

Prishtina Insight

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DEFENDING MACHINE

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Repatriation confusion

People who are forcibly returned to Kosovo often lack essential rights such as education, health care, civil registration and social assistance. The OSCE is pressuring Prishtina officials to determine how many individuals repatriated who sought asylum are still living in Kosovo.

“Without such data it is not possible to assess how many individuals (or even families) have access to housing, education and other basic services, how many have found sustainable employment—or even how many remain in Kosovo,” the OSCE said in a report released in January.

THE 21 COUNTRIES:

Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland



AN AVERAGE RATE OF 2,500 TO 3,500 EACH YEAR.

KOSOVO

According to the OSCE, “a quarter of repatriated persons are members of communities considered by the UNHCR to be ‘at risk’ and in need of international protection.”

27,000

From January 2005 to June 2013 around 25,000 to 27,000 refugees were repatriated to Kosovo.



17,000 in 2013

Many in Kosovo still seek asylum in other European countries. In 2013 alone, there were 17,000 applications.

2,372,450€

What is Kosovo doing for repatriated individuals? In 2014, Kosovo government distributed 2,372,450 euro to assimilate repatriated individuals from Western countries.

from the editor

A cheap city? That's a myth

Last week, during a visit back home, I stopped at a cafe in San Francisco for a bottle of mineral water. I nearly gasped when I saw the price: \$2.50 (around 1.83 euro). Back in Prishtina, I thought, that bottle would have set me back 1 euro at most at a nice cafe and less if I shopped around.

San Francisco is one of the most expensive cities in the US, but the average income is about \$72,000 (52,000 euro).

So, though double the price, that bottle of water was still far cheaper than one from a cafe in Prishtina. An average San Franciscan could buy about 29,000 bottles of water at that cafe, whereas the average Kosovar, earning 3,600 euro per year, can buy anything from 3,600 to 7,200 bottles. That water would have to cost \$10 to \$20 in San Francisco to be on par with the price in Kosovo.

While just a rough comparison, it reflects the fact that while living in

Kosovo may have lower raw cost than in the West, it is much more expensive for most people living here.

The World Bank estimates that, according to Purchasing Power Parity, the income of the average Kosovar is equivalent to \$7,500 (5,500 euro) in the United States. In other words, the euro of a Kosovar does go farther, but not as far as it should.

This can be lost on those of us from the West. Michael McKenna, a Canadian editor at Kosovo 2.0, in a recent blog post about rising energy bills, wrote that Prishtina is “not a hugely expensive city in which to live.”

Much has been said and written about the fact that most foreigners living in Kosovo enjoy a high standard of living - particularly those who work for governments or international organisations who typically earn far more in a month than most Kosovars earn in a year. While they are not to blame for earning what often are tightly regulated salaries, there is something to be said for showing humility.

A good start: avoid the temptation to remark on how cheap everything is.



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Prishtina Insight

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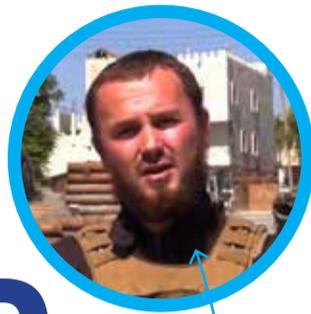
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Nation

JOINING
THE FIGHT

 2,500

The number of followers of the Facebook page Krenaria Islame (Islamic Pride), as of Wednesday. Krenaria Islame is posting pictures and propaganda on behalf of Albanians reported to be fighting in Syria for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, an Al-Qaeda-affiliated group. One picture posted on the page shows about a dozen armed men, wearing black masks, with the title, "Albanian mujahedeen of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, with their battalion leader, [Lavderim Muhaxheri](#)."



Kosovo, Albania push joint EU integration

By Edona Peci
and Besar Likmeta

The governments of Kosovo and Albania will hold their first joint meeting on Saturday in Prizren, in Kosovo, to mull their joint EU perspectives.

Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaci said the meeting "marks the start of a joint strategic governance with one aim and one vision, the Euro-Atlantic vision."

"The meeting in Prizren marks a new chapter and sends out a European message for everyone - the message of a region with open borders and without barriers of the past," he added. No information on the precise topics to be discussed was given, but the Albanian Prime Minister, Edi Rama,

said the meeting would also discuss the problems facing the small Albanian community in Serbia.

The meeting would be "a sign of solidarity with the Albanian community in the Presevo valley [in southern Serbia] to which both governments will agree on a special fund for the increase of new births.

"We will open a new page of cooperation between governments of the two countries facing the challenges of democratization, modernization and integration of both Albanian countries into the European union," Rama wrote on Facebook.

The meeting was announced in September when Rama visited Prishtina.

IT'S NOT JUST FOG

Stagnant smog leaves Prishtina choking

Combination of power plant pollution and high pressure blamed for dense fog that is leaving many people gasping for air.

By Edona Peci

Prishtina often gets more than its share of hazy days, with the nearby Obiliq power plant pumping out some of Europe's most polluted gases.

But in recent weeks the air has been worse than usual in the Kosovo capital and other parts of the country.

At times, thick smog has covered the capital, reducing visibility to as little as 10 metres. The key measure of pollution has averaged more than three times the EU standard.

The unusually stagnant air, blamed on high pressure, has meant that pollution from the power plants Kosovo A and B, and from other sources, has nowhere to go. Letafete Latifi, head of Kosovo's Hydro Meteorological Service, explained. "There is not enough circulation of the air," she said.

More than 50 people have been taken to the city's public hospital, the University Clinical Center, with respiratory problems linked to the smog, recently.

Two weeks ago, Selvete Cakolli, who had a pre-existing lung condition, found herself struggling to breathe. "I could feel it every morning when I had to go to the work," the 44-year-old said.

"I had a feeling that my lungs were constricted; I had to cover the area

around my mouth and nose just so I could breathe," she added.

Her doctor told Prishtina Insight that bad air was to blame for Cakolli's recent troubles.

In December, Prishtina averaged 174.1 micrograms per cubic meter of air of PM10, which is how the presence of larger hazardous particles in the air is measured.

According to EU standards, a PM10 level of 50 is considered the highest acceptable limit, which should not be exceeded more than 35 days per year.

While the authorities have not engaged in any public awareness campaigns, to alert people to the potential risk to health, Dr Gazmend Zhuri, a pulmonologist, is urging people to stay indoors.

"One cannot remove the smog just like that. What people should do is to stay inside," he said.

Latifi, of the Hydro Meteorological Service, said the situation should improve this week, as the weather turns. "There will be low air pressure and good conditions for rain," she said.

Rain would also welcome in Prishtina for other reasons. A wintertime drought has left the water reserves, which supply the 400,000 people in the area, dangerously close to running dry.

Briefly



A

FIFA Allows Friendly Matches With Kosovo. Players of the Football Federation of Kosovo (FFK), will in future be able to compete with international rivals after FIFA confirmed a set of modalities concerning "friendly" matches involving teams from Kosovo. In a concession to opponents of Kosovo's independence, the international body stressed that Kosovo teams "may not display national symbols (flags, emblems, etc.) or play national anthems." "The decision taken by the FIFA Emergency Committee represents a major boost for football development in Kosovo and it once again confirms the extraordinary power of our sport to bring people together," FIFA President Sepp Blatter said.



B

Serb Turns Down North Kosovo Mayor's Post. Pantic on Saturday refused to sign a document endorsing the oath of office to become mayor of the northern Kosovo town. "By signing below a text where the coat of arms of Kosovo appears, suggesting that Kosovo is a republic, I would violate the constitution of Serbia," Pantic told Serbia daily paper Vecernje Novosti on Monday. He went on to say that the local elections, which were organized by the OSCE and purportedly 'status neutral,' were "a major scam by the international community." Pantic's move came in the wake of delays to the inauguration of municipal assemblies in northern Kosovo and small protests by local Serbs opposed to the Brussels-backed agreement on normalizing relations which Belgrade and Pristina signed in April last year.



C

Kosovo Expects Customs Cash Boost from North. The head of Kosovo's customs, Lulzim Rafuna, said that "so far some 130,000 or 140,000 euro have been collected" at the border crossing points into Serbia in Jarinje and Brinak. Rafuna said that "the money flows into a special fund for [investment in] the north" which was established a month ago. The Kosovo government previously set up a fund for northern areas in 2010, to which it contributed 500,000 euro. It later offered the northern municipalities another five million euro for capital projects. Opposition hardliners in Pristina have criticised the new fund, with MPs from the Vetevendosje Movement warning that it would divide the country into "a developed north and a poor south."



33%

In 2011, about 33 per cent of the urban population in the EU were exposed to PM10 above the daily limit, the report said. In Prishtina and much of Kosovo, however, that figure is closer to 100 per cent.



PHOTO/NATE TABAK

WHAT'S BEHIND THE SMOG

- The outdated highly polluting Kosovo A and B power stations are most responsible. Kosovo A is slated for replacement, controversially, with a new coal plant.
- Heating and cooking with lignite and firewood during winter.
- Kosovo does not properly classify or recycle waste. Inadequate waste disposal leads to garbage being illegally dumped or burned, which leads to high levels of air pollution.
- Cars and trucks.

A PARTICULAR DANGER

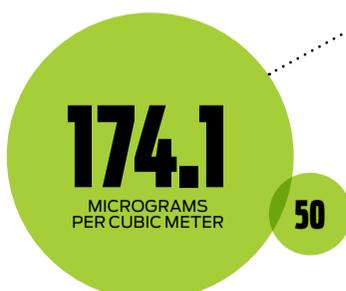
Particulate matter, or PM, penetrates sensitive regions of the respiratory system, causing health problems and even premature death. The European Environment Agency in its 2013 report, "Air quality in Europe", said particulate matter can "cause or aggravate cardiovascular and lung diseases, heart attacks and arrhythmia, affect the central nervous system, the reproductive system and cause cancer."

KOSOVO

174.1 micrograms/cubic meter - Average in level of PM10 - a key indicator of air pollution - recorded in Prishtina in December.

EU

50 micrograms/cubic meter - The EU's limit on PM10



COST TO HEALTH

A 2012 World Bank Report said air pollution in Kosovo caused 835 premature deaths, 310 cases of bronchitis, 600 hospital admissions and 11,600 emergency visits to hospital annually. The estimated cost of treating illnesses relating to air pollution ranges from 37 to 158 million euro a year.

Cover

How Ex-Yugoslav states funded war crimes defendants

Former Yugoslav countries have spent almost 40 million euro of public money supporting war crimes suspects on trial at the Hague Tribunal, a BIRN investigation has revealed.

By Sase Dimovski,
Denis Dzidic, Josip Ivanovic,
Edona Peci and Marija Ristic

The two countries which have lavished the most public money on suspects standing trial for war crimes at the International Criminal for the Former Yugoslavia are Croatia, which has spent over 28 million euro on three defendants, and Macedonia, which spent an estimated 9.5 million euro on just two men, BIRN has learned.

Macedonia's internal conflict with Albanian rebels in 2001 only lasted for around six months, and as a result only two Macedonians were indicted by the UN-backed court in The Hague, but the impoverished Balkan state spent millions on defending, supporting and lobbying for interior minister Ljube Boskoski (who was ultimately acquitted of war crimes) and policeman Johan Tarculovski (who was convicted).

Croatia meanwhile spent more than 28 million euro on defence costs alone for its three generals, Ante Gotovina, Mladen Markac and Ivan Cermak, who were all ultimately acquitted.

Both countries made it state policy to defend their ICTY indictees and spent huge sums to give them the best chances of being freed. The apparent aim was to defend their wartime heroes, score political points at home and prevent any further damage to their international image.

The other three countries in the former Yugoslavia have spent lesser sums on larger numbers of suspects, but the total amount spent on wartime officers who were arrested and made to answer to the international court for some of the worst atrocities committed in Europe since World War II still comes to almost 40 million euro.

Shadowy, unaccountable funds also collected cash through public appeals to aid war crimes suspects in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo, but it remains unclear exactly how much money they raised and how it was spent.

Defending wartime 'heroes'

Serbia spent 1.7 million euro of state money from 2004 to 2013 on personal allowances and doctors' bills for the accused and travel costs for their families, rather than on their defence teams.

But BIRN's survey revealed that out of the 26 indictees currently being paid by Belgrade, 18 of them are actually Bosnian Serb military officers who have Serbian citizenship, including General Ratko Mladic - despite the fact that Serbia firmly denies that it played any part in the Bosnian war.

A total of 640,000 euro was sent from Bosnia and Herzegovina to aid indictees, but all of this came from the Serb-led part of Bosnia, Republika Srpska, and went to help Serb suspects. Money has also been donated to families of Serb indictees through a fund called Pomoc (Help), although it has published no accounts to indicate what exactly was raised and how the money was spent.

With its difficulties in coming to any political consensus, Bosnia's other political entity, the Bosniak-Croat Federation, has given nothing to help Bosniak or Croat suspects, officials said.

Kosovo meanwhile spent nothing on defending its six war crimes indictees, officials told BIRN, laying out a mere 16,750 euro on a welcome-home party for suspects who were acquitted.

However more than 1.7 million euro was raised to help two prominent ex-Kosovo Liberation Army guerrillas turned politicians, Ramush Haradinaj and Fatmir Limaj, through public appeals which collected money in intransparent funds.

These funds also never publicly accounted to their donors for what they received or spent. BIRN managed to establish partial figures through ICTY documents and from a corruption case in Pristina over alleged improper management of the fund for Haradinaj.

In Bosnia, Kosovo and Serbia, BIRN obtained its data for this investigation from public information requests.

But the other two countries - the ones that spent the most - were reluctant to give a full breakdown of what had been paid out, perhaps due to public sensitivity about lavish spending amid tough economic times in the Balkans.

Macedonia declined to give any information at all about what it had paid to support its two Hague defendants, and BIRN's estimate of Skopje's state spending was assembled from interviews and anonymous briefings from a range of official and legal sources within the country, as well as the few statements that are on record.

"I tried to get the data that you asked for, but I was immediately told that it's strictly confidential and that I should not ask," a Macedonian official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told BIRN.

The 9.5 million euro spent by Macedonia from 2006 to 2013 includes 3.5 million for a US defence team led by celebrity US lawyer Alan Dershowitz, and 2.5 million for lobbying.

Croatia failed to supply any more than the already-known sum of 28 million euro spent on the defence of three of its generals who were acquitted of war crimes, despite its legal obligation to do so under public information legislation.

No information was provided on any other payments, for instance to Bosnian Croat indictees accused of atrocities during the Bosnian war who are also Croatian citizens. It is still unclear whether Zagreb helped to support these men or not.



"The cases before [the ICTY] are seen by the countries of ex-Yugoslavia as a fight for their own truth, in which every state sees its opportunity to prove that their truth is the right one."

— Roland Kostic,
Uppsala University
professor

Neither was there any official confirmation of the amount that the Croatian state spent on engaging US company Patton Boggs to do lobbying work on the generals' case.

The Foundation for the Truth About the Croatian Homeland War, a private fund set up to aid the generals and defend their actions during wartime, has also published no accounts, although one of its promoters has said that it collected 1.1 million euro in its first year alone.

Politically-motivated payments

The official payments to aid Hague defendants have often been described by the states that made them as humanitarian efforts to support citizens on trial abroad.

But they were also made for political reasons, said Roland Kostic, a Balkans expert at Uppsala University in Sweden.

"The cases before [the ICTY] are seen by the countries of ex-Yugoslavia as a fight for their own truth, in which every state sees its opportunity to prove that their truth is the right one," Kostic said.

Providing funding for war crimes suspects, however lavish, is not illegal. The chief prosecutor of the Hague Tribunal, Serge Brammertz, told BIRN that it is "up to sovereign states to decide for themselves how they want to spend money".

But he noted that many victims of the wars in the former Yugoslavia, who often struggle to gain compensation from their cash-strapped and recession-hit states, often feel a sense of injustice when they see governments funnel money to battlefield commanders.

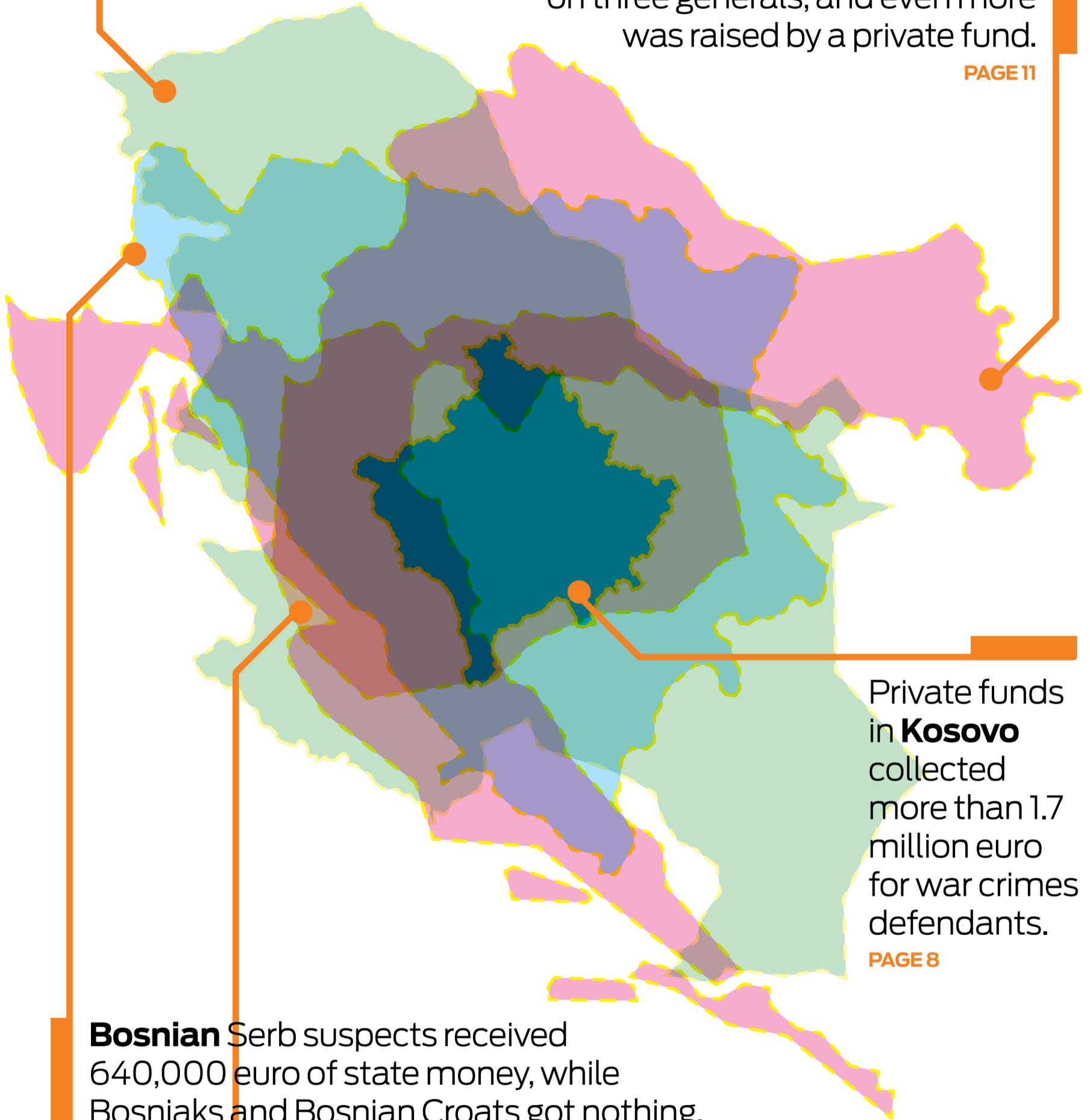
"I can understand the frustration of victims who see there are amounts of money invested in the defence of potential war criminals, many of whom get convicted afterwards," Brammertz said.

Serbia spent around 1.7 million euro on supporting defendants, a lot of it going to Bosnian Serb officers.

PAGE 10

Croatia spent over 28 million euro on three generals, and even more was raised by a private fund.

PAGE 11



Private funds in **Kosovo** collected more than 1.7 million euro for war crimes defendants.

PAGE 8

Bosnian Serb suspects received 640,000 euro of state money, while Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats got nothing.

PAGE 11

Macedonia kept payments secret, but, in fact, the country has spent 9.5 million euro on two indictees.

PAGE 10

Cover

Shadowy funds raise corruption fears in Kosovo

More than 1.7 million euro was raised by private funds to support Kosovo's war crimes defendants in The Hague, but they never made public exactly how the money was spent.

By Edona Peci

The Kosovo government did not pay anything directly to help the six former Kosovo Liberation Army fighters indicted for war crimes defend themselves at the Hague Tribunal, only laying out a relatively meagre total of 16,750 euro for a welcome-home celebration for some of its acquitted suspects.

But the two most prominent men who were accused by the international court, Ramush Haradinaj and Fatmir Limaj, who both went into politics and held high office after the war, received large sums from opaque private funds established to support them in The Hague.

BIRN tracked the money flow into funds established for post-war Prime Minister Haradinaj, who is currently head of the opposition Alliance for the Future of Kosovo, and for former transport minister Limaj, who is now a lawmaker with the ruling Kosovo Democratic Party.

BIRN's calculations suggest that Haradinaj's fund gathered more than 1.5 million euro and Limaj's attracted at least 212,000 euro—but the real amounts could have been even higher.

Because the funds published no accounts, it is also not possible to be certain whether all the money that was donated by the public in response to TV-advertised appeals was actually spent on the two men's legal teams.

Public pledges for Limaj

Limaj, Isak Musliu and Haradin Bala were the first former KLA fighters to be indicted by the ICTY after the conflict ended.

In January 2003, the Tribunal charged them with participating in a joint criminal enterprise with the alleged aim of intimidating, assaulting, jailing or killing Serb civilians and perceived Albanian collaborators who refused to cooperate with or resisted the KLA.

Limaj and Musliu were acquitted of all charges in September 2007, while Bala was sentenced to 13 years in prison.

All three initially applied for the legal aid which is offered to impecunious defendants by the ICTY, but Limaj's situation changed when a large amount of money was collected for him through a phone-line appeal which was advertised on Kosovo TV, appealing to people to donate money to help support their wartime hero.

The ICTY initially assigned British lawyer Karim Khan as counsel to Limaj in March 2003, but ended the arrangement after a few months, saying that "the total amount collected by the [Limaj] fund until October 8, 2003 is by far sufficient to cover all expenses of the defence for the remainder of the pre-trial stage".

In its decision, the Tribunal cited a press release from the Coordination Office for the Defence of Fatmir Limaj, which said the fund had raised \$291,594.92 [approximately 212,000 euro].

But in July 2004, Limaj's defence re-applied for legal aid, submitting a new financial declaration and claiming that the fund "has been exhausted and that it is no longer available to him to pay his defence before the Tribunal".

After analysing Limaj's finances, the ICTY's registrar decided that "the ac-

cused is partially eligible for legal aid" and agreed to pay half his costs for the remaining part of the trial.

But suspicions were raised in Kosovo about how the Limaj fund's resources were raised and used after Karim Khan remained his lawyer in two separate cases against him that followed his Hague acquittal, the Klecka detention centre war crimes case and the Kosovo Post-Telecommunication Ministry corruption case.

Although the fund was closed, Limaj still had the money to pay three lawyers, British attorney Khan and two Albanians, Tome Gashi and Tahir Rrecaj. Their payments were never made public.

Kosovo newspaper Koha Ditore reported in January 2013 that the EU prosecutor's indictment in the telecoms corruption case alleged that the money Limaj paid for his defence in the Klecka case could have been raised illegally. However Limaj's lawyers insisted that the cash was generated legally through a land sale.

Cash pours in for Haradinaj

In the second major Kosovo case at the ICTY, Ramush Haradinaj, Idriz Balaj and Lahi Brahimaj were charged in March 2005 with war crimes against civilians.

Unlike his co-accused, Haradinaj did not apply for legal aid, but like Limaj, he was supported by an appeal fund.

In May 2005, two members of his Alliance for the Future of Kosovo party, Jahja Lluka and Ethem Ceku, alongside one former minister in his administration, Astrit Haraqia, established the Committee for the Defence of Ramush



Haradinaj and opened a bank account for people to pay in money. Again, a telephone donation system was used, and again it was well-advertised on Kosovo television.

But the other two, less well-known men accused alongside Haradinaj could not call on such public support, meaning that they could only mount weaker defences, said Behxhet Shala, executive director of Kosovo's Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms.

"While it was easy for Haradinaj to ensure money, it was much more difficult for his co-accused. It was clear discrimination which we criticised by asking the government to take over the expenses needed for the defence of the accused," said Shala.

The Haradinaj fund however soon came under investigation and three people were indicted for corruption in connection with its methods.

Jahja Lluka from the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo party, Milazim Abazi,



director of Kasabank, and Hashim Sejdiu, manager of the Kasabank branch in Prishtina, were charged with false statements or reports, unlawful acceptance of contributions and failure to report transactions.

Abazi and Sejdiu were acquitted in 2010, but Lluka was found guilty, fined 10,000 euro and given a ten-month suspended jail sentence, which was later reduced to nine months on appeal.

The court found that between August 2005 and November 2006, Lluka had deposited over 1,500,000 euro for the Haradinaj fund in a series of different transactions at Kasabank.

But, like Limaj's fund, no accounts were published to assure donors that their money had been properly spent.

Although the names of the people contributing to the Haradinaj fund were never made public, Behxhet Shala said he was convinced "some businessmen who contributed financially to the funds were paid off later by tenders or other financial favours".

Emotional propaganda about defending the nation's wartime liberators was the spur for people to donate their money to the funds, which suffered from a "lack of transparency", said Nora Ahmetaj, executive director of the Centre for Research, Documentation and Publication.

"Through nationalistic discourse, the public was quite driven and sensitised to give money for the defence of Limaj, Haradinaj and others," Ahmetaj said.

"But the public never knew where those funds went and how much money was really spent. No one was responsible for the amount of money collected and the outgoing of those funds," she said.

In April 2008, Haradinaj and Balaj were acquitted of all charges after a three-year trial. Brahimaj was sentenced to six years' imprisonment for cruel treatment and torture.

A partial retrial followed, and in November last year, all three men were declared not guilty and set free.

A party, but no payments

Unlike other countries in the region, the Kosovo government did not financially support the ex-KLA fighters while they were on trial at the ICTY.

In July 2003, the government decided to "make a request to the Economic and Fiscal Council in order to ensure money for the defence fund of those accused by the International Tribunal in The Hague", according to documents seen by BIRN.

A similar request was made in March 2005 by then Prime Minister Bajram Kosumi.

The government decided to "establish a committee for professional, legal and financial help in the process of the Hague Tribunal for the ex-prime minister of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj".

But government permanent secretary Fitim Krasniqi told BIRN that "these decisions were never implemented."

Some have claimed that government bodies illegally and covertly made donations to the Haradinaj fund.

"It was mentioned several times that phone calls made to the Haradinaj Fund were made by Kosovo institutions," said Bekim Blakaj, executive director at the Humanitarian Law Centre.

But such claims were never proven.

The only official support for any of Kosovo's Hague defendants came in December 2012, when the government decided to allocate 16,750 euro on the "welcome [celebration] for Ramush Haradinaj and his comrades acquitted by the Hague Tribunal".

Muharrem Xhemajli, head of the War Veterans Association, said he believed that the state should have done more to support Haradinaj and Limaj financially.

"Several times we have urged the need for the state - and not organisations or private persons - to deal with this issue in order to prevent the mismanagement or manipulations which can occur," Xhemajli said.

"The Kosovo government should have contributed all it could in support of our former comrades," he insisted.

But while the ICTY defendants were feted as heroes and money poured in to help them win their freedom, the victims of the war were all but forgotten, said the Humanitarian Law Centre's Blakaj.

"I have never heard about a case in which victims were given reparations; the public doesn't know the victims and in fact it is not interested in knowing them," Blakaj said. "In most cases, the accused have the main role, and in the end, they end up being glorified," he concluded.

COMING TO THEIR DEFENSE

Fatmir Limaj
at least **212,000 €** raised

Ramush Haradinaj
more than **1.5 million €** raised

Huge secret payments revealed in Macedonia

By Sase Dimovski

The amount that the Macedonian government spent on supporting its two Hague Tribunal war crimes defendants, former interior minister Ljube Boskoski and policeman Johan Tarculovski, is possibly the biggest secret in the country.

The government did not respond to requests for data about it. Neither did the justice ministry.

But current and former officials have provided BIRN with information which suggests that the money spent on costs related to the two men's trials in The Hague, on lawyers and lobbying, court expenses and the lavish welcome-home parties that were organised after their release has added up to a total of at least 9,480,000 euro.

Compared to what Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia spent on helping to defend their citizens accused of committing heinous crimes in wars that lasted for years, not just a few months, it is a staggering sum.

Tarculovski is the only Macedonian convicted of war crimes by the Hague Tribunal. He was jailed for 12 years over his role in the brief but bloody conflict in 2001 between the Macedonian security forces and ethnic Albanian rebels known as the National Liberation Army.

He was found guilty of leading a police unit that killed ethnic Albanian civilians and committed other atrocities in the village of Ljuboten, near Skopje.

But the ICTY acquitted Tarculovski's chief, ex-minister Boskovski, who had been charged with having command responsibility over the unit.

The Macedonian government spent millions of euro on supporting the two men between 2005, when they were arrested, and 2013, when Tarculovski was released from prison after serving two-thirds of his sentence.

BIRN sent official requests to the Macedonian government and the justice ministry, and to the lawyers and families of the two men, asking how much was spent on their defence, on procedural costs, on expenses for their families, on visits to The Hague by senior political figures from Macedonia, and on the welcoming ceremonies in Skopje.

But despite their legal obligations to fulfill such requests, the government and justice ministry did not reply. Justice minister Blerim Bedzeti and his spokesperson made no response to BIRN's telephone calls, emails or text messages asking for clarification. Lawyers and families also refused to disclose how much they had received.

The reasons for this silence are political, said one government official who asked to remain anonymous.

"It is a sensitive issue that could cause a reaction from certain military veterans," the government source told BIRN, explaining that Macedonian soldiers and policemen who want compensation for injuries they suffered during the conflict, as well as ethnic Albanian ex-guerrillas demanding state pensions, could cause problems for the authorities if they learned how much was spent.

"I tried to get the data that you asked for, but I was immediately told that it's strictly confidential and that I should not ask," BIRN's source added.

"It was pointed out to me that as a member of [Macedonia's] Albanian community, I have no reason to look for data about the payment of money for the defence of two Macedonians who were tried for war crimes in The Hague," the source said.

Sifting the evidence

BIRN's estimated total of ten million euro includes government payments for domestic and foreign lawyers, lobbying efforts, money for the preparation of the



Macedonia's costly efforts paid off.

defence and translation of documents, for several trips to The Hague by governmental, parliamentary and party delegations, as well as for the return transport costs and the welcome-home celebrations staged for Boskoski and Tarculovski.

In 2006, several months after the men were detained and delivered to the international court, the Macedonian government decided to finance their defence and cover travel expenses for their families.

At first, the justice ministry granted the families 200,000 euro for travel expenses, accommodation and preparations for hiring lawyers.

When this amount proved inadequate, the government decided to approve an additional 770,000 euro, taking the cost to around a million.

Then Prime Minister Vlado Buckovski personally informed Boskoski that the government would fund his defence and hire Bosnian lawyer Edina Residovic, according to a government press office statement on June 2, 2006.

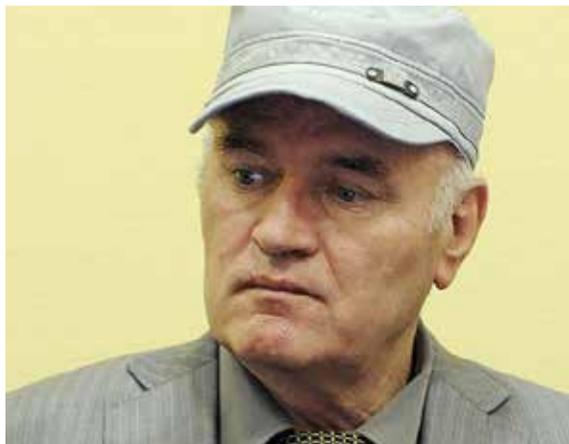
Buckovski confirmed to BIRN that, during his premiership, around one million euro was approved for the accused men's defense and costs.

"Most of that money, the one million euros that were allocated by the state, were given to foreign lawyers," said Buckovski.

Belgrade supporting Bosnian Serb Suspects

By Marija Ristic

The Serbian government has given approximately 1,700,000 euro in financial support to its Hague Tribunal defendants – suspects who include many Bosnian Serb army officers accused of some of the war's worst crimes, BIRN has learned.



Ratko Mladic began getting aid from Belgrade last April.

Belgrade is currently providing financial aid to 26 defendants, according to the director of Serbia's Office for Cooperation with the ICTY, Milan Markovic.

A document signed by Markovic lists the names of 26 people who are currently receiving state aid, including several former top Serbian security officials and Yugoslav Army officers, but the largest sum has gone to Serbian Radical Party Leader Vojislav Seselj – around 104,000 euro in total so far.

Eighteen of the 26 who are receiving aid however are Bosnian Serbs who hold Serbian citizenship, even though Belgrade insists that it was never directly involved in the early 1990s wars. They include Bosnian Serb Army commander Ratko Mladic, who is on trial for genocide, and his right-hand man Zdravko Tolimir, who has already been convicted of genocide.

Mladic, a Serbian citizen who started getting financial aid from Belgrade in April 2013, had received an overall amount of about 6,500 euro by November. However former Bosnian Serb political leader Radovan Karadzic, who was hiding in Serbia until his arrest in 2008, gets nothing from Belgrade because he does not have a Serbian passport.

Serbia is providing state aid to seven other Bosnian Serb Army officers who were convicted of involvement in the Srebrenica genocide, and to nine others involved in the killings and persecution of non-Serbs in other areas of Bosnia, including Stanislav Galic and Dragomir Milosevic, both jailed for the shelling of Sarajevo.

Belgrade cites the acquittals of Yugoslav general Momcilo Perisic and senior security officials Franko Simatovic and Jovica Stanisic as proof that Serbia did not play a crucial role in the 1990s conflicts.

"This [verdict] is of a tremendous importance for Serbia and the Serbian people because it proves that Serbia didn't carry out military aggression against Bosnia and Croatia," said Prime Minister Ivica Dacic after Perisic's acquittal.

But Roland Kostic, a Balkans expert at Uppsala University in Sweden, said that although Serbia insists that it is only giving the Hague indictees what they deserve as citizens, while continuing to claim that only its neighbour countries went to war, the payments prove that there was a direct link. "This data shows that Serbia actually feels responsible for them and their deeds," he said.

Croatia backing 'Homeland War' generals

By Josip Ivanovic

In November, Croatian generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markac returned to Zagreb to a rapturous welcome after being acquitted of war crimes by the Hague Tribunal.

Euphoric crowds celebrated in Zagreb's main square, waving national flags and holding up photos of the generals and banners reading 'Pride of Croatia', as patriotic songs blasted out across the city streets.

Many people in Croatia believe that the men's release, after they were acquitted on appeal, was a triumph for the Zagreb government's long-term strategy of lavishing funds on their defence.

The state spent a total of 28,145,610 euro on helping generals Gotovina, Markac and Ivan Cermak between



Ante Gotovina was ultimately acquitted in 2012.

2006 and 2012, according to government figures.

The brief email from the government press office to the H-Alter news website that revealed the amount said the money was spent on "legal representation at the ICTY" for the three men. No other explanation was given, and it is unclear whether the figure includes travel costs for their families or any other expenses.

The amount spent on supporting Bosnian Croat defendants at The Hague who hold dual Bosnian and Croatian citizenship is also unknown, if any money was spent on them at all, which remains unclear.

But the Croatian government, despite being bound by law to answer public information requests within a maximum of four weeks, has so far failed to respond to BIRN's further inquiries for full details.

Nevertheless, the sum of more than 28 million euro already puts Croatia well ahead of every other former Yugoslav country when it comes to payments to war crimes defendants at the international court.

Unlike Serbia and Bosnia, Croatia has a more straightforward view of its 1991-95 conflict, which is generally seen in the country as a righteous struggle for independence - the "Homeland War," as it is known.

"The defendants had massive support from almost all parliamentary parties and state structures," said Sven Milekic of the Zagreb-based Youth Initiative for Human Rights. They could also count on "significant support" from the public, he said.

Although the public has never been given the exact details of how much money the state spent, the acquit-

ment has been held up as a political triumph by top politicians and the generals themselves.

On his return to Zagreb, Markac described the verdict as proof that Croatia did not act illegally during wartime.

"I knew there was no joint criminal enterprise, I knew that the Croatian army and police liberated the country in an honourable way," he told the cheering crowds in the capital, adding that "everyone now can say that Croatian liberation was [achieved] without a stain".

The current centre-left government admits that war crimes were committed during the 1991-95 conflict, but has also expressed satisfaction about the generals' acquittal - although without making any comment about the money spent on attempting to ensure this.

"Gotovina and Markac are obviously innocent, but that doesn't mean that the war wasn't bloody, that mistakes were not made," Prime Minister Zoran Milanovic said after their return.

Dragan Pjevac, whose 68-year-old mother was shot dead and mutilated during the conflict in 1993, expressed cynicism about the Croatian government's motives in paying for the generals' defence costs.

"Perhaps, according to their short-sighted logic, it is more profitable to defend a crime," he said, accusing the authorities of spending much more on military leaders than on compensation for those who suffered

"Where are the victims? All the victims? Where are the reparations for them?"

In Bosnia, ethnic politics dictate payments

By Denis Dzidic

Bosnia and Herzegovina suffered the largest number of deaths during the early 1990s conflicts in the former Yugoslavia - around 100,000 - while some 2.2 million people fled their homes because of the war.

As a result, 101 of the 161 indictments raised by the Hague Tribunal were for war crimes committed in the country, but Bosnia has spent much less on its indictees than most other ex-Yugoslav states - with some of them receiving nothing at all from their home country.

The country's two political entities, the Serb-led Republika Srpska and the Bosniak-Croat Federation, have taken different approaches to their defendants at the UN-backed court: the Serbs have officially given their suspects some financial support, while the Federation has not.

Republika Srpska has spent a total of 640,000 euro on its ICTY indictees, officials in Banja Luka told BIRN.

The justice ministry said that the Bosnian Serb authorities have allocated funds to defendants in three ways.

The Bosnian Serb government decided in September 2005 that it would grant a one-off 25,000 euro payment to anyone indicted by the ICTY who voluntarily turned themselves in to the local authorities. Seven people did so, costing the government a total amount of 175,000 euro, although the authorities declined to reveal their names.

The second way method was in the form of one-off grants of 50,000 euro awarded to families of people



Many in Republika Srpska consider Ratko Mladic a hero.

detained by the ICTY to ensure their "material and financial wellbeing".

Thirdly, the Bosnian Serb authorities set up a foundation called Pomoc (Help) in 2001, through the Former Fighters Association of Republika Srpska, with the aim of helping families of those standing trial at the ICTY or the Bosnian state court.

Between 2003 and 2013, the foundation received around 412,000 euro from the Bosnian Serb government, which has been distributed to families of war crimes suspects either in The Hague or in Sarajevo.

Despite the fact that two wartime commanders of the Bosniak-led Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been sent to trial in The Hague - Sefer Halilovic and Rasim Delic - as well as several high-ranking Bosnian Croat officials, the Bosniak-Croat Federation govern-

ment has not allocated any funds for their defence or their families, BIRN was told.

But while the Republika Srpska authorities allocate funds for families of Serb war crime indictees, their defence costs are paid by the ICTY and are UN-funded.

The entire costs of the trials of former Bosnian Serb political and military leaders, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, which amount to hundreds of thousands of euros, were initially paid for by the ICTY.

After several years however, the ICTY this year made a decision that both Karadzic and Mladic would have to finance part of their own defence because they could afford it. Karadzic was ordered to make a one-off payment of 150,000 euro and Mladic 60,000 euro.

"The assistance consists of granting documents. We have never received any financial aid from any government in Bosnia and Herzegovina," said Miodrag Stojanovic, deputy counsel for Mladic. Legal representatives of both Karadzic and Mladic have told BIRN that they have never received any money from the Republika Srpska authorities for their work.

Kada Hotic from Srebrenica, who lost some of her family members when Bosnian Serb forces attacked the UN-protected area and massacred more than 7,000 Bosniak men and boys in July 1995, said that such payments represented a continuation of the war crimes of the past.

"It would be far better if they invested the money in the reconstruction of schools or communities, in any beneficial work from which people could get jobs, or something similar," Hotic said.

pi guide

Four stars: Perfection
 Three stars: Superb
 Two stars: Good
 One star: Just OK
 No Star: Don't Bother

GOOD



Legere shows promise in new beginning

By Arijeta Lajka

Hidden away from the nearby bustling center of Prishtina, Legere Creative Cuisine offers an enchanting atmosphere that is hard to come by in this city. Although the restaurant is modern, it has a touch of vintage flair, along with romantic decor.

Legere looks like it belongs somewhere in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The windows are surrounded by white string lights. Simple, yet stunning black and white portraits hang from the walls. Soothing Italian music was playing in the restaurant. The restaurant has rich wooden details, like the wooden ceiling and fireplace, along with a wooden wall, which holds wine bottles.

Upon arriving to Legere, my dining partner and I were greeted by a friendly and attentive staff. Legere has been around for a year, but reopened last week under new management and staff. The previous incarnation had a long menu and uneven execution of dishes that often looked much better than they tasted.

Legere did not have a printed menu during our visit. Our waiter read us a hand-written menu consisting of pasta, meat, soups and salad. Our choices were limited since we did not have a physical menu, but the waiter did allow us to be a bit more creative with our dishes.



We started with a "caesar" salad. Although the salad was an interesting mix, it was by no means anywhere near a traditional caesar salad, which was disappointing. We were served a salad consisting of juicy cherry tomatoes, green olives and carrots drenched in French dressing as opposed to caesar.

My dining partner created her own plate of pasta without a problem. She ordered pasta with carbonara sauce and grilled chicken. The white sauce was creamy and contained fresh spinach. The chicken was grilled to perfection, and she was pleased with her dish.

For my dish, I ordered a plate of fettuccine with a rich and spicy tomato sauce filled with dry-cured black olives. Over the years, I have built such a tolerance for spicy food that I no longer taste it. The pasta however had



good kick of spice, and within seconds I felt the heat, which I deeply missed and look forward to having again.

For dessert, we went with the only options available: chocolate mousse and cheesecake. The chocolate mousse was unconventional. The texture more closely resembled pudding than cake. The cheesecake had an airy decadence that was drizzled in berries and syrup. While the cheesecake alone was delicious, the syrup was too sweet and a bit overwhelming.

To balance the sweet taste of the cheesecake, I ordered a cappuccino, and my friend ordered a macchiato. Although there's a coffee shop in every corner of Prishtina, this was by far the best coffee we have had here.

Our meals arrived rather quickly and dinner was relatively cheap. Each dish of pasta was around 4 euro. Expect to spend around 10 euro a person. Only a short walk away from the center, visit Legere for friendly faces, pasta dishes that stand out, and a quiet, yet charming evening.

EDS EAT DRINK SHOP



CENTRAL ROOM > Central Room is a chic place to have dinner. It's a little brown house covered in bright white lights. Inside there are dark wooden tables, modern furniture, and vibrant artwork. The sophisticated menu had a vast amount of flavorful options. From creative salads to several steaks, the menu had a little something for everyone. The restaurant seems to lure in an international crowd. While eating dinner, I heard different languages all around me and our waiter spoke English fluently. Central Room offers a refreshing take on European cuisine especially here in Kosovo. Portions are a good size. It's one of the better fine dining options here in Prishtina. Desserts are baked in the restaurant and the tiramisu is absolutely decadent.



Central Room
 Garibaldi 63, near Central Bank and Newborn Monument, Prishtina
 Monday through Friday, 7 am to 12 a.m.
 Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.
 +377 (0) 44 810 000

LEGERE CREATIVE CUISINE

Address: Off Sylejman Vokshi Street, near restaurants Ultra and Mosaic, Prishtina
 Phone: +377 (0) 45 883 355
 Hours: Monday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 11 p.m.



FYI

PI

You can have PI delivered to your door and your inbox. Just drop us a line at info@prishtinainsight.com.

WHERE TO PICK UP PRISHTINA INSIGHT

06 Hotel Prishtina
Hotel Prishtina's 43 charming guest rooms and suites are reminiscent of a small hotel in the European tradition. 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.

07 Pizza Napoli
A taste of Napoli in Prishtina. 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. Pizzeria Napoli off Luan Haradinaj, opposite Newborn. 044/409-402402

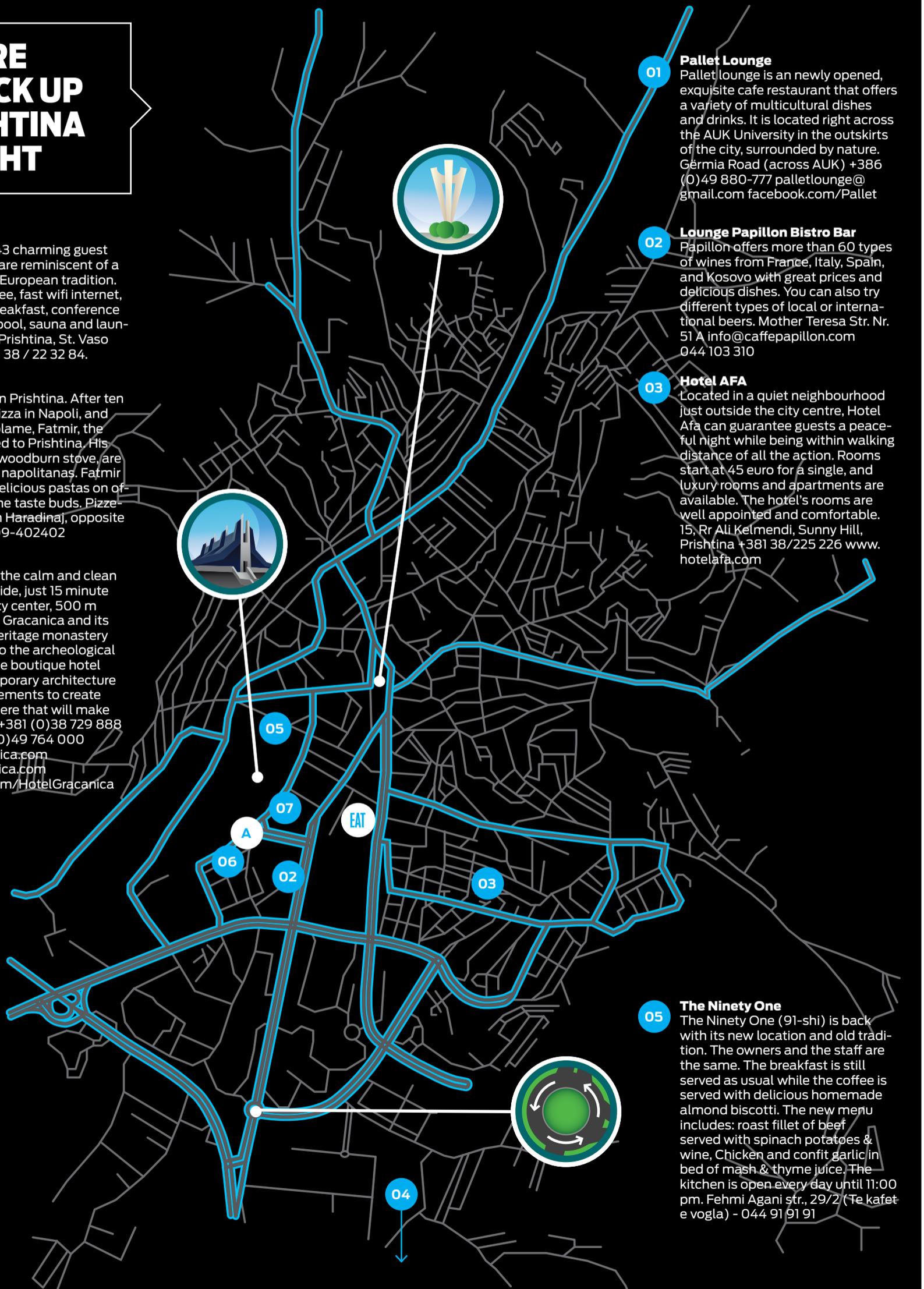
04 Hotel Gracanica
A place to relax in the calm and clean air of the countryside, just 15 minute sfrom Prishtina city center, 500 m from the center of Gracanica and its UNESCO World Heritage monastery and a short walk to the archeological site of Ulpiana. The boutique hotel combines contemporary architecture with traditional elements to create a unique atmosphere that will make you feel at home. +381 (0)38 729 888 (landline) +386 (0)49 764 000 info@hotelgracanica.com www.hotelgracanica.com www.facebook.com/HotelGracanica

01 Pallet Lounge
Pallet lounge is an newly opened, exquisite cafe restaurant that offers a variety of multicultural dishes and drinks. It is located right across the AUK University in the outskirts of the city, surrounded by nature. Gërmia Road (across AUK) +386 (0)49 880-777 palletlounge@gmail.com [facebook.com/Pallet](https://www.facebook.com/Pallet)

02 Lounge Papillon Bistro Bar
Papillon offers more than 60 types of wines from France, Italy, Spain, and Kosovo with great prices and delicious dishes. You can also try different types of local or international beers. Mother Teresa Str. Nr. 51 A info@caffepapillon.com 044 103 310

03 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. 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

05 The Ninety One
The Ninety One (91-shi) is back with its new location and old tradition. The owners and the staff are the same. The breakfast is still served as usual while the coffee is served with delicious homemade almond biscotti. The new menu includes: roast fillet of beef served with spinach potatoes & wine, Chicken and confit garlic in bed of mash & thyme juice. The kitchen is open every day until 11:00 pm. Fehmi Agani str., 29/2 (Te kafete vogla) - 044 91 91 91



Opinion

Send us your thoughts to info@prishtinainsight.com.



Kosovo picks up the habit again

Am I a fanatic or an extremist? This is the third time I have written an article on smoking. I happen to be deeply motivated by several factors. As I mentioned in my other articles, I saw what smoking did to my mother. The several savage illnesses that lead to her death were entirely smoking-related. Maybe I am just selfish because I feel more comfortable eating and drinking with friends when smoking is banned in restaurants and cafes, but I am also moved by the threat it poses to so many here in Kosovo.

In the last month or so, the respect for and enforcement of the 2013 Tobacco Law has nearly collapsed. Just to give a few examples, in two cafes on the main street of Obiliq, people were smoking. In a mini-market on "Police Street" and a parking lot nearby, cigarettes were openly displayed, which violates the law. In a cafe in the sports complex there was smoking and also in a restaurant on top of Arberia. These places are not hidden away, or far from potential officers who are supposed to enforce smoking restrictions. These cafes and restaurants are on main streets, near police officers, courts and international organizations. Most owners and

patrons no longer fear the possibility of being fined.

I recently visited a club, said to be owned by a prominent political figure. Before I entered I asked the man at the door, "Is there smoking inside?" He assured me that no one was smoking. I gave him 5 euro and entered. When I noticed that there were people smoking inside, I requested a refund, which he refused to give me.

The Kosovo Advocacy and Development Centre, a key force behind development and passage of the Tobacco Law, recently published a monitoring report on implementing the law in one small venue: As the law bans smoking in government buildings, was it being respected in Kosovo's court buildings? This is a prominent question to analyze since courts are a fundamental component in the process of imposing laws.

Courts have a vital responsibility in law enforcement, and many have concerns with smoking in the workplace. Research shows that 66 monitoring visits found that 67 percent of court personnel do not smoke, and 82 percent find smoking in the workplace a nuisance. A staggering 97 percent are aware that second-hand smoke is harmful to their own health. However, 86 percent feel too uncomfortable expressing their opinions. Though the



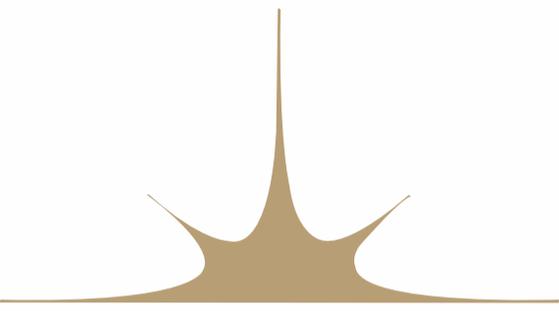
BY RAND ENGEL

majority do not smoke, and even some smokers who are bothered by smoking indoors, will never say anything. Perhaps if the general population were also surveyed, the results would also be similar.

There are plenty of reasons to enforce the tobacco law: the overall population would be healthier, and children will grow up in a less addictive atmosphere, which will give them a chance to avoid smoking later in life. Kosovo health care costs will decrease, and workers in restaurants, cafes and other public venues will suffer far fewer catastrophic illnesses over their lifetimes. Also, clothing and hair will not reek of cigarettes. Good laws should be obeyed, and the rule of law understood.

There are many restaurants, offices, public buildings and individuals who deserve respect and appreciation for following the law. However, if Kosovo does not react soon, the law may fail. Perhaps we should at least think of the children and what it may mean to them in the future if the law is not properly implemented.

Rand Engel has worked with Balkan Sunflowers in Kosovo since 1999.



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You are invited!

culture



Culture fusion yields special hotel - and a great brunch

Spicy Swiss *zimtsterne* biscuits sit next to the delicious local bread. Some homemade jams, and a plate of meats and cheese with a pot of smoky ajvar are also on the table. Serbian, Albanian, English and Italian are some of the languages that are around me. The Roma staff is smoothly managing the kitchen and reception desk. If one has ever dreamed of what a multiethnic brunch would look and taste like, this is it.

Hotel Gracanica opened last year and is becoming the thinking man's choice of venue. Whether it is for the food like the *birchermuesli* and air-dried *Sijenica* mountain lamb at Sunday brunch, or for the cultural events, like the Austrian Catch-pop String-strong orchestra, a Swiss literary evening, an exhibition by local artist Driton Selmani or even next month's yoga weekend. Hotel Gracanica has something in store for everyone.

From its stunning design by Prizren-born architect Bujar Nrecaj,

to its employment policies, which are providing jobs for 11 Serbian, Albanian and Roma employees, thought has gone into every element of the hotel. The design has the same 'fusion' feel as the eclectic menu. The design features Serbian handcrafts, the traditional layout of the Albanian village meeting rooms and the Swiss styled pale wood and clean lines that have bright handwoven textiles. This is how the Swiss-born Le Corbusier would design a Kosovo *oda*.

These surprising combinations are the result of the team behind the hotel. It is not just the staff who derive from different ethnic backgrounds, but also the team of three friends who came up with the idea. Atlan Gidzic and Hisen Gashnjani are from Gracanica, and Andreas Wormser is originally from Switzerland. Wormser came to Kosovo in 1999 with a Swiss government programme. The three men became friends in 2001 and are now business partners. They are also connected in other ways. Gidzic and Gashnjani are also double

brothers-in-law and Wormser is godfather to three of Gashnjani's children. Wormser, who speaks fluent Albanian, is the manager and main investor in the hotel, and Gidzic and Gashnjani are his deputies.

Perhaps it is the family connections which create the warm hospitable welcome. For Sunday brunch, between 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., for a flat price of 10 euro, help yourself to the buffet while staring out at the beautiful landscape beyond the hotel.

One foreign visitor said "it reminds me of Tuscany," while another said "you could be in Switzerland." In fact, we are in Kosovo, and the hotel offers the quintessence of Kosovo. Out beyond the fields, just a short walk away, is the archaeological site of the Roman-Byzantine city of Ulpiana. Half a kilometer in the other direction is the UNESCO World Heritage Site monastery of Gracanica with its medieval frescoes. These are some of the pearls of Kosovo's past, and what this hotel offers could be the best of Kosovo's future.



BY ELIZABETH GOWING

Elizabeth Gowing is a founder of The Ideas Partnership, a Kosovo NGO using volunteer power to tackle educational, cultural heritage and environmental challenges. She is also the author of *Travels in Blood and Honey*; becoming a beekeeper in Kosovo (2011) and *Edith and I*; on the trail of an Edwardian traveler in Kosovo – www.edith-and-i.com – published this summer. She can be reached on theideaspartnership@gmail.com



For more information visit www.hotelgracanica.com