

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 421/91 DEATH AFTER ILL-TREATMENT IN CUSTODY

3 December 1991

YUGOSLAVIA Ali Sahit HAXHIU

The body of Ali Sahit Haxhiu was handed over to his family on 27 November 1991 by the police. He had been arrested on 25 November 1991.

Ali Sahit Haxhiu, (aged 46), father of 10 children, was born in the village of Salaj in the Kukës district of Albania. Recently, he was living as a refugee in the village of Sazli near Uroševac in Kosovo province in southern Serbia. In May 1990 Ali Sahit Haxhiu was sentenced to 30 days' imprisonment for a petty offence but was not sent immediately to serve this sentence. At 7pm on 25 November he was arrested by police in Uroševac and held in the town police headquarters where he was allegedly brutally beaten. His family was reportedly informed by the authorities that he had been sent on 26 November to a prison in Priština to serve his sentence and was found dead by a prison guard 15 minutes after his arrival. On 27 November his body was handed over to his family who have alleged that his entire body was heavily bruised and that several of his teeth had been broken.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Over the past year Amnesty International has continued to receive almost daily reports of incidents in which police have beaten or otherwise ill-treated ethnic Albanians in Kosovo province.

In January and February 1990 there were violent clashes between police and ethnic Albanian demonstrators in many parts of Kosovo province after ethnic Albanians, who form 85 per cent of the province's population, called for more independence from the Republic of Serbia. In July 1990 the Serbian parliament suspended the Kosovo parliament and government after ethnic Albanian members of the Kosovo parliament declared Kosovo independent from the Republic of Serbia. Thousands of ethnic Albanians who refused to declare their approval for these measures by the Serbian authorities have since lost their jobs, including university staff.

In April 1990 the Serbian authorities took over responsibility for law and order in Kosovo province. Extra police from Serbia were brought into Kosovo and ethnic Albanian police officers whose loyalty or professional competence were judged to be suspect were dismissed. In September 1990 Serbia adopted a new constitution which deprived its two provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina, of most of their autonomy. Schools in Kosovo province which have refused to teach a curriculum set by the Republic of Serbia have been closed and teachers dismissed.

The death of Ali Sahit Haxhiu following detention in police custody is to Amnesty International's knowledge the second such death in Kosovo province within a month. On 11 November an ethnic Albanian, Mikel Marku, died reportedly as a result of head injuries sustained when he was arrested and beaten by police in Pe\_ on 21 October 1991 (See EXTRA 79/91, EUR 48/25/91, 12 November 1991).

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/faxes/airmail letters:**

- expressing concern that Ali Sahit Haxhiu, an Albanian citizen living in Sazli near Uroševac, died on 26 November 1991 reportedly as a result of ill-treatment by police officers received while in detention in Uroševac on the night of 25/26 November 1991;

- urging an independent and impartial investigation into the circumstances of his death and that the methods and findings of this investigation be made public;
- urging that those responsible for the death of Ali Sahit Haxhiu be brought to justice;
- stating that Amnesty International receives frequent allegations that police in Kosovo province have beaten or otherwise ill-treated ethnic Albanians and urging that police be informed about, and required to conform to, internationally-recognised standards as laid down in the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials;
- noting that Yugoslavia ratified the UN Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment on 10 September 1991 and urging that the provisions of this convention be respected.

**APPEALS TO**

1. President of the Republic of Serbia:

Slobodan Milošević  
Predsednik Republike Srbije  
Maršala Tita 14  
11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia

**Dear President**

**Telegrams: President of Serbia Slobodan Milosevic, Belgrade, Yugoslavia**

**Faxes: + 38 11 682 167**

2. Minister of Internal Affairs of Serbia:

Zoran Sokolović  
Ministar Unutrašnjih Poslova Srbije  
Kneza Miloša 101  
11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia

**Dear Minister**

**Telegrams: Serbia Internal Affairs Minister, Belgrade, Yugoslavia**

**Faxes: + 38 11 682 167**

3. Secretary for Internal Affairs for Kosovo Province:

Sekretar

**Dear Secretary**

Pokrajinski Sekretarijat za unutrašnje poslove  
Kragujeva\_ka 4  
38000 Priština, Yugoslavia

**Telegrams: Sekretar, Pokrajinski SUP, Pristina, Yugoslavia**

4. Chief of Police of Uroševac police station:

Na\_elnik

**Dear Sir**

SUP  
Maršala Tita bb  
38230 Uroševac, Yugoslavia

**Telegrams: Nacelnik, SUP, Urosevac, Yugoslavia**

**COPIES TO:**

Federal Secretary of Justice:

Dr Vlado Kambovski  
Savezni Sekretarijat za  
Pravosudje  
Omladinskih Brigada 1  
Beograd, Yugoslavia

President of the Committee for the  
Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms:

Adem Demaçi  
Xhavit Mitrovica 15  
38000 Priština  
Yugoslavia

and to diplomatic representatives of Yugoslavia in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 January 1992.