

Public

AI Index: EUR 70/134/99

Distrib: PG/SC

To: Health professionals
From: Medical Office / East Adriatic Team
Date: 10 December 1999

Further information on
MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

Dr Flora Brovina (f)

**Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
(Province of Kosovo)**

**[see previous update AI Index: EUR 70/120/99, 5 November 1999,
EUR70/115/90, 13 October 1999]**

Theme: Physician / POC

SUMMARY

Doctor Flora Brovina was found guilty of "association for the purposes of hostile activity" in connection with "terrorism" and sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment by a court in Nis, Serbia on 9 December 1999. Amnesty International believes that the charges against her are without foundation and is calling for her release.

The text of a statement by Amnesty International and recommended actions follow.

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY): 12-year prison sentence for Kosovo doctor is outrageous

After an unfair trial, a Serbian court sitting in Nis yesterday sentenced an ethnic Albanian medical doctor to 12 years' imprisonment on charges of "association for the purposes of hostile activity" in connection with "terrorism". Amnesty International believes the authorities are making an example of Dr Flora Brovina and is calling for her release.

Although the written judgment has yet to be issued, Amnesty International's information indicates that the charges against Dr Brovina are without foundation.

Dr Brovina was accused of assisting the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), by supplying medicines, treating wounded KLA fighters, and helping to supply them with uniforms. The activities were allegedly carried out in Pristina (Prishtina) from her clinic and the office of the League of Albanian women, an association which she helped found in 1992. In court she denied any connection with KLA.

Reports of the trial indicate that the evidence produced against her was weak and consisted primarily of self-incriminating statements which she signed under duress. During the trial she withdrew the statements and stated that she had been interrogated 18 times after her arrest in Pristina in April

while the Kosovo conflict was at its height. Sometimes Dr Brovina was questioned from morning to late afternoon without food. She complained that during the period of interrogation she was suffering from angina and on one occasion she was hit on the head by police.

Other evidence reportedly consisted of testimony from one witness, photocopied documents and a photograph of Dr Brovina with a man in KLA uniform, whom she stated she met by chance as he was the husband of a friend.

During yesterday's hearing the court accepted the prosecutor's amendment of the indictment to include stiffer penalties which apply in time of war.

According to the authorities some 1,900 other ethnic Albanians are detained in Serbian prisons. Some have already been sentenced in unfair trials after having statements extracted from them under torture, while others await trials which are also likely to be unfair.

The above text was issued as AI News Service 233/99, AI Index: EUR 70/133/99 on 10 December 1999.

Recommended Actions

Appeals from health professionals should be sent to the addresses listed below and:

- refer to your earlier letters if applicable, or introduce yourself as a member of Amnesty International's health professional network;
- note that Amnesty International is not aware of any statements Dr Brovina has made advocating the use of violence or of any evidence of her involvement in violent acts;
- call on the authorities to release Dr Brovina.

Please inform your professional association of Dr Brovina's conviction.

ADDRESSES (Please note that these have been amended since the last update)

Postal services have now resumed to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

President of the FRY
Slobodan Milosevic
Predsednik SRJ
Bulevar Mihaila Pupina 2
11070 Beograd,
FR Yugoslavia
Fax: + 381 11 636 775
email: slobodan.milosevic@gov.yu
Salutation: Dear President

Minister of Justice of the Republic of Serbia
Dragoljub Jankovic
Ministar pravde
Republicko Ministarstvo za pravosudje i opstu upravu
Nemanjina 26, 11000 Beograd
FR Yugoslavia
Salutation: Dear Minister
Fax: +381 11 685 672

Prime Minister of the FRY
Predsednik Savezne Vlade
Dr Momir Bulatovic
Bulevar Mihaila Pupina 2
11070 Beograd, FR Yugoslavia
Fax: + 381 11 636 775 or + 381 11 659 682
email: momir.bulatovic@gov.yu
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Director of the prison
Upravnik (Director)
KPD Zabela
12000 Pozarevac
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Please send copies of your letters to diplomatic representatives of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia accredited to your country.