

12/09/2018

"INSTEAD THE POLICE OFFICER SPRAYED PEPPER SPRAY INTO THE CAR'S BACK WHERE THE MEN SAT DOWN."

Date and time: September 12, 2018 22:50

Location: Croatia, near to Zagreb

Coordinates: 45.7939494614755 , 15.980545608984357

Push-back from:

Push-back to:

Demographics: person(s), age: , from:

Minors involved? No

Violence used:

Police involved: Croatian police

Taken to a police station?:

Treatment at police station or other place of detention:

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: No

Reported by: Rigardu

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of Pakistanis, including one elderly male, had been travelling on foot for several days in the Croatian interior. In some woodland near to the southern suburbs of Zagreb the men were observed by police. A flashlight pointed at them through the trees. Moments later a man began to shout at them to stop. This was followed by two loud gunshots. The victims describe how the handgun was aimed and fired just over their heads. The group sat down and waited for the officer to reach their position. One officer was dressed in a blue uniform and continued to aim the gun at them threateningly. The officer asked the men: "What are you doing here?"

He said this in a menacing way and some in the group thought that he was about to shoot at them again. The interviewed person described how they treat them "like animals" and that they repeated to the officers: "We don't want to hurt anybody."

The officer ignored them. More police arrived on the scene within 20 minutes. They came with one combi vehicle and two police vans for transporting officers. The men searched them and took their phones, money and powerbank. From the three new vehicles, there were ten additional police men. They were all dressed in blue Croatian uniforms. The group was not taken to the station but loaded into the back of the combi. The man interviewed described how it was dark and that the officer held him towards the back doors of the combi. The policeman shouted: "Get in!"

To this the victim replied: Sir the back doors are locked, I can't get in. What are you doing with me?"

In response, the officer pushed the individual against the back doors and kicked him forcefully in the ankle. After this the doors were opened and all ten men had to take a seat in the back. The journey took around 2 hours. After 30 minutes the group was feeling sick from the lack of space and oxygen. One man knocked on the grill that connects the drivers cabin. He wanted to get their attention and get some air for the other men who were vomiting. The van stopped after a

few minutes, drawing up onto a slope at the side of the road. The men heard the passenger door opening and then heard the back doors opening. But they had not arrived at the border. Instead the police officer aimed a canister of pepper spray into the back of the combi, causing the men to choke and cry. The man who sat next to the door received burns to his skin from the intensity of the assault.

The doors were slammed and the combi continued on towards the Bosnian border. When it stopped again the men were unloaded at a rural spot near the Glina river. The ten officers in blue and four in black commando uniforms made a circle around the back of the van. When the doors were opened, each victim was summoned out one by one. On the ground in the middle of the circle the police threw a plastic bag full of broken phones. As the individuals dismounted the rear of the combi, the police asked them individually to find their personal mobile amongst the others in the bag.

As soon as each victim bent to look into the bag, the circle was closed around them and the police beat them over the heads with black batons. The men were kicked as they tried to find their balance. The interviewed man said that even those who didn't attempt to bend down to find their phone were beaten badly as well. When asked if the group had tried to claim asylum the man interviewed described how if you made any questions about asylum:

"He (Croatian police officer) starts to box you... If anyone talks, they start to beat."

After fifteen minutes of beating, the men were told by the officers to go. The police pushed them towards the river and across into Bosnian territory.