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THE AFTERMATH OF SNAP ELECTION: WHO'S FORMING THE NEW GOVERNMENT?

By Erëza Pula

The aftermath of previous parliamentary elections in Kosovo led to a political deadlock of almost 6 months. PDK, even though it had the most votes, still did not have the needed majority to form the Government. In the midst of these events, LDK together with AAK and NISMA, and with the support of VV, seized the opportunity to form an anti-PDK coalition which would enable the constitution of the Government. However, contrary to expectations, in mid-November 2014 the biggest political parties in Kosovo, PDK and LDK, formed a coalition which ended the almost 6 months' stalemate.

The PDK and LDK coalition caused an immense dissatisfaction among citizens and especially party militants of LDK, AAK, NISMA and VV. The inability to constitute the Assembly for almost half a year led to an institutional malfunction and a wave of economic, social and political crises, which persisted even after the creation of the government given the different mindsets of these two leading parties. Following many failures of this coalition among which also the massive migration waves to EU countries, the opposition launched a no-confidence motion in 2017 accusing the Cabinet of not being able to meet its obligations in accordance with the program. After losing the vote, the parliament was dismissed; thus, smoothing the path for Snap Election on 11th of June.

Being aware of citizens' dissatisfaction and the controversial interpretation of the Constitutional Court on parliamentary groups and coalition, political parties formed pre-election coalitions some of which resulted as quite '*impulsive marriages*'. PDK formed a coalition with AAK, NISMA and many other small political parties, known as the *War Wing* due to the association of parties' leaders with the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK). The *War Wing* proposed AAK's leader Ramush Haradinaj as a candidate for Prime Minister, who has been indicted by The Hague Tribunal a couple of times alleged for war crimes. LDK joined AKR and Alternativa – known as the *Peace Wing*. They proposed Avdullah Hoti as a candidate for Prime Minister who ran the Ministry of Finance during the previous government. VV, on the other hand, was confident enough as to run alone. VV - Movement for Self-determination - proposed Albin Kurti as a candidate for Prime Minister, also a vibrant voice of the opposition

The electoral campaign was characterized by almost no constructive and adequate debate, many accusations among political opponents, and many electoral gatherings followed by occasional fines to political parties for violation of electoral regulations. Parliamentary elections of 11th of June were considered as free and democratic by many civil society observers and international community. More than 29.000 observes from civil society, political parties, European Union, OSCE, and accredited embassies monitored the elections in order to ensure integrity and transparency. According to Central Election Commission, only 41.34% out of 1.872 million Kosovars used their right to vote.

The post-election political sphere in Kosovo was characterized with an unusual turn, as attested by unexpected results. According to preliminary results, PDK and its coalition secured 33,92%, followed by VV with 27,16%, and the coalition LDK, AKR and Alternativa with 25,79%. It's worth mentioning that VV, compared to previous elections of 2014, shifted in the second place by doubling its number of votes. Was this because Kosovars started supporting the program of VV, or because they were just '*fed up*' with the continuous failures of the previous coalition, the stagnant economic development, migration waves, deeply rooted corruption... thus striving for a change while VV was the only *other* choice?!! Were these elections utilized by the electorate as a punishment tool?!! Either way, it will be quite challenging for the pre-election coalitions and other political parties to constitute the Assembly.

The winning *War-Wing*, PDK-AAK-NISMA together with the other small parties, does not have the sufficient votes to form the government *alone*, thus leading to a necessary scenario of post-election coalitions. If the *War-Wing* fails to form the new government, how will the President of Kosovo, also the former leader of PDK, proceed? One of the choices includes awarding the opposition with the privilege of forming the new government, i.e. VV. Even though, there is still no post-election coalition buzz; Kosovars and the international community are all ears regarding the way parties will play their cards after this round of elections? Surely, the constitution of the Government remains a challenge for these coalitions and political parties.

There is still a ray of hope that the outcome of these elections won't lead to a political vacuum as in 2014. The new government, once formed, will be facing many challenges which should be addressed during this mandate. Besides enhancing economic growth, softening unemployment rates, and fighting corruption, the newly created government has to put tremendous effort to resolve the Demarcation issue with Montenegro, the dialogue with Serbia and creation of the Association of Serb-Majority Municipalities in Kosovo, and the functionalization of the Special Court expected to deal with the war crimes.



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