## "THEY WOULDN'T EVEN OPEN THE DOOR FOR THE TOILET"

**Date and time:** April 28, 2019 20:00

Location: Vrhovine, Croatia

Coordinates: 44.848718294918996, 15.423381361872543

Push-back from: Croatia
Push-back to: Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 30, 30, 47, 36, 36, 17, 12, 2, from: Iran

Minors involved? Yes

Violence used: pushing people to the ground, theft of personal belongings

Police involved: 2 local police officers, 10-12 border police officers, all wore dark blue uniforms

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention, no translator present, denial of access to toilets,

denial of food/water

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Unknown

Reported by: Border Violence Monitoring

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of nine individuals from Iran, including three families – the respondent and her husband (both 30 years old), their family friends – husband (47 years old), wife (36 years old), their two children (2 and 17 years old), and a mother (36 years old) and her daughter (12 years old), departed from Bihać (BiH) in a taxi at 6:00 pm on 24 April. They rode in the taxi for twenty minutes and then disembarked and spent five hours walking towards the border. They arrived at the border at 10:00 pm, but two Bosnian police officers saw them and told them to go back to Bihać.

Instead of returning to Bihać, the respondent reported that a Bosnian man invited them to spend the night in his cabin. They slept there and at 5:00 pm on 25 April they left the cabin and once again started walking toward the Croatian border. They walked three hours from the house and crossed the border at 10:00 pm. That night they did not sleep and continued walking until the sun rose. They slept in the forest during the morning and afternoon.

For three days they continued walking through the forest at night and resting during the day. The weather was very cold, windy and rainy and after two days they ran out of food and water.

On 28 April at around 13:00, in the town of Vrhovine (HR), the respondent reported that she bought train tickets at the station in Vrhovine to go to Ogulin (HR). While they waited for the train, they asked a Croatian couple to give them food and water.

The respondent believed that the couple called the police after this, because as they waited for help, one female and one male police officer arrived in a white car. They were reported to have been wearing dark blue uniforms. They respondent reported that these two officers stayed with them on the road for four hours until 10-12 male police officers, who they believed to be border police officers who were also wearing dark blue uniforms arrived in three vans. The respondent reported that these border officers were all between 30-40 years old. She did not report if they had a conversation with either set of officers.

The officers took four phones from the group. When the two year old child was hugging her father to stay warm, the respondent claimed that one officer pushed the child down. The officers also took 1,500 EUR from the group members.

The officers shouted at the individuals to get in the vans. The respondent believed they rode in the van for two hours and arrived at a cell in the county of Zadar (HR) around 8:00 pm on 28 April, where the officers ordered the group into a windowless jail cell with white tiled walls and concrete floor.

"They wouldn't even open the door for the toilet"

The officers locked them in a room with single male individuals who had also been apprehended. The 17-year-old boy had been stabbed in the arm by the group's smuggler after an argument about payment and the officers refused him any medical care.

The respondent and her group were locked in the cell for 24 hours without food, water, toilet or blankets. They knocked on the door to ask for a toilet, but the officers did not open the door. On 29 April around 8:00 pm the officers ordered the group out of the cell and drove them for three hours back to the Bosnian border, where they were ordered out of the vehicle in the mountains where the respondent and her group walked for 30 kilometers in the heavy rain back to Bihać.