

AI Index: EUR 48/05/92

EXTERNAL

8 September 1992

Desimir Randjelovi_ and Zoran Joni_ are both reserve officers of the JNA (Federal Yugoslavian army) stationed in the army barracks in the Serbian town of Niš. On 16 October 1991 they, together with some five other reserve officers and several hundreds of reservists, were given the order to depart for Croatia and take part in the civil war going on there. All men, including the officers, spontaneously refused to carry out the order. The officer in command who had issued the order then called all reserve officers, amongst which Randjelovi_ and Joni_, in his office and ordered them to get their men ready to go. This they did but the soldiers were still not prepared to go. The reserve officers then decided to share the men's decision not to go and did not as they were told to do by the officer in command divide the men in categories according to who was willing to go and who was not.

On 15 January 1992 the Military Court in Niš found both Desimir Randjelovi_ and Zoran Joni_ guilty of "not carrying out and refusing to carry out orders" (Art. 201 para 1 of the Penal Code of the SFRJ), and sentenced Randjelovi_ to six and Joni_ to four months imprisonment. On 27 August 1992 both men were forcibly transported to Leskovac prison by policemen.

Amnesty International believes that both Desimir Randjelovi_ and Zoran Joni_ in agreeing with their soldiers not to obey orders to be taken to Croatia and take part in the civil war have used their right to conscientious objection to military service.