



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.

On 17 and 18 December, three separate plea agreements were made public in which Sabit Januzi, Haxhi Shala, and Ismet Bahtijari each admit guilt to one charge of intimidation and one charge of obstruction.

At hearings held on 18 December, Mr. Januzi and Mr. Shala each pleaded guilty to one count of obstructing official persons in official duties, and one count of intimidation, as defined in the relevant articles of the 2019 Kosovo Criminal Code and the KSC Law.

Other matters related to the plea agreements were also discussed during the 18 December hearing, where the defendants confirmed that they had discussed the agreements with their lawyers, and that they understood the agreements and their consequences. The defendants also confirmed that they had entered into the agreements voluntarily, and that they waived their right to a trial.

A similar hearing to discuss Mr Bahtijari's plea agreement started earlier this afternoon.

The plea agreements and related matters such as sentencing are still under consideration by the Trial Panel.

In the case of Hashim Thaçi, Bashkim Smakaj, Fadil Fazliu, Isni Kilaj and Hajredin Kuçi, related to alleged witness influencing, the first status conference was held on Tuesday, 17 December. The disclosure of evidence by the Prosecution to the Defence and other matters related to the expeditious preparation of the case for trial were discussed.

In the same case, the Registrar notified the Pre-Trial Judge on 13 December of the conditional approval of Ms Sophie Menegon as Co-Counsel for Mr Thaçi.

In the separate case of Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi, related to charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, the Trial Panel issued a new decision on victims' participation on 16 December, according to which one applicant was admitted to participate in the proceedings. This brings the total number of victims participating in this case to 154.

In the same case, on 13 December, the Trial Panel ruled on a Prosecution request to admit the written testimonies of several witnesses into evidence without cross-examination, admitting six such testimonies, denying the admission of one, and deferring a decision on another witness's testimony until the SPO satisfies the requirements of the relevant rule.





On 16 December, the Trial Panel granted a Prosecution request to admit into evidence the prior statements of a witness and in a separate decision granted in part a request related to the expert testimony of three witnesses.

On 13 December, the Trial Panel extended the detention for Hashim Thaçi and Kadri Veseli in separate decisions, finding for both accused that there remains a sufficient risk that they will obstruct the progress of KSC proceedings and commit further crimes against those perceived as being opposed to the KLA, including witnesses who have provided or could provide evidence in the case and/or are due to appear before the Specialist Chambers. The Panel also found that these risks could only be effectively managed in the Detention Facilities.

The KSC judicial recess period will start on Monday, 23 December, and last until Friday, 10 January 2025. During this period, no hearings are held and some non-essential services are reduced to a minimum. However, the court remains fully functional and work continues across all sections of the KSC.

Filings are possible during the recess and, unless otherwise ordered by the Judges, judicial deadlines continue running.

The next regular weekly press briefing is scheduled for Thursday, 9 January 2025 at 14:30.

The next court hearing before the KSC is scheduled to take place on 13 January 2025, starting at 09:00 in the trial of Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi.

