

18/03/2019

"THEY TREATED US LIKE ANIMALS, THEY WERE BEATING US, AND WE WERE LAYING ON THE GROUND."

Date and time: March 18, 2019 00:00

Location: Maljvac, Croatia, near Maljvac

Coordinates: 45.19729580140959 , 15.789128335762257

Push-back from: Slovenia

Push-back to: Croatia, Bosnia

Demographics: 10 person(s), age: 20-34 , from: Morocco, Algeria

Minors involved? No

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, gunshots, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

Police involved: 6 Slovenian officers, 3 Croatian border officers

Taken to a police station?: yes

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

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: Border Violence Monitoring

ORIGINAL REPORT

On March 9, 2019, a group of ten men left Velika Kladusa (BIH) and walked to Croatia, close to Maljevac. From there they continued walking day and night towards Slovenia. After nine days, the group crossed the border to Slovenia.

In the morning on March 18, 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 on the road by six Slovenian officers.

The officers drove the group with a van to the police station of Metlika. Their personal belongings and bags were taken from them. The whole group asked for asylum but the officer answered:

"You won't stay here!"

Then they were put in a cell for one hour, before their fingerprints and photos were taken.

Afterwards the group received their personal items back and six officers drove them in a van to the Croatian border where they got handed over to Croatian border officers. The officers asked again for their personal belongings. All phones, IOM Cards and all the money was confiscated and the group had to enter another van. By then all of them haven't had eaten anything for one day and were in the van without knowing where they were going. They asked again for asylum but the police officer pretended not to understand.

After a few hours of driving, at nightfall, the van stopped.

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

Each time, when two people got off, the doors were closed behind them. The others inside the van could hear the voices and screams of their friends being beaten several times by the officers. This procedure remained the same, two were taken out of the van and three officers were waiting outside to beat them up with batons. The individuals couldn't see the officer's faces as they were wearing masks.

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

One of the respondents described that while he was laying on the ground, one of the officers took a knife and slit his jacket and trousers (see photo).

Afterwards, one officer gave them a plastic bag with their broken phones inside. He kept around € 100, all cigarettes and the IOM Cards.

They were close to the border, so one officer ordered them to run towards Bosnia, while another one shot in the air with a gun, shouting:

“Never come back here!”

The individuals found themselves 30 km from Velika Kladusa and walked back for hours through the dark without the GPS or lights.

“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* .