

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 11/25/96

25 October 1996

Further information (6) on UA 50/96 (EUR 11/03/96, 28 February 1996) and follow-ups (EUR 11/04/96, 11 March; EUR 11/07/96, 21 March; EUR 11/11/96, 9 May; EUR 11/19/96, 12 September; EUR 11/20/96, 17 September) - Possible Prisoners of Conscience

ALBANIASami Meta, Kristaq Mosko, Timoshenko Pekmezi and Tare Isufi

On 23 October 1996, the Court of Appeal in Tirana confirmed the sentences of imprisonment for Sami Meta and his three co-defendants. The four men, aged between 45 and 73 years had appealed against the length of the sentences on grounds of old age and alleged irregularities during the investigation.

On 16 September, the Tirana District Court had sentenced the defendants to terms of imprisonment as follows: Sami Meta, two and a half years; Timoshenko Pekmezi, two years; Tare Isufi, one year; and Kristaq Mosko, one year.

At their trial in July, three of the defendants had reportedly acknowledged that they had attempted to create a communist party (The former Albanian communist party has been illegal since 1992) but denied they supported violence. The fourth, Sami Meta, had reportedly declined to comment on the charges against him.

Amnesty International has so far not received any information about what evidence was presented in court in support of the charge that they had aimed to take power by violence.

PLEASE SEND ONE MORE ROUND OF APPEALS ON THIS CASE:

- expressing concern that sentences imposed on Sami Meta and three co-defendants for anti-constitutional activity were confirmed on appeal;
- stating that Amnesty International is well aware of the extremely severe human rights violations committed in Albania under past communist rule;
- noting that the limited available information suggests that these persons, whatever their political beliefs, did not advocate violence and urging that, if this is the case, their convictions should be quashed;
- stating that unless there is clear evidence that the defendants had advocated the use of violence Amnesty International would consider them to be prisoners of conscience and would call for their immediate and unconditional release;
- urging changes to Articles 224 and 225 of the Criminal Code so as to ensure that they criminalize only those activities which clearly involve the use or advocacy of violence.

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 10 per Section

APPEALS TO:

President of Albania

Dr Sali Berisha

Presidenti i Republikës së Shqipërisë

Zyra e Presidencës, Tirana

Republic of Albania

Tel/fax: +355 42 33761 or +355 42 28420 (if voice, ask for fax)

Telegrams: President Berisha, Tirana, Albania

Salutation: Dear President

Minister of Justice

Mr Kristofor Peçi

Ministër i Drejtësisë, Tirana, Republic of Albania

Tel/Fax: +355 42 28359 (if voice, ask for fax)

Telegrams: Mr Peçi, Ministria e Drejtësisë, Tirana, Albania

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

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Mr Tritan Shehu

Ministër i Punëve të Jashtme, Tirana

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and to diplomatic representatives of Albania accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 December 1996.