



## 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 case against Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi, on 2 April the Trial Panel rejected a request by the Thaçi and Selimi defence to order the Prosecution to disclose any additional evidence to the defence only, and not additionally and as usual in such cases to the judges. The defendants argued that such disclosure to the Judges was no longer necessary as the case was closed.

In its decision, the Panel distinguished between the submission of material proposed as evidence at trial and the mere disclosure of material. The Panel pointed out that its judgment will be based exclusively on material admitted into evidence on the record. However, considering the continued disclosure obligations by the Prosecution, the Panel found it legitimate to continue overseeing that such disclosure is done in accordance with the Rules, considering that it must be able to assess any issue arising from disclosure, including the current request.

In the trial of Hashim Thaçi, Bashkim Smakaj, Isni Kilaj, Fadil Fazliu, and Hajredin Kuçi on alleged influencing of witnesses, the Single Trial Judge on 2 April ordered the continued detention of Hashim Thaci finding that the risks that he may obstruct the progress of proceedings or commit further crimes continued to exist. The Single Trial Judge confirmed his previous findings that the risk of obstruction was reduced relative to previous detention reviews, as evidentiary proceedings in one case are closed and in the other case the Prosecution is unlikely to rely on witnesses or evidence that can be tempered with.

However, the Single Trial Judge did consider that there was a certain risk that individuals who might be called as Defence witnesses in this case, whose identity was not yet known, could be subject to influence. Additionally, he considered the alleged leadership role of Hashim Thaci in efforts to obstruct the proceedings in his war crimes and crimes against humanity case. He reminded that these risks must also be viewed in the context of a prevalent climate of witness intimidation in Kosovo, in particular in respect of investigations and prosecutions of crimes attributed to ex-KLA members.

The Single Trial Judge was not convinced that any conditions for release could sufficiently mitigate these risks and found that, based on the above, Mr. Thaci's continued detention was still reasonable considering that the case is progressing speedily.

Hearings in this case that were initially scheduled between 14 and 17 April have been cancelled. These dates had been tentatively reserved in case needed.

