



Press Update

Welcome to the weekly press briefing of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers, where we aim to provide journalists with an update on the latest developments at the court, and the opportunity to ask questions.

Two witnesses have been testifying this week in the war crimes trial of Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi. On Monday, 10 February, the Prosecution called a witness whose testimony was conducted via video link and mostly in private session. According to the summary read out in court, the witness and his relative were abducted in June 1999 by armed men wearing uniforms with KLA insignia and taken to a detention location, where they were interrogated and mistreated.

This witness finished his testimony on Monday and Sylejman Selimi took the stand. Mr Selimi was appointed with legal counsel during his testimony, ensuring that he could seek guidance regarding any potential self-incrimination issues. Mr. Selimi's testimony continued throughout the week.

In the same case, on 7 February, the Trial Panel decided that the written statements of two witnesses and one associated exhibit could be admitted into evidence, noting that the written testimonies would not cause unfair prejudice to the Defence, because the Defence will have the opportunity to cross examine the witnesses on all issues considered relevant. The Trial Panel also rejected the prosecution's request to admit one exhibit under Rule 154 and granted a separate request to add certain documents to the exhibit list, noting that the Defence did not object to this.

The next hearing in this case is scheduled for Tuesday, 18 February starting at 9 in the morning.

In the separate case of Hashim Thaçi, Bashkim Smakaj, Isni Kilaj, Fadil Fazliu and Hajredin Kuci related to the alleged influencing of witnesses, the Registrar notified the Pre-trial Judge on 6 February that Ms. Nina Tavakoli had requested the Registrar's approval to terminate her representation of Mr. Thaci in the case. Subsequently, on 10 February the Registrar informed about a request for Mr. Thaci's current co-counsel, Ms Sophie Menegon, to replace Ms. Tavakoli as lead Counsel.

In the same case, on 7 February, the Pre-trial Judge issued separate decisions extending detention for Isni Kilaj, Fadil Fazliu and Hashim Thaci. In all three decisions, the Judge found that the risks that the accused will flee, obstruct the progress of proceedings and/or commit further offences, continue to exist.

A public redacted version of the Pre-trial Judge's decision confirming the indictment in this case was issued yesterday and can be found on the KSC website. The original decision confirming the indictment was issued on 29 November 2024.

The decision provides further details about the materials submitted by the prosecution supporting the indictment, including details about a number of visits to the Detention Facilities during which Mr Thaci is





alleged to have instructed visitors to influence witness testimonies in his ongoing war crimes trial, and details about relevant transcripts of these visits.

Among other things, the Pre-Trial Judge found that the supporting materials indicated that Mr Taçi... "tasked each group to approach different SPO witnesses, some of whom Mr Taçi specifically characterised as 'decisive' or 'crucial' [...] repeatedly and purposefully revealed, without authorisation, Protected Information..." and "unmistakeably encouraged and urged, in the context of each group, i.e. the Fazliu Group, the Smakaj Group, and the Kilaj Group, Messrs Fazliu, Smakaj, and Kilaj, to receive and memorise his precise instructions and to contact the Targeted Witnesses, for the purpose of unlawfully influencing their (then) forthcoming testimony in the Taçi et al. trial."

In the Pjeter Shala case, the Court of Appeals Panel granted a request by the Defence for an extension of the time limit to file its appeal brief against the Reparation Order. The Defence now has until 14 March 2025 to file the brief.

