



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, Bashkim Smakaj, Isni Kilaj, Fadil Fazliu, and Hajredin Kuçi on the alleged illegal influencing of witnesses, the Trial Judge granted a request from the Thaci Defence seeking the admission of 96 pieces of evidence on 30 April.

This evidence included public records from Mr. Thaçi's war crimes and crimes against humanity trial, prior public evidence provided by witnesses listed in the indictment, publicly available media content, previous versions of transcripts and translations of audio-recordings of visits to Mr Thaçi at the Detention Centre, expert reports and other material. Excepted from the decision were two expert reports and five other items. The Judge noted that the expert reports will be the subject of a separate decision. He considered the Defence request moot for five of the items, because judicial notice had already been taken of them. The Trial Judge admitted into evidence all the remaining items finding them to be *prima facie* authentic and relevant.

In the same case, the Thaçi Defence called Professor Helen Fraser, an expert witness in the field of forensic transcription, to testify this week. Professor Fraser's testimony took place on Monday and Tuesday, including cross-examination by the Prosecution and questions from the Trial Judge. The judge also reminded the parties of the deadlines established in his earlier decision, including for the Defence to file notices concerning the closure of their cases and for the Prosecution to indicate whether it intends to present any rebuttal, by 14 and 15 May 2026, respectively.

In the Thaçi et al war crimes and crimes against humanity case a public redacted version of the Jakup Krasniqi Defence team's Final Trial Brief was issued on 11 May and can be accessed on the website.

Finally, in the case of Pjetër Shala, the Supreme Court Panel set a deadline of 18 May for the Shala Defence to file a public redacted version of its request and set subsequent deadlines for Victims' Counsel and the Defence to respond. On 11 May, the Registrar assigned Simon Laws as Victims' Counsel to respond to the Shala Defence submissions.

Mr. Shala was convicted of arbitrary detention, torture and murder and the Trial Panel ordered him to pay a sum of 208,000 euros as compensation for the physical, mental and material harm suffered by the participating victims. The Appeals Panel dismissed Mr. Shala's appeal against the reparations order on 29 January 2026, and he is now filing a request with the Supreme Court Panel against that decision.

