

U.N. Sleuth Calls on Albania to Allow Organ Inquiry

By [Global Research](#)

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TIRANA – A [United Nations](#) expert accused Albania on Tuesday of stalling an international investigation into allegations of torture, killing and organ trading during the 1999 Kosovo conflict.

“None of the efforts to investigate have received meaningful cooperation on the side of the government of Albania,” Philip Alston told a news conference.

Explanations offered to him by officials “amounted in practice to a game of bureaucratic and diplomatic ping pong in which the responsibility for not responding to requests was moved from one office to the next.”

“Each insisted that if requested by the right authorities and under proper conditions they would not hesitate to cooperate. But the bottom line is that the issue is definitely stalled.”

Former U.N. War Crimes prosecutor [Carla Del Ponte](#) said in a book published in 2008 her team had investigated reports that around 300 Serbs held in Albania had had organs removed, apparently for trafficking.

Alston, a U.N. Special Rapporteur mandated by the Human Rights Council to monitor extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, said Albanian authorities had told him the allegations were politically motivated and baseless.

He said there were investigations in progress by the Council of Europe, Serbia’s war crimes prosecutor, and EULEX, the [European Union](#) police and justice mission in Kosovo.

“The (Albanian) government should do everything it can to facilitate an independent and objective investigation by the international entities investigating abuses,” he added.

Albanian Prime Minister [Sali Berisha](#) has dismissed Del Ponte’s charges as fiction. However, claims persist that either Serbs or Kosovo Albanians seen as spies were tortured or killed in Albania in the camps of the guerrilla [Kosovo Liberation Army](#).

Serbia welcomed Alston’s comments. Bruno Vekaric, a spokesman for Serbia’s war crimes prosecutor, said Serbia would support an independent international investigation. “That would be the right path to find out the truth and achieve full regional cooperation,” he said by telephone from The Hague.

In 2004, U.N. investigators searched a house belonging to an Albanian family after

allegations ethnic Albanian guerrillas in Kosovo had removed body organs from Serbs seized during [NATO's](#) 1999 air campaign against Serbia to stop ethnic killings.

Investigators said they found bloodstains, gauze in the garbage area and syringes but not enough evidence for a case.

(Additional reporting by Ivana Sekularac in Belgrade; editing by Adam Tanner and Andrew Roche)

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