



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.

This briefing covers developments since the last briefing before the judicial recess. During this period, no hearings or press briefings took place, but the court's other activities continued without interruption.

In the case of Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi, the Trial Panel ordered the continued detention of Rexhep Selimi and Hashim Thaçi, in separate decisions on 28 July and 10 August, finding that for both accused there continues to be a risk that they may obstruct the progress of proceedings or commit further crimes. The Trial Panel considered that it appears that Mr. Selimi disclosed privileged information to unauthorised third parties and that it seems that Mr. Thaçi provided non-privileged visitors with information elicited during the testimony of protected witnesses and discussed instructions to be passed on to witnesses about the form and content of their testimonies.

In its decisions, the Trial Panel also recalled that the names and personal details of certain highly sensitive witnesses have been disclosed to the accused, which increases the risk of sensitive information pertaining to witnesses becoming known to members of the public. The judges reminded of the persistent climate of witness intimidation in Kosovo and concluded that it was only through the communication monitoring framework at the Specialist Chambers Detention facility that these risks could be sufficiently mitigated.

In the same case, on 29 July, the Trial Panel granted a request by Victims' Counsel to allow one close relative of a deceased victim to resume the victim's participation in the proceedings. The total number of participating victims in this case is 156.

As a reminder, the Trial Panel will render the Trial Judgment in this case on 16 September 2026, starting at 10:00 CET.

All requests to attend the 16 September hearing in person received before the deadline are currently being reviewed. Due to limited space in the public gallery and the particularly high volume of requests to attend this hearing, this review process takes some time. As indicated in the first announcement, confirmation emails will be sent within two weeks before the hearing.

The pronouncement of the Trial Judgment will also be streamed online through the streaming page of the KSC website in Albanian, English and Serbian. As with all other public hearings, registration is not required to follow the judgment online.

In the trial of Hashim Thaçi, Bashkim Smakaj, Isni Kilaj, Fadil Fazliu and Hajredin Kuçi on the alleged illegal influencing of witnesses, the Single Trial Judge closed the evidentiary proceedings, and scheduled closing statements to take place on 10, 11 and 14 September 2026, with hearings starting at 9:30 CET on all three

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days. In the same order, the Single Trial Judge ordered that any requests from the accused to attend the closing statements via video conference were to be submitted by 14 August. Based on public filings, Mr. Smakaj, Mr. Kilaj, Mr. Fazliu and Mr. Kuçi have filed requests to participate in the hearing remotely.

The hearings on 10, 11 and 14 September will be public and can be followed in Albanian, English or Serbian through the streaming page of the KSC website, or from the public gallery at the premises of the court. Confirmation emails to those who pre-registered to attend these hearings will be sent within two weeks before the closing statements.

In the same case, on 24 July, the Single Trial Judge denied a request by the Smakaj Defence to appeal the Judge's decision admitting into evidence the statement of Witness 8 following the decision by the Appeals Chamber on this matter. Among others, the Single Trial Judge found that the Smakaj Defence did not show that the issue would significantly affect the fair and expeditious conduct of the proceedings.

On the same day, the Single Trial Judge granted a request by the Thaçi Defence to admit into evidence three public filings in judicial proceedings before other courts for the limited purpose of indicating the scope of confidentiality obligations relating to expert microdot analysis. This relates to Witness 8, an expert witness called by the Prosecution in this trial who refused to disclose certain information during his testimony, citing confidentiality reasons.

On 31 July the Single Trial judge ordered the continued detention of Hashim Thaçi, finding that there continues to be a risk that Mr. Thaçi may obstruct the progress of proceedings or commit further crimes.

On 29 July, Specialist Chambers President Ekaterina Trendafilova denied Haxhi Shala's request to reconsider his earlier request to be permitted to go on a holiday to Albania. Mr. Shala's sentence was modified by the President in February of this year after he had served 2/3rds of the sentence, and he was released to Kosovo with certain conditions, including a restriction on travel outside Kosovo during the remainder of the sentence.

In her first decision on the request, the President found travel for recreational purposes fundamentally incompatible with the sentence imposed on Mr Shala. In her 29 July decision, she reiterated that a holiday does not constitute a sufficiently compelling basis for him to leave Kosovo while completing his sentence and reminded him to comply with all conditions of his release. She recalled that Mr Shala pleaded guilty to grave offences and that the conditions applied to his release will be lifted in a few months on 11 December 2026 when he completes his sentence.

