

The Influence of

Hate Speech as a Political Tool

on the

Youth of Kosovo

July 2016



USAID
NGA POPULLI AMERIKAN
OD AMERIČKOG NARODA





The Influence of Hate Speech as a Political Tool on the Youth of Kosovo

Copyright © 2016 International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). All rights reserved.

Permission Statement: No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system without the written permission of IFES.

Requests for permission should include the following information:

- A description of the material for which permission to copy is desired.
- The purpose for which the copied material will be used and the manner in which it will be used.
- Your name, title, company or organization name, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address and mailing address.

Please send all requests for permission to:

International Foundation for Electoral Systems
2011 Crystal Drive, Floor 10
Arlington, VA 22202
E-mail: editor@ifes.org
Fax: 202-350-6701

This report is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Contents

- A. Executive Summary..... 1
- B. Background..... 1
- C. Methodology 2
- D. Views expressed in the focus groups 3
 - 1. Participants’ views on the meaning of hate speech 4
 - 2. Participants’ views on where hate speech is used 5
 - 3. Participants’ views on why hate speech is used..... 5
 - 4. Participants’ reactions to hate speech..... 6
 - 5. Participants’ views on hate speech and violence 7
- E. Participants’ responses to fictional statements 8
 - 1. Scenario one - political 8
 - 2. Scenario two - political..... 10
 - 3. Scenario three - religious..... 12
 - 4. Scenario four - ethnicity 14
- F. Conclusions 16
- Annex I: Kosovo legislation on freedom of expression and hate speech..... 18
- Annex II: Definitions of and prohibitions on hate speech, from international sources..... 19
- Annex III: Grading scale used for the fictional scenario statements..... 20

A. Executive Summary

This report examines the potential influence of political hate speech on youth in Kosovo. It presents young people's perceptions of the meaning of hate speech, where hate speech is used and by whom, and how hate speech influences young people's feelings and behavior. The information presented in this report was obtained from six focus groups held in various regions of Kosovo with young people between the ages of 15 and 29.

Generally, the focus group participants perceived hate speech in terms of expressions or language that is used to offend, humiliate, or discriminate against an individual or group mainly on the basis that they are of different nationality, ethnicity or political affiliation. Participants also tied hate speech to being offensive, name calling, jealousy, and conflicts from the past.

The common finding across all six focus groups is that politicians are the main group of people who use hate speech. Generally, participants claimed that hate speech is much more present today, and they are exposed to hate speech on a daily basis in news broadcasts, television debates, protests, and social media.

Overall, participants were of the view that political leaders have personal incentives to use hate speech against their political opponents or other groups. There were several frequently mentioned opinions about why politicians use hate speech: to denigrate political opponents, to gain more support among voters who share their views, to gain political power by humiliating others, to draw attention to the wrong-doings of political opponents, to marginalize groups on the basis that they are different, to create divisions among ethnic groups, and to move attention away from the real social problems.

Generally, participants believed that hate speech has a negative impact on society, and has a negative influence particularly on young people and persons living in poor economic conditions. Participants widely condemned the use of hate speech, and are more likely to cease supporting political figures who use hate speech. Participants generally did not justify violence under any circumstance, although a few participants stated that violence is justifiable in exceptional circumstances.

B. Background

Freedom of expression is one of the most fundamental rights guaranteed by international and domestic legal instruments. Article 19 (2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), states that "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression [...]". Likewise, Article 40 (1) of the Constitution of Kosovo provides that "Freedom of expression is guaranteed. Freedom of expression includes the right to express oneself, to disseminate and receive information, opinions and other messages without impediment."

Freedom of expression is subject to certain limitations. The ICCPR, in Article 19 (3), provides that freedom of expression is subject to restrictions, "but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary: (a) for respect of the rights or reputations of others; (b) for the protection of national security or of public order, or public health or morals." Limitations to the freedom of expression were also foreseen in Article 40 (2) of the Constitution of Kosovo, which provides that "the freedom of expression can be

limited by law in cases when it is necessary to prevent encouragement or provocation of violence and hostility on grounds of race, nationality, ethnicity or religion”.

Among the reasons for limiting the freedom of expression is to prevent the use of hate speech. Studies of hate speech are lacking in Kosovo, and there is no clear understanding of how young people perceive hate speech, and the extent to which they are exposed to it. There is no clear dividing line between abusive or offensive language and expressions that can be considered as hate speech. Discussions in the focus groups conducted suggest that whether or not a form of expression incites hatred appears to depend largely on the context in which it is used, and the perceptions that young people have toward it.

This report looks at the influence of political hate speech on the youth of Kosovo. It presents young people’s views on the meaning of hate speech, where hate speech is used and by whom, and how hate speech influences young people’s feelings and behavior. The findings presented in the analysis section are based on qualitative research that was completed through six focus groups in various regions of Kosovo with young people between the ages of 15 and 29. The report also looks at participants’ perceptions of hate speech by assessing how they responded to four fictional statements that they were asked to assess during the focus groups. In the annexes, the report makes reference to provisions relating to freedom of expression and hate speech in the Kosovo legal framework, definition and prohibition of hate speech by various international instruments, and the grading scale used for assessing responses to the fictional statements used during the focus groups.

This report was prepared by undergraduate students¹ engaged in research internships as part of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems’ (IFES) U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded “Increasing Inclusion and Mitigating Violence in Electoral Processes” program in Kosovo, under the guidance of IFES Kosovo staff. This report is one of three reports on research into youth participation issues in Kosovo prepared by IFES in 2016. The other two reports present findings on the role of youth in political entities, and voter turnout among youth in Kosovo.

C. Methodology

This report looks at the influence of political hate speech on the youth of Kosovo. The findings presented in this report are based on the feedback from six focus groups held in various regions of Kosovo with young people aged between 15 and 29 years old. This is the age range used in the definition of youth by USAID. The focus groups were composed of eight to 12 participants from various regions and settlements. The table below provides detailed information on the composition of the focus groups. One of the six focus groups was held with Serbian minorities in North Mitrovica.

¹ Rrita Rugova (Rochester Institute of Technology Kosovo), Endrit Dibrani and Rudinë Fetahaj (Faculty of Political Science at the University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”). There were also contributions by Hana Bacaj and Fjoralba Krapci (Rochester Institute of Technology Kosovo) during the initial stages of the research.

Region		Prishtina	Prizren	Peja	Gjilan	Mitrovica	North Mitrovica
Settlement		Urban	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Location		Prishtina	Malisheva	Novosella	Gjilan	Rezalla	North Mitrovica
Age groups	15-17		1	1			
	18-21	1			1	1	
	22-25						
	26-29						

The focus group participants were selected through the snow-ball randomization technique. During the screening process, consideration was given to ensuring gender balance and recruitment of individuals with various socio-economic backgrounds. The focus groups covered discussion on youth perceptions of hate speech, the extent to which they are exposed to hate speech, areas in which they think it is used and by whom, and how it influences the behavior of youth.

Participants in the focus groups also completed a short questionnaire on their reactions to four fictional written scenarios covering: (1) a high-profile political figure appearing on a public broadcaster; (2) a political party leader addressing a large crowd in a public protest; (3) a religious preacher making a statement on a radio show; and (4) a person expressing views in a public debate between leaders of different ethnicities. Participants were asked to assess how they felt about the language used in each of these scenarios, and what impact it would have on their actions. This data is presented in Section E of this report.

Only a limited number of focus groups could be conducted within the resources available for this research. The research teams would like to thank the participants who attended the focus groups, and contributed to the findings presented in this report. The participants’ views were very diverse, but they were carefully studied, grouped, and presented in the findings section of this report.

D. Views expressed in the focus groups

This section of the report is divided into five parts, and presents participants’ views of: (1) the meaning of hate speech; (2) the areas in which hate speech is used; (3) the reasons why hate speech is used; (4) the way in which hate speech influences youth; (5) the relationship between hate speech and violence.

1. Participants' views on the meaning of hate speech

To most participants, hate speech meant expressions or language that is used to offend, humiliate, or discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis that they are of a different nationality, ethnicity or political affiliation. Participants placed greater emphasis on these differences, but differences in race, religion, and sexual orientation were also mentioned as a possible basis for the use of hate speech. Some responses by participants include: "being offensive about nationality, race and ethnicity," "discrimination and prejudice," "ethnic divisions," "discrimination against a person, group or nation," "denigration of another entity," and "political manipulation."

A frequent response among participants was to associate hate speech with name-calling, or labels that are used to describe other individuals or groups. Very frequently, participants pointed to words such as "*magjup* (gypsy) or "*shkije*" (Serbs, in a negative connotation) to identify words that can ignite hatred and are frequently used in public. Participants also stated that hate speech can manifest when people are called by the task that they perform rather than their name, and some examples included "*kamarier*" (waiter) or "*pastruese*" (cleaning person).

Across all focus groups, participants were of the view that hate speech consists of expressions that are typically used by political leaders against their opponents. Generally, participants argued that political leaders use hate speech with the aim of achieving personal goals. Other participants defined hate speech in terms of violence and conflicts from the past, responding with phrases such as: "violence and fear," "causes war, divides and kills," "conflict [...] the past," and "something that causes conflict between people or groups'."

Several participants either associated hate speech with jealousy, or stated that jealousy is the reason why individuals or groups use hate speech. Some phrases and words used as examples by participants include: "jealousy is among the factors in order to hate," "the factor [of hate speech] is jealousy – because of the fear that others do it better." The story of "Snow White" story was often mentioned by participants.

There were a few participants whose view was that there is a distinction between hate speech and offensiveness. In their view, hate speech is more systemic and has a greater impact. To make this point, a law student in Prishtina stated, "Using offensive language cannot be equal to hate speech, hate speech I believe is something systemized that is pointed towards a person".

A female participant drew a sketch (right) of a bullet shot from a mouth and targeted toward a person, as a way to depict her first association with hate speech.



Overall, male and female participants had similar views on their understanding of hate speech. A rare distinct perspective to the meaning of hate speech was added by a female participant in each of Prishtina and Gjilan, who both stated that hate speech is commonly used to express jealousy that women feel toward other women's appearances.

2. Participants' views on where hate speech is used

The common finding from all focus groups is that hate speech is typically used by politicians. Participants in Gjilan generally agree that politicians usually use hate speech toward people who have different opinions from them. In North Mitrovica, participants were of the view that hate speech is used by politicians to achieve their personal interests, or to create divisions between ethnic groups. In Rezalla, participants generally agreed that hate speech is used by politicians as a means to denigrate their political opponents and present themselves as superior to others.

“When the leader of the country offends all of its citizens, it is hate speech.”
– A student of philosophy in Rezalla

Overall, participants stated that they hear hate speech very frequently on news broadcasts and television debates, and this was particularly the case during the recent political crisis in Kosovo. A male participant in Malisheva stated that in the past he was not exposed as much to hate speech, but now he hears it almost every day on the television. Also in Malisheva, a female participant expressed concern about the extent to which political hate speech has an impact on children who are exposed to it. There were a number of participants who stated that they do not watch news programs on television specifically because they hear hate speech during the news broadcasts. In Malisheva, a male participant stated that every time he wants to hear hate speech, he just watches political debates on television. Participants also claimed to have heard hate speech during opposition parties' protests. Another common view was that hate speech is used on social media on a daily basis, on the profiles of participants' friends and politicians that they follow.

“The television in my house is always on, and I hear hate speech even if I do not want to, and then I see myself using such words unconsciously”
– A male participant in Gjilan

There were also participants whose view is that hate speech is used in music. In Malisheva, a female participant claimed to have found hate speech in lyrics. A male participant in Gjilan stated that one rap singer uses hate speech in his music, “I see that my friends who listen to him talk with his words when talking about Serbs.” Other participants agreed that the intention behind this music is to send offensive messages, but they do not think that the usage of hate speech in music will necessarily lead to violence.

There was also a view expressed by some participants that hate speech is used by people who have fears, are motivated by revenge, have low self-esteem, have low morals, are jealous of each other, have no other skills to achieve the goals, or have influence on people. The views of some participants reflected a degree of gender-based tension or animosity, rather than the more usually expressed political framework for hate speech.

3. Participants' views on why hate speech is used

Participants emphasized that political leaders have personal incentives to use hate speech against their political opponents or other groups. There were several frequently mentioned reasons across all focus groups as to why politicians use hate speech: to denigrate political opponents; to gain more support among voters who support their views; to gain political power by humiliating others; to draw attention to

the wrong-doings of political opponents; to marginalize groups on the basis that they are different; to create divisions among ethnic groups; and to move attention away from the real social problems. Participants in North Mitrovica placed a greater emphasis on the intention of political leaders to cause divisions between ethnic groups, particularly in moving attention away from social problems or by attributing the causes of social problems to other social groups.

A female participant in Gjilan was of the view that politicians have incentives to use hate speech because it is demanded by the public, saying “people need to be fed with hatred.” This view was also echoed by participants in North Mitrovica, who were of the view that politicians use hate speech because people want to hear such discourse.

Participants across all focus groups also mentioned several reasons why people in general use hate speech. Some of these include: to make others feel inferior; to appear superior to others; to denigrate others’ personalities; and to reinforce a better position or status. A female participant claimed that hate speech is sometimes used between females to be offensive about a person’s appearance.

4. Participants’ reactions to hate speech

Generally, participants claimed that they are not directly influenced by hate speech. Across all focus groups, participants generally expressed an ability to critically examine and doubt statements by political, religious and other leaders. Other participants expressed fatigue from politicians who frequently use hate speech, and claimed that they are more likely to ignore statements by politicians. There were also some participants who showed no interest in politics and claimed to not be influenced by political hate speech.

Participants nonetheless stated that they felt ‘annoyed’, ‘bad feelings’ and ‘irritated’ when they are exposed to hate speech. This was more common among female participants. Participants across all focus groups widely condemned hate speech, and were of the view that those who use hate speech have a negative impact on society.

Participants stated that they were more likely to cease supporting politicians who use hate speech, and the political entities which they represent. In Novosella, participants declared that their opinions toward the persons who have used hate speech have deteriorated, whereas there are no changes in opinions toward those targeted by hate speech. The view of participants in Novosella was that one way of sanctioning those who use hate speech is not to elect them again. In Gjilan, participants claimed that hate speech is more likely to harm politicians, because citizens will distance themselves from them. A similar view was shared by participants from North Mitrovica. In Prishtina, participants claimed that if they were to respond to hate speech in any way, it would be through peaceful means, such as peaceful protests.

“One of my friends talks with insulting words when we discuss politics ... and he was talking with words he heard from politicians, which means they have incited hatred in him.”

– Male participant in Gjilan

Participants believed that hate speech is more likely to influence youth and persons living under poor economic conditions. In North Mitrovica, participants were of the view that hate speech is more likely to influence those with insufficient economic means for living. In Gjilan, Prishtina and Rezalla participants

thought hate speech during protests influenced youth toward violent activities, such as throwing rocks at government buildings.

Some participants stated that because they have heard hate speech very frequently in the media over the past years, they have developed a high tolerance of it and feel indifferent toward it. In North Mitrovica, participants believed that there is a general tolerance of violence, that it would be detrimental to them to intervene in a violent incident, and that they do not trust law enforcement authorities to deal with violent behavior.

A distinct perspective was stated by female respondents. They generally believed hate speech affects youth negatively, and promotes hatred between them. Two female respondents in Malisheva who had ambitions of becoming politicians decided to not do so after assessing the current political situation, expressing disappointment and irritation toward politics. Another female participant in Prishtina stated that whenever she finds herself in a political discussion, she demands to change the subject.

“In the past I wanted to become a politician, I used to watch political debates and it seemed that they were doing things right and I liked their work, now they use protests, high school students to achieve their goals, and now I find myself saying if this is politics - then I do not want to deal with it.”

– Female participant in Malisheva

5. Participants’ views on hate speech and violence

The discussion on hate speech among participants almost inevitably led to discussions about violence. Generally, participants drew a relationship between the use of hate speech at protests and youth engagement in violent activities, particularly in the recent protests. In Prishtina, participants stated that people use violence during demonstrations because of hate speech. In Rezalla, some participants were of the view that political parties manipulate youth and incite them to become violent at public rallies.

A common perception among participants in Rezalla was that whenever people get together in protests, the risk of progressing from hate speech to violence increases. Participants in Novosella thought that persons between 18 to 35 years old are more likely to exhibit violent behavior at protests.

“The bigger the crowds, the more influential the politicians’ speeches will be.”

– A male participant in Rezalla

In North Mitrovica, participants were of the view that the rivalry between sports fan clubs cause acts of violence among youth. According to participants, political parties misuse these groups to organize public rallies and protests, and to exercise fear and intimidation against supporters of other parties, in order to achieve their political and economic goals.

With a few exceptions, participants generally did not justify violence. A male participant in Novosella claimed that “[things] cannot be fixed with violence” while another in the same group stated that even if the country suffers from poverty and corruption at highest levels, violence is not justifiable during

protests. In Prishtina, a male participant was of the opinion that voting is the alternative way of initiating change.

A different perspective was shared by a few participants in Rezalla, whose view was that violence in protests is justifiable in exceptional circumstances. They explained that the population is frustrated by the lack of progress, and when they take to the streets, they express their anger by throwing rocks at government buildings. In Prishtina, a male noted that this frustration can be oriented toward violence by some political leaders expressing the view in public debates that peaceful protests are ineffective and that without violence there will be no change.

“You cannot tell a person who cannot feed himself or his family not to protest or be violent.”
– A male participant in Rezalla

E. Participants’ responses to fictional statements

Four written scenarios were distributed to participants during the focus groups, covering fictional statements of: (1) a high-profile political figure appearing on a public broadcaster; (2) a political party leader addressing a large crowd at a public protest; (3) a religious preacher making a statement on a radio show; and (4) a person expressing his views in a public debate between leaders of different ethnicities.

After reading each scenario, participants were asked to complete two sets of questions intended to assess how they felt about the language used in each of these scenarios, and what impact it would have on their actions. The results from participant responses to each scenario are presented below.

1. Scenario 1: Political

1. In a popular television program on a public broadcaster, in a discussion between the main political parties in the country, a high-profile political figure (person making the statement) talks about his opponent (person about whom the statement was made):

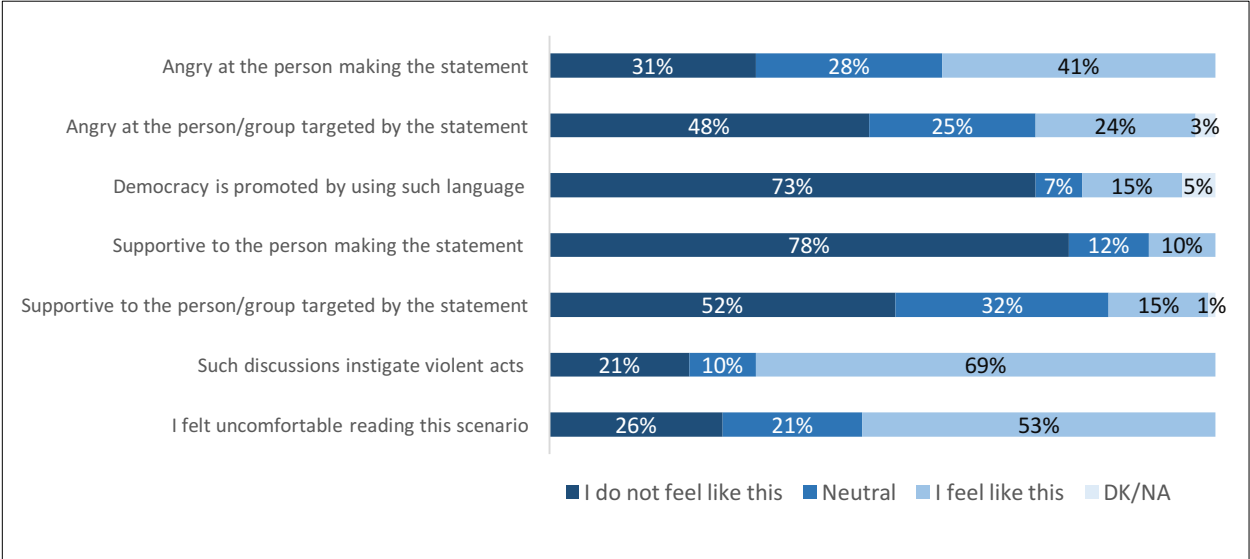
“These lickspittles of the current regime are plundering our people. Instead of working for the benefit of the citizens, they work for their own individual interests. This regime is blocking the development of our country. We will not stand silent. We will take it to the streets and will enter public institutions using force. We will bring justice against those who are not with us. Our political program is the best one, and it is only us who know how to govern this country. We are not gypsies that look up to others. All others are uneducated and sneaky. Only we can take this country from the crisis we are facing.”

The debate continues with the politicians vigorously arguing with each other.

More than two-thirds of participants (69%) believed that such statements instigate violent acts, and more than half (53%) felt uncomfortable reading this scenario. However, almost one-third (31%) of participants did not feel angry at the person making the statement, compared to 41 percent who did. While only 15 percent of participants agreed that democracy is promoted using such statements (15%), 10 percent felt supportive toward the person making the statement, and almost one-quarter (24%) felt angry at the people against whom the statement was made (Figure 1).

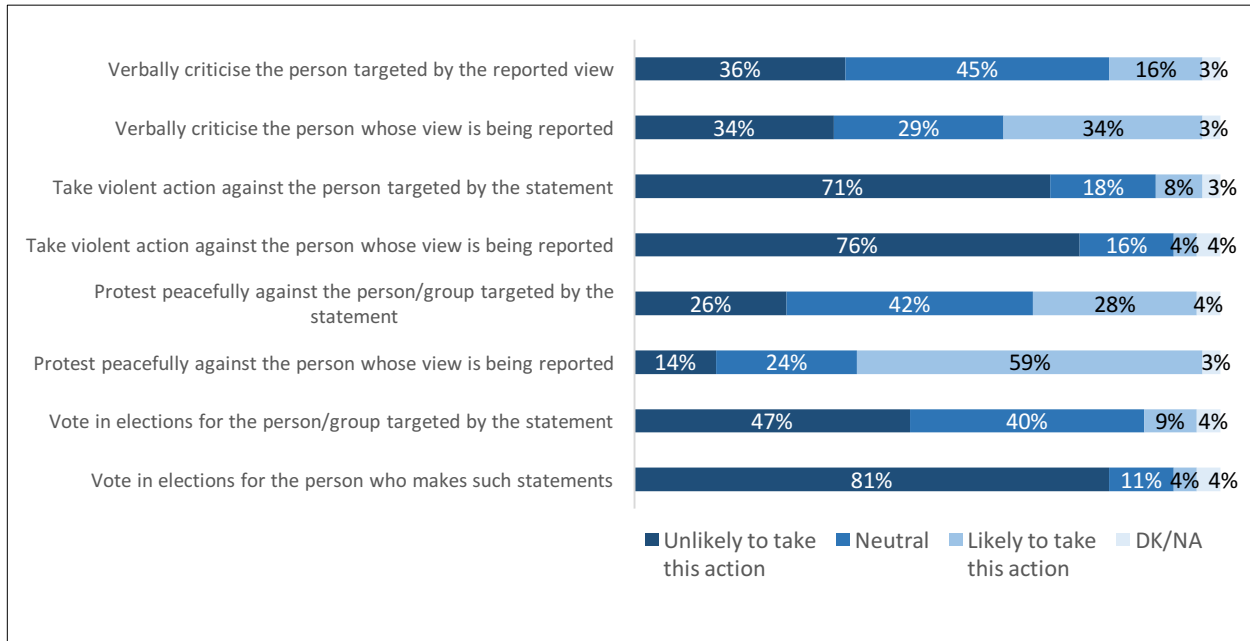
In the discussion about scenario one, a male participant in Malisheva said “you cannot call someone a lickspittle” – a similar view was shared by two female participants in Rezalla. A female participant in Malisheva was of the view that the declaration included elements of discrimination, particularly when it mentioned “gypsies.” A student of political science in Prishtina was of the view that the whole scenario included hate speech.

Figure 1: How participants felt after reading the first scenario (72 participants)



When asked how they would act as a result of this statement, the same proportion of participants would criticize the person whose view is being reported as those who would not (34% for each reaction). Most of the participants (81%) would be unlikely to vote in elections for someone who makes such statements (Figure 2). A male student of economics from Rezalla stated, “It depends because there are people who deserve hate speech to be used against them, moreover, they are capable of accepting such words if they deserve it.” Very few participants said that they would act violently as a result of the statement, either against the person targeted by the statement (8%), or the person making the statement (4%). On the other hand, 59 percent would protest peacefully against the person whose view is being reported.

Figure 2: How participants would act as a result of reading the first scenario (72 participants)



2. Scenario 2: Political

2. In a public protest, where there is a large crowd of people gathered by one of the leading opposition parties in the country, the chairperson of the party (person making the statement) addresses the crowd with an aggressive voice:

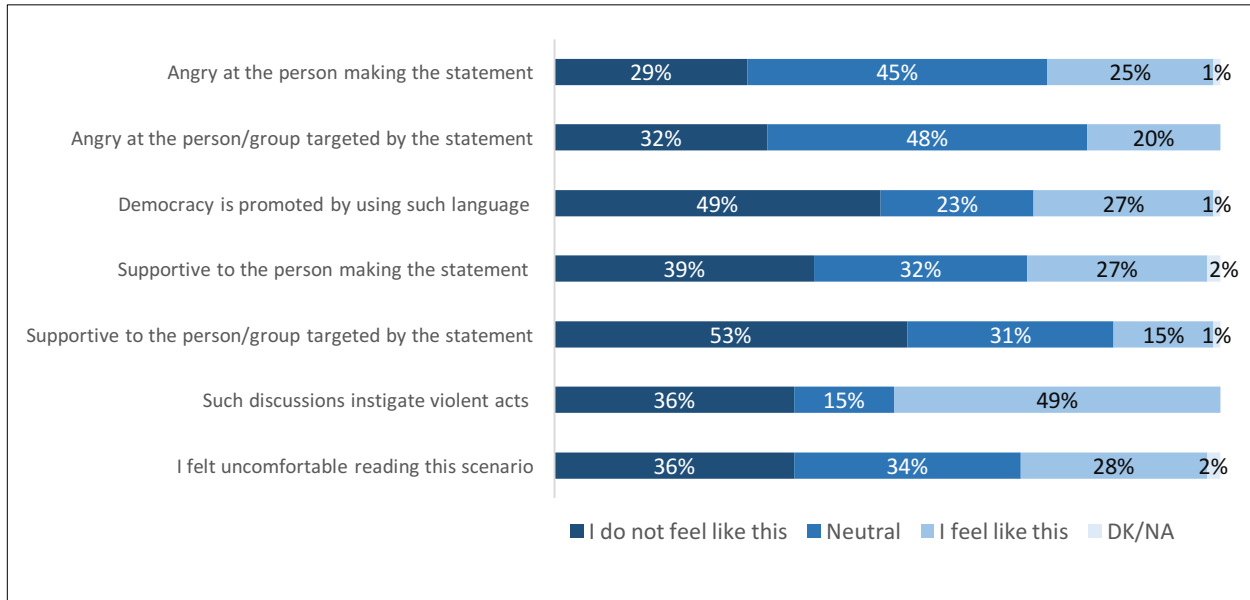
“We must be determined to take this regime down (group against which the statement is made). Political dialogue is not bringing any positive results. They have done much damage to us, to our national wealth and ordinary people. They are acting irresponsibly, producing long-lasting damage. It’s shameful that we have to cope with all this nonsense. All we hear is empty rhetoric, with false promises and never-ending lies.”

Protesters vigorously chant the name of the speaker. The tension in the crowd dies down as the speaker finishes. The crowd disperses peacefully.

In general, participants were more likely to have neutral feelings about this scenario than scenario one. A male participant in Gjilan stated that people in Kosovo are used to statements such as the one presented in scenario two. Almost one-third (27%) of the participants believed that democracy is promoted by using such language. More than half (53%) of participants did not feel supportive toward the person/group targeted by the statement, while almost half of the respondents (49%) thought that such statements instigate violent acts (Figure 3). In Prishtina and North Mitrovica, some participants were not convinced that this scenario contained hate speech. A student of political science in Prishtina declared that this scenario “did not attack anyone directly.” However, some participants in Novosella presented a contextual view of hate speech, arguing that this scenario contained more hate speech than other

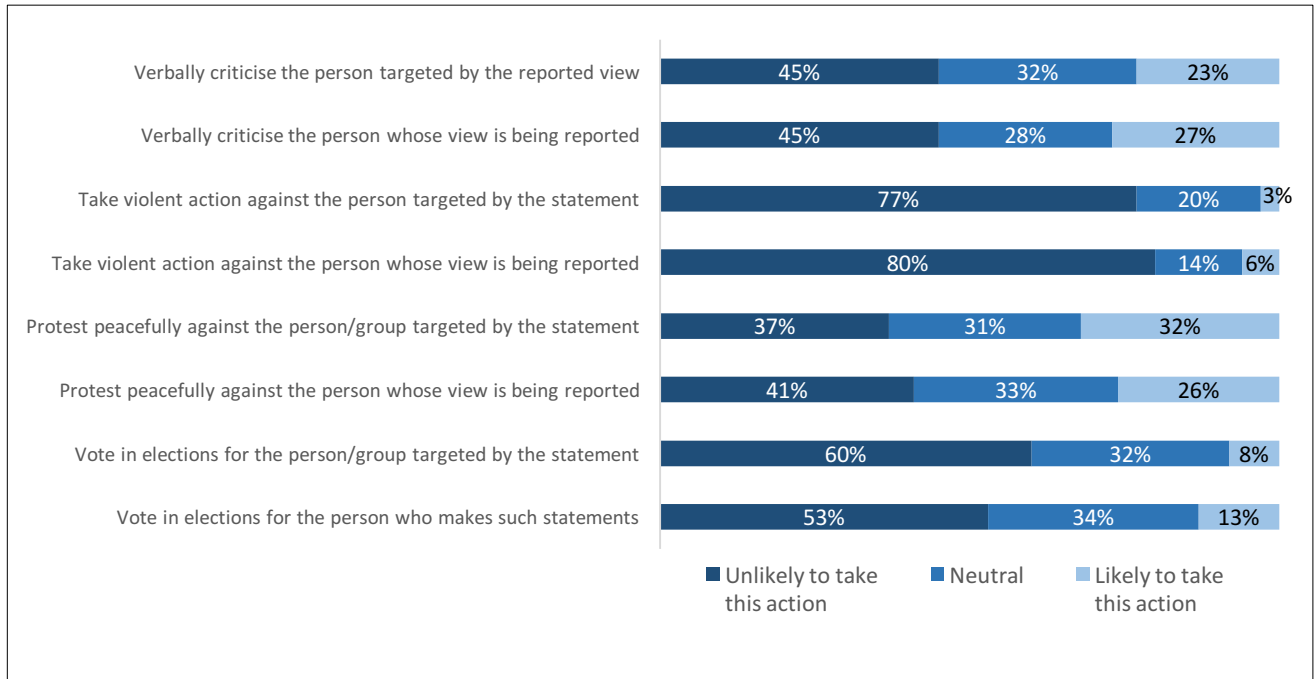
scenarios, because according to them, a minor incident in a protest can result in the situation getting out of control.

Figure 3: How participants felt after reading the second scenario (71 participants)



As with scenario one, few respondents believed that they would be incited to violence by this statement, either against the person targeted by the statement (3%) or the person making the statement (6%), even though almost one half thought that such statements do instigate violent acts. Almost one-third (32%) of the participants believe that they would protest peacefully against the person targeted by the statement, and more than a quarter (26%) would do so against the person whose view is being reported. The statement also did not appear to have a widespread positive impact on voting intentions, with 13 percent stating that they would vote for the person making the statement, and 8 percent for the person targeted by the statement. However, it did have a strong negative impact on voting intentions. More than half of the respondents (53%) believed that they would not vote for the person who makes such statements, while 60 percent would be unlikely to vote for the person targeted by the statement (Figure 4).

Figure 4: How participants would act as a result of reading the second scenario (71 participants)



3. Scenario 3: Religious

3. On a radio station, a preacher (person making the statement) is hosted by a leading radio presenter. After receiving a telephone call from an anonymous caller (person/group about which the statement was made) who appeared not to share the same opinions with the guest, the preacher elaborates:

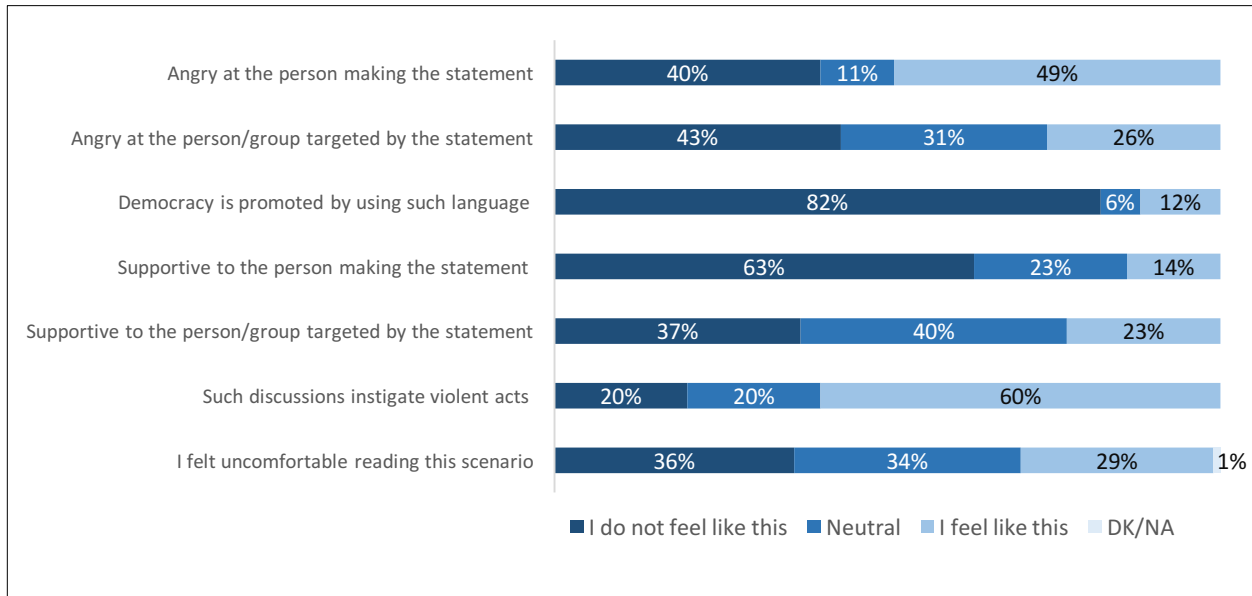
“A person who does not know fear of God and who disobeys, cannot work for the benefit of this nation. Because disobedience alludes submission to the devil. Under God’s command and willingness, we shall gather all our forces and fight the evil. And, all who do not follow our path, we are here to tell them they are setting foot in the wrong direction.”

Many subsequent callers reiterate the need to block callers who do not support the views of the preacher and they condemn people who question the authority of religious leaders.

While more than one-third (36%) of participants did not feel uncomfortable reading this statement, almost two-thirds (60%) believed that such statements instigate acts of violence. Almost half (49%) of the participants felt angry at the person making this statement, and most (82%) believed that democracy is not promoted by using such language. Fourteen percent felt supportive toward the person making the statement, while over one-quarter felt angry at the person targeted by the statement. This was similar to the effectiveness, in arousing anger against the persons targeted, of the political statements at scenarios

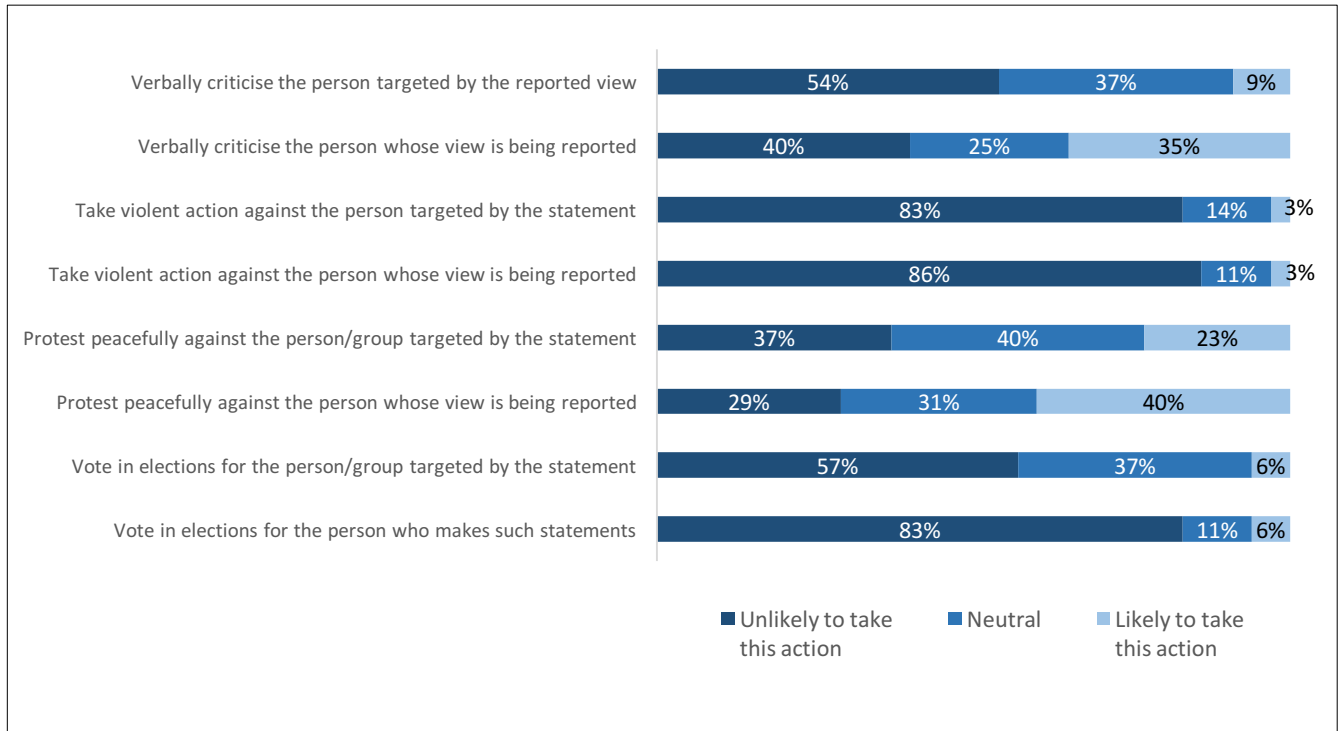
one and two (Figure 5). A male participant from Gjilan stated that it depends who hears statements like this, because the level of influence it could have varies from person to person.

Figure 5: How participants felt after reading the third scenario (35 participants)



Continuing the trend from the first two scenarios, few respondents believed that they would be incited to violence by this statement, either against the person targeted by the statement (3%) or the person making the statement (3%), even though 60 percent thought that such statements do instigate violent acts. More than a third (35%) of the participants believe that they would verbally criticize the person whose view is being reported, while 40 percent would be likely to peacefully protest against this person. As with the two political scenarios this statement had a positive impact on the voting intentions of very few participants, but a widespread negative impact on voting intentions in relation to both the person making the statement and the target of the statement (Figure 6).

Figure 6: How participants would act as a result of reading the third scenario (35 participants)



4. Scenario 4: Ethnicity

4. In a heated public debate between representatives of the main political groups in the country, including political leaders from various ethnic groups, one of the persons (person making the statement) in the debate addresses the other persons (person/group about which the statement was made):

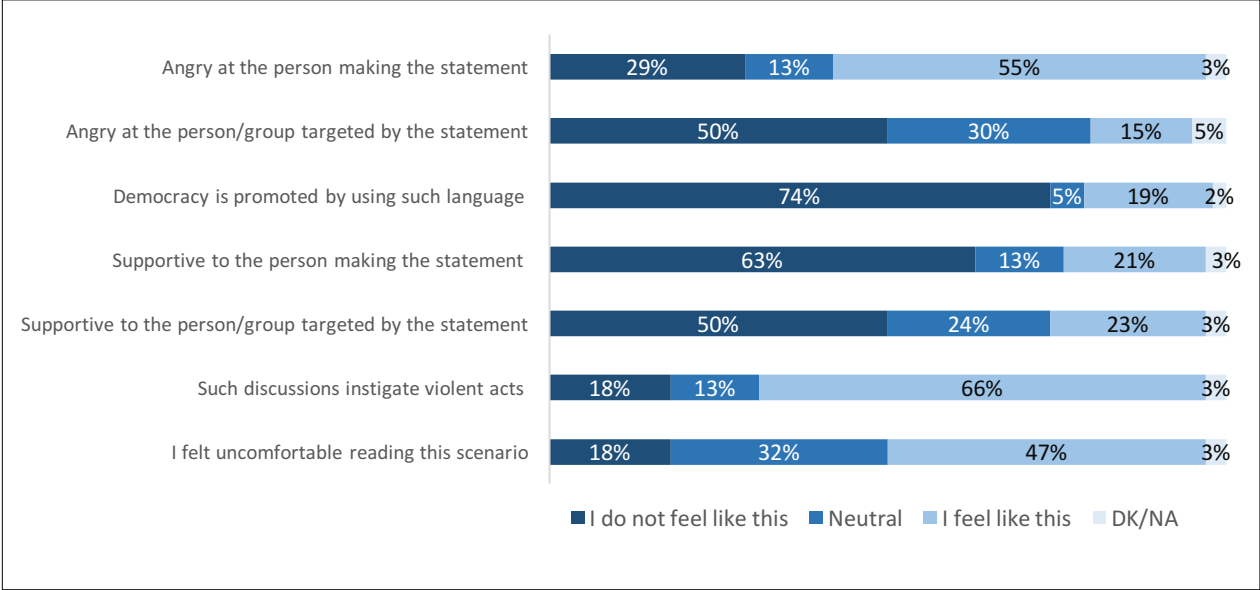
“A nation with false national identity has troubles finding the right path and building its future. Our group has a legacy over this country. As a country with great virtues and common cultural heritage we are decisive to defend them. As native countrymen, we shall not leave newcomers to tarnish our culture. These others [pointing at the person coming from other ethnic group] do not belong here, in the territory that is ours. Furthermore, blood of our predecessors is a clean, noble blood. If it’s necessary, we shall fight in the name of our national identity; all that are not as we are should not be in this country.”

The participants in the debate from minority ethnic groups are booed by spectators and had to leave the show. They are recognized on the street and soon afterwards a few physical attacks on them are reported.

Almost one-half (47%) of participants felt uncomfortable while reading the scenario, whereas more than a fifth (23%) felt supportive toward the person targeted by the statement. While more than half (55%) of participants felt angry at the person making such statements, around one-fifth (21%) felt supportive toward the person making the statement. Two-thirds of participants agreed that such statements instigate violent acts (Figure 7). In Prishtina, almost all participants agreed that this scenario based on views about ethnicity was much more representative of hate speech than the other political and religious

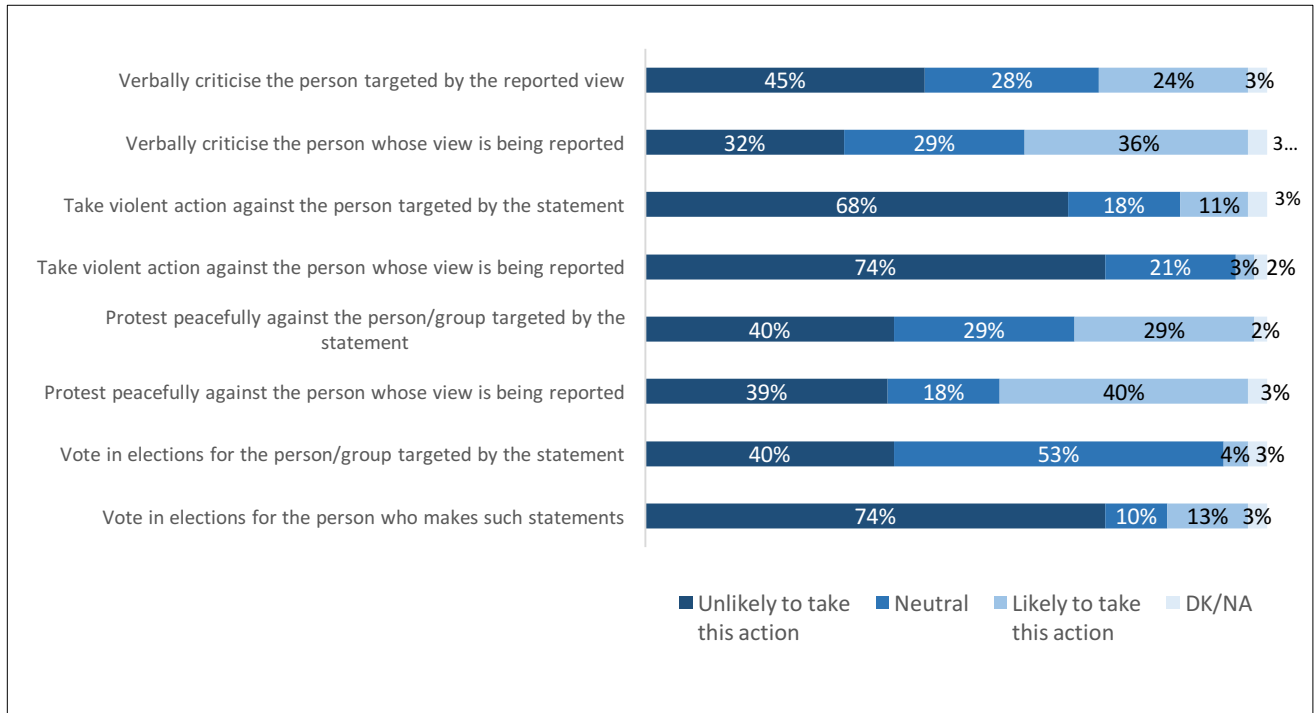
speech scenarios – a male participant added, “this is a typical hate speech statement.” Similarly, a participant in North Mitrovica stated that of all scenarios “this is the worst one ... it is directly related against someone and it’s a talk without elaborating any facts”.

Figure 7: How participants felt after reading the fourth scenario (38 participants)



This ethnicity-based statement appeared to have a more marked impact on the participants in relation to taking violent action against the target of the statement: 11 percent would be likely to do so, compared to 3 percent for each of scenarios two (political) and three (religious) and 8 percent for scenario one (political). Thirteen percent would be likely to vote for the person making the statement, equal to the proportion at scenario one and higher than for scenarios two and three (both 3%). The statement was most likely to have no impact on voting intentions in relation to the person about whom the statement was made. There was a considerable proportion (40%) of participants who believe that they would protest peacefully against the person whose view is being reported (Figure 8).

Figure 8: How participants would act as a result of reading the fourth scenario (38 participants)



F. Conclusions

Several broad conclusions can be drawn based on the findings presented in this report, noting that the findings are based on a small number of focus groups with youth, which gave an indication of a range of youth’s views but may not be representative of the views of youth in Kosovo.

- **There is no single meaning or understanding of hate speech amongst Kosovo youth:** While most focus group participants perceived hate speech in terms of expressions or language that is used to offend, humiliate or discriminate against others on the basis that they are of different nationality, ethnicity or political affiliation, others linked hate speech to offensive language, name calling, jealousy, and conflicts from the past;
- **There is a high exposure of Kosovo youth to hate speech:** A considerable number of focus group participants claimed that they are exposed to hate speech on a daily basis in the news broadcasts, television debates, protests and social media;
- **The most frequent users of hate speech are politicians:** In their discussions the focus group respondents frequently pointed to politicians, who in their view use hate speech, and were generally of the view that politicians use hate speech to appear superior to others and gain political power at the expense of their political opponents;
- **Those who use hate speech are more likely to persuade young people not to vote for them:** The focus group participants stated that they generally felt annoyed and irritated when they hear hate speech. They also condemned the use of hate speech. When reacting to the scenarios, for three of

the four scenarios more than three-quarters of participants stated that they would not be likely to vote for the person making the statement, and for the remaining statement over half would not do so. This indicates that, on a macro level, using hate speech or offensive language may reduce political support among young people. However, for some scenarios, there were still significant numbers of participants (up to 13%) whose voting intention was positively impacted by the statement, which would represent a sizable bloc of voters;

- **There is a widespread perception that there is a relationship between hate speech and violence:** The focus group participants were generally of the view that hate speech can influence youth and persons living in poor economic conditions to engage in violent acts, and pointed to a number of cases where political parties have incited youth to do so in protests and other public rallies. This is an area that would benefit from further research;
- **There is a disconnect between professed views of young people and specific reactions:** While the view from participants in all focus groups was that hate speech did not have an impact on them personally, the fact that almost one-quarter of participants felt anger toward the target of three scenario statements indicates that hate speech may well have an impact on a significant proportion of young people, even among those who do not recognize this impact. This disconnect between how young people perceive their reaction to hate speech and their actual reactions to statements that could be regarded as hate speech would also benefit from further research.

Annex I: Kosovo legislation on freedom of expression and hate speech

<p>Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo</p>	<p>Article 40 Freedom of expression 2. The freedom of expression can be limited by law in cases when it is necessary to prevent encouragement or provocation of violence and hostility on grounds of race, nationality, ethnicity or religion.</p> <p>Article 42 Freedom of Media 2. Censorship is forbidden. No one shall prevent the dissemination of information or idea through media, except if it is necessary to prevent encouragement or provocation of violence and hostility on grounds of race, nationality, ethnicity or religion.</p> <p>Article 44 Freedom of Association 3. Organizations or activities that infringe on the constitutional order, violate human rights and freedoms or encourage racial, national, ethnic or religious hatred may be prohibited by a decision of a competent court.</p>
<p>Law on general elections (03/L-073)</p>	<p>Article 33 Prohibited Actions by Political Entities During the campaigning period a Political Entity, its supporters or candidates shall be prohibited from doing any of the following: [...] l) using language, in oral or written form, which incites or provokes, or is likely to incite or provoke, another person to commit an act of violence against other persons or property, or which incites or is likely to incite hatred towards others, or publishing or using pictures, symbols or any other material that has or is likely to have such effects; <i>[This violation may be sanctioned from 10,000 to 30,000 euros according to Rule 01/2012 of the Election Complaints and Appeals Panel]</i> [...]</p> <p>Article 34 Intimidation and Violence During the Electoral Process 34.1 The use or threat of use of violence of any kind by Political Entities, their members, supporters or candidates, is strictly prohibited. 34.2 No Political Entities or candidates shall encourage, support or approve of violence, threats of violence or intimidation, during the electoral process. Each Political entity shall inform its members and supporters of the need to avoid such behavior. 34.3 Election campaigns shall be organized in such manner that a congenial and peaceful atmosphere prevails during the campaign period.</p>
<p>Criminal Code of Kosovo (04/L-082)</p>	<p>Article 147 Inciting national, racial, religious or ethnic hatred, discord or intolerance 1. Whoever publicly incites or publicly spreads hatred, discord or intolerance between national, racial, religious, ethnic or other such groups living in the Republic of Kosovo in a manner which is likely to disturb public order shall be punished by a fine or by imprisonment of up to five (5) years. [...]</p>

Annex II: Definitions of and prohibitions on hate speech from international sources

“The term ‘hate speech’ shall be understood as covering all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin.”

Source: Committee of Ministers, Recommendation No. R (97) 20 (page 107), accessed on July 2016 at [www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/hrpolicy/other_committees/dh-lgbt_docs/CM_Rec\(97\)20_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/hrpolicy/other_committees/dh-lgbt_docs/CM_Rec(97)20_en.pdf)

“Speech that carries no meaning other than the expression of hatred for some group, such as a particular race, esp. in circumstances in which the communication is likely to provoke violence.”

Source: Black’s Law Dictionary (2009) 9th edition (page 1,529)

“Hate speech is a term which refers to a whole spectrum of negative discourse, stretching from hate or prejudice and inciting to hatred. Hate speech is designed to degrade, intimidate, or incite violence or prejudicial action against a person or group of people based on their race, gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, language ability, moral or political views, socioeconomic class, occupation or appearance (such as height, weight, and hair color), mental capacity and any other distinction-liability. Although “speech”, it covers not only oral or written communication but also any other form of expression such as for example movies, arts, gestures (symbolic speech).”

Source: European Association for the Defense of Human Rights, Hate Speech, accessed on July 2016 at www.aedh.eu/plugins/fckeditor/userfiles/file/Discriminations%20et%20droits%20des%20minorités/Hate%20speech.pdf

“Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.”

Source: United Nations, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 20 (2), accessed on July 2016 at www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx

“A person is guilty of an offence if he-

- (a) uses towards another person threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or
- (b) distributes or displays to another person any writing, sign or other visible representation which is threatening, abusive or insulting,

with intent to cause that person to believe that immediate unlawful violence will be used against him or another by any person, or to provoke the immediate use of unlawful violence by that person or another, or whereby that person is likely to believe that such violence will be used or it is likely that such violence will be provoked.”

Source: United Kingdom, Public Order Act 1986, s.4 (1), accessed on July 2016 at <http://www.harassmentlaw.co.uk/law/crimes.htm>

Annex III: Grading scale used for the fictional scenario statements

“Mark a single number between 1 and 5 for each question, where the value of 1 is ‘I do not feel like this at all,’ the value of 3 is neutral, and the value of 5 was ‘I feel very much like this.’”

Angry at the person making the statement	1	2	3	4	5
Angry at the person/group targeted by the statement	1	2	3	4	5
Democracy is promoted by using such language	1	2	3	4	5
Supportive toward the person making the statement	1	2	3	4	5
Supportive toward the person/group targeted by the statement	1	2	3	4	5
Such discussions instigate violent acts	1	2	3	4	5
I felt uncomfortable reading this scenario	1	2	3	4	5

“Mark a single number between 1 and 5 for each question, where the value of 1 was ‘I am very unlikely to take this action,’ the value of 3 is neutral, and the value of 5 was ‘I am very likely to take this action.’”

Verbally criticize the person targeted by the reported view	1	2	3	4	5
Verbally criticize the person whose view is being reported	1	2	3	4	5
Take violent action against the person targeted by the statement	1	2	3	4	5
Take violent action against the person whose view is being reported	1	2	3	4	5
Protest peacefully against the person/group targeted by the statement	1	2	3	4	5
Protest peacefully against the person whose view is being reported	1	2	3	4	5
Vote in elections for the person/group targeted by the statement	1	2	3	4	5
Vote in elections for the person who makes such statements	1	2	3	4	5