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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Assembly to discuss creation of Kosovo army today (*Zeri*)**

Three draft laws relating to the transformation of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) are scheduled to be discussed in today’s session of the Assembly. Chairman of the Assembly committee on internal affairs, security and supervision of the Kosovo Security Force, Haxhi Shala, said if today’s first reading of the bills is successful, they will then be sent back to the committee which will set up a working group and organise public readings with members of all communities. This will then be followed by the second reading at the Assembly. “The legal part will be concluded by the end of November, early December,” Shala explained.

**NATO’s engagement in Kosovo to be reviewed if KSF mandate is changed (*DW*)**

An unnamed NATO official told ***Deutsche Welle*** that if Kosovo institutions approve change of mandate and structure of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF), the “North Atlantic Council will review level of commitment in Kosovo.” Asked to comment on what this review could involve, the official did not want to speculate. “We cannot predict the decisions of the North Atlantic Council,” the source said.

**Haradinaj: Idea of partition was funded by Serbia (*Koha*)**

Kosovo Prime Minister, Ramush Haradinaj, said on Wednesday that Serbia invested large sums of money for the idea of changing the border between Kosovo, the paper reports on page three. During a debate with students in Tirana, Albania, Haradinaj said: “Why should such a debate be imposed on us. For 20 years now, Serbia has invested money, has made friends, and has lobbied to bring the debate even among us. Why should we deal with the theory of partition? I have held many discussions with my people to tell them the truth”. Haradinaj also said he supports dialogue with Serbia. “I think dialogue is a tool that helps in finding a formula for reconciliation between nations. Every elected President has competencies defined by the Constitution, in this case the Parliament. The President has the right to represent the country, but not to talk about territory and borders,” he added.

**Veseli: Germany supports visa liberalisation for Kosovo (*dailies*)**

Kosovo Assembly Speaker Kadri Veseli said Germany supports visa liberalisation for Kosovo. In a press release following the meeting with President of Bundestag Wolfgang Schauble, Veseli said he received confirmation that Germany would give positive assessment on visa liberalisation. “Germany is the biggest European Union supporter and donor for Kosovo. We are fortunate to have such a partner,” Veseli said.

**Limaj: We have so far gone to talks with hands in pockets (*Zeri*)**

Kosovo’s Deputy Prime Minister Fatmir Limaj said that the Kosovo negotiators have so far gone to dialogue with Serbia with hands in their pockets but that this will not be the case anymore. Limaj, who the government proposed as chief negotiator for talks with Belgrade, also said the Kosovo side will not discuss issues that are to its detriment including talks on possible partition.

**Cooper calls for “great caution” on land swap idea (*Koha*)**

Robert Cooper, former mediator in the technical dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, said in Belgrade on Wednesday that the land swap could be a good idea, but he called for great caution, the paper reports on its front page. “One must be cautious when the issue of land swap is discussed. I must admit that this has caused some irritation and there are now different comments to the land swap idea. There should be great caution on this issue, although it may be a good idea,” Cooper said at the Security Forum in Belgrade. He said leaders in Pristina and Belgrade must be given time to reach an acceptable agreement. “It is encouraging that leaders from both states have the readiness to reach a deal. This is what makes me believe that an agreement is possible,” Cooper added.

**Vucic: UNMIK departure forces us to defend our people (Epoka)**

Aleksandar Vucic, President of Serbia said on Wednesday that the U.S. call to withdraw the UN peacekeeping mission from Kosovo would not leave any other solution to Serbia but to defend its people in Kosovo. Vucic did not say concretely what actions would Serbia undertake in Kosovo. His threat comes after the announcement of the U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley for the development of an exit strategic review for UNMIK.

**Govt aims finalization of army, visa liberalization and Interpol this year (Epoka)**

Coalition government partners, Assembly President Kadri Veseli, Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj and deputy prime ministers Behgjet Pacolli and Fatmir Limaj, assessed that visa liberalization, creation of the army and membership at INTERPOL are the main targets of the government of Kosovo. They claimed that respective institutions are working to conclude these processes within this year, however political analysts expressed skepticism that these issues could be finalised soon. “Of course, we have no reason for enthusiasm about conclusion of these processes. However, even if creation of the army and membership at INTERPOL happen, I do not believe that liberalization of visas will happen,” Imer Mushkolaj said. He said that in the best-case scenario, the decision for liberalization of visas can happen this year, but this does not mean that Kosovo people will be able to move freely immediately.

**Alleged sexual violence perpetrator member of Kosovo Police (*media*)**

Online and printed media are reporting that one of the alleged perpetrators of sexual violence against Vasfije Krasniqi, who recently shared her story publicly for the first time, is a member of the Kosovo Police. According to the Humanitarian Law Centre, the alleged perpetrator of Serb ethnicity has served with Kosovo Police for 16 years and although he and another suspect were indicted on rape charges, both were acquitted on justification that their identification was not in line with required standards. Meanwhile in a press conference yesterday, Vetevendosje’s Albulena Haxhiu accused local and international institutions of intentionally not providing justice to survivors of sexual violence during conflict in Kosovo. “We cannot allow a criminal who raped in Kosovo be part of Kosovo Police and get paid by Kosovo taxpayers,” Haxhiu said. Kosovo Police also reacted to reports saying that the person in question was indeed employed as police officer in 2001 but that his contract was terminated in 2017.

**KSF Minister meets members of Serb community (*Klan*)**

Rrustem Berisha, Minister for Kosovo Security Force, visited on Wednesday the KSF Civil Protection Regiment at “Young Europeans” barracks. Accompanied by the chief of the Office for communities, Lejla Loci, Berisha visited members of the Serb community serving in the units of Operational Support Brigade. “I feel good that none of the members who submitted request for demobilsation had complaints on treatment, work or human and interethnic relations at KSF. I am pleased with the fact that requests from the youth of this community to recruit in KSF arrive every day,” Berisha said. He further promised even more support for the members of this community.

**Kosovo Police director of economic crimes, demoted (*media*)**

Most media report that Nazim Sahiti, director of economic crimes in Kosovo Police, has been demoted from his post and has been transferred to the police border department. The decision was taken by Kosovo Police General Director, Reshat Qalaj. Bashkim Spahiu has been appointed the new head of the economic crimes department. ***Koha Ditore*** recalls that in December last year, Sahiti and one of his colleagues attacked then-manager of Kosovo Telecom, Agron Mustafa, in downtown Pristina.

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