



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.

This week the Hashim Thaçi Defence began the presentation of its case and the calling of witnesses in the trial of Hashim Thaci, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi. On Monday, 15 September, James Rubin began his testimony as the first witness called by the Defence. Mr. Rubin continued his testimony on Tuesday and Wednesday, during which he was questioned by the Defence and cross-examined by the Prosecution. The judges of the Trial Panel also asked the witness questions. On Wednesday, the second witness called by the Thaci Defence, Paul Williams, began his testimony, which concluded today.

Hearings in the trial are scheduled for next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

In the same case, on 11 September, the Trial Panel granted a request by the Thaçi Defence to amend its exhibit list, adding four documents related to two witnesses. In a separate decision, on 12 September, the Trial Panel granted a Thaçi Defence request for the admission of several items into evidence. The Trial Panel also informed that some of the items requested for admission will be considered by the Trial Panel in a separate decision related to Rule 154 requests. Rule 154 allows a party to admit the written statement of a witness into evidence in place of direct examination in the courtroom.

On 16 September, the Trial Panel granted a motion by the Victims' Counsel asking the court to take notice of several adjudicated facts from the Pjeter Shala war crimes case, which Victims' Counsel considered to be relevant to the harm caused to victims participating in the case of Msrs. Thaci, Veseli, Selimi and Krasniqi.

The Annex to the decision provides details of the facts about harm suffered by the victims held at the Kukes Metal Factory in northern Albania in 1999. For example, that all detainees in one of the rooms were physically and psychologically abused on a daily basis by several members of the KLA, forced to witness and to listen to the physical abuse of their co-detainees and threatened with violence or death.

The adjudicated facts from the Pjeter Shala case also include the fact that the detainees in the Kukes Metal Factory suffered long-lasting injuries, both physical and mental, such as: head injuries, burn injuries, a broken elbow, broken teeth, persistent and severe pain throughout their bodies, feelings of shame, fear and vulnerability, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, including nightmares, flashbacks and intrusive memories.

Under the Rules, the Trial Panel in one case may, in the interests of a fair and expeditious trial, take judicial notice of adjudicated facts from other proceedings of the Specialist Chambers or from final proceedings before other Kosovo courts or from other jurisdictions relating to matters at issue in the proceedings under consideration, to the extent that they do not relate to the acts and conduct of the Accused as charged in the indictment.





In the case of Hashim Thaçi, Bashkim Smakaj, Isni Kilaj, Fadil Fazliu and Hajredin Kuçi related to the alleged unlawful influencing of witnesses, the Pre-Trial Judge this week informed the parties that she intends to transmit the case to a Trial Panel in the first half of November 2025, subject to pending Court of Appeals Panel decisions. The Judge also invited the Defence teams to file any pre-trial briefs by 20 October 2025. In an earlier decision, the Prosecution was given the deadline of 19 September to file its Pre-trial Brief and witness list.

In the same case, on 15 September, the Pre-Trial judge granted a request by the Thaci defence to disclose to the Trial Panel in the Thaci et al war crimes case all witnesses that are testifying in both cases. This is to assist the Thaci defence in preparing a request for certain amendments to its contact protocol with witnesses, in order to facilitate Defence investigations. The Pre-Trial Judge noted that the Prosecution did not oppose the request and that sharing the information would not require lifting any protective measures for witnesses.

On 12 September, the Pre-Trial judge granted a request to authorise the copying of the forensic image and corresponding report of the mobile telephone seized from Hajredin Kuçi in March 2024, in order to provide the copy to the Defence for Mr Kuçi.

