



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 of Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi, the Trial Panel on 1 July issued the scheduling order for the pronouncement of the verdict in this case. The hearing is scheduled to take place on 16 September at 10:00. Pre-Registration is required. The hearing can also be followed through the streaming function on the Specialist Chambers website in the three languages of the court Albanian, Serbian and English.

Also on 1 July, the Trial Panel issued an order reminding Hashim Thaçi of the modified detention conditions that apply to him as well as of all other rules and regulations concerning his detention. The Panel also directed his Counsel to remind Mr Thaçi of his obligations in that regard. Based on regular reporting by the Registrar, the Panel came to the conclusion that Mr. Thaçi has displayed a repeated pattern of non-compliance with the modified detention conditions as well as other relevant detention rules and regulations. Should Mr. Thaçi not comply, the Panel will consider stricter measures to ensure compliance with its orders.

On 24 June, the Trial Panel granted in part a joint request by the Defence to reject the amendments the Prosecution made to their final trial brief. The Prosecution had filed a corrected version of its final trial brief, making three amendments in footnotes. Minor clerical corrections to filings are permissible in certain circumstances, prior to the issuance of a decision on the relevant filing. The Panel permitted two changes to the footnotes in the final trial brief and rejected one where the Prosecution had added a reference, as it would constitute an additional exhibit and as such fall under "further submissions" which are outside the permissible scope.

In the trial of Hashim Thaçi, Bashkim Smakaj, Isni Kilaj, Fadil Fazliu and Hajredin Kuçi on the alleged influencing of witnesses, the Appeals Chamber granted in part an appeal by the Prosecution of the Single Trial Judge's decision on the admission of expert evidence and directed the Single Trial Judge to re-evaluate the admissibility of the relevant evidence in accordance with the Appeal Panel's decision.

The Prosecution had requested the admission of an expert report and testimony from an expert witness who specialized in a specific analysis. However, the Single Trial Judge had denied admissibility of the report because the method was not universally recognised in academia, the witness was not willing to fully disclose his methodology, and the Prosecution had not secured authorization under Rule 107 to keep this information confidential.

The Appeals Chamber found that to decide on the admissibility of evidence the Single Trial Judge should have applied a lower threshold of review, namely whether it is prima facie reliable, meaning whether the witness can, on its face, be considered an expert in the subject matter. In the Appeals Chamber's view, absolute transparency on every step of the methodology employed is not necessary for the admission of evidence.

1





Because the witness adequately explained his general parameters and internal quality controls, the Appeals Chamber found that his report was sufficiently transparent for purposes of admissibility. Once the expert is admitted as a witness, it will be for the Single Trial Judge to decide what weight to give to this evidence.

The Appeals Chamber further found that Rule 107 did not strictly speaking apply, because the sensitive information the witness refused to disclose was not shared with the Prosecution prior to the testimony and therefore the Prosecution was not required to clear it ahead of time. Furthermore, because the Defence could cross-examine the witness on this issue, the Appeals Chambers did not see any prejudice towards the Defence.

Therefore, the Appeals Chamber remanded the issue to the Single Trial Judge with the instruction to re-assess the admissibility of the expert witness based on the findings of the Appeals Chamber.

Following the decision, the Single Trial Judge on 1 July invited the parties to file any submissions on the issue by 6 July. He also vacated all previous deadlines concerning the submission of the parties' final trial briefs and any related deadlines.

On 30 June, the Single Trial Judge ordered the parties to reclassify certain transcripts of witness testimony to public and produce public redacted versions of some other similar transcripts. Concerning the testimony of one of the expert witnesses, the Single Trial Judge ordered the Prosecution to get in contact with the employer of the witness to determine whether the testimony can be reclassified as public or if there are any concerns on information security or the privacy of the witness.

On 29 June the Single Trial Judge's decision on Fadil Fazliu's urgent request for variation of Condition of Release became available in a public redacted version. On 25 March, Mr. Fazliu's Defence had requested that Mr Fazliu be permitted to leave Kosovo to visit someone who was terminally ill so he could say goodbye in a meaningful way while the person was still able to do so.

The Single Trial Judge granted the request considering that Mr Fazliu's travel would not enhance the previously identified moderate risk that he may obstruct the progress of proceedings considering that the same conditions of release apply during the travel. The Single Trial Judge also based his decision on the person's medical records and the fact that the person is a close family member reminding that serious medical conditions of close family members have in the past been a basis for provisional release.

The Single Trial Judge also considered that the requested visit would not disrupt the progress of the proceedings nor would it negatively affect the rights of the other accused in this case to a trial without undue delay. The Panel reminded Mr Fazliu that all other conditions set out in the Decision on Release continued to apply and ordered him to return his passport to the Registry immediately upon his return to Kosovo.

In a second decision, originally issued on 19 June 2026, the Single Trial Judge denied a request by the Fazliu Defence to allow Mr. Fazliu to travel to Montenegro to attend an event. The Judge found that no good cause





had been established to justify a variation of the existing conditions on his release and that no compelling humanitarian grounds or other significant change of circumstances had been shown.

On 25 June, the Specialist Chamber of the Supreme Court dismissed in its entirety Pjetër Shala's request for protection of legality concerning the reparations order against him. Among the four grounds raised, Mr Shala submitted that the Trial Panel had committed a substantial violation of the procedures by conducting separate reparation proceedings before his convictions were considered final on appeal, and that the Trial Panel erred by holding him liable to repair harm that was not caused by his acts or omissions, but by the crimes in respect of which Mr. Shala was convicted.

The Supreme Court Panel rejected Mr Shala's submissions in relation to the sequencing of the issuance of the reparation order. The Supreme Court Panel further noted that the Appeals Panel had found that the Trial Panel correctly determined that reparations are to be awarded based on the harm suffered as a direct result of the commission of a crime within the jurisdiction of the Specialist Chambers in relation to which a person has already been convicted, and that Mr Shala merely disagreed with the interpretation given by the Trial and Appeals Panels without substantiating his arguments.

The Supreme Court Panel observed with respect to the second ground raised by Mr Shala that the Appeals Panel determined that the standard of review for appellate proceedings also applies to appeals against reparation orders and, having carefully considered Mr Shala's submissions, was not persuaded that the Appeals Panel erred in this respect.

The Supreme Court Panel concluded that Mr Shala failed to show a substantial violation of the procedures by the Trial and Appeals Panel in relation to all four grounds and rejected his referral in its entirety.

