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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Protesters in Pristina call for chief prosecutor’s resignation (*media*)**

All media cover Wednesday’s protest by civil society in Pristina where around 1,000 protesters demanded the resignation of State Chief Prosecutor Aleksander Lumezi after claims made by a former prosecutor, Elez Blakaj, that Lumezi had reprimanded him for interviewing senior state officials during the investigations into the lists of war veterans. Protesters called for a vetting system in the judiciary and criticized Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj for his remarks in the Blakaj case. ***Koha Ditore*** quotes Imer Mushkolaj, one of the organizers of the protest, as saying that Blakaj was threatened and insulted not only by Lumezi, but also by Prime Minister Haradinaj and Assembly President Veseli. “He was labelled a thief only because he had the courage to investigate thieves and had the courage to investigate and point out manipulators,” Mushkolaj said. Media also report that Lumezi held a press conference before the protest, saying that he would stay in his job and that he would never bow to pressure from political parties and civil society “that interfere in the work of the prosecution”. Lumezi said that if Kosovo’s institutions and the prosecutorial council find that he has violated the law, he will respect any decision that they take. Lumezi also said that a new prosecutor has been appointed to handle the case of lists of war veterans after Blakaj’s resignation. According to Pristina-based ***KTV***, the new prosecutor is Haki Gecaj.

**PM does not change his mind, calls Blakaj “a thief” (*RTK*)**

The Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj, said at a press conference on Wednesday that the resigning prosecutor Elez Blakaj did not want t6o complete his duty. “The truth is that there are attempts to use this situation, and they are right by doing so, but I spoke about a physical individual, because one is prosecutor based on the duty and public responsibility. The person who has resigned is not a prosecutor. I have the right to express my opinion on the manner he has thrown the case…” Haradinaj said. “It is obvious that Vetevendosje, which used to swear police officers and prosecutors is defending a prosecutor…the saying ‘watch whom are you defending’ has a meaning,” he added. “I called him a thief, because he is a thief, and do you know why is he a thief? Because we have offered all the conditions to that man to his job…So I gave him my office, and the entire case and if this is denial of justice or obstruction, bear in mind these do not stand. What he said is an abuse with the truth and a lie…we have set up cameras and spent and for days he stayed at the Prime Minister’s office at my floor to look into the case. Rarely any government in any country know to implement the law as well and we implemented it,” said Haradinaj. According to him, Blakaj just as Tome Gashi at certain point, is trying to become somebody through noise. “This thief has put visa liberalization under a question mark. It is a stabbing behind the back,” Haradinaj said.

**EU reacts to attacks on prosecutor Blakaj (*media*)**

The EU Office in Kosovo/EU Special Representative issued on Wednesday a statement which notes that the EU is closely following the case of prosecutor Elez Blakaj. “The independence and autonomy of the judiciary, including the prosecution, is of crucial importance in this context and must be ensured. The EU calls upon all to refrain from any attacks against the rule of law institutions including any personal and defamatory comments against individual prosecutors or judges. Statements of some politicians and prosecutors of Kosovo in this regard undermine the key principles of the rule of law. Furthermore, they also send discouraging signals to all judicial officials dealing with sensitive and important cases. The EU reiterates that pending investigations should be carried forward with professionalism and in full respect of the rule of law, free from any interference,” is written in the statement.

**Pensions expected to be cut for 19 thousand veterans (*Epoka*)**

After the resignation of the prosecutor Elez Blakaj, the President of the Assembly of Kosovo Kadri Veseli announced that he has written to the Prosecutorial Council of Kosovo with regards to the investigation of the lists of KLA veterans. He said manipulations took place during the process of verification of status of KLA veterans. The leadership of the KLA-War Veterans Association also called on the prosecution of the country to bring this issue to the end. On the other hand, Kosovo’s Chief Prosecutor Aleksander Lumezi, warned that after the raise of charges, a decision for temporary measure of interruption of the payments to false veterans will be made. “The request of the chief prosecutor was to include those names, in order to propose interruption of the harmful consequences caused by the illegal acting. Concretely, to stop distribution of € 3.6 million per month for these 19 thousand veterans,” Lumezi said.

**Thaci’s office: Presevo Valley will be discussed in Brussels in September (*Zeri*)**

The Office of Kosovo President, Hashim Thaci, told the paper on Wednesday that Thaci and his Serbian counterpart, Aleksandar Vucic, will discuss at their meeting in Brussels in September, the request of Albanians from Presevo Valley to join Kosovo. They also said that a fixed date for the meeting has yet to be set but that it will be held early next month.

**Haradinaj: President doesn’t have my trust to discuss borders (*Koha*)**

Kosovo’s Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj said on Wednesday that he will not feel responsible if Kosovo’s borders are changed during the final phase of dialogue with Serbia, the paper reports on page four. Haradinaj said there are two stages in the process. “The first stage is giving the President the trust to represent the country in the process. And the second stage is the content. The President has my trust for talks on mutual recognition with Serbia. But he doesn’t have my trust to discuss borders. I am not a stakeholder in such a topic. If the President tables this topic, then he is doing so without my support,” Haradinaj told reporters.

**Ragmi Mustafa: We won’t give up on our demand to join Kosovo (*Epoka*)**

Ragmi Mustafa, leader of the Albanian Democratic Party (PDSH) in Presevo, said in a front-page interview to the paper that he is optimistic the demand of Albanians from Presevo Valley to join Kosovo will be discussed at the upcoming meeting between Kosovo and Serbia Presidents in Brussels. Mustafa argued that Presevo Valley joining Kosovo would not have a domino effect in other countries of the Western Balkans. He added that if the two countries reach a peace agreement, no one can reject border adjustments, namely Presevo Valley joining Kosovo. Mustafa also said that Presevo Valley will never give up on its demand to be part of the Republic of Kosovo.

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