

15/04/2019

"PLEASE, PLEASE, THE BABY IS SICK, LOOK AT HER! SHE NEEDS TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL"

Date and time: April 15, 2019 00:00

Location: Tuzi, Montenegro

Coordinates: 42.3615146 , 19.3383147

Push-back from: Montenegro

Push-back to: Albania

Demographics: 5 person(s), age: 5 - 35 years old , from: Afghanistan

Minors involved? Yes

Violence used: no violence used, threatening with guns, pushing them on the shoulder in order to move

Police involved: 3 „strong, tall“ officers in dark blue uniforms, 3 different officers with the same dark blue uniforms and one big dark-brown dog, one white „prison“ van, without windows. The back was separated from the driver's area through a metal – wall, with one small opening to the driver's seat.

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention, no translator present

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Unknown

Reported by: Border Violence Monitoring

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of four men and one minor crossed the Albanian-Montenegrin border not far from the Hani i Hoti border crossing (Albania), heading towards Tuzi, (MNE) with the goal of reaching the camp in Spuz (MNE). In the evening of the April 15th, after 10 hours of travel, they passed the Tuzi (MNE) train station and continued to walk towards Podgorica.

At this point, the group was approached by three police officers. The officers wore dark blue uniforms. The respondent described the officers as shouting in Montenegrin before pointing their guns at the group. The officers pointed with their hands to the ground, and the group understood to lay down.

“They screamed ‘Stop, Stop!’ at us and showed us to sleep on the ground. The baby started screaming, we told her: It’s okay, it’s okay.”

“The police looked strong, scary. When you see them, you feel fear.”

The officers ordered the group to walk back to the Tuzi train station and escorted them on foot for around 10 minutes until they reached the station. The officers walked behind them.

On the way, the group told the officers that the child in their group needed to go to a hospital. The 5-year-old was exhausted from the long walk and had to be carried, as she was not able to walk anymore. The officers replied: “We bring you to police station, to office, we take your fingerprints and then we bring you to camp. There is doctor.”

“This made us happy. We told them we were very hungry and thirsty and so tired from the long walk.”

At the police station, which is located inside the Tuzi train station, the group was told to sit on chairs in a corner and wait. In this police station, there were many officers present. One officer gave the group a small bottle of water. When the bottle was empty, they wanted to give it back to the officers in order to put it in the trash, but the officers told them to keep the bottle. "This irritated us. Why should we keep it? We will go to camp, there we will not need it."

After around ten minutes of waiting, an officer approached the group telling them to follow him outside. A white van was parked outside of the station. The officer told the group: "Get inside the car!". Three different officers than those who had originally approached the group, but with the same blue uniforms sat in front of the van. There was also a "big dark-brown" dog in the front the car with the officers.

The front-seats were divided from the back of the car with a metal divider. There was a small window in the divider. In the back there were no seats and the group sat on the floor. There were no windows in the back.

The group was loaded in the van and driven approximately 20 minutes to the Albanian border.

"It was really so strange, this was a car with which the police brings people to prison. I asked my friend to check our GPS location. We were shocked when we saw that the car drove towards Albania. I told to the police: 'Please, please, the baby is sick, look at her! She needs to go to the hospital, she will die!' One officer said: 'Okay, wait one minute.'"

The van stopped in an area without houses at the Albanian border. It was described by the group as "a village without houses, near a forest". When the van stopped, the officers and the dog went out of the car. The dog was held on a leash.

One officer opened the side door and told the group to get out. The group got out, but they did not take their bags. An officer shouted: "Take your bags!" and grabbed one member of the group roughly by the shoulder. The group took their bags and sat down, as they were exhausted and hungry.

The officers grabbed the members of the group by the arms and pulled them up. They shouted: "Go, go! This way Albania!" The officers followed the group for a bit, then left them.

"We didn't know where we are going. The baby was so tired. She was like a dead body. We passed many ways until we found a well-paved road."

The group continued the journey on the Albanian side, in order to try to cross into Montenegro the following night. They walked until 6:00 pm, waited until 9:00 pm and crossed again into Montenegro. They reached Podgorica the next morning around 6:30 am. On their way, they adults took turns in carrying the child, because she was not able to walk anymore.

"The girl was crying, but we lied to her, we told her, 10 minutes, 10 minutes, we will reach soon."

Early in the morning the group arrived in the Camp in Spuz, MNE. They had to wait around five hours in front of the camp. They were not provided food or water during this time.

Once allowed into camp, the group was nearly divided into different rooms, one member of the group said: "We are a family, we don't want to be separated!", and the person responsible replied: "Here we decide, not you!"

"On this journey, we saw a lot of hardship, and then we receive this kind of treatment, it is really not nice. It made us really sad."