

19/10/2018

"THE KIDS WERE [...] THE CHILDREN SHOULD NOT SEE SOMETHING LIKE THIS. MAYBE THEY WILL NEVER FORGET THIS"

Date and time: October 19, 2018 04:00

Location: Near Baići, Croatia

Coordinates: 45.215501, 15.713286

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 4 person(s), age: 5-30, two children aged 5 and 7, from: Iraq

Minors involved? Yes

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

Police involved: Three cars with 12 officers in dark blue uniforms and civilian clothes

Taken to a police station?: unknown

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: No

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent and his family, his sister and her two children, walked from Velika Kladuša (BIH) to Croatia, from where they wanted to continue to Slovenia to seek asylum. They had been searching for a safe place in Europe and chose Slovenia as they considered this as the first country in the EU that was safe for them. They did not want to apply for asylum in Croatia as they had experienced several episodes of violence there at the border.

The fourth day of their journey, when they were walking through Croatia, around 35 km from the Bosnian border, they were detected by 12 Croatian officers. The officers were acting aggressively towards the family and questioned them:

"Did you come here with smuggler? Where are you from? What you want in Croatia?"

Then, they frisked their bodies, including the woman and children, and stole all their personal belongings. Following that, the officers physically attacked the respondent with their hands, in front of the children:

"They [Croatian police] were asking me: 'Who is with you?! Tell us!'. I told them just this family. 'Are you sure?', I said to them, 'Yes, I am sure'. It was just me, my sister, and her two kids, one child is 5 years old and one 7 years old. [...] They broke the phone that belonged to my sister and hit me into my back and my leg also, something horrible. The kids were crying, and they did not care. They did not care. The children should not see something like this. Maybe they will never forget this."

After the physical attack, all of them were transported straight away in a 40-minute ride to the Bosnian border. Inside the van, there were already other people on the move who had previously been caught by the authorities. The car was driving very fast and the respondent felt sick. At around 5 am, they arrived at the border and were

told to get off the van one by one. Then, the officers again attacked everyone, except women and children, and told them to go back to Bosnia:

“ They [Croatian police] took us one by one from the car and started beating us. The children were crying and screaming and they [Croatian police] did not care.”

At the end of the interview, the respondent told that he had never experienced worse treatment than by the Croatian authorities during his journey through Europe:

“ I came from my country, from Iraq, walking in the mountains. I saw the Turkish army, the Greek army, Albanian, Montenegrin, and Bosnian Army. They are all different, but Croatian police and army are so bad, why? In the end, we are all humans. Why do they do this? Why do they hit me? They do you do this to my sister with the kids crying? I don't know. Maybe they hate Muslims, I don't know”.