

# Speech: A lack of results and accountability: monitoring corruption cases in Kosovan prosecutorial and judicial systems

Dear Mr. Tahiri, Dear Ms. Haxhiu, Dear Mr. Musliu, Dear Mr. Qalaj, Dear Mr. Çoçaj, Dear Mr. Hyseni,

Honorable Court Presidents, Chief Prosecutors, Judges, Prosecutors, representatives of public institutions, media, civil society,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This event, in comparison with others, has so many panelists.

Allow me to thank KLI for their work to-date on this British Embassy funded project. And I hope you will allow me to speak a little more directly today. This is because of my affection for Kosovo.

The British Embassy and I have consistently followed the developments in the justice system in Kosovo. A lack of results, impunity, lack of response and lack of accountability remain key issues. This is noted in both domestic and international reports.

One might wonder, why? Why is serious crime not being punished in Kosovo? All of you here deal with this issue daily. Please, do tell us and your citizens why corruption is not being punished. Where is the problem? Why is it that there hasn't been a single high-profile case of corruption or organised crime where the outcome was effective imprisonment? Why do Kosovo's citizens and Kosovo's international partners see corruption, while the prosecution doesn't?

Are we dealing with a lack of courage, a lack of competence or the system captured by politics or interests of certain groups? I think that neither is acceptable for the people of this country, on whose behalf you deliver justice. It is not acceptable for the international community either. We have invested heavily in this country. We are working hard and we all want Kosovo, as a country, to succeed. We do not want to accept failure.

This country needs to have accountability. Here I am talking about the prosecution. The competences of the prosecution system are highly decentralised when allocating responsibility for failure and very centralised when claiming achievements. Where is the accountability? Can we know the address to which citizens may complain? Where the concerns of citizens should be addressed?

Are there any conditions for success? Laws have improved continuously. But, laws do not currently effectively combat corruption and organised crime; and

neither do the working conditions of prosecution offices and courts. Also, we all know that you are the most highly paid officials in Kosovo.

Of course, we continue to call on politicians not to influence the justice system, including the appointment of prosecutors and judges, chief prosecutors and court presidents who are obedient or susceptible to blackmail. They should remain independent because this is the only way to achieve results, fight criminality, and deliver justice for the citizens.

With us today is the Minister of Justice who launched a review of the entire justice system. We consider this process to be very important and have been supporting it for two years now. I hope that this process will yield recommendations that will be properly addressed, instead of having yet another Strategy in a drawer overflowing with various justice system strategies.

You hold the responsibility. It is up to you alone, no one else. I have said it before, but I shall repeat it again – the international community has a very clear demand for Kosovo – Kosovo cannot be a haven for corruption and organised crime.

Having a country in Europe, such as Kosovo, where corruption proceeds can be laundered and safe haven is provided for criminal phenomena, poses a risk not only for the Kosovan society but also for us and for Europe. Now I have a question. What do you think, how long can Kosovo continue to have the support of the international community, while it continues to prove lacking in fighting organised crime and corruption?

It is time for officials with dubious integrity to leave their positions and be prosecuted for their actions. In this regard, we welcome initiatives in the Kosovo Police to bring the police officers with integrity into key positions, and we expect them to prove themselves in combating criminality, especially corruption and organised crime.

Such changes are needed in the police, the prosecution and the judiciary. They should be led from officers with integrity in leadership positions. The reach of politics should be kept away from the police, the prosecution, the judiciary, and the independent public institutions.

I will not talk any longer because time is running out. Time is running out for Kosovo and the justice system as well. I have stated several times before that there are judges and prosecutors who should and can become the new heroes of Kosovo. They just have to prove themselves.