

08/05/2019

"NOBODY TRIED TO RESIST IT. YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING, THEY WILL BEAT YOU."

Date and time: May 8, 2019 05:00

Location: Višnja Gora, Slovenia

Coordinates: 45.9567291 , 14.7443778

Push-back from: Slovenia, Croatia

Push-back to: Croatia, Bosnia

Demographics: 4 person(s), age: 17-36 years old , from: Syria, Algeria

Minors involved? Yes

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

Police involved: 7-8 Slovenian police officers at the place of apprehension (3 of them in plain clothes, among them 1 woman); unknown number of officials in a police station in Slovenia and in another police station in Croatia; 4 officers wearing ski-masks at the pushback site at the Croatian-Bosnian border. - A white police car and a police van with a blue strip and the inscription "Policija" on the side in Slovenia. Another van in Croatia.

Taken to a police station?: yes

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

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: [Re:]ports Sarajevo

ORIGINAL REPORT

In the morning of May 2, a group of four men set out from Sturlic (BiH). After crossing the border to Croatia, they continued and crossed Croatia by foot.

"We walked for 6 days in the jungle trying to avoid all the villages and towns, to avoid any problem. We were so deep in the jungle that we even saw bears one morning. We screamed and ran away".

On the sixth day, on May 7, the four men reached the Slovenian border near the town of Pribanjci. They did not have any food or water left. They crossed the river at the estimated coordinates 45.451219,15.243339 and entered Slovenian territory. It was 7 am.

After several kilometers of walking into Slovenia, they spotted a house and asked the residents for food and water, which they gave.

After one day and one night of walking in Slovenia, they arrived early in the morning at Višnja Gora and waited in a small square near a church deciding what to do next.

After 20 minutes there, it started raining and they decided to buy a ticket to Ljubljana. However, they never had the chance to do

that because two policemen and one policewoman dressed as civilians arrived.

“They made us sit down on the ground and asked for our IDs. We asked for asylum, but the policemen just remained silent and did not take any action”.

A few minutes later, a white police car and a police van with a blue strip and the inscription “Policija” on the side arrived. 4-5 officials came out of the two vehicles. Each man of the group was searched and their phones and money were taken from them. The respondent had a Galaxy A3 and 200 Euros, another member of the group had an iPhone.

“They asked us where we crossed the border. They wanted the exact location. Then they took us with a van without seats nor windows to that spot. It took us 40 minutes to get there and once there they took a picture of the spot with one of my fingers pointing at it”.

Afterwards, the four men were taken to a police station, which was only 5 minutes away. It was late in the afternoon.

The authorities there took pictures of each of them with a computer camera and also took their fingerprints.

“They took all my fingerprints. The others only had to give their index fingerprint”.

Then they had to sign five documents in Slovenian. The respondent and his fellow Algerian friend did not ask for a translator. The two other Syrian men had a translator.

“When I asked why I had to sign those papers, the authorities answered me that they had to decide if they were sending us to Ljubljana or back to Croatia. So I signed.”

They spent 3 nights in that police station. The four men were split into two groups and put in two cells, with one Syrian man and one Algerian man in each cell. They were given dry clothes, blankets, cigarettes and they slept on beds.

“At some point I really started believing that we were going to be brought to the capital.”

On the third day (May 11), at 6am, they were waked up by some officials who started cleaning the room and taking back the blankets. At approximately 7.30 am the four men were taken to the border crossing. The Slovenian officials drove with them into Croatia and dropped them at a police station in Croatia located at a 25-minutes ride from the border. There, they were handed over to the Croatian police. Their belongings (money and phones) were also handed over to the Croatian police, who however, would never return them to the four men.

In the police station, they were asked to fill a form with their names and their parents’ names, had to sign a paper written in Croatian and the police took pictures of them while they had to hold a paper on their chest level with their names and birth dates.

They only stayed for 10 minutes because according to the respondent the police station was full of people.

“We were taken to a van with another group of people. We were at least twenty people in that car, women also. The ride was awful and lasted about two hours.”

The respondent did not specify the reason why it was awful. They reached the Croatian-Bosnian border and were taken out of the van. Four officers masked with ski masks were waiting for them outside.

The first person who got out of the car was hit with a stick on the back. No physical violence was exerted against the other persons in the group. While the four group members’ money and phones had already been taken by the Slovenian authorities,

there were other people in the van who still had their belongings. However, when they got out of the van, the authorities took the money and the phones also from those persons.

“Nobody tried to resist it. You can’t do anything, they will beat you”.

“The Croatian police kept my money and phone. I know they had my phone because I saw the Slovenian officers handing over a bag with my belongings to Croatian officers when they deported us to Croatia.”

The group was then told to go towards Bosnia by following an unpaved road. After walking 20 kilometers, they reached Velika Kladusa.