In: KSC-BC-2020-06

Specialist Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep

Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi

Before: Trial Panel II

Judge Charles L. Smith III, Presiding

Judge Christoph Barthe Judge Guénaël Mettraux

Judge Fergal Gaynor, Reserve Judge

Registrar: Dr. Fidelma Donlon

Filing Participant: Specialist Counsel for Hashim Thaçi

Specialist Counsel for Kadri Veseli Specialist Counsel for Rexhep Selimi Specialist Counsel for Jakup Krasniqi

Date: 8 April 2024

Language: English

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Joint Defence Consolidated Response to F02195 and F02196 with confidential

Annexes 1-12

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Defence for Messrs. Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi, and Jakup

Krasniqi ("Defence") hereby files its consolidated response to the Prosecution

Submission of List of Witnesses for 22 April to 18 July 2024¹ and the Prosecution

Motion for Admission of Evidence of Witnesses W01978, W02540, W02677, W02714,

W02951, W03865, W03881, W04371, W04710, and W04850 pursuant to Rule 154 and

Related Requests.²

2. The present filing responds to the Rule 154 Motion with respect to the following

witnesses: W01978, W02540, W02677, W02714, W02951, W03865, W03881, W04371,

W04710, and W04850. The Annexes contain objections to documents the SPO intends

to use with these witnesses, as well as with W03877 and W04744, and Defence

estimates for cross-examination.³

3. This filing is submitted confidentially because it responds to documents with the

same classification.4

II. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

4. On 22 March 2024, the Specialist Prosecutor's Office filed the List of Witnesses

for the period of 22 April to 18 July 2024 and the Motion.

¹ KSC-BC-2020-06, F02195, Specialist Prosecutor, *Prosecution Submission of List of Witnesses for 22 April to 18 July 2024* ("List of Witnesses"), 22 March 2024, public, with Annexes 1-2, confidential.

² KSC-BC-2020-06, F02196, Specialist Prosecutor, *Prosecution Motion for Admission of Evidence of Witnesses W01978, W02540, W02677, W02714, W02951, W03865, W03881, W04371, W04710, and W04850 pursuant to Rule 154 and Related Requests* ("Motion"), 22 March 2024, confidential, with Annexes 1-10, confidential.

³ See infra, paras 6-7.

⁴ Rule 82(4) of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence on the Kosovo Specialist Chambers ("Rules").

KSC-BC-2020-06 1 8 April 2024

KSC-BC-2020-06/F02229/RED/3 of 15

PUBLIC
Date original: 08/04/2024 19:26:00
Date public redacted version: 10/04/2024 16:41:00

Date public redacted version. 10/04/2024 10.4.

5. On 27 March 2024, the SPO filed a Further Rule 154 Motion.⁵

6. On 28 March 2024, the Defence gave notice to the SPO via inter partes

correspondence of its intention to request an extension of time until 8 April 2024 to

respond to the first 10 witnesses in the List of Witnesses and to the Motion; and until

26 April to respond to the remaining witnesses and the Further Rule 154 Motion.⁶ The

SPO responded that it did not oppose the Defence request.⁷ Counsel for Rexhep Selimi,

on behalf of the Defence, made an oral application for an extension of time before the

Panel.8

7. On the same day, the Panel granted the Defence request. The Panel extended

the limit to respond, by 8 April, to the first 10 witnesses in the List of Witnesses and

to the Motion; and by 29 April, 10 to the remaining witnesses in the List of Witnesses,

and to the Further Rule 154 Motion. The Defence notes, however, that while W02540

and W03881 are not included among the first 10 witnesses, both witnesses are part of

the Motion. For the sake of convenience, the Defence's time estimates and comments

to the documents of both witnesses are submitted with the present response.¹¹

III. SUBMISSIONS

8. At the outset, the Defence notes that the SPO seeks admission of material

pursuant to Rule 154 in relation to a number of witness for which the additional time

⁵ KSC-BC-2020-06, F02204, Specialist Prosecutor, *Prosecution Motion for Admission of Evidence of Witnesses W01511, W04260, W04305, W04410, W04744, W04752, and W04764 pursuant to Rule 154* ("Further Rule 154 Motion"), 27 March 2024, confidential, with Annexes 1-8, confidential.

KSC-BC-2020-06 2 8 April 2024

⁶ Thaçi Defence e-mails from 28 March 2024 at 11:39 and 12:19.

⁷ SPO e-mail from 28 March 2024 at 12:44.

⁸ KSC-BC-2020-06, Transcript of Hearing, 28 March 2024, confidential, p. 14092, lines 7-25.

⁹ KSC-BC-2020-06, F02209, Trial Panel II, Decision on Selimi Defence Request for Extension of Time to Respond to F02195, F02196, and F02204 ("Trial Panel Decision"), 28 March 2024, public, paras 4-5.

¹⁰ 26 April 2024 is an official holiday. See Trial Panel Decision, para. 2.

¹¹ See Annexes 2, 7.

Date public redacted version: 10/04/2024 16:41:00

required for direct examination appears to be excessively long. 12 As submitted below,

the practice of admitting witness' material pursuant to Rule 154 where the time-saving

benefit is minimal or non-existing, undermines the very purpose of Rule 154, which is

to save time and resources.¹³ It further contributes to bloating the case record, due to

the inevitable repetition in court of the same evidence that is admitted pursuant to

Rule 154. In this regard, and echoing the SPO's concerns about "bloating the record

even more",14 the Defence invites the SPO to reconsider calling witnesses viva voce

when the time required for direct examination would not significantly increase the

estimated time for additional examination. Alternatively, the SPO should be ordered

to reduce the time for direct examination of these witnesses.

A. W01978

9. The Defence does not object to the admission of W01978's proposed evidence via

Rule 154. However, the current estimate of two hours for its in-court examination of

the witness appears excessive.¹⁵ The Defence observes that the SPO seeks to introduce

three separate statements regarding his time in detention - including a 150-page

verbatim SPO transcript - and fails to explain why it seeks two hours of court time to

adduce further evidence from the witness. Given the volume of material tendered via

Rule 154, the SPO should be ordered to further reduce its estimated time for direct

examination.

10. The Defence does not oppose the addition of SITF00014555-00014563 to the list

of exhibits.16

¹² See infra, paras 9, 13, 19, 22-24, 30.

¹³ KSC-BC-2020-06, F01380, Trial Panel II, *Decision on Admission of Evidence of First Twelve SPO Witnesses Pursuant to Rule 154* ("First Rule 154 Decision"), 16 March 2023, confidential, para. 20.

¹⁴ KSC-BC-2020-06, Transcript of Hearing, 26 March 2024, confidential, p. 13713, line 20.

¹⁵ Motion, para. 10.

¹⁶ *Idem*, paras 11-12.

KSC-BC-2020-06 3 8 April 2024

KSC-BC-2020-06/F02229/RED/5 of 15

PUBLIC
Date original: 08/04/2024 19:26:00
Date public redacted version: 10/04/2024 16:41:00

B. W02540

11. W02450 is intended to provide evidence, *inter alia*, on the alleged occupation by

the KLA of the MUP building in Prizren, [REDACTED] according to W02450's

evidence and [REDACTED].17

12. The Defence does not object to the W02540 proposed statements provided by the

witness, recognising that they meet the basic indicia for authenticity. Further, the

Defence does not oppose the admission of the material tendered for admission as

associated exhibits.18

13. Nevertheless, W02540 proposed statements contain 137 pages of evidence, the

associated exhibits tendered by the SPO into admission via Rule 154 contain a 6

minute length video and around 20 pages of exhibits in total which is incompatible

with the SPO seeking to elicit two hours of evidence during its examination-in-chief.

Such a lengthy examination-in-chief in addition to the W02540's preparation session

where the SPO will also have an opportunity to clarify or explain certain aspects of

W02540's evidence would jeopardise time-saving purpose of Rule 154 admission.

14. However, the Defence objects to the SPO's request to amend the exhibit list to

include an official note of a recent contact with W02540 and three photographs.¹⁹ The

SPO provides that the official note "memorialises a conversation between the SPO and

W02540 on 30 January 2024 and describes and appends a photograph provided by

 17 Motion, paras 14-16; 069539-TR-ET Part 1 Revised 1 RED; 069539-TR-ET Parts 2-4 Revised 1; 069539-TR-AT Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR Part 1 Revised RED; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4 Revised; 069539-TR-AT Parts 2-4

TR Parts 2-4 Revised; [REDACTED]

¹⁸ [REDACTED]; 054010-03 (14:00:00:00-14:05:55:01); 5005597-5005597; 5005597-5005597-ET; SITF00031163-SITF0003167, pp. SITF00031164-SITF00031165; SITF00188892-00188901 RED2; SITF00188892-SITF00188901-ET RED2; SITF00188892-SITF00188901-AT RED2.

¹⁹ Motion, para. 21, including fn. 25 (19101-119105 RED; [REDACTED]).

KSC-BC-2020-06 4 8 April 2024

Date public redacted version: 10/04/2024 16:41:00

W02540, which was previously referred to by him in his SPO interview". 20 The SPO

interviewed W02540 on [REDACTED], since that time the SPO has had sufficient time

prior to the submission of its initial exhibit list on 17 December 2021²¹ and/or until the

beginning of the trial in April 2022. Therefore, the Defence considers such request to

amend the exhibit list late and objects to the addition of the photograph obtained from

W02540 and to the SPO's note of contact describing this photograph.²²

Similarly, the Defence objects to the SPO's request to amend the exhibit list with 15.

additional two photos provided by the witness to the ICTY on [REDACTED].²³ The

SPO has already been in a possession of these photographs; in addition, they were

previously disclosed under Rule 102(3) to all the Defence Teams apart from the Thaçi

Defence Team.²⁴ However, the two photographs have only been disclosed to the Thaçi

Defence following the Motion, which was submitted on 22 March 2024.²⁵

It is both untimely and prejudicial to the Defence to request amendment of the

exhibit list simultaneously with disclosing one of such items to the Thaçi Defence

Team only at this stage and right prior to W02450's testimony. The Defence objects to

such late amendment of the exhibit list and to the use of such items by the SPO with

W02540 during his testimony in court.²⁶

C. W02677

²⁰ *Idem*, para. 22, including fn. 26.

²¹ KSC-BC-2020-06, F00631/RED, Specialist Prosecutor, Public Redacted Version of 'Submission of Pre-Trial Brief, with Witness and Exhibit Lists', KSC-BC-2020-06/F00631, dated 17 December 2021, 21 December 2021, public, with Annexes 1-3, confidential.

²² 19101-119105 RED.

²³ [REDACTED].

²⁴ Motion, para. 23, including fn. 27.

²⁵ *Ibid*.

²⁶ Motion, paras 21-25.

5 KSC-BC-2020-06 8 April 2024

Date public redacted version: 10/04/2024 16:41:00

17. The Defence does not object to the admission, through Rule 154, of W02677's

SPO interview.²⁷

D. W02714

18. The SPO seeks admission of two interviews: an SITF interview taking place in

[REDACTED];²⁸ and an interview with the Serbian MUP in [REDACTED].²⁹ W02714

has no associated exhibits.

19. The Defence submits that there would be no time-saving benefit to admitting

W02714's proposed evidence in writing.³⁰ The SPO still intends to use around 1.5

hours of time for direct examination, focused on precisely the same topics covered in

W02714's prior statements.³¹ The SPO direct examination is thus likely to be repetitive

and the purpose of Rule 154 would be undermined.

20. The combined dossier for W02714 amounts to 40 pages in length and there are

no associated exhibits. W02714 is also quoted extensively in the SPO's Pre-Trial Brief,

as he is the sole SPO witness to speak to detentions in [REDACTED].³² For these

reasons, the Defence suggests that W02714 should provide his testimony viva voce.

E. W02951

²⁷ 076247-TR-ET Parts 1-2 RED; 076247-TR-AT Parts 1-2 RED; 076247-TR-ST Parts 1-2 RED.

²⁸ 025450-TR-ET Part 1 RED2; 025450-TR-ET Part 2; 025450-TR-AT Part 1 RED2; 025450-TR-AT Part 2; 025450-TR Part 1 RED; 025450-TR Part 2.

²⁹ 025447-025449-ET RED2; 025447-025449-AT RED2; 025443-025450 RED, pp. 5-7.

³⁰ First Rule 154 Decision, para. 20.

³¹ Motion, para. 38.

32 [REDACTED].

KSC-BC-2020-06 6 8 April 2024

PUBLIC
Date original: 08/04/2024 19:26:00
Date public redacted version: 10/04/2024 16:41:00

21. The SPO seeks admission of a four-part SPO interview with W02951 and one associated exhibit.³³ Whilst the Defence does not contest the *prima facie* authenticity and reliability of W02951's SPO interview,³⁴ it opposes the suitability of W02951's proposed evidence for Rule 154 admission.³⁵

22. Contrary to the SPO submissions,³⁶ the time-saving benefit of admitting W02951's proposed evidence in writing would be extremely limited.³⁷ The SPO anticipates approximately one hour of direct examination.³⁸ The SPO interview is 94 pages long, at times repetitive,³⁹ and parts of it have little to no relevance to the charges in the present case.⁴⁰ These 94 pages includes the introductory part of the interview as well, which is about 10% of the 94 pages.

23. Further, the exact topics that the SPO intends to cover in direct examination⁴¹ are addressed in detail in W02951's SPO interview, [REDACTED];⁴² his [REDACTED];⁴³ [REDACTED];⁴⁴ the [REDACTED];⁴⁵ and [REDACTED].⁴⁶ The SPO will have ample opportunity to highlight, clarify, or explain certain aspects of his evidence during the witness' preparation session.⁴⁷

³³ 041337-TR-AT Parts 1-4 Revised-ET RED; 041337-TR-AT Parts 1-4 Revised RED3; 041336-041336-ET; 041336-041336.

³⁴ Motion, para. 42.

³⁵ *Idem*, para. 44.

³⁶ *Ibid*.

³⁷ First Rule 154 Decision, para. 20.

³⁸ Motion, para. 44.

³⁹ E.g., 041337-TR-AT Part 1 Revised-ET RED, pp. 10-11; 041337-TR-AT Part 4 Revised-ET RED, pp. 7-8; 041337-TR-AT Part 2 Revised-ET RED, pp. 3-4; 041337-TR-AT Part 3 Revised-ET RED, p. 17; 041337-TR-AT Part 2 Revised-ET RED, p. 7; 041337-TR-AT Part 3 Revised-ET RED, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁰ See e.g., 041337-TR-AT Part 4 Revised-ET, pp. 13-15.

⁴¹ KSC-BC-2020-06, F02195/A01, Specialist Prosecutor, *Annex 1 to Prosecution Submission of List of Witnesses for 22 April to 18 July 2024*, 22 March 2024, confidential, p. 9.

^{42 041337-}TR-AT Part 4 Revised-ET RED.

⁴³ 041337-TR-AT Parts 1-3 Revised-ET RED.

⁴⁴ 041337-TR- AT Part 3 Revised-ET RED.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ 041337-TR- AT Part 3 Revised-ET RED; 041337-TR-AT Part 4 Revised-ET RED.

⁴⁷ Motion, para. 44.

KSC-BC-2020-06/F02229/RED/9 of 15

PUBLIC
Date original: 08/04/2024 19:26:00
Date public redacted version: 10/04/2024 16:41:00

24. An additional hour of direct examination will thus inevitably result in

questioning the witness on issues already contained in the Rule 154 statement,

defeating the primary purpose of Rule 154, which is to save time and resources.⁴⁸ In

any event, and given the nature and the scope of W02951's expected testimony,

hearing the entirety of the witness' testimony viva voce would not significantly affect

the time required for examination-in-chief and would further provide necessary

clarity for the evidentiary record.

25. The SPO seeks admission of a handwritten note discussed with W02951 during

the SPO interview.⁴⁹ The Defence opposes the admission of the handwritten note.

26. The document does not bear the sufficient indicia of authenticity and reliability

and has no probative value. First, the document has no indication of authorship. It is

not signed, W02951 is not the author of the document, he can only identify the person

who wrote it by [REDACTED], and is unable to provide any further details.⁵⁰ Second,

despite W02951's [REDACTED],51 the note is undated. Third, the note is mostly

illegible, with only a few words being partially visible. Fourth, whilst the document

appears to have references [REDACTED].52 As such, the document has minimal, if

any, probative value.

F. W03865

⁴⁸ First Rule 154 Decision, para. 32.

⁴⁹ Motion, para. 43.

⁵⁰ 041337-TR-AT Part 4 Revised-ET RED, p. 23.

⁵¹ 041337-TR-AT Part 3 Revised-ET RED, p. 6.

⁵² 041337-TR-AT Part 4 Revised-ET RED, p. 23.

KSC-BC-2020-06/F02229/RED/10 of 15

PUBLIC Date original: 08/04/2024 19:26:00 Date public redacted version: 10/04/2024 16:41:00

The Defence does not object to the admission, through Rule 154, of W03865's

UNMIK and SPO interviews.53

28. The Defence objects to the admission of [REDACTED], U000-6628-U000-6639-

ET, as associated exhibit and proposed exhibit. W03865 said he [REDACTED].54

Therefore he could not authenticate the document. Pursuant to an SPO email

[REDACTED]; therefore, there is no clear chain of custody for this document and its

author, its purpose and the circumstances/date of its elaboration are unknown, which

prevents its admission as exhibit through W03865.

29. The Defence further objects to the admission of [REDACTED], SPOE00322107-

00322152, as associated exhibit and proposed exhibit. W03865 [REDACTED].55 The

document is undated and the witness could not clarify to which period it referred.⁵⁶

Therefore he could not authenticate the document, which prevents its admission

through him.

G. W03881

The Defence does not object to the admission of W03881's proposed evidence via 30.

Rule 154.⁵⁷ However, the SPO interview consists of over 200 pages. Given its volume

and the limited relevance of this witness's evidence to the charges in the indictment,

the Defence suggests that the SPO be ordered to further reduce its estimated time for

direct examination, which currently stands at 'approximately 1.5 hours'.58

⁵³ SITF00032808-SITF00032820 RED, pp. SITF00032808-SITF00032810; SITF00032808-SITF00032820 RED, pp. SITF00032816-SITF00032820; 078562-TR-ET Parts 1-4 RED; 078562-TR-AT Parts 1-4 RED.

⁵⁴ 078562-TR-ET Part 2 RED, pp. 11-13.

⁵⁵ See 078562-TR-ET Part 2 RED, pp. 17-19.

⁵⁶ 078562-TR-ET Part 2 RED, pp. 17-19.

⁵⁷ 071136-TR-ET Parts 1, 3 Revised 1 RED; 071136-TR-ET Parts 2, 4-5 Revised 1; 071136-TR-AT Part 1 Revised RED; 071136-TR-AT Parts 2-5 Revised; 071136-TR Parts 1, 3 Revised RED; 071136-TR Parts 2,

4-5 Revised.

58 Motion, para. 58.

9 KSC-BC-2020-06 8 April 2024 KSC-BC-2020-06/F02229/RED/11 of 15

PUBLIC
Date original: 08/04/2024 19:26:00

Date public redacted version: 10/04/2024 16:41:00

31. The Defence does not object to the admission of the associated exhibits, with the

exception of W03881's [REDACTED], 071139-071313, which the SPO submits should

be admitted in its entirety.⁵⁹ The diary consists of 176 pages, many of which are not

relevant to the charges in the indictment. In light of the ever-present concern for the

size of the record in this case, the Defence submits it would be more appropriate to

admit only the excerpts of the diary discussed by W03881 during his SPO interview.

H. W04371

32. W04371 is intended to provide evidence on the alleged arrest, detention and

disappearance of [REDACTED].60 The Defence does not object to the statement

provided by the witness to the SPO on [REDACTED],⁶¹ recognising that it meets the

basic indicia for relevance and authenticity.

33. However, the Defence submits that the UNMIK statement [REDACTED]⁶² does

not meet the minimum requirements of authenticity to be admitted pursuant to

Rule 154. First, the document is unsigned; the only visible signature is that of

[REDACTED].63 Second, the interview was not conducted in person, but on the

phone.⁶⁴ How this phone call was conducted, and what safeguards, if any, were

employed to ensure the accuracy of the statement, remains unclear. The only

information in this regard recites that [REDACTED],65 which provides no clarity

whatsoever. Moreover, there is no indication that the statement was read back to the

witness; it follows that W04371 had no chance to review and, if needed, make

⁵⁹ *Idem*, para. 57.

60 Motion, para. 59.

⁶¹ 060207-TR-ET Parts 1-7 Revised RED2.

62 SITF00299810-SITF00299818 RED2.

63 *Idem*, p. SITF00299812.

64 *Idem*, p. SITF00299810.

65 Ibid.

KSC-BC-2020-06 10 8 April 2024

Date public redacted version: 10/04/2024 16:41:00

corrections to the statement. When asked about it in his SPO interview, the witness

vaguely remembered the phone call but was unable to elaborate on the circumstances

of this phone call.66

34. Third, while the document asserts that the phone call started at 11:20 and ended

at 12:10,67 it only records four questions and answers, which appears to suggest that

the record is incomplete. Fourth, while the document appears to contain a witness

warning, the boxes confirming that the witness understands his rights and wishes to

give up his right to silence and talk to the investigator, are left blank. The box requiring

the witness' signature to certify the understanding of his rights is also left blank.⁶⁸

When read together, all the above shortcomings demonstrate that W04371'as UNMIK

statements falls short of the minimum requirements for admission pursuant to

Rule 154.

35. The Defence does not object to the admission of the associated exhibits.⁶⁹

I. W04710

36. The Defence does not object to the admission, through Rule 154, of W04710's

SPO interview⁷⁰ and its associated exhibit 100829-100829-ET.

J. W04850

66 060207-TR-ET Part 1 Revised RED2, pp. 7-8.

⁶⁷ SITF00299810-SITF00299818 RED2, pp. SITF00299810, SITF00299812.

⁶⁸ SITF00299810-SITF00299818 RED2, p. SITF00299810.

⁶⁹ SITF00299805-SITF00299809-ET; SITF00299805-SITF00299809; 060178-060189 RED2, p. 060184; 060178-060189 RED2, p. 060185; 060178-060189 RED2, p. 060187; 060178-060189 RED2, pp. 060188-060189; SPOE00301664-SPOE00301673, pp. SPOE00301664-SPOE00301665; 045015-045016-AT RED2; 060200-060206; U008-2532-U008-2532-ET; 060178-060189 RED2, p. 060186; SPOE00208402-00208421; SPOE00208402-SPOE00208421-AT; U001-7995-U001-7995-ET; 083505-083505.

⁷⁰ 091696-TR-ET Parts 1-3 RED2; 091696-TR-AT Parts 1-3 RED2.

KSC-BC-2020-06/F02229/RED/13 of 15

PUBLIC
Date original: 08/04/2024 19:26:00
Date public redacted version: 10/04/2024 16:41:00

37. The Defence does not contest the *prima facie* authenticity and reliability of his

proposed statements.71

38. This notwithstanding, the Defence note and reiterate concerns expressed in the

Rule 153 Response.⁷² In particular, that W04850 does not possess any first-hand

knowledge about what happened to [REDACTED] after two soldiers allegedly took

him with them and that for the most part of his further evidence W04850 relies on the

information which he heard from [REDACTED] or from what the [REDACTED].⁷³ In

addition, W04850 further relies on the information regarding the detention of

[REDACTED] which he received from [REDACTED] whose name W04850 could not

remember and whose words W04850 considered [REDACTED].74 Thus, the Defence

invite the Panel to exercise necessary caution when assessing this witness's evidence

if admitted via Rule 154.

IV. CONCLUSION

39. For the reasons set out above, the Defence respectfully requests the Trial Panel

to take notice of the Defence objections, and to:

- DENY the admission of W02714 and W02951's evidence through Rule 154 and

ORDER the SPO to elicit their evidence viva voce;

- DENY the admission of one statement relating to W04371, namely,

SITF00299810-SITF00299818 RED2;

⁷¹ SPOE00089545- 00089570 RED and SPOE00092352- 00092379 RED, pp. SPOE00092355- 0092379 RED.

⁷² KSC-BC-2020-06, F02063, Defence Counsel, Joint Defence Response to Prosecution Motion for the Admission of the Evidence of Witnesses W04016, W04019, W04044, W04305, W04361, W04722, W04816, W04850, W04851, and W04852 pursuant to Rule 153 (F01994) ("Rule 153 Response"), 15 January 2024, confidential, para. 49.

⁷³ SPOE00089545-00089570 RED, pp. SPOE00089547-SPOE00089549.

⁷⁴ *Idem*, p. SPOE00089558-SPOE00089559.

KSC-BC-2020-06 12 8 April 2024

- DENY the admission of 041336-041336/041336-041336-ET; U000-6628-U000-6639/U000-6628-U000-6639-ET; SPOE00322107-00322152; and all pages of 071139-071313 as associated exhibits; and
- DENY the SPO request to add 119101-119105 RED; and [REDACTED] to the list of exhibits.

Word count: 3,581

Respectfully submitted on 8 April 2024

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