

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 70/05/96

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 20 per Section.

UA 77/96

Arbitrary detention / Ill-treatment

20 March 1996

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA Ali Sadriu, political activist
(Kosovo Province)

Sami Dugolli, farmer
Zenun Dugolli
Ragip Heseti, head teacher

Habib Haziri, teacher
Raif Rushiti, humanitarian worker
Xhelal Rushiti
Hysni Baftiu, head teacher
Nazif Salihu, religious leader
Mahmut Mahmuti, religious leader
Isak Haxhiu, student
Xhavit Rama, student
Shaban Feka
Syleman Zuka

and other ethnic Albanians

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about reports of a recent escalation of police violence against ethnic Albanians in and around the town of Štimlje in Kosovo province. Local human rights activists claim that in February 1996 some 70 people were searched for arms or arrested for questioning and that many were ill-treated, some severely. The situation has reportedly been as bad or worse in the first half of March.

Police have carried out arms raids in many villages in the area, and have arbitrarily detained many men for questioning about their political or educational activities. A number of people have reportedly been beaten in police custody in Štimlje or Uroševac before being released, usually without charge. There have also been reports that police officers have in some cases explicitly urged those under arrest to leave Kosovo: several people are reported to have done so as a result of police intimidation.

Among those who have been arrested is Ali Sadriu, a leading local activist of the *Lidhja Demokratike ë Kosovës* (LDK), the main political party representing ethnic Albanians in the province, who was reportedly arrested on 6 March and taken to police headquarters in nearby Uroševac where he was held for two hours, questioned about his political activities and beaten. He reportedly lost consciousness and suffered injuries for which he required subsequent medical treatment.

Between December 1995 and March 1996 Sami Dugolli was repeatedly detained by police in Štimlje and at least on some occasions severely ill-treated. To escape further ill-treatment he has reportedly fled his home. His brother, Zenun, is also reported to have been detained several times and ill-treated.

Ethnic Albanian teachers who have refused to teach according to curricula laid down by the Serbian authorities and who hold classes for ethnic Albanian children, often in private schools, have also been recently arrested and questioned. They include Ragip Heseti, head of a primary school in Štimlje who was reportedly ill-treated on 6 March and Habib Haziri, a teacher at a

primary school, who is said to have been summoned for questioning almost every day in the first two weeks of March 1996.

Others who are reported to have been recently detained for up to 10 or 12 hours include Raif Rushiti, who works for a humanitarian organization, "Mother Theresa", his brother, Xhelal Rushiti, Hysni Baftiu, head of a middle school in Štimlje, local religious leaders - imams Nazif Salihu and Mahmut Mahmuti - and Isak Haxhiu, Xhavit Rama, Shaban Feka (who is an invalid) and Syleman Zuka. Some of these, including Syleman Zuka and Xhavit Rama, have reportedly been beaten or otherwise ill-treated.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In July 1990 the Serbian parliament suspended the Kosovo parliament and government after ethnic Albanian deputies of the Kosovo parliament declared Kosovo independent of the Republic of Serbia. Since then most ethnic Albanians have refused to recognize Serbia's authority in the province and a number of "parallel" institutions (in particular in the fields of local government, education and medicine) have been established by ethnic Albanians. Since the outbreak of armed conflict in former Yugoslavia in 1991 police have almost daily conducted arms searches in the homes of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo province, in the course of which they have frequently resorted to violence, regardless of whether illegal arms have been found or not. Although these arms searches take place throughout the province, certain areas appear to be particularly targeted at certain periods. This appears to be the case at the moment around Štimlje.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, French or German, or your own language:

- expressing deep concern about recent reports of arbitrary arrests of ethnic Albanians in Štimlje municipality and about reports that some have been severely beaten or otherwise ill-treated by police (give names);
- urging the authorities to initiate a prompt, independent and impartial inquiry into these allegations of arbitrary detention and ill-treatment;
- noting that torture and other ill-treatment are prohibited both under Yugoslav national law and under international law;
- urging, therefore, that any persons found to be responsible for ill-treatment be brought to justice;
- urging that police officers be informed of, and required to uphold, international standards for law enforcement.

APPEALS TO

1. Chief of police, Uroševac

Na_elnik
Sekretarijat Unutrašnjih Poslova
382230 Uroševac, AP Kosovo i Metohija
Yugoslavia

Telegrams: Nacelnik SUP-a, Uroševac, APKM, Yugoslavia

Salutation: Dear Chief of Police

2. Prefect of Kosovo district

Na_elnik Kosovskog okruga
38000 Priština, AP Kosovo i Metohija, Yugoslavia

Faxes: +381 38 27791

Telegrams: Nacelnik Kosovskog Okruga, Priština, APKM, Yugoslavia

Salutation: Dear Prefect

3. Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia

Zoran Sokolovi_

Ministar Unutrašnjih Poslova Republike Srbije

Kneza Miloša 101, 11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia

Faxes: +381 11 683 041 or 685 937

Telegrams: MUP Srbije, Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

1. Committee for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms, Priština:

Xhavit Mitrovica 15, 38000 Priština, Yugoslavia

2. The district public prosecutor of Priština

Okru_ni javni tu_ilac, 38000 Priština, AP Kosovo i Metohija, Yugoslavia

and to diplomatic representatives of Yugoslavia accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 May 1996.