

18/04/2019

"THE OFFICERS THREATENED THE RESPONDENT WITH ELECTRIC BATONS AND PUSHED HIM"

Date and time: April 18, 2019 00:00

Location: Trbušnica border crossing, Bosnia and Serbia, Granični prelaz Trbušnica bridge

Coordinates: 44.541911 , 19.182515

Push-back from: Croatia, Bosnia

Push-back to: Bosnia, Serbia

Demographics: 4 person(s), age: 18, 27-30 , from: Morocco, Turkey

Minors involved? No

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, electric shock

Police involved: 4 Croatian police men with light blue uniforms. 2 Bosnian police men with dark blue uniforms. 1 white van and 1 white police car

Taken to a police station?: yes

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

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: No

Reported by: [Re:]ports Sarajevo

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of four, two from Turkey, two from Morocco, started their journey from Bihac and entered Croatia by foot. The respondent doesn't remember the exact day, around April 10, 2019, but recalls walking six days until arriving to Rijeka.

There, they were apprehended in the outskirts of Rijeka, near the coordinates 45.324509, 14.496193 at around 2 am by four Croatian officers wearing light blue uniforms. The officers arrived in a white van, asked them to lay down on the ground and started checking their pockets. They took their phones and money and returned all after a check. Afterwards, while the people on the move were still lying on the pavement, they started beating them with batons. The respondent asserts gotten hit at least three to four times on the low back and head.

Then, they had to enter a van and were taken to a police station, an estimated hour far away. Once there, the police officers started to interrogate them:

"How long have you been walking? From which city did you start?"

The individuals received a number written on a paper along their names and the police took photos of each of them holding the paper in front of their chests.

They spent the rest of the day, an additional night and the following day in the police station, sharing the same cell. There was only one single bed in it which the four of them had to share to sleep. They didn't get any water or food and started drinking water from a tap in the cell.

At night, the group was taken with around 20 other people in a van to an area located near the Croatian-Bosnian border (roughly estimated coordinates 45.268058, 16.059115). All of them, except the respondent, were told to get off the van and to cross the border to Bosnia. The respondent thou had to remain in the car.

“ I asked ‘where am I going?’ , but the police did not answer me. They also took my phone and money .”

He was taken to a forest next to an unpaved road at the Bosnian border, where a white police car and two Bosnian officers in dark blue uniforms with Bosnia’s flags on the sleeves were waiting. The Croatian officers handed over the respondent’s belongings to the Bosnian officers and told him to enter the Bosnian police car.

After an estimated seven-hour drive, they reached the Serbian Border on April 18 at around 11 am. The Bosnian police returned the respondent’s phone and money and took him to Granični prelaz Trbušnica bridge (coordinates 44.541911, 19.182515).

This was the same place where he had entered Bosnia from Serbia, however this was eight months ago in August 2018.

“ They left me on a bridge. On the other side was Serbia and they told me to go there”

The officers threatened the respondent with electric batons and pushed him.

He walked around 11 km inside Serbia and returned to Bosnia through another bridge around 3 am.

“ I still do not know why I was the only one to be pushed forward into Serbia”.

It was a double push-back in less than 24 hours: from Croatia to Bosnia and from Bosnia to Serbia even though the respondent didn’t come from Serbia.