

Newsletter from the Movement for SELF-DETERMINATION!

THIS WEEK:

- **Arrest attempt at funeral of Ali Aliu**
- **9th session in trial of Albin**
- **7 activists in court for preventing arrest of Albin Kurti**
- **EULEX's 'war on corruption'**
- **Pieter Feith on Albin's trial**

Arrest attempt at funeral of Ali Aliu

On Monday 26th April, Albin Kurti attended the commemorative ceremony for Ali Aliu, who had died the night before. Ali Aliu was a highly respected activist of the national movement, who spent many years in Serbia's prisons for his political activities. Following the ceremony, Albin attended his burial service and as this was taking place, it became clear that special police checkpoints had been set up on the roads exiting from the graveyard. Violating the tradition of the sacredness of the funeral, and insulting the Aliu family, the special police intervened violently, attempting to stop the car carrying Albin Kurti as it left the graveyard, in order to arrest him. The police used spray against the members of the public and activists who rushed to prevent the arrest, in some cases beating people with metal batons. Seven activists were arrested for preventing Albin's arrest: Salih Zyba, Frashër Krasniqi, Hysen Durmishi, Gëzon Kastrati, Lirim Gashi, Arsim Maqastena and Arben Selmani. The CDHRF later reported that at least three activists were beaten after being arrested and inside the police station.

Liburn Aliu, activist of Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE!, and son of Ali Aliu, who was being buried that day, stated that the police intervention completed the meaning of his father's life and work, because this had always been resistance with the people.

Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE! holds the Prime Minister, Hashim Thaçi and EULEX responsible for ordering the police to violate Ali Aliu's funeral, in order to further their political goal of isolating and persecuting Albin Kurti.

In the days following this shocking police intervention, public outrage led the Minister of the Interior, Bajram Rexhepi to state that he had been opposed to the police operational plan. He also declared that he had advised the head of EULEX that the trial should be closed. On the other hand, in yet another blatant indication of what justice means to

EULEX, their spokeswoman welcomed the police intervention and condemned the members of the public and our activists for 'violence' and for obstructing the police.

9th session in trial of Albin Kurti

In a session on Wednesday 28th April lasting just 5 minutes, the Presiding Judge adjourned the trial until 4th May at 09:00, due to the absence of Albin Kurti and the absence of the assigned defense lawyer. The judge issued yet another arrest warrant for Albin Kurti in what has become an endless prosecution of him and Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE!

We call on Ali Rexha, the EULEX prosecutor, to drop all charges in the case; on Fllanza Kadiu, the Albanian Judge in the Panel, to refuse to participate; and on the Kosova Police to refuse to implement the arrest warrant for Albin.



Activists being brought to court by masked police

7 activists in court for preventing arrest of Albin Kurti

After the trial session against Albin Kurti had finished, the seven activists arrested on Monday were brought to court by masked police. One of these activists, Hysen Durmishi, was facing a charge of attempted murder, which was then reduced to attacking a police officer. In his speech to the court, Hysen described these charges as shameful, stating, "I and my colleagues were at a funeral. Whilst leaving, we came across a special police cordon. Faced with the choice of stopping for the police and them arresting Albin, or respecting the will of 175,000 citizens who demand the immediate closing of the trial against him, I listened to reason and decided to respect the will of the people. All that I did was to remove Albin from the police, without injuring anyone. On the

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contrary, it was the police who injured activists and members of the public." The judge decided to release six of the activists and to place Hysen under house arrest for 30 days.

EULEX's 'war on corruption'

On Wednesday, the same day that EULEX was prosecuting eight activists of our movement; and just two days after Kosova was horrified by the attempted arrest of Albin Kurti ordered by EULEX; and, a week after news that 16 EULEX staff had been caught smuggling cigarettes and alcohol out of the country; EULEX, with its reputation in tatters, organized a spectacular 'search' of Fatmir Limaj's offices and home. This was meant to be the start of the much trumpeted campaign EULEX promised against corruption when it arrived here over a year and a half ago.

However, as EULEX police officers paraded for the media, removing computers from Limaj's offices, their boss was undermining even the illusion of the action having any meaning: Yves de Kermabon and the US Ambassador, were sequestered for hours in a private meeting with Hashim Thaci and Fatmir Limaj, after which Limaj announced he would continue work as normal.

Corruption cannot be resolved by a mission that is anti-democratic and both above and immune from the law it pretends to implement. Nor will corruption be rooted out by a mission whose primary aim is to maintain stability in Kosova. In this context, the so-called war against corruption will always be reduced to spectacles that look good on TV, while the reality is being managed in backroom negotiations.

Pieter Feith on Albin's trial

In an address at the American University in Kosova, Pieter Feith, the ICR, was asked what he thought about the trial of Albin Kurti. According to students at the talk, he replied that Albin 'has a moral responsibility to attend court to account for his misdeeds'. His comment indicates precisely how little respect he has for the independence of the judiciary, (it is Feith who approves the appointment of all EULEX judges and prosecutors), and the principle of 'innocent before proven guilty'.