



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.

Following several media reports about the translation of the trial judgment in the Pjetër Shala case, and about the availability of the trial judgment to the public, we wish to clarify that an unrevised Albanian translation of the complete trial judgment was filed on 4 September and has since been available to Mr. Shala and his Counsel. The Registry has informed the court that the final, revised translation is expected by the end of October 2024.

A public version of the trial judgment was issued on 24 September in English along with those redactions necessary to protect witnesses and victims. The public redacted version of the trial judgment can be accessed on the KSC website.

In light of the requirement to ensure that documents are translated to the highest standards, it can take some time before translations are finalized in cases where the working language is English. However, the KSC gives highest priority to the translation of judgments and any other documents which must be provided to a defendant in his own language.

Hearings were held throughout this week in the trial of Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi.

At a status conference held on Tuesday to discuss the timing and planning of the trial, the Presiding Judge informed that as of Friday, 27 September, a total of 159 witnesses had testified so far in the case via all modes of testimony, including in-court testimony, written testimony, and a combination of both.

88 of these 159 witnesses had testified in court, including those witnesses for whom a written testimony was admitted and the witness appeared in court for cross-examination. 71 additional testimonies were admitted only in written form under Rules 153 and 155.

When it comes to the remainder of witnesses to be called by the Prosecution, the Presiding Judge noted that the Panel was recently informed by the SPO that it plans on calling 65 more witnesses to testify in court, and intends to request that 54 additional written witness testimonies be admitted into evidence.

In light of the April 2025 target date set for the Prosecution to finish the presentation of their case, possible steps to further expedite the trial were also discussed. In particular, the Presiding Judge asked the Prosecution whether and how they plan to reach the April 2025 target. The Prosecution indicated that they intend to further streamline the number of witnesses testifying in court and call fewer witnesses than indicated in the current estimate.





In the course of this week, four witnesses testified in the trial. On Monday morning, a witness testified under protective measures, mostly in private session. According to the Prosecution summary read out in court, the witness was a Kosovo Albanian civilian who was detained in 1998 at a KLA base and subjected to mistreatment.

After the testimony of this protected witness, the Prosecution called Ahmet Rrahmanaj, who was a member of the "Lumi" unit of the KLA military police during the relevant period. His testimony, which was given in public session, concluded on Monday afternoon.

On Wednesday, Stamen Jelić testified through video link. According to the Prosecution summary, KLA members took the witness's husband, Marko Jelić, from their home in Rahovec/Orahovac in August 1999, and he has been missing ever since. The witness's testimony was predominantly in public session.

The fourth witness to testify this week began their testimony this morning. This is the 95th witness called by the Prosecution to testify in court so far. The witness is testifying entirely in closed session.

In the same case, on 2 October, the Trial Panel granted a request by Victims' Counsel to vary protective measures for one of the participating victims.

The trial preparation conferences in the trial of Sabit Januzi, Ismet Bahtijari and Haxhi Shala are scheduled next week on 7, 8 and 9 October from 09:30 until 16:00, as needed. 10 and 11 October are also scheduled as reserve days for the hearing. The proposed start date for the trial is 11 November 2024.

On 30 September, the Registrar informed the Trial Panel of the conditional approval of Ms Marion Carrin as Co-Counsel to Ismet Bahtijari.

