



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 Thaçi, Bashkim Smakaj, Fadil Fazliu, Isni Kilaj and Hajredin Kuçi concerning allegations about the illegal influencing of witnesses, opening statements are scheduled to take place tomorrow, 27 February.

The hearing is scheduled to begin at 9:30 and end at 16:00. It can be followed online in the three languages of the court, Albanian, Serbian and English, via the streaming function on the KSC website, with a 45-minute delay, or from the public gallery at the premises of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers.

During opening statements, the prosecution and the defence each have the opportunity to give a principled overview of their cases and a concise explanation of the evidence to be called. Under the rules, the Defence may choose whether to deliver their opening statement after the opening statement of the Specialist Prosecutor or later, after the conclusion of the presentation of evidence by the Specialist Prosecutor, or not at all.

On 27 February, the Prosecution will make its opening statement. Based on current public filings, the Defence of Mr. Thaçi and Mr. Fazliu have indicated that they will **not** make opening statements during tomorrow's hearing.

Following the opening statements, the Prosecutor will start presenting its case and call the first of its three witnesses. The defence will have the opportunity to cross-examine the witnesses called by the Prosecution. After the opening statements on 27 February, trial hearings are scheduled from 2 to 6 March. The Prosecution is expected to finish calling its witnesses by 6 March.

The Prosecution alleges that between at least 12 April 2023 and 2 November 2023, during separate, unprivileged visits to the Detention Facilities, Hashim Thaçi provided Messrs Smakaj, Kilaj, Fazliu and Kuçi with confidential information about witnesses called by the prosecution in the Thaçi et al war crimes case, instructed them to influence the testimonies of the witnesses, and provided details about how to do so.

The confirmed indictment further alleges that Mr. Thaçi coordinated three distinct groups, formed with Messrs Smakaj, Fazliu and Kilaj, and other uncharged individuals, and with Mr. Kuçi, in an aim to interfere with the testimonies of witnesses called by the prosecution in the ongoing Thaçi et al war crimes trial.

All accused in this case have pleaded not guilty to all charges.

