

On the widespread repression and harassment perpetrated by the Serbian police and other authorities in Kosova from 21 April until 28 April, 1996

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Abstract:

This report documents widespread repression, harassment, and human rights violations committed by the Serbian police and other state authorities in Kosova between 21 April and 28 April 1996. Following the murder of the Albanian student Armend Selim Daci, a series of killings, bomb explosions, arson attacks, and other violent incidents occurred under officially “unknown circumstances”. These events were followed by large-scale police raids, arrests, interrogations, beatings, confiscation of property, and intimidation directed primarily against the Albanian population. The report records, in chronological order, all known victims, detainees, and affected individuals, including children, women, elderly persons, political activists, teachers, journalists, and humanitarian workers, based on information collected by the Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms.

Introduction

This document presents information on the widespread repression and harassment carried out by the Serbian police and other authorities in Kosova from 21 April until 28 April 1996. The information was collected and documented by the Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHRF) in Prishtina and reflects reported incidents of violence, arbitrary arrest, ill-treatment, destruction of property, and political persecution directed mainly against the Albanian civilian population.

Background and initial events

After the Albanian student Armend Selim Daci (born 1976) was murdered by the Serb Zlatko Jovanovic on 21 April 1996 in Prishtina, five killings of Serbs and two bomb explosions followed. In one of these bomb explosions, an Albanian child was deprived of life, and three more children were wounded. All these incidents occurred “in yet unknown circumstances”, although the media and some Serbian political parties hurried to blame “Albanian separatists” and did not hesitate to label them as “terrorists”.

Killings and violent incidents on 22 April 1996

On Monday, 22 April, at around 9:00 p.m., unknown persons killed with machine guns, in the café “Čakor” in Deçan, the waitress Stana Radusinovic (48), the guests Blagoje Okulic from the village of Boleq, and Gjorgje Dragic (39) from Pančeva. Branko Bibic was badly wounded. All three men were employees of “Unikop” in Prishtina.

Almost at the same time, near Mitrovica, in a police car, Dragana Neshic (19), a waitress from Prishtina, was killed. The driver, Slobodan Dudic (38), an employee of the SIA in Suhareka, was slightly wounded.

At the same time in Shtime, the policeman Milenko Vucic (24), from the village of Brusi in Serbia, was killed.

Near the railway station of Peja, the policemen Safet Kocan (26), from Peja, and Zoran Dashic (26), from the village of Gorazhdec in the Peja district, were killed.

Explosion and police actions on 27 April 1996

On Saturday, 27 April 1996, at around 3:00 a.m., a heavy explosion occurred in the pit of the construction enterprise owned by Ekrem Kryeziu from the village of Dushanova, near Prizren, on the Prizren–Gjakova road. Immediately afterwards, the police blocked this section of the road.

From 5:00 a.m., the siren of a police car woke the inhabitants of the village, creating panic and fear, particularly among children. Regarding this incident as well, the Serbian daily newspaper “Jedinstvo” of Prishtina, without waiting for any official statement, attempted to blame “Albanian separatists”, admitting that the explosion was aimed at the home of Slavko Shqekiq, whose son is the commander of the local police station of Prizren.

Arson and destruction of property on 27 April 1996

On the same day, 27 April, during the night of the Muslim feast of Kurban Bajram, in the center of Prishtina, next to Radio–TV Prishtina, which since 1990 has been under the control of Serbs and Montenegrins, a large fire broke out and affected six private Albanian handicraft shops.

On Saturday evening, in the village of Zillopek, in the Peja district, the home of Avdyl Daci and Xhavit Daci, together with all its furniture, burned down under mysterious circumstances.

Bomb explosion involving children on 28 April 1996

On Sunday, 28 April, at around 6:00 p.m., four Albanian children were seriously wounded in a bomb explosion in the village of Lumëmadh (Vushtrri), near the Prishtina–Mitrovica road.

Nexhat Rifat Hetemi (born 1984), a sixth-grade pupil of the “Migjeni” primary school in the village of Stanovci i Epërm, died on the way to the hospital.

The following children were badly wounded:

Arsim Sahit Hetemi (8),
Fatmir Sahit Hetemi (13),
Xhavit Ahmet Hetemi (15).

The children had been putting cattle out to pasture in a meadow near the road when an explosive device, believed to have been a grenade, was thrown from a car. After the explosion, the device spread a very bad smell.

Beginning of mass police raids and arrests

In the meantime, the Serbian police carried out numerous raids, arrests, and acts of ill-treatment against Albanians as a consequence of these events.

According to information received, the following persons were affected:

In the district of Deçan:

Zenun Hasan Mazrekaj,

Shefqet Ismajli,

Abdullah Gjikokaj,

Ibrahim Ibërhysaj,

Naim Kuçi,

Ibrahim Mushkolaj and his three sons:

Halit Mushkolaj,

Faik Mushkolaj,

Edison Mushkolaj (17),

Kushtrim Mushkolaj (11),

Himë Mushkolaj,

Ibish Mushkolaj,

Skifter Mushkolaj,

Ramë Mushkolaj,

Dardan Gjikokaj,

Florim Ibërhysaj.

Note on arrests of Serbian citizens

As far as is known, the only Serb who was arrested during this period was Zlatko Jovanovic from Prishtina, the murderer of the Albanian student Armend Selim Daci.

Incidents on 21 April 1996

Podujeva

Qazim Rrahmani and Fadil Rrahmani were taken for weapons and physically ill-treated, and Liman Rrahmani was summoned, all of them from the village of Dumnica e Epërme.

Suhareka

Three Serbian policemen stopped in the street and physically ill-treated Mentor Buzhala (20) and Burim Buzhala (22), from the village of Savrova, who were on their way to collect sand with trucks.

Viti

A Montenegrin police squad stopped and ill-treated the Albanians Minush Idrizi, Agim Aliu, and Fadil Aliu from the village of Buzovik (Viti), while they were returning from a journey to Italy, on the Tivar–Podgorica road, at the bridge of Lake Shkodra.

Vushtrri

Hajdin Hasani was subjected to a weapons search, summoned, and beaten at the police station. Jakup Hasani, Ajvaz Hasani, and Hamdi Hasani, all from the village of Strofc, were summoned for weapons.

Klina

For “informative discussions”, the former journalist of TV Prishtina, Tahir Desku, from the village of Siqeve, who had just returned from the United States, was taken to the police. He was interrogated about Albanian political activities in America and about the activities of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) in Klina.

At the same time, the following persons were summoned for weapons:

Mujë H. Krasniqi,

Salih Sh. Krasniqi, from the village of Çabiq,

Hamit Berisha and Gani Berisha from the village of Volljak.

In the villages of Cernovik and Jellovc, the homes of Sejdi H. Mehmetaj (43) and Veli Raci, who are temporarily employed in Switzerland, were searched.

Malisheva

The young man Azem S. Krasniqi (21), from the village of Burim (Malisheva), who was mentally ill, deaf, and mute, was found dead on the territory of the village of Mushitisht (Suhareka), ten days after he had left his home.

Incidents on 22 April 1996

Viti

The police confiscated the passport of Rexhep Dobërdjanca from the village of Novosella, who had just returned for holidays from Germany, where he is temporarily employed.

Mitrovica

Abdullah Behram Kelmendi (31), secretary of the Charity Association “Mother Theresa” in Mitrovica, and Avdyl Tahiri (62) from the village of Selac, were taken for weapons and physically ill-treated.

Mustafë Islami (65) and Iljaz Islami (60) were summoned for weapons.

Klina

In the village of Budisalc, the police blocked the road and controlled cars and passengers. On the Peja–Fushë Kosova railway line, they removed Lulzim Drelaj from the village of Budisalc from the train, checked his identity, insulted him, and physically ill-treated him.

Kamenica

On 20 and 22 April, Remzush Spahiu from the village of Muçiverc was summoned for weapons to the police.

Prishtina

Driton Lajçi and Xhevat Bajrami, students at the Faculty of Law in Prishtina, who had participated in the event “Pranvera poetike '96” (Poetic Spring) in Tetova, were stopped by Serbian border authorities at the border with Macedonia.

Incidents on 23 April 1996

Ferizaj

Rexhep Xhemajli (60),
Shefki Konjufca (born 1961),
Hasan Konjufca (born 1946), all from Ferizaj,
Shaban Zeqiri and Nexhmedin Zeqiri,
and Nijazi Tahiri from the village of Balaj,
were taken for weapons to the police.

Nexhmedin Zeqiri was physically ill-treated by the policeman Boban Krstić, the murderer of the child Fidan Brestovci (7).

Ramadan Berisha, a teacher from the village of Mirodalla, whose passport had been confiscated some days earlier, was summoned to the police. The passport of his brother, Hyzri Berisha, was also confiscated.

The police beat in the street Afrim Sylejmani (25) from Ferizaj because his identity card stated “Kosova” instead of “Kosova and Metohia”.

The home of Sabit Krasniqi from Ferizaj was searched, and his son Blerim was subjected to a search.

Azem Llabjani, from the village of Surçina, member of the presidency of the CDHRF sub-council in Ferizaj, was summoned to report to the police on 6 May.

Vushtrri

The police intervened at the “Marin Beçikemi” technical secondary school, confiscated identity cards, and summoned the principal Qazim Azemi and the teachers Bahrije Krasniqi, Bekrije Gjyshinca, Muharrem Qirezi, and Ali Miftari.

The police stopped the bus transporting teachers and students of the “M. Bektashi” secondary school and checked the identities of:

Beqir Haxhiu (teacher),
Xhafer Islami,
Ragip Ujkani,
Zymer Sadiku,
Naim Saraqi,
Burim Poterçi.

Shtime

The police searched several families and ill-treated many citizens in the street, including:
Ismet Behluli, chairman of the LDK Youth Forum,
Dr. Ismet Jetishi, physician,
Hamit Tafaj, teacher,
Bashkim Kodra,
Daut Rrusta,
Ramush Sylë Ahmeti from the village of Raçak, who was beaten until he lost consciousness.

All were taken to the police.

Incidents on 23 April 1996 (continued)

Prizren

The police searched the home of the journalist of the weekly *Zëri*, Basri Rrahmani. They confiscated written materials and summoned him for “informative talks”.

The police summoned:
Xhavit Kryeziu,
Sadri Kryeziu,
Ismet Kryeziu,
all from the village of Dushanova.

Peja

The police summoned for weapons:
Sadri Ukaj,
Ramë Ukaj,
Halil Ukaj,
Niman Ukaj,
Selim Ukaj,
Ismail Ukaj,
from the village of Gorazhdec.

The home of Ismail Ukaj was searched.

Glogovc

The police carried out searches in several villages and summoned a large number of citizens for weapons, including:
Ismet Qeriqi,
Sabri Qeriqi,
Beqir Qeriqi,
Shaban Qeriqi,
Halil Qeriqi,
all from the village of Shtrubullova.

Incidents on 24 April 1996

Prishtina

The police summoned for “informative talks”:
Bajram Qerimi,

Bekim Qerimi,
Irir Qerimi,
from Prishtina.

The home of the family of Qerimi was searched.

Podujeva

The police searched the homes of:
Shefqet Rrahmani,
Sali Rrahmani,
both from the village of Dumnica e Epërme.

Mitrovica

The police summoned and physically ill-treated:
Fadil Gashi,
Qazim Gashi,
both from Mitrovica.

Ferizaj

The police summoned:
Rexhep Xhemajli,
Shefki Konjufca,
Hasan Konjufca,
for a second time, and again subjected them to weapons searches.

The home of Ramiz Zeqiri was searched.

Incidents on 25 April 1996

Viti

The police summoned:
Ragip Ahmeti,
Sadri Ahmeti,
from the village of Pozharan, for weapons searches.

Gjilan

The police summoned and ill-treated:
Naim Gashi,
Qazim Gashi,
from Gjilan.

Prizren

The police summoned:
Nazif Krasniqi,
Hysni Krasniqi,
from the village of Landovica.

The police searched the home of Sali Berisha from Prizren.

Suhareka

The police summoned:
Bajram Thaqi,
Ismet Thaqi,
from the village of Studençan.

Incidents on 26 April 1996

Peja

The police summoned:
Ramë Ukaj,
Sadri Ukaj,
for the second time.

Kamenica

The police searched the home of:
Remzush Spahiu,
from the village of Muçiverc.

Prishtina

The police summoned:
Ilir Berisha,

Arben Berisha,
from Prishtina.

Incidents on 27 April 1996

Prizren

The police summoned:
Ekrem Kryeziu,
owner of the construction enterprise whose pit was damaged by the explosion near Dushanova.

The police searched his home and confiscated documents.

Gjakova

The police summoned:
Agim Shehu,
from Gjakova, for weapons.

Incidents on 28 April 1996

Vushtrri – Bomb explosion injuring children

Four Albanian children were badly wounded in a bomb explosion in the village of Lumëmadh, near the Prishtina–Mitrovica road:

- Nexhat Rifat Hetemi (born 1984), sixth-grade pupil of the “Migjeni” primary school in the village of Stanovci i Epërm, **died on the way to the hospital.**
- Arsim Sahit Hetemi (8)
- Fatmir Sahit Hetemi (13)
- Xhavit Ahmet Hetemi (15)

The children had been putting cattle to pasture when an explosive, reportedly a grenade, was thrown from a passing car.

Mass police raids and arrests – listed by district

Deçan District

- Zenun Hasan Mazrekaj

- Shefqet Ismajli
- Abdullah Gjokokaj
- Ibrahim Ibërhysaj
- Naim Kuçi
- Ibrahim Mushkolaj and his sons: Halit, Faik, Edison (17), Kushtrim (11), Himë, Ibish, Skifter, Ramë Mushkolaj
- Dardan Gjokokaj
- Florim Ibërhysaj

Suhareka District

- Agim S. Kuçi
- Osman Sh. Elshani
- Shaqir Kryeziu

Shtimje District

- Sami and Dalip Dugolli
- Nebih and Alush Gashi
- Osman Emrush
- Dalip Dugolli
- Daut Rrusta
- Bashkim Kodra
- Bashkim Daut Gashi
- Naim Gashi
- Mexhid Gashi
- Bashkim Halit Gashi
- Ismet Behluli
- Halim Baftiu
- Nebahate Misini
- Hamit Tafa
- Imer Rrusta
- Naser Rrusta
- Dalip Luma
- Abaz Lata and his son Lulzim Lata (15)
- Sylë Gashi
- Milaim Gashi
- Osman Rrafshi
- Refki Kadriu (15)
- Nuhi Baftiu, pupil
- Mehdi Velu
- Gazmend Arifi

- Aziz Krasniqi
- Ahmet Aliu
- Dr. Bedri Sadriu
- Hasan Avdyli
- Bashkim Ibali
- Reshat Sinani
- Sami Dugolli
- Osman Emrushu
- Ismet Jetishi
- Hamit Tafaj
- Nazim Kabashi
- Ali R. Gashi
- Kadri Z. Kadriu
- Shaban Abazi
- Rexhep Abazi
- Mehmet Alibegu
- Ahmet Aliu
- Ramush Sylaj
- Bahtiar Gashi
- Muhamet Seferi
- Sali Seferi
- Bajram Latifi
- Dalip Luma
- Mujadin Beqa
- Shaban Halili
- Bashkim B. Beqa
- Haqif Qarri
- Kamber Qarri
- Osman Rrafshi
- Idriz Hoxha
- Nuhi Bislimi, invalid
- Miftar Qerimi
- Munish Qerimi
- Remzije Veseli
- Avdi Duga

Note: In the district of Shtimje, **more than 60 Albanian citizens were detained**, including women and children.

Mitrovica

- Ukë Hajzer Hajdini (68)
- Xhafer Hajdini (15)
- Dervish Tafil Kahrmani (30)
- Yzer B. Gashi (25)
- Ferki Hasani (22)
- Nexhat Sefer Dërguti (16)
- Shani S. Loshi (28)
- Besnik A. Gjeloši (17)
- Nysret Dibrani
- Muhamet Z. Gashi (19)
- Esat N. Haliti (21)
- Ramadan Rrahman Rexhepi (43)
- Sabri Bislim Jashari (43)
- Behxhet Shaban Shaqiri (49)
- Osman Hasani (40)
- Idriz Selaci

Peja

- Burim Berisha
- Malush B. Novaj (33)
- Erton K. Elezaj (20)
- Argjend F. Husaj (17)

As known, the only Serb arrested during this period was **Zlatko Jovanovic**, murderer of the Albanian student Armend S. Daci.

Additional police actions (April 21–28, 1996) – selected incidents

Podujeva

- Qazim and Fadil Rrahmani, taken for weapons and physically ill-treated
- Liman Rrahmani, summoned

Suhareka

- Mentor Buzhala (20) and Burim Buzhala (22), physically ill-treated by three Serbian policemen

Viti

- Minush Idrizi, Agim Aliu, Fadil Aliu, ill-treated by Montenegrin police squad on Tivar–Podgorica road

Vushtrri

- Hajdin Hasani, raided, summoned, beaten
- Jakup, Ajvaz, Hamdi Hasani, summoned

Klina

- Tahir Desku, former journalist, interrogated on political activities in America and LDK
- Mujë H. Krasniqi, Salih Sh. Krasniqi, Hamit and Gani Berisha, summoned
- Homes of Sejdi H. Mehmetaj (43), Veli Raci, searched

Malisheva

- Azem S. Krasniqi (21), mentally ill, deaf and mute, found dead

Delayed Information

Prishtina

- On 16 April, the Serbian authorities of interior affairs **seized the passport of Ali Podrimja**, a well-known Albanian poet, preventing him from attending an international writers' event on 20 April in Tirana. During this event, Ernesto Sabato, an Argentine poet of Albanian origin, received the "Kadare" award; Mr. Podrimja was supposed to be a jury member.
- Hamdi Musa, former railway employee in Fushë-Kosova, was expelled from his apartment in the "Dardania" quarter, SU/4/1D2 in Prishtina, where he had lived for 14 years. The apartment was given to the secretary of the Serbian railway director, who also owns a flat in Obiliq.

Podujeva

- From 3–16 April, the police searched for weapons in the homes of: Hamit Blakqori, Idriz Uka, Imer Maqkaku, Rizah Fazliu, Hajdin Hajdari, Hilmi Osmani (Podujeva), Isuf Latifi, Sadik Behrami, Selman Mahmuti, Jahir Latifi (Pollata village), Halim and Bekim Hamiti (Dumnica village).
- From 16–20 April, weapons searches were conducted at the homes of: Xhafer Batanica, Ahmet Mehana (beaten in front of family members), Jahir Mehana, Fehmi Potera, Januz Halimi (physically ill-treated), Shemsi Latifi, Selim Çitaku, Rexhep Gimolli, Kadrush Gimolli, Avdi Bajoku, Hamdi Ajvazi, Xhevat Behrami, Mursel Behrami, Januz Halimi, Vesel Jaha, Bajram Ojaca, Ajet Oraca, Mujë Ojaca, Latif Selmani (beaten in front of family, house raided, furniture destroyed), Rahman Jashari.
- The homes of Avdyl Avdullahu (Mirovc village), Qazim Mahmuti (Obranç village), Sheqir Zeqiri (beaten in front of family members), Muharrem Polomi (Halabak village), Sadik Behrami and Hajdin Ademi (Pollata village) were also searched.

- On 20 April, the police entered Nexhip Hajdini's house in Bellopojë village. As he was absent, the police **arrested and physically ill-treated his wife**.
- Around midnight on 20 April, Latif Selmani was physically ill-treated.
- On 20 April, the police blocked the green market, searched passers-by, checked identities, and plundered goods and foreign currency. Examples include: Selim Maliqi (300 DM), Beqir Ferizi (700 DM), Muhamet Tullari (600 DM), Habit Gashi (200 DM), Albert Beqiri (130 DM), and many others.

Dragash

- Bedri Halimi, chairman of the Sub-CDHRF in Dragash, was stopped, searched, and interrogated by the police.
- On 15 and 18 April, Jetullah Shabani (1961) from Kuk village was summoned for weapons.

Gllgovc

- On 20 April, the police raided the house of Elez Plakiqi (65), a farmer, and physically ill-treated him and Hafir Plakiqi (1967), a metallurgist from Nekoci village, on the pretext of hiding refugees.
- On 14 and 15 April, students Agim Thaçi (1976) from Llapushnik village (Gllgovc) and Mehdi Krasniqi (1973) from Lladroviq village (Malisheva) were physically ill-treated.

Mitrovica

- On 19 April, the police for the third time searched the homes of Hakif Jashar Jashari (60) and Sherif Zenel Jashari (58) in Vinarc village and left summonses to report to the police station.

Ferizaj

- On 16 April, Milaim Veseli from Greme village was summoned twice and brutally beaten.
- On 17 and 18 April, Ali Nuhaj, Feriz Reka (70), and Lumni Reka (26) from Nerodimja village were taken for weapons.
- On 20 April, Ismet Sadiku, member of the LDK chairmanship, was summoned.

Kaçanik

- From 5–14 April, the following were taken for weapons to the police station: Nexhadi Ajet Luta (1966), Shaban Hisman Mulaku (1951, physically ill-treated) from Ivaja village; Ziber Shefki Luma (1963), Shaip Luma (1969), Ekrem Luma (1964), Rexhep Mejdi Luma (1960) from Gllloboçica village.

Rahovec

- On 20 April, the police interfered in the “Ramiz Radiku” secondary school and two classes of the high school of Krushë e Madhe village, arresting and holding for 5 hours the school librarian **Bajram Nalli**.

Kamenica

- On 10 April, the police arrested for weapons and physically ill-treated **Zenel B. Ruhani (53)**, and summoned for weapons Hamzë Rashiti (57) and his son Hamit H. Rashiti, all from Zajçevci village.

Vushtrri

- On 16, 17, 18 April, Bahri and Sherafedin Hasani from Strofc village were summoned.
- On 19 April, Zenel Latifi from Sllatina village was summoned.

Gjilan

- On 15 April, Riza Aliu (1948), a worker living at “R. Sadiku” 11/6, was sentenced to 1 year imprisonment by the Serbian district court for participation in the demonstrations of 1990, even though he had served 2 months for the same “offense”.
- On 16 April, Selami Leka (1958), living at “A. Ajeti” IV/29, was arrested for weapons and ordered to report again on 18 and 24 April, when he was physically ill-treated.

Shtime

- On 20 April, Ruzhdi Hamdi Jashari, machine engineer and teacher of the “Naim Frashëri” primary school, was kept for 4 hours at the security center of Ferizaj for “informative talks” and interrogated about political activities. This was the fifth time he was interrogated by **Serbolub Vujinovic**, Serbian state security inspector.

Fushë Kosova

- On 20 April, the police raided the home of Ibrahim Ahmeti, chairman of the local LDK sub-branch, for weapons.

Source

Prishtina, **CDHRF Information Service**, 28 April 1996

AlbaNews: Albanian News List, Alba...@ubvm.cc.buffalo.edu

ftp: ubvm.cc.buffalo.edu/albanian

Usenet: bit.listserv.albanian

Abstract

This report documents the widespread repression, harassment, and killings perpetrated by Serbian police and other authorities in Kosovo from 21–28 April 1996, following the murder of the Albanian student Armend Selim Daci. The incidents include targeted killings, bomb explosions, arson attacks, arbitrary arrests, physical ill-treatment, confiscations of passports and property, and intimidation of Albanian civilians, including children, journalists, and political activists. Hundreds of Albanians were affected across districts including Prishtina, Mitrovica, Ferizaj, Peja, Viti, and Shtime. The report also highlights systematic attempts to blame Albanians for violence they did not commit.

Summary

From 21–28 April 1996, the Serbian police and authorities in Kosovo engaged in systematic repression against Albanians. Following the murder of Armend Selim Daci, multiple killings of Serbs and bombings occurred, yet Albanians were widely targeted for harassment, arbitrary arrests, ill-treatment, and property seizures. Children, students, teachers, journalists, and political activists were affected. Hundreds of individuals across multiple districts suffered violence and intimidation. The report documents the names of victims, families raided, passports confiscated, and public spaces controlled. These actions demonstrate a coordinated pattern of ethnic targeting and repression during this period in Kosovo.