

24/12/2018

## "BUT BECAUSE WE ARE STRONGLY BEATEN, WE LOST THE PLASTIC BAG"

**Date and time:** December 24, 2018 11:00

**Location:** Plitvička Jezera, Croatia, Plitvička Jezera Bus station

**Coordinates:** 44.87256475264679 , 15.633412468261668

**Push-back from:** Croatia

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 23 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** Croatian officers; white, windowless van with blue stripe. At the border: five officers wearing balaclavas, one more white vehicle with blue stripe

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

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of three friends left Bihac (BIH), walking towards Croatia. On Monday at around 10 am , they arrived at the Plitvicka Jezera Bus station ( HRV ) . They had been waiting there for about one hour when Croatian officers arrived and arrested them. They had to enter a white , windowless van with a blue stripe indicating a police vehicle.

*"They took us to a police station, I don't know where we were because in the van, we cannot see anything . "*

They were driven for around 30 minutes to a police station where they were well treated:

*"They even got us cake . "*

At the police station, the group was told that they would be taken back to Bosnia later that night.

One of the individuals expressed his wish to claim asylum, but the officers just laughed and made fun of him. The same happened, when he tried to express it again at the border during the push-back.

The three of them had to stay for four hours at the police station and were driven to the border at around 5 pm. After a 30-minutes drive, they arrived at the border where they waited around 10 minutes inside the van until the door was opened.

Three officers were standing in front of the van, two others a bit further. After the three friends got off the van, the officers covered their faces with black balaclavas.

*"They asked us to lie on the floor and take out our shoes. After I took them out, I tried [to take them back], they beat me two, three times with a baton, I ran to try get my shoes back, they were 2 or 3 beating me."*

*"I think that it is a military section, this isn't the police who beat us. There is a unity for it, they stay at the border, the other [Croatian Police] are normal [...] But they are all from Croatia, because they have a sign on their arm, with their uniform, they all have a Croatian Police sign . "*

*"They put their ski masks afterwards, but they are young, in between 18, 31 and 35 years old. It is a really muscular people, they are athletes. [...] . "*

They were also wearing night-vision glasses.

*"They could see us, but we cannot see anything."*

The respondent noticed another vehicle, white with a blue police stripe, present there. When he exited the van, one of the officers returned their phones back in a white plastic bag. However, while being hit by the officers later, he lost the bag, in addition to his money, bracelet and neck chain.

*"But because we are strongly beaten, we lost the plastic bag"*

All three individuals were targeted with similar force by the officers:

*"The first person, they beat him a bit , and then he escaped. After the policemen beat me and my friend. My friend, they beat him with [...] shoe, here [showing his lip], a safety footwear."*

After being pushed-back, the respondent hid himself in the forest nearby where he was attacked by the officers again. After they left, he ran away. He walked for around four to five hours without shoes through the cold until a Bosnian farmer saw him and gave him emergency shoes.