

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 70/102/99

UA 158/99 Ill-treatment

9 July 1999

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA (FRY)

**Ivan Novkovi_, technician
Other anti-government demonstrators**

Demonstrators calling for the release of imprisoned technician Ivan Novkovi_ and an end to repression of news media were beaten and detained by riot police in the southern Serbian town of Leskovac on 6 July 1999. Amnesty International is concerned that they may be ill-treated in detention.

On 5 July 1999, Ivan Novkovi_, who works for a television station in Leskovac, was sentenced to 30 days in prison for arranging an anti-government protest without giving advance warning to the authorities. The following day a crowd of demonstrators started moving towards the police station, chanting, "Go away Sloba" and "We want Ivan". They were violently dispersed by police in riot gear, who reportedly beat several demonstrators. Other protesters were reportedly detained without charge after the demonstration.

Further protests are planned in many towns throughout Serbia, which could result in further arbitrary arrests and police brutality.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the end of the NATO air strikes tens of thousands of people have taken part in anti-government demonstrations across Serbia, calling on FRY President Slobodan Miloševi_, indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for war crimes, to resign. In May, during the NATO air strikes, anti-government demonstrations in several Serbian towns were violently broken up by police and an unknown number of demonstrators were detained.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language: (please note that at present no mail is being delivered from the UK)

- expressing concern at the imprisonment of Ivan Novkovi_, and urging the authorities to ensure that he is not ill-treated in detention;
- expressing concern at the reports that police beat demonstrators in the town of Leskovac on 6 July 1999;
- calling for a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into all reports of police ill-treatment;
- urging the immediate and unconditional release of anyone detained for the non-violent exercise of their right to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression;
- emphasising that Articles 19 and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (to which Yugoslavia is a state party) guarantee the rights of freedom of expression and assembly respectively.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
Slobodan Miloševi_
Predsednik SRJ
Bulevar Mihaila Pupina 2
11070 Beograd, Yugoslavia
Salutation: Dear President
Fax: + 381 11 636 775
Telex: 11062 siv yu
e-mail: slobodan.milosevic@gov.yu

Federal Minister of Internal Affairs

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Zoran Sokolovi_
Ministar za unutrašnje poslove
Savezno ministarstvo za unutrašnje poslove
Bulevar Mihaila Pupina 2
11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia
Fax: + 381 11 685 073 or +381 11 636 074
e-mail: zoran.sokolovic@gov.yu

COPIES TO:

Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministar za inostrane poslove
ivadin Jovanovi
Savezno ministarstvo za inostrane poslove
Kneza Miloša 24-26
11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia
Salutation: Dear Minister
Fax: + 381 11 361 8089 (OK Feb 99)
Telex: 11173
e-mail: zivadin.jovanovic@gov.yu

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 20 August 1999.