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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Haradinaj: They were not deported, they were stolen (*Voice of America*)**

Kosovo Prime Minister, Ramush Haradinaj, said in an interview to ***Voice of America*** that he does not understand the reactions of the Turkish President toward him, and stressed that no one from outside can decide on Kosovo’s internal affairs. Haradinaj said he does not want to prejudge who gave the order for the arrests and deportation, and added that “they were not deported, they were stolen”. Haradinaj also said Kosovo is careful about its relations with all countries, including the Republic of Turkey. “We are grateful for recognition, support on the international plan and membership at international organisations…There is obscurity surrounding the detention of six Turkish citizens in Kosovo and their deportation, so the manner of revocation of their residence permit was done by a very fast procedure and secret deportation and based on this and the fact that I was not informed, made me come up with the decision to irrevocably dismiss the Minister of Interior and the director of Kosovo’s Intelligence Agency. I don’t understand the reactions coming from President (Erdogan). We do not interfere in Turkey’s internal affairs, these are our internal affairs and no one will make decisions on Kosovo’s internal affairs,” Haradinaj said.

**Interior Minister resigns, intelligence chief disobeys PM Haradinaj (*media*)**

***Koha Ditore*** reports on its front page that following the arrest and deportation of six Turkish nationals, Flamur Sefaj has resigned as Minister of Interior Affairs. Sefaj wrote in a Facebook post: “It was a privilege, honor and pride to serve my country for seven months. I want to assure the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo that the police operation in northern Kosovo protected the Constitution and the principles of our multiethnic society”. ***Epoka e Re*** reports on its front page that the New Kosovo Alliance (AKR) said Sefaj was not a decision-making factor and that he only implemented the law following the assessment of the Intelligence Agency according to which the six Turkish nationals were a threat to Kosovo’s national security. Meanwhile, Driton Gashi, head of the Kosovo Intelligence Agency (AKI), is still holding the post despite Haradinaj’s request to dismiss him. Both ***Koha Ditore*** and ***Zeri*** note in their coverage that Gashi is protected by Kosovo President Hashim Thaci. ***Zeri*** quotes AAK MPs as saying that they are confident that Gashi too will resign the post. ***Kosova Sot*** notes on its front page that “everyone is pointing fingers at Thaci” for the incident involving the Turkish nationals. In a different article, the paper quotes political analysts in Pristina as saying that the Minister of Justice too should resign due to the incident.

**Assembly presidency to discuss request for extraordinary session (*RTK*)**

The Assembly Presidency with parliamentary caucuses will gather today to discuss the request of forty MPs for an extraordinary session related to the deportation of six Turkish citizens. The request for this session was submitted by the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), which has recently requested also new elections with the justification that this government is not capable of leading Kosovo.

**Intelligence chief to report to assembly committee on Gulenists’ case today (*RTK*)**

The Director of Kosovo Intelligence Agency (KIA), Driton Gashi, will report today to the Assembly committee for supervision of the KIA. This is Gashi’s first reporting after the deportation of six Turkish citizens to Turkey. Gashi has been accused as the main person responsible for their deportation. Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj has requested his resignation, however Gashi has yet to act on the request.

**EU reacts to arrest and deportation of Turkish nationals (*media*)**

EU spokeswoman Maja Kocijancic said on Tuesday that “the arrest and subsequent deportation of six Turkish nationals legally residing in Kosovo raise questions about the respect of the due process of law. The rule of law is a fundamental principal of the European Union”. Kocijancic also said: “Kosovo in line with its determination to build a free and democratic future, as part of its association agreement with the EU is required it to show full respect for the rule of law and promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Arbitrary procedures concerning arrest, detention, or exile go against these principles”. She also said that as for Turkey, “while we understand the need to bring the culprits of the coup attempt...to justice, any alleged wrongdoing or crime should be subject to due process and well established international norms when seeking extradition … The right of every individual to fair trial needs to be fully respected. As a European Union candidate country and a member of the Council of Europe, Turkey has subscribed to these principles.”

**U.S. encouraged Kosovo will investigate deportation of Turkish citizens (*media*)**

Several media report that the US State Department feels encouraged that Kosovo institutions have decided to investigate what happened with the Turkish citizens, who were deported on account of the Turkish government. A spokesperson for the U.S. State Department commented the recent incident between Kosovo and Turkey, saying that the United States feel encouraged for the fact that Kosovo’s institutions have announced their determination to investigate what happened and improve the procedural guarantees for protecting basic rights. “Transparency and guarantees for the rule of law are vital for Kosovo’s democratic development and Euro-Atlantic aspirations,” the spokesperson said.

**Fetullah Gulen reacts over deportation of Turkish nationals (*Kosova Sot*)**

FETO leader, Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen has commented in an interview for Aksam, for the first time the arrest and deportation of his supporters in Kosovo. “Bandits are kidnapping people in Kosovo. And when I am saying bandits, it might sound as an easy thing to some. This is pure banditry, just as kidnaping in Pakistan. Pure banditry. In Myanmar, it is a pure banditry. In some places even murders ...These actions were not committed even by traitors who occupied Istanbul in the past,” Gulen was quoted as saying.

**Consequences for Kosovo at CoE following incident with Turkish nationals (*Zeri*)**

Kosovo, which was expected to apply for membership of the Council of Europe this year, does not fare well in this respect following the arrest and extradition of six Turkish nationals, the paper reports on page six. Kosovo’s authorities have violated article 3 of the Statute of the Council of Europe which notes that every European country must respect human rights and rule of law principles in order to join this organization. The paper also quotes Behxhet Shala, chairman of the Pristina-based Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHRF) as saying that Kosovo won’t be able to join the Council of Europe and will not get visa liberalization due to the incident with the Turkish nationals.

**LDK calls on political parties to set date for new elections (*media*)**

All media report that the chairmanship of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) called on political parties to meet as soon as possible and set a date for new parliamentary elections. The LDK said the Haradinaj-led government no longer has the majority in parliament and that “a minority government cannot address capital issues”.

**“Serbian List might return to government after Sefaj’s dismissal” (*RTK*)**

Kosovo Assembly MP from the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), Memli Krasniqi, claims that the Serbian List could return to the government, after the Minister of Interior, Flamur Sefaj, resigned from his position with the request of Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj. Krasniqi said the government can stand on its feet even with only 52 votes. However, according to him, possibilities for the return of the Serbian List are great. On the other hand, Lumir Abdixhiku, MP from the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), said if this happens, Serbs would not return without new conditions and that this would go against Kosovo’s interests.

**Hoxhaj: Resuming dialogue with Serbia becoming impossible (*media*)**

Kosovo’s Deputy Prime Minister Enver Hoxhaj has reacted to Serbia’s campaign against Kosovo’s international recognition and to the recent statements by Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabic over Kosovo’s participation at the upcoming EU Western Balkans Summit. Hoxhaj took to Twitter to note that such actions are making impossible the dialogue on normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia. “Aggressive campaign from Serbia to revoke our recognitions and publicly speaking against Kosovo’s participation in EU Summit in Sofia are making the dialogue between two countries impossible. Kosovo will act proportionally because such actions are against normalizing relations,” Hoxhaj wrote.

**Pacolli doesn’t believe Burundi has retracted recognition of Kosovo (*media*)**

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic met on Tuesday in Belgrade with the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Burundi, Alain Aime Nyamitwe, and thanked him for Burundi’s decision to retract the recognition of Kosovo’s independence, Serbian media reported. However, Kosovo’s Foreign Minister Behgjet Pacolli is skeptical about media reports coming from Belgrade. “Apart from what we have seen in the media, we have not received anything official from Burundi yet,” Pacolli said.

**Rada Trajkovic tells why Ivanovic’s murderer is not being found (*Lajmi*)**

Former Kosovo Assembly MP and leader of the European Movement of Serbs in Kosovo, Rada Trajkovic, spoke about possible reasons for the lack of progress on investigation of Oliver Ivanovic’s murder. “If Ramush Haradinaj said four days ago that he meets Milan Radojcic every 15 days, as an important person for the north of Kosovo, and discusses with him integration of Serbs, then we can suppose, who in fact is impeding investigation on Oliver Ivanovic’s murder,” Trajkovic said. She added that it is not a secret that Radojcic is considered as the main chief of Mafia in northern Kosovo. She said that it is not important for Ramush Haradinaj if the Serbian List supports him at the Assembly, because according to her, they are only a “button” while Radojcic is the negotiator.

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