



HRSP NEWSLETTER

U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Division, Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section

August 2016

GEORGIA MAN SENTENCED TO 57 MONTHS FOR IMMIGRATION FRAUD FOR FAILING TO DISCLOSE ROLE IN BOSNIAN PRISON CAMP

A Loganville, Georgia, man was sentenced to serve 57 months in prison on August 26 for obtaining his U.S. citizenship by providing false and fraudulent information on his naturalization application. Mladen Mitrovic, 55, who is originally from Bosnia and Herzegovina, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Amy Totenberg of the Northern District of Georgia. The court also granted a motion to revoke Mitrovic's citizenship, although the revocation order will not take effect until after a federal court of appeals has reviewed his conviction and sentence. Mitrovic was convicted on May 26, 2016, of failing to disclose his role as a prison guard in a Bosnian Serb Army detention camp as part of the "ethnic cleansing" that occurred during the Bosnian War from 1992 through 1995.

"The defendant tried to game our country's immigration process to conceal his record of flagrant human rights violations," said Assistant Attorney General Leslie R. Caldwell of the Justice Department's Criminal Division. "Together with our partners at the U.S. Attorney's Office and HSI, however, the Criminal Division was able to ensure that both his immigration crimes and his human rights abuses saw the light of day. Cases like this demonstrate how we ensure that the United States does not become a safe haven for human rights violators."

"Mitrovic believed he could bury his past and the horrific human rights violations he committed during the Bosnian War," said U.S. Attorney John Horn of the Northern District of Georgia. "Our immigration system endeavors to flag those who have committed human rights violations, especially for those who seek refugee status from persecution. Mitrovic's application turned this humanitarian process on its head, and it's incredibly fitting that he ultimately was discovered by a refugee from Mitrovic's own abuses."

According to evidence presented at trial, in 1996, Mitrovic was permitted to immigrate to the United States based on his statements in his refugee application that he feared persecution if he remained in Bosnia. In 2002, he naturalized as an American citizen. The evidence presented at trial also demonstrated that on his naturalization application, Mitrovic stated, among other things, that he had never persecuted anyone because of their race, religion or membership in a social group; he had never committed a criminal offense for which he had not been arrested; and he had never provided any false or misleading information to obtain an immigration benefit, such as refugee status.

In reality, as the trial evidence established, during the Bosnian War, Mitrovic had been a guard in one of the prison camps that the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS) opened in May 1992 to "ethnically cleanse" northwest Bosnia of non-Serb minorities. At trial, one victim testified that Mitrovic had used a sharp military knife to carve a Christian cross into his chest, saying from that moment on, he "was going to be a Serb." Others testified that Mitrovic and other soldiers beat non-Serb prisoners into unconsciousness or threatened to kill them with automatic rifles. Bosnian government documents also showed that in February 1996, Mitrovic applied for and was later awarded veterans' benefits for his later military service in the VRS during the Bosnian War. Trial evidence showed that Mitrovic failed to disclose any of this conduct or military service on his refugee and naturalization applications.

U.S. authorities began investigating based on information provided by a former prisoner from the prison camp where Mitrovic had served. That individual, who came to the United States as a refugee, thought that Mitrovic had died during the war. But in 2011, he learned that Mitrovic was living in the Atlanta area and he contacted U.S. immigration authorities. At the sentencing hearing, that prisoner and another former prisoner, also a refugee in the United States, addressed the court. One said that he would never forget how people looked after Mitrovic and other soldiers had beaten and tortured them. At trial, the other testified how shocked and frightened he had been when Mitrovic, a friend before the war, threatened to kill him with an automatic rifle.

If you have information about individuals suspected of engaging in human rights abuses or war crimes, please call the HSI tip line at 866-DHS-2-ICE, or complete its online tip [form](#). Information may also be provided to the Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section at 1-800-813-5863. Tips to HRSP may be reported anonymously.

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