

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 70/39/96

UA 292/96 Death after custody / Fear of ill-treatment 16 December 1996

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA Feriz BLAKÇORI, teacher, aged 34

On 10 December 1996, Feriz Blakçori, an ethnic Albanian primary school teacher and political activist from Kosovo province, died in Priština hospital, reportedly after being arrested and ill-treated by police. As human rights activists in Kosovo province continue to report almost daily incidents of police brutality against detained ethnic Albanians, the authorities must take immediate and effective steps to ensure the safety of such detainees.

Reports indicate that Feriz Blakçori was arrested in the early hours of 9 December after police found a rifle during an arms search at his family home in Priština, the capital of Kosovo province. The same day he was taken by police to Priština hospital where he was admitted to the intensive care unit in a critical condition. According to a medical certificate issued by the hospital, on admission he was in a state of severe traumatic shock, with bruising visible on his back, legs and buttocks. He died at 9.45am the following day, Human Rights Day.

Members of a local human rights organization who saw his body after it was returned to his family have stated that he also had bruises and/or cuts on his head, abdomen, hands, thigh and soles of his feet. His death certificate reportedly attributes his death to cardiorespiratory insufficiency due to severe shock provoked by bruising to the head and body.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Local human rights activists continue to report almost daily incidents in which police have arrested and beaten ethnic Albanians - often, but not always, in the context of arms searches. Since the outbreak of armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia these searches have been systematically carried out by police in the homes of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Police have also frequently arrested and questioned, and sometimes ill-treated, ethnic Albanians working in education and active members of ethnic Albanian political parties. In the first week of December 1996 there were at least eight such incidents; in two of these cases the victims allegedly lost consciousness due to ill-treatment, and in another case, the victim, Muhabi Ademi, a medical student, was allegedly ill-treated because he had informed the local press of his previous ill-treatment by police.

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

- expressing grave concern about reports of the death on 10 December 1996 of Feriz Blakçori, allegedly as a result of ill-treatment by police. Refer to medical reports which indicate that his death was caused by severe shock provoked by bruising to his head and body;
- calling for a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the cause of his death and urging that if it is found that police ill-treatment caused or contributed to it, that the officers responsible be brought to justice;
- further, urging that all such allegations of ill-treatment of citizens by police be properly investigated, and that explicit instructions be issued to members of police forces to act in accordance with international standards for law enforcement, in particular the *United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials*, which states in Article 5: "No law enforcement official

may inflict, instigate or tolerate any act of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment..."

APPEALS TO:

1) President of the Republic of Serbia

Slobodan Milošević
Predsednik Republike Srbije
Andrijev venac 1
11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia

Faxes: +381 11 682 167 or 656 862

Telegrams: President Milosevic, Beograd, Yugoslavia

Salutation: Dear President

2) Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia

Zoran Sokolovic
Ministar Unutrasnjih Poslova Republike Srbije
Kneza Milosa 101, 11000 Beograd, Republic of Yugoslavia

Faxes: +381 11 683 041 or 685 937

Telegrams: MUP Srbije, Beograd, Yugoslavia

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Committee for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms, Pristina

Xhavit Mitrovica 15,
38000 Pristina, Yugoslavia

NGO Information Centre

Avalska 9,
11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia

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and to diplomatic representatives of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 January 1997.