

| Network of Concerned Historians | | | | NCH |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------|---------|---------------------------------|
| Campaigns | | | | |
| Year original | Year follow-up | Circular | Country | Names |
| 1996 | | 3 | Albania | Elvira Shapplo, historian, a.o. |

Announcement:

Amnesty International is sending an urgent action appeal for some colleagues in Albania. I hope you can react immediately.

URGENT ACTION APPEAL

The following information is from Amnesty International's research headquarters in London, England. A.I. is an independent worldwide movement working for the international protection of human rights. It seeks the release of people detained because of their beliefs, color, sex, ethnic origin, language or religious creed, provided they have not used nor advocated violence. These are termed prisoners of conscience. It works for fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners and works on behalf of such people detained without charge or trial. It opposes the death penalty and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of all prisoners without reservation.

Please do not repost the information below to any part of the Internet without prior permission from Amnesty International. Thank you for your help with this appeal.

URGENT ACTION NETWORK
 AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
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11 March 1996

Further information on UA 50/96 issued 28 February 1996) - Possible Prisoners of Conscience

ALBANIA

Sulejman Rrahman Mekollari

Dilaver Ibrahim Dauti

Lirim Sevet Veliu

Gani Korro

and (in a new case):

Sami Meta

Kristaq Mosko

Timoshenko Pekmexi

Tare Isufi;

and (in a third case):

Elvira Shaplo (female)

Vladimir Qiriaqi, historian

Jani Bardho

Thoma Ngjelo

It has been reported that on 1 March 1996 four men, Sami Meta, Kristaq Mosko, Timoshenko Pekmezi and Tare Isufi, were arrested in Tirana on charges under Article 224 of the Criminal Code, dealing with 'Creating anti-constitutional parties and associations'. This is an offence punishable by one to five years' imprisonment. The four are accused of 'recreating' the Albanian Communist Party (which has been illegal since 1992). Their arrest followed reports that communist tracts had been scattered in Tirana. On 4 March at a preliminary hearing before a court in Tirana, the accused reportedly claimed that they intended to found a new party, which did not advocate the use of violence, and for which they planned to seek legal registration. However, the official Albanian newsagency, ATA, reported that the court concluded, on the basis of 'lists, documents and various materials' that they had gathered illegal and anti-constitutional materials to recreate the communist party. The court therefore ruled that they were dangerous to society, and confirmed their detention in prison, with the exception of Tare Isufi, who was placed under house arrest because of his age (he is 73 years old).

Amnesty International has also learned that Elvira Shaplo, a historian, Vladimir Qiriaqi, an archeologist, Jani Bardho, an artist and Thoma Ngjelo, a businessman, went on trial in February 1996 in Gjirokastër on charges of 'distributing anti-constitutional writings', an offence punishable by up to three years' imprisonment. They are the authors of a guide book to Gjirokastër which apparently contained a

photograph of Enver Hoxha, the former communist ruler of Albania, a native of the town. On 13 February, the president of the court sent a request to the Ministry of Justice to inquire whether any political party or organization which had filed a request with the Ministry regarded Enver Hoxha as its symbol. The court is due to reconvene later in March. It appears that the four defendants are not currently in detention.

The trial of Sulejman Mekollari and his co-defendants has reportedly not yet ended.

Albanian constitutional provisions guarantee freedom of expression:

‘Everyone enjoys the right to freely express his opinions by speaking, writing or any other means of dissemination’. They also explicitly state that: ‘Political pluralism is one of the fundamental conditions of democracy in the Albanian state’, while stipulating that ‘political parties and other organizations are created and exercise their activity in accordance with the law’. There are no constitutional provisions outlawing the former communist party.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express or airmail letters:

- expressing concern about the reported arrests of Sami Meta and three other men in Tirana on 1 March 1996 on charges of ‘anti-constitutional’ activity;
- stating that you are further concerned about the current trials of Sulejman Mekollari and three co-defendants in Saranda, and of Elvira Shaplllo and three co-defendants in Gjirokastër, all accused of ‘anti-constitutional activity’;
- stating that Amnesty International is well aware of the extremely severe human rights violations committed in Albania under past communist rule;
- noting, however, that in 1991 Albania ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees freedom of expression and association;
- 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, charges against them be dropped and those in detention released;

If possible, also urging changes to Articles 224 and 225 so as to ensure that they apply only to those activities which clearly involve the use or advocacy of violence.

APPEALS TO: (SALUTATION)

President of Albania: (Dear President)

Dr Sali Berisha

President i Republik_s

se Shqiperis_

Tirana, Albania

[Faxes: 011 355 42 33761 or +355 42 28 8420]

[Telegrams: President Berisha, Tirana, Albania]

Minister of Justice: (Dear Minister)

Mr Hektor Frasher

Ministria e Drejt_sis_

Tirana, Albania

[Telegrams: Mr Frasher Ministria e Drejt_sis_, Tirana, Albania]

[Faxes: 011 355 42 28 359]

Procurator General: (Dear Procurator General)

Mr Alesh Dragoshi

Prokuror i P_rgjith_sh_m

Tirana, Albania

[Telegrams: Prokuror i P_rgjith_sh_m, Albania]

[Faxes: 011 355 42 22950]

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Dr Alfred Serreqi

Minister i Pun_ve t_ Jashtme

Tiran_, Albania

[Faxes: 011 355 42 32971]

The Albanian Helsinki Committee :

Komiteti Shqiptar i Helsinkit

Qendra Nderkombetare e kultures, Dhoma no.35

Bulevardi 'Deshmoret e kombit'

Tirana, Albania

Ambassador Lublin Dilja

Embassy of the Republic of Albania

1150 -18th St. NW

Washington DC 20036

Please send appeals immediately. Check with NCH if sending appeals after April 22, 1996.