

11/05/2019

""HE SAID(...) 'SLOVENIA CATCHES YOU RETURNS YOU TO CROATIA, WHAT IS CROATIA SUPPOSED TO DO? RETURN YOU TO BOSNIA! SO GO, GO BOSNIA(...)'"

Date and time: May 11, 2019 13:00

Location: Metlika, Slovenia

Coordinates: 45.6473994 , 15.31767519999994

Push-back from: Slovenia, Croatia

Push-back to: Croatia, Bosnia

Demographics: 4 person(s), age: 21-32 , from: Algeria

Minors involved? No

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

Police involved: 2 Slovenian police officers, 1 translator, 5 Croatian police officers, 4 Croatian border officers, 1 Slovenian police van, 1 Croatian police van

Taken to a police station?: yes

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

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group started the journey from Velika Kladuša (BiH) on the May 6th. They walked during the night and slept during the day because of Ramadan. After four days of walking the men reached Slovenia, where they walked a single.

On the morning of May 11th, they woke up to rain. With everything wet and being unable to sleep any longer the men split into three different groups of two and walked to the nearest village, Metlika (SLO), to take shelter. At around 1:00 pm, two Slovenian police officers approached the two men and told them to stop. The respondent believed at the time that him and his friend would have a chance to express their intention to seek asylum.

"I said to my friend it's ok we are only two they will take us into the camp, everything is alright."

The two men were taken to a police station at 3:00 pm, where they were questioned by the police officers who utilized translator. The respondent described that this was the third time that he had come across this particular translator. He described him as large, bald-headed man, with tanned skin and large eyebrows. The respondent described him as being somewhere between 38 and 47 years old.

"I can never know where he is from though. Because the first time I met him he said he was from Syria, but I know the Syrian accent very well, so I told him that I knew he was lying."

The respondent recalled that this interpreter had told him in the past that he would help him go to a camp in Slovenia where he would be able to access asylum procedures. the camp if he would try to come there another way. "He said:

‘Oh you are here again!’ and I said: ‘Yes, came another way, will you help me go to the camp now?’ and he replied ‘No, not like this you have to try again.’ What should I do?”

In the police station, the respondent described having his picture taken, in addition his name was registered and he was given paper to sign.

“I tell what is this? Because it is in Slovenian language... One nice police told me that it was because I was entering Slovenia in an illegal way so I must pay 500 euros, but he knew I was refugee and had no money so I must sign that and they return me back to Croatia.”

The two group-members stayed overnight in this police station. Two of the other people from their original group joined them later in the station.

On the morning of May 12th, the four men were put inside of a vehicle and driven to the Croatian border. At this point five Croatian police officers, two of being women, waited for them at the other side of the border. The group was then driven for around 40 minutes to a police station in Croatia. The respondent had no knowledge of the location this place. In this police station, the authorities searched the men and took their phones, money and powerbanks.

The respondent described that at around 1:00 pm, the officers told them to go to sleep and put them inside of a room which he described as dirty and dark.

“You can see is a nasty room, you sleep in here the toilet is just there, next to your had”

After three hours, the police transferred the group to another vehicle with two policemen inside and drove them for one hour until they reached the Bosnian-Croatian border.

At the border, there were four other policemen waiting for the group. The respondent described the uniforms of the officers as being different. There was one female officers and two male officers dressed in black uniforms. The respondent described another, who he inferred was the leader of the group, who wore a dark shirt and light blue trousers. The man claimed that when the presumed leader was present, the other officers typically use less force.

“I think he is the boss so I asked him why they were doing this. He said: ‘We don’t have a problem with you there is no problem for us, we know you are refugee. The problem is Slovenia, Slovenia catches you, returns you to Croatia, What is Croatia supposed to do? Return you to Bosnia! So go, go Bosnia we don’t have a problem with you.’”

The officers returned the group-members phones as they left the car. The phones were completely broken.

“Why you do that? This is my phone, Why crashing my phone? They said: ‘No, it was not us, it was like that before, the problem was at the police station. Go away, go away!’ If you not go away they will beat you so I went.”

The respondent also recalled that the group’s money was not returned. They group walked for four hours back to Velika Kladuša (BiH), and arrived to the city at around 8:00 pm.