

EXTERNAL

7 May 1991

@Rexhep RIFATI

£YUGOSLAVIA

Rexhep Rifati, a journalist, was sentenced to 60 days' imprisonment by the local magistrate's court for petty offences in Urosevac, Kosovo on or around 5 April 1991.

Rexhep Rifati was a correspondent for the Albanian-language daily newspaper Rilindja, published in Priština, which was banned by the Serbian authorities in August 1990. He was arrested and imprisoned on account of an article he published on 4 December 1990 in the weekly Kosovarja under the title "Violence upon violence". He was apparently convicted of "slander of the country's social order" for a passage in the article in which he reported the protest of 240 workers of the independent trade union at the "Bosko Caki_" enterprise, who had been dismissed from their jobs for refusing to accept the economic and other measures imposed in Kosovo by the Serbian authorities. The article reputedly stated: "The workers recognize only the legitimate authorities of Kosovo."

Reason for Amnesty International concern:

As the information currently available to Amnesty International suggests that Rexhep Rifati was arrested and imprisoned solely for his non-violent political and professional activity, the organization considers him a prisoner of conscience, detained in violation of Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees freedom of expression. Yugoslavia ratified this Covenant in 1971. Amnesty International is appealing to the Yugoslav authorities for Rexhep Rifati's immediate and unconditional release.