

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Extrajudicial Killing/
Torture Concern

27 February 1991

ALBANIA

On 22 February at least 15 people were wounded during and shortly after a shooting incident outside the Military Academy in Tirana in which at least three people died, one of them a policeman. Unofficial sources have alleged that some of those wounded were not on the streets at the time of this incident but in their own homes where they were assaulted by members of the security forces. Among those reportedly injured are several children, one of whom is dangerously ill.

Two days later, on the evening of 24 February, a young man (a civilian) was reportedly shot by an army patrol and another wounded after they refused to show their identity cards. A local human rights organization has called for an investigation into the conduct of army patrols. Between 22 and 25 February over 100 people (according to some sources many more) were arrested in Tirana.

Human rights activists have said that they have received complaints that some of those arrested were tortured. By 26 February at least 67 of those arrested had been released.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to official reports the events of 22 February took place after hostile crowds had gathered outside the Military Academy in Tirana as talks took place inside between representatives of political parties, the Ministries of Defence and of Internal Affairs, and the media. These talks took place at the request of a group of officers and cadets calling themselves the "Initiating Commission of the Movement for the Defence of the Interests of the People and Homeland" who had demanded the reinstatement of the statue of Enver Hoxha, Albania's former leader, which had been torn down from its position in Tirana's main square by anti-communist crowds on 20 February. Official sources say that someone from the crowd outside the Academy fired a gun, killing a policeman, after which the security forces returned fire killing two civilians. The same day it was announced that Enver Hoxha's name would be removed from the title of Tirana university, in response to a demand by striking students, and President Alia said he was forming a new government and a presidential council to run the country until elections on 31 March. The following day there were further demonstrations, and there are unconfirmed reports of arrests in Vlore, Korçe, and of deaths in clashes between demonstrators and police in the towns of Fier and Berat. According to a statement by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, on 24 February an army officer was reportedly killed inside the Academy complex by gunfire coming from a building overlooking the Academy.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at allegations that on 22 February, after shooting took place outside the Military Academy, in which three people were killed, security forces assaulted and injured several people who were not present at this incident but in their own homes. Further, that on 24 February an army patrol reportedly shot and killed a young man and wounded another after they refused to show their identity cards;

- urging an investigation into these allegations by an independent body, which should publish its findings;

- urging a similar investigation into allegations that some people arrested

on 22 and 23 February in connection with public disturbances in Tirana were tortured.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Presidium of the People's Assembly:
 President Ramiz Alia
 Tirana
 The People's Socialist Republic of Albania

Telegrams: President Ramiz Alia, Tirana, Albania
Telexes: 4298 PKPRSSH AB

Prime Minister:
 Fatos Nano
 Kryetar i Keshilli i Ministrave
 Tirana
 The People's Socialist Republic of Albania

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Tirana, Albania
Telexes: 4201 KMRPSSH AB

Minister of Internal Affairs:
 Gramoz Rucaj
 Minister i Punëve të
 Mbrendëshme
 Tirana
 The People's Socialist Republic of Albania

Telegrams: Internal Minister, Tirana, Albania
Telexes: 2164 MPJ AB (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Minister of Justice:
 Dashamir Kore
 Minister i Drejtësisë
 Tirana
 The People's Socialist Republic of Albania

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Tirana, Albania
Telexes: 2164 MPJ AB (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs:
 Muhamet Kapllani
 Ministria e Puneve te Jashtme
 Tirana, Albania

and to diplomatic representatives of Albania in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 April 1991.