



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.

On 16 September 2026 the Trial Panel found Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi guilty of the war crimes of arbitrary detention, cruel treatment, torture, and murder.

The Trial Panel found the accused not guilty of crimes against humanity because the Specialist Prosecutor failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that there was a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population. The accused were also found not guilty in connection with a number of specific incidents of war crimes.

The Trial Panel sentenced Hashim Thaçi to 25 years of imprisonment, Kadri Veseli to 18 years, Rexhep Selimi to 13 years and Jakup Krasniqi to 25 years in prison, with credit for time already served.

The Judges found that during the Kosovo conflict Mr. Thaçi, Mr. Veseli, Mr. Selimi and Mr. Krasniqi contributed significantly to the common criminal purpose of targeting perceived opponents of the Kosovo Liberation Army's political and military goals, including Kosovo Albanians associated with other political or military forces, like the LDK and FARK; individuals alleged to be associated with the Serbian authorities; and certain members of ethnic minorities, including a number of Roma and Serbs.

The targeting of such opponents took the form of killings; arrests and detention without due process; physical and psychological mistreatment; as well as other forms of abuse, intimidation and harassment. With limited exceptions, the Trial Panel found no evidence that any of the victims had engaged in any criminal activity, taken an active part in hostilities or presented any other legitimate security concern for the Kosovo Liberation Army. The vast majority were innocent civilians who were caught in the implementation of a common criminal purpose in which they were described, often falsely and generally without basis, as collaborators or spies. Many victims recounted the lasting psychological and physical consequences of their ordeal.

During the hearing, the Presiding Judge emphasised that the trial was not about the legitimacy of the Kosovo Liberation Army and its goal of an independent Kosovo, but about the use of certain criminal means by some of its members to achieve these goals.

On 15 September the bi-monthly detention review of Jakup Krasniqi and Kadri Veseli was due according to the legal deadline and the Trial Panel ordered their continued detention finding that there continued to be a risk that they would obstruct the progress of proceedings or commit further crimes. The KSC Law requires that for anyone in pre-trial detention, such detention must be reviewed every two months. Therefore, even though the Trial Judgment was to be pronounced the next day, they were still required to conduct the review.





The Panel noted that in that decision that the next review of their detention was due in principle in November 2026, but that in either case, following an acquittal or a finding of guilt in the Trial Judgment on 16 September, it would not be necessary for the Parties to file submissions on the next detention reviews.

On 16 September, the Trial Panel issued an Order in Relation to Reparations Proceedings, deciding to hold reparation proceedings and issue a reparation order, provided that no objections are raised by the Defence.

Based on the submission by Victims' Counsel and the findings in the Salih Mustafa case, the Panel decided not to refer victims in this case to civil litigation in Kosovo. The Panel noted that participating victims in this case were granted the protective measure of anonymity that continues to apply and which could not be upheld if victims were referred to civil litigation in Kosovo. The Panel also considered the context of witness intimidation in which these proceedings were held and noted that many of the victims do not live in Kosovo anymore and would not have access to civil litigation there. Consequently, the Panel found that the SC constitutes the most appropriate forum for the determination of reparation arising from those crimes.

The Panel ordered the Defence to raise objections against this decision by 22 September, should they wish to do so and the Prosecution to respond to these objections, if any, by no later than Friday 25 September.

The Panel further ordered the Defence to inform the Panel whether they intend to submit any evidence by 22 September and Victims' Counsel to submit any evidence concerning reparations by 7 October.

Finally, Victims' Counsel was ordered to file any request for reparations by Wednesday, 14 October, to which the Defence and SPO can reply by 4 November.

Following the closing statements in the *Thaçi et al.* case on the alleged influencing of witnesses that took place on 10, 11 and 14 September 2026, the Single Trial Judge declared on Monday the case against Hashim *Thaçi*, Bashkim Smakaj, Isni Kilaj, Fadil Fazliu and Hajredin Kuçi closed. The date for the pronouncement of the judgment will be announced in due course.

