** United Nations Office in Belgrade**

**Daily Media Highlights**

**Tuesday, 4 March 2014**

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**LOCAL PRESS**

**ROSU searched the court in Strpce (*Beta*)**

Kosovo police ROSU units blocked this morning the roads at several locations in Kosovo and searched houses and premises in Brezovica, Strpce and Gotovusa village. ***Beta*** learns that ROSU special units broke into the court building in Strpce and in the Gotovusa village. The acting president of the High Court in northern Kosovska Mitrovica Nikola **Kabasic** confirmed this information and added that, according to the information he has, ROSU units broke into the court before 8 a.m. They kept temporarily three employees who were in the building at the time, while other employees were not allowed to enter the court without any explanation. “We don’t know the legal grounds for this KPS action nor what are they doing in the court building,” Kabasic told ***Beta***, adding that he informed the Serbian Justice Ministry about the event. According to Kabasic, “the occupying KPS ROSU forces” searched the court in court in Strpce, took out the registrars and other documentation, and they are determining presently what else has been taken out from the court. After one hour, ROSU members left the building and released the employees they had kept.

**Raids and detentions in Strpce (*RTS/Tanjug*)**

Several tens of members of the Kosovo police ROSU special units raided in Strpce the offices of the Directorate for Construction and the Serbian Health Insurance Fund, as well as the Kosovska Mitrovica Municipal Court Department, members of the provisional council of the Strpce municipality told ***Radio and Television of Serbia*** (RTS). The same police units detained in Strpce and near-by villages local members of the Kosovo police and took them for interrogation in Urosevac. Detained are Dejan **Stevanovic**, Radisa **Jovanovic**, Dragan **Markovic** and Dejan **Jorgovic**. They worked in the investigative unit of the police station in Strpce. The local forester

Dragutin **Ivanovic** is also among the detained. The houses of all detained had been searched previously. They also used sniffer dogs during the search. Members of the Kosovo police special units blocked during the operation all roads from Strpce towards the villages Sevce, Gotovusa, Vrbestica. ***Tanjug*** reports that members of the Kosovo police special units searched the **Lazic** family house in Strpce and on that occasion seized money, laptops and telephones. Ivan Lazic said the police came into his family house around 5.30 a.m. and showed him a search warrant that was written in Albanian. Ivan is the brother of Laza Lazic who has been in detention several months. The special police left Strpce after 10 a.m.

**Vulin and Udovicic banned from visiting Kosovo and Metohija (*Tanjug*)**

The Office for Kosovo and Metohija stated that the Pristina authorities banned outgoing Serbian Minister without Portfolio in charge of Kosovo and Metohija Aleksandar **Vulin** and outgoing Minister of Youth and Sports Vanja **Udovicic** from visiting Kosovo and Metohija. “This time it is not only an ordinary ban on visiting Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija imposed on the ministers of the Serbian government, but also a decision that prevents them from helping the best Serb students in the province to broaden their knowledge and talents,” the statement reads. The Office called on the competent bodies and the international community to react and impede Pristina from discriminating students on a national basis thus violating the basic right to education of all Serb students of the Pristina University with the temporary seat in Kosovska Mitrovica. Vulin and Udovicic were supposed to present the grants of the Fund for Young Talents to six students of the Pristina University, who won the grants in a state competition for 1,200 best students of the final year at the universities founded by the Republic of Serbia for the 2013/2014 academic year.

**REGIONAL PRESS**

**Covic: Security system in B&H doesn’t function (*Fena*)**

The HDZ B&H leader Dragan **Covic** has stated that the security situation in B&H is very complex and concerning, and that the latest events showed to what extent the system that is supposed to guarantee security in B&H doesn’t function. “You see how much time we need to receive reports after the latest events and how many different views exist of different security-police agencies in B&H from different levels on what had been done, as well as on the launched activities and certain sanctions towards individuals who conducted these activities,” said Covic. During a break of the session of the HDZ B&H Presidency in Mostar, Covic told journalists that the latest events speak for themselves in what kind of atmosphere people live. “Our key task is to perceive everything thoroughly through parliamentary work, primarily at the B&H level, and to remove what can be removed in this complexly regulated B&H so that it never happens again that a Presidency member can’t be guaranteed to enter the Presidency building or any citizen to enter the building here,” stressed Covic.

**RS cabinet accepts wording of permanent residence bill (*Srna*)**

The Republika Srpska (RS) cabinet accepted the wording of the RS bill on permanent residence which was sent to the competent committees for harmonization so that the cabinet could adopt a final version of the bill at its next session, which it would then forward to parliament. The RS Interior Minister Radislav **Jovicic** said that the reasons for bringing this bill are numerous, one of the major being the fact that the B&H law on permanent and temporary residence most probably will not be adopted on time. “Our analyses say that there are a great number of B&H citizens registered at addresses which do not exist or are registered at addresses of B&H institutions and religious sites, which is why there are abuses,” Jovicic told a press conference in Banja Luka after a cabinet session. “Most probably the final wording will be identical to the one at the B&H level, which is awaiting passage in the B&H House of Peoples. The RS Interior Ministry is very interested in having this bill go into force, primarily for the sake of the safety of the RS citizens, and it will be applied only in the RS territory,” Jovicic said. He said that this bill in no way will violate B&H laws and that the RS finds the right to bring this law in Article 21 of the RS Constitution, which guarantees freedom of movement, settlement and stay in the territory of the RS. “The bill stipulates which documents citizens need to show in order to register permanent or temporary residence, and they are copies of the apartment purchase agreement, employment contract, lease agreement, and the like,” Jovicic explained. If in the meantime the law on permanent residence is adopted by the B&H House of Peoples, Jovicic said that the RS bill on residence will be withdrawn from procedure. The RS Interior Minister feels that there won’t be problems because the RS will have a law which has not yet been brought at the B&H level, stressing that no one has the right to challenge the bringing of such an important bill at the entity level. “We had a similar situation in connection with the law on the personal ID number. The RS cabinet brought and implemented a decree on the personal ID number, and there were no problems. With the passage of a law on the personal ID number, all personal ID numbers which were issued on the basis of the decree were entered into the B&H Central Data Base,” Jovicic explained.

**Reshetnikov: New model for B&H already created in Brussels and Washington (*Srna,* by Sasa Krsman)**

In an interview with ***Srna***, the Director of the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies – an advisory body of Russian President Vladimir Putin – Leonid **Reshetnikov**, says that a stable RS which defends the interests of the Serbian people evokes hatred among Westerners. He says that they are particularly irritated by the fact that even though they have already subjugated Serbia, the RS is still resisting. Reshetnikov has stressed that the recent protests in the FB&H which received the approval of the West, were certainly organized with the aim of spreading riots to the more stable and better organized RS. “A new model for B&H has already been created in Brussels and Washington, and it concerns the re-organization of the FB&H exclusively in keeping with the territorial principle. The West is waiting for an opportune moment, more precisely creating a circumstance in which to make public this new plan for artificially transforming the Federation. Re-tailoring borders and countries and re-settling peoples have become a favored pre-occupation of the United States,” Reshetnikov told Srna. He says that the EU, on orders of the U.S., artificially created the FB&H, while now it is saying that the FB&H is inefficient. He says that Americans and their helpers are doing everything not to allow Russia to strengthen its influence in the world, and, therefore, the direction taken by the RS President Milorad **Dodik** towards widening cooperation with Russia is making Washington angry. “This is why various actions directed at undermining the stability of the RS and overthrowing the current president are being prepared,” Reshetnikov says. He says that any country which tries to develop relations with Russia is submitted to pressure from the US, including the organizing of “orange revolutions” and overthrowing of governments that are not to the liking of Americans and their allies. “The US and powerful multinational companies which stand behind them are firmly committed to the ideology of their supremacy in the world. They consider Russia a potential competitor, even a civilizational alternative,” Reshetnikov says.

**INTERNATIONAL PRESS**

**Serbia Rightists Back Russian Moves in Ukraine (*BIRN*, 4 March 2014)**

About 150 Serbian far-rightists gathered in front of the Russian embassy in Belgrade to demonstrate their support for Russian military intervention in Ukraine.

Chanting "Russia, Russia," and "Putin, Serbia is with you," some 150 far-right supporters gathered in front of the Russian embassy in Belgrade late on Monday.
The group, which brought traffic to a halt in front of the embassy in Deligradska st, expressed strong support for the Russian forces that have taken effective control of the Black Sea region of Crimea in Ukraine.
Vladan Glisic, who heads the ticket for one of the groups - Dveri - in the Belgrade local election due on March 16, said Dveri "invited all Serbian anti-fascists and patriots to gather today in a show of support for [Russian] President [Vladimir] Putin and the Russian state in their fight against Nazism in Ukraine".
Russian forces seized the Crimea peninsula, where most of the population are ethnic Russian, over the weekend, using forces based at its large naval base in Crimea.
The takeover has been denounced by the new government in Kiev as well as by most Western governments.

Russia, however, maintains that it acted on the invitation of Ukraine's ousted leader, Viktor Yanukovych - and had a right to move in to defend ethnic Russians whom it said felt endangered.

Serbian rightists and nationalists generally cherish ties with Russia, as the leading Orthodox Christian Slavic power in the world.

The movements are also known for holding strong socially conservative values, emphasising family life and opposing gay rights and abortion. They also oppose Serbia's EU integration.

**Bosnian Serbs Push Through Own Residency Law (*BIRN*, by Elvira M. Jukic, 4 March 2014)**

Bosnia's mainly Serbian entity, Republika Srpska, is adopting its own residency law after proposed Bosnia-wide legislation became stuck in the country's state-level parliament.

Republika Srpska has adopted its own residency law after a Bosnia-wide law remained blocked in the state-level parliament, where Bosniak MPs said it would discriminate against returnees.
As no residency law could be adopted in the state-level parliament, the Republika Srpska President, Milorad Dodik, pushed the law through the entity government in an urgent procedure.
Radislav Jovicic, the Republika Srpska Interior Minister, on Monday said the entity government had finalised its proposal of the disputable law, and the final version would be sent to entity lawmakers by next week.
“We have many citizens registered at addresses that do not exist... which has created a large number of abuses,” Jovicic said, explaining the reasons for adopting the law.
The law gives local authorities, such as the police, the authority to check up on whether there are misuses concerning residency, or fake registrations.
“The law foresees which documents citizens need to show when registering residence - and those are a copy of the agreement on buying an apartment, an agreement on employment and agreement with the employer that you will be residing at a certain address,” Jovicic explained.

Bosniak returnee organizations and Bosniak lawmakers at state-level say they fear the law will allow the Serb entity police to discriminate against returnees and other individuals at local level.
Returnees say they already face sustained obstructions from the Bosnian Serb authorities - and some Bosniak returnees are unregistered at their residence for no fault of their own.

**Macedonia Parties Mobilize Ethnic Supporters (*BIRN*, by Sinisa Jakov Marusic, 4 March 2014)**

As elections in April approach, the two main parties in government are mobilizing their own ethnic Macedonian and Albanian electorates in order to strengthen their bargaining positions in the next government.

The junior party in Macedonia's government, the Democratic Union for Integration, DUI, on Monday called on ethnic Albanians to mobilize to give the DUI more leverage in the next government.
Sounding confident of victory within the ethnic Albanian bloc in the April early elections, the DUI spokesperson, Bujar Osmani, said the party needed at least 25 seats to boost its position in government.

The party currently controls 14 of the 123 seats in the country's assembly.
“These elections will determine who will be more influential in the next government - the [main ruling party] VMRO DPMNE or the DUI - which is why we ask for support from Albanians, so that we can win 25 seats,” Osmani said.
Two days earlier, the Prime Minister and leader of VMRO DPMNE, Nikola Gruevski, called on ethnic Macedonians also to mobilize - so that his party is less susceptible to blackmail and pressure from its ethnic Albanian partner, the DUI.
Gruevski, whose party controls just under half of the seats in parliament, on Saturday told a party congress that he needed a working majority of at least 62 seats.
With that number, he added, “no one could blackmail us as a party, as a coalition, as the Macedonian people and nation”, he told his supporters.
He said that the DUI wanted to put VMRO DPMNE in a position whereby they could demand one of the top three posts in the country as a condition for participation in the government.
“If VMRO DPMNE does not win 62 legislators, the DUI could either seek the Prime Minister's position, or that of speaker of parliament, or head of state,” Gruevski explained.

Ethnic Albanians make up roughly a quarter of the population of Macedonia. Since independence, it has been an unwritten rule that the strongest parties from both ethnic blocs should together form the government.
At the weekend, all the main political players agreed that early parliamentary elections should be held on April 27, in tandem with the second round of voting in the presidential election.
The agreement became clear after the DUI submitted an initiative on early elections to parliament on Friday, on the grounds that VMRO DPMNE had ignored its idea for a joint presidential candidate.
However, some opposition parties described the apparent crisis between VMRO DPMNE and the DUI as a fabrication - prearranged between the two of them in order to have an excuse to call early elections.
Both parties have an interest in early elections as recent opinion polls suggest they stand to do well, and so win another four-year term.
For Prime Minister Gruevski, who has held power since 2006, this will be the third time he has challenged the opposition in an early general election.
The last early general elections were held in Macedonia in 2011. Although Gruevski won, the main opposition Social Democrats made a strong showing. At present, VMRO DPMNE hold 56 seats in parliament, the Social Democrats 42, the DUI 14 and the opposition Democratic Party of Albanians, eight.

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