

03/09/2018

## **"THEY TOLD HIM HE WAS LYING AND SAID DIRECTLY TO HIM THAT HE MUST SIGN HIS YEAR OF BIRTH AS 2000. ALL THREE MINORS WERE REGISTERED AS ADULTS IN THIS WAY"**

**Date and time:** September 3, 2018 23:00

**Location:** Rijeka, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.21386416162564 , 15.930939906780964

**Push-back from:** Croatia

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: 15-41 , from: unknown

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 8 croatian police men, dressed in blue

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, papers signed

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group concerned in this incident were made up of eight men and three minors. They had walked for five days before their capture near the Croatian town of Rijeka. They were observed by police in a semi-rural area on the east of the town at around 11:00 on September 2nd. 2018.

Two officers dressed in blue Croatian police uniforms approached the group from a parking area near some industrial units. The police shouted at them to stop and the group complied. The police officers searched them and confiscated their possessions (incl. phones, money, bags and powerbanks).

After an hour, two white combi-vans were brought and the group was divided between the two. The eight men were put in one vehicle and the other three minors were put into a seperate combi-van. They were driven to a nearby station.

When they arrived, they were taken into a room to be processed. Each man had a photo taken and gave his name, age and nationality (no fingerprints were taken) on a document that he was then ordered to sign. The men asked for asylum in Croatia but the police just told them to "shut up". The group did not insist further because the police were shouting at them, but some of the older men asked again on behalf of the minors. The police told them again to be quiet and ignored the request for the children to claim asylum.

When it was time for the underaged boys to be processed the police became angry again. The sixteen year old child was asked to give his date of birth and when he signed it as 2002 the officers began to shout at him. They told him he was lying and said directly to him that he must sign his year of birth as 2000. All three minors were registered as adults in this way, despite being 15, 16 and 17.

The processing took around two hours, with the men all being held in one room, while the minors were coerced into changing their age. After this they were moved into an adjoining cell for some hours. During this time they were given no food or water.

At around 18:00 or 19:00 the group was led from the station and loaded into a combi-van (note that at this stage, all the group members were now listed as adults and thus contained in one vehicle). The drive took around 5 hours and upon arriving at the destination the men were unloaded at a rural spot on the Croatian frontier.

The three men interviewed described how four boys had vomited on the journey because of the lack of oxygen and the heat. When asked, they described the experience as punishment .

At the border, four officers in blue came out of the front cabins of the combi-vans and told the group to walk towards Bosnia. When the men and children asked for their belongings back, the police laughed and gave back a plastic bag containing their confiscated mobiles. When the group received them, they realised that the devices had all been put into water and were irreparably damaged.

The arresting officers were dressed in sky blue and were made up of 4 men from Croatian detachment close to Rijeka who participated in the theft of belongings. The processing officer in the station was dressed in the same uniform and participated in the misrecording of the childrens ages. At the border a further four officers delivered the men to the frontier near Poljana and enacted the illegal pushback.