

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

EXTERNAL

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BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Vladimir SREBROV

(Pseudonym of Mladen NIKOLI_)

Bosnian Serb writer detained by the Bosnian Serb *de facto* authorities

Mladen Nikoli_, who writes under the name of Vladimir Srebrov, is a Bosnian Serb poet and university lecturer. He is prominent among Serb intellectuals in Sarajevo who oppose the policies of the Bosnian Serb *de facto* authorities and support the maintenance of a multi-ethnic or multi-national state in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

He was detained by Bosnian Serb forces in September 1992 while travelling from the Bosnian Government-controlled centre of Sarajevo to the Bosnian Serb-controlled suburb of Ilid_a. He reportedly went to Ilid_a to act as either an official or informal intermediary between the Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Serb *de facto* authorities who controlled the access routes to the town. According to a report of a radio interview with him in the spring of 1994, he claimed that among other things he aimed to negotiate the opening of a passage through Ilid_a for citizens of Sarajevo who wished to leave.

According to press reports, in May 1993 he was tried by a Bosnian Serb military court and was "sentenced" to five years' imprisonment for allegedly organizing the recruitment of soldiers to fight the Bosnian Serb forces. The "sentence" may have subsequently been reduced. He is currently held in a Bosnian Serb-controlled military prison at Lukavica near Sarajevo. He was allegedly severely beaten early in his detention.

Vladimir Srebrov was one of the founders of the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS - *Srpska Demokratska Stranka*) in 1990 (in the 1994 radio interview, he claimed to have been the sole founder). However, in 1991 he left the SDS and dissociated himself from the policies it was developing, particularly the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina along ethnic or national lines and the use of force to achieve this.

Although full details of the case are difficult to obtain or confirm, Amnesty International believes that his detention was motivated by his opposition to the SDS and that the reported charges were based on his support for the maintenance of a multi-ethnic state and contacts with the Bosnian Government authorities. The organization calls for his immediate and unconditional release.