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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Thaci: No one can make us discuss or agree to Kosovo’s partition (*dailies*)**

In yesterday’s press conference, President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci categorically rejected the possibility of discussing partition of Kosovo as part of the final settlement with Serbia. “Unfortunately, we are witnesses to fake news. I am here today as president of the country to reassure the citizens of Kosovo that there is no force that can make Kosovo discuss let alone agree to its partition.  I can assure you with all my institutional responsibilities that partition of Kosovo will not even be discussed,” Thaci said. He said he will work to make sure the final agreement with Serbia is in line with Kosovo Constitution and that it will only make sense if its outcome involves mutual recognition and possibility to join international organisations without delay. “We need to reach agreement as soon as possible and have mutual recognition,” said Thaci warning of a repeat of the scenario with ratification of the border demarcation with Montenegro. “Circumstances change and not always to our advantage.” He said he welcomes the present debate in Kosovo regarding dialogue with Serbia which he said is aimed at encouraging all actors to work towards reaching a final agreement for normalisation of relations.  Thaci noted however that it was disappointing that political parties did not manage to agree to a joint document concerning dialogue with Serbia. “We have shown amazing results in Rambouillet where as Kosovo delegation we demonstrated responsibility and took it on together. At the time we also had different opinions, but reason prevailed,” Thaci said. “I have full confidence that the political spectrum will come together for state interests. Work for the interests of the citizens and all assume responsibility, or rather those who wish to do so.” Asked what the introduction of the Presevo Valley question means for the dialogue in Brussels and whether this could lead to redrawing of borders, Thaci said: “I hope this represents correction of borders between the state of Kosovo and Serbia.” With regards to allegations made by political representatives that Thaci has no credibility to lead talks with Serbia, he responded by saying that he is the most voted leader in the last 12 years. “A leader that has won some seven elections consecutively,” he said of himself. As to the question of why he was hosting more press conferences lately, Thaci said he was doing it for the sake of transparency. “People need to be informed of every detail,” he said.

**Haradinaj: Do not fear that Kosovo would make mistakes in dialogue (*RTK*)**

The Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj advised during a meeting with representatives of Diaspora that they should not fear that Kosovo would make mistakes in the dialogue with Serbia. “There were many discussions about the dialogue, do not fear that Kosovo, now after twenty years, would make mistakes, you understand what I want to say. It has not made a twenty years journey to make mistakes now, Kosovo will not make mistakes, but internal discussions, debates, are necessary, different points of view are not negative. Sometimes, even lack of consensus, or not speaking in the same voice as population says, is not harmful,” Haradinaj said. He further advised representatives of Diaspora to be good citizens and respect the countries where they currently live.

**Kurti comments on possibility of leading dialogue with Serbia (*Bota Sot*)**

In a press conference yesterday, Vetevendosje leader Albin Kurti said dialogue with Serbia cannot be led by people with no credibility. He said it was therefore paramount for the Assembly to take lead of the process and properly define Kosovo’s demands towards Serbia. Once these are laid out, can Kosovo proceed to set up a negotiating team, Kurti added. Asked by reporters whether he would be ready to become chief negotiator in the dialogue with Serbia, Kurti said it was too early to discuss this. “I think it is too premature and entirely inappropriate to discuss the end without making even first steps,” Kurti said.

**Janjic warns of Kosovo’s partition, calls on US and EU to intervene (*Telegrafi*)**

Father Sava Janjic, Abbot at Visoki Decani Orthodox Monastery, warned about the risk of Kosovo’s partition through staged acts of violence in the northern part of Kosovo. Janjic said he hopes the United States of America and the European Union will prevent irresponsible individuals and groups from provoking violence and added that political leaders in Belgrade and Pristina must assume responsibilities for a peaceful dialogue. Janjic wrote in a Facebook post: “In Kosovo there are different dangerous information, including information about an agreed scenario of incidents in the northern part of Kosovo that would trigger reactions from both sides and create a factual division on the ground … KFOR claims it is determined to prevent violence, but there is concern among the people. It is very important for this concerning news to be refuted by all sides and to have a mutual commitment to peaceful dialogue … I strongly believe that the international community, especially the U.S. and the EU, will prevent irresponsible individuals and groups from both sides from provoking violence that would harm innocent people and precious historic and cultural monuments like in the 2004 riots. For Kosovo and the region, this would be a terrible step backwards … Political leaders in Belgrade and Pristina must reject voices for eventual territorial partition … and assume obligations for a peaceful dialogue. Otherwise, they will have to bear a great political and moral responsibility”.

**Brnabic: Situation in Kosovo must be discussed at Security Council (*Klan Kosova*)**

Serbian Prime Minister, Ana Brnabic, said on Tuesday that the situation in Kosovo needs to be discussed at the United Nations Security Council as has been the case so far. She told the ***Radio Television of Serbia*** that there are many things Serbia can do with regards to “London’s attempt to prevent a regular session at the UN Security Council about the situation in Kosovo”. “We are certainly continuing our diplomatic efforts and we are talking to our permanent allies in the Security Council, so we will see how the issue develops,” she said. Brnabic also said that the current United States administration has a better understanding of Serbia’s position. “In my brief career in politics, it often seemed to me that I didn’t have interlocutors that were willing to hear our position, and it was like talking to a wall. Now however there is an administration that seems to be open and willing to listen to us and this is a great change,” Brnabic added.

**NATO ready to intervene in the event of violence in Kosovo (*Koha*)**

U.S. Admiral James Foggo, commander of NATO’s Joint Force Command, based in Sicily, said during a visit to Kosovo on Tuesday that KFOR troops are ready to react to possible violent outbreaks. “I don’t see any threat to Kosovo’s integrity. KFOR is strong and we don’t see any problem in the near or distant future,” Foggo told a press conference at a KFOR base near Leposavic. Asked to comment on reports about Kosovo’s possible partition, Foggo said “these are political issues that need to be resolved through the Pristina – Belgrade dialogue”. “Every time there are talks about controversial political solutions to problems in the Balkans, there is also a potential for riots. We are aware that this is an important time, that there are many discussions beyond Kosovo’s borders, like I said between Pristina and Belgrade, political leaders who are trying to resolve some difficult issues. We will be here to support Kosovo’s institutions in maintaining security this month and the coming months,” Foggo said.

**Bushati: We need to be careful not to open Pandora’s Box (*Koha*)**

Albania’s Foreign Minister, Ditmir Bushati, said on Tuesday that the time has come for Serbia and Kosovo to make painful concessions and reach a mutually-beneficial and legally-binding agreement. Bushati however also said that the eventual exchange of territories would go against the Helsinki Final Act and other international documents. “Therefore, we need to be very careful not to open Pandora’s Box for other countries in the region,” Bushati was quoted as saying.

**Haradinaj: First proposal for ACSM statute, within the deadline (*Epoka*)**

The Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj, said on Tuesday that the draft statute for the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities is in process and according to him, the initial proposal will be submitted on 4 or 5 August. “However, the process will continue. The managing team will initially present the statute, then the government and the others can have their remarks or advises, finally we should be certain that it is in accordance with the laws and the Constitution of Kosovo, as stressed in the agreement,” Haradinaj said.

**Haradinaj says failure to approve IPA deal sends bad message to EU (*Zeri*)**

Prime Minister of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, said the failure of the Kosovo Assembly to endorse European Commission’s Instrument of Pre-Accession (IPA) agreement sends a bad message to the EU implying Kosovo does not need its assistance. Haradinaj blamed the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) for not voting the agreement. “I am shocked,” Haradinaj said. “I don’t remember ever Kosovo refusing IPA funds,” he added. He said the LDK’s position is “strange” and hinted at the possibility of the party being currently without a de facto leadership as reason behind its moves.

**Government sets up team to assess Trepca mine assets (*Epoka e Re*)**

Government of Kosovo has set up a working group to assess all assets owned by the Trepca mining complex. The group, consisting of representatives from different ministries and Trepca mine, will prepare a report in three months and present its findings to the government.

**Gentiana Begolli elected chair of journalist association (*media*)**

Gentiana Begolli from public broadcaster RTK has been elected to head the Association of Journalists of Kosovo. The Association also elected its eight-member board.

**Government of Kosovo lifts protective measures on fruits and vegetables (*Koha*)**

Government of Kosovo has lifted protective measures it recently imposed on import of fruits, vegetables and milk. The government took the decision to annul two respective decisions of the Ministry of Trade and Industry for introducing protective measures on 21 products but did not give any explanation behind its most recent decision.

**Ugljanin: We want to be involved in talks for northern Kosovo (*Klan Kosova*)**

The President of the National Council of the Sandjak Bosniaks, Sulejman Ugljanin, said Bosniaks want to be part of the discussions between Kosovo and Serbia. “We want to be involved in these discussions between representatives of Serbia and Kosovo, as an equal party, to discuss solution of the Northern Kosovo issue, a place where Bosniaks live for centuries. We also have the right to be involved in discussions for the north of Kosovo,” Ugljanin said. He considered a crime lack of a solution for Bosniak Mahala.

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