

**EXTERNAL**

November 1995

**\_ivojin Arambaši\_ - Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**

\_ivojin Arambaši\_ is a member of the youth section of the opposition Democratic Party, called "Democratic Youth". On 23 September 1995 he was arrested and severely beaten and injured by police officers at Vra\_ar police station in Belgrade. According to his own account and a statement issued by the President of the Democratic Youth, the background to his arrest and ill-treatment lay in a property dispute between \_ivojin Arambaši\_ and another family. It is reported that certain police officers at Vra\_ar police station, allegedly because of family links with \_ivojin Arambaši\_'s opponents, have repeatedly harassed \_ivojin Arambaši\_, his mother and wife.

\_ivojin Arambaši\_ has described the incident in a written statement:

"At 6.30pm on 23 September 1995 three police officers from Vra\_ar police station burst into my house at 19, Franc Rozman street. Without any explanation they grabbed me from behind and dragged me to the front door where they handcuffed me and began to ill-treat me. None of them wore an official badge - they put their badges on before we got into the police car. Two of them held me down while the third beat me about the head, back, stomach and chest. When I asked why they were doing this they responded by beating me even more severely. When I insisted that they explain to me why they were arresting and beating me and asked to see the arrest warrant, one of them replied: "You want the arrest warrant? Here you are!" and hit me on the stomach and head. After that they searched me from head to toe and asked me: "Where do you live? Where's your pistol? Your name and surname? The name of your mother, father, what is your job?" I told them that I live in 19, Franc Rozman street, to which they replied that I was lying, that it was a fiction that I lived there. While I was answering their questions one of them kept hitting me. While they were ill-treating me in this way, they dragged me to the police car which was parked about 50 metres from my house. There they thought to check my identity card, although they had already searched me and knew I did not have it on me. I explained that it was at home with my wife. I had another document on me with my details and the number of my identity card, but this did not satisfy them.

They took me to the police station in Vra\_ar and left me, handcuffed, to wait outside the office of the chief officer on duty. After some time they took me into the office where he approached me and slapped me as hard as he could without any explanation. In the meantime my wife and mother telephoned to ask what was happening and should they bring my identity card, to which he answered that this was not necessary, that he had no idea what was happening and not to worry, everything would be O.K. When he finished the telephone conversation, he turned to me and began to ask me questions about where

my wife lived. I asked him why this interested him and why he insisted so much on this. His questions were accompanied by slaps. I repeatedly demanded that he explain why he was behaving to me in this way, why I had been arrested, and why they were beating me. When I asked to make a telephone call, they replied that they didn't like my face, that I should be happy just to be alive and that I had no rights, not even to make a telephone call. In spite of my questions and requests they continued to beat me while asking where my wife was, at what address she lived, where I worked, who was my boss. All this time several police officers were present. They removed my jacket and carried out yet another detailed search, they read my visit cards, address book etc. When I asked for their names and surnames and their official numbers I received more blows and slaps for an answer. Since I had not told them where my wife was, they took me outside into the corridor and handcuffed me to a table leg. After some time the chief officer on duty came out of his office and said to me: "Even criminals have better manners than you; you are just a creep, you disgust me, just to look at you disgusts me", and then he came up to me and began to slap me with both hands at once and to punch me with both fists in turns in the area of the breastbone. Then he turned and gave orders that I be confined to custody until the following day, after which he left. A police officer escorted me to a cell and locked me up. After a long time, when another chief officer came on duty, I was taken back to the office where he and my mother were waiting. When we asked to be informed why this had happened, he answered that he did not know what it was all about, why I had been arrested, imprisoned and beaten and that he did not know the names, surnames or the official numbers of his colleagues who had worked the previous shift. He acted as though nothing had happened and then I was released without any written evidence that I had ever been arrested.

This harassment by the Vra\_ar police has been going on for more than a year now and the chief of the Vra\_ar station knows this and has done nothing to stop it. Individual officers, specifically chief officers on duty, have given themselves the right to solve and interfere in the legal-ownership problems of the Arambaši\_ and Mitrovi\_ families, to the advantage of the Mitrovi\_ family...Over the last year, Vra\_ar police officers have come to my house every second or third day at all times of the day and night - especially at night - when my mother, who suffers from a heart condition, was alone. She has been arrested, insulted and ill-treated, without any arrest warrant, permit or explanation...On one night when Vra\_ar police officers came to the house in which my mother was alone, all her important documents (identity card, driving license, etc) disappeared.

What happened on 23 September 1995 was the culmination of all these physical and psychological tortures and ill-treatment. I, \_ivojin Arambaši\_, claim that this unprecedented torture has had a traumatic psychological effect on me and my family, for we feel that our lives are threatened, and particularly the life of my small daughter, who is only nine months old.

I request the competent authorities to urgently undertake appropriate measures to bring these threats and ill-treatment to an end..."

On 27 September 1995 the Serbian Ministry of the Interior wrote to the Arambaši\_ family the following note: "We hereby inform you that an inquiry has been carried out following your

complaints about the conduct of officers of Vra\_ar police station. As a result of this enquiry it has been established that the police officers acted according to the law and in the prescribed manner."

On 30 September 1995 the President of the Democratic Youth party wrote to the Minister of Interior of Serbia protesting about this incident, demanding an investigation into the conduct of officers at Vra\_ar police station and for measures to be taken against those officers who had ill-treated \_ivojin Arambaši\_. According to this letter, \_ivojin Arambaši\_ received over 200 blows to his head and body, suffering severe bruising - injuries confirmed by medical examination.

Amnesty International has learned that following this incident \_ivojin Arambaši\_ was dismissed from his part-time employment as a guard at the (state) Serbian Radio-Television (RTS). It appears that a few days after the incident was reported in the Belgrade media, he was summoned to the chief of security at RTS and dismissed without any explanation. When he insisted on an explanation, he was informed that RTS considered that he should not have mentioned where he was employed when he informed the media about the incident. (In an interview he had been asked by a journalist of an independent television station where he was employed.)

Amnesty International is concerned that \_ivojin Arambaši\_ was beaten and otherwise ill-treated by police officers from Vra\_ar police station in Belgrade on 23 September 1995. Amnesty International is calling for a full and impartial investigation into this incident. The organization is further calling for those responsible to be brought to justice and for fair and adequate compensation for the victim.

Amnesty International opposes unconditionally torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of all prisoners.