KOSOVO SPECIALIST CHAMBERS
DHOMAT E SPECIALIZUARA TË KOSOVËS
SPECIJALIZOVANA VEĆA KOSOVA

Weekly Press Briefing
Chambers and Registry
N°42/2026
The Hague, 19/11/2026

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, due to compelling humanitarian reasons, the Trial Panel has instructed the Registry to manage a custodial visit to Kosovo for Jakup Krasniqi.

This is the 15th such visit by a detainee to Kosovo ordered by the judges of the Specialist Chambers for humanitarian reasons and managed by the court to date.

Such custodial visits are granted under Rule 56 of the KSC's Rules of Procedure and Evidence, which were adopted by the judges and are based on international human rights law, including Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

When a detainee makes a request of this nature, the judge or judges dealing with the case assess all of the circumstances at the time that the request was made with the urgency and compassion that such situations require. They decide based on the KSC's legal framework and international human rights standards.

In the same case, on 17 and 18 November 2026, the Trial Panel ordered that lesser-redacted versions of transcripts be made public related to the testimony of 2 witnesses called by the prosecution and 6 witnesses called by the Defence during the trial.

While the majority of these Defence witnesses' testimonies had been in public session, lesser-redacted versions of the transcript addressed some parts of the hearings that had been held in private session. This follows earlier decisions by the Trial Panel to make public the previously confidential testimony of 59 witnesses.

These decisions reflect the public nature of the proceedings and the commitment of the judges to transparency. During the Thaçi et al war crimes trial, a majority of the witnesses testified entirely or mostly in public session, and 61 witnesses testified without any protective measures.

Witness testimony that was initially confidential is reviewed so that more testimonies can be made public later while ensuring the ongoing protection of victims and witnesses. Public transcripts and video recordings of trial hearings can be accessed on the KSC website, where they are organized by hearing date, or on the court's YouTube channel.

In the same case, in separate filings on 13 November, the Registrar notified the Trial Panel and the Appeals Panel of the approval of Mr. Russell Hopkins as co-counsel for Kadri Veseli.

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In the case of The Specialist Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi, Bashkim Smakaj, Isni Kilaj, Fadil Fazliu and Hajredin Kuçi, the Single Trial Judge pronounced the Trial Judgment on 17 November 2026.

The Single Trial Judge found that Mr Thaçi had disclosed confidential information about several witnesses in his war crimes trial to persons visiting him in detention in 2023, and that he had conveyed instructions through visitors to witnesses about how they should testify in his war crimes trial. Mr Thaçi's co-accused in this case were persons visiting him in detention.

The Single Trial Judge found Hashim Thaçi guilty of attempted obstruction of official persons in performing official duties, violating the secrecy of proceedings, and contempt of court, for which he was sentenced to 17 months of imprisonment, to be served separately from any sentence imposed for his conviction in the Thaçi et al. war crimes case.
Bashkim Smakaj was found guilty of attempted obstruction of official persons and assisting contempt of court, for which he was sentenced to 12 months of imprisonment. With credit for time served, the Single Trial Judge considered that his sentence had been served and discharged him.

Fadil Fazliu was found guilty of attempted obstruction of official persons and assisting contempt of court, for which he was sentenced to 12 months of imprisonment. With credit for time served, the Single Trial Judge considered that his sentence had been served and discharged him.

Hajredin Kuçi was found guilty of one count of contempt of court for which he was sentenced to one month, suspended for a period of one year and to be discharged if he does not commit any other offence under the Kosovo Criminal Code during that period.

Isni Kilaj was acquitted of the charges against him.

In pronouncing the Trial Judgment, the Single Trial Judge emphasized the inherent gravity of the offences committed. He noted that obstruction of official duties relating to ongoing trial proceedings was an attack on the integrity of the judicial system, which is an essential foundation for the rule of law.

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