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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Protest in Pristina today calling for chief prosecutor Lumezi’s resignation (*media*)**

Several news websites report that a protest will be held in Pristina this afternoon demanding the resignation of state chief prosecutor, Aleksander Lumezi, and calling for a vetting process in Kosovo’s judiciary. Elez Blakaj, who recently resigned as prosecutor, claimed in a public letter that he was faced with pressure from Lumezi for interviewing senior state officials, during his investigations into the lists of war veterans. The call for the protest notes: “It is now clear: the prosecution is in the service of politics. Even if there is a prosecutor like Elez Blakaj who is willing to fight corruption, he/she will be obstructed by chief prosecutor Aleksander Lumezi and Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj. Under such circumstances, the citizen of the Republic must be at the helm of his/her civic duties and responsibilities. Today, our duty is the request to dismiss chief prosecutor Lumezi and the start of a vetting process in the judiciary”.

**“Veterans” unmask the state (*Koha*)**

The paper reports on its front page that debate following Elez Blakaj’s resignation and the publication of the indictment known was “the false veterans” has brought to the surface links between politics and the state prosecution. The paper further notes that reactions by politicians and the prosecution after Blakaj denounced state prosecutor Aleksander Lumezi for interfering in his work, confirm the deteriorating situation “in the corrupt political and judicial system”.

**Kurti criticizes Haradinaj for insulting Elez Blakaj (*media*)**

Vetevendosje leader Albin Kurti took to Facebook to criticize Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj for insulting Elez Blakaj, who recently resigned as prosecutor and left to the U.S after filing an indictment for false war veterans. In an interview to ***KTV*** on Monday, Haradinaj said Blakaj was a thief and that he went to the U.S. for his MA studies and not because of pressure from the veterans. Kurti wrote in his post: “This cannot be our Prime Minister … The man with probably the biggest power in Kosovo, insulted an individual … I was surprised too that prosecutor Elez Blakaj left, but this Prime Minister with his insults told us everyone why it happened. Imagine if the former prosecutor was still in Kosovo and what Prime Minister Haradinaj would do to him?”

**Justice Minister: Vetting in judiciary is necessary (*Koha*)**

Kosovo’s Minister of Justice, Abelard Tahiri, said in an interview to ***KTV*** on Monday, that the indictment on false war veterans filed by former prosecutor Elez Blakaj “will not remain in the drawers of the prosecution office”. He pledged that the indictment will be proceeded to court without any interference in the independence of the judiciary. Tahiri also said that a vetting process is needed to improve the current state of the judiciary.

**Molliqaj: No justice in Kosovo without liberation from criminals (*Koha*)**

Kosovo Assembly MP from the Social-Democratic Party Dardan Molliqaj, took to Facebook to comment the recent news on resignation of prosecutor Elez Blakaj. According to Molliqaj, there will be no justice in Kosovo without “liberation of the country from criminals”. He further mentioned “Pronto’ affair which was also being investigated by Blakaj. “The Pronto affairs proved what we already knew: the justice system and the state in general are seized by a group of criminals that were leading the government. The most recent case of manipulation with veterans’ lists, then threats against the prosecutors who tried to shed light on this manipulation, revealed this truth once again,” Molliqaj wrote.

**Dacic: Blakaj resigned because he was investigating KLA crimes (*Koha*)**

The news website reports that during his stay in Russia, Serbia’s Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic said that Elez Blakaj resigned as prosecutor “due to pressure from the war veterans because he was investigating crimes committed by the KLA”. “The Albanian side does not implement our agreements. We want to reach a compromise, but it is clear that there is a double standard in the way the West treats Pristina. Now a war crimes prosecutor, an Albanian, has resigned due to pressure from the veterans, because he was investigating war crimes committed by the KLA. We will continue our close cooperation with Russia and President Putin, because without Russia there can be no sustainable solution,” Dacic said.

**LDK rejects President Thaci’s idea on border adjustments (*media*)**

Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) secretary general, Ismet Beqiri, said on Monday that his party is against President Hashim Thaci’s idea for border adjustments. According to Beqiri, “Kosovo will have to give something to Serbia” in return for parts of Presevo Valley. Beqiri also said that his party will initiate a vote of confidence against the Haradinaj-led government and called on MPs to support their initiative.

**Prosecution lacks evidence to file indictments for special court (*Zeri*)**

The paper reports that the office of the Specialist Prosecutor has not managed to collect enough evidence to file indictments at the special court. Christopher Bennet, a spokesman for the Specialist Prosecutor’s Office, told the paper: “the Specialist Prosecutor’s Office knows there are expectations to submit indictments in time and it will make a decision on the matter when the presented evidence and facts permit this. Until then, the Specialist Prosecutor’s Office will continue its investigations”.

**Lavrov: KFOR, EULEX must prevent any kind of violence against Serbs (*RTK*)**

Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov appealed on Tuesday to KFOR and EULEX to completely prevent any attempt for violence and vandalism towards Serbs and religious sites in Kosovo. “We share the position with Serbia that there is a need to avoid any action that could lead to some line of division in Balkans that could support the principle with us or against us.” Lavrov said after the meeting with Serbia’s Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic. He added that it is absolutely certain that a sustainable and secure future can be ensured only through equal and mutual cooperation supported by Russia and Serbia. Lavrov also appealed on the European Union to make pressure on Kosovo Albanians on implementation of the reached agreements in Brussels. According to him, Serbia has implemented the reached agreements while Kosovo lacked to do so.

**Kommersant: Exchange of territories to be discussed in Brussels (RTK)**

Moscow-based daily newspaper ***Kommersant*** reported that a new round of negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina on the normalization of relations will be held in September in Brussels. According to the paper’s Western diplomatic sources, the central issue of negotiations between Serbian President Alexander Vucic and Kosovo’s President Hashim Thaci will be the transfer of territories: the inhabited Serb of the north of Kosovo in exchange for the south of Serbia, where Albanians live. However, the leading states of Europe are against this idea, and experts fear that redrawing borders will lead to a new war in the region.

**Vulin: EU should stop Haradinaj (*Klan Kosova*)**

Serbia’s Minister of Defense, Aleksandar Vulin, said Haradinaj’s threats with war are sufficient proof that Kosovo should not have an army and “why a clear determination of borders between us and Greater Albania is required”. “Unsentenced terrorists dream to repeat their crimes and hide themselves behind great western countries in order to avoid sentencing and defeat,” Vulin said. He added that Serbia will not start wars or cause conflicts, but it will defend its interests and its population. “The EU should stop Haradinaj, and for its own interest prevent conflicts and destabilization of Balkans,” Vulin said.

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