



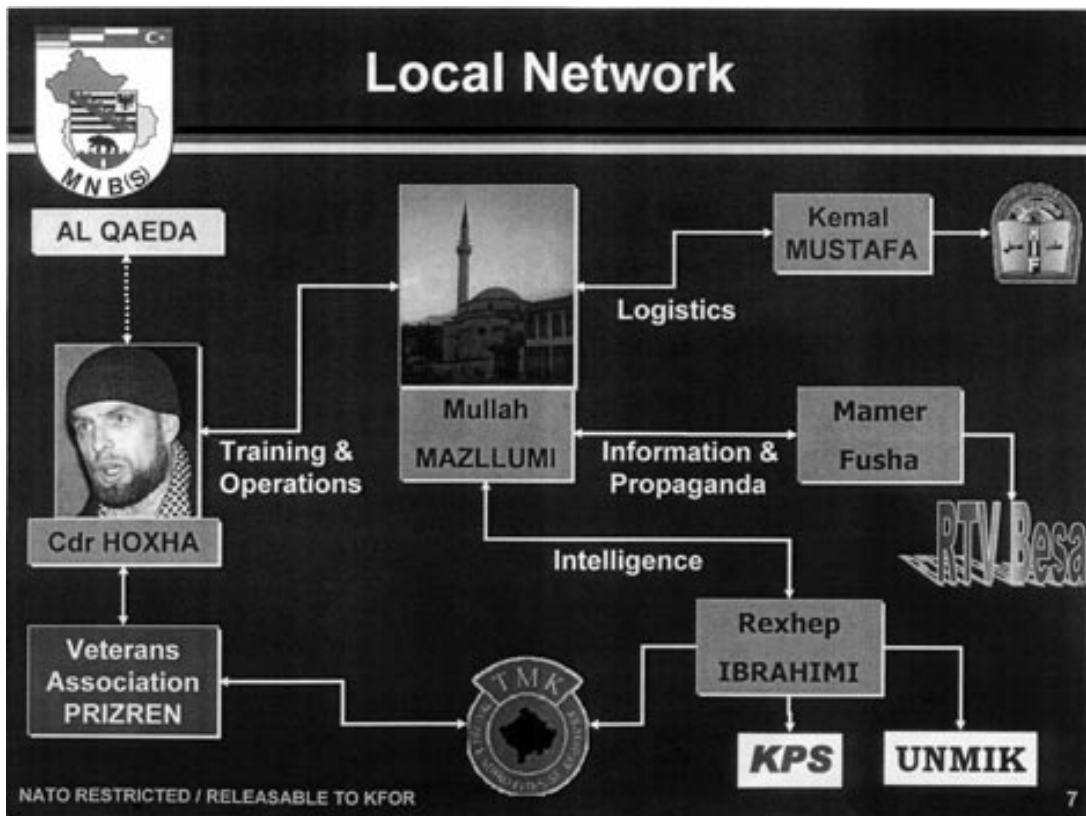
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When intelligence officers fan the flames

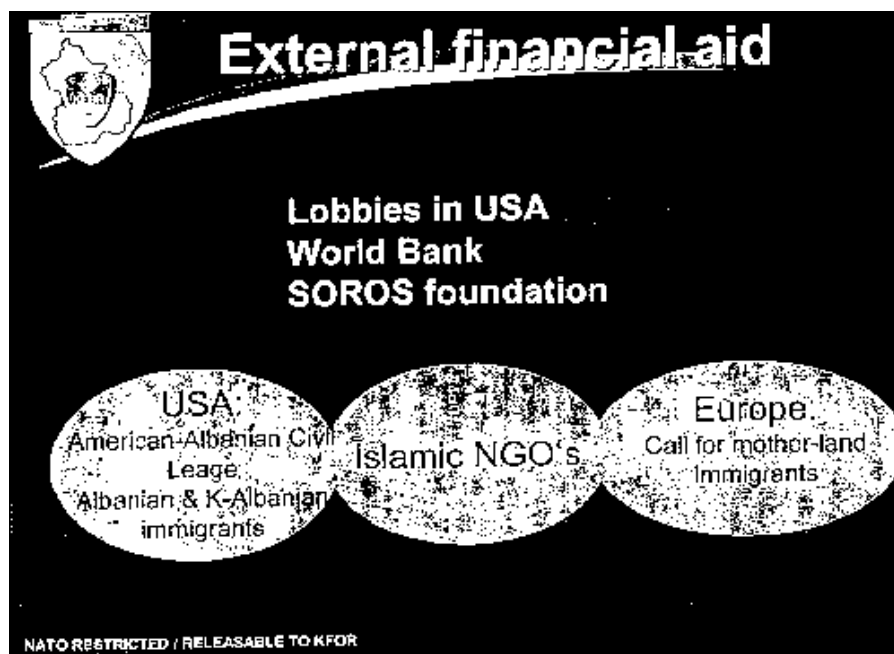
Why is the Serbian community silent on reports by German ZDF television presenting serious accusations against the German intelligence service (BND) in connection with the March pogroms in Kosovo and Metohija



In two segments of more than four minutes each broadcast on November 18 and 20 as major news during the main news program, ZDF reporters documented the following: that the German intelligence service (BND - Bundesnachrichtendienst) knew three weeks prior to March 17 that organized attacks on Serbs throughout Kosovo and Metohija were being prepared, that the BND knew this because it was tapping the conversations of one of the organizers of the pogrom, that this man's name is Samedin Xhezairi, also known as Commander Hoxha, and that Xhezairi, for his part, was a BND spy but also an intermediary between Albanian extremists

and al-Q'aida. The reporters cited transcripts of conversations from the intelligence services as well as confidential NATO documents, and the dilemmas they opened, directly and indirectly, were why BND did not relay the information to the German government, and through it to the commander of the German Kfor contingent in Prizren and Holger Kammerhof, then commander in chief of NATO troops in Kosovo? Could the violence have been prevented if key political and military structures in Berlin and Kosovo and Metohija had received timely information from the German intelligence officers? And finally - with what kind of suspicious characters is the BND cooperating?

That the ZDF information was volatile was demonstrated by the quick reaction of the German government. The very next day after the broadcast of the first part, government spokesperson Bela Anda sharply denied at a press conference ZDF claims that the BND but not the German troops in the field knew that Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija were preparing violence against the Serbs. Anda emphasized that the BND and the German Army had a completely "mutually corresponding picture of the situation" but refused to comment on cooperation between the BND and the extremist Xhezairi.

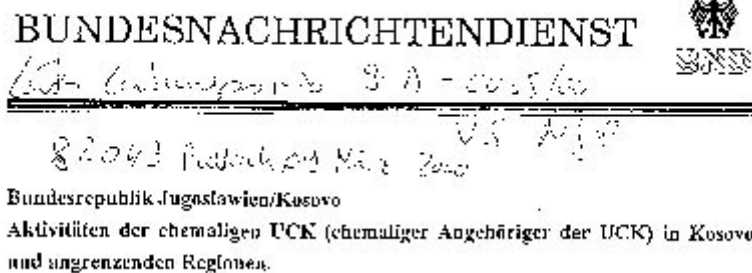


The German media and the media in the region where the German language is spoken gladly accepted the ZDF news and the government reaction, some very gladly. The Austrian paper "Kurir", for example, placed the headline of "Al-Q'aida fanned the violence in Kosovo" above its report. Although things are indeed serious they are not quite as simple as the headline suggests.

NIN's journalist accompanied the ZDF journalists during their investigations in this region and also learned additional information. Thanks to the exclusive information at our disposal we can put together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle still far from complete but clear enough to be able to recognize the contours of the somber scenario.

The protagonist of this story is Samedin Xhezairi, called Commander Hoxha, an Austrian citizen of Albanian origin who today lives in Prizren. In the last issue of NIN we presented major facts about him to which we will add that Xhezairi lived in Austria and joined the Kosovo Liberation Army when armed conflict in Kosovo began, taking part in the activity in three operative zones. He was a fighter in

Chechnya, trained in Afghanistan and acted as the commander of the mujaheddin 112th Brigade operating in the summer of 2001 in the region of Tetovo. In August of the same year 80 members of the 3/502 battalion of U.S. paratroopers evacuated him from Arachinovo, together with his Albanian extremists and 17 instructors of the U.S. private military company MPRI which was training the Albanian paramilitary formations.



According to confidential NATO information from 2002 prepared by the German intelligence services BND and ZNB (Zentrum für Nachrichtennjeseu der Bundesnjehr), Xhezairi has been tasked with forming a branch of "Allah's Army", the Hezbollah, and his telephone number has been found in confiscated documents from identified members of al-Q'aida. Samedin Xhezairi is an active member of the KLA Veterans' Association, which is collecting money for "humanitarian aid" through a German bank. The Albanians consider him to be a charismatic "holy man" and count him among the most eminent Albanian leaders.

The same NATO information presented to KFOR Headquarters on May 17, 2002 indicate that his involvement with Islamist elements in Kosovo is far reaching. At the center of local Islamist structures in Prizren is Hoxha Mazlumi who is active in the Jeni Mahala ("New Territory") mosque. Through his closest associates, including Xhezairi, Mazlumi has established an organization with his own paramilitary, intelligence service and logistical, financial and propaganda network (see illustration). Through his people Mazlumi has ties to the Kosovo Protection Corps, the Kosovo Police Service, UNMIK and al-Q'aida.

The NATO documents state that the potential intentions and capabilities of Mazlumi's organization are "quick mobilization of the masses for demonstrations, fanning of aggressive stance among the non-Islamist population toward Kfor, development of a Islamist dam in Prizren, initiation of unrest to demonstrate the failure of the international community, taking advantage of the fact that Kosovska Mitrovica in the center of Kfor's attention, while the south of Kosovo is under less observation by international forces..."

**Breaking news
BND admission**

At the printing deadline for this issue of NIN we have learned that BND chief August Haning has admitted that the ZDF documents also in NIN's possession are authentic

Thus, it was known for at least two years that in Prizren a cell of extremist Islamism was being born right under the eyes of German Kfor. It is not surprising that the temperature in that city jumped when ZDF journalists arrived and began

to ask awkward questions of both the German troops and the Islamist extremists. At the same time, it is interesting that the Germans were less talkative than their temporary neighbors. They stuck firmly to the official version of events: no one knew anything about the preparation of the March pogroms; German Kfor, like all members of international forces throughout Kosovo, were caught by surprise by the violence, and consequently unable to react adequately. When confronted with evidence that the BND was informed regarding the preparations by Albanian terrorists, the German soldiers categorically rejected every possibility of being privy to the information themselves.

Unlike them, Samedin Xhezairi was not particularly reluctant to admit some things to the German reporters even though his nervousness was apparent. He warned his collocutors no less than four times that they must show the report they were preparing to the BND before broadcasting it, as if it was necessary to ask the intelligence service for its approval with the reporters' discoveries. Apparently, Xhezairi understood this to be an obligation on his part toward his former employers. Commander Hoxha did not deny working for the BND as a spy but he depicted this as some form of entertainment. He did not deny having taken part in the recorded conversations regarding the preparation of the violence nor did he reject the fact that organized structures exist: "We are former fighters; we know each other just like U.S. veterans. As long as the people are alive, these structures exist."

He also explained the use of coded conversations to the German reporters: "You agree beforehand that, for example, the word 'health' means 'liquidate him' and then you just say 'health' and the people tapping your conversation don't know what it means." In fact, the conversations Xhezairi took part in at the end of February and beginning of March were not very well coded, and any listener of average education could understand them, let alone intelligence service experts. Mention was made, for example, that "in two or three weeks the party will begin" and that "in Prizren everything is prepared for a hot party" while the question asked was "can you guarantee it will be a blast in Urosevac". Some of Xhezairi's collocutors also complained that they still had not organized enough buses to transport the activists. According to transcripts in the possession of ZDF journalists, Samedin Xhezairi commanded the March operations in Prizren and Urosevac, and probably in Orahovac, too. The BND knew and not only the BND.

"According to confidential NATO information from 2002 prepared by the German intelligence services BND and ZNB (Zentrum für Nachrichtennjesen der Bundesnjehr), Samedin Xhezairi has been tasked with forming a branch of "Allah's Army", the Hezbollah, and his telephone number has been found in confiscated documents from identified members of al-Q'aida. Samedin Xhezairi is an active member of the KLA Veterans' Association, which is collecting money for "humanitarian aid" through a German bank. The Albanians consider him to be a charismatic "holy man" and count him among the most eminent Albanian leaders" (NIN weekly)

NIN also received confirmation of this from German intelligence service expert Erich Schmidt-Eenboom who told us: "Until March 4 - two weeks before the pogroms - Commander Hoxha was a BND spy for 500 euros per month, probably more because of his connections with al-Q'aida than because of Kosovo. On

March 4 he was deactivated after the BND learned from partner services - probably the Austrian military intelligence service - that they were tapping his conversations. The BND advised him of this fact." According to some sources, after this discovery Xhezairi fled to Bosnia, returning immediately prior to March 17 to Prizren. It is not known whether someone temporarily removed him or if he left for personal reasons. What is known, and what Erich Schmidt-Eenboom confirmed for NIN, is the fact that Xhezairi was working for at least one other intelligence service, the CIA. That is why U.S. paratroopers evacuated him in 2001 from Arachinovo.

Some German media and politicians these days are not even questioning the reliability of the ZDF reports according to which the BND was aware of the criminal activities of its collaborator Xhezairi. For example, the spokesperson of the Greens on defense matters, Vinfrid Nahtvaj (phonetic spelling), stated that the ZDF investigations are based on "fairly solid and certain indications". And former coordinator of the German secret services in the government Bernt Schmidtbauer (sp!) said that the ZDF information regarding the suspect role of the BND "must be taken very seriously" and requires a thorough investigation into lack of communication between the BND and the German Army.



Photo: German Defense minister Schtruck in Kosovo

The statements of Nahtvaj and Schmidtbauer follow a scandal after the March events in Kosovo in which German defense minister Peter Struck and his army were implicated. Struck and the German contingent in Kosovo found themselves in the limelight of public attention after media reports revealed that at the time of the attack by Albanian terrorists there was chaos among the German troops and that the burned body of a Serb man was found in Prizren after Struck claimed that there were no casualties in the German area of responsibility. The latest revelations regarding the role of the BND correspond with this stunning picture of disorganization on the part of German military and security structures. If the BND had the information and failed to forward it to the government and army, that means there is no help for anyone dependent on the protection of state

institutions. That is the approximate image of the intelligence service and the army among the German public at present.

However, Erich Schmidt-Eenboom categorically rejects this interpretation and tells NIN that the German government spokesperson was telling the truth in his denial of the ZDF report: "The BND certainly informed the Chancellor's cabinet. It is inconceivable that the BND failed to do so under the present political conditions and good cooperation with the German government. The statement of spokesperson Anda is correct - the BND and the German Army had a 'mutually corresponding picture of the situation'. That means that the German contingent in Prizren and its commander colonel Hinkelmann consciously failed to respond to the attacks, that they allowed everything to happen in order to avoid coming into direct contact with the Albanians. Because the consequence of having done so would have been Albanian violence against the German Army, and that would have ruined the good image of the peacekeeping mission. The irony of the whole story is that the Germany government and the KLA have a common final goal, and that is an independent state of Kosovo without concession of territory to the Serbs. Only Berlin also needs to be careful with respect to the timeline as far as allies who still oppose this are concerned, as is the case with France."

Schmidt-Eenboom also reminds of the history of cooperation between the BND and the KLA: "What German journalists and their Dutch colleagues at VPRO Radio Television investigated has a long tradition. Since the beginning of the 1990s the BND has maintained contacts with the KLA which was then considered to be a terrorist organization. Although we have to admit that the KLA has stronger ties with the CIA than the BND. Commander Hoxha had ties with the CIA, the BND and with the Austrian military intelligence service which has devoted great attention to this region and has very good connections with the KLA."

Such facts, of course, are not mentioned in the media and among the general public in Germany because life is not easy for those who bear such knowledge, either. After the ZDF reports were broadcast the BND launched a campaign against one of the authors, journalist Franc-Jozef Huch (sp!) and began to spread stories in Berlin that his revelations are based on false information from Serbian intelligence services, and that he is of pro-Serbian orientation because he was a defense witness in the Milosevic trial and after that gave an interview to NIN. To be of pro-Serbian orientation is tantamount to the German public to being, for example, a member of al-Q'aida.

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However, the editors of ZDF strongly support Huch, as Ulrich Gack (sp!) one of the co-authors of the controversial broadcasts tells NIN. There is even more compromising material for the BND and the German government, and now everyone is waiting for the further unfolding of events.

The German public, for example, still does not know what NIN reported in its last issue: that the terrorist structures in Kosovo are being systematically armed by state-of-the-art G-22 sniper rifles, which are arriving in the southern Serbian province in large quantities. Taking into account the fact that Commander Hoxha stated in his interview for German television that he can immediately mobilize 30,000 fighters, and that "it is no longer necessary to wait for the spring for a new attack; all we need is a spark" it may happen that the German public will suddenly find itself confronted by new-old questions without clear answers: Who will be to blame if the Albanian terrorists carry out yet another, perhaps final ethnic cleansing in Kosovo? Can Kfor protect the Serbs from new violence, and is it even in their interest to do so? Are Islamist fundamentalist cells being born in Kosovo under the eyes of the peacekeeping forces that might even become a threat to Europe? Are Western intelligence sources participating, actively or passively, in this process and thus creating a new army of "talibans" who will one day turn against them? And so on and so on.

There are so many questions and the answers are wrapped in a veil of silence or being consciously obscured. It appears that both the Serbian public and Serbian politicians are fleeing from facing important facts. We have not heard any official statements following the news from Germany while "European Serbian National Television", for example, reported on the whole issue as if Kosovo and Metohija was some province in the Congo, not one whose fate is still, at rhetorically, a part of Serbia's state interests. It would appear that these are matters of interest only to "the dark forces of the past" whose remaining days are numbered.

■ **By Mira Beham**