



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 Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi, the Trial Panel issued an order last Friday setting out deadlines and directions concerning the remaining stages of the trial.

Defence teams are to formally close their cases by **2 December** at the latest.

The Trial Panel also set **19 January 2026** as the deadline for the Prosecution and the Defence to submit their final written trial briefs, and for Victims' Counsel to submit a statement on the impact of the alleged crimes on the 155 victims participating in this case.

Closing Statements are scheduled to take place from **9 to 13 February 2026**.

After this, the Trial Panel will close the case and enter into deliberations in order to reach a judgment.

The judgment should be pronounced within 90 days of the closing of the case. Where the circumstances require additional time, a further extension of 60 days is possible.

As the evidentiary proceedings in the trial draw to a close, we can provide some statistics on the publicity of the proceedings.

In the course of the trial, a majority of the 134 witnesses who testified in the courtroom did so either entirely or mostly in public session. 61 of these witnesses testified without any protective measures.

In addition, testimony which took place in private session is continually being reviewed and reclassified wherever possible and lesser redacted transcripts are continually being issued, to ensure that the proceedings are public and can be followed by any interested person.

So far, the judges have issued 11 decisions related to publicizing the private session testimony of 19 witnesses.

All public testimony in the trial can be found on the KSC website's *Thaçi et al* case page and the court records database.

In the case of Hashim Thaçi, Isni Kilaj, Bashkim Smakaj Fadil Fazliu, and Hajredin Kuçi, related to allegations of the illegal influencing of witnesses, a Trial Preparation Conference is scheduled to take place tomorrow, 28 November, at 09:30 in the morning.





As is the normal practice, both of the parties were consulted prior to scheduling the hearing about their availability on this date. Given that both parties confirmed their availability and did not raise any objections, the hearing was scheduled accordingly.

During the hearing, the parties are expected to discuss issues like the status of investigations by the Prosecution and the Defence teams, the status of evidence disclosure, and the possible timing of opening statements and calling of first witnesses.

We would also like to take this opportunity to provide some facts in response to recent reporting and statements in Kosovo about human rights and monitoring within the KSC's Detention Facilities in The Hague.

Under the Constitution of Kosovo, as amended by a two-thirds majority of the Kosovo Assembly, it is the Ombudsperson of the Specialist Chambers, Judge Pietro Spera, and not the Kosovo Ombudsperson, who holds the authority to ensure that conditions of detention in the KSC Detention Facilities comply with international human rights standards.

Article 162 of the Kosovo Constitution reads: "A separate Ombudsperson of the Specialist Chambers with exclusive responsibility for the Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office shall be appointed..." [emphasis added]

KSC Ombudsperson Judge Pietro Spera, who is an expert of international human rights law with 30 years' experience, has conducted 9 independent inspections of the detention facilities to date, including 3 independent inspections this year.

Regarding general oversight, the Ombudsperson of the Specialist Chambers acts independently to monitor, protect, and defend the fundamental rights and freedoms of all persons interacting with the KSC and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office. He may receive complaints alleging human rights violations and conducts inquiries into all admissible complaints. His reports are public and available on the Specialist Chambers' website, together with information regarding all complaints received.

Having in mind the exclusive authorities of the KSC Ombudsperson in relation to the KSC Detention Facilities, the recent visit by the Kosovo Ombudsperson to some of the detainees could not be in his official capacity, because this official monitoring function is carried out by the separate KSC Ombudsperson, appointed in line with the Constitution.

This also explains why the same conditions that apply to other visitors were applied during the visit of the Kosovo Ombudsperson. In particular, when it comes to visits to Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli and Rexhep Selimi, the Trial Panel introduced additional conditions on visits, such as active monitoring, after it came to light that these three detainees appeared to have revealed confidential information to some visitors about witnesses in their war crimes trial.





During inspections by the Ombudsperson of the Specialist Chambers, each of the detainees is afforded the opportunity to meet alone with the KSC Ombudsperson if they wish to do so to discuss any issue.

In addition to independent monitoring by the Ombudsperson of the Specialist Chambers, the KSC Detention Facilities are also subject to regular independent monitoring by the International Committee of the Red Cross, a practice in place since the establishment of the Specialist Chambers.

As a final word on visiting conditions in KSC detention, it is important to emphasise that all detainees continue to receive regular family visits with spouses and children, which occur outside the sight and hearing of detention officers. All detainees have ten days in every 30-day period for personal visits, in addition to regular phone calls and correspondence throughout the month.

