



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 Hashim Thaci, Bashkim Smakaj, Fadil Fazliu, Isni Kilaj and Hajredin Kuci concerning allegations about the illegal influencing of witnesses, on 26 January, the Trial Judge issued a decision related to one of the witnesses whom the Prosecution plans to call in the trial. The judge decided to defer any decision on whether the witness qualifies as an expert and on whether the witness's report and associated materials are admissible until after the witness has testified, as was requested by the Defence. The defence had earlier given notice that it will challenge the witness as an expert and the admission of the report. This procedure follows Rule 149 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence related to expert witness testimony.

In the same case, on 27 January, the Trial Judge granted a Prosecution request for an extension of the word limit for a filing related to the admission of evidence, having extended the word limit for a related Defence filing the week before.

On 28 January, the Single Trial Judge granted a request by the Thaci Defence to postpone the start of the Trial initially scheduled for 24 February and set the new starting date to 27 February 2026. The Trial Judge considered that two factors of significance to trial scheduling have changed: the definite scheduling of two additional days for the closing arguments in the Thaci et al war crimes case on 16 and 18 February 2026; and increased certainty concerning the time that will be required for the examination of Prosecution witnesses.

In the trial of Hashim Thaci, Kadri Veseli, Jakup Krasniqi and Rexhep Selimi, as a reminder, closing statements are scheduled to take place from 9 to 13 February, and on 16 and 18 February. The hearings are scheduled to begin at 9:00 and end at 16:30 and can be followed online in the three languages of the court, Albanian, English and Serbian, via the [streaming function on the KSC website](#), with a 45-minute delay, or from the public gallery at the premises of the KSC. The agenda for closing statements is based on current estimates and may vary, for example if a party needs less time than anticipated.

Due to the high interest in attending the hearings on these days, pre-registration is required to attend the hearings from the public gallery at the premises in The Hague. The deadline for pre-registration is tomorrow, 30 January.

Public redacted versions of the filings and the decision concerning Salih Mustafa's request for temporary release submitted in December last year are now available on the KSC website.

As reflected in the filings, the Single Judge was seized of Mr. Mustafa's request to visit his father in the hospital on Monday, 22 December, and on the same day issued a decision requesting further submissions from the parties and the Registry. On the following day, the Defence filed an additional submission, including





updated medical documentation. At the time of the passing of Salih Mustafa's father on 25 December, further submissions were still pending before the Single Judge.

Subsequently, the Single Judge invited the Defence to indicate whether it wished to amend the initial request, including for the purpose of visiting the grave or family members. The Defence informed the Court that it did not intend to submit any further or modified request, following which the Single Judge declared the request moot. More details are available in the filings on the website.

Regarding the KSC Outreach Programme, we would like to reiterate the information provided last week that the purpose of the court's information-sharing events is to provide basic information about the court's mandate and activities, to give people in Kosovo the opportunity to share their views, and most importantly to answer the questions that people have.

The information provided at these events is the same information that can be found on the Specialist Chambers website. The court is a separate institution from the Specialist Prosecutor's Office, and the Outreach Programme administered under the neutral court Registry does not represent the Prosecution or the Defence. The presumption of innocence of the accused is clearly communicated. The information shared does not include political or ideological content.

The court reports regularly on its Kosovo Outreach activities in our weekly press briefings and online. The KSC appreciates listening to people in Kosovo and answering their questions through the Outreach programme.

