

YUGOSLAVIA

@Police violence against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo province

Background

Amnesty International has long been concerned about police abuses - specifically, daily incidents of beatings and other forms of ill-treatment - against ethnic Albanians in the predominantly Albanian-populated province of Kosovo in the Republic of Serbia. These have taken place in the context of a continued confrontation between the Serbian authorities and ethnic Albanians, the majority of whom refuse to recognize Serbian authority in the province and support the demand of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Kosovo's main party representing ethnic Albanians, for the secession - by peaceful means - of the province from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).

Amnesty International has no position on the question of Kosovo's status; the organization is concerned solely with the protection of the human rights of individuals. One of these rights is the right not to be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This right is provided for under Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and under the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, both treaties which are legally binding on the FRY. It is a right, however, which is violated, repeatedly and daily, by officers of the largely Serbian police force in Kosovo province.

The most obvious targets of police violence are ethnic Albanians who, by their political or other activity, are prominent in the organisation of the "parallel" society which ethnic Albanians have created outside the official state structures. They include political activists, in particular members of the LDK; members of other ethnic Albanian political parties, teachers and academics, trade unionists, those involved in the organization of humanitarian aid to families in need, even local sports leaders. Journalists, former police officers and former military, also appear to be targeted.

However, police violence does not stop here; its circle is much wider, affecting, for example, large numbers of families whose homes are searched by police for arms. The sense of insecurity this has provoked amongst ethnic Albanians, coupled with economic hardship and the fear of military call-up to the Yugoslav Army, have led several hundred thousands of ethnic Albanians, the majority young men, to leave the country,

primarily for western Europe. The authorities' unstated policy appears to be to actively encourage their departure: most observers have concluded that the military authorities have not been systematically carrying out conscription in Kosovo, but rather using the threat of conscription as a means of inducing young men to leave the country. Similarly, the manner in which arms searches are carried out appears to be deliberately intended to intimidate, and has sometimes been accompanied by explicit threats to families to leave the country. The reaction of the authorities to reports in March 1994 that western European governments might be considering the mass refoulement of asylum seekers from Yugoslavia (the majority of them ethnic Albanians) was to publicize their intention to prosecute all those who had fled the country to avoid military service (unless they consented to sign up on return) or who had deserted. Conversely, a key policy of the Serbian Government's program for Kosovo has been to promote the settlement of Serbs there, both those who left Kosovo in recent years and new settlers, including refugees from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and from Albania (Montegrins), with the aim of changing the demographic balance (Albanians account for over 85 per cent of Kosovo's population at present). Ethnic Albanians frequently describe the combined effect of these policies as a covert form of "ethnic cleansing". However, the attempt to attract Serb settlers to Kosovo has so far had very limited success, despite government assurances of employment and accommodation.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO CRITICISM OF ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD IN KOSOVO PROVINCE

Amnesty International notes that although human rights abuses by police are well-documented by human rights activists in Kosovo and Serbia, by international human rights organizations and media, and have been condemned by the international community, the authorities have failed to take measures to bring them to an end.

On the contrary, the authorities' response to condemnation of these abuses has been either to denounce this as part of an international campaign to promote Albanian secessionism, or more specifically, to deny abuses or imply that they are to be condoned when committed against those who break the law and seek secession. Yet both national law and the international human rights treaties which are legally binding on Yugoslavia explicitly prohibit torture and ill-treatment. Article 191 of the Yugoslav Criminal Code punishes, with up to three years' imprisonment, officials who in the performance of their duties physically ill-treat, intimidate or insult another person. Article 65 of the Serbian Criminal Code provides for a sentence of up to five years' imprisonment if the ill-treatment is intended to extract a confession (or up to 15 years if the ill-treatment is very serious).

Amnesty International has repeatedly called on the authorities to investigate individual cases of alleged torture or other ill-treatment and to bring those responsible to justice. One such case was that of Sami Kurteshi, a member of an ethnic Albanian human rights organization, the Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedom (CDHRF), who on 7 July 1993, in the presence of colleagues, was beaten on the Council's premises in Priština by police carrying out a search and again afterwards in a local police station. He was released the same day. Amnesty International possesses a report of this incident issued by the Council the same day, a detailed statement by Sami Kurteshi dated 12 July, as well as a copy of a medical certificate issued on 8 July which records multiple bruising consistent with his account of his beating.

The authorities did not respond to Amnesty International's appeals until November 1993 when the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement accusing Amnesty International of making "uncorroborated and unverified allegations and accusations" and illustrated this with the case of Sami Kurteshi. According to the Ministry's statement, after checking "with the republican and provincial authorities, it was established that a person with such a name was never detained or arrested..." The statement ignored the allegations of ill-treatment, and went on to state that criminal proceedings had not been instituted against Sami Kurteshi (Amnesty International had not claimed that criminal proceedings had been instituted against him).

More recently, in December 1993, Amnesty International raised the case of 19 ethnic Albanians who were detained for investigation on charges of seeking Kosovo's secession by violent means. The organization called on the authorities to investigate allegations that many of them had been severely beaten by police following arrest. On 10 January 1994, the Federal Minister for Human and Minority Rights, Margit Savovif, responded to Amnesty International's appeals. She wrote: "We have investigated the claims in your letter concerning the maltreatment of a group of 19 persons, citizens of the FR Yugoslavia, members of the Albanian national minority". However, she did not say what the investigation had concluded. Instead, after summarizing the charges against the defendants, she continued: "The District Court in Priština sentenced the mentioned persons to prison sentences, which they are serving in the District Prison in Kosovska Mitrovica". In fact, the trial was at the time still in progress, and did not finish until 27 February 1994, over six weeks later, when 17 of the accused were indeed convicted, receiving sentences of between one and 10 years' imprisonment.

The attitude to police abuses of the highest judicial official in Kosovo province is noted in a report submitted in February 1994 to the

United Nations Commission on Human Rights by Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights. "The Special Rapporteur has received, with grave concern, information from a reliable non-governmental organization about a meeting with the President of the Pristina Regional [District] Court in which the ill-treatment of detainees by the police was discussed. It was reported that the President of the Court supported such treatment when 'crimes against the State' were involved, 'irrespective of whether there was a conviction or not'".

Other judicial officials appear to share this view, or at least to show little enthusiasm for addressing the problem of police violence. In a letter, dated 24 August 1993, to a defence lawyer who had complained about the ill-treatment of his client (one of the 19 defendants referred to above), the Deputy President of the District Court of Priština wrote "...As regards the conduct of police officers, this court is not able to influence their work".

In this climate of official toleration of police violence, it is not surprising that the human rights situation in Kosovo has further deteriorated over the last year. This period has also seen a marked increase in official hostility to international human rights monitoring in the province. In July 1993 the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) was forced by the government of the FRY to close down its mission of long duration in Kosovo (and also in the Sandžak and Vojvodina). The United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the former Yugoslavia has also been refused permission to base staff long-term in the FRY. Since then there has been no permanent monitoring mission in Kosovo. In September 1993 Amnesty International issued an appeal to member states of the UN, CSCE, Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and European Community (EC) for action to ensure long-term human rights monitoring by the CSCE and UN in Kosovo and other parts of the FRY. In October 1993 an Amnesty International delegation was refused visas to the FRY, but the following month an Amnesty International delegate observed a trial in Kosovo. While several other international human rights organizations and foreign delegations have visited the FRY in the last six months to monitor human rights abuses, the authorities have in recent weeks refused visas to Amnesty International delegates, to members of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and to representatives of Swedish human rights organizations.

POLITICAL TRIALS

Between July and September 1993 over 90 ethnic Albanians from Kosovo province were arrested on charges of making preparation for armed uprising. They were charged with planning, by force of arms, the secession

of Kosovo from the FRY; they were not, however, accused of having used violence.

By the end of February 1994, some 60 had been convicted and sentenced to up to 10 years' imprisonment. Further trials are under way. On the basis of what Amnesty International has learned, it believes that at least some of those imprisoned are prisoners of conscience and that charges against them of seeking to change Kosovo's status by force were not convincingly substantiated in court. Amnesty International is also deeply concerned about allegations that many of the accused were severely beaten and otherwise ill-treated by police following arrest. These allegations have been made by defendants and by their lawyers who claim their clients were visibly bruised when they visited them in prison. In February 1994 Amnesty International issued a report, *Yugoslavia: Ethnic Albanians - Trial by truncheon* (AI Index: EUR 70/01/94) which focused on its concerns with regard to these cases, in particular what the organization believes to be the deliberate use of violence by members of the largely Serbian police force to obtain self-incriminating statements from ethnic Albanian detainees charged with political offences.

However, police violence is a very widespread phenomenon in Kosovo province. In April 1994 the Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms reported: "House searches, raids, arrests, beatings and other forms of ill-treatment have become a common occurrence over the last couple of years, but these practices have drastically increased in the first three months of this year". According to figures about human rights abuses against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo province issued by the Council, in the period from January to March 1994, 1,229 homes were searched and 3,081 people were subjected to various forms of police violence and harassment, including 684 people who were beaten or otherwise physically ill-treated.

The sheer scale of police repression, and its sometimes random nature, makes it difficult to isolate key features. The aim of the present report is to show that while certain groups are particularly at risk (for instance, political activists), the shadow of police repression extends far beyond such groups.

VIOLENCE AGAINST FAMILIES DURING ARMS SEARCHES

The most widely experienced form of police violence in Kosovo province is that undergone by families during police searches for arms. These have become a prominent feature of policing in Kosovo since the outbreak of armed conflict in former Yugoslavia in 1991. Over the past year arms searches have increased dramatically, and are now conducted on a daily

basis, most intensively in border villages and rural areas, but also more generally throughout the province.

Legal and illegal possession of arms is widespread in Kosovo province, as elsewhere in the FRY. Many reports state that during these raids police have confiscated not only illegal weapons (generally revolvers and hunting rifles), but also arms for which the owner possesses a licence. There have also been reports of police ordering a family to go out and purchase a gun to be handed over. In other cases, families have been forced to hand over money or valuables to police or police have confiscated individual passports.

Because of the traditional pattern of settlement in rural areas of Kosovo, in which large extended families tend to live together, police raids are normally witnessed and personally experienced by many relatives. The sense of insecurity they provoke is further exacerbated by the pervasive presence in the province of the Yugoslav Army, and by the belief, strongly held by ethnic Albanians, that local Serbian communities have not only been spared these searches but have actually been given arms by the authorities.

Accounts of arm searches repeatedly refer to the deliberately intimidating and destructive way in which they are conducted: furniture is broken up, the inmates of the house are threatened, shouted and sworn at, and the men of the house are frequently arrested and beaten in local police stations or, even more humiliatingly, in their homes in front of their families. These beatings are often severe, causing injuries: reports of the victim losing consciousness as a result of beating, or of suffering bruising, broken teeth or ribs, are not uncommon. It is not only those found to possess unlicensed arms who are at risk of being beaten: those who do not possess weapons may also find themselves bearing the brunt of police frustration. The principle of "guilt by association" seems often to apply: police officers unable to find a specific man they are looking for are frequently reported to have instead arrested or beaten a member of his family. While most police violence is directed against adult males, in some cases the elderly, women or children who are members of the family are not spared beatings. There have also been cases in which police have explicitly arrested a family member as a hostage in order to force a relative to give himself up to police. Some families have been repeatedly searched; under such a barrage of harassment, at times accompanied by threats such as "Get out of here" or "Go to Albania", many individuals and even whole families have opted to leave the country.

Amnesty International's information is primarily based on the Albanian-language press and on information provided by ethnic Albanian human rights activists who regularly report on abuses. Amnesty

International can only check a small proportion of reported cases of ill-treatment, but where it has been able to check by means of documentation or interviews, reporting has generally been reliable. An idea of the scale of abuses may be gained from reports published in just one issue (for 25 February 1994) of the Albanian-language newspaper *Rilindja*, largely compiled in Kosovo, but published in Switzerland. The following is in no way untypical: every issue of *Rilindja* carries similar reports.

Vu..itrn - Yesterday at about 8am police carried out an arms search at the homes of the families of the brothers Rexhep and Zymer Mehmeti in Vu..itrn. During the search, police officers ill-treated Rexhep and his son Shemsedin Mehmeti, whom they arrested and sent to the police station in Vu..itrn where they were held for about two hours and beaten brutally.

Klina commune: On 19 February the police sought arms from Osman Marmullaku and Salih Marmullaku in the village of Duš. Police left a summons for Osman Marmullaku to report to the police station in Klina...

On 21 February, police on the pretext of looking for arms searched the family of Ibrahim Havolli, leader of an LDK branch in Resnik village. Since he was not at home, police brutally beat his brother, Haki Havolli, and ordered him to report to the police station in Klina...

On 23 February, the police went to the house of Mëhill Gojani in the village of Veliko Kruševo, looking for his son Ndue Gojani, who was not at home. The police arrested Ndue Gojani in Klina, and beat him brutally, together with his father Mëhill Gojani at the police station in Klina.

Kosovska Mitrovica commune: The day before yesterday at about 10am, a police raid, on the pretext of searching for arms, searched the family of Hakif Jashari in the village of Vinarc i Poshtëm. Since no arms were found in the house, the police arrested Hakif and his son Musa Jashari.

Also yesterday at about 10am, three Serb police officers entered [the house] where pupils of the Frang Bardhi high-school in Kosovska Mitrovica were having lessons and checked the identity cards of the teachers Hasan Veliqi and Abit Maxhuni. Since the beginning of the school year the police have 41 times interrupted teaching in the Albanian language which is being carried out in private homes.

Ka..anik commune: On Tuesday [22 February], at about 5am, police on the pretext of an arms raid, searched the family of Ilaz Salihaj in Duraj village. The police carried out the search in the most violent

manner, causing great material damage, breaking up all the furniture, and brutally beating Ilaz Salihaj, aged 74, and a female member of the family, Azemine.

Priština: The day before yesterday, about 40 police officers searched the family of Shemsi Gashi in Priština. Shemsi Gashi and his two sons, Adem and Sylejman Gashi, as well as two guests, Sherif Gashi and Nazmi Gicolli, were brutally beaten in front of the family. After the search, police arrested all the above persons and sent them to the police station, where physical ill-treatment continued.

Kosovo Polje: The day before yesterday at about 6am police searched the family of Shefqet Zogiani in the village of Halilq near Kosovo Polje, looking for arms; on this occasion Shefqet and his two sons Naim and Nexhat Zogiani were brutally beaten.

Mališevo commune: On 17 February, the police on the pretext of searching for arms brutally beat Cenë Krasniqi from Vlački Drenovac and Hazir Hoti from Crni Lug. The family of Fejzë Krasniqi from Drenovac was also searched and he was brutally beaten in the police station in Kijevo. Recently the police brutally beat Vesel Kryeziu, while a day later Xhevat Kryeziu from Babeveci was interrogated at the police station in Pef.

Gnjilane: ...In recent days inspectors [state security police] in Gnjilane have interrogated a number of activists, for example Bahtiar Kryeziu, director of the "Skenderbeg" high school in Gnjilane, Shefik Baliti, a teacher at this school and chairman of the Education Committee of the LDK branch in Gnjilane, Xhavit Latifi, member of the Solidarity Committee of the Gnjilane branch of the LDK, Jasmin Abdyl i, chairman of the LDK sub-branch in Dobr..ane and Begzad Osmani, an activist from Gnjilane...

Vitina commune: On 22 February at about 10am, police arrested Demush Murtezi at his home in Trpeza village. They took him to the police station in Kl okot and demanded that he hand over a revolver and automatic rifle which he did not have. After several hours of ill-treatment, the police told him to go and buy weapons and hand them over.

The same issue of *Rilindja* reported arms searches in the Djakovica area, in which a number of men were arrested, including Tahir and Muhamet Tahiraj from Skivjan village, who were allegedly physically ill-treated. Another report, this time from Drenovac near De..ane, said there had recently been arms searches carried out in the area, involving some 20 families, who had been so intimidated by the police that some were

afraid to give statements about what had happened. A local leader, Ramadan Dukaj, reported that among those ordered to hand weapons over to the police was Përparim Kadrijaj, an orphan aged 17. Although he apparently had no weapons and was unable to hand over any, police reportedly beat him twice in one week, and on the second occasion ill-treated him for five hours in the police station in De..ane. [A later report gave his name as Përparim Demë Dukaj, and said the second beating had occurred on 16 February.] Similarly, Kadri Dukaj, Naser Beqaj and Canë Mazrekaj were reportedly beaten despite having no arms to hand over, as were Shefqet and Agim Mazrekaj and Ali Dukaj, who did hand over revolvers.

ABUSES AND REPRISALS AGAINST FAMILY MEMBERS, INCLUDING THE BEATING OF MINORS, WOMEN AND THE ELDERLY.

The following are among yet other reports received by Amnesty International which refer to police abuses committed against people apparently because of their family ties, including minors, women and the elderly.

- On 17 January police searched the home of LDK activist, Xhavit Hashani, in Miraš vil lage. When they failed to find him, they arrested his brother, Shpejtim, aged 17, and beat him for not handing over a weapon on behalf of his elder brother.

- Bekim Gashi, aged 17, was beaten by police in „abif (Kl ina) on 22 January because he refused to tell them where his father was.

- Nuhi Krasniqi, aged 15, was arrested by police at his brother's home in Mališevo on 27 January. They reportedly brought him to a spot near Ljubiñde and beat him before releasing him.

- On 31 January, police searched the home of Ali Hoti in the vil lage of Jošanica (Kl ina); he was out at the time. They picked up his 10-year-old son, Labinot Hoti, who was in the vil lage road, put him in their car, beat him and allegedly held a knife to his throat while ordering him to reveal where arms were hidden in the vil lage.

- Xhemila Ademaj, wife of Sahit Ademaj was beaten by police on 3 February, when they came to the family house in Petrovo vil lage (Štimlje) looking for her brother, Sahit Ademaj, who was to serve a seven-month prison sentence.

- On 3 or 4 February police searched the house of the brothers Fadil and Halil Gruda in the vil lage of Poljance (Srbica). They reportedly arrested

Halil and threatened to detain him until his brother, Fadil, handed over a weapon.

- On 15 February, police searched the home of Mursel Miftari in the village of Be...uk (Vu...itrn), and in the course of their search beat his wife, Dinorja and his daughter, Shehribanja. They also beat Isa Miftari, aged 67.

- Police searched the home of Hajriz Bytyçi in Miroslavlje village (Uroševac) on 18 February and took him to the local police station. They later returned with him to his home, where they arrested his wife and two grown-up daughters and took them, together with Hajriz, back to the police station. Here they reportedly ill-treated Hajriz Bytyçi and showed him a gun, claiming that his wife had brought it to them: "Now admit you have arms". They also reportedly taunted one of the daughters, saying: "Do you see how we're beating your father?" All four were released later in the day.

- On 17 or 18 February police searched the home of Xhavit Fejzullah in the "Bajr" quarter of Kosovska Mitrovica. He was out at the time; they arrested his wife Sebahata and his brother Zaim Rama. These two were released after five hours but were told to report to the police station the next morning, together with Xhavit Fejzullah.

- On 23 February police searched the homes of Zeqir and Alush Kryeziu in Dušanovo (Prizren). As Zeqir was not at home, they arrested his son Bekim (aged 16) whom they released only when his father came to the police station.

- On 24 March police came to the home of Zylfi Gashi in Smira (Vitina). He and his wife were out at the time. In their absence, police searched the house and hit their young daughter, Malësore, to make her say where arms were hidden.

POLICE VIOLENCE AGAINST POLITICAL ACTIVISTS

Among the most frequent targets of police violence are political activists, in particular members of the LDK. However, there are also frequent reports of police harassment or ill-treatment of members of other ethnic Albanian political parties. Former political prisoners, human rights activists, trade unionists, former police officers and former military men also appear to be particularly targeted.

A well-documented incident occurred on 31 January 1994 in Uroševac on the occasion of a concert held in privately-owned premises to commemorate five ethnic Albanian nationalist leaders, who in past years

died violently in clashes with the police in Kosovo or were killed abroad, many suspect by agents working for the state security service. The organizers and audience included former political prisoners, human rights activists and political activists, including chairmen or members of local LDK branches in Gnjilane, Uroševac, Štrpce, Kačanik and Kamenica.

The concert reportedly finished at about 4pm and as the public was dispersing, police who had surrounded the building where the concert was held, arrested some 40 people, and took them to the local police headquarters. Here they were held for up to nine hours (in some cases longer), interrogated and all allegedly beaten, often very brutally, by police and SDB officers. One of those arrested, who wishes to remain unnamed, has alleged that he was sexually assaulted by a senior police officer.

Those arrested and beaten included: Bedri Abdylî, Nuhi Ahmeti, Lumnie Azemi, Nijazi Beqa, Sylejman Bytyçi, Abdullah Dërguti, Valbonë Dermaku (f), Hyrë Emini (f), Skënder Ferizi, Xhavit Gashi, Hamdi Haliti, Emin Hasani, Aziz Hoxha, Xhemil Ismani, Rexhep Ismani, Salih Jonuzi, Basri Krasniqi, Emin Krasniqi, Naser Kuka, Sami Kurteshi, Avdi Limani, Ali Luzha, Berat Luzha, Mevlyde Malaj (f), Habib Misini, Basri Musmurati, Xhelil Pajaziti, Zef Pali, Ilmi Reçica, Shemsi Salihu, Shqipe Sejdiu (f), Mujë Shabani, Habib Shehu, Enver Topalli, Qamil Xhemajli and Hysen Zenuni.

Amnesty International has seen signed statements by eight of the above people describing their ill-treatment on 31 January. Several of these statements comment that the reason for their arrest appeared to be to intimidate them - they were only superficially questioned about the concert and its organization. Amnesty International has also received copies of medical certificates issued by doctors in Uroševac, Kačanik, Gnjilane and Priština, which confirm injuries (bruising) suffered by 17 of those arrested consistent with their allegations of ill-treatment. In addition, press reports alleged that Avdi Limani suffered a broken rib.

Rexhep Ismani, chairman of an artists' club in Uroševac and one of the members of a committee which organized the concert, wrote the following statement on 4 February 1994:

"At the end of the concert word went round that police were taking the registration numbers of cars of those attending the concert. The audience began quietly to depart, and the Organizing Committee and other activists and guests went to the reception room of our host where a meal was prepared. As the guests were seated word came that the building was surrounded. The doors remained closed and a silence settled on those present. Then the bell rang and armed inspectors [SDB officers] and police came in...They started to carry

out an identity check...As I was near the door I was among the first to be ordered to go downstairs where other police were waiting". He and some 15 others were put into a police van and taken to local police headquarters, where they were greeted by shouts and insults. "They lined us up with our face to the wall, and took us one by one into an office to take down our names and addresses.

"They then took us up to the second floor to an open corridor where they began to beat us in the most brutal manner. One police officer with a shaved head, who changed his truncheon for a larger one which he held in both hands, beat us with all his might...A number of police officers came and joined him and in a frenzy began collectively to kick and punch us and beat us with truncheons, aiming at vital parts of the body, such as the head, kidneys, legs, back and hands.

"With our faces turned to the wall they continued to beat us until we were fainting or bleeding from our injuries...After six hours of beatings, threats and insults, they used warm water to revive those who had lost consciousness. Afterwards the interrogations started on the third floor."

[He was asked who had organized the concert, what songs and poems had been recited, who had made the sets.]

"After they had taken down my statement they led me down to a prison cell where I found Xhabir, Syl e and Il mi [arrested at the same time].

"We spent the night in pain in damp, cold surroundings smelling of urine. We spent the whole night on our feet until dawn broke...At 2.30pm they sent us to the court for petty offences...[the trial was postponed]".

A medical certificate dated 3 February 1994 states that Rexhep Ismani had bruises on his back and both hands.

This account is similar to that of others who were arrested after the concert. Most, however, stated that after being beaten on the second floor, they were again beaten or otherwise ill-treated while being interrogated on the third floor.

Syl ejman Bytyçi, in a statement dated 2 February, wrote that after being beaten on the second floor:

"...Between 8pm and 9pm a group of us were taken up to the office [on the third floor] where the interrogation was carried out...They called me by name to be interrogated...I knocked at the door, but two police officers hit me and pushed me into the office. Inside were

three plainclothes officers, one with a revolver. After asking a question that was unclear, one of them began to swear at me and punched my head and face six or seven times; he did this again later. The interrogation lasted 15-20 minutes..."

On 2 March Xhabir Morina, Syl ejman Bytyçi, Rexhep Ismani, Hyrë Emini and Il mi Reçica were each sentenced to 30 days' imprisonment and a fine for having organized the concert.

A young woman, Shqipe Sejdiu, a human rights activist from Uroševac, who was among those arrested, described the ill-treatment she suffered while being interrogated in an office on the third floor:

"During the interrogation they kept hitting me with a rubber truncheon on my hands, hitting first one hand 10-13 times and then the other, causing me internal bleeding (bruising) which covered the palms and back of both hands and also the region of the forearms for which I have as evidence a medical certificate and photographs...They also slapped my face...They were not in the least interested in the concert, but in other things, particularly my private life, so that they used every answer I gave to insult me in the most vulgar and inhuman way".

A medical certificate issued on 3 February confirms that Shqipe Sejdiu bore bruising on her face, hands and forearms.

POLICE VIOLENCE AGAINST TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND ACADEMICS

In 1990 and 1991 the Serbian authorities introduced a uniform curriculum throughout the whole of the Republic of Serbia and abolished the province's educational authority. The total number of enrolments in secondary Albanian-language schools was drastically reduced and a considerable number of educational institutions were closed. Many subjects at Priština University were no longer taught in the Albanian language but only in Serbian. More than 18,000 ethnic Albanian teachers and other staff in Albanian-language schools and the university who refused to recognize these changes and follow the new curriculum were dismissed. Instead they created a parallel educational system, using the old curricula, and lessons began to be held in private homes.

The issue of education has thus become one of the key points of confrontation in Kosovo. The Serbian authorities have systematically harassed those involved in the educational process, including members of the teachers' trade union, teachers, university lecturers, private citizens who have made their homes available for teaching and even pupils

themselves. Schools have been broken into and raided, teachers arrested and/or beaten and lessons repeatedly interrupted. Most recently, the Serbian authorities have closed and sequestered the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosovo and the Institute of Albanian Studies, regarded by ethnic Albanians as the bastions of Albanian culture and by the Serbian authorities as hotbeds of secessionist aspirations.

In August 1993, the Humanitarian Law Fund, a human rights organization based in Belgrade, published a report on human rights violations in Kosovo province and concluded: "The investigation conducted by the Humanitarian Law Fund in the latter half of June 1993 indicates that the authorities of the Republic of Serbia, since the suspension and abolition of the Kosovo educational system, apply different forms of pressure and coercion against all those taking part in, or supporting, the autonomous Albanian schooling system". Other independent observers have come to similar conclusions.

The following are just some of the most recent reports involving police violence against teachers, academics and their students.

- According to reports published in *Rilindja* on 14 and 15 February 1994, police arrested Tafil Brahimaj, director of a primary school in Kraljane village near Djakovica on 9 February at about 3pm. Officers of the State security police (SDB) in Djakovica interrogated him about the school's curriculum and also asked him for a gun. When he denied possessing any weapon, they forced him to sit on a heated stove as a result of which he was burned. He was then released and ordered to report again to the SDB in Djakovica in 10 days time. Tafil Brahimaj was obliged to seek medical treatment for his injuries.

- On 27 February three police reportedly went to the village of Strovce and arrested Behxhet Jashari Bexheti, a primary school teacher in Obilif. They reportedly beat him so severely in the police station in Vu...itrn that he lost consciousness several times.

- On 21 February police reportedly beat eight secondary school pupils in Runik near Srbica who were returning from lessons in a private home.

- Lavdim Dukaj and Vehbi Mulaj, pupils, were stopped on their way to school by police near the village of Graboc on 11 March and beaten after being questioned about where lessons were held.

On 8 March 1994, the authorities closed by force the Institute of Albanian studies in Priština, after orders to evacuate it were ignored by ethnic Albanians working at the Institute. On this occasion, groups of

Serbian civilians (possibly plainclothes police), and armed police entered the building and beat those who had remained inside. In a statement published on 14 March, the CDHRF said that among those beaten and injured were the following academics:

"The director, Sadri Fetiu (who received injuries to his head, face, nose, jaw and had three teeth broken); Ragip Mulaku (injuries to his head, face, a rib and a fractured left hand); Professor Anton Çetta (injuries to his head, left hand and spine); Mehmet Halimi (injuries to a leg, a rib, and his head and face); the archivist Hajdin Hajdini (injuries to the face, head and both legs); Xheladin Shala (injuries to his body and head)".

The statement continued that armed Serbian civilians, together with police officers, subsequently beat a number of people in the street outside. One of the victims was Abdyl Kadolli, a journalist and Secretary of the Forum of Intellectuals of Kosovo, who was reportedly forced into a car by two men dressed as civilians, beaten and driven to a spot five kilometres outside the town where he was released in the late hours of the evening.

VIOLENCE BY BORDER-GUARDS

Ethnic Albanians have frequently complained of harassment at border crossings, generally when entering Yugoslavia from Hungary or at the border between Kosovo province and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). There have been numerous reports that border-guards have confiscated foreign currency or passports from travellers; there have also been complaints of physical ill-treatment. One such case is that of M (his name is withheld at his request), an ethnic Albanian living in France, who was interviewed by Amnesty International in February 1994. According to his account, in January 1994 he learned from his family that his father was gravely ill, and he therefore returned to Kosovo via Skopje in the FYROM.

A week later, on his departure for France, he was detained by a border guard at Djeneral Jankovif on the border with the FYROM, at about 9.30am, after the border guard noticed that M's passport contained a stamp showing he had visited Albania. (According to M, he went to Albania in 1992 in order to try to obtain a visa for France after being refused one in Belgrade.)

"...the officer who took my passport started insulting me together with another officer. They said I was one of those Albanian swine and an enemy of "Greater Serbia". They accused me of having been in Albania to buy weapons. Then they handcuffed me and placed me in a

very small and dirty cell with a mud floor and nothing to lie down or even sit on. I stayed there about four hours until a plainclothes police inspector came to interrogate me. He...interrogated me for about an hour or so, asking about the reasons for my trip to Albania. [After] the inspector left, the two border guards started to ill-treat me. One in particular...was very brutal; he...punched me in the face and kicked my legs and back; he also hit me with a truncheon. (Two weeks later traces of bruising were still visible on M's back and left arm.) He spat in my face and insulted me...I was locked up again, handcuffed, in the cell. After a while [the same officer]... came in with a hose and told me that dogs like me should be cleaned because they stank. He hosed me with very cold water...I was then left alone, wet and freezing, till the next morning. I was given nothing to eat or drink until midday, when I was at last given a cup of cold coffee. [The same officer] came back in the afternoon and started again to threaten me that he was ready to kill all Albanians, including me. He beat me again, slapping my face and hitting me with a truncheon. Finally, I don't know when exactly, I was "granted" a second cold water shower with a fire hose. I was unable to sleep all night because I was freezing and I was afraid of dying of cold so I tried to move about as much as I could in that very small cell".

According to M, the officer also confiscated M's money, wedding ring and some jewels his parents had given him to take to his wife in France as a wedding present. The following day M was driven to his home town in Kosovo where he was detained in police custody and interrogated for a further four days, before finally being released. He left the country soon after.

APPARENTLY RANDOM ACTS OF POLICE VIOLENCE

Incidents of police violence which appear to be motivated by momentary irritation or drunkenness are not uncommon and in at least one recent case have resulted in a death. On 6 March 1994 a police officer shot and killed Faik Maloku and seriously wounded Xhevat Bejzaku (who tried to intervene) in a restaurant in Kosovo Polje. It appears that the officer had asked Faik Maloku to show his identity card and when he failed to do so, explaining that he did not have it with him, an argument started. The officer was detained for investigation.

In another instance, on 18 March three police officers, apparently drunk, stopped a young man, Ali Shala, in the streets of Kosovska Mitrovica and checked his identity card. In answer to one of their questions, he reportedly replied that he did not recognize "the Serbian police state", whereupon they beat him causing serious injuries to his left ear.

On 22 March two police officers reportedly beat 12-year-old Besnik Maloku in Priština, because he was unable, or unwilling, to reply to them in Serbian.