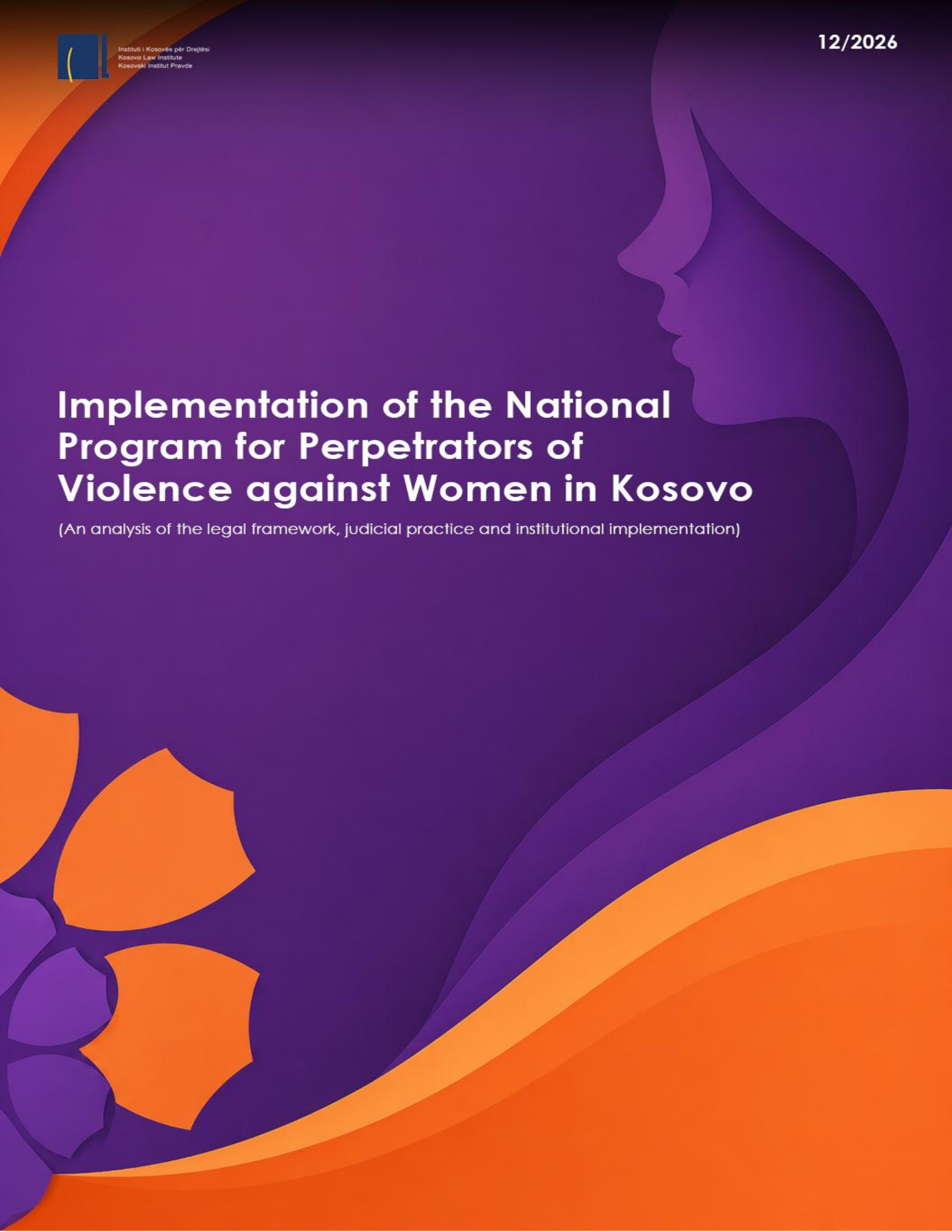




Implementation of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women in Kosovo

(An analysis of the legal framework, judicial practice and institutional implementation)



Author: Arrita Reznici

Special contribution: Anesa Hoxha

Editors: Ehat Miftaraj and Betim Musliu

No part of this material may be printed, copied, reproduced in any electronic or printed form, or by any other means of reproduction without the consent of the Kosovo Law Institute.

Implemented by:



Instituti i Kosovës për Drejtësi
Kosovo Law Institute
Kosovski Institut Pravde

Supported by:



ABOUT KLI

The Kosovo Law Institute is a non-governmental and non-profit public policy organisation, a think tank specialized in the justice sector.

KLI

Str. Ilaz Agushi, Pristina

E: info@kli-ks.org

www.kli-ks.org

June, 2026

Pristina, Republic of Kosovo

Content

1. Executive summary.....	7
2. Methodology.....	9
3. Legal framework.....	10
4. National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women	11
5. Implementation of the Program within the Criminal Justice System in Kosovo.....	15
5.1. Analysis of suspended sentences in domestic violence cases.....	17
5.1.1. Implementation of obligations imposed in suspended sentences	18
5.1.2. Type of criminal offence	19
5.1.3. Duration of proceedings.....	20
5.1.4. Family relationship	21
5.1.5. Victim representation	22
5.1.6. Admission of guilt.....	23
5.1.7. Sentenced imposed.....	24
5.1.8. Reference to the Istanbul Convention.....	25
6. Implementation of the perpetrator intervention program within the Kosovo Correctional Service.....	26
6.1. Implementation in correctional centres.....	26
6.2. Participants.....	27
6.3. Method of inclusion of convicted persons	27
6.4. Method of implementation.....	28
6.5. Training of officials.....	28
6.6. Identified challenges	29
6.7. Positive assessments	29
7. Implementation of the Program for perpetrators of violence in the Kosovo Probation Service	30
7.1. Implementation in the Probation Service.....	30
7.2. Training of officials.....	32
7.3. Identified challenges	32
8. Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Program.....	33
8.1. Annual Reports on the Treatment of Perpetrators of Violence in Kosovo.....	36

8.1.1.	The report for the year 2024	37
8.1.2.	The report for the year 2025	39
9.	Key findings.....	42
10.	Recommendations.....	44

1. Executive summary

This report of the Kosovo Law Institute (KLI) analyses the legal and institutional framework governing the treatment of perpetrators of violence against women, the level of implementation of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women, and the role of the justice system in referring perpetrators to specialised intervention Programs. The report assesses whether the existing legal and institutional mechanisms contribute to the rehabilitation of perpetrators, the prevention of repeat violence, and the strengthening of victims' safety.

In this context, at the end of 2023 Kosovo launched the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women, the first standardised Program in the country specifically dedicated to the treatment of perpetrators of violence against women. However, the findings of this report indicate that, despite the existence of the Program and the legal basis enabling the referral of perpetrators to rehabilitative treatment, the Program has not yet been operationalised in its mandatory form and continues to be implemented primarily on a voluntary basis.

The analysis of 50 judgments in domestic violence cases demonstrates that the potential of the criminal justice system to refer perpetrators to rehabilitative Programs remains largely untapped. Although Article 56 of the Criminal Code allows courts, in addition to imposing a suspended sentence, to order specific obligations, including participation in treatment or rehabilitation Programs, none of the analysed cases included such an obligation. Furthermore, in none of the cases did the courts provide reasoning for the non-application of these measures. Despite the launch of the Program in 2023, the judicial practice analysed by KLI does not reflect any meaningful shift towards the use of rehabilitative mechanisms for perpetrators of domestic violence.

In this regard, KLI considers that courts, prosecutors, victim advocates and other justice-sector actors should make more active use of the legal mechanisms available to them by proposing and imposing rehabilitative obligations whenever the circumstances of a case justify such measures.

With respect to the practical implementation of the Program, the report finds that it is currently implemented only within the Kosovo Correctional Service and solely at the Dubrava Correctional Centre, thereby limiting access to this rehabilitative intervention for other convicted persons. At the time of drafting this report, a total of 38 convicted persons had either completed or were participating in the Program. Meanwhile, although the Kosovo Probation Service has taken initial steps to strengthen its professional capacities, the Program has not yet become operational within that institution. KLI considers this a serious shortcoming, given that a considerable proportion of domestic violence perpetrators receive suspended sentences and remain in the community. Consequently, the group of perpetrators that could potentially benefit most from rehabilitative interventions continues to remain outside the Program. KLI therefore recommends the prompt operationalisation of the Program within the Kosovo Probation Service and the establishment of effective referral mechanisms for perpetrators to community-based rehabilitative treatment.

The report further emphasises that participation in perpetrator Programs cannot and should not serve as an alternative to the criminal investigation and prosecution of acts of violence. Rather, such Programs should function as a complementary mechanism to the criminal justice system, focusing on perpetrator rehabilitation, reducing the risk of recidivism, and enhancing victims' safety.

Another important finding concerns the absence of a comprehensive secondary legal framework regulating the organisation, standardisation, monitoring and evaluation of the Program. The report also identifies uncertainty regarding institutional competencies for drafting the necessary regulatory acts. For this reason, KLI considers that the Ministry of Justice, through the Office of the National Coordinator for Protection from Domestic Violence, Violence against Women and Gender-Based Violence, should take the necessary steps to draft and adopt the secondary legislation governing the organisation, implementation, monitoring and standards of the Program.

A significant part of the report focuses on the monitoring and evaluation of the Program. The analysis found that the Ministry of Justice has not established a dedicated database for monitoring perpetrators referred to and participating in the Program, despite such a mechanism being foreseen in strategic documents. Although the National Database for Recording Domestic Violence Cases contains basic information on cases and perpetrators, it was not designed as a mechanism for monitoring participation, progress, outcomes, or the effectiveness of the Program. The absence of such a system limits the ability of institutions to develop evidence-based policies and to assess the Program's impact on preventing repeat violence.

The report also highlights a lack of transparency in institutional reporting. Annual monitoring and evaluation reports on the Program have not been published by the Ministry of Justice, despite having been prepared. Analysis of these reports revealed inconsistencies between different institutional sources regarding the number of Program participants, as well as significant methodological limitations affecting the reliability of outcome assessments. Moreover, the monitoring process did not incorporate the perspectives of victims due to the absence of adequate mechanisms for the safe collection of victim-related data. This limits the ability to fully assess the Program's impact on victim safety and the prevention of repeat violence.

Although the evaluation reports for 2024 and 2025 identify improvements in reducing certain abusive behaviours, increasing awareness, and encouraging perpetrators to assume responsibility for their actions, they also indicate that certain forms of control, jealousy, possessiveness, gender stereotypes, and victim-blaming attitudes remain present even after completion of the Program.

Finally, during the consultation process conducted for the preparation of this report, representatives of the judiciary expressed the view that the current legal framework could be strengthened through amendments to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo, with the aim of establishing participation in the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women as a mandatory measure in cases involving convictions for domestic violence and violence against women.

2. Methodology

This report was prepared using a combined methodological approach that included normative analysis, analysis of judicial practice, collection of institutional data, and consultation with relevant stakeholders.

The initial phase consisted of an analysis of the legal and policy framework governing the treatment of perpetrators of violence in Kosovo. This analysis covered criminal legislation and relevant secondary legislation, national strategic documents, the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women, as well as international standards and recommendations, with particular emphasis on the the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO monitoring practice.

An important component of the research was the analysis of judicial practice. For this purpose, KLI analysed 50 final judgments imposing suspended sentences issued by Basic Courts and their branches during the period 2021–2025. The judgments were selected randomly from decisions published on the official website of the Kosovo Judicial Council. The selection of suspended sentence cases was intentional, taking into account that the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo allows courts, in addition to imposing a suspended sentence, to order specific rehabilitative obligations, including participation in treatment and rehabilitation Programs.

The analysis of judgments sought to assess whether courts are making use of legal mechanisms for referring perpetrators to rehabilitation Programs and whether judicial practice has changed following the launch of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women at the end of 2023. For each judgment, additional elements were analysed, including the legal classification of the criminal offence, the duration of proceedings, the family relationship between the parties, procedural representation of the victim, admission of guilt by the accused, the type of sentence imposed, and references to international instruments, particularly the Istanbul Convention.

To assess the level of practical implementation of the Program, KLI requested information from institutions responsible for its implementation, supervision and coordination. In this regard, information was sought from the Kosovo Correctional Service and the Kosovo Probation Service concerning the number of persons included in the Program, methods of implementation, institutional capacities, staff training, challenges encountered, and assessments of achieved results. Information was also requested from the Ministry of Justice, specifically the Office of the National Coordinator for Protection from Domestic Violence, concerning the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women.

In addition, KLI organised a consultative meeting with representatives of institutions responsible for implementing the Program and other actors working in this field. This process enabled the identification of practical implementation challenges, discussion of institutional experiences, documentation of operational obstacles, and collection of recommendations for improving existing mechanisms..

3. Legal framework

With regard to domestic legislation in Kosovo, the treatment of domestic violence is regulated by Law No. 08/L-185 on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence, Violence against Women, and Gender-Based Violence,¹ which repealed the 2010 Law on Protection against Domestic Violence. The purpose of this law is to prevent and address violence against women, domestic violence, and gender-based violence; to protect and contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women; to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women; and to establish the necessary mechanisms for providing support to victims of all forms of violence regulated by this law.² On the other hand, the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo, which entered into force in 2019, unlike previous criminal codes, explicitly criminalizes domestic violence as a separate criminal offence.³ This offence is punishable by a fine and imprisonment of up to three years. The relevant provision also recognizes various forms of violence, including physical, psychological, economic, and sexual violence.

Furthermore, the treatment of domestic violence in Kosovo is regulated through a legal framework built upon international standards. One of these instruments is the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (known as the Istanbul Convention), which aims to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence, protect victims, and prosecute perpetrators. Since 2020, this Convention has been incorporated into the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo.⁴

The Istanbul Convention establishes specific obligations for States Parties concerning the development of preventive and treatment programs for perpetrators of domestic violence. Article 16 requires the establishment or support of programs designed to prevent perpetrators of domestic violence from reoffending and to encourage changes in violent behavioural patterns. Specifically, it states that: "Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to set up or support Programs aimed at teaching perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relationships, with a view to preventing further violence and changing violent behavioural patterns."⁵ In addition, Article 16, paragraph 3, emphasizes that: "Parties shall ensure that the safety of, support for and the human rights of victims are of primary concern and that, where appropriate, these Programs are established and implemented in close co-ordination with specialist support services for victims."⁶

¹ Law No. 08/L-185 on the Prevention and Protection from Domestic Violence, Violence against Women and Gender-Based Violence (<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2691>)

² Law No. 08/L-185 on the Prevention and Protection from Domestic Violence, Violence against Women and Gender-Based Violence, Article 1.

³ Criminal Code No. 06/L-074 of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 248.

⁴ Amendment No. 26 to the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, 25.09.2020. (<https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=3702>)

⁵ Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Article 16, paragraph 1.

⁶ Ibid, par. 3.

With regard to programs for the treatment of perpetrators of violence against women, Article 56 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo specifies the types of obligations that may be imposed alongside a suspended sentence.⁷ Among the fifteen obligations provided for is participation in a medical treatment or rehabilitation program.⁸

On the other hand, until the entry into force of the new law on prevention and protection against domestic violence, Administrative Instruction No. 12/2012 on Determining the Place and Method of Psychosocial Treatment of Perpetrators of Domestic Violence had been applicable.⁹ However, with the repeal of Law No. 03/L-182 on Protection against Domestic Violence, the legal basis upon which this secondary legislation had been issued ceased to exist. Moreover, Administrative Instruction No. 12/2012 had also been based on Law No. 02/L-17 on Social and Family Services and Regulation No. 09/2011 on the Work of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, both of which have likewise been repealed. As a result, there is currently no valid secondary legislation specifically regulating the psychosocial treatment of perpetrators of domestic violence.

Although Law No. 08/L-185 on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence, Violence against Women, and Gender-Based Violence requires the Government of the Republic of Kosovo to issue the relevant secondary legislation within six months of the law's entry into force, no concrete steps have yet been taken to draft and adopt acts relating to the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women.

Meanwhile, in an effort to strengthen initiatives aimed at guaranteeing a life of dignity free from violence, Kosovo has also adopted the National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women 2022–2026.¹⁰ e Strategy sets out several strategic objectives, including the specific objective of "Establishing and implementing psychosocial treatment programs for perpetrators of criminal offences involving violence" under Objective 1 – Prevention and Identification of Violence¹¹, emphasizing that the psychosocial treatment of perpetrators during the execution of sanctions and their inclusion in appropriate rehabilitation programs is essential.

4. National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women

The National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women (hereinafter: the Program) is an initiative developed on the principles of strategic intervention and psychosocial rehabilitation

⁷ Criminal Code No.06/L-074 of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 56.

⁸ Ibid, par. 1.2.

⁹ Administrative Instruction No. 12/2012 on determining the place and method of psychosocial treatment of perpetrators of domestic violence, which was approved at the 91st meeting of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo by Decision No. 03/91 dated 12.09.2012

¹⁰ National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women, brochure from the Ministry of Justice of Kosovo <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ALB-Strategjia-Komb%C3%ABtare-p%C3%ABr-Mbrojtje-nga-Dhuna-n%C3%AB-Familje-dhe-Dhuna-ndaj-Grave-2022-%E2%80%93-2026.pdf>

¹¹ Ibid, pg. 38-39.

for individuals who have perpetrated violence against their female intimate partners.¹² The Program aims to transform perpetrators' violent behaviours through a process of change that leads to the adoption of non-violent and respectful conduct in interpersonal relationships.¹³ Although the Program places emphasis on the reform and rehabilitation of perpetrators, its ultimate objective is to create a safe environment for survivors by providing them with the support and security necessary to empower them and enable them to move forward with their lives.¹⁴

The Program was launched at the end of 2023.¹⁵ Prior to its introduction, findings had shown that the primary responsibility for providing treatment programs for perpetrators of violence rested with public healthcare institutions, particularly mental health centres, which implemented both types of interventions.¹⁶ These institutions constituted the principal institutional mechanism for the therapeutic management of violent behaviour.¹⁷ In its baseline evaluation reports, GREVIO noted that perpetrator programs focusing primarily on medical treatment are problematic, as they may imply that violence will cease once substance abuse, alcohol dependency, or mental health issues are addressed.¹⁸

In this regard, GREVIO has emphasized that the treatment of addiction-related problems or mental health disorders may constitute an important supportive component, but should not replace specialized programs for perpetrators of violence. According to this monitoring mechanism, the effectiveness of such programs should be measured by their ability to promote accountability among perpetrators, change patterns of violent behaviour, and, above all, contribute to enhancing victims' safety and preventing the recurrence of violence.¹⁹

Programs for perpetrators of violence may be implemented in different institutional or community settings, depending on the legal responsibility of the individual or the procedural context in which the person is involved. For this reason, KLI considers it essential that the organization, methods of implementation, and standards governing the delivery of these programs be clearly regulated through secondary legislation. Such regulation should define not only institutional responsibilities but also the conditions and criteria that other entities involved in the implementation of the Program must satisfy. This would ensure that, regardless of the context in which it is implemented, including community-based settings, the Program is carried out in accordance with the standards

¹² National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women, brochure from the Ministry of Justice of Kosovo.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ministry of Justice of Kosovo: Launch of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women, November 2023 (<https://md.rks-gov.net/lajmet/lancohet-programi-kombetar-per-kryeresit-e-dhunes-ndaj-grave/>).

¹⁶ Assessment of the alignment of Kosovo's laws, policies, and other measures with the standards of the Istanbul Convention, Secretariat of the monitoring mechanism of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, November 2022, p. 39. (<https://rm.coe.int/kosovo-assessment-report-istanbul-convention-sqi/1680a9203f>).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 39-40.

of the National Program for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence as a standardized and official program, without deviation from its methodology and content.

With regard to the institutional aspect, Law No. 08/L-185 on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence, Violence against Women, and Gender-Based Violence, in Article 36, paragraph 4, provides that the Ministry responsible for Health, in cooperation with the ministry responsible for social welfare and other relevant institutions, shall prepare and propose for Government approval the secondary legislation defining the manner and location of the implementation of psychosocial treatment. Meanwhile, paragraph 5 of the same article obliges the Ministry responsible for Health to establish the necessary institutional mechanisms for the psychosocial treatment of perpetrators of violence. KLI considers that these provisions refer to the protective measure of psychosocial treatment, which is imposed by the court as part of a protection order with the purpose of preventing violence, ensuring the protection and safety of the victim and other persons exposed to violence, and eliminating circumstances that may contribute to its recurrence. In this sense, the competencies of the Ministry of Health relate primarily to the organization and provision of psychosocial treatment in cases where perpetrators present specific health-related needs, including substance dependency issues or mental health disorders, in accordance with its legal mandate. This approach is also consistent with the spirit of previous legal instruments regulating this matter, under which psychosocial interventions could be provided by health institutions, social welfare institutions, and licensed providers of social services, including civil society organizations.²⁰ In cases where perpetrators exhibit substance dependency problems, medical treatment should be provided by the relevant healthcare institutions in accordance with their legal competencies.²¹

It is important to draw a clear distinction between the psychosocial treatment provided for under Article 36 of Law No. 08/L-185 and the Program for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence. Psychosocial treatment under this provision constitutes a protective measure imposed by the court within the framework of a protection order, with the aim of preventing violence and protecting the victim. In such cases, the individual is not necessarily subject to criminal proceedings or a criminal sanction; therefore, institutional responsibilities are primarily related to the provision of psychosocial and healthcare services based on the identified needs of the individual. In contrast, the Program for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence is a broader rehabilitative mechanism implemented within the criminal justice system for individuals convicted of criminal offences involving domestic violence, including cases where the sentence is suspended. The Program seeks to change behavioural patterns, promote accountability for the criminal offence committed, and reduce the risk of reoffending. Therefore, although psychosocial treatment may constitute one component of the Program for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence, these are two distinct

²⁰ Administrative Instruction No. 12/2012 on determining the place and method of psychosocial treatment of perpetrators of domestic violence, Article 4, paragraph 1.

²¹ *Ibid*, par. 2.

mechanisms in terms of their legal nature, objectives, target groups, and the institutional responsibilities associated with their implementation.

Consequently, the secondary legislation regulating the implementation of this Program should be issued by the competent authority responsible for coordinating policies in the field of protection from domestic violence. Law No. 08/L-185 clearly stipulates that the National Coordinator for Protection from Domestic Violence, Violence against Women, and Gender-Based Violence is "the highest institutional authority responsible for coordinating, harmonizing, monitoring, and evaluating policies and measures aimed at preventing and combating all forms of violence covered by the Law and the Istanbul Convention." Furthermore, Regulation (GRK) No. 37/2024 on the Organization and Functioning of the Office of the National Coordinator for Protection from Domestic Violence, Violence against Women, and Gender-Based Violence, in Article 5, provides that the "Office of the National Coordinator offers support in the drafting of legislation related to access to justice, including protection from domestic violence, violence against women, and gender-based violence." Given that the objective of the Program for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence is to protect victims and prevent domestic violence, violence against women, and gender-based violence, it is directly linked to the National Coordinator's policy-making and coordinating mandate. For this reason, KLI considers that the Ministry of Justice, through the Office of the National Coordinator, should undertake the necessary steps to draft and adopt the secondary legislation governing the organization, implementation, monitoring, and standards of the Program for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence, while clearly defining institutional responsibilities and the conditions for its implementation.

From a practical perspective, KLI finds that these programs may be delivered within the correctional system, in institutions where prison sentences are served, as well as through probation services for persons convicted of offences involving violence against women. In such cases, participation in the program is linked to a court decision or an individual rehabilitation plan and is monitored by relevant authorities. At the same time, these programs may also be implemented within the community, where perpetrators of violence participate on a voluntary basis. Two civil society organizations, the SIT Center in Pristina and the Safe House in Gjakova, have developed pilot programs based on psycho-cognitive treatment approaches. However, NGO-led programs have faced limited financial support, which has affected their capacity to ensure sustainable implementation and broader outreach.²²

Within the framework of its monitoring procedures, GREVIO has emphasized that states should ensure not only an increase in the number of states that should ensure not only an increase in the number of programs for the treatment of perpetrators of violence but also their diversification, so that they are accessible across different institutional and community settings.²³ This includes

²² Assessment of the alignment of Kosovo's laws, policies, and other measures with the standards of the Istanbul Convention, Secretariat of the monitoring mechanism of the Council of Europe Convention, p. 39.

²³ Training Curriculum for Professionals Delivering Programs for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in the Republic of Kosovo, Ministry of Justice, p. 29. (<https://md.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/E366CD3B-E6B1-4250-9748-1692A1A6D636.pdf>)

providing programs both for individuals who are mandatorily referred through the criminal justice system and for those who seek treatment voluntarily, whether within correctional institutions or outside them. In this regard, the combination of mandatory and voluntary programs is regarded as one of the most effective mechanisms for expanding victim's safety.

However, the findings of this KLI report indicate that in Kosovo, the program for the treatment of perpetrators of violence has not yet been operationalised in its mandatory form and continues to be implemented solely on a voluntary basis. This situation persists despite the importance attributed to mandatory programs under international standards and notwithstanding their potential to contribute to behavioural change among perpetrators, reduce the risk of repeated violence, and strengthen the protection of victims.

On the other hand, it is of crucial importance to emphasize that participation in programs for perpetrators of violence cannot and should not serve as an alternative to the investigation, prosecution, and criminal adjudication of violent offences.²⁴

KLI further emphasises that the development and operationalisation of perpetrator Programs should not come at the expense of victim services. In line with the standards of the Istanbul Convention and a victim-centred approach, funding for perpetrator Programs should be secured in a manner that does not undermine, reduce or negatively affect the budgets and capacities of services dedicated to victims of violence. Ensuring support, protection and empowerment for victims must remain the primary priority of public policies and financial resource allocation.

5. Implementation of the Program within the Criminal Justice System in Kosovo

The National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women has been designed as a psychosocial rehabilitation program aimed at changing violent behaviours, increasing perpetrators' accountability, and preventing the recurrence of violence. Due to its nature and objectives, this Program is directly linked to the criminal justice system and, in particular, to orders requiring compliance with certain obligations provided for under the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo.

In this regard, Article 56 of the Criminal Code explicitly provides that: "A suspended sentence may also include an order to fulfil one or more of the following obligations: [...] 1.2. participation in a medical treatment or rehabilitation program."²⁵ This means that, when imposing a suspended sentence, the court may require the convicted person to comply with one or more obligations, including participation in treatment or rehabilitation programs. Although the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women was launched at the end of 2023, after the Criminal

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Criminal Code No .06/L-074 of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 56.

Code had entered into force, the wording of this provision is sufficiently broad to encompass rehabilitation programs established even after the adoption of the Code.

Consequently, there is a legal basis for courts, in appropriate cases, to order perpetrators to participate in the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women as one of the obligations attached to a suspended sentence. This approach is also consistent with the purpose underlying the imposition of special obligations in the context of suspended sentences. In determining such obligations, the court is required to take into particular consideration the age of the convicted person; their overall physical and mental health condition; their lifestyle and personal needs, especially those relating to family, education, and employment; the motives for committing the criminal of the offence; their previous behaviour; their personal and family circumstances; and any other circumstances relevant to determining the type and duration of supervision.²⁶

The significance of this provision becomes even more pronounced in cases involving violence against women and domestic violence, given that many perpetrators do not acknowledge responsibility for their behaviour or demonstrate a willingness to participate voluntarily in treatment programs. Consequently, relying solely on voluntary participation risks leaving a considerable number of individuals who pose a risk of reoffending outside the scope of treatment. In this context, the possibility of court-ordered participation in the Program assumes particular importance as a mechanism for the rehabilitation of perpetrators, the prevention of recidivism, and the enhancement of victims' safety.

This is particularly important considering that a substantial proportion of sentences imposed for the criminal offence of domestic violence are suspended sentences.²⁷ As a result, a large number of perpetrators remain within the community, and if participation in the National Program were imposed as an obligation within the framework of a suspended sentence, rehabilitative treatment would reach the largest category of perpetrators of violence, which currently remains outside specialized programs.

Given these circumstances, KLI considers that there is significant potential for broader use of legal mechanisms enabling the referral of perpetrators to treatment and rehabilitation Programs. All actors involved in criminal proceedings have an important role in this regard. The Criminal Procedure Code provides that, “during sentencing hearings following a guilty plea, the State Prosecutor, the accused or defence counsel may request a hearing to present matters relevant to sentencing”.²⁸ Likewise, during such hearings, the prosecutor, accused, defence counsel, injured party, victim, victim advocate or victim representative may present statements, arguments and circumstances considered relevant to determining an appropriate sentence.²⁹

²⁶ Ibid, Article 55, par. 3.

²⁷ Rezniqui A., “Istanbul Convention in the verdicts of court in Kosovo”, September 2022 (https://kli-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/The-Istanbul-Convention-in-the-verdicts-of-courts-in-Kosovo_ENG.pdf).

²⁸ Criminal Code No .06/L-074 of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 356, par. 2

²⁹ Ibid, par. 7.

Therefore, KLI considers that state prosecutors, victim advocates, and other relevant stakeholders should adopt a more proactive approach in cases where the circumstances justify such a measure. In situations where the court may impose a suspended sentence, these actors should propose that, in addition to the sentence itself, the obligation provided for under Article 56 of the Criminal Code, namely, participation in treatment or rehabilitation programs—be imposed, specifically through referral to the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women. Such an approach would facilitate the effective use of existing legal mechanisms to increase perpetrators' participation in rehabilitative programs, prevent the recurrence of violence, and strengthen the protection of victims.

From the perspective of victim protection, the implementation of the Program through obligations imposed by the court should not be viewed solely as a rehabilitative measure directed at the perpetrator, but also as a mechanism for risk management, the prevention of repeated violence, and the enhancement of victims' safety. For this reason, KLI analysed judicial practice in order to assess whether courts are utilizing the potential offered by Article 56 of the Criminal Code to refer perpetrators to treatment and rehabilitation programs.

It is also important to note that, during the preparation of this report, KLI held consultative meetings with key institutional actors involved in the handling of domestic violence and violence against women cases. Within the context of these discussions, representatives of the judiciary expressed the view that the current legal framework should be amended through changes to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo, with the aim of establishing participation in the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women as a mandatory obligation in cases involving convictions for criminal offences related to domestic violence and violence against women.³⁰ According to this position, such a solution would ensure a more uniform approach in judicial practice and would significantly increase the number of perpetrators enrolled in specialized rehabilitation programs.

5.1. Analysis of suspended sentences in domestic violence cases

For the purposes of this report, KLI analysed 50 final judgments issued by the Basic Courts and their branches during the period 2021–2025. The selection of these judgments was conducted randomly through decisions published on the official website of the judicial system,³¹ with the aim of ensuring a representative sample of current judicial practice.

The analysis covered various elements of judicial practice, including the type of criminal offence, duration of proceedings, family relationship between the parties, victim representation, admission of guilt, type of sentence imposed, and references to the Istanbul Convention. However, the primary focus of the analysis was the implementation of obligations provided for under Article 56

³⁰ Consultative meeting of the KLI with key institutional stakeholders responsible for the implementation of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women, Pristina, 12.06.2026.

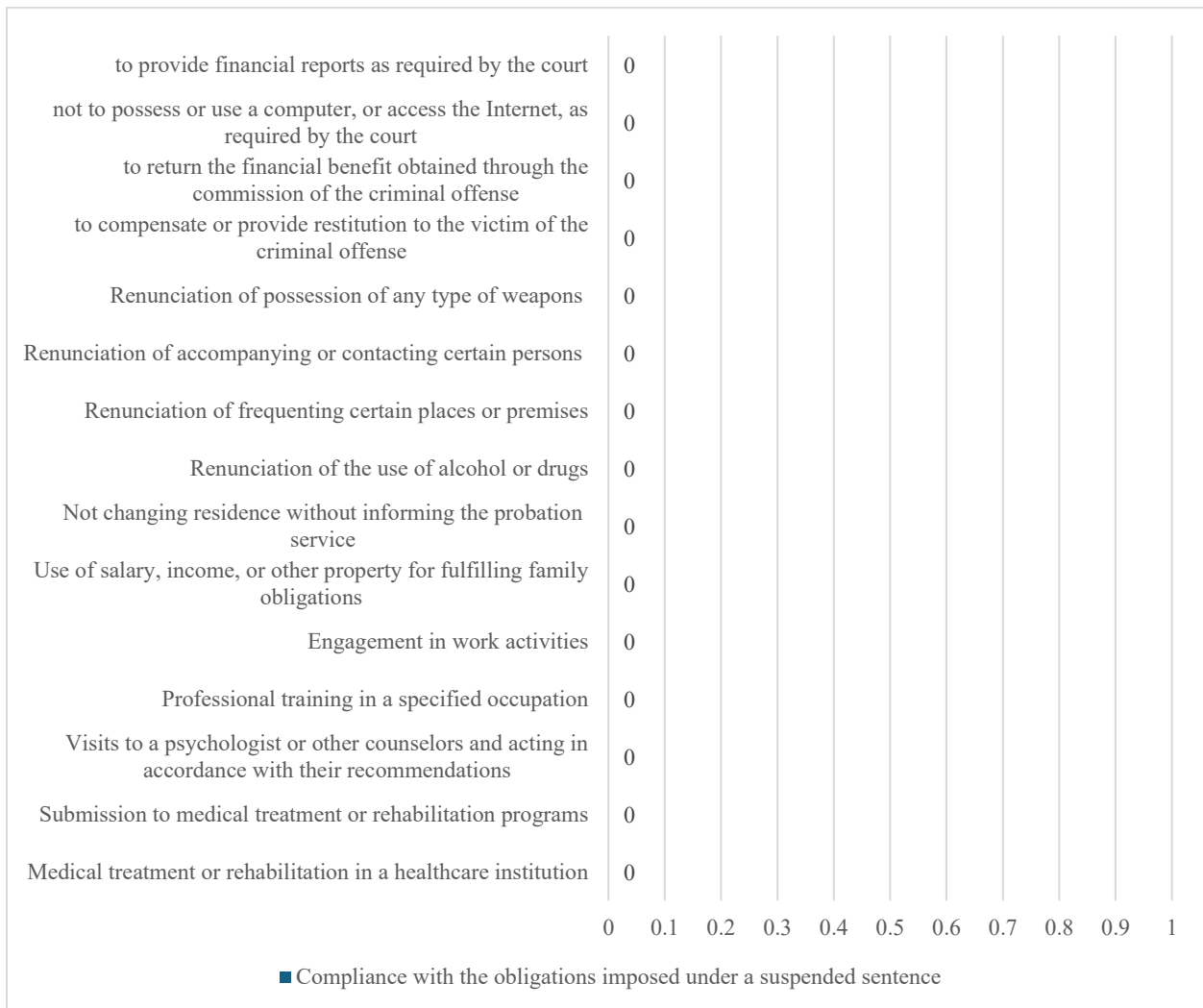
³¹ Judgments published in the webpage of the Kosovo Judicial Council - <https://www.gjyqesori-rks.org/aktgjykimet/>.

of the Criminal Code, and in particular, the obligation to participate in rehabilitation programs in cases of suspended sentences.

5.1.1. Implementation of obligations imposed in suspended sentences

The role of courts in activating complementary mechanisms through judicial decisions is of particular importance. In this regard, Article 56 of the Criminal Code enables courts, when imposing a suspended sentence, to assign one or more obligations aimed at rehabilitating the convicted person, addressing the factors that contributed to the commission of the offence, and preventing its recurrence.

However, the analysis of the 50 judgments included in this report shows that in none of the cases involving suspended sentences was any of the obligations provided for under Article 56 of the Criminal Code imposed.



Graph 1. Implementation of obligations imposed in suspended sentences

This finding is particularly significant given that criminal legislation provides a legal basis for imposing additional obligations, including the referral of perpetrators to rehabilitation programs. Consequently, the analysed cases indicate that courts have opted to limit suspended sentences solely to the suspension of the execution of the sentence, without accompanying them with additional rehabilitative or supervisory measures. From a prevention perspective, the absence of rehabilitative obligations implies that legal mechanisms aimed at addressing the causes and factors contributing to the perpetrator's violent behaviour have not been utilized. Particularly in cases of domestic violence—where recidivism and persistent patterns of control and coercion are recognized risk factors—the failure to activate such measures limits the rehabilitative potential of sentencing and weakens its preventive function.

Similarly, the analysis of judgments shows that in none of the cases was specific reasoning provided regarding the non-imposition of obligations provided for under Article 56 of the Criminal Code. The absence of such reasoning restricts the ability to assess whether the court evaluated the perpetrator's rehabilitative needs, the risk of reoffending, and the necessity of additional measures that would contribute to victim protection and the prevention of future violence. In terms of sentencing individualization, clear and detailed reasoning constitutes a fundamental element of judicial decision-making, as it demonstrates that the court has assessed the specific circumstances of the case, the characteristics of the perpetrator, and the need for rehabilitative intervention, thereby ensuring that the sentence is not only proportionate but also effective in achieving its preventive and rehabilitative purposes.

From a victim protection perspective, this finding is particularly important. Given that the majority of perpetrators sentenced with suspended sentences remain in the community and continue to potentially be in contact with victims, the lack of rehabilitative obligations indicates that legal instruments aimed at changing perpetrators' behaviour and reducing the risk of reoffending are not being fully utilized.

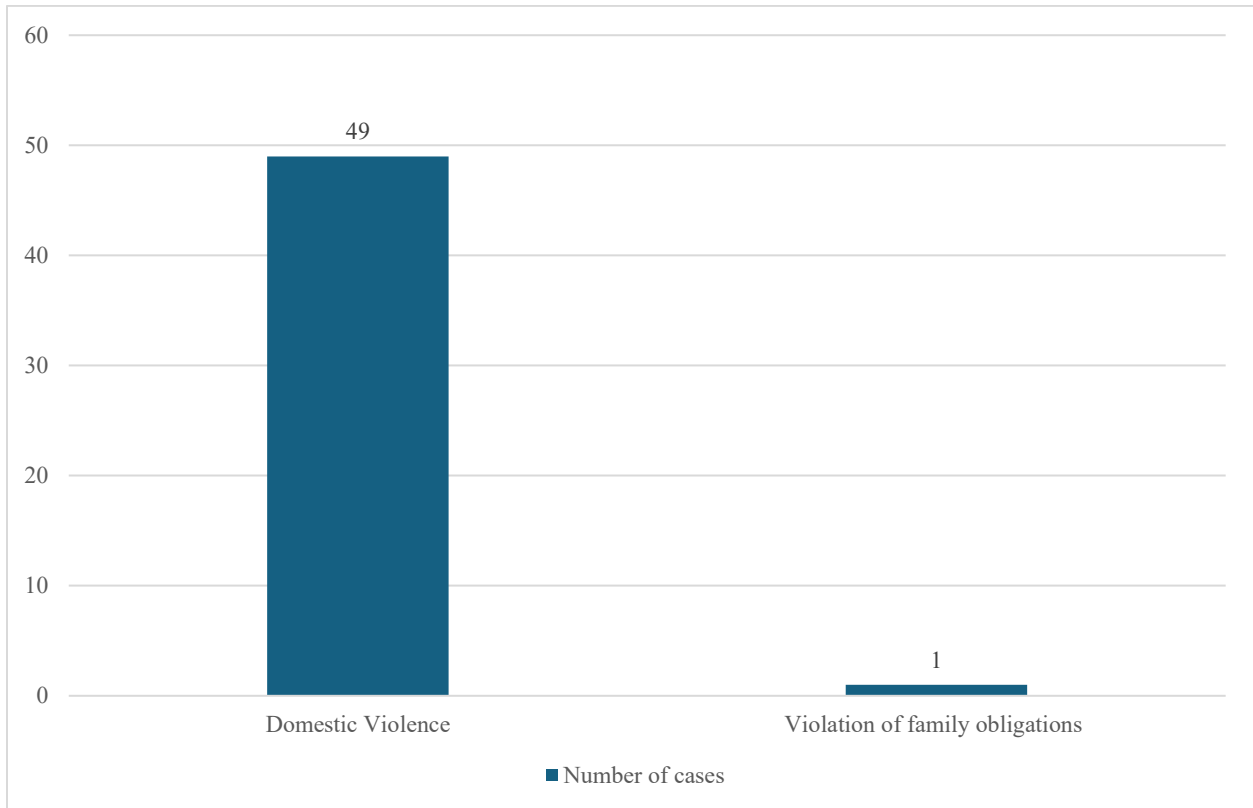
For this reason, KLI considers that the potential of Article 56 of the Criminal Code for the mandatory referral of perpetrators to treatment and rehabilitation programs, including the National Program for the Treatment of Perpetrators of Violence Against Women, remains underutilized in judicial practice. Considering the high number of suspended sentences imposed in domestic violence cases, more frequent use of these obligations could constitute one of the most effective mechanisms for operationalizing the Program in practice, transforming it into a system in which perpetrators are systematically referred through the criminal justice system.

5.1.2. Type of criminal offence

Nearly all of the analysed judgments relate to the criminal offence of domestic violence, as provided for under Article 248 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo. This indicates that the cases included in this sample predominantly involve direct forms of physical,

psychological, or other forms of violence within family relationships, as defined in the relevant criminal provisions.

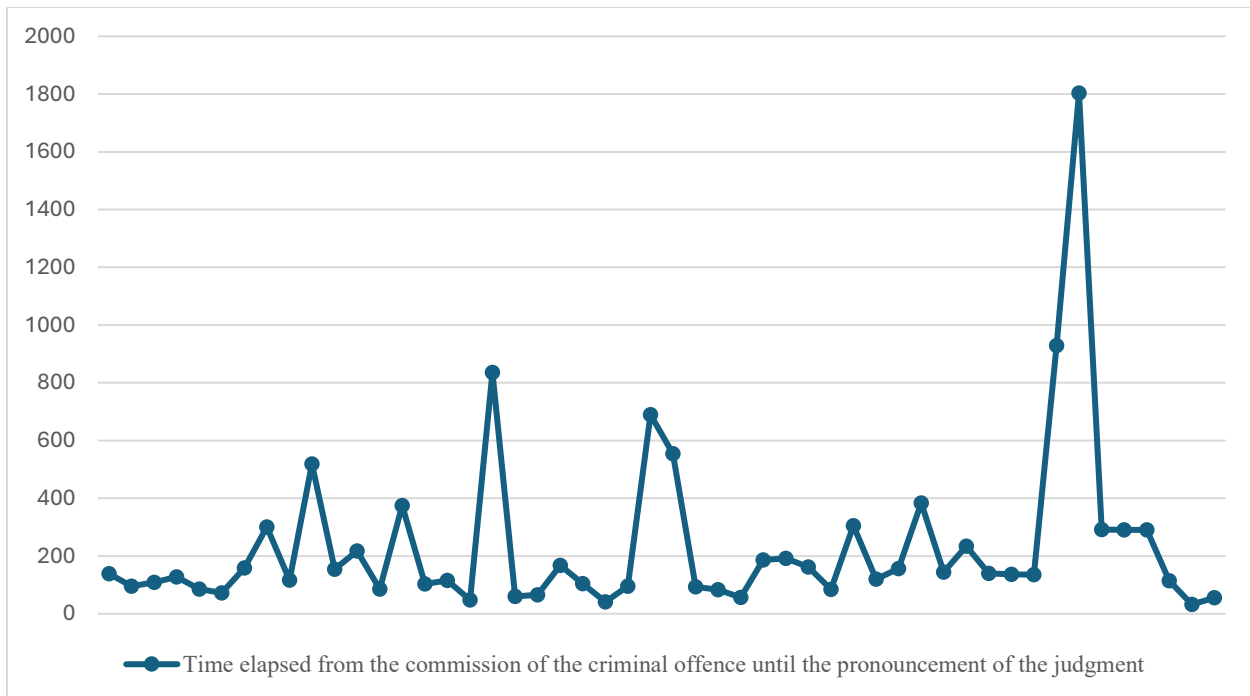
Only one case was classified as “Violation of Family Obligations” under Article 244 of the Criminal Code. This distinction shows that, in practice, cases brought before the courts have been primarily associated with clear elements of violence, while violations of family obligations constitute a minimal proportion within this sample.



Graph 2. Type of criminal offence for which the perpetrator was charged in the judgments of the basic courts.

5.1.3. Duration of proceedings

Regarding the duration of proceedings, the analysis of the 50 cases shows that, on average, 237 days, or approximately 8 months, elapsed from the moment the criminal offence was committed until the issuance of the judgment.



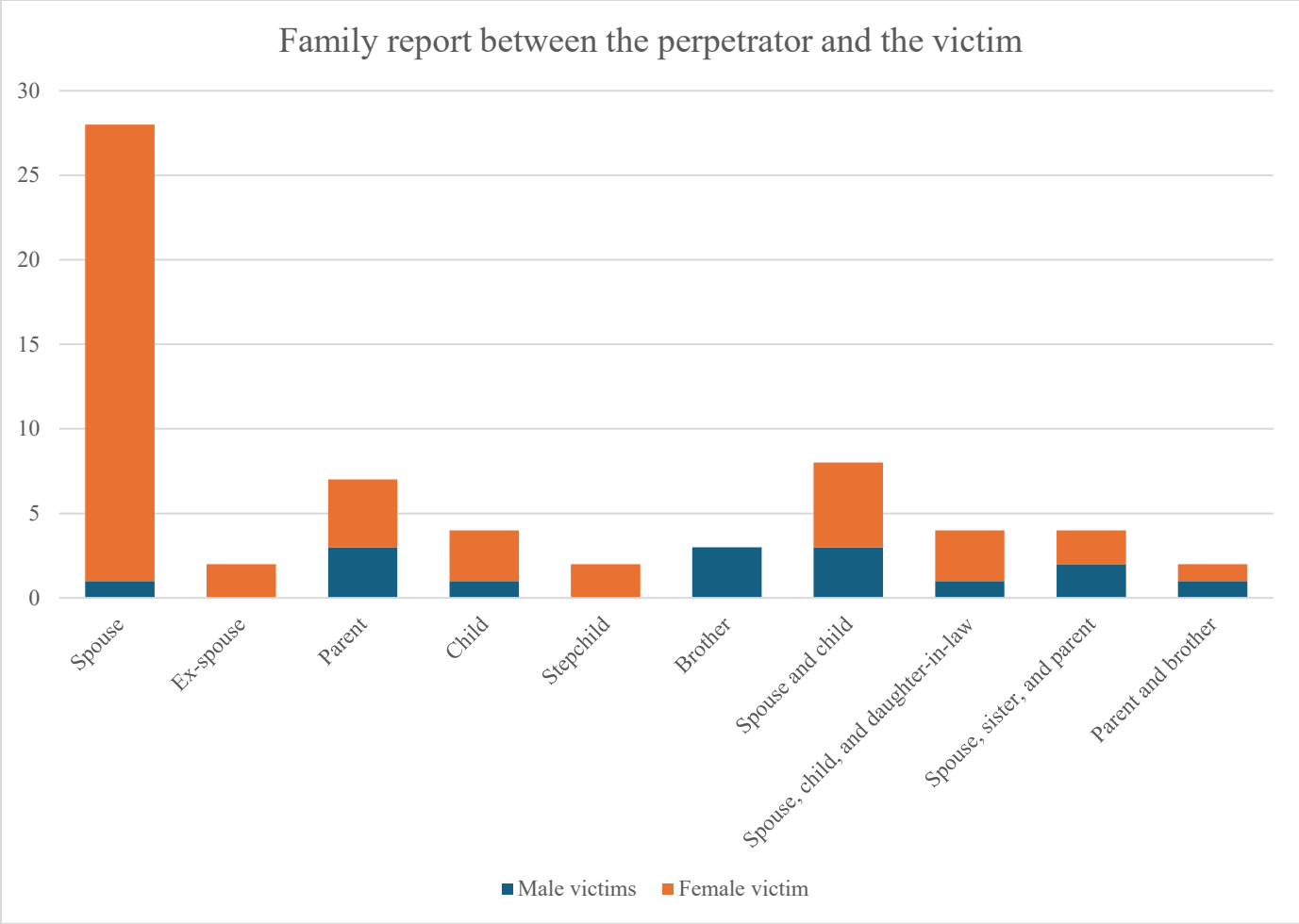
Graph 3. Duration (expressed in days) from the moment the criminal offence was committed until the issuance of the judgment.

This time period is an important indicator for assessing the efficiency of the criminal justice system in handling domestic violence cases. Given that these cases have a direct impact on the safety and well-being of victims, the duration of proceedings constitutes a fundamental element in analysing effective access to justice.

5.1.4. Family relationship

The analysis of family relationships between perpetrators and victims shows that in the majority of cases—specifically in 33 out of 50 analysed cases—the perpetrator was the victim’s spouse. This finding confirms that, in judicial practice, domestic violence primarily occurs within marital or cohabitation relationships.

In 8 cases, violence was perpetrated by a parent against a child, while in another 8 cases, it was perpetrated by a child against a parent. These findings indicate that the phenomenon of domestic violence encompasses a broad spectrum of family relationships.



Graph 4. Family report between the parties³²

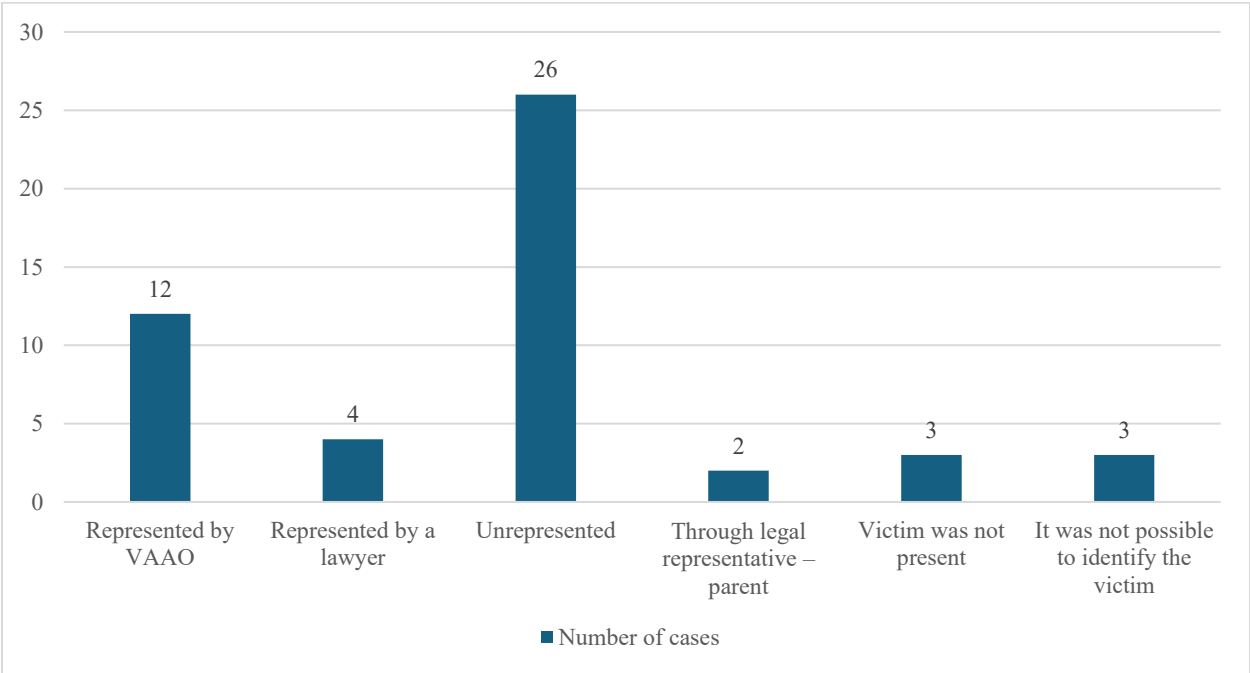
5.1.5. Victim representation

In terms of procedural representation, out of the 50 analysed cases, in 12 cases victims were represented by the Victims’ Advocacy and Assistance Office (VAAO), which constitutes a significant share of cases with institutional representation. In addition, in 4 cases victims were represented by a private lawyer, while in 2 cases representation was carried out through a legal representative, specifically a parent. In total, this means that only 18 out of 50 cases had some form of procedural representation.

Meanwhile, in 26 cases, which represent the majority of the sample, victims participated in the proceedings without any representative. This figure indicates a significant gap in ensuring legal and institutional support for victims during court proceedings.

³² The total number of victims presented may be higher than the number of judgments, as there are cases where a single judgment involves multiple injured parties.

The graph also shows that in 3 cases the victim was not present in the proceedings, while in another 3 cases the status of representation could not be identified from the judgement data.

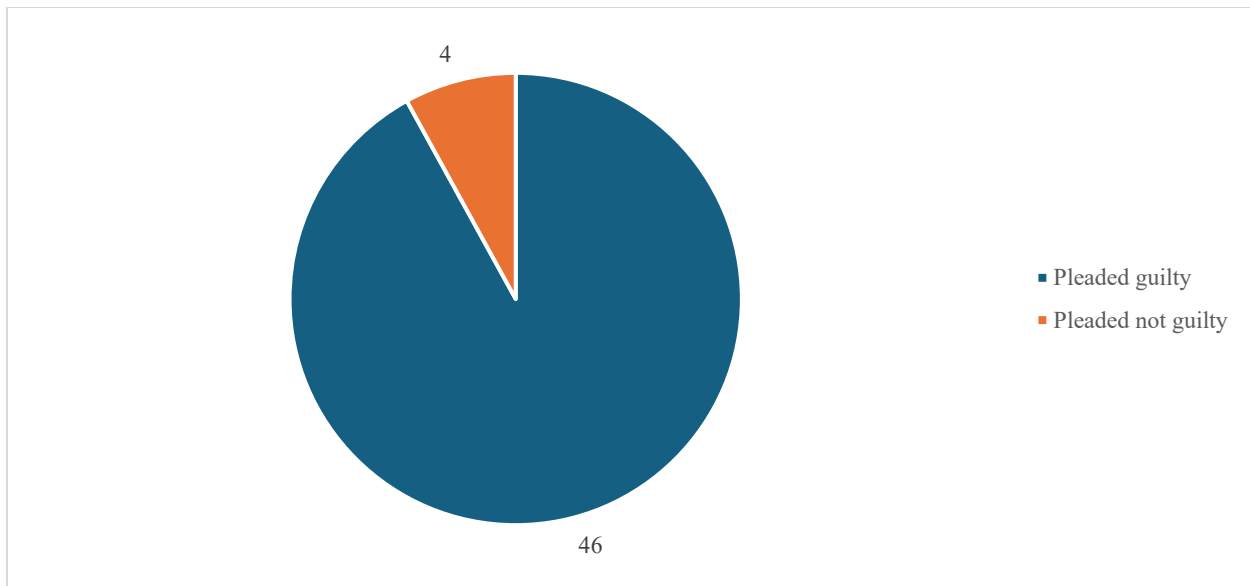


Graph 5. Representation of victims of domestic violence in judicial proceedings.

Overall, the structure of procedural representation, as presented in the graph, shows that the involvement of protective mechanisms and professional representation is not a consolidated standard in judicial practice for domestic violence cases. Given the sensitivity of these cases and the structural imbalance that often exists between the parties, the lack of representation in the majority of cases raises serious concerns regarding effective access to justice and the protection of victims’ rights during criminal proceedings. This is particularly important in the context of safeguarding victims’ rights and ensuring a fair trial, considering that professional representation may influence the manner in which the victim’s interests, compensation claims, or requests for protective measures are presented.

5.1.6. Admission of guilt

In 46 out of 50 analysed cases, the accused persons admitted guilt, representing an extremely high proportion of cases concluded through acknowledgment of criminal responsibility. At the same time, this indicates a dominance of proceedings concluded through guilty pleas.



Graph 6. Admission of guilt by the accused.

From a procedural perspective, the admission of guilt typically contributes to the acceleration of proceedings and avoids the need for the full administration of evidence, thereby reducing the duration of judicial review. However, in the analysed practice, the admission of guilt has been systematically treated as a mitigating circumstance during sentencing, directly influencing the type and severity of the penalty imposed.

Such a high rate of guilty pleas also raises important issues for further analysis, particularly in the context of domestic violence offences. In such cases, a formal admission of guilt does not necessarily imply deep reflection on violent behaviour or a genuine willingness to change in the long term. For this reason, KLI considers that the automatic linkage between admission of guilt and sentence mitigation should be accompanied by an individualized assessment of recidivism risk and the need for rehabilitative measures—an element that is absent in the judgments analysed by KLI for the purposes of this report.

5.1.7. Sentenced imposed

The overall sample selected for the purposes of this research consists exclusively of cases in which a suspended sentence was imposed. This methodological approach aimed to assess judicial practice specifically in cases where courts opted not to impose effective imprisonment but instead applied alternative measures with rehabilitative and preventive potential.

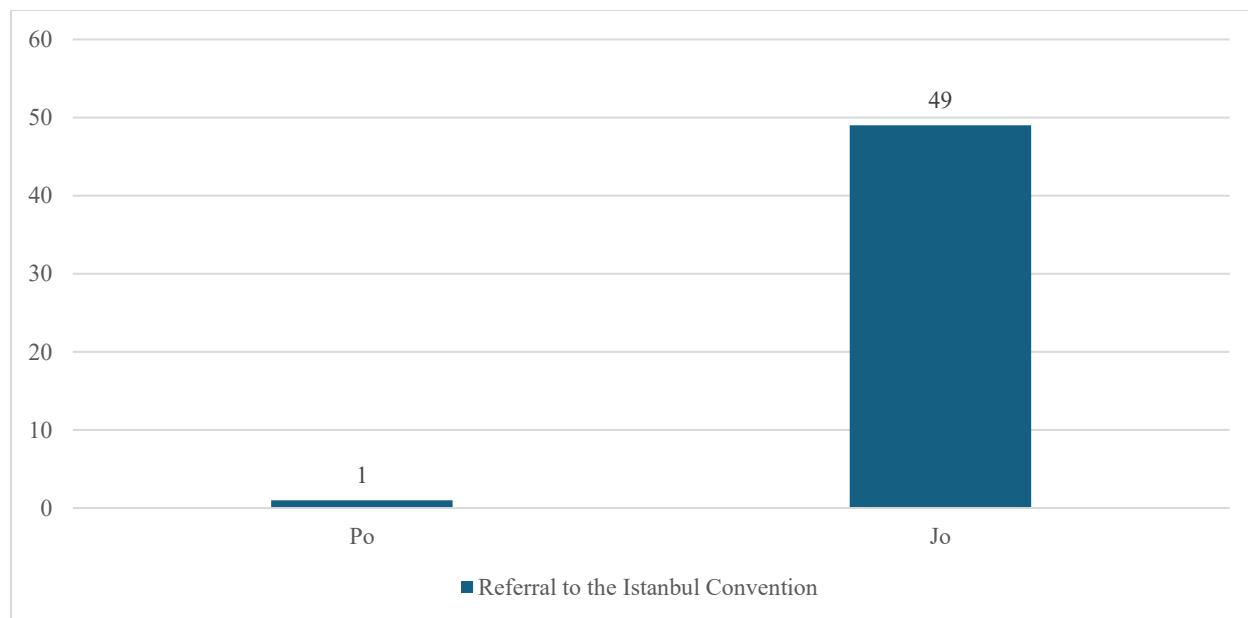
Within this sample of 50 judgments, in only 10 cases were the convicted persons given a suspended sentence accompanied by a supervision order by the Probation Service, in accordance with Article 55 of the Criminal Code.

This means that the Probation Service must monitor compliance with the imposed conditions and assess the offender’s behaviour during the probation period, with the aim of preventing reoffending and supporting social reintegration.

However, in none of the cases was any additional obligation imposed under Article 56 of the Criminal Code, which provides for the order to fulfil one or more specific obligations. Nevertheless, the fact that only 10 out of 50 suspended sentence cases were accompanied by a supervision order indicates that in the majority of cases, suspended sentences were imposed without a structured monitoring mechanism.

5.1.8. Reference to the Istanbul Convention

Out of the 50 analysed cases, in only one case did the court³³ in its reasoning, explicitly refer to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, known as the Istanbul Convention.



Graph 7. Reference to the Istanbul Convention.

This finding indicates a very limited level of direct reference to international instruments in judicial reasoning, despite their normative and interpretative importance in the field of domestic violence protection.

³³ Judgment of the Basic Court in Prizren, case no. P.nr.1471/21.

6. Implementation of the perpetrator intervention program within the Kosovo Correctional Service

The Kosovo Correctional Service (KCS), in accordance with applicable legislation, has the mandate to execute criminal sanctions and implement rehabilitation and reintegration programs for persons deprived of liberty. Beyond ensuring security and order in correctional institutions, one of the core functions of the KCS is preparing convicted persons for reintegration into society through educational, vocational, psychological, and rehabilitative programs.

In cases involving persons convicted of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence, the role of the KCS is particularly important, as the period of imprisonment provides an opportunity for structured interventions aimed at addressing factors that contributed to violent behaviour. The National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women is specifically designed to promote behavioural change, increase individual accountability, develop non-violent communication skills, and prevent reoffending after release.

The involvement of the KCS in implementing this program represents an important component in fulfilling Kosovo's institutional obligations to prevent and combat violence against women, contributing not only to the rehabilitation of perpetrators but also to increased victim safety and reduced risk of recidivism.

For the purposes of this report, KLI has analysed data provided by the Kosovo Correctional Service, as well as official publications and information from relevant institutions regarding the implementation of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women.

6.1. Implementation in correctional centres

According to data provided by the Kosovo Correctional Service (KCS), the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women has been implemented exclusively in the Dubrava Correctional Centre. According to the KCS, this has resulted from the limited number of trained officers available for program delivery, who have been assigned to this correctional institution.³⁴

KLI has identified that following the launch of the program in late 2023, the first phase of practical implementation was realized through its pilot phase in the Dubrava Correctional Centre, which was completed in July 2024.³⁵

The findings indicate that the initial approach of the KCS focused on testing the program through this pilot implementation phase. However, the fact that the program has been implemented in only one correctional centre for more than two years has limited access for other convicted persons of offences related to violence against women to this form of specialized rehabilitation.

³⁴ Responses of KCS to KLI, 03.06.2026.

³⁵ Notice from the Ministry of Justice of Kosovo.: <https://md.rks-gov.net/lajmet/ne-qendren-korrektuese-ne-dubrave-ka-filluar-zbatimi-i-pilotimit-te-programit-kombetar-per-trajtimin-e-kryeresve-te-dhunes-ndaj-grave-lansuar-nga-ministria-e-drejtise/>

6.2. Participants

According to data provided by the Kosovo Correctional Service, since the launch of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women, a total of 38 convicted persons have participated in or are currently participating in the program.³⁶

Year	No. of participants
2024	10
2025	10
2026	18 ³⁷
Total	38

Table 1. Table of the number of perpetrators who have participated in the rehabilitation program for perpetrators of gender-based violence within the Kosovo Correctional Service.

The data show an increase in the number of participants during 2026, which may be linked to the strengthening of institutional capacities and the expansion of the number of trained officers for program implementation.

According to the KCS, all participants have been persons convicted of domestic violence or other criminal offences related to gender-based violence.³⁸ These include individuals convicted of offences such as bodily injury, assault, and blackmail, when such offences were linked to a domestic violence context.³⁹ No person serving a life sentence has been included in the program.⁴⁰

6.3. Method of inclusion of convicted persons

The program is implemented through six-month treatment cycles and consists of ten modules and a total of twenty-four sessions, which are held once per week. By the time this report was drafted, three full treatment cycles had been completed, while another cycle was ongoing.⁴¹

The inclusion of convicted persons in the program is based on their willingness to participate. According to the KCS, the identification of potential candidates is carried out within the process of individual sentence execution planning, conducted by the Prisoner Assessment and

³⁶ Responses of KCS to KLI, 03.06.2026.

³⁷ Eight participants in the first group and ten participants in the second group

³⁸ Responses of KCS to KLI, 03.06.2026.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Classification Unit. This process evaluates rehabilitation needs, risk factors, and the programs considered appropriate for each convicted person.⁴²

6.4. Method of implementation

According to data provided by the Kosovo Correctional Service (KCS), the implementation of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women is preceded by motivational interviews conducted by officials responsible for rehabilitation programs. Through these interviews, the willingness of convicted persons to participate in the program and benefit from the treatment process is assessed.⁴³

After participant selection, organizational and logistical preparations are made for the delivery of sessions, including coordination among responsible officials and ensuring appropriate conditions for program implementation. The program is held once a week, and the organization of the space aims to create an inclusive and equal environment for all participants, in order to facilitate communication, interaction, and active participation of each group member.⁴⁴ At the beginning of the program, basic group rules are established, which are discussed and agreed upon by the participants. Signing these rules serves as a form of commitment to respect the process and to create a safe environment for discussion and reflection.⁴⁵

6.5. Training of officials

The professional capacities of staff represent a key element for the effective implementation of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women. According to data provided by the KCS, during the implementation period of the program, several activities have been undertaken to strengthen the professional capacities of officials responsible for its implementation.

A significant development is the certification of 16 officials in social programs and social affairs on 26 May 2026, who successfully completed training for the implementation of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women. With this, the total number of certified officials in this institution has reached 17.⁴⁶ According to the KCS, this development creates conditions for expanding the program to other correctional institutions,⁴⁷ overcoming the previous limitation that allowed the program to be implemented only in the Dubrava Correctional Centre.

In addition to specialized training for program implementers, certified officials have organized internal trainings for correctional staff on the treatment of perpetrators of violence against women

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Input from representatives of the KCS at the consultative meeting organised by KLI, in Prishtina, on 12.06.2026

⁴⁷ Responses of KCS to KLI, 03.06.2026.

and domestic violence. According to the available data, approximately 300 officials participated in these training activities during 2024, 2025, and the first quarter of 2026.⁴⁸

These findings indicate that strengthening professional capacities has been one of the main institutional investments in the operationalization of the program. However, KLI considers that the fact that the program has been implemented in only one correctional institution up to 2026 shows that the capacity-building process has been gradual and has directly contributed to the limited scope of implementation during the initial phases.

6.6. Identified challenges

According to the Kosovo Correctional Service (KCS), one of the main challenges during the initial phase of implementation of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women has been the limited number of certified officials available to deliver the program.⁴⁹ This has directly affected the possibility of implementing the program in only one correctional institution. However, following the certification of 16 new officials in 2026, bringing the total number of certified staff to 17, gradual expansion of the program to other correctional institutions is expected.

Beyond institutional capacity, the KCS identifies a range of challenges related to the participants themselves. These include resistance to change, normalization of violent behaviour, minimization of the consequences of violence, lack of awareness of personal responsibility, and reluctance by some participants to openly discuss their experiences and behaviours.⁵⁰

From a rehabilitation perspective, KLI considers that these challenges represent common obstacles in the treatment of perpetrators of violence, as many of them do not fully acknowledge responsibility for their actions or attempt to justify violent behaviour. For this reason, the effectiveness of such programs, in addition to the quality of their content, also depends on the ability of professionals to build motivation and encourage reflection among participants.

6.7. Positive assessments

According to the Kosovo Correctional Service (KCS), the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women has produced positive outcomes for participants who have completed or are currently undergoing treatment.⁵¹ Institutional assessments indicate that the program has contributed to increased awareness among participants regarding the nature and consequences of violence, the promotion of accountability for their behaviour, and the development of healthier forms of communication and conflict management.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

According to the KCS, participants have shown greater reflection on the impact of violence on partners, children, and other family members. In a number of cases, convicted persons have expressed willingness to accept responsibility for their behaviour and take steps toward personal change's.⁵² Furthermore, according to the information provided, most participants have evaluated the program positively and reported that its content has influenced the way they understand violence, interpersonal relationships, and the consequences of their actions. In some cases, participants have expressed willingness to share their experiences publicly, apologizing to their families and reflecting on the harm caused by their previous behaviour.

However, KLI finds that these assessments are primarily based on perceptions of the institution and program participants. In this regard, KLI considers that the effectiveness of the program should not be measured solely through progress reported by perpetrators or implementing institutions, but also through its concrete impact on increasing victim safety, as the ultimate goal of perpetrator intervention programs is not only rehabilitation, but also prevention of reoffending and protection of victims. For this reason, monitoring and evaluation of the program should, where possible and safe, also include the perspective of victims regarding observed changes in the perpetrator's behaviour and their level of safety following completion of treatment.

7. Implementation of the Program for perpetrators of violence in the Kosovo Probation Service

The Kosovo Probation Service (KPS) plays an important role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of persons who have been sentenced to alternative measures and penalties, as well as in supervising individuals released on probation. Through community-based supervision and individual case management, the KPS has a unique opportunity to address risk factors related to reoffending, including cases of violence against women and domestic violence.

The inclusion of the Probation Service in the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women is particularly important, given that a significant number of perpetrators of violence are supervised in the community rather than in correctional institutions. For this reason, the operationalization of the program within the KPS would enable earlier and broader access to rehabilitative interventions, contributing to the prevention of reoffending and increased victim safety.

7.1. Implementation in the Probation Service

According to data provided by the Kosovo Probation Service, the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women has not yet begun to be implemented in practice within this institution.⁵³

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Responses of KCS to KLI, 01.06.2026.

The KPS has stated that, according to initial institutional planning, the program was intended to be piloted and consolidated first within the Kosovo Correctional Service before being expanded to the Probation Service. Consequently, until the time of drafting this report, no individuals have been included in the program under probation supervision.

Thus, although more than two years have passed since the launch of the National Program, persons supervised by the Probation Service still do not have access to this specialized rehabilitation mechanism. KLI considers that this creates a gap in the provision of interventions for perpetrators of violence who remain in the community, limiting the program's reach to persons deprived of liberty only. This gap becomes even more evident when examined in relation to judicial practice. As highlighted in this report, in none of the 50 analysed judgments have courts imposed any of the obligations provided under Article 56 of the Criminal Code, including the obligation to participate in treatment or rehabilitation programs. As a result, the legal mechanism that would enable mandatory referral of perpetrators to the National Program has not been activated in practice.

In this context, the lack of implementation of the program within the Probation Service and the absence of judicial referrals represent two interconnected factors that significantly limit the effectiveness and coverage of the Program, leaving a considerable number of perpetrators outside any form of specialized treatment.

Although the program is not yet implemented in practice within the Probation Service, according to data provided by the institution, current activities are limited to informing supervised persons about the existence and importance of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence Against Women.⁵⁴ Consequently, institutional intervention at this stage remains primarily informational, without enabling participation in structured and specialized treatment as foreseen by the program.

For cases involving longer durations of probation measures or alternative sentences, probation officers, in their role as case managers, individually address elements similar to those included in the program during regular supervision meetings.⁵⁵ These interventions include discussions on individual responsibility, the consequences of violence, and the importance of behavioural change.

However, these activities do not constitute formal implementation of the Program and are not carried out according to its structure, modules, and methodology. As a result, persons under probation supervision do not currently benefit from the full and standardized treatment provided by the program.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

7.2. Training of officials

According to data provided by the Kosovo Probation Service, three officials of this institution have been certified as trainers for the implementation of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women by the Ministry of Justice.⁵⁶

In addition to them, eleven other officials have attended specialized training related to the program during 2022 and 2023.⁵⁷ These trainings aimed to enhance professional capacities for dealing with perpetrators of violence and to prepare staff for the implementation of the program within the probation supervision framework.

KLI finds that the Probation Service has taken several steps to build the professional capacities of its staff and has created an initial foundation of expertise necessary for the implementation of the program. However, the program has not yet been operationalised, creating a mismatch between the capacities developed and the actual delivery of services.

7.3. Identified challenges

According to the Kosovo Probation Service, one of the main challenges for the implementation of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women is related to the formation of participant groups.⁵⁸ Unlike correctional institutions, where participants are located within the same facility, the Probation Service supervises individuals who live in the community and who have different family, professional, and social obligations. Consequently, organizing regular treatment groups represents a significant practical and logistical challenge.

Another challenge relates to the voluntary nature of participation in the program.⁵⁹ According to the Probation Service, the absence of a formal obligation to attend the program may affect individuals' motivation to participate and to continue attending regularly. This challenge becomes even more pronounced in cases where supervised persons do not acknowledge responsibility for their behaviour or do not consider treatment necessary.⁶⁰

Budgetary constraints and limited financial resources also continue to pose obstacles to the development of specialized rehabilitation programs and to ensuring the necessary professional support for their implementation.⁶¹

From a victim protection perspective, KLI assesses that the non-operationalization of the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women within the Probation Service presents a particular challenge. This is because a considerable number of perpetrators of violence against women and domestic violence remain in the community and continue to be in direct or indirect

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

contact with victims. Furthermore, the findings of this report and other KLI reports show that, in Kosovo judicial practice, the majority of sentences imposed for domestic violence cases are suspended sentences. In this context, the fact that the program is currently implemented only within the Kosovo Correctional Service means that the vast majority of persons convicted of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women do not undergo this rehabilitation program. As a result, opportunities to address behavioural factors related to violent conduct, accountability, and prevention of reoffending remain limited precisely for the largest group of perpetrators.

KLI assesses that delays in operationalizing the program within the Probation Service limit opportunities for early rehabilitation interventions and for recidivism risk management. At the same time, this situation also raises concerns from a victim safety perspective, as most perpetrators who remain in the community do not have access to a structured and specialized program aimed at changing violent behaviour.

8. Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Program

Monitoring, data collection, and regular reporting on the Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women constitute essential elements for assessing the effectiveness of institutional interventions in preventing repeated violence and protecting victims. Through reporting systems and databases, responsible institutions can identify the number of individuals included in the program, completion rates, implementation challenges, and achieved outcomes.

From the perspective of victim protection, KLI considers that the monitoring and evaluation of the Program should not be limited solely to statistical data on the number of participants, Program completion rates, or activities implemented. The assessment of the Program's effectiveness should also enable the measurement of its impact on changing perpetrators' behaviour, increasing accountability for their actions, reducing the risk of reoffending, and enhancing victims' safety. For this reason, KLI considers the systematic collection of data and periodic reporting to be essential components of an evidence-based and victim-centred approach.

Furthermore, KLI recommends that, wherever possible and without compromising the safety, privacy, and well-being of victims, the monitoring and evaluation process should also incorporate their perspectives. Given that the ultimate objective of the Program is the protection of victims and the prevention of repeated violence, victims' perceptions and experiences constitute an important source of information for assessing the Program's outcomes and overall impact. This issue appears to be challenging in monitoring program implementation across different countries. Data from 23 countries covering 48 programs show that only 42.85% of the reviewed programs reported including victim feedback and evaluations in their outcome measurement processes.⁶² For an

⁶² Council of Europe, "Guidance for safe and effective perpetrator Programs under Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention: Comparative study and recommendations on Programs for perpetrators of domestic and sexual

effective assessment, it is essential to use data from multiple sources, including victims' testimonies and experiences. Continuous monitoring of progress throughout the program duration, comparison of data collected before and after the program, as well as the use of standardized assessment tools, are key elements of an effective monitoring and evaluation system.⁶³

The practice of the system in Scotland illustrates the importance of investing in professional capacities and standardizing monitoring and evaluation processes for perpetrator programs, relying on standardized national-level data collection procedures that ensure information is gathered in a consistent and comparable manner across all implementing institutions.⁶⁴ A key element of this model is continuous training of professionals not only in program implementation, but also in data collection methodology and the importance of monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of their work.⁶⁵ This approach contributes to improved reporting quality, more reliable data, and the creation of an institutional culture based on evidence and accountability. Likewise, coordination of the process by a dedicated monitoring and evaluation expert, as well as the periodic engagement of independent external evaluators, represent important mechanisms for ensuring objectivity, identifying shortcomings, and continuously improving the program.⁶⁶

KLI considers that this experience shows that the effectiveness of perpetrator programs is closely linked to the existence of clear monitoring procedures, adequate training of responsible officials, and compliance with unified implementation and reporting standards.

The importance of reporting and record-keeping has also been recognized within the National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women 2022–2026. Under Strategic Objective 1, “Prevention and identification of violence,” the strategy foresees the creation and implementation of programs for psychosocial treatment of perpetrators of criminal acts of violence.⁶⁷ To ensure monitoring of these programs, the Action Plan has foreseen two important measures: the creation of a database of perpetrators who have received psychosocial services or treatment during and after serving their sentence, and the preparation of annual reports on the rehabilitation of perpetrators of violence.⁶⁸

For the purposes of this report, KLI addressed a request for information to the Ministry of Justice regarding the implementation of these strategic activities,⁶⁹ specifically whether the database foreseen by the National Strategy has been established, how it functions, the number of persons registered as beneficiaries of psychosocial treatment during and after serving their sentence, as

violence.”, 2024. (<https://rm.coe.int/guidance-for-safe-and-effective-perpetrator-Programs-article-16-of-t/1680b00524>)

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 17.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women 2022–2026, p. 39.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 76-77.

⁶⁹ Request for information and access to public documents submitted by KLI to the Ministry of Justice, 5 June 2026.

well as a request for access to the annual reports on the rehabilitation of perpetrators of violence for the years 2024 and 2025.

With regard to the establishment of a database for perpetrators who have received psychosocial services or treatment during and after the execution of their sentence, the Ministry of Justice, in its response to KLI, stated that it manages the National Database for Recording Domestic Violence Cases (NDRDV), an inter-institutional system established for the registration and management of data related to domestic violence cases. According to the Ministry, this database also records information on psychosocial services and treatment provided to perpetrators of domestic violence, depending on the institutions responsible for delivering such services.⁷⁰ In support of this position, the Ministry also referred KLI to the National Database for Recording Domestic Violence Cases.⁷¹

However, KLI considers that this response does not demonstrate compliance with the obligation to establish a dedicated database for perpetrators who have received psychosocial services or treatment during and after the execution of their sentence, as envisaged in the strategic documents adopted by the Ministry of Justice itself.

In this regard, it is important to emphasise that the National Database for Recording Domestic Violence Cases contains information on reported domestic violence cases and victims, including, among other things, the number of victims killed, reported cases of sexual violence within the family, emergency protection orders, the number of women and children accommodated in shelters, as well as the categorisation of victims and perpetrators by gender, age and nationality. Furthermore, the cases recorded in the database do not necessarily represent individuals who, due to their criminal justice status, have been referred to or were required to participate in the Program. This is because the database records all reported domestic violence cases and all perpetrators identified in those cases, regardless of whether they have been referred to, have participated in, or are currently participating in the Program.

Although the database contains basic information on perpetrators, it was not designed as a dedicated mechanism for monitoring the implementation and outcomes of the Program for Perpetrators of Violence. Information obtained by KLI through interviews with institutional representatives indicates that the database records data concerning the commencement and completion of a perpetrator's participation in the Program. Nevertheless, it does not allow for the recording and analysis of more detailed information that would enable effective monitoring of the Program's progress and outcomes.

KLI considers that a dedicated database for perpetrators participating in the Program should contain detailed and standardised information regarding their participation and progress. This should include, among other things, the method of referral to the Program, participation status, completion or discontinuation of the Program and the corresponding reasons, completion of

⁷⁰ Response of the Ministry of Justice / Office of the National Coordinator for Protection from Domestic Violence to KLI's request for information, 16 June 2026.

⁷¹ Link provided by the Ministry of Justice as a reference in its response to KLI: <https://md.rks.gov.net/publikimet/statistikat/>.

the implementation of the “National Program for the Treatment of Perpetrators of Violence against Women”, which was piloted at Dubrava Prison in Kosovo by the Ministry of Justice of Kosovo, with the support of the Council of Europe project “Aligning Laws and Policies with the Istanbul Convention”.⁷⁶

In the course of its analysis, KLI identified a number of issues relating to data quality, consistency of reporting and the methodology used to evaluate the Program.

8.1.1. The report for the year 2024

The analysis of the 2024 Program Evaluation Report initially identified significant inconsistencies regarding the number of Program participants. According to information obtained during interviews with the responsible institutions, 10 individuals participated in the Program during 2024.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, data provided by the Ministry of Justice in response to KLI’s request for access to public documents lists 13 participants under the category “Domestic Violence Program”.⁷⁸ On the other hand, the Program Evaluation Report states that the pilot Program implemented at Dubrava Prison involved a total of 20 perpetrators of violence against women.⁷⁹ The report further explains that only 18 of them were included in the evaluation process, as the remaining participants had been released before the completion of the Program and, consequently, did not complete the monitoring questionnaires.⁸⁰ However, in the section presenting the socio-demographic characteristics of participants, data are reported for only eight individuals.⁸¹ These discrepancies are not adequately explained in the report and create serious uncertainty regarding the actual number of Program participants, the number of individuals included in the evaluation process, and the data set on which the report’s conclusions are based.

The report notes that the composition of the group changed throughout the implementation of the Program.⁸² According to the report, it was not possible to measure individual changes over time and the analysis was therefore based on data collected at the group level.⁸³ The report also emphasises that its findings should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size and changes in group composition, and that the results cannot be generalised to other participants or similar Programs.⁸⁴

⁷⁶ IMPACT Report, Analysis of Data Collected through the IMPACT Outcome Monitoring Tool Adapted to the Prison Context, 2024, pg. 2 dhe 4.

⁷⁷ Responses of the Kosovo Correctional Service to KLI, 3 June 2026.

⁷⁸ Response of the Ministry of Justice to KLI’s request for access to public documents, 17 June 2026.

⁷⁹ IMPACT Report, Analysis of Data Collected through the IMPACT Outcome Monitoring Tool Adapted to the Prison Context, 2024, pg. 4.

⁸⁰ Ibid, pg. 4-5.

⁸¹ Ibid, pg. 17

⁸² Ibid, pg. 13.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Despite these limitations, the report presents several positive findings regarding the reduction of abusive behaviours,⁸⁵ increased perpetrator accountability,⁸⁶ and greater awareness of the impact of violence on victims.⁸⁷ However, the report itself acknowledges that certain forms of controlling behaviour, jealousy, possessiveness and gender stereotypes remained present even after completion of the Program, while a significant degree of victim-blaming attitudes continued to persist among some participants.⁸⁸

Another important issue concerns the process of collecting data from victims. The report states that it was not possible to gather information directly from victims due to the lack of specialised support services, limited access to counselling and psychosocial support, and circumstances that could have posed risks to their safety.⁸⁹ For this reason, the process of collecting victim questionnaires was discontinued. As an alternative, assessments from five Program facilitators were used, with facilitators completing questionnaires for each participant based on their own professional observations and assessments.⁹⁰

Although the report presents this approach as an alternative solution, its own findings reveal considerable differences between perpetrators' self-assessments and facilitators' evaluations. For example, at the conclusion of the Program, most perpetrators reported that their current or former partners were no longer afraid of them. In contrast, facilitators assessed that approximately two-thirds of victims might still fear the perpetrator.⁹¹ Similar discrepancies were identified regarding the Program's impact on parenting skills and relationships with children.⁹² These differences highlight the importance of incorporating victims' perspectives into monitoring and evaluation processes, as exclusive reliance on perpetrators' self-assessments cannot provide a comprehensive picture of the Program's actual outcomes. In the absence of victims' perspectives, there is a risk that Program results may appear more positive than their actual impact on victims' safety and well-being.

The report also identifies shortcomings in the facilitator evaluation process itself.⁹³ The section on facilitator observations notes inconsistencies in assessments among facilitators, differing perceptions of participant risk levels, and variations related to their degree of involvement in Program implementation and professional experience. The report itself recommends the standardisation of assessment procedures, the development of common risk-assessment protocols, the organisation of regular case review meetings, and the continuous training of staff. These

⁸⁵ Ibid, pg. 6

⁸⁶ Ibid, pg. 7

⁸⁷ Ibid, pg. 8-9.

⁸⁸ Ibid, pg. 6-10.

⁸⁹ Ibid, pg. 5.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid, pg. 7 dhe 9.

⁹² Ibid, pg. 9-10.

⁹³ Ibid, pg. 33-34.

findings indicate that internal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms also require improvement in order to ensure greater consistency and reliability of data.

Overall, KLI considers the evaluation report to be an important step towards monitoring Program outcomes. However, inconsistencies in the reporting of basic data, the absence of direct information from victims, methodological limitations acknowledged by the authors themselves, and the lack of a structured and sustainable data management system limit the ability to draw comprehensive and reliable conclusions regarding the Program's long-term effectiveness. These findings underscore the need to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system, standardise data collection and analysis methodologies, and establish mechanisms that enable the inclusion of victims' perspectives in the assessment of Program outcomes.

8.1.2. The report for the year 2025

The analysis of the 2025 Program Evaluation Report also identified inconsistencies regarding the number of participants and the absence of a unified reporting system. According to the evaluation report, the Program implemented at Dubrava Prison during the period February–July 2025 involved a total of 15 convicted individuals who participated in the Program and in the research process at different points in time.⁹⁴ However, data obtained by KLI from the responsible institutions indicate that 10 individuals participated in the Program during 2025.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, data provided by the Ministry of Justice record 12 participants in the Program for the Treatment of Domestic Violence Perpetrators during 2025.⁹⁶ The same data further indicate that an additional 19 participants were enrolled in the Program during the period November 2025–April 2026,⁹⁷ while a further 12 participants were recorded from March 2026 onwards.⁹⁸ At the same time, information provided by the Kosovo Correctional Service identifies two separate participant groups during 2026, comprising a total of 18 individuals, namely one group of 8 and another group of 10 participants.⁹⁹

As with the 2024 report, these discrepancies among different data sources make it difficult to determine the actual number of Program participants and create uncertainty regarding the factual basis on which institutional monitoring and reporting are conducted. This situation once again highlights the need for a centralised and standardised system for collecting and reporting data on Program participants.

The report further notes that participants joined the Program at different stages and that the composition of the group changed throughout its implementation. Some individuals entered the Program after its commencement, while others discontinued participation due to their release from

⁹⁴ MPACT Report, Analysis of Data Collected through the IMPACT Outcome Monitoring Tool – Ministry of Justice, Kosovo Correctional Service, Dubrava Prison, 2026, p. 4.

⁹⁵ Responses of the Kosovo Correctional Service to KLI, 3 June 2026.

⁹⁶ Response of the Ministry of Justice to KLI's request for access to public documents, 17 June 2026.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Responses of the Kosovo Correctional Service to KLI, 3 June 2026.

prison.¹⁰⁰ According to the report itself, these changes, together with the small sample size, created challenges for analysing individual changes over time and limited the ability to draw broader conclusions regarding the Program's effectiveness. For this reason, the report recommends that its findings be interpreted with caution.¹⁰¹

An issue that remains unchanged in the 2025 report is the absence of victims' perspectives in the monitoring and evaluation process. The report states that it was not possible to obtain data directly from victims and that, as an alternative, the perceptions of Program facilitators regarding participant behaviour and progress were used.¹⁰² Although the report considers that the combination of information obtained from perpetrators and facilitators provided valuable insights into Program outcomes, the absence of victims' perspectives continues to constitute a significant methodological limitation.¹⁰³ This is particularly important given that the ultimate objective of the Program is to enhance victim safety and prevent the recurrence of violence.

With regard to Program outcomes, the report identifies improvements in several areas. According to the findings, both participants and facilitators reported reductions in emotionally, physically and sexually abusive behaviours by the end of the Program.¹⁰⁴ Participants also reported increased awareness of the impact of violence on victims and improvements in parenting skills.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, the report emphasises that certain forms of abusive behaviour remained present even after completion of the Program, particularly jealousy, possessiveness, controlling behaviour towards partners and other forms of emotional control.¹⁰⁶

The report further notes that participants continued to explain their use of violence primarily through external factors, such as alcohol consumption, lack of trust in their partner, jealousy or a desire to exercise control.¹⁰⁷ Although an increase in awareness of personal factors influencing their behaviour was observed, the report concludes that attitudes involving victim-blaming and external justifications for the use of violence remained present among some participants. Consequently, the report recommends continued efforts to strengthen individual accountability, challenge gender stereotypes and address beliefs that legitimise control and violence within relationships.¹⁰⁸

Similar to the findings of the 2024 report, the 2025 report identifies significant differences between perpetrators' perceptions and facilitators' assessments regarding victim safety. At the beginning of the Program, most participants reported that their current or former partners were not afraid of them, whereas a considerable proportion of facilitators assessed that victims continued to feel at

¹⁰⁰ IMPACT Report, Analysis of Data Collected through the IMPACT Outcome Monitoring Tool – Ministry of Justice, Kosovo Correctional Service, Dubrava Prison, 2026, 2026, pg. 5.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid, pg. 4 and 9.

¹⁰³ Ibid, pg. 16.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, pg. 6.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, pg. 7 and 9.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, pg. 6-9.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, pg. 6 and 7.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, pg. 7-8.

risk.¹⁰⁹ Even at the conclusion of the Program, most participants stated that their partners were no longer afraid of them; however, facilitators expressed reservations regarding this assessment and, in many cases, were unable to confirm that victims' fear had been fully eliminated.¹¹⁰ The report also identifies differences between participants' perceptions and facilitators' assessments concerning the Program's impact on relationships with children and parenting skills.¹¹¹ While most participants reported significant improvements in these areas, facilitators adopted a more cautious view, indicating that the changes perceived by perpetrators do not necessarily translate into increased safety and well-being for victims and children. These findings once again confirm the importance of incorporating victims' perspectives into the Program's monitoring and evaluation process, as well as the need for continuous risk and safety assessments.

Overall, the 2025 report presents findings suggesting positive effects of the Program in reducing violent behaviour and increasing participant awareness. However, the report itself identifies significant methodological limitations, including the small sample size, changes in group composition during implementation and the absence of direct data from victims. Furthermore, the inconsistencies identified in official data regarding the number of participants and the lack of a sustainable data-management system continue to limit the ability to assess comprehensively and reliably the Program's long-term effectiveness and its impact on preventing the recurrence of violence.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, pg. 24.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid, pg. 26-27.

9. Key findings

- The National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women in Kosovo has not yet been operationalized in a mandatory form; it continues to be implemented only on a voluntary basis, significantly limiting its scope and effectiveness in practice.
- There is a legal basis for referring perpetrators of violence to treatment and rehabilitation programs through Article 56 of the Criminal Code; however, this possibility is not being used in judicial practice.
- In Kosovo's judicial practice, most sentences in domestic violence cases are suspended sentences, creating significant potential for referring perpetrators to the National Program through existing legal mechanisms.
- Out of 50 suspended sentences analysed by KLI for the purposes of this report, in no case was any of the obligations provided for under Article 56 imposed, particularly the obligation to participate in rehabilitation programs. Moreover, in none of the cases was specific reasoning provided for the non-imposition of such obligations, limiting the ability to assess whether courts evaluated the offender's rehabilitative needs, the risk of reoffending, and the need for additional measures to protect victims and prevent future violence.
- Representatives of the judiciary have assessed that the current legal framework could be strengthened through amendments to the Criminal Code, in order to make participation in the National Program mandatory in cases of criminal offenses related to domestic violence and violence against women.
- The National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women has been operationalized within the Kosovo Correctional Service, and by the time of drafting the report, 38 individuals had been included in the program.
- The program has so far been implemented only in the Dubrava Correctional Center, limiting access for other convicted persons to this rehabilitation intervention.
- The Correctional Service has taken concrete steps in building professional capacities through the certification of officials and staff training, with a total of 17 certified officers, creating prerequisites for expanding the program to other correctional institutions.
- The Probation Service has 3 certified officials for the implementation of the National Program, but the program has not yet been operationalized in practice and has had no participants to date.
- The lack of judicial referrals and the non-operationalization of the program within the Probation Service are two interconnected factors that significantly limit the effectiveness and reach of the Program.
- In Kosovo's judicial practice, most sentences imposed in domestic violence cases are suspended sentences. In this context, the fact that the Program is currently implemented only within the Kosovo Correctional Service means that the vast majority of persons convicted of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women do not undergo

this rehabilitation program. As a result, this raises concerns from a victim safety perspective, as most perpetrators who remain in the community do not have access to a structured and specialized program aimed at changing violent behaviour.

- Participation in perpetrator programs cannot and should not serve as an alternative to criminal prosecution and proceedings for acts of violence.
- The development and operationalisation of perpetrator Programs should not come at the expense of victim services. In line with the standards of the Istanbul Convention and a victim-centred approach, funding for perpetrator Programs should be secured in a manner that does not undermine, reduce or negatively affect the budget and capacities of services dedicated to victims of violence. Ensuring support, protection and empowerment for victims must remain a primary priority of public policy and financial resource allocation.
- In Kosovo, there is no valid secondary legislation that clearly regulates the organization, standards, monitoring, and implementation of the Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women in both institutional and community contexts.
- The Law on Prevention and Protection from Domestic Violence, Violence against Women and Gender-Based Violence provides for the adoption of relevant secondary legislation by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo within six months of its entry into force; however, no concrete steps have yet been taken to draft and adopt the sub-legal act on psychosocial treatment of perpetrators of violence.
- The Ministry of Justice has not established a dedicated database for monitoring perpetrators who have participated in the Program, despite this requirement being envisaged in strategic documents. The National Database for Recording Domestic Violence Cases contains only basic information and does not enable the monitoring of Program progress, outcomes or effectiveness.
- Annual monitoring and evaluation reports of the Program have not been published by the Ministry of Justice. The lack of publication undermines transparency, institutional accountability, and the possibility of independent monitoring and evaluation of the program's effectiveness.
- Analysis of the 2024 and 2025 evaluation reports identified inconsistencies between different institutional data sources regarding the number of Program participants, raising concerns about the consistency and reliability of reporting.
- The evaluation reports identify significant methodological limitations, including the small sample size, changes in group composition during Program implementation, and the inability to consistently measure individual changes over time.
- Victims' perspectives are not included in the evaluation of program outcomes.
- In the absence of direct information from victims, the evaluation process has relied primarily on perpetrators' self-assessments and facilitators' perceptions, while the reports themselves identify significant discrepancies between these two sources regarding victim safety and the Program's impact.

- Although the reports indicate improvements in reducing violent behaviour and increasing participant awareness, certain forms of controlling behaviour, jealousy, possessiveness, gender stereotypes and victim-blaming attitudes continue to persist among some participants even after completion of the Program.
- International practices show that the effectiveness of perpetrator programs is closely linked to the existence of standardized monitoring procedures, continuous training of officials, and independent evaluation of outcomes.

10. Recommendations

1. Courts should increase the use of the obligations provided under Article 56 of the Criminal Code in cases of domestic violence and violence against women, particularly the referral of perpetrators to rehabilitation programs such as the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women.
2. The Kosovo Judicial Council and the Academy of Justice should organize continuous training for judges on the National Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women, its importance in preventing recidivism and protecting victims, and the application of Article 56 of the Criminal Code.
3. State prosecutors, victim advocates, and other relevant actors should adopt a more proactive approach in proposing the referral of perpetrators to treatment and rehabilitation programs when suspended sentences are imposed.
4. The operationalization of the Program within the Kosovo Probation Service should be ensured, including the inclusion of individuals sentenced with suspended sentences and other persons under supervision.
5. The Kosovo Correctional Service should expand the implementation of the National Program to all correctional institutions where persons convicted of domestic violence and violence against women are held.
6. The Kosovo Correctional Service and the Kosovo Probation Service should continue investing in strengthening the professional capacities of their staff.
7. The Ministry of Justice, through the Office of the National Coordinator, should draft and submit for approval the sub-legal act regulating the organization, standards, monitoring, and implementation of the Program for Perpetrators of Violence against Women.
8. The Ministry of Justice should publish regular annual reports on the implementation, results, and challenges of the National Program.
9. Monitoring and evaluation of the Program should be based on standardized procedures and include measurement of outcomes before, during, and after completion of treatment.
10. Monitoring and evaluation of the Program should also include, where possible and safe, the perspectives of victims regarding observed changes in the perpetrator's behaviour and their level of safety.

11. The Ministry of Justice should establish a unified and standardised system for the collection, management and reporting of Program data, ensuring consistency among data maintained by the Kosovo Correctional Service, the Kosovo Probation Service, the Office of the National Coordinator and Program evaluation reports.
12. The Ministry of Justice should provide continuous training for responsible staff on data collection methodologies and on the importance of monitoring and evaluating the outcomes and effectiveness of their work.
13. The Ministry of Justice should develop standardised monitoring and evaluation instruments that allow for the comparison of results before, during and after treatment, as well as the measurement of individual participant changes over time.
14. The Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with other state institutions, including the Victim Protection and Assistance Office, as well as specialised organizations providing services to victims of violence, should develop safe and ethical mechanisms for incorporating victims' perspectives into the monitoring and evaluation of Program outcomes.
15. During the budget planning process, a separate and sustainable budget allocation should be ensured for the implementation of the Program, while guaranteeing that its financing is never carried out at the expense of funds dedicated to the protection, rehabilitation, sheltering and empowerment of victims of violence.
16. Regular inter-institutional coordination should be ensured among courts, prosecution offices, the Probation Service, the Correctional Service, the Office of the National Coordinator, and specialized organizations providing services for victims and perpetrators of violence.

