Beat: Local

Gunmen ambush EU police convoy in northern Kosovo, killing 1

-, 20.09.2013, 01:00 Time

USPA News - A member of the European Union`s (EU) police force in Kosovo was killed Thursday when gunmen ambushed two of their vehicles, officials said, marking the first deadly attack against the mission since it took over the region`s security in 2008. The attack happened at approximately 7:30 a.m. local time when unidentified gunmen fired at two vehicles belonging to the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) near the town of Zve?an, located in Kosovo`s north which is controlled by ethnic Serbs who reject the 2008 declaration of independence by Albanian-majority Kosovo. EULEX head Bernd Borchardt said the two vehicles were on rotation from Gate 1 and were carrying six staff members from Greece, Denmark, Bulgaria, Croatia, Lithuania, and the Czech Republic.

He said a man from Lithuania, identified as 35-year-old Audrius Senavicius, was killed in the attack. "I am shocked at the callous nature of the murder of this morning," Borchardt said. "Our EULEX staff member was a Customs Officer dedicated to ensuring the stability of Kosovo, and contributing to the normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo. He was young man who leaves behind a wife and family." A second EU police officer, from the Czech Republic, was taken to a medical facility but had no apparent physical injuries. "The Czech colleague has no visible injuries but you can imagine how he feels and he`s in our medical unit," Borchardt said, without giving other details about the officer`s condition. The police officer was later visited by Borchardt and Kosovo President Atifete Jahjaga, who conveyed her condolences for the loss of life in Thursday`s attack and wished a speedy recovery to the Czech colleague. "We will stand together, side by side, in order to overcome this grave moment," she said, expressing her government`s support to EULEX. It was not immediately clear who was behind the ambush, which comes ahead of local polls in November, but Borchardt said the scene had been sealed off and a murder investigation is underway. "Currently this is a mixed investigation between Kosovo Police and EULEX police," he said. "No effort will be spared in bringing the perpetrator or perpetrators to justice." Samuel ?bogar, head of the EU Office in Kosovo, said any attack on EULEX represents an attack on the values of the European Union, including its stance on peace, security and the rule of law. "I think that we have a strong feeling that such an attack is directed against the normalization that we try to facilitate within the EU-dialogue in the north and Kosovo in general," he said. "But of course we have to wait for an investigation before blaming anybody." Thursday`s attack immediately drew condemnation from around the world, including from United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who described it as a "cowardly attack" and called for a "swift and thorough" investigation. NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen also condemned the attack, saying "such violence is unacceptable and will not be tolerated." Countries including the United Kingdom, Belgium, and the United States issued similar statements of condemnation and voiced their support for the EU`s police force. "There is no space for violence, threats and intimidation in today`s Kosovo," said Marie Harf, a spokeswoman for the U.S. State Department.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1453/gunmen-ambush-eu-police-convoy-in-northern-kosovo-killing-1.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement):

Exemption from liability:
The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report.

Editorial program service of General News Agency:

UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619