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EXTERNAL

24 September 1991

@Habib SHEHU, an ethnic Albanian from Kosovo

£YUGOSLAVIA

**Habib Shehu, chairman of the Kacanik Branch of the Kosovo Democratic Alliance, was arrested on 7 September in Kacanik while he was giving a speech at a celebration of the first anniversary of the proclamation in Kacanik of the "Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo".**

**Shortly afterwards he was sentenced to 60 days' imprisonment, apparently on charges of "disturbing law and order". He was immediately sent to start serving his sentence. His arrest and imprisonment reportedly provoked a peaceful demonstration on 8 September by several thousand citizens who walked through the town centre.**

#### **Background**

**On 7 September 1990 ethnic Albanian deputies of the Kosovo assembly (suspended by the Serbian assembly in July 1990) met clandestinely and adopted a constitution proclaiming Kosovo a republic within the Yugoslav federation. Later that month four deputies were arrested and charged under Article 116 of the federal criminal code with having aimed to change Serbia's borders unconstitutionally and proclaim Kosovo province a republic. They were released in October. Similar charges were also brought against several members of the Kosovo government (also suspended in July) and a former director of Pristina television. (So far all are free although charges against them have not, to Amnesty International's knowledge, been dropped.)**

**Amnesty International's concern: Amnesty International is concerned that Habib Shehu has been arrested and imprisoned as a result of his non-violent exercise of the right to freedom of expression. This freedom is guaranteed in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which was ratified by Yugoslavia in 1971. Amnesty International considers Habib Shehu to be a prisoner of conscience and is appealing to the Yugoslav authorities for his immediate and unconditional release.**