

UA 269/99 Ill-treatment/denial of medical care/possible prisoners of conscience

7 October 1999

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA (FRY)

**Svetozar Rajkovi\_**, journalist  
**Bogoljub Arsenijevi\_**, artist and opposition activist

Journalist Svetozar Rajkovi\_ was reportedly beaten unconscious by police and later sentenced to 30 days' imprisonment, after taking part in a peaceful anti-government protest in the capital, Belgrade, on 4 October 1999.

Svetozar Rajkovi\_ is editor-in-chief of the *Trade Union Representative (Sindikalni Poverenik)*. According to the umbrella opposition group which organized the protest, Alliance for Change (*Savez za promene*), he was attacked by a group of police officers and beaten unconscious outside St Mark's Church in the city centre on his way home from the 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive day of protests.

On 7 October an imprisoned government opponent, Bogoljub Arsenijevi\_, reportedly began a hunger strike in protest against the inadequate medical care for the severe injuries he sustained at the hands of the police officers who arrested him on 17 August. Mr Arsenijevi\_, an artist and leader of the Valjevo Citizen's Resistance (*Gradjanski Otpor Valjeva, GOV*), was sentenced for his part in organizing an anti-government demonstration of approximately 15,000 people in the city of Valjevo on 12 July, during which several civilians and three policemen were injured.

Earlier reports of police ill-treatment during the recent protests do not appear to have been investigated, and those responsible have not been brought to justice.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the end of the NATO air strikes in June this year tens of thousands of people have taken part in anti-government demonstrations across Serbia, calling on FRY President Slobodan Miloševi\_, indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, to resign.

Demonstrations in Belgrade at the end of September were violently broken up by riot police using truncheons and water cannon. Some members of the news media were beaten and their cameras destroyed and several demonstrators were detained.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, German, French, Russian or your own language: (please note that at present no mail is being delivered from the UK)**

- expressing deep concern at reports that police beat Svetozar Rajkovi\_ on 4 October;
- expressing concern at reports that Bogoljub Arsenijevi\_ was severely beaten by police during his arrest on 17 August, and urging that he immediately be provided with adequate medical care;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that all allegations of ill-treatment by police are immediately, thoroughly and impartially investigated, and those responsible brought to justice;

- emphasising that Articles 19 and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (to which Yugoslavia is a state party) guarantee the rights of freedom of expression and assembly respectively;
- urging the immediate and unconditional release of anyone who remains in detention for the non-violent exercise of their right to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression.

**APPEALS TO:**

**President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**

Slobodan Milošević\_  
Predsednik SRJ  
Bulevar Mihaila Pupina 2  
11070 Beograd, Yugoslavia  
**Fax: + 381 11 636 775**  
**Telex: 11062 siv yu**  
**e-mail: slobodan.milosevic@gov.yu**  
**Salutation: Dear President**

**Federal Minister of Internal Affairs**

Zoran Sokolović\_  
Ministar za unutrašnje poslove  
Savezno ministarstvo za unutrašnje poslove  
Bulevar Mihaila Pupina 2  
11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia  
**Fax: + 381 11 361 7730**  
**e-mail: zoran.sokolovic@gov.yu**  
**Salutation:**

**COPIES TO:**

**Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs**

Ministar za inostrane poslove  
Zivadin Jovanović\_  
Savezno ministarstvo za inostrane poslove  
Kneza Miloša 24-26  
11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**  
**Fax: + 381 11 367 2954**  
**Telex: 11173**  
**e-mail: zivadin.jovanovic@gov.yu**

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 4 November 1999.