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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**President Thaci delivers end of year address before KSF members (*media*)**

All media cover Kosovo President Hashim Thaci’s end of year address yesterday before the members of the Kosovo Security Force. ***Koha Ditore*** reports that Thaci criticized the European Union for imposing the establishment of the special court. “We voted [in favor of the court] at the time in order to safeguard our partnership with the U.S., EU and NATO,” he said. Thaci also criticized the EU for isolating Kosovo. ***Bota Sot*** quotes President Thaci on the front page as saying, “the special court will not manage to do what it claims”. Both ***Epoka e Re*** and ***Kosova Sot*** highlight Thaci’s statement that Kosovo needs to establish its Armed Forces in partnership and coordination with NATO. The full link to Thaci’s address: *http://www.president-ksgov.net/en/news/the-president-the-security-force-is-kosovos-pride*.

**Delawie: Kosovo is not losing territory, Assembly must ratify demarcation (*Koha*)**

The paper runs an interview that U.S. Ambassador Greg Delawie gave to ***KTV*** on Tuesday, highlighting his remarks that Kosovo does not lose territory as a result of the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro, that the Bulliqi-led commission is talking nonsense and that the Kosovo Assembly must ratify the border deal. “We, the U.S. government, and I, support the 2015 agreement as drafted and adopted by the Parliament of Montenegro. This is the accurate line. This is what the Kosovo Assembly should ratify. This is the line that has existed between the two countries ever since they were autonomous provinces or republics, and it is the line on the Kosovo flag. This is the right line,” Delawie was quoted as saying.

**Demarcation doesn’t threaten ruling coalition (*Koha*)**

In its leading front-page story, the paper recalls that the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) joined forces with the opposition early this year to bring down the former government led by LDK’s Isa Mustafa, citing lack of decision-making on the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro. The Alliance for the Future of Kosovo was the biggest opponent of the agreement. Now that the PDK and AAK are partners in the ruling coalition, and after the government submitted to the Assembly the draft law on the border deal, political observers in Pristina argue that whatever decisions are made, one of these parties must shoulder their share of responsibility, because of their different stands on the matter. On the other hand, some political analysts believe that “in the offensive of a Machiavellian mindset, there are minimal chances for someone to act on moral grounds” and therefore they don’t believe that the ruling coalition will be threatened.

**Bulliqi: Report is in favor of Kosovo’s territorial integrity (*Epoka*)**

Head of the Commission for demarcation and maintenance of the border, Shpejtim Bulliqi, told the paper that material used in his report derives from official institutions of different periods of time. He said the commission does not have the authority to recommend to the government how to act with regards to the demarcation agreement with Montenegro. “We have completed the previous report with other factual material which go in favor of Kosovo’s territorial integrity,” Bulliqi said. He called on Kosovo Assembly MPs to read the report and decide based on facts.

**LDK with conditions on demarcation (*RTK*)**

Skender Hyseni, former Minister of Interior from the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), said he believes the Kosovo Assembly must ratify the border agreement with Montenegro. He stressed that the current commission for demarcation and PM Ramush Haradinaj are “playing with Kosovo citizens, leaving them isolated, due to an inexistent cause, which could open Pandora’s Box”. Hyseni also said the LDK will vote in favor of the agreement if the ruling coalition manages to gather 61 votes.

**Nitaj explains why Haradinaj voted to send agreement to Assembly (*RTK*)**

After the criticism of the opposition parties that Kosovo’s Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj voted to proceed the same agreement on demarcation that he used to oppose in the past, AAK MP Muharrem Nitaj explained that each international agreement has to be voted at the Assembly, in order to be ratified or annulled. He added that PM Haradinaj has completed his work by engaging an independent commission to draft a report. “Democracy is a procedure and political war against Haradinaj on behalf of “the promised land for visas” is at least dishonest,” Nitaj wrote.

**EU diplomats argue Washington was main force behind dialogue (*Koha*)**

EU diplomats in Brussels told the paper that the United States of America, alongside Germany and Great Britain, was the main force behind dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade and that nothing was achieved without its help and consent. EU diplomats said that in the most difficult times during the process, these countries provided crucial help. EU officials also said that every step along the process was coordinated with the U.S., that they continue to have close cooperation and that the U.S. never requested to have a formal mediating role alongside the EU.

**Apostolova to MPs: Don’t keep the youth hostage (*Zeri*)**

The Head of the EU Office in Kosovo and Special Representative, Nataliya Apostolova, said at a Pristina conference yesterday that whistleblowers have a key role in the fight against corruption but that the role of the media is also very important in this regard. Asked to comment on the border demarcation issue, Apostolova said that MPs should take into account the perspective of the youth when voting the agreement. She also said that while she has not yet seen the recent report presented by the border demarcation commission, it is up to the MPs to decide on it.

**Minister confirms removal of persons from Interpol’s wanted list (*Bota Sot*)**

Minister of Justice, Abelard Tahiri, said he received confirmation that Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj has been removed from the Interpol’s wanted list along with 17 other persons from Kosovo. “I have been informed that Interpol has removed arrest warrants for 18 persons. This list also includes Prime Minister Haradinaj,” Tahiri said. However, Halil Matoshi from the PM’s Office said that 20 persons have been removed from the wanted list.

**PDK and LDK appeal to Supreme Court on Pristina and Prizren elections (*Epoka*)**

The Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) have appealed to the Supreme Court the decision of the Elections Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP) for no recount of votes in the municipalities of Pristina and Prizren. PDK’s Blerand Stavileci told ***Kallxo*** they were appealing decisions regarding mayoral runoffs in Prizren, Rahovec/Orahovac and Klina while LDK’s Florian Dushi said they asked the court to enable recount of all votes in the municipality of Pristina.

**1244 appears in invitations for Mitrovica Noth constitutive session (*Zeri*)**

The paper reports that the Mitrovica North Mayor, Goran Rakic, has sent out invitations to new municipal councilors for the constitutive session set to take place on 12 December at 12.44 hrs, seemingly alluding to the UN Security Council Resolution 1244. Bashkim Cimili and Gonxhe Caushi, the only Albanian councilors in the Mitrovica North municipality, said the timing of the session is a provocation.

**Huhtamaki: Kosovo to fulfill remaining visa liberalisation criteria (*Zeri*)**

On the occasion of Finland’s independence anniversary, the Finnish Ambassador to Kosovo Anne Huhtamaki said Kosovo needs to implement the two remaining criteria for visa liberalisation: conclude the border demarcation issue with Montenegro and a track record of fighting organised crime and corruption. “The EU and Kosovo have agreed on these terms. It is now in the hands of Kosovo to take care of these agreements,” Huhtamaki said.

**UN urges Kosovo to stop citizens from joining terror groups (*AP/media*)**

Most online media carry an ***AP*** report saying that the United Nations is urging authorities in Kosovo to have a clear strategy to deter potential fighters from joining Islamic extremists in Syria and Iraq, and to offer more employment possibilities and education. An independent U.N.-commissioned report, made available to The Associated Press on Tuesday, examined returned foreign fighters and the reasons that Kosovars joined extremist groups. It also urged Kosovo and international bodies to develop better policies to prevent violent extremism. According to Kosovo police, 335 citizens have traveled to or been caught en route to conflict zones in Syria and Iraq since 2012, making Kosovo one of Europe’s largest exporters of foreign fighters on per capita basis. They included 253 were men, 55 women and 27 children. The link to the story: *http://www.nydailynews.com/newswires/news/world/urges-kosovo-stop-citizens-joining-terror-groups-article-1.3679207*.

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