

Middle East Studies Association of North America

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January 22, 1993

President Slobodan Milosevic
Predsednik Republike Srbije
Srpskih vladara 14
11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia

Dear President Milosovic:

The Committee on Academic Freedom wishes to express its deep concern over the discriminatory policies directed at Albanian citizens of Kosovo, which have resulted in Albanian professors and teachers losing their jobs and the closing of most of the educational institutions in Kosovo province. These acts have caused grievous injustice for most citizens of Kosovo, since Albanians, though a minority in Serbia, constitute over 90% of the inhabitants of Kosovo.

The Middle East Studies Association comprises 2300 academics worldwide who teach and conduct research on the Middle East and North Africa. The association publishes the respected *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and is committed to ensuring respect for the principles of academic freedom and human rights throughout the region.

Since the Serbian government revoked the autonomy of the province of Kosovo in 1989, most Albanian language schools have been closed -- at the same time that educational institutions serving the Serbian population continue to function. Albanian teachers and professors have been deprived of their employment because they wish to teach in Albanian, the language of the majority, or because they resist changes requiring that the curriculum emphasize Serbian rather than Albanian history and culture. Approximately 780 professors and deans at Pristina University have been fired without any right to appeal and have been replaced by Serbs. A discriminatory quota system requiring that half of the students admitted to Pristina University be Serbian has been instituted. Furthermore, Albanians employed in the University Library of Kosovo and Albanian medical personnel at the Kosovo School of Medicine have been fired from their jobs solely because of Albanian ethnicity.

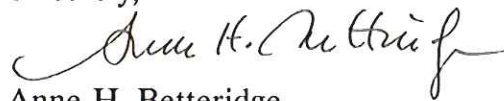
Taken together, these actions suggest that policies are being pursued of dismantling educational institutions serving Albanians, purging ethnic Albanian educators and professionals, and suppressing Albanian culture and language. Such policies violate fundamental human rights. The discrimination directed against Albanian educators and Albanian educational institutions violates basic principles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including the article 19 guarantee of the freedom to seek, receive

and impart information and ideas; the article 26 guarantee that all persons shall be equal before the law and are entitled to the equal protection of the law regardless of race, language, religion or national origin; and the article 27 guarantee that ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities shall not be denied the right to enjoy their own culture and to use their own language. Regarding the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the measures closing educational facilities serving the Albanian populace violate the Article 13 provisions guaranteeing the right of primary education for all, requiring that secondary education be made generally available and accessible to all, and requiring that higher education be made equally accessible to all.

We respectfully request that all such discriminatory measures cease immediately, that Pristina University and all Kosovo's schools be reopened on a basis that respects the human rights of Albanians, and that all dismissed Albanian teachers and professors be reinstated in their former positions.

Thank you for your consideration of these matters. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Anne H. Betteridge
Executive Director

cc: Zoran Sokolovic, Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia
Minister of Defence of the Republic of Serbia
Milan Panic, Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
Tibor Varadi, Federal Minister of Justice
Committee for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms, Pristina, Yugoslavia
Robert Rackmales, Charge d'affaires - Serbia