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FACSIMILE MESSAGE

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Subject: Conscription Practice in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Reference is made to your request regarding conscription practice in FRY, dated 25 August 1998 and 9 February 1999.

UNHCR's office in Belgrade gives the following information:

QUOTE

1. All male citizens in FRY are liable to be conscripted. In practice, ethnic Albanians from Kosovo are not being called up. Other minorities are (including Albanians from Montenegro).

2. First training lasts 12 months.

3. According to law, it is possible to opt for serving without carrying arms (e.g., sanitary troops, engineering troops, office duties), or for an alternative civilian service. In both cases, first training lasts 24 months. A wish to perform non-armed service or alternative civilian service has to be made known at the time of the obligatory medical examination prior to the call up. In practice, only certain religious minorities (Jehovah's witnesses) use this option.

4. Conscripts are normally called up for first training in the age bracket of 18-27 years.

5. Call ups for reserve training is possible up to the age of 60.

6. Call ups take place by means of registered mail.

7. The events in Kosovo in 1998 did not lead to a change in the above practice. As far as we know, no reservists were called up during 1998, with the exception of military police.

8. In principle, every conscript could be sent to Kosovo. In practice, no members of ethnic minority groups were sent to Kosovo. The army was only involved in the fighting to a limited extent. Troops of the Interior Ministry (special police) were most involved. However, some 50 soldiers died in Kosovo in 1998, including a few conscripts.

9. Draft evaders and deserters are punishable by law. Draft evasion is wide-spread, and prosecutions are relatively few. Standard sentence would seem to be 3 months conditional imprisonment. No discriminatory practices between population groups have been observed.

END QUOTE

We hope that this information will be useful.

Regards