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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**U.S.: Time for Kosovo and Serbia to reach historic agreement (*media*)**

In his visit to the U.S., President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci met yesterday the National Security Advisor John Bolton who called on Kosovo and Serbia to use the opportunity to resolve their disputes and move towards European Union membership. “We agreed the time is now for Kosovo and Serbia to reach an agreement. The U.S. stands ready to help both parties achieve this historic goal,” Bolton wrote on Twitter after the meeting. Thaci on his part thanked Bolton for the support the U.S. has provided to Kosovo during the current administration. “We agreed there’s a historic chance in dialogue that should not be missed for both countries. This enables Kosovo’s NATO, UN, EU membership,” Thaci tweeted. Thaci at the same time also addressed the media after the meeting that Kosovo has full and undivided support from the U.S. in reaching agreement with Serbia. “It was a joint conclusion that there is historic momentum which Kosovo and Serbia cannot lose to reach final agreement for mutual recognition, change of resolution 1244 and Kosovo’s membership in the UN,” Thaci said.

**Kosovo Assembly President calls for calmness in the north (*media*)**

Kosovo Assembly President and leader of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), Kadri Veseli, said on Tuesday that the resignations of the mayors of four northern municipalities was a hasty decision. He called on citizens in the north to remain calm considering the recent developments. Veseli wrote in a Facebook post: “The resignations of mayors of four northern municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo is a hasty decision and it is harmful for the citizens of these municipalities as well as for relations between communities in Kosovo. I call on all citizens of the north for self-restraint, to remain and balanced in the light of recent developments. Kosovo is engaged to respect the rights of each citizens; therefore problems should be resolved in a mature manner and only through political ways and dialogue. Kosovo will also continue to do its best to improve inter-ethnic coexistence within the country and consolidate stability and good neighborly relations in the region”.

**UNMIK chief Tanin warns against escalation of tensions (*media*)**

Most news websites cover a press release issued by UNMIK citing SRSG Zahir Tanin as saying that he is following with serious concern the recent developments culminating in the declared resignations by the mayors of four northern municipalities. Regarding the tariffs placed on Serbian and Bosnian goods, SRSG Tanin reiterated that “such actions represent a clear violation of the CEFTA agreement and should be retracted”. The SRSG called upon leaders on all sides to demonstrate greater restraint and to avoid any further provocation that may endanger prospects for the normalisation of relations or potentially escalate tensions.

**EU reacts following resignation of northern mayors (*Insajderi*)**

The European Commission spokesperson Maja Kocijancic has reacted to the resignation of mayors of four northern municipalities in Kosovo calling on Kosovo authorities to retract decision on imposing taxes on imports from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbian media reported. Kocijancic said provocations that do not contribute to dialogue for normalisation of relations should be stopped.

**Mustafa comments on resignations in the north (*media*)**

Leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) Isa Mustafa has reacted to the resignation of Serb mayors in the four northern municipalities in sign of protest against the import tax the government of Kosovo has imposed on products from Serbia. In a Facebook post, Mustafa said the resignations are “a clear signal on which way Kosovo is heading”. “A country cannot be sustained and led with folklore actions, we need to be cautious of our actions and decisions and their consequences for the country’s territorial integrity. In this situation, I consider the Government and the Assembly of Kosovo need to convene,” Mustafa wrote.

**Arifi reacts to Serbian Government’s ultimatum (*Klan Kosova/Insajderi*)**

Avni Arifi, chief of staff to Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj, said that the Serbian Government’s ultimatum to Kosovo to retract the 100 percent import tax on Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina or have the case being sent to the international court of arbitration will not work in Kosovo. “The tragedy of Serb politics is that it has not yet realized its ultimatums don’t sell in Kosovo. We call on the Government of Serbia to return towards normalisation of relations with Kosovo. As a start, recognition of Kosovo as a sovereign and independent country would be a good basis to begin reviewing overall relations,” Arifi told ***Insajderi***.

**Mushkolaj: Resignation of northern mayors, a new momentum (*Telegrafi*)**

Pristina-based political commentator Imer Mushkolaj said on Tuesday that the resignation of the mayors of four northern municipalities is a new momentum between Kosovo and Serbia and that it is related to the issue of dialogue. “Brussels too wants issued to be resolved as soon as possible. The signals we have received so far have to do with border correction and are part of a possible future agreement,” Mushkolaj told ***RTV Dukagjini***. He further argued that the split within the Serbian List is the best possible news given the way this party has functioned until now. “The conditions they [the Serbian List] have made to Kosovo Serbs, they forced them to vote for them … Those that went against this party were threatened and even killed, such as the case of Oliver Ivanovic,” he added.

**New U.S. ambassador to Kosovo sworn in (*media*)**

The new U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo Philip Kosnett has officially been sworn in to the post, online media are reporting. In a video message issued by the U.S. Embassy in Pristina, Kosnett said he served in Kosovo 15 years ago as part of the U.S. diplomatic mission. “I am proud to be returning as ambassador to help strengthening the close friendship between our two great countries,” Kosnett said.

**Lorenzo D’addario, new KFOR commander (*media*)**

Several news websites report that Lorenzo D’addario will assume his duties as the new commander of KFOR peacekeeping troops in Kosovo today. The change of command ceremony will be held today in Pristina. Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj will attend the ceremony.

**Former Albanian PM: Unification of Albanians in one state is a necessity (*media*)**

Several news websites report that former Albanian Prime Minister, Sali Berisha, commented on Tuesday on the possible union between Kosovo and Albania. “Concrete steps are required. We need to make continuous steps in this direction and then we will see. The unification of Albanians in one state is a necessity, but it needs to be done in understanding with international partners,” Berisha said.

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