

EXTERNAL

AI Index:EUR 63/26/95

This is a limited action. Please restrict to 15 appeals per section.

EXTRA 134/95

Arbitrary detention

7 November 1995

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

David Rohde, journalist, US national

US journalist David Rohde has been detained by the Bosnian Serb *de facto* authorities since 29 October 1995. His reports about human rights abuses in the Srebrenica area may be the reason for his detention.

On 29 October David Rohde, correspondent for the Boston-based newspaper *The Christian Science Monitor*, was travelling alone from Sarajevo into Bosnian Serb-held territory. He was reportedly going there in order to follow up on his earlier coverage of alleged unlawful killings by the Bosnian Serb forces during the fall of Srebrenica in July and suspected mass grave sites associated with the killings.

He was reportedly detained on charges of altering his press credentials and taking photographs in illegal places. He was held in unacknowledged detention for five days before the Bosnian Serb news agency SRNA reported that he was detained in Zvornik on the border with Serbia.

A US diplomat was allowed to see the imprisoned journalist on 5 November. David Rohde is reported to be serving a 15-day prison sentence, but it is unclear whether he will be released automatically and unconditionally. He has been allowed to telephone his family.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Other journalists have been detained by the Bosnian Serb *de facto* authorities for apparently arbitrary reasons. In April 1995 a Swiss woman journalist of Bosnian origin, Marija Wernle-Mati_ and a Swiss writer, Simon Gerber, who were visiting Sarajevo as part of a cultural delegation were detained in the Bosnian Serb-controlled part of Sarajevo for one month until they were released against a "bail" payment. They were reportedly charged with "spreading anti-Serbian propaganda" on the basis of written material allegedly found on them. A Bosnian Muslim journalist, Namik Berberovi_, was also detained for two months from January for similar reasons.

In October 1995 two Turkish journalists, Munire Acim (f) and Ali Koçak, were detained in Sarajevo. They may have been taken as hostages to be exchanged for a Bosnian Serb journalist, Saša Kolevski and his driver, Goran Pej_inovi_, who were detained by Bosnian Government forces in September. The two Bosnian Serb men were killed in detention. Their bodies were exchanged for the Turkish journalists.

Up to 75 journalists or media personnel have been killed in the former Yugoslavia since 1991. Some of them were deliberately killed.

Staff working for international humanitarian aid agencies have also been subject to arbitrary detention by the Bosnian Serb *de facto* authorities during 1995.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send faxes in English, French, German or your own language:

- expressing concern about reports of the arbitrary detention of US journalist, David Rohde;

- calling for his immediate and unconditional release;
- urging that steps be taken to ensure that journalists or staff of international organizations involved in delivering humanitarian assistance and human rights monitoring are not subject to arbitrary detention or restrictions upon their movements.

APPEALS TO:

Representative of the Bosnian Serb de facto authorities - faxes only

Dr Radovan Karad_i_
Pale, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Faxes: +381 71 783 566; + 381 71 783 497

Salutation: Dear Dr Karad_i_

Please note that the international telephone code given above is for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (381). The code for Bosnia-Herzegovina (387) should not be used. Connections may be difficult to obtain and persistence may be necessary. If there is recorded message in German saying "no connection under this area code", please try later.

President of the Republic of Serbia

Slobodan Miloševi_
Predsednik Republike Srbije
Andri_ev venac 1

11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia

Faxes: +381 11 682 167 or 656 862

Telegrams: Slobodan Miloševi_, Beograd, Yugoslavia

Salutation: Dear President

COPIES TO:

Office of *de facto* Bosnian Serb authorities in Belgrade
Biro Republike Srpske
Moše Pijade 8
11 000 Beograd
Yugoslavia

and to diplomatic representatives of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 December 1995.