

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 11/11/96

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 10 per Section.

9 May 1996

Further information (3) on UA 50/96 (EUR 11/03/96, 28 February 1996) and follow-ups (EUR 11/04/96, 11 March and EUR 11/07/96, 21 March) - Possible prisoners of conscience

ALBANIA (1) Sulejman Rrahman Mekollari, Dilaver Ibrahim Dauti, Lirim Servet Veliu and Gani Koro  
(2) Elvira Shapllo (f), Vladimir Qiriaqi, Jani Bardho and Thoma Ngjelo  
(3) Sami Meta, Kristaq Mosko, Timoshenko Pekmezi and Tare Isufi

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It has been reported that in April 1996 the Court of Appeal confirmed the sentences passed on Sulejman Mekollari, Dilaver Dauti, Lirim Veliu and Gani Koro by the district court of Saranda on 17 March 1996. The Court of Appeal found these defendants guilty of anti-constitutional activity and confirmed their sentences as follows (please note corrections to sentences as given in EUR 11/07/96): Sulejman Mekollari - four years' imprisonment; Lirim Veliu - two years' imprisonment; Gani Koro - three years' imprisonment suspended for 18 months. The available information suggests that these three men are prisoners of conscience, imprisoned for the non-violent exercise of their right to freedom of expression. The Appeal Court also confirmed the sentence of Dilaver Dauti, the fourth defendant - two and a half years' imprisonment. He, however, is reported to have escaped from house arrest and to have left the country.

On 16 April 1996 the district court of Gjirokaster acquitted Elvira Shapllo, Vladimir Qiriaqi, Jani Bardho and Thoma Ngjelo of charges of "distributing anti-constitutional materials" and ruled that the City Council which had commissioned the tourist guidebook (on which the charges were based) should decide whether to make it available for sale or not. (It reportedly is on sale.)

The prosecution, which had called for prison sentences for all the defendants and a ban on distribution of the guide, has reportedly appealed against the court's verdict.

Amnesty International has as yet no further information on the case of Sami Meta and co-defendants.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Italian, English or French or in your own language:**

- welcoming the acquittal of Elvira Shapllo and her co-defendants by the district court of Gjirokaster on 16 April;
- expressing concern that sentences imposed on Sulejman Mekollari and three co-defendants for anti-constitutional activity were confirmed on appeal;
- noting that the available information suggests that these four men, whatever their political beliefs, did not advocate violence and urging that, if this is the case, the three who remain detained be released;
- expressing concern about the detention of Sami Meta and three other men in Tirana on charges of "anti-constitutional activity" and urging their release, if - as it appears - they did not advocate violence;

**if possible also:**

- call for changes to Articles 224 and 225 of the Criminal Code so as to ensure that they criminalize only those activities which clearly involve the use or advocacy of violence.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of Albania

Dr Sali Berisha

President i Republikës

se Shqiperisë

Tirana, Albania

**Faxes: +355 42 33761 or +355 42 28 8420**

**Telegrams: President Berisha, Tirana, Albania**

**Salutation: Dear President**

Minister of Justice

Mr Hektor Frasheri

Ministria e Drejtësisë

Tirana, Albania

**Telegrams: Mr Frasheri Ministria e Drejtësisë, Tirana, Albania**

**Faxes: +355 42 28 359 (if voice, ask for fax)**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Procurator General

**Mr Alesh Dragoshi**

Prokuror i Përgjithëshëm

Tirana, Albania

**Telegrams: Prokuror i Përgjithëshëm**

**Salutation: Dear Procurator General**

**COPIES TO:**

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Dr Alfred Serreqi

Minister i Punëve të Jashtme

Tiranë, Albania

**The Albanian Helsinki Committee**

Komiteti Shqiptar i Helsinkit

Qendra Nderkombetare e kultures, Dhoma no.35

Bulevardi "Deshmoret e kombit"

Tirana, Albania.

and to diplomatic representatives of Albania accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office if sending appeals after 30 June 1996.