

UNMIK



United Nations Mission in Kosovo

Division of Public Information

Media Monitoring

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28 November

Editorial: Delaying optimism (Zëri)

Zëri weekly newspaper carries an opinion piece by the editorial office:

Ignorance, incompetence, intention... You can choose either one of the three, or all three of them together.

An UNMIK official used these terms when he responded to a question of a western diplomat on the reasons for the delays in the process of privatization in Kosovo.

The same reaction can be valid when it comes to delays in the effort to complete the plan for the operationalization of the standards, which should have been ready by now and pave way to the proposal for the implementation of standards and the evaluation mechanisms. This is at the same time the most difficult and complicated part of the package of standards before status.

Wasting a positive mood

After his meeting with the UNMIK official, the western diplomat could have concluded that despite positive statements in Pristina and in western capitals, Kosovo was in fact suffering a stalemate.

Certainly, not a day goes by without hearing a western state-official talk about the necessity of fulfilling standards by mid-2005, the time when the process of resolving Kosovo's final status is expected to commence. But underneath these statements there is a situation of permanent turmoil which could very soon reach an escalating point when it comes to relations between UNMIK and the Kosovo authorities.

Only three weeks ago it seemed that relations between internationals and locals were entering a much more quiet period of genuine cooperation in the process of implementing the operationalization of standards. The visit by US Assistant Secretary of State Marc Grossman and the fact that he announced a timeframe by when the international community expects progress in fulfilling standards in Kosovo left an

impression amongst Kosovars that a formula was found to emerge from the crisis in the functioning of the Kosovar society. Following Grossman's statement, it was also found out that the well-known British diplomat Carne Ross and his team have been doing a very good job in preparing the plan. The Kosovo Government, and especially Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi, not only in his public statements, but also in head-to-head meetings with western officials, always voiced his willingness and the willingness of his cabinet to focus all their attention on the implementation of this plan which paves the way to the resolution of Kosovo's status.

But this entire positive political mood in Kosovo suffered major damages with the blocking of privatization in Kosovo and the postponement of endorsing the Plan for the Operationalization of Standards.

Lacking explanations

The latter issue was postponed because the UN Administration in New York felt it had been ignored to an intolerable extent by the Contact Group (first of all by the US and Great Britain, which contributed the most in the progress of this plan).

However, in this context at least, no one is expecting additional complications that would disable the finalization of this plan. The key problem here is time, because the whole package should be finalized by mid-December or before Christmas and New Year's Eve.

The privatization of the former socially owned enterprises in Kosovo is much more difficult. The constant meetings of the Kosovo Government and the Board of the Kosovo Trust Agency have not offered a solution for the major problems that have pervaded this process, which is at the same time the essence of the standard of economy and crucial for the economic development of Kosovo in the next three years.

It is known that privatization was stopped early October after an order by UNMIK Pillar IV head Nikolaus Lambsdorff, who continues to object to the resuming of privatization according to the model of the first two rounds of privatization, which were evaluated as very successful both by UNMIK and the KTA.

It is also known that while some international members of the KTA Board want to have legal immunity, the local members believe that the main obstacles to privatization are the discriminatory laws that were adopted during Milosevic's regime.

Upon returning from New York last week, Kosovo chief administrator Harri Holkeri didn't bring the much-awaited explanations of the UN Legal office that were supposed to facilitate the resuming of privatization. The main message of the UN was that the KTA is fully responsible for the process of privatization, and if translated into the political language this means that the clash between internationals and locals on the issue of the privatization is going to continue.

Privatization is not only the key word of the standard of economy, but also an issue without which we cannot move toward the implementation of the package of standards.

Therefore, if privatization doesn't resume soon, by eliminating the ignorance, incompetence and intention of certain circles in UNMIK, then the plan for the implementation of standards is going to be a dead born.

Threatening letter on possible attacks sent to diplomatic offices and UNMIK

Bota Sot reports that numerous KFOR forces and KPS police officers were deployed in Pristina yesterday and were controlling the entrances and exits of the city and the movement of vehicles.

Citing sources at UNMIK, ***Bota Sot*** reports that the main reason for such a deployment was information from New York, which suggested increased security measures in Pristina. According to the paper, the United Nations Headquarters in New York had received a threatening letter claiming that there could be attacks against foreign liaison offices, the UNMIK mission and police buildings.

Bota Sot quotes UNMIK chief Harri Holkeri as saying that security measures were increased 'not only due to rumors, but also because we are responsible to do this on every occasion and on a daily basis'.

Following this issue ***Epoka e Re*** reports that UNMIK admitted an anonymous threat that in the next 72 hours one of its premises would be attacked, UNMIK Police said on Thursday.

UNMIK sources claimed that the threat came through an internal letter that was presented to the UN officials in Kosovo, paper further reports. I cannot comment on the content of that letter, UNMIK spokeswoman Isabella Karlowicz said to the foreign agencies. She added that increasing the security measures was done in accordance with a plan for increasing the security in the entire world, but not just in Kosovo. KFOR members increased security around the UNMIK premises, paper reports. KFOR had located armored vehicles at all entrances and KFOR troops were running the checkpoints instead of KPS members.

Rugova: We don't have to make essential constitutional changes, because we expect the constitution of an independent country (*Bota Sot*)

Bota Sot conducted an interview with Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova.

Mr. President, what is your assessment for the situation in Kosovo after four and half years of living in freedom?

I would say that Kosovo has made a great progress in four and half years. I just would mention the period of reconstruction and emergency, whereas now we are entering the period of privatization and the creation of new jobs. Security has improved, while KPS is consolidated. Police should be professional and cooperate with UNMIK and

KFOR. We can say that Kosovo has achieved great progress during the last four years and this is also the assessment by our international friends.

What is your assessment about the work of the Kosovo institutions?

I have a positive assessment. As you know the assembly has adopted several laws. The assembly proved that it is a democratic institution. The coalition government prepared laws and led the economic and social life. We should raise the issue of competencies, we aren't in confrontation with UNMIK but we walked fast and we should have more competencies, particularly in the economic fields.

Generally these institutions function very well and I had assisted the institutions which are the government and the assembly, but I haven't put pressure on them.

Mr. President, do you think that the next year would bring fulfillment of our economic and diplomatic ambitions?

I would wish it to be as you said. As a friend of mine from the UNDP said, it is the year of economic development. We should concentrate on this issue and find a common language with UNMIK regarding security of foreign investments. Currently we are preparing a law on concessions, which will be another door for the foreign capital to Kosovo. We should work closely with the SRSG to find the way of opening the foreign offices, particularly in the EU and the US. As you know, I had appointed Ambassador Dole in the US, but there was lots of resistance and we have to look into this issue this year. It is important for Kosovo to get out, because many of our friends who came here noticed the progress, but there is no information on our progress. We are at the mercy of the media; they get Kosovo's news third hand. Example, our TV, agencies and papers should find ways to get in connection with American and European papers, in order that your information to be considered reliable. Since the establishment of our institutions we went abroad very rarely. You know that I have constitutional competencies to coordinate work with the SRSG and I hope to do more in this sense next year.

Kosovo assembly in connection with Constitutional Changes. What are the most sensitive issues that need to be changed in the Constitution in order to advance Kosovo's judicial position?

We can make few amendments to the Constitutional Framework in order that institutions become more effective and also to assist UNMIK. However, we do not need significant changes, because we expect the constitution of an independent country, after the formal recognition of Kosovo's independence. We can make different amendments, e.g., on the issue of finances, elections, to extend mandate of our institution from three to four years, because we didn't have enough time to work. We should seek possibilities that the president should be elected directly by the citizens. Also we should have lists that are proposed by the political parties. All these issues would be discussed in close cooperation with UNMIK.

Do you think that the issue of state symbols must be included in the constitutional changes?

Yes, why not. I have a program as President of Kosovo and also my party and other parties have it. We should have our state symbols because they are necessary. We need state symbols.

The time for resolving the Kosovo status is foreseen to be mid 2005. What should Kosovo institutions do in order to resolve this issue by 2005?

You know my position, which is in accordance with the majority of the Kosovo people. This issue should be resolved through formal recognition of independence by the EU, the UN and US. We have fulfilled numerous standards in the last four and a half years, but the point is that there was no evaluation. So, how are we going to evaluate them? Certainly together with UNMIK and the US, the European Union, the Contact Group and other mechanisms. We also must be careful to have an earlier start, maybe with the gradual evaluation of standards so that they don't pile up, or else we could face interference from various circles to destabilize the situation and postpone the evaluation of standards. We should be careful together with UNMIK to begin a gradual evaluation of the standards; this way we shouldn't create an issue that might be misused.

Thaçi: The state is not built with symbols (Kosova Sot)

Kosova Sot carries an interview with Hashim Thaçi, leader of the Kosovo Democratic Party (PDK). 'There has been a lot of confusion as to whether or not Kosovo should have its own flag. We are all Albanians and our national flag will remain the current flag. However, as we are making efforts to build a political identity, we are consequently going to need a state flag. But I do not think that we should start building this identity with symbols. We must first create the state of Kosovo,' Thaçi was quoted as saying.

Mr. Thaçi, having in mind this is the fourth year Kosovo is celebrating Flag Day in freedom, can you tell us where Albanians stand in 2003?

The Flag Day unifies Albanians wherever they are. Kosovo Albanians for many years celebrated this day under very difficult circumstances of oppression and occupation. However, despite all the difficulties we kept celebrating it, and it is the fourth year we celebrate it in freedom. 28 November has not only been a holiday but it has always served as inspiration for meeting the aspirations of the people of Kosovo. In the course of these efforts the Kosovo Liberation Army was born, which appeared publicly for the first time on 28 November 1997. I think that enough has been done over the last four years, but we cannot allow ourselves the luxury of being happy with it. There is still a lot to be done. We are not physically threatened, but in many walks of life we are limited and restricted. Practically, many citizens of Kosovo do not enjoy the freedom of movement, while politically we are not yet free to decide about our future. But, I am optimistic that people of Kosovo will succeed and will celebrate Novembers to come with a more positive outcome.

The year 2003 has found Albanians scattered in three states. Should Albanians have three flags or only one?

Much confusion has been created as to whether Kosovo should have its own flag or not. We are Albanians and our national flag is and will remain the same. However, since we are trying to build a new political identity, we will need a state flag. But I do not think that we need to start to build this identity with symbols. We first need to create the state of Kosovo. Only after we set the foundations of the state we can talk

about symbols that definitely need to be chosen by the people of Kosovo through a referendum.

If we get back to the current political situation; Democratic Party of Kosovo marked the fourth anniversary some while ago, how satisfied are you with its extension, developments and the percentage of your electorate?

Democratic Party of Kosovo is a continuation of political movements of the people of Kosovo. We took the form we have today as a Democratic Party of Kosovo after the transformation of the Kosovo Liberation Army by its political directorate. Many Kosovo citizens embraced our concept. PDK will in the near future be the party with the strongest electorate and together with the wide progressive political family it will co-govern Kosovo.

Based on an agreement reached two years ago, the PDK managed to get the post of the prime minister. How do you assess the co-governance over the recent years? Would you enter a new co-governance again?

Circumstances that prevailed in Kosovo after the general elections of the 2001 imposed co-governance. I think that it was the best solution and in a way co-governance was the will of the people of Kosovo, since through their votes they did not give the mandate to a single party to form the institutions. On the other hand, as a country, we were facing and we continue to face many challenges that require unity between the Albanian and Kosovar political factor. Whether there will be co-governance after the next elections, that I cannot say now, but I can assure you that the party and I will be in favor of consensus and unity among all Albanians when it comes to capital issues. Kosovo and its future are not and cannot be the responsibility or a privilege only for a party or an institution.

The US Diplomat Grossman recently made public that the status of Kosovo is to be tackled by 2005. How probable is it for the benchmarks, set by the international community, to be met by then?

Standards should not be seen as a condition imposed by the international community, but as a way to improve the quality of life for our people. We need to develop the economy, create jobs, we need to make Kosovo a place from where nobody wants to leave. But, to achieve them, we need political stability and a clear legal infrastructure in place. I believe this is possible.

To what extent do you, as a party leader, influence decisions of the PM Rexhepi?

The Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi is a member of the presidency of PDK. We have regular meetings. I would in no way describe my relations with Mr. Rexhepi as influential, but as relations of cooperation for the benefit of Kosovo people.

It is said that the PM Rexhepi is going to lead the working group of dialogue. While the Serbian side has said it will be lead by Nebojsa Covic. Why isn't the same level applied on both sides?

According to the rules, the Prime minister only forms the working groups but he does not enter them. I have said before that dialogue is a democratic value, but that it can only be fruitful when both sides are equal. Serbia has launched a constitutional aggression against Kosovo, and the international community should annul legal validity of those judicial acts that prejudice the political status of Kosovo.

What is your cooperation with President Rugova? Do you ever meet outside international initiatives?

As head of the Democratic Party of Kosovo I have initiated several times to send invitations to all Kosovo leaders to meet and build up a joint strategy for Kosovo and its future. Unfortunately, he never responded positively to my invitation, and I never got a similar invitation from him. Yet, I am always ready to meet with all those interested in working seriously for Kosovo.

Do you think that we need to wait for the year 2005 for the definition of the status, or maybe, the Kosovo Assembly should do it beforehand? Could it come to the division of Kosovo or to exchange of territories, and how would that affect the region?

Kosovo institutions need to work for the creation of a reality for an independent Kosovo. Everybody knows the will of the people of Kosovo, and there is no compromise about that. Kosovo has its own borders internationally recognized and which are protected by KFOR. We are against partition of the territory of Kosovo. We as leaders hold these positions because the people of Kosovo trusted us through their votes. Our objective is independence.

Haradinaj: We are a little late, but independence next November! (Epoka e Re)

Epoka e Re carries an interview with Ramush Haradinaj, leader of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo.

The Alliance for the Future of Kosovo has insisted several times on the Kosovo Assembly to declare the independence of Kosovo, but this hasn't happened so far...

The political spectrum of Kosovo must be united in their actions. We want to have understanding on the declaration of Kosovo as a sovereign and independent country by the Kosovo Assembly. By celebrating the November holiday, by learning from the examples of our ancestors, their actions in those times and their great deeds, I think that we must also be involved in actions. The Alliance and I personally believe that we must act.

Since this November doesn't find Kosovo independent, what is your opinion about the next 28th November?

I think that the next November will be the coronation of our efforts for independence. Next November is going to mark the independence of Kosovo

Krasniqi: Not every status leads Kosovo toward European Union (Epoka e Re)

Epoka e Re carries an opinion piece by the Minister of Public Services, Jakup Krasniqi, who writes that lately we very often hear statements such as 'regardless what Kosovo's political status will be, Kosovo will be a part of Europe'.

I am convinced that such a conclusion is wrong, unconvincing and it cannot stand politically. We can line up a number of convincing arguments to show that not any final political status for Kosovo can pave its way to Europe - very few arguments can be provided for the opposite. The silent acceptance of such a conclusion by local political and institutional leaders could create illusions with European circles that

Kosovo citizens will accept other solution, besides independence. The independent state of Kosovo is the minimal request of Kosovo citizens. You have to be more than narrow-minded not to see something that is so evident.

Even during the 20th century, Kosovo was a part of Europe, but only geographically. The economy, education, health, science, culture, democracy and institutional development were far behind the countries of almost same development during the last century. During the last three decades the Kosovars made titanic efforts to solve the Kosovo issue. Serbia is not only guilty for the pre war period events in Kosovo but also what is happening in Kosovo after the war is a result of the Serb politics. It is a result of the politics that created hostility between Albanian majority and minorities in Kosovo. That is why Kosovo's road to the EU cannot lead through Belgrade, because it will never lead to the right destination. Independence is not the most adequate solution for Kosovo but it opens more perspectives for freedom, peace, security and democracy in the western Balkans, it opens a road to this region for a faster integration into the EU. It is not enough for Kosovo to just be a part of the European map, it should be a special entity (independent state) in EU.



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Kosovo Media Highlights

Threatening letter on possible attacks sent to diplomatic offices and UNMIK

Bota Sot reports that numerous KFOR forces and KPS police officers were deployed in Prishtina yesterday and were controlling the entrances and exits of the city and the movement of vehicles.

Citing sources at UNMIK, ***Bota Sot*** reports that the main reason for such a deployment was information from New York, which suggested increased security measures in Prishtina. According to the paper, the United Nations Headquarters in New York had received a threatening letter claiming that there could be attacks against foreign liaison offices, the UNMIK mission and police buildings.

Bota Sot quotes UNMIK chief Harri Holkeri as saying that security measures were increased ‘not only due to rumors, but also because we are responsible to do this on every occasion and on a daily basis’.

As for UNMIK Police, Bin Laden could freely come to Kosovo (*Epoka e Re*)

Epoka e Re claims that criminals, war crimes suspects, terrorists, and even the leading world terrorist Osama Bin Laden, can very easily come to Kosovo and have a great time here. ‘All of them, with some fake documents, can land in Prishtina Airport or enter every border crossing point and the police is not very likely to identify them,’ added the newspaper.

Prime Minister Rexhepi and SRSG Holkeri evaluate standards (*Kosova Sot*)

Kosova Sot quotes sources in the Kosovo Government as saying that the working groups are expected to carry out the implementation plan. The paper also claims that SRSG Harri Holkeri and Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi will jointly evaluate the fulfillment of standards.

Rugova: We don’t have to make essential constitutional changes, because we expect the constitution of an independent country (*Bota Sot*)

In an interview for ***Bota Sot***, Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova was quoted as saying, ‘We have fulfilled numerous standards in the last four years and a half, but the point is that there was no evaluation. So, how are we going to evaluate them? Certainly together with UNMIK and the US, the European Union, the Contact Group and other mechanisms... We must also be careful to have an earlier start, maybe with the gradual evaluation of standards so that they don’t pile up... or else we could face interference from various circles to destabilize the situation and postpone the evaluation of standards’.

Thaçi: The ethnic state is not built with symbols (*Kosova Sot*)

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Haradinaj: We are a little late, but independence next November! (*Epoka*)

In an interview for *Epoka e Re*, Ramush Haradinaj, leader of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo, was quoted as saying, ‘I think that the next November will be the coronation of our efforts for independence. Next November is going to mark the independence of Kosovo’.

Krasniqi: Not every status leads Kosovo toward European Union (Epoka)

‘Independence is not the best solution for Kosovo, but although it is a minimal solution it does nonetheless pave way to future, peace, security and democratization in Western Balkans,’ writes Jakup Krasniqi in an opinion piece for *Epoka e Re*.

Rugova does not attend the blessing of KPC (Epoka e Re)

Epoka e Re reports that the chairman of the Islamic Community of Kosovo, Naim Tërnavë, and the leader of the catholic community in Kosovo, Mark Sopi, have blessed the Kosovo Protection Corps during yesterday’s ceremony in the honor of 28th November – Flag Day.

‘It is a privilege, pride and honor to be in the service and protection of the homeland and your people,’ Tërnavë was quoted as saying. Sopi prayed to God to bless the KPC and the entire Kosovar society.

Epoka e Re notes that almost all Kosovar leaders attended the ceremony, except for President Ibrahim Rugova and Assembly Speaker Nexhat Daci. ‘The first never attended a ceremony of the KPC or the former KLA,’ the paper added.

Macedonian Defense Minister visits Kosovo (Kosova Sot)

Kosova Sot quotes the Macedonian Defense Minister Vlado Buckovski, who visited Kosovo yesterday, as saying that Macedonia did not fear the independence of Kosovo and that it would respect every formulation that doesn’t violate the national interests and the territorial integrity of Macedonia. Buckovski also added that the territory of Macedonia was so far never violated by Kosovo.

Robertson: First a multiethnic Kosovo, and then status (Epoka e Re)

Epoka e Re reports that outgoing NATO Secretary General George Robertson stated that a truly multiethnic Kosovo is a precondition for any kinds of talks on Kosovo’s final status.

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- **Rugova: Independence before 2005 (*Politika/Tanjug*)**

UNMIK increased security measures around its HQ in Pristina (*Vecernje Novosti/Beta*)

UNMIK police has confirmed that the UN Mission in Kosovo has received an anonymous threat that one of its premises would be attacked within the next 72 hours. Upon receiving the information KFOR has tightened security measures, especially around UNMIK HQ located in the former JNA Cultural Center downtown Pristina. KFOR has deployed its armored vehicles at all gates and its soldiers have also taken over guarding the building from the KPS. KPS has increased its presence on all incoming roads to Pristina and has intensified traffic controls. This increased activity has also been considered as related to tomorrow's celebration of the national day of neighboring Albania - "The Flag Day".

George Robertson's interview to Vecernje Novosti (*Vecernje Novosti*)

What is your stand on Kosovo's final status since some factors of the international community see in UNSCR 1244 a possibility for Kosovo to become independent. Potentially this could mean changing of borders, i.e. it could become a safety challenge for Europe.

"In politics, you can never cross the bridge before you step on it. There can be no talks on Kosovo's final status now until standards, set by the international community before the Kosovo government, are achieved. This is a question more for the UNSG

and not NATO secretary general. The SC will be deciding on Kosovo and not the NATO Council. I think we should not panic on whether Kosovo will be independent or integrated into Serbia again. We will see what will be in the future,” NATO Secretary General George Robertson told *Novosti*.

Robertson in Banjica military barrack (Glas/Beta)

The creation of multi-ethnic society in Kosovo represents a prerequisite for any discussion on the final status of the province, said NATO Secretary General George Robertson during his visit to the Banjica military barrack in Belgrade. He underlined that the aim of the 1999 NATO intervention against FRY was not the creation of independent Kosovo but the prevention of ethnic cleansing and the defense of the principle that all minorities may live in peace.

Momcilo Trajkovic's interview to Danas (Danas)

Why had been Kosovo and Metohija, as the number one state and national issue, given to the DOS Presidency, instead of being resolved in institutions?

“The key difference in SPOT’s conception and us who live in Kosovo and Metohija on the one side, and those who are resolving the Kosovo issue from Belgrade on the other side, is that we advocate an active policy by Serbia towards Kosovo and Metohija, while they had a passive policy. With this I don’t wish to say that Serbia and the government had not done a great deal, but the problem continues to be held and hasn’t left Belgrade. I think our policy should reaffirm the stand of late premier Djindjic, regardless of the fact that the stand “standards before status” was clearly positioned in the international community. We should accept to work on this, but we must also initiate the status issue. I’m afraid that the “standards before status” policy is the buying of time for constituting in Kosovo and Metohija a monstrous state that we will have a hard time destroying later on. This is why we should insist, if not for the issue status to be resolved, then to at least stop the creation of an Albanian state. The balance of those two policies, the policy of standards and the policy of stopping the creation of an independent state, would be the best for us.”

Serbia doesn’t have a president, DOS doesn’t exist anymore, and the government has a mandate only until the forming of the new one. Who is in charge of Kosovo and Metohija?

“The government and the CCK. They have authority until a new government is formed and until, perhaps, a new concept is set. But, what is with Kosovo and Metohija today, where will it head, will our position be weaker or not, how is the international community viewing all this, I think not many people are thinking about this presently.”

How true are the stories on the blackmailing by the international community like the latest one, allegedly “either the EU or Kosovo?”

“Those are more lobbyist options than of the state policy of the US and the EU countries, but we must respond to this. Serbia entered a phase when it should give an answer as to what it really wishes and wants. It is irresponsible to bring a new Serbian Constitution and not to give an answer to the issue on Kosovo and Metohija. It is not

enough to just state that Serbia is made up of two autonomous provinces Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija. By taking part in the Kosovo elections and supporting the Constitutional Framework, we have already accepted the status of Kosovo and Metohija, and that is presently an entrance hall to an independent state. If we were so open and went so far to accept this position at the start, then we must use this as a political point in stopping the independence issue. It is now hardly possible to take away from Kosovo the institution of the Kosovo president or the judiciary, but the most important things for me now are the elimination of the KPC from the Constitutional Framework and decentralization," SPOT leader Momcilo Trajkovic told *Danas*.

Judge arrested for bribery (Blic)

UNMIK has announced that Jusuf Berisha, the municipal magistrate, had been arrested in Kosovska Mitrovica because he was receiving bribes. UNMIK spokeswoman Tracy Baker has stated that Berisha is in custody and that international investigative bodies will conduct an investigation against him.

Church demolished near Pristina (Glas/Srna)

Unknown persons demolished a church in the village of Gornja Brnjica near Pristina, only 48 hours after a similar attack on the St. Dimitrije Church in Susica near Gracanica. Reports say the doors and windows of the church have been smashed.

Still no Serbs in Gorazdevac (Balkan/Tanjug)

Despite promises, UNMIK and KFOR have not ensured returns for 30 Serbs who had taken refuge from Klina, which was cleansed from Serbs four years ago upon the arrival of the military and civil mission to Kosovo and Metohija, the director of the high school in Gorazdevac Mileta Bukumiric confirmed to *Tanjug*. Although Serb returnees were told several days ago that they would be returned to Klina, this didn't happen, and even an Albanian family moved into the Pesic family house where Serbs should have been sheltered. According to him, 30 Serb returnees have been temporarily sheltered in the villages of Bice and Grabac, several kilometers away from Klina, where there is not a single Serb inhabitant. Over 200 Serb families lived in Klina prior to the summer of 1999.

Handover of 40 bodies (Glas/Beta)

CCK representatives have announced that the handing over of the mortal remains of some 40 Albanians, exhumed from a mass grave in Batajnica near Belgrade, will be performed at the Merdare administrative boundary crossing by mid next week. The Head of CCK's Bureau for Kidnapped and Missing Persons, Gvozden Gagic, said the bodies of 40 Albanians had been identified and would be handed over to UNMIK at the Merdare administrative boundary crossing by mid next week. After the comparison of data and the identification performed by UNMIK experts, the bodies will be handed over to their families.

Rugova: Independence before 2005 (Politika/Tanjug)

Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova said in an interview to Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* that Kosovo will become independent before the year 2005. The flag of independent Kosovo "is ready," said Rugova and showed the flag to the Italian

journalist - a black eagle in a red circle (symbols of the Albanian flag) with a blue background that, as he said, represents the "color of Kosovo's sky" and is "the symbol of tolerance and Europe".