



## 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 trial of Hashim Thaci, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi, last Thursday, 27 March, the 125<sup>th</sup> witness called by the Prosecution testified by video link and under protective measures. In approving the request for video link testimony, the judges recalled that where the health and/or security of a witness prevents the witness from attending court, that constitutes a sufficient reason to grant video-conference testimony.

The judges also noted that the witness would be questioned under the same conditions as those in the courtroom, and that the judges, the accused and the parties would be able to see and hear the witness testifying in real-time and have the opportunity to question the witness. This witness concluded their testimony last Thursday.

In the same case, on Tuesday, 1 April, the trial hearing convened briefly, after which it was announced that the witness who was supposed to provide testimony was unable to appear. The Prosecution then indicated that it would seek to have the witness's testimony entered into evidence in written form.

The Prosecution is not expected to call any more courtroom witnesses in this case and has indicated in the past that they plan to conclude their case by 15 April.

A status conference has been scheduled for 23 April to discuss next steps in the case.

According to the rules, after the prosecution has closed their case, the Defence may submit motions seeking the dismissal of any or all of the charges.

Pending any such motions and the Trial Panel's decisions on them, after this, the Victims' Counsel would have the opportunity to present his case.

There are over 150 victims participating in the proceedings, including victims of different nationalities.

After this, each of the Defence teams will have the opportunity, if they choose, to present their cases and call witnesses to support their cases.

So far in the Thaci et al trial, 125 witnesses have testified either in the courtroom or through video link.

In addition, so far in the trial, 117 witnesses have had their evidence admitted in written form only.

76 of these written testimonies were admitted under Rule 153, meaning the evidence was not directly related to the alleged conduct of the accused in the case.





41 of these written testimonies were admitted under Rule 155, when the witness is unavailable, for example if the witness has died, or if the person's failure to give evidence was materially influenced by improper interference, including threats, intimidation, injury, bribery, or coercion.

In the same case, on 1 April, the Trial Panel decided on a Prosecution Motion for Admission of Pashtrik Zone Documents, admitting several of the items in evidence, while denying the admission of other items requested by the Prosecution. On the same day, the Panel admitted into evidence a media interview and cover pages from three books, related to the authenticity of a volume that was earlier tendered into evidence.

On 27 March and 1 April, the Prosecution submitted lesser redacted versions of trial transcripts related to three witness testimonies in the trial from February 2025. These submissions are related to the Trial Panel's order of 7 November 2023 on the publicity of proceedings, which requires the parties to review private session testimony and propose lesser redacted transcripts within deadlines set by the court. This is to ensure that as much information as possible is made public, while also protecting witnesses and victims.

In the Pjetër Shala case, the Court of Appeals Panel has scheduled an Appeals hearing on 15 and 16 May. According to the scheduling order, the hearing is to include oral submissions from the Defence, the Prosecution and Victims' Counsel.

In the same case, on 28 March, the Appeals Panel denied a motion by the Defence requesting leave to call a witness and to admit into evidence transcripts, notes and interviews related to the witness's testimony in other cases. In its Decision denying the request, the Appeals Panel explained in detail why the judges determined that the witness's testimony would not have impacted the verdict. The judges also noted that the Defence had not provided the Appeals Panel with any statement regarding the content of the witness's anticipated testimony, as the rules require.

