

18/03/2019

“Each time, when two people went out, the doors were closed behind them. The others inside the van could hear the voices and screams of their friends outside of the van, while they got beaten up several times.”

Date and time: March 18, 2019 00:00

Location: Near Maljvac, Croatia

Coordinates: 45.19729580140959 , 15.789128335762257

Demographics: 10 men from Algeria, Morocco, 20-34 years old

Minors involved? No

Violence used: insulting, beating with stick, gunshot in the air

Police involved: 6 Slovenian officers, 3 Croatian border officers

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

What was the reaction to this intention?: denied access to asylum procedure twice (one time by Slovenian police, one time by Croatian police), instead: chain push-back via Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Reported by: Border Violence Monitoring

Original Report

On 9th March 2019 a group of 10 men left Velika Kladusa and walked into Croatia close to Maljevac. From there they went through Croatia towards Slovenia, passing forests, mountains, walking day and night. After 9 days, the group crossed the border to Slovenia.

On 18th March in the morning, the group crossed the Kupa's river and reached Metlika, exhausted, wet and hungry. At some point a local recognized them, took his phone and called someone. A few minutes later, the group was picked up by 6 Slovenian police officers on the road.

The policemen drove the group in a van to the police station of Metlika. Their personal belongings and their baggage was taken from them. The whole group asked for asylum but the officer said: “You won’t stay here!”. Then the group was put in a cell for one hour, before their fingerprints and pictures of each man of the group were taken .

Afterwards the group received their personal items back and 6 officers drove them in a van to the Croatian border where they got handed over to the Croatian border police. The officers asked again for their personal belongings. All phones, IOM Cards and all the money were confiscated and the group was put in a van. All the men haven’t eaten for one day and were in the van without knowing where they are. They asked again for asylum but the police officer pretended not to understand.

After few hours of driving, at the beginning of the night, the van stopped.

“It was dark, and they asked us to go out from the van two by two.”

Each time, when two people went out, the doors were closed behind them. The others inside the van could hear the voices and screams of their friends outside of the van, while they got beaten up several times.

The procedure always remained the same: Two people were taken out of the van and 3 officers were waiting outside to beat them up with a stick. They couldn't see their faces because they were wore masks.

„They treated us like animals, they were beating us and we were laying on the ground.“

One of the men described that when he was laying on the ground, one of the officers took a knife to cut his jacket and trousers (see picture).

After the beating, one officer gave them the plastic bag with their broken phones inside. He kept around 100€, all the cigarettes and the IOM Cards. They were close to the border, so one officer ordered them to run towards Bosnia, and another one fired in the air with a gun, shouting: ” Never come back here! ”

The group was left 30km from Velika Kladusa, they walked back in the dark without gps or lights for hours .

“We came back exhausted, without money to buy food, without phones to call our families..., we are not animals, we just want to live a real life!”

The interview was conducted in cooperation with Thé et Café pour les réfugiés .

