

10/02/2019

## **"YOU COULDN'T ASK, YOU DIDN'T HAVE GPS, I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE I WAS"**

**Date and time:** February 10, 2019 21:20

**Location:** Slunj, Croatia, a forest about 8 km out from Slunj

**Coordinates:** 45.129322927181136 , 15.546262614270972

**Push-back from:** Croatia

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: over 18 , from: Palestine, Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, pepper spray, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving, threatening with a knife, ID cards taken

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers, caught and robbed by 4 officers (with a van), officers at the police station, violating at the border 10 officers (9 in black and one in blue uniform, in masks, 7 with batons and one with a knife, two police cars)

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of food/water

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** No

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of eight men left from Velika Kladuša on February 7, 2019 . They carried dates, bread, milk, tuna, water and chocolates for themselves to eat along their journey. On the third day of walking, around 9 . 20 pm on February 10, the group was walking in a forest around 8 km out side of Slunj ( HRV ) and divided in to two sub-groups of four individuals . One of these groups was soon caught by four Croatian officers who then forced the m to lead them to the other sub-group. All eight were then led to a van nearby and driven to a police station, which took approximately 1,5 hour s by car.

*"THEY PUT US IN A VAN, AND INSIDE [THE VAN] HE DROVE LIKE A CRAZY MAN [MOTIONS BEING THROWN BACK AND FORTH]...JUST BECAUSE WE WERE INSIDE, YOU KNOW, AND ONE TIME HE STOPPED AND ONE POLICE OFFICER OPENED THE BACK OF [THE CAR], OPEN, AND HE SAW NO ONE CAN SEE, THIS SPRAY FOR EYES, IT MAKE PROBLEM IN OUR EYES. HE DID THAT AND HE CLOSED [THE DOOR] AND HE WENT."*

At the police station, they had to stay inside the van for around three more hours while the air conditioning was running on a low level. The individuals were not offered food or water. They

did not ask for asylum and they were not asked for any personal information about themselves.

Eventually, they were driven with the van once more, this time to the Bosnian-Croatian border, where they arrived between 2 am and 3 am on the on February 11. It took them around 40 minutes to reach this place from the police station. There, the respondents saw ten officers, of which seven had batons and one had a knife. Nine officers wore a black, while one wore a blue uniform. In addition, two police cars were present. Their van parked in between the two, leaving one car on each side.

The respondents were threatened with taunts by them.

*" Here, they opened door and they started [making fun of] us. Smile and "Hahahaha", the police with cargo [masks] , you just saw the eyes."*

Then, the respondents had to get off the van one-by-one and were beaten up and insulted by the officers. One individual was tricked by the knife-wielding officer, posing a threat of hurting him with the knife.

*" He want to hit Najib [with the knife] . He want just to make him scared."*

Another one's pant got cut with this knife and also their sleeping bags were cut open.

While not everyone described experiencing this knife-play, each individual was being beaten with batons by the officers.

*" When we went out, they slapped us. They beat three or four times and then we ran off."*

The y were hit with batons primarily on arms and back s . The respondents all were told various swear-words in Croatian such as " *U pičku materinu*" by the officers as well as repeatedly to leave "*H ajde, hajde*" .

When the men were initially captured, they were compelled to put their electronic devices, five phones and three power banks, into a plastic bag. They never received these back.

*" And when you were in border, you asked where is my phone, and they say it is with your friends, go, and then when you asked the friends they say it is not there."*

In addition, €280 were taken from them during this incident as well as their tent which the officers would not let them to take with them. One of the respondents expressed frustration at the manner in which his group was pushed back into what was essentially in the middle-of-nowhere without any idea of where they were.

*" You couldn't ask, you didn't have GPS, I didn't know where I was... At 3 am there was no*

*one outside. You couldn't ask anyone where you were."*

After the push-back, it took the group seven hours to return to Velika Kladusa on foot. When they returned to the Miral camp, they were told by the private security there that since they did not have IDs they were not allowed to enter.