



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 Tuesday, 15 January, the Defence for Mr Pjetër Shala filed a notice with the Trial Panel that the Defence has closed its case. During its presentation of evidence, the Defence for Mr Shala called 10 witnesses to testify in court.

In terms of next steps, after the Trial Panel announces the closure of evidentiary proceedings, the judges will invite the Specialist Prosecutor and the Defence to file Final Trial Briefs and schedule a hearing for closing statements.

In the trial of Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi, the 40th witness called by the Prosecution began their testimony on Monday and finished on Wednesday. This was a protected witness who testified through video-conferencing.

According to the summary read out by the prosecution in court, the witness served in the Dukadjini Operational zone during the relevant period and their testimony should provide information on the structure of and the relationship between the Kosovo Liberation Army and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kosovo.

On Wednesday, the 41st witness called by the prosecution began their testimony, also testifying with protective measures. According to the prosecution, this witness is a family relative of a murder and enforced disappearance victim from Drenoc/Drenovac.

In the same case, on 15 January, the Trial Panel ordered the continued detention of Jakup Krasniqi and Rexhep Selimi, in separate decisions. For both accused, the Judges found that there continues to be a risk that they will obstruct the progress of proceedings and commit further crimes against those perceived as being opposed to the KLA, including witnesses who have provided or could provide evidence in the case. The Trial Panel maintained the view that these risks can only be mitigated through the communication monitoring framework applicable at the Specialist Chambers detention facilities.

On 11 January, the KSC Registrar notified the KSC President that she had approved Ms Venkateswari Alagendra as Counsel for Salih Mustafa, replacing Mr Mustafa's previous Counsel, Julius von Bóné.

In the same case, on 17 January, the KSC President assigned a Single Judge to oversee the implementation by the Registrar of specific paragraphs of the reparation order issued against Mr Mustafa by the Trial Panel. Mr Mustafa was convicted of arbitrary detention, torture and murder as war crimes by the Trial Panel in December 2022, and the Court of Appeals Panel upheld these convictions in December 2023. The Trial Panel ordered reparations for the eight participating victims in the case totalling 207,000 Euros.





On 12 January, the Specialist Prosecutor submitted an indictment that would, if confirmed, join the Sabit Januzi and Ismet Bahtijari case with that of Haxhi Shala. The proposed joint indictment does not add new counts or modes of liability for any of the accused, but provides certain limited additional factual allegations in respect of Januzi and Bahtijari, and such clarifications and alignments of language necessary to join the cases.

In the case of Isni Kilaj, on 11 January, the Court of Appeals Panel denied the appeal of Mr Kilaj against the single judge's decision ordering his continued detention.

Journalist Questions

There were no questions asked.

