

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 11/28/96

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 15 per Section.

6 November 1996

Further information on EXTRA 169/96 (EUR 11/26/96, 1 November 1996) - Legal concern / Prisoner of conscience

ALBANIAIdajet BEQIRI, opposition leader

On 5 November 1996 the Albanian Court of Appeal upheld the prison sentence of 15 years imposed on Idajet Beqiri by the district court of Tirana on 28 September 1996 for "crimes against humanity". Amnesty International believes that the charges against him were not substantiated by the evidence produced in court, and were politically motivated (see original EXTRA for details). The organization considers him to be a prisoner of conscience. The court also upheld the sentences imposed on eight co-defendants.

The president of the Court of Appeal was quoted by the local press as saying that the Court's ruling in this case could be the reason for an explosion which early on 6 November reportedly wrecked his apartment, injuring four people.

Idajet Beqiri is the leader of the opposition Party of National Unity and a former president of Kruja district court (from 1981 to February 1986).

One further round of appeals from the UA Network is requested in order to maintain pressure on the authorities, while the case is being transferred to another AI Network. Please send faxes, telexes or telegrams, to the authorities listed in the original action, in Italian, English, French or German or your own language, including as many of the following points as possible:

- expressing deep concern that the Court of Appeal on 5 November confirmed the 15-year prison sentence imposed on Idajet Beqiri, leader of the National Unity Party;
- reiterating that Amnesty International has carefully studied this case and concludes that the evidence produced in court did not substantiate the charges against him of having committed "crimes against humanity", and that these charges appear to be politically motivated;
- stating that Amnesty International consequently believes him to be a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned as a result of his non-violent beliefs and calls for his immediate and unconditional release;
- adding that Amnesty International does not contest the right of the authorities to bring to justice persons who in the past committed grave crimes under international law, but that such trials should be conducted in accordance with international standards for fair trial.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your Section office, if sending appeals after 7 December 1996.