



## 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 Sabit Januzi, Ismet Bahtijari and Haxhi Shala, the Trial Panel on 4 March ordered the parties as well as the Registrar to file public redacted versions of a number of filings that have been confidential so far. Deadline is 10 March 2025.

On 28 February, the President of the Specialist Chambers issued a decision on Mr. Bahtijari's request for clarification in which Mr. Bahtijari's Counsel alleged that Mr. Bahtijari was not informed in a timely manner about the commutation of his sentence. In her decision, President Trendafilova clarified that Mr Bahtijari was not only informed of the outcome of the commutation procedure and the Decision, but was also provided with a copy of the conditions and the disposition of the Decision in Albanian language. He further received all necessary logistical details regarding his upcoming transfer to Kosovo and his conditional release. The President further clarified that all these details were known also to the Counsel of Mr. Bahtijari before she filed the request for clarification. As such, the President dismissed the request and ordered Mr. Bahtijari's defence to file a public redacted version of their request by 6 March 2025.

In the same case, the detailed reasoning concerning the Trial Panels' decision on the Plea Agreements is now available on the KSC website. Having assessed the evidence, the Panel was satisfied that the agreed factual basis was supported by the evidence and that each accused agreed that they were part of a group which thought to induce Witness 1 to refrain from giving evidence.

In the trial of Hashim Thaci, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, the Trial Panel on 3 March rejected a request by the Veseli's Defence to appeal the Trial Panel's decision not to admit into evidence a document the Veseli Defence had used during the cross-examination of a witness. The Panel found that the authenticity of the document in question could not be sufficiently challenged through cross examination given that the relevant witness had deceased. The Panel reminded that it was for the Panel to decide on the admissibility of evidence.

On 3 and 4 March, the Trial Panel issued three decisions on proposed redactions by the Prosecution, Victims' Counsel and the Witness Protection and Support Unit for the production of lesser redacted versions of transcripts of different court hearings. In all three decisions, the Panel approved redactions that were necessary to protect the identity of protected witnesses and ordered for other parts of the transcripts to be reclassified as public.

On 3 March became public the public redacted version of the Trial Panel's decision from 19 February on Mr. Thaci's request for temporary release on compassionate grounds. Like the Pre-Trial Judge in her decision, the Trial Panel rejected Mr. Thaci's request because it was not convinced that the current medical condition of Mr. Thaci's father constituted a compelling situation that would justify temporary release. The Trial Panel

1





recalled that, considering the importance that detainees can maintain close contact with family members, the Panel had ordered the Registry to facilitate additional video visits which could be attended by both Mr. Thaci's parents.

On 4 March, the Trial Panel granted in part a request by the Prosecution to admit into evidence documents about the Shala Zone and the Karadak Zone. The Panel permitted the admission into evidence where it was satisfied that the relevant evidence was authentic and relevant while making sure that its probative value was not outweighed by any prejudice to the Accused.

The next hearing in the trial is scheduled for Monday, 24 March, starting at 09:00 am.

During the week, a number of Prosecution filings became public related to the investigations in the Thaci et al case on alleged influencing of witnesses. They are available on the KSC website.

