

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 288/94 Ill-treatment

3 August 1994

YUGOSLAVIA Fetah BERISHA, Kadri BERISHA, Ali MUHARREMI, Veli
ZYBERAJ and Rexhep KASTRATI

Fetah Berisha, his brother Kadri Berisha, Ali Muharremi, Veli Zyberaj and Rexhep Kastrati are ethnic Albanians from the village of Drenovac near Orahovac in Kosovo province. Fetah Berisha is chairman of the Orahovac branch of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), the main ethnic Albanian opposition party in Kosovo. All these men have recently been arrested and severely beaten by police, and as a result have required hospital treatment for their injuries.

Early in the morning of 29 July 1994 Fetah and Kadri Berisha and Ali Muharremi were arrested and taken to Orahovac police station where they were held until about 4pm. They were reportedly so severely beaten by police officers at the station that all three are presently undergoing treatment in the "Isa Grezda" hospital in the town of Djakovica. The condition of Fetah Berisha is reportedly particularly bad.

Earlier, on 22 July, Ali Muharremi was reportedly arrested and beaten by police, together with his brother Muharrem Muharremi and Veli Zyberaj. As a result of this beating Veli Zyberaj was admitted to hospital in Djakovica until 30 July.

Amnesty International knows of no reason for the arrest of these men, other than that Fetah Berisha is a local political activist.

Rexhep Kastrati and his two sons, Xhemajl and Besarti, were arrested on 11 July. Rexhep Kastrati was severely beaten by police and is said to be currently receiving treatment in Djakovica hospital.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Police violence has escalated in the predominantly Albanian-populated province of Kosovo since the beginning of 1994. Amnesty International daily learns of cases in which officers of the largely Serbian police force have beaten ethnic Albanians in police stations or while carrying out arms searches in their homes. Since 1990, when Serbia adopted a new constitution which deprived Kosovo province of most of its autonomy, most ethnic Albanians have refused to recognize Serbian authority in the province. The majority of teaching staff at secondary schools and Priština University have been dismissed from their posts after refusing to teach according to curricula set by the Serbian authorities. Teachers and members of ethnic Albanian political parties have been among the most frequent targets of police violence. For further information, please see Amnesty International's report: Yugoslavia: Police violence against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo province (AI Index: EUR 70/06/94).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes and airmail letters:

- expressing deep concern about reports that the above men have recently been beaten by police officers at Orahovac police station and as a result have been admitted to hospital in Djakovica for treatment of their injuries.

- urging the authorities to initiate a prompt, independent and impartial inquiry into the allegations of ill-treatment made in these cases and in many other recent cases involving ethnic Albanians;
- noting that torture and other ill-treatment are prohibited both under Yugoslav national law and under international law;
- urging, therefore, that any persons found to be responsible for ill-treatment be brought to justice;
- urging that police officers be informed of, and required to uphold, international standards for law enforcement.

APPEALS TO

Chief of police, Orahovac

Na_elnik

Sekretarijat Unutrašnjih Poslova

Orahovac, AP Kosovo i Metohija

Yugoslavia

Telegrams: Nacelnik SUP-a, Orahovac, APKM, Yugoslavia

Salutation: Dear Sir

Prefect of Prizren district

Na_elnik Prizrenskog okruga

Brankica Furjanovi_

38400 Prizren, AP Kosovo i Metohija,

Yugoslavia

Telegrams: Furjanovic, Nacelnik Okruga, Prizren, APKM, Yugoslavia

Salutation: Dear Sir

Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia

Zoran Sokolovi_

Ministar Unutrašnjih Poslova Republike Srbije

Kneza Miloša 101

11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia

Faxes: +381 11 683 041

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Federal Minister for Human Rights and Minority Affairs

Ms Margit Savovi_

Bulevar Lenjina 2

11070 Beograd

Yugoslavia

Committee for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms, Priština:

Xhavit Mitrovica 15

38000 Priština, Yugoslavia.

Director of Djakovica hospital

Direktor, Bolnica "Isa Grezda"

Djakovica

APKM, Yugoslavia

and to diplomatic representatives of 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 14 September 1994.