



## Press Update

Welcome to the 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 Thaci, Kadri Veseli, Jakup Krasniqi and Rexhep Selimi, the Trial Panel on 2 September issued a Further Order on the Scheduling of the Defence Case. The Panel set the target date for the closing of the defence case as Friday, 14 November or one week after the completion of the last witness testimony, whichever one is earlier. The Panel emphasized that the date is a mere indication of the Panel's estimate of the length of the defence case and can be brought forward or be extended as necessary.

The Panel noted that the SPO may want to present evidence in rebuttal of the defence case and that the defence may want to respond in such case. Without prejudice to such possibility, the Panel informed the Parties and participants that they should be prepared to file their final trial briefs, and statement on the impact of the alleged crimes on victims participating in the proceedings, before the commencement of the judicial recess on Monday, 22 December 2025. The Panel added that it will set a firm date in respect of this matter once the Defence case is more advanced and once the Panel has heard the Parties on the matter.

The Panel recalled that the Thaci Defence submitted that except for one witness, all their witnesses will testify in court either as a live witness or to be present for cross-examination once their written testimony has been submitted. The Krasniqi Defence submitted that two of its witnesses will be present in court for cross examination and three testimonies will be submitted in written form only, pending the Panels approval.

The Panel set the deadline for submitting all evidence that is not linked to a witness testimony thematically and on a rolling basis to no later than one week after the completion of the testimony of the last witness of the respective defence team.

The next hearing in this case is the start of the presentation of the defence case scheduled on Monday 15 September starting at 9 in the morning. For this hearing pre-registration is required. Journalists who would like to attend the hearing from the public gallery in The Hague are kindly requested to also indicate whether they need a seat in the media centre of the Specialist Chambers.

In the case of Hashim Thaci, Bashkim Smakaj, Fadil Fazliu, Isni Kilaj and Hajredin Kuci, The Appeals Panel on 1 September denied in its entirety Isni Kilaj's appeal against the Pre-Trial Judges decision on his continued detention. The Appeals Panel was satisfied that the Pre-Trial Judge in her decision had applied the correct standard in line with the practice of the European Convention of Human Rights. The Appeals Panel saw no error in the Pre-Trial Judge basing her decision on factors such as the gravity of the offence Mr. Kilaj is charged with; his demonstrated willingness to violate court orders and intervene in proceedings; his access to sensitive witness related information and the climate of fear and intimidation in Kosovo against witnesses or potential witnesses of the Specialist Chambers. Recalling that the Pre-Trial Judge weighed the proportionality of Mr. Kilaj's detention against a number of factors, the Appeals Panel was satisfied that she properly took





into account the length of time he spent in detention pending trial when considering that his continued detention remained proportionate at this stage.

On 1 September the Appeals Chamber granted in part a request by Salih Mustafa to extend the deadline for Mr. Mustafa to file his appeal against the decision by the Single Judge to impose an interest rate of 8% per year on the amount of the reparations that has not been paid yet.

The Panel noted that the request was filed several days after the deadline had passed. Nevertheless, out of fairness for Mr. Mustafa, the Panel exceptionally considered the request and found that he demonstrated good cause considering the significance and novelty of the issue. The Panel recalled that it is in the interest of justice that parties can file meaningful appellate submissions and found that the consideration of these issues will contribute to ensuring procedural fairness and thereby give effect to the rights and interest of both, the victims and Mr. Mustafa. On that basis, the Appeals Panel extended the deadline for filing the appeal to 8 September.

