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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**PM Mustafa does not prefer early elections (*Kosova* *Sot*)**

Kosovo’s Prime Minister, Isa Mustafa, said on Thursday that early elections would not solve the current political crisis in Kosovo. “Early elections would not solve anything because the political forces would be the same as now, we would only repeat the same thing. The ruling coalition mandate should last as foreseen,” Mustafa said. He made these comments during a conference in London organised by the Developing Markets Associates.

**Opposition refuses Thaçi’s invitation (*Kosova Sot*)**

The President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi, invited leaders of the political parties for a working meeting today at 10:00 hours, to discuss “Election reform in the Republic of Kosovo”. The leader of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), Ramush Haradinaj, said that AAK and the Initiative for Kosovo (NISMA) will not participate at the meeting. The leader of the Vetëvendosje movement, Visar Ymeri, said that there is no need for an election reform, but for elections, because the government of Kosovo has lost its legitimacy.

**Hoxhaj: Only U.S. and EU can condition Serbia (*Zëri*)**

Kosovo’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Enver Hoxhaj, said in an interview for Tirana-based ***Top Channel*** that only the United States of America and the European Union can condition Serbia when Kosovo is concerned. Speaking about his statement that Albania’s Prime Minister cannot talk on behalf of Kosovo, Hoxhaj said that “the essence was on Albania’s role on the normalization of the relations between Kosovo and Serbia. I said that our relations are so complex that only the U.S. and the EU can condition Serbia. This is a geo-political reality in relation to the Kosovo state,” Hoxhaj said. “We are concerned how Belgrade can interpret the pace of Albania’s approximation as it is happening with Prime Minister Edi Rama. Serbia is interested to have an Albanian-Serbian dialogue, and it was never interested to have dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo. My statement was a message for Belgrade and our partners to continue with their conditioning policy,” he said.

**EULEX: We do not interfere in Constitutional Court’s decisions (*Insajderi*)**

The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), reacted to media reports yesterday, clarifying a statement issued by a judge with the Special Chamber of the Supreme Court who claimed that the Trepca Law was unconstitutional. Besa Domi, EULEX’s spokesperson, told the news site that the mission does not interfere in the decisions of the Constitutional Court. “This request of the judge is related to a specific case for which a judicial decision is expected to be issued at the Special Chamber of the Supreme Court, which was delegated to the judge,” Domi said. According to her, the international judge acted within his legal authority stipulated in the Constitution and that his request is not related to previous requests of the Serbian List for the constitutionality of the Trepca Law. "EULEX notes that the independence of the Constitutional Court as the highest judicial authority to decide on constitutional issues, is extremely important,” she said.

**Northerners threaten to bring back barricades (*Koha*)**

The paper reports on its front page that representatives of the northern mainly-Serb inhabited municipalities have threatened to stop cooperation with Pristina if the latter does not change its approach toward them. Representatives of the municipality of Zubin Potok even threatened to bring barricades and engage in civil disobedience. Zubin Potok officials told the paper that they have sent a final warning to the Kosovo Government. The main complaints of the municipal representatives relate to what they called constant reduction of funds for capital investments, the obstruction to use the development fund for the north and non-payment of obligations for former members of the so-called Civil Protection. A spokesman for the Ministry of Finance however told the paper: “it is not true that the budget of the fund for capital investments has been reduced. Compared to previous years, for 2017 we have foreseen an increase in the capital budget for this municipality [Zubin Potok]”.

**President Thaci meets families of Serb missing persons (*Kosova* *Sot*)**

Kosovo’s President, Hashim Thaci, met on Thursday the representative of the families of the missing Kosovo Serbs, with whom he discussed the problem of missing persons in general and about the opportunities to clarify the fate of all the missing persons as soon as possible. Representatives of the families agreed with Thacifor this to become one of the main topics in the dialogue in Brussels. “This issue must be opened in Brussels as well, in the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, that all instances, all institutions, must work in order to solve and to close this pain and this suffering as soon as possible,” Thaci said.

**Kosovo to cap war veterans’ pay to comply with IMF (*Koha* *Ditore*/*Reuters*)**

The paper runs a story originally published by Reuters, quoting Kosovo’s Prime Minister, Isa Mustafa, as saying that Kosovo's government plans to cap spending on payments to war veterans at 50 million euros, in line with demands from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). “The war veterans' number has increased beyond what was originally planned and the IMF evaluated this would destabilise the budget if we don't have control over these expenditures and they believe that it is an amount of 50 million euros above which we cannot go for the war veterans," Mustafa told Reuters on the sidelines of an investment conference. "We have spoken with them (the veterans) and we have agreed that we have to make some changes in the law for war veterans and to apply these new norms," said Mustafa.

**Albanian FM wants Kosovo to have seat in OSCE Permanent Council (*media*)**

Several media report that in his address to the OSCE Permanent Council, Albanian Foreign Minister Ditmir Bushati argued that Kosovo should be given a seat in the council. “We strongly believe the time has come for Kosovo, just like any other country in the region, to soon have a seat in the OSCE Permanent Council,” Bushati was quoted as saying.

**Russia keeps UN door closed for Kosovo (*Kosova Sot*)**

Serbia’s Foreign Minister, Ivica Dacic is participating at a meeting of the Serb-Russian Committee for trade and economic cooperation in Suzdal, Russia. He said on Thursday that Serbia appreciates Russia’s veto for a resolution on Srebrenica at the UN Security Council and the use of its veto against Kosovo’s membership at UN. He reiterated that his country would not undertake economic sanctions against Russia. “Serbia, in accordance with its policy, will not join the anti-Russian sanctions of Europe,” Dacic said.

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