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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Special court in the hands of the government (*dailies*)**

The decision of the Kosovo Assembly presidency to send the draft law on abrogating specialist chambers to the government of Kosovo for further review is the top story in most daily papers. ***Koha Ditore*** writes the presidency of the Assembly forwarded two initiatives further: that of 43 MPs calling for abrogation of the law on specialist chambers was sent to the government while the petition of KLA associations was sent to the Assembly committee for petitions. The paper also notes that the government has one month time to give its opinion on the draft law. Under the headline, *The undoing of special court in the hands of the prime minister,* ***Zeri*** quotes political analysts as saying that the initiative for abrogation of the court has now taken on the form of a legal initiative and quotes Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj as saying that they have not yet officially received the initiative and therefore cannot comment on future steps. Meanwhile, ***Bota Sot*** on the front page quotes head of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) parliamentary group, Avdullah Hoti, saying that abolishing the special court is in the interest of Kosovo’s enemies.

**Gashi: No matter government’s opinion, special court returns to Assembly (*Koha*)**

Kosovo Assembly’s MP from the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Arben Gashi, told KTV that the request of the 43 MPs for abrogation of the law on specialist chambers was specific. “It requested an extraordinary session for the 22 December at 08:00 hours. We are a month late. The request should have been removed from the agenda completely. Based on the procedures, now the government has 30 days to reply. However, no matter if the government replies or not, this matter is in the agenda of the Assembly of Kosovo,” Gashi said.

**Sejdiu: Initiative to abrogate special court has shown initial consequences (*Epoka*)**

Korab Sejdiu, Kosovo Assembly’s independent MP, told the paper that MPs who wish well to Kosovo should not allow abrogation of the Law on the specialist chambers. He said that government officials want to set the country on fire for their close personal interests. He added that this initiative is already showing the first consequences. “For the first time, SAA conclusions were not signed at the European Parliament,” Sejdiu said. Contradictory position of Kosovo political forces with regards to the specialist chambers has dominated a Stabilisation and Association committee meeting between a Kosovo Assembly delegation and the European Parliament representatives. As a result of disagreements amongst the Kosovo Assembly delegation, headed by Memli Krasniqi from the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), the meeting failed to end in a joint statement which EP insisted to include the need for Kosovo authorities to cooperate with specialist chambers.

**Osmani: Disagreements between Kosovo and EU increase (*Zeri/RFE*)**

MP from the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Vjosa Osmani, told ***Radio Free Europe*** that Kosovo is damaging relations with the EU following the failure of a Kosovo Assembly delegation to agree on a joint statement with European Parliament which called on Kosovo institutions to support the work of specialist chambers. Osmani said the joint statement was not agreed upon because of the “irresponsible” position of MPs from the ruling coalition. Meanwhile, MP Time Kadriaj from the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) who is also deputy chairperson of the Assembly’s committee on foreign affairs, said not approval of the joint conclusions with the European Parliament does not impair Kosovo’s relations with the EU and that the government of Kosovo is committed to implement necessary reforms from its European integration agenda.

**Kosovo government pledges transparency in Brussels dialogue (*Zeri*)**

Kosovo government officials said they believed that dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade will resume very soon and pledged to be much more transparent than was the case in the past. In a written response to the paper, government of Kosovo said the public will be timely and accurately informed of all the topics being discussed in the dialogue.

**Dacic: If EU believes we will recognize Kosovo in 2018, it believes in fairy tales (*Koha*)**

Belgrade is committed to the dialogue with Pristina, however the discussions will only continue when Serbian party receives concrete information on Oliver Ivanovic’s murder. During a meeting with Ambassadors of the EU member states, Serbia’s Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic, said they expect from Kosovo authorities to identify and criminally prosecute perpetrators. “Ivanovic’s murder represents a threat to regional stability and dialogue for normalization of the relations between Belgrade and Pristina,” Dacic said. Later on, in an interview for Vojvodina broadcaster, Dacic said that expectations of the EU High Representative, Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for Enlargement Johannes Hahn, are not realistic. “If they expect from us to recognize the independence in 2018, then they believe in fairy tales,” Dacic said.

**EU Foreign Ministers discuss Ivanovic’s murder (*Koha*)**

The foreign ministers of the EU member states discussed on Monday murder of the Serb politician in Mitrovica North and suspect for war crimes, Oliver Ivanovic. Croatian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Marija Pejcinovic, said that they requested a swift investigation and resumption of the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. “The matter of Kosovo and the murder that happened there was mentioned. The conclusion is a call for speedy investigations, return of the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, and as much assurance as possible that for such things to never happen again, because they represent a dangerous precedent,” Pejcinovic said.

**Kosovo Assembly to resume sessions on Thursday (*Koha Ditore*)**

The paper reports that the Kosovo Assembly has announced its first session since the winter break for Thursday. The agenda includes reviewing issues from the last session as well as voting on Kosovo Ombudsperson’s annual report and on members of the public broadcaster RTK board. This will be followed by a motion sponsored by the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) against Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Diaspora and Strategic Investment, Dardan Gashi, about his involvement in the “happy fire” case.

**Meta requests from Kosovo politicians to find wise solutions (*Epoka*)**

The President of Albania, Ilir Meta, requested during his visit to Pristina from both the government and opposition parties of Kosovo, to find wise solutions on all the matters that strengthen Kosovo’s international position. He also offered maximal support of Albania. Meta said both Kosovo and Albania should fulfill all EU membership criteria.

**AKI director called to report to Assembly committee (*Klan Kosova*)**

Director of the Kosovo Intelligence Agency (KIA), Driton Gashi, has been called by the Assembly committee to report about the security situation in Kosovo. Chairperson of the Committee for the Oversight of the Kosovo Intelligence Agency, Donika Kadaj-Bujupi said Gashi will be asked to brief the members on overall situation, particularly in the north following the recent events there.

**Danish military academy with plan to transform KSF (*Bota Sot*)**

In an interview to the paper, John Skovbo, head of a Danish military academy said they have prepared a four-year strategy aimed at completing the transition of the Kosovo Security Force into a Kosovo army. “We had a workshop with senior KSF officers and other officials and drafted an analysis on what education process and training KSF members require for transformation into KAF (Kosovo Armed Force),” Skovbo said.

**DPM Jevtic to attend Morning Prayer but not instead of Haradinaj (*Telegrafi*)**

The Ministry for the Returns and Communities through a press release refuted the news that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister Dalibor Jevtic will travel to Washington D.C. for the Morning Prayers to replace PM Ramush Haradinaj. “Having in mind that some media in Albanian language published information that the DPM and Minister for Returns and Communities Dalibor Jevtic will go to the Morning Prayers instead of Ramush Haradinaj, we have to explain: The DPM and Minister received the invitation in the beginning of December. The invitation was sent personally to Mr Jevtic, therefore, in this case, Jevtic was not delegated to replace PM Haradinaj in this case, but he will travel to Washington on a personal invitation,” the press release reads.

**Thaci decrees 21 new prosecutors (*media*)**

President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, has decreed 21 new prosecutors and said on the occasion that consolidation of the rule of law must be their main priority. “In this regard, you have my full support,” Thaci said adding: “Now, when we are close to the marking of the 10th anniversary of the independence, we need greater commitment to the strengthening of the rule of law by providing a strong, legal, equal state for all citizens.”

**Haradinaj: Electricity price will not be increased at this difficult time (*Koha*)**

Prime Minister of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, said after a meeting with Kosovo Energy Corporation (KEK) management that the electricity price will not be increased “at this difficult time”. He said he was aware of occasional power restrictions at present but said he hoped the energy supply situation will be improved in February.

**Over 10,000 Vetevendosje members voted Kurti for their leader (*Epoka*)**

Around 33.83 percent of members of the Vetevendosje Movement members voted Albin Kurti for the new leader of this party, in the internal elections held on Sunday. Head of the party’s election commission, Adnan Rrustemi, said Kurti won with over ten thousand votes. According to him, this was the best election process for the leader of the party, held so far.

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