



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 case of Pjetër Shala, an appeals hearing has been scheduled for next Thursday and Friday, 15 and 16 May 2025. On Thursday, the court will convene from 13:30 in the afternoon until 17:10. On Friday, the session will take place in the morning, starting at 10:00.

During the appeals hearing, the Presiding Judge is expected to make introductory remarks, followed by oral submissions from the Defence, Specialist Prosecutors Office and Victims' Counsel. In an order issued on 5 May, the Appeals Panel laid out a number of issues which the parties may choose to address during their submissions at the hearing.

Pjetër Shala was convicted by the Trial Panel of the war crimes of arbitrary detention and murder on 16 July 2024 and sentenced to 18 years of imprisonment, with credit for the time served. The Trial Panel issued a reparations order in respect to the eight participating victims in the case on 29 November 2024, ordering Mr. Shala to pay a sum of 208,000 Euros as compensation for the physical, mental and material harm inflicted on the victims of the crimes for which he was convicted.

Mr Shala appealed his conviction, his sentence, and the reparations order. The upcoming hearing is expected to be about his appeal against the judgment and the sentence.

In the trial of Hashim Thaci, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi, the Trial Panel on 2 May denied a request by the Veseli Defence to appeal two earlier decision by the judges on the admissibility of evidence. The Trial Panel found that the





probative value of the tendered items was not outweighed by any prejudice to the Accused.

On 2 May, Victims Counsel submitted two expert reports and requested for them to be admitted into evidence. One report addresses the psychological harm suffered by victims participating in these proceedings, the other assesses the material harm the victims suffered. Victims' Counsel also asked for the relevant expert reports from the trials against Salih Mustafa and Pjetër Shala to be admitted into evidence, given that they also concern victims participating in the Thaci et al war crimes case.

In a recent status conference, the Judges ordered Victims' Counsel to be prepared to present their case in July this year.

In the case of Hashim Thaci, Bashkim Smakaj, Fadil Fazliu, Isni Kilaj and Hajredin Kuci on the alleged influencing of witnesses, the Pre-trial Judge denied a request by the Smakaj Defence to appeal her earlier decision on Smakaj's request for a stay of proceedings, because the request was filed after the relevant deadline.

In her latest decision, the Pre-trial Judge also explained that even if the application had been submitted on time, the request to appeal would not have been granted because the first and second issues raised by the Defence in its request merely expressed a disagreement with the judge's earlier decision, while the third issue raised by the Defence involved a clear misrepresentation of the judge's decision.

In other news, on Friday, 2 May, Judge Kenneth Roberts informed Specialist Chambers President Ekaterina Trendafilova that he would be stepping down from the roster of international Judges due to time constraints and competing priorities. President Trendafilova expressed her appreciation for Judge Roberts's contribution to the Specialist Chambers legal framework.

