

REPORT 2 CONCERNING ERGIN SALIHI

By Paul Polansky dispatched on 22nd April 2009

Tina called the Kraguevac hospital again today and actually spoke with Ergin's doctor. Her name is Dr. Mariana Pavicevic.

I thought Ergin would be going back to Mitrovica this week, but his doctor said he still needs treatment and probably wouldn't be sent back until Thursday or Friday next week. In fact, he might not even be sent back to his "home" but might have to spend at least a month in the hospital in north Mitrovica. That decision will be left up to Dr. Lubijca (a friend of mine) in the north Mitrovica hospital. Dr. Lubijca also treated four year old Djenita who died in the Zitkovac camp in 2004.

Much to my surprise, Dr. Pavicevic did not know that Ergin lives in an IDP camp. His medical records from the north Mitrovica hospital listed him as living in Zvechan. Hence, she has no history of him living for nine years on toxic wasteland. She presumed his kidney disease was from only malnutrition, a common ailment, according to her, among Romani children.

Dr. Pavicevic discounted an early kidney biopsy. That can only be done in Belgrade and they usually don't perform a biopsy unless the illness returns two or three times. So she really can't be sure what is causing his kidney disease.

Dr. Pavicevic has no knowledge or experience with lead poisoning and kidney disease. However, she offered to meet us on Friday between 8 am and 1 pm to discuss Ergin's case.

She felt that if he had a "high quality" diet, he could live a normal life. My opinion is that we should make Ergin the focal point of our campaign for the foreseeable future. Since four year old Djenita's death in 2004, we have not had a child we could try to save. Until now, all the children who have died in the camps died without any warning. There was no chance to save them or to make the public aware of their plight. Now we have a kid that we can follow day by day while he recovers or doesn't recover (because he doesn't get the treatment he needs). We should be sending out his photo and a daily report on him until the Kosovo govt, the UN, and the international NGOs acknowledge that these camp children need urgent, immediate help.

There are many, many children in the camps who must have the same illness as Ergin since so many eat only what their parents find in the garbage containers. The combination of malnutrition and lead poisoning effects every child in the camps. Every minister in the Kosovo govt, every ambassador in Pristina, and every head of mission for every NGO must see Ergin's photo and follow his illness. This should be our main focus. We now have the opportunity to make the decision-makers face up to the necessity of "immediate medical treatment" for all these camp children.

Paul