

KOSOVO SPECIALIST CHAMBERS &
SPECIALIST PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

2025 REPORT



KOSOVO SPECIALIST CHAMBERS &
SPECIALIST PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

The Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office were established pursuant to an international agreement ratified by the Kosovo Assembly, a Constitutional Amendment and the Law on Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office.

They are of temporary nature with a specific mandate and jurisdiction over crimes against humanity, war crimes and other crimes under Kosovo law, which were commenced or committed in Kosovo between 1 January 1998 and 31 December 2000 by or against citizens of Kosovo or the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Kosovo Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office have a seat in The Hague, the Netherlands. Their staff is international, as are the Judges, the President, the Registrar and the Specialist Prosecutor.

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Contents

KOSOVO SPECIALIST CHAMBERS	05
Foreword	06
KSC at a Glance	08
CHAMBERS	24
1. Judicial Activities	25
2. Activities of the President and the Judges	34
3. External Activities	37
EXTERNAL RELATIONS	38
REGISTRY	41
Downsizing	44
1. Immediate Office of the Registrar	48
2. Public Information and Communication Unit	50
2.1 Media	51
2.2 Outreach	52
2.3 Cooperation with Civil Society	53
2.4 KSC Online	54
3. Judicial Services Division	56
3.1 Court Management Unit	56
3.2 Language Services Unit	57
3.3 Defence Office	58

3.4	Victims' Participation Office	59
3.5	Witness Protection and Support Office	60
3.6	Detention Management Unit	62
4.	Division of Administration	63
4.1	Human Resources Unit	63
4.2	Information Technology Services Unit	68
4.3	Facilities Management and General Services Unit	68
4.4	Security and Safety Unit	69
4.5	Finance and Budget Unit	70
4.6	Procurement Unit	71
5.	Internal Audit	72
	GENDER MAINSTREAMING AT THE KSC AND THE SPO	74
1.	Gender Mainstreaming and Anti-Harassment Training	75
2.	Gender Focal Point	79

OMBUDSPERSON

80

SPECIALIST PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

84

Foreword	85
SPO Mandate and Investigation	86
Mandate Implementation	87
Obstruction of Justice	93
Senior Prosecution Staff	94
Prosecution Teams	97

KOSOVO SPECIALIST CHAMBERS

Foreword

We are pleased to present the 2025 annual report of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC). Over the course of the year, the KSC continued to progress efficiently and effectively in the fulfilment of its mandate, reaching several significant milestones across all levels of proceedings. Trial proceedings in the largest case concerning war crimes and crimes against humanity advanced substantially. Cases relating to offences against the administration of justice moved forward to key procedural stages, with one such case concluding following the approval of plea agreements reached with the relevant accused. The KSC has been able to undertake its work in such a well-organised and effective manner thanks to the steadfast commitment and professionalism of the Judges, staff members and all personnel of the court.

The judicial activities of the KSC progressed significantly throughout the course of 2025. In the largest case before the court concerning war crimes and crimes against humanity, concluded by the end of the year with the closure of the Defence case. Closing statements are scheduled for February 2026 and the judgment will be issued in due course. The Appeals Panel further issued its judgment in a war crimes case.

The pre-trial proceedings in a case related to offences against the administration of justice came to a close, with trial proceedings in that case expected to commence in early 2026. In another case related to offences against the administration of justice, plea agreements were approved, with the three accused admitting guilt to charges of obstructing official persons in the performance of official duties and intimidation in criminal proceedings. One accused was sentenced to three years' and the other two to two years' imprisonment, with credit for the time served in detention, and reparations were ordered. These were the first plea agreements reached at the KSC. The President rendered decisions on commutation and conditional release of some of the convicted persons.

Panels at all levels of the proceedings were seised with different matters during 2025, namely the Single Judge, the Pre-Trial Judge, the Trial Panels, the Appeals Panels, the Supreme Court Panel, the Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court and the President.

Together, they issued a substantial number of decisions, orders and judgments, reflecting the intensity and breadth of the court's judicial activity.

The Judges of the KSC, continued to carry out their duties with independence and dedication. They convened for their tenth annual plenary in March 2025 and gathered again in September for a colloquium on novel topics in international justice.

Over the course of 2025, the KSC has continued to engage with Member States of the European Union (EU) and Third Contributing States. Bilateral cooperation is an important aspect of the KSC's ability to fulfil its mandate. To that end, we have continued to stress at every diplomatic meeting the importance of concluding agreements for the enforcement of sentences of persons convicted by the KSC.

In May, the President and in October the Registrar, travelled to Kosovo to meet the KSC's stakeholders to inform them about the ongoing court's activities. While in Kosovo, the President further made herself available for interviews with Kosovo media and meetings with civil society.

The outreach team has continued to organise a wide range of events throughout Kosovo during 2025. The KSC's proceedings can be observed from the public gallery of the KSC courtroom, as well as online. The court live-streams its hearings on its website and also makes them available through its YouTube channel. Key developments are announced through the "LiveUpdate" function on the website and via the court's X-account. Members of the Public Information and Communication Unit host weekly online briefings to provide updates and respond to questions concerning the court's activities, reflecting the KSC's continued commitment to transparency and public engagement. The presentation of the Defence case in the *Thaçi et al.* case attracted a lot of public and media attention, including a high number of people present in the public gallery of the KSC courtroom of the KSC during the first few days of the Defence case. Similarly, 2025 saw the highest number of people visiting the KSC website.

In 2025, the Principals announced the adoption of a comprehensive downsizing framework for the staff of the KSC and the SPO. The framework outlines in a transparent manner the procedures that will be applied to the downsizing process, based on operational needs and the decrease in judicial activity.

Much progress was achieved in records management. Retention values for all KSC information asset series were identified and implementation thereof commenced, including through the destruction of physical and digital information assets. The KSC records management has attracted interest among other organisations and visits to the premises to learn about the approach have been welcomed throughout 2025.

We are most grateful to the Host State, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, for its steadfast commitment to the mandate of the KSC and the invaluable assistance and support provided throughout the year.

Judge Ekaterina Trendafilova
President of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers

The Hague, December 2025

We further very much appreciate the unwavering support of the EU Member States and Third Contributing States, as well as of the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo police during operations in Kosovo. We also wish to express our sincere gratitude to our counterparts at the European External Action Service, the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability and the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, and to members of the diplomatic community, international and internationalised courts and tribunals in The Hague, and non-governmental organisations in the field of international justice for their constructive cooperation and exchanges.

We look forward to the year ahead, as the KSC continues to undertake its proceedings in a secure, independent, impartial, fair and efficient manner in accordance with its mandate.

Dr Fidelma Donlon
Registrar of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers

KSC at a Glance

In June 2008, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe appointed a special rapporteur to investigate allegations of serious crimes committed during and in the aftermath of the 1998-1999 conflict in Kosovo.

In January 2011, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, through Resolution 1782 (2011), adopted the report prepared by the special rapporteur (Council of Europe Report), which alleged that numerous crimes were committed against Serbs, Kosovo Albanians suspected of being collaborators, and other individuals.

Further to the Council of Europe Report, in May 2011, EU Member States considered the matter in the framework of the Political and Security Committee, a body dealing with the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy. Thereupon, the Special Investigative Task Force (SITF) was established and mandated to conduct an independent investigation into allegations of unlawful detention, deportation, inhumane acts, torture and killings, as well as any other crimes related to the Council of Europe Report. Based in Brussels, the SITF commenced its operations in September 2011.

Whilst this investigation was ongoing, in an Exchange of Letters between the President of Kosovo and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in April 2014, an international agreement was reached for the establishment and operation of separate judicial chambers and specialist prosecutor's office for the prosecution and adjudication of crimes arising from SITF investigations.

The Exchange of Letters provides that these dedicated and separate judicial chambers would be established in accordance with Kosovo law. These judicial chambers and the specialist prosecutor's office would be governed by their own statute and rules of procedure and evidence, while being staffed and managed by international staff and have only international judges.

The Exchange of Letters also states that the separate judicial chambers would have a seat in a third state and that sensitive proceedings, including hearing of witnesses, would take place outside Kosovo. The Exchange of Letters was ratified in April 2014 by the Kosovo Assembly with a two-thirds majority and incorporated into domestic law. It has superiority over the laws of Kosovo.

2014

In July 2014, the SITF Chief Prosecutor issued a statement, concluding that the SITF "will be in a position to file an indictment against certain senior officials of the former Kosovo Liberation Army".

2015

In March 2015, the President of the Kosovo Assembly referred to the Kosovo Constitutional Court a constitutional amendment proposed by the Kosovo government to implement the Exchange of Letters. According to the Constitution, the Kosovo Constitutional Court had to assess whether the proposed amendment diminished any of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by Chapter II of the Constitution.

In April 2015, the Kosovo Constitutional Court held that the amendment proposal was in conformity with the Kosovo Constitution and held that "[t]he structure, scope of jurisdiction and functioning of the Specialist Chambers will be regulated by further laws in compliance with the Constitution".

This amendment was implemented through Article 162 of the Kosovo Constitution, adopted by the Kosovo Assembly in August 2015. At the same time, the Law on the establishment of both institutions was also adopted, which serves as the foundational instrument for the Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC) and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office (SPO).

2016

In April 2016, Dr Fidelma Donlon was appointed Registrar of the KSC, marking the commencement of the work of the Registry in The Hague.

In **September 2016**, Mr David Schwendiman was appointed Specialist Prosecutor.

In **December 2016**, Judge Ekaterina Trendafilova was appointed President of the KSC. She took office in January 2017.

2017

On **1 January 2017**, the Host State Agreement between Kosovo and the Netherlands entered into force, allowing the KSC to conduct criminal proceedings in the Netherlands.

Subsequently, in **February 2017**, 19 Judges were appointed to the Roster of International Judges of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers. In **March 2017**, during the first plenary, the KSC Judges adopted the Rules of Procedure and Evidence.

After a constitutional review by the Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court, the Rules of Procedure and Evidence entered into force in **July 2017**, rendering the KSC fully judicially operational.

In **November 2017**, the Registrar adopted the Directive on Counsel regulating matters such as the eligibility of lawyers to represent suspects, accused and victims before the KSC. Since then, 247 practitioners from Kosovo, Serbia and a number of other countries have been admitted to the Lists of Defence and Victims' Counsel.

2018

In **May 2018**, Mr Pietro Spera was appointed Ombudsperson of the KSC.

In **June 2018**, the Court Information Network comprised of local NGOs from Kosovo and Serbia, was established.

In **September 2018**, Mr Jack Smith succeeded Mr David Schwendiman as Specialist Prosecutor.

2019

In **March 2019**, the Judges of the KSC convened for the fourth plenary. In that same month, the Code of Professional Conduct for Counsel and Prosecutors before the KSC was adopted.

In **June 2019**, the KSC and the SPO moved to their new premises in The Hague.

2020

In **February** and **April 2020**, the Specialist Prosecutor filed the first indictments.

In **April 2020**, Registrar Fidelma Donlon was reappointed for another term of four years.

In **September 2020**, six new Judges were sworn in, the Specialist Prosecutor arrested the first accused, Mr Salih Mustafa, for alleged war crimes and the Specialist Prosecutor arrested Mr Hysni Gucati and Mr Nasim Haradinaj for alleged crimes against the administration of justice.

In **November 2020**, the Specialist Prosecutor arrested Mr Hashim Thaçi, Mr Kadri Veseli, Mr Rexhep Selimi and Mr Jakup Krasniqi for alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In **December 2020**, President Ekaterina Trendafilova was reappointed for a term of four years.

2021

On **16 March 2021**, Mr Pjetër Shala was arrested in Belgium and transferred to the KSC Detention Facilities on **15 April 2021**.

On **5 May 2021**, the President assigned Trial Panel I to the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Salih Mustafa*, which commenced trial proceedings on **15 September 2021** with the opening statement of the Specialist Prosecutor.

On **15 July 2021**, the President assigned Trial Panel II to the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Hysni Gucati and Nasim Haradinaj*, which commenced trial proceedings on **7 October 2021** with the opening statement of the Specialist Prosecutor.

2022

On **8 May 2022**, Specialist Prosecutor Jack Smith was reappointed for a term of four years.

On **18 May 2022**, Trial Panel II rendered the first judgment at the KSC in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Hysni Gucati and Nasim Haradinaj*, finding both accused guilty of obstructing official persons in performing official duties, intimidation during criminal proceedings and violating the secrecy of proceedings.

On **17 June 2022**, Mr Gucati and Mr Haradinaj filed their notices of appeal against the trial judgment.

On **21 September 2022**, the Pre-Trial Judge transferred the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Pjetër Shala* to Trial Panel I.

On **19 November 2022**, Mr Alex Whiting became the Acting Specialist Prosecutor following Mr Jack Smith's departure.

On **1 and 2 December 2022**, the Court of Appeals Panel held an appeal hearing in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Hysni Gucati and Nasim Haradinaj*.

On **15 December 2022**, the Pre-Trial Judge transferred the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi et al.* to Trial Panel II.

On **16 December 2022**, Trial Panel I issued the trial judgment in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Salih Mustafa*, finding the accused guilty of arbitrary detention, torture and murder as war crimes.

2023

On **2 February 2023**, the Court of Appeals Panel rendered its judgment in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Hysni Gucati and Nasim Haradinaj*, affirming

the trial judgment, but reducing the sentences to four years and three months' of imprisonment.

On **21 and 22 February 2023**, trial proceedings commenced in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Pjetër Shala* with the opening statements of the parties and Victims' Counsel.

On **3 April 2023**, trial proceedings in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi et al.* commenced with the opening statements of the Specialist Prosecutor.

On **2 June 2023**, Ms Kimberly West succeeded Mr Jack Smith as the Specialist Prosecutor.

On **31 July 2023**, Mr Dritan Goxhaj was arrested in Albania by local authorities pursuant to an arrest warrant of the KSC and thereafter released after a decision by the Albanian Court of Appeal.

On **5 October 2023**, Mr Ismet Bahtijari and Mr Sabit Januzi were arrested in Kosovo for alleged offences against the administration of justice.

On **12 October 2023**, Mr Hysni Gucati's sentence was modified to provide for his release to Kosovo with certain conditions.

On **2 November 2023**, Mr Isni Kilaj was arrested in Kosovo for alleged offences against the administration of justice.

On **11 December 2023**, Mr Haxhi Shala was arrested in Kosovo for alleged offences against the administration of justice.

On **12 December 2023**, Mr Nasim Haradinaj's sentence was modified to provide for his release to Kosovo with certain conditions.

On **14 December 2023**, Court of Appeals Panel issued the appeal judgment in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Salih Mustafa*, upholding the trial judgment, in part, and reduced his sentence to 22 years of imprisonment.

2024

On 15 May 2024, Mr Isni Kilaj, who is a suspect, was released to Kosovo on order of the Single Judge under strict conditions.

On 6 June 2024, Judge Marjorie Masselot was appointed to the Roster of International Judges and assigned as Single and Pre-Trial Judge following Judge Nicolas Guillou's resignation therefrom on the same day.

On 16 July 2024, Trial Panel I pronounced its judgment in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Pjetër Shala*.

On 4 September 2024, the Pre-Trial Judge transferred the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Sabit Januzi et al.* to Trial Panel I.

On 10 September 2024, the Court of Appeals Panel reduced Mr Salih Mustafa's sentence from 22 years to 15 years of imprisonment.

On 5 December 2024, Mr Isni Kilaj, Mr Bashkim Smakaj and Mr Fadil Fazliu were arrested in Kosovo on charges related to offences against the administration of justice.

On 6 December 2024, the parties in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Januzi et al.* filed plea agreements.

On 8 and 9 December 2024, Mr Hashim Thaçi, Mr Bashkim Smakaj, Mr Isni Kilaj, Mr Fadil Fazliu and Mr Hajredin Kuçi had their initial appearances in relation to charges of offences against the administration of justice.

On 24 December 2024, the case involving Mr Hysni Gucati and Mr Nasim Haradinaj came to a close with the conclusion of the service of their sentences.

2025

On 7 January 2025, Mr Hashim Thaçi and Mr Bashkim Smakaj pleaded not guilty to charges related to offences against the administration of justice.

On 4 February 2025, Trial Panel I approved the plea agreements in the *Januzi et al.* case.

On 19 February 2025, the President modified the sentences of Mr Sabit Januzi and Mr Ismet Bahtijari, releasing them to Kosovo under specific conditions.

On 15 April 2025, the Prosecution closed its case in the *Thaçi et al.* war crimes case.

On 12 June 2025, the KSC and the Kingdom of Belgium concluded an agreement on the enforcement of sentences of persons convicted by the KSC.

On 14 July 2025, the Court of Appeals Panel rendered its judgment in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Pjetër Shala*, reducing Mr Shala's sentence from 18 years to 13 years of imprisonment.

On 16 and 17 July 2025, Victims' Counsel presented evidence in the *Thaçi et al.* proceedings involving war crimes and crimes against humanity.

On 11 September 2025, Judge Christopher Gosnell was sworn in following his appointment to the Roster of International Judges and was appointed as Single Trial Judge.

On 15 September 2025, the Defence commenced the presentation of their case in the *Thaçi et al.* proceedings involving war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Defence closed their cases on 21 November 2025, having called seven witnesses.

On 12 November 2025, the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Thaçi et al.* involving offences against the administration of justice was transmitted by the Pre-Trial Judge to the Single Trial Judge.

On 10 December 2025, Mr Isni Kilaj was released to Kosovo under strict conditions by the Single Trial Judge.

On 18 December 2025, Trial Panel II closed the evidentiary proceedings in the war crimes case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Thaçi et al.*

2011



January 2011

The Council of Europe (CoE) Parliamentary Assembly approves a Report on "Inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo".

September 2011

The Special Investigative Task Force (SITF), established by the EU to conduct criminal investigations into the allegations of the CoE Report, commences its work.

2014

April 2014

The Kosovo President and the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy exchange letters on the establishment of "separate judicial chambers".

2015

August 2015

The Kosovo Assembly adopts Article 162 of the Kosovo Constitution and the Law on Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office.

2016



April 2016

Dr Fidelma Donlon is appointed Registrar of the KSC, marking the commencement of the work of the judicial institution in The Hague.



September 2016

Mr David Schwendiman is appointed Specialist Prosecutor.



December 2016

Judge Ekaterina Trendafilova is appointed President of the KSC.

2017

January 2017

The Host State Agreement between Kosovo and the Netherlands enters into force, allowing the KSC to conduct criminal proceedings in the Netherlands.



February 2017

19 Judges are appointed to the Roster of International Judges.

March 2017

Judges adopt the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, subject to review by the Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court.

July 2017

Following the constitutional review conducted by the Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court, the Rules of Procedure and Evidence enter into force and the KSC becomes judicially operational.

November 2017

The Registrar adopts the Directive on Counsel regulating matters such as the eligibility of lawyers to represent suspects, accused and victims before the KSC.

2018



May 2018

Mr Pietro Spera is appointed Ombudsperson of the KSC.



September 2018

Mr Jack Smith succeeds Mr David Schwendiman as Specialist Prosecutor.

2019



June 2019

The KSC and the SPO move to their new premises.

2020

February and April 2020

The Specialist Prosecutor files the first indictments.

April 2020

Registrar Fidelma Donlon is reappointed for another term of four years.

September 2020

Six new Judges are sworn in and the Specialist Prosecutor arrests Mr Salih Mustafa for alleged war crimes and then Mr Hysni Gucati and Mr Nasim Haradinaj for alleged crimes against the administration of justice.

November 2020

The Specialist Prosecutor arrests Mr Hashim Thaçi, Mr Kadri Veseli, Mr Rexhep Selimi and Mr Jakup Krasniqi for alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes.

December 2020

President Ekaterina Trendafilova is reappointed for a term of four years.

2021



March 2021

Mr Pjetër Shala is arrested in Belgium for alleged war crimes.



September 2021

Trial proceedings in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Salih Mustafa* start.

October 2021

Trial proceedings in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Hysni Gucati and Nasim Haradinaj* start.

2022



March 2022

Trial in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Hysni Gucati and Nasim Haradinaj* closes.

May 2022

Specialist Prosecutor Jack Smith is reappointed for a term of four years.

May 2022

Trial Panel II issues first KSC trial judgment in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Hysni Gucati and Nasim Haradinaj*.

June 2022

Mr Hysni Gucati and Mr Nasim Haradinaj file notices of appeal against their trial judgment.

September 2022

Trial in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Salih Mustafa* closes.



November 2022

Mr Alex Whiting becomes the Acting Specialist Prosecutor following Mr Jack Smith's departure.



December 2022

Appeal hearing in the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Hysni Gucati and Nasim Haradinaj*.



December 2022

Trial Panel I issues the KSC's first war crimes trial judgment in the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Salih Mustafa*.

2023

February 2023

Court of Appeals Panel renders its judgment in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Hysni Gucati and Nasim Haradinaj*.



February 2023

Trial proceedings in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Pjetër Shala* start.



April 2023

Trial proceedings in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi et al.* start.



June 2023

Ms Kimberly West is appointed as the new Specialist Prosecutor.

July 2023

Mr Dritan Goxhaj is arrested in Albania by local authorities for alleged offences against the administration of justice and thereafter released by the Albanian Court of Appeals.



October 2023

The Specialist Prosecutor arrests Mr Ismet Bahtijari and Mr Sabit Januzi for alleged offences against the administration of justice.

October 2023

Mr Hysni Gucati's sentence is modified to provide for his release to Kosovo with certain conditions.



November 2023

The Specialist Prosecutor arrests Mr Isni Kilaj in Kosovo for alleged offences against the administration of justice.



December 2023

The Specialist Prosecutor arrests Mr Haxhi Shala for alleged offences against the administration of justice.

December 2023

Mr Nasim Haradinaj's sentence is modified to provide for his release to Kosovo with certain conditions.



December 2023

Court of Appeals Panel renders its judgment in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Salih Mustafa*.

2024

April 2024

Registrar Fidelma Donlon is reappointed for another term of four years.

May 2024

Mr Isni Kilaj is released to Kosovo under strict conditions.



June 2024

Judge Marjorie Masselot is appointed to the Roster of International Judges and assigned as Single and Pre-Trial Judge.



July 2024

Trial Panel I pronounces its judgment in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Pjetër Shala*.

September 2024

The Pre-Trial Judge transfers the *Sabit Januzi et al.* case to Trial Panel I.

September 2024

The Court of Appeals Panel reduces Mr Salih Mustafa's sentence from 22 to 15 years of imprisonment.



December 2024

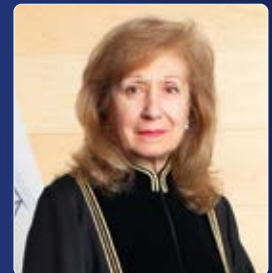
Mr Bashkim Smakaj, Mr Fadil Fazliu and Mr Isni Kilaj are arrested in Kosovo on charges related to offences against the administration of justice.

Initial appearances of Mr Hashim Thaçi, Mr Bashkim Smakaj, Mr Isni Kilaj, Mr Fadil Fazliu and Mr Hajredin Kuçi in relation to offences against the administration of justice.

December 2024

The parties in the *Sabit Januzi et al.* case file plea agreements.

Mr Hysni Gucati and Mr Nasim Haradinaj complete the service of their sentences.



December 2024

Judge Piotr Hofmański is appointed to the Constitutional Court.

President Ekaterina Trendafilova is reappointed for a term of four years.

2025

January 2025

Mr Hashim Thaçi and Mr Bashkim Smakaj pleaded not guilty to charges related to offences against the administration of justice.

February 2025

Trial Panel I approved the plea agreements in the *Januzi et al.* case.



Mr Sabit Januzi and Mr Ismet Bahtijari are conditionally released to Kosovo.

April 2025

The Prosecution concludes its case in the *Thaçi et al.* proceedings involving war crimes and crimes against humanity.

June 2025

The Kingdom of Belgium and the KSC conclude an agreement on the enforcement of sentences.



July 2025

Pronouncement of the appeal judgment in the case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Pjetër Shala*.

Victims' Counsel presents his case in the *Thaçi et al.* proceedings involving war crimes and crimes against humanity.



September 2025

Judge Christopher Gosnell is sworn in following his appointment to the Roster of International Judges and is appointed as Single Trial Judge.

Defence case in the *Thaçi et al.* proceedings involving war crimes and crimes against humanity starts.



November 2025

Defence case in the *Thaçi et al.* proceedings involving war crimes and crimes against humanity concludes, the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Taçi et al.* involving offences against the administration of justice is transmitted by the Pre-Trial Judge to the Single Trial Judge and pre-trial conferences take place.

December 2025

Trial Panel II closes the evidentiary proceedings in the war crimes case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Taçi et al.*

Mr Isni Kilaj is released to Kosovo under strict conditions by the Single Trial Judge.

The Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC) and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office (SPO) are two independent institutions established following an Exchange of Letters in accordance with Kosovo law and through a constitutional amendment in 2015. The Law on Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office (Law) was adopted by the Kosovo Assembly in August 2015.



■ The mandate of the KSC is

- “To ensure secure, independent, impartial, fair and efficient criminal proceedings in relation to allegations of grave trans-boundary and international crimes committed during and in the aftermath of the conflict in Kosovo, which relate to those reported in the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Report [...] and which have been the subject of criminal investigation by the Special Investigative Task Force” (Article 1 of the Law).

■ The KSC is established in accordance with the Exchange of Letters and Kosovo law

- having the same court levels as the Kosovo judicial system (basic, appeal, supreme, constitutional)
- having a seat outside Kosovo
- having Judges and staff who are citizens of EU Member States or Third Contributing States
- applying international customary law and domestic substantive criminal law as provided for in the Law
- applying its own rules of procedure and evidence.

■ The KSC is a temporary judicial institution

- it will only be in existence for the time necessary to deal with charges presented by the Specialist Prosecutor and until Kosovo is notified by the EU Council that investigations and proceedings have concluded.

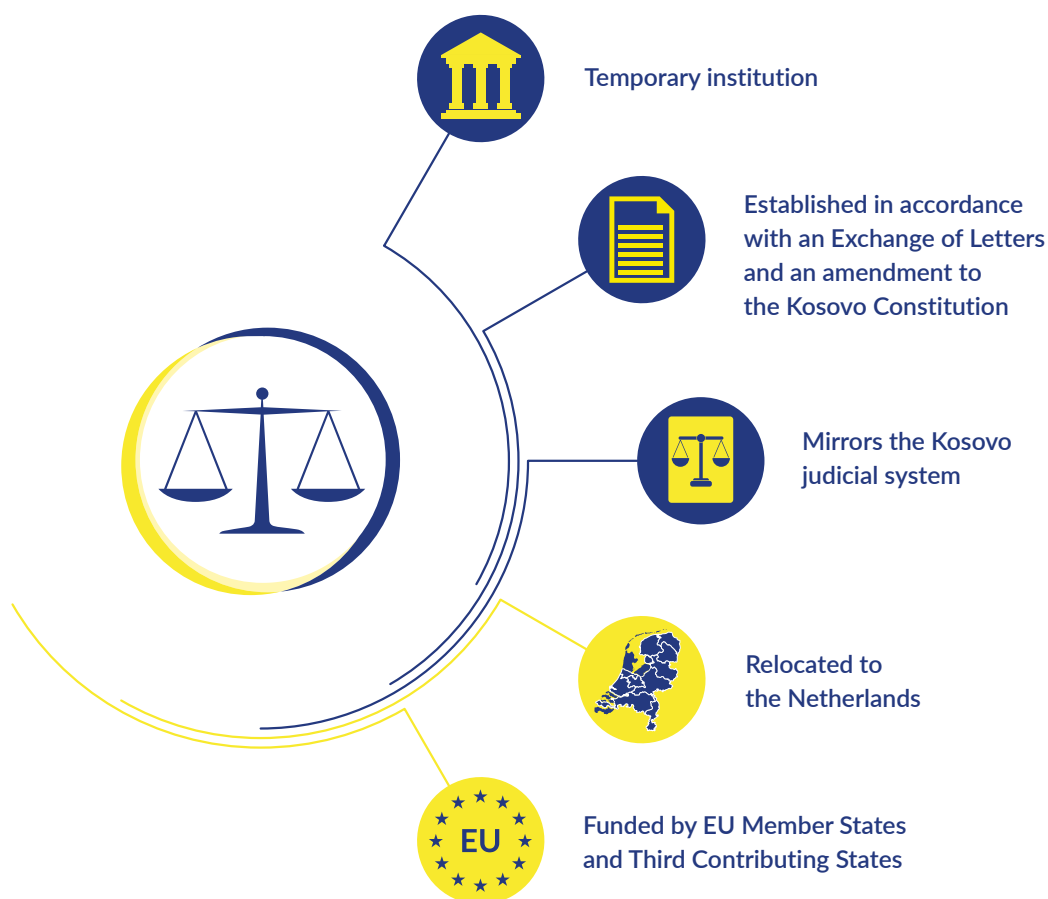
■ The jurisdiction of the KSC covers

- crimes against humanity, war crimes and other crimes under the applicable criminal law at the time the crimes were
 - committed between 1 January 1998 and 31 December 2000
 - either commenced or were committed in Kosovo, or committed by or against persons of Kosovo/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia citizenship
- certain offences against the administration of justice when they relate to its official proceedings and/or officials.

■ The KSC deals with individual criminal responsibility only - groups or organisations cannot be put on trial.

■ The KSC allows victims' participation in proceedings.

- The KSC and the SPO are funded by EU Member States and Third Contributing States, and are independent in the fulfilment of their mandate and work.
- The official languages of the KSC and the SPO are Albanian, Serbian and English.
- The KSC has an Ombudsperson, who acts independently to monitor, defend and protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of persons interacting with the KSC and the SPO, including by
 - operating a complaints procedure, which individuals can make use of if
 - the complaint involves an interaction between the complainant and the KSC or the SPO
 - there is undue delay in a proceeding before the KSC
 - all other remedies have been exhausted
 - the complaint has been filed within six months of the alleged violation
 - entering and inspecting the KSC Detention Facilities to assess the conditions of detention at any time and without notice.







CHAMBERS

1

Judicial Activities

The Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC) has continued to operate at a very efficient and effective pace of its proceedings and has reached a number of important milestones throughout the year. Specifically, the trial proceedings in the war crimes case of the *Specialist Prosecutor v. Thaçi et al.* and the transfer of the second *Specialist Prosecutor v. Thaçi et al.* case related to offences against the administration of justice to the Single Trial Judge took place over the course of 2025.

Every level of the Specialist Chambers was seised during 2025, including the Single Judge, the Pre-Trial Judge, two Trial Panels, Court of Appeals Panels, the Supreme Court Panel, the Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court (SCCC), as well as the President. During the year, these Panels and the President issued a combined 1,098 decisions and orders, of which 86 were rendered orally.

a.

PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE PRE-TRIAL JUDGE AND THE SINGLE JUDGE

Specialist Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi et al. (offences against the administration of justice)

Following the confirmation of the indictment by the Pre-Trial Judge on 29 November 2024, Mr Bashkim Smakaj and Mr Fadil Fazliu were arrested in Kosovo on 5 December 2024 and transferred on the same day as Mr Isni Kilaj to the KSC Detention Facilities, while Mr Hajredin Kuçi was summoned to appear. On 8 December 2024, at the initial appearance Mr Thaçi and Mr Smakaj did not enter pleas, while Mr Fazliu pleaded not guilty to all charges. The following day, both Mr Kuçi and Mr Kilaj also pleaded not guilty to the charges against them. The Pre-Trial Judge requested

Mr Thaçi and Mr Smakaj to submit their pleas in writing by 7 January 2025. Both filed not guilty pleas before the deadline, which was 3 January 2025 for Mr Smakaj and 6 January 2025 for Mr Thaçi.

On 11 November 2025, Pre-Trial Judge Marjorie Masselot notified the President that the case file would be ready for transmission to a Trial Panel on 12 November 2025. President Trendafilova assigned Judge Christopher Gosnell as the Single Trial Judge to the case.

b.

PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE TRIAL PANELS

Specialist Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi et al. (war crimes and crimes against humanity)

Mr Thaçi, Mr Kadri Veseli, Mr Rexhep Selimi and Mr Jakup Krasniqi are each charged with 10 counts – four counts of war crimes and six counts of crimes against humanity. The indictment states that the crimes charged were committed from at least March 1998 through September 1999. They took place in

several locations across Kosovo as well as in Kukës and Cahan, Northern Albania. The crimes were allegedly committed by members of the KLA against hundreds of civilians and persons not taking part in hostilities.



Trial Panel II during a hearing, 19 November 2025

The trial proceedings in the case against Mr Thaçi, Mr Veseli, Mr Selimi and Mr Krasniqi commenced on 3 April 2023. The SPO closed its case on 15 April 2025, having called 125 witnesses to testify.

On 16 July 2025, Trial Panel II denied the joint Defence motion to dismiss the charges pursuant to Rule 130 of the Rules of the KSC.

The Panel also notes that each and all of the concerned incidents are also charged as crimes against humanity, which, unlike war crimes, are indifferent to the existence of an armed conflict at the relevant time. Therefore, even if considered on its merit and successful, the Defence motion would not result in the dismissal of any of the counts in the indictment.

Specialist Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi et al., KSC-BC-2020-06, transcript of hearing, 16 July 2025, p. 26194.

On 16 July 2025, the Defence teams of Mr Thaçi and Mr Krasniqi informed the Trial Panel that they intend to present a Defence case, while the Defence teams of Mr Veseli and Mr Selimi notified the Panel that they do not intend to present any evidence.

The Defence preparation conference was held on 19 August 2025. The Defence cases started on 15 September 2025 and closed on 21 November 2025, having called seven witnesses.



Mr Hashim Thaçi



Mr Kadri Veseli



Mr Rexhep Selimi

On 16 and 17 July 2025, the Victim's Counsel presented evidence in court and two witnessed to testify.

Closing statements are scheduled to take place between 9 and 18 February 2026 and the judgment will be issued in 2026.



Mr Jakup Krasniqi

There are 155 participating victims in this case.

Trial Panel II, assigned by the President to this case, is composed of Judges Charles Smith III (presiding), Christoph Barthe, Guénaél Mettraux and Fergal Gaynor (reserve).

Specialist Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi et al. (offences against the administration of justice)

On 12 November, the Pre-Trial Judge transmitted the case file to Single Trial Judge Christopher Gosnell.

A trial preparation conference was held on 28 November 2025 and trial proceedings are scheduled to start on 27 February 2026.



Single Trial Judge during the trial preparation conference, 28 November 2025

According to the indictment, during separate, unprivileged visits to the Detention Facilities between at least 12 April 2023 and 2 November 2023, Mr Thaçi provided Mr Smakaj, Mr Kilaj, Mr Fazliu and Mr Kuçi

with confidential information about SPO witnesses, instructed them to influence the testimonies of SPO witnesses, and provided details about how to do so.



Mr Hashim Thaçi



Mr Bashkim Smakaj



Mr Isni Kilaj



Mr Fadil Fazliu



Mr Hajredin Kuçi

c.

PROCEEDINGS BEFORE COURT OF APPEALS PANELS

Specialist Prosecutor v. Pjetër Shala (war crimes)

On 15 and 16 May 2025, the Court of Appeals Panel held a hearing on the appeal filed by Mr Pjetër Shala against the trial judgment in this case.

On 14 July 2025, the Court of Appeals Panel rendered its appeal judgment, wherein it affirmed Mr Shala's convictions for the war crimes of arbitrary detention, torture, and murder.

The Appeals Panel further granted, in part, three of the 14 grounds raised by Mr Shala in his appeal, reducing his sentence from 18 to 13 years of imprisonment, with credit for time served.

The Appeals Panel emphasises that this reduction in Mr Shala's sentences in no way suggests that the crimes for which he has been convicted and sentenced are not grave.

[...]

As a general note, the Appeals Panel recalls that the Specialist Chambers only have jurisdiction over individuals, not groups or organisations. In that vein, the Appeals Panel emphasises yet again that neither the KLA nor the Kosovo people were the subject of these proceedings, but that the Panel has only addressed the specific conduct of Mr Shala.

Specialist Prosecutor v. Pjetër Shala, KSC-CA-2024-03, Summary of the Appeal Judgment, 14 July 2025, pp. 30-31.



Court of Appeals Panel during the rendering of the appeal judgment, 14 July 2025

On 19 March 2025, the Court of Appeals was seised by Mr Pjetër Shala with an appeal against the Reparation Order issued against him, ordering to pay EUR 208,000 in compensation to the victims who suffered harms from the crimes for which he was convicted.

Mr Shala requested that the Court of Appeals Panel annul the Reparation Order and remit the assessment of his potential civil liability to a different Panel to issue “an appropriate, fair and proportionate award”, following the judgment of the Appeals Panel on the appeal of Mr Shala against his conviction.

The Appeals Panel's judgement on reparations is expected to be delivered in early 2026.

The Appeals Panel was composed of Judges Michèle Picard (presiding), Kai Ambos and Nina Jørgensen.



Mr Pjetër Shala during the rendering of the appeal judgment,
14 July 2025

Interlocutory appeals

With the extensive progress made in the cases before the KSC, Court of Appeals Panels were also seised with a wide range of interlocutory appeals in 2025. They issued decisions on a number of appellate issues,

including on continued detention, admission of evidence, the questioning of witnesses, and whether an interest rate should be imposed on reparations ordered.

The Panel recalls the Trial Panel's broad powers under the Rules in managing the presentation of evidence and questioning of witnesses in order to make them "effective for the ascertainment of the truth", and the Trial Panel's responsibility in making factual determinations regarding the relevance, credibility and reliability of testimony.

Specialist Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi et al., KSC-BC-2020-06/IA031/F00005/RED, 11 April 2025, para. 37.

While mindful of the interest of victims in receiving the value of the compensation awarded in the Reparation Order, the Panel considers, by majority, that such interest must be balanced against considerations of fairness and the proper administration of justice. Fairness is a fundamental procedural right that applies to all stages of criminal proceedings, including reparations. Consequently, reparation orders must also conform with the principle of legal certainty. In this context, fairness also requires that a convicted person be reasonably informed of any obligations established under a reparation order and of the legal consequences arising from non-compliance. In the Majority's view, the payment of post-judgment interest is one such consequence.

Specialist Prosecutor v. Salih Mustafa, KSC-BC-202-05/R001/IA001, Public Redacted Version of Decision on Mustafa's Appeal Against Decision on Payment of Interest, 5 December 2025, para. 46.

The Court of Appeals Panel is composed of three Judges and included the following Judges in different Appeals Panels over the course of 2025: Judges Michèle Picard, Emilio Gatti, Kai Ambos and Nina Jørgensen.

d.

SUPREME COURT PANEL

The Supreme Court was seised with a variety of matters over the course of 2025. The Panels were composed of Judges Ekaterina Trendafilova (presiding), Christine van den Wyngaert and Daniel Franssen.

On 25 February 2025, the Supreme Court Panel dismissed in its entirety Mr Mustafa's and the Specialist Prosecutor's requests for protection of legality. The Supreme Court Panel found that Mr Mustafa failed to demonstrate that the Appeals

Panel violated the criminal law by reducing his sentence to 15 years of imprisonment. The Supreme Court further concluded that the Specialist Prosecutor did not demonstrate how the Appeals Panel failed to adhere to an earlier Supreme Court decision in which it provided guidance on the determination of sentences in accordance with Article 44(2) of the Law and observed that the Appeals Panel extensively reasoned its decision and referred to the guidance given to it in this respect.

The Panel observes that the Appeals Panel in its “Decision on New Determination of Sentence” specifically followed the findings set forth in the Supreme Court Decision, the sentencing range identified therein, as well as the relevant international jurisprudence. The Panel recalls that the circumstances surrounding the crimes for which Mr Mustafa was convicted, including murder, were extensively considered by the Trial Panel and twice by the Appeals Panel.

KSC-SC-2024-03 and 04/F00006, Decision on Mustafa’s and Specialist Prosecutor’s Requests for Protection of Legality, 25 February 2025, para. 36.

On 19 December 2025, the Supreme Court Panel dismissed Mr Veseli’s request for protection of legality related to his continued detention, finding that the arguments raised by Mr Veseli did not meet the standard for protection of legality as provided for by the KSC’s legal framework.

On 30 December 2025, the Supreme Court Panel dismissed Mr Jakup Krasniqi request for protection of legality in relation to the denial of his request for provisional release and review of detention, finding that Mr Krasniqi’s arguments failed to meet the standard required for a request for protection of legality.

e.

SPECIALIST CHAMBER OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

The Specialist Chambers of the Constitutional Court (SCCC) was also seised with a variety of matters over the course of 2025.

On 6 March 2025, the Constitutional Court Panel in the *Januzi et al.* case, consisting of Judges Vidal Stensland, Roumen Nenkov, and Romina Incutti, decided on a referral by Mr Haxhi Shala, alleging violations of his fundamental rights. Specifically,

Mr Shala argued that the Pre-Trial Judge failed to consider the lawfulness and merits of Mr Shala’s detention during his initial appearance on 13 December 2023, following his arrest in Kosovo.

The Panel concluded that Mr Shala’s initial appearance complied with Article 5(3) of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR).

In the absence of any submissions from the Applicant, the Chamber finds that the pre-trial judge cannot be reproached for not entering into further details as to the circumstances militating for or against the Applicant’s detention. What the Chamber finds important is that the pre-trial judge examined the Applicant, afforded him the possibility to be heard, and was satisfied that there existed a well-grounded suspicion that he had committed a criminal offence within the SC’s jurisdiction, namely that the Applicant’s detention fell within the permitted exception set out in Article 5(1)(c) of the Convention. Granted, the lawfulness and merits of the Applicant’s continued detention could have been addressed more explicitly, the Chamber is of the view that the pre-trial judge’s decision, although succinct, cannot be taken to signify that the pre-trial judge did not consider these aspects.

KSC-CC-2024-28/F00003, Judgment on the Referral of Haxhi Shala to the Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court, 6 March 2025, para. 49.

On 17 April 2025, the Constitutional Court Panel delivered its judgment on the referral of Mr Mustafa, finding that there had been no violation of the Kosovo

Constitution or the ECHR of Mr Mustafa’s right to a fair trial and the determination of his sentence of imprisonment.

On 9 July 2025, the Constitutional Court Panel dismissed a further referral by Mr Mustafa in relation to his sentence, since the applicant neither challenged the proportionality of the punishment prescribed by Law for the offence, nor advance any arguments indicating that the sentence imposed on him was grossly disproportionate to the gravity of the offence, the referral did not reveal any appearance of a violation of Mr Mustafa's constitutional's rights. The Constitutional Court Panel was composed of Judges Vidar Stensland, Roumen Nenkov and Piotr Hofmánski.

On 29 December 2025, Mr Thaçi filed a referral to the Constitutional Court Panel alleging violations of his fundamental rights in connection with the assignment by the KSC President of the Single Judge and the Pre-Trial Judge in the administration of justice case against him. On 30 December 2025, the KSC President assigned Judges Vidar Stensland (presiding), Roumen Nenkov and Piotr Hofmánski to adjudicate the referral. The decision of the Constitutional Court Panel is expected in 2026.

f.

PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE PRESIDENT

President Ekaterina Trendafilova was seised with several matters in relation to the commutation, modification or alteration of sentences. The KSC President may consider commutation, modification or alteration of a sentence after a convicted person has served two thirds of their sentence.

Mr Januzi and Mr Bahtijari served two thirds of their sentences on 5 February 2025. On 19 February 2025, the President modified their sentences and provided for their conditional release to Kosovo on 21 February 2025. The conditions set out in the modification decision continued to apply for the remainder of the two-year sentence imposed on them by the Trial Panel on 4 February 2025 following plea agreements.



Mr Sabit Januzi



Mr Ismet Bahtijari

The President reiterates that persons convicted by the Specialist Chambers become eligible for consideration of commutation of sentence upon having served two-thirds of their sentence. Eligibility denotes consideration and not an inherent right to commutation after having served two-third of a sentence. Thus, commutation, modification or alteration of a sentence is a discretionary decision for the President to take in consultation with the judges of the Specialist Chambers on the basis of the "interests of justice and general principles of law" and in accordance with the procedure set forth in the legal framework of the Specialist Chambers.

Specialist Prosecutor v. Sabit Januzi et al., KSC-SC-2025/CS001/F00002/COR, Corrected Version of Decision on Commutation, Modification or Alteration of Sentence with Confidential and Ex Parte Annexes, 19 February 2025, para. 8.

On 14 July 2025, the President dismissed a request by Mr Haxhi Shala for conditional release, given that at the time of the request, he was not eligible for consideration of commutation, modification or alteration of his sentence. In his request, Mr Shala argued that he was eligible to be considered for provisional release under the Kosovo Criminal Code, having served half of his sentence. The President recalled Article 3(4) of the KSC Law which explicitly states that any other Kosovo law, which has not been incorporated into the Law, shall not apply to the Specialist Chambers.

On 6 October 2025, the Registrar notified the President that Mr Shala would become eligible for commutation of his sentence on 11 December 2025, having served two-thirds thereof.

On 11 December 2025, the President decided against granting Mr Shala commutation of his sentence, noting that he was convicted of offences considered “indisputably grave” as the impact of obstruction and witness intimidation on the administration of justice is considerable and that he has failed to express remorse and to dissociate himself from the offences. However, President Trendafilova noted that she will consider a possible modification of Mr Shala’s sentence in two months’ time, upon receiving a further report from the Registrar as stipulated in the Rules of the KSC, including any clear and genuine dissociation from the crime which led to his conviction.



President Trendafilova



Mr Haxhi Shala

The three individuals in this case concluded plea agreements with the SPO, which were approved by Trial Panel I during the plea agreement hearings held between 18 and 19 December 2024. Each accused admitted that they were part of a group which sought to induce an individual to refrain from giving evidence before the KSC through the promise of a benefit. In particular, Mr Januzi and Mr Bahtijari, acting at the direction of Mr Haxhi Shala, approached this individual at his home on 5 and 12 April 2023, respectively.

Trial Panel I was composed of Judges Mappie Veldt-Foglia (presiding), Roland Dekkers, Gilbert Bitti and Vladimir Mikula (reserve).

2

Activities of the President and the Judges

The Judges of the KSC are appointed to a Roster of International Judges (Roster) and exercise their judicial functions as necessary and only at the request of the President. In accordance with Article 26 of the Law, the Judges appointed to the Roster do not receive remuneration or other benefits by virtue of this appointment. Moreover, Judges are only remunerated if they are assigned by the President to exercise official functions. Once assigned, and insofar as possible, the Judges perform their duties remotely.

On 2 May 2025, Judge Kenneth Roberts informed President Trendafilova that he would be stepping down from the Roster.

On 11 September 2025, the Appointing Authority, Major General Giovanni Pietro Barbano, appointed Judge Christopher Gosnell (Canada) to the Roster in accordance with Article 28(4) of the Law on Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office. Judge Gosnell took his solemn oath on the same day.

Judge Gosnell joined the Roster following a Call for Nomination of Judges to a reserve list for the Roster. The reserve list for the Roster is intended to ensure that in case of future resignations of Judges, they can be immediately replaced, thereby preventing any delays in the proceedings, and thus ensuring the continued and uninterrupted efficient operations of the KSC. Any appointment to the Roster will only be effectuated where the number of Judges from the Roster appears insufficient.



Judge Christopher Gosnell

a.

ANNUAL PLENARY

On 28 March 2025, the Judges convened for their tenth plenary. According to the Rules of Procedure and Evidence the Judges meet once a year for a plenary of Judges to discuss the operations of the court and, if necessary, any amendments to the Rules of Procedure and Evidence or other regulatory documents. During the tenth plenary, the Judges visited the Netherlands

Forensic Institute. They also discussed the efficient conduct of the proceedings at the KSC, they were informed by the President of ongoing institutional matters and were provided with an update from the Registrar on the assistance and the support provided by the Registry to the proceedings over the course of the year.



The tenth plenary of the KSC Judges, 28 March 2025

b.

GATHERING OF THE JUDGES

On 25 and 26 September 2025, the Judges gathered in Bruges, Belgium, at the College of Europe for a colloquium, during which distinguished speakers presented and discussed with the Judges novel matters relevant to the field of international criminal justice.



Colloquium in Brugges, Belgium, 26 September 2025

Judges on the Roster of International Judges



Judge Ekaterina Trendafilova
President
(Bulgaria)



Judge Charles L. Smith III
Vice-President
(United States of America)



Judge Vidar Stensland
Constitutional Judge
(Norway)



Judge Roumen Nenkov
Constitutional Judge
(Bulgaria)



Judge Piotr Hofmański
Constitutional Judge
(Poland)



Judge Romina Incutti
Reserve Constitutional Judge
(Italy)



Judge Christine van den Wyngaert
(Belgium)



Judge Michèle Picard
(France)



Judge Thomas Laker
(Germany)



Judge Emilio Gatti
(Italy)



Judge Roland Dekkers
(Netherlands)



Judge Antonio Balsamo
(Italy)



Judge Kai Ambos
(Germany)



Judge Kenneth Roberts *
(Canada)



Judge Mappie Veldt-Foglia
(Netherlands)



Judge Christoph Barthe
(Germany)



Judge Vladimír Mikula
(Czech Republic)



Judge Guénaél Mettraux
(Switzerland)



Judge Gilbert Bitti
(France)



Judge Daniel Fransen
(Belgium)



Judge Fergal Gaynor
(Ireland)



Judge Nina Jørgensen
(Norway)



Judge Marjorie Masselot
(France)



Judge Christopher Gosnell
(Canada)

* Judge Roberts resigned from the Roster on 2 May 2025

Throughout 2025, President Trendafilova kept members of the public and stakeholders informed of the various activities of the KSC. The President met with representatives of EU institutions, EU Member States, Third Contributing States, the Host State and Kosovo in The Hague and Brussels.

The President visited Kosovo from 12 to 14 May 2025. During her visit, meetings were held with various stakeholders, including representatives of EU Member States, the EU Special Representative to Kosovo, and the Head of Mission of EULEX. She also met with the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, the Head of UNMIK, and the Kosovo Ombudsperson to share public information regarding the court's mandate, administration and ongoing activities. Furthermore, the President engaged with law students in a discussion about the legal framework of the KSC, as well as its mandate and functioning. She also visited the Documentation Center of the Humanitarian Law Center in Kosovo.

On 30 October 2025, the President participated in the international conference on “Genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and crime of aggression: national, international, transitional and restorative justice”, held at the University of Modena, organized by the Societe Internationale de la Defense Sociale. President Trendafilova was one of the speakers in the first session dedicated to “International crimes and criminal justice: a historical approach” and she delivered a presentation entitled “International crimes and protection of human rights before international courts: the relationship between the ICC and Kosovo Specialist Chambers”.



EXTERNAL RELATIONS

External relations

Over the course of 2025, the President and the Registrar continued to take a prominent role in explaining to the public in Kosovo and the region how the KSC works to ensure fair, secure and effective judicial proceedings in line with its mandate and the highest international standards.

On 1 April 2025, the President, the Registrar and the Specialist Prosecutor met with Ms Emily Rakhorst, Deputy Head of the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), at the KSC and SPO premises.

The President was invited to participate in the World Law Congress in the Dominican Republic, from 4 to 6 May 2025. On 5 May 2025, she chaired a Panel on "Developments in International Criminal Justice: Voices of Different Actors". Amongst the panellists were the Registrar of the KSC, Dr Fidelma Donlon, Specialist Counsel at the KSC Venkateswari Alagendra, ICC Deputy Prosecutor Nazhat Shameem Khan and the former Chair of the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims at the ICC Minou Tavez Mirabal.

On 16 July 2025, the Principals welcomed the Head of Unit of the Common Foreign and Security Policy Operations and Election Observation of the Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI 6) of the European Commission, Ms Heike Gerstbrein, at the KSC in order to discuss matters related to the budgets and sound financial management.

On 11 September 2025, the Principals held an online meeting with the Head of EULEX, H.E. Giovanni Pietro Barbano, to discuss the ongoing judicial activities of the KSC, the SPO and the support provided by EULEX in this respect.

On 27 November 2025, the President and the Registrar held an informal briefing for the EU Political and Security Committee in Brussels, on the KSC's progress and activities and its future case and work load.

On 10 December 2025, the Principals held an online briefing for EU Member States hosted by the EUSR Kosovo in Pristina.

On 11 December 2025, during their annual briefing, the Principals updated the EU Member States and Third Contributing States based in The Hague on the progress of the KSC and the SPO.

On the same day, H.E. Giovanni Pietro Barbano, Head of Mission, EULEX, visited the KSC and SPO to meet with the Principals.

The President, the Registrar and the Specialist Prosecutor also met with the Director of Protocol and Host Country Affairs Department of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms Gabriella Sancisi. Throughout the year, the President and the Registrar further welcomed members of the diplomatic, international, and national authorities to the KSC, including EU Ambassadors and Ambassadors of the Third Contributing States, who visited the court and showed interest in its mandate and achievements.



KOSOVO SPECIALIST CHAMBERS HIGHLIGHTS 2025



Proceedings underway in 5 cases
involving 13 accused



Appeals judgment in
1 case



3 plea agreements
approved



50 hearings in the 3 languages
of the court



24 witnesses testified
in 2 cases



Over 1,000 decisions and orders
rendered by the panels



1,000 documents comprising
13,100 pages translated



Over 460 people in Kosovo
participated in outreach events



82,000 views of streaming page,
171,000 visitors on website

REGISTRY

Registry

The Registry of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC) provides services not only within the KSC but also to the Specialist Prosecutor's Office (SPO). It comprises the Divisions of Administration and the Judicial Services Division. The Registry remains neutral and independent in the delivery of its services. It is headed by the Registrar, Dr Fidelma Donlon, who consults with the President and the Specialist Prosecutor on institutional matters.

The Division of Administration provides services in the following areas: human resources, IT, facility management, security and safety, finance and budget, and procurement. The judicial support services provided by the Registry relate to courtroom management, language services, witness protection and support, the administration of Lists of Counsel, the provision of legal aid and the victims' participation process, and the management of the KSC Detention Facilities.

In 2025, under the leadership of the Registrar, Registry staff continued to deliver the highest quality of services in support of the efficient administration of the KSC and the SPO, as well as the fair, safe, and effective advancement of judicial proceedings before the court.

This work included the continued management of a system for the prior approval and monitoring of visits to the KSC Detention Facilities, as determined by a Trial Panel in 2023 and the Pre-Trial Judge in 2025, the implementation of the reparation order in the Mustafa case, conducting indigence inquiries and assessments for legal aid, ensuring the safety and well-being of testifying witnesses, translating judicial decisions and judgments, facilitating custodial visits of a detainee to Kosovo, and overseeing the release of two convicted persons and one accused to Kosovo under specific conditions.

In addition, outreach activities remained a key focus, aimed at maintaining dialogue with the people of Kosovo and the Court Information Network, and ensuring that accurate information about the court and its proceedings continued to be made publicly available.



Registrar Fidelma Donlon

Given the temporary nature of the court and the considerable progress in proceedings, the Registrar, together with her fellow Principals, developed a comprehensive framework for the orderly downsizing of the court's personnel strength, in parallel with peak judicial activity, and began implementing that framework over the course of 2025. This included the adoption of the necessary internal regulations and amendments to the Staff Rules, the issuance of decisions on the abolition and merger of posts, and notifications to staff about reductions in posts with interchangeable functions, following the recommendations by the KSC and SPO Functional Assessment Boards.

The strategic project on records management and retention set by the Registrar, advanced in 2025 with her adoption of the Administrative Directive on Information Asset Retention and Disposition. The adoption launched the KSC retention and disposition activities related to the physical and electronic information assets mapped in the KSC Information Asset Register. Furthermore, the development of an automated process for the retention and disposition, as well as the end-placement, the electronic archive repository, advanced. In 2025, the SPO also joined these efforts.

A major milestone was reached in 2025 with the signing of the first Agreement on the Enforcement of Sentences with the Kingdom of Belgium. Agreements of this kind are pivotal for the court as the 2014 Exchange of Letters between the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the President of Kosovo as well as the Kosovo Constitution, and the Host State Agreement with the Netherlands provide that final sentences are to be served outside Kosovo and the Netherlands.

The Registrar, together with the President and the Specialist Prosecutor, continued engaging with EU Member States and Third Contributing States throughout the year on this topic as well as other matters essential to the success of the court.

The EU is the principal funder of the KSC and the SPO. This funding is provided through a two-year grant agreement, signed by the Registrar on behalf of the KSC and the SPO. Since 2018, additional funding has been provided by Switzerland to support KSC outreach activities in Kosovo.

The Registrar ensures the sound management of the financial resources allocated to the KSC and the SPO. In accordance with the applicable regulations, the court is subject to both internal and external audits. By the end of 2025, 20 external audits had been conducted, with no irregularities identified.

Throughout 2025, the Registry continued to cooperate closely with the Host State regarding the services it provides to the KSC under the Host State Agreement and other cooperation arrangements, including detainee transfers, detention services, and matters relating to security, as well as the conclusion of a new rental agreement for the KSC and SPO premises beyond spring 2026. The support provided by the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) remained vital to KSC operations conducted in Kosovo.

Downsizing

The KSC and the SPO are temporary institutions with specific mandates. In view of the considerable progress in proceedings, the President, Registrar, and Specialist Prosecutor, prepared to effectively and efficiently manage the highest period of the court's judicial activity in parallel with the gradual downsizing of court personnel.

The KSC and SPO had a truly dynamic year in 2025, but also since inception. From when the Specialist Chambers were first seised with indictments in September 2020 until December 2025, 199 witnesses testified in person in 482 hearings, with the statements of another 195 witnesses admitted in writing. Approximately 267,000 evidentiary items were disclosed, 13,800 filings distributed, and 5,200 judicial decisions and orders issued by the President and the KSC Judges.

Over its lifespan, the court has reached several critical milestones and indicted 17 individuals involving war crimes, crimes against humanity, and offences against the administration of justice. Proceedings against 16 of them have been opened in six separate cases with one additional case still pending. By the end of 2025, four of these six cases had concluded or neared conclusion, and two cases entered the final trial stages or had commenced trial preparation proceedings, namely the *Thaçi et al.* war crimes and crimes against humanity case and the *Thaçi et al.* administration of justice case, respectively.

At the same time, as temporary institutions with clear mandates, the KSC and SPO must ensure that their staff and financial resources continue to match operational needs and that the organisation is equipped to evolve and align with changing workloads. In parallel with peak judicial activity, preparations commenced for a bespoke downsizing framework fully aligned with the highest standards of administrative practices in comparable fields and grounded in the principles of sound financial management, namely economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

At every stage, the guiding objective has been responsible stewardship so that the KSC and SPO remain fully equipped to deliver on their mandates, all the while ensuring that staff are treated with fairness and dignity.

The President, Registrar, and Specialist Prosecutor have deep respect and appreciation for the dedication and contributions of the Judges and staff, which have been instrumental in achieving these critical milestones.



Administrative framework for downsizing

The KSC and SPO are keenly aware that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to downsizing. Guided by the jurisprudence and lessons learned from comparable organisations, Legal Counsel led the drafting and internal consultation process, working closely with the Principals, senior management, the Human Resources Unit, the Staff Representative Body, the Gender Focal Point, and other stakeholders to ensure that the framework was both legally robust and responsive to operational and staff considerations. These consultations helped refine the framework and strengthen its clarity, safeguards, and practical implementation.

A central feature of the downsizing framework is the overarching principle that staff shall be kept to the minimum necessary for the proper discharge of the KSC and SPO's responsibilities. Another central feature of the approach has been early and consistent communication with staff.

In April 2025, the Principals announced the adoption of the administrative framework, consisting of amendments to the Staff Rules and two new internal regulations: namely, an *Administrative Directive on the Principles and Process of Downsizing* and an *Operational Instruction on the Terms of Reference for the Functional Assessment Boards*, which were published to all staff. The framework was then presented in detail at a town hall meeting in May 2025, where staff could ask questions, both in-person and online.

The key features of the framework include: (i) clear and transparent principles and procedures; (ii) an objective, function-based assessment, meaning an impersonal exercise that evaluates the objective necessity for the functions of all posts based on operational needs; (iii) meaningful opportunities to be heard; (iv) fair and competitive internal and external selection processes; (v) timely communication and appropriate notice; and (vi) access to administrative and judicial review of decisions on termination or non-renewal.

Alongside the formal framework, channels for engagement and support were also created and maintained in 2025. A dedicated email address was provided for staff queries about the framework, and in June 2025, the Human Resources Unit launched a centralized hub on the organisation's intranet, containing all relevant information related to downsizing.

Following the closing of the prosecution case in the *Thaçi et al.* war crimes and crimes against humanity case, the Registrar appointed five staff members to the KSC and SPO Functional Assessment Boards (FABs), including a representative of the Staff Representative Body. The FABs were then convened in May 2025 to carry out a functional assessment of all posts within the KSC and SPO and make recommendations to the Principals in advance of two anticipated judicial milestones, namely the closing statements and issuance of trial judgments in the *Thaçi et al.* war crimes and crimes against humanity case and the *Thaçi et al.* administration of justice case.

In June and July 2025, the preliminary and final recommendations of the FABs were shared with potentially impacted staff members for their comments.

After careful consideration of the recommendations of the FABs and staff comments, the Registrar issued, on 17 September 2025, 147 decisions and notifications to impacted staff on the abolition, merger of or reductions in posts, as well as substantial and minor changes made to job descriptions.

The decisions were taken by the Registrar, in consultation with the respective Principals. They set out detailed reasons as to whether the objective necessities of service required post abolition, merger of posts, or substantial changes to job descriptions at the closing statements milestone. Staff were also notified of reductions in posts with interchangeable functions and their eligibility to participate in internal competitions, as well as given advance notice of post abolition at the trial judgments milestone, with the exact date of abolition to depend on the progress of proceedings.

Overall, KSC and SPO staff were provided with considerable notice of upcoming changes, including, in some cases, nine months' advance notice, as well as the opportunity to seek administrative and judicial review. In this way, the organisation has sought to support informed planning and minimise uncertainty among staff to the greatest extent possible.

Support to staff

Throughout 2025, the organisation also invested in practical measures to support staff during the downsizing process, including human resources guidance, briefings and trainings for both staff and line managers, well-being resources, as well as career transition support and coaching services.

For example, the KSC and SPO engaged the services of a Certified Senior Professional Career Coach, with substantial experience working with staff in international organisations, to support staff in their career transitions. Each staff member was allocated an individual 1:1 coaching session designed to provide tailored guidance and support. An introductory workshop was also organised for all interested staff, offering general information, guidance, and practical tools and strategies to support career transition.

To further support staff, the Registrar also introduced changes to the leave entitlements in the Staff Rules to afford additional opportunities for staff to attend external professional trainings to support their career transition, namely three working days per 12-month contract or tour of duty.

Several trainings were also delivered throughout 2025, including 'Managing Organisational Change', 'Leading through Organisational Downsizing' and 'Managing Change for Self', to support staff and managers in building resilience and applying practical strategies during organisational transition. The Human Resources Unit also issued targeted guidance for line managers and continued to be available to all staff for support and consultation, alongside the Counselling Psychologist and Welfare Advisor, where needed.

Delivering through transition

Throughout 2025, the KSC and SPO undertook intensive institutional planning to ensure the downsizing process could be managed with predictability and clarity. In this period of transition, staff continued to deliver at a consistently high level, demonstrating an outstanding capacity to sustain momentum and quality. The progress achieved in 2025 reflects their extraordinary contribution.





Immediate Office of the Registrar

The Immediate Office of the Registrar (IOR) supports the Registrar in the execution of her mandate. IOR provides legal and non-legal support related to the judicial proceedings and the administration of the court, Host State and diplomatic relations, external communications and outreach, as well as periodical reporting and protocol services. In addition, Information Governance (InfoGov) and Information Security (InfoSec) functions form part of IOR.

In 2025, Legal Counsel led IOR's Legal Team in providing legal advice and in-house counsel to support the overall legal needs of the organisation. The Legal Team advised on a diverse array of judicial matters, including by collaborating with the Defence Office, the Detention Management Unit, and the Court Management Unit to support the Registrar in ensuring effective access to legal aid and implementing complex court orders related to detention conditions and external cooperation with forensic entities. In total, the Legal Team managed 635 submissions on behalf of the Registrar in judicial proceedings before the KSC related to, among other things, the effective delivery of judicial services, detention, legal aid, and witness protection.

The Legal Team also provided legal advice and support on all matters involving good administration and good governance, including by collaborating closely with the Human Resources Unit and managing all internal and external litigation matters. Its principal focus in 2025 was the design and implementation of the organisation's administrative framework for downsizing. The Legal Counsel co-presented the downsizing framework at a town hall meeting for all staff, together with representatives from Chambers, the SPO, and the Human Resources Unit. The Legal Team also provided significant legal support to the Registrar in ensuring overall compliance, transparency, and fairness in the downsizing process.

IOR also supports the Registrar in her diplomatic work. In 2025, efforts continued to be made in order to reach cooperation agreements with States in the area of witness protection and enforcement of sentences. Significantly a cooperation agreement with the Kingdom of Belgium was finalised.

In 2025, IOR continued to carry the responsibility for the joint periodic reporting of the court. It also led the work of internal cross-sectional working groups and boards such as the one for the management of the electronic court management system, Legal Workflow, ensuring system stability and necessary further development, and the Information Security Board that provides recommendations to the Registrar on IT systems and applications. IOR also carried on providing internal protocol arrangements.

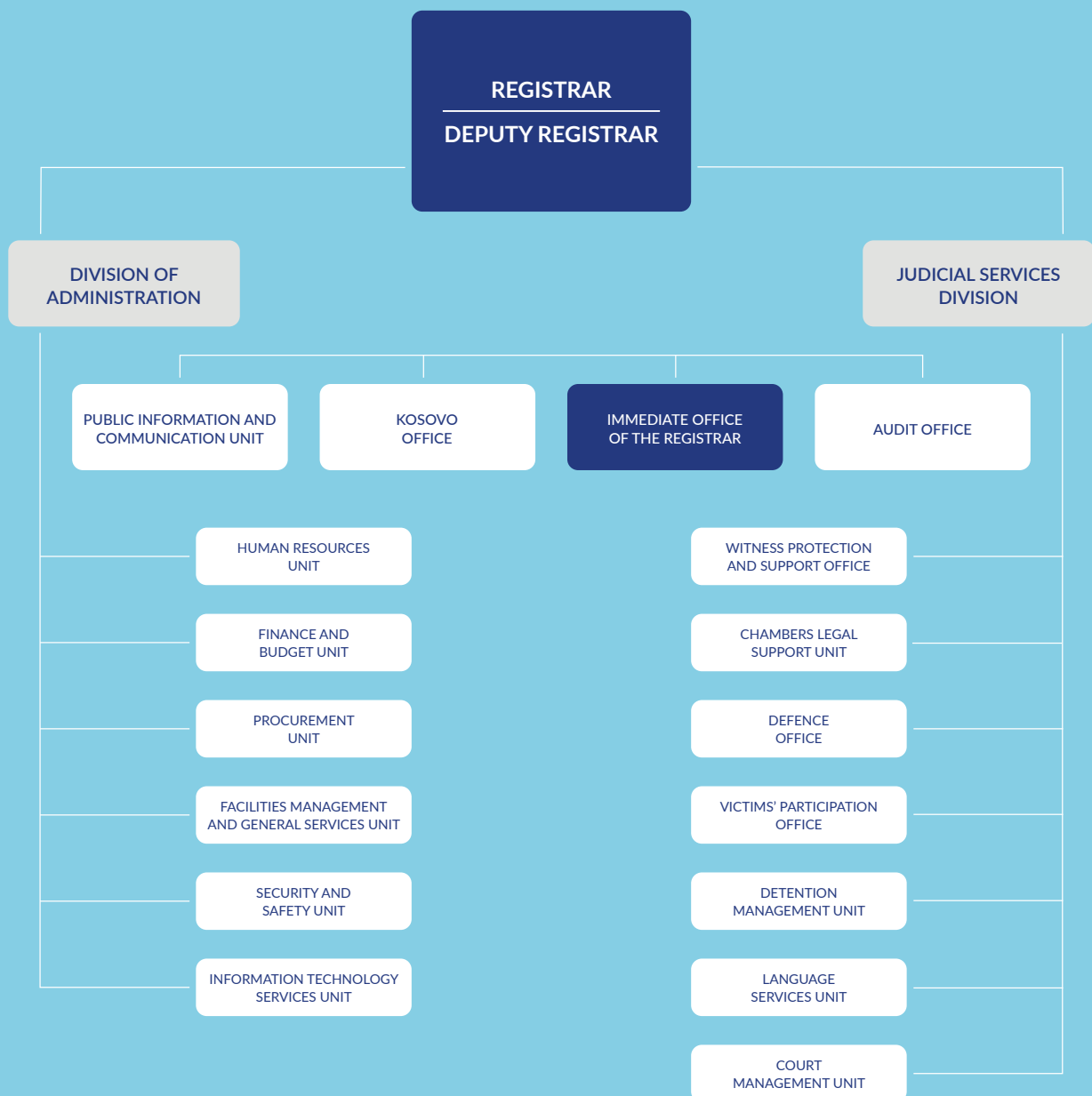
In 2025, the InfoGov managed strategic priority project on records management advanced significantly. With the Registrar's adoption of the policy establishing retention schedules for KSC records, the enduring retention value of over 320 information asset series identified across the Registry and Chambers were determined. InfoGov provided expert advice and specific training on information asset destruction and transfer process to custodians. Towards the end of the year, the destruction of the physical and digital information assets commenced.

Furthermore, the Archiving Project Board, established by the Registrar and chaired by the Senior Information and Records Management Advisor, oversaw the technical design and prototyping of a digital archive repository aimed at automating the processes associated with records destruction and transfer. It is estimated that well over one million information assets need to be reviewed and appraised against the records retention schedules which amounts to over 25TB of digital data including audiovisual recordings, e-mails and databases.

The work of the InfoGov team attracted external interest and updates on the archive project were presented at several professional network meetings. In November 2025, a delegation from the EU Parliament visited the KSC to gain insights into its work in the area of records and archive management.

The InfoGov team continued providing library services to all parties in the proceedings. In 2025, the access to print and electronic resources was further extended. Over 400 library resources requests were handled in 2025.

The InfoSec function advises and supports KSC policy development for effective information security management. In 2025, several information security reviews and assessments were performed on key IT systems supporting operations and the development of KSC archiving. In addition, InfoSec took steps to further raise staff awareness of cyber and information security, including by promoting the use of the European External Action Service information security training platform, distributing regular newsletters and executing phishing simulation tests.



Public Information and Communication Unit

While trials take place in The Hague, the KSC ensures through a wide range of outreach and communication efforts that the public in Kosovo and beyond remains closely informed and engaged. These activities include interactive outreach events, an active visitors' programme, regular engagement with journalists, and the provision of timely updates and resources online. The Public Information and Communication Unit (PICU) coordinates all such activities and ensures that all materials are produced in the three official languages of the court: Albanian, Serbian, and English.

In 2025, the KSC reached several key milestones which contributed to increased public and media interest, particularly in Kosovo and across the region. These included the issuance of an appeal judgment in the *Pjetër Shala* war crimes case, the conclusion of the Prosecution and Defence cases in the *Thaçi et al.* war crimes and crimes against humanity case, as well as the transfer of an obstruction of justice case to a Single Trial Judge.

The commencement of the Defence case in the *Thaçi et al.* case, on 15 September 2025, prompted several Kosovo media outlets to travel to The Hague and also attracted regional and international media to cover the proceedings on site. In total, 20 different media organisations followed the hearings from the public gallery and the KSC Media Centre.

Further developments in November 2025 contributed to sustained media focus. The Pre-Trial Judge transferred a second case involving Mr Hashim Thaçi to the Trial Panel. This case relates to alleged efforts by Mr Thaçi to instruct witnesses about how they should testify in the ongoing *Thaçi et al.* war crimes and crimes against humanity proceedings. The announcement of this development generated widespread media coverage.

Throughout 2025, the KSC held outreach events across Kosovo, providing the public with the opportunity to ask questions, share their views, and receive accurate information directly from court representatives. The KSC also continued to produce and air informative video segments, and to regularly post updates about the proceedings on its website and social media platforms.

The KSC visitors' programme offered student groups, legal professionals, and other members of the public the chance to tour public areas of the court, observe hearings, and participate in interactive presentations. The KSC welcomed 75 visiting groups during the year. Additionally, in September 2025, the KSC took part in The Hague Open Day, inviting members of the public to visit the court's premises, learn about its mandate, and take part in guided tours.



The KSC participated in the Hague Open Day, September 2025

2.1 Media

Throughout 2025, PICU maintained consistent engagement with the media. Weekly online press briefings, simultaneously translated into the court's three official languages, provided journalists worldwide with timely updates on the proceedings and opportunities to ask questions. Additionally, KSC spokespersons responded to 226 individual journalist inquiries within 24 hours and provided 15 in-depth interviews with Kosovo and regional media outlets.

The KSC Principals remained committed to the court's mission of public communication. The KSC President gave four extended media interviews during the year. In May 2025, the President travelled to Kosovo to engage with civil society and the media. However, a planned press conference was cancelled after a protest by KLA War veterans prevented the meeting from taking place.

Media, both in Kosovo and internationally, followed courtroom developments closely. This could be done by following the proceedings live from the public gallery, the streaming thereof on the KSC website, or the recordings made available on the KSC YouTube channel. The year 2025 saw the conclusion of the Prosecution and the Defence cases in the *Thaçi et al.* war crimes and crimes against humanity case. Although some of the witness testimony was held in private session to protect witnesses, the majority of witnesses testified either fully or mostly in public session. Media representatives also took advantage of the opportunity to attend hearings in person at the KSC premises and to make use of the dedicated media centre.

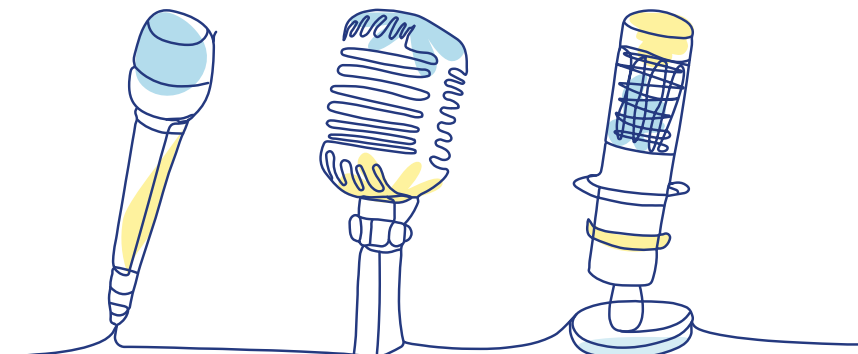
PICU further developed its relations with media across Kosovo and the region by maintaining regular meetings with news editors in Kosovo and hosting four journalist roundtables in Pristina. These events provided journalists with background information and the opportunity to ask questions. Additionally, following each briefing, journalists were invited to conduct on-camera interviews with KSC spokespersons.



KSC Spokesperson Michael Doyle during an interview with Kosovo Online



KSC Spokesperson Angela Griep during a weekly online press briefing



2.2 Outreach

Since becoming fully judicially operational in 2017, the KSC has prioritised engaging the people of Kosovo in a dialogue about the court's mandate and ongoing proceedings. Because the trials are relocated in The Hague, it was recognised from the start that the court needs to reach out to people affected by the proceedings with transparent, neutral, and accessible information.

To ensure firsthand information, the KSC outreach team has conducted Outreach events with audiences across Kosovo on an almost monthly basis. Events have been held with students, lawyers, civil society, citizens in local communities and many others. Since 2018, with the generous funding from Switzerland, the KSC has conducted 210 outreach activities in Kosovo directly reaching some 4,500 persons.

The purpose of these information-sharing events is to be present in Kosovo, to provide basic information about the court's mandate and activities, to give people in Kosovo the opportunity to share their views, and most importantly to answer the questions that people have. The public information provided at these events includes information about the mandate of the court, the rights of the accused, the participation of victims, and legal developments in the cases before the KSC.

In 2025, the KSC organised 25 outreach events, involving 466 participants from communities including Prishtinë/Priština; Gjakovë/Đakovica; Gjiilan/Gnjilane; Janjeve/Janjevo; Kamenicë/Kamenica; Leposaviq/Leposavić; North Mitrovica; South Mitrovica; Pejë/Peć; Prizren; Shtërpçë/Štrpce; and Zvečan/Zvečan. Of these, 23 took place in person, while two were held online.

To broaden its reach further, the KSC continued in 2025 to produce and broadcast informational videos on topics such as the conditions of detention and their monitoring by the International Committee of the Red Cross, witness protection, rights of the accused, victims' participation, the appeals process, and other common questions raised during outreach sessions. These videos were also accessible on the KSC's YouTube channel, where they were viewed 3,000 times over the year.



Outreach event in Pristina, November 2025



Outreach event in Kamenica, August 2025



Outreach event in Zvečan, September 2025

2.3 Cooperation with Civil Society

The KSC maintains regular consultations with NGOs from Kosovo and the region. The insights and recommendations of civil society have been crucial in shaping and enhancing the Outreach programme, ensuring it adapts alongside courtroom developments.

Different NGO's, specialised in topics such as transitional justice, human rights and minority issues, offer diverse perspectives on the needs and concerns of various communities. They also provide valuable advice on how to present complex legal topics in a way that is accessible to a general audience.

In April 2025, the court hosted civil society members at its premises enabling them to follow court sessions and hear about public developments in the proceedings, and to share views on how to reach the public with factual information about the court's mandate and work, focusing especially on simplifying intricate legal concepts for non-expert audiences.

Additionally, the KSC organised an online meeting with NGO's in 2025 to take stock of public perceptions and knowledge of the court in the current phase of proceedings.



Civil society meet with KSC President Ekaterina Trendafilova,
April 2025



Civil society meet with KSC Registrar Fidelma Donlan,
April 2025



2.4 KSC Online

The KSC provides extensive public access to information about its mandate, operations, and proceedings through its official website, available in Albanian, Serbian, and English. The website has recently been migrated to a more modern system as part of the organisation's continuous efforts to make it as user-friendly and transparent as possible, enabling the public to easily follow the work of the court.

To further enhance transparency, the case pages have been updated to a new format that offers an overview of each stage of the proceedings for all trials. Public hearings are streamed live in all three official languages, while the Public Court Records database provides access to more than 9,000 public filings across various cases. Visitors can also follow a continuously updated feed called 'Live-Update' featuring key daily developments. The website also offers a wide range of informative resources, such as fact sheets, infographics, and publications, providing essential information about the KSC mandate and proceedings.

In 2025, the streaming page continued to attract the most attention, reaching 82,000 views. Overall, the KSC website recorded 787,000 visits during the year, generated by a total of 171,000 individual users which is the highest annual number of visitors since the launch of the KSC website. The largest share of visitors coming from the Netherlands and Kosovo.

The KSC also engages with the public through its YouTube channel, which hosts recordings of hearings as well as short explanatory videos answering frequently asked questions. By the end of 2025, the channel had more than 828 subscribers, representing a 27% increase compared to the end of 2024. During the year, videos were viewed approximately 41,000 times, a 5% increase to the previous year, amounting to approximately 4,000 hours of total watch time. The most-watched video was the trial hearing on 10 November 2025 in the *Thaçi et al.* war crimes and crimes against humanity case.

The court used its Instagram and X accounts throughout the year to share updates on judicial developments, basic information on issues such as detention and rights of the accused, and updates on outreach initiatives. The court's social media community grew with 60% in 2025 reaching 2,099 followers at the end of the year.





KOSOVO SPECIALIST CHAMBERS &
SPECIALIST PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

SPECIALIST CHAMBERS SPO CASES COUNSEL DOCUMENTS NEWS/MEDIA CALENDAR PROCUREMENT

Kosovo Specialist Chambers & Specialist Prosecutor's Office

The Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office were established pursuant to an international agreement ratified by the Kosovo Assembly, a Constitutional Amendment and the Law on Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office. They are a temporary mixture with a specific mandate and jurisdiction over crimes against humanity, war crimes and other crimes under Kosovo law, which were committed or committed in Kosovo between 1 January 1998 and 31 December 2000 by or against citizens of Kosovo or the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Kosovo Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office have a seat in The Hague, the Netherlands. Their staff is international, as are the Judges, the Specialist Prosecutor and the Registrar.



IN FOCUS
Trial Panel approves plea agreements
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Public court records
[Access the database](#)

Streaming
[Streaming site](#)

NEWS
President Ekaterina Trendafilova grants Sabit Januzi and Ismet Bahtijari Modification of Sentence
The President of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC), Judge Ekaterina Trendafilova, on 19 February 2025, decided to...

LIVE UPDATE
KSC Weekly Press Briefing
Another KSC weekly press briefing will take place on Thursday, 23 January 2025, at 14:30. During this briefing, the KSC...



VICTIMS' PARTICIPATION
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THACI ET AL. TRIAL OVERVIEW
[Click here to watch](#)



KSC OUTREACH
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OMBUDSPERSON
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VISITS
The Kosovo Specialist Chambers offers visitors and journalists the possibility to attend public hearings from the gallery of the courtroom. Accredited journalists may also use the media room to work during breaks or closed sessions.
[Read more](#)

EMPLOYMENT
The Kosovo Specialist Chambers is currently seeking qualified candidates for various positions. For more information, please visit our website.

The Judicial Services Division provides the court and the parties with operational and legal support. It does so through the units it comprises: the Court Management Unit, the Language Services Unit, the Defence Office, the Victims' Participation Office, the Witness Protection and Support Office, and the Detention Management Unit.

In 2025, the judicial proceedings advanced significantly with the rendering of the second Appeal Judgment in the *Pjetër Shala* war crimes case and the completion of the evidentiary phase in the *Thaçi et al.* senior leadership war crimes and crimes against humanity case. In addition, 2025 saw the approval of the first plea agreements before the KSC in the *Januzi et al.* case and the conclusion of the pre-trial phase in the *Thaçi et al.* administration of justice case. Furthermore an agreement on the enforcement of sentences was concluded with the Kingdom of Belgium.

During the year, the number of detainees in the KSC Detention Facilities decreased from 12 to nine following the President's decision to modify the sentence for two convicted persons and the provisional release under strict conditions of one accused.

The Division units provided support throughout the judicial proceedings such as ensuring legal representation for accused and for participating victims, affording legal aid where required, the provision of psychological and logistical support to witnesses, and the safe and secure detention of detainees at the KSC Detention Facilities.

3.1 Court Management Unit

The Court Management Unit (CMU) continued to manage courtroom operations and to ensure custody of file records for criminal, as well as constitutional and staff appeals proceedings. Additionally, CMU also coordinated and implemented court orders with external entities.

In 2025, as the custodian of the KSC courtroom, CMU oversaw the technological upgrades and maintenance of the courtroom, interpretation and audio-visual booths. CMU executed its responsibilities for scheduling court hearings, courtroom familiarisations, external visits, internal trainings and other activities related to the courtroom. During the year CMU was also invited to present and share best practices of its court management policies and electronic court management system to a variety of domestic and international courts and organisations.

In the reporting period, CMU continued to manage file records in digital and physical repositories, ensuring compliance with information management and record-keeping standards. File records were processed and distributed through the electronic court management system, Legal Workflow. CMU as the business owner of the Legal Workflow provided 18 general training sessions which were attended in total by 61 users, provided access to 84 new users and in total managed access for 363 users and maintained custody over all case file records in the system.

As part of its mandate, CMU ensured the production of live transcripts during hearings and access management of 275 users through the transcript software Transcend which was successfully migrated to a new system, Lexel, in September 2025.

In 2025, CMU staff members represented the Registrar during 50 court hearings. CMU supported courtroom familiarisations and testimony of 24 witnesses in coordination with the Witness Protection and Support Office, and facilitated six remote witness testimonies, seven remote participations for Judges, parties and participants and eleven for accused attending through video link.

A total of 3,480 filings and 945 filing annexes, 706 correspondence records and 276 transcripts of hearings were processed and distributed by CMU in 2025. Decisions and orders of the Panels requiring personal service pursuant to the Law, were certified in printed format. In furtherance of court orders, CMU authored and filed 147 internal memoranda confirming implementation of classification changes, assignment of exhibit numbers and other file record related matters.

A total of 40 in-court and post-session redaction orders were implemented on both transcripts and audio-visual recordings of hearings. Additionally, following the issuance of orders and decisions, 48 transcripts totalling over 5,772 pages and 925 filings were re-classified, processed and re-distributed.

Public access to transcripts and filings was enabled through the KSC's website whereby the dedicated Public Court Records database was updated with 2,425 public filings, filing annexes and their corresponding translations as well as 130 court hearing transcripts.

In total, over 2,076 translation requests were processed by CMU and over 4,600 records totalling 114GB were disclosed between the parties through Legal Workflow.

In 2025, CMU processed over 71,000 pages of filings through the electronic court management system Legal Workflow.

3.2 Language Services Unit

In 2025, the Language Services Unit (LSU) continued delivering interpretation and translation services both at the seat of the KSC and during missions.

LSU translated 1,000 documents into the three official languages of the KSC, as well as into other languages as needed, thus facilitating the court's smooth and effective operation and external communications. In addition to translating numerous filings, LSU provided translations of weekly press briefings, press releases and other outreach materials, and correspondence with external parties. Among the Unit's most notable achievements in 2025 were the translation of two Appeal Judgments, one Trial Judgment, one Reparation Order and a Decision on Confirmation of the Indictment.

In the same period, LSU provided simultaneous interpretation during 50 court hearings at various stages, including pre-trial, trial and appeals. The Unit also provided simultaneous interpretation during 47 weekly press briefings, as well as simultaneous and consecutive interpretation at meetings held at the seat of the KSC, and during missions abroad. In addition, it supported other Units with ad hoc requests for interpretation, translation and language assistance.

In 2025, LSU translated over 13,100 pages of documents.

3.3 Defence Office

As a Unit of the Registry, the Defence Office (DO) is neutral. It is the focal point for any administrative queries, questions and matters Defence Teams may encounter, including requests for legal aid.

DO administers a system of legal aid for representation of indigent or partially indigent suspects and accused. Furthermore, it administers a List of Counsel eligible to practice before the KSC as Specialist Counsel. At the end of 2025, the list contained 247 Counsel. Of those, 127 were Specialist Counsel, 28 were Victims' Counsel and the remaining 92 were listed as both Specialist Counsel and Victims' Counsel. The application process for admission to the List remained open throughout and beyond the year.

There were, at the end of 2025, 11 Defence Teams before the KSC, with a combined staff of 122 persons. This number included 11 Specialist Counsel. In 2025, seven Defence Teams were funded through the KSC Legal Aid system. DO processes legal aid requests and performs indigence inquiries to ensure the sound financial management of means at its disposition.

The Unit further provided guidance and support to Defence Teams on a multitude of topics, such as admission of team members, registration with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, provision of office space, transition into the KSC IT systems, and access to the electronic court management system Legal Workflow.

The Unit drafts admission letters for team members in line with the Directive on Counsel, and advises the Registrar on matters relating to their admission, deontological questions and any other topics related to DO tasks pursuant to the Law on Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office. The Unit also identifies suitable Duty Counsel, manages their contracting and instructing as required during legal proceedings. Furthermore, DO facilitates communications between the Defence Teams and States, International Organisations and other institutions with regards to their investigative requests.

In 2025, seven of the eleven Defence Teams before the KSC were funded through legal aid.



3.4 Victims' Participation Office

The Victims' Participation Office (VPO) administers the system of victims' participation at the KSC by assisting applicants who wish to participate in the proceedings as victims, processing their applications and submitting them to the relevant Panel.

When victims are admitted to participate in proceedings before the KSC, VPO ensures that they are properly represented. For this purpose, VPO maintains a list, which contains 120 Counsel who are qualified to represent victims. The Unit also administers a system of payment of legal representation of participating victims.

Victims who participate in proceedings have the right to notification, acknowledgement and reparation. They exercise their rights through Victims' Counsel, assigned to a group of victims in each case. Victims' Counsel may be present at court hearings, make written and oral submission and will keep the victims informed throughout the proceedings.

There are participating victims in four cases before the KSC and in all four cases the deadline for applications has expired.

Over the years, VPO has received 325 applications and submitted 27 reports to the relevant Panels for their consideration and admission. In 2025, five victims were admitted to participate in the proceedings in the *Thaçi et al.* war crimes and crimes against humanity case while two victims in the case passed away and one withdrew as a participating victim from the proceedings. With these changes, the total number of participating victims before the KSC was 172 at the end of the year. Eight of these were in the case against Mr Shala, eight in the case against Mr Mustafa, 155 in the *Thaçi et al.* case, and one in the *Januzi et al.* case.

In 2025, the Registrar continued executing the Reparation Order against Mr Mustafa. The Panel ordered in April 2023, Mr Mustafa to pay an overall sum of EUR 207,000 as compensation for the harm inflicted to the eight participating victims in the case. The Single Judge, appointed to oversee the implementation, issued several decisions and there have been a number of reports submitted by the Registrar.

A Reparation Order has also been issued in the case against Mr Shala, ordering Mr Shala to pay a sum of EUR 208,000 as compensation for the physical, mental and material harm inflicted on the eight victims of the crimes for which he was convicted. Mr Shala reparation order appeal was under the Panel's consideration during 2025 and a decision thereon issued in early 2026.

At the end of 2025, there were a total of 172 participating victims before the KSC. A Reparation Order issued in one case was being implemented.

3.5 Witness Protection and Support Office

The Witness Protection and Support Office (WPSO) implements, on behalf of the Registrar, in consultation where appropriate with the SPO, Specialist Counsel or Victim's Counsel, court ordered or other necessary protective measures and security arrangements, as well as safeguarding measures to protect the psychological wellbeing, dignity and privacy of witnesses and victims.

Since evidentiary hearings began, WPSO has managed the safe and timely appearance of 199 witnesses across five cases before the court, of which 32 appeared by video-testimony. During 2025, WPSO facilitated the testimonies of 24 witnesses called by the Prosecution, Defence teams or Victims' Counsel in the *Thaçi et al.* war crimes and crimes against humanity case. Regular engagement with the calling parties, the Host State and other relevant authorities ensured the safe and timely court appearance of witnesses. Furthermore, WPSO psychologists provided individually tailored psychological and other support to KSC witnesses through 43 interactions, before, during and post-testimony.

WPSO protection officers addressed the security needs of witnesses who testified, where appropriate in collaboration with the calling party, and provided designated protection measures and advice to witnesses and their families deemed at risk due to their testimony. WPSO implemented tailored protection measures for witnesses, participating victims, and accompanying support persons before, during and after their testimony to ensure their safety and security. In its efforts to safeguard the identity of protected witnesses, WPSO also advised Trial Panels on the redaction of information from court records that could reveal a witness's identity or compromise their dignity or privacy.

Additionally, WPSO reviewed transcripts of testimony given in private session to ensure that the integrity of court ordered protective measures remained in effect, while supporting the court's objectives regarding transparency and providing public proceedings. WPSO also ensured that witnesses who appeared for testimony were provided appropriate security advice and protection and could raise any matters relating to their security and safety with WPSO protection officers. WPSO continued to work in close coordination with relevant partners in Kosovo and the region, the Host State and internationally to effectively fulfil its mandate and provide protection and security to the KSC witnesses.

To maintain the high quality of services provided to witnesses and to identify any potential enhancements, WPSO manages the KSC's witness feedback process. Based on its experience since trials began, as well as the feedback from witnesses about the services provided, WPSO has developed and implemented a number of best practices in areas of its responsibilities.

WPSO manages the KSC witness feedback process and has developed best practices based on the input received.

Best practices

Gender- and Trauma-Informed Staff Training

Continuous training in trauma-informed safeguarding, gender sensitivity, and stress management equips WPSO staff to recognise subtle gendered expressions of distress, maintain empathy, and provide consistent, compassionate support to witnesses.

Holistic, Witness-Centric Support

A witness is in touch and accompanied by the same operational staff throughout their engagement with the court, fostering clarity, consistency, and trust building. This is achieved by providing services in witnesses' native languages, such as Albanian and Serbian. WPSO's commitment to keeping witnesses well-informed, as well as taking care of their basic day-to-day needs, substantially contributes to their well-being and overall experience during the testimony period. The simultaneous focus on both support and logistical arrangements helps to uphold the dignity and rights of witnesses throughout their engagement with the KSC.

Learning, Adaptation, and Victim-Centred Practice

The ongoing reflection and integration of witnesses' experiences and feedback enables WPSO to refine its communication, internal procedures, and coordination with Trial Panels. Services are firmly anchored in a victim-centred approach and provided in an adaptive and inclusive way. Since 2021, WPSO has gathered feedback from close to 200 witnesses on their experience of appearing before the court. The feedback informs the development of the best practices that are applied.

Integrated Operational Model

A comprehensive, person-centred operational approach ensures that logistical, psychological, and protection needs are seamlessly coordinated. The administrative and logistical assistance and support for witnesses appearing before the court are clearly set out in a number of KSC regulations. These regulations provide clarity to witnesses regarding the services they can expect. WPSO undertakes a large volume of advance planning to manage a high-volume of time critical transport arrangements of witnesses to and from The Hague, often requiring swift changes to original plans.

Comprehensive and Gender-Sensitive Assessments

WPSO psychologists conduct confidential, trauma-informed assessments that identify psychological risks, trauma load, and family dynamics, particularly addressing gender-specific stressors such as stigma, discrimination, or parenting concerns. These assessments safeguard witnesses' dignity, inform special courtroom measures, and ensure that witnesses feel seen, heard, and respected both inside and outside the courtroom.

3.6 Detention Management Unit

The Detention Management Unit (DMU) oversees and administers the KSC Detention Facilities, which are located within a Dutch prison in The Hague. DMU ensures that detainees are held in a safe and secure environment. At the end of 2025, there were nine detainees at the KSC Detention Facilities.

DMU upholds the dignity and rights of all accused and convicted persons detained at the KSC Detention Facilities, in full accordance with the KSC Rules of Detention and Regulations, best practices, and relevant international standards.

In accordance with fair trial principles, the KSC remains committed to ensuring that detainees are provided with adequate time and facilities to prepare their defence. In line with this commitment, and in view of the ongoing judicial proceedings DMU facilitated Counsel visits, both in person and via video conference, upon request and in compliance with the Rules of Detention. Detainees also continued to have the opportunity to participate remotely in court proceedings from the Detention Facilities, when authorised by the relevant Panel.

DMU facilitated detainees' ability to maintain personal relationships with family and friends through both in-person and video visits. Following the Trial Panel's order of December 2023 in the *Thaçi et al.* war crimes and crimes against humanity case, which imposed certain restrictions on visits, telephone communications, and correspondence for three of the accused, the Unit implemented a new visiting system in early 2024 applicable to all detainees. This system remained in effect throughout 2025, alongside additional restrictions introduced pursuant to the Pre-Trial Judge's decision in July 2025 with regard to one accused. Notwithstanding these measures, DMU continued to ensure that detainees retained their right to communicate with relatives and friends. In 2025, 708 visits were facilitated.



KSC Detention Facilities

Detainees continued to receive health care of the highest standard, with full access to necessary medical services to guarantee continuity of treatment and care. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the KSC Ombudsperson conducted independent inspections of the KSC Detention Facilities to assess detention conditions. In 2025, the ICRC carried out one inspection, while the KSC Ombudsperson conducted three.

In 2025, DMU facilitated a total of 708 visits of which the majority by family members and other personal visitors as well as 19 Consular visits.

The Division of Administration provides expert, administrative and technical support to the KSC and the SPO through the Human Resources Unit, the Information Technology Services Unit, the Facilities Management and General Services Unit, the Security and Safety Unit, the Finance and Budget Unit and the Procurement Unit.

In 2025, the Division facilitated judicial proceedings by ensuring secure hybrid courtroom activities, supporting the electronic court management system, Legal Workflow, and by implementing Chambers' decisions requiring the execution of custodial visits of a detained person to Kosovo on humanitarian grounds, setting up procedures to allow modified serving of sentences and making arrangements for the release on bail.

As part of the KSC's commitment to sound management of both human and financial resources, the Head of the Division of Administration and the Head of the Finance and Budget Unit continued to apply a system of monthly expenditure forecasting at entity and unit level. This practice was introduced in 2024 to ensure an even more robust implementation of the approved budget.

During the first half of the year, a new budget for the two-year period 15 June 2025 to 14 June 2027, was drafted and later approved by the EU Council on 5 June 2025.

The KSC Anti-Fraud Strategy was revised during the year. The Head of the Division, as the KSC Anti-Fraud Contact Person, together with the Internal Auditor and the Administrative Officer continued to provide anti-fraud awareness training to staff in line with the KSC Anti-Fraud Action Plan.

4.1 Human Resources Unit

The Human Resources Unit (HRU) provides support, advice and services to all personnel across the KSC and the SPO. In 2025, the Unit led recruitment and selection procedures, administered entitlements, benefits and welfare programmes and advised staff thereof, supported staff and managers with contract renewals and performance evaluations, as well as facilitated learning and development opportunities for all staff.

During the reporting period, two Calls for Contributions (CfC) for staff members and one internship call were published. Within the two CfCs, a total of 1,300 applications from 578 applicants were received and screened, of whom 271 were female and 307 male applicants. Of the applicants, 88% were from EU Member States while 12% were from Third Contributing States.

Within the internship call, 327 applications were received from 116 candidates, of whom 81 were female and 35 male. In total, 19 interns, 14 female and five male, joined the KSC and the SPO during 2025. In addition, 14 placements/student visitors joined the KSC and the SPO as part of their academic research projects.

In total, 26 new staff members were deployed in 2025 of whom 15 female and 11 male. In addition, three internal candidates were successful in securing new positions advertised in the CfCs of 2025.

The combined staff of the KSC and SPO decreased from 293 on 31 December 2024 to 282 on 31 December 2025. Out of the 207 KSC staff, 102 were female and 105 male, and of the 75 SPO staff members, 34 were female and 41 male.

The number of seconded staff decreased from 11 to 10 during the year. At the end of the year nine secondees were from the EU Member States of Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary and Ireland, and one was from the United States of America.

In 2025, new tools were introduced in HRU to further improve its budget tracking and monitoring and to support budgetary needs. Furthermore, the revisions of the Staff Rules and the administrative directives on internships and leave management were finalised.

HRU delivered a wide range of initiatives focused on staff development, well-being and workplace culture. A total of 70 training and development activities were delivered throughout the year on topics such as 'Situational Leadership and Coaching', 'Conflict Management', 'Improving Performance Management with Constructive Feedback', 'Leading High Performing Teams', and 'Unconscious Bias'.

Regular induction briefings continued to be organised for new staff to ensure smooth integration to the KSC and SPO and awareness of available resources. 'Train the Trainer' and procurement trainings were provided. Within the internship programme, trainings such as 'Setting SMART Goals', 'CV Writing', 'Cover Letter Writing', 'CBI Preparation' and 'Mock CBI Interviews' were also held.

The announced downsizing of the court also engaged HRU during the year. The Unit's focus was, in addition to providing support to the Functional Advisory Boards (FABs), information coordination. It launched a consolidated internal information platform with the relevant policies, communications, resources and updates. Emphasis was put on the existing support structures such as the Counselling Psychologist.

On 7 May 2025, a town hall meeting was organised for all staff during which presentations on the downsizing process were provided and a Q&A session held. Furthermore, the commitment to engage a specialist Career Coach was shared as well as other available support resources.

HRU also ensured the dissemination of information on downsizing to all staff, and the preliminary and final assessments, as well as the Registrar's final decisions to the affected staff members. The Unit also coordinated staff members' comments and responses throughout the FABs review process.

Other key HRU functions included updating the conditional offers of employment for new staff. Preparations for internal selection processes were initiated which included development of guidelines and recruitment and selection planning. The Unit also provided briefings to the selection panels to ensure transparency, consistency and alignment with the adopted administrative framework on downsizing.

The recruitment and selection of external and internal competitions were initiated after the closure of the CfC on 19 December 2025 with the respective selections to be finalised in the first quarter of 2026.

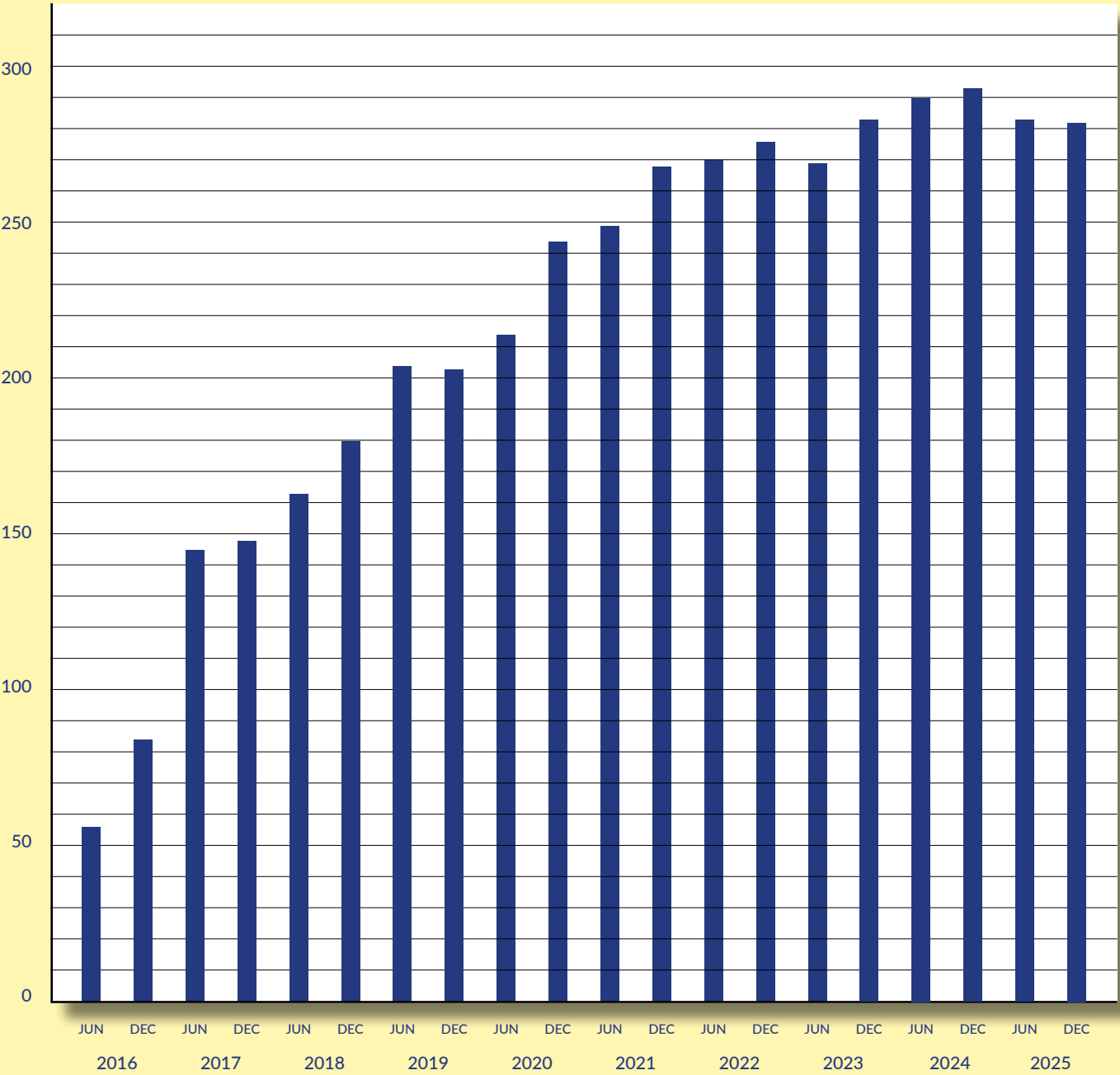
- **External recruitment:** CfC2-2025 was published on 1 December 2025 with 14 positions for external recruitment. Eight of these positions are new positions approved in the context of downsizing.
- **Internal recruitment:** 14 positions were subject to a reduction of posts in the context of downsizing resulting in internal competitions. Only staff members with interchangeable functions relating to each position were eligible to confirm their participation for these positions. By 31 December 2025, internal competition for five of the 14 positions were cancelled due to natural attrition.

HRU collaborated closely with the Immediate Office of the Registrar, the Head of the Division of Administration and the Finance and Budget Unit in providing the necessary staffing cost projections and statistics related to the downsizing decisions.

In relation to the ongoing organisational changes, HRU organised training sessions on topics of 'Leading Through Organisational Transition and Downsizing', 'Managing Organisational Change' and 'Managing Change for Self'.

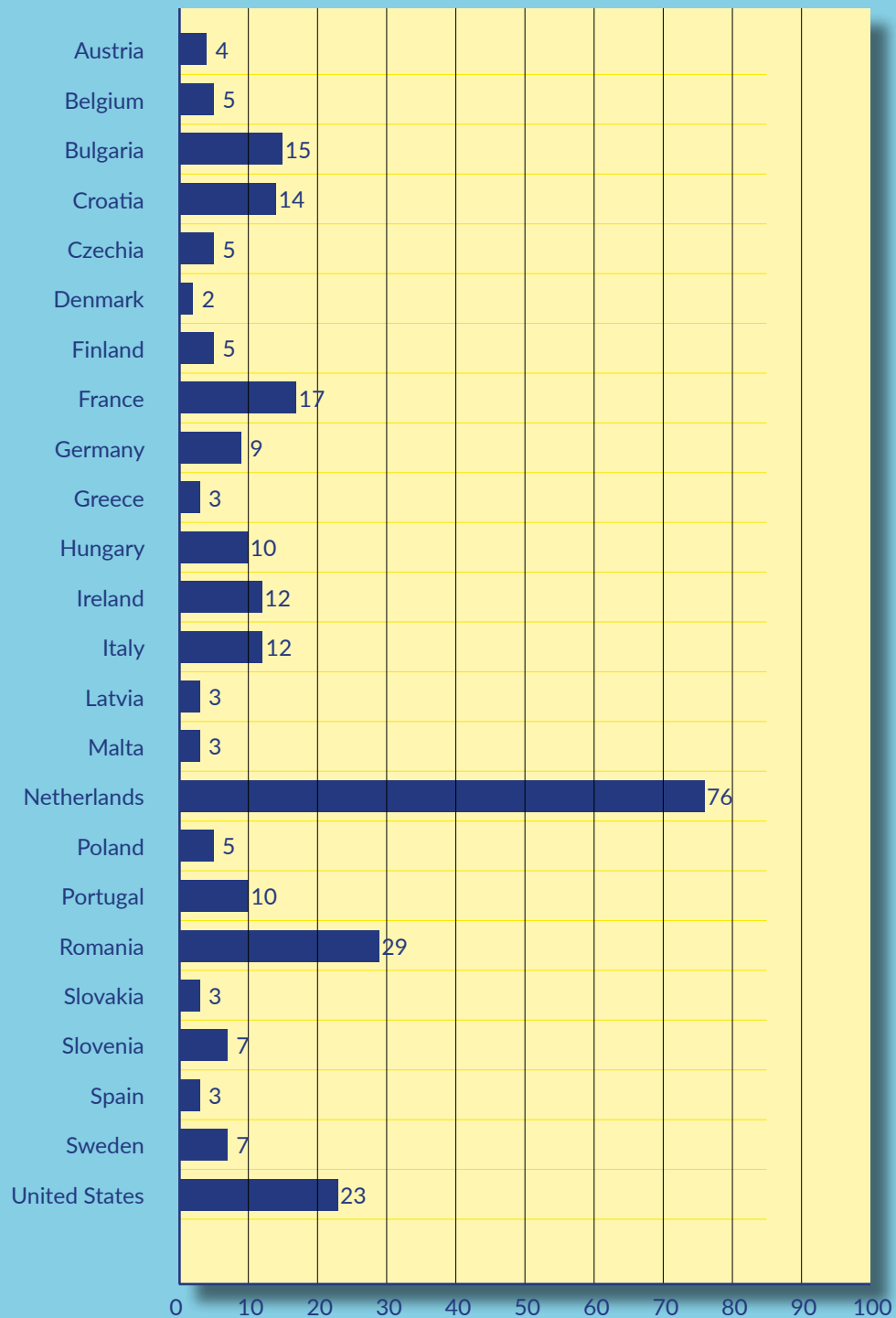
Throughout the downsizing process, HRU ensured transparent and consistent communication keeping staff well-informed, also emphasizing existing support structures such as the Career Coach and the Counselling Psychologist.

Total KSC and SPO staff



KSC and SPO staff by nationality

31 December 2025



4.2 Information Technology Services Unit

The Information Technology Services Unit (ITSU) supported 50 days of hybrid-courtroom activity in 2025. During these, over 5,000 audio-visual files, consisting of 7.6TB of data, were generated and processed in the three official languages of the court. The hybrid court sessions combined courtroom participants and remote participants using secured video teleconference equipment, both mobile video teleconference setups and fixed installations in semi-permanent remote locations.

In addition, confidential audio-visual material of 50 hearings was reprocessed to support reclassifications to public and consequent publication on the Public Court Records database on the KSC website.

The main KSC application is the electronic court management system Legal Workflow through which every decision, filing and related communication as well as disclosure is processed. Following the full upgrade of the system in 2024, ITSU continued to manage the stability and security of the system, and implementing limited feature requests.

Furthermore, the Unit continued to track the lifetime of hardware and applications used by the court. In 2025, aging hardware were replaced and a new transcription management software application installed. ITSU also implemented a new remote access management system that facilitates control over users' remote equipment, leveraging cloud technology and Windows 11.

The ITSU Service Desk continued its local and remote support to approximately 500 users and converted all KSC workstations to Windows 11 ensuring modern security and cloud collaboration features.

In 2025, ITSU also successfully migrated its operations and cyber security into Microsoft 365 platform, supported by Microsoft and based on international hardening standards. The new system includes 24/7 surveillance by the Airbus security operations centre as well as external security testing of the effectiveness of incident detection and response. This modern posture enables ITSU to implement cyber security measures to protect KSC data, even when data travels outside of KSC cloud or its on-premises infrastructure.

All of the actions taken in 2025 align with the envisaged end-state architecture. The KSC operations can be adequately and securely supported until the end of its mandate also with limited resources when implementing the required technology, processes and knowledge.

ITSU continued to ensure the security and stability of the Legal Workflow used by 350 persons.



4.3 Facilities Management and General Services Unit

The Facilities Management and General Services Unit (FMGSU) is responsible for the efficient and effective management of the KSC and the SPO premises while ensuring a quality work environment for its staff and visitors. This includes the delivery of support services related to real estate management, building maintenance and construction projects in consultation with relevant Host State authorities.

The Unit also ensures that services such as catering, hospitality and cleaning are provided. In addition, FMGSU manages internal space planning, protocol administration services, mail and pouch services, logistics and maintenance of the KSC vehicle fleet, and travel. The Unit works closely with the Security and Safety Unit and Protocol. Furthermore, the Unit coordinates with the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo on the management of the facilities used by the KSC and the SPO in Pristina, Kosovo.

Following five years of occupancy at Raamweg 47 in The Hague, several capital replacements were due. The required upgrades were carried out during the first half of 2025. They were mainly related to the security system software and hardware to ensure uninterrupted operations.

The Unit also engaged with the Dutch Central Government Real Estate Agency on the process of renewing the tenancy agreement for the premises following the ten-year initial investment period for the refurbishment of Raamweg 47. FMGSU supports the Registrar in the negotiations to conclude a new rental agreement beyond April 2026.

In 2025, FMGSU continued to ensure a quality work environment for staff and visitors.



4.4 Security and Safety Unit

During 2025, the Security and Safety Unit (SSU) continued to provide a diverse range of safety and security services in support of the KSC activities and its staff. The management of staffing resources has been a key focus to ensure support for court operations both at the court and elsewhere. By implementing interim planning solutions for staff with a focus on maximising resource efficiency, the Unit was able to maintain required level of service. Mission focus, staff's situational awareness and their active engagement were key.

SSU provides security services at the premises, including inside the courtroom. It executes detainee transfers and coordinates threat assessments with external counterparts.

In 2025, the opening of the Defence case in the *Thaçi at al.* war crimes and crimes against humanity case saw an increased interest in the court. A demonstration was organised in The Hague that led to a gathering outside the KSC and SPO premises as well as significant interest in attending the public hearings. SSU provided staff with additional security guidance, ensured the security of the premises in cooperation with the local Police, and managed the high number of hearing attendees without any adverse impact on the hearings.

During the reporting period, major technical projects were implemented in relation to the delivery of a new key management system and the updating of information management systems. Both projects ensure that SSU continues to be able to provide effective services in support of the court's mandate.

Collaboration with operational and information partners in the Host State and beyond continues to be effective.

SSU successfully executed two high profile custodial visits to Kosovo on compassionate grounds, two decisions on modification of sentence resulting in conditional release and one release on bail in coordination with the Kosovo Police.



4.5 Finance and Budget Unit

The Finance and Budget Unit (FBU) supports the Registrar in the financial management of the funds granted to the KSC for the implementation of its mandate, in accordance with internal financial rules and regulations, and with the principles of EU financial regulations.

In 2025, FBU continued to have a key role in the financial circuit ensuring the sound financial management of KSC funds. In terms of regulatory framework, two administrative directives and two operational instructions relating to processes with financial impact were updated during the year. In order to further enhance the procedures and the know-how, FBU delivered regular in-house trainings to staff members covering key aspects of the financial circuits of the KSC and the SPO.

During the first half of the year, the main activity of the Unit was the drafting and approval of the budget for the seventh Grant Contract signed between the Registrar, acting on behalf of the KSC and the SPO, and the European Commission, as the grant donor. The approved budget for the two-year period from 15 June 2025 to 14 June 2027 is in the total amount of EUR 106,374,000. FBU worked with the European Commission on the swift disbursement of the first instalment which was received in July 2025.

Additionally, the KSC managed the budget afforded through the sixth Grant Contract signed between the Registrar, acting on behalf of the KSC and the SPO, and the European Commission, for the two-year period from 15 June 2023 to 14 June 2025 in the total amount of EUR 106,810,000. In 2025, FBU worked with the European Commission for the swift disbursement of the contingencies amount which was received in March 2025.

FBU also managed EU funds received through the fifth Grant Contract signed between the Registrar, acting on behalf of the KSC and the SPO, and the European Commission for the two-year period from 15 June 2021 to 14 June 2023 in the total amount of EUR 103,279,698. The final report for the grant expenditure was submitted to the European Commission, and the balance was paid back.

In addition to the funds granted by the EU, the KSC managed funds totalling EUR 132,300 from Switzerland, for its outreach activities in Kosovo during 2024 and 2025.

In 2025, FBU took over the active management of the KSC Provident Fund implementing the deposit policy and working on it with two banks. In total, FBU processed over 4,000 financial actions in 2025, from budgetary commitments to payments.

The KSC financial accounts are subject to regular independent audits and expenditure verifications by both internal and external auditors as required by the EU Commission and the internal governance framework. FBU maintained effective collaboration with the European Commission Service for Foreign Policy Instruments contributing to effective monitoring and implementation of the KSC's financial resources.

By the end of 2025, 20 external audits have been carried out on the KSC with no irregularities identified.

4.6 Procurement Unit

The Procurement Unit is responsible for the KSC and the SPO procurement activities and thus ensures that services, supplies and works, required by the court to fulfil its mandate, are obtained timely and at the right cost.

The Unit further confirms that the organisation complies with EU regulations. The procurement is one of the most heavily regulated fields in the public sector and consequently any purchase made by the KSC and the SPO undergoes regular strict controls and audits.

In 2025, the Unit continued to increase awareness and understanding of applicable tender processes and requirements among prospective suppliers, as well as to provide as many businesses as possible, regardless of their location, the opportunity to work with the KSC and the SPO.

The Unit continued to identify opportunities to maximise value for money and to achieve procurement excellence, including establishing new multi-year framework contracts. The Unit also provided contract administration and monitoring support, as well as delivered in-house training to KSC and SPO staff to ensure procedural compliance, proper market survey processes, as well as consistent and rigorous contract management. Overall, with its efforts the Unit ensured KSC and SPO compliance with good practices, reducing the risk of non-compliance with the relevant procurement rules and regulations, and internal policies and guidelines. The main document governing the KSC and SPO procurement activities is the Practical Guide on Contract Procedures for EU External Action.

In total, 50 new procurement contracts worth EUR 5.8 million were concluded for the KSC and the SPO during 2025.



INTERNAL AUDIT

The Internal Auditor contributes to institutional governance and accountability of the KSC and the SPO by conducting audits and reporting her findings and recommendations to the Registrar. The main objective of internal audit is to provide independent and objective assurance that an organisation's risk management, governance and internal control processes are operating efficiently and effectively.

The Internal Auditor verifies the status of implementation of the given recommendations in the follow-up audits she conducts. In her work, the Auditor adheres to international professional standards of internal auditing and to the EU Financial Regulation and advises on measures to improve governance.

During the audits, the Auditor assesses compliance with the EU Financial Regulation, procurement rules, internal policies, procedures and contracts.

During 2025, the Internal Auditor conducted eight audits based on the annual audit plan focusing on the eligibility of expenditure of imprest accounts, invoicing of detention services, the grant received from Switzerland, and on the management of the legal aid system and IT related contracts. The Internal Auditor carried out eight follow-up audits to ensure that management has implemented the recommended corrective actions. In addition to the audit assignments, the Internal Auditor was engaged with the Anti-Fraud trainings provided to staff members.

Through internal audits, the Auditor aims to improve the institution's operations by assessing whether internal controls are sufficient to mitigate risks, safeguard assets and prevent fraud.



GENDER MAINSTREAMING AT THE KSC AND THE SPO

Gender Mainstreaming and Anti-Harassment Training

The KSC and the SPO are unique among courts and institutions of its kind in that all Principal positions are held by female officials. In 2025, President Ekaterina Trendafilova, Registrar Fidelma Donlon and Specialist Prosecutor Kimberly West reinforced a culture of

dignity and mutual respect across the organisations through their visible engagement in organisational events and their support for gender mainstreaming initiatives and comprehensive training activities across the institution.

Inclusivity, Cultural Sensitivity and Gender Trainings

The Principals have maintained a zero-tolerance approach to any form of harassment since the organisation's inception. This commitment is reflected in the KSC and SPO's 2019 Anti-Harassment Strategy and the 2022 Anti-Harassment Policy.

To reinforce a respectful and harassment-free workplace, training on the 'Prevention of Psychological and Sexual Harassment' was delivered in 2025 as part of the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training programme. Attendance included all first-line managers and 96% of other staff. In addition, 94% of line managers completed specialised training on 'How to Handle Harassment Allegations in a Supportive Environment'.

The EDI training programme was further expanded through two expert-led awareness sessions on LGBTQ+ inclusion, alongside additional interactive training sessions on unconscious bias and navigating cultural differences.

To promote fair, transparent and consistent management practices, the leadership and management training programme also included sessions throughout the year on conflict prevention, situational leadership and coaching, leading high-performing teams, and providing constructive feedback.

Security and Law Enforcement Panel Showcasing Senior Female Colleagues

To highlight staff expertise and their exceptional contributions to the KSC and SPO mandates, a special panel discussion moderated by the Head of the Security and Safety Unit was organised, which showcased the professional experiences of three senior female colleagues in the areas of security and law enforcement. Together with the President, Registrar, Specialist Prosecutor, and Gender Focal

Point, the event was attended by 50 colleagues. The discussion provided insights into the panellists' career pathways and achievements, as well as obstacles encountered and overcome. The event concluded with the panellists offering practical guidance and advice for female colleagues seeking to advance in security and law enforcement roles.

Security and Law Enforcement Panel

Key messages from the panellist

Build confidence and apply ambitiously for opportunities:

"Be confident in your professional experience and believe in yourself. Do not limit yourself but go for the roles you think you can do. You do not need to fulfil every criterion in a job description – just go for it!"

Be proactive about opportunities:

"Communicate your professional aspirations and reach out to contacts and networks."

Invest in skills development:

"Make yourself stand out from the crowd by completing extra courses."

Gender Parity

Since its inception, the KSC has achieved gender parity on several occasions. From 2018 onwards, female representation among new staff joining the KSC and the SPO has increased steadily. In 2025, 26 staff were deployed to the KSC and SPO, of whom a record 58% were women. The previous high of 56% was recorded in 2021 and 2022; following this, the proportion has been between 43% and 46%.

By the end of 2025, the KSC and SPO were again close to gender parity overall, with 48% female staff and 52% male staff.

At the KSC, the overall gender distribution remained stable at 49% female and 51% male staff. At the Expert and Management level, women represented a record 59% of staff. At the Secretary and Assistant level, the distribution was unchanged from 2024, at 40% female and 60% male staff.

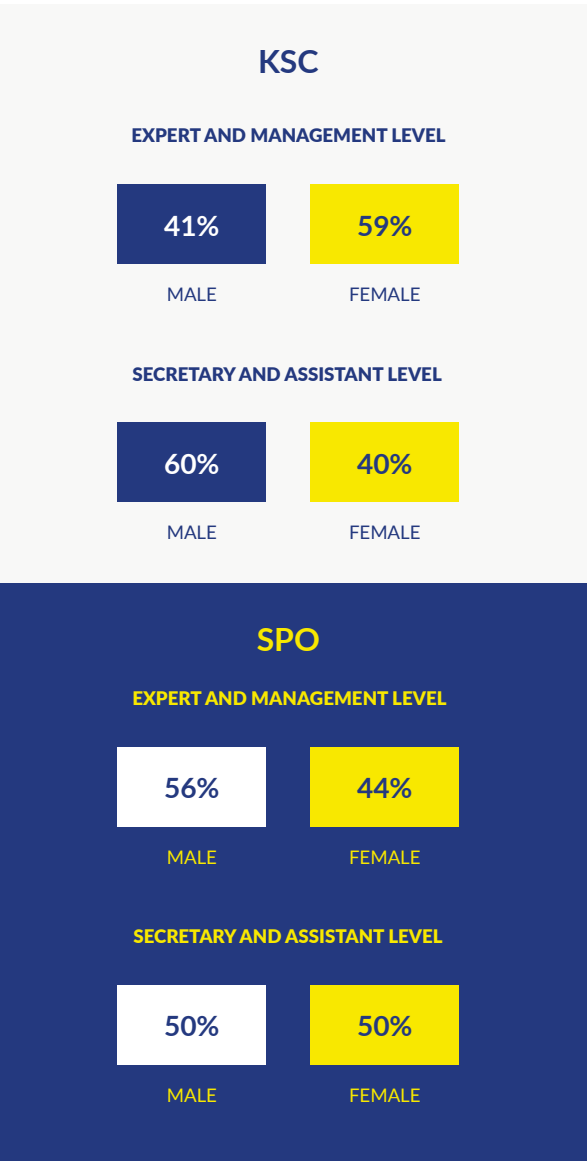
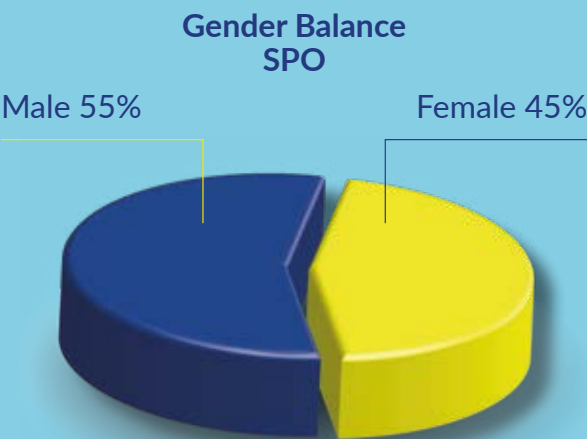
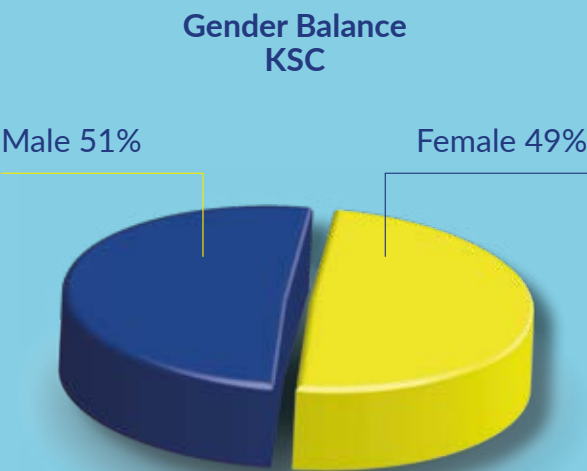
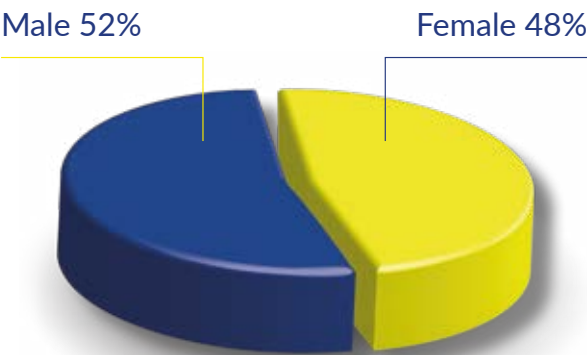
At the SPO, the overall proportion of female staff remained at an all-time high of 45%, which was first reached in 2024. At the Expert and Management level, the gender distribution also remained unchanged compared to 2024 with 44% female and 56% male staff. At the Secretary and Assistant level, the SPO achieved gender parity by the end of 2025, improving from 40% female and 60% male in the previous year.

Gender Ratio Among KSC and SPO Staff 31 December 2025

	All posts		Expert & Management Level		Secretary & Assistant Level	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
KSC-SPO	48%	52%	53%	47%	40%	60%
KSC	49%	51%	59%	41%	40%	60%
SPO	45%	55%	44%	56%	50%	50%

Gender Balance of KSC and SPO staff

31 December 2025



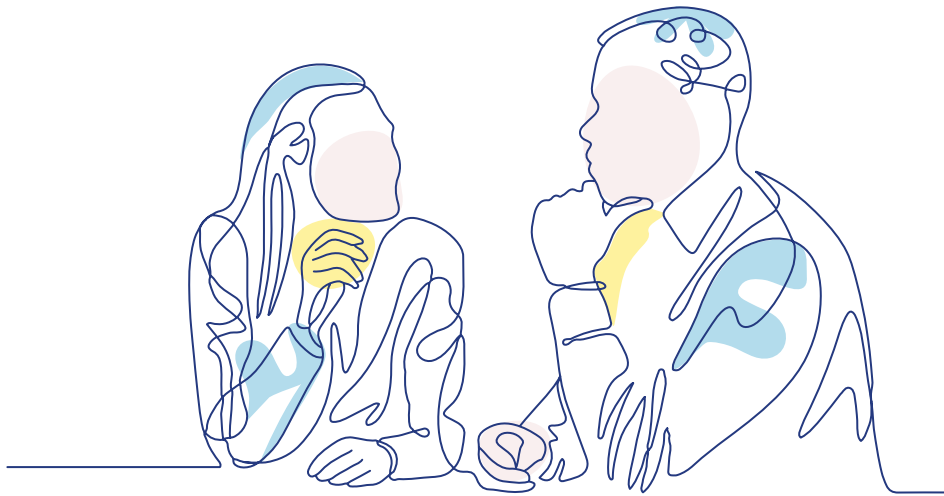
Support Functions

In line with established practice at the KSC and SPO, staff welfare support structures remained in place throughout the year. The Counselling Psychologist and the Welfare Advisor continued to be available to staff, as needed. The Counselling Psychologist provides psychological support, while the onsite Welfare Advisor supports staff, interns and contractors to help them explore various options relating to harassment concerns or allegations and by signposting relevant resources.

In view of the initiation of the downsizing process and its potential impact on staff, reminders on available support resources were circulated regularly during the

year. Staff also had access to 1:1 coaching sessions provided by a Certified Senior Professional Career Coach. In addition, a joint introductory workshop was delivered to all interested staff to support career transition, including tools for self-assessment, career exploration and planning, effective job search strategies, and practical preparation.

In accordance with the Anti-Harassment Policy, an External Mediator also remained available as an independent third-party to support informal dispute resolution processes and facilitate amicable outcomes, where appropriate.



2

Gender Focal Point

The presence of the Gender Focal Point forms part of the Principals' overall dedication to maintain and further strengthen an inclusive work environment.

In 2025, the Gender Focal Point organised a celebration to mark International Women's Day under the theme "Accelerate Action". The aim was to call for bold, collective efforts to break barriers, challenge biases, and create inclusive opportunities for women everywhere. The Gender Focal Point sent daily messages to all KSC/SPO/Defence colleagues in the

days leading up to the International Women's Day, with interesting quotes and articles. The emails included names and biographies of remarkable women working in the field of law, as well as suggestions for movies directed by women. Staff members of the KSC and the SPO and the Defence teams gathered to celebrate the women working at the institutions, as the President, the Registrar, the Specialist Prosecutor, a member of a Defence team and the Gender Focal Point spoke in honour of International Women's Day.



Symbolic wristbands were designed in coordination with the Public Information and Communication Unit, and distributed during International Women's Day

In March 2025, the KSC-SPO adopted an amended administrative framework that regulates the downsizing of the KSC-SPO personnel as the KSC reaches its various judicial milestones. The adoption of the new administrative framework followed a thorough review of downsizing procedures applied in other organisations. During the review process, the Gender Focal Point provided comments and a gender-informed perspective to the amendments of the Staff Rules and to two new internal regulations.

In May 2025, the Gender Focal Point and senior staff of the KSC and SPO participated in an online information session with Lara Owen on the effects of menopause and the possibilities of arranging workplace accommodations. The information session, held with personnel from the KSC and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, was aimed at providing information and starting a conversation with managers and supervisors, as well as with male colleagues, and providing them with the tools to support women colleagues experiencing symptoms.

On 1 December 2025, the Registrar organised an event with the support of the Gender Focal Point. The event consisted of a discussion with KSC and SPO members on their careers in security operations and law enforcement. Staff members of Europol and Eurojust joined the discussion and presented the work of their respective organisations, as well as career paths within those institutions. The three Principals joined the event and delivered remarks on the crucial role played by women in law enforcement and the career paths they can take to join these efforts.



President and Registrar at IWD in 2025

OMBUDSPERSON

Ombudsperson of the KSC

The Ombudsperson of the KSC acts independently to monitor, defend and protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of persons interacting with the KSC and the SPO. The establishment of the Office of the Ombudsperson within the structure of the KSC and the SPO is distinctive in that it provides an additional layer of human rights protection for any individual(s) interfacing with the KSC and the SPO.

The KSC Ombudsperson, Mr Pietro Spera, an Italian Judge, was appointed in May 2018. The KSC Ombudsperson's mandate and official functions are detailed in Amendment No. 24 to the Kosovo Constitution, in the Law on Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office and in the Rules of Procedure and Evidence of the KSC, including the Rules of Procedure for the Specialist Chamber of the Constitutional Court.

In 2025, one complaint was lodged with the Ombudsperson's Office. The complaint has been finalised and there are no outstanding complaints before the Ombudsperson.

The complaint received was rejected by the Ombudsperson on the basis that the complainant had not argued or demonstrated that either the KSC or the SPO were involved in any capacity with the matter complained of. The complainant was notified of the outcome of their complaint and was provided with the full reasoning of the Ombudsperson's decision.

In 2025, the Ombudsperson published a summary on the KSC website of the complaint he received. A summary of all 37 complaints received by the Ombudsperson is available on the KSC website as well as the outcome of each. As of the end of 2025, the Ombudsperson has published a summary of eight complaints received that led to a Report. The Report issued in each of these complaints is also available on the website. In addition, the Ombudsperson has published a summary of five complaints received which were withdrawn by the complainant, a summary of 22 complaints received which were rejected by the Ombudsperson and a summary of two complaints received which were resolved through mediation or reconciliation.



Ombudsperson Pietro Spera

As part of his monitoring function, the Ombudsperson continued constructive engagement with the KSC and the SPO throughout the year with the aim of ensuring strict compliance with the highest human rights standards. In addition, the Ombudsperson continued his engagement with the Registry and the Detention Management Unit in respect of the KSC Detention Facilities. The Ombudsperson engaged directly with the President, the Registrar and the Specialist Prosecutor on several occasions during the year.

Pursuant to his statutory functions as set out in Rule 29(2)(b) of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, the Ombudsperson carried out three in-person inspections of the KSC Detention Facilities during 2025, to assess the standards and conditions of detention. The inspections were carried out in January, June and October 2025.

At the commencement of each inspection, the detainees were informed of the Ombudsperson's visit and invited to meet with him individually and in private.

Following each of the three inspections, the Ombudsperson was satisfied that the conditions of detention complied with international human rights law and adhered to internationally recognized standards for the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty. In making this assessment, particular regard was given to the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (UN Doc. A/Res/70/175) (the "Mandela Rules") and the European Prison Rules (Rec (2006)2).

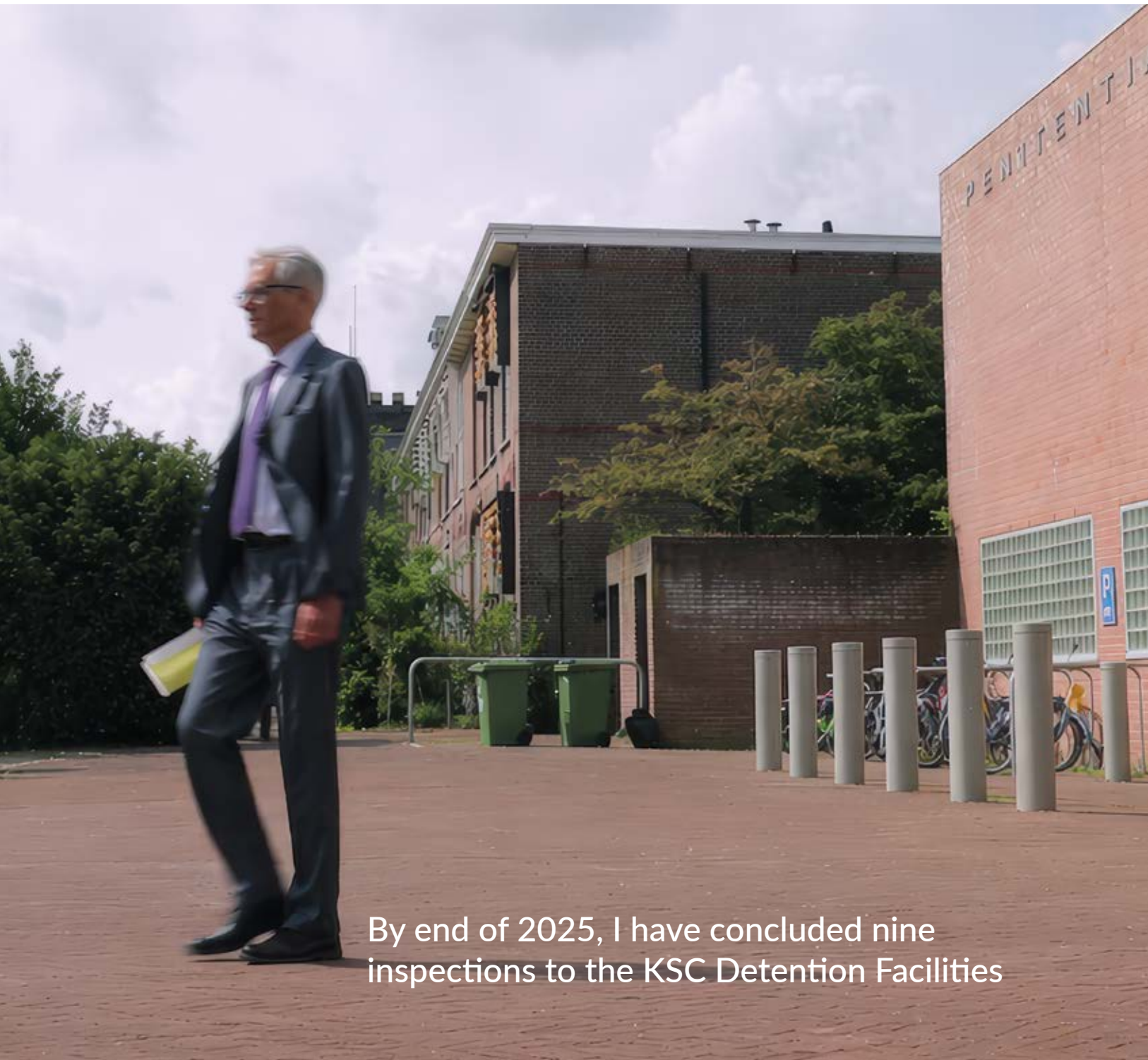
In addition, during the reporting period, the Ombudsperson wrote to each detainee, reiterating that they may contact him at any time regarding matters related to their conditions of detention.

The Ombudsperson's Office continued to engage in its Outreach programme throughout 2025. With the assistance of the Public Information and Communication Unit of the Registry, the Ombudsperson's Office visited Kosovo on a number of occasions and engaged in a wide variety of outreach activities with civil society representatives, youth organisations and academic institutions.

In 2025, the Ombudsperson's Office participated in five separate outreach missions. These were to Prishtinë/Priština, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Gjiilan/Gnjilane, Janjevë/Janjevo, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Leposaviq/Leposavić, North Mitrovica, South Mitrovica, Prizren; Shtërpçë/Štrpce, and Zvečan/Zvečan. During these missions the Office representative met with local and Albanian law students, with high school students, summer school participants, and also representatives of Serb and Croat communities.

In addition, the Ombudsperson published two informational videos online: 'The Ombudsperson' and 'KSC Ombudsperson – Monitoring Detention Conditions'. These videos aim to raise awareness about the Ombudsperson's mandate, his independence, and the procedures available for submitting complaints.

The Ombudsperson may enter and inspect, at any time and without notice, the Specialist Chambers' detention facilities to assess the conditions of detention.



By end of 2025, I have concluded nine inspections to the KSC Detention Facilities

SPECIALIST PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

Foreword

The Specialist Prosecutor's Office (SPO) has moved forward expeditiously over the past year, completing presentation of evidence as scheduled in the trial of former Kosovo President Hashim Thaçi and his three co-accused and litigating the defence case. As a result, we can expect a verdict in this, the only senior leadership war-crimes case being tried in the world, in the coming months. In the course of 2025, the SPO also completed negotiation of three historic guilty pleas in a case of offences against the administration of justice; it litigated one appeal; and it prepared for trial in another case of offences against the administration of justice, again involving former President Thaçi as well as four other accused.



Kimberly West, Specialist Prosecutor

Despite these milestones, the SPO must remain vigilant and continue to address the threats of obstruction of justice and witness intimidation that have plagued investigations involving senior KLA members over the past quarter century, in order to maintain the integrity of proceedings at the Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC). Indeed, an important reason that the KSC was located in The Hague was to help combat such threats. This work is ongoing, and the SPO will continue to investigate and to prosecute anyone and everyone involved, including those who intimidate or interfere with witnesses or provide financial or other support to such criminal offences. The confirmed indictment in the *Thaçi et al.* administration of justice trial, which is scheduled to begin in February 2026, presents details of ways in which the accused have sought to influence witness testimony.

The SPO's many achievements would not have been possible without the support and hard work of many countries, organisations and individuals. I wish to thank each of the countries of the EU, including our Host State, the Netherlands, and the Third Contributing States of Norway, Switzerland and the United States, for continuing to provide the necessary resources and support for the rule of law to make our work possible. I am also grateful to the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and its Head of Mission, Major-General Giovanni Pietro Barbano, for the logistical and operational support given to the SPO in Kosovo. And I wish to thank the staff of both the SPO and the KSC for their commitment and dedication.

Kimberly West
Specialist Prosecutor

*The Hague,
December 2025*

SPO Mandate and Investigation

The SPO was established on 1 September 2016 following adoption of the Law on Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office and a constitutional amendment by the Kosovo Assembly on 3 August 2015.

The SPO inherited the staff and the mandate of the Specialist Investigative Task Force (SITF), which had been created to investigate and, if warranted, prosecute individuals for crimes alleged in the January 2011 Council of Europe Report "Inhuman Treatment of People and Illicit Trafficking in Human Organs in Kosovo", compiled by Swiss Senator Dick Marty.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe had appointed Senator Marty to investigate allegations in relation to Kosovo contained in "Madame Prosecutor", the 2008 memoir of former ICTY Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte.

The SITF was an autonomous entity, deriving its jurisdiction and legal authority from the EU Council Decision establishing EULEX, based in Brussels.

Clint Williamson, a US prosecutor and former US Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues, headed the SITF Investigation. In July 2014, he advised that a court would have to be established to take the investigation forward.

In presenting his findings, Ambassador Williamson also made clear that the issue that concerned him most was the climate of witness intimidation in Kosovo, explaining that efforts to undermine the investigation by interfering with witnesses were ongoing.

The SPO is an independent institution, with its independence guaranteed by the Law creating it. As such, the SPO is obliged to act independently from both the KSC and from all other prosecutors in Kosovo. The Law also instructs the Specialist Prosecutor and SPO staff not to seek or receive instructions from any government or other source.

Within its jurisdiction, the KSC has primacy over all other courts in Kosovo. The KSC or the SPO may order the transfer of proceedings within its jurisdiction from any other prosecutor or any other court in the territory

of Kosovo to the KSC and the SPO at any stage of an investigation or proceedings.

The Specialist Prosecutor is authorised to question victims, witnesses and suspects, and record their statements; conduct on-site investigations, collect evidence, undertake expert examinations thereof and conduct such other investigative activities as necessary; seek the assistance of Third States and international organisations or other entities; and undertake investigative measures as laid out in the Rules of Procedure and Evidence.

David Schwendiman served as the first Specialist Prosecutor between September 2016 and March 2018, having previously been Lead Prosecutor of the SITF from June 2015. Jack Smith succeeded Mr Schwendiman as Specialist Prosecutor in May 2018 and served until November 2022. Kimberly West succeeded Mr Smith as Specialist Prosecutor in October 2023.



David Schwendiman,
Specialist Prosecutor 2016-2018

Mandate Implementation

The SPO maintained the pace and intensity of its activities throughout 2025. It concluded presentation of evidence in the trial of former Kosovo President Hashim Thaçi and his three co-accused and litigated the defence case; it completed negotiation of three guilty pleas in a case of offences against the administration of justice; it litigated the appeal of Pjetër Shala; and it prepared for trial another case of offences against the administration of justice involving former President Thaçi and four others.

Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi et al.

The SPO completed presentation of evidence in the trial of former Kosovo President Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Jakup Krasniqi and Rexhep Selimi on 15 April 2025, as scheduled.

In presenting its case, the SPO called testimony from 125 witnesses live in court; and testimony from a further 118 witnesses was presented in written form. In addition, some 3,000 SPO exhibits in multiple languages were admitted into evidence.

The SPO also litigated evidence presented by the Thaçi and the Krasniqi defence teams. Defence Counsel for Messrs Veseli and Selimi chose not to present a case. The presentation of defence evidence began on 15 September 2025, and both cases were concluded on 2 December 2025.

Closing statements in the *Thaçi et al.* trial were scheduled for February 2026.

Messrs Thaçi, Veseli, Krasniqi and Selimi are charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes, including the murders of more than 100 victims and the illegal detention and torture of hundreds of victims.

According to the indictment, the crimes were committed from at least March 1998 through September 1999 and took place in several locations across Kosovo as well as in Kukës and Cahan, in Albania. They were allegedly committed by members of the KLA against hundreds of civilians and persons not taking part in hostilities.



Senior Prosecutor Alan Tieger, Prosecutor James Pace and Legal Officer Vicki Andrys

Messrs Thaçi, Veseli, Krasniqi and Selimi are charged with six counts of crimes against humanity – persecution, imprisonment, other inhumane acts, torture, murder and enforced disappearance of persons – and four counts of war crimes – illegal or arbitrary arrest and detention, cruel treatment, torture and murder. Their trial began on 3 April 2023.

The indictment alleges that Messrs Thaçi, Veseli, Krasniqi and Selimi are individually criminally responsible, pursuant to various forms of criminal responsibility, for crimes which were committed in the context of a non-international armed conflict in Kosovo and were part of a widespread and systematic attack against persons suspected of being opposed to the KLA.

Pursuant to allegations that three of the accused were revealing confidential court information and, in the case of Mr Thaçi, attempting to influence the

testimony of upcoming witnesses, the SPO sought a series of measures restricting the contacts and communications of three of the accused – Mr Thaçi, Mr Veseli and Mr Selimi – in the Detention Facilities of the KSC. A number of these measures were granted by the Trial Panel on 1 December 2023 and remained in force throughout 2025.

The SPO arrested Messrs Thaçi, Veseli, Krasniqi and Selimi and the KSC transferred them to its Detention Facilities in The Hague on 4 and 5 November 2020.

The SPO filed its pre-trial brief on 17 December 2021 and an updated version on 24 February 2022. The SPO filed a further amended indictment on 30 September 2022.

The SPO made 325 filings in this case in 2025.

Specialist Prosecutor Pays Tribute to Witnesses in Thaçi et al. Trial



Specialist Prosecutor Kimberly West issued a statement paying tribute to witnesses after the SPO completed presentation of evidence in the *Thaçi et al.* trial. “The willingness of witnesses to testify has been extremely important and I recognise their courage in giving evidence in court,” the Specialist Prosecutor said.

The Specialist Prosecutor also expressed gratitude to all who have made it possible for the SPO to present its case. “Crimes like murder and torture must always be confronted,” Ms West continued. “It is essential for Kosovo that the rule of law and the judicial process in this court are respected, so that the integrity and fairness of the proceedings are maintained, and the truth can be established.”

Prosecutor v. Sabit Januzi, Ismet Bahtijari and Haxhi Shala

The SPO negotiated separate plea agreements with Sabit Januzi, Ismet Bahtijari and Haxhi Shala, whereby all three accused pleaded guilty to having engaged in witness intimidation and obstruction.

Messrs Januzi and Shala pleaded guilty in court on 18 December 2024; Mr Bahtijari pleaded guilty in court on 19 December 2024. In pleading guilty, Messrs Shala, Januzi and Bahtijari admitted that they were part of a group which sought to induce a witness to refrain from giving evidence before the KSC through the promise of a benefit.

These were the first guilty pleas at the KSC and represent the first occasion that individuals voluntarily admitted to attempting to persuade a witness not to testify in a Kosovo war-crimes case.

On 4 February 2025, the Trial Panel approved the plea agreements and sentenced Mr Shala to three years in prison and Messrs Januzi and Bahtijari to two years each.

The accused had been charged with intimidation during criminal proceedings and obstructing official persons in performing official duties.

The SPO arrested Mr Januzi and Mr Bahtijari in Kosovo on 5 October 2023. They were transferred to the KSC Detention Facilities on 6 October 2023.

The SPO arrested Mr Shala in Kosovo on 11 December 2023. He was transferred to the KSC Detention Facilities on 12 December 2023.

The SPO filed a request to join the cases against Mr Januzi and Mr Bahtijari with the case against Mr Shala on 13 December 2023, which the Pre-Trial Judge granted on 8 February 2024.

The SPO filed its pre-trial brief on 16 February 2024. All three Defence teams filed the latest versions of their pre-trial briefs on 2 September 2024. The trial had been scheduled to begin on 14 November 2024.

The SPO made 33 filings in this case in 2025.



Prosecutor Tazneen Shahabuddin, Deputy Specialist Prosecutor Ward Ferdinandusse and Associate Prosecutor John Devaney



In response to the verdict in the *Januzi et al.* case, Specialist Prosecutor Kimberly West issued a statement hailing the plea agreements as "historic" and "critical to protecting the integrity of proceedings". "The plea agreements are historic in that they represent the first occasion on which accused at the KSC have voluntarily admitted their guilt," the Specialist Prosecutor said. "This development is critical to protecting the integrity of proceedings at the KSC, as well as a step forward for the administration of justice in Kosovo."

Ms West also made clear that the SPO was committed to ensuring that justice can take its course, based on the facts and the law, explaining that: "The SPO has investigated crimes against the administration of justice to ensure that witnesses are able to testify in court about the crimes they witnessed or experienced without fear of intimidation or retaliation. These investigations have been fundamental to the progress of all other prosecutions and will continue to be central to the work of the SPO."

Prosecutor v. Pjetër Shala

The SPO completed litigation in relation to the appeal of Pjetër Shala, who had been found guilty in a 16 July 2024 first-instance judgment of three counts of war crimes – arbitrary detention; torture; and murder – and sentenced to 18 years in prison.

On 14 July 2025, the Appeals Panel affirmed convictions on all counts, emphasised the grave nature of the crimes and modified Mr Shala's sentence to 13 years in prison.

Mr Shala's crimes were committed between approximately 17 May 1999 and 5 June 1999 against persons detained at the Metal Factory in Kukës, Albania.

In its judgment, the Trial Panel ruled that at least 18 persons were held in inhuman and degrading conditions and subjected to psychological and physical abuse, and one victim was murdered.

Among the evidence admitted during the trial were statements in which Mr Shala admitted to his presence in the Kukës Metal Factory in the indictment period and the mistreatment of detainees.

The SPO opened its case against Mr Shala on 21 February 2023 and closed its case on 6 July 2023, by which time ten witnesses had testified in court. The Defence case commenced on 20 September 2023.

Mr Shala was arrested on 16 March 2021 in Belgium and transferred to the Detention Facilities of the KSC on 15 April 2021. His initial appearance took place on 19 April 2021. The SPO filed its pre-trial brief on 28 January 2022 and a public redacted version on 14 April 2023.

The SPO made nine filings in this case 2025.

Prosecutor v. Thaçi et al. (Administration of Justice)

The SPO prepared for trial another case of offences against the administration of justice involving former President Thaçi and four others. The trial was scheduled to begin in February 2026.

The SPO charged former Kosovo President Hashim Thaçi with offences against the administration of justice on 5 December 2024, together with four other persons: Bashkim Smakaj, Isni Kilaj, Fadil Fazliu and Hajredin Kuçi. The indictment had been confirmed by a Pre-Trial Judge of the KSC on 29 November 2024.

Mr Thaçi was served with an arrest warrant in the KSC's Detention Facilities and has been charged with three counts of obstruction of official persons in performing official duties, four counts of violating secrecy of proceedings and four counts of contempt of court. He made an initial public appearance on 8 December 2024.

The SPO arrested Messrs Smakaj, Kilaj and Fazliu in Kosovo, pursuant to the confirmed indictment and separate arrest warrants issued by the Pre-Trial Judge. They were transferred to the KSC Detention Facilities on 6 December 2024.

Messrs Smakaj, Kilaj and Fazliu have each been charged with one count of obstruction of official persons in performing official duties and one count of contempt of court. Messrs Smakaj and Fazliu made their initial public appearances on 8 December 2024. Mr Kilaj made his initial public appearance on 9 December 2024. Mr Kilaj was released on bail on 10 December 2025.

The SPO served Mr Kuçi with the confirmed indictment in Kosovo and summonsed him to appear before the Pre-Trial Judge at the KSC. Mr Kuçi has been charged with two counts of contempt of court and made his initial public appearance on 9 December 2024.

The SPO made 237 filings in this case in 2025.

Specialist Prosecutor's Response to Shala Appeal Verdict



In the wake of the judgment in the appeal of Pjetër Shala, Specialist Prosecutor Kimberly West issued a statement welcoming the verdict, which, she said, “reinforces the rule of law and contributes to achieving accountability for serious crimes and justice for Mr Shala’s victims”.

The Appeals Panel affirmed convictions of all counts, emphasized the grave nature of the crimes and modified Mr Shala’s sentence to 13 years in prison.

Diplomatic Briefings



In the course of 2025, the SPO participated in a series of diplomatic briefings to update EU Member States and Third Contributing States on the SPO's work, challenges the SPO was facing and ways in which the international community could help the SPO expedite its work. Specialist Prosecutor Kimberly West addressed diplomats from both EU Member States and Third Contributing States in The Hague in December 2025, together with KSC President Ekaterina Trendafilova and Registrar Fidelma Donlon. Deputy Specialist Prosecutor Ward Ferdinandusse addressed EU Legal Advisers in The Hague in October 2025.

Further Investigative Work

The SPO maintained its obstruction-of-justice investigations throughout 2025 in order to maintain the integrity of proceedings at the KSC, with a view to prosecuting all who intimidate or interfere with witnesses or provide financial or other support to such criminal offences.



Specialist Prosecutor Kimberly West, Prosecutor Filippo De Minicis and Prosecutor Sarah Clanton

Obstruction of Justice

The SPO has been obliged to devote time and resources to combating attempts to obstruct justice and intimidate witnesses. This is because such investigations and prosecutions are fundamental to maintaining the integrity of proceedings at the KSC so that witnesses can speak openly about what they witnessed or experienced without fear of intimidation or retribution.

The SPO's commitment to countering obstruction of justice and witness intimidation is in part the result of the experience of earlier attempts to try serious crimes involving senior members of the KLA at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and EULEX.

In the *Haradinaj et al.* Trial Judgement at the ICTY, for example, the Trial Chamber noted that: "Throughout the trial, the Trial Chamber encountered significant difficulties in securing the testimony of a large number of witnesses. Many witnesses cited fear as a prominent reason for not wishing to appear before the Trial Chamber to give evidence. The Trial Chamber gained a strong impression that the trial was being held in an atmosphere where witnesses felt unsafe."

In her 2009 memoir, "Madame Prosecutor", former ICTY Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte wrote: "Witnesses were so scared and intimidated that they refused to speak even of the presence of KLA in certain zones, let alone speak about war crimes."

Witness intimidation was a key consideration for the creation of the Special Investigative Task Force (SITF) in 2011 to investigate the allegations of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe's Report "Inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo". It also was a key consideration for the relocation of the KSC to The Hague.

When Lead Prosecutor Clint Williamson reported the SITF's findings in July 2014, he spoke of "active efforts to undermine" the investigation and concluded that: "As long as a few powerful people continue to thwart investigations into their own criminality, the people of Kosovo as a whole pay the price as this leaves a dark

cloud over the country. Those who engage in violence or the threat of violence against witnesses or those in political positions or the media who attack witnesses for daring to speak out are not the ones defending Kosovo. They are the people betraying Kosovo's future."

The SPO has investigated and prosecuted three instances of obstruction of justice: the *Gucati and Haradinaj*, *Januzi et al.*, and *Thaçi et al.* (Administration of Justice) cases.

Hysni Gucati and Nasim Haradinaj were convicted in May 2022 of obstruction of justice, intimidation of witnesses and violating the secrecy of proceedings, and sentenced to four-and-a-half-years' imprisonment, reduced on appeal to four years and three months.

Sabit Januzi, Ismet Bahtijari and Haxhi Shala pleaded guilty to having engaged in witness intimidation and obstruction. Mr Shala was sentenced to three years in prison and Messrs Januzi and Bahtijari were sentenced to two years each in February 2025.

The *Thaçi et al.* (Administration of Justice) trial, which involves five accused, is scheduled to open in February 2026.



Carla Del Ponte, ICTY Chief Prosecutor 1999-2007

Senior Prosecution Staff



Kimberly West | Specialist Prosecutor

The SPO is led by a team of senior prosecutors, all of whom have experience in both their domestic jurisdictions and international courts and tribunals.

The Specialist Prosecutor is [Kimberly West](#), a former US federal prosecutor with extensive experience in both domestic and international criminal investigations.

Ms West joined the SPO in October 2023 from the Ashcroft Law Firm in Boston, Massachusetts, where she had been a Partner since 2019 focusing primarily on white-collar defence. Prior to joining the Ashcroft Law Firm, Ms West worked as a prosecutor for more than two decades in local, state, federal and international roles.

Ms West was the Chief of the Criminal Bureau in the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office between 2015 and 2019. In that capacity, she supervised a team of more than 120 professionals responsible for investigating and prosecuting a wide range of financial fraud, public corruption, narcotics, gaming and human trafficking offenses; defending convictions on appeal; and assisting victims and witnesses.

Ms West joined the Attorney General's Office from the US Attorney's Office, District of Massachusetts, where she served as an Assistant US Attorney in the Health Care Fraud Unit for two years and in National Security Unit for six years. Ms West joined the National Security Unit after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

For five years, between 2008 and 2013, Ms West served as a prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague, where she was a member of the team that prosecuted Radovan Karadžić for his role in the Srebrenica genocide. She was also on the *Prlić et al.* prosecution team focusing on the crimes committed in Mostar and the destruction of the Old Bridge.

Ms West has a Juris Doctor degree from Suffolk University Law School, Massachusetts, and was admitted to the bar in Massachusetts. She also has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Boston College, Massachusetts.



Ward Ferdinandusse
Deputy Specialist Prosecutor

The Deputy Specialist Prosecutor is **Ward Ferdinandusse**, who joined the SPO as Head of Investigations in 2020. A Dutch national, Mr Ferdinandusse has both a law degree and a doctorate in the application of international criminal law in national courts from the University of Amsterdam. He has published extensively on issues of national and international criminal law. He also taught International and European Criminal Law at the University of Groningen, focusing on international cooperation in criminal matters.

As a prosecutor at the National Public Prosecutor's Office in Rotterdam, Mr Ferdinandusse worked on criminal cases, extradition proceedings and investigations into international crimes such as genocide, war crimes, torture, piracy and terrorism. He joined the SPO from the Flight MH17 trial where he worked as a lead prosecutor.



Joshua Hafetz
Head of Investigations

Joshua Hafetz is the SPO's Head of Investigations. He is a US national who holds a law degree from Yale Law School. Prior to joining the SPO, Mr Hafetz served for a decade as a federal prosecutor in the US Attorney's Offices in Newark, New Jersey, and Brooklyn, New York, focusing on violent crime and counterterrorism cases.

Earlier in his career, Mr Hafetz worked in private practice for a leading law firm in New York City after clerking for a US District Court judge in the Southern District of New York. Prior to obtaining his law degree, Mr Hafetz served four years as an investigator for New York City.





Alan Tieger
Senior Prosecutor

The SPO has two Senior Prosecutors, Alan Tieger and Nathan Quick.

Alan Tieger is a US national with extensive experience both from the US and the ICTY. Mr Tieger was involved in both the ICTY's first trial, that of Duško Tadić, and its final trial, that of Ratko Mladić. He also served as senior prosecutor in the trials of Ante Gotovina, Radovan Karadžić, Momčilo Krajišnik, Darko Mrđa and Biljana Plavšić.

Mr Tieger served as a federal prosecutor in the Civil Rights Division Criminal Section of the US Department of Justice from 1987 to 1994, prosecuting cases of racial violence and police brutality nationwide, including the Rodney King case.

He has a BA degree from the University of California at Los Angeles and a Juris Doctor degree from Santa Clara University.



Nathan Quick
Senior Prosecutor

Nathan Quick is a US national with experience at many international and hybrid tribunals, as well as in private practice in the United States, and has worked for the SPO since 2018. Prior to joining the SPO, Mr Quick worked at the UN Mechanism for the International Criminal Tribunals in The Hague, the International Criminal Court in The Hague, the UN Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague.

Mr Quick has a Juris Doctor degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Law in Cleveland, Ohio. He was admitted to the bar in Illinois.

Staffing

The SPO staff is comprised of prosecutors, legal advisers, security professionals, investigators, analysts, witness-security specialists and support staff. At the end of 2025, the SPO comprised 75 staff, with 24 different nationalities represented from both EU Member States and Third Contributing Countries. Of the 75 staff, 41 were male and 34 were female.



Prosecution Teams

Pjetër Shala Appeal Team

The team in the appeal of Pjetër Shala comprised Filippo De Minicis and Sarah Clanton. Mr De Minicis is an Italian Prosecutor who previously worked at the ICTY, the Office of the Co-Investigating Judges at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, and the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for

Human Rights in South Korea. Ms Clanton is a US Prosecutor who previously worked for the ICTY, the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia and in private practice for a leading global law firm.



Filippo De Minicis
Prosecutor



Sarah Clanton
Prosecutor

Januzi, Bahtijari and Haxhi Shala Team

The prosecution team in the case against Sabit Januzi, Ismet Bahtijari and Haxhi Shala comprised Joshua Hafetz, Tazneen Shahabuddin and John Devaney. Mr Hafetz is the SPO's Head of Investigations and previously served as a federal prosecutor in the United States focusing on violent crime and counterterrorism cases. Ms Shahabuddin is a US Prosecutor, educated

in the United States and the United Kingdom, who previously worked as a federal criminal prosecutor in the United States. Mr Devaney is a US Associate Prosecutor, educated in the United States and the Netherlands, who previously worked for the Office of the Prosecutor at the ICC, and in criminal law in the United States.



Joshua Hafetz
Head of Investigations



Tazneen Shahabuddin
Prosecutor



John Devaney
Associate Prosecutor

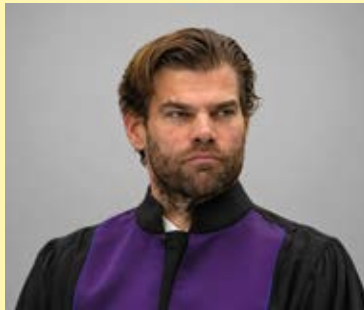
Thaçi et al. Administration of Justice Team

The prosecution team in the *Thaçi et al.* administration of justice case comprised Joshua Hafetz, Dirk-Jan Laman, Matthew Halling, Brent Hicks, Claire O'Connell and Earl Sullivan. Mr Hafetz is the SPO's Head of Investigations and previously served as a federal prosecutor in the United States focusing on violent crime and counterterrorism cases. Mr Laman is a Dutch Prosecutor. Before joining the SPO, he worked for a decade as a prosecutor in the Netherlands, serving most recently as an anti-corruption prosecutor in Curaçao and Sint Maarten, and prior to that as a prosecutor at the National Prosecutor's Office in Rotterdam, focusing on digital investigations and high-tech crime. Mr Halling is a US Prosecutor admitted to the bar in California, who joined the SPO in 2020 from the ICC, where he had been employed since 2011. Mr Hicks is a US Associate Prosecutor with experience at many international and hybrid tribunals, as well in

private practice in the United States. Mr Hicks has worked in all functional areas of international criminal institutions – Prosecution, Defence, Chambers and Registry – including at the ICTY, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, the International Criminal Court, and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. Ms O'Connell is a US Associate Prosecutor educated in the United States and the Netherlands, who previously worked at the United Nations in atrocity-crime investigations, in Chambers at the International Court of Justice, and in private practice focusing on cross-border criminal investigations, litigation, and international arbitration. Mr Sullivan is an Associate Legal Officer who has practised international criminal law, public sector litigation and legal consulting, and served at multiple international tribunals and organisations, focusing most recently on digital investigations.



Joshua Hafetz
Head of Investigations



Dirk-Jan Laman
Prosecutor



Matthew Halling
Prosecutor



Brent Hicks
Associate Prosecutor



Claire O'Connell
Associate Prosecutor



Earl Sullivan
Associate Legal Officer





KOSOVO SPECIALIST CHAMBERS &
SPECIALIST PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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