

18/01/2019

"HE BEAT HIM AND STRUCK HIM MULTIPLE TIMES ON HIS BACK WITH THE BATON"

Date and time: January 18, 2019 23:30

Location: Maljevac, Croatia, Croatian side of Croatian-Bosnian border close to official checkpoint of Maljevac

Coordinates: 45.195511321228665 , 15.793980530224644

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 7 person(s), age: one 45-50 years old , from: Afghanistan, Morocco

Minors involved? Unknown

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, water immersion, theft of personal belongings

Police involved: Croatian police officers, caught by 4 officers (acting adequately, with large Nissan car, later a large van), at the police station violating 4 men and one woman (tall, around thirty years old and strongly built, having long and dark brown hair in a ponytail), at the border physically attacking 3 officers (in dark blue uniforms, 2 black-masked, one non-masked around 30-35 years old and having short hair and shaved face)

Taken to a police station?: yes

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

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: No

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of seven left Velika Kladuša (B I H) around January 13 , 2019, and headed towards Croatia. Most of the individuals were from Afghanistan however there were also some from Morocco. After they entered Croatia, they walked through the deeply snow covered forests , which hindered their progress significantly. Although they had enough food with them, the snow remained a persistent problem for them, and they considered giving up. On the fifth day of walking, in the afternoon of January 18 , they decided to walk into a nearby town , hoping to find some authorities who might take them back to Bosnia. They all felt very cold and all their clothes and sleeping bags were wet. One of the individuals walked into the town, while the others were waiting outside of it. He approached a Croatian man who was washing a car , trying to ask him in English , if he could call the police.

The man just answered:

"Go, go!"

Afterwards, around 4.10 pm, all seven of them went to a cafe together and asked the people there to call the police. After around 20 minutes, four officers arrived with a large Nissan car. The officers told the seven people on the move to stay there. Three officers asked them if they carried knives or guns and checked their belongings, while the fourth officer stayed in the car. The officers took the phone of

the respondent, telling him, they would return it later, which never happened. They brought water and cigarettes for the group of seven.

"They were good people."

The respondent asked the officers:

"Do you have the possibility to apply here for asylum in Croatia or not?"

They answered:

"Yes but not here, you can ask at the police station."

After around 1,5 hours, a large van arrived. The seven of them had to enter the van and was taken to a small police station. They drove for one hour at a low speed, around 40 to 50 km/h. When they arrived at the station, they were searched once more. The officers also took photos of each with a smartphone.

There were five officers at the station, different from the officers who initially apprehended the group. One of them was a female who had long, dark brown hair in a ponytail. She was tall, around 30 years old and strongly built.

The respondent describes the officers in the police station as more negative towards the individuals. They also took the respondent's power bank and never returned it.

"It was a good and expensive one."

The officers looked at the serial number and commented among each other that it was a good device. One of the officers told the others:

"Give me, i want it!"

The respondent describes that he can understand the Croatian language well enough, since he has spent several months in Bosnia. The officers only took the respondent's power bank, not any property of the others from the group.

Although the respondent had intended to ask the officers at the police station about asylum, following the initial officers' advice, he didn't trust them and thus didn't ask.

"When they talked with me, they did not do it with respect, they did not respect me."

The seven of them didn't leave the van when they were at the police station. They were locked inside the windowless backspace for approximately one hour, between 8 and 9 pm.

Then, they drove them back very fast for around 2,5 hours to the Bosnian border.

When the men arrived close to the Maljevac (HRV) border checkpoint, around 11.30 pm, they encountered two officers, wearing black balaclavas and carrying batons. Additionally, there was one uncovered officer. The latter had short hair, a shaved face, and was aged between 30 and 35. All of them wore dark blue uniforms. The whole group was instructed to leave the van:

"Go Bosnia!"

At this point, the masked officers attempted to beat the respondent, however as he put his baton down for the strike, the respondent grabbed the officer's hand and pushed him. The officer got angry and attempted to strike again. Then, the respondent managed to escape and ran with the other six towards the border. The van was very close to the border, approximately 30 meters away.

Nonetheless, one of the masked officers made it and caught one of the individuals, a Moroccan aged between 45 and 50 years. He beat him and struck him multiple times on his back with the baton.

As the other six continued running, they fell into the waist-high water of a stream running at the border.

After the respondent had crossed the stream and entered Bosnia, he turned around and discovered his Moroccan friend being beaten, which made him angry. He told the ones standing with him on the Bosnian side:

"It's not good what the officers are doing!"

Afterwards, the officers threw the beaten man into the water.

When all the seven finally were on the Bosnian side, they tried to walk back to Velika Kladusa, but didn't know where they were. Therefore, they knocked at the door of a house and the owner told them to walk three kilometers in a certain direction. At this point, it was around 1 am on January 19.