

Initial session of parliament, arrest of war indictee and new Kosovo constitution

The initial session of the newly elected Serbian parliament took place, having been constituted following the snap parliamentary elections in May. Political parties are now obliged to form a new government within 90 days as stated in the Serbian constitution. If not, new elections are required to take place. Taking into consideration the events of last year, we can expect that the government may be formed at the very last moment. This expectation stems from last year's January elections when a government was only formed at the last possible day in May. However voices are now being heard from the Socialist Party of Serbia (formerly led by Milosevic), who have emerged as the kingmaker in coalition negotiations, that a government with the pro-European democrats of Boris Tadic should be formed as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, Stojan Zupljanin, one of the 4 remaining ICTY indictees was arrested in Serbia. This surprising news came soon after a number of EU member states, most notably the Netherlands, claimed that the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) between Serbia and the EU which was signed at the end of April, will only be ratified if the remaining war fugitives are handed over to The Hague. Stojan Zupljanin was the former chief of the Republika Srpska police during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and is charged with crimes against humanity and violations of the laws and customs of war. He was captured only a few kilometers from Belgrade and was apparently hiding in Serbia for several years.

Other important news from the region includes the signing of the SAA with Bosnia and Herzegovina (June 9, 2008), as well as the adoption of a new constitution in Kosovo. Together with that, Kosovo has introduced a new national anthem, flag and national symbols.

Sources: B92, BALKANINSIGHT, BBC