



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.

In the trial of Hashim Thaci, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi, on 5 June 2025, the Trial Panel issued a revised scheduling order regarding the next steps in the case.

The Judges ordered the Defence to submit their joint request for dismissal of charges under Rule 130 by 12 June. After this, the Specialist Prosecutor's Office has until 7 July to respond. The Trial Panel also indicated that it plans to decide on the Defence's joint request for dismissal of charges in the week of 14 July.

Should the Trial Panel deny the Defence's motion in whole or in part, the Victims' Counsel is ordered to be ready to start calling witnesses on 16 July. Each of the Defence teams should also notify the Trial Panel on 16 July about whether they plan to present evidence and call witnesses.

More details are available in the Trial Panel revised scheduling order on the KSC website.

In the same case, Victims' Counsel informed the court that one of the participating victims in this case has passed away. The victim was admitted to participate in the proceedings as a result of having suffered mental harm as an indirect victim of arbitrary arrest, detention, cruel treatment, murder and enforced disappearance.

On 4 June 2025, the Trial Panel admitted an additional victim to participate in the proceedings. The participating victim will be included in the existing group of victims, represented by the same Victims' Counsel. The Panel noted in its decision that the deadline for submitting applications for victims' participation in this case had passed on 15 February 2023. However, finding good cause, the Panel accepted this application.

On 5 June 2025, the Trial Panel rejected a request by the Veseli Defence to appeal an earlier decision by the Trial Panel to admit into evidence documents from the Dukagjin zone. The Panel stated that it had conducted a careful assessment of each item in question.

On 11 June public versions of provisional release decisions for Jakup Krasniqi, Kadri Veseli and Rexhep Selimi were issued. The Trial Panel denied the requests in separate decisions finding that there continues to be a risk that the accused may obstruct the progress of proceedings and/or commit further crimes considering that Victims' Counsel will submit a list of potential witnesses for its case and the accused will therefore be exposed to sensitive information. In view of the Panel, the rationale it applied in relation to SPO witnesses applies equally to the witnesses to be called by Victims' Counsel. The Panel further noted that the risk of interference may also exist in relation to witnesses the Defence may choose to call and that





witnesses who have already testified in this case and other witnesses relevant to the proceedings could be subject to interference or retaliation.

In the case of Hashim Thaci, Isni Kilaj, Bashkim Smakaj, Fadil Fazliu and Hajredin Kuçi, the Pre-trial Judge issued a number of decisions related to pre-trial detention last week. Under the KSC Law, someone can only be detained before their trial under certain circumstances, including if there is a risk that they will flee justice or interfere with witnesses.

As a reminder, this case is distinct from the trial in which Mr. Thaci and three others are accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity. This case, which is still in the pre-trial phase, involves accusations from the prosecution that Mr. Thaci and others unlawfully interfered with the testimony of witnesses in Mr. Thaci's war crimes trial.

On 5 June, in separate decisions, the Pre-trial Judge found that there are articulable grounds to believe that Hashim Thaci, Isni Kilaj, Bashkim Smakaj, and Fadil Fazliu may flee, obstruct the progress of the proceedings or commit further offences, and that these risks cannot be sufficiently mitigated by any proposed or additional conditions for release.

In considering the risk that Mr. Thaci may obstruct proceedings, the judge referred to the allegations that Mr. Thaci coordinated with three distinct groups, of which he was the leader, to interfere with the testimony of prosecution witnesses in Mr. Thaci's ongoing war crimes trial, and that he instructed others to unlawfully influence the witnesses' testimonies. She also considered that Mr. Thaci's actions show persistence in furthering obstruction efforts from within the Detention Facilities, including by leveraging his influence over former KLA affiliates loyal to him, and persons from his political circles. She also referred to previous findings suggesting that, in the past, Mr. Thaci attempted to undermine the Specialist Chambers, and, through his circles, offered benefits to persons who were summoned by the SPO to provide information to the SPO and the Specialist Chambers.

The Pre-trial Judge noted that the Prosecution has closed its case in chief in the Thaci et al war crimes trial, but considered that the risk of obstructing witnesses and victims does not cease to exist, since: (i) the proceedings in Mr. Thaci's war crimes trial remain ongoing and the Trial Panel may hear further evidence from the participating victims, defence witnesses and rebuttal witnesses, including by witnesses who may have already testified; and (ii) a Trial Panel may, under exceptional circumstances, hear additional evidence after the closing of the case under Rule 136 of the Rules.

The Pre-trial judge also found that there is a risk of Mr. Thaci obstructing the course of justice in his separate case related to alleged witness tampering.

