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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**UN: “Tensions in Kosovo centred on demarcation with Montenegro” (*media*)**

The United Nations Security Council will discuss today the quarterly report of Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on developments in Kosovo. During the reporting period, political tensions centred around the dispute over the draft law ratifying the agreement on territorial delineation with Montenegro and the adoption of a new law on the Trepca mining and industrial complex. The latter issue created additional public tension between Pristina and Belgrade, while the implementation of the agreements reached within the framework of the European Union-facilitated dialogue continued only at a slow pace. The report notes that during the quarterly period there were 69 incidents that involved minorities, which marks a decrease compared to the previous quarterly period that had 94 such incidents. These incidents include physical attacks, verbal threats and thefts against returnees. The report also includes an annex report by the European Union High Representative for Foreign Policy and Security about the activities of the EU rule-of-law mission in Kosovo (EULEX).

**Hahn says blaming EU for visa liberalisation is “not serious” (*dailies*)**

In an interview for Austrian daily ***Der Standard***, the European Union Enlargement Commissioner, Johannes Hahn, reemphasized that Kosovo’s visa liberalisation criteria are clear and that 93 out of 95 have already been met. Hahn said that it is misleading to believe that early elections would change the situation. “Elections will not solve structural problems or the EU-set criteria. This is possible only through being concrete and committed,” said Hahn. He added that blaming the EU for no visa liberalisation is not serious and goes against the interests of Kosovo’s European perspective.

**Mustafa: Political causes should not be built on Dehari’s death (*media*)**

The Prime Minister of Kosovo, Isa Mustafa, wrote on his Facebook account about the case of death of Vetevendosje movement activist Astrit Dehari in the Prizren prison. “We do not need to become lawyers of the evil, but those of the truth,” wrote Mustafa. “What we all need is facing the truth. The truth is not determined by accusations, noise and strangling of opinion, but by scientific and professional facts. False political cause is endangering liberalization of visas, because lies are defeating the truth. Let us not build a political cause on a tragic case; let us wait for the institutions authorized by Law to speak. Those who are rushing, might have their own reasons, but state institutions should work thoroughly, they should be precise and transparent on saying the truth and take responsibility for their findings”.

**EULEX is monitoring Astrit Dehari’s case (*RTK*)**

Kosovo’s Minister of Justice, Dhurata Hoxha, has guaranteed full transparency of the investigation of the death of Vetëvendosje activist, Astrit Dehari, and claimed that she would engage relevant mechanisms to deal with the case. Asked about EULEX’s engagement on the investigations, this mission responded to ***Telegrafi*** that “EULEX is monitoring the case, which is the responsibility of Kosovo authorities.”

**Court of Appeals reduces Lushtaku’s sentence (*Zeri*)**

The Court of Appeals has cleared the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) commander and Skenderaj/Srbica Mayor, Sami Lushtaku, of murder charges. However, the Court confirmed the other charges on war crimes, thus reducing his sentence from twelve to seven years imprisonment. Lushtaku will now serve seven years in prison for his command responsibility. Kosovo Elections Commission head, Valdete Daka, told media on Tuesday that there will be no elections in Skenderaj/Srbica because Lushtaku still has the right to appeal the decision at the Supreme Court.

**War veterans react on Court of Appeals decision for “Drenica 1” (*RTK*)**

The Organization of the War Veterans of Kosovo, stated on Tuesday that the international justice, through the so-called justice mechanisms, has continuously organized complots against the warriors of the Kosovo Liberation Army. The Court of Appeals has proved this with the catastrophic verdict on cases of Drenica 1 and 2, proclaiming guilty all commanders of the KLA Operative Zone of Drenica, without any evidence, based only on the statement of a protected witness, proved at the court to have mental problems,” is written in their press release. The statement further appealed to the Kosovo justice institutions to deal with real perpetrators, “those who terrorized the Albanian population for decades and who committed horrifying massacres at the end of the 20th century, to the level of genocide,” concludes the press release.

**CDHRF: Prisoners transferred to high-security prison are not on strike (*RTK*)**

The Kosovo-based Council for Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHRF), under the authorization to monitor persons deprived of freedom, visited the high-security prison in Gërdoc following reports that four prisoners transferred there from the Mitrovica detention facility are on hunger strike.  CDHRF met three of the prisoners, the fourth being on a trial session at the time of the visit, who all claimed not to be on hunger strike. However, CDHRF recalled that the persons deprived of freedom should be placed in prisons as close as possible to their families and that they cannot be transferred without a decision or prior announcement as was the case with the transfer in question.

**EULEX suspends search for mass grave in Mitrovica North (*media*)**

The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) has temporarily suspended the search for a mass grave in Mitrovica North due to security concerns for its staff. Besa Domi, spokesperson for EULEX confirmed that the mission has temporarily suspended the excavations because of security concerns. Media report that this action has irritated the families of missing persons in Kosovo.

**47% of citizens believe in normalisation of Kosovo-Serbia relations through EU integration, survey shows (*Koha*)**

Pristina-based Research Institute of Development and European Affairs (RIDEA) published on Tuesday a public opinion survey in Kosovo about the process of European integration. 47.1 percent of respondents said they believe Kosovo can normalise relations with Serbia through European integration. 27 percent said Kosovo cannot normalise relations with Serbia through European integration, and 20.1 percent said they did not know. Over 81 percent of the respondents said Kosovo will benefit economically from the process of European integration.

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