

08/11/2018

## "FALL DOWN, AND THEN THE POLICE COME AND BEAT YOU"

**Date and time:** November 8, 2018 05:00

**Location:** close to route 218, Vinica, Slovenia

**Coordinates:** 45.4614158 , 15.253570999999965

**Push-back from:** Slovenia

**Push-back to:** Croatia, Bosnia

**Demographics:** 19 person(s), age: 16,17, others about 30 years old , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Caught and registered by Slovenian officers (one of them 5 feet tall female having brown hair with shoulder length and police code number 00448801), deported, stolen and physically attacked by Croatian police officers (at the border joining a van of officers driven by officer with black ski mask)

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, papers signed, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

At the beginning of November 2018 , a group of 30 left from an area between Bihać (BIH) and Velika Kladusa (BIH) , approximately 25 km away from the latter city, with the intention to enter Croatia , continue to Slovenia and then to Italy. This group of 30 was split into several subgroups. One of those was a group of 14 where the two respondents were part of .

They walked for five days through Croatia and on the morning of the sixth day, on November 8, around at 5 am, they prepared to cross a river bordering Slovenia. Four Pakistani men who had joined their group during the journey, couldn't swim and stayed behind. The rest swam to the other side using plastic trash bags as flotation devices. Upon reaching Slovenian soil, close to the town of Vinica, route 218, they were apprehended by some Slovenian officers who had apparently spotted them from afar with binoculars. These officers also saw the four other men waiting on the Croatian side of the river and called the Croatian authorities to pick them up.

The group of now 13 was brought by car to a police station where they were made to fill out some papers without a translator. They asked for asylum but were denied access to the procedures. The 16 and 17 – year – old boys specifically stated in their paperwork that they were intending to apply for asylum in Slovenia, but the Slovenian officers said "No!" and crossed out their handwriting on the papers and instead filled in Italy as their intended destination. Furthermore, the officers claimed that everybody was over 18 and that there were no minors present. The 13 individuals spent one night in the jail in Slovenia. One of the officers present was around five feet tall , female , with brown shoulder-length hair and police code number 00448801.

On the next morning, November 9 , the y were taken to the Croatian border and handed over to the Croatian authorities around 10 am . In Croatia, they were taken to an unspecified place and all 13 were kept in a van for the entire day without receiving any food or water.

*" I told them all of these people are very hungry can you give us some food. The Croatia police tell me, give me money I give you food."*

Also, the individuals were forced to urinate into soda bottle, as they didn't get access to a toilet. Around 11.30 pm, they were finally driven to the Bosnian border in a convoy of three vans with approximately 30 people on the move in total. There was also one van joining them by the time they reached the border that transported only officers. Their driver wore a black balaclava.

It was already November 10, when they arrived at the Bosnia-Croatia border, close to the town of Sturlić (BIH) , approximately 30 km from Velika Kladusa. The respondents saw the doors of their van opening, and then they were blinded by flashlights pointing into their eyes. Three people had to get off together at one time and were beaten by the officers .

*" Three people, door close, fighting, fighting, finish. And another three people. Step-by-step."*

The respondents were unable to identify any distinguishing characteristics of the officers present due to the fact that during this process, flashlights continued to be pointed into their eyes. The officers also smashed their mobile phones, stole their power banks and more than €500 prior to the beatings. The officers were standing on each side of the road, in two long lines. The road had a downward incline and before the line of officers, there was a large drum of water being placed strategically to leak down the road, making the surface more slippery for the individuals being pushed-back:

*" The water came from a drum, water downhill, from drum, pouring downhill, and police on each side... They put the water down for slipping."*

One respondent slipped 10 times during the push-back. The officers waited for the people to slip and fall down, at which point they came and beat them up:

*" Fall down, and then the police come and beat you."*

They were forced to run through this line of officers, downhill on the slippery ground, for approximately 15 meters before they reached the safety of the forest on Bosnian territory. Flashlights were pointed into their eyes throughout this process.

The respondent described a family being present within the group of seven people being pushed – back, consisting of the mother , one child, and three men. He said that the officers did n't hit the woman of the family, only the men.

The respondent was hit on his eyes the front and back of his head, his legs, and on his arms. When he got out of the van, he was first running and then slipping several times. After that, three officers held him, while two officers beat him with batons. While hitting the people on the move with their fists and batons, the officers shouted:

*" Go! Go! Go!"*

After finally reaching the forest, the respondent collapsed and couldn't stand up for 10 minutes due to exhaustion.

*"I jump for jungle, 10 minutes I am sleeping here."*

After exiting the forest on the Bosnian side, the group came upon a man who told them that he would take them to Velika Kladusa for €10 per person . They only had 20 euros left at this point, but the man accepted and took them.