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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Partition of Mitrovica fortified (*Koha Ditore*)**

The paper reports on the front page that the Iber Bridge in Mitrovica is no longer the symbol of the city’s partition as this has now been replaced by a 2.5m-high concrete wall erected in the middle of the road that leads to Zveçan/Zvečan. The wall has been constructed on the initiative of the Mitrovica North municipal leadership and is in violation to Kosovo laws and the plan for revitalization of the Iber Bridge agreed on by the parties in Brussels. With the wall being constructed in the middle of the road, the paper writes that the only way to reach Zveçan/Zvečan from the south will be through alternative roads which are also not barricade-free.

**EU to assess if Mitrovica wall is in accordance with agreement (*lajmi.net*)**

Maja Kocijancic, Spokesperson of the EU High Representative for Foreign Policy and Security, Frederica Mogherini, said exclusively for this portal that they are considering the reports on the wall at River Iber Bridge. The agreement on the Mitrovica Bridge consists of renovation of the bridge itself. This renovation is being carried out through EU funds. The same goes for Kralj Petar Street. It was agreed for both the road and the bridge to reopen on 20 January 2017,” Kocijancic said. According to her, the EU is in close contact with the interested parties in order assure a satisfying design for the bridge and the street, in order for all citizens to profit from it.

**Rakic: Wall will not be demolished (*Zeri*)**

The Mayor of Mitrovica North, Goran Rakic, said on Wednesday that the wall that is being built in the northern side of Iber River will not be destroyed. Rakic’s statement comes as a response to Kosovo’s Minister without portfolio, Edita Tahiri, who said the government will use all legal means to demolish the wall. “The fence will not be destroyed. Edita Tahiri cannot decide what will be built in the north. The wall that Tahiri is talking about will not be destroyed because that is a ‘fence’ and is part of the project agreed between Pristina and Belgrade,” Rakic said. “This fence that it is being called wall will serve for leveling the road and the physical safety of the pedestrian zone,” he added.

**KDI: Construction of the wall creates insecurity and fear (*Koha Ditore*)**

The Kosovo Democratic Institute think tank expressed concern with the construction of the wall in Mitrovica North which it said was a breach of the project for revitalization of the Iber River bridge in Mitrovica. “Mitrovica bridge should serve to unite citizens,” said KDI adding that the building of the wall is unacceptable and creates confusion among the citizens. Furthermore, “it awakens the feeling of insecurity and fear,” KDI said.

**Assembly commission recommends session on Dehari (*Kosova* *Sot*)**

The Assembly Commission on Human Rights and Petitions recommended the Presidency of the Kosovo Assembly to call an extraordinary session to discuss the death of Vetevendosje activist Astrit Dehari whilst in detention. Vetevendosje has requested that the debate be held on Friday or as soon as possible. However, the session cannot be held without collecting 40 signatures from the MPs.

**O’Connell: I regret that there are still criminals in politics (*Telegrafi*/*RTK*)**

The British Ambassador to Kosovo, Ruairi O’Connell, during an interview for public broadcaster ***RTK*** said that Kosovo has built a culture of impunity and expressed great concern about corruption involving senior officials. “I regret that there are still criminals in politics,” he said, referring to cases of officials being indicted and convicted while still holding their posts. Lack of transparency in the prosecution and courts to provide access to documents that are accessible under the law, according to O'Connell, presents a serious concern in Kosovo.

**NISMA and AKR sign coalition deal in Drenas/Glogovac (*Bota Sot*)**

Initiative for Kosovo (NISMA) and New Kosovo Alliance (AKR) signed a coalition deal ahead of the second round of voting in the municipality of Drenas/Glogovac where the NISMA candidate, Isa Xhemajlaj, will face Democratic Party of Kosovo’s Ramiz Lladrovci.

**Haradinaj: PM Mustafa tried to smuggle demarcation at the Assembly (*RTK*)**

The leader of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) Ramush Haradinaj, considers the Prime Minister of Kosovo Isa Mustafa, is trying to smuggle the current agreement for demarcation of the border with Montenegro at the Assembly. He said in an interview for ***Klan Kosova*** that he did the same with regards to the Law on Trepca. “In case of Trepca, he tried for some time to smuggle the wrong law. They brought a wrong law and we did not support it, the second law came and we voted it. Demarcation can also improve and we will vote it. However right now the PM is saying let us agree that Kosovo was not reduced but Montenegro grew. This is an ordinary joke, this is a typical smuggling, just as he tried to do with Trepca,” Haradinaj said suggesting that that the entire process should be re-considered.

**Eight Kosovo Albanians held on terror charges in Belgium (*Telegrafi*)**

Belgian authorities are reported to have arrested a group of eight persons as part of an anti-terror operation carried out in several parts of the country. All eight persons are thought to be members of the Albanian community in Belgium and are suspected of being active part of a terrorist group that was recruiting and funding people to fight for ISIS in Syria.

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