



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 Pjetër Shala trial, an expert on DNA identification testified last Friday, 16 June.

At the same hearing, the Trial Panel issued an oral order setting some target dates for the next few months of the trial. 6 July is the target date for the Prosecution to finish with the presentation of its case. Then, subject to the outcome of any motion by the Defence to have the charges dismissed, 21 or 22 August is the target date for the Victims' Counsel to start with any evidence they may wish to present. Finally, the Trial Panel set 18 September as the target date for the Defence to commence its case.

Hearings in this trial are scheduled to resume next Monday.

In the *Thaçi et al.* trial, hearings took place on Monday and Tuesday of this week. The tenth and eleventh witnesses called by the Specialist Prosecutor's Office testified, answering questions from the Prosecution, Defence, Victims' Counsel and the Judges.

On Monday, 19 June, the Trial Panel expressed its concern at the pace at which the hearings are progressing in this case and reminded the parties that it is unnecessary to question witnesses extensively on undisputed matters.

On Tuesday, 20 June, the eleventh witness completed their testimony, after which the Trial Panel discussed extensively with the parties and Victims' Counsel concrete steps that could be taken to ensure a greater degree of publicity of the proceedings in this case. The discussion was based on written submissions that the Trial Panel had received from the Prosecution, the Defence and Victims' Counsel. The Presiding Judge stressed that everyone agreed publicity should be promoted in the proceedings. At the end of the hearing, he indicated that the Trial Panel would likely convene the parties and participants again to go over the proposals, and he called on both the Prosecution and the Defence to contribute to addressing this issue.

The next hearing in the *Thaçi et al.* case is scheduled for Monday, 10 July, starting at 9:00 in the morning.

In addition to this week's hearings, there were a number of recent submissions and decisions taken in the *Thaçi et al.* case.

On 16 June, the Victims' Participation Office submitted a report to the Trial Panel in which it transmitted the amended application of one victim whose application was previously denied, and recommended that this applicant be admitted to participate in the proceedings.





On 16 June, the Trial Panel ordered the continued detention of Hashim Thaçi and Kadri Veseli, in separate decisions. For both accused, the Panel found that there continues to be a risk that they may obstruct the progress of proceedings or commit further crimes. The Panel also found for both accused that these risks can only be sufficiently mitigated through the communications monitoring framework applicable at the KSC Detention Facilities.

On 21 June, a Court of Appeals Panel denied two appeals against the Trial Panel's Fifth Decision on Victims' Participation, which were filed on behalf of 37 denied applicants. Among others, the Trial Panel had found that the crimes the applicants alleged to have suffered from did not fall within the geographic or material scope of the indictment. The Appeals Panel found that the Counsel for the denied applicants did not show that the Trial Panel had erred in its finding and rejected their motion.

Also on 21 June, the Trial Panel granted in part a request from the Prosecution to limit courtroom attendance, and ordered that one Defence team member shall not be present in the courtroom during testimony of witnesses with protective measures.

The Judges found that the presence of a Defence team member who is a close relative of an individual alleged to have taken part in some of the crimes set forth in the indictment could reasonably be perceived by witnesses as prejudicial to their safety, well-being, dignity or privacy and could make witnesses fearful to give full and candid evidence, which would be incompatible with the search for truth and justice and would not be fair.

The Judges also made clear that there was no suggestion that the Defence team member had violated the Code of Conduct and there was no adverse finding regarding their professional conduct.

In the same case, a public redacted version of the Trial Panel's earlier decision partially granting Mr Thaçi's request for a custodial visit to Kosovo due to compelling humanitarian grounds, is now available on the KSC website. The custodial visit took place on 29 May.

On a final note, next week's regular press briefing will be moved to Wednesday, 26 June at 14:30, due to the fact that next Thursday is a KSC holiday.

Journalist Questions

