

29/05/2019

"WE BEGGED FOR ASYLUM IN SLOVENIA, BUT THE POLICE TOLD US THEY WILL TAKE US BACK TO CROATIA"

Date and time: May 29, 2019 08:00

Location: Kortino, Slovenia

Coordinates: 45.85221754721218 , 15.634735822753896

Push-back from: Slovenia, Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 20 person(s), age: 15 people between the age of 23-28, 21, 24, 23, 22, 21 , from: Palestine, Syria

Minors involved? No

Violence used: exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, threatening with guns, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

Police involved: 9 Slovenian police officers, 2 vans; 8-9 Croatian police officers, 3 vans

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention, fingerprints taken, personal information taken, papers signed, denial of food/water

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: Border Violence Monitoring

ORIGINAL REPORT

On May 22 at 12:00AM, a group of 20 individuals from Palestine and Syria left Velika Kladuša (BiH) and walked to the Croatian border. They arrived at the border around 2:00AM and after entering Croatia they walked in the forest for 7 days.

They crossed the Croatian/Slovenian border on May 29. After walking approximately ten kilometers into Slovenian territory, a group of five Slovenian police officers (four male, one female) approached them at 8:00AM in the forest between the villages of Koritno and Laze (SLO). The respondent reported that when the police saw the group, one officer aimed a gun at them, but did not shoot. The police ordered all twenty individuals into one van and the group waited in the van for one hour before the police officers began driving.

The police drove the group approximately 30 minutes to a small jail cell and ordered all 20 individuals into the cell. They group stayed in this cell for 24 hours without access to food, water or a toilet. The respondent reported that the Slovenian police took 200 EUR from him and took a total of 1200 EUR from the rest of the group.

There was a translator present at the jail. The respondent could not identify where he was from by his accent. The group members gave their personal information to the translator and the police gave them documents to sign. The police also took the finger prints of the group members during this time.

"Ten [people in the group] begged the Slovenian police to let us stay and apply for asylum, but they told us 'no, you will go back to Croatia'"

On May 30, at around 12:00PM, four different police officers (three men, one woman) ordered the group of 20 individuals into one police van and they drove one hour to the Croatian border.

“It was very crowded and hot in the van with so many people. [The police] drove very fast to the border.”

The group arrived to the Croatian border around 1:00PM. Four to five Croatian police were waiting there with three vans and they ordered the group into the vehicles and drove them approximately one hour to a jail. Before entering the cell, the police collected everyone’s phone. Once again, all 20 people were placed in one cell. There was a tap with water in the cell which they could drink from, but the police denied them access to food or to use the toilet. Other than these requests, the group did not speak to the police officers at all. The police did not give them any documents to sign, nor did they ask the group for their identifying information.

On May 31, after 24 hours in the cell, the police released them from the jail and ordered the group into a van that was waiting for them in front of the cell. The respondent believes that the four police officers drove them approximately three hours to the Bosnian border. On the border, the police gave the phones back to the group but the screens had been smashed and the charging ports were destroyed.

“When we got to the border, the police said ‘go, go.’ We walked for forty kilometers to the closest village”

From the village, the split into four groups and paid ten Euro each to ride in a taxi to Velika Kladuša (BiH).