



## 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 case, the Trial Panel has closed the evidentiary proceedings and scheduled closing statements to take place from 15 to 19 April 2024.

According to the rules, after closing statements, the Presiding Judge shall declare that the case is closed. After the closing of the case, the Trial Panel enters into deliberations. The trial judgment is to be pronounced within 90 days of the closing of the case, except where the circumstances require additional time.

In addition to scheduling closing statements in the trial, the Judges invited Victims' Counsel to formulate any request for reparations for the physical, mental and/or material harm allegedly suffered by (each of) the victims participating in the proceedings, where applicable, by 4 March.

Trial Panel I also invited the Prosecution, the Defence and Victims' Counsel to file their respective final trial briefs and Victims' Counsel's statement on the impact of the alleged crimes on the victims, by 25 March.

In the *Thaçi et al.* trial, the 45<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> witnesses called by the Prosecution have been testifying this week, mostly in public session. Starting on Tuesday, the 46<sup>th</sup> witness testified under a pseudonym but without facial or voice distortion, about the kidnapping of his family members in the area of Rahovec/Orahovac.

On Tuesday afternoon, former KLA officer Hajrush Kurtaj continued testimony which began earlier this month. Hajrush Kurtaj's testimony continued on Wednesday and Thursday.

After yesterday's regular trial hearing, Trial Panel II called a separate session to discuss scheduling and planning issues related to the trial, including the possibility of streamlining the Prosecution's case, as well as measures to make more of the proceedings public.

In the same case, there were public filings over the last week related to changes of Counsel and Co-Counsel for two of the accused.

On 16 February, the KSC Registrar informed the Trial Panel of the termination of David Young's appointment as Co-Counsel for Mr Rexhep Selimi.

Following the Trial Panel's decision approving the withdrawal of Gregory Kehoe as lead Counsel for Hashim *Thaçi*, the Registrar appointed Luka Mišetić as new lead Counsel for Hashim *Thaçi* on 19 February. During the hearing on 20 February, the Trial Panel issued an oral order directing Luka Mišetić to provide an updated list of Hashim *Thaçi*'s Defence team members by 11 March.





In the same case, on 15 February, the Trial Panel ordered the continued detention of Hashim Thaçi and Kadri Veseli 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, including those measures recently ordered by the Trial Panel.

In the same case, the Panel found on 16 February that portions of the transcript of a witness's testimony can be reclassified as public.

In the case of Sabit Januzi, Ismet Bahtijari and Haxhi Shala, the Prosecution has filed its pre-trial brief, along with the list of witnesses it intends to call and the list of proposed exhibits it intends to present at the trial to prove its case.

On 21 February, the Registrar notified the Single Judge who is appointed to oversee the Registrar's implementation of the reparation ordered by Trial Panel I in the Salih Mustafa case about the appointment of Mr Julius von Bóné as Counsel for Mr Mustafa.

### **Journalist Questions**

There were no questions asked.

