SUPREME COURT OF KOSOVO

Case number:

Plm. Kzz. 138/2016

(P. no 132/14 Basic Court of Mıtrovicë/Mitrovica)

(PAKR 474/15 Court of Appeals)

Date:

14 July 2016

IN THE NAME OF PEOPLE

The Supreme Court of Kosovo, in a Panel composed of the Supreme Court of Kosovo Judge Valdete Daka (Presiding), EULEX Judge at the Supreme Court of Kosovo Elka Filcheva-Ermenkova (Reporting), the Supreme Court of Kosovo Judge Nebojsha Borichich, as Panel members, and EULEX Legal Officer Sandra Gudaityte as the Recording Officer, in the criminal case against the defendant:

G. G.

charged under the indictment of EULEX Basic Prosecutor of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica No. PP. 10/14 filed on 14 November 2014, with the clarification filed on 8 December 2014, with the following criminal offence: **AGGRAVATED MURDER** in violation of Article 179(1)(5) and (1)(8) of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo (hereinafter "CCK"), in conjunction with Article 31 of the CCK;

having considered replies of the EULEX Prosecution Office Mitrovicë/Mitrovica filed on 30 May 2016, and of the Office of the State Prosecutor (hereinafter "Prosecution") filed on 16 June 2016;

having deliberated and voted on 14 July 2016;

pursuant to Articles 432, 433 and 435 of the Criminal Procedure Code of Kosovo (hereinafter "CPC")

renders the following

JUDGEMENT

The request for protection of legality against Judgement of the Basic Court of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica P. 132/14 of 30 July 2015 and Judgement of the Court of Appeals PAKR 474/15 of 14 January 2016 filed by defence counsel M. H. I on behalf of defendant G. G. n 10 May 2016, is hereby rejected as unfounded.

REASONING

I. Procedural background

- On 14 November 2014, EULEX Basic Prosecutor of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica filed Indictment PP 10/14 against (G. G. . The indictment was clarified on 8 December 2014. The defendant was charged with the criminal offence of Aggravated Murder in violation of Article 179(1)(5) and (1)(8) of the CCK, in conjunction with Article 31 of the CCK.
- On 8 and 23 December 2014, the initial hearings were held in the presence of the defendants, defence counsels and the prosecutor. The main trial was held on 30 June, 2, 9, 24, and 28 July 2015.
- 3. On 30 July 2016, in its Judgement P. 132/14, the Basic Court of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica found guilty of the criminal offence of Aggravated Murder in violation of Article 179(1)(5) of the CCK, in conjunction with Article 31 of the CCK. The defendant was

sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment. Time served in detention of remand since 19 September 2014 was included in the punishment.

- 4. On 27 August 2015, the defence counsel of 'G, G, ii filed an appeal against the Judgement of the Basic Court of Mitrovice/Mitrovica.
- 5. On 14 January 2016, in its Judgement PAKR 474/15, the Court of Appeals partially granted the appeal of the defence counsel of ... insofar as it challenges the imposed sentence. Judgement P. 132/14 of the Basic Court of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica was modified as follows: defendant ... was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment. The time sent in the detention on remand since 19 September 2014 was accredited towards the sentence. The appeal was rejected as unfounded in the remaining parts.
- On 10 May 2016, defence counsel M.H. on behalf of defendant S. i filed the request for protection of legality against Judgement of the Basic Court of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica P. 132/14 of 30 July 2015 and Judgement of the Court of Appeals PAKR 474/15 of 14 January 2016.
- On 30 May 2016, EULEX Prosecution Office Mitrovicë/Mitrovica filed its reply in which it
 moves the Supreme Court to affirm Judgement of the Basic Court of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica P.
 132/14 of 30 July 2015 and Judgement of the Court of Appeals PAKR 474/15 of 14 January
 2016.
- 8. On 16 June 2016, the Prosecution filed its reply in which it moves the Supreme Court to reject the request for protection of legality submitted by defence counsel on behalf of defendant G. G. i as unfounded pursuant to Article 437 of the CPC.

II. Submissions of the parties

Submissions of the defence counsel of G.G.

The defence counsel argues that Judgement of the Basic Court of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica P.
 132/14 of 30 July 2015 and Judgement of the Court of Appeals PAKR 474/15 of 14 January

2016 contain violations of criminal law, and essential violations of provisions of criminal procedure as defined in Article 432(1)(1) and (2) of the CPC. For this reason, the defence moves the Supreme Court to acquit the defendant because it was not proven that he committed the criminal offence, to requalify the criminal offence to Participation in a Brawl under Article 190(1) of the CCK, and return the case for re-trial, or alternatively to amend the judicial qualification of the criminal offense from Aggravated Murder under Article 179(1)(5) of the CCK in relation to Article 31 of the CCK to the criminal offence of Murder under Article 178 of the CCK in relation to Article 31 of the CCK and impose a lenient sentence.

- 10. The defence counsel argues that the enacting clause of the judgements of the Basic Court and the Court of Appeals is incomprehensible and contrary to the contents of the case file. The defence argues that the evidence presented during the trial (particularly video recording from the CCTV at the shop " XX ") were in contradiction to the findings of the Basic Court. The defence in detail analyses the video recording and claims that the first and the second instance courts made erroneous and contradictory conclusions. The judgement of the Court of Appeals is contradictory with itself, because on one hand the judgement states that (G ... was aware that the road blockage and the obstruction from self-defence could have resulted in the murder of 2 XH. H and on the other hand it is noted that victim XH. H is was armed and able to resist the attack-brawl.
- 11. According to the defence counsel, the Court of Appeals violated the provision of Article 394(1) of the CPC as it either did not give any explanation why the appeal was rejected, or gave the explanations that were in contradiction with the evidence in the case. The Court of Appeals omits reasoning concerning the decisive facts and the part of the appeal related to the element of intent to commit the criminal offence in co-perpetration was not evaluated.
- 12. The defence counsel argues that the evaluation of factual situation related to the intent and co-perpetration was conducted in violation of principle in dubio pro reo (Article 3(2) of the CPC) and the independence of the court (Article 8(2) of the CPC). Therefore, the defence claims that the defendant's intent was not proven beyond reasonable doubt because the

defendant could not predict that his actions in any way would affect the murder of . **H. H. In this regard, both courts did not prove beyond reasonable doubt that B. gave G.G. hi any sign or that there was a weapon in the defendant's hands. The courts did not take into consideration that B. G. G. 'i confronted **H. K. for at least 8-10 seconds trying to pull him out of the car, and did not assess the lack of credibility of the statements of the two pedestrians.

- 13. The defence counsel further argues that the first and the second instance courts did not prove the element of co-perpetration as set in Article 31 of the CCK. In this regard, the first and the second instance courts failed to establish beyond reasonable doubt that (1) G.G. i recognised. XH.K. i or his vehicle, and he did not know about any conflicts between XH.K. and 1 B.G. i knew that B.G. i had a weapon; (3) G.G. ii could predict that B.G. would use the weapon to shoot at XH.K. i; (4) actions of the victim and B.G. in any way would lead to the murder.
- 14. The defence counsel further submits that the courts erred in qualifying the criminal offence as Aggravated Murder. It is not sufficient to prove that there was an abstract risk of endangering lives of one or more persons, there should be a concrete risk and the perpetrator should intentionally endanger another person's life when committing the murder. Additionally, the specific identification of the endangered person or persons is a necessary element of this criminal offence. To support his argument, the defence counsel attaches the previous judgements of the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court. In the present case, there was no concrete endangering of any person, contrary, \(\text{P} \). \(\text{G} \) if all the time was in full control of his weapon and the shots were aimed only at \(\text{XH} \). \(\text{R} \) if and his vehicle. \(\text{G} \). If cannot be considered liable for the shots to the kebab shop done by
- 15. The defence counsel argues that i's acts should be qualified as Participation in Brawl under Article 190(1) of the CCK. He presents an example of the case law explaining the difference of cooperation and assistance which is an element of the criminal offence of

Participation in Brawl, and co-perpetration as an element of the Aggravated Murder. The defendant did not have any physical contact with the victim and therefore cannot be considered as co-perpetrator.

16. As an alternative, the defence argues that the courts should have qualified the actions of Article 178(1) of the CCK in conjunction with Article 31 of the CCK, and imposed a lenient punishment.

Submissions of the EULEX Prosecution Office Mitrovice/Mitrovica

- 17. The EULEX Prosecution Office considers that Judgement of the Basic Court of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica P. 132/14 of 30 July 2015 and Judgement of the Court of Appeals PAKR 474/15 of 14 January 2016 are valid and are rendered in accordance to the requirements of the CCK and the CPC.
- 18. Most of the arguments presented by the defence counsel are related to the erroneous and incomplete determination of the factual situation which cannot be a basis for the request for protection of legality according to Article 432(2) of the CPC. In any case, the evidence including the video recording were properly assessed and interpreted by both courts.
- 19. Concerning the qualification of the criminal offence, the EULEX Prosecution Office indicates that the first instance and the second instance courts correctly evaluated the endangerment the lives of one or more other persons. In this regard, the courts identified concrete circumstances under which concrete individuals were endangered, two of them even testified during the main trial.
- 20. The EULEX Prosecution Office further argues that the Basic Court and the Court of Appeals proved beyond reasonable doubt that "G. G. was aware of the attack, and took active actions to contribute to the attack. Therefore, there is no doubt that (G. G. acted in co-perpetration and had eventual intent. His actions do not constitute the criminal offence of Participation in Brawl under Article 190(1) of the CCK.

Submissions of the Office of the State Prosecutor

- 21. The Prosecution in its reply moved the Supreme Court to reject the request for protection of legality as unfounded pursuant to Article 437 of the CPC. The Prosecution alleges that the majority of the arguments presented by the defence counsel are related to the evaluation of the factual situation. These arguments should be dismissed as inadmissible pursuant to Article 432(2) of the CPC.
- 22. Concerning the alleged essential violation of the procedural law, the Prosecution claims that the defence did not provide any valid argumentation to support the claim that the enacting clause is incomprehensible, that the Court of Appeals did not examine all the parts of the first instance judgement challenged by the defence, or that the judgement of the Court of Appeals is in contradiction with itself. The defence further did not provide any prove of violation of Article 432(1)(1) of the CPC related to the violation of criminal law. All the arguments are related to the evaluation of the factual situation and therefore should be dismissed.

III. Composition of the Panel

23. The Panel established that on 2 July 2014, the Kosovo Judicial Counsel confirmed that EULEX had jurisdiction in case PP 10/14. The Panel unanimously decided that pursuant to Article 1A (1.4) of the Law on Amending and Supplementing the Laws Related to the Mandate of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (05/L-103) (hereinafter "Omnibus Law") inter alia modifying Law on the Jurisdiction, Case Selection and Case Allocation of EULEX Judges and Prosecutors in Kosovo (03/L-053), this case is to be considered as an 'ongoing case'. Thus, EULEX judges have jurisdiction in this case. Pursuant to Article 3.3 of the Omnibus Law, the panel shall be composed of a majority of local judges and presided by a local judge.

IV. Findings

Admissibility of the Requests

24. The request for protection of legality submitted by defence counsel M. H. on behalf of defendant G. G. is admissible. The request was filed by an authorised

person (Article 433(1) of the CPC), within the prescribed deadline (Article 433(2) of the CPC), and to the competent court (Article 434(1) of the CPC).

Merits of the Requests

- Allegations of erroneous or incomplete determination of the factual situation
- 25. At the outset, the Panel notes that a big part of the request for protection of legality challenges the evaluation of evidence by the Basic Court and the Court of Appeals. Particularly, the defence challenges the evaluation of the video recording from the CCTV at the shop "/ XX s". In this regard, pursuant to Article 432 (1) of the CPC, the request for protection of legality can be filed only on the grounds of a violation of the criminal law, a substantial violation of the provisions of criminal procedure, or another violation of the provisions of criminal procedure if such violations affected the lawfulness of a judicial decision. Article 432 (2) of the CPC strictly and clearly indicates that a request for protection of legality may not be filed on the ground of an erroneous or incomplete determination of the factual situation. A mere disagreement with the factual evaluation made by the first and the second instance courts does not amount to the requirements for the request for protection of legality as it is set in Article 432(1) of the CPC. Therefore, the Panel finds that all allegations related to the ground of erroneous or incomplete determination of the factual situation shall be dismissed as inadmissible.
- Incomprehensible and contradictory enacting clause
- 26. The defence alleges that the enacting clause of the Judgement of the Basic Court and the Court of Appeals is incomprehensible and contrary to the contents of the case file. The Panel considers that the enacting clause of the judgements of the Basic Court and of the Court of Appeals is drawn in accordance to the requirements set in Article 370(3) and (4) in conjunction with Article 365 of the CPC. The enacting clause contains full description of the act of which the defendant was found guilty together with the description of the facts and circumstances indicating the criminal nature of the acts and the application of pertinent provisions of the criminal law.

- 27. While it is correct that the enacting clause of the judgement of the Basic Court does not list the names of the people whose lives were endangered during the shooting, the Panel is not persuaded that the Basic Court failed to establish the names of the people whose lives were endangered. Firstly, the enacting clause clearly refers to several persons on the street, and two persons inside the Kebab shop. Further, the specific names of the affected persons, and the circumstances related to endangerment of their lives is in great detail addressed in the main reasoning of the judgement. The judgement has to be read as a whole, including the enacting clause and the reasoning. Therefore, the Panel considers that the omission to mention specific names in the enacting clause does not prejudice the defendant's rights and does not affect the fairness of the trial as a whole.
- 28. The Panel further considers that the defence's disagreement with the factual situation described in the enacting clause does not amount to the violation of Article 370(3) and (4) in conjunction with Article 365 of the CPC.
- Violation of Article 394(1) of the CPC
- 29. The defence further alleges that the Court of Appeals violated Article 394(1) of the CPC as it either did not give any explanation why the appeal was rejected, or gave the explanations that were in contradiction with the evidence in the case. The defence argues that the Court of Appeals did not provide any explanation about the contradiction of the content of the case and the reasoning. In this regard, the Panel considers that the Court of Appeals clearly and extensively addressed the allegation of erroneous and/or incomplete determination of the factual situation raised by the defence in its appeal (see pages 8-9 of the judgement of the Court of Appeals). Therefore, the Panel concludes that the Court of Appeal addressed the parts of the judgement of the Basic Court challenged by the defence in accordance with the requirements set in Article 394(1) of the CPC. The question whether the factual situation was assessed correctly, is outside the scope of the present judgement. Therefore, the allegation that Article 394(1) of the CPC was violated is rejected as unfounded.

- Violation of principles in dubio pro reo and the independence of the courts
- 30. The defence argues that the Judgements of the first and the second instance courts violated the principle *in dubio pro reo* (Article 3(2) of the CPC) and the independence of the court (Article 8(2) of the CPC) because the evaluation of the factual situation was done to the detriment of the defendant.
- 31. The Panel notes that principle in dubio pro reo is an important outcome of the presumption of innocence, and the requirement of proof beyond reasonable doubt. It means that any ambiguity or doubt arising from the trial evidence must be resolved in favour of the accused. This principle provides that when it is possible for a court to draw one or more inferences from facts which have been established by either direct or circumstantial evidence, it must consider whether any such inference reasonably open under the facts is inconsistent with the guilt of the accused. In other words, this principle requires to treat all the ambiguity of the guilt to the benefit of the defendant's favour.
- 32. It is important to note, that the principle is applicable when assessing the entirety of the evidence presented in the main trial, and not individual evidence. It is well established by the Supreme Court and the jurisprudence of the international tribunals that the principle in dubio pro reo is not applicable to individual pieces of evidence and findings on which the judgement does not apply.¹
- 33. In the present case, the defence presented a different interpretation of the evidence of the case which has already been addressed by the Basic Court and the Court of Appeals. Both instance courts concluded that the only conclusion deriving from the video footage is the one proving the defendant's guilt. Different interpretation of the factual situation, and the allegation that the same facts should be qualified as a different criminal offence do not mean that the principle of in dubio pro reo has been violated.

See, Supreme Court, case Pml.Kzz 8/2015, paragraphs 4.23 and 4.24; ICTY, Prosecutor v. F. L., H. B., T. M. T-03-66-A, Judgement, 27 September 2007, page 11.

- 34. In accordance to Article 8 of the CPC, the principle of judicial independence means that the court shall render decisions in conformity with the law, and on the basis of the evidence examined and verified in the main trial. In this regard, the Panel considers that the evidence was properly collected and examined in the main trial, the parties had an opportunity to challenge each piece of evidence; the defence did not challenge the evidence presented and verified in the main trial. Therefore, the Panel sees no violation of the principle of judicial independence.
- Qualification of the offence as Aggregated Murder pursuant to Article 179(1)(5) of the CCK
- 35. The defence further claims that the Basic Court and the Court of Appeals erred in determining that the lives of other people were endangered. The defence claims that the danger has to be concrete and directed against concrete person(s). The actions of Basic Court were coordinated, and he fired shots only to the direction of 2 x44. K. and his vehicle. While the shots fired towards the Kebab shop and the people walking along the street were the ones coming from 2 x44. K. I's weapon. Therefore, the defence claims that the defendant cannot be held liable for the actions of x44. K.
- 36. Endangering lives of other persons as it is defined in Article 179(1)(5) of the CCK means that the perpetrator produces with premeditation two consequences by a single action: taking the life of one person and endangering the life of another person. The danger for the other person must really occur; the danger thus must be concrete, and not abstract. Premeditation can be direct or incidental, in relation to the murder as well as in relation to the causing of concrete danger to life of one or more persons. This means that the person was aware that the undertaken action, the applied manner and the means used, as well as other existing circumstances may put into concrete danger the life of another person or persons, and he nevertheless consents to that consequence.
- 37. In the present case, the Panel notes that the Basic Court and the Court of Appeals clearly established that G.G. i together with B.G. i attacked: XH.K., and these actions eventually resulted into a series of shooting. In this case, the acts of G. and B.G. had a foreseeable consequence of a shooting in the public

area when there were several people present. It is irrelevant who made shots. Also, for the purpose of the intent the accuracy of the possible outcome is not necessary. What matters in this case, is that the perpetrator was aware or taking into consideration the characteristics of the attack against $2 \times 4 \times 2 = 1$ i could have known that a prohibited consequence might occur, and nevertheless proceeded with his actions. Therefore, the Panel concludes that G gnificantly contributed to the acts that lead to the endangering of the life of one or more persons.

- 38. The Panel further notes that the Court of Appeals carefully analysed the jurisprudence presented by the defence establishing whether the risk was specific and real and the concrete persons were endangered. The Panel fully concurs with the conclusion of the Court of Appeals that the doctrine of precedent declares that the cases must be decided in the same ways only when their material facts are the same. In the present case it has been clearly established that the risk was real and specific, and was directed against clearly identified persons. Therefore, the Panel fully subscribes to the conclusions made by the Court of Appeals, and considers that the element of endangering lives of one or more persons is fully established. The criminal offence was correctly qualified as Aggregated Murder pursuant to Article 179(1)(5) of the CCK, and it cannot be qualified as Murder pursuant to Article 178 of the CCK.
- Co-perpetration and eventual intent
- 39. The defence further argues that the defendant's actions do not show that he could predict the result of the murder. Therefore, the defence claims that the first and the second instance courts erred in determining that the defendant had an eventual intent and wilfully accepted the actions of 6. G. ii as its own as a co-perpetrator. Therefore, 6. G. 's actions can be qualified only as Participation in Brawl as established in Article 190(1) of the CCK.
- 40. Article 31 of the CCK defines co-perpetration as "when two or more persons jointly commit a criminal offence by participating in the commission of a criminal offence or by substantially contributing to its commission in any other way, each of them shall be liable

and punished as prescribed for the criminal offence". The elements of co-perpetration according to this Article are: plurality of person, participation in perpetration or providing a decisive contribution which is important and without which the criminal offence would not be committed or would not be committed in the planned way, and willingness to commit a criminal offence as his own (shared intent). Co-perpetration is a form of perpetration where several persons, each of them fulfilling required elements for a perpetrator, knowingly and wilfully commit certain criminal acts. Contrary to an aider or an instigator, co-perpetrators do not participate in an act accomplished by another person. A co-perpetrator participates in his own act, while aiders and instigators participate in someone else's act.

- 41. The defence claims that there was no established common plan and that the defendant could not predict that his or begin a section would result into the murder of the co-perpetration. The Panel notes that this element means that co-perpetrators divide essential tasks between themselves, act in a concerted manner and hence share the control over the crime. However, it does not mean that the co-perpetrators have to agree to commit a certain crime; it is sufficient to show that their actions were coordinated. Also, the agreement does not need to be explicit and can be inferred from the subsequent concerted action of the co-perpetrators. Actions of each co-perpetrator shall lead to a co-ordinated essential contribution by each co-perpetrator resulting in the realisation of the objective elements of the crime.
- 42. In the present case, the Basic Court and the Court of Appeals concluded that the defendant's actions blocking the Mercedes and rushing towards the passenger's door of the Mercedes in order to disturb? **XH.** In defensive action were central to the commission of the criminal offence. Contrary to the defence's claim, the defendant's actions were coordinated and clearly showed that the defendant was aware of the overall situation. The Panel is of the view that whether **G**-G**. recognised the victim or his vehicle, or whether he knew that **B**-G**. Shi had a weapon, is irrelevant to the classification of the criminal offence.

² The Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, Decision on the Confirmation of Charges, 29 January 2007, ICC-01/04-10/06-803, paragraphs 344-345. *See also*, The Prosecutor v. Germain Katanga and Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui, Decision on the Confirmation of Charges, 26 September 2008, paragraph 484; The Prosecutor v. Jean Pierre Bemba, Decision on the Confirmation of Charges, 15 June 2009, paragraph 348.

Further, it is also irrelevant for the classification of the criminal offence whether the confronted \mathcal{XH} . \mathcal{H} . for at least 8-10 seconds trying to pull him out of the car.

- 43. Further, the defence claims that the first and the second instance courts wrongfully determined that the defendant had the eventual intent and accepted the consequences of the i. The Panel notes that criminal intent does not necessarily mean murder of : XH.K. malicious intent, and a person can be found to have criminal intent even where his motives are objectively good. However, in cases when a person intends to do the criminal act, but does not form the intent prior to taking the action (which would constitute malice aforethought), it is considered that the person has nevertheless acted with intent. In the present case, it is clear that \(\oplus \op against 1 14. K. li even though he might not intend to eventually kill him. Therefore, the Panel considers that the courts correctly determined that (5.5. shi did not act with the direct intent to kill XH. H i as it was not proven beyond reasonable doubt that the plan to kill 1 x#. U, iqi was formed prior to the attack. The act of blocking the vehicle i from self-defence clearly show and taking active role in the attempt to stop $\chi \mu$. ω . the defendant's eventual intent. He was aware that there was a substantial risk that the objective elements of the crime would be committed and nevertheless actively participated in actions that substantially contributed to the killing of : XH. K. Įi.
- 44. For this reason, the Panel considers that the defence failed to prove the elements of the criminal offence of Participation of Brawl as provided under Article 190(1) of the CCK. There is no indication to prove that the defendant's actions can be qualified as cooperation or assistance to the perpetrator in the brawl. Further, the case law submitted by the defence is not applicable in the present case as it was determined by the Court of Appeals.
- 45. Therefore, the Panel finds that the first and the second instance court correctly determined the elements of the crime and considers that the defence failed to prove the violation of criminal law. The defence's submission to requalify the criminal offence as Participation in Brawl under Article 190(1) of the CCK is rejected as unfounded.

V. CONCLUSION

Having considered the above, the Supreme Court of Kosovo decided as in the enacting clause of this Judgment.

THE SUPREME COURT OF KOSOVO PRISHTINE/PRIŠTINA

PML-138/16

Presiding judge:

/ Valdete Daka

Judge at Supreme Court of Kosovo

Members of the panel:

Elka Ficheva-Ermenkova

EULEX Judge at the Supreme Court of Kosovo

Judge at Supreme Court of Kosovo

Nebojsha Boridic

Mentor Osmani

EULEX Interpreter

Sandra Gudaityte EULEX Legal Officer