

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 70/03/97

UA 37/97

Fear of further ill-treatment

3 February 1997

FEDERAL REPUBLIC

OF YUGOSLAVIA Vesna Peši_, parliamentary deputy

Ljubivoj (Ljuba) Tadi_, actor;

Sergei Karazy, cameraman, and others

On the night of 2-3 February 1997 police charged and beat demonstrators in Belgrade, the capital. Hospital officials are reported to have said that about 130 people, including 10 police officers, were injured, but that all but two had been treated and discharged. Among those injured was Vesna Peši_, leader of the opposition party *Civil Alliance*, one of the three parties making up the *Zajedno* (Together) coalition. Others named as injured included Ljubivoj (Ljuba) Tadi_, an actor, and a number of journalists. Sergei Karazy, a cameraman working for Reuters news agency, was among several television cameramen who were hit by police. A woman with a broken arm and a man whose nose and hand had sustained fractures remained in hospital for further treatment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For over two and a half months now demonstrators supporting *Zajedno*, and students, have been protesting against the annulment of election results in November 1996 in a number of major cities, among them Belgrade, which *Zajedno* claims to have won. This claim was supported in December by a fact-finding mission from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) which was invited by the government.

On the evening of 2 February police had been blocking a group of demonstrators who were attempting to cross Brankov Bridge from New Belgrade into the centre of the city in order to join up with other demonstrators for a nightly rally in the city centre. After a stand-off of several hours, around midnight police reportedly suddenly charged, hitting protesters with truncheons. The demonstration had reportedly been peaceful. At the time that Vesna Peši_ was hit by a police officer, a lawyer accompanying her had just informed police officers that she was a parliamentary deputy.

There were later clashes between police and demonstrators in the centre of town, and some protesters reportedly threw bricks, bottles and empty dustbins at police and set fire to car tyres. Police, with the aid of truncheons, water cannons and teargas, had reportedly dispersed protesters by about 2am on 3 February.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, French, German or Russian or your own language:

- expressing deep concern at reports that on the night of 2-3 February 1997 police attacked and beat protesters demonstrating peacefully at Brankov Bridge, among them Vesna Peši_ and Ljubivoj (Ljuba) Tadi_, and at reports of the beatings of journalists, among them Sergei Karazy;
- urging the authorities to desist from any further violence against peaceful demonstrators and emphasising that Articles 19 and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (which the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia recognizes as legally binding) guarantee the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly;
- calling for a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into these and other recent reports of ill-treatment by police of demonstrators in the towns

of Smederevo, Kragujevac, Kraljevo and Smederevska Palanka and for any officers found responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging the immediate and unconditional release of anyone who remains in detention for the non-violent exercise of his or her right to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic of Serbia
Predsednik Republike Srbije
Slobodan Milošević_
Andrijev venac 1
11000 Beograd, FR Yugoslavia
Fax: + 381 11 682 167 or 656 862
Telegrams: Predsednik Srbije, Beograd, Yugoslavia
Salutation: Dear President

Minister of Internal Affairs
Zoran Sokolović_
Ministar unutrašnjih poslova Republike Srbije
Kneza Miloša 101
11000 Beograd, FR Yugoslavia
Fax: +381 11 641 867 or 11 685 937
Telegrams: Ministar unutrašnjih poslova Srbije, Beograd, Yugoslavia
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

NGO Information Centre
Avalska 9,
11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia
Fax: +381 11 444 39 44

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 17 March 1997.