

22/02/2019

"THEY CAME AND SEARCHED THE RIVER, BUT NOBODY FOUND HIM."

Date and time: February 22, 2019 10:00

Location: Zunici, Slovenia, Slovenian-Croatian border at the Kolpa river

Coordinates: 45.481691590850794 , 15.360398977246064

Push-back from: Slovenia

Push-back to: Croatia

Demographics: 10 person(s), age: 19-24 , from: Morocco, Algeria

Minors involved? No

Violence used: threatening with guns

Police involved: 7 Slovenian officers, 2 of them dressed in standard police uniforms, 5 of them dressed in military-style uniforms

Taken to a police station?: unknown

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

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of ten left from Bihać (B I H) on February 14 , 2019. The seven Algerian men and three Moroccan women crossed the border to Croatia and reached the Slovenian border after seven days of walking. At around 4 pm on the February 20, the ten of them decided to enter Slovenia by passing the border river Kolpa. The current of the river was very strong so it was challenging for them to cross it . They decided that the men would cross first, so the three women were watching them crossing from the Croatian side . When the last one went in, he soon lost his fight against the river's strong current and got carried away by the water.

Shocked by this, the six men told the women not to enter the water, as it would have been too dangerous for them, and to stay in Croatia. Then, they started to search for their friend, but couldn't find him.

"I feel so lost and alone."

In an attempt to signal for help, the group decided to make a large fire, hoping it would attract the police. They started the fire at around 5 pm, but no one came.

After this shocking event and the following desperate search, the exhausted group fell asleep next to the fire. At around 4 am on February 21, they were woken up by a group of Slovenian officers. Two were dressed in standard police uniforms and five officers were dressed in military-style uniforms, all carried guns.

First the officers dressed in standard uniforms searched the group of six. They told the police officers what happened and the Slovenian officers called out for help.

“They came and searched the river, but nobody found him.”

Afterwards, the six of them were taken to a police station.

The group spend one day at the station during which they were questioned by a Palestinian translator about their migration route and where their ultimate destination was. The translator did not answer any of their questions regarding asylum. Their fingerprints of their index fingers were taken as well as photos, and they also had to sign papers.

On the next morning, February 22, around 10 am, the Slovenian officers drove the six of them in a van back to the Croatian border. There, they were handed over to the Croatian authorities and had to switch into another van. In this van, there were already other people on the move, in total they were now 13 people. The van drove about one hour until they reached the Bosnian border. The entire group was told to exit the van together and to walk back to Bosnia. Five Croatian officers and one driver were present, when the group entered Bosnia again.

Then, the group of 13 walked back to Velika Kladuša (BIH) and arrived there at the same day.