

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

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**EXTRA 21/92**

**Death Sentences**

**26 February 1992**

**ALBANIA:**

**Zamir LOÇI**

**Hamit BITRI**

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It is reported that the above two men have been sentenced to death by shooting. They were both found guilty (in separate trials) under Article 84a of the Albanian Criminal Code of having committed murder out of base motives. According to a statement made by a court official of Tirana district court on 20 February 1992, Zamir Loçi was sentenced under court penal decision no.33 and Hamit Bitri under penal decision no.40. The two men have appealed to the Supreme Court against their sentences.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In May 1990 the scope of the death penalty was restricted under amendments to the criminal code. Women may no longer be sentenced to death. The number of offences punishable by death has been reduced from 34 to 11. These include treason, espionage, terrorism and premeditated murder, as well as certain economic, non-violent offences. In 1991, six men were sentenced to death in Albania. Four were executed; one had his sentence commuted and the Supreme Court returned the case of the sixth for retrial.

By law, the Supreme Court hears appeals against death sentences within 10 days of receipt of the case and reviews all death sentences even if no appeal is made. If the death sentence is confirmed by the Supreme Court, the defendant may petition for clemency to the President of the Republic of Albania, who must in any case examine and approve all death sentences before they are carried out. Execution may be by shooting or hanging.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:**

- expressing concern at reports that Zamir Loçi and Hamit Bitri have been sentenced to death on charges of murder by the district court of Tirana (penal decisions nos.33 and 40);

- stating that you recognize the gravity of their crimes, but that Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without reservation, on the grounds that it is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment;

- urging the President to exercise his constitutional power to commute these two death sentences.

**APPEALS TO**

President Ramiz Alia  
President of the Republic of Albania  
Tirana  
The Republic of Albania  
**Telegrams: President Ramiz Alia, Tirana, Albania**  
**Telexes: 4298 pkprssh ab**

**Salutation: Dear President**

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**COPIES TO:**

Minister of Justice:  
Mr Kudret Çela  
Ministria e Drejtësisë  
Tirana  
The Republic of Albania

Minister of Foreign Affairs:  
Mr Ilir Boçka  
Ministria e Puneve te Jashtme  
Tirana  
The Republic of Albania

Forum for Human Rights:  
Prof. Arben Puto  
President of the Forum for Human Rights  
Rr. Lidhja Prizrenit nr.3; ap. 5,  
Tirana  
The Republic of Albania

and to diplomatic representatives of Albania in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 April 1992.