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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Foggo: Kosovo army, sovereign decision (*Koha/Zeri*)**

Admiral James Foggo, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa and Allied Joint Force Command Naples, said in Skopje yesterday that the transition of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) into an army is Kosovo Assembly’s “sovereign decision.” Asked about potential implications to the stability of the region, Adm Foggo said: “Kosovo is a democracy just like Macedonia and Serbia where citizens vote for the people that will take decisions on their behalf,” and added later on: “We are ready for any decision that will be taken this week.” ***Zeri*** meanwhile on its front page carries the caption: *Foggo supports creation of Kosovo army.*

***AP*: Serbia to confront U.S. and NATO if it tries to enter into Kosovo (*Kosova Sot*)**

***Kosova Sot*** quotes a report from the ***Associated Press*** news agency saying that as Kosovo prepares to vote for the creation of its army, officials in Serbia have warned that the move is aimed at ethnic cleansing of Serbs from Kosovo and that sending Serbian army into Kosovo is one of the options on the table. AP however reports that Serbia’s military intervention in Kosovo is “highly unlikely”. “That would trigger a direct confrontation with some 4,600 NATO-led peacekeepers, [including U.S. troops](https://www.militarytimes.com/news/2018/05/25/pentagon-releases-identity-of-soldier-who-died-in-kosovo/), stationed in Kosovo since 1999. It would also almost certainly prompt Western sanctions and Serbia’s isolation,” AP writes.

More: <https://apnews.com/2796bc760448419a9b17da21e9029ddf>

**UK supports creation of Kosovo army (*Epoka e Re*)**

The paper reports that following the support from the U.S., UK has also come out in support of Kosovo army’s creation. The UK Ambassador to Kosovo, Ruairi O’Connell, said yesterday during a live chat session on Facebook: “United Kingdom believes it is Kosovo’s right to create its own armed forces.” He said the UK continues to encourage Kosovo to act in a responsible and transparent manner, in consultation with NATO allies and respect its engagement through KFOR.

**Haradinaj: No one should try to evade justice (*media*)**

Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj wrote on Facebook today that Kosovo’s liberation war was just and sacred but that no one should evade justice. “It has increasingly been requested on us to make sacrifices in dealing with justice, although we were victims of aggression. The response of Kosovo citizens and former KLA members to international justice filters was prompt and without hesitation,” Haradinaj said adding: “Let no one think or believe that this country is destined and ready to accommodate interests of those who lost the war yesterday and today threaten peace and stability in the region.” He said the Specialist Chambers is another testament of how far Kosovo’s sacrifice for a rule of law country is willing to go and though it is another challenge, “we will overcome it together and come out of it more unified and stronger.” “No one has the right to shame Kosovo by hiding, obstructing or evading justice. KLA war was pure and sacred and this will be strongly proven anytime, anywhere. The Government of Kosovo will stand by freedom fighters in all stages and is ready at any time to provide necessary assistance for legal defence,” Haradinaj concluded.

**Over ten invitations from Specialist Chambers (*Zeri*)**

The paper writes on the front page that while so far six former KLA senior officials have confirmed having received invitations from the Specialist Chambers in The Hague, there will be at least seven other people called by the court. The papers quoting sources says it knows the identity of the persons that will be called in the coming days and published their initials. Furthermore, it said it contacted the families of these persons, all former KLA, but they either declined to comment or said they had no information.

**Kocijancic: Mogherini’s role is to facilitate dialogue (*Zeri*)**

Spokesperson for the EU Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Maja Kocijancic, said the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina is at the level of presidents and that the role of the EU High Representative Federica Mogherini is to facilitate the dialogue. Kocijancic’s comments come after Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj accused Mogherini of, as he said, killing the dialogue by introducing the border changes option.

**Limaj: Kosovo has two very important issues ahead (*RTK*)**

Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo Fatmir Limaj said that Kosovo has two major issues to face. “It is voting of the package of laws which transform KSF into an army and the dialogue with Serbia.” He added that the army will be definitely created on Friday, which according to him will increase Kosovo’s and region’s stability. “After voting the army, Kosovo should seriously approach the issue of the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia,” he said. He considers that the Assembly of Kosovo should urgently adopt the platform or basic principles and mandate the negotiating team.

**VV: Haradinaj’s criticism of EU, coverup for his own failures (*Koha*)**

Vetevendosje deputy leader Besnik Bislimi said that the government of Kosovo is criticizing the EU in an attempt to camouflage its own failures but did share the Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj’s view that the EU High Representative Federica Mogherini has exceeded her authorisations as facilitator of Pristina-Belgrade dialogue by often taking an imposing approach. “The European Union had this approach even before and we spoke about it but the Prime Minister’s criticism at this point is an attempt to camouflage internal failures,” Bislimi said.

**Arifi: Donations for Mitrovica North hospital released (*RTK*)**

Avni Arifi from the Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo said on Wednesday that there is no humanitarian crisis in Kosovo as a consequence of the imposed tax on Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. He said that the government of Kosovo has released a € 242,356 donation of medications and medical equipment for the hospital in Mitrovica North. “Tax is for Serbian state and its policy, not for our citizens,” he wrote.

**Kandic calls for regional cooperation on war crimes (*Koha Ditore*)**

Founder of the Humanitarian Law Centre, Natasa Kandic, said at a conference in Pristina yesterday that regional cooperation through a reconciliation mechanism is a prerequisite to making sure the past is not repeated in the Balkans. According to Kandic, civil society from the former Yugoslav countries is responsible for regional cooperation and in advocating for an increased number of war crimes being prosecuted.

**Names of 700 Serbs suspected of war crimes sent to prosecution (*Arberesh.info*)**

Civil Society Group representatives for gathering evidence of war crimes and preparing criminal charges against Serbian criminals during the 1998/99 war, for the eighth time have filed criminal charges against Serbian criminals, at the Special Prosecution Office of Kosovo, the Department for war crimes. "Criminal reports were filed based on Serbian secret files that operated in the 1998-1999 war in Kosovo," Shkendije Hoda said. The group also has submitted a letter to the Government of Kosovo requesting the ban on Serbs to enter the Orthodox Church on 6 January 2019.

**Kosovo government to fund reconstruction of a Bujanovac school (*Epoka*)**

The government of Kosovo has allocated €30,000 for reconstruction of a primary school in Bujanovac. The Municipality of Bujanovac thanked the Kosovo’s Ministry of Finance for the donation saying it gives hope that Kosovo will increase its support to the Presevo Valley.

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