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Federal Republic of Yugoslavia -- Kosovo: Amnesty International reports from the field

Serbian Security forces continue their campaign of civilian killings, arbitrary detention and forcible expulsion, Amnesty International field researchers said today.

Findings by the Amnesty International research missions in Albania and Macedonia point to a systematic pattern of forcible expulsions of ethnic Albanians from villages, with people being subjected to death threats, beatings and killings by Serbian police and paramilitaries.

Reports of Serbian police demanding documents and money from individuals as they were forced from their homes or driven across the border into Macedonia also continue undiminished. The most harrowing accounts so far collected by Amnesty International delegates include:

- **The killing of Shkëlqim Ymeri**, a student in his late teens from the village of Blja_ (Blaç), in southwestern Kosovo. He was travelling in a column of vehicles towards Albania after soldiers had ordered all the village inhabitants to leave. On their journey they were intercepted by armed men. According to a witness who reported being threatened at gunpoint and beaten, Shkëlqim Ymeri was knocked out of the vehicle he was travelling in by a gun butt, and shot in the head twice.
- **The killing -- reported by two informants -- of a group of 14 civilians** in the village of Ljubi_da (Lubisht i Hasit), about 20 miles northwest of Prizren. After an attack by Serbian forces on 31 March the population fled into the mountains, where they remained until 12 April. On that day villagers were surrounded by Serbian forces and 14 of them were killed in unclear circumstances. The survivors were forced to return to the villages, beaten and insulted while gunshots were fired above their heads. The men were separated from the others and some of them were detained for three days before being robbed of their money and identity documents, loaded onto buses along with the women and children and taken to the border with Albania. The whereabouts of the others remains unknown.
- **The summary execution of a number of civilians** in the villages around Izbica in north-central Kosovo in the course of a Serbian offensive during the last week of March 1999. Witnesses reported collecting between 150 and 200 bodies from the area, which they subsequently buried in several grave sites in the area. Although those buried included members of the KLA who had died in combat, there are strong indications that others died as the result of indiscriminate attacks on the part of Serbian forces, or were extrajudicially executed. Amnesty International is continuing to seek further information concerning these incidents.

Amnesty International researchers are continuing their fact-finding missions and will be issuing further reports in the coming days. ENDS.../