



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 Thaci et al war crimes case, the Trial Panel on 18 September ordered the continued detention of Rexhep Selimi, Kadri Veseli and Jakup Krasniqi finding that the risks that the accused may obstruct the progress of proceedings or commit further crimes continue to exist. The Panel considered that the release of the Accused with sensitive information in their possession would not be conducive to the effective protection of witnesses who already testified or who may testify in parallel proceedings. In the case of Mr. Selimi, the Panel recalled that it appears that Mr. Selimi disclosed privileged information to unauthorised third parties, which reinforced the Panels finding that there is a risk that Mr. Selimi will obstruct the progress of proceedings.

In view of the Panel, the identified risks could not be mitigated any other way than through the communication monitoring framework of the Specialist Chambers detention facility. The Panel was mindful of the fact that the accused have been in detention for a long time but considered the continued detention reasonable based on the facts that the accused are charged with serious international crimes in which they allegedly played a significant role and would face a significant sentence if convicted.

During this week, the third witness called by the Thaci Defence testified in court. John Duncan is a former UK Diplomatic Service officer. The testimony took place mainly in public session.

The next hearing in this case is scheduled for Monday, 29 September. During the next week, two witnesses are expected to testify in court.

In the Thaci et al case on alleged influencing of witnesses, the Prosecution on 19 September filed their Pre-Trial Briefs as per the deadline set by the Pre-Trial Judge. In a decision last week, the Pre-Trial Judge invited the defence to file their Pre-Trial Briefs by 20 October and announced her intention to hand over the case to a trial panel during the first half of November subject to pending decisions by the Court of Appeals Panel.

In other news, the Specialist Chambers outreach team this week met with local community members in Zvecan as well as with university students, high-school students and journalists in Pristina. Almost every month, a team from the Specialist Chambers meets with civil society representatives in different parts of Kosovo to explain the court's mandate, provide updates on the proceedings, and answer people's questions.

On 21 September, the Specialist Chambers took part in The Hague Open Day during which once a year, international organisations in The Hague open their doors to the public and explain their mandate and activities. Throughout the day, the Specialist Chambers offered three guided tours through the public area of the Court.

