

09/01/2019

"THEY DIDN'T EVEN LET ME GO TO THE TOILET, SO HOW COULD I TALK WITH A LAWYER?"

Date and time: January 9, 2019 00:00

Location: Kotrediz, Slovenia

Coordinates: 46.15124099999999 , 14.995462999999972

Push-back from: Slovenia

Push-back to: Croatia, Serbia

Demographics: 6 person(s), age: 17 - 23 , from: Afghanistan

Minors involved? Yes

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings

Police involved: 12 police officers, wearing black uniforms with the Slovenian emblem in the factory with three cars; several others in the other police stations

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of access to toilets

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of six Afghans, aged between 17 and 23 years old, left Serbia on January 9, 2019, in the direction of Croatia. They had left from Sid at night by truck. After two days in the truck, they reached Slovenia in the afternoon. The truck stopped some time after having crossed the border and the group soon discovered that the truck was inside a factory.

About 15 workers were inside the factory and the group was detected quickly. Soon after, the authorities arrived. It were around 12 officers with three different cars. The officers informed the group that they were illegal immigrants in this country.

At this point, the officers encircled the group and it wasn't possible for them to escape. They beat the whole group with batons and black steels batons, resulting in two injured individuals, whose hand and leg got broken. As a consequence of this violence one of the respondents, fell down and collapsed. An ambulance was called, and he was brought to a hospital, while the other group members were brought to a police station.

At the police station the police provided the group with water and half a loaf of bread for every two people, but denied them access to toilets. The officers declared they would allow them to stay in the country, and asked them to wait in order to proceed with the paperwork. The group was told that this would take about seven or eight hours. After three hours, the collapsed respondent came back from the hospital.

While waiting, the people on the move were told to take off their clothes and the officers checked them, also taking their power banks and chargers. The group would never receive them back. The officers further took their fingerprints and

photos and made them sign papers. As all the papers were written in Slovenian and there was no translator present, despite one of the individuals explicitly requesting one, they couldn't understand what they were signing. There was also no lawyer present.

"They didn't even let me go to the toilet, so how could I talk with a lawyer?"

At this police station, all individuals repeatedly asked for asylum and the officers replied:

"I will give you".

Nonetheless, the group later was transferred by car to another police station on the Slovenian-Croatian border, which took around 1,5 hours. One officer told them to wait:

"You sit here, and we will talk about you, I will give you stay. Maybe I will deport you but maybe I will give you stay".

The group waited in this police station for about five hours, before being transferred to Croatia by car. Once transferred to the Croatian police, they again took photos of all individuals and made them sign documents. And again, neither a translator nor a lawyer was present. One respondent asked the officers for some food and offered one of the officers 30 euros to buy something for the group to eat. The officer took his money, but never brought any food. The police was verbally aggressive during this time, insulting the people on the move:

"Pičku ti matera." (English: You screw it up!)

Eventually, the people on the move were brought back to the Serbian-Croatian border on January 12, 2019, in a vehicle, which's air conditioning was turned on throughout the approximately seven hour drive. The vehicle had neither windows nor lights. The group arrived back to Sid at about 3 am.

At the beginning of the interview, both interviewees mentioned to have been pushed-back many times: Five times from Slovenia, once from Zagreb (Croatia), and twice from another place in Croatia.