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**Mustafa: Early elections are possible if demarcation fails (Radio Free Europe)**

Kosovo Prime Minister Isa Mustafa said in an interview for Radio Free Europe that early parliamentary elections would be the only solution if the Kosovo Assembly fails to adopt the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro. Mustafa said it would not be reasonable to “allow people, who are leaving the citizens of Kosovo isolated, to continue to govern the country”. He added: “The duty of all members of parliament is to work for national interests. We will agree with coalition partners, including the Serbian List, on when we will have the sufficient number of MPs, because you know that until now we have had the problem of the absence of the Serbian List. The moment that we agree on the timing, we will proceed with the draft law on the ratification of the agreement. We will send it to the Assembly and the Assembly will then be responsible. I think this is a great responsibility, because an Assembly that does not bring out its people out of isolation and keeps them isolated over political causes or for personal interests, the question arises whether this Assembly has a moral right to continue existing or if it should reevaluate itself”. Mustafa said the issue of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities needs to be addressed. “We are willing to sit down with the Serbian List anytime, also with the management team and with international officials, to address the matter in line with the ruling of the Constitutional Court and with agreements that we have signed in Brussels,” Mustafa added.

**Veseli: Opposition parties cannot oust the government (media)**

Several media quote Kosovo Assembly President Kadri Veseli as saying that he expects “the Assembly and Government to make decisions otherwise the continuation of the ruling coalition will be senseless”. Following the meeting of the Assembly Presidency on Friday, Veseli told reporters that he does not believe the opposition parties can oust the government.

**Asllanaj: PDK, LDK decide on future of ruling coalition (Epoka)**

Sali Asllanaj, senior member of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), told the paper in a front-page interview that with their motion of no confidence, opposition parties will not manage to oust the Mustafa-led government. Asllanaj argued that the ruling coalition can end only if the two coalition partners – the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and LDK – decide so. Asllanaj ruled out the possibility of early parliamentary elections and said that the ruling coalition is obliged to resolve issues such as the border demarcation with Montenegro and the formation of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities.

**Heightened anti-terror security measures in southern Balkans (Lajmi)**

Kosovo, Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have stepped security measures to prevent possible terror attacks especially against religious site on the occasion of Easter. The National Security Council in Kosovo issued a statement on Friday saying it had revealed suspicious activities by certain individuals and groups with links to groups and individuals from third countries. “They were planning to carry out attacks against institutional and political officials,” the statement said, without revealing further details about the nature of the attacks. An unnamed Kosovo official confirmed to AFP that a person mentioned in the local media was detained by police. “Police are searching for three other persons,” the said the source, adding that the suspects are believed to have ties with Lavdrim Muhaxhiri, one of the leaders of jihadists from the Balkans fighting in Syria and Iraq.

**Hoxhaj: Kosovo feels Russia’s heavy hand through Serbia (media)**

Most media cover Kosovo’s Foreign Minister Enver Hoxhaj’s op-ed for The New York Times. Hoxhaj wrote: “For centuries, dark forces of history have found the Balkans a suitable proxy region for unleashing grand plans for global prominence and competition. Now, after two decades of stability and prospects for a prosperous future, Serbia again is returning to an old vocation — seeking regional hegemony. It is doing so by destabilizing the Balkans, expanding its own military and working toward economic dominance of a regional common market that Kosovo finds unacceptable and strongly opposes — all of this with Russia looking over Serbia’s shoulder. Russia is clearly using Serbia not just to regain a foothold in the Balkans, but also to seek vengeance on NATO, the United States and the West with schemes to restore the regional prominence it lost when the Soviet empire collapsed. Serbia has not yet recognized the independence that Kosovo won a decade ago as a result of a liberation war, backed by NATO in 1999, to avert a genocidal catastrophe supported by Serbia’s despotic leader at the time, Slobodan Milosevic. Now, in their presidential election on April 2, Serbians have not only endorsed a nationalist government that continues to defy Kosovo’s independence; they have also provided a needed victory for Russia, which only days before had authorized a new shipment of fighter jets and battle tanks for Serbia, obviously to help it regain power in the Balkans. Serbia’s new president, Aleksandar Vucic, had campaigned from his former post as prime minister on the false premise that he wanted Serbia only to join the European Union and be a good neighbor to all. Nothing could be farther from the truth. While Serbia has opened talks to join the European Union, what we know and see is a Serbia moving day by day away from democratic Europe’s core principles. Serbia’s rapprochement with Russia clearly demonstrates a desire not for solidarity with the European Union, but rather for domination of the Balkans in Russian style — achieved by instigating instability to claim power in the name of restoring stability.” Read full text of the op-ed at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/13/opinion/kosovo-feels-russias-heavy-hand-via-serbia.html?_r=0>]

**Delawie: Adopt important laws to fight corruption (media)**

United States Ambassador to Kosovo, Greg Delawie, called on members of the Kosovo Assembly on Friday to adopt laws that help the fight against corruption. In a video message, Delawie said: “I would like to talk about two things Kosovo can do right now to fight corruption —pass a new Law on the Execution of Penal Sanctions and, when it gets to the Assembly, pass a new Law on Disciplinary Procedures for Judges and Prosecutors … With the amendment of the Law on the Execution of Penal Sanctions, Kosovo can ensure that all prisoners are treated equally—regardless of their political connections or “celebrity” status.  When I first arrived, I was surprised to learn that some convicted prisoners were allowed essentially to roam free on spurious medical grounds.  These well-connected criminals claimed they were ill, pressured the Justice Ministry to let them out of prison for medical treatment, and then spent months traveling around the region, even giving television interviews.  This is no way to show the people of Kosovo that all are equal under the law.  It made a farce of that fundamental rule of law principle. So my government and I repeatedly urged the Kosovo government to do something to close these loopholes.  I am pleased that the Justice Minister and her team have drafted amendments to the Law on the Execution of Penal Sanctions that will place the decision of who should be let out for medical treatment in the hands of doctors and judges, not of politicians.  This would show Kosovo and the world that Kosovo’s leaders are committed to justice … Unfortunately, the Kosovo Assembly has not yet passed the law, despite having had several opportunities to do so.  Worse, some members of parliament presented an amendment that would automatically reduce all convicts’ sentences by one-third–an action that would make a mockery of judicial authority.  There are convicted terrorists in Kosovo’s prisons today who would be released immediately if that unconscionable amendment became law. I urge the Assembly to pass the new penal sanctions law without any amendments.  That is one way to show Europe and the world you are committed to fighting crime and corruption.  It will also show that Kosovo deserves its good reputation in the international fight against ISIS. Kosovo’s leaders can also show their commitment to the fight against corruption by passing a new Law on Disciplinary Procedures for Judges and Prosecutors.  Most judges and prosecutors work hard and do a fine job serving their fellow citizens.  But there are a handful of others whose actions undermine justice and cause citizens to doubt the honesty of the whole system. We have been working closely with the Justice Ministry to draft legislation that will reform the system that holds judges and prosecutors accountable for their performance.  This law is probably the most fundamental step Kosovo can take to improve the justice system, making it something the people of the country can truly count on.  I look forward to the passage of this draft law when the government submits it, hopefully later this month. Kosovo is decisively on its European path.  You have a constitution, a government, and a people who embrace Euro-Atlantic values.  I am confident you can pass the laws on the execution of penal sanctions and on disciplinary procedures for prosecutors and judges, and defeat corruption.  All it takes is political will and a commitment to put the people of Kosovo and their future first.  My Embassy and I remain committed to supporting Kosovo’s people and their path to the heart of Europe.”

**Roundtable on transformation of KSF into Kosovo Army (media)**

Most media cover a roundtable held in Pristina on Friday on the transformation of the Kosovo Security Force into the Kosovo Armed Forces. The roundtable titled What should the Assembly do for the KSF was organized by the Kosovo Assembly Committee on Security and Supervision of the Kosovo Security Force, the Kosovo Center for Security Studies and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Office in Pristina. Media quote Daut Haradinaj, committee chairman, as saying that constitutional amendments are the best way to transform the KSF into the Kosovo Army. Haradinaj also argued that the international community should put pressure on the Serbian List to vote in favor of these amendments.