



## 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 Thaçi, Bashkim Smakaj, Isni Kilaj, Fadil Fazliu, and Hajredin Kuçi on the alleged influencing of witnesses, hearings provisionally scheduled for 24 and 28 April have been cancelled.

The Defence requested that the testimony of all of its witnesses be received by the Single Trial Judge in written form, rather than calling them to testify in person during trial hearings. The Single Trial Judge has now granted this request in respect of five of the seven witnesses on the Defence's list, thus leading to the cancellation of trial hearings. A decision remains pending in respect of the remaining two Defence witnesses, which will be decided in due course.

In the same case, the Trial Judge ordered the parties to file written submissions by 22 April on several matters relevant to determining the schedule for the remainder of the trial. The Judge set a tentative target date of 5 May for the Defence teams to file notifications on the closure of their respective cases. Once the Trial Judge receives the parties' submissions, he will decide on the schedule for the remainder of the case.

In the trial of Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi, the Trial Panel on 17 April granted a request by Victims' Counsel to allow two close relatives of a deceased victim to resume the victim's participation in the proceedings. As a result, the total number of participating victims in this case has increased to 156.

In the same case, earlier decisions connected with the detention of the accused were made public, including the Trial Panel's 16 March 2026 decision to extend the detention of Rexhep Selimi. In this decision the Judges found that the risks that the accused may obstruct the progress of the proceedings or commit further offences continue to exist, pointing out that the risk of interference also includes any attempt to retaliate against witnesses who have testified or to incentivise a witness to recant.

Two other decisions recently made public, from 4 July 2025 and 19 March 2026, effectively relax measures imposed by the Trial Panel on visits to three detainees.

As a reminder, in December 2023, the Trial Panel imposed certain measures in relation to non-privileged personal visits to Mr Thaçi, Mr Veseli and Mr Selimi. The Trial Panel did so after evidence provided by the SPO appeared to show that the detainees were revealing confidential information from the proceedings to their visitors and that the ordinary conditions of detention were insufficient to mitigate the risk of the detainees engaging in conduct that could interfere with the proceedings or present a risk to the safety and security of witnesses.





The additional measures introduced in December 2023 included active monitoring of personal visits for these three accused. Such monitoring did not apply to confidential meetings between defendants and their lawyers, or to private visits with spouses and children. These meetings have always taken place without monitoring. These measures also did not apply to other detainees.

In their 4 July 2025 decision, the Trial Panel lifted some of these measures pertaining to Mr Thaçi, Mr Veseli and Mr Selimi, for example lifting the one-visitor restriction on video visits with close family.

In their 19 March decision, the Trial Panel further relaxed some measures for all three accused, while rejecting a request by the Selimi Defence to rescind the remaining contact restrictions in respect of Rexhep Selimi.

Regarding the relaxation of measures, the Trial Panel in their March decision increased the number of authorised non-privileged in-person visits from five to six per month and agreed with changes envisaged by the Registrar that will give the opportunity to the three accused to request two additional video visits with close relatives per month, and one additional private visit with spouses and children per month.

In their decision, the Judges expressed the view that the modified detention conditions, “do not interfere impermissibly with the right of the Three Accused to respect for their family life”, and noted that, “the Modified Detention Conditions set out in the present decision, in some respects, align with, or provide for additional visitation rights comparatively to, the detention regulations.”

The system in place ensures that every detainee is provided with reasonable means of maintaining personal relationships, including daily contact with family and friends through telephone calls and correspondence, in addition to in-person and video visits.

