Procedural Matters (Private Session)

Page 12365

1	Thursday, 1 February 2024
2	[Open session]
3	[The accused entered the courtroom]
4	[The accused Krasniqi appeared via videolink]
5	Upon commencing at 9.00 a.m.
6	PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: Mr. Court Officer, you may call the
7	case.
8	THE COURT OFFICER: Good morning, Your Honours. This is the
9	file number KSC-BC-2020-06, The Specialist Prosecutor versus Hashim
10	Thaci, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi, and Jakup Krasniqi. Thank you,
11	Your Honours.
12	PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: I note that Mr. Krasniqi is appearing
13	via videolink today. The other accused are present in court.
14	Judge Barthe is also attending via videolink. We will still we
15	will take the same break at 10.00.
16	Before we continue to hear evidence of Prosecution
17	Witness W04325, the Panel will deal with some preliminary matters.
18	Mr. Court Officer, please bring us into private session.
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1 February 2024

Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

Procedural Matters (Private Session)

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

Procedural Matters (Private Session)

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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21	[Open session]
22	THE COURT OFFICER: Your Honours, we're in public session.
23	Thank you.
24	PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: We're adjourned for ten minutes.
25	Break taken at 10.03 a.m.

PUBLIC

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

Witness: W04325 (Resumed)(Private Session) Cross-examination by Mr. Misetic

1	On resuming at 10.14 a.m.
2	MR. EMMERSON: Your Honour, I'm simply rising to complete the
3	conversation that Your Honour raised this morning, which is that now,
4	having had an opportunity to go through the documents that were
5	disclosed overnight, there is one topic I need to raise, if I may.
6	It won't take very long. And certainly
7	PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: Five minutes, ten minutes?
8	MR. EMMERSON: Five minutes, ten minutes, and not now. Not
9	until the end.
10	PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: Yeah, we'll wait until we get finished
11	with every all the cross.
12	Madam Court Usher, please bring the witness in.
13	And, Mr. Court Officer, please take us to private session.
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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

Procedural Matters (Private Session)

[Private session text removed] [Open session] THE COURT OFFICER: Your Honours, we're in public session. Thank you. PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: All right. We're adjourned until 11.30. --- Recess taken at 10.54 a.m. --- On resuming at 11.29 a.m. PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: Mr. Court Officer, please take us into

Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

Witness: W04325 (Resumed) (Private Session) Page 12461 Cross-examination by Mr. Emmerson (Continued) [Private session text removed] 1 2 [Open session] 3 THE COURT OFFICER: Your Honours, we're in public session. 4 PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: We're adjourned until 2.30. 5 --- Luncheon recess taken at 1.05 p.m. 6 --- On resuming at 2.30 p.m. 7 PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: Madam Usher, you may bring the witness 8 back into the courtroom. 9 Madam Court Officer, please take us into private session. 10 11 [Private session] [Private session text removed] 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

Procedural Matters (Private Session)

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

Procedural Matters (Private Session)

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1	[Private session text removed]
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5	[Open session]
6	THE COURT OFFICER: Your Honours, we're in public session.
7	PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: We will adjourn for five minutes.
8	Break taken at 3.35 p.m.
9	On resuming at 3.40 p.m.
10	PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: Madam Usher, you can bring the witness
11	in.
12	MS. O'REILLY: Your Honour, before we bring the witness in,
13	there was a matter that I had raised earlier. I hope you received
14	notice of it over the lunch break, that I wanted to
15	There is a matter that I wanted to address before the witness is
16	brought in.
17	PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: [Microphone not activated].
18	MS. O'REILLY: We received the Preparation Note for this witness
19	on Tuesday around lunchtime. We reviewed it over the course of the
20	afternoon, and on Wednesday morning before court began. I wrote an
21	e-mail to the Prosecution asking them whether they intended to elicit
22	the evidence that is at paragraph 20 of the note. This is a case
23	theory that we have had no prior notice of, does not feature in the
24	pre-trial brief or anywhere else that would provide notice to us, and
25	is really being brought to our attention for the very first time as

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Procedural Matters (Open Session)

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of Tuesday. 1

It is quite a significant matter. Now, the witness has said in 2 his Preparation Note that he doesn't know anything about this, so I 3 would expect that the Prosecution does not intend to try to elicit, 4 you know, non-evidence, as it were, from the witness. Nonetheless, 5 when I e-mailed the Prosecution to ask them what their intentions 6 were, they refused to make their intentions clear. 7

I, therefore, asked again if they could confirm whether or not 8 they intended to elicit the evidence, and I haven't had a response. 9 So I was wondering if we could maybe just clarify that issue before 10 we continue. 11

12

PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: Mr. Pace, can you please respond. MR. PACE: Yes, Your Honour. 13

14 So, first of all, asking a question does not amount to a case theory. Second of all, we're not in the business of eliciting 15 non-evidence. Third, we responded to the Defence. They did not like 16 our response, which was the document is in our presentation queue, 17 18 which means we may use it. The line of questioning referred to is relevant. It concerns a direct superior of the next witness and his 19 relationship the zone commander and the General Staff. We also 20 noted, which would have avoided the courtroom time we're wasting 21 right now, that is the kind of question that Your Honours have 22 directed the Defence to raise at the time a document is used or at 23 the time a question is made. 24

25

There is no need to re-hash this now under a certain obligation

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

for us to confirm with some form of signature or finality whether or 1 not we're going to use a document in our presentation queue. 2 Those are our submissions. 3 4 PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: Thank you. MS. O'REILLY: Your Honour, if I may respond. 5 We were under the impression, based on the developments over the 6 last two, three weeks in this session that you did -- that Your 7 Honours did want notice of when we objected to documents that were in 8 the queue prior to the issue being addressed. I also believe that 9 this would be less disruptive to the Prosecutor's 10 examination-in-chief. 11 We asked a simple question: Do you intend to lead this 12 evidence? We did not get an answer to that. And, therefore, we 13 14 asked again so that we could confirm whether or not we needed to waste your time with this now. 15 It would be helpful if we could get a direction from Your 16 Honours as to whether you would, indeed, rather these issues were 17 addressed prior to testimony --18 PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: [Overlapping speakers]. I don't have the 19 document in front of me. You understand that? 20 MS. O'REILLY: Your Honour --21 PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: I will ask you do you intend to lead the 22 evidence, Mr. Pace. 23 MR. PACE: Your Honour, the reason we did not say "yes" or "no" 24 25 to the Defence is, of course, as you must appreciate, especially with

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a live witness, whether we pursue a certain line of questioning 1 depends on how things are going. 2 PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: [Microphone not activated]. 3 MR. PACE: We put the document on our presentation queue because 4 we might. The evidence has not started and that's why I can't give 5 an answer right now, Your Honour. In terms of the general line of 6 questioning, I do intend to ask it. 7 PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: All right. I will take a look at it 8 over the break, because we won't get to it now anyway, and we will 9 rule on it prior to the next time we're all together. 10 MS. O'REILLY: Just to point out, Your Honour, this is a 11 138-page intelligence report. When it was initially brought to our 12 attention, we were told that it was relevant to the witness's role 13 14 within the KLA. That is frankly misleading as you will find out when you review the Preparation Note. 15 PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: Thank you for your comment. 16 MR. PACE: Your Honour, if I may, to clarify --17 18 PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: [Microphone not activated]. MR. PACE: Thank you, Your Honour. 19 Just to clarify. As the Defence noted, in the Preparation Note 20 there's a specific page put to the witness, and they have the 21 information thereon. I also note that we raised the fact that we 22

Defence. At the time in December as well, they commented they had no objection to the document being used with the witness, and that's in

might use this document, as long as it is, in December with the

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Procedural Matters (Open Session)

filing 2037/A02. So that you have the full picture. 1 MS. O'REILLY: I'm sorry, I do need to clarify that. The reason 2 we said there was no objection is because the Prosecution had said 3 that it is relevant to his role within the KLA. Now it is being used 4 to pursue quite a different theory. 5 MR. MISETIC: On a totally different point. I was going to ask 6 at the end of the day, but rather than --7 PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: I think we're about at the end of the 8 day anyway. 9 MR. MISETIC: I know. There may be some Rule 143 issues with 10 this witness. We made some submissions, written submissions to the 11 Panel in November on interpretations of Rule 143. We're obviously 12 not going to complete this witness today. So if the Panel could give 13 14 us some guidance in the break as to its interpretation of 143, because that would instruct what kind of objections we might make 15 when we come back in February. 16 That was the only point I wanted to request to the Panel. 17 18 MR. TULLY: We support the submissions of our colleagues, Your Honour. 19 PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: Mr. Tully, you're okay. 20 MR. TULLY: Thank you, Your Honour. 21 PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: Mr. Ellis, you want to chime in also? 22 MR. ELLIS: [Microphone not activated]. 23 PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: All right. We'll make a decision on 24 that. 25

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

Witness: W04576 (Open Session) Procedural Matters

1	Let's get the witness in and at least go through giving him his
2	oath.
3	[The witness entered court]
4	PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: Good afternoon, Witness. The Court
5	Usher has provided you with the text of the solemn declaration which
6	you are asked to take pursuant to Rule 141(2) of the rules.
7	Please take a look at the document and then read it aloud.
8	THE WITNESS: [Interpretation] Solemn declaration according to
9	Rule 141.
10	Conscious of the significance of my testimony and my legal
11	responsibility, I solemnly declare that I will tell the truth, the
12	whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and that I shall not withhold
13	anything which has come to my knowledge.
14	WITNESS: W04576
15	[Witness answered though interpreter]
16	PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: You may be seated.
17	Witness, today we will start your testimony, which we expect to
18	last approximately 15 hours. As you may know, the Prosecution will
19	ask you questions first, and then the Defence has the right to ask
20	questions of you. Members of the Panel might also ask questions of
21	you.
22	The Prosecution estimate for your examination is five hours.
23	The Defence estimates that it will need nine and a half hours. As
24	regards each estimate, we hope that counsel will be judicious in
25	their use of their time. The Panel may allow redirect examination if

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

Witness: W04576 (Open Session) Procedural Matters Page 12499

1 conditions are met.

We won't be meeting for very long yet today because we stop at 2 4.00, which is the time that we like to end the process in order for 3 the interpreters not to be overtaxed. So we apologise for the fact 4 that you've been here all day and now you're going to have to leave 5 in a few minutes, but we will be back together in about two weeks. 6 Witness, when you come to court next time, try to answer the 7 questions clearly with short sentences. If you don't understand a 8 question, feel free to ask counsel to repeat the question or tell 9 them you don't understand and they will clarify. 10

Also, please try to indicate the basis of your knowledge of the facts and circumstances that you will be asked about. In the event you are asked by the SPO to attest to some corrections made during your statement, you are reminded to confirm on the record that the written statement, as corrected by the list of corrections, accurately reflects your declaration.

Please also speak into the microphone and wait five seconds before answering a question and speak at a slow pace for the interpreters to catch up.

During the next hours or days while you are giving evidence in this Court, you are not allowed to discuss with anyone the content of your testimony outside of this courtroom. If any person asks you questions outside of the Court about your testimony, please let us know.

25

Also, please stop talking if I ask you to do so and also stop

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

Witness: W04576 (Open Session) Examination by Mr. Pace

1	talking if you see me raise my hand. These indications mean I need
2	to give you an instruction. If you feel the need to take breaks at
3	any time, please let us know and we will try to accommodate you.
4	We will begin now with a few questions by the Prosecution on
5	your left.
6	Go ahead, Mr. Pace. You've got about ten minutes.
7	MR. PACE: Thank you, Your Honour.
8	Examination by Mr. Pace:
9	Q. And good afternoon, Witness. We've met before but I'll
10	introduce myself again. I'm James Pace, a Prosecutor with the SPO.
11	As the Judge indicated, I'll be asking you some questions for the
12	next five or so hours, starting with a little bit today, and the
13	first questions are to establish your identity.
14	What is your name?
15	A. Hajrush Kurtaj.
16	Q. Your date of birth?
17	A. 2 October 1966.
18	Q. Your nationality?
19	A. Albanian.
20	Q. And what is your educational background?
21	A. I have finished military mid high school and then the
22	faculty of history.
23	Q. And what degree, if any, do you have from the faculty of
24	history?
25	A. University of Prishtine diploma, master of history.

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

Witness: W04576 (Open Session) Examination by Mr. Pace

1	Q.	And what is your current employment?
2	Α.	I worked at the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Kosovo,
3	dire	ctor of the department for planning and assessment.
4	Q.	How long have you worked at the Ministry of Defence?
5	Α.	From 2009.
6	Q.	And where did you work before 2009?
7	Α.	In the Kosovo Protection Corps.
8	Q.	What role did you have in the Kosovo Protection Corps?
9	Α.	Chief of staff in Gjilan 6 zone.
10	Q.	When did you start in that position?
11	Α.	I started 16 September 1999.
12	Q.	Have you ever occupied any role within the KLA War Veterans
13	Asso	ciation?
14	Α.	Initially, I was a soldier and then deputy commander of the
15	brig	ade, and as of 14 May 1999 I was commander of brigade until
16	11 J [.]	une 1999.
17	Q.	Thank you, Witness. Perhaps my question wasn't understood. I'm
18	aski	ng for now for your role, if any, within the KLA War Veterans
19	Asso	ciation.
20	Α.	Now I am a member of the chairmanship of the war veteran
21	orga	nisation in Prishtine.
22	Q.	Could you tell us roughly or precisely, if you know, how many
23	memb	ers are in the chairmanship?
24	Α.	I don't remember accurately.
25	Q.	Do you have a rough idea?

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

Witness: W04576 (Open Session) Examination by Mr. Pace

1	Α.	I believe about 20, 23 members, but I can't be exact.
2	Q.	You mentioned a short while ago some roles you had in the KLA,
3	and	I'd like to go back to the beginning. Could you tell us first
4	when	you joined the KLA?
5	Α.	On 1 June 1998.
6	Q.	Where did you join it?
7	Α.	In Kacanik.
8	Q.	And how did you come to join the KLA? Did you speak to anyone
9	abou	t doing so or did you join in some other way?
10	Α.	I spoke with my brother, Xheladin Kurtaj, and the first
11	comm	ander of the KLA, Agim Bajrami.
12	Q.	And what was your role when you first joined?
13	Α.	Freedom fighter.
14	Q.	And did you have any particular position at the time or not?
15	Α.	No, initially not. Just freedom fighter.
16	Q.	And was that a fighter within any particular unit or brigade?
17	Α.	The Kacanik unit.
18	Q.	And what were your tasks at the time?
19	Α.	Can you repeat the question, please.
20	Q.	At this time when you were a fighter in the Kacanik unit, what
21	were	your main tasks?
22	Α.	To be trained for the war that was awaiting us.
23	Q.	And did you receive any orders or instructions in relation to
24	what	you were meant to do within the Kacanik unit at the time when
25	you	first joined?

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

Witness: W04576 (Open Session) Examination by Mr. Pace

1	A. No, we didn't receive any orders.	
2	Q. Who did you report to at this time?	
3	A. To the first commander, Agim Bajrami.	
4	Q. And how long were you a fighter at this level in the Kacanik	
5	unit? From 1 June until when?	
6	A. From approximately until beginning August 1998.	
7	Q. From the time you joined until August 1998, did Agim Bajrami ask	
8	you to do anything in particular during your time with his unit?	
9	A. I don't remember.	
10	Q. In June and July 1998, do you remember anyone at all in the	
11	Kacanik unit telling you or asking you to carry out a particular task	
12	or a particular job?	
13	A. No.	
14	Q. What was your next role after you said that you were no longer,	
15	let's say, a simple soldier or a fighter in August 1998? What	
16	happened next in your role in the KLA?	
17	A. Commander Agim Bajrami seeing my military education and	
18	background, asked me to prepare to train the soldiers for the front	
19	line.	
20	Q. And did you do so after he asked you to?	
21	A. Yes.	
22	Q. And at this time after you did so, did you have any new title or	
23	position within the unit?	
24	A. Deputy commander for military operations on the front line.	
25	Q. And who gave you that title?	

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Kosovo Specialist Chambers - Basic Court

Witness: W04576 (Open Session) Examination by Mr. Pace

1 A. Commander Agim Bajrami.

2 Q. And was this role always within the Kacanik unit or some other 3 unit?

4 A. Only for the Kacanik units.

5 Q. And what did this role entail? What did you do as part of this 6 role?

A. I trained the new soldiers on the weapons and to verse them with
their duties in the front line, how to use weapons, the tactics used
on the front line.

10 Q. And how long did you undertake this particular role for?

11 A. I performed this duty almost until the end, until 14 May 1999.

12 Q. And during this time, between August 1998 and May 1999, did you 13 undertake any different roles or duties within the KLA?

A. That was my main task, which I was entrusted with by
Commander Agim Bajrami; namely, as deputy commander for military
operations. And then I continued this job on the orders of Brigade
Commander Sami -- Qamil Ilazi.

Q. And perhaps just one last question given the time. Could you -you mentioned Qamil Ilazi. Can you tell us -- and you described him as brigade commander. Could you tell us when he became the brigade commander and of which brigade?

A. Qamil Ilazi took the role of brigade commander after the falling
of Agim Bajrami who was killed in August 1998 in Gabrrice all for
Kacanik, together with two others. Then instead of him, his duty was
taken by Qamil Ilazi.

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1	MR. PACE: Your Honour, this might be a convenient time to stop.
2	PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: All right. Witness, as I said earlier,
3	this is how long we will be in court today. We will now have about a
4	two-week period where we do not have court. The Registry office will
5	direct you on coming back for the rest of your testimony.
6	You will be excused now. And remember not to discuss this case
7	with anybody outside of the courtroom.
8	Madam Usher, you may escort the witness out of the room.
9	[The witness stands down]
10	PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: [Microphone not activated].
11	MR. ELLIS: Your Honour, only that it would be useful to have
12	the update on which witnesses will be called in the February block.
13	If the Prosecution is able to do that.
14	PRESIDING JUDGE SMITH: We will see that that gets sent around.
15	Ms. O'Reilly, did you have a question? Oh, okay. All right.
16	We're adjourned.
17	Whereupon the hearing adjourned at 4.02 p.m.
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