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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Haradinaj: Special Court exists, no question about it (*Klan Kosova*)**

Prime Minister of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, is reported to have cast away any doubts regarding the functioning of the specialist chambers. "The court exists, it has been voted at the parliament through constitutional changes," Haradinaj is quoted as telling journalist Tim Sebastian in a ***Deutsche Welle*** interview aired by ***Klan Kosova***. He said the MPs initiative to abrogate the law on specialist chambers is linked to "procedure" but is not aimed at preventing the court's functioning. "The MPs want to amend the existing legislation but not to stop the court. The court exists and there is no question about it" Haradinaj said. Haradinaj admitted that there is concern with a number of people in Kosovo regarding the possible indictees but that he personally was not afraid. Speaking about the issue of border demarcation with Montenegro, Haradinaj said Kosovo has strong ties with Montenegro and that it was unfortunate that the border demarcation is linked to the visa liberalisation process. At the same time, he criticized the EU for not paying “enough attention to Kosovo”. “All EU states need to act in unison regarding Kosovo. The war in Kosovo has ended in 1999 but we are still an open issue by the EU and Europeans,” Haradinaj said.

**Delawie: People of Kosovo do not support abrogation of Special Court (*Bota Sot*)**

The U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, Greg Delawie, took to Twitter to praise Kosovo politicians who are openly speaking against the initiative to abrogate the Law on specialist chambers. “Kosovo’s people don’t support the initiative to undo the Special Court. I applaud politicians and others who are speaking out publicly on behalf of Kosovo citizens and, though it is difficult, what is right for Kosovo’s future,” Delawie wrote.

**Pacolli: Special Court abrogation and lack of ratification of demarcation, fatal for Kosovo (*dailies*)**

Kosovo’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Behgjet Pacolli, said during his reporting at the Kosovo Assembly’s Committee for Foreign Affairs that he was told to stop the initiative for abrogation of the Special Court. “These initiatives are fatal. There is a quiet isolation of Kosovo each day,” Pacolli said. He further said that Serbia is challenging Kosovo’s foreign policy, especially on Kosovo’s path for integration, membership at different organisations and on the matter of recognition of the state of Kosovo. He said Serbia has gone so far that it is even lobbying to the states that have already recognized Kosovo to withdraw their recognition. “There is no state in African continent where Serbia does not have a delegation lobbying against Kosovo’s statehood,” Pacolli said. He added that according to his information, Serbia has allocated €300 million and engaged a team of twenty people, experts in foreign affairs, to visit different countries in the world and lobby against Kosovo. He told the Committee that foreign policy is not only a matter of the government but the Assembly of Kosovo as well. He said that claims of some members of this Committee that he is avoiding reporting are not true. Pacolli informed the Committee that the Ministry will not extend mandate to 22 Ambassadors of Kosovo. They are to return to Kosovo and replaced with new ones.

**Kurti: Thaci only wants to get his name off special court's list (*Zeri*)**

Vetevendosje leader, Albin Kurti, said at a debate on the specialist chambers and its relations with Kosovo institutions that President of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci, is not sincere in the initiative to abrogate law on specialist chambers and that all he wants is to make sure his name is not on the list of possible indictees. He said that although many people hope that the court will free Kosovo of corrupt politicians, “we cannot get rid of them through initiatives that come from Serbia and Russia.” “In Kosovo, many of these politicians need to be accused as peace criminals for what they did to our people and not war criminals,” Kurti said. Vetevendosje MP, Albulena Haxhiu, observed that although she believed the specialist court to be political and aimed at “distorting” the fight for freedom led by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), the initiative for its abrogation is not right while head of Vetevendosje's parliamentary group, Glauk Konjufca, accused Kosovo leaders – Hashim Thaci, Kadri Veseli and Ramush Haradinaj – for being behind the initiative to abrogate specialist chambers.

**Kosovo Assembly discusses air pollution (*dailies*)**

Media report today that the high level of air pollution was the focus of the Assembly yesterday where MPs voiced numerous concerns regarding the response institutions have had in face of the record level of pollution in recent period. Assembly President, Kadri Veseli, said they cannot remain indifferent to the current situation and stressed that debate on the topic should go beyond political affiliation. All parliamentary groups agreed on drafting a resolution or recommendations regarding emergency measures institutions ought to take to tackle air pollution. The Assembly session is set to continue today.

**Dacic and Tanin discuss security situation in Kosovo (*dailies*)**

Several dailies report that Serbia’s Foreign Minister, Ivica Dacic, has discussed with the UNMIK Chief the situation in Kosovo, during Tanin’s regular visit prior to the next session of the UN Security Council. According to the webpage of the Serbian Foreign Ministry, “they discussed the fragile political and security situation in Kosovo, especially after the tragic murder of Oliver Ivanovic, as well as current events on the attempts to abrogate the Special Court.” They also discussed the perspective of the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade and UNMIK’s engagement.

**Admiral Foggo: NATO is not concerned about Kosovo’s stability (*RTK*)**

NATO Commander, Admiral James g. Foggo, is not concerned about the stability in Kosovo. He says that “NATO respects Serbia’s neutrality and its political and military connections with Russia.” “We are in Partnership for Peace, and this is excellent. The statute of the Alliance stresses that an attack to one of the members is attack on all. However, NATO’s mission is first of all defense and prevention of conflicts. Acceptance of Montenegro has helped security of the borders in the region,” Foggo said. Asked about the security situation in Kosovo, Foggo said that the first Kosovo Police is competent for security, then EULEX and after them KFOR. “Their duty is to prevent destabilization and violence,” Admiral Foggo said. “Oliver Ivanovic’s murder is a crime, and perpetrators should be tried. Serbia’s President Aleksandar Vucic has sensibly calmed the situation after this case, with his visit to Kosovo. This contributed also to the determination of continuing with dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade,” Foggo said. Admiral Foggo, together with KFOR Commander General Major Salvatore Cuoci, will be visiting main bridge in Mitrovica today.

**Hoxha: Any further delay undermines visa liberalisation (*RTK*)**

Minister of European Integration, Dhurata Hoxha, argued in a Facebook post on the need to ratify the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro saying that any further delay also undermines the visa liberalisation process. “I call on all political parliamentary forces, international friends and our country’s executive institutions to make efforts to successfully end this process,” Hoxha wrote.

**Government applies double standards on anti-corruption agency’s ruling (*Koha*)**

The paper writes that the government of Kosovo is applying double standards when it comes to rulings issued by the Anti-Corruption Agency by implementing them as a matter of urgency when convenient or choosing to ignore them when it does not suit the government. Soon after taking on the post of prime minister, Ramush Haradinaj dismissed directors of public enterprises upon an opinion by the anti-corruption agency but seemed reluctant to implement the agency’s ruling regarding decision to increase salaries for the government officials.

**Haradinaj suspends decision on pay raise (*Zeri*)**

Prime Minister of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, has decided to temporarily suspend decision to increase salaries for himself and his cabinet pending a decision by the Constitutional Court. In a Facebook post, Haradinaj said the opinion of the Anti-Corruption Agency against the move was politically motivated but that he has nevertheless decided to freeze its implementation. Haradinaj’s move follows the request of 30 MPs who addressed the Constitutional Court asking it to review the legality of the pay raise decision.

**“PM Haradinaj has no time for north’s Albanians” (*Koha Ditore*)**

The paper reports on the front page that since taking on the office of Prime Minister, Ramush Haradinaj has received many people of different backgrounds starting from politicians, fellow party colleagues, family members, as well as religious representatives but that he has not found so far any time to receive Albanian representatives from the north of Kosovo. The paper writes that an official request for a meeting has been submitted to the government since 8 January but the meeting has not taken place because of PM Haradinaj’s “busy agenda”. “We have requested a meeting with the prime minister in order to relay the many problems Albanians and other non-majority communities face in the north. The main problem is lack of security as well as inability to renovate houses. At the same time Albanians are not being treated equally when it comes to employment opportunities,” said Bashkim Cimili, deputy chairman of Mitrovica North’s office for communities. Haradinaj’s office meanwhile did not comment on the concerns raised by the Albanian representatives from the north or on whether the prime minister plans to undertake a visit to the north any time soon.

**Vucic: In EU, after signing a binding document on Kosovo (*RTK*)**

The President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, said at a press conference after the meeting with President of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajan, that the EU expects Belgrade to sign a legally binding document prior to the EU membership. Vucic also spoke about Oliver Ivanovic’s murder assessing it as a terrible crime and added that he expects from Pristina powerful investigations and bringing of perpetrators in front of justice. At this occasion, Vucic once again requested Tajani on the other hand said that “Serbia is Europe and it is correct for all people in Balkans to live in peace.” He further insisted on continuance of the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade.

**Hamza presents Apostolova with economic reforms programme (*Zeri*)**

Kosovo’s Minister of Finance, Bedri Hamza, presented to the Head of the EU Office in Kosovo, Nataliya Apostolova, annual economic reforms programme which he noted for the first time includes input from the civil society and business community. Furthermore, Hamza added, the programme strictly adheres to the European Commission guidelines.

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