



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 19 March granted a request by the Prosecution and authorized a witness in the trial to testify via video conference. The Panel however ordered the Prosecution to provide additional factual information concerning the witness.

On 26 March, the Trial Panel rejected a joint request by the defence teams to be allowed to appeal a decision by the Trial Panel that the parties file their final trial briefs simultaneously at a date set by the Panel, rather than successively. The Panel found that the Rules of Procedure and Evidence provide that the final trial briefs have to be filed simultaneously and was of the view that the adversarial aspects of the proceedings do not demand successive briefs. The Panel pointed out that the primary purpose of final trial briefs is for each party to put forward its case in light of the evidence on the record of proceedings and emphasized that each party will get an opportunity to put their own case forward and to respond to the opposing side's arguments in their final oral submissions.

During this week, two witnesses testified in this case. According to the summary provided by the Prosecution, the first witness, Mr. Maloku occupied various roles in the KLA during the relevant period, including in the Operational Directorate of the General Staff. The second witness testifies via video link and with protective measures. The entire testimony is expected to be conducted in closed session.

So far, 125 witnesses testified in court in this case.





The next hearing in this case is scheduled for Tuesday, 1 April starting at 9 in the morning.

In the case of the Specialist Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi, Bashkim Smakaj, Isni Kilaj, Fadil Fazliu and Hajredin Kuçi, as well as in the case of Sabit Januzi, Ismet Bahtijari and Haxhi Shala, several decisions became public during the last week in regards to special investigative measures including search and seizure operations by the Prosecution.

On 21 and 22 March, the Trial Panel and Pre-Trial Judge had instructed the Registry of the Specialist Chambers to conduct a custodial visit to Kosovo for Mr. Thaci to pay his respect to his late father and be with immediate family. Mr. Thaci stayed in the custody of the Specialist Chambers at all times. This was the 14th custodial visit on compelling humanitarian grounds that the Judges of the Specialist Chambers have ordered.

Following the filing of Mr. Pjetër Shala's appeal brief against the reparation order in his case, the Appeals Panel on 27 March granted a request by victims' counsel to extend the deadline for victims' counsel to respond to the appeal brief to 4 April 2025. The Panel recalled that the appeal proceedings in this case are the first before the Specialist Chambers against a reparation order and may, therefore, set important precedents.

In other news, during this week, the KSC met with several NGOs from Kosovo and the region in The Hague to discuss how to ensure that the people in Kosovo are fully informed about the Specialist Chambers and what questions people have at this stage of the proceedings.

