

Prishtina Insight

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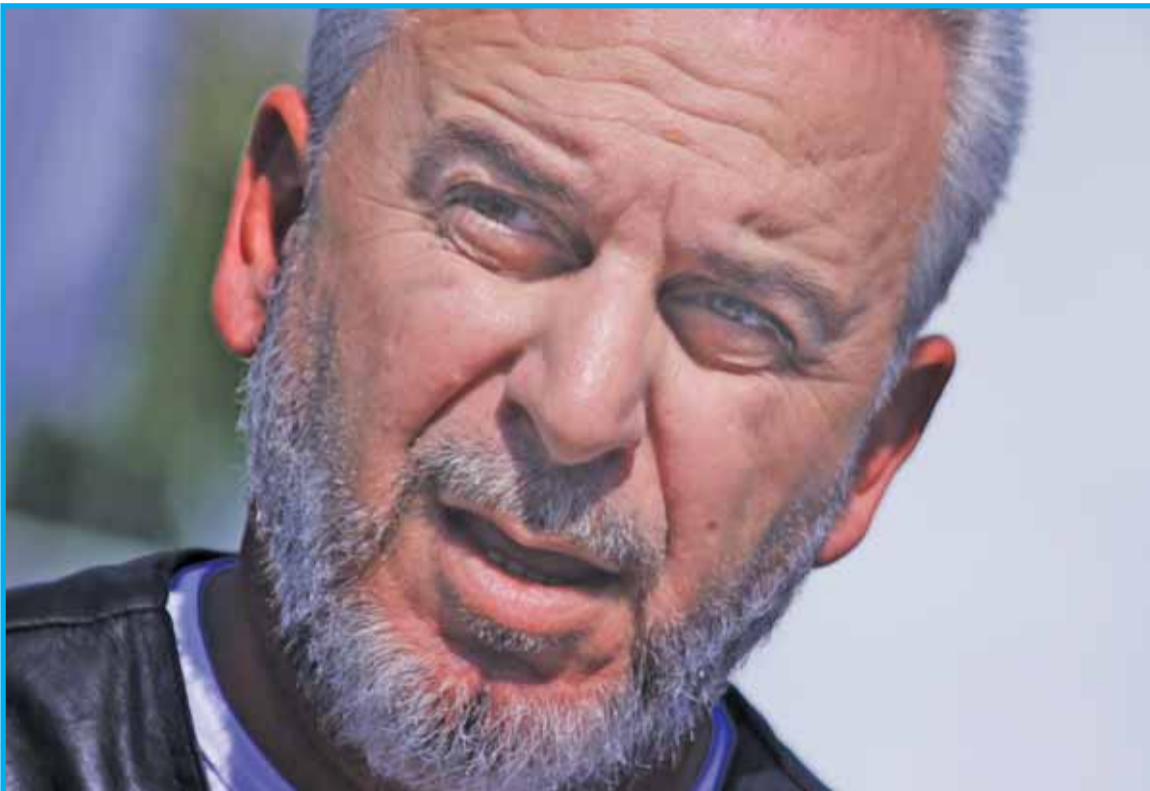


Photo by: Korab Bashja

Hardline Kosovo Muslims Aim to Form Party

A leader of Bashkoku says their party intends to change laws to 'protect Muslim interests' - and block the advance of gay rights by any means possible.

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Kosovo Serbs Bring Southern Flavour to Belgrade



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Thaci Brothers Profit From Prime Minister's Power

While Hashim Thaci toasts six years in office, his brothers also have good reason to celebrate his rise.

By Parim Olluri

As he begins his sixth year in office, Hashim Thaci can take pride in becoming the most powerful and enduring premier in Kosovo's short history as an independent state.

After his Democratic Party of Kosovo, PDK, took power in 2007, Thaci presided over Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008 and has remained in office ever since.

He survived the collapse of his government in 2010, and a major

international scandal when a Swiss Council of Europe Rapporteur, Dick Marty, accused him of links to organised crime and organ trafficking.

But the flak has not dented his grip on power, nor has it affected his family's flourishing business interests.

As Prishtina Insight discovered during investigations spanning the past year, the Prime Minister and his siblings have significantly extended their business activities since he took office.

While Thaci himself has built up strong connections with businessmen, his brothers have set up companies and formed ties to other powerful firms involved in construction, oil, minerals, energy and insurance.

Thaci's office has batted aside repeated questions about his family's business interests, as have his brothers.

Evidence uncovered by Prishtina Insight offers a glimpse into an overlapping cast of characters and business interests with

close ties to the Thaci brothers.

One thread is a document from an oil company, Kosova Petrol, which lists companies that regularly purchase petroleum products, and names the Prime Minister's brother, Idriz, as the contract person for a company called Geo Mineral.

The mineral quarry, owned by Hajati Banjica, is based in Malishevo, a small municipality governed by Thaci's PDK.

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Milk Scare Spreads to Kosovo and Albania

Food safety authorities in Kosovo have ordered the removal from the market of milk produced by five dairies amid fears of contamination by M1.

Kosovo's Agency of Food and Veterinary, AUV, ordered the removal of milk produced by two Albanian...

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Albania Struggles to Protect its Vandalized Heritage

Following public uproar after the destruction of paintings by Albanian medieval master Onufri, the Albanian Institute of Monuments has unveiled a plan to install 88 new security cameras in dozens of churches to protect them from looters...

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Thaci Brothers Profit from PM's Power

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The company, which has gone through several owners through undervalued share transfers since its establishment in 2008, has worked as a subcontractor for Bechtel-Enkas on the largest infrastructure project in Kosovo, the National Highway.

Geo Mineral also won three public tenders from the power corporation KEK, worth around 1.6 million euro, from 2009 to 2011.

The document linking Idriz to Geo Mineral indicates that the firm buys petroleum products from Kosova Petrol, which is owned by Bedri Salmani, a former MP and adviser to the Prime Minister.

According to the Kosovo Privatisation Agency and Prishtina Insight's own investigations in 2012, Salmani usurped state-owned oil pumps for use by Kosova Petrol and took state-owned land to build a hotel, Hotel Victory, in Prishtina.

These actions deprived Kosovo of hundreds of thousands of euro, but have not led to any action on the part of the authorities.

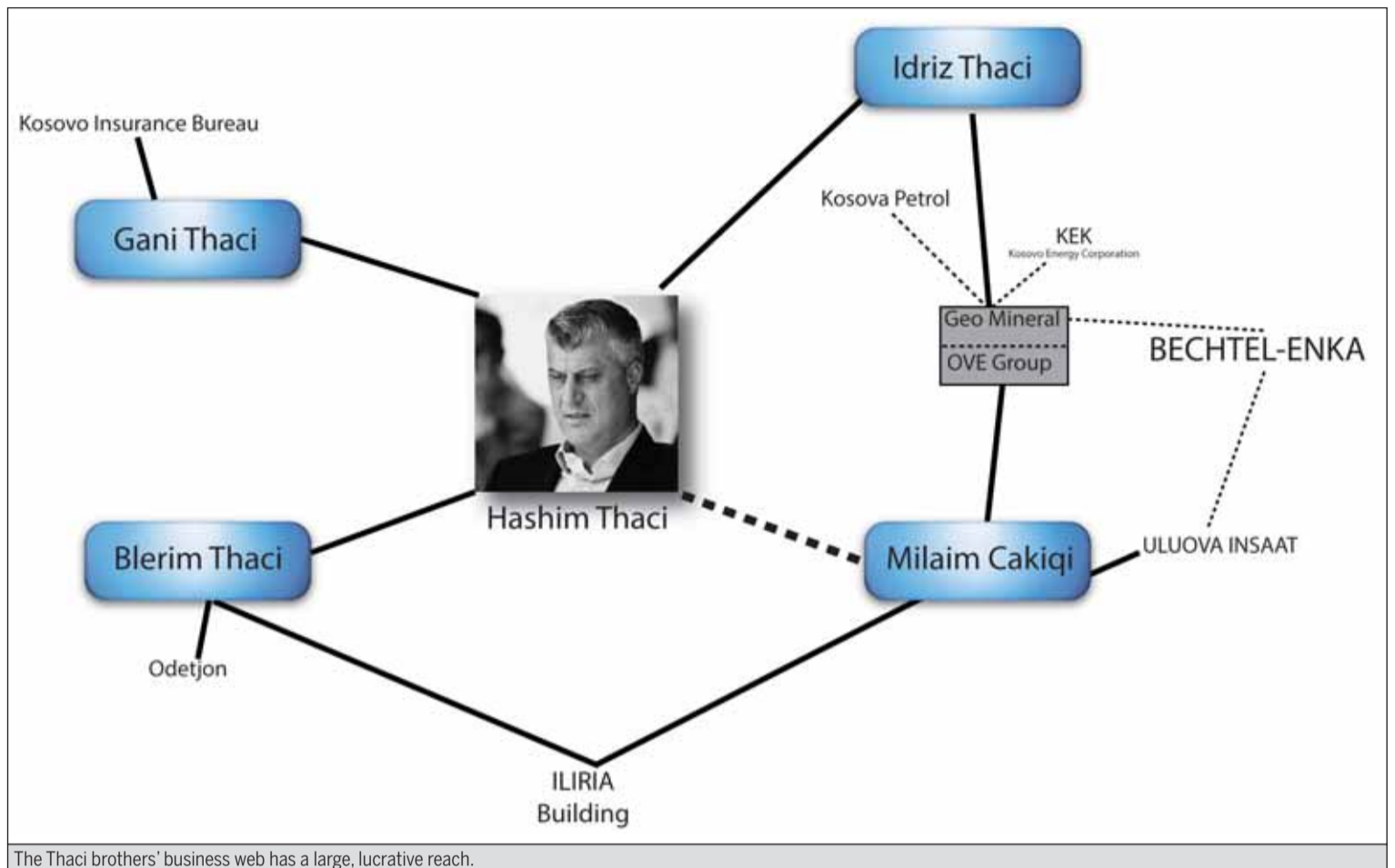
Banjica, Geo Mineral's owner, did not respond to Prishtina Insight's questions about Idriz Thaci's connections to his firm.

Geo Mineral meanwhile shares an office in the Dardania area of Prishtina with Banjica's son's metal trading company, OVE Group.

A close Thaci associate, Milaim Cakiqi, formerly owned shares in Ove Group.

Cakiqi, the Prime Minister's neighbour in Prishtina's New West district, is also a business partner of his youngest brother, Blerim.

Blerim and Cakiqi jointly own



Iliria Building, a construction company that built a multi-million-euro apartment complex in 2012 in the Mati 1 area of Prishtina.

Iliria is currently completing a 120-unit complex in the same neighbourhood.

Blerim Thaci did not respond to Prishtina Insight's questions about whether he financed any of the projects. Public records show he has no prior significant business interests.

However, Cakiqi and members

of his family, Fazli and Viktor, own major companies in Kosovo.

Cakiqi himself is the registered representative in Kosovo of a Turkish construction company, Uluova, which is a sub-contractor in the National Highway, the biggest infrastructure project in Kosovo.

Gani Thaci, eldest brother to the

Prime Minister, meanwhile, has done well in a different field from that of his brothers.

He plays an important role in

overseeing the lucrative insurance industry as deputy director of the Kosovo Insurance Bureau, to which he was appointed in 2011 and from which he draws a monthly salary of 3,500 euro.

Last September, he received a bonus of 10,000 euro for helping to prevent insurance fraud. The Insurance Bureau has yet to explain what Thaci did to earn the hefty award.

Gani has a long history of benefiting from his brother's political connections.

According to a BBC story dating back from 2000, when police from the UN Mission in Kosovo, UNMIK, raided Gani Thaci's flat that year in a gun-related incident, they found \$250,000 there.

Gani told police that the money had come from a Canadian construction company, which in turn told the BBC that it had hired him to facilitate deals with businesses under the control of Hashim's provisional government, which took power after the war ended in 1999.

Kosovo and Serbia Edge Closer Over North

Kosovo and Serbia are expected to come closer to an understanding on Serbian-financed institutions in northern Kosovo in their talks in Brussels - but a think tank warns that the situation remains volatile.



By Prishtina Insight

After a meeting on Tuesday, the Kosovo Prime Minister, Hashim Thaci, and his Serbian counterpart, Ivica Dacic, are continuing talks on the Serb-run north of Kosovo with their mediator, the EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton.

Details of Tuesday's talks remain under wraps but both parties previously said they intended to address the question of the Serb-run northern part of Kosovo.

Kosovo wants Serbia to dismantle its so-called "parallel" structures in north, while Serbia wants to see broader autonomy offered for all Serb-populated areas in Kosovo first.

Since the end of the Kosovo conflict in the late 1990s, the region has been beyond

Kosovo's control while Serbia has continued to finance local security, judicial, health and educational institutions.

Kosovo describes the north as an "oasis of organized crime", accusing Serbia of obstructing the integration of the area.

The International Crisis Group, a think tank, said an agreed solution had yet to emerge and the situation remained volatile.

"The leaders of both states seem more ready than ever to compromise, but the northern Kosovo Serbs are staunchly opposed to integration, low-level violence is increasing, Kosovo nationalists are tense, and a spark could set off inter-communal fighting," it said.

"Belgrade and Prishtina should seize this chance to engage in a substantial discussion on the transformation of existing structures in the North and to offer a self-governing region that fits into Kosovo's jurisdiction", the ICG report published on Tuesday added.



Kosovo 'Not Dealing With War Crimes'



By Edona Peci

Kosovo society is struggling to come to terms with war crimes and systematic human rights abuses because of past grievances and denial, said a new UN report.

"The overwhelming majority of respondents from all communities in Kosovo do not consider that members of their community have committed war crimes," said the report published on Tuesday by the UN Development Programme, UNDP in Prishtina.

The report, based on a public opinion survey of 1,250 people from all Kosovo's ethnic groups, said that past grievances were obstructing progress.

Petrit Skenderi of UBO Consulting, the company that carried out the UNDP survey, told a press conference in Prishtina that "each side thinks that the criminals belong only, or in the majority, to the other side".

The UNDP report, 'Perceptions on Transitional Justice', outlines the current problems Kosovo is facing over reconciliation, missing persons, reparations and other key post-conflict issues.

Since the end of the conflict between the Kosovo Liberation Army and Serbian forces in 1999, more than 300 war crimes remain unsolved and 1,775 people are still missing.

The UNDP survey found that 63.2 per cent of those questioned believed that finding the truth about war crimes com-



The 1999 war still looms large in Kosovo.

mitted during the armed conflict in Kosovo was important for the reconciliation process.

"Increased efforts should be taken by judicial authorities to investigate all war crimes that occurred prior, during and after the 1998-1999 armed conflict in order to respond to the high expectations of respondents for criminal prosecution," the report said.

The report also called upon the authorities to consider establishing a special reparations fund for those whose lives were damaged by the conflict, including "non-recognised victims such as victims of sexual violence".

A large majority of people from all ethnic groups interviewed for the survey agreed that "civilian victims, regardless of their ethnicity, should receive material reparations for their suffering".

Besides financial reparations, over 30 per cent of the respondents said that "rehabilitation and socialisation programmes should be offered to the victims", while more than 20 per cent said there was a need for "public apologies from crime perpetrators".

Kosovo "needs to conduct a comprehensive process of dealing with the past and build reconciliation between the communities" to overcome barriers created by the past and forge a European future, the Netherlands's deputy ambassador Emma Key told the press conference.

The Prishtina government established a ministerial working group in June 2012 to prepare a national strategy for dealing with the past.

The UNDP survey's authors interviewed 850 ethnic Albanians, 200 ethnic Serbs and 200 people of other ethnicities.

EU-Funded Serb Municipal Buildings Hit Delays

Brussels wants to know why new local authority HQs in Gracanica and Klokot are months behind schedule.



By Ardian Lulaj

The European Commission is looking at why construction of municipal buildings it funded in two Serbian communities is months overdue amid a legal dispute between the contractor and sub-contractor.

"The case does not involve the EU office in Kosovo, but we are reviewing the case with our contractor to avoid further complications that would cause delays in the completion of the municipality buildings," the European Commission office in Kosovo said in a written statement.

Gracanica's new facilities were supposed to be ready in October, while those in Klokot should have been completed by June 1.

The municipalities of Gracanica and Klokot were established in 2010 as part of a decentralisation process aimed at

strengthening local governance in minority communities in Kosovo.

Officials in both communities told Prishtina Insight that the municipalities are now having to pay thousands of euro per month to rent office space.

"We pay 4,600 euro rent a month for two facilities," said Nada Brkljac, head of urban planning in Gracanica. "This is a big sum, so it's important for construction to finish and for the facility to be ready for work."

A 2010 European Commission project worth just under 7 million euro is funding construction of municipal buildings in Gracanica, Klokot and several other towns.

Sasa Sacic, representative of Zagorje Tehnobeton, the Croatian company which won the contract for the project, declined to comment to Prishtina Insight and directed inquiries to company headquarters in Zagreb.

The company did not respond to inquiries about the projects in Gracanica and Klokot. Zagorje Tehnobeton's lawyer



in Kosovo, Iljaz Ramajli, declined to comment.

Officials from both municipalities said the company was blaming the delays on problems with its subcontractors.

A Kosovo-based subcontractor, Euro-Ing, is suing Zagorje Tehnobeton, and two other Croatian firms, for 664,342 euro.

The company alleges that it completed construction work for which it was never paid, including work in Gracanica and Klokot. The case is currently before the Economic Court of the District of Prishtina.

Editor's Word

Politicians Aren't Above the Law

Last April, when Kosovo police came under fire for their rough treatment of Self-Determination protesters, the high-ranking MP from the Democratic Party of Kosovo, PDK, Adem Grabovci, came to their defense.

"If we don't respect the sacred uniform of our sacred police, on what basis do we ask someone to respect us?" asked Grabovci, who chairs the PDK's parliamentary group.

The Self-Determination party recently dredged up the quote following revelations that Grabovci's own sons had been arrested on February 14 on suspicion of attacking a police officer.

While Self-Determination's motives appear to be nothing more than embarrassing a political foe, the case of Grabovci's sons is indeed troubling.

The incident itself wasn't that special. A report from the state prosecutor's office said Guxim Grabovci was speeding near Fushe Kosove and failed to stop at a police checkpoint when a police car gave chase, eventually stopping the BMW at a gas station.

The report stated that because Guxim did not have his driving license on him, he called his brother, Ngadhenjim, to ask him to bring it. When Ngadhenjim arrived, the report added, he attacked an officer. Officers used pepper spray to subdue the pair and arrested them. One officer had to go to hospital for treatment of his injuries.

Up to this point, the story is an all too typical case of an assault on a police officer. But the subsequent chain of events is more troubling.

The Grabovci brothers were freed in a matter of hours. A state prosecutor assigned to the night shift, Merrushe Llugiqi, ordered their release, having downgraded the charges from felonies to misdemeanors, citing a lack of evidence. Footage from surveillance cameras at the gas station, which captured the incident, mysteriously disappeared during the night.

Llugiqi also reported that the officer who was attacked did not provide sufficient information in his statements to warrant more serious charges.

This treatment of a case involving an assault on a police officer is highly irregular. The law usually deals firmly when police are attacked.

Thanks to the reporting of the daily newspaper Zeri, the public learned about incident and the state prosecutor has re-opened the case and is pursuing felony charges.

Adem Grabovci cannot be held responsible for the poor behaviour of his adult sons. Asked about the case by a KTV reporter recently, he said the case was in the hands of the police and courts, and his sons were not above the law.

But the sequence of events still raises questions about whether family ties played a role in an attempt to whitewash the affair. The handling of the case is curious, at very least, and warrants deeper investigation.

It recalls another incident involving the Grabovci family. Last May, Grabovci's wife was shot at the family apartment. At the time, Grabovci said she accidentally shot herself in the abdomen when she tried to take a pistol from their young nephew - a keepsake from a former Kosovo Liberation Army soldier.

When police confiscated the weapon, it turned out the gun wasn't registered and was therefore illegal. However, prosecutors have not issued any indictments in the case.

Now, the two will have to contend with legal due process. And that's a good thing.

But the case raises another question: How many others have been swept under the rug?

Prishtina Insight

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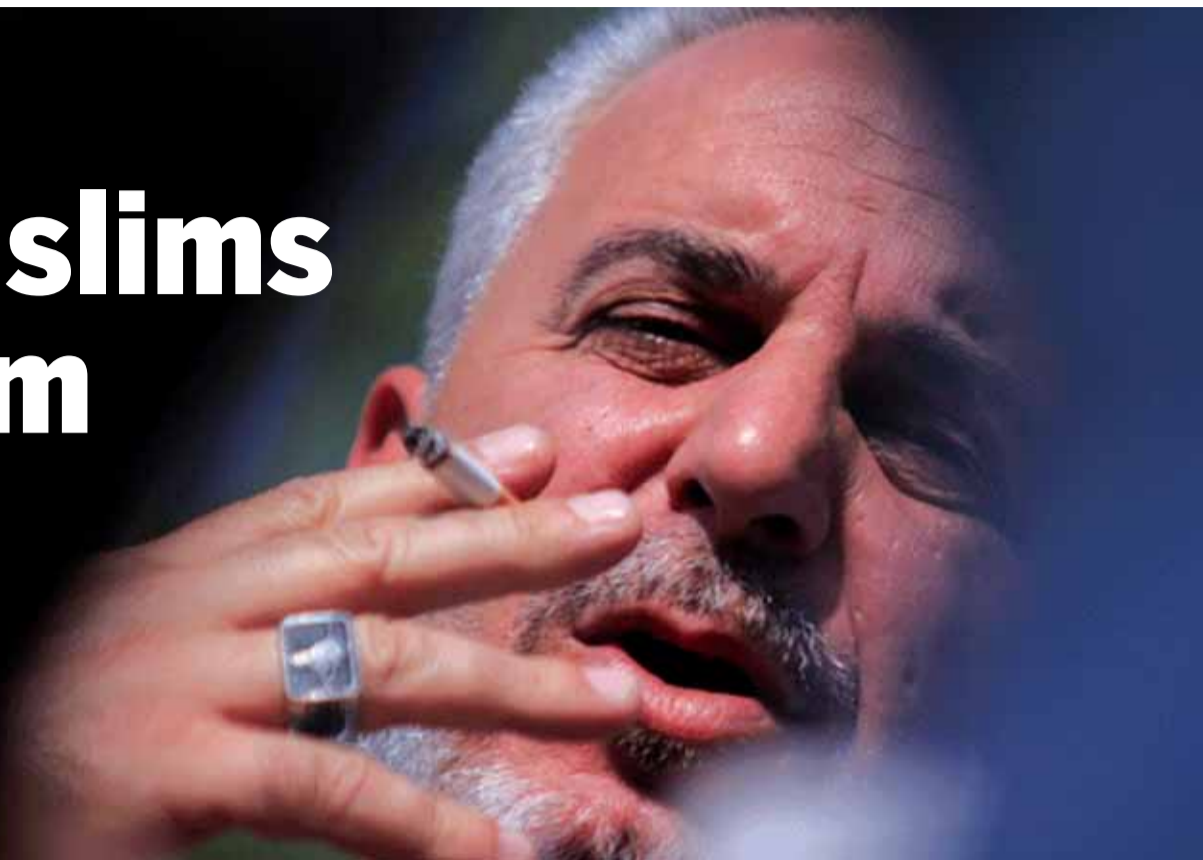
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Hardline Kosovo Muslims Aim to Form Party

A leader of Bashkohu says their party intends to change laws to 'protect Muslim interests' - and block the advance of gay rights by any means possible.



By Kaltrina Rexhepi

Wanting to "protect the rights of Muslims" in Kosovo, a hardline Islamic movement known for its street protests and links to the attack on the launch of Kosovo 2.0 magazine, is preparing to become a political party.

Bashkohu [Unite] applied on February 1 to register as party under the formal name the Islamic Movement to Unite. The Central Election Committee is considering the request, which would allow Bashkohu to participate in parliamentary elections.

"There is no 'if' about is being accepted in politics," said Fuad Ramiqi, the professional bowler who is one of Bashkohu's leaders.

"We will be accepted, and this is a done deal."

Bashkohu would be the first officially Muslim party in Kosovo, although the small Justice Party frequently aligns itself with conservative Islamic causes.

Ramiqi said that Bashkohu would provide Muslims with a voice that is currently absent for Muslims, and change unspecified laws.

"They should be improved for the sake of justice, truth and equality, and in favour of science," Ramiqi said. "When we enter parliament, you will see what we can build."

Bashkohu rose to prominence in 2011, when it organised a series of well-attended protests in Prishtina demanding the construction of a new mosque in the centre of Prishtina.

The movement champions a devout form of Islam, though some leaders of the Islamic Community have some condemned it and its supporters as extremists.

"There is no 'if' about is being accepted in politics. We will be accepted, and this is a done deal",

*Fuad Ramiqi,
professional bowler and
a Bashkohu leader.*

In December, Bashkohu took part in violent demonstrations against the launch of Kosovo 2.0, a magazine featuring stories about the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in Kosovo and the Balkans.

"We never will support the public promotion of ugly spectres," Ramiqi said. "We will never accept the promotion of homosexuals in public, whether we enter the Assembly or not."

The LGBT community "will not be allowed in society, even if international condition the prosperity of Kosovo in exchange for rights for homosexuals," Ramiqi added.

While Ramiqi talks of entering politics as a done deal, Kosovo's Ombudsperson, Sami Kurteshi, told Prishtina Insight that groups like Bashkohu are, in fact, uncon-

stitutional.

"All those groups, organizations and assemblies of people that publicly declare themselves against a specific group of people, and with concrete actions, threaten the rights of specific groups of people, are prohibited under the constitution," Kurteshi said.

Florian Qehaja, director of the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies, said that while Bashkohu's potential for influencing Kosovo politics is marginal, the organisation still poses a threat to the country's values.

"Every organization that tries to damage the constitutional provisions on secularity in Kosovo constitutes a direct intervention in the constitutional order of the country and so endangers national security," Qehaja said.



Bashkohu supporters at a protest in Prishtina.

Kosovo Clinic Boss 'Authorised Illegal Organ Transplants'

A handwriting expert told the high-profile Kosovo organ-trafficking trial that scientific analysis proved that a Prishtina clinic owner and his son had agreed illicit kidney operations.



By Edona Peci

Graphologist Milazim Tahirukaj testified on Tuesday that the majority of the documents authorising the operations were signed by Lufti Dervishi, the owner of the Medicus clinic near Prishtina where the illegal transplants are alleged to have taken place, or by his son Arban Dervishi.

Tahirukaj said that experts had

compared the signatures with the clinic owner's handwriting on a document sent to Kosovo's health ministry, and had found that they were "written by the same person".

The graphologist said that analysis of documents signed by Dervishi's son also proved they were genuine.

However Arban Dervishi's defence argued that the signatures had been copied by someone else.

The two men are charged with human trafficking, organised crime and unlawful medical activ-

ities at the Medicus clinic, along with five other Kosovo Albanians and two foreign nationals.

The indictment says that 30 illegal kidney transplants took place at the clinic in 2008.

Poor people from Turkey, Russia, Moldova and Kazakhstan were allegedly lured to the clinic with the false promise that they would receive up to 15,000 euro for their kidneys.

Lutfi Dervishi denies any wrongdoing, saying that he was not informed that illegal organ transplants had taken place at his clinic.



Former Medicus clinic in Prishtina.

Public Preschools a Dream for Many in Prishtina

While the city's nine early education centres can't accommodate the thousands of children who want to enroll, most private alternatives are pricier and unlicensed.



By Liridona Hyseni

The roughly 3,800 babies born in Prishtina in 2011 are reaching the age when their parents want to send them to preschool.

But they'll be lucky to find a spot in one of the city's nine public pre-schools, nurseries or kindergartens. Their total enrollment is a little under 1,800.

Besa Gashi, a doctor who lives in Prishtina, spent two years trying to enroll her daughter, now four, at the Fatostat preschool in her neighborhood, Ulpiana.

"They wouldn't enroll my daughter on the grounds that no

place was available," Gashi said.

Enrollment, at least officially, is on a first-come, first served basis. But Gashi said she suspects she would have had better luck had she "known someone."

Instead, she gave up, enrolling her daughter in a pricier private pre-school. Those can cost as much as 100 euro a month, compared to the 50 euro per month at a public preschool. Most private pre-schools also aren't licensed.

A father of another four-year-old confided to Prishtina Insight that he used a personal contact to enroll his child at Fatostat.

"To register my child, I knew someone, but I won't say whom," this parent said.

Fatostat's director, Kadime Kallaba, insists that personal connections don't affect admissions policy. The real issue, she said, is



Fatostat, like all public preschools in Prishtina, doesn't have room for most children seeking to attend.

limited space in the 292-pupil school.

"We continually get requests to

accept children, but we don't have the capacity to take any more," she said.

Expert studies suggest that early education plays a vital role in a child's future success.

A long-term study published in the US journal *Science* in 2011 examined the effects of pre-school on a group of children from the poorest neighborhoods of Chicago.

It found those who attended preschool were 24 per cent more likely to attend a four-year university, and 28 per cent less likely to develop drug or alcohol problems or wind up in jail than others.

The head of Education in the municipality of Prishtina, Halim Halimi, acknowledged that the city's public pre-schools don't have the space to meet demand.

But he said the Directorate is repairing two facilities to be used

"They wouldn't enroll my daughter on the grounds that no place was available,"

Besa Gashi, parent

as pre-schools in the Ajvalia and Mati neighborhoods. It is also expanding the existing Lulevera and Xixellonjat pre-schools. He said the projects were due for completion in 2013.

Meanwhile, 83 private pre-schools are registered in Prishtina, according to the Business Registration Agency. But most aren't licensed.

The Ministry of Education has only issued four since it began licensing preschools in 2011. Twenty other licenses are pending.



Children play at the Fatostat public preschool in Prishtina's Ulpiana neighborhood.

Photo News: Electricity Bill Protests Continue



Hundreds of citizens protested in front of Kosovo Energy Corporation headquarters in Prishtina on Thursday. It followed several similar protests against KEK since January. Protestors are complaining about higher power bills. (Photo by: Beta)



The Tregu market complex hasn't paid rent since it signed a contract with the municipality of Prishtina nearly eight years ago.

Prishtina Denies Market Owes 3 Million Euro

Tregu marketplace hasn't paid any rent in nearly eight years to the city, which claims it never rented out the land in the first place.



By Liridona Hyseni

The sizeable Tregu marketplace has yet to pay rent to the municipality of Prishtina, nearly eight years after signing a contract.

It ought to have paid the city nearly 3 million euro by now for the site in Prishtina's Industrial Zone as per a May 2005 agreement. Curiously, the municipality doesn't seem to have any interest in collecting the money it's owed.

According to a June 2012 report of the Auditor General, Prishtina has never recorded the unpaid debt on its balance sheets.

The municipality has also not recorded or made good on 650,000 euro that a court ordered it to pay to Amortizatori, a former socially owned enterprise that owns more than half the 11.1 hectares that Tregu now occupies.

The Privatisation Agency also

says the municipal contract with Tregu, itself a publicly owned business in the agency's custody, has prevented the full privatisation of Amortizatori.

Tregu's then director, Burim Krasniqi, inked the deal in 2005 with Sami Hamiti, then the chief executive of Prishtina, the de facto mayor during the UN administration of Kosovo.

Hamiti, now head of the municipal assembly, is currently fighting corruption charges in an unrelated case dating from 2012.

According to the 2005 agreement, Tregu obtained use of the land and the retail market for three years for 32,140 euro per month.

Tregu claims that 5,000 merchants use the complex to buy and sell wares on a daily basis.

But Tregu's current director, Hafiz Krasniqi, says the marketplace is in no position to pay rent.

"It's impossible to fulfill the agreement as the revenues of Tregu are small and cannot cover the amount that must be paid,"

Krasniqi said. "This was not a reasonable contract."

The municipality, meanwhile, denies that it ever signed a contract with Tregu or is owed any rent.

Municipal spokesman Asdren Osaj recently told Prishtina Insight that the city merely served as the guarantor for the agreement.

The contract obtained by Prishtina Insight, however, clearly names the municipality as the landlord in the rental agreement.

Meanwhile, the Privatization Agency is trying to sort of what to do about Tregu and Amortizatori, which it administers as former socially owned enterprises.

While Amortizatori has been partly privatised, the land that Tregu occupies remains in limbo.

Two parts of the Amortizatori Company were privatized in October 2010, including a factory occupying eight hectares, sold to the Devolli Group for 2 million euro.



The municipality of Prishtina claims it isn't owed 3 million euro in rent.

Prishtina Insight reported in October 2011 that the Privatization Agency had violated two requirements for the sale: to have more than one competitor and not to sell it to an enterprise under investigation, which Devolli was.

Meanwhile, Tregu is seeking to

become a municipal enterprise. "It's impossible for it to develop without the help of the municipality," director Krasniqi said.

Privatization Agency spokesman Ylli Kaloshi said negotiations are ongoing with the municipality to reach an agreement on the land that Tregu occupies.

Milk Scare Spreads to Kosovo and Albania



By BesarLikhmeta

Food safety authorities in Kosovo have ordered the removal from the market of milk produced by five dairies amid fears of contamination by M1.

Kosovo's Agency of Food and Veterinary, AUV, ordered the removal of milk produced by two Albanian, one Croatian and two Bosnian dairies after initial tests suggested possible contamination by the toxin.

"These products are being withdrawn in cooperation with the importing companies, awaiting the result of fresh analysis, which will determine if they can return for sale," AUV said.

Aflatoxins are produced by mould and can damage human and animal health if they enter the food chain in significant concentrations.

AUV ordered the removal of milk from Albanian producers Fast milk and Primalat, Croatia's Dukat, and two Bosnian dairies, Meggle and Zott.

Following the move by Kosovo, the Albanian Ministry of Agriculture announced that it would test milk produced by local dairies in order to determine if there was a higher than normal presence of aflatoxins.

"The National Food Authority, AKU, conducts periodical tests of milk that dairies produce in Albania and in the past the presence of aflatoxins has not turned up," the ministry said.

Based on information received

from other countries in the region, the ministry said milk produced by Dukat of Croatia had already been sent for testing.

Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro have already taken out of the market milk produced by Dukat and another Croatian dairy, Vindija, after analysis in Vienna showed that the amount of M1 in the milk was 0.006 per cent, slightly higher than the legally permitted limit of 0.005 per cent.

However, one Albanian producer, Primalat, panned the move in Kosovo and said that it routinely tested their milk, which was safe and met all necessary standards.

"We use the best technology and our milk is totally guaranteed," ViganDervishi, director of Primalat, told the broadcaster News 24.



Milk is being recalled across the Balkans. (Darko Vojinovic/Associated press)

According to Dervishi, the company was being unfairly targeted by Kosovo's authorities,

who he maintained were illegally protecting the interests of local producers.

Kosovo Ex-Fighters Face Third War Crimes Trial



By Edona Peci

The retrial of three ex-Kosovo Liberation Army commanders for jailing, torturing and killing Albanian civilians will begin next month, a Prishtina court has decided.

For the third time since the case first went before a court in 2003, former commander and ex-lawmaker from the Kosovo Democratic Party, Rrustem Mustafa, plus two other former senior fighters, will be tried for crimes against civilians during the Kosovo war of 1998-1999.

The retrial of the three men,

known as the 'Llapi Group', is set to start on March 25, a preparatory hearing in Prishtina confirmed on Tuesday, but the defence remains unhappy with the charges against them.

Mustafa and his co-defendants Latif Gashi (known as Lata) and Nazif Mehmeti (known as Nazi) all held command positions within the KLA during the conflict with Serbian forces.

According to the indictment, from August 1998 until April 1999, they detained, tortured, abused and killed Kosovo Albanian civilians at detention centres in the villages of Bajgora, Llapashtica, MajacPotok and Koliq in eastern Kosovo near Podujeve.

To escape the torture, the



Three ex-KLA commanders will go on trial next month.

indictment says, the detainees had to show loyalty towards the KLA by killing a Serb.

In September last year, the EU rule of law mission prosecution changed the indictment by removing Bajgora and Koliq from the charges, but the defence argued on Tuesday that some of the other counts should also be

thrown out because previous trials had already rejected them.

The Llapi Group case was first investigated in 2001 and 2002 by the UN mission in Kosovo.

In 2005, after a two-year trial which concluded with guilty verdicts for the defendants, Kosovo's supreme court ordered a retrial because the allegations had not

been proved "beyond all doubt".

In 2009, the three former KLA commanders were again found guilty of war crimes and jailed for the torture and inhumane treatment of detention camp prisoners.

They appealed against the verdicts and in 2011, the supreme court ordered a partial retrial.

EU Urges Action on Kosovo Missing Persons



By Edona Peci

The EU's representative in Kosovo, Samuel Zbogar, said the issue of the 1,762 people missing since the late 1990s war with Serbian forces was an "emotional bomb".

"I understand it's an emotional bomb and there's emotional energy behind this issue," said Zbogar during a visit to the Kosovo city of Gjakova last week, where he met members of the Missing Persons Association.

"This is an issue that has to remain open - it has to remain on the table until it is closed," he said.

Since the end of the late 1990s war, the International Committee of the Red Cross has been arranging contacts between Kosovo and Serbia on the issue, but progress has remained slow.

However Kosovo and Serbia's prime ministers agreed during EU-sponsored talks in December last year to intensify cooperation between their respective commissions for missing persons.

"I hope normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, which we hope to achieve in this [EU-backed Prishtina-Belgrade] dialogue, will help to solve this issue as well," Zbogar said.

But he also suggested that "it is probably best to leave it to the humanitarian field and not to make it too political".

Some of the families of the missing have expressed frustration that the Kosovo government has not stepped up its efforts to solve the problem, as it has promised.

"You're always waiting for



1,762 people are still missing from the Kosovo war. (Photo/Matthijs Gall)

something, but you never know what you're waiting for," Myrvete Hoti-Kosumi, sister of Ukshin Hoti, a politician who went missing during the conflict, told BIRN.

She said that "hope has faded away that something will be done with regard to the missing".

Pristina and Belgrade's missing persons commissions met twice during 2012, but the timeline for the future meetings remains unclear.

"More pressure has to be put on Belgrade," argued Prenk Gjetaj, chief of Kosovo's missing persons commission.

Gjetaj said that in the meantime, the commission would continue to gather information about possible mass graves before excavations become possible again in the spring.

"I understand it's an emotional bomb and there's emotional energy behind this issue,"

Samuel Zbogar

But of the 36 locations where excavations were planned during 2012, only 19 were carried out, partly because of security concerns.

"There are some problems with regard to some locations in the northern part of Kosovo. [The EU rule of law mission] EULEX says the lack of security is the main reasons excavations cannot take place there, but the conditions could be met if [NATO's force in Kosovo] KFOR deals with that," Gjetaj said.

Kosovo Prolongs Ex-Fighter Limaj's Detention



By Edona Peci

Prishtina court has ordered another two months of pre-trial detention for ex-Kosovo Liberation Army commander turned politician Fatmir Limaj, who is accused of war crimes.

Ex-KLA commander Limaj, a lawmaker with Kosovo's ruling Democratic Party, will remain in detention until April 24, an EU rule of law mission, EULEX judge ruled last Friday.

Limaj is one of ten suspects in the high-profile 'Klecka' war crimes case, accused of abusing prisoners at a detention camp during the late 1990s conflict in Kosovo.

Tome Gashi, Limaj's defense lawyer, said he has appealed against the decision to extend his client's detention.

"There is no legal reason [for it], but it is obvious that political reasons are having an impact on this issue," Gashi told Prishtina Insight.

Limaj has claimed that the case has been prolonged to prevent him from returning to active politics and so that EULEX can publicly demonstrate that it is doing its job in Kosovo.

He was acquitted of the charges in May last year but the prosecution successfully appealed against the verdict and the case has since been sent for a retrial.

According to the indictment, Limaj and the other co-defendants, also former KLA fighters, "violated the bodily integrity and health of an unspecified number of Serb and Albanian civilians and Serb prisoners of war held in a detention centre in the village of Klecka".

Prisoners were held in "inhumane conditions, which included keeping prisoners chained, cold and hungry, in unsanitary conditions, with frequent beatings", the indictment said.

In a previous trial at the Hague Tribunal in 2005, Limaj was acquitted of war crimes against Serbs and Albanians suspected of collaborating with Serbia during the Kosovo war and returned home to a hero's welcome.



Fatmir Limaj will stay in custody until his trial begins in April.

Belgrade Aims to Restore US Flight Link

After America's FAA completed its initial inspection of Serbia's aviation, Serbia hopes the US will allow Belgrade to launch direct flights by year's end.



By Prishtina Insight

After the US Federal Aviation Administration, FAA, carried out the first stage of its inspection of Serbian aviation on February 17th, it will decide whether Belgrade meets the requirements to obtain certification for direct flights to the US.

Milutin Popovic, the transportation ministry's advisor on aviation, said the main audit will probably be carried out in April.

"After that we can obtain FAA's Category One, which would allow us to establish direct flights to the US and other countries by the end of the year," Popovic told news agency Tanjug.

Serbia lost its certification to fly to the US in 2004, due to poor organisation of aviation governance and regulations and discrepancies between Serbian and US civil aviation standards and procedures.

Director of the Civil Aviation Directorate, Milan Zivanovic, told Tanjug that the directorate had harmonised rules with international rule-books and standards since losing Category One status in 2004.

Zivanovic explained that if Serbia



Flights between Belgrade and the US are one step close to resuming.

obtained FAA's Category One, domestic airlines could open direct flights to the US with the possibility that other airlines would also use Belgrade Airport for direct flights to the States.

As Serbia's national carrier, JAT, does not currently plan to offer transatlantic flights, the company is unlikely to be able to start flights to the US within the next two years.

Until the 1990s Belgrade offered direct flights to Chicago and New York once a week. The last were in 1992, on the eve of the break-up of Yugoslavia.

US Deputy Ambassador in Belgrade, Lee Litzenger, told Tanjug that the US wants closer and stronger ties to Serbia. "Air transport is one area in which we want to support Serbia," Litzenger said.

Romania Plans To Reopen Disused Mines

Following growing expressions of interest in its mineral reserves, Romania plans to reopen some of the mines it shut earlier.



By Marian Chiriac

Romania's centre-left government is planning to draft a law to allow coal and non-ferrous-metal mines to reopen, according to officials.

"We will draft a law to allow some mines to resume operations. They need new technology and private funds, and the legislation aims to speed up the mine-licensing process," the Economy Minister, Varujan Vosganian, said.

Vosganian added that the decision reflected increased interest among foreign investors in Romania's coal and uranium reserves.

A controversial plan by the Canadian company Rosia Montana Gold Corporation, RMGC, to use cyanide in an open-cast gold mine in central Transylvania to extract 10.6 million ounces of gold over a decade is not covered by the draft law, the minister added.

RMGC obtained a licence to exploit the gold reserves more than ten years ago but is still trying to obtain all the required environmental and archaeological permits. The company insists that it will use the latest environmentally-friendly technology and says it will preserve local heritage.

According to Euracoal, Romania's known hard coal resources are estimated at 650 million tonnes, of which 252.5 million tonnes are commercially exploitable.

There are still around a dozen coal mines in operation. In 2011, Romania's coal production was of 35.49 million tonnes, around 0.16 per cent of the world total.

In 1997, Romania launched a pro-

gramme with World Bank funds to close unprofitable mines. Since then, around 550 mines were suspended or shut.

Till now, restructuring the mining sector has proven difficult for Bucharest given the lack of foreign investment and official unwillingness to take harsh measures that might have made mines profitable, out of fear of industrial action.



Romania may reopen some coal and other mines.

News in brief

Jobless Rise Adds to Croatia's Economic Gloom

Jobless rate reaches new high of 21.9 per cent, the highest in a decade - and that's not the only bad news about the Croatian economy.

The total number of unemployed persons in Croatia has reached 372,000, according to the latest official data, published last week. In January alone, another 13,800 people lost their jobs.

Since the beginning of the economic crisis in 2008, Croatia has lost more than 150,000 working places.

A recent poll conducted by the local Gfk institute showed that 76 per cent of Croatian families do not believe they have enough money to meet basic everyday costs.

The average income of a four-member family in Croatia is now about 1,000 euro a month, almost half of which is needed to cover routine living costs.

New Malls Lure Belgrade's Big Spenders

Within two years, Belgrade is due to get four new major retail centres, significantly boosting the range of temptations on offer.

A new shopping centre called "Stadium" ("Stadium") will open in the Vozdovac municipality in March. The third facility of its kind in Europe, the 74,600-square-metre centre comes with a football stadium on the roof and four levels.

The ground floor will host a hypermarket, banks, bakeries, pharmacies and cosmetics shops, while the first and second floors will feature fashion outlets, shops for children and electronics shops. The 5,000-seat stadium will be on the third floor.

Stadium will also have a food court with a balcony, a multiplex cinema and a fitness centre.

In the next couple of years Belgraders can expect other retail centres to open in the Palilula municipality, at Autokomanda and in Zemun.

Macedonia Boosts Checks As Milk Fears Spread

Macedonia's food safety agency is boosting checks on dairy products in the light of fears of contamination by the cancer-causing toxin M1.

Macedonia said it was conducting more tests as the scandal about milk contaminated with M1 in Croatia and Serbia was causing widespread concern.

"Macedonian milk is healthy and does not have toxins in it," the head of the Macedonian Food Safety Bureau, Dejan Runteovski, said.

"We conduct regular monitoring in all dairies in the country and that proves that our domestic milk is healthy," Runteovski told the media.

The bureau has not ordered the withdrawal from stores of Serbian milk that Serbia has already black-listed.

Serbia Signs 'Major Investment Deals' with Emirates

Belgrade said the United Arab Emirates has agreed a series of deals worth several hundred million euro to help revive Serbia's tattered economy.

Deputy prime minister Aleksandar Vucic said that his second official visit to the energy-rich Arab state had yielded several major agreements for investment in Serbia.

"In four years' time, the investment will come to 220 million dollars," Vucic said on Sunday after signing three deals with Emirates foreign minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed.

Vucic said that an Emirates company, Mubadala, could also put "about four billion dollars into Serbia in the future", including investments in the missile industry, agro-business and the building of a modern hotel on the site of former military headquarters in Belgrade that were bombed by NATO in 1999.

"This is a great day for relations between our two states, and what is even more important than this ceremony is that in the next several months, citizens of the UAE and Serbia will see how serious our governments are in establishing these ties between our two countries, of which we can be proud," bin Zayed said.

Gender-Bending Model in Bowie Video

Andrej Pejic, the new face of the world of gender ambiguity in fashion, is starring in a new video by rock legend David Bowie.



Andrej Pejic, the cover model.



By Prishtina Insight

Andrej Pejic has joined the circle of models starring in top music videos, featuring in the mini-movie for David Bowie's latest single, Stars (Are Out Tonight).

Pejic plays the girl part in a manic celebrity couple who have moved next door to a suburban husband and wife, played by Tilda Swinton and Bowie.

Pejic and his boyfriend in the video, played by another gender-bending model, Saskia de Brauw, are intent on trashing Bowie and Swinton's outwardly perfect life.

One night, they break into Bowie's and Swinton's place

with Pejic clambering atop of Bowie for a kiss as he sleeps.

In the end, everyone except Bowie starts swapping gender and personality.

Pejic was born in Tuzla, northern Bosnia, in 1991. Because of the war raging in former Yugoslavia, his family fled to Serbia, settling in a refugee camp near Belgrade. They emigrated to Australia in 2000 when Andrej was eight.

Discovered in his late teens and noted for his androgynous looks, his pictures have been published in French Vogue, Dossier Journal and other fashion magazines.

And while Serbia has a reputation as one of Europe's more sexually intolerant societies, the country's top fashion magazine, ELLE, put Pejic on its front cover this January.

Montenegro and Bosnia 'Close to Border Deal'

The Bosnian prime minister said there was only one disputed piece of territory to be demarcated before the ex-Yugoslav states sign a crucial border agreement.



By Milena Milosevic

Vjekoslav Bevanda and Milo Djukanovic, the prime ministers of Bosnia and Montenegro, said a deal was close after they met last Tuesday in Podgorica.

"There is only one undefined border point, which I expect to be solved soon in order for the two countries to sign the border agreement," Bevanda said.

Neither official specified where the disputed land was located on the 240-kilometre-long border between the two countries.

Podgorica usually receives praise from the EU for fostering good neighbourly relations, but the most recent European Commission progress

report on the country, published in October last year, noted that Montenegro's border demarcation process with Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia had yet to be completed.

In June 2012, Montenegrin President Filip Vujanovic stated that the border deal with Bosnia was being finalised and would be the first agreement of its kind between the two former Yugoslav republics.

The large part of Tuesday's meeting was devoted to the economy, the improvement of infrastructure connecting the two countries and to the possibilities of advancing their European integration.

Alluding to Bosnia's stalled advance towards the EU, Djukanovic said that Montenegro offered a good example for overcoming such delays.

"As we can see, Montenegro today is not lagging behind and it managed to compensate for a delay of 10, 15 years," he said.

Serbs in Croatia's Vukovar 'Increasingly Insecure'

Serbs in the Croatian city are growing fearful amid threats of force to stop the official introduction of Cyrillic script and the Serbian language, a Belgrade official said.



By Boris Pavelic

Serbs in Vukovar are feeling "growing insecurity", the director of Serbia's office for the diaspora, Slavka Draskovic, said during a visit to Zagreb on Tuesday.

Draskovic, who is to meet government officials and Serb minority representatives in the country amid growing tensions over the introduction of Cyrillic, said that "Croatia should react more vigorously to hate speech in Vukovar".

Croatia should send "a clear message whenever ethnically-motivated problems occur", she said.

Her comments came on the day that Croatian war veterans vowed to prevent the planned official introduction of Cyrillic road signs and the Serbian language to Vukovar "by any means necessary".

The president of the veterans' campaign group, the Headquarters for the Defence of Croatian Vukovar, also warned on Wednesday that resistance could include the use of force.

"We will find 2,000 volunteers ready to prevent Cyrillic in Vukovar by force," vowed the group's leader, Tomislav Josic, in comments published by Croatian newspapers, although he said he was "not willing to fight" himself.



Tensions are on the rise in Vukovar, Croatia.

Public controversy erupted two months ago after the government announced that it planned to introduce official use of Serbian and Cyrillic into about 20 Croatian municipalities where Serbs make up more than a third of the population, including Vukovar.

Its introduction in Vukovar is particularly controversial because the city became a symbol of Croatian resistance after it was devastated by Serb forces in a siege during the 1991-95 conflict.

Milorad Pupovac, a Croatian lawmaker and the president of the Serbian national council in the country, said after meeting Draskovic that "no security measures would be needed in Vukovar" to install Cyrillic signs.

"The process will be gradual. The government will do its job, and we will do ours," Pupovac said.

Veterans groups' have also warned the government not to use using police to help ensure the installation of the controversial road signs.

Pupovac said that the introduction of Cyrillic should be introduced with "respect to all who regard respect as necessary, but at the same time not to worsen inter-ethnic relations in Vukovar nor let anybody misuse the situation politically".

The plan to introduce street signs with dual Latin and Cyrillic script sparked a 20,000-strong protest earlier this month in the city.

Croatia's law on minority rights says that a minority has the right to the official use of its script and language in areas where it makes up more than the third of the population.

According to the 2011 census, 34.87 per cent of the population of Vukovar are ethnic Serbs.

Islamism and Bosniak Nationalism May Unite, Report

New International Crisis Group reports says the danger is growing of a politicised Islamic Community harnessing frustrated Bosniak nationalism for its own purposes.



By Prishtina Insight

The latest briefing from the International Crisis Group, a think tank, entitled "Bosnia's Dangerous Tango: Islam and Nationalism", warns of the danger of a fusion between Bosniak nationalism and Islam.

"Political Islam is a novelty in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), and its rise is seen as threatening to secular parties and non-Muslims," the report issued on Tuesday said.

According to the report, in spite of growing concerns about terrorism, the plethora of non-traditional Salafi and other Islamist groups that have appeared on the margins of society remain small.

"Virtually every act of violence inspired by Islamism has come from places where Islamic institutions – džemat (congregation), mosque, madrasa and family – are weak or absent, and many perpetrators have a troubled past," says Marko Prelec, the ICG Balkans Project Director.

But he added that there was a lot of anger and frustration among Bosniaks, and leading figures in the Islamic establishment have sought to harness this feeling to advance their own political aims.

The Islamic Community in Bosnia has grown from a religious organisation into an important political actor that has helped shape Bosniak identity, the report notes.

According to the report, Mustafa Cerić, the former head of the Islamic Community of Bosnia who is now



A new report warns of the dangers of Islamism in Bosnia.

president of the World Bosniak Congress, advocated a vision of Bosnia as a Bosniak nation-state, arguing that Croats and Serbs already have their own countries.

That vision appeals to many Bosniaks, including some who are thoroughly secular, but it repels most Croats and Serbs, the document adds.

"If this becomes the dominant Bosniak view, it is hard to see how it could be reconciled with the viewpoints of Bosnia's other communities; persistent conflict and instability would then be likely," the report concludes.

The International Crisis Group has called on Bosnia's Islamic Community to foster a view of the state as a shared enterprise in which all groups feel equally at home.

Serbia's Organised Crime Fight 'Struggling Under Caseload'

The special prosecution for organised crime is buckling under the number of cases it is leading, while also facing political pressures.



By Gordana Andric

Legal experts in Serbia are questioning whether the prosecutor's understaffed and politically vulnerable organised crime office is up to dealing with its heavy caseload.

The office is currently investigating and leading trials against more than 200 individuals, including such high profile cases as suspected drug lord Darko Saric and oligarch Miroslav Miskovic.

The department is running almost all sensitive investigations into organised crime and corruption, including one into Prime Minister Ivica Dacic's links with Rodoljub Radulovic, a suspected high-ranking member of the Saric gang.

Experts query the prosecution's capacity to deal efficiently with such a large number of complex cases.

The department, formed in 2002 by late Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic, initially probed the so-called Zemun clan, whose members were later convicted of Djindjic's own assassination in 2003.

In January 2012, meanwhile, a new criminal code introduced a new model of criminal investigation into organised crime, giving the prosecution the lead role in gathering evidence.

Prior to that a special court for organised crime conducted investigations.

Some believe the office is now struggling to handle all its assigned cases, in spite of upping staff levels from 13 in 2005 to about 60.

The department's chief prosecutor, Miljko Radisavljevic, and 16 deputy prosecutors, are obliged both to run investigations and present cases in front of the court in the name of the prosecution. Last year the office was investigating and prosecuting 220 people.

The European Commission progress report on Serbia, published last October, notes that the office launched investigations into 115 corruption cases in 2011 alone.

"But, in the great majority of such cases, the sanctions

remained lenient," the report observed.

Zorica Zecevic, a member of the office, says that all prosecutors are in charge of several cases, while being involved in other investigations at the same time.

"Each deputy prosecutor is in charge of two to four cases and not all cases are at the same stage, as some are in front of the court, while others are in the investigation stage," she explained.

"When it comes to investigations, the deputy is the head of the investigation, but several others work with him. The number of prosecutors involved in one case depends on each case and its complexity," Zecevic added.

Dragana Boljevic, president of the Judges' Association of Serbia, admits the prosecution is struggling with its workload.

"The police are currently investigating 24 privatisation deals that the EU has highlighted as problematic," she recalled.

"If the prosecution for organised crime has to prosecute all these cases, they won't be able to cope," Boljevic added.

Zecevic also says the office remains understaffed, although, as she put it, "We have grown significantly since 2005, and now have 60 people working at the office".

The prosecution is not the only body dealing with organised crime that has a capacity problem.

The special court for organised crime has similar problems. Each judge presides over about five hearings a month and is a member of the trial chamber in several other cases.

"This number of cases per judge is the maximum [we can handle] at the moment," a source at the court said.

"Owing to the complexity of the cases, it is not possible to finish a trial in the course of one year," the same source told BIRN.

Subtle political pressure:

Analysts point to a separate problem facing the prosecution office. The sensitivity of cases run by this department, on top of judicial reforms that have affected it, have left the prosecution vulnerable to political pressures.

"The judiciary, including the prosecution, is under pressure



Chief prosecutor Miljko Radisavljevic is handling a heavy caseload. (Photos by: Beta)

from politics and higher judicial authorities," Boljevic said.

"Politicians influence judicial processes much more than any tycoon," she explained. "I can't remember a colleague complaining of a businessman trying to interfere in the work."

Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic, who is in overall charge of investigations into 24 privatisation deals that the EU has raised concerns about, ordered several high profile arrests in the last six months.

They included the arrests of Miroslav Miskovic and two former ministers, Sasa Dragin, who was in charge of agriculture, and Oliver Dulic, who ran spatial planning and the environment.

Following the arrests, Vucic stated that he expected the first convictions by the end of the year.

Some experts have interpreted Vucic's statement as a form of ultimatum to the judiciary.

"It's a form of pressure. A politician should not talk about what he expects from a court," BIRN's source from the court for organised crime said.

"Only interested parties can give comments like this, which means the prosecution and the defence.

"If a politician states something like this, it makes him an interested party, which is not good for the independence of the court process."

Both Boljevic and the source from the court say reforms launched in 2009 have left the judiciary open to pressure.

"Our judiciary was left significantly weakened by the reforms," the BIRN source said.

The reform of the corpus of judges and prosecutors in Serbia began when the State Prosecutorial Council, SPC, and the High Judicial Council, HJC, were tasked with examining the

entire quota of prosecutors and judges. Two years later, hundreds lost their jobs.

Domestic and foreign experts complained of political influence on the work of the SPC and the HJC and on the decisions to appoint or sack prosecutors and judges.

In 2012 the Serbian Constitutional Court said that the SPC and HJC had demonstrated serious shortcomings in their work and had not appointed prosecutors and judges under transparent criteria based on worth, professional qualifications and demonstrated competence.

The court ruled that all the axed prosecutors and judges should be reinstated. The judiciary is now awaiting a fresh reform.

Boljevic said the changes have left the judiciary, and especially the prosecution, in a state of anxiety, and that this element of fear could undermine their ability to work independently.

"As we wait to see what will happen with the reform, everyone is worried about their jobs," she said.

"It's an issue of self-censorship. You read in newspapers about a case and you see that someone influential is very interested in that case," she explained.

"No one actually has to pressure them; the fact that they see that someone cares very much about some investigation puts pressure on prosecutors. It's not an issue of bad intentions, just fear," Boljevic added.

BIRN's source from the court for organised crime also points to an issue of self-censorship.

"The pressure goes through the media. Imagine the judge who is in charge of a case that has been covered a lot in the media, which writes that the defendant is guilty.

"However, it's different in court and with the evidence presented there. If valid evidence is not presented to prove guilt, imagine the judge who feels a need to acquit that person," the source said.

Boljevic said that even the cases that the prosecution for organised crime is handling now show how vulnerable they are.

"All the cases they are working on now are cases that the prosecutor for organised crime already had, but hadn't proceeded with, until the government changed [in July 2012]," she said.

"It's good that they are acting now, but the fact that they have waited for politicians to point out which cases should be launched shows that they work under political influence," she concluded.



The Office of the Special Prosecutor Crime was investigating and prosecuting 220 people last year.



The Special Court struggles to process all cases under its jurisdiction.

Albania Struggles to Protect its Vandalized Heritage

While authorities promise action following the shocking destruction of an ancient fresco by blundering thieves, activists and experts remain skeptical of their pledges.



By Ben Andoni

Following public uproar after the destruction of paintings by Albanian medieval master Onufri, the Albanian Institute of Monuments has unveiled a plan to install 88 new security cameras in dozens of churches to protect them from looters.

The head of the Institute, Apollon Bace, says the Ministry of Culture might also consider recomposing the old system of guardians who used to patrol and protect heritage sites in remote areas, if more funds were allocated.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Culture, Aldo Bumci, has declared that his institution is reviewing a number of options to buff up security at heritage sites following the disaster with the Onufri fresco.

"After the latest incident, we are discussing a number of possibilities, like adding security guards and cameras and other security systems," Bumci said.

"However, the financial cost of these systems is large and money has to be allocated for a long list of monuments," he added.

The destruction of the fresco is unfortunately not a singular incident in Albania.

Archeologists and activists alike say Albanian heritage sites are regularly targeted by looters, who in the past two decades have wrought terrific damage to the country's historical patrimony.

They remain doubtful that a problem that has been going for so

long can be resolved with few more security cameras.

Without creating new, well-funded administrative structures, they maintain, the tragic loss of the fresco is doomed to be repeated.

Theft of antiques became rampant in Albania in the 1990s, as the country struggled through a period of anarchy and lawlessness following the collapse of the authoritarian Communist regime.

Onufri's fresco was wrecked after thieves armed with axes and knives twice scalped through the painting in the church in the remote village of Valsh in late December and early January.

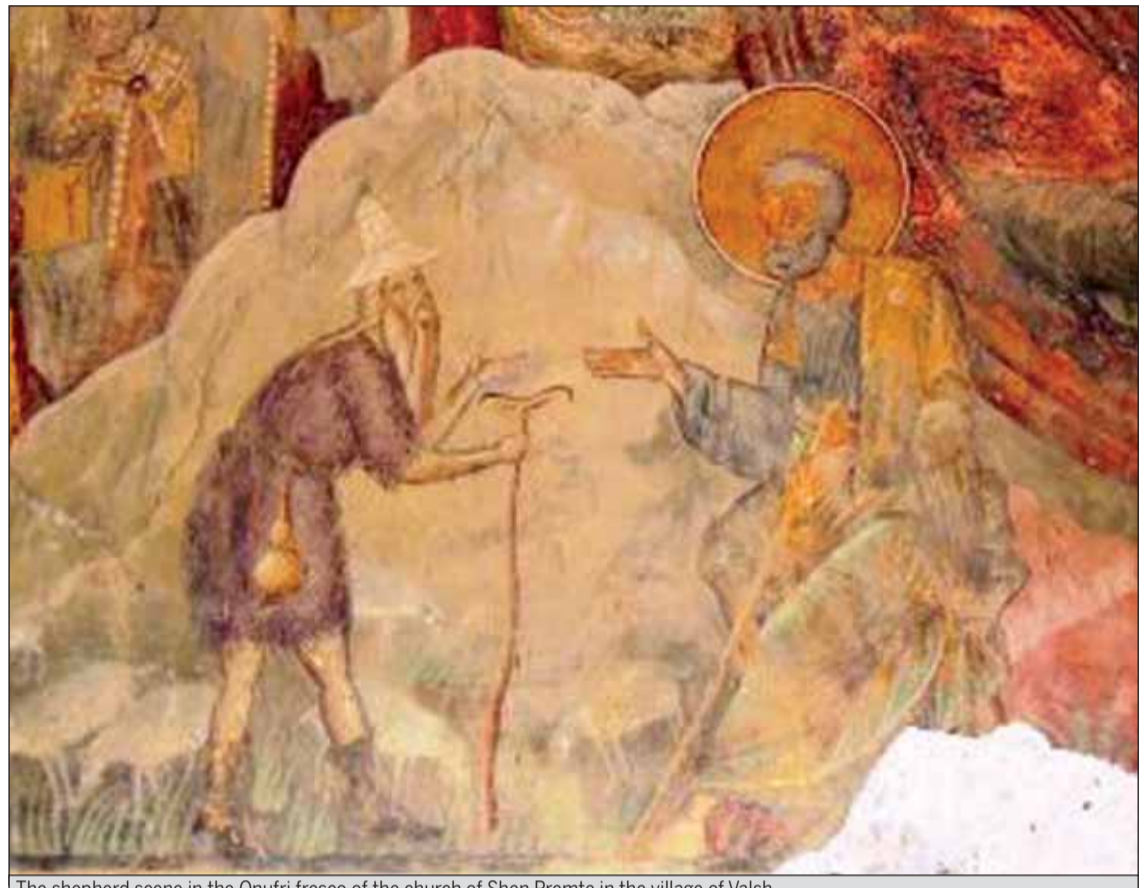
The looters tried to cut through the plaster in the 16th-century chapel, to remove the aureoles of the saints, but managed only to destroy them.

Widely considered Albania's greatest icon painter, Onufri is renowned for his colours and style, which introduced greater realism and individuality into facial expressions, breaking with the strict conventions of Byzantine art.

"Onufri is for Albania what Michelangelo is for Italy; just imagine if someone attacked the Sistine Chapel with a scalpel - what would happen?" Auron Tare, an activist with the Forum for Protection of Cultural Heritage, asked.

The Forum panned the Ministry of Culture after the destruction of the fresco, accusing it of trying to sweep the incident under the rug.

The Ministry responded that despite its best efforts it could not protect all of Albania's monuments, particularly those located in remote areas like the village of



The shepherd scene in the Onufri fresco of the church of Shen Premte in the village of Valsh

Valsh.

Mustafa Arapi, one of Albania's most renowned restorers, says that because such sad incidents have happened so often in Albania, he almost has given up hope that the country is capable of protecting its heritage sites.

"The government has always underestimated cultural heritage in Albania and the ministry is now seen as more of an instrument to promote tourism," he complained.

Lorenc Bejko, professor of Archeology at the University of Tirana and former head of the Institute of Monuments, says the proposed security cameras project is a step in the right direction.

However, a combination of solutions is necessary to protect monuments from looters, he added.

"The cameras could help protect them, but any decision to install them should be taken only after a detailed study of each monument or group of monuments," Bejko



A statue of Onufri.

said.

According to Bejko, the way a monument is protected should depend on a series of geographical, regional and social factors.

"In one place you might have the local community responsible for protecting a monument, and in others the church or a non-governmental organization could protect it," he suggested.

Bejko says that since the collapse of Communism, the social and political changes that have occurred have forced the Ministry of Culture and its agencies to take a more proactive stance in protecting monuments and heritage sites.

"We should strengthen educational and promotional activities over cultural heritage and punish those responsible for damaging our treasures without exceptions," he said.

"What's needed is cooperation between local and central actors in the country; coordination and control of local circumstances that are ever-changing," Bejko added.

Arapi, the restorer of many of Albania's religious icons agrees, warning that in today's complicated world of Balkan politics, heritage sites risk being damaged not only by looters but also by extremists.

"We need new structures that protect monuments and investigate crimes against them, possibly special police units," he said.

"Although [extreme] groups don't yet target our patrimony, with the rise of extreme right-wing groups on all sides, that could well happen one day," he concluded.

"Onufri is for Albania what Michelangelo is for Italy; just imagine if someone attacked the Sistine Chapel with a scalpel - what would happen?" Auron Tare, an activist with the Forum for Protection of Cultural Heritage, asked.



Shen Premte Church in Valsh.



Musa Berisha, ex-mayor of Decan



Rasim Selmanaj, Decan mayor



Teki Bokshi, lawyer of Apiko and Iliria



Imer Jusaj, Apiko ex-director

Serb Monastery Dispute Raises Tensions in Kosovo

A bitter land dispute between an iconic Serbian Orthodox monastery and two Kosovo companies has sparked protests and threatened to damage fragile ethnic relations.



By Edona Peci

Surrounded by high walls, the Visoki Decani monastery stands on a wide green field a few kilometres away from the town centre of Decan in western Kosovo, but visitors who used to come here to see its extensive array of ancient Serbian Orthodox frescoes now find the doors firmly locked.

The Serb holy site became the focus for protests after a controversial ruling by the supreme court in Prishtina last December which declared that some 23 hectares of land belonged to the monastery, not to two Kosovo companies which have been claiming it since the 1999 conflict between Kosovo Liberation Army fighters and Serbian government forces.

The monastery is one of the best-known Serb heritage sites in Kosovo, established in 1327 and housing the grave of its founder, King Stefan Uros 'Decanski', although it now sits in solidly ethnic Albanian-populated territory. It has been on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 2004.

The supreme court's decision has damaged relations between the monastery and the local community, said Rasim Selmanaj, head of the Decan municipality.

"I'm very interested in having good relations and common projects with the monastery, but its insistence in taking this land is turning relations [back to zero]," Selmanaj told Prishtina Insight.

Three mass protests have been staged so far; the most recent, a month ago, attracted some 2,000 Albanian demonstrators.

"We won't stop protesting peacefully. We can't accept the discriminatory verdict," Adem Lushaj, the head of the campaign group which organised the protests, told Prishtina Insight.

"It is not about the territory. The economy and tourism is

blocked by the verdict and we won't allow this," Lushaj said.

Protesters at the gates

Tensions rose again at the beginning of this month when some 20 demonstrators were stopped by NATO peacekeeping forces as they tried to approach the monastery gates.

Lushaj insisted that his group wasn't involved in this protest, which led the monastery to close its doors to visitors for the first time in 13 years since the end of the Kosovo war, citing security concerns.

The Kosovo authorities and international missions in Prishtina urged all sides involved to respect the rule of law.

But Father Sava Janjic, the archdeacon of Visoki Decani, told Prishtina Insight at the time that it was part of a campaign to drive the clergy from the monastery and make the last ethnic Serbs leave the area.

"This is a huge embarrassment for Kosovo, and I am sorry the representatives of the Kosovo government are not more active in resolving this issue," Janjic said.

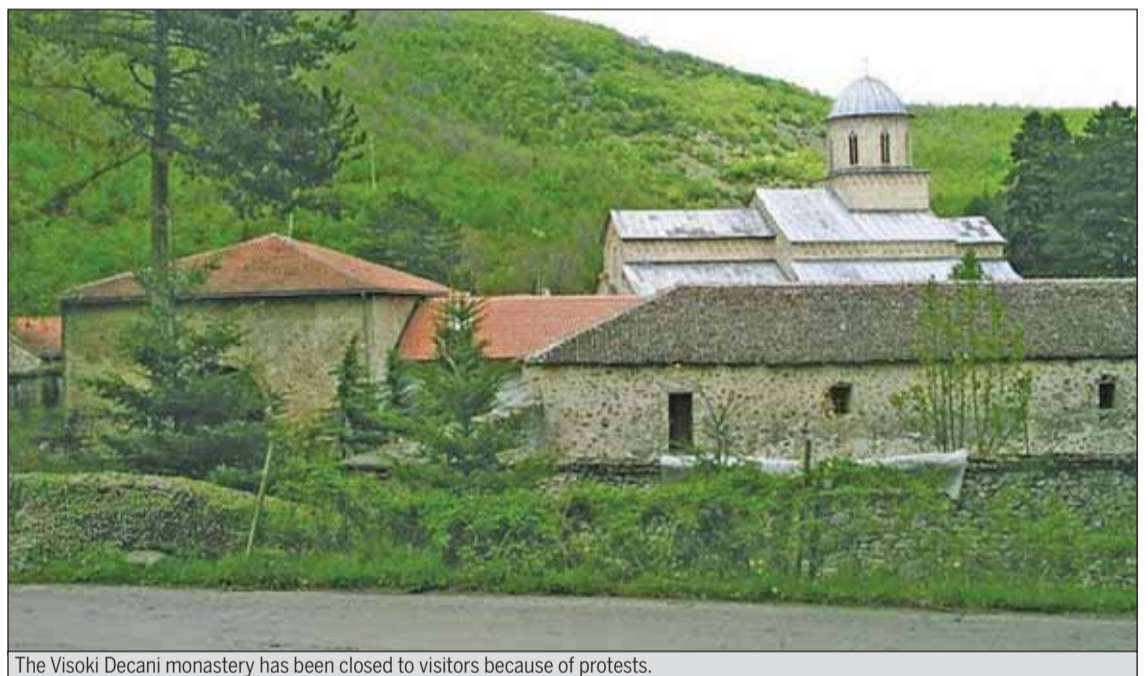
He recalled that the monastery had been attacked four times since the late 1990s war, once by rocket fire.

"We cannot allow the monastery to be endangered again," he warned. "This is an attempt to evict the last remaining Serbs [from Decan]."

Since the war, Belgrade has repeatedly claimed that its heritage and monuments are under threat in Kosovo, which is seen as the cradle of Serbian Orthodox religion and home to many of its most important monasteries.

An illegal donation?

The two socially-owned Kosovo companies, Apiko and Iliria, have been claiming the land since 2000, saying that its donation to the monastery by the Serbian authori-



The Visoki Decani monastery has been closed to visitors because of protests.

ties in 1997 was unlawful because it happened at a time when Belgrade was actively repressing Kosovo Albanians.

But in December 2012, Kosovo's supreme court rejected their claims.

The two companies appealed in January, alleging that the verdict was "anti-constitutional".

"The decision was taken forcibly and it is politically motivated," said their lawyer, Teki Bokshi.

Bokshi argued that the UN mission in Kosovo, UNMIK, had failed to represent the companies' interests at the supreme court and vowed to take the case to Kosovo's constitutional court.

UNMIK made no comment on the issue.

Imer Jusaj, who ran Apiko's honey factory from 1984 until 1991, when he said he was thrown out of his office by Serbian security forces, vowed to "pursue justice until the end".

"I believe in justice, but this is no justice," Jusaj said in his office in Decan where he showed Prishtina Insight some documents which, he claimed, proved that nine hectares of the disputed land belonged to Apiko.

He said that it had been a highly profitable factory in the former Yugoslavia but had now been

demolished because of the land dispute and rebuilt elsewhere in the town.

But if it was to regain its former success and provide more much-needed employment for locals, "the municipality should have insisted on restoring the old factory where it was", he argued.

Allegations of international pressure

The current leadership of Decan and former heads of the municipality have raised concerns about alleged international political pressure to keep the land in the Serbian church's hands.

"For as long as I was mayor, [a lot of] ambassadors and international representatives came and met me, insisting the land has to be transferred to the monastery," said Musa Berisha, who led the municipality in 2008 and 2009.

The current mayor of Decan, Rasim Selmanaj, argued meanwhile that "the insistence of foreign embassies that the verdict has to be respected shows this is a political problem".

"If we want to find a solution, I am ready to talk to [Father] Sava [Janjic], the international community and the people who lead Kosovo institutions. But there can-

not be a unilateral solution. The way it's being attempted to impose a solution is unacceptable and unrealisable for us," Selmanaj said.

A source within the local authorities told Prishtina Insight that the municipality had a proposal to resolve the dispute, which involved giving some of the land where the honey factory used to be situated to the monastery in return for other nearby land which could be used for tourism purposes.

But the row shows no signs of easing, and Father Janjic has accused the local authorities of stirring up ethnic hatred and "running a media and political campaign" to overturn the supreme court's decision and prevent the normalisation of relations between Belgrade and Prishtina.

Some local Albanian politicians meanwhile remain convinced that the monastery is involved in an illegal Serb land grab.

"There were efforts [by the Serbs] to create a Serbian enclave around the monastery," claimed former mayor Berisha.

And as the dispute goes on, protesters say they'll be back on the town's streets in the first week of March.

New Probe Starts into Macedonia President's Death

A fresh inquiry into the 2004 plane crash that killed Boris Trajkovski will seek to question the French air traffic controllers then at Mostar airport.



By Sase Dimovski

As Macedonia on Tuesday marked nine years since the death of President Boris Trajkovski, the head of a Bosnian commission leading a new inquiry into the disaster has confirmed that they have started re-examining evidence.

Omer Kulic told Prishtina Insight that five expert teams from different countries will be working on different aspects of the crash – some examining the state of the plane and its instruments while others look into the weather conditions and other factors.

The aim is to conclusively determine what went wrong on February 26, 2004 when a plane crash near Mostar, southwest Bosnia, killed the Macedonian President.

Trajkovski died on his way to an international conference in Bosnia in a government plane that crashed at Matic Brdo, amid thick fog and clouds. Eight others died.

A previous investigation by a joint Bosnian-Macedonian team concluded that the crash was an accident, blaming mistakes made by the crew during landing amid the worsening weather.

That probe established that the crew deviated from normal landing procedures agreed with Mostar air traffic control.

The results did not dampen speculation into the causes of Trajkovski's death.

Some said the long time spent finding the wreckage was suspicious as searchers took 24 hours to reach the plane.

Others blamed Mostar control tower, which was then run by the French military. Others claimed that the President's rivals in Macedonia arranged his death.

The plane's two pilots, Marko Markovski and Branko Ivanovski, also died in the crash.

So did Dimka Ilkova-Boskovic, Risto Blazevski and Anita Krishan Lozanovska from the President's cabinet, Mile Krstevski from the Foreign Ministry, and Boris Velinov and Ace Bozinovski, from the security services.

Trajkovski became President of Macedonia in 1999 and was head of state during the armed conflict with ethnic Albanian rebels in 2001. He defended the internationally brokered 2001 Ohrid Accord, which ended the conflict by granting greater rights to the Albanians.

Flight controllers face grilling:

Kulic says the new probe will want to hear from the two French air traffic controllers who were the last to make contact with the plane and "who were on duty at the airport in Mostar in 2004 and began the landing procedure of the Macedonian plane".

The controllers were part of SFOR a NATO-led peacekeeping force deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina following the 1992-5 war.

Kulic, whose commission works in Bosnia's Ministry of Transport, said they would also seek to hear from others who were involved, or in a relevant position, at the time of the crash.

Any inconsistencies uncovered in the previous investigation will be passed to the Bosnian State Prosecution, which may then

decide to launch a criminal investigation.

Prishtina Insight has obtained the previous statements of the French flight controllers, Pascal Faidide and Alain Lourdel, from March 12, 2004, given to Public Prosecutor Mexhida Kreso in Bosnia, before they left the country.

They said they lost track of the plane minutes after agreeing on the landing procedure with the pilots via a radio link.

The air traffic controllers explained that they took over the plane from Zagreb air traffic control and, after establishing regular communication, began landing procedures at Mostar.

"There are three landing procedures at the airport in Mostar. I proposed one to the pilot, which he accepted. I expected him to start the landing procedure and tell me: 'The procedure has been established' and to continue the communication once the wheels were down," Lourdel testified in 2004.

"The pilot reported a problem with the radio navigation VOR/DME device. Such a device is located near the runway through which the plane receives signals. The functioning of this system is necessary to complete the landing procedure," he added.

The controller said the final altitude approved to the pilot to begin landing was 6,400 feet, and the plane was eight nautical miles up when they discussed the problems with the radio device.

"Mostar Airport has no radar... but in France there are also many airports without radar, so there is a procedure for landing in such circumstances," Lourdel testified.

"The pilot's concerns about the radio device were short lived and after only ten seconds he said: 'All



Trajkovski was head of state during the 2001 Macedonian armed conflict.



Trajkovski's wife, Vilma. (Photo by: Sase Dimovski)

clear'.... then I requested he turn on the landing lights. From that moment I had no response."

After the pilots did not respond for ten minutes, Lourdel said they activated the so-called reflex list, which specifies all the institutions to be notified in the event of a crash.

His assistant, Faidide said: "When we did not get a response, I informed all institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the air traffic control in Zagreb that we had lost contact."

The two controllers said that during a regular checkup of the instruments at Mostar that morning at 6.30am, the VOR device was working properly.

The new investigation, according to sources in it that talked to Prishtina Insight, will focus on exploring whether the landing instruments were, in fact, functioning.

The Macedonian government under Nikola Gruevski asked Bosnia and Herzegovina to reopen the investigation last year.

The Macedonian Police Minister, Gordana Jankulovska, said they wanted to reopen the matter after uncovering fresh leads in a report that the government commissioned three years ago.

The Skopje government passed the report to the Macedonian State Prosecutor as well as the Bosnian Civil Aviation Directorate, requesting a new investigation.

Trajkovski's recently deceased twin brother, Aleksandar, fuelled speculation about his death by

suggesting the President might have been assassinated. But he never named anybody.

Conspiracy theories:

Andreas Gross, a Swiss member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and a personal friend, has also said he suspected foul play.

Ignat Pancevski, lawyer to the family of one of the victims who died with Trajkovski, said he possessed a satellite video recording that shows a war plane shooting down Trajkovski's aircraft. He said the same video showed soldiers burning the crash site.

Last year, he said the Macedonian prosecution had refused to accept his evidence, and he recently said he had contacted the Bosnian authorities about it.

Confirmation of the new investigation coincides with the ninth anniversary of the plane crash.

On February 26, Trajkovski's wife, Vilma, his family, and officials laid flowers at Trajkovski's grave, at the Butel cemetery near Skopje. Flowers were also laid at the graves of the other eight victims.

Vilma Trajkovska told Prishtina Insight she did not want to comment in detail on the new investigation but expressed "trust in state institutions conducting the investigation".

She said that she believed "that the two states will complete the investigation". Trajkovska said she could still not find the courage to visit the scene of the plane crash near Mostar.



Honour guards at Trajkovski's grave. (Photo by: Sase Dimovski)

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Kosovo Serbs Bring Southern Flavour to Belgrade

Refugees are bringing the flavours of their old home to the Serbian capital.



By Idro Seferi

“When it comes to food, Serbs and Albanians from Kosovo have things in common,” says Petar Vasic. “They like to eat with their hands and they like chilli,” he adds.

He works in a small family restaurant in Visnjicka 18, named Stari most - The Old Bridge.

This traditional restaurant started up 10 years ago, then in the Karaburma neighbourhood.

His family is from Peja, or Pec as Serbs know it. After the war in 1999 they were among the many Serbs who left Kosovo.

On coming to Belgrade, they decided to continue their traditional cooking, as they had owned a restaurant in their old hometown under the same name.

“At first, we mostly had people from Kosovo coming here, but later Serbs from here came as well, once they’d heard about us,” Petar explains.

“They are curious to try our sudzuk (sausages) because they do not know much about them and you don’t find them in other restaurants.”

Stari most is a distinctly traditional place, with seats covered in leather and lots of wood decor in the interior.

The menu is different from most eateries, combining ordinary Serbian specialities with Kosovo specialities.

There are always cevapi, a grilled dish of minced meat, Kosovo sausages, and qofte or minced meat.

All the food it is served with somun, homemade bread, which is served hot and baked fresh in the restaurant. Every table has a small dish with minced chilli peppers used for seasoning.

Kosovo sausages, the restaurant explains, are different from most others because they are made with beef.

After mixing the minced meat with onions and a bit of chilli pepper, the meat it is put in bowels and lightly smoked.

“You need to grill it well,” Bojan, one of the chefs and owners, says.

“We make it here for our guests. All our food is made here in the restaurant and we work as a family,” he explains.

“Our meat balls are made with pork, but are different and smaller than normal pljeskavica, or Serbian burgers,” Petar Vasic adds.

He says their cevapi are easier to eat, too, because they are not so fatty and are softer, as the meat is pure and they don’t use pork. “We can call this a place for Kosovo food,” Petar continues.

Like many people from the Balkans, who make similar food but with different recipes, people from Kosovo are proud of their grilled dishes.

“We have this food in common and are used to it,” says Becko, a Serb from Prishtina, who owns a little bar and pizza place near the Vuk monument named Nivo, close to the city centre.

“We do pizza with Shar cheese from Kosovo and our guests love it more and more,” he said.

“We make pizza with sausages, too. This is something that I and my family love to eat,” he added.



Kosovo-style suxhuk is served with cevapici at a Kosovo Serb restaurant in Belgrade.

“We can’t go without this food and chilli peppers, even in the morning.”

Many Kosovo Albanians in Serbia used to work in bakeries, and Serbs often think that many Albanians in Belgrade still work with bread products, though few such places remain now.

Most of the owners left Serbia as a result of the conflict in Kosovo and closed their stores. Some were victims of violence because of the tensions, and several stores in Serbia were attacked.

A few remain. Domaci hleb, - Homemade bread - in Kalenic piaca, the green market in the Vracar neighbourhood, is one

such kiosk in a side street that does a good trade.

Costumers wait every day in queues to buy their bread and other products here.

Their burek, a form of pie, is similar to the Sarajevski burek, made in the form of longer sticks and they also don’t use pork. The dough of the pie is less oily than usual.

“I don’t have any problems here and many people buy my bread and other products because we don’t use additives and we offer top quality,” the owner said.

Some owners of grills, bakeries and sweetshops don’t want to talk about their food because they don’t want to be identified with Kosovo because of the continuing problems between Serbs and Albanians.

“Even us Serbs, because we are from Kosovo, people sometimes call us siptari (a pejorative term for Kosovo Albanians),” Becko, the bar owner in Vuk monument area, shouted out.

“But I don’t really care, we are all the same and some things cannot be changed,” he concluded.

Slovenia’s Alpine Pearl Wraps up Winter Season

The last winter tourists are still enjoying the natural beauty, architectural heritage, sports facilities and cultural charms of one of the oldest Slovenian tourist resorts, Lake Bled.



By Nemanja Cabric

Visitors to Lake Bled often return home amazed by the picturesque landscape of the snow-covered foothills of the Julian Alps, the tranquil atmosphere, fresh air and excellent cuisine.

The glacial lake in north-west Slovenia is surrounded by idyllic mountains and forests, is rich in cultural monuments and sporting venues and offers a range of events from sports competitions and art exhibitions to boat trips and hiking trails.

This part of Slovenia owes its refreshing climate to the closeness of the Alps. Its abundance of sunny days and thermal waters make Lake Bled one of the most relaxing places in the region, perfect for those who want to recharge their batteries while enjoying its natural splendours.

The magnificent 11th century castle and small romantic island in the middle of the lake, dominated by a church, contribute to the fairytale atmosphere.

The castle, presented by German Emperor Henrik II as a gift to Bishop Albuin of Brixen in 1004, is now open to visitors as an exhibition space which displays objects dating back through Bled’s ancient history.

The display also examines the changing structure of the castle itself. In the late Middle Ages more towers were built and the fortifications were improved, while further buildings were added during

the Baroque period when the architectural development of the castle complex was completed.

Some of the castle’s rooms showcase different epochs from its past, with furniture and other details from those periods on display.

Visitors can also take a look at the castle’s cellar, herbal gallery and restaurant.

Although its charms are at their most alluring in summer, when archery tournaments are held along with concerts of classical music under the night sky, it can still be a unique experience in winter time.

Perched on a rock high atop the lake, the castle’s great view makes it a great starting place for getting to the wider Gorenjska region, as well as the Julian Alps.

Slovenian winter dream:

After a lively carnival that filled the tourist resort in mid-February, there are still plenty of activities awaiting visitors to Lake Bled. Besides sports and cultural events, these include walks along beautiful hiking paths to caves and waterfalls, and boat rides to the small island in the middle of the lake.

Visitors that come here in the last days of winter will have the chance to see a unique swimming tournament; a sport that is really popular in Slovenia.

After a successful swimming World Cup was held here three years ago, regular competitions have been established during the winter.

Special guests this winter will be Martin Strel, a Slovenian long-distance swimmer best known for

swimming the entire length of various rivers including the Amazon, and Haydn Welch from Britain, who has twice successfully traversed the English Channel.

The two men plan to swim an ‘ice mile’ at Lake Bled - a swim in open water with a temperature of less than 5 degrees Celsius, for which no wet suits are allowed.

Near Bled winter sports fanatics can also watch a sledging competition called Eurosank at the Sports Centre TriglavPokljuka in RudnoPolje on February 24.

There are several places nearby to satisfy ski lovers, such as the gentle Straza slope that is equipped with artificial snow and lights for night skiing, as well as a cross-country skiing paradise called Pokljuka that offers over 60 kilometres of trails.

Miles of hiking paths, both easy and more demanding, wind around the frozen lake all the way to the heart of the Triglav National Park.

Tourists who come for an active holiday can also enjoy inline skating and curling at the Ice Hall or alternatively spoil themselves at indoor swimming pools with thermal water, saunas, massages, baths and fitness studios.

Cultural dessert:

One of Bled’s most wonderful cultural monuments is the old Church of the Assumption, located on the island in the lake.

Legend suggests that where the Baroque church now stands there was once a temple dedicated to the ancient Slavic goddess Ziva, which was destroyed during clashes between pagans and Christians. Archaeologists have also discov-



The lake in north-west Slovenia is surrounded by idyllic mountains and forests.

ered evidence of prehistoric (11th to 8th century B.C.) and Slavic (9th to 10th century) settlements there.

The first three-apsed Romanesque basilica was built there in 1142. In the 15th century it was rebuilt in the Gothic style, only to be heavily damaged in an earthquake and reconstructed in Baroque style. The Church of the Assumption’s current architecture dates from the 17th century.

One of the ways to get there is by the traditional Bled boat called ‘Pletna’. The pleasant trip around the lake includes a stop on the island.

After taking in the island’s attractions, visitors can also enjoy numerous exhibitions taking place at Bled’s hotels and galleries all year round.

At the Vila Nana Gallery there is a permanent ‘Exhibition of Worlds’, consisting of works by the most famous Slovenian and Croatian exponents of Naive Art: Jozetisnikar, JosipGeneralic, StjepanVecenaj and others. The gallery’s collection also includes works by modern Slovenian

painters.

Paintings, graphics, photography, sculptures and other various artworks by respected Slovene and foreign artists can be seen at Gallery 14. Permanent exhibitions are also held at Bled hotels Golf, Krim, Ribno, Jelovica and Kompas.

After refreshing their bodies and minds, visitors can fill up the rest of their leisure time by taking a coach ride around the lake or dining at Bled’s fine restaurants and tasting the cream cakes which have become a symbol of this part of Slovenia.

The recipe for this delicious treat took IstvanLukacevic, the former manager of one of the area’s hotels, many years of testing and tasting to perfect. However his efforts paid off, because over the past 40 years more than 7 million of these cakes have been sold.

Their crispy crust dusted with sugar might be the only white powder remaining in Bled when the spring finally comes and melts the snow.

How Mom's Death Changed My Thinking About End-of-Life Care

My father, sister and I sat in the near-empty Chinese restaurant, picking at our plates, unable to avoid the question that we'd gathered to discuss: When was it time to let Mom die?



By Charles Ornstein

It had been a grueling day at the hospital, watching — praying — for any sign that my mother would emerge from her coma. Three days earlier she'd been admitted for nausea; she had a nasty cough and was having trouble keeping food down. But while a nurse tried to insert a nasogastric tube, her heart stopped. She required CPR for nine minutes. Even before I flew into town, a ventilator was breathing for her, and intravenous medication was keeping her blood pressure steady. Hour after hour, my father, my sister and I tried talking to her, playing her favorite songs, encouraging her to squeeze our hands or open her eyes.

Doctors couldn't tell us exactly what had gone wrong, but the prognosis was grim, and they suggested that we consider removing her from the breathing machine. And so, that January evening, we drove to a nearby restaurant in suburban Detroit for an inevitable family meeting.

My father and sister looked to me for my thoughts. In our family, after all, I'm the go-to guy for all things medical. I've been a health-care reporter for 15 years: at the Dallas Morning News, the Los Angeles Times and now ProPublica. And since I have a relatively good grasp on America's complex health-care system, I was the one to help my parents sign up for their Medicare drug plans, research new diagnoses and question doctors about their recommended treatments.

In this situation, like so many before, I was expected to have some answers. Yet none of my years of reporting had prepared me for this moment, this decision. In fact, I began to question some of my assumptions about the health-care system.

I've long observed, and sometimes chronicled, the nasty policy battles surrounding end-of-life care. And like many health journalists, I rolled my eyes when I heard the phrase "death panels" used to describe a 2009 congressional proposal that would have allowed Medicare to reimburse physicians who provided counseling to patients about living wills and advance directives. The frenzy, whipped up by conservative politicians and talk show hosts, forced the authors of the Affordable Care Act to strip out that provision before the bill became law.

Politics aside, I've always thought that the high cost of end-of-life care is an issue worthy of discussion. About a quarter of Medicare payments are spent in the last year of life, according to recent estimates. And the degree

of care provided to patients in that last year — how many doctors they see, the number of intensive-care hospitalizations — varies dramatically across states and even within states, according to the authoritative Dartmouth Atlas.

Studies show that this care is often futile. It doesn't always prolong lives, and it doesn't always reflect what patients want.

In an article I wrote for the Los Angeles Times in 2005, I quoted a doctor saying: "There's always one more treatment, there's always one more, 'Why don't we try that?' ... But we have to realize what the goals of that patient are, which is not to be in an intensive-care unit attached to tubes with no chance of really recovering."

That made a lot of sense at the time. But did it apply to my mom?

We knew her end-of-life wishes: She had told my dad that she didn't want to be artificially kept alive if she had no real chance of a meaningful recovery. But what was a real chance? What was a meaningful recovery? How did we know if the doctors and nurses were right? In all my reporting, I'd never realized how little the costs to the broader health-care system matter to the family of a patient. When that patient was my mother, what mattered was that we had to live with whatever decision we made. And we wouldn't get a chance to make it twice.

As my mom lay in the ICU, there was no question that her brain function was worrisome. In the hours after she was revived, she had convulsions, known as myoclonus, which can happen if the brain lacks oxygen. After that, she lay still. When the neurologist pricked her with a safety pin, she didn't respond. When he touched her corneas, they didn't reflexively move.

I began checking the medical literature, much like I do as a reporter. I didn't find anything encouraging. Studies show that after 72 hours in a coma caused by a lack of oxygen, a patient's odds of recovery are slim to none. I asked my writing partner in New York to do additional research. She, too, found nothing that would offer much hope.

But couldn't my mom beat the odds? Harriet Ornstein was a feisty woman. At age 70, she had overcome adversity many times before. In 2002, weeks before my wedding, she was mugged in a parking lot and knocked to the pavement with a broken nose. But she was there to walk me down the aisle — black eyes covered by makeup. She had Parkinson's disease for a decade, and in 2010 she suffered a closed head injury when a car backed into her as she walked down a handicapped ramp at the drugstore. Mom persevered, continuing rehabilitation and working to lead as normal a life as possible. Might she

not fight through this as well?

Truth be told, I was already somewhat skeptical about physician predictions. Just last summer, my dad's heart stopped, and it took more than 10 minutes of CPR to revive him. Doctors and nurses said a full neurological recovery was unlikely. They asked about his end-of-life choices. Mom and I stayed up late talking about life without him and discussing the logistics of his funeral. But despite it all, he rebounded. He was home within weeks, back to his old self. I came away appreciative of the power of modern medicine but questioning why everyone had been so confident that he would die.

Also weighing on me was another story I wrote for the Los Angeles Times, about a patient who had wrongly been declared brain-dead by two doctors. The patient's family was being urged to discontinue life support and allow an organ-donation team to come in. But a nursing supervisor's examination found that the 47-year-old man displayed a strong gag-and-cough reflex and slightly moved his head, all inconsistent with brain death. A neurosurgeon confirmed her findings.

No one was suggesting that my mom was brain-dead, but the medical assessments offered no hint of encouragement. What if they were off-base, too?

Over dinner at the Chinese restaurant, we made a pact: We wouldn't rush to a decision. We would seek an additional medical opinion. But if the tests looked bad — I would ask to read the actual clinical reports — we would discontinue aggressive care.

A neurologist recommended by a family acquaintance came in the next morning. After conducting a thorough exam, this doctor wasn't optimistic, either, but she said two additional tests could be done if we still had doubts.

If more tests could be done, my dad reasoned, we should do them. My sister and I agreed.

On Friday morning, the final test came back. It was bad news. In a sterile hospital conference room, a neurologist laid out our options: We could move my mom to the hospice unit and have breathing and feeding tubes inserted. Or we could disconnect the ventilator.

We decided it was time to honor my mom's wishes. We cried as nurses unhooked her that afternoon. The hospital staff said it was unlikely that she would breathe on her own, but she did for several hours. She died peacefully, on her own terms, late that night — my dad, my sister and I by her side.

I don't think anyone can ever feel comfortable about such a decision, and being a health



Photo by: Jose Collao

reporter compounded my doubts.

I was fairly confident that we did what my mom would have wanted. But a week later, when I was back in New York and had some emotional distance, I wondered how our thinking and behavior squared with what I'd written as a reporter. Did we waste resources while trying to decide what to do for those two extra days? If every family did what we did, two days multiplied by thousands of patients would add up to millions of dollars.

Curious how experts would view it, I called Elliott S. Fisher. I've long respected Fisher, a professor of medicine at Dartmouth and a leader of the Dartmouth Atlas. The Atlas was the first to identify McAllen, Texas, subject of a memorable 2009 piece in the New Yorker by Atul Gawande, for its seemingly out-of-control Medicare spending.

I asked Fisher: Did he consider what my family did a waste of money?

No, he said. And he wouldn't have found fault with us if we decided to keep my mom on a ventilator for another week or two, although he said my description of her neurological exams and test results sounded pessimistic.

"You never need to rush the decision-making," he told me. "It should always be about making the right decision for the patient and the family. ... We have plenty of money in the U.S. health-care system to make sure that we're supporting families in coming to a decision that they can all feel good about. I feel very strongly

about that."

Plenty of money? How did this mesh with his view that too much money is spent on care at the end of life? He said his concern is more about situations in which end-of-life wishes aren't known and cases where doctors push treatments for terminal illnesses that are clearly futile and that may prolong suffering.

"I don't think the best care possible always means keeping people alive or always doing the most aggressive cancer chemotherapy," he said, "when the evidence would say there is virtually no chance for this particular agent to make a difference for this patient."

I left the conversation agreeing with Fisher's reasoning but believing that it's much harder in practice than it is in theory. You can know somebody's wishes and still be confused about the appropriate thing to do.

The past few weeks have been the most difficult of my life. I hope what I learned will make me a better, more compassionate journalist. Most of all, I will always remember that behind the debate about costs and end-of-life care, there are real families struggling with real decisions.

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Here is Prishtina Insight's guide to the best places in town to eat, drink, shop and be merry. We'll keep this section updated with the newest and coolest places opening in Kosovo.

Restaurants:

Liburnia 1 and 2

Rr Meto Bajraktar, tel. +381 (0)38 222 719. There are actually two Liburnias opposite each other, both very similar in style and food. Housed in a fine Ottoman abode and surrounded by pleasant walled gardens, Liburnia oozes atmosphere, whether in winter or summer. The food is a roll call of decent traditional Albanian food, including the usual stews (tave) and grilled meat. It's not the best place in town to sample local delicacies, but a good choice given the setting. Open 8 am - 11 pm

Country House

Off road to Podujevo from Pristina, right after the Muciqi Mercedes-Benz garage, tel. +377 (0)44 656 054. This rustic restaurant is a 15-minute drive outside Pristina (on a good day) and provides glorious views across rolling, verdant hills and is especially pleasant place in the summer to watch the sunset. The overall food quality is decent, with special marks for the fresh bread, straight from the wood stove, and specia me maze (peppers in cream). 10 am - 11 pm.

Princesha Gresa

23 Rr. Fehmi Agani, tel. +381 (0) 38 24 58 41. If you have a horse-size hole in your stomach to fill, this is the place to come. The meal starts with some free bread and dips and is followed by gargantuan portions of salad, meat, fish, or anything else on this varied menu. The food is sometimes great, sometimes average but always served in massive portions. Open 10 am - 11 pm.

Hemingway

Rr Ilaz Kodra, tel. +386 (0)49 145 637. Yes, you can get fresh sea fish in landlocked Kosovo. Hemingway is tucked away in an unappealing end of the city but worth a trip if you are craving food of the piscine variety. It's a pretty basic sort of set-up and relatively expensive for the setting, but undoubtedly one of the best places in town for fish. Open 9 am - 11 pm

Le Siam Thai

Rr Fehmi Agani, tel. +377 (0)45 243 588.

Stylishly designed and smoke-free, Le Siam has become a real hit for the international community of Kosovo. If you are acquainted with Thai food, you're not in for any surprises here, with the typical assortment of curries, salads and deep fried treats, delivered to decent standards. At 7 or 8 euro for a main course, it's relatively pricey compared to its neighbours. Open Monday-Thursday 11:00-14:00 and 17:45-22:30; Friday-Sunday 11:00-23:00.

Renaissance II

Rr George Bush (behind the Pro Credit Bank HQ), tel. +377 (0)44 118 796. Renaissance offers arguably the best overall dining experience in Prishtina. It's quite an experience just to find the place. Tucked away along a tiny alleyway, you enter the homely, stone building through heavy wooden doors. It's 15 euro per head, and for that you will be kept fed, watered and supplied with booze for at least a three course meal, including a wonderful meze starter and a delicious main course cooked on embers. Open 11 am - 11 pm.

Bars:

Crème de la Crème

Rr Robert Doll, tel. +377(0)44259912. Crème is probably the best all-round bar in the city. It's run for the amusement of the young, arty owners and not for profit, which explains the more-than-generous pricing arrangements, especially for the perfectly executed cocktails. Its five tiny floors heave on Fridays and Sundays with Pristina's cool to the variety of beats. Every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 8pm to 3am.

Filikaqa

Rr Mujo Ulqinaku BL 4/1, Pejton, website www.filikaqa.com; 038 244 288. Whistle, as it translates from Albanian, offers a dizzying array of televisions on which to watch your sport of choice and eat the best burgers in town. Select a booth, ask the amiable staff to tune into your match and grab a 'double decker' or 'triple burger', which look like American fast-food classics but taste better. Friday night Karaoke is a must-see, must-see event.

Hard Rockers Club

Road Ilaz Kodra, contact: vraja_fatos@hotmail.com. It's one of the few places in Prishtina where you can catch regular live acts and the only place which caters for those who like their rock served up heavy, or hard. On a quiet night, it's quite a comfortable venue to grab a beer, even if you are not being entertained by hirsute musicians.

The Cuban

Road Luan Haradinaj Tel: +377(0) 45 620 620. This is a decent addition to the city's drinking scene, even if the place can be full of spivs and tarts who aren't going to a fancy-dress party. The Cuban-themed décor is decadent Havana, the food is average, and not very Caribbean, but the cocktails are good. 8 am - 1 am.

Xhoni's Bar

Rexhep Mala, Pristina, tel. +377 (0)44 750 720. Xhoni's is, without doubt, a Prishtina institution. It's small, friendly and smoky, plays excellent soul, disco and classic rock music from vinyl and is open until the last man or woman staggers out. Arrive by 11pm at the weekend to secure a corner, or even better a seat, if you intend to make a night of it. Next to A&A restaurant and has round windows. Opens: 8pm-to late. Shut on Sundays.

Fastfood:

Bel Ami

Rr Luan Haradinaj, Tel: +377 (0)44 133 848, +386 49 133 848. The ideal town-centre stop for a quick lunch or takeaway snack, Bel Ami unceremoniously serves some of the best chicken doner in Prishtina in a surprisingly un-greasy, smoke-free environment. Ask for a "komplet" to get the classic doner packed with salad and sauces and wrapped in tin foil. Monday-Friday 9 am - 7.30 pm; Saturday 9 am - 8 pm.

Clubs:

P1

Fehmi Agani, +377 (0)44 608 669. If you're looking for cool, then P1 is probably not the spot for you. The decor is pretty uninspiring, the music is bog standard and the atmosphere reminiscent of a cattle market. But if your thing is scantily clad young women or packs of amorous boys, than it's an excellent choice. And, in the venue's defence, it does have a pleasant outdoor area for summer dancing. Working hours Wednesday, Friday, Saturday from 9 pm to 3 am.



Hot Food:

FRESCO (LEFT). Rr. Fehmi Agani. The newest eatery to hit Prishtina's fine-dining scene, Fresco has designs on being one of its best. Forgive the excessive interior design - the food is elegant and simple, with a gastronomic sense that in-step with the times. The salmon filet (11.50 euro) is a standout: succulent and flavorful, appearing alongside a sweet potato puree and tempura-fried zucchini. The steaks are perfect, too. +377 (0) 44 333 772.

PAPIRUN Tel. 045 26 23 23. Papirun has seating at two perpendicular counters in what's basically a hole-in-the-wall just off Mother Teresa Boulevard, near the Grand Hotel. The menu has 13 options: 6 pizzas and seven sandwiches. The sandwiches are the stars, though. Every component is handled with care. The bread alone is good enough to make just about any sandwich into a glorious feast. It's freshly baked and seasoned with rosemary.



Where to pick up Prishtina Insight?

A taste of Napoli in Prishtina.

Prishtina Insight has teamed up with these excellent venues to offer a limited number of complimentary copies of Kosovo's only English-language newspaper. Grab a copy of the publication and settle down with a drink or a meal to read it.

After ten years of making pizza in Napoli, and with only love to blame, Fatmir, the head chef, returned to Prishtina. His pizzas, made in a woodburn stove, are definitely genuine napolitanas. Fatmir also has several delicious pastas on offer, a true joy for the taste buds. Napoli has an excellent selection of red and white wines or, for the more ambitious, one of the region's best quince raki. Napoli makes for delicious lunch, dinner or even after-theatre time out in the centre of Prishtina.



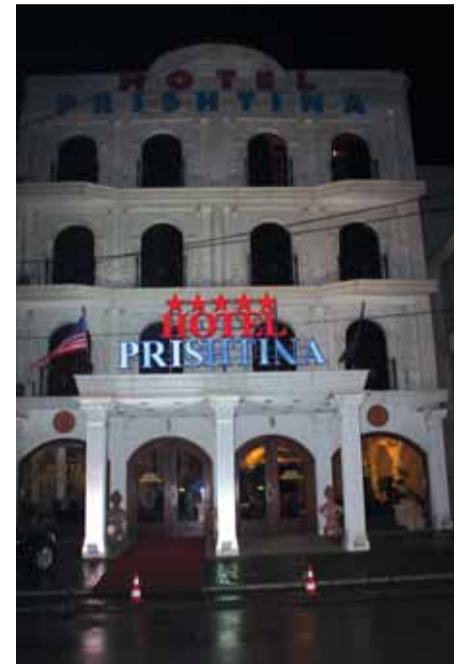
*Pizzeria Napoli
off Luan Haradinaj, opposite Newborn
044/409-402402*

Hotel Prishtina

Hotel Prishtina's 43 charming guest rooms and suites are reminiscent of a small hotel in the European tradition. You'll immediately feel at home in our living room, sipping a glass of wine in our fine restaurant surrounded by a gallery of paintings by local artists.

The hotel offers free, fast wifi internet, complimentary breakfast, conference room, swimming pool, sauna and laundry service.

*Hotel Prishtina,
St. Vaso Pasha nr. 20
+381 38 / 22 32 84*



Hotel AFA

Located in a quiet neighbourhood just outside the city centre, Hotel Afa can guarantee guests a peaceful night while being within walking distance of all the action. The venue has won a host of awards for its excellent service to customers and offers a good range of facilities, from an exclusive restaurant and VIP bar to pretty, tranquil gardens. Rooms start at 45 euro for a single, and luxury rooms and apartments are available. The hotel's rooms are well appointed and comfortable.

*15, Rr Ali Kelmendi,
Sunny Hill, Prishtina
+381 38/225 226
www.hotelafa.com*



Te Komiteti

Te Komiteti's large trees and a beautifully garden, which surround the small outdoor terrace, give you an impression of an exclusive place for ordinary people. And this is exactly what it is. From brunch to lunch-time snacks and special evening meals, this restaurant offers dishes comprising quality, varied ingredients, combined to perfection. Alongside one of Prishtina's best 'modern European' style menus, you'll also find a good selection of wine, and great sangria and cocktails.

*Te Komiteti
Qamil Hoxha Street
Prishtina
+381 38 24 96 63*



Paddy O'Brien's

The staff at Paddy O'Brien's have a saying: "It's easy to walk in, but very hard to leave."

And with its warm atmosphere, fantastic range of drinks and excellent food, it is easy to see why.

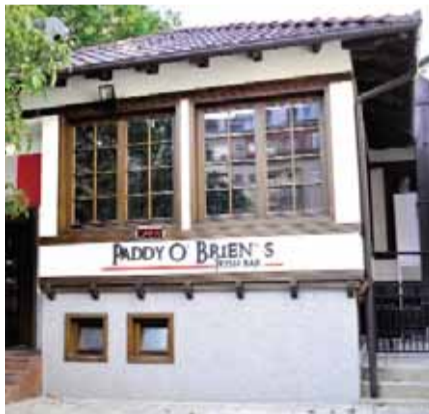
There have been many attempts to establish a proper Irish pub in Prishtina, but this is the only one to hit the spot.

From classic coffees to cocktails, via, of course, Guinness, you really won't find it difficult to select the perfect drink.

A mouth-watering menu of Irish specialties is also on offer, spanning from all-day breakfasts to Irish stews at night.

Options include shepherd's pie, bangers and mash, fish 'n chips, and whopping great burgers.

Thursday is pub quiz night, but there is always something going on at the pub, whether it is sport screenings or just a good shindig.



*Paddy O'Brien's
Tringe Smajli Street, by the Illyria Hotel
Prishtina: 045-420900*

Papillon Bistro Bar

This newly reopened bar in Prishtina, Papillon, offers more than 60 types of wines from France, Italy, Spain, and Kosovo with great prices and delicious dishes.

They serve pasta, sandwiches, salads and different appetizers.

You can also try different types of local or international beers.

The bar, with its stunning new design, is located in the centre of Prishtina, near ProCredit Bank headquarter, RTK radio centre, and the Mother Teresa cathedral.

*Papillon
Mother Teresa Str. Nr. 51 A
info@caffepapillon.com
044 103 310*



If you live in Kosovo and would like to receive the hardcopy of the newspaper delivered to your door, you can also subscribe for 13 editions, the equivalent of six months, for 13 euro, including delivery, or for 26 euro for the whole year. Please note, deliveries outside of Prishtina may be refused due to transport costs.

You can pay through an international bank transfer or in cash at a Kosovo branch of Raiffeisen bank.

If you are interested in subscribing please email us at info@prishtinainsight.com with the subject "subscription", listing what type of subscription you require. We will then provide you with an invoice and bank details.

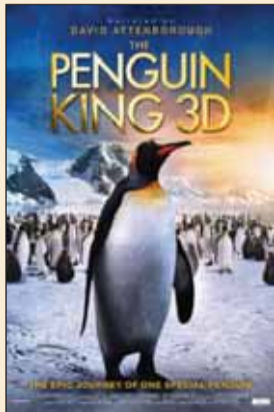
+



“The penguin king” 3D

Every day at 3 pm

South Georgia, alone in a vast ocean, 900 miles from Antarctica, and a more 100 miles long to go. A wild rugged landscape with mountain ranges, vast glaciers, and windblown plains half buried beneath snow and ice. Three years ago, the Penguin King left home. Now he is returning to the place where he was born and raised: Penguin City.



“A Good Day to Die Hard”

Every day at 6pm

John McClane travels to Russia to help out his seemingly wayward son, Jack, only to discover that Jack is a CIA operative working to prevent a nuclear-weapons heist, causing the father and son to team up against underworld forces.

Director: John Moore
Writers: Skip Woods, Roderick Thorp
Starring: Bruce Willis, Jai Courtney, Sebastian Koch



“Zero Dark Thirty”

Every day at 10pm

Maya is a CIA operative whose first experience is in the interrogation of prisoners following the Al Qaeda attacks against the U.S. on the 11th September 2001. She is a reluctant participant in extreme duress applied to the detainees, but believes that the truth may only be obtained through such tactics.

Director: Kathryn Bigelow

Writer: Mark Boal

Starring: Jessica Chastain, Joel Edgerton, Chris Patt.



“Hitchcock”

Every day at 8pm

In 1959, Alfred Hitchcock and his wife, Alma, are at the top of their creative game as filmmakers amid disquieting insinuations about it being time to retire. To recapture his youth's artistic daring, Alfred decides his next film will adapt the lurid horror novel, Psycho, over everyone's misgivings. Unfortunately, as Alfred self-finances and labors on this film, Alma finally loses patience with his roving eye and controlling habits with his actresses.

Director: Sacha Gervasi

Writers: John J. McLaughlin, Stephen Rebello

Starring: Anthony Hopkins, Helen Mirren, Scarlet Johansson.



For any further questions or reservations call at 038 243 238 or visit them at www.kinoabc.com

Theatre

ODA Theatre

“The last station”

8pm Thursday, 24 January

8pm Thursday, 31 January

The story is situated in the year 2015. Nowadays and past problems are carried in the year of 2015. Burim is the main character who is looking for the truth, for his family and his fiancé, which are still missing since the war of KLA ended. After many attempts he finds out that his neighbour is still alive and that he knows more about his family. Burim can't live in the present; he is always going back to the past, in the memories of his family and Behare, his fiancé. Halfway he meets a young girl called Shpresa who reminds him of Behare and finally gets part of Burim's life.

Based on the novel “Birds fly on their own” by Ibrahim Kadriu.

Directed by Lirak Celaj and Florent Mehmeti

Cast: Besnik Krapic, Liridona Shehu, Ilire Celaj, Adrian Morina, Eshref Durmishi and Kushtrim Sheremeti.

Friday, 1st March - Tuesday, 5th March 2013

(11:00-18:00, last two days more flexible)

Location: Stacion - Center for Contemporary Arts Prishtina

DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY ATELIER

Monumental Sculptures from Socialist Yugoslavia in Kosovo: Artefacts between Memory and Neglect

The atelier is part of the art-based action research “Recollecting the Past in Kosovo: Cultural Remembrance between Facts and Fiction”, which is implemented by forumZFD through the course of 2013.

This atelier creates space for photographic explorations on monumental sculptures from Socialist Yugoslavia in Kosovo through field trips, discussions, theoretic inputs, interviews and by delving into different archive material. The atelier will be led by Marc Schneider - a photographer from Berlin who has established a systematic basis of more than 500 monuments from Ex-Yugoslavia, and has exhibited his works in Germany, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Italy and Tokyo.

The atelier is organized in collaboration with Stacion - Center for Contemporary Arts Stacion Cca Prishtina.

Prishtina Diary

Shuala Bar Friday, 1 March Music: Compilations of 80's by Shualla DiscoDominique behind the bar	Punkt Friday, 1 March Music: dark wave! With D.J. Pulsar Minimal - Techno
Saturday, 2 March Music: Sounds from Detroit (DJ Dooshine)	Saturday, 2 March Bass Sensation with Dagg

FLAT FOR RENT

STUDIO FLAT FOR RENT, IN ULPANA IN THE FIRST FLOOR WITH A GREAT VIEW FROM ITS LARGE BALCONY IN FRONT OF (FONTANA) 15min WALK FROM THE HOSPITAL AND FROM THE CENTER OF THE CITY. IT HAS 35sq/m AND ITS NEWLY FURBISHED. CONTACT US:

044-262-272 or denis.b@msn.com

giz

Stellenanzeige der GIZ

Als weltweit tätiges Bundesunternehmen der internationalen Zusammenarbeit für nachhaltige Entwicklung unterstützt die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH die Bundesregierung bei der Verwirklichung ihrer entwicklungspolitischen Ziele. Sie bietet zukunftsfähige Lösungen für politische, wirtschaftliche, ökologische und soziale Entwicklungen in einer globalisierten Welt und fördert komplexe Reformen und Veränderungsprozesse auch unter schwierigen Bedingungen. Ihr Ziel ist es, die Lebensbedingungen der Menschen nachhaltig zu verbessern.

Das „GIZ Büro“, sucht folgende(n) Mitarbeiter(in):

Instrumentenbeauftragte/-r (in Teilzeit)

Verantwortungsbereich

Unterstützung bei Akquisition

- Verantwortung für die Nutzung von Synergien und Identifikation von Opportunitäten bei anderen Gebern und Verantwortung für die Außendarstellung der GIZ Kosovo und der einzelnen Vorhaben
- Wahrnehmung auftragsübergreifender und Unterstützung auftragspezifischer landes- oder regionenbezogener Funktionen auf dem Gebiet der internationalen Zusammenarbeit

Unterstützung des Landesdirektors und der Programme bei Aufgaben der Koordination, Positionierung, Vernetzung

- Erstellt und organisiert Informationsmaterialien für den Büroleiter AVs und/oder Besprechungen
- Bündelt nachfrageorientiert Informationen aus den Programmen für die WZ Referentin / Botschaft
- Einrichtung eines Management Cockpits (Bündelung von Informationen zu VE, RV / RK, Phasen und Verlängerungen, Kennzahlen etc)

Wissensmanagement

- Sicherstellung des Kommunikationsflusses zwischen dem Landesdirektor und den Vorhaben
- Verantwortung für die zentrale DMS Ablage
- Inhaltliche Vorbereitung und Dokumentation von Meeting und Konferenzen

Erforderliche Qualifikation:

- Erfahrung in der (europäischen) Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, Hochschulabschluss, Deutsch als Muttersprache (oder Muttersprachenniveau), verhandlungssicheres Englisch, der Willen durch deutsche TZ Instrumente die Entwicklung des Staates Kosovo zu unterstützen, Einsatzbereitschaft und gute kommunikative Fähigkeiten. Mindestens 1-3 Jahre Berufserfahrung in vergleichbarer Position.

Die Bewerbung sollte in deutscher Sprache erstellt werden. Der Einsendeschluss ist der **15.03.2013, 15:00 Uhr**.

Nur Kandidaten/-innen in der engeren Auswahl werden von der GIZ kontaktiert, um ein Vorstellungsgespräch zu vereinbaren.

Die GIZ ist eine Organisation der Chancengleichheit und ermutigt Kandidaten und Kandidatinnen aus ethnischen Minderheiten sowie weibliche Kandidatinnen sich bei der GIZ zu bewerben.

Bitte senden Sie Ihre Unterlagen mit einem Lebenslauf, früheren Arbeitszeugnissen und Referenzen, Passbild sowie ein Motivationsschreiben in einem Brief mit der Aufschrift „Bewerbung um die Stelle „Instrumentenbeauftragte/-r im GIZ Büro“ an die folgenden

Email Adressen: petrit.sadriu@giz.de und mirjeta.zatriqi@giz.de.



Tapë Uncorks Nightlife

Cheap locally made booze and bites fuel good times at new spot in Prishtina's centre.



By Donjeta Demolli

If other bars in Prishtina have become boring — perhaps it's the ordinary people hogging the tables or the terrible, old-fashioned interior design created by the businessman owner — then Tapë is for you.

It's kind of place that you can take you from friend from Macedonia or South Africa, with the comforting feeling of your aunt's house.

Tapë — which means “cork” in Albanian but is often used to denote extreme drunkenness — is

a bar with a warm atmosphere in Prishtina's centre. It serves homemade raki, as well as a variety of beers and other liquors, and, of course, Stone Castle wine - all at reasonable prices.

Tapë also offers delicious meze to cushion the booze.

As for hot beverages, there's Turkish coffee and black tea.

An eclectic soundtrack of blues, jazz, classical and old Albanian music compliments the cozy space, which is adorned with African kitch.

Tapë

Hajdar Dushi Street Nr. 2 (next to Zani Bar, Kada Books, in front of the Radio Dukagjini).

4 p.m. to midnight, Monday



through Friday

11 a.m. to midnight, Saturdays

11 a.m. to 8 p.m, Sundays.

Photo News:

Pomp on Kosovo's Fifth Birthday



Kosovo celebrated its fifth anniversary of independence on February 17. The main event featured a march of Kosovo's Security Force, police and firefighters in Prishtina's city centre. (Photo/Donjete Hoxha)

Prishtina through the Eyes of:



DiscoDominique

Olof Palme International Center

1. What surprised you most about Prishtina?

I honestly did not had any ideas about Prishtina before, but I guess, I am a bit surprised that the city is kind of ugly if you compare to other cities. Although, the people here make it an awesome place to be, definitely!

2. What's your favourite hangout?

In the city there are not many green spots, like parks or other urban social spaces to hang out, which is a bit sad. So I kind of ended up at coffee places and pubs. My most favourite are Miqt, Shualla Bar and Punkt. But I do like to hang out at my friend's garage and jam.

3. Do you do anything cultural?

Of course! Every day I meet people and visit places. I also hang around and play music with friends or play records/perform at various places. There is a whole lot of cultural stuff to do around here and the underground scene is nice. There are some really interesting people to meet here in all art genres. They are all amazing and they share really fascinating stories about their artistic life. Sometimes it results in many glasses of wine. The coolest thing I've seen so far were The Glasses at a live concert - really cool local rock stars. Also, my friend from Paris had an all access pass to a Rita Ora concert and I asked her to tell Rita that whole Prishtina loves her.

4. What is the most annoying thing about Prishtina?

I mean if you consider the fact that the city has grown from a village to a metropol in 50 years then you should really accept the fact that it is how it is. Plus the years of civic struggle has not made the situation better for the citizens here. I have met representatives both in the ministries and "on the streets" who believe that a change can happen here. I really hope that these people can make a better change for everyone here in Prishtina, since the citizens here really deserve it. The only "annoying" thing in this process is, I believe, lack of communication and belief in own initiatives. You know, even the small things can help to create a big change.

5. If you were mayor of Prishtina for the day what would you change?

Hah, for a day only? Come on, you should give me at least a weekend! Well, I think I would gather all the international organisations that are present here. Then I would tell them to organize and structure their support in common, multinational projects with long-lasting results and better focus.

6. How many macchiatos do you drink a day?

Hehe. I don't drink coffee. It happens very rarely, but I know that this city has very good coffee!

7. What's the tastiest Kosovar food?

There is this really good joint, Aba hamburgers that has really tasty burgers for only 1 euro. I know that the idea of a hamburger is not very traditional, but the place itself does create local and traditional Prishtina burgers.

8. What landmark do you use to tell taxi drivers where you live?

I actually prefer to walk, this makes me to get to know my city better. Plus the air will get less polluted.

Ecosovo

Pure Kosovo



By Elizabeth Gowing

So how many of Kosovo's mountains could you name? How many have you seen? How many have you hiked? Arben "Beni" Islami, also known as "Hiking Njeri" or 'Hiking Man' has climbed every peak in the country, and also taken photographs of all 160 of them from four angles. He is an inspiration to meet - for his energy, but also for the sense of potential he offers for tourism in Kosovo.

Because this country is gorgeous. The proof is in a new book Beni has just produced in association with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development. Called Pure Kosovo and to be launched next week, it showcases some of his favourite images from the more than one million he has taken in his walks around Kosovo. There are familiar sights: the distinctive peak of Luboten, Brezovica's skilifts, haystacks in mountain meadows.

But there are also revelations that are new for me - the 'heart lake' of Gjeravica, the 'Guri i shpum' ('perforated rock') in the Lumbardh mountains. And wandering through one beautiful landscape, a flock of sheep painted a startling red apparently for easy identification by the shepherd.

There are also pictures of Rudoka, named 'Njeri's Peak' because it was Arben who measured it precisely with GPS technology once this peak was formally included in Kosovo's borders, following the resolution of the border dispute with Macedonia. What his GPS measurements identified was that Rudoka is 2658m high - all of two meters higher than the official highest peak in Kosovo which is Gjeravica.

The photographs in Pure Kosovo are mainly of mountains, but there are some images, too, of Kosovo's beautiful flowers, the curious insects (including some great mating ladybirds), goats, horses and plenty of sheep which bring the mountains alive. There's a great picture of Sharr cheese being made, hung in flowery cloths to drain over old pails. Occasionally there is also a walker in shot or a swimmer in the mountain lakes, just as a reminder that these are landscapes that are also for human enjoyment. And amid the pictures of Mount Pashtrik above Prizren are photographs of the religious buildings constructed by dervishes who revere Sari Salltek, thought to be buried here. It's a good reminder of the awe and transcendental beauty of the mountains too.

So this is a book to be savoured on your sofa, but also a motivation to get you off the sofa and onto a bus, headed for one or other of Kosovo's stunning mountain ranges. At this time of year, of course, many of the landscapes are hidden under snow, but from April Beni runs 'Hiking Njeri' tours which leave from Sunnyhill every Sunday. Why don't you join him, or go alone.

Kosovo's compact size makes it possible to reach all parts of the country on a daytrip from Prishtina, and if you want to make a weekend of it, then there are great homestay options near to many of the most beautiful locations. For Rugova, for example, contact Fete and Mustafa in Reka e Allages (045 383184) who will have you to stay in their converted 'stan' or summer hut in the mountains, and Fete will feed you her excellent pite and homemade cheese. Gjeravica is near to Junik where a tastefully restored stone kulla (045 394084) has three double bedrooms with traditional fabrics, and old wedding chests in every room, with a fabulous oda for relaxing in upstairs. Finally, if you're planning to climb Luboten, the best possible accommodation base is 'Hangjik' in the village of Runjeve near Kacanik. Alan and Mary Packer (044 835075) a British couple, long-established in Kosovo and in the village, have restored an old house and adjacent barn with lovely old craftsmanship, wood and stone and thoughtful design using local materials and traditions. Meals can be provided using produce from their organic garden and the hospitality on offer is fabulous.

For more information about Hiking Njeri's tours, contact Beni at beni@hikingnjeri.com.

Elizabeth Gowing is a founder of The Ideas Partnership, a Kosovan NGO working on educational, cultural and environmental projects. She is also the author of *Travels in Blood and Honey*; becoming a beekeeper in Kosovo (Signal Books, 2011). She can be reached at theideaspartnership@gmail.com

Outside In

Post-Independence Blues



By Kreshnik Hoxha

Faced with a leadership whose job description includes outrageous scandals on a weekly basis and an opposition that's inept, uncoordinated and incompetent, Kosovo marked its fifth birthday with very little to celebrate.

Very few Kosovars could forget the positive energy dominating the country in the run-up to the declaration of independence five years ago.

The same hope that ensured survival during 1990s was the exactly same hope that also erupted on independence day of Kosovo's declaration. The desire people had was a rather noble and sincere one: building a state that does not deny all those things that Serbia denied to Kosovars with a fierce diplomacy and ghastly violence.

But nowadays, it seems that Kosovars are dumbfounded with all the confused steps in state-building and the stagnation that persistently withers away the goodwill people had for an inclusive country.

And it is precisely because of this state of affairs that the time has come for Kosovars to urgently undertake an evaluation of what has been achieved over the last five years of Kosovo's fragile statehood. Did Kosovars work diligently in creating the state they aspired - a state of democracy and equality? Did we learn lessons from Serbia's rather shallow practices of treatment of minorities - staying away from discrimination? Did we get all those things we hoped we would get after independence - equal opportunities and welfare improvement?

No, absolutely not - because we did not work sufficiently for any of those and, what is worse, it seems that we all begrudged our collective efforts. Which minister produced outstanding work? Which MP accomplished something worthwhile? Even more sadly, which civic movement made



an impact or changed a matter for better? None, results are rather poor.

Every pore of Kosovo's society is contaminated with cynicism. The vast majority of Kosovo lives by doing the bare minimum to survive. Engulfed by high poverty, murky job prospects, and purposelessly wandering youth, Kosovo's fifth birthday finds the society more disillusioned than ever before. And the polarisation is so concentrated that even something noble like the independence anniversary falls short from neutralising the disillusionment.

This is a sombre picture, but also a picture that should be a wake-up call for identifying the culprit. The fact of the matter is that neither the Constitution, nor the Ahtisaari Plan and not even Northern Kosovo, the flag or the silent hymn are the culprit. The Kosovar society as whole is the sole culprit for the state of the country today, because in record time we deviated from the commitment we made on February 17, 2008. As a result, Kosovars today reap what they sowed.

People might have been celebrat-

ing the survival from the hardship of the 1990s. That sacrifice and goodwill which brought us to February 17 cannot be diluted by anything; it remains a historic effort. However, the sacrifice and goodwill of the past would be insufficient today in justifying our deviation from the vision we once had for statehood.

I can also understand the demoralisation and disappointment of people with Kosovo's development thus far. After all, we are led by corrupt and incompetent people. However, despite inept politicians, the responsibility for Kosovo's state falls upon its citizens, too. A country neither is born nor does it die due to its government or presidency. A state is built by its own people's diligence, sacrifice and commitment - something that has been rather scarce in the past five years.

We declared ourselves independent from Serbia five years ago. But now it is the time to build and nurture the state so that there will be a more prosperous Kosovo when we pass it over to the coming generations.



Can Albania's Media Be Set Free At Last?



Axel Kronholm

Without reform aimed at easing the current strong outside pressures on the media, the press can never become a force for societal change.

As I set off in the fall of 2012 to research press freedom and the situation of journalists in Albania, the first thing I realised was that repressive legislation is not the main problem.

Considering the country's relatively recent history of authoritarian rule, Albania's media legislation is understandably liberal and free.

However, the press and broadcast media are still clouded by censorship.

For a country like Albania, which is eager to modernize, deal with deep-rooted corruption and join the European Union, the issue of the state of the media could hardly be more pressing, considering its potential in working as a catalyst for change.

But a worrying downward trend shows that this potential is being squandered. In international indexes of press freedom and corruption, Albania continues to drop in the rankings.

From being in 34th place in Reporters Without Borders' Press Freedom Index in 2003, Albania had dropped to 102nd place in their latest report.



Questions about freedom in Albania's media.

One example of the problem are the methods that the political elite uses to exert influence over the media.

The difficult financial situation of the Albanian media renders them vulnerable to special interests.

The government wields considerable power. Using its budget for public information campaigns, it is able to reward government-friendly outlets for their reporting and punish more critical voices by handing advertising to competitors.

Private advertising is run on similar principles. Business owners know that their choice of

media partners will have consequences for their relations with the state. This puts critically minded media at an even bigger disadvantage compared to other outlets and skews the competition in the market.

What is financially rewarded is not primarily the circulation, or the quality of reporting, but the political allegiance of the media outlets in question.

This relationship between government and private enterprises is detrimental both to the open market and to journalism.

Another major factor restricting the freedom of the press is the situation of most journalists in

Albania. It is hard, if not impossible, for an outsider, used to the Scandinavian model of the press, to imagine life for journalists in the Balkans.

However, from interviews with Albanian journalists and media professionals, I am able to conclude that self-censorship is a major threat to the media's role as a watchdog.

The informal labour market contributes to this situation. Most Albanian journalists work without any contracts. Publishers also frequently violate labour rights regarding payment and vacation time.

Journalists in Albania are constantly on their guard, viewing self-censorship and self-restraint as necessary not only for their jobs and careers, but for their own personal safety.

Most journalists I interviewed have their own stories of violence or threats of violence. The pure notion of risk and its possible consequences keeps journalists on their toes, forcing them to think carefully about what they intend to report.

Such questions become almost existential in an environment of stifling corruption.

Albania has a large number of dedicated and talented journalists who, despite this inhospitable environment and the overwhelming pressure, do their best to report and investigate wrongdoing.

But the media as a democratic institution and as a force for societal change is on its knees, cor-

nered from all angles by special interests.

Financial woes and threats to reporters actively undermine the role of the press as a watchdog. The press in Albania is barely any longer a facilitator of informed choices and does not set the agenda for policymakers.

A more transparent and fairer system of state support for media outlets would be a good place to start serious long-term reform, leading to a healthier media climate.

Use of government funds currently spent on advertising to create an un-biased system of press subsidies, based purely on circulation, would limit the media's dependence on business and political interests and prevent the government from skewing the competition by distributing its money based on the outlet's political affiliation.

This would also require improved transparency on behalf of the media with regards to circulation, the number of employees and so on.

Whichever way this is eventually dealt with, these issues deserve their spot in the public debate and should be taken seriously by the political elite.

Axel Kronholm is a freelance Finnish journalist who researched freedom of the press in Albania for his bachelor thesis. His thesis can be read at: <http://axelkronholm.com/press-freedom-in-albania/>

The Easy Route to Extra Cash in Serbia

Belgrade's decision to give Hague war crimes defendants more financial support when the country is so short of money says much about the nation's priorities.



By Marija Ristic

In this time of economic crisis it is always hard to get hold of extra cash. However, there are ways to do that in Serbia, especially if you are a defendant at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Almost every day in the Serbian news you can hear how dire the economy is, how there is no money for salaries, for youth employment, for social benefits, health care, culture and many other things. The list is long.

But if you are smart you can always find a way to ask for a rise. It is always about the moment. That is why school teachers go on strike just before the academic year starts, or farmers block highways in summer, just as the tourists pass through Serbia. And that is how you put your government in the corner, so inevitably they give you a rise, or some additional form of financial aid. As I said, it is all about picking the right moment.

Last November, the Hague

Tribunal brought two verdicts that made Serbia angry. The trial chamber acquitted two Croatian generals and three Kosovo Liberation Army commanders of war crimes against Serbs during the 1990s.

Many Serbs felt betrayed, and the feeling of injustice remains. And that is OK. What is not OK is what the Serbian government then did, which was to use this moment for their own nationalistic agenda, by bringing back the rhetoric of the 1990s.

It is not that just the government that used this moment. Serbs standing before the ICTY for war crimes also used the same opportunity to complain about their "rights". They cooked a few cheese pies, bought some chocolates and asked the country's justice minister to pay them a visit. And, during their joint lunch, they asked for a little more money.

This resulted in a government decision to increase state funds for ICTY defendants - and not just defendants, but also for those who have been convicted by the court.

Some 200 euro per month, plus trav-

el expenses for the family, plus additional health care - all that for around 40 Serbs who are either still before the Hague Tribunal or who have already been convicted.



During the course of last year, Serbia gave around 145,000 euro to 16 ICTY defendants. That is equivalent to around 400 average salaries in Serbia. Simple arithmetic shows that the amount of money given will be doubled this

year.

And this is just one part of the problem; did the state give the money because they believe that the ICTY defendants are innocent or because we realised that we made a mistake by sending them to Hague, as our minister says? Or are they enduring very bad conditions in prisons across Europe?

After all, the former Bosnian Serb commander, Ratko Mladic, lost 20 kilos at The Hague, so the minister argues.

And here we come to the other part of the problem; Serbia is not treating all its citizens equally, despite what the constitution says. Why do

local war criminals or war crime suspects not receive the same extra 200 euro plus travel costs for their families? Where is the money for the 400 people facing war crime charges in Belgrade courts? I am sure that our justice minister would agree that conditions in Serbian prisons are far worse than those in Europe. Or are the local war criminals not important as those at the ICTY?

Are their crimes different?

What is the difference between Ratko Mladic and Srečko Popovic? The first is suspected of killing more than 7,000 people in Bosnia, the second one more than 100. Both men pleaded not guilty. The main difference is that no one knows about Srečko Popovic. So, giving him a monthly allowance doesn't have the same effect as giving money to Mladic, a hero to Serbs on both sides of river Drina.

I can come up with just a few reasons why the money went to the Hague defendants. For sure, it is not because Serbia is a rich country with cash to spare. It is because this government never faced the past and the crimes that were committed in the name of Serbia. It is because parts of this government supported or formed part of the regime of Slobodan Milosevic. It is because they are negotiating with Hashim Thaci, their former enemy. It is because they are risking votes by picking Europe over Kosovo.

So, what is the easiest way to show that you still didn't give up on nationalism? Just have a few bites of chocolate with Mladic - and give him some cash.



+ Artifacts Back in Kosovo

Seven artifacts are displayed at Kosovo's Archaeology Museum. They were found in Germany during a police raid there. The artifacts are believed to have been stolen during the 1998-99 Kosovo war. (AP Photo/Visar Kryeziu)



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