

# Kosovo's Mafia-like Prime Minister Hashim Thaci: Human Organs Trafficker

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The details of an elaborate [KLA](#)-run human organ harvesting ring, broadly known for years, have been [confirmed](#) by a [Council of Europe](#) report published on January 15. The report, "[Inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking of human organs in Kosovo](#)" identifies the province's recently re-elected "prime minister" [Hashim](#) Thaçi as the boss of a "mafia-like" Albanian group specialized in smuggling weapons, drugs, people, and human organs all over Europe. The report reveals that Thaçi's closest aides were taking Serbs across the border into Albania after the war, murdering them, and selling their organs on the black market. In addition, the report accuses Thaçi of having exerted "violent control" over the heroin trade for a decade.

Deliberate Destruction of Evidence – Long dismissed in the mainstream media as "Serbian propaganda," the allegations of organ trafficking – [familiar](#) to our readers – were ignored in the West until early 2008, when [Carla Del Ponte](#), former Prosecutor at the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at The Hague, revealed in her memoirs that she had been prevented from initiating any serious investigation into its merits. She also revealed – shockingly – that some elements of proof taken by ICTY field investigators from the notorious "Yellow House" in the Albanian town of Rripe were [destroyed](#) at The Hague, thus enabling the KLA and their Western enablers to claim that "there was no evidence" for the organ trafficking allegations.

In April 2008, prompted by Del Ponte's revelations, seventeen European parliamentarians signed a motion for a resolution calling on the Assembly to examine the allegations. The matter was referred to the Assembly's Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, which in June 2008 appointed Swiss senator Dick Marty as its rapporteur. He had gained international prominence by his previous investigation of accusations that the CIA abducted and imprisoned terrorism suspects in Europe.

"Genuine Terror" – In his Introductory Remarks Marty revealed some of the "extraordinary challenges of this assignment": the acts alleged purportedly took place a decade ago, they were not properly investigated by any of the national and international authorities with jurisdiction over the territories concerned. In addition, Marty went on,

... efforts to establish the facts of the Kosovo conflict and punish the attendant war crimes had primarily been concentrated in one direction, based on an implicit presumption that one side were the victims and the other side the perpetrators. As we shall see, the reality seems to have been more complex.

The structure of Kosovar Albanian society, still very much clan-orientated, and the absence of a true civil society have made it extremely difficult to set up contacts with local sources. This is compounded by fear, often to the point of genuine terror, which we have observed in some of our informants immediately upon broaching the subject of our inquiry. Even certain representatives of international institutions did not conceal their reluctance to grapple with these facts: "The past is the past", we were told; "we must now look to the future."

The report says Thaçi's links with organized crime go back to the late 1990's, when his Drenica Group became the dominant faction within the KLA. By 1998 he was able to grab control of "most of the illicit criminal enterprises" in Albania itself. Thaçi and four other members of the Drenica Group are named as personally guilty of assassinations, detentions and beatings:

In confidential reports spanning more than a decade, agencies dedicated to combating drug smuggling in at least five countries have named Hashim Thaçi and other members of his Drenica Group as having exerted violent control over the trade in heroin and other narcotics... Thaçi and these other Drenica Group members are consistently named as "key players" in intelligence reports on Kosovo's mafia-like structures of organised crime. I have examined these diverse, voluminous reports with consternation and a sense of moral outrage.

Marty notes that the international community chose to ignore war crimes by the KLA, enabling Thaçi's forces to conduct a campaign of murderous terror against Serbs, Roma, and Albanians accused of collaborating with the Serbs. Some 500 of them "disappeared after the arrival of KFOR troops on 12 June 1999," about a hundred Albanians and 400 others, most of them Serbs. Some of these civilians had been secretly imprisoned by the KLA at different locations in northern Albania, the report adds, "and were subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment, before ultimately disappearing." Captives were "filtered" in ad-hoc prisons for their suitability for organ harvesting based on sex, age, health and ethnic origin. They were then sent to the last stop - a makeshift clinic near Fushë-Krujë, close to the Tirana airport:

As and when the transplant surgeons were confirmed to be in position and ready to operate, the captives were brought out of the 'safe house' individually, summarily executed by a KLA gunman, and their corpses transported swiftly to the operating clinic.

Thaçi the Untouchable - The report states that Thaçi's Drenica Group "bear the greatest responsibility" for the prisons and the fate of those held in them. It criticizes the governments supportive of Kosovo's independence for not holding to account senior Albanians in Kosovo, including Thaçi, and of lacking the will to effectively prosecute the former leaders of the KLA. The diplomatic and political support by such powers "bestowed upon Thaçi, not least in his own mind, a sense of being untouchable."

Marty concludes that "[t]he signs of collusion between the criminal class and the highest political and institutional office holders are too numerous and too serious to be ignored," but "the international authorities in charge of the region did not consider it necessary to conduct a detailed examination of these circumstances, or did so incompletely and superficially."

Following Marty's presentation of the report to the Council of Europe in Paris on December 16 it will be debated by the Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg on January 25.

Media Reaction – Within days of the publication of Marty's report, numerous of excellent articles were published in the mainstream media Europe linking his revelations with the broader problem of NATO's war against the Serbs in 1999, the precedent it had created for Afghanistan and Iraq, and the nature of the "Kosovar" society today.

Neil Clark in *The Guardian* [assailed "the myth of liberal intervention."](#) Far from being Tony Blair's "good" war, he wrote, the assault on Yugoslavia was as wrong as the invasion of Iraq:

It was a fiction many on the liberal left bought into. In 1999 Blair was seen not as a duplicitous warmonger in hock to the US but as an ethical leader taking a stand against ethnic cleansing. But if the west had wanted to act morally in the Balkans and to protect the people in Kosovo there were solutions other than war with the Serbs, and options other than backing the KLA – the most violent group in Kosovan politics... Instead, a virulently anti-Serb stance led the west into taking ever more extreme positions, and siding with an organisation which even Robert Gelbard, President Clinton's special envoy to Kosovo, described as "without any question, a terrorist group."

Clark reminds us that it was the KLA's campaign of violence in 1998 which led to an escalation of the conflict with the government in Belgrade. "We were told the outbreak of war in March 1999 with NASTO was the Serbian government's fault," he adds, yet Lord Gilbert, the UK defence minister, admitted "the terms put to Milošević at Rambouillet [the international conference preceding the war] were absolutely intolerable ... it was quite deliberate." Then came the NATO occupation, under which an estimated 200,000 ethnic Serbs and other minorities from south Kosovo, and almost the whole Serb population of Pristina, have been forced from their homes. But as the Iraq war has become discredited, Clark concludes,

so it is even more important for the supporters of "liberal interventionism" to promote the line that Kosovo was in some way a success. The Council of Europe's report on the KLA's crimes makes that position much harder to maintain. And if it plays its part in making people more sceptical about any future western "liberal interventions", it is to be warmly welcomed.

Tony Blair has some very bizarre friends, wrote [Stephen Glover in The Daily Mail](#), but a monster who traded in human body parts beats the lot. The prime minister of Kosovo is painted by the report as a major war criminal presiding over a corrupt and dysfunctional state, Glover says, and yet this same Mr Thaci and his associates in the so-called Kosovo - Liberation Army were put in place after the U.S. and Britain launched an onslaught in March 1999 against Serbia, dropping more than 250,000 and killing an estimated 1,500 blameless - civilians: "This was Mr Blair's first big war, and it paved the way for the subsequent Western invasion of Iraq. The crucial difference is that while the Left in general ... opposed the war against Saddam Hussein, both were among Mr Blair's main cheerleaders as he persuaded President Bill Clinton to join forces with him in crushing Serbia." Both London and Washington tended to ignore atrocities committed by Hashim Thaci's KLA, Glover concludes, and offered unacceptably draconian terms to the Serbs "because by that stage Blair and

Clinton preferred war”:

Those were the days, of course, when most of the media thought Tony Blair could do no wrong. His military success in 1999 convinced him that Britain could and should play the role of the world's number two policeman to the U.S. A messianic note entered his rhetoric, as at the 2001 Labour party conference, when he raved that 'the kaleidoscope has been shaken... Let us re-order this world about us.' ... What happened in Kosovo helped shape subsequent events in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is richly ironic that 'liberated' Kosovo should now be a failed, gangster state... With his messianic certainties, the morally bipolar Tony Blair liked to divide the world into 'goodies' and 'baddies', having presumptuously placed himself in the first category. How fitting that this begetter of war after war should end up by receiving the Golden Medal of Freedom from a monster who traded in body parts.

U.S. Damage Limitation and Self-Censorship – Such commentary is light years away from the feeble and half-hearted reporting in the American mainstream media. The *Chicago Tribune*, for instance, did not deem it fit to publish a story about the Council of Europe report itself. It published two related items critical of the report instead, on the European Union expressing doubt about its factual basis and on the “government” of Kosovo planning to sue Dick Marty for libel. No major daily has published a word of doubt about Bill Clinton's wisdom of waging a war on behalf of Thaçi and his cohorts a decade ago, or perpetuating the myth of it having been a good war today.

That Thaçi aka [“The Snake”](#) is a criminal as well as a war criminal is [no news](#), of course. The intriguing question is who, on the European side, wanted to end his “untouchable” status, why now, and what is the U.S. Government – his principal enabler and abettor – going to do about it.

Unsurprisingly, Thaçi's “government” [dismissed the report](#) on December 14 as “baseless and defamatory.” On that same day Hashim Thaçi wrote in a telegram to President Obama that “the death of Richard Holbrooke is a loss of a friend.” “The Snake” has many other friends in Washington, however, people like US senator (and [current foe of WikiLeaks](#)) Joseph Lieberman, who declared back in 1999 at the height of the US-led war against the Serbs that “the United States of America and the Kosovo Liberation Army stand for the same human values and principles ... Fighting for the KLA is fighting for human rights and American values.” Thaçi's photos with top U.S. officials are a virtual Who's Who of successive Administrations over the past 12 years: Bill and Hillary Clinton, Albright, Bush, Rice, Biden, Wesley Clark...

Thaçi's American enablers and their media minions are already embarking on a bipartisan damage-limitation exercise. Its pillars will be the assertion that the report rests on flimsy factual evidence, an attempt to discredit Dick Marty personally, and the claim the Council of Europe as an irrelevant talking shop.

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