

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: EUR 48/15/90
Distr: UA/SC
28 September 1990

Further information of UA 388/90 (EUR 48/14/90, 25 September) - Arrest of ethnic Albanian officials

YUGOSLAVIA: Jusuf ZEJNULLAHU
 Seladin SKEJA
 Muhamet BICAJ
 Jusuf KARAKUSHI
 Isa MUSTAFA
 Lek VUKSANI
 Agim MALAJ
 Raif RAMBAJA
 Nazif MATOSHI
 Ismail SAHITI
 Fatos PULA

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Four members of the Assembly of Kosovo province were reported as being arrested on 17 September. On 21 September a further six people, former Kosovo government officials, were also reported as being arrested, also Agim Malaj, a former director of Pristina television. It was thought that they were all charged with having formed a group aiming to change unconstitutionally the borders of Serbia and proclaim Kosovo province a republic.

According to press reports dated 26 September Jusuf Zejnullahu, Isa Mustafa, Jusuf Karakushi, Muhamet Bicaaj and Agim Malaj are not in detention although warrants for their arrest have been issued. Agim Malaj is reportedly abroad, the others are believed to be in the republics of Slovenia and Croatia, and it seems unlikely that they will be handed over to the Serbian authorities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Kosovo province, where over 85 per cent of the population are ethnic Albanians, lies in the south of the republic of Serbia, of which it is a constituent part. In 1989 there were wide-spread demonstrations after constitutional changes limited the province's autonomy and gave greater powers to Serbia. Since then over 60 ethnic Albanians have died in violent incidents with security forces brought into Kosovo to quell protest against Serbian policies in the province.

On 2 July ethnic Albanian members of the Kosovo Assembly declared Kosovo an independent unit within the Yugoslav federation. On 5 July Serbia responded by suspending the Kosovo parliament and government and taking over full control of the province. Since then thousands of ethnic Albanians have been dismissed from their jobs and Kosovo's one daily newspaper in Albanian and almost all television broadcasts in Albanian have been banned. Independent trade union officials who declared a strike to protest against these measures have been jailed for up to 60 days. On 7 September ethnic Albanian members of the dissolved Kosovo Assembly met clandestinely and adopted a constitution designating Kosovo a republic within the Yugoslav federation.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/Telexes/Faxes/Airmail letters:

- urging that criminal proceedings be dropped against Jusuf Zejnullahu, Isa Mustafa, Jusuf Karakushi, Muhamet Bicaaj and Agim Malaj;

- urging again the immediate and unconditional release of the remaining six people on the grounds that they are prisoners of conscience.

APPEALS TO:**President of the SFRJ Presidency:**

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Telegrams: SFRJ President, Beograd, Yugoslavia
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Federal Secretary of Justice:

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Bulevar Lenjina 2
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Telegrams SFRJ Justice Secretary, Beograd, Yugoslavia
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President of the Serbian Presidency:

Slobodan Milosevic
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Serbian Secretary of Justice:

Sreten Vladislavljevic
Republicki sekretar za pravosudje
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COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of Yugoslavia in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 November 1990.