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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Haradinaj: No compromise on decentralization over visa liberalization (*media*)**

Kosovo’s Prime Minister, Ramush Haradinaj, said on Wednesday that his government would make no compromise on the border demarcation with Montenegro that would damage Kosovo’s national interests. During a visit to Mitrovica, Haradinaj said “Kosovo does not to go through painful roads to get visa liberalization”. “I can assure you that we are very serious about getting visa-free travel for our citizens. But everything that we have done so far does not include compromises that would damage our country’s interests,” Haradinaj said.

**Winners in 5 municipalities, including Pristina and Prizren, to be known today (*Koha*)**

The paper reports on its front page that the winners of the mayoral runoff elections in five municipalities – Pristina, Prizren, Istog, Dragash and Kllokot – will be known today after the count of conditional votes and the votes from the diaspora. The main attention is on Pristina and Prizren where the conditional votes will determine the definite winners. Vetevendosje’s Shpend Ahmeti leads with 237 votes against LDK’s Arban Abrashi.

**Mustafa: Vote recount will confirm winner in Pristina (*Klan Kosova*)**

The leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Isa Mustafa, told ***Klan Kosova*** on Wednesday that the race for Pristina remains a challenge for his political party. “There are two branches with a result that we did not expect. This is part of Pristina that is under development,” Mustafa said. He added that recounting of ballots is necessary in order to clarify the situation and eventual mistakes during the mayoral runoff elections. He noted that the difference on the number of votes between the LDK and Vetevendosje candidates is minor “and there is always suspicion that something might have happened”. “In times of elections, there is a war for every single vote,” Mustafa said.

**Tahiri: Vetevendosje will suffer defeat in Pristina and Prizren (*Zeri*)**

Abelard Tahiri, head of the election staff of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and Minister of Justice, told the paper on Wednesday that he believes that after the count of conditional ballots, the Vetevendosje Movement will be defeated in both Pristina and Prizren. He confirmed that the PDK voted against Vetevendosje’s Shpend Ahmeti in Pristina. “As it was seen, in Pristina, our vote determined the positive result of [LDK candidate] Arban Abrashi,” he added. Tahiri also said his party is not satisfied with the results from the mayoral runoff elections but that despite these results party leader Kadri Veseli does not have to resign.

**“Unity Team should represent Kosovo in talks with Serbia” (*Epoka*)**

Edita Tahiri, former Minister for Dialogue, told ***KTV*** on Wednesday that Pristina must form a Unity Team before proceeding with talks with Belgrade in Brussels. Tahiri also suggested that along with the Office of the President and the Government, the opposition too should be represented in the Unity Team. “Kosovo should be represented by an all-inclusive delegation in the talks,” Tahiri said.

**Thaci received at House of Representatives of Canadian Parliament (media)**

The President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, was received on Wednesday by the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of Canada, Mr. Geoff Regan, with whom he discussed about the cooperation between Kosovo and Canada and the deepening of this cooperation, especially in the parliamentary field. President Thaci said that Kosovo is grateful for the support that Canada has given to Kosovo. “It was touching to visit the military camp at Halifax where many Kosovar refugees arrived in 1999. But it was a pleasure to see that those children who had arrived as refugees are now professionals, artists, sportsmen, integrated into Canadian society,” Thaci said. “We also value Canada’s support for the post-war reconstruction of the country and now the support for the international consolidation of the state of Kosovo,” he added. Speaker Regan praised Kosovo for building a successful state, where human rights and diversity prevail, a common value of Canada and Kosovo. “Twenty years ago, we have received you as refugees whereas now we are receiving you as a partner”, said Regan. Thaci said that Kosovo and Canada should deepen cooperation, at parliamentary level, but also in other areas such as economy and security.

**Canada concerned over “Russia’s impact on Kosovo” (*RTK*)**

The news website reports that Canada’s Senate Chairman George Furey said during a meeting with Kosovo President Hashim Thaci on Wednesday that “Canada is concerned about Russia’s attempts to harm Kosovo”. Furey and Thaci talked about furthering cooperation between the two countries.

**Court issues arrest warrants for Vetevendosje MPs (*media*)**

Most media report that the Basic Court in Pristina has issued arrest warrants for detention against three Vetevendosje MPs – Albin Kurti, Albulena Haxhiu and Donika Kadaj – as they failed to appear at the ongoing trial against them for throwing teargas in the Kosovo Parliament. The Vetevendosje Movement reacted against the arrest warrants qualifying them as political persecution. The defendants meanwhile have filed a request to change the presiding panel in the trial.

**UN tribunal sentences Ratko Mladic to life in jail (*media*)**

All media report that the UN tribunal in The Hague sentenced Bosnian Serb military leader Ratko Mladic to life in jail for genocide and other atrocities committed during the 1990 Bosnian war. The President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci said Ratko Mladic’s conviction for genocide is important to ensure justice for the victims. “We think of Srebrenica today. We must also ensure the perpetrators of deeds and promoters of genocidal ideology will continue to pay for the evil they unleashed from Belgrade. Never forget,” Thaci wrote on his Twitter account. The Kosovo Government issued a press release on Wednesday saying it considers the punishment of Mladic with life imprisonment as a placement of international justice and satisfaction for the victims of the war in Bosnia. “The government and the people of Kosovo on this occasion remind the world that the regime of Slobodan Milosevic and his generals have applied in Kosovo as well all forms of crimes described in the indictment against Mladic … The Government of the Republic of Kosovo considers that it is a tremendous signal for generations to come the tendency to rehabilitate war criminals, either through heroism or through their rehabilitation, proposing them to teach in military academies … The Kosovo Government appreciates that the ICTY's message should first serve the governments of the region to face boldly with the past and to reflect with more determination not to use ethno-nationalist policies, and to promote more understanding for the victims - regardless of their origins - for a lasting peace and reconciliation between peoples of this area of Europe,” the press release noted. Kosovo’s Ambassador to the United States of America, Vlora Citaku, commented on a United Nations tribunal’s verdict today against Bosnian Serb military leader Ratko Mladic. The latter has been jailed for life for genocide and other atrocities committed during the 1990s Bosnian war. Citaku posted on Facebook: “It took more than two decades to bring justice to the victims of genocide in Srebrenica. It breaks my heart when I imagine the pain that the survivors had to go through. It hurts knowing that many responsible for massacres and terrible crimes in Kosovo have not been punished”.

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