Asociacioni i Gazetarëve të Kosovës
Association of Journalists of Kosovo

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Hate Speech in Kosovo's Media Landscape: Monitoring Report, April–June 2025

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Association of Journalists of Kosovo

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1. Executive Summary

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of hate speech in Kosovo's media landscape, with a particular focus on both Albanian and Serbian media.

Through a comparative lens, the study examines how hate narratives are expressed, normalized, or challenged across language divides, media platforms, and political contexts. The findings reflect concerning patterns of ethnic, political, gender-based, and religiously charged rhetoric that continue to undermine democratic dialogue and social cohesion.

The monitoring period (April–June 2025) covered major national broadcasters, including KTV, T7, Klan Kosova, RTV Dukagjini, RTK, ATV, RTV21, Kosovo Online, TV Most, and RTV Gračanica. The methodology was rooted in Babak Bahador's hate speech classification system, identifying key categories such as disagreement, negative actions, dehumanization, exclusionary rhetoric, and demonization.

Key findings reveal that while extreme or direct calls to violence were rare, hate speech was regularly conveyed through emotionally charged language, historical generalizations, and the targeting of ethnic and political identities. Terms like "traitor," "shk*," "repulsive," and accusations linking religious communities to foreign intelligence services were among the most repeated problematic expressions.

The report concludes with targeted recommendations, emphasizing the need for clearer definitions of hate speech, stronger regulatory enforcement, media accountability mechanisms, hate speech training for journalists, and support for formats that promote interethnic dialogue. It also encourages alignment with international standards, including the UN Rabat Plan of Action, and calls for greater institutional coordination, particularly involving the Independent Media Commission, Press Council of Kosovo, and the Ombudsperson Institution.

Hate speech in Kosovo's media space reflects deeper political and societal divides. Addressing it requires sustained commitment from institutions, the media sector, civil society, and international partners to foster a culture of ethical journalism, responsible public discourse, and inclusive communication.

2. Introduction

This academic report explores the prevalence, patterns, and consequences of hate speech in Kosovo's mainstream media, with a specific focus on prime-time televised debate shows aired in both Albanian and Serbian languages. The research was conducted between April and June 2025 and aims to critically analyze the language, narratives, and discursive practices that contribute to exclusionary and inflammatory rhetoric. The project was developed in response to growing concerns over political polarization, interethnic tensions, and the normalization of harmful stereotypes in Kosovo's post-conflict media landscape.

The research team undertook content analysis of the most prominent media in Kosovo, such as KTV, T7, Dukagjini, Klan Kosova, RTK, ATV, RTV21, Kosovo Online, TV Most, and RTV Gračanica. The study was guided by Babak Bahador's internationally recognized methodology on hate speech classification, ensuring a systematic approach to terminology and severity assessment. This report not only maps incidents of hate speech but also provides a comparative overview of how such language functions within different linguistic, political, and editorial ecosystems in Kosovo.

2.1. Methodology

This report is based on systematic media monitoring conducted between April and June 2025. The research focused on major national broadcasters and platforms, including KTV, T7, Klan Kosova, RTV Dukagjini, RTK, ATV, RTV21, Kosovo Online, TV Most, and RTV Gračanica.

Monitoring occurred weekly and targeted prime-time debate shows, news bulletins, and political talk shows. Selection criteria prioritized outlets based on audience reach, influence on public discourse, and representation of Kosovo's linguistic diversity.

The analytical framework draws on Babak Bahador's hate speech classification system, identifying categories such as disagreement, negative actions, dehumanization, exclusionary rhetoric, and demonization. To align with international standards, this methodology is complemented by the UN Rabat Plan of Action—the key UN framework for addressing hate speech. This plan provides a comprehensive six-part threshold considering context, speaker, intent, content, extent, and likelihood of harm, enabling a nuanced evaluation of media content.

3. Terminology and Identification Criteria

The analysis in this report is based on a structured typology of hate speech drawn from Babak Bahador's model, which categorizes harmful language across a spectrum of severity. This typology distinguishes between disagreement, exclusionary rhetoric, and overt dehumanization or incitement, enabling researchers to assess the language in televised debates and other media with nuance and clarity.

Key Terminology Categories:

Disagreement	Legitimate political or ideological critique may become problematic when it escalates into generalized or accusatory statements.
Negative Characteristics	Use of derogatory language to describe individuals or groups in ways that imply inferiority, immorality, or danger.
Negative Actions	Claims about harmful behavior attributed to a group (e.g., treason, criminality) without evidence or context.
Exclusionary Rhetoric	Language that suggests a group does not belong in society or governance structures; often linked with ethnic, religious, or political identity.
Demonization/Dehumanization	Extreme rhetoric that equates groups with disease, animals, or historical enemies, aimed at inciting fear or hatred.

This categorization allows for an evidence-based evaluation of statements and facilitates clearer advocacy, regulation, and journalistic response to hate speech.

4. Legal and Institutional Framework

Kosovo has established several key institutions tasked with addressing hate speech and fostering respect for human rights within its media and public discourse. Central among these is the Ombudsperson Institution (OIK), which plays a vital role in monitoring violations related to discrimination and hate speech. The OIK investigates complaints and works to ensure that individuals and groups are protected against harmful rhetoric that threatens their dignity and rights.

Complementing the Ombudsperson's role is the Independent Media Commission (IMC), which oversees the regulation of audiovisual media in Kosovo. The IMC is responsible for issuing broadcasting licenses and ensuring that media outlets adhere to established standards, including those aimed at preventing hate speech and promoting ethical journalism. Through its regulatory powers, the IMC can impose sanctions or corrective measures when media content crosses legal boundaries.

Alongside formal regulatory bodies, the Press Council of Kosovo (PCK) serves as a self-regulatory mechanism within the media sector. The PCK promotes journalistic ethics and media accountability by adjudicating complaints related to hate speech and other breaches of professional standards. Its work supports a culture of responsible reporting and helps build public trust in media institutions.

Another important actor is the Language Commissioner, whose mandate is to ensure the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages. This institution safeguards the linguistic rights of Kosovo's diverse communities, preventing the use of discriminatory or exclusionary language in official and public communications.

Lastly, the Office for Good Governance (OGG) plays a coordinating role within the government's broader human rights framework. The OGG facilitates the development and implementation of anti-discrimination policies, working across ministries and agencies to promote good governance practices that include combating hate speech.

Together, these institutions form a multi-layered framework designed to address hate speech from different angles—legal enforcement, media regulation, ethical oversight, linguistic rights protection, and governmental policy coordination. Effective collaboration among them is essential to build a comprehensive response to hate speech and foster an inclusive and respectful media environment in Kosovo.

5. Comparative content analysis

The comparative analysis of Albanian- and Serbian-language media in Kosovo reveals distinct patterns in the use and framing of hate speech. In Albanian-language prime-time debate shows such as Rubikon, Pressing, and Debat Plus, overt hate speech was generally rare. However, problematic expressions and ethnic generalizations were still present. A recurring issue involved the use of politically charged language when referring to “Serbia” or “Lista Srpska,” often conflating criticism of political regimes with ethnic demonization. Terms like “guban” or “shka” were identified as deeply derogatory and indicative of normalized exclusionary rhetoric.

Political discourse within Albanian-language public and private broadcasters showed a gradual shift from disagreement to exclusionary rhetoric and, at times, dehumanization. Non-majority communities, particularly Bosniaks and Serbs, were frequently depicted as obstructive or burdensome to Kosovo’s progress. Panelists and political figures described their demands as “whims” and promoted narratives supporting ethnic majoritarian governance, such as calls for a “majority Albanian coalition.” These narratives reinforced ethnic polarization and institutional mistrust.

In contrast, Serbian-language media, especially those affiliated with Belgrade, tended to frame Albanians and Kosovo institutions as existential threats. While direct incitement to violence was absent, emotionally charged rhetoric dominated coverage. Terms like “ethnic cleansing,” “terror against Serbs,” and “institutional violence” were used without critical context or alternative perspectives. Such narratives emphasized victimhood and deepened ethnic divisions. Independent Serbian-language outlets, including KoSSev and Radio Goraždevac, stood out for balanced reporting and efforts to foster interethnic dialogue.

Overall, hate speech manifests differently across linguistic and political contexts: through ethnic demonization in mainstream Albanian media, political exclusion in domestic discourse, and narratives of persecution in Serbian-language outlets.

6. Section I: Albanian-language Prime Time Shows

Within the framework of analyzing hate speech in Prime Time shows, specifically in "*Konfront*" on KTV, "*Pressing*" on T7, *"Debat Plus"* on Dukagjini, and "*Rubikon*" on Klan Kosova, we generally observe that the hosts of these programs tend to maintain a professional tone and promote balanced and fair debates.

Although over a two-month monitoring period, no extreme or overt hate speech was detected, there are still several problematic terms, portrayals, and insinuations that should be addressed seriously within the context of hate speech discourse in Kosovar media. In this brief analysis, we aim to distinguish and comment on some of the recurring expressions and phrases that may contribute to such a discourse.

Our intention is not to deconstruct or psychoanalyze the deeper psychological or ideological motivations behind these statements. However, we believe that such expressions can serve as seeds for constructing hostile narratives about "the other" and perpetuating stereotypes.

The term "Lista Srpska" (Serb List), whether used as "Lista Sprska," "Lista Serbe," or in its original form "Srpska lista," frequently appears in Prime Time programs. Often, this term is used in a politically charged or inaccurate manner.

The portrayal of Serbia as the source of all regional ills, what we could call the "demonization of Serbia", and its depiction as a historical force of regional destabilization risks reinforcing a problematic majority-minority dynamic between Kosovo Albanians and the Serb minority.

There is a crucial difference between "the Serbian state" and the regimes of Vučić or Milošević. Rather than saying, "Serbia committed crimes in Kosovo," it is more accurate and responsible to state, "The Milošević regime committed crimes in Kosovo." While different episodes of such rhetoric exist across broadcasts, the terms "Serbia" and "Lista Srpska" are too often employed in ways that may incite hatred or pave the way for its normalization.

6. Section I: Albanian-language Prime Time Shows

Examples of problematic phrases identified in Prime Time programming include:

- “I won’t lie to my children: Serbs hate us / Serbs hate Albanians / They (Serbs) have slaughtered us for a thousand years / Serbs believe Albanians are not human beings / Serbs are raised to hate Albanians.”
- (Klan Kosova, 09.06.2025)
- “You are sold; you are a manipulator, a traitor.”
- (Klan Kosova, 03.06.2025)
- In a debate about who is a hero and who is a victim in Kosovo, panelists lost control and made unprofessional remarks about their colleagues.
- A recent televised debate stemmed from a photo showing the Prime Minister and Saranda Bogujevci, which led to divisive narratives about “heroes” versus “traitors,” often linked back to Serbia. This triggered strong reactions from civil society. Regardless of whether these individuals are deemed heroes or not, the judgment and instrumentalization of wartime victims only serve to reinforce stigma and undermine efforts toward resilience and recovery.

Further derogatory expressions include:

- On 29.04.2025, during “Debat Plus” on Dukagjini, the word “guban” was used—a pejorative term implying inferiority. Other expressions such as “iposhtër” (scoundrel), “iflliqt” (filthy), “zhyllan” (dirty), and “guban” are manifestations of hate speech and promote a dangerous normalization of such language in public discourse.
- On 20.05.2025, in the show “Guximtarë apo Tradhtarë” with Nexhmedin Spahiu, one panelist said:
- “You are either an idiot with 5,000 books or a ‘shka’ just like Gjuriqi.”
- Terms such as “shka” (a slur for Serbs), “idiot,” and “liar” reflect hate speech and should have warranted the moderator’s intervention.

7. Section II: Albanian-language Prime Time Shows

The media monitoring report, based on Babak Bahador's methodology for identifying hate speech, highlights several instances of language ranging from political disagreement to exclusionary and dehumanizing rhetoric across the monitored media outlets (RTK, Klan Kosova, RTV 21, ATV). The selection of the Prime-Time shows is made random.

Below is a detailed analysis of the key findings for the analyzed broadcasts.

RTK Prime (May 6, 2025, and April 22, 2025)
Broadcast on May 6, 2025:
Context: Arbreshë Kryeziu-Hyseni, a deputy from the Vetëvendosje Movement (VV), discusses the political crisis and the lack of new institutions during a prime-time show on Kosovo's public television.
Identified Language:
Disagreement: Statements such as "LDK hasn't changed" and "LDK is not interested in concrete actions for the benefit of Kosovo's citizens" reflect ideological disagreement with opposition parties, particularly the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK). These are legitimate political criticisms but carry a divisive tone.
Negative Actions: Mentioning Lista Srpska (a Serbian minority party) in a negative context ("if VV is not part of it, they should include Lista Srpska in this transitional government") targets a political group from the Serbian community, exploiting historical tensions. This is classified as hate speech with exclusionary and discriminatory potential against a minority group, as it portrays the Serbian community in a negative light.
Assessment: The language reinforces an "us vs. them" narrative and may promote negative stereotypes against the Serbian community, potentially exacerbating ethnic tensions.

7. Section II: Albanian-language Prime Time Shows

Broadcast on April 22, 2025:
Context: Faton Peci, Minister of Agriculture and co-chair of GUXO, discusses the institutional crisis and potential coalitions following the February 9 elections.
Identified Language:
Disagreement: Advocating for a "majority Albanian coalition" is a legitimate political stance but carries exclusionary undertones by prioritizing one ethnic group over others.
Negative Actions: Using terms like "caprices and whims" to describe non-majority communities (specifically Bosniaks and others) and referring to Lista Srpska as a party "we have faced in war" portrays these groups as irresponsible, unreliable, and dangerous. These statements undermine the constitutional equality of non-majority communities.
Exclusionary Rhetoric: The rhetoric creates a narrative that non-majority communities obstruct Kosovo's interests, risking discrimination.
Panelist Fatime Hajdari: Reinforces this narrative with terms like "absurd demands" and "whims of communities," stigmatizing non-majority groups as harmful and against Kosovo's interests.
This includes **Negative Characteristics** (portraying communities as inherently problematic) and exclusionary rhetoric with potential to incite social division.
Assessment: Statements by Peci and Hajdari contain elements of hate speech with the potential to incite discrimination and social exclusion of minority communities, particularly Bosniaks and Serbs.

7. Section II: Albanian-language Prime Time Shows

Klan Kosova (Rubikon, May 27 and May 14, 2025)
Broadcast on May 27, 2025 ("Millions Flying Away? – Investigations into Government Corruption"):
Context: The show debates recent allegations of government corruption, including a case involving a Bosniak individual allegedly linked to a business network.
Identified Language:
Berat Buzhala: The phrase "not just some Bosniak from Sanjak we found at the market" contains Negative Characteristics and Negative Actions, dehumanizing and discrediting an individual based on Bosniak ethnicity. This rhetoric suggests a lack of legitimacy or seriousness, reinforcing ethnic stereotypes.
Azdren Shala:
Disagreement: The statement "This government is the greatest misfortune to befall this people" is a legitimate political critique targeting the Kurti government.
Negative Characteristics: Comparing Prime Minister Albin Kurti to Hitler ("This trait of his is more dangerous than controlling the media. It's reminiscent of Hitler") and calling the ruling party "repulsive" constitutes inflammatory and demonizing rhetoric. These statements portray Kurti and his party as existential threats.
Negative Actions: Generalizations like "When they steal, they honor the state" and "they're a bit repulsive" portray the ruling party as corrupt and hypocritical, inciting negative emotional reactions and reducing the party's identity to unacceptable behavior.
Assessment: The language shifts from political criticism to **discrimination** and dehumanization, particularly with ethnic references and extreme historical comparisons, posing risks of polarizing public opinion.

7. Section II: Albanian-language Prime Time Shows

Broadcast on May 14, 2025 (“Religion, Terrorism, Espionage”):
Context: The show discusses arrests of individuals with religious backgrounds suspected of collaborating with Serbian intelligence services.
Identified Language:
Vehbi Kajtazi: The statement “Serbia is sitting cross-legged in the Islamic Community of Kosovo” and accusations that “a large part of imams serve Serbia” contain Negative Actions and Negative **Characteristics**. This exclusionary rhetoric links the Islamic community with betrayal and portrays it as a threat to Kosovo’s interests, with potential to fuel Islamophobia. The term “cross-legged” adds a symbolic dimension of domination, reinforcing a narrative of internal betrayal.
Adriatik Kelmendi: The phrase “cancer in the middle of Europe” to describe a Kosovo hypothetically oriented toward the East is **Demonization and Dehumanization**. This emotionally charged term stigmatizes Eastern peoples and implies that deviation from Western alignment would render Kosovo “sick” or “dangerous.” It also carries prejudicial undertones toward Eastern cultures.
Assessment: These statements create an exclusionary narrative linking religion and ethnicity with security threats, risking social cohesion and potentially inciting prejudice against Muslim communities.

7. Section II: Albanian-language Prime Time Shows

ATV (Context, April 29, 2025)

Context: The show “Context – Are We a Racist Society?” discusses the physical assault on young Kosovar footballer Belgin Jashari during a football match, focusing on ethnic motivations behind the incident.

Identified Language:

Bajram Shala: Blaming the victim (“You saw how Belgin ran from the other side to get involved in the incident. Why did you get involved?”) contains Negative Characteristics, reinforcing stereotypes against a marginalized individual. This rhetoric shifts responsibility onto the victim, potentially perpetuating prejudice against his ethnic group.

Moderator: The question “Is the mentality of the average Kosovar measured by the mentality of a fan?” contains Negative Characteristics, generalizing a broad group (“average Kosovar”) as irrational, aggressive, or immature by equating them with football hooligans.

Assessment: Although not overtly hateful, these statements contribute to the stereotyping and disparagement of specific individuals and groups, thereby risking the reinforcement of negative public perceptions.

7. Section II: Albanian-language Prime Time Shows

RTV 21 (Click, May 1, 2025)

Context: The show "Click," titled "VV Breaks the Rules 'Again,' Who Will Judge It?" focuses on the Vetëvendosje Movement's (VV) alleged violations of laws and the Kosovo Constitution.

Identified Language:

Disagreement: The three panelists (Alma Lama, Lulzim Peci, Blerim Cana) share a unified perspective, portraying VV as a party that disregards laws and the Constitution and is responsible for obstructing the Kosovo Assembly. This constitutes legitimate political criticism but uses strong, generalized language.

Negative Characteristics: Describing VV as a party that "does not recognize or respect laws and the Constitution" and as "obstructive" to the Assembly generalizes the party as irresponsible and harmful to democratic processes, impacting its perceived character negatively.

Lack of Balance: The absence of diverse viewpoints among the panelists, all of whom criticize VV, risks creating a one-sided narrative that portrays VV as a threat to institutional stability. While not classified as overt hate speech, this lack of balance may contribute to polarizing public discourse.

Assessment: According to Babak Bahador's methodology, the statements primarily fall under Disagreement, with elements of Negative Characteristics due to generalizations portraying VV as irresponsible. Although no explicit hate speech was identified, the lack of balanced representation heightens the potential for a discrediting and polarizing narrative against a specific political group.

Conclusions and Overall Assessment	
Disagreement	**Most broadcasts contain legitimate political criticism, but these often escalate into exclusionary or inflammatory rhetoric.**
Negative Actions and Characteristics	**Terms like “caprices,” “whims,” “repulsive,” comparisons to Hitler, and accusations of betrayal (e.g., against imams or minority groups) indicate hate speech with the potential to fuel stereotypes and division.**
Exclusionary Rhetoric	**Non-majority communities (Serbs, Bosniaks) and religious groups (Muslims) are frequently targeted as obstacles to Kosovo’s interests, risking discrimination and interethnic tensions.**
Demonization and Dehumanization	**Severe instances, such as “cancer in the middle of Europe” or linking Islam to Serbian espionage, represent extreme forms of hate speech with potentially destabilizing social and political impacts.**
Media Balance	**The lack of balanced representation, as seen in RTV 21’s panel, amplifies one-sided narratives that may polarize public opinion and undermine democratic discourse.**

TABLE: Babak Bahador's methodology (George Washington University)

Media Outlet	Broadcast Date	Speaker	Statement	Hate Speech Category (Bahador)	Assessment
RTK Prime	May 6, 2025	Arbreshë Kryeziu-Hyseni (VV Deputy)	"LDK hasn't changed" "LDK is not interested in concrete actions for the benefit of Kosovo's citizens"	Disagreement	Legitimate political criticism but reinforces divisive "us vs. them" narrative.
RTK Prime	May 6, 2025	Arbreshë Kryeziu-Hyseni	"If VV is not part of it, they should include Lista Srpska in this transitional government"	Negative Actions Exclusionary Rhetoric	Targets Serbian minority party (Lista Srpska) in a negative context, exploiting historical tensions. Risks discrimination
RTK Prime	April 22, 2025	Faton Peci (Minister, GUXO)	"Kosovo needs a majority Albanian coalition... we can't leave Kosovo's fate to the caprices and whims of non-majority communities, like Bosniaks and others" "We've faced war	Disagreement Negative Actions Exclusionary Rhetoric	Legitimate political stance but uses derogatory terms ("caprices and whims") to portray Bosniaks and Serbs as
RTK Prime	April 22, 2025	Fatime Hajdari (Analyst)	"Considering the whims and absurd demands of community members, it's right not to fulfill any of them, in Kosovo's interest"	Negative Actions Negative Characteristics Exclusionary Rhetoric	Stigmatizes non-majority communities with terms like "absurd" and "whims," portraying them as harmful. Risks social

TABLE: Babak Bahador's methodology (George Washington University)

Media Outlet	Broadcast Date	Speaker	Statement	Hate Speech Category (Bahador)	Assessment
Klan Kosova (Rubikon)	May 27, 2025	Berat Buzhala (Journalist)	"Not just some Bosniak from Sanjak we found at the market"	Negative Characteristics Negative Actions	Dehumanizes and discredits an individual based on Bosniak ethnicity, suggesting lack of legitimacy. Risks perpetuating ethnic
Klan Kosova (Rubikon)	May 27, 2025	Azdren Shala (Panelist)	"This government is the greatest misfortune to befall this people"	Disagreement	Legitimate political criticism targeting the Kurti government. Minimal hate speech risk but contributes to polarization.
Klan Kosova (Rubikon)	May 27, 2025	Azdren Shala	"This trait of his [Kurti's] is more dangerous than controlling the media. It's reminiscent of Hitler" "They're a bit repulsive" "If they steal they honor the state"	Negative Characteristics Negative Actions	Demonizes Kurti with extreme historical comparison (Hitler) and portrays the ruling party as corrupt and "repulsive." Inflammatory rhetoric risks polarizing
Klan Kosova (Rubikon)	May 14, 2025	Vehbi Kajtazi (Journalist)	"Serbia is sitting cross-legged in the Islamic Community of Kosovo. A large part of imams serve Serbia"	Negative Actions Negative Characteristics Exclusionary Rhetoric	Accuses Muslim community (imams) of betrayal, linking them to Serbia. Risks fueling Islamophobia and portraying the community as a security

TABLE: Babak Bahador's methodology (George Washington University)

Media Outlet	Broadcast Date	Speaker	Statement	Hate Speech Category (Bahador)	Assessment
Klan Kosova (Rubikon)	May 14, 2025	Adriatik Kelmendi (Moderator)	"Cancer in the middle of Europe" (re: Kosovo oriented toward the East)	Demonization/Dehumanization	Emotionally charged term stigmatizes Eastern alignment and peoples, implying Kosovo would be "sick" or "dangerous." Risks prejudice against Eastern cultures
ATV (Context)	April 29, 2025	Bajram Shala (Panelist)	"Belgin ran from the other side to get involved in the incident... Why did you get involved?"	Negative Characteristics	Blames the victim (Belgin Jashari) of an ethnic attack, reinforcing stereotypes against a marginalized individual. Risks
ATV (Context)	April 29, 2025	Moderator	"Is the mentality of the average Kosovar measured by the mentality of a fan?"	Negative Characteristics	Generalizes "average Kosovar" as irrational or aggressive, equating them with football hooligans. Risks disparaging a
RTV 21 (Click)	May 1, 2025	Alma Lama, Lulzim Peci, Blerim Cana (Panelists)	VV portrayed as a party that "does not recognize or respect laws and the Constitution" and as "obstructive" to the Kosovo Assembly	Disagreement Negative Characteristics	Legitimate political criticism but uses generalized language to portray VV as irresponsible and harmful. Lack of balanced panel risks polarizing

8. Section III: Serbian-language Media in Kosovo

This report summarizes the findings of media monitoring conducted between April 15 and June 15, 2025, covering Serbian-language media in Kosovo. The focus was on identifying hate speech, polarizing rhetoric, and assessing the level of journalistic balance in reporting on interethnic and political issues. No explicit hate speech was recorded, but several outlets close to Serbian authorities—such as Kosovo Online, TV Most, and RTV Gračanica—regularly published politically motivated and emotionally charged content, often without presenting multiple perspectives.

In contrast, independent media, including KoSSev, Radio Goraždevac, Radio KiM, Kontakt Plus, and the Media Center Čaglavica, demonstrated a consistently professional and balanced editorial approach. Despite limited resources, they continue to uphold journalistic ethics and enjoy growing public trust, as confirmed by previous research such as the Trends Analysis by NGO AKTIV. Their role remains essential for preserving media integrity and supporting informed public discourse in Kosovo.

Date of publication	Media/Portal/Link	Example of Hate Speech (Quote or Paraphrase)	Target Group	Explanation / Context
21.04.2025	Kosovo Online/Novosti	„terornadSrbima“, „militarizacija”„zastrašivanje“	Kosovo Police	It generalizes members of the Kosovo Police as criminals and terrorists, and uses inflammatory language.
23.04.2025	Kosovo Online	„Svakaodlukakojusu donelibila je samonaštetuSrba.“	Local authority in North Kosovo	The article claims that Albanian mayors acted solely against Serbs, without including the other side's perspective or explanation.
23.04.2025	Kosovo Online	“Takozvana Kosovska policija” “naoružanefalange” “lažnigradonačelnicii okupatori” “institucionalnonasilje” “progonnašegnaroda”	Kosovo authorities	The quote in the headline lacks quotation marks, which means there is no distancing from the political rhetoric. The article was republished by most media outlets. The tone is accusatory. This is a common practice when reporting on statements from the Office for Kosovo and Metohija and the Srpska Lista.

8. Section III: Serbian-language Media in Kosovo

Date of publication	Media/Portal/Link	Example of Hate Speech (Quote or Paraphrase)	Target Group	Explanation / Context
25.04.2025	RTV Gračanica	„antisrpskapolitika“,„progonSrba“,„nasiljenadsrpskimnarodom“,„sistematskiteror“	Kosovo institutions	The text uses accusatory terms like “anti-Serb policy” and “regime in Pristina” without presenting the other side, framing the graffiti incident as part of a broader campaign against Serbs and further fueling ethnic polarization.
16.05.2025	Kosovo Online	Kurtijeviizvršiociprljavihposlova” implicirakriminalizacijucelokupnepolitičkestrukture.	Kosovo Albanian representatives’ elite and institutions.	Uses inflammatory and derogatory language that contributes to ethnic polarization and undermines legitimate institutions.
16.05.2025	RTV Gracanica	„etničkočišćenje“,„TerornadSrbima“, „onemogućavanjeopstankaSrba“	Kosovo Authorities	The text uses emotionally charged and accusatory language without presenting the other side, further reinforcing a sense of ethnic threat and deepening divisions.
28.05.2025	TV Most	„odrastaju pod dugimcevima“,„zbogpotezaAljbinaKurtija“	Kosovo police	The statements use emotional and accusatory language without presenting the other side, portraying police presence as a direct threat to Serbian children and contributing to ethnic polarization.
01.06.2025	Kosovo Online	„brisanjesrpskenacionalneistorije“ „promeneulica u ciljualbanizacijeprostora“,„ukidanjesrpskogidentiteta“	North Municipalities	The article lacks the perspective of the other side and uses inflammatory language that further fuels ethnic tensions and a sense of threat.

8. Section III: Serbian-language Media in Kosovo

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25.04.2025	RTV Gračanica	„antisrpskapolitika“,„progonSrba“,„nasiljenadsrpskimnarodom“,„sistematskiteror“	Kosovo institutions	The text uses accusatory terms like “anti-Serb policy” and “regime in Pristina” without presenting the other side, framing the graffiti incident as part of a broader campaign against Serbs and further fueling ethnic polarization.
16.05.2025	Kosovo Online	Kurtijeviizvršiociprljavihposlova” implicirakriminalizacijucelokupnepolitičkestrukture.	Kosovo Albanian representatives’ elite and institutions.	Uses inflammatory and derogatory language that contributes to ethnic polarization and undermines legitimate institutions.
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01.06.2025	Kosovo Online	„brisanjesrpskenacionalneistorije“ „promeneulica u ciljualbanizacijeprostora“,„ukidanjesrpskogidentiteta“	North Municipalities	The article lacks the perspective of the other side and uses inflammatory language that further fuels ethnic tensions and a sense of threat.

Between April 15 and June 15, 2025, media monitoring was conducted to track the presence of hate speech and polarizing rhetoric in Serbian-language media outlets informing communities in Kosovo. The monitoring focused on the most influential and widely followed digital and broadcast media operating in Serbian and consumed predominantly by the Kosovo Serb community.

The monitored outlets included: Radio Goraždevac, Radio KiM, KoSSev, Kosovo Online, Kontakt Plus, RTV Gračanica, TV Most, Radio Mitrovica Sever, as well as the Media Center Čaglavica, which plays a visible and constructive role through its media production, events, and debate programs.

The methodology involved daily monitoring of online content on the web portal, identifying headlines, reports, statements, and terminology that may constitute hate speech or contribute to ethnic and political polarization. Special attention was given to inflammatory language, unbalanced reporting, targeting of groups based on ethnicity or political affiliation, and the lack of diverse perspectives in coverage.

No explicit forms of hate speech were recorded during the monitored period, such as direct calls for violence, ethnic slurs, or dehumanizing language. However, a significant presence of accusatory and emotionally charged rhetoric was observed, especially in content referring to Kosovo institutions and Albanian political representatives. This rhetoric most frequently appeared in the form of unfiltered political statements from representatives of the Srpska Lista, the Serbian Government Office for Kosovo and Metohija, and certain officials in Belgrade, often republished by media outlets without editorial distancing,such as quotation marks, disclaimers, or inclusion of the other side's perspective.

Common phrases identified in such reports included: “ethnic cleansing”, “persecution of Serbs”, “apartheid system”, “terror against the Serbian people”, “erasing Serbian history”, and institutional violence”, among others. These statements were frequently presented as news headlines, without critical examination, verification, or analysis, thereby reinforcing narratives of collective victimhood and interethnic hostility.

It was also observed that political representatives of the Srpska Lista and Serbian authorities primarily communicate with media outlets funded or closely aligned with Belgrade, while generally avoiding independent local Serbian-language media operating in Kosovo. Nevertheless, it is essential to highlight the existence of independent outlets that consistently uphold high professional and ethical standards in their reporting, despite limited resources and infrastructure.

Media such as KoSSev, Radio Goraždevac, Radio KiM, Kontakt Plus, and the Media Center Čaglavica have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to balanced, accurate, and pluralistic reporting. Their editorial policies are characterized by a critical and fair approach, not only toward Kosovo institutions but also toward authorities in Belgrade. These outlets play a vital role in maintaining informational balance and enabling open dialogue within the Kosovo Serb community. Although they operate with significantly fewer resources compared to state-backed media, their professional integrity and credibility are increasingly recognized and appreciated.

The monitoring shows that, while open hate speech is not widespread in Serbian-language media in Kosovo, a consistent pattern of politically driven and one-sided reporting exists in part of the media landscape, particularly in outlets affiliated with official structures in Belgrade such as Kosovo Online, TV Most, and RTV Gračanica. This style of reporting, marked by confrontational tone, unfiltered political narratives, and a lack of editorial balance, reinforces a sense of collective threat and deepens ethnic divides.

In this context, the role of independent and professional media — those that offer diverse perspectives and adhere to journalistic ethics — becomes even more crucial and deserves greater institutional, donor, and public support.

Positive assessments of these independent media have been confirmed in earlier studies, such as the “Trends Analysis”, which shows that public trust in these outlets has been steadily increasing year after year. Despite their limited financial and technical resources, these media have become essential voices of responsible journalism in Kosovo, contributing directly to the development of a democratic and open public sphere.

Examples of good practice in interethnic dialogue reporting

In addition to identifying problematic patterns in political reporting, the monitoring also recognized positive examples of media content that actively promote interethnic understanding and dialogue in Kosovo.
A notable initiative is the podcast series “Aequitas”, produced by RTV Kim and the Media Center Caglavica. This bilingual political talk show is co-hosted by respected journalists Zorica Vorgucic (Serbian language) and Leart Hoxha (Albanian language), who lead discussions with guests from various backgrounds on complex socio-political topics. The format, in which each journalist represents the perspective of their respective community, encourages critical and empathetic dialogue, while challenging dominant narratives. Aequitas offers an innovative and inclusive approach to fostering mutual understanding through informed conversation.

https://radiokim.net/podkast/238325-seholi-kosovo-zbog-blokade-ostaje-u-opasnoj-zoni-institucionalnog-vakuma/

Another strong example is the radio and video program “Da tepitamkomzija” (Let Me Ask You, Neighbor), jointly produced by KoSSev and Radio Gorazdevac. This cross-studio format connects guests from different ethnic communities—typically one from the north and one from the south of Kosovo, including the Peja region—who engage in live discussion from two locations: North Mitrovica and Gorazdevac. The concept allows for direct communication and exchange of views, promoting openness, reducing stereotypes, and encouraging inter-community dialogue on shared challenges.

https://kossev.info/eljsani-srpske-licne-karte-gradova-na-kosovu-vazice-i-posle-1-juna-o-promeni-ce-gradjani-biti-unapred-obavesteni/

These programs represent rare but powerful media formats in Kosovo that demonstrate how journalism can serve as a platform for constructive engagement and trust-building across ethnic lines.

Public Discourse and Societal Impact

This part of the report examines how televised hate speech affects public discourse, particularly in a diverse society like Kosovo. It highlights the role of the media in reinforcing divisions, fueling mistrust between communities, and influencing the attitudes of younger generations. Hate speech not only harms targeted individuals or groups but also undermines efforts toward reconciliation, democratic participation, and inclusive dialogue. The section calls attention to the long-term risks of radicalization and social polarization when hate speech is normalized in public media space.

Some Serbian-language media in Kosovo, particularly those with closer ties to political actors from Belgrade, often focus on conveying the perspectives and concerns of the Serbian community, especially in response to decisions made by Kosovo institutions that are at times perceived as unilateral or unclear. While such reporting reflects real anxieties on the ground, it tends to rely heavily on political statements from one side and is often presented without broader context or alternative viewpoints. This lack of balance can inadvertently contribute to reinforcing divisions and limiting the potential for constructive, interethnic dialogue.

In contrast, independent Serbian-language media outlets have shown that it is possible to foster constructive discourse through their daily news production, even in a sensitive environment. Programs like “Aequitas” and “Da tepitamkomšija” demonstrate how inclusive and balanced formats can contribute to breaking stereotypes, encouraging empathy, and opening space for critical thinking. These initiatives are especially valuable in engaging younger audiences and promoting democratic values, showing that media can be a tool not only of information but of reconciliation and social cohesion.

9. Comparative Analysis

Hate speech in Kosovo's media takes different shapes depending on editorial alignment and political influence. In some cases, it is used to assert dominance or legitimacy, while in others, to cultivate fear and distrust. Though the language and tone vary, the underlying function remains the same—fueling division and reinforcing polarized narratives.

Despite this, a few independent media platforms offer a more balanced and ethical approach, showing that journalism can challenge harmful discourse rather than enable it. Their work highlights the importance of professional standards in resisting the broader trend of media-driven fragmentation.

10. Public Discourse and Societal Impact

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11. Recommendations

Based on the analysis, this section provides concrete recommendations for key stakeholders, including media regulators, editorial boards, civil society, and international organizations. Recommendations include stricter enforcement of ethical codes, mandatory hate speech training for journalists and moderators, independent monitoring mechanisms, and public awareness campaigns. Furthermore, it calls on the Independent Media Commission and Press Council to adopt clearer definitions of hate speech and introduce sanctions for repeated violations, while encouraging donors and international actors to prioritize media accountability projects.

In addition, hate speech in Kosovo poses a serious threat to social cohesion, democratic values, and interethnic trust. A multidimensional approach, grounded in human rights and prevention, is essential. Institutions, the media, civil society, and international actors must work in coordination, following UN principles that prioritize early intervention, education, and systemic reform.

Key Recommendations:

1. Develop a National Strategy Against Hate Speech

- Adopt a comprehensive, cross-sector strategy addressing legislation, education, media regulation, and public awareness, aligned with UN frameworks.

2. Invest in Media and Civic Education

- Introduce hate speech prevention and media literacy modules in formal education and professional training for journalists, editors, moderators, and public communicators.

3. Engage Political, Religious, and Public Figures in Prevention

- Establish a public code of conduct for political and religious leaders, promoting accountability and ethical communication, especially during election cycles or crises.

4. Strengthen Regulatory and Self-Regulatory Mechanisms

- Enhance the mandates and enforcement capacities of the Independent Media Commission and the Press Council of Kosovo to address hate speech violations with clear definitions and proportional sanctions.

5. Establish Independent Monitoring and Early Warning Systems

- Create or support independent civil society-led mechanisms to track hate speech trends, identify emerging risks, and inform timely responses.

6. Promote Inclusive Media Content and Dialogue Formats

- Support media programs that foster interethnic understanding and challenge divisive narratives—such as Aequitas and Da te pitam komšija—through sustainable donor and institutional backing.

7. Apply International Standards in Assessment and Response

- Use global benchmarks like the UN Rabat Plan of Action to distinguish hate speech from legitimate expression and guide proportionate responses in regulation and policy.

8. Ensure Engagement of the Ombudsperson Institution (OIK)

- Utilize the OIK's human rights mandate to monitor discriminatory rhetoric, mediate complaints, and ensure institutional responsibility in addressing hate speech.

Disclaimer

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