

EXTERNAL

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DOCTORS AND NURSES ARRESTED IN SARAJEVO

**Drs Dejan KAFKA, Ranko MEDAN, Igor SABLAK,
Nemanja VELJKOV, Marko VUKOVI_ (all male) and
three female nurses (names unknown)**

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Amnesty International is concerned about reports of the continuing detention of a group of five doctors and three nurses who were detained by Bosnian Government forces in Sarajevo early in January 1994. The majority are of Serbian nationality, although there is one Croat among the group and another is known to be Jewish.

Dr Dejan Kafka is a paediatric surgeon who, until recently, worked in the Koševo hospital in Sarajevo. The other doctors and nurses were also working in the same hospital. Drs Medan and Veljkov are specialists in internal medicine; the specialities of the others are not known. All were arrested in early January and it is believed that the authorities may be investigating them for alleged "desertion" or trying to cross to Bosnian Serb-controlled territory without permission. It appears that they are being held in the Viktor Bubanj army barracks where it has been alleged that they have been ill-treated. Reports of their ill-treatment are impossible to confirm, although the frequency with which detainees have been tortured or ill-treated by all sides in Bosnia-Herzegovina indicates that this is a real concern.

Delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross are reported to have visited the group in detention.

Koševo hospital is the main hospital in Sarajevo. It has frequently been hit by shelling during the siege of the town by Bosnian Serb forces which is now almost two years old. In one of the recent attacks on the hospital, in late November, two nurses were killed and three doctors injured by shells which an officer of the United Nations Protection Force believed to have been fired by Bosnian Serb artillery.

Although it is difficult to confirm the details of this case, Amnesty International is concerned that the men and women may be held solely on account of their nationality. The organization believes that the mere fact of having tried to cross to a Bosnian Serb-occupied area of Bosnia-Herzegovina -- if this is what they have attempted -- should not in itself be a punishable offence and that no presumptions should be made about their motives for doing this. Although it is impossible to confirm whether they have been ill-treated, all three sides are known to have ill-treated many of the thousands of people who have been detained in Bosnia-Herzegovina and this remains a continuing concern.

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Europe
Date: 4 February 1994

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Drs Dejan KAFKA, Ranko MEDAN, Igor SABLAK,
Nemanja VELJKOV, Marko VUKOVI_ and
three female nurses (names unknown)**

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Keywords

Theme: Possible POCs/ fear of ill-treatment

Profession/association: Doctors/nurses/paediatric surgeon/internal medicine

Summary

The five above-named hospital doctors and three nurses, the majority of whom are of Serbian nationality, were arrested in Sarajevo in mid-January 1994. The reason for their arrest is not known, but it is believed that they may have been arrested for attempting to cross to Bosnian Serb-controlled territory without permission (permission is needed from the authorities to leave Sarajevo). Amnesty International is concerned that they may have been arrested simply because of their nationality and fears that they may have been ill-treated in detention. Please see the details attached.

Recommended Actions

Letters, express letters and faxes are requested from medical professionals to the addresses below. Letters should preferably be in English, French or German or in your own language.

- expressing concern about reports of the detention of these doctors and nurses in Sarajevo and about allegations that they have been ill-treated;
- seeking information on the legal basis for their arrest and calling for their immediate and unconditional release if they have not committed any internationally recognizable criminal offence;
- seeking assurances that, if criminal proceedings are to be brought against them, any trial will be held openly and in strict accordance with international guidelines for fair trials;

- urging that checks are made to ensure that no ill-treatment is taking place and calling for an immediate and impartial investigation if it is found to have occurred.

Addresses

President Alija Izetbegovi_
c/o Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina
22 bis, rue Lamartine
1203 Geneva
Switzerland
FAXES: +41 22 345 88 89

or via the Embassy of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina in your country where one exists.

[Please note that the difficulties in communication with Bosnia-Herzegovina mean that direct appeals to Sarajevo are not feasible]

Please forward this information to your national Medical Association and ask that they send similar appeals.