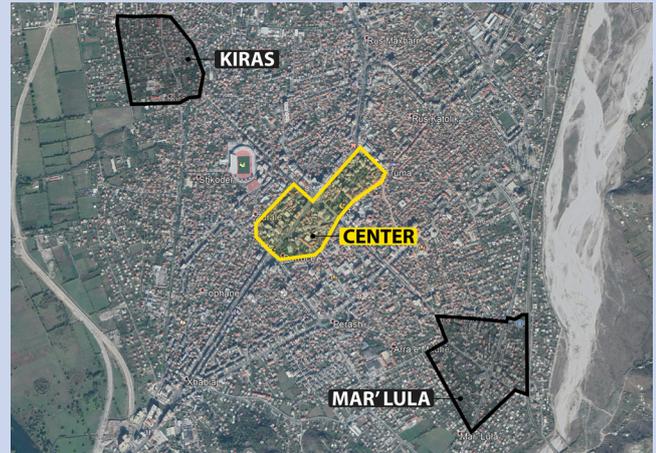


# SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND OTHER FORMS OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN URBAN SPACES IN ALBANIA, 2019 SHKODRA MUNICIPALITY

**250 Interviews** with girls and women divided between Center, Kiras and Mar Lula

**One Focus Groups** with women and girls

**Six Structured Observations** and one Safety Audit Walk\*  
(\*Structured observations are observations of an area, with the help of checklists, to assess its conditions in various aspects. Safety Audit walks are conducted by a group of women and girls in a certain area to assess, with the help of guidelines and checklists, what makes them feel unsafe and how an area can be improved.)



Kiras, Center, Mar Lula

## Safety of Neighborhoods and Personal Safety

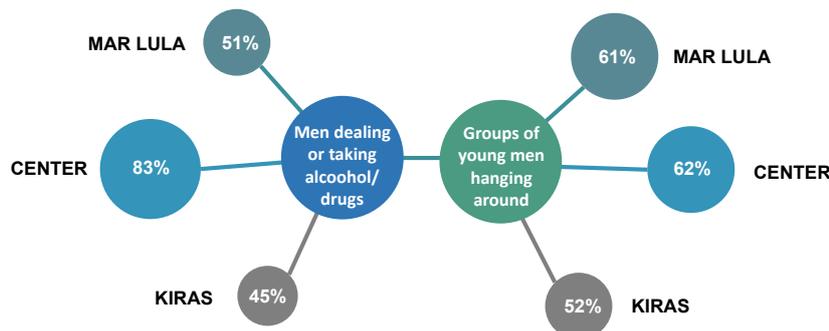
When asking the respondents about the quality of lighting in several different places in their neighborhoods, it appears that the overall situation in Shkodra is varied. Lighting in the streets appears to be the biggest issue in Mar Lula with 47 per cent combined rating it as “poor” or “no lighting at all”. In the Center and in Kiras about one third of respondents perceive it equally negative, too.

Regarding public transportation service, the great majority perceives it as “poor” or “no service at all”. Only at the Center some respondents would rate it as “satisfactory” or “good”. The lack of effective or visible police is also seen as an issue contributing to feeling unsafe in the neighborhoods by many respondents. In Mar Lula and Kiras, more than half of the respondents feel that poor maintenance affects their safety, too (such as garbage laying around). A poor appearance of an area can increase the general impression of an area being unsafe.

Men dealing with drugs or taking drugs and alcohol, and groups of men hanging around are seen as other factors influencing the women’s and girls’ safety, identified by around 60 per cent of respondents in all three neighborhoods.



## In this area, which factors contribute to you feeling unsafe?



Alarming results can be found in regard to the statement “Girls/women who are sexually harassed or sexually abused provoke it themselves.” While only 23 per cent of the respondents from the Center “partly agree”, the situation in other neighborhoods is worse. 57 per cent of Kiras and 70 per cent of the Mar Lula respondents “partly agree”, while seven per cent of respondents in Mar Lula even “strongly agree”.

### Help and Reporting



Over 90 per cent of respondents from all three neighborhoods in Shkodra are not aware that a national helpline under 116 117 exists, where victims of sexual harassment or violence can call. Most are also not aware of other services which might offer help to victims.

*“Girls/women who are sexually harassed or sexually abused provoke it themselves”*



The most common reasons for not asking for help are the lack of trust in getting the appropriate help, not knowing where to ask for help, or being afraid of being labeled. What stands out is that around 3 out of 4 respondents think that victims are too ashamed or afraid that people will judge them or their families and over 40 per cent believe that women and girls are afraid to approach the Police



### Key Recommendations for Shkodra Municipality

- Urgent intervention is needed to improve lighting system at Mar Lula and Kiras neighborhood as well as to ensure that the lighting system is managed properly during the entire year in all areas of the city. Interventions in some streets such as in: “Lufta e Miletit” street, “Sali Hylja” street and “Sukave” street should be prioritized.
- Public transportation infrastructure is in urgent need of expansion and improvements. Data of this study has shown that a significant number of women and girls do not make use of the public transport due to lack of existing bus lines in many areas.
- Since the municipality of Shkodra is the main responsible institution at local level to coordinate the Coordinated Referral Mechanism against Domestic Violence, it should require from police to increase the level of controls and patrolling in all neighborhoods of the city, especially in Kiras and Mar’ Lula neighborhoods. These patrolling must be with high frequencies especially during evening and late hours in night. In addition, registering of all reported cases and protection of the personal data when reporting cases of sexual harassment or violence can be required from police, as well as from other members of the referral mechanism.
- Information on existing services as well as their contact numbers must be spread all over the city, especially in bus stations, health clinics and schools. Specialized NGOs must collaborate with state institutions for such purpose.
- Existing NGOs in Shkodra specifically focused on VAWG must increase their efforts and must conduct many informative and awareness activities regarding their existence, mission and services provided. In collaboration with the Municipality of Shkodra and CRM’ members, NGOs may initiate an awareness programme to be broadcasted in local TV and Radio station.
- The Municipality of Shkodra, must take all needed measures to allocate and/or ensure the budget for capacity building activities focused especially on local administrators of all administrative units (as planed in the Gender Action Plan 2018-2020). These capacity building activities must have a very strong focus on sexual harassment and sexual violence as well as on identification, referral and recording of such cases from them. Particular attention should be paid on avoiding gender stereotypes and victims’ prejudices/blaming/labeling.