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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Haradinaj: U.S. against border changes, tax to remain in force (*Koha/RTK*)**

Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj said that the U.S. doesn’t support border changes or land swap as part of the Kosovo-Serbia agreement. “We have direct communication with the administration of President Trump. They are not oriented towards change of borders or territories. But they told us not to be paranoid with fear of this topic being talked about thus blocking positive options,” Haradinaj said while speaking to reporters yesterday. He added that no one has a right to discuss anything that goes beyond the provisions of the Constitution of Kosovo. Whosoever does so will be dismissed, he said. Meanwhile, Haradinaj did admit receiving a request from the U.S. to lift the tax on imports from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. He said the tax will remain in force until 2022 but that it could be suspended if an agreement on mutual recognition is guaranteed. Haradinaj also revealed that he would not be travelling to the U.S. to attend the National Prayer Breakfast although he has been invited. “With the climate created around the tax, I will not go this time,” he said. Haradinaj is also reported to have said that he plans to discuss with his coalition partners the possibility of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) joining the government after LDK leader Isa Mustafa said his party would agree to join the government if it undergoes reformatting beforehand.

**Haradinaj “threatens” Thaci (*Kosova Sot*)**

The Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj said during the commemoration ceremony in Racak, that no one should dare to talk about the territory of Kosovo in the dialogue with Serbia. He said that no one should dare give away any part of land to Serbia and added that he will be defending this even if he is brought down from the government.

Assembly President Kadri Veseli also said that territorial sovereignty and integrity of Kosovo are untouchable.

**Goods from Serbia imported before 21 Nov exempted from 100% tax (*dailies*)**

The government of Kosovo has modified decision on 100-percent import tariff on Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina by exempting goods that entered into Kosovo before the date when the tax was introduced. “The government cabinet has approved the decision freeing from tax goods originating from Serbia and B&H imported before the decision dated 21 November 2018, but which will be subject to a ten-percent tariff,” Haradinaj wrote on Facebook.

**Daut Haradinaj: Tax will remain even if it spells government’s end (*Koha*)**

MP from the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo, Daut Haradinaj, said in an interview with ***KTV*** that the import tax on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina will remain in force even if this leads to the end of the government led by his brother, Ramush. “It would then become obvious who is for and who is against state sovereignty of Kosovo,” he said adding: “The tax will not be removed without serious guarantees because we have insisted on having the U.S. in the dialogue. We have full confidence with the U.S. and the tax should be seen as a guarantee [for] mutual recognition and implementation of agreements.”

**NATO to discuss creation of Kosovo’s army (*Epoka*)**

NATO defense chiefs will meet on Tuesday and Wednesday to discuss missions of the Alliance in Afghanistan and Kosovo. According to the Spanish news agency EFE, part of the discussions will be creation of the army of Kosovo against NATO recommendations. The agency further reports that the discussions on Kosovo will take place on Wednesday when the member states are expected to come up with recommendations.

**Mustafa concludes testimony before Specialist Chambers (*dailies*)**

Papers report that the former KLA commander, Rrustem Mustafa-Remi, concluded last night his testimony before the Specialist Chambers in The Hague. Mustafa spoke to reporters as he came out of the building where his interview was taken and said that he spoke to the prosecutors in the capacity of witness/suspect. He did not comment as to what cases he was interviewed about but did say that he was asked “serious” questions and has provided “serious” answers. Koha Ditore however reports that the term witness/suspect does not exist in the Criminal Procedure Code of Kosovo which served as the basis for the establishment of the Specialist Chambers. The Code specifies that the Specialist Prosecutor interviews victims, witnesses and suspects but makes not mention of a combined category of a witness and victim.

**Gucati: More former KLA officials to go to The Hague (*Telegrafi*)**

Hysni Gucati, chairman of the Kosovo Liberation Army associations, said there are many more KLA veterans that have been invited by the Specialist Chambers and that among them are members of the former KLA presidency. He said one of these officials will travel to The Hague on 4 February but said the name will be announced in the coming days. Gucati said 11 other invitations have been confirmed involving KLA commanders and more junior fighters.

**Bahtiri to submit petition for unification of Mitrovica today (*Epoka*)**

Agim Bahtiri, mayor of Mitrovica South, will submit today at 09:30 hours the petition for unification of Mitrovica city signed by 16594 citizens, to three Kosovo institutions: the government, the Assembly as well as the President. According to e press release, Bahtiri will request from these institutions to approve this initiative undertaken by Mitrovica citizens.

**Kosovo opens a Customs Office in Durrës, Albania (*media*)**

An official ceremony of the beginning of the work of Kosovo Customs at the port of Durrës in Albania, was held Tuesday. Prime Minister of Albania Edi Rama, Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo, Fatmir Limaj, as well as the Minister of Finance Bedri Hamza, attended the ceremony. Limaj said that this project shows that the joint meetings of the two governments are not only political but also economic. "This port shows that we have started to integrate economically. It is an important news for the economy of Kosovo and Albania. It is an important moment of expanding cooperation between the two countries. After the nation's highway, the port project is the most important since the announcement of Kosovo's independence," Limaj said.

**Haziri: We will not become part of dialogue, government chose PSD (*Telegrafi*)**

Lutfi Haziri, deputy leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), said that MPs from his political party are not figurines or numbers. “To LDK, the political platform on the table was between LDK and PSD, they chose PSD. There was no effort for involvement in the dialogue, but they only dealt with calculation of numbers. MPs are not numbers nor figurines. We of course consider the dialogue to be the only instrument. We have made an offer, but our platform was not taken into consideration,” Haziri said. ‘We will not be part of these sub-structures but we believe on institutional representation and political agreement. What we have confirmed is that we will cherish the partnership with America, we do not dare affect our special relations,” he said.

Speaking about the letter of the U.S. President Donald Trump sent to Kosovo President Hashim Thaci, Haziri said that the letter proves that Thaci will lead with the dialogue and the final phase of the process.

**Negotiations unfruitful, teacher strike continues (*Koha Ditore*)**

Kosovo Assembly committee on education held an extraordinary meeting yesterday to discuss the teachers’ strike which has begun on Monday but representatives of trade unions that present at the meeting said they were determined to continue the strike until their demands. Head of the trade union, Rrahman Jasharaj said they have expressed their disapproval of the draft law on salaries since May of last year but that their remarks were not taken under consideration. “We are not demanding pay raise but improvement of the coefficient system. If others stand to benefit from tens of millions, so should we,” Jasharaj said.

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