

# UNMIK



United Nations Mission in Kosovo

Division of Public Information

## Media Monitoring

# ► Local Media

## ► Media Analysis

**24 November**

### Disputes concerning privatization go to the assembly (Zëri)

*Zëri carries a report about claims that Kosovo Prime Minister Rexhepi would ask the assembly to declare null and void three Serbian laws.*

The Kosovo government has the full right to oppose the cease of the privatization process in Kosovo, while the assembly also has the authority to declare null and void the three Serbian laws that are adopted in Kosovo after March 22, 1989 in a discriminatory environment, *Zëri* reports.

‘The government has begun a good initiative, because it is the government’s right to react against the cease of the privatization process in Kosovo,’ said Fatmir Sejdiu, member of the Kosovo assembly presidency and member of the assembly committee for legislation issues and constitutional changes. He added that the government, the assembly and UNMIK would find a good solution concerning this issue. ‘Kosovo would open a new path to its economic development by overcoming this obstacle and by declaring null and void all those discriminatory laws,’ said Sejdiu.

‘The assembly has the legal basis to declare the three Serbian laws null and void and also inapplicable,’ said Arsim Bajrami, the chair of the assembly committee for legislation issues and constitutional changes. He added that ‘the assembly has the legal and constitutional basis to begin the procedure concerning Prime Minister’s initiative [declaration null and void of the Serbian laws]. This is in accordance with UNMIK’s regulations.’

To declare null and void the Serbian laws is a waste of the time, said Oliver Ivanovic. ‘The assembly will spend only time, energy and will become polarized, whereas results will be nothing,’ he said. He added that the dissolution of Serbian laws would be a political decision similar to Kouchner’s regulation number one, where all state enterprises, transferred from 1992 to 1996, were put under UNMIK control. He prefers an agreement with Serbia regarding this issue. He thinks that the only solution concerning this issue would be an assessment by an international court. ‘I would prefer to reach an agreement with the Republic of Serbia, the Serbian development fund and its shareholders, including the unions,’ Ivanovic said.

Arsim Bajrami said that UNMIK is supposed to specify the laws and to assess which one is discriminatory. 'There are more than 50 discriminatory laws and it is good if the assembly declares them inapplicable. It would be good to have consultations with the UNMIK legal office, therefore they could join us so that the discriminatory laws do not impede the processes in Kosovo,' he said.

Even if the Kosovo deputies Bajrami and Sejdiu say that the Kosovo assembly can declare null and void all laws that were adopted after March 22, 1989, on the other hand UNMIK Pillar IV head Lambsdorff and the KTA officials claimed that it is not within their competence to cancel those laws, the paper reports.

The paper concludes that the debate on the privatization process would be transferred to the Kosovo assembly, as it was required by a number of deputies.

Following this issue *Zëri* further reports that Prime Minister Rexhepi and a few Kosovan ministers will meet today the KTA head to make an effort to unblock the privatization process.

Government spokeswoman, Mimoza Kusari, confirmed yesterday that Prime Minister Rexhepi would meet UNMIK Pillar IV Lambsdorff, whereas government sources confirmed that the Kosovan representatives in the KTA Board would also attend the meeting.

She added that Rexhepi would reiterate the government's demands to Lambsdorff and would also ask him to continue the privatization process.

### **Editorial: The responsibility for impeding privatization (Zëri)**

*Zëri carries an editorial concerning privatization.*

Many of the recent meetings did not manage to unblock privatization, which is stalemating since the beginning of October. Under the most optimistic circumstances the third round of tenders will resume before the end of the year. In the meantime, the Kosovo Government, the KTA Board and UNMIK should overcome the numerous obstacles and problems that have made the continuation of privatization impossible. Already now calculations of the damages caused by this blockade have started. The Kosovo Chamber of Commerce mentions a figure of two million Euros. But there are damages that cannot be calculated with full precision which are considered even higher. The most negative effect of this whole chaos created in the past two months relates to the insecurity, which seems to prevail the privatization blockade.

Even prior to the latest developments we were aware that Kosovo cannot be a normal investment market in the privatization process because of its undefined political status. However, the doubts about the known obstacles seem to have multiplied primarily as a result of different views, or even opposite views of the international administration at the time Steiner was SRSG and now that Holkeri heads the administration. KTA is a creation of the international administration, regulations which comprise the legal basis for privatization are adopted by the SRSG and confirmed by the UN Legal Office in New York. The then head of UNMIK Pillar IV Andy Bearpark had no doubts that the privatization could continue on the basis of procedures set by UNMIK and KTA.

However nowadays we are witnesses of interpretations, which question the continuation of the started privatization. More specifically, the latest actions of the international administration prove that the previous leadership of UNMIK has not made good preparations for the process of privatization. Someone has made a mistake. There were either mistakes in preparing the process of privatization, or UNMIK is now failing to resume privatization. It is useless to speak about the perspectives of the operationalization of standards, which should be announced by the beginning of December, unless privatization is unblocked.

Privatisation is a measure unit for the standard of economy and without the acceleration of privatization this standard cannot be met.

### **Surroi: The three colors of Bogdan Bogdanovic (Koha Ditore)**

*Koha Ditore carries an editorial piece by its publisher Veton Surroi on Bogdan Bogdanovic, the former mayor of Belgrade who now is a political refugee in Vienna.*

1.

Green was the box where Bogdan Bogdanovic decided to store his dreams. Every morning he wrote what he had dreamed the night before; the course of events as he recalled them with their smell and taste. He would fold the letter in two; one letter in the box, and one less in the swirl created every night.

Since he was locked in his house in Belgrade, after serious threats, and especially after his villa had been blown up into the air in the nearby village of Popovic, Bogdan Bogdanovic decided it was a conflict of two realities in his life; the environment that surrounded his house and which was created by Milosevic with people who he called Serbian fascists in his writings of the eighties. And the other he kept inside. 'It was a real miracle. Outside was the horror of Milosevic, and good things were coming from my dreams. A real creation. I protected myself from Milosevic and his mental destruction through my dreams'.

2.

Yellow were the socks of Bogdan Bogdanovic in one of the gray meetings of the eighties when the anti-Albanian hysteria was taking shape in Belgrade. As a mayor of Belgrade, the only one who could say his origin was from Belgrade at least for the last 250 years used to come to the meetings of the Serbian leadership with a sort of mockery. There were wide discussions in these meetings, a gray vocabulary was used, people dressed in gray and black were speaking, and the messages were no clearer.

His yellow socks, while he was crossing his legs in the first row of this or that forum, would break the political model. As would a bow tie, a differentiating sign from all the other ties according to the sampler dictated by the chief of the party.

Later he would break that with a piece of writing. In the beginning through writing about the danger of eruption of Serbian fascism in Serbia, and afterwards with a detailed analysis of what was going on, while the wars in former Yugoslavia had already started. While Vukovar, Dubrovnik and Sarajevo were being shelled, he revealed the notion of 'urbicide', the killing of towns, as one of the main drivers of the destructive passion in the war, aiming at destroying not only other nations but the structure of the towns. They were forces that had the village as an archetype of their

political morale. A town was a 'decadence' and it needed to be destroyed, 'the simplicity and purity' of the village were to be imposed.

3.

The black color has its tones with which Bogdanovic sees his motherland. He arrived one morning in Vienna, where he is living now with his wife as a political refugee. The town was full of Chetniks, and so was the train station, he says. While sitting in the train going to Vienna, his eyes were focused outside through the window, trying to avoid eye contact with people that might know him, especially as a 'traitor of the Serbian cause'.

In Belgrade he left sketches and drawings of various kinds, starting from monuments he made of the victims of genocide of the SWW in Jasenovac, Croatia, up to the complex of the anti-fascist uprising in Prilep, and many others about the town he fled from ten years ago, visions of a man whose family had moved from Kosovo to Belgrade some time around the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

4.

The Danube can be blue, but it does not seem to be the color of Bogdanovic. Now, since the times of the eighties are gone, the Danube can be the river that leads to Belgrade, but he does not want it. 'It does no longer seem like my country', he says with a resigning mode. 'Two years ago, not only did I not know my town, but I could see that the language, the gestures, everything had changed'.

Now, more or less, the only connection with the motherland is the box of dreams, the same one that protected him in his motherland during the time of the rule of the black color.

#### **Shala: History of laws and the law on history (Zëri)**

*In a front-page editorial for Zëri, Blerim Shala writes that UNMIK's hesitation to repeal the three discriminatory laws from Milosevic's regime, which impede the process of privatization in Kosovo, is unreasonable.*

Officials of the International Administration in Kosovo must have heard this a dozen times from local authorities in the last couple of days. But the first reaction of these officials whenever they face the proposals of local representatives is suspicion. In fact, the level of trust between UNMIK and the local government is close to zero. And there are no indications that this is worrisome for UNMIK's leadership.

If we put ourselves in the shoes of international officials we can imagine that they fear that their actions, especially in the case of the three abovementioned laws, could be perceived as prejudging the final status. Thus, they are representatives of the UN's school of neutrality, which in reality has never functioned, because if neutralism implies no actions then it is perceived as taking sides, and strengthening the status quo and not changing the situation which is a source of problems. Both Bosnia and Kosovo are examples of this wrong policy.

Most UNMIK officials prefer to be very careful when it comes to the interpretation of Kosovo's new history, especially the history of the 90's, even though the West clearly

sealed that period with the Conference in Rambouillet and NATO's intervention. In this context, the repealing of the three discriminatory laws doesn't prejudge the status.

### **Cosic: Serbia's vital interest is to get released from Kosovo (Zëri)**

*Zëri published an interview that the Serbian writer Dushica Milenkovic conducted with the Serbian writer, publicist and former Yugoslav president, Dobrica Cosic.*

'The project of a "multiethnic Kosovo," which is being supported by the international community, is anti-human and anti-democratic; it is a nasty, unreal, servile and absurd project. The Serbs, who remained in Kosovo, live in Nazi camps. The chauvinistic beast in Kosovo cannot be turned into a multiethnic society during the lifetime of the current generations. The political dogma of the current EU and US diplomacy on invulnerable state borders is anti-historical, anti-democratic and frightening for people in the Balkans and for the stability in the Balkans. I am committed to the solution of Kosovo's final status as soon as possible and with more active participation of the Balkans countries, EU and the US. I consider that it is Serbia's interest to get released from Kosovo, a liberation with which the basic rights and interests of Serb people would be protected,' said Cosic.

### **Palokaj: UNMIK and KFOR's Chinese cultural revolution in Kosovo (Koha)**

*Koha Ditore carries an opinion piece by Augustin Palokaj who writes,*

The methods of the Chinese cultural revolution are the first that crossed my mind when I heard that in a certain part of Kosovo, the northern part, which is practically separated from Kosovo and linked with Serbia, UNMIK and KFOR have decided not to communicate with Albanian journalists that write for Kosovan media in those areas.

If UNMIK and KFOR can punish journalists in northern Kosovo and deny the public opinion its right to receive information, then not only is Kosovo divided, but there also seems to be a "northern KFOR" and a "northern UNMIK", on which the center in Prishtina has no influence. And if the center does have any influence, then it is tolerating an undemocratic, unprofessional and illegal behavior of its employees.

And in order to prove that they are performing a perfect censorship, UNMIK local officials in northern Mitrovica (I don't know whether they consider this to be part of Kosovo or part of Serbia because UNMIK has admitted that it doesn't have full control there) are using well-known methods. They don't make the official decision to boycott journalists but they simply turn this boycott into practice. They realize that if they make a decision they would have to face reactions from the international professional associations of journalists and human rights organizations, and this is what every government, be it communist or democratic, wants the least. And the most perfect censorship is the one that leaves no traces in writing.

## **Holkeri should bring a little piece from Finland to Kosovo**

A similar case of censorship by the international administration in Kosovo is the case of the *Koha Ditore* journalist in Peja. He is not allowed to attend the conferences of

UNMIK Police in a town with the highest rate of crimes in Kosovo. This drastically violates the guidelines of the Council of Europe for the inalienable right of citizens to have full information about trials. And again we have no decision to boycott the *Koha Ditore* journalist in Peja. He was simply told that ‘we have received an order from Prishtina that you cannot enter’, but he was never shown the order or told who had issued it. Except for asking for collegial assistance, the journalist can do nothing else because the decision to prevent him from entering the offices of UNMIK Police in fact doesn’t exist. He knows why they are doing this to him, because he was told that they were not satisfied with his articles. The difference between this case and the one in Mitrovica is that in the latter case measures were taken against all Albanian journalists. These are worrisome cases of performing methods of censorship against disobedient journalists, who find the courage to write something that doesn’t suit the authorities.

We are not sure if the employees in northern Mitrovica or in Peja are rebels who make decisions on their own, or if the administration is so decentralized that they don’t have to answer to the headquarters in Prishtina. But we find it difficult to believe that Holkeri, if he even knows about it, tolerates them. We find this difficult to believe due to a simple reason. According to an analysis done by the international association of journalists, Holkeri’s homeland, Finland, is by far the highest-ranking country as far as respect for freedom of press and transparency in the work of institutions is concerned. If UNMIK officials want to help us to democratize Kosovo, then Holkeri should bring us a piece of Finland here, bring more transparency and undertake measures against his officials who in an uncivilized, undemocratic and unprofessional manner boycott the journalists. This in fact is happening at a time when relations between UNMIK and Kosovans have been aggravated, and journalists are not those who should be punished for this.

Ever since UNMIK’s former spin-doctor, Simon Haselock, left Kosovo there has been a sense of relief among journalists, because UNMIK officials don’t write so many reactions to articles and they are not criticizing and insulting them. Haselock was known for cooperating with his preferred journalists in Kosovo. But now there are some worrisome things again in the work of journalists in Kosovo, such as the latest measures. The Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo has reacted to these measures and so will the international associations of journalists, which are noticing that the time has risen again to help Kosovan journalists, this time to protect them and their profession from UNMIK, and in Mitrovica’s case from KFOR.

## **UNMIK is lecturing local authorities for relations with the media**

We fear that this is a campaign, but we hope it is not. Media in Kosovo are in a difficult financial situation, and instead of providing assistance the international administration is impeding them in their work. A similar behavior can be noticed among the local administration, such as the municipal administration in Prishtina that undertakes measures against *Koha Ditore* to remove its generator, although there are hundreds of generators in the city. UNMIK is now cut in half and it has less professional staff members. The professional quality of the officials of the

international administration in Kosovo is constantly declining because many of them have gone to more interesting places than Kosovo. And this is the reason why there is a greater risk, because by undertaking various measures toward the local media they are going to try to create a perception that they are doing a successful job. If there are going to be no changes it could happen that instead of leading Kosovo toward Europe and democratization, the international administration could lead it toward totalitarianism. And the problem is that local authorities are going to learn from UNMIK, and one day when UNMIK leaves, they are going to adopt the same behavior towards the media, by preferring obedient journalists and by punishing and isolating the disobedient ones, as was done during the Chinese cultural revolution or as UNMIK is doing in several cases in Kosovo.

**Editorial: Kosovo is to integrate in EU not UNMIK (Kosova Sot)**

*Kosova Sot carries an editorial piece saying that customs, trade and economic legislation are exclusive competencies of the UN Mission, and that you can notice a big stagnation in all three fields.*

When it comes to trade, Kosovo continues to be a country economically discriminated. In the meantime, customs are a sector full of corruption scandals and lacking in transparency, while the economic legislation is very poor and does not guarantee long-term and stable investments. All these three topics should be part of the third meeting of the Stabilization and Association Tracking Mechanism with EU officials, who might not be too proud, since many of the officials employed in these key sectors come from their countries.

Despite the fact of how the European side might feel, the Kosovo Government needs to be decisive in its stance. Its executive should take the opportunity and exercise more pressure in order to get these sectors in their hands. At the end of the day, it is Kosovo that wants to integrate in the EU and not UNMIK. This integration cannot be achieved without taking some preliminary steps. Kosovo institutions need to become more efficient. In this respect the undefined status of Kosovo is an obstacle, but EU seems to have found a path, through which Kosovo can feel the spirit of the European family. Though this path is narrow and experimental for Kosovo, it still is a way out of the isolation. The meetings of the Stabilization and Association Tracking Mechanism constitute a preparation at the eve of the final status of Kosovo. The success of these meetings will facilitate inclusion of Kosovo in the EU. And these talks have technical and political importance. Through them, some processes that are currently being dragged could speed up. Also, bridges of communication with the EU structures could be set up, which is very important since that way Kosovo would benefit a serious international support, especially in the economic sector.

# UNMIK



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## Media Monitoring

# ► Headlines

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24 November

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- NY Mayor Michael Bloomberg to visit Kosovo today (*Zëri*)

## Kosovo Media Highlights

### Prime Minister Rexhepi to head group of dialogue (*Epoka e Re*)

*Epoka e Re* quotes UNMIK officials as saying that the plan on standards before status would soon be made public. At the same time, an official from the Prime Minister's office told the paper that the government is one step ahead of UNMIK when it comes to the preparations on standards.

The official also said that the government has already formed the five working groups on standards, and added that Prime Minister Rexhepi would head the group of dialogue.

### Disputes on privatization transferred to Kosovo Assembly (*Zëri*)

*Zëri* quotes Albanian members of the Kosovo Assembly Presidency as saying that the Kosovo Government is fully entitled to react against the obstacles that are being made to the process of privatization in Kosovo, and that the Kosovo Assembly has the legal basis to declare null and void the three laws that are impeding privatization and all the other laws that were adopted after 22 March 1989 in a discriminatory environment in Kosovo.

### PM Rexhepi asks unconditional resuming of privatization from Lambsdorff

*Zëri* reports that Prime Minister Rexhepi and several members of his cabinet will meet today with the leaders of the Kosovo Trust Agency and continue their efforts to unblock the process of privatization in Kosovo.

Mimoza Kusari, spokeswoman for the government said that Rexhepi would reiterate the government's conditions to UNMIK Pillar IV head Nikolaus Lambsdorff and ask for the unconditional resuming of privatization.

### **Editorial: The responsibility for impeding privatization (Zëri)**

According to an opinion piece by *Zëri*'s editorial office, 'the latest actions of the international administration prove that the previous leadership of UNMIK hasn't made good preparations for the process of privatization. Someone has made a mistake. There were either mistakes in preparing the process of privatization, or UNMIK is now failing to resume privatization'.

### **Shala: History of laws and the law on history (Zëri)**

In a front-page editorial for *Zëri*, Blerim Shala writes that UNMIK's hesitation to repeal the three discriminatory laws from Milosevic's regime, which impede the process of privatization in Kosovo, is unreasonable.

'Most UNMIK officials prefer to be very careful when it comes to the interpretation of Kosovo's new history, especially the history of the 90's, even though the West clearly sealed that period with the Conference in Rambouillet and NATO's intervention. In this context, the repealing of the three discriminatory laws doesn't prejudge the status,' Shala added.

### **Minister Rexhep Osmani abandons government meeting (Koha Ditore)**

*Koha Ditore* quotes a regular witness of the government meetings as saying that these meetings would prove to be good material for a local comedy show, and then points out the latest meeting of the Kosovo Government.

Citing sources in the government, *Koha Ditore* reports that Education Minister Rexhep Osmani abandoned the abovementioned meeting after quarreling with Prime Minister Rexhepi and the ministers Ali Sadriu and Jakup Krasniqi. In fact, PM Rexhepi had initially asked the ministers who attend the KTA meetings to play a more active role and demand the unconditional resuming of privatization. Minister Osmani on the other hand reacted by saying that the PM should have put his recommendations in writing.

### **Are K-institutions failing to improve Kosovo's image in the world? (Zëri)**

*Zëri* quotes Kosovan politicians and analysts as saying that Kosovo is losing the pace in counterattacking the Serb propaganda about Kosovo. 'While the Serbian Government has been sponsoring the so-called White Book which talks about 'Albanian terrorism', the President, Prime Minister and Assembly Speaker of Kosovo have done nothing to issue a book on Kosovo during the postwar period,' added the newspaper.

### **Palokaj: UNMIK and KFOR's Chinese cultural revolution in Kosovo (Koha)**

*Koha Ditore* carries an opinion piece by Augustin Palokaj who writes, ‘If UNMIK and KFOR can punish journalists in northern Kosovo and deny the public opinion its right of receiving information, then not only Kosovo is divided but there also seems to be a northern KFOR and UNMIK on which the center in Prishtina has no influence. And if the center does have influence, then it is tolerating an undemocratic, unprofessional and illegal behavior of its employees.’

### **Cosic: It is in Serbia’s interest to free itself from Kosovo (Zëri)**

*Zëri* reports that Dobrica Cosic, an ideologist of a Greater Serbia, recently gave an interview in which he said: ‘The project backed by the international community for a multiethnic Kosovo is anti-human and anti-democratic... I believe that it is in Serbia’s interest to free itself from Kosovo’.

### **NY Mayor Michael Bloomberg to visit Kosovo today (Zëri)**

*Zëri* reports that New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg is going to visit Kosovo today. During his visit, Bloomberg will meet President Ibrahim Rugova, Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi Prishtina Mayor Ismet Beqiri, and give a speech at the National Theatre in Prishtina. Bloomberg is also expected to visit the US military camp Bondsteel.

A front-page headline in *Bota Sot* reads *Welcome to Kosovo, Mr. Bloomberg, our great American friend!*

## **Kosovo Press Headlines**

### **Koha Ditore**

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- **16 families hold occupied court building**
- **Surroi: The three colors of Bogdan Bogdanovic**
- **Municipality will remove flower bowls from the Ministry of Environment**
- **Fear from terrorist attacks, Albania increases security measures**
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- **Welcome to Kosovo Mr. Bloomberg, our big friend**
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- **New York mayor announces visit to Kosovo and Metohija (*Vecernje Novosti*)**
- **Tchernomyrdin with Rugova in Bonn (*Vecernje Novosti*)**
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- **Alex Anderson: Grossman brought hope to Kosovo-Albanians (*Glas/Tanjug*)**

## **What does Tchernomyrdin's book "Challenge" reveals? (*Vecernje Novosti*)**

At the beginning of the book entitled "Challenge" Tchernomyrdin explains how the Kosovo drama occurred. Without hiding that he agrees with those Russian experts for the Balkans who have written many times that the Americans and the West sponsored everything and initiated Albanians to head for succession from Serbia. In the negotiations with Milosevic whom he addressed personally (ti), Jelzin's special envoy Viktor Tchernomyrdin has several times repeated that Yugoslavia is guaranteed territorial unity (integrity), that Kosovo would remain part of the Yugoslav territory, only with broad rights of autonomy. In "Challenge" he reveals that the Serb population in Kosovo and Metohija had been given guarantees for survival and safety. Furthermore, they were promised that a certain number of soldiers and policemen would stay in Kosovo and Metohija to protect Serbian sanctuaries. This is what Tchernomyrdin reiterated to Milosevic during the third visit to Belgrade, and described his reaction as follows: "Milosevic expressed doubt that NATO would use the negotiations for a maneuver. He said that the US and its allies wished to destroy Yugoslavia as a federal state. More precisely, that they intend to give away Kosovo to Albania. According to Milosevic, the alliance itself needs to become stronger in Kosovo and that is why it will first of all form an international administration, and later on – a purely Albanian. In the meantime, Serbs, faced with unbearable conditions, will leave the province."

## **Milan Radovic sells original handicraft to soldiers and policemen (*Vecernje Novosti*)**

Who has an idea and works, he or she can "multiple" it and earn good money. Milan Radovic has confirmed this, among the first in Mitrovica, on the left "Serb" shore of the Ibar. Downtown Mitrovica, on 20 square meters, he built a wooden house and put souvenirs in it. He "printed" a Serb coat of arms on the T-shirts with an Italian flag

and KFOR sign, while he wrote the message in Spanish “No pasaran!” on the bridge on the Ibar River, which is guarded by French soldiers. This is how he commenced, and today foreign soldiers are buying different souvenirs and evidence where they spent the days of their peace mission in the Balkans. Radovic and his wife started this business cautiously, but also in a probing manner. They printed five-pointed stars, the Yugoslav flag and Serb national symbols on the T-shirts for soldiers from the West where communism is a “devil’s vice,” and Tchetnik banners for Italian “carabinieri.”

### **Northern Kosovska Mitrovica one year under UNMIK’s control (Glas)**

One year ago, UNMIK took control over the municipal administration in the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica, controlled by the Serbs until then. With that, the international community has established, after three years and five months, authority on the entire territory of Kosovo and Metohija. What is the present situation in northern Mitrovica, where 65% of the population are Serbs, 15% Albanians, and the same percentage are Goranci, Romany and Muslims? “The failure of the UN mission over the past year has also been demonstrated on the example of northern Mitrovica. The result is reduced safety for Serbs in Mitrovica, while there have been a lot of incidents over the past 12 months. UNMIK hasn’t fulfilled the agreement reached between Covic and the then UNMIK Head Michael Steiner, except for abolishing the bridge watchers, whom the international community considered to be parallel institutions. KFOR check points were removed from the bridge, the presence of UNMIK police was reduced, while, contrary to the agreement, Albanians are in the KPS, who, apart from patrolling Bosnjacka mahala and the Micro settlement, are walking the other parts of the town. Although it has been agreed that municipal elections will be held within six to eight months, they have not been scheduled to this day,” said SNC leader for northern Kosovo Milan Ivanovic.

### **Serb beaten (Glas/Tanjug)**

Two Albanians have beaten Trajko Jovanovic (63) from the vicinity of Kosovska Vitina, KP AM Rada Trajkovic told *Tanjug*. The attackers broke Jovanovic’s left lower leg, and injured the head and rib, so he was transferred to the Vranje hospital.

### **Holkeri on Kosovo budget for 2004 (Danas/Beta)**

UNMIK Head Harri Holkeri called on at the session of the Kosovo Economic-Fiscal Council on Saturday the Kosovo Ministry for Finances and the Economy to complete the draft budget for 2004 so it could enter assembly procedure as soon as possible. The Economic-Fiscal Council has discussed Kosovo’s budget for the following year and examined the report on implementing the free trade agreement with Albania, UNMIK announced. The Council reiterated that the financial needs of the Kosovo power corporation, Trepca and the Pristina airport would be taken care of at the beginning of 2004 with the funds of the Kosovo Trust Agency that is in charge of privatization in the province. Holkeri called on the Ministry for Finances and the Economy to complete the draft budget and to write in the changes it had discussed at the session. The Council expressed satisfaction that imports from Kosovo into Albania in October 2003 more than doubled compared to the same period in 2002.

### **All bridges of Gyorgy Kakuk (Politika)**

This summer, more precisely on 1 August, it was two years of Gyorgy Kakuk’s, the head of UNMIK’s information service in Kosovska Mitrovica, stay in this town.

Before him there was a certain Beatrice, then Benjaminsen, then a certain Kids, and other international names that came for help. However, Kakuk, one would say, has been lasting for more than two years in the divided town that is separated by the main Ibar bridge. The town, by mentioning it, still means a time bomb. He made himself at home not only in the north, but also in the south. He crosses the bridge every day and spends his working hours in the former Jugobanka building where UNMIK headquarters for Kosovska Mitrovica are located. We ask him to tell us how come he stayed the longest in Kosovska Mitrovica, whether it is according to party line. He is brief here, and answers diplomatically: "I am probably working well. Nobody asked me to leave, and I will stay as long as they ask me to." Then he adds: "There is no reason for anger when journalists are at issue. We are at different sides of the table. I cannot give you information that is black and white, it is up to you to read between lines," Kakuk responds in his unique manner. We are trying to have him tell us what is his vision of Kosovska Mitrovica. Again in a, let's say, twisted style he responds: "I cannot predict when the situation will settle down, but I must admit that, according to what I encountered in 2001, it is heading towards significant progress," said the UNMIK spokesman, and adds: "When I arrived it was a bridge with a barbed wire, with many armed soldiers and ramparts. During the time I have spent here, as you may see yourself, the bridge is open for all. Kosovska Mitrovica is becoming a normal town." We don't agree with his opinion, we are persistently trying to prove, and we don't doubt he is also convinced in this, that the bridge is not open for Serbs. However, like all other foreigners, he wishes to convince us that Mitrovica is free for all, but that the disagreement is, as he says, in the minds of the people on both sides of the national communities. We ask him how he comments the statements that he is pro-Serb oriented? He said that he was in Zvecan, in the north, for only economic reasons. Asked that there were those who say he "cheered for Albanians" he responds angrily: "Until I am receiving criticism from both sides, it means I am unbiased. I am always fair in criticizing both communities."

### **Group of Albanians beat up Serbs (*Blic/Tanjug*)**

Two young men of Serbian nationality have been beaten up by a group of Albanians in Kosovska Mitrovica, said the director of the Mitrovica hospital Vladimir Adzic. The men are 19 and 20 but Adzic didn't announce their names for safety reasons. Both young men contracted body injuries, and one of them a head injury as well, said Adzic and added that injuries were caused by a dull object, most probably by a metal bar. Fearing revenge, the young men refused to remain in the hospital and were released home for treatment.

### **OSCE official stabbed in Mitrovica (*Vecernje Novosti/Fonet*)**

German OSCE official was stabbed with a knife on Saturday evening in southern Kosovska Mitrovica, UNMIK police spokesman Dimitrii Priyahin announced. According to Priyahin, the international police arrested an Albanian who took part in the attack. The OSCE official has been seriously wounded, but his/her life is not threatened.

### **New York mayor announces visit to Kosovo and Metohija (*Vecernje Novosti*)**

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg is planning a visit to Pristina at the end of the month, where he is to attend the celebration of the Day of the Albanian flag with the Kosovo President and Premier, the *New York Post* announces. Bloomberg's

spokesperson Ed Skydler explained that this would be an opportunity to “pay respect to the contribution by the Albanian community in New York, and to remind that genocide could happen anywhere if you are not awake.” In the company of Congressman John Sweeny, Bloomberg also plans a dinner with the American troops at the Bondsteel base. The Serbian-American Congress, an organization that represents 1.2 million Serbs in America, with visible presence in New York, has addressed a letter to the New York mayor “expressing concern” over his decision to attend the celebration. “Taking into account that the Day of the Albanian flag is an opportunity for remembering the independence of the Republic of Albania in 1912, how can the respected New York mayor allow himself to celebrate this event in Kosovo since it is, according to UNSCR 1244, an integral part of Serbia? This celebration is always seen as an extremely provocative opportunity for Kosovo’s independence and unification of Albanians under one flag in the movement towards creating a Great Albania – it is stated in the letter by the Serbian-American Congress to Bloomberg.

### **Tchernomyrdin with Rugova in Bonn (*Vecernje Novosti*)**

During his stay in Bonn, Tchernomyrdin had an unplanned meeting with Ibrahim Rugova. He wanted to hear the opinion of this Albanian representative whom they considered “moderate.” What kind of impression did Rugova make on him at the time? “With a restless look, with some strange student-like unserious scarf around his neck. His thoughts were vague. He spoke general phrases on Kosovo’s independence. He looked dejected, demoralized. It was visible that he didn’t know what to do... NATO didn’t listen to him because he was for them an already “worked off material.” Talks with Rugova were open, but he didn’t leave an impression on me. Peace in the Balkans depended on totally different forces, wrote Jelzin’s envoy Viktor Tchernomyrdin in his book “Challenge.”

### **Kosovo government doesn’t accept UN recommendations (*Glas/Tanjug*)**

At an early session held on Friday, the government of Kosovo and Metohija didn’t agree with the recommendations of the UN legal office on bringing new rules for privatization and offered its proposal that implies continuation of privatization in that Serbian province. Despite the opposing of the only Serb minister Goran Bogdanovic, the government of Kosovo and Metohija proposed to the Kosovo Trust Agency to immediately continue with the ceased privatization process of companies in the province, and that legal and physical persons who are to file charges in connection with the privatization process in the province may do so only through the special Chamber of the Supreme Court of Kosovo and Metohija.

### **Alex Anderson: Grossman brought hope to Kosovo Albanians (*Glas/Tanjug*)**

Director of the International Crisis Group Office in Pristina Alex Anderson has assessed that the standpoint of the American administration – that the resolution of Kosovo’s final status could begin by mid 2005 if all set standards are fulfilled, brought forward in Pristina by the Undersecretary of State Mark Grossman, later on supported by the EU and UNMIK, brought hope and patience to the Kosovo Albanians, which they started to lose.

