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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Consequences from revoking special court (*Koha*)**

The paper reports on its front page that in numerous meetings with international diplomats in the last couple of days, Kosovo’s leaders have been warned that the country will face serious consequences if the special court is revoked. Citing unnamed sources, the paper reports that if the Assembly revokes the law on the special court this will damage Kosovo’s relations with leading Western countries. Kosovo’s leaders will be ignored and will not be invited to meetings; moreover, certain aid programs could be suspended, and the visa liberalization process will be completely removed from the agenda. Sources told the paper that the revoking of the special court will also have a negative impact on international relations, and on the 10th anniversary of its independence, “Kosovo will be seen as a failed state that refuses the rule of law and justice”. “If the special court is revoked, the leaders and politicians that initiated this process will pay the price. If they adopt the revoking, they will burn out,” a source said. The paper notes that despite these warnings, Kosovo’s state leaders are not backing down from the initiative to revoke the law. Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj has not changed his position on the matter even after a recent meeting with a French-German delegation. “The Prime Minister has not changed his public position on this issue,” an advisor to Haradinaj told the paper.

**Haradinaj: Undoing the special court is just (*media*)**

Kosovo Prime Minister, Ramush Haradinaj, said during a visit to Albania, that undoing the special court is just and added that regardless of the position of his party on the matter, as Prime Minister, he will respect the decision of Kosovo MPs. “My party and I have voted against it, we are against it even now as we believe that it is an unjust act against Kosovo. Nonetheless, Kosovo has taken over obligations about this court from Parliament and if Parliament votes differently we will respect its decision,” Haradinaj said.

**U.S. Embassy: Abandon the idea to revoke the special court! (*Zeri*)**

The United States Embassy in Pristina has again called on Kosovo’s leaders to abandon the idea for revoking the law on the special court. In a written reply to the paper, the U.S. Embassy said: “Our top priority in Kosovo is to support improvements in the rule of law area, including the work of the Specialist Chambers. We call on leaders of institutions, political parties and members of parliament, to abandon every idea to revoke or renegotiate the law on the specialist chambers”.

**Fajon: Ball on visa liberalization in the hands of Kosovo politicians (*media*)**

Tanja Fajon, the European Parliament’s Rapporteur on visa liberalization for Kosovo, told ***Radio Free Europe*** on Thursday that it is difficult to make progress in Brussels on visa liberalization if there is no progress in Kosovo. Fajon said the ball is now in the hands of Kosovo politicians and said she hopes there will be positive developments in the Assembly in terms of ratifying the border demarcation deal with Montenegro. “In Brussels we are certain about the two conditions: the ratification of the border demarcation and the fight against corruption. We will appreciate every step forward and effort by politicians in Pristina so that we can then ask the European Parliament or work together in order to grant visa liberalization to Kosovo as soon as possible,” Fajon said.

**Draft law on Kosovo Army will be sent to government in April (*Zeri*)**

Kosovo Security Force Minister (KSF), Rrustem Berisha, told the paper on Thursday that the latest by April, this ministry will submit to the government the draft law on the Kosovo Armed Forces. Berisha said the KSF is fully ready to transform into an army. On the other hand, military experts argue that the transformation will be delayed because the process has already become too complicated. The paper recalls that the transformation through constitutional amendments requires the votes of 2/3 of non-majority communities, including the votes of Serbian List MPs, who so far have rejected the formation of the armed forces. The paper also quotes Anton Cuni, a former KLA commander and LDK MP, as saying that the failure to create the armed forces has more to do with the inability of Kosovo’s institutions to coordinate their actions with the international community, rather than with the position of the Serbian List.

**Justice Minister calls on state prosecutor to investigate Morina’s claims (*media*)**

Kosovo’s Minister of Justice, Abelard Tahiri, has called on State Prosecutor Aleksander Lumezi to investigate claims made by journalist Bajrush Morina on Thursday who said that a member of the Kosovo Assembly and his spouse are responsible for the killing of Enver Maloku, LDK activist and head of the Kosovo Information Service, in January 1999. Pristina-based news website ***Gazeta Express*** reported on Thursday that Tahiri has asked Lumezi to seriously handle the claims without avoiding punishments for those that make ungrounded accusations.

**Frasher Krasniqi resigns from all Vetevendosje posts (*media*)**

All media report that Vetevendosje MP Frasher Krasniqi has resigned from all posts in this party. Krasniqi, who is serving a sentence for attacking the Kosovo Assembly premises, announced his resignation through a public letter.

**Government won’t merge Customs and Tax Administration (*Koha*)**

In one of its front-page stories, the paper reports that the Kosovo government has backed down from the idea to merge the Customs and the Tax Administration (KTA). The Ministry of Finance told the paper: “There won’t be a full merger because the key tasks of the Customs Service, such as the excise and customs tax, will remain part of Customs and the part of special taxes that are not related to import will remain with the KTA. Moreover, Customs is an element of statehood with which the state identifies and as such in this stage of political-diplomatic developments we are not interested to depreciate it”.

**Prosecution to file indictment against members of “Eye of People” (*Koha*)**

Kosovo’s Special Prosecution (SPRK) is collecting evidence as part of an investigation related to the murder attempt against Pristina-based attorney Azem Vllasi, the activities of the organization “Eye of the People” and other people believed to have ties to this organization. Citing unnamed sources, the paper reports that the special prosecution is expected to file an indictment this month against 12 persons who are currently under investigation.

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