
SERBIA, KOSOVO URGE COLLABORATION TO EASE TENSIONS

- 18.01.2018

Anadolu Ajansı (18 January 2018)

The presidents of Serbia and Kosovo, Aleksandar Vucic and Hashim Thaci, said Wednesday that collaboration on stabilizing the situation in Kosovo is crucial for both sides.

Kosovo's Serb politician Oliver Ivanovic was assassinated on Tuesday in a drive-by shooting in Mitrovica town in northern Kosovo.

The two leaders said dialogue between the Serbs and Albanians was crucial, during a phone conversation.

According to a statement from the Serbian president's cabinet, the leaders agreed that the arrest of perpetrators of this crime "is of key importance for preserving peace and trust among people".

Following the attack, the Serbian delegation left talks with Pristina in Brussels and returned to the country.

Vucic asked Thaci to accept the involvement of Serbian authorities in investigation of the murder.

Thaci in a Facebook post said he had urged investigators to launch a thorough probe into the murder.

He added that authorities in Kosovo "are ready to cooperate and accept any assistance in accordance with the law".

Ivanovic, 64, was a key politician in Serb-dominated northern Kosovo, a former Serbian province.

Ivanovic, who commanded Serb paramilitary groups in the war in Kosovo, was sentenced to 9 years in prison in 2016 for crimes committed against Albanian civilians during the war. The Supreme Court overturned the decision in 2017 and ordered retrial.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008 but Belgrade insists the country remains part of Serbia. Since then tensions have remained between Kosovos ethnic-Albanian majority and a small Serb minority in the north.

It is recognized by over 100 countries, including the U.S., Britain, France, Germany and Turkey.

Serbia, Russia and China are among the countries which have not yet recognized Kosovos independence.

<http://aa.com.tr/en/europe/serbia-kosovo-urge-collaboration-to-ease-tensions/1034101>

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