

Skenderaj/Srbica

January 2008

1. Area and Population

- Skenderaj/Srbica Municipality is located northwest of Prishtinë/Priština and south of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica with a total area of 378 km². The municipality consists of 52 villages organized in 12 districts. Basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity and water supplies and telecommunications are in poor condition.

- The estimated total population is approximately 72,600. The vast majority is Kosovo Albanian with small numbers from minority communities; approximately 350 Kosovo Serbs in the northern villages of Suvo Grlo/Syriganë and Banja/Bajë, 50 Ashkali and 15 Bosniaks residing throughout the municipality. Although the municipality has been more cooperative recently to support minority returns such as Go-and-See visits to multiethnic Runik/Rudnik area, there has been no minority return to date. [Source: UNHCR]

- Skenderaj/Srbica constitutes the core of the Drenica region, which has a long history of Kosovo Albanian resistance to Serbian authority. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was founded here by Adem Jashari and the place was considered its stronghold.

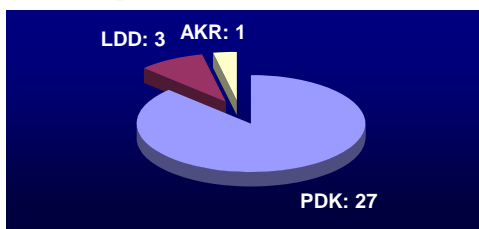
The municipality also hosts a Serbian Orthodox religious and cultural site, the Dević Monastery, located near Skenderaj/Srbica town. The Monastery has a very old church which is believed to have been built in the 14th century. The site was damaged during the 1999 conflict and the March 2004 riots. The reconstruction of the Monastery is proceeding and KFOR has been guarding the premises where seven nuns are currently living.

2. Governing Structures

• Legislative

The Municipal Assembly is comprised of 31 members elected following the 17 November 2007 Municipal Elections, with the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) by far the most dominant.

The Mayor of the Municipality is Mr. Sami Lushtaku, a former KLA General, while the Vice Chairperson of the Municipal Assembly is Mr. Ismet Salihu. Both are from the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK)



PDK - Democratic Party of Kosovo
LDD - Democratic League of Dardania
AKR - New Kosovo Alliance

• Executive

The Civil Administration is composed of seven departments and the Municipal Community Office that is located in the majority Kosovo Serb village of Banja/Baje.

The Municipal Departments are: Economy, Finance and Development; Education and Culture; Urban Planning and Environmental Protection; Geodesy, Cadastral and Property; Health and Social Welfare; Public Services; Administration and Personnel. Six directors have been appointed by the Mayor, while the Chief of Administration and Personnel Directory will be selected in conformity with the procedure of recruitment of senior civil servants. Currently, around 1,300 civil servants work in the municipality.

• Judiciary

Skenderaj/Srbica has a Municipal Court (covering both criminal and civil cases) and a Minor Offence Court. There are a total of three judges, all of which are Kosovo Albanian males, in the municipality. Court prosecutors are based in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

• Security Presence

The police station has 127 Kosovo Police Service (KPS) officers and four UNMIK Police officers. In March 2005, the police station and all operation competencies were handed over to the KPS and since then UNMIK police has only maintained a monitoring function. In 2006, KPS HQ opened a police substation in Suvo Grlo/Syriganë, and since its opening (with 12 Kosovo Albanian Police Officers and four Kosovo Serb Police Officers), this initiative has had positive results. As to the military presence, the Danish, French and Lithuanian KFOR troops cover the municipality and, among other things, conduct mobile patrols in the Kosovo Serb villages of Suvo Grlo/Syriganë and Banja/Bajë.

3. Political Overview

Since 1999, the PDK has been by far the most dominant political power in Skenderaj/Srbica. Since the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) party elections in November 2006, the party split and the entire

Skenderaj/Srbica branch joined the newly created Democratic League of Dardania (LDD).

4. Economy

Skenderaj/Srbica is historically the poorest municipality in Kosovo with little investment made since the former Yugoslavia time and high unemployment. Agriculture supposedly represents the major industry but the municipality has not fully developed existing arable land. Today, the local economy consists of small enterprises such as family-run shops and restaurants while two privatized factories, a brick and a flourmill, have a few hundred employees. At the beginning of 2008 the European Agency for Reconstruction, selected Skenderaj/Srbica, together with four other municipalities, to help them draft the strategy on rural development. The Department of Economy, Finance and Development will work with relevant experts on this strategy and will prepare a project for the donors' conference which will take place in November 2008. Other projects on improving the economical situation in Skenderaj/Srbica area are foreseen both from local and central government. The major sector of employment is also the municipality's civil service.

5. Public Services

• Health

According to the Director of Health, the Centre for Family Medicine located in Skenderaj/Srbica town is the major medical institution for the population and it is currently staffed by 26 doctors, 117 nurses and other support staff. It provides first aid and general medical services; however, urgent and difficult cases are often referred to the hospitals in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica or Prishtinë/Priština. Besides the Centre for Family Medicine in Skenderaj/Srbica town, a network of five Family Medicine Centers and nine health stations (*ambulantas*) covers all villages in the Municipality. In the two Kosovo Serb majority villages, health care is provided by the hospital in north Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, but also by the *ambulanta* in Suvo Grlo/Syriganë, which has one doctor and two nurses.

• Education

According to the Department of Education and the Municipal Assembly Committee for Education, there are 23 schools functioning in the municipality, 21 primary schools and two high schools. Many schools are in very bad conditions and some of these function in containers. There are 15,025 students in total, 10,980 in primary education and 3,150 students in secondary education, 850 preschool students, 45 students with special needs. In total there are 933 educational staff members: 779 in primary schools and 154 in secondary education; 749 teachers and 184 administration and support staff members. There are approximately 850 children attending pre-school education in the municipality. There is one kindergarten/preschool in Banja/Bajë and a primary school in Suvo Grlo/Syriganë that provide primary education for around 35 Kosovo Serb students and there is a secondary/technical school in Suvo Grlo/Syriganë with 22 students which is functioning through northern Mitrovica under Serbian curricula.

6. Map of the Region

