The Specialist Prosecutor’s Office (SPO) is an internationalised and relocated prosecutor’s office in The Hague created to investigate and, if warranted, prosecute individuals for crimes alleged in the 2011 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Report “Inhuman Treatment of People and Illicit Trafficking in Human Organs in Kosovo”.

MANDATE

The SPO mandate is set out in the Law on the Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor’s Office adopted by the Kosovo Assembly in August 2015. This legislation grants the SPO authority to investigate and prosecute citizens of Kosovo and/or the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or individuals who committed crimes against citizens of Kosovo and/or the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for crimes commenced or committed in Kosovo in relation to conduct identified in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Report during the three-year period from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2000.

SPECIALIST PROSECUTOR

The Specialist Prosecutor is Jack Smith, a US prosecutor with experience in both high-level political investigations and international criminal investigations, who took up his post in September 2018.

Mr Smith succeeded David Schwendiman, another US prosecutor, who became the first Specialist Prosecutor on 1 September 2016 and was previously, from May 2015, Lead Prosecutor of the Special Investigative Task Force (SITF).

The original SITF Lead Prosecutor, who served between October 2011 and August 2014 was Clint Williamson, a former US Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues.

CONTACT

For further information, please contact the Specialist Prosecutor’s Office by email at: spokespersonSPO@scp-ks.org or by mail at:

Raamweg 47, 2596 HN
The Hague, The Netherlands
The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe appointed Senator Dick Marty to investigate allegations contained in the memoir of former International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte, Madame Prosecutor, which was published in April 2008.

In the wake of publication of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Report, the European Union formed the Special Investigative Task Force to investigate the allegations contained in it. The Law on the Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor’s Office, adopted by the Kosovo Assembly in August 2015, provided a mechanism for continuing the investigation and prosecuting charges deriving from it. The SPO is part of the judicial system of Kosovo, but based in the Netherlands on the basis of a Host State Agreement between the Netherlands and Kosovo of 15 February 2016. It is a temporary institution with a specific mandate and jurisdiction, namely over certain crimes against humanity, war crimes and other crimes under Kosovo law which allegedly occurred between 1 January 1998 and 31 December 2000.

The SPO was established on 1 September 2016, inheriting the staff and mandate of the Special Investigative Task Force, which began to investigate the allegations in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Report in October 2011 as an autonomous entity, deriving its jurisdiction and legal authority from the European Union Council Decision establishing EULEX, the EU Rule-of-Law Mission in Kosovo.

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.

To protect the integrity of the investigation, the confidentiality of witness testimony and ongoing collection of evidence, the SPO does not disclose specific information on the status of the investigation, evidence gathered in the course of the investigation or the timing of possible charges.

The Specialist Chambers has primacy over all other courts in Kosovo. The Specialist Chambers 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 Specialist Chambers and the SPO at any stage of an investigation or proceedings. The Specialist Chambers and the SPO can order a Kosovo court to hand over any ongoing cases or investigations that are within the jurisdiction and mandate of the Specialist Chambers or SPO.

All Kosovo courts and prosecutors must notify the Specialist Chambers and the SPO without delay should they be aware of a case of criminal proceedings within the jurisdiction of the Specialist Chambers.

SPO staff – prosecutors, investigators, analysts, security professionals, witness-protection specialists and support workers – are internationals with citizenship of either an EU member state or one of the five non-EU contributing countries: Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States.

All documents and further information accessible at: www.scp-ks.org