



## 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 15 May, the Trial Panel in the case of Hashim Thaci, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi decided on two Registry reports on victims' applications to participate in the proceedings. In their decision, the judges granted the applications of four victims to participate in the proceedings and rejected the application of one victim.

The KSC rules allow for the judges to accept applications after the deadline when good cause is shown. In their decision, the judges explained their reasoning in accepting the application for each of the four victims. The four victims will join the group of participating victims represented by Victims' Counsel Simon Laws. 156 victims are now participating in the proceedings in this case.

In the same case, the Trial Panel decided on a request from the Prosecution to admit the written testimony of five witnesses under Rule 155. This rule allows the judges to admit into evidence the written testimony of a witness who is unavailable to appear in court or subject to interference, if certain conditions are met.

For one of the witness testimonies proposed by the Prosecution, the Trial Panel rejected the request. The Trial Panel admitted the testimony in written form for the four other witnesses, noting in each case that the evidence of the relevant witness was not directly related to the acts or conduct of the accused as charged in the indictment. The Trial Panel also stressed that a final assessment of the reliability of the admitted testimonies would be made in light of the entire body of evidence admitted at the end of the trial.





In the case of Hashim Thaci, Bashkim Smakaj, Fadil Fazliu, Isni Kilaj and Hajredin Kuci, the Pre-Trial Judge extended the deadline for the Prosecution to respond to Defence preliminary motions in the case. This followed two extensions granted earlier to the Defence.

Before the start of the trial, an accused has the right to file preliminary motions before the Pre-trial Judge in which they may, for example, challenge the jurisdiction of the Specialist Chambers or allege defects in the form of the indictment. The Defence teams have filed five preliminary motions in this case.

The Appeal Hearing in the Pjeter Shala case concluded last Friday 16 May, following the submissions by the parties and the personal address by Mr. Shala. Among other submissions, the Defence stated that the convictions should be reversed and their client acquitted of all counts, while the Prosecution argued that Mr. Shala's appeal should be rejected in its entirety. The Court of Appeals Panel will render its judgment in due course.

