

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 70/22/97

14 July 1997

Further information on EXTRA 153/96 (EUR 70/29/96, 2 October 1996) and follow-up (EUR 70/30/96, 7 October, EUR 70/31/96, 11 October and EUR 70/15/97, 11 April 1997) - "Disappearance" / Torture / Fear of Unfair Trial

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA Besim Rama
Avni Nura
Idriz Asllani, ethnic Albanians

On 11 July 1997 Besim Rama, Avni Nura and Idriz Asllani were convicted by the district court of Priština together with 12 other ethnic Albanians who were tried *in absentia*. Avni Nura was found guilty of illegal arms possession and sentenced to four years' imprisonment. The other defendants received sentences ranging between 10 and 20 years' imprisonment on charges of being members of an organization calling itself the Liberation Army of Kosovo and of involvement in attacks in which three police officers and a woman died between 1993 and 1996. Besim Rama was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment, and Idriz Asllani to 15 years' imprisonment.

At the end of the trial Besim Rama withdrew statements he had previously made in court admitting to participation in one attack in which a police officer was killed; he said he had falsely confessed to this crime after two state security police officers had visited him in prison two days before the start of the trial and threatened him with reprisals if he failed to do so.

Amnesty International is concerned that the defendants did not receive a fair trial and that Besim Rama and Avni Nura were tortured or otherwise ill-treated by police officers after being arrested in September 1996 and illegally detained incommunicado for two weeks.

Other AI networks will take up these concerns, so no further action by the UA Network is requested. Many thanks to all who worked on this case.