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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Muja refuses to facing Transparency Forum**

After two invitations within a month for taking part in the debate “Face-off” with members of the Transparency Forum, mayor of Prizren, Ramadan Muja, has given another proof of the lack of transparency and accountability towards citizens. He has refused to face with journalists and civil society activists for discussing local governance matters.

Refusal to discuss with community groups presents the violation of fundamental principles of transparent and accountable governance by the mayor of the municipality. Moreover, such lock up of the mayor during the preparation of municipal budget for 2015 presents a violation of legal obligations as well. According to the Law on Public Finances, the mayor is also a Municipal Financial Administrator thus he is bound to act in accordance with legal obligations for consultations with the public in relation to the management of public money.

The other legal obligation of the mayor derives from the Law on Local Self-Government, according to which, in addition to public meetings, municipalities are obliged to inform citizens of the municipality on any significant plans or programs of public interest, as governed by the statute of the municipality. The same law stipulates that the mayor represents the municipality and acts on its behalf. Transparency Forum has invited the mayor to provide information and discuss on local governance matters, while his refusal clearly represents a legal violation.

Mayor Muja has once again showcased himself to be in breach of the citizens’ will by rejecting the public debate with journalists and civil society activists. His closing-off is contrary to the practice of democratic governance and breach of his contract with the citizens, who, through their vote, have authorized him to serve them, by governing in a transparent and accountable manner. Transparency Forum expresses its disapproval with such an undemocratic act of mayor Muja. Yet, we would like to give another opportunity to the mayor by inviting him again publicly to face with Transparency Forum. This is the last invitation Transparency Forum addresses to mayor Muja for observing one of the most basic legal and democratic obligations – meeting and communication with citizens.

Transparency Forum is an informal body consisting of civil society activists and journalists of Prizren, active in the field of democratic governance and its mission is to synchronize the actions of these stakeholders for raising the level of transparency and accountability of local government of Prizren.

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