

07/11/2018

"DON'T TOUCH HIM, HE IS NOT AN ANIMAL, HE IS HUMAN LIKE YOU"

Date and time: November 7, 2018 00:00

Location: Near Donje Selište, Croatia

Coordinates: 45.327268 , 16.046255

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 4 person(s), age: 20-50 , from: Syria, Algeria

Minors involved? No

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

Police involved: 13 officers, 9 wearing black ski masks.

Taken to a police station?: unknown

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Unknown

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of four men left Velika Kladuša (BIH) in the direction of Croatia on the night of November 6, 2018. They coordinated their movement with another group of four men in a different location. After crossing the border, the group of four walked for approximately six or seven hours towards the town of Glina (HRV) with the intention of taking a bus from there. After walking a distance of approximately 20 km, they were caught by six officers:

"The police say 'Stop, stop!' and fired their guns in the air three times. We stay on the ground and after the police beat [us] with their fists."

The officers asked, where they were from and when they responded individually with "I am from Syria" or "I am from Algeria", they beat them more, for approximately 10 minutes. During this time, they searched all of their clothes, broke three phones, and stole approximately €400 from them.

Afterwards, the four of them were put into a van and brought back in a convoy with two other cars carrying officers to a spot at the border close to Velika Kladuša (BIH). Once they arrived there, their van was positioned in such a way in relation to the other cars that they altogether formed sort of barrier. When the van doors were opened, the respondent could see the blockade which was formed by the other cars.

"It was like a pyramid, [or a] corner."

"When they open the door, you can't go away, [you can only] look at the police. You see the police, thirteen police."

He was the first one having to get off the van and was beaten by a group of 13 officers. The majority of the officers were wearing black balaclavas, but four of them were without masks. Due to the use of flashlights that

they were pointing in his eyes, he wasn't able to distinguish any identifying characteristics of their faces.

He was beaten for approximately 10 minutes, passing a distance of around 20 meters. While attempting to pass the line of officers, he was hit with batons. Halfway, he was intentionally pushed down onto the ground and then hit by all 13 officers with batons and fists:

"Halfway, they push you down and beat you again, all police."

He got up again and stumbled the remaining meters towards the border, all while being hit. When he finally reached the safety of the Bosnian side, an officer screamed at him:

"Motherfucker, go to Bosnia and never come back!"

His rib was broken during the attack and another individual's nose was badly hurt (see photo).

The respondent then had to walk back alone through the darkness without any sense as to where he was:

"No light, no nothing. You can't see a single thing... I don't have GPS or anything... When I could hear the police beating people, when I heard screams, I came back. I feel this is not Bosnia, this is Croatia, and another way. Maybe 10 minutes after this, I see the light. I hear some people say 'Hey, hey, come here, this is the way, come on'. I make that. And drink [their] water".

The respondent already tried to cross Croatia five times in total before this attempt and voiced his frustration about the brutality of the authorities he has experienced:

"Inside the migrant you find everything. The good, the bad, the drinker, the junkie, the doctor, the engineer, everything. But you must make a filter. Don't judge someone when you see him drink or take drugs. First, talk with him. You can't judge a book by the first page and the last page. You must read the whole book. Maybe you see me take drugs or you see me drinking. I am not a bad person, I have my own problems... I am without my country, I am leaving my family, I am leaving everything, my work, to try this plan."

Finally, he remarked on his perception of the violent push-back in Croatia:

"From my experience, what I read in books, what I listen to in the news, when you catch someone inside some country without papers, just take him outside the border. Don't touch him, he is not an animal, he is human like you. Why did 13 police beat me for ten minutes in the dark, in the night? It is not legal, brother."