

01/10/2018

"YOU KNOW, THEY [MALE OFFICERS] WERE TOUCHING MY WIFE EVERYWHERE"

Date and time: October 1, 2018 00:00

Location: 10-15 km away from the border close to Bihac, Bosnia

Coordinates: 44.8150207626052 , 15.697971228968072

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 8 person(s), age: 29, 31, 3 ,54, 16, 12 , from: Iran, Iraq

Minors involved? Yes

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, sexual assault, reckless driving

Police involved: Croatian officers. Caught by 7 males (with 5 cars), deported by 20 males (from border police, in blue uniforms)

Taken to a police station?: unknown

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

The family, father, mother and their three year old daughter left Bihac (BIH) together with another family from, father and two children. They crossed the Croatian border and walked for around 5 km through Croatia before they were picked up by a car organized from a smuggler. They had paid €1000 each to be transported from Croatia to Slovenia, where they wanted to apply for asylum. Already previously they had been violently pushed back from Croatia several times. The respondent wanted to initially apply for asylum with his family and for this reason he wanted to go to Slovenia. He believed that doing the trip by foot with his small daughter and wife without the help from a smuggler, would be impossible for their family.

After around 10 km of driving, the car was detected by the authorities. Some officers with five police cars started to chase them and simultaneously fired guns to make the driver stop. When the smuggler stopped, around seven male officers told the families and the driver to get off the car. The driver got arrested for the illegal transport of undocumented persons.

Then, the officers told the families to lay on the ground and frisked their bodies, including women and children:

"They told us to lay in the ground, all of us, also my baby. They did not speak nicely to my baby. My friend, a man from Iraq, was telling the police: 'I am a Muslim, please help me.' And the police said 'The Muslims killed my father during the war, I don't want to help you.' I told that the man who killed his father was not my friend and asked why they didn't speak good to me. He [one officer] said to me 'Shut up' and kept speaking to me very badly, called me 'picko matre' [mother fucker]. They [the policemen] searched our bodies, also of my wife and my daughter. They [the officers] were touching them and then kept doing it. You know, they were touching my wife everywhere. I said them: 'Please brother, don't touch my wife and daughter, please, don't touch them.' I kept asking them 'Please, don't touch them.' But they told me 'Shut up' and kicked into my legs [covering his eyes with

his hands]. I asked them why that happened, because I am not a terrorist, I am a refugee. This is not good behavior to us."

He then asked the officer whether him and his family could apply for asylum in Croatia and access the formal accommodation asylum center there. The officers answered:

"Okay, we'll take you to the camp."

But instead of taking them there, the two families were transported directly to the Bosnian border. They were driven there by a big van very fast, so that they were falling from one side to another. The car finally stopped at the Bosnian border in an abandoned forest around 20 km away from Velika Kladusa (BIH).

There, the 20 border officers in blue uniforms told them to hand out all their belongings, such as cigarettes, money, phones. They stole €200 from the respondent and around €100 from each. Then, the officers told the families to go back to Bosnia, and started pushing them, attacking them with batons:

"By the border, after they robbed us, they [the policemen] pushed to my wife and shouted at her to go back to Bosnia. They kept telling my wife bad things. They also pushed my friend, who is fifty years old, and now he has a problem with his knee. My friend told me. 'Don't worry, come and we will come to Croatia later'. One of the officers could hear it and said: 'After you'll go to Croatia?' and took a baton and hit this man into his leg. They were acting to us like we'd be terrorists. There was another Pakistani man who was being deported with us and I could see how the officer was hitting him with a baton too."

After the attack, the families walked back to Velika Kladusa (BIH). The respondent was very frustrated by the asylum and border system in Europe, that gives him no options to find a peaceful life for him and his family:

"I just want to find a safe place, not too much money or big house. I just want a peaceful life. Look [showing me the photo of his destroyed car after an explosion by the Iranian government], I had problems with the government in Iran. I just want a safe place in Europe and peace."

Because of the strike with a baton, the respondent's friend had pain in his knee. His wife was traumatized by the sexual harassment and has since felt concerned to move around the camp unaccompanied.