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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Ramush Haradinaj arrested by French police on a Serbian warrant (*media*)**

All media report that French police on Wednesday arrested Ramush Haradinaj, leader of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) and former Kosovo prime minister, on a Serbian arrest warrant. ***Reuters*** reports that Serbia considers Haradinaj a war criminal for his role in leading a guerrilla insurgency in its former southern province of Kosovo, which declared independence with Western backing in 2008. Haradinaj served briefly as prime minister of Kosovo in 2004 and 2005, while it was a ward of the United Nations, before being tried and acquitted twice of war crimes at a U.N. court in The Hague. “He was stopped by French authorities based on an arrest warrant issued by Serbia in 2004 which for us is unacceptable,” Kosovo Foreign Ministry said in a statement. The ministry said it was doing everything possible to secure his release, which it expected to happen. French border police arrested Haradinaj upon his arrival at Basel-Mulhouse airport in eastern France on a flight from Pristina. A French judiciary source told ***Reuters*** that investigators would on Thursday begin looking into whether there were reasons not to execute the extradition request, especially in the case that it had been issued for political reasons. They would look at whether he had already been tried before the U.N. court on the same charges as those the arrest warrant had been issued on, the source added. ***Koha Ditore*** covers the story under the leading front-page headline ***Haradinaj’s arrest adds pressure against Government and dialogue with Belgrade***. The paper notes that Kosovo President Hashim Thaci, the Kosovo government and opposition parties all reacted to Haradinaj’s arrest, but that the ruling parties have yet to comment on the matter. Haradinaj’s party issued a statement saying that his arrest was unacceptable and that it was made based on an illegal warrant. “We call on French authorities to enable Mr. Haradinaj to continue his travel and we ask from EU authorities and European countries individually to not obstruct the free movement of Kosovo citizens based on Serbia’s illegitimate arrest warrants,” the press release noted. AAK parliamentary group chief, Pal Lekaj, is quoted as saying in several news websites that Haradinaj is expected to be released on Thursday at 13:00. President Hashim Thaci said in a reaction: “We, the members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, are proud to have fought against the discriminatory and criminal laws of Slobodan Milosevic’s regime and our just cause was confirmed by the free and democratic world when it launched a bombing campaign against Serbian targets”. Kosovo Assembly President and PDK leader, Kadri Veseli, said in a Facebook post that Haradinaj’s arrest on a Serbian arrest warrant is unacceptable and that he should be released as soon as possible. Kosovo’s Minister for Dialogue, Edita Tahiri, told ***Telegrafi*** news website that Haradinaj’s arrest is a primitive act by Serbia which damages the spirit of dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. Vetevendosje leader Visar Ymeri said Haradinaj’s arrest was unacceptable and that Kosovo institutions should set conditions until all international arrest warrants against former KLA combatants are annulled.

**Kocijancic: Actions on the Association should resume in early 2017 (*Koha*)**

Maja Kocijancic, spokeswoman for EU High Representative Federica Mogherini, told the paper on Wednesday that the European Union expects actions on the formation of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities to resume early 2017 in line with the latest achievements on the implementation of the August agreement. “Discussions on the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities are continuing and both parties have expressed their commitment to implement the agreement reached in August last year,” Kocijancic said. Kosovo government officials meanwhile have said that work on the formation of the Association/Community would not resume until the wall built by local authorities in Mitrovica North is not removed.

**Tahiri: Mitrovica wall to be demolished in January (*dailies*)**

Kosovo’s Minister for Dialogue, Edita Tahiri, said for ***Radio Free Europe*** that the wall in Mitrovica North constructed by local authorities under “Belgrade’s instructions” will be demolished in January as it infringes the right to free movement. “The construction of this was had a political background aimed at hindering the revitalisation of the bridge process. This is very clear,” Tahiri said.

**Thaci: Special court, product of intimidation and killing of witnesses (*Epoka*)**

President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, told news agency ***Kosovapress*** that the special court is a result of intimidation and killing of witnesses after the conflict rather than wrong political decisions. “The decision of Kosovo institutions was strategic,” said Thaci adding that it is in the interest of Kosovo to clear any doubt that may hang over the “pure war” of the Kosovo Liberation Army.

**LDK MP Gashi calls for dismissal of Kosovo Serb ministers (*Epoka*)**

The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) MP, Arben Gashi, called for dismissal of Kosovo Serb ministers who have declared they only recognise Aleksandar Vucic as their prime minister. Furthermore, added Gashi on his Facebook account, all MPs that do not recognise Kosovo as an independent country should be stripped of their mandate.

**Hyseni: Lavdrim Muhaxheri is not in Kosovo (*Gazeta Express*)**

Kosovo’s Minister for Interior Affairs, Skender Hyseni, denied media reports according to which Lavdrim Muhaxheri, a senior IS commander, had recently stayed in Kosovo. “Allow me to say that this is media speculation. This person is not in Kosovo. We would have ‘welcomed’ him. I will not go into further detail for the sake of ongoing investigations. We have 17 detained persons that are being interrogated. A judicial process is underway,” Hyseni was quoted as saying.

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