



## 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.

In the case of Hashim Thaci, Kadri Veseli, Jakup Krasniqi and Rexhep Selimi concerning war crimes and crimes against humanity, the Trial Panel on 18 March granted a request by the Prosecution to admit a witness testimony in written form while the witness will be available in court for cross-examination. The Panel found that the probative value of the evidence is not outweighed by any prejudicial effect and that any inconsistencies or contradictions in the testimony can be dealt with in cross examination. The Panel further found that allowing the testimony in written form will contribute to the expeditiousness of proceedings as it will reduce the estimated time for questioning by the Prosecution from six to one hour.

Also on 18 March, the Trial Panel admitted into evidence the testimony and associated exhibits of four witnesses in written form only, finding that the evidence was probative and not unduly prejudicial and that the requirements of a fair and expeditious trial warrant the admission of this evidence without cross-examination.

On 13 March the Trial Panel granted in part a request by the Prosecution to admit six witness statements in written form only, because the witnesses are deceased. Concerning five of the statements, the Panel granted the request finding that the evidence does not go to proof of acts and conduct of the Accused and that its probative value is not outweighed by any prejudice to the Accused. The Panel further found that the Evidence is consistent with and corroborated by statements of other witnesses that the Defence had the opportunity to cross-examine.

In regards to the sixth witness statement, the Panel granted the request in part ordering the Prosecution to exclude those parts of the testimony that concern an incident not included in the indictment. As for the alleged speculative or unsupported character of certain aspects of the evidence, the Panel emphasized this would be accounted for at the time when the Panel will consider what weight and probative value to attach to the evidence.

Victims Counsel on 17 March informed the Trial Panel that one victim decided to withdraw their participation in the proceedings due to concerns for their safety. Currently 154 victims participate in the proceedings in this case through Victims Counsel.

On 13 March, the Panel ordered the continued detention of Jakup Krasniqi and Rexhep Selimi finding that there continues to be a risk that the accused may obstruct the progress of proceedings and/ or commit further crimes. The Panel further found that it is only through the communication monitoring framework at the Specialist Chambers detention facilities that these risks can sufficiently be mitigated. In the case of Mr. Selimi, the Panel recalled that it appears that Mr. Selimi disclosed privileged information to unauthorized





third parties and that such conduct supports the Panel's finding that the release of Mr. Selimi would constitute the risk of obstruction.

Hearings in this case will resume on Monday, 24 March at 9 in the morning.

In the case of the Specialist Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi, Bashkim Smakaj, Isni Kilaj, Fadil Fazliu and Hajredin Kuçi, during the last week, several decisions became public concerning the indictment in this case as well as in relation to search and seizure operations by the Prosecution.

In the case of Salih Mustafa, two reports by the Registrar from May and July 2024 regarding the implementation of the Reparations Order have become public. In the reports, the Registrar submitted that the Single Judge's order regarding making payments to victims has been executed in the sense that victims have received a certain percentage of the reparations allocated to them. Further details on the implementation of the Reparations Order continue to be confidential at this point.

On another topic, the KSC has received several questions from journalists following the death of Hashim Thaci's father about whether Mr. Thaci will be permitted to visit Kosovo.

I would like to use the opportunity to clarify that at this moment the court is not able to provide information about any specific request or decision in relation to this question, because requests by a detainee and the decisions on those requests are always initially confidential for reasons that include privacy and operational security. After a humanitarian visit is completed, the judges typically reclassify these documents so that the public can be informed in more detail. It is also important to emphasize that while such visits, when ordered by the judges, are organized as quickly as possible, this can take some time, requiring close coordination with a number of actors, and complex logistical arrangements, including flights and security.

Keenly aware of the importance of being with family in situations like this, the Kosovo Specialist Chambers legal framework allows detainees to request a visit to Kosovo on compelling humanitarian grounds.

So far, thirteen such visits have been ordered by the judges of the Specialist Chambers.

