

EUR 70/006/2013
28 March 2013

UA 79/13 Kosovo - HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ATTACKED

Nazlie Bala, a human rights defender in Kosovo, was attacked outside her apartment on 27 March. She had recently received death threats after publicly supporting a law that would provide survivors of war crimes of sexual violence with compensation and rehabilitation. Amnesty International is calling for her protection.

On 27 March, Nazlie Bala was attacked upon entering her apartment building after returning home from work, and was badly beaten by at least two unknown assailants. She was taken to the emergency department at Pristina hospital, suffering from shock and injuries, including to her jaw. On 20 March, she returned home from work to find an anonymous letter slipped under her door. The letter read, "Do not protect the shame. Otherwise we will kill you."

The Kosovo Police (KP) today opened an investigation into the assault. They had previously opened an investigation into the threatening letter, and had taken measures to conduct a risk assessment. The KP also stated that after the first incident, they had stepped up police patrols in the area where Nazlie Bala lives.

Nazlie Bala is a well-respected human rights activist in Kosovo, who has consistently fought for the rights of women in Kosovo, and helped to establish institutional support for persons suffering from domestic violence. She had been advocating for a proposed legal amendment – which received its first reading in the Kosovo Assembly on 14 March – which seeks to guarantee the rights of women who have suffered war crimes of sexual violence during the armed conflict in Kosovo. She had publicly supported the amendment in a television debate on television channel RTK on 18 March. The draft amendments to the Law on the Status and Rights of Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of Kosovo Liberation Army, Civilian Victims, and their Families would give legal recognition, respect and public acknowledgement to people who have suffered sexual violence. The amendment aims to provide them with compensation, in the form of financial support, rehabilitation and other forms of reparation.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- * Stating that you are extremely concerned about the threats and recent assault on Nazlie Bala;
- * Urging the KP to intensify their investigations and the State Prosecutor to ensure that an independent, impartial and thorough investigation is carried out into the assault, the threats made against Nazlie Bala, and other women human rights defenders;
- * Urging the State Prosecutor to provide immediate and appropriate protection to Nazlie Bala, as set out in the Law on Witness Protection, and take further measures to guarantee human rights defenders their right to freedom of expression;
- * Calling on the Prime Minister to ensure the government implements immediately in law, policy and in practice the provisions of the UN Declaration on human rights defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 MAY 2013 TO:

Chief State Prosecutor
Ismet Kabashi,
Kryeprokurori i Shtetit të Republikës së Kosovës
Zyra e Kryeprokurorit të Shtetit
Ndërtesa e ish bankës së Lubjanës, kati i VIII-të,
10 000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Email: info.psh@rks-psh.org
Salutation: Dear State Prosecutor

Director General Kosova Police
Shpend Maxhuni

Drejtor i Përgjithshëm i Policisë së Kosovës,
Drejtoria e Përgjithshme e
Policisë së Kosovës,
Rr. Luan Haradinaj pn.
10000 Prishtinë – Kosovë
Email: info@kosovopolice.com
Salutation: Dear Director General

And copies to:
Prime Minister
Mr. Hashim Thaci
Kryetari i Këshillit të Ministrave
Ndërtesa e Qeverisë
Sheshi: Nëna Terezë, p.n.
Zyra e Kryeministrit
10 000 Prishtinë, Kosovë
Email: info_pmo@ks-gov.net

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

KOSOVOS AMBASSAD
BOX 3643
103 59 STOCKHOLM

FAX 08- 678 30 02
E-post: embassy.sweden@ks-gov.net

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

To date, very few investigations have been opened into allegations of war crimes of sexual violence in Kosovo. Only one prosecution for rape – as a war crime – is currently being conducted by the EU-led Mission on Kosovo, which is responsible for the investigation and prosecution of all crimes under international law.

Rape and other crimes of sexual violence committed over the armed conflict in Kosovo amount to war crimes. All those suspected of criminal responsibility should be investigated and, if there is sufficient admissible evidence, prosecuted.

On 22 March 2013 Amnesty International called on President Atifete Jahjaga to publicly support the rights of women who have survived war crimes of sexual violence, and called on the Prime Minister and other members of the Kosovo government to publicly denounce the threats to Nazlie Bala. Both the Prime Minister and the President have done so.

The organisation urged the Kosovo Police Service and the State Prosecutor to immediately open an independent, impartial and thorough investigation into the threats against Nazlie Bala, and any other women human rights defenders who are so threatened. The organization called on the authorities to provide appropriate protection to Nazlie Bala and other women human rights defenders who have received such threats.

Amnesty International also urged the Kosovo government to implement in law and in practice the principles of the UN Declaration of Human Rights Defenders, which provides a framework for the protection and support of human rights defenders. The organization also calls on the embassies of EU member states to provide protection and support to human rights defenders in Kosovo. Amnesty International also urged all those in positions of power in Kosovo to refrain from invoking any custom or tradition or belief to avoid its obligations to provide reparation for crimes of sexual

violence against women, and publicly declare at every opportunity its intention to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish all forms of violence against women.
Under the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Declaration on Human Rights Defenders) governments should ensure the rights of human rights defenders, and provide them with protection.

Name: Nazile Bala

Gender m/f: f