** United Nations Office in Belgrade**

**Daily Media Highlights**

**Monday, 7 April 2014**

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**LOCAL PRESS**

**Court in Mitrovica will have two “administrations” (*Politika*)**

The Serbian delegation in Brussels has practically finalized the talks with Pristina on the judiciary, while the final agreement is expected in the following round of the dialogue, planned for the end of this month after the new government is formed. What will the judiciary in north Kosovo look like, according to what is known so far? The court in Mitrovica, which will be competent for seven municipalities and located in two buildings, will actually have “two administrations,” the chairperson of the parliamentary Committee for Kosovo and Metohija Milovan **Drecun** says. He points out that the important thing is that the president of that court will be a Serb since he/she will “prevent abuses and for cases to be assigned to the other side.” The agreement implies the respect of the national structure, so Serb judges will try Serbs and Albanian judges will try Albanians. “Keeping in mind that the three municipalities in the south are included in the agreement, it is very important that the Serbs will have the president of the court, as well as Serb judges in other courts south of the Ibar River, in municipalities where Serbs make up a majority or are significantly present. It is also very important that an equal number of prosecutors will exist, on whom it will largely depend who will be processed and how a certain case will be conducted,” explains Drecun, who underlines that this represents one of the significant results of this agreement. He says that Pristina will have to amend its law on the judiciary so the agreed structure of courts could be reached after the elections in May or June. He notes that they agreed in Brussels what was possible so the judiciary system can start operating and in which Serbs could fight for an equal treatment. “The novelty is that the element of the representation of the Serb people is introduced into the judiciary system in Kosovo and Metohija, through the Serb judges and prosecutors. Of course, we would wish for the solutions to be significantly different, but at this moment this is the only thing possible we could achieve,” said Drecun.

**Vekaric: Special court for KLA encouragement for victims (*Tanjug*)**

The Serbian War Crime Prosecution welcomed the information from Brussels that the accused for crimes of the so-called KLA based on the report of Council of Europe Rapporteur Dick **Marty** will be tried in The Hague and not in Pristina. The formation of the court for the KLA-related crimes will be very encouraging for victims and their families, Deputy War Crime Prosecutor Bruno **Vekaric** told ***Tanjug***. The agency confirmed in Brussels that after several-month consultations behind the closed door, the EU member states decided to try the individuals charged by head of the special investigative team Clint **Williamson** in The Hague. For nearly four years, Williamson’s team has been investigating allegations outlined in the Marty report that described crimes committed by members of the former KLA against the Serbs and Roma after the state forces withdrew from Kosovo in 1999. The most attention was attracted by the part of the report outlining extraction of organs of the kidnapped Serbs in the so-called yellow house in central Albania, after which the organs were sold in the black market.

**Majority understands Serbian stance on Ukraine (*Beta*)**

Outgoing Serbian Foreign Minister Ivan **Mrkic** has stated that the majority of EU countries understand the neutral position of Serbia regarding the crisis in Ukraine. After an informal meeting of EU members and candidates for membership, held in Athens, Mrkic has announced that EU High Representative Catherina **Ashton** should visit Belgrade at the end of April, and one of the topics in the talks will be the Ukrainian crisis. The Minister said that he had explained to the European partners the Serbian view of the entire situation, and repeated that a strong government would be formed soon, and it will present the official position on various neuralgic points, including Ukraine. The press release of the Foreign Ministry underlines that Mrkic’s participation at the meeting in Athens indicated the intensified dynamics of the relations with the EU since the beginning of the accession talks.

**Partner relations with the EU and resolution on Kosovo (*Radio Serbia*, by Petar Popovic)**

After another round of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue in Brussels, members of the Serbian delegation have stated that the available maximum at the moment has been achieved in view of judiciary in Kosovo. At the same time, President Tomislav **Nikolic** has announced the possibility of a new parliamentary resolution in Kosovo and Metohija. Certain political analysts believe this is a good time for the new composition of the Serbian parliament to discuss the situation in Kosovo, regardless of whether the new resolution will be on the agenda or not. In that context, the fact is that a lot has changed in the field and in foreign policy circumstances since the passing of the previous resolution, first and foremost if we have in mind the results of the Brussels dialogue.

President’s advisor Stanislava **Pak Stankovic** specified that the new resolution on Kosovo and Metohija is required for the sake of legitimacy of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. She also pointed to another important turn of events, which is the formation of the Kosovo army. The Serbian officials have engaged in some serious political activity to prevent it, pointing that the establishing of such a formation would jeopardize the Serbs in the province, and on the other side, the international law would be violated again. Let us remind, none of the currently valid documents relating to Kosovo and Metohija, particularly UNSCR 1244, allows for such an undertaking. So, the logical question is – what is the purpose of the Brussels dialogue, if official Pristina, helped by certain centers of power, takes unilateral actions and brings to completion its statehood to the detriment of the Serb people?

It remains to be seen what the future Serbian Government will do about it, and if they will see it fit to define new guidelines through the new resolution to be adopted in the national parliament. That sort of a strategic document is certainly needed, although one should not have any illusions about official Belgrade being able to “do whatever they like”. It is clear that most could be achieved through the clever and constructive policy and a partner relationship with the EU, which is the current aim. The arms cannot prevent the forming of the so-called Kosovo army, but persistent insisting on the international norms and documents could do it, along with stressing the promises and guarantees given by the international community.

The power of the Serbian stance, not just in regards of Kosovo, depends primarily on the economic power that stems from the foreign investments and strengthening of the economic capacities. If the Serbian Government succeeds in attracting foreign investments and to have that image reflected in the north of Kosovo as well, along with the forming of the Union of Serb Municipalities, then the dialogue of Belgrade and Pristina would certainly become more flexible and effective.

**REGIONAL PRESS**

**Council of Ministers adopts conclusion: B&H avoids Council of Europe sanctions (*Oslobodjenje*)**

The B&H Council of Ministers obliged the Ministry of Security to prepare and put forward a new draft law on preventing money laundering and financing terrorist activities, which will be put into urgent procedure in the Parliament. “The B&H Council of Ministers expressed commitment to put a law on preventing money laundering and financing terrorism again into parliamentary procedure as soon as possible. The draft amendments to the Criminal Code are already prepared and will be considered at the first regular session of the Council of Ministers. The Ministry of Security is tasked with immediate preparation and submission of a new draft law on preventing money laundering and financing terrorism, in order to be urgently put into parliamentary procedure,” the Council of Ministers said in a statement, confirming the news that urgent measures would be adopted to pass the sought legal resolutions so B&H avoids finding itself on the blacklist of the Council of Europe with Iran and North Korea.

**INTERNATIONAL PRESS**

**AP Exclusive: EU to set up court for Kosovo crimes (*AP*, by Nebi Qena, 4 April 2014)**

PRISTINA, Kosovo — The European Union plans to set up an international tribunal focusing exclusively on crimes allegedly committed by Kosovo's ethnic Albanian rebels during their war with Serbia, The Associated Press has learned.

Plans for an independent tribunal amount to an admission of failure by the West to hold its ethnic Albanian allies accountable for war crimes. The rebels had the backing of NATO during the war — and the West has staunchly supported Kosovo in its efforts to emerge from the conflict as an independent state. But the ethnic Albanians have also come under increasing pressure from the international community to reckon with their own war crimes, including alleged organ harvesting.

Kosovo declared independence in 2008, and it has been recognized by over 100 nations, although not by Serbia and its ally Russia.

The court is expected to start proceedings by next year, a senior EU official told The Associated Press, adding that the rules and reach of the tribunal are still being discussed with Kosovo authorities.

The court is to be symbolically seated in Kosovo, but most key proceedings such as hearing witness testimony would take place in the Netherlands, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal has yet to be approved by Kosovo's assembly.

Prosecutions of ethnic Albanian rebels — both in Kosovo and at the United Nations war crimes tribunal in the Hague, Netherlands — have been marred by widespread intimidation of witnesses and their families. Former rebels are considered by many Kosovars as heroes who fought for freedom from Serbia. Some 10,000 people died during the 1998-1999 war and about 1,700 are considered missing.

The court, which will be set up and paid for by the EU, is to consider allegations of organ harvesting by the now-disbanded Kosovo Liberation Army rebels as well as the disappearance of some 400 people — most of them Kosovo Serbs — at the end of the war. A two-year investigation led by a U.S. prosecutor, and set to wrap up by mid-June, is to form the basis of any indictments brought before the court. The United States supports the new tribunal.

"We are asking for a court composed only by internationals and an appeals panel composed only of internationals," said the EU official. "The procedure has to be done and has to be done abroad. It's the only way for it to be credible."

Kosovo has yet to agree to the 170 million euro tribunal but failure to do so would damage its claim to statehood. Some Kosovars noted the dilemma they faced.

"This is a tribunal to try ethnic Albanians," said a senior Kosovo official, skeptical about whether lawmakers will support the tribunal when it is discussed in Parliament next week. "However, we are fully aware that any other option is worse."

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the deal.

U.S. Ambassador Tracey Jacobson insisted on Friday the judicial body that will be set up will be a Kosovo court and not an international tribunal, a term she said implies an external mechanism created without Kosovo having a say.

"The proposal is for the creation of a Kosovo court implementing Kosovo law, staffed with international judges, and that has an external and internal seat," Jacobson said.

But EU member states such as Spain have been reluctant to endorse a court that would recognize Kosovo as a state and implement its laws because they reject Kosovo's secession. Greece, Slovakia, Romania and Cyprus also refuse to recognize Kosovo's secession from Serbia.

A top international official in Kosovo said that once set up, the court will draft its internal procedures but the laws used will include Kosovo law, the penal code of the now defunct Yugoslavia — in use at the time when the crimes were committed — as well as U.N. legal documents promulgated while Kosovo was under U.N. control.

Serbia's Deputy War Crimes Prosecutor Bruno Vekaric told the AP that "setting up of the tribunal would present an encouragement for the victims and their families."

"This is important for reaching justice and for reconciliation in the region," Vekaric said.

Kosovo's justice system was set up and originally run by a U.N. administration in control for nearly a decade. An EU mission called EULEX took over judicial responsibilities in Kosovo on the eve of its 2008 independence declaration. Since then, EULEX has often come into conflict with Kosovo's ruling coalition, made up mainly of former rebels unhappy that their fellow fighters were being investigated for war crimes.

Highlighting the difficulties in protecting witnesses, an ethnic-Albanian was found hanging in a German park in an apparent suicide after he was named in local media as a whistleblower in a war crimes case against a senior rebel and former ally of Prime Minister Hashim Thaci.

Fred Abrahams, a special adviser to Human Rights Watch who has investigated human rights violations in Kosovo, said the court is important because it may shed light on the fate of hundreds of missing people.

"The organ trafficking is a distraction from the central issue," said Abrahams. "The central issue is about more than 400 people, mostly Serbs, who went missing after the war."

Plans to set up the court have been met with anger by former rebels, many of whom hold senior governing positions in Kosovo.

"It's absurd, it makes no sense," said Muharrem Xhemajli, the head of Kosovo Liberation Army veteran's association. "Our war that was supported by the international community, the United States and all the freedom-loving people is now being put on trial."

**EU to set up international court for Kosovo war crimes (*EUbusiness*, 6 April 2014)**

(*PRISTINA*) - The European Union said on Saturday it plans to set up an international court in Kosovo to deal with alleged crimes committed by ethnic-Albanian guerrillas during the war with Serbia.

"The EU is not proposing to establish a tribunal, but rather a specialist court within the Kosovo court system," the bloc's Pristina office said in a statement sent to AFP.

"This court would have a seat in Kosovo, but sensitive proceedings, including hearing of witnesses, would take place outside of the country in view of the nature of the allegations," the EU said.

The court will address the findings of a 2010 report by the Council of Europe's special rapporteur Dick Marty that alleged ethnic-Albanian fighters had been involved in serious war crimes during the 1998-1999 conflict.

It accused Kosovo's top political leaders, including Prime Minister Hashim Thaci and several of his closest associates, of killing some 500 prisoners -- mostly Kosovo Serbs -- in order to harvest and sell their organs, among other crimes.

At the time Thaci was a leader of Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), an independence-seeking guerrilla force that fought the armies of the Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic.

The two-year war ended when a NATO air campaign ousted Milosevic's forces from Kosovo, paving the way to its declaration of independence from Serbia in 2008.

The EU in 2011 set up a special task force (SITF) to conduct a fair and independent criminal investigation into the allegations contained in the Marty report.

Led by US prosecutor Clint Williamson, the force "is expected to release its findings by mid-June", a justice official told AFP.

"He hinted that his probe resulted in enough evidence for raising an indictment," said the official, who asked not to be named.

The establishment of the court topped the agenda of meetings senior US diplomat Johnathan Moore held Friday with Thaci and other top officials in Pristina, local media reported.

In an interview with Kosovo's Koha Ditore daily on Saturday, Moore said the goal of the court "is to focus on the findings of the Marty report," and that it should be approved by parliament.

"The US is convinced strongly that this is the only way to move forward," he was quoted as saying.

Both the government and opposition in Pristina have doubts about the creation of the international court in charge of ethnic Albanian fighters, who many in Kosovo considered to be heroes.

However, the EU insisted that "this court is not about Kosovo, KLA or the nature of the war".

"It is about investigating allegations of serious criminal acts committed by individuals," the EU office said.

It added that "the court will be established following the exchange of letters" between Kosovo and the EU and "their ratification by the assembly" in Pristina.

**Serbia Mulls New Kosovo Resolution (*BIRN*, 4 April 2014)**

Officials have suggested the possibility of a new parliamentary resolution on Kosovo after Serbia's new government is formed, but will not change their stance on non-recognition.

Stanislava Pak-Stankovic, an advisor to Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic, said on Thursday that a new parliamentary resolution on Kosovo was needed because "the circumstances in Serbia and the world have changed".  
The changes include the establishment of a Kosovo army and the impending end of the mandate of the EU's rule-of-law mission in Kosovo, EULEX.   
On Monday, Kosovo's constitutional court approved the Pristina government’s request to change the current lightly-armed Security Force into a proper army.  
Pristina meanwhile is still consulting with European Union officials on the powers that EULEX will have after its current mandate expires on June 14.

The new Serbian parliamentary resolution is expected to come after a government is formed following the March 16 general election.  
Aleksandar Vulin, Serbian minister without portfolio in charge of Kosovo, also said that Serbian needed a new resolution on Kosovo but insisted that Belgrade would maintain its current stance on its former province.  
"The policy on Kosovo will not change. We will not recognize Kosovo as a country," he said in the Kosovo Serb enclave of Gracanica on Thursday.  
The Brussels agreement on the normalization of relations signed in April last year will be implemented and Serbian officials will be present in Kosovo every day, Vulin added.

Implementation of the Brussels deal is a key precondition for Serbia's further EU progress.  
The existing parliamentary resolution on Kosovo was adopted in January 2013 and contains six key points.  
One is that Serbia will never recognize Kosovo's independence, but another is that the EU-led Belgrade-Pristina talks should continue. The other points concern the status of the mainly Serb north of Kosovo and guarantees for Serbs elsewhere in Kosovo.

**EU Condemns Threat to Serbian Peace Women (*BIRN*, by Marija Ristic, 4 April 2014)**

The EU delegation in Belgrade said the authorities should take action after a Serbian police spokesman called on football hooligans to target peace group Women in Black.

The head of the EU delegation in Belgrade, Michael Davenport, said that [the threat of violence issued against the peace group last week by a spokesman for Serbia’s anti-terrorist police unit](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbian-policemen-threatens-women-in-black_blank) was not acceptable in any democratic society.

Davenport “welcomed initial condemnation from the authorities, stressing the importance of following this up through the appropriate administrative and legal channels”, the EU delegation said in a statement.

Last week, the special prosecution for high-tech crime said that it had launched an investigation into police spokesman Radomir Pocuca, who urged hooligans to fight Women in Black after they [staged a commemoration marking the 15thanniversary of war crimes committed by Serb forces committed against Kosovo Albanians during the late 1990s conflict](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/belgrade-women-remember-kosovo-crimes_blank).

The Serbian interior ministry also said that Pocuca would be dismissed from the force for his actions, but this has not yet happened.

Pocuca addressed the country’s hooligans on his Facebook page: “Instead of fighting each other, you should unite and fight the one that really deserves it,” he wrote.

Davenport also expressed concern about [right-wing extremists who recently published a blacklist of public figures described as anti-Serb “traitors”](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/preliminary-probe-launched-into-traitors-list-case_blank).

“He pointed to the responsibility of the authorities both for fostering an atmosphere in society enabling all citizens to express their views freely and for taking appropriate steps against organisations or individuals seeking to intimidate citizens in this way,” the EU delegation said.

The list, published by extremist movement SNP Nasi, contained the names of 30 actors, directors, writers, political analysts and journalists accused of being “the greatest haters of the Serb people”.

Among them were actors Mirjana Karanovic and Nikola Djuricko, journalists Svetlana Lukic and Petar Lukovic, writer Svetislav Basara and popular folk singer Jelena Karleusa.

Serbia's National Committee for the Fight Against Hate Speech also condemned what it called the misuse of the internet to spread hatred and calls for violence.

"It is down to us [the internet community] to get together and show that the Serbia in which we want to live in is open to all," its statement said.

**Bodily remains of 6 Bosnian war victims found (*Anadolu Agency*, 5 April 2014)**

SARAJEVO - The Institute for Missing Persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina found a father and his five sons' dead bodies in a mass grave that also contains the remains of many civilian victims from Prijedor in the north-western part of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A forensic expert from the institute, Muyo Begic said that the large mass grave was found six months ago and identification of the bodies is still continuing. On Saturday, the forensic experts determined the six dead bodies; were members of the Hegic family - the father, Abdullah Hegic and his sons.

Begic also said that 48 people and the Hegic family were killed during the Bosnian war in the Prijedor area of northwest Bosnia.

20 years after the war, the prosecution office along with the institute in Bosnia and Herzegovina actively continue the process of searching for 6,500 missing persons throughout the country.

**Srebrenica widows sue Dutch government (*Associated Press*, 7 April 2014)**

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — Mothers and widows of men murdered in Europe’s worst massacre since World War II are suing the Dutch government for failing to protect their husbands and sons during the 1995 Srebrenica genocide.

The civil case starting Monday in a Hague courtroom focusses on the failure of Dutch troops serving as United Nations peacekeepers to protect Muslim men in the protected enclave in eastern Bosnia from rebel Serbs who overran the town and killed some 8,000 men and boys.

Lawyers for a group called the Mothers of Srebrenica are demanding compensation for the women in a case that could set legal precedents for other peacekeeping missions.

Dutch judges threw out attempts by the women to also sue the United Nations, saying the world body has legal immunity.

**Presidential Poll Likely to Shape Macedonian General Election (*BIRN*, by Sinisa Jakov Marusic, 7 April 2014)**

With only a week to go before the first round of presidential election, observers say its outcome could significantly impact on the results of the subsequent general election.

Experts say that if the opposition presidential candidate, Stevo Pendarovski, comes close to the ruling party's candidate, Gjorge Ivanov, on April 13, it will boost the opposition's chances in the subsequent general elections on April 27.  
If Pendarovski “closes the difference between him and Ivanov to less than 50,000 votes, this will boost support for the opposition [Social Democrats, SDSM] in the general elections,” Vladimir Bozinovski, from the Skopje think tank, the Institute for Policy Research, IPIS, predicted.  
A close result could motivate passive and undecided voters to turn out and vote for the opposition, he maintains.

But the same effect applies vice-versus, he added.  
“If the difference between the candidates after the first round of elections is around 100,000 votes, in favour of the [ruling] VMRO DPMNE candidate, this will boost the ruling party [in the general election]," Bozinovski noted.  
In the 2011 general elections the difference between the opposition SDSM and VMRO DPMNE was some 70,000 votes, in favour of the ruling party.   
The SDSM then won 368,000 votes, taking 42 of the 123 seats in parliament. VMRO DPMNE won 438,000 votes, and 56 seats.  
Last year's local elections widened the gap between the opposition and the ruling party to over 110,000 votes, however. The SDSM then won only 288,000 votes while the ruling VMRO DPMNE party netted 403,000.  
On April 13, Macedonians will choose between four presidential candidates. A second round, pitting the two best-ranked candidates against each other, takes place on April 27, alongside snap general elections.   
Meanwhile, two opinion polls showing presidential candidates ratings were published last week, the only ones so far since the start of the election race. They had contrasting results.  
According to the pro-government NGO, the Insititute Dimitrija Cupoveski, Ivanov has a convincing lead over Pendarovski, of 31 to 16 per cent.  
But a separate opinion poll commissioned by *Fokus* weekly and carried out by Rating agency gave Pendarovski a slight lead of 36.9 to 35.1 per cent.  
In the same survey, 68.5 per cent of respondents said Macedonia needed significant changes while 31.5 per cent said Macedonia should maintain its current direction.  
The ruling VMRO DPMNE party of Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski has not lost a single election since it came to power in 2006.

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