

"[...] STANDING NAKED IN FRONT OF THE OTHERS AND THE OFFICER FOR FIVE MINUTES"

Date and time: January 1, 2019 18:00

Location: Golac, Slovenia

Coordinates: 45.5148274 , 14.063373500000012

Push-back from: Slovenia

Push-back to: Croatia, Bosnia

Demographics: 9 person(s), age: respondent 24, others unknown , from: Syria, Palestine

Minors involved? Unknown

Violence used: forcing to undress, reckless driving

Police involved: Slovenian police officers before and at police station; later Croatian police officers with blue uniform; 10-12 police officers, 4 police cars at the border

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, papers signed, denial of access to toilets

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of nine traveled by a car close to the Croatian-Slovenian border and got off at the Croatian side. The individuals did not understand the GPS locations they intended to travel towards and were led on a detouring route. They walked around for seven hours before actually entering Slovenia. At that point, their internet ceased to work and their ability to navigate through GPS stopped. At around 9 am, the respondent voiced his desire to enter a nearby town in order to access internet from a restaurant or cafe. The other eight dissuaded him from doing this at this time. Nonetheless, by 6 pm, the respondent along with the rest of the group had grown despondent about their situation, and they entered a town with the intention to seek out the authorities :

"I was hungry and I did not drink water today, so I went to the police."

When they encountered some officers, the respondent described that one of their first questions was where the group was from:

"I told them 'I am from Syria.' and they said 'Okay, stay here.'"

Within an hour, they were brought inside a police station, where the nine of them were frisked in the same room. Each individual was told to undress to their underwear to have their clothes searched. The respondent stripped down to his underwear but afterwards was told that he had to take off his boxers too. He hesitated to do so, but a tall, blonde officer, approximately 25 years old, forcefully told him to take off his underwear. He was the only one of the group made to undress completely, standing naked in front of the others and the officer for five minutes.

“ All friends did not take off their boxers.”

Between 9 and 10 pm, a Palestinian translator arrived and began to interview the individuals one by one. The respondent described that he talked to the translator for two hours, which was much longer than any of the others of his group, who only talked to the translator for about five minutes. He inferred that his interview was much longer since he had asked for asylum during his interview, unlike the other group members:

“ I said ‘I stay’, the rest of the group did not say ‘I stay.’”

During his interview, there were three officers in addition to the translator in the room. He and the translator sat on one side of the table while the three officers faced them, saying only little. There were two computers in the room and one machine for taking fingerprints. He had his fingerprints taken twice – one time all ten fingers and the other time only his two index fingers. In addition, he was made to sign three different papers during the time in the police station, all written in Slovenian. Therefore, he couldn't understand what was written and the translator also didn't tell him. Also a photo of him was taken by a computer camera.

The translator asked the respondent several questions, e.g. with what intention he came to Slovenia. He answered:

“ I want to stay here. Yes. I want asyl.”

The translator responded:

“ What is the problem in Syria? Syria is no problem”

To which the interviewee replied:

“ Are you crazy? Syria is not a problem? Are you sure Syria is not a problem?”

The translator told him:

“ Yes, I am sure.”

The respondent then explained to him that he was a lawyer in Syria, and only left the country because he was forced to and that it was very dangerous.

The translator told him:

“ You can stay in Turkey. You can stay in Greece.”

Shortly thereafter, the interview ended and the translator went to talk to the officers in Slovenian. During this interaction, the respondent heard the translator deriding Islam in front of the officers, so he later told the officers:

“ I am muslim, but I am not Daesh (ISIS), I drink alcohol...I am open minded. I have money. I am not crazy.”

After the interview, he returned to the room where the other eight were waiting. The translator left at approximately 1 am.

The group spent the night in the police station. All nine of them slept on the floor in the same room and were each given one blanket. There was no toilet in the room, and they didn't have the possibility to use the bathroom,

even though they asked for it. At around 3 am, they got a meal, consisting of a small piece of bread and a type of meat, supposedly pork. As Muslims, the nine individuals could not, and did not, eat the meat.

At around 6 am the next day, they were driven for around 1,5 hours from the police station to the Slovenian–Croatian border in a van and handed over to Croatian authorities who held them at a border station for some time. The respondent was able to use the bathroom in this building. In addition, he described having his Slovenian deportation papers ripped up by a Croatian officer at this point. This officer was around 60 years old, with short, white hair and a mustache and wearing a blue uniform as all other officers present.

The respondent described that as they left the Croatian border station, there were fifteen individuals inside the back of the van. In addition to the nine of them, there was now a number of Pakistani men with them. It took them very long to reach the Bosnian–Croatian border, approximately six hours:

“ He drove like crazy, stopped for five minutes, and went on one minute. Stop, and go. Stop, and go and stop and go”

They finally arrived at the border around 3.30 pm and all people on the move were told to get off the van together. They were then encircled to be moved towards the Bosnian side of the border. There were four police cars present at the scene and approximately ten to twelve officers, all with uncovered faces.

They were pushed-back around 40 km south of Velika Kladuša. He remembered passing a sign which said precisely “Velika Kladuša – 40 km”. The people on the move then walked for twenty kilometers before being picked up by a car which took them the rest of the way to the IOM–run Miral camp near Velika Kladuša.