

AI Index: EUR 63/09/93

EXTERNAL

Bosnia-Herzegovina

2 April 1993

Raš_ani

A group of about 240 Serbs, almost all women, children or men above military age have been detained by Bosnian Croatian forces since autumn 1992 in the village of Raš_ani near Tomislavgrad in Croatian-held territory in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Many are natives of the village, while others earlier took shelter there from nearby villages or were forcibly moved there by Croatian forces. The road to and from the village is reportedly guarded by members of the Croatian Defence Council (HVO). The villagers' movement is severely restricted although reportedly they may go to the nearby town of Tomislavgrad if they get the permission of the HVO.

The villagers have told the HVO authorities, representatives of Amnesty International and other international organizations that they wish to leave the area for Serbian-controlled territory. HVO higher command reportedly agreed to release the villagers following representations made by international agencies in autumn 1992. The villagers were not, however, released, reportedly because local HVO authorities wanted the villagers to remain in the area as a safeguard against further bombardment by Serbian forces. Subsequent attempts to negotiate their release have been unsuccessful.

In an article in the *New York Times* of 22 January 1993 it was reported that the Bosnian Croats had refused to let the villagers leave with their husbands, sons and fathers in late October 1992 although they were ready to pack their belongings and board waiting buses. According to the Tomislavgrad commander of the HVO, the Serb villagers were held because Bosnian Serbs had refused to return Croatian prisoners from this area.

AI concern: Amnesty International is concerned that the Serbs in Raš_ani are civilians who are being held, because of their ethnic origin, in a form of administrative detention as hostages. It calls for the lifting of restrictions on their movements and for all those who wish to leave HVO-controlled territory to be evacuated under the supervision of international

5 April 1993

Dr Ejup STATOVCI

YUGOSLAVIA - KOSOVO

Dr Ejup Emina Statovci (51 years old), a lecturer at the Faculty of Law at the University of Priština, is an ethnic Albanian from Kosovo province in southern Serbia.

On 23 March 1993, Dr Statovci received a phone call from a Serbian official at Priština police station to report there immediately, which he did. At the police station he was arrested and taken to Priština prison to serve the remainder of a 60-days' prison sentence which he had started in January last year.

On 22 January 1992, Dr Statovci was arrested and sentenced to 60 days' imprisonment by the court for petty offences in Priština for having "insulted and belittled the social and political order of Yugoslavia and the moral and patriotic feelings of its citizens" according to Article 18, paragraph 1 of the "Law on Public Law and Order" of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija. He reportedly had written to the Serbian rector of the University, Radivoje Papovi_, and asked him to resume education in the Albanian language for ethnic Albanian students, which had effectively ended in late 1991. Dr Statovci was immediately imprisoned but subsequently released as the lower court's decision was annulled by the Serbian Supreme Court¹. By that time he had spent 11 days in prison.

However, on 24 June 1992, the same court reportedly revoked its decision, annulling its previous annulment. Dr Statovci has now been rearrested to serve the rest of his sentence. The court reportedly did not notify Dr Statovci of this decision, which is final without the possibility of further appeal.

Reason for Amnesty International concern:

Amnesty International is concerned that Dr Ejup Statovci has been rearrested and imprisoned as a result of his non-violent exercise of

¹See for more background to this case EERAN 02/92 (EUR 48/06/92) and EERAN 02/92 UPDATE (EUR 48/02/92A).

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 him to be a prisoner of conscience and is appealing for his immediate and unconditional release. agencies.