



Prishtina Insight

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UNMIK Prepares for at Least Two More Years

Two-year fuel contract for UNMIK put out to tender despite calls from Government for mission to leave the country

By Vjosa Musliu and
Lawrence Marzouk in Prishtina

UNMIK is making preparations for at least two more years in Kosovo, despite calls from the Kosovo Government to end its presence in the country.

The timeframe emerged in a tender from the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, which is ordering in two years of fuel, with the option to extend the contract for another three years.

UNMIK's role in the country, which declared independence 17 months ago, has been largely taken over by the European Union Rule-of-Law Mission, EULEX, and the International Civilian Office, ICO.

But UN Security Council Resolution 1244, which gave the UN its mandate in Kosovo, remains in place and the mission has been criticised for being unready to relinquish its position any time soon.

UNMIK has until now refused to speculate on how long it is planning to remain in Kosovo, but the two-year fuel contract is being seen as a sign that the mission is not preparing an early exit.

The interpretation was rejected by UNMIK spokesman Russell Geekie. He said that the timetable would be decided by the Security Council.

He said: "The mission plans for different scenarios to ensure that we don't run out of gas."

The fuel is destined for UN distribution points in Prishtina, Mitrovica and Skopje, as well as "specific sites for approximately 36 UNMIK generators and 23 UNMIK heating units throughout Kosovo".

Government spokesperson Memli Krasniqi told Prishtina Insight that the Government's stance on UNMIK staying in Kosovo has been very clear since the implementation of Kosovo's constitution. "Considering the



Former UNMIK headquarters in Prishtina

political developments in Kosovo, UNMIK is not needed in Kosovo," he said, adding that the Government has sent a request to the Security Council calling for an end to the UNMIK mandate.

Civil society and opposition parties said the way Kosovo's Government had treated UNMIK is alarming. According to Ardian Gjini, from Alliance for Kosovo's Future, AAK, the Government has not invested sufficient effort to ensure UNMIK is made obsolete.

"UNMIK cannot be moved out of Kosovo with letters sent to the Security Council," said Gjini, adding that the current Government has not managed to build a proper state which would

send a clear message to the Security Council that the UN mission is no longer needed.

Albin Kurti, leader of the Vetevendosje! Movement, said there was one local and one international aspect to explain the longevity of UNMIK in Kosovo. "Kosovo's Government is trying to please everybody," said Kurti. According to him, the fact that the Government included Resolution 1244 in the declaration of independence is a scandal.

The second aspect, according to Kurti, is that Obama's foreign policy is fostering a multi-polar world giving more importance to the state's interests.

While EULEX deployment was

initially postponed, there was considerable determination from the EU institutions that UNMIK should be replaced by EULEX. "The main problem is that EULEX is coming in and UNMIK is not getting out," said Joost Langedijk, member of the European Parliament and its rapporteur for Kosovo.

As the new civilian mission started to deploy in Kosovo, while the UN was not moving, Kosovo's senior leaders started to call for UNMIK to end its mandate.

It has, however, significantly reduced its policing numbers. The figure stands at 500 today, down from 5,000 when Kosovo declared its independence.

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Xharra is the director of BIRN Kosovo, which produces...

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Major Kosovo Court Weaknesses



Kosovo's courts are inefficient, opaque, and hampered by persistent institutional obstacles, according to a 50-page report released today following a year-long monitoring project conducted by BIRN.

Major problems noted by the monitors in a report released this week include unreasonably...

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Prishtina Insight

Journalist Under Fire

Kosovar journalist Jeta Xharra is a spy for Belgrade, if one is to believe a campaign waged by pro-government press over the past week targeting the “Life in Kosovo” programme, which she hosts on public television and which dares to address controversial and even taboo topics.

Xharra is the director of BIRN Kosovo, which produces “Life in Kosovo,” aired weekly on public broadcaster RTK. Screaming front-page headlines on the Infopress tabloid newspaper reached a climax in recent days, stating “Jeta Xharra is an Agent of the Serbian Secret Police,” and calling for the programme to be taken off the air.

“This is an explosive allegation in a society still traumatised by Serbian oppression and wartime atrocities, and is a clear incitement to acts of violence against our Kosovo staff,” said Xharra.

On Thursday, Infopress appeared to issue a death threat against Xharra, commenting: “Jeta has brought it upon herself to have a short life.”

The situation intensified following the 28 May edition of the pro-



Jeta Xharra, Director of BIRN Kosovo

Photo by Asdren Rahmani for Prishtina Insight

gramme, dedicated to freedom of the media in Kosovo. It discussed how government advertising is used to influence the media landscape and recent dismissals of journalists who inconvenienced the authorities.

It featured a video report in which the BIRN Kosovo news team was expelled from the Office for Public Information of the municipality of Skenderaj in the central Kosovo

Drenica region, and forced to leave town by an armed man who confiscated their footage.

Infopress newspaper, which receives the lion's share of government advertising revenues, has led the campaign with a series of inflammatory articles on Xharra and the programme, claiming they had set out to denigrate the Drenica region. Threatening emails fol-

lowed, including death threats, and the newspaper itself published openly abusive and threatening letters from readers.

Xharra said: “We have nothing against Drenica. These are vicious and manipulative smears. On the contrary, our show has on several occasions dealt with the negligence of officials, which contributes to Drenica's/Skenderaj's continuous poverty”.

Given Infopress' closeness to the government, she added: “I would like to see the government explicitly distance itself from these disgraceful attacks. We need to be reassured that this is neither part of a wider campaign to put the public broadcaster under state control nor to silence an incisive and impartial source of information ahead of local elections scheduled for this autumn.”

“Life in Kosovo” is a very popular show, despite the death threats, spy allegations and negative press. It touches on taboo topics ranging from homosexuality to corruption of public officials and is Kosovo's most-watched current affairs program.

Editor's word

Liri!



By Prishtina Insight Team

When the world was just beginning to sense a serious, evil threat, a great man spoke up about freedom and said: “In the truest sense, freedom cannot be bestowed; it must be achieved.” And ‘liri’ (pronounced as ‘leereeh’) is the Albanian word for freedom, but for the truest sense of freedom, the truth which Franklin Roosevelt spoke about back then.

We are presenting you with this word now, as not the world, but this country is sensing a serious threat to its freedom – but this time it is not an existential freedom as such, rather freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

Our freedom, as editors of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, BIRN, is being threatened by some who are violating the first rule of freedom, which is: “one's freedom ends where somebody else's freedom begins”.

We are being attacked but not constructively criticised, we are being libelled but never proven wrong, we are being threatened but we are not backing down. And we never will, because we have assigned ourselves a mission to strengthen the media in this region, and to promote its freedom. And we will continue to do so, until we're certain that nobody will be called a spy or a traitor as we are now being called, and until the newspapers begin providing news, rather than calling for public lynchings, as they are now doing, against us.

And today, on the eve of the first year since Kosovo's constitution entered into force, we remind those who drafted the constitution, and those on whose behalf it was adopted, of Article 42, which guarantees freedom of the media.

We are using this editorial to inform first of all our readers, our government and parliament, and everybody living in Kosovo, that we are firm in our intention of using this freedom.

In this issue of Prishtina Insight, we offer you more information, more analysis and deeper insight into political, economic and social issues of the day. So enjoy reading until the next issue, as we continue to enjoy our constitutional freedom. As another outstanding man, Albert Einstein, said: “Everything that is really great and inspiring is created by the individual who can labour in freedom.”

Feith Defends BIRN Kosovo

The international community's top envoy to Kosovo, Pieter Feith has spoken out in defence of the Jeta në Kosovë (Life in Kosovo) TV programme amid threats made to journalist Jeta Xharra, who heads the BIRN Kosovo team which produces the show.

“I have the highest regard for the programme and I welcome the scrutiny of my own activities that the Life in Kosovo programme undertakes,” Feith, the International Civilian Representative and the European Union's Special Representative in Kosovo, wrote in a letter to BIRN's govern-

ing body.

“Freedom of expression, including in the media, is a central value of European Union integration. Deficiencies in this area have a direct impact on a prospective member's progress towards the European institutions,” he goes on to add.

Answering BIRN's call to take action against these threats, Feith said he “will give further consideration to following up the points you make, including with the Government of Kosovo, in order to strengthen this important right of all citizens”.



Pieter Feith, International Civilian Representative and Special Representative of the EU

Photo by Petrit Rahmani for Prishtina Insight

Albania-Kosovo Highway Marks Milestone

Crews working on the tunnel of the new highway connecting Albania and Kosovo completed work at the end of May, inaugurating the breakthrough with a celebration ceremony attended by Kosovo Prime Minister, Hashim Thaci and Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha.

The 5.6-kilometre tunnel is part of the Rreshen-Kalimash road - one of the segments of the Albania-Kosovo highway.

The milestone, which was transformed into an electoral rally by the Albanian leader, saw deputies from both countries and hundreds of supporters congregate in the tunnel in a show of unity between the two neighbours.

“We lived today one of our wildest dreams,” Berisha said, addressing the gathered crowd. “We did not tear down a wall today, rather a mountain that separated us,” he added.

Thaci also described the highway as a symbol of unity between the two countries, as well as a symbol of Kosovo's new independence.



Kosovo PM Hashim Thaci and Albania PM Sali Berisha

Photo by Petrit Rahmani for Prishtina Insight

“The central element of this physical and spiritual connection is the freedom and independence of Kosovo, the Kosovar state,” Thaci told the crowd.

Albania's largest public works project in decades, the four-lane highway is expected to strengthen the already deep ties between Albania and Kosovo, where more

than 90 per cent of the population of 2 million is of Albanian descent.

It will make travel for hundreds of thousands of Kosovars who cross the border to take their summer holidays in Albania each year much easier.

The road has been dubbed the “patriotic highway,” reflecting the widely perceived geopolitical

motives behind the project – and the fact that no feasibility study was ever undertaken into the possible return on investment for the massive undertaking. Corruption allegations and cost overruns have led many to question the ultimate value of the highway's construction.

Last November, following a 17-month investigation, Albanian Prosecutor General Ina Rama indicted Foreign Minister Lulzim Basha on charges of abuse of office in connection with the tender for the highway. The case has since been suspended.

Rama said the deal with Bechtel-Enka to build the most challenging portion of the road, the 61-kilometre stretch from Rreshen to Kalimash, had cost the country hundreds of millions of euro more than originally necessary.

The price tag for Bechtel-Enka's work, which covers a little more than one-third of the highway's full length, has leaped from 416 million euros in the initial contract to more than 1 billion euros, according to prosecution charges.

The New Leftists, Kosovo's Socialist Party



By Shega A'Mula in
Prishtina

The new Socialist Party of Kosovo marked its entrance onto the political stage in Prishtina on Saturday.

Emrush Xhemajli, head of the party, told Prishtina Insight that among a majority of right-wing parties, the newly formed Socialist Party of Kosovo intends to represent the ideals of the left, and "the interests of the middle class and poverty stricken citizens of the country".

Xhemajli, the head of the former Kosovo Peoples' Movement, LPK, which campaigned for Kosovo's independence for 27 years, and a member of Kosovo's Assembly, was voted Head of the Socialist Party. Xhemajli calls the formation of the Socialist Party a natural step after the fulfilment of the Kosovo People's Movement.

"We have become a party because the time came for this. The Kosovo People's Movement will remain a very successful political subject. It was created for the



The inaugural session of the Socialist Party of Kosovo in Prishtina

mobilisation of the population without distinction of religion, region or ideas for liberation of the country. With the liberation of the country and independence, along with the Albanian integration and European integration

which is occurring, the LPK's program has been realised," Xhemajli said.

The choice to brand their party as socialist was not only done to stress their left-wing position, but also develop a unified political

platform. The party has even adopted a red rose as their emblem, which socialist parties in many other countries use.

"We chose to be socialists to simplify the political stage in the region and, concretely, to simplify

the political stage of the left in Kosovo and Albania. Names and programmes that are not compatible with any other left-wing party in the region will not help political development," he emphasised.

According to Xhemajli, all of Kosovo's political parties have declared their positions, or are in the process of doing so, with the majority identifying themselves with the right, except Kosovo's Democratic Party, PDK, which he says has no left- or right-wing profile and is currently in power.

"This will enable Kosovo not only to have state, institutional and diplomatic relations with the world, but also to have political relations. It has less of the latter and not at all at a satisfactory level," he said.

Xhemajli characterises the left wing in Kosovo as putting citizens in the "spotlight" and focusing on the middle class and poorer citizens.

The party launch has not been timed for the autumn local elections, Xhemajli said. He added: "It has nothing to do with the local elections, but with the completion of the mission, the independence of the country".

Kosovo: New Home Welcomes Serb Returnees

Kosovo's Government has earmarked 16,000 euro for the construction of a new house for a Serbian family recently returned to Kosovo, lauding the move as a demonstration of the government's commitment to ensuring that Kosovo is a true home for all of its

ethnic groups.

Kosovo's Prime Minister Hashim Thaci and the head of the Spasic family, Sasa Rasic, kicked off construction on the new house with the ceremonial laying of the first cement for the foundations.

Thaci was then invited to dine with the family in what he described as "a lunch for a new democratic Kosovo, adding that the Spasic family was a perfect example of new life in an independent Kosovo, according to local media reports.

During the lunch, the 11-member Spasic family related their problems to the prime minister, saying, "we have land, but we don't have a truck to work it".

The youngest child in the family, Milan, presented the prime minister with a football. Thaci responded by saying that "Since your name is Milan, I hope when you grow up you will play for Milan as well."

"I want to thank you for helping me to get back here and to build my house," another family member, Darko, said, also taking the opportunity to thank his Albanian neigh-



Kosovo PM Hashim Thaci giving football to Milan, the youngest child of the Spasic family

bours for the welcome, Express and Koha Ditore reported.

The Spasic family had sent a request to the government of Kosovo, asking authorities to construct them

a new home after having abandoned theirs at the end of the 1999 conflict.

The government agreed to sponsor the building of the house, but it is unclear whether similar requests in

the future will be met, though Thaci pledged to continue the project.

"We are determined to continue with rebuilding projects," reporters quoted Thaci as saying during the lunch.

Kosovo Finally Appoints Ombudsperson

Kosovo's Parliament has finally appointed a new ombudsperson, which had been delayed continuously since 2006.

Sami Kurteshi took home 65 votes in a parliamentary poll, and has been appointed ombudsperson with a five-year

mandate.

The new 'people's lawyer' has pledged to "protect people's interests" and to serve all citizens of Kosovo.

Since 2006, the post of ombudsperson has remained empty, despite five parliamentary attempts to fill the position.



Kosovo's Parliament

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Croatia Tourism Suffers From Crisis

Though the tourism season has just begun, a new report has revealed that visits to Croatia are already down markedly, forcing the industry to look elsewhere, particularly to Serbia, to close the gap.

A report released by the Institute for Touristic Research and Forecasts, ITEP, stated on Monday that, based on data compiled so far for 2009, Croatia's domestic tourism industry is down 21 per cent as a result of the global financial crisis. The report said Croatia and Portugal had suffered the sharpest declines in tourism, ANA news agency reported.

In parallel, Croatia is now turning to its neighbour and wartime rival Serbia to boost its ailing tourism industry, the New York Times reported.

According to the report, tourism officials from Croatia's Istria and Dalmatia regions sent a delegation to a Serbian trade fair in May in a bid to boost Serbian visits to the Croatian coast.

The US daily quoted Dubrovnik hotelier Goran Strok as saying it was time to put historical grievances aside and welcome Serb tourists to the area.

"What [Slobodan] Milosevic and Serbian politicians did was unforgivable and should be remembered," he said. "But the war is finished, and we can't change who our neighbour is," Strok added. "The Serbs are also good people, and the time has come to reach out to them. I want to see Serb tourists in Dubrovnik."

The Association of Croatian Travel Agencies warns prices will have to be cut if the country is to attract enough tourists.



Dubrovnik

Macedonia "Needs One Billion Euro"

Macedonia will need at least one billion euro in fresh foreign capital by the end of the year in order to stabilise the current negative financial trends and avoid recession, the Skopje-based Regional Economic Chamber says.

At last week's session of the chamber, which includes some of the largest Macedonian companies, an appeal was made to the Government to provide one billion euro through foreign institutions, investment funds or banks, and to inject the funds into the local economy as soon as possible.

Experts warn that the country's economy desperately needs fresh money, as many companies are struggling to survive amid the global economic crisis. Some fear that the money the state said it would borrow from foreign commercial banks will not arrive in time to save some companies.

The chamber suggests using domestic banks to simplify and speed up the procedure for granting credit.

The Government said it would not make any new arrangements with the International Monetary Fund, IMF, for now. Macedonia's metal, construction and textile industries have suffered significant decreases in demand since the onset of the global financial crisis.

Amid decreasing tax revenues, Skopje has already cut budget spending by nine per cent, frozen public administration salaries and new state employment and decreased public spending.



Skopje



Kosovo Workers

Workers "Losing Confidence" in Divided Trade Unions

Questions are being raised about the effectiveness of trade unions in Kosovo after just 300 people turned out for the latest workers' protest



By Lavdim Hamidi in Prishtina

Workers are losing confidence in their trade unions because of poor organisation and a lack of communication between the two main labour groups, activists and economists have warned.

The latest protests organised by the Union of Independent Trade Unions of Kosovo, BSPK, on May 16, attracted just 300 from a membership of 100,000.

Despite the highest unemployment rate in Europe, at 45 per cent, Kosovo's two labour unions – the BSPK and Confederation of Free Unions in Kosovo, KSLK – are weakened by their lack of cooperation, it has been claimed.

Economist Nagip Skenderi said: "Unions are not well organised, especially in the private economic sector because employers pressurise and try to gag employees, which is a far cry from giving employees the right to protest for their rights."

He said that more effective cooperation between trade unions can be reached by following the model used in other countries.

"I think that there is an inadequate legal foundation for the organisation of unions. Moreover, cooperation between Kosovar unions and international ones needs to be organised to learn through their experiences and expertise, and better organise union activities," he said.

According to Skenderi, a solid organisation will ensure that workers' protests result in minimal requests being met, rather than "gentlemen's agreements" between business chiefs and union decision-makers to end demonstrations.

BSPK's director Haxhi Arifi admits that the last protest, aimed at protecting the rights of workers, attracted an insufficient number of members. However, he points out that the low turnout was due to the protest being held on May 16 rather than May 1, International Workers' Day.

But Government officials believe that

the small turnout at the BSPK protest shows that Kosovar workers wish to come to a compromise without taking to the streets.

"The fact that a small number of participants were at the protest demonstrates that the majority of workers do not support protests and wish to find solutions through dialogue, which the Government is also involved in," said Memli Krasniqi, the Government's spokesperson.

Arifi said the Government does not want strong unions. He suggested that the Government is investing in weakening union activities, and is very close to the Confederation of Free Unions in Kosovo, KSLK.

"The government wants to have three to four unions in Kosovo, so that we are not strong in our requests to improve workers' rights, even though Kosovar workers are in a difficult situation," explained Arifi.

He also criticised Kosovo's institutions for not creating the legal foundation to protect workers' rights, because of the failure to approve a law on labour.

"Due to the lack of a labour law, we still work under the foundations of UNMIK's administrative governance, which is very defective," he said.

Arifi explained that the private sector employs more than 250,000 people, who work long hours without the legal protection of contracts.

The KSLK admits that the partnership between Kosovo's two unions is fragile.

The KSLK was created in 2007 as a result of discontent at the 2006 Congress of the Association of Independent Unions of Kosovo, during which many administrators lost their positions in BSPK.

Ali Dragusha, deputy director of the KSLK, admitted that the creation of his organisation contributed to the pluralisation of unions in Kosovo. He added that the administrators of these two unions do not communicate with each other and warned that workers were losing confidence in union representatives.

"The director of the BSPK says that he has 104,000 members, while only 300 people went to the last protest," said Dragusha.

World Bank Votes on Kosovo

The World Bank voted on Kosovo's membership in the international body.

The main condition for membership in the World Bank is prior membership in the International Monetary Fund, IMF.

Last month, Kosovo's Parliament implemented a law for Kosovo's membership in the IMF and the World Bank.

Possible membership in the World Bank includes membership in other international financial mechanisms, which are part of the World Bank, such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Association for International Development.

Similar to the IMF membership, Kosovo's acceptance in the World Bank is not contingent upon membership in the United Nations.

Quoting an anonymous source, Kosovo's Public Television, RTK, said Kosovo's membership in the World Bank would become a reality very soon.

A new member in the World Bank is accepted by a majority vote of the board of governors, while the most powerful votes come from western countries, who are staunch supporters of Kosovo's independence.



Bosnia and Croatia Reach Trade Truce

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia have lifted mutual trade barriers on some food products, taking a significant first step towards ending a two-week-long trade war.

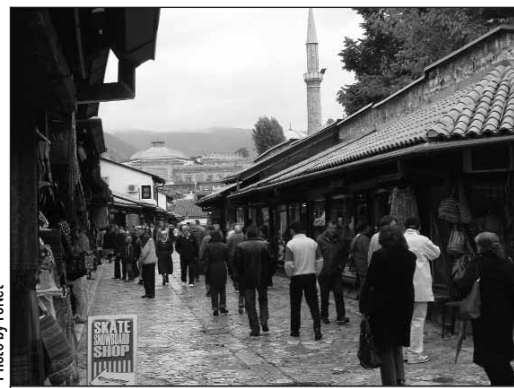
"Trade wars with Croatia end," read the front-page story in Mostar's daily Dnevi List newspaper.

After weeks of trade tensions and mutual accusations of wrongdoing, Bosnian and Croatian trade ministers and the heads of state veterinary agencies met in Sarajevo on Saturday and quickly agreed to restore trade in poultry, beef and fish products.

Trade of live fish and beef cattle between the two countries is still blocked, but Drago Nedic, head of Bosnia's state veterinary office, assured producers that a solution would soon be found in regard to live fish trade, while Croatia has asked for additional time to consult with the EU regarding the beef cattle trade.

The trade wars were sparked two weeks ago after Croatia suddenly halted poultry and live fish imports from Bosnia, prompting Bosnia to respond with countermeasures. In addition to halting the import of poultry and fish, Bosnia also blocked the import of beef cattle from Croatia. Croatia has blocked the import of beef from Bosnia for the past nine years.

"With this agreement, we have established a much better position for producers from Bosnia and Herzegovina," Nedic said in an interview published in the Banja Luka daily Nezavisne Novine.



Sarajevo



Mother Teresa Square

French Old Timers Shake Prishtina

25 French drivers of classic cars were stationed on Mother Teresa Square in Prishtina on Saturday, May 30, during midday. The French “Old Timers” came from Serbia to pass through Novoselle village of Vushtrri. The tour continued with the drive in front of Kosovo’s Parliament to stop later on the main boulevard.

Citizens of Prishtina and other fans of classic cars felt the attraction of the old vehicles, while Kosovo’s Business Alliance took care to provide a warm welcome to the drivers, offering them domestic products.

A second group of 35 French Old Timers impressed Kosovo’s capital on June 1.



One of the classic vehicles on Mother Teresa Square

Prishtina Stands Still for Champions League Final



By Vjosa Musliu in Prishtina

Rather than stay at home, football fans in their thousands opted to watch the final of the Champions League in the many cafés and bars around Prishtina. This tradition, perhaps most associated with Britain, of gathering in a watering hole to watch a game has well and truly reached the capital of Kosovo, if last Wednesday is anything to go by.

Bars, cafés and even the plateau outside Oda Theatre were rammed with supporters of Barcelona and Manchester United and neutrals, for the climax of the football season.

Peja beers, international beverages and snacks filled the tables, where groups of male friends waited for their Spanish or British idols to shake the net of the opponent’s goal.

Watching matches at cafés and bars became popular in Kosovo after the end of the war. Most football fans interviewed by Prishtina Insight said they preferred to watch the game at the bar as they



Football fans watching the Champions League final at Lounge

can discuss the minutiae of the play with their friends and shout freely when the referee makes “ridiculous decisions”. Indeed, one of the possible factors impeding Prishtina’s ladies from frequenting these events is the fruity vocabulary directed mainly towards the man in black.

“I cannot shout and say these words in front of my children,” said a taxi driver, who was enjoying a beer and supporting Barcelona.

By and large, the environment

was quite friendly and fun. As Barcelona scored its first fantastic goal, disappointed fans of the British team goaded the opposition supporters by pointing out that Spain had not recognised Kosovo.

A game of quality football followed with Lionel Messi, Samuel Eto’o and Cristiano Ronaldo the highlights of this stellar cast, but there could only be one winner, and it was the Barca’s fans who danced into the night to celebrate another crown for this illustrious club.

Prishtina through the eyes of:

Mia Marzouk Freelance Consultant

Mia Marzouk, born and brought up in London and south-east England, moved to Kosovo in March, is now working as a freelance consultant specialising in security issues.

Where do you take friends when you go out?

It’s a bit early to say since we haven’t had friends to stay yet, but a visit to Natyra shop at the top of Bedri Shala road which sells eggs, coffee, nuts and honey would be high on my list. And then perhaps if some good jazz was on at Oda, we might pop in there too.

If you were mayor of Prishtina for a day, what would you do?

I would slap a congestion charge on 4x4 vehicles driving in the centre of the city (with no exceptions) and use the money to improve rubbish collection and recycling facilities in Prishtina.

What makes you feel at home in Prishtina?

It’s an incredibly safe city for ordinary citizens. In London, if you left your mobile phone on a cafe table, it would disappear within minutes. Here, I feel much safer.

What do you like about Prishtina?

Everything is walking distance. For someone who has just left a 3 ½ hour commute, this is very special – and it keeps you fit!



Mia Marzouk

A Taste of Kosovo

Gjevrecke

1 cup all purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon olive oil
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoon water
1 tablespoon milk plus
1 teaspoon
1 egg, beaten
100 grams of sesame seeds
milk for brushing



Preheat oven to 200 Degrees Celsius.

Sieve flour and salt into a bowl.

Make a well in the middle of the flour. Add olive oil, melted butter, water, milk, and egg.

Fold the dry ingredients into the liquids. Knead it into a dough for about 10 minutes.

Role the dough into long pieces roughly around 20 cm in length. Bring end of the pieces together to form circles.

Place circles on greased pan. Brush with milk and sprinkle sesame seeds on top.

Bake for 30 minutes, until the tops of the gjevrecke are golden brown in color and crispy on top.

Freedom Fest puts Kosovo on the world festival map

On June 12 and 13, Kosovo will mark the 10th 'Anniversary of Liberation' and the beginning of a new festival. With big name acts such as Gus Gus and Zenzile, Freedom Festival in Prishtina aims to put Kosovo on the map for international artists



By Arif Muharremi
in Prishtina

For two days, Prishtina is going to host top international bands to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the end of conflict with Serbia.

Local radio station Urban FM has joined forces with the Prime Minister's Office and the Vala mobile phone operator to organise this big, free event.

According to organisers, Kosovo needs a festival to attract international artists, who have until now ignored the country.

The slogan of the festival is 'Urban Goes Green', and organisers aim to raise awareness on the importance of protecting

the environment and tackling global warming.

Playing alongside international bands will be a host of well known Balkan outfits, including the famous Bla Bla Bla from Skopje and Spasulati, an Italian-Albanian band.

Berna Caka, one of the organisers, said they had the idea for the festival years ago, but did not secure financial support until now. "During all these years there were only some poor folk concerts organised for this national day," said Berna.

The festival will be held in Gërmia Park, where a number of stages will serve as platforms for different genres of music.

"One of the most important things is that we will leave Gërmia in the same condition as we find it," Berna says. "It is our mission to keep the nature clean".



Kadare Delighted at "Two Albanian states" in Balkans

Famous Albanian writer Ismail Kadare has praised the latest developments in the Balkans and said that time is working in favour of Kosovo, and all Albanians.

"Kosovo is going forward and Albanians are going forward," said Kadare, during his visit to Kosovo last week.

"It's delightful that we have two Albanian states in the Balkans," added Kadare, addressing students at the American University of Kosovo.

The writer of General of the Dead Army also noted that whenever he comes to Kosovo, he is pleased to see people working in the country's interests. Born in Gjirokastra, in south east Albania, Kadare is connected to Kosovo through his books, which he used to raise Western awareness on the plight of Kosovo Albanians who, at the time, were suffering persecution under Milosevic's regime.

Apart from The General of the Dead Army, translated into more than 52 languages, Kadare's other famous works include The Wedding, The Castle and Doruntine.

In 1990, Kadare claimed political asylum in France, issuing statements in favour of democratisation. During the ordeal, he stated that "dictatorship and authentic literature are incompatible. The writer is the natural enemy of dictatorship".

He was awarded the Prix mondial Cino Del Duca. He won the inaugural Man Booker International Prize in 2005. He was also a Nobel Prize candidate.

Graphic Design for Life

The exhibition of Fatmir Krypa's graphics sets out his forty years as an artist

Everybody loves Fatmir Krypa, the author of drawings in Abetare - the first book of first grade kids, complete with red-cheeked boys and girls who have taught generations of children the alphabet.

But Krypa is best known for his outstanding graphics, and

seventy of them are now exhibited at the National Gallery in Prishtina, representing his work during forty years as a professional artist.

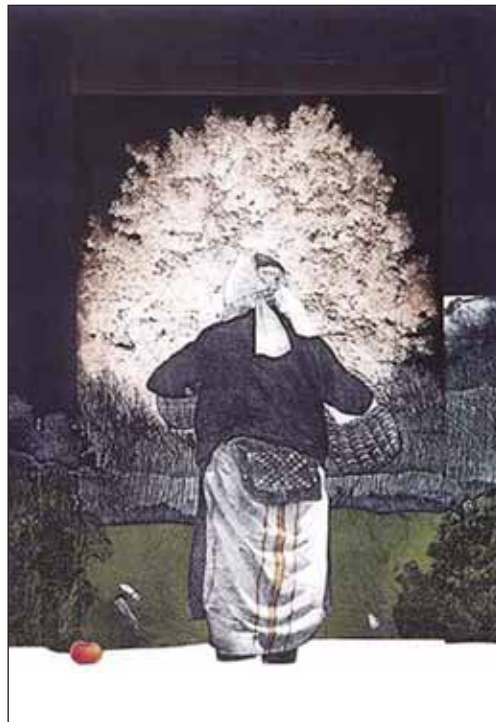
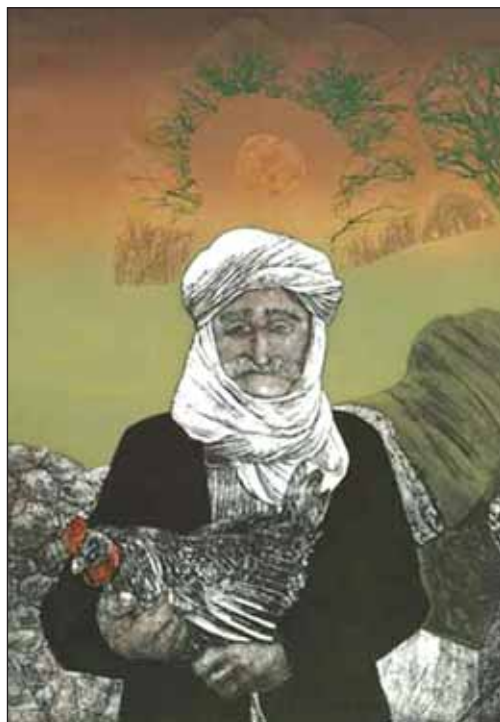
Krypa graduated from the Academy of Applied Arts in Belgrade in 1968, and received a masters degree from the Academy of Figurative Arts in

Zagreb in 1977. He has been awarded 14 national prizes in his career.

"I was lucky to belong to the most representative crew of Kosovo artists," he said. "My work exhibited here is divided into a few inspirational cycles and it includes good times and bad times of my life."

Krypa is known for depicting Albanian symbols in his graphics, and his most celebrated work remains portraits of Albanian women wearing traditional costumes.

The exhibition of Krypa's work can be visited every day, except Sundays, at the National Gallery.





Rahovec Vineyard

Good Year for Kosovo Wine



By Krenar Gashi

On an undulating terrain in central Kosovo, between the town of Rahovec and Prizren, lies Stone Castle, one of country's best wineries and vineyards.

Just by the large vineyard, in a modest building situated in between two hillocks, Shani Mullabazi, general manager of Stone Castle, talks proudly about the company he manages.

"We export 95 per cent of our products," says Mr Mullabazi, explaining that the company has recently debuted in the English market, co-operating with Adel UK Ltd.

"We made it, despite all the obstacles, despite the global financial

downturn," he added, explaining that the financial crisis has affected the company directly, as many payments from their partners abroad have been delayed.

Stone Castle, previously known as NBI Rahoveci, was sold in August 2006 for 5 million euro. The buyers, two Albanian-American businessmen from the US, committed to invest an additional 5 million euro after privatisation, and have already ploughed in 6 million euro.

The winery, which was initially built in 1952, exported throughout Europe while Kosovo was part of Yugoslavia, and was one of the cornerstones of the Rahovec economy. In 1975, it was expanded, increasing the production and storage capacities, while in the 1980s it was already exporting more than 40 litres of wine every day.

Even during the UN administra-

"We made it, despite all the obstacles, despite the global financial downturn,"

Shani Mullabazi

tion of Kosovo, the winery functioned and was able to export. Prior to Kosovo's independence, each bottle had to be stamped with the wording "UN Security Council resolution 1244", before it could be exported.

But following independence, things have changed, and Stone Castle expects to enter the American market very soon.

There are some 4,000 hectares of vineyards in Kosovo, most of them



Grapes on the vine

located in the Rahovec area, which is known for producing many agriculture products, but especially grapes.

Stone Castle alone owns some 600 hectares of vineyards. But in order to produce 10 million litres of wine, which was the total production in 2008, they also buy grapes from local farmers.

At its peak, the production capacity of the winery can go up to 1.5 million kilograms a day. It has a storage capacity of 50 million litres, out of which up to 5 million can be stored in wooden barrels, all of which are located in a huge underground cellar, where the temperature is naturally kept at the same level during all seasons.

The Rahovec-Prizren road divides the winery in two parts, but the company has an underground passage to pass from one side to the other. The division, explains Mr Mullabazi, is simple: red wine is produced in the upper part, and white wine in the lower.

Stone Castle's red wine products include cabernet sauvignon, merlot, pinot noir and amphora. White wines they produce feature chardonnay, riesling and elena. The winery also produces grape brandy, better known as raki in these parts.

At its peak, the production capacity of the winery can go up to 1.5 million kilograms a day.

Mr Mulalbazi is one of the rare cases in Kosovo when directors of the so-called socially owned enterprises remained in their positions after privatisation, as in most cases, new owners changed the management of the privatised companies straight away.

"We made a huge success," he says. But he complains that unlike neighbouring countries, Kosovo has no stimulating policies for export. Producers in other Balkan countries receive subsidies of some 10 per cent of the price for each exported article.

Despite the lack of subsidies, the company, which employs 250 people, has made a turnover of 3 million euro during 2008, out of which less than 10 per cent is expected to be profit.

"Everything is made here. Grapes grows nearby, fermentation done here and so is the bottling," says Mullabazi.



The winery at Rahovec



Dining area of C7

C7 is Seventh Heaven for Cheap Italian Fare



By Maneater in Prishtina

With the ever increasing stock of restaurants in central Prishtina, it is easy to forget the many eateries located up in the hills that surround downtown. A ticket to cheaper prices and quieter dining should be expected at these restaurants, and C7 delivers.

A view overlooking a peaceful residential street, abundant greenery and a distant Prishtina centre is on offer at one of the few tables at C7, a modest restaurant located in the neighborhood of Ulpiana. The dining area is small, but works with the presence of a large floor-to-ceil-

ing window, which I settled down next to.

The menu includes an array of Italian-inspired options, the staple of many eateries in the city. Salads, sandwiches, pastas, chicken and beef dishes are available, all at very reasonable prices.

Perhaps it was the low expectations after the bruschetta fiasco, but my dining partner and I were impressed with the authentic cuisine served up.

We went with bruschetta (priced at 1 euro), and a mozzarella salad (priced at 2.5 euro), for appetisers.

Minutes later, a plateful of bruschetta pieces arrived, along with the salad of fresh mozzarella, tomato, and avocado.

The bruschetta topping was delectable but unfortunately placed on partially toasted, stale bread which had to be treated with a healthy dose of olive oil to be even the slightest bit enjoyable. However, the mozzarella salad, accompanied by a balsamic dressing and gorgeous pieces of avocado, was refreshing.

Our main courses of chicken and vegetable risotto and salmon tagliatelle arrived minutes after we had wolfed down our appetisers. Perhaps it was the low expectations after the bruschetta fiasco, but my dining partner and I were impressed with the authentic cuisine served up.

The risotto possessed the kind of



One of the few tables at C7

creamy texture which is characteristic of the dish. Roasted vegetables were abundant, along with crispy pieces of chicken and a hint of tomato sauce smartly added to the broth.

The salmon dish also amazed due to the lightness of the tomato sauce, which did not compete with the delicate fish. The dish was composed of large chunks of pan-seared salmon beautifully topped with thick tagliatelle and colourful vegetables.

Dessert, unfortunately, was not even an option.

My suggestion would be to focus on the pastas and more complex main courses, since it was apparent that less creativity and attention was spent on the basic options.

All in all, the service was flawless and the main courses were priced exceptionally low and delivered impressive flavours. The backdrop of a quiet neighbourhood street slowed down our hectic work day, and the absence of downtown Prishtina's noisy lunch crowd was definitely much appreciated.

However, you might want to advise the staff to put down the volume on their sound system, or turn it off all together, as the drone of Albanian music contributed to obscuring conversation more than anything else.

PS. C7 is the name of the block of apartments the restaurant is located in.

Meal for two plus a bottle of wine around 20 euro

We Recommend

Central Room

Central Room's almost panoramic view of all roads leading to its location on the corner of Pejton conveniently puts its diners at the heart of one of Prishtina's most foot-trafficked areas, making ogling slightly more discreet, and that much easier. Nevertheless, the refreshing interior and flavoursome cuisine may just help you kick that oh so Prishtinian habit of staring out the window at the passers-by.

PoshNosh

Tucked behind one of the banking buildings surrounding Grand Hotel is Poshnosh, a diminutive café, serene in nature, compared to its buzzing backdrop. The menu is simplistic, with a collection of salads, sandwiches and burgers, but offers excellent value for money and is well suited for lunch.

SachPizza

SachPizza is certainly the spot to stop at when in dire need of some quality chow, may it be on a quick lunch break or on a mission to find some food after a night on the town. Yes, SachPizza's oven is open until three in the morning for those of you who burn all your calories on the dance floor, or chatting someone up at a bar.



Entrance to C7 Restaurant

Photo by Petrit Rrahmani for Prishtina Insight

Photo by Petrit Rrahmani for Prishtina Insight

Photo by Petrit Rrahmani for Prishtina Insight

BIRN Reveals Major Kosovo Court Weaknesses



By Fatmire Terdevci
and Tom Fuller

Kosovo's courts are inefficient, opaque, and hampered by persistent institutional obstacles, according to a 50-page report released today following a year-long monitoring project conducted by BIRN.

Major problems noted by the monitors in a report released this week include unreasonably long delays in opening, and then concluding, cases; failures to meet the standards expected in handling trials, and some instances of suspected corruption by judges and prosecutors.

The study, conducted at four district courts and seven municipal courts from March 2008, found that the workload of judges varies widely. In the district court of Pec/Peja last June, for example, one judge heard 99 cases, whilst another heard none. Of the 513 trials monitored across the country, 59 per cent began late.

Flawed administration slows the work of the courts, according to the study. Problems included the possession of out-of-date contact details for suspects; the centralised appointment system for administrative staff and the inability, or unwillingness, of court staff to use the new computerised registration system, despite the offer of training.

In addition, the failure to produce

electronic recordings of court proceedings, as required under the 2004 Criminal Procedure Code, raised concerns that some information or statements may not be included in official records.

One contributing factor may be that almost three-quarters of the monitored trials took place in judges' offices, as opposed to court rooms, in contravention of the principle that trials should be open to the public, as far as possible. Additionally, one of the major violations of the court work is that public prosecutors have been found to attend up to three trials at the same time, when they are expected to concentrate on one trial.

The judicial police unit for investigating court cases still does not exist, some five years after it was envisaged in Kosovo's criminal justice code. The work is currently performed by investigators from the overburdened Kosovo Police Service. The Chief Prosecutor for the Urosevac/Ferizaj municipal court, Ekrem Shabani, cited the lack of a judicial police service as an important factor in the large number of unsolved crimes in his municipality, which stood at 1,400 in 2008 alone.

Even after judgements are passed, the enforcement of sentences is patchy. For example, out of the 591 criminals punishable by imprisonment in 2008 in Pristina municipal court, only 298 actually went to prison.

According to Rifat Abdullahu, the head judge of Urosevac/Ferizaj municipal court, the system for civil



Photo by Petrit Brahmani for Prishtina Insight

sentences "is in true chaos". In his court, out of the 6,050 cases processed in 2008, fewer than 10 per cent had their sentences imposed. Figures for the municipality of Pristina are similarly low.

Court officials suggested this was being caused by uncooperative banks, the mis-registration of debtors' addresses and insufficient physical and human capacity to effectively deal with the collection of fines and enforcement of sanctions.

However, Artan Arifi, an official from Gnjilane/Gjilan municipal court, claimed that the statistics for civil cases appeared alarming because "a large number of unpaid fines are from Post Office debtors", adding that the Post Office "sometimes initiates judicial proceedings for debts of 25".

Monitors observed that public defence lawyers often did not attempt to communicate with their assigned clients outside of court. In

one trial in the municipal court of Pec/Peja, the public defence lawyer had to ask the prosecutor which individual was his client.

The other main violations of legal norms highlighted in the report were the widespread use of mobile telephones by court officials during trials and the failure, in some cases, to provide suitable translation for parties and witnesses who could not speak or read Albanian.

The report found that institutional problems were at the heart of issues related to the smooth-running of trials.

After three years of delays, the re-evaluation of judges and prosecutors has finally begun. The process, which is hoped to 'cleanse' the judiciary of those who have abused their positions, is scheduled to last 22 months. Those officials wishing to continue working in court must submit to an evaluation of their past activities.

However, those officials who do not reapply will not be subjected to checks. Consequently, BIRN has drawn attention to the possibility that unsuitable judges and prosecutors could simply move to another role within the judiciary.

Despite the major impact the re-evaluation process may have upon Kosovo's judiciary, as well as the persistently low number of officials, the Ministry of Justice has not held Bar Exams since January 2008. The report concludes that not only is this a violation of the ministry's obligation to hold exams at least three times a year, but it could lead to a shortage of suitable candidates to replace those judges deemed unsuitable in reform processes.

In the meantime, judges suspected of abusing their positions have not been subjected to restrictions. Gnjilane/Gjilan district court's head judge, Ymer Huruglica, admitted trying to influence the direction of the criminal trial of a relative, charged with the possession of heroin. Despite the opening of an investigation into this case by the Office of the Disciplinary Prosecutor in June last year, Huruglica, also the head of the Kosovo Society of Judges, continues to preside over civil and criminal cases in Gnjilane/Gjilan district.

A series of targeted recommendations has been put forward by BIRN in the hope its report will encourage the competent authorities to push for further reforms and wholeheartedly implement those previously agreed.

'Freedom of Expression in Kosovo a Luxury

Balkan Investigative Reporting Network has uncovered allegations of journalists being intimidated or even sacked for tackling difficult question. BIRN team investigated concerns about freedom of the press in the young country and discovered the media's critical voice is being jeopardised by conflicts of interests, political and business interference and the psychological power of Omerta.



By Vjosa Musliu in
Prishtina

Television Journalist Jeton Llapashtica claims to have lost his job because of the questions he asked. Not because his line of inquiry was irrelevant, or his delivery poor, but because he directed "very tough questions" at Kosovo's government spokesperson, Memli Krasniqi.

Llapashtica alleges he was fired from his Besa TV job purely because his questions were not in the best commercial interest of the television station he was working for.

During his interview with Krasniqi, Llapashtica asked the Government's spokesperson to comment on Kosovar rock band Troja and their song Clown's testament, in which the political apparatus in Kosovo is criticised as an organised team which is stealing land.

Talking to Prishtina Insight, Llapashtica said that the director was very frank and plain when explaining the reasons why he should quit. Llapashtica said he was told: "You shouldn't have asked him that question because you provoked him very much. We shouldn't taunt the government people. They give us advertisements."

However, Besa TV director

Muhamer Fusha argues that Llapashtica was dismissed for his general performance. But he added that "being critical, and a local TV station, is not in the best interest of local TV station". He said it was the national media to tackle the bigger issues.

While compiling a report in Skenderaj Municipality, which is led by the PDK, Kosovo Democratic Party, a BIRN team was attacked and impeded from filming. Journalist and presenter of Jeta në Kosovë, Jeta Abazi was trying to report on failures by the mayor.

"Instead of leaving Skenderaj with certain emotions, knowing that the region is famous for resistance toward the Serbian regime, we are back with other emotions and with police escort," Jeta Abazi told viewers after the incident.

According to Glauk Konjufca, from the Vetevendosje! Movement, there is no freedom of expression in Kosovo. "There is an entire mechanism of small scale blackmails, threats, phone calls and pressure threatening the freedom of speech either on behalf of the government or the institutions".

An OSCE report, covering summer 2007 to 2008, claimed that "politicians and political parties continue to consider media as their spokespersons. Media are ordered to publish the Prime Ministers speech for free."

And, according to the US Department of State in 2008:

"Journalists in Kosovo are intimidated by the government officials, public service workers, as well as by businesses. Some media are financed by business groups and by political interests groups, which offer them financial support in exchange for positive reporting."

Freedom House, a Washington DC based organisation which assesses freedom of expression in all countries, said of Kosovo: "Most media in Kosovo face great financial difficulties. The editorial independence remains weak and media are adhering to business interests. Public broadcaster Radio Television Kosovo is particularly at the whim of political and economic interests."

BIRN has conducted an investigation into changing patterns of government advertising in newspapers. It emerged that some newspapers have more advertisements with the PDK-LDK coalition, elected in 2007, while others lost their advertisements with the arrival of this partnership.

Infopress newspaper, largely seen as a pro-Government newspaper, had 234.5 pages of advertisement in March 2007, while in 2009 it had doubled at 406 pages of advertisement. On the other hand, Zëri newspaper, headed by deputy head of Alliance for Kosovo's Future, AAK, Blerim Shala, had 260.5 pages of advertisement in April 2007, while in 2009 it had 178.5 pages of advertisement.

An investigation by think-tank

KIPRED, Kosovo Institute for Political Research and Economic Development, also found similar changes. KIPRED followed the situation with all daily newspapers for eleven consecutive days to see which one received more advertising following the PDK-LDK coalition. According to their research, Infopress had 105 pages of ads, Epoka e Re 82 pages, Express 50, Koha Ditore 49, Kosova Sot 40, Zëri 37, Lajm 24 and Bota Sot 16. Although Koha Ditore is currently the most-read newspaper, this coalition directed more ad money to Infopress.

The issues around freedom of press were thrust into the open when, at the end of May, Kosovo's Parliamentary Speaker Jakup Krasniqi declared that civil society and the media in Kosovo were directed by the Government.

According to a Government

spokesperson, Krasniqi declaration was misinterpreted by the media. "The Assembly President's statement was drawn out of the context, creating confusion" said spokesman Memli Krasniqi.

He argues that lack of freedom of expression is when we discuss about one issue and we have only one voice and one approach to the issue. "In Kosovo we do not have only one voice that speaks about one issue, because we have the voice of Vetvendosje, voice of civil society, voice of opposition and the voice of media," added Memli Krasniqi.

Ilir Deda, from KIPRED, said that there was a lack of freedom of speech in Kosovo. "We don't have a tradition of freedom of expression, and due to the lack of this tradition, the only freedom of expression historically was to say "Kosovo Republic", "Separation from Serbia".

Freedom of Speech

Last month, a supporter of Prishtina's football club (Plisat) was arrested by Kosovo's police after holding up a sign saying: "KPS, how much for a kilo?"

The message was written after some 47 kilograms of heroin, seven cannabis plants, money and a black sports bag were reported missing from a police station.

As soon as the game finished a 16 year old member of Plisat was arrested by the police. "I felt bad when they took me. It was injustice, because I didn't write that," said Qendrim Shabani, a 16 year old boy of Plisat.

Ancient Hebrew Stones atop a Lonely Kosovar Hill



By Shega A'Mula in Prishtina

There are no signs or markers that direct you to the Jewish cemetery in Velania. No security guards, maintenance staff or any other sort of workers who might be able to indicate its presence. In fact, you may have driven past the site countless times and not realised the historical significance of this spot atop that lonely hill. A walk into the unguarded gates of the cemetery reveals a time when the Jewish population was plentiful in Kosovo, and also in the region.

The Spanish Inquisition saw around 90,000 Sephardic Jews leave for the Balkans. From that period up until the Second World War, Jewish families thrived in many parts of the

region, particularly the coastal area of Albania. By the end of the Ottoman Empire in 1912, around 305 Jewish families were situated in Prishtina, and more than a thousand all over Kosovo.

The Second World War however led to the capture or displacement of nearly all of Kosovo's Jewish population, some of whom ended up in German concentration camps. The Jewish cemetery in Prishtina is believed to date back to the 19th century.

The flat grave stones are hard to distinguish at first among the overgrown grass, but a step closer exposes several groups of cluttered stones throughout the hill's summit. Varying in size and age, some of the stones possess rich engravings written in Hebrew. Others, which are evidently older, are bare and face ruin without maintenance.

More clusters are found further down the hill, but are even harder to spot. Some are



Hebrew engravings

Photo by Petrit Rrahmani for Prishtina Insight



The Star of David

Photo by Petrit Rrahmani for Prishtina Insight

almost completely covered in foliage, while others have been entirely concealed after decades of neglect. Dozens of stones are visible, and Qazim Namani, an official at the Institution for the Protection of Monuments, told Prishtina Insight that hundreds of Jews are buried at this site.

“Between 1850 and 1922, around 800 Jews were buried at the cemetery in Velania. After 1922, Jews were buried in the Catholic Cemetery in Dragodan, because of politics. They were also non-Slavic,” said Namani.

Close to 200 Jews were buried at the Catholic Cemetery in Dragodan. Namani said that other, smaller Jewish cemeteries are scattered throughout Kosovo.

Striding further into the cemetery, you are not only met with thick vegetation, but, even worse, litter. Plastic cups, empty bottles, cigarette packets and other garbage are dispersed throughout the several acres of the cemetery, demonstrating the absence of preservation.

The director of the Institution for the Protection of Monuments, Baki Svirca, told

Prishtina Insight that the reason behind the minimal maintenance is because of Kosovo's law on cultural heritage which states that the competent institution should protect monuments and historical artifacts, without distinguishing which institutions are responsible for what.

“The competent institution is not specified. That is why it does not get done,” said Svirca, adding that the budget for the Institution for the Protection of Monuments is currently zero.

According to Svirca, Kosovo's government plans to pass reforms of the law, which should correct these problems. Until that happens, some international interest groups have proposed funding projects for the protection of the cemetery in Velania.

Nevertheless, the mere fact that cemetery continues to exist without protection suggests that residents and visitors maintain respect for the site, which will hopefully continue to live on along with the rest of Kosovo's historical sites and monuments.

“Prishtina 2009” Book Fair Opens

Over one hundred publishing houses will gather at Kosovo's book fair “Prishtina 2009”, held at the Red Hall every year , between June 3 and June 7.

The book fair, which is funded by the Publishing Association of Kosovo, along with minimal support from the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, is in its eleventh year of operation, with more and more publishing houses joining every year.

“There are over one hundred publishing houses, but taking into consideration that every other year, many publishers that have not contacted us earlier come on the last day,”

said Behxhet Bici, coordinator of the book fair.

For the first time this year, publishing houses from Bosnia and Herzegovina will also participate in the book fair, after meeting with the Publishing Association of Kosovo, transforming the “Prishtina 2009” almost into an international event.

Publishing houses from Croatia were also contacted but could not make the event this year, and instead agreed to participate next year after applying for funding from their ministry of culture.

We recommend: Decléor Spa

As temperatures in Prishtina begin to hit 40 degrees, and the layers of required clothing begin to diminish, women begin to pull out all of their most beautifying tricks. For those of you who may not be adequately skilled at the task, Decléor Spa in the centre of Prishtina is your one stop to becoming bikini ready, and summer beautiful.

Decléor products happen to be renowned for their quality and effectiveness, along with their essential role in the spa process. A team of well-trained and gracious women bring the experience together with their soothing techniques and gracious care, especially for those more uncomfortable moments (waxing maybe?).

Facial treatments include aromatherapy, massages, peeling, masks, and specific treatments for certain different needs. Teuta Gagica, owner of the spa, will create the right



One of the treatment tables

Photo by Petrit Rrahmani for Prishtina Insight

treatment for your skin type, and take you through a facial journey into total relaxation.

Body treatments include anti-aging, aromatherapy detox and massage treatments. Thermal mud masks, anti-cellulite body wraps, and aromatherapy messages ranging from 30 minutes to 90 minutes are available for your pampering needs.

Other services include waxing, pedicures, manicures, eyelash enhancement and permanent make-up, which is all done in a tranquil environment, well distant from the noise and grime of the city. Treatments are unique and service is remarkable at prices which are equivalent to any other spa locations in town. Reservations are a must. Telephone: 044 158 234, Address: 40 Mother Teresa Boulevard (Across from Hotel Grand)



The Palace of Youth and Sports where the Red Hall is located

Photo by Petrit Rrahmani for Prishtina Insight

Refugee War Criminals Pose Dilemma to Scandinavia



By: Denis Dzidic and Marina Ferhatovic

Legal systems of Norway, Sweden and Denmark face challenge over residents from former Yugoslavia suspected of having committed crimes back “home” in the 1990s.

Authorities in Scandinavian countries are wrestling with the problem of refugees and asylum seekers associated with war crimes committed in former Yugoslavia.

Data available to diaspora associations suggest about 110,000 Bosnian citizens live in Scandinavia. Most fled the country during the 1992-5 war or just after it ended.

On arrival in Norway, Sweden or Denmark, refugees and immigrants request asylum with the Immigration Offices. Those bodies are also responsible for filing reports against persons suspected of war crimes.

When filing their asylum requests, immigrants have to mention past memberships of military, paramilitary or security forces. If the mentioned group is known to have violated human rights during wartime, the Immigration Office informs the competent police and includes the asylum seeker's name in the list of war crime suspects.

In 2002, Denmark established a Special International Crimes Office, SICO, which employs 17 inspectors, prosecutors and investigators. Since 2002, Denmark's SICO has investigated 148 reported war crimes, 26 of which were committed in former Yugoslavia.

Norway established its own special section for international crimes later on, in 2005. Last year the first verdict was pronounced in the case of Mirsad Repak, a former member of the Croatian military group HOS.

Sweden only started a war crimes investigation section in 2008. Available data suggest that it faces the largest number of war crime suspects – more than 1,500.

All these investigations often face a number of problems. One is that the police authorities of Scandinavia have frequently to rely on their embassies in Bosnia and Herzegovina to provide premises for investigations, find witnesses and introduce them to trials via video links.

A second problem area is the legal systems of the Scandinavian states, which have little or no experience of trying war crimes. Finally, the difficulty faced by the police in obtaining

evidence to back up accusations means that inevitably most investigations end without result.

The problem – lack of evidence:

Birgitta Vestberg, the state prosecutor heading the Danish SICO, says her organisation has achieved “extraordinary results”, which would not have been possible without the cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, ICTY, local judicial institutions and other embassies, such as the British embassy, in the countries in which the crimes were committed.

“It is necessary to create a network of people who have got the necessary knowledge and experience to deal with this type of crimes exclusively.”

Vestberg said their model of cooperation could serve as an example to the Scandinavian countries, showing them how they should work on war crimes processing.

“It rarely happens that an embassy conducts an independent investigation. This is only done if an assessment of the political situation in the country is needed.”

Ambassador Nehring confirmed to Justice Report that the SICO opened an office in Sarajevo in 2008, when they conducted independent investigations concerning two cases of war crimes committed in Bosnia in the war.

The Norwegian embassy in Bosnia has also established cooperation with local judicial institutions and the Norwegian SICO.

Besides providing logistical support to investigators from Norway, the embassy made its premises available for the examination of witnesses via video link at the trial of Repak last year.

“This enabled the judge, prosecutor and defence attorney to directly or cross-examine the witness, with no need for the witness to travel to Norway,” Jan Braathu, the Norwegian ambassador to Bosnia, said.

The Danish SICO conducted its investigations in Bosnia concerning two people currently residing in Denmark, suspecting they had committed war crimes in Bosnia in 1992.

“The investigations were conducted in a different manner than the usual SICO model applied in the course of investigations conducted in the countries in which crimes were committed,” the SICO report for 2008 said.

The first investigation concerned a 71-year-old man living in Denmark,

suspected of taking part in the murder of 40 Serbian civilians in three villages in Bosnia in 1992.

“In the first case the SICO identified 30 witnesses and 10 in the second case,” the SICO report said.

“After that, crime scene inspections were conducted and material evidence gathered.

According to its annual report, SICO says lack of evidence the key reason why many investigations finish without gathering any strong evidence. Despite this, Vestberg says that SICO should continue its work.

“We cannot sit here doing nothing,” she told Justice Report. “We are aware that a certain number of war criminals will evade justice but we promise that we will conduct a detailed investigation of all cases that are reported to us.”

Norway takes a lead:

Although Norway established a SICO three years later than Denmark, in 2005, the first indictment was already filed in 2008.

The was against Mirsad Repak, charged, as a member of the Croatian Armed Forces (HOS), with having participated in the unlawful deprivation of liberty of 18 civilians and the rape of one person in Dretelj detention camp, Capljina municipality.

The trial required a change to Norwegian law, which had not until then contained any stipulations pertaining to war crimes.

After the changes had been introduced in December 2008, the District Court in Oslo pronounced Repak guilty on 11 counts and sentenced him to five years' imprisonment. He had already spent nearly two years under custody.

“We did not have any special laws for treating war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide,” said the prosecutor in charge of Repak's case, Pal Lonseth. “The amendments to the law should prove that Norway is not a haven for war criminals,” he added.

Data available to the Norwegian embassy in Bosnia suggest the Bosnian community in Norway has 15,667 members.

Ambassador Braathu said the Norwegian police and prosecutors were conducting their own investigations in Bosnia to be able to prepare the cases in Norway, adding that the investigations were being conducted with the “close cooperation of the Norwegian police and judiciary and the Bosnian authorities”.

“This cooperation is achieved in the process of finding witnesses as well. It is not such a big problem to find relevant witnesses, but it is a problem to persuade them to testify before a court in Norway,” Braathu added.

Sweden was one of the countries that actively advocated for ratification of the Rome Statute.

This defines the competencies of courts and supports the signatory countries in adopting laws that enable the local judiciary to prosecute suspects for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In Sweden a special police section for international crimes based in Stockholm deals with investigation of these cases.



Albania PM Sali Berisha

Albanian Parties Launch Campaigns

Albania's main political parties officially kicked off their electoral campaigns on Thursday, beginning the countdown for June 28 elections - a key vote for the country's EU aspirations.

In a rally at the University of Tirana campus, where two decades ago students launched a series of protests that would spell the end of Albania's communist regime, Socialist leader Edi Rama called on Albanians to vote for change on June 28.

“I call on you to take part in the change of the country with your vote, a change that goes beyond the left and the right,” Rama said, addressing a crowd of opposition supporters.

“I call upon all that want new politics, better schools, more work, more infrastructures and a better quality of life to turn the page of history,” he added.

Rama's arch rival, Prime Minister Sali Berisha, launched his campaign by promising a gathering of women greater representation in the government.

“The next four years will be the years of the development of the country,” said Berisha. “During my new mandate I will draft a legal framework to support women in opening businesses, increasing their access to labor and the highest echelons of the administration,” he added.



Lepa Brena

Concerts Awake War Ghosts in Bosnia, Croatia

Upcoming concerts of Bosnian-born, Serbia-based folk star, Fakreta Jahic Zivojinovic, better known as Lepa Brena, planned for Sarajevo and Zagreb have triggered a public uproar across the region.

Lepa Brena is scheduled to hold at least one, maybe two concerts in Sarajevo over this weekend. She is scheduled to perform in Zagreb on June 13.

But war veterans associations in both Bosnia and Croatia vehemently oppose these concerts and have threatened to hold demonstrations, protesting against Brena's war history.

The 49-year old singer was born in an ethnic Bosniac (Bosnian Muslim) family in the northern Bosnian town of Tuzla and then moved with her family to the town of Brcko. In 1979 she moved to Belgrade and became one of the most popular folk stars in the Balkans.

Yet a few weeks before the concert, local media published a story, including a video and photos in which Lepa Brena – dressed in Bosnian Serb military uniform – visited Brcko during

Bosnian 1992-1995 war.

The singer explained that she came to Brcko to rescue her father from the town which was held and ethnically cleansed by Bosnian Serb forces during the war.

Many Bosnians and Croats wouldn't buy that story and have initiated a Facebook campaign to boycott her concerts.

So far more than 30,000 people have joined the Facebook group asking to boycott of Brena's concert in Sarajevo. Some 200 more have joined a group urging the boycott of her Zagreb concert.

“She was the most popular folk star. She didn't need military uniform to get into Brcko. A plain mini skirt would have sufficed,” Sarajevo can driver and war veterans Muhamed said. Their reactions show that the ghosts of war are still very much present 15 years after hostilities ended.

Sarajevo war veterans went as far as to request Sarajevo's regional government to come up with a 12,000 euros rent for the Zetra sports hall where the concert will be held.



Protecting Kosovo

Lushtaku may be tactically right not to want to appear in the “Jeta ne Kosova” debate, but strategically he has lost this battle. A politician who starts a war with a journalist will lose that war. His public lynching of Jeta, is being conducted under false pretexts.



By Behxhet Shala in Prishtina

In today’s Kosovo, where independence remains disputed and sovereignty is imposed with an iron fist, politicians and journalists are considered the main pillars of the state – the former creating and carrying out policies and the latter supporting or opposing these policies.

In a normal country, this type of relationship would be completely acceptable, but in Kosovo, which is still struggling to belong somewhere, it simply does not work. In ‘real’ countries with established identities, it is much easier to become a politician. Investment in future politicians is a process that takes years, from the time of their earliest education until they reach political maturity. Only then do they enter the political race and meet with any success – a process intended to benefit the country and its people by fostering the creation of a normal democratic state. In such an infrastructure, journalists provide the opinions, the direction and often the content that helps to ensure a sustainable and equitable democracy.

Unfortunately, our situation in Kosovo is not such. Here, politicians become politicians overnight in the same manner in which dirty money earned by night is laundered by day. This is how such politicians destroy the state. We have politicians in Kosovo today who have been profiled and cleverly packaged in a way that neatly brushes over their arguably criminal and decidedly unpatriotic pasts.

These ‘Kalashnikov politicians’ often obtain for themselves fancy academic titles by pressuring the University of Pristina in a threatening manner, thus becoming, by default, a part of the so-called intellectual nomenclature.

Journalists are on the other end of this spectrum. In Kosovo, we have top notch journalists who have done much to form and save the reputation of the trade. Still, ‘real’ investigative, independent journalists are rare in Kosovo; survival, both physical and financial, is challenging at best.

Perhaps it is worth noting that despite all, I agree with Adem Demaci (called Baca Adem by Albanians) when he said that Prime-Minister Hashim Thaci and President Fatmir Sejdiu were the most com-

petent people to lead Kosovo in this period – however sad such a thought may be.

As far as Drenica is concerned, one must ask: Is Drenica in Kosovo?

I love Drenica, I honestly do! During the time that I was in prison, I befriended mostly people from Drenica. I identified them all with Albanian national heroes such as Azem Bejta, Hasan Prishtina, Shotë Galica, Mehmet Gradica, Shaban Polluzha and Tahir Meha. I was a friend of Fehmi Lladrovci and Hafir Shala, and I had tremendous respect for Xheve Lladrovci - all famous former KLA soldiers who were killed in the war.

Drenica is the birthplace of Kosovo’s freedom; Prekaz is the capital of an independent Kosovo; while Adem Jashari is the creator of the Eternal Constitution of Kosovo – a constitution written in blood and which cannot fade, compared to Ahtisaari’s constitution, which will have only the longevity of a pen.

This is why I love Drenica, and I say that not only is it in Kosovo but it is the heart of Kosovo! However, it is not only in Drenica that one cannot speak openly about certain issues in Kosovo. There are other places where the cat may bet your tongue if you speak too openly about dangerous things. It is the same in Dukagjin, Llap, Prizren, Gjakova and Gjilan. It can even happen to you in Pristina. There are guns everywhere, not only in Drenica. Only crazy people are ready to kill for nothing.

For the sake of life in Kosovo, ‘Jetas’ must be protected.

At the very beginning, I want to say that I don’t agree with everything that journalist Jeta Xharra (host of BIRN Kosovo’s weekly current affairs TV show, “Life in Kosovo”) does. I have opposed her and she has opposed me. I don’t know Jeta Abazi well, the young journalist who did the story on Skenderaj where she was attacked. Nonetheless, calling Jeta Abazi a “spy” for Serbia shows either a total lack of information or casual insanity. Not to mention the fact that Abazi’s family members were arrested under the Serb regime on charges of spying for the Albanians

and they served as political prisoners of that regime for many years.

I know Sami Lushtaku (former Drenica KLA commander) as a brave man during the war. I dealt with Sami in my previous articles, and he was never angry with me; not even when I told him that he was wrong about Jeta Xharra. He has his position and sticks to it with stubbornness; and he supports this position with the fact that he got 90 per cent of the votes in his municipality in the last election.

Perhaps tactically he is right, but strategically he has lost this battle. A politician who starts a war with a journalist will lose that war – a media war is played out on a much different type of frontline.

I don’t judge him for not meeting with Jeta Xharra personally – after all, he is under no obligation to do so, but I do judge him for his public lynching of Jeta, which is being done under false pretexts. I have never accepted such tactics and never will, regardless of the victim. I am not convinced that Jeta Xharra is a spy or that she allegedly has “her head in Serbia and her body in Kosovo”.

I’m against seizing camera tapes by force, which is what happened to BIRN. I’m against the “Jeta ne Kosova” team having to leave Skenderaj escorted by the police because they did not need a police escort to go Skenderaj in the first place. Sami Lushtaku, after all, had waged many wars against the need for police escorts. I served some time in prison against this sort of regime and and this type of behavior, too.

As such, I am defending Jeta, and those like her, because I want to protect precisely the war fought by Sami; because I want to protect myself, my children and Drenica, which actually has a tradition of fighting for freedom - and this means freedom to speak freely, too.

If there’s a price that both these Jeta’s have to pay, i.e. BIRN journalists Jeta Xharra and Jeta Abazi, I am personally willing to pay the price. It is my duty - as a long-time human rights activist, as a former political prisoner, as a huge supporter of the KLA war, as a humanist and a man who always loved and still loves Drenica - to do so! No matter what the cost is.

The author of this text is executive director of the Council for Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms.

Kosova’s Son-in-Law The Free Speech Terrorists



By Casey Cooper Johnson

For a good part of my lifetime, the most menacing term I have come to fear is neither fascism nor global warming. No, more than Hitlers or melting glaciers, I fear terrorists. Yes, terrorists can blow you up in your car, on the subway, or at the airport. They lurk in public places, blending in, making friends, while in secret, plotting how to blow you up. You never know which of your friends might turn out to be a terrorist. In this modern day of global terrorist warfare, I can barely sit in a café without shaking in fear...of being suddenly vaporized.

So you can imagine my shock and horror this week when I found out from a highly esteemed local newspaper, “Infopress”, wedged somewhere between the sexy bikini model photo-spreads and the mounds of government advertising that this little-read tabloid mysteriously attracts, that I, in fact, work for a terrorist organization. That’s right! Throughout the past four years that I have worked as a co-producer and political satirist on the current affairs TV show, “Life in Kosovo”, the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network has been functioning as a terrorist organization right under my nose, dedicated to the destruction of the entire Drenica (central Kosovo) region and Kosovo’s national values. Furthermore, I’ve learned that my colleague and editor in chief, Jeta Xharra, is actually a special agent of the Serbian Secret Police.

All of this breaking news has come out in a series of front-page headlines since the airing of our last week’s show, dedicated to the freedom of speech in Kosovo, in which we aired a field report chronicling how our news team was expelled from the Skenderaj Municipal Office for Public Information and later attacked by a man with a handgun, who grabbed the tape from the camera and ordered the team to leave town.

Skenderaj’s mayor, Sami Lushtaku, had already made clear that he would be the only mayor to not participate in our municipal debates, as he was offended with us for transmitting a show which questioned the legality and morality of him remaining in office while serving a prison sentence for assaulting a judge. However, after he promised to not obstruct the rest of his staff and citizenry from cooperating with our team, we had not expected such a hostile response to our news work there. In the context of a show dealing with the freedom of speech and pressures exerted on the media by government institutions, we thought it relevant to present the story of our obstructed investigation in Skenderaj.

This show has set off a full scale offensive by Infopress and, to a lesser extent, a couple of other newspapers, also known for their closeness to the government. Their answer to our examination of the extent to which journalism in Kosovo is free and uncensored: “Get those Serbian-employed spies and free speech terrorists off the air! Traitors! Off with their heads!”

I used to harbor the notion that terrorist organizations were synonymous with destroying our free way of life. Now, in Kosova, I see that, actually, stifling free speech with violence is the patriotic thing to do, and that investigative journalism, which performs a watchdog role over the government, is the real terrorism...to be feared and stamped out for the good of the nation.

Such an unsettling revelation is only exacerbated as it finally dawns upon me that I am also, by participation in this exercise of free speech and government critique, a terrorist myself! Me, a terrorist? Yes indeed! Like Mickey Rourke’s private detective in the film “Angelheart”, following a trail of gruesome murders, who is at the end confronted with the revelation that it is he himself, as Satan’s servant, who has killed them all.

You think that you are working to improve the quality of life of the citizens, and to promote democracy and responsible governance. And then you wake up one day to find that telling truth to power is a suicide bomb, free speech is poison poured into the water supply, and enlightenment of society is anthrax powder sent in the mail.

It Should Pay to Talk Albanian



By Mia Marzouk in Prishtina

“I’m not working very much at the moment,” a taxi driver complained to me as he drove up the steep hill to my flat. “It’s the economic crisis – it means fewer people want a taxi.”

At least, this is what I understood him to be saying – my Albanian is pretty basic, but at least I try. And twice in the past week, taxi drivers have reduced my fare on account of my attempts to negotiate in Albanian.

It strikes me as bizarre that people coming to live in a country – any country – do not attempt to learn a few pleasantries in the local language. Saying “hello” and “thank you” in the language of the person to whom you are speaking is simply common courtesy.

When I worked in a bar in the UK, my col-

leagues and I used to run rings around the unfortunate tourists who tried to order a drink in Pidgin English, not least because they invariably expected table service, a mark of civilisation yet to reach the British Isles.

In stark contrast, here in Kosovo, waiters, taxi drivers and shopkeepers alike will still treat you politely if you talk to them in English.

I do understand that most foreigners don’t have a hope in heaven of learning Albanian (or, depending on where you live, Serbian or Turkish) fluently. I have made a strategic decision to ignore Chapter 6 in our Colloquial Albanian textbook on “clitics” (those funny two-letter words sprinkled ostensibly at random throughout newspaper articles); and I am still wary of numbers 11 to 19. But you don’t need to be fluent to get by – or to be polite.

However, the international community in Kosovo (and here I generalise appallingly) has been peculiarly reluctant over the past decade

to greet and thank Kosovars in their local language.

So here’s my proposal: Take the courtesy out of learning the language, and replace it with a market incentive.

Taxi drivers, getting fewer and fewer fares as people of all passports economise, should offer discounts for international passengers who greet them with “mirëdita”. Shopkeepers could throw in a free banana when their foreign customer asks: “Si jeni?” Waiters, struggling to compete in the distorted market of Prishtina café life, should provide a glass of raki on the house to any foreigner who orders “shisha uji pa gaz”.

Incidentally, anecdotal evidence suggests that the consumption of alcohol aids fluency in a foreign language.

In this way, we can boost Kosovo’s ailing economy – at least in the service sector – and create mutual respect between Kosovo’s citizens and their international occupiers. A win-win situation, eh?

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Across

- 1: Yellow weed
6: Visit a run-down neighborhood
10: Bug-eyed
14: Tiny type size
15: Fabled race loser
16: Sooty shaft
17: Let down
19: Punch ingredient?
20: Loud door sound
21: Fishing gear
22: Annoying ones
23: Says 'I'm thinkin',' for

- example
25: Circle sections
26: Touch of winter
27: Legacy
31: Nolo contendere and others
34: Goggles
35: Carp constantly
36: Bagel topper
37: Least fresh
39: Do some research
40: Pindar product
41: Kind of down
42: Computer symbols
44: Sauce

- 46: Bearded African grazer
47: Scratching post users
48: Kitchen utensil
51: Loses weight (with 'down')
53: Gaucho's cattle catcher
55: Slave away
57: Gardener's coil
58: In a robust manner
60: Keeps cold
61: Friend
62: More brut
63: Station
64: Golf ball pegs
65: Thick

Down

- 1: Insignificant amounts
2: Quick-thinking
3: Like Fran Drescher's voice
4: Endurance
5: 'Sure thing'
6: Chases away
7: Given the ax, with ?off?
8: Java vessels
9: Came across
10: Act on
11: Sliding effect in music
12: Vote off the island
13: Catches on to
18: Warm up, for short
22: Fresh as new
24: Differs in opinion
25: Cumbersome boats
27: Compels to go
28: Large pitcher
29: Persuade, with 'over'
30: They're beaten in the kitchen
31: Alka-Seltzer jingle starter
32: Prospector's bonanza
33: Flashcards, for example
34: Wanders (about)
38: Makes a sheepshank
43: Kind of shock
45: Least wild
46: Paraphernalia
48: Devious maneuvers
49: Rose red dye
50: Gets to
51: Use UPS
52: Plumb crazy
53: Liver product
54: Get an eyeful
56: Hand-held harp
58: Dyer's tub
59: Like any number finish-ing with '9'

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Norwegian Address: "Sejdi Kryeziu" no. 6 10000 Prishtina Phone: +381 (0) 38 232 111 00			

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National Theatre



FRIDAY, JUNE 5 - 20:00

Play "Bodrumi" by Ilir Gjocaj, Directed by Fadil Hysaj

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 - 20:00

Play "Tartufi" by Moieri, Directed by Rahim Burhan

THURSDAY, JUNE 11 - 20:00

Ballet "Sleeping Beauty" by P.I. Tchaikovsky, Choreographed and Directed by Silvia Tomova

MONDAY, JUNE 15 - 20:00

Play "Last Fire" by Dea Loher, Directed by Fadil Hysaj

TUESDAY, JUNE 16 - 17:00

Senses" by Anja Hilling, Directed by Ben Apolloni

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17 - 17:00

"Norway Today" by Igor Bauersima, Directed by Zana Hoxha-Krasniqi

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17 - 20:00

remiere of Play "Deceivers" by Ilirian Bezhani, Directed by Clement Peretjatko

THURSDAY, JUNE 18 - 20:00

Play "Der Kick" by Andres Veiel, Directed by Florent Mehmeti

For reservations call: 038 224 397 or 044 430 693

ticket price: 3 euro



Set in post-apocalyptic 2018, John Connor is the man fated to lead the human resistance against Skynet and its army of Terminators. But the future Connor was raised to believe in is altered in part by the appearance of Marcus Wright, a stranger whose last memory is of being on death row. Connor must decide whether Marcus has been sent from the future, or rescued from the past. As Skynet prepares its final onslaught, Connor and Marcus both embark on an odyssey that takes them into the heart of Skynet's operations, where they uncover the terrible secret behind the possible annihilation of mankind.

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40

Bunar Fest is a non – traditional festival that is held in Prizren. At this festival, applicants race down Prizren's cold and dangerous Bistrica River in tractor tires, a race very enjoyable to watch. Spend the weekend in Prizren, with a kick-off party at 21:00 on Saturday, June 6, with the race beginning at 14:00 on Sunday, June 7. Take pleasure in the race and all that this beautiful city has to offer.

BIRN

Balkan Investigative Reporting Network

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