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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Serbs threaten to form Association, Pristina says it won’t have legitimacy (*Koha*)**

Kosovo Serb representatives have threatened to unilaterally form the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities if authorities in Pristina don’t do this by April 20, the paper reports on its front page. Serbian politicians from Belgrade and Serb political representatives paid by the Kosovo budget held a meeting in Mitrovica North on Wednesday and expressed their outrage over the arrest of Marko Djuric and used nationalistic and racist tones against Albanians. The logo of the Association/Community was presented at the meeting. “If Pristina is not ready to work on the Association/Community in three weeks, then the municipalities will start establishing it, as foreseen in the Brussels agreements. We will work on this regardless of the Court’s ruling. If Pristina continues to act in this way, we will see it as lack of readiness to form the Association/Community,” it was said at the meeting. Serbian List leader Goran Rakic said he has informed Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic that if Pristina does not form the Association/Community, the Serb municipalities will do this on their own.

**Haradinaj: Kosovo cannot be undone (*Kosova Sot*)**

The Prime Minister of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, said Kosovo cannot be undone for anybody’s sake. According to Haradinaj, there is no division of Kosovo and there will be no exchange of territories. Haradinaj wrote on his Facebook page that Serbian List should return to table and discuss joint issues which are for the benefit of citizens. “Ultimatum is a wrong approach and the only formula is legal and constitutional base,” Haradinaj wrote. “Serbian President Vucic should understand that Kosovo’s patience should not be tested unlimitedly and that we will defend our right,” Haradinaj wrote.

**Kosovo government condemns initiative of Serbian List (*Zeri*)**

The Kosovo government has condemned the Serbian List’s initiative to unilaterally form the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities, the paper reports on page four. “The Association is an obligation that Kosovo has taken over from the Brussels process and it will be implemented in the near future. Every initiative that is not based in the laws and democratic procedures of the Republic of Kosovo will not be implemented and will not be respected,” the government said in a written response to the paper.

**Thaci meets Haradinaj and Delawie (*media*)**

Kosovo President Hashim Thaci met on Wednesday with Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj and U.S. Ambassador Greg Delawie to discuss the recent developments, most media report. Thaci and Haradinaj pledged to respect the obligations deriving from the Brussels talks and also talked about functionalizing the management team for the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities. “Kosovo institutions believe that dialogue and not ultimatums is the way forward in building a European and multiethnic Kosovo,” it was said at the meeting.

**U.S. Embassy condemns recent events (*Koha*)**

The United States Embassy in Pristina issued a press release on Wednesday condemning the recent events in Mitrovica North. “The United States strongly condemns yesterday’s events in Mitrovica, which unnecessarily heighten tensions and threaten regional stability. We urge all parties to avoid further escalation of the situation, and to act calmly and resolve disputes peacefully. To create lasting peace and stability in the Balkans, both Kosovo and Serbia need to focus on normalizing relations through the EU-led Dialogue. The United States stands ready to support all parties in Dialogue negotiations,” the statement noted.

**Hoxhaj: Djuric entered Kosovo a day before his arrest (*RTK*)**

Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo, Enver Hoxhaj, told Klan Kosova that Director of the Office for Kosovo at Serbian government, Marko Djuric, entered Kosovo a day before being arrested and then deported to Serbia. According to Hoxhaj, the international treaty signed in Brussels explains clearly how and when the requests for permission to visit are made, and added that this is where Djuric committed violation. “In reality, Djuric entered Kosovo a day before, according to my last information, and in the meantime he was trying to receive permission to visit Kosovo. At the time his office submitted the request, he was already in Kosovo”. He further added that police action was not against Serb community, but an individual who entered Kosovo illegally. Hoxhaj said that considering Djuric’s statements, he entered Kosovo six or seven other times, and added that this is a provocation. “His intention was to provoke internal situation in Kosovo,” Hoxhaj said.

**Opposition parties don’t want to throw down government (*Zeri*)**

The paper reports on its front page that opposition parties have decided not to try and bring down the Haradinaj-led government despite the fact that the latter now lacks the majority in Parliament after the Serbian List’s decision to leave the government. Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj told media that he does not intend to resign. The paper further notes that this is a very rare case when the opposition is not interested in bringing down the government even though it lacks the majority.

**Kosovo-Serbia dialogue under high tension (*Zeri*)**

The paper reports that tensions are expected in dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade and that therefore a new phase of talks is not going to be easy, the paper reports on page five. The Kosovo government told the paper that it is too early to draw conclusions over the recent developments but that it is ready to resume dialogue with Belgrade. “We believe that in coming days and weeks, things will become clearer and the public will be informed in due time. As far as dialogue is concerned, the agenda is set by Brussels and Kosovo is ready to respond at any time,” the government said in a response. The paper also quotes European Commission spokesperson Maja Kocijancic as saying: “the two parties have pledged to dialogue and we believe that dialogue is the way forward also in the light of the Western Balkans strategy”.

**Fajon meets Avramopoulos, discuss visa liberalization (*RTK*)**

Tanja Fajon, Rapporteur for Kosovo at the European Parliament, met on Wednesday with Commissioner for Migration and Internal Matters at the European Parliament, Dimitris Avramopoulos. They discussed visa liberalization for Kosovo. “Meeting with Commissioner Avramopoulos today in Berlaymont. We have a fruitful cooperation on many European Parliament Justice issues and joint efforts to restore Schengen and abolish visas for Kosovo,” Fajon wrote on her Twitter account.

**Vucic seeks Putin’s advice on Kosovo (*Koha*)**

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic has sought advice from Russian President Vladimir Putin on how to respond to “violence and aggression from Pristina”, Belgrade-based media reported on Wednesday. A press release issued by Vucic’s office noted that he informed Putin about the recent events in Kosovo and the arrest of Marko Djuric. According to the press release, Putin told Vucic that Russia is closely following events in Kosovo and that it strongly condemns Pristina’s actions and the violence against the Serb population. “The violence against senior Serbian officials is intolerable and condemnable,” Putin is quoted as saying.

**Serbian military planes seen flying near Kosovo border (*Zeri*)**

Two Serbian military planes were seen flying near the border with Kosovo in the zone between Gjilan and Presevo, the paper reports on page seven. Presevo Mayor Shqiperim Arifi told media that such actions cause concern and anxiety among Albanians living in Presevo Valley. A spokesman for the Serbian Ministry of Defense told ***BIRN*** that the flights were part of military drills planned in the area and that they will continue today in central Serbia. “There is no need for panic among the local population,” the spokesman said.

**KFOR: There is no threat (*RTK*)**

KFOR informed that it is monitoring the situation after Wednesday’s flights of Serbia’s air force planes over Presevo municipality. “KFOR is monitoring the situation and calls on population to be calm, because there is no threat. Serbian military authorities announced that they are commencing a tactic training “Sadejstvo 2018”, which was planned for the next day,” informs a press release issued by KFOR.

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