

## "THEY CIRCLED US SO THAT WE WERE IN THE MIDDLE AND THEN THEY BEAT US"

**Date and time:** August 31, 2018 15:00

**Location:** Close to Vinica, Slovenia

**Coordinates:** 45.467479780157774 , 15.250700757152117

**Push-back from:** Croatia

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 18 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?:** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Caught and robbed by 3 Croatian male police officers, deported by 6 Croatian male police officers (the driver wearing white clothes, other five who were physically attacking the men in black uniforms)

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On August 29th. 2018, a group of 18 men left Sturlic (BiH) and walked through Croatia. They paid between 200 and 300 euros each to a smuggler, who was supposed to pick them up by a van from the prearranged point in a forest close to Vinica (Slovenia) and transport them to Trieste (Italy). The men crossed the Road number 1 and then the Road 42, and hid in a forest to wait for the smuggler.

The group spent one night in the forest. The following day around 3 pm, a man appeared close to them, wearing casual clothes, and signaling them to come out of the forest to enter a van that would transport them to Italy.

*"This man said to us: "Come, come, come. We are not police and no police is coming. We will take you to Italia." Okay, so we went into the car. When we were inside of it, the man said to us: "Wait until the next car is coming." Okay, were waiting. But two or three minutes later we could hear some voices and see some men who had guns. And one of them said: "Sit down here, we are police", but they did not have police ID cards. We were sitting for one hour on a road, it was raining heavily, while he called to the police station." (Ali)*

Then 3 police officers arrived at the place. They stripped all the men naked and frisked their bodies. They told all men to give them their money and phones and did not return them back. The interviewee explained that the policemen stole 1000 euros from him and between 50 to 300 euros from each of the other men.

*The police asked that who has money and who has phones. All the boys gave him their telephones and money. And when we got to the border, we asked them to give our mobile phones, but they said no. This is business for the Croatian police.*

Then, the police officers took them to a police station, but the interviewee did not know its location because they were

transported by a car with no windows. At the police station, the interviewee and other men told the police that they wanted to apply for asylum in Croatia. But the men were only investigated for the purpose of identifying a smuggler within their group. They were denied access to the asylum procedures:

*We all asked to apply for asylum in Croatia. They said: "Okay, no problem." When we came to the police station, they asked who could speak English, me and my friend could. They asked us who was the smuggler, how much money, all of information I gave them. Also, one was searching through my phone my pictures and saying "This is your smuggler", but I was saying "No, no, this is my brother." When t hen they had finished the investigation, they said to me go.*

Following the investigation at the police station, the men were transported by a van to the Bosnian border (Sturlic) for their deportation. There was one driver in white clothes and five police "commandos" in black clothes in the car. The interviewee explained that the journey to the border was difficult, because there was almost no oxygen inside the van and they were driving very fast, turning from one side to another, so that the men kept falling from their seats.

When they arrived at the border, the interviewee asked the police officers to return their phones and money, but the police refused. After that, the black suited police officers told the men to leave the car three by three. When three of the men were outside the car, these officers started verbally threatening the men and physically attacking them with kicks and metal batons while pushing them back to Bosnia.

*When we were being deported at the border, I said: "Give my mobile and give my money back." He [a police officer] said: "No, go!" The police told three persons to come out of the car. We came outside and they circled us so that we were in the middle and they were beating us. And after it was finished, another three persons. They were beating us outside the car, three by three. They [were acting very hardly], telling us "Go! Fuck you!" like this "Pichko Matre"*

After the violent push-back, the men slept one night rough in Sturlic, and after that walked back to Velika Kladusa. The interviewee stated that he wanted to return back to Serbia now because there was no accommodation for him in Bosnia, which makes the transit difficult especially over the winter. He also explained that he could not try to go to Europe now because he had paid his last money to the smuggler whom he had lost contact with.

*I was calling the smuggler, but the phone was off. And I cannot find where that smuggler is, in Bosnia, Serbia, Bihac, Velika Kladusa, I don't know. This time we don't have money anymore. I cannot call my family for more money. They do not have work in Kabul and they are poor.*