



## SUCCESS STORY

### Kosovo's Courts Reduce Case Backlog and Delays

Thousands of unresolved cases closed in one year

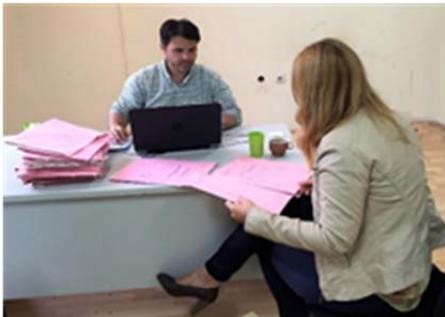


Photo by: USAID JSSP Program

JSSP readies backlogged cases for review and disposition



Photo by: USAID JSSP Program

JSSP's backlog reduction team inventories pending cases in Mitrovica

"We were able to act on cases that have not been addressed for many years. This work has had its positive impact on court dealing with citizens." - Hamdi Ibrahim, President of the Basic Court in Pristina.

February 2017—Kosovo recently began to address a problem in its judicial system—a backlog of unresolved court cases, which was undermining the delivery of justice. Now cases are moving forward that had remained unsettled for years.

USAID is helping Kosovo's courts resolve cases more efficiently and reduce processing delays through its [Justice System Strengthening Program](#). In its first year of operations, the program has already yielded significant results.

Since May 2016, working with the basic courts in Ferizaj, Gjakova, Mitrovica and Pristina, USAID has helped the courts close over 6,200—or 16 percent—of the 39,500 civil and criminal cases backlogged in the system for more than two years.

Pristina's Basic Court alone disposed of over 3,000 cases thanks to the project's backlog reduction and prevention initiative.

"Through the assistance of USAID staff, we were able to act on cases that had not been addressed for many years. This work has had its positive impact on court dealings with citizens," said Hamdi Ibrahim, president of the Basic Court in Pristina. "During the last few years, this court has been addressing old cases which have been sitting idle for more than a decade, and this engagement certainly reflects positively in restoring the trust of citizens in justice."

Equally impressive are the results achieved by the Basic Court of Mitrovica, including the northern municipalities of Zubin Potok and Leposavic, where USAID helped dispose of over 1,200 cases.

"I believe that the majority of citizens do have a good appreciation of this work as they have been facing hardships in materializing their rights because of the remaining old undisposed cases," stressed Ali Kutllovci, president of the Basic Court in Mitrovica.

To support and expand upon these improvements, USAID provided its partner courts with 39 backlog reduction and prevention strategies for improving case processing. It will continue to reduce case backlogs and redesign court practices to increase efficiency and responsiveness to citizens' needs, and to bring European standards to Kosovo's courts.

The four-year Justice System Strengthening Program, which began in January 2016, builds upon USAID's prior efforts to advance the rule of law in Kosovo and ensure that the justice system operates in a professional, efficient and accountable manner.