

12/03/2019

“We begged them to give us asylum. We begged them to tell us what will happen to us. But they didnt answer.”

Date and time: March 12, 2019 00:00

Location: Delnice, Croatia

Coordinates: 45.3987305 , 14.801610799999935

Demographics: 5 men from Marocco, Algeria, Syria, Iraq ; 19-30 years old

Minors involved? No

Violence used: speeding up the car and slow down suddenly, so that the group would fall back and forth

Police involved: Slovenian police officers, Croatian border officials

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

What was the reaction to this intention?: denied access to asylum procedure twice (one time by Slovenian police, one time by Croatian police), instead: chain push-back via Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Peculiarities: 24 hours detention in Slovenia before pushed back

Reported by: Border Violence Monitoring

Original Report

On 3rd March 2019, a group of 5 men left from Bihac at 1 am towards Croatia. After 9 days of walking they reached Slovenia. After a long hike up a mountain, the group felt very tired and hungry. In the hope to buy some food and water, they entered a small village called Lozec. They were recognized by some citizens of the town, who used their phone to call the police.

Suddenly a big dog, followed by a couple of policemen, attacked one member of the group.

„I understand that the locals get scared when they see us. After 9 days of walking we were dirty and exhausted. But if I would have known that they are going to call the police, I would have stayed in the forest. I can endure hunger, thirst and exhaustion, but not another pushback to Bosnia.“

At the police station, the group asked for asylum, but their request got ignored. Their names, nationalities were asked, their fingerprints and photos taken. Following this procedure, each member of the group received an official paper, that everyone was asked to sign – but no translator was present at this time.

„I asked them what the paper says, but they only said that we crossed the border illegally and have to pay 500 euros. They made us sign it.“

The police took all their personal belongings away and put them in a closed room. They got detained 24 hours in this room.

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After being released from the room, they were brought to a van. During the transfer, the group asked repeatedly if they were taken to Ljubljana.

The officers said „Yes, Ljubljana.“

„You know when I knew they won't bring us to Ljubljana? When I felt the road. The road towards Croatia is a bad one. I felt we were on that road.“

Once at the border, they were handed over to the Croatian officials. They are brought to the police station. The group asked again for asylum, but the police men just said „No“. The officers asked for the paper, that the group received by the Slovenian police and threw it in the bin. Without any formal procedure, they were put in a van again.

The ride to the Bosnian border took around 3 hours. During this whole time, the driver used to speed up very fast and slow down suddenly, so that the group would fall back and forth. It made them feel extremely dizzy and sick.

„They do this to scare us. They want us to stop. But I will not give up. I will try again.“

They were allowed to leave the van at a spot 22km away from Velika Kladusa. Their personal belongings were handed over to them, but the officers confiscated their money. They were told to go back to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The interview was conducted in cooperation with *Thé et Café pour les réfugiés*.