



## 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 Monday, 14 July 2025, the Court of Appeals Panel in the case of the Specialist Prosecutor v. Pjetër Shala, composed of Judges Michèle Picard, Kai Ambos and Nina Jørgensen, issued its judgment.

The Appeals Panel affirmed Mr Shala's conviction for the War Crimes of Arbitrary Detention, Torture, and Murder.

However, the Appeals Panel also granted in part three of the fourteen grounds raised by Mr Shala in his appeal, reducing his sentence from 18 to 13 years of imprisonment, with credit for time served.

In concluding, the Appeals Panel emphasised that the reduction in Mr. Shala's sentence in no way suggests that the crimes for which he has been convicted and sentenced are not grave.

The Appeals Panel also stressed that the Specialist Chambers only have jurisdiction over individuals, not groups or organisations and that "neither the KLA nor the Kosovo people were the subject of these proceedings, and they have not been found responsible for or convicted of these crimes".

A public redacted version of the full Appeal Judgment can be accessed on the KSC website.

The Appeals process is an integral part of ensuring fair trials. It is designed to ensure that after a judge or panel of judges issues a decision or a judgment, an accused or





convicted person can challenge that decision before an independent panel of judges who will review the decision.

Hearings are ongoing this week in the trial of Hashim Thaci, Kadri Veseli, Jakup Krasniqi and Rexhep Selimi.

Yesterday in court, the Trial Panel issued its decision on the joint Defence motion under Rule 130. This rule says that the Trial Panel may dismiss a charge – for example a charge that someone committed cruel treatment – even before the Defence presents its case – if there is no evidence capable of supporting a conviction beyond reasonable doubt on the particular charge in question.

In their written request, the Defence had sought a dismissal only in relation to alleged incidents before the end of May 1998 and following 20 June 1999.

In issuing the Trial Panel's decision, the Presiding Judge explained that the Defence was seeking the dismissal of certain material facts, whereas Rule 130 only relates to the possibility of dismissing an entire charge or charges in the indictment.

The Judge further explained that the question raised by the Defence of whether the Prosecution had sufficiently proven the temporal scope of the charges would be dealt with by the Trial Panel in its judgment at the end of the case.

After the Presiding Judge had issued the oral order, Victims' Counsel called two Expert witnesses, Karin Duhne-Prinsen and Dr Catherine Nicola Black, who are providing testimony on the psychiatric/psychological harm to victims in this case. Their testimony concluded today following cross-examination by the Prosecution, the Defence teams and questions from the Trial Panel. There are no further hearings planned for this week.

On 16 July, the Defence teams of Hashim Thaci and Jakup Krasniqi notified the Trial Panel that they both plan to present a Defence case, while the Defence teams of Kadri





Veseli and Rexhep Selimi notified the Trial Panel that they do not plan to present cases. A status conference has been scheduled for next Tuesday, 22 July.

On 14 July, the KSC President dismissed a request by Haxhi Shala for conditional release. As a reminder, Mr. Shala confessed to intimidation in criminal proceedings and obstruction of official persons in performing official duties and was sentenced to 3 years of imprisonment with credit for time already served.

In his most recent request, Mr. Shala argued that having served half of his sentence as of 11 June 2025, he was eligible to be considered for provisional release under the Kosovo Criminal Code.

In her decision, the KSC President highlighted that Article 3(4) of the KSC Law explicitly states that any other Kosovo law, which has not been expressly incorporated into the Law shall not apply to the organisation, administration, functions or jurisdiction of the Specialist Chambers. The service of sentences, which includes the possibility of early release, is an integral part of the administration and functioning of the Specialist Chambers. Therefore, it is the KSC Law that should apply in this case. Under this law, persons convicted by the Specialist Chambers only become eligible for consideration of commutation, modification or alteration of sentence upon having served two-thirds of their sentence.

On 16 July 2025, the Single Judge appointed to oversee the implementation of the Salih Mustafa reparations order for victims issued a decision in which he found that Salih Mustafa has failed to comply with his obligations under the Reparation Order and in which he informed Mr. Mustafa that an interest rate of eight percent per annum shall start to accrue on the part of the Reparation Order which has not yet been executed as of the date on which this decision is notified to him.

The decision relates in part to Mr. Mustafa's refusal to fill out a declaration of means form that would enable the court to determine how much of the reparations he is able to pay, and the fact that the Registrar had not received any response from Mr Mustafa on the matter of voluntary payment to the victims.





The recent decision also includes several details about the earlier implementation of the reparations order that were not previously public. In a March 2024 decision, the Single Judge ordered the Registrar to inform Mr Mustafa of the modalities for any voluntary payment that he may wish to make to meet his obligations towards the victims and to conduct an indigence assessment on Mr Mustafa to assess whether his current and future available means, taking into consideration his family's needs, would allow him to pay the reparations ordered in full, within a reasonable time.

In the same decision from March 2024, the Single Judge also ordered the payment of reparations to victims from Mr Mustafa's assets, thus partially enforcing the Reparation Order. On 19 July 2024, the Registrar informed the Single Judge that his order regarding the (partial) payment of reparations to victims had been executed and she submitted a table detailing the pro rata amounts distributed to each of the victims.

