



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.

Closing statements in the Pjetër Shala trial were delivered this week. On Monday, the Prosecution delivered its statement, followed by Victims Counsel on Tuesday morning. The Defence concluded its closing statement on Wednesday, after which the parties and participants responded and commented on one another's submissions. After this, submissions were made on the issue of reparations in case of conviction and Mr Shala addressed the court.

The Presiding Judge has declared the case closed. In line with the Rules, the Judges of the Trial Panel will deliberate confidentially, in order to reach a judgment on the charges in the indictment. The trial judgment shall be pronounced within ninety days of the closing of the case, unless the circumstances require additional time.

In the case of Sabit Januzi, Ismet Bahtijari and Haxhi Shala, the Appeals Panel on 12 April dismissed the appeal of Mr Haxhi Shala against the decision of the Pre-Trial Judge extending his detention

In the same case, a public redacted version of the decision on review of detention of Ismet Bahtijari was issued last week. The Pre-Trial Judge decided to extend Mr Bahtijari's detention, finding that while conditions proposed by the Defence could sufficiently mitigate the risk of flight, they could not restrict the Accused's ability to obstruct the progress of Specialist Chambers proceedings and to commit further offences.

Specifically, the Pre-Trial Judge was of the view that Mr Bahtijari would have the motive, means and opportunity to exert pressure on Witness 1 to dissuade him from participating in the proceedings, or to otherwise tamper with evidence. The Judge also found that Mr Bahtijari's detention remains reasonable and proportionate.

In the same case the Pre-Trial Judge granted the Bahtijari Defence an extension of time until 19 April 2024 to provide all necessary documents to request legal aid before the Registry of the Specialist Chambers.

On 15 April 2024, the Trial Panel in separate decisions extended the detention of Kadri Veseli and Hashim Thaçi, finding for both accused that there remains a risk that they will obstruct the proceedings and commit further crimes, and that these risks can only be mitigated through the communication monitoring framework provided at the KSC detention facility, including those measures recently ordered by the Trial Panel.

In this regard, the Trial Panel recalled in the case of Mr Thaçi its previous findings that it appears that Mr Thaçi provided visitors with information elicited during the testimony of protected witnesses and that the record suggests that he passed on to an unprivileged visitor instructions pertaining to a future SPO witness regarding the form and content of that witness's upcoming testimony.

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On 15 April, the Trial Panel in this case rejected Veseli's request for leave to appeal a decision on the admission of certain evidence. The Panel found that the Veseli Defence failed to establish any unfairness arising from the admission of the evidence and recalled that it had heard both parties before rendering its decision.

The next hearing in the *Thaçi et al.* trial is scheduled to take place next Monday, 22 April, starting at 09:00am.

Journalist Questions

There were no questions asked.

