

27/11/2018

**""L WANT TO SEE [THE PERSON WHO DROWNED IN THE RIVER)."
-"YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO SEE HIM.""**

Date and time: November 27, 2018 00:00

Location: Topolc, Croatia, place between Toploc and Rečica, close to the Reka river

Coordinates: 45.58265460491888 , 14.22402077797085

Push-back from: Slovenia

Push-back to: Croatia, Bosnia

Demographics: 11 person(s), age: 26 , from: Algeria

Minors involved? No

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

Police involved: 1 officer near Reka River, more officers arriving with 2 vehicles and at police station, 14 male and female officers at border checkpoint, 6 officers at border with black ski masks and black uniforms, 1 police van

Taken to a police station?: yes

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

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: No

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of eleven Algerians crossed the border from Bosnian to Croatia by foot from Bihać on November 22 . For five days, they continued walking through Slovenia. On November 27, one officer saw them at a place between Topolc (SVN) and Rečica (SVN) and tried to apprehend them , but they all managed to run away. At this point, they were close to the Reka river, and one individual tried to cross it in an attempt to escape the officer. A second individual followed the first one into the river, however he did n't know how to swim , was taken by the river's current . One of the others tried to save him, but also fell in the water.

Slovenian authorities arrived soon after and mounted a rescue attempt for the individual who was still in the river. When a Slovenian firefighter managed to take him out of the water, he had already passed away.

Three of the 11 had escaped during the group's initial flight from the officer and five others stayed along the river, including the three persons present in this interview.

"We were walking and then a policeman saw us, and then we ran away to leave, there was a river [...] it was one guy he crossed it, he knew how to swim, and there was a second person, he went [in the river] but he didn't know how to swim [...]."

The now seven of them had to enter two different vehicles. The individual who had tried to save his friend and one other individual were brought to a hospital where they stayed for about an hour. Then they were brought to a police station where the other group members were already waiting. This station was located about ten minutes from the place where their friend drowned. One of the respondents reported that:

“ The police station looks like a camp, there are bedrooms there. I think there is Red Cross around.”

They stayed approximately four hours at the police station. The officers weren't rude to them, however one of the respondents asked:

“I want to see [the person who drowned in the river].”

And the officer answered:

“ You have no right to see him.”

The group was then brought to an official border checkpoint between Slovenia and Croatia where they had to stay in a cell for two hours. There were about 14 male and female officers. The seven of them had to take off their clothes and had their bags checked, one by one in a different room. Their phones and money was taken away and photos of each were taking, wearing a panel with his name and surname on it. The photos were taken by with a phone by a female officer. They further gave their fingerprints and signed a paper. Although it was written in Arabic, the respondents declared that they didn't have time to read it and therefore didn't know what they signed. One of the respondents described voicing concern over his injured foot at this time to an officer:

“I showed my foot [to the policewoman and said:] ‘Look, it's not good.’ She answered me ‘It's normal, you are men.’.”

They were later brought to a police van and driven to an unknown place to change the van, before being driven another 20 minutes to a secluded section of the Bosnian–Croatian border between Maljevac and Buhaua (HRV). The area was close to where the October border protest was held. At approximately 1.40 am, the seven of them had to get off the van one by one. There were six officers waiting in front of the van while two others waited a bit further to catch those who might run away. They wore black balaclavas and black uniforms.

“ They beat us and were laughing, you go out of the van one by one and when you leave there is again two persons, then you run, you run until Bosnia. They beat everywhere, in the head, in the eyes, everywhere”

They arrived to Velika Kladuša (BIH) by foot at around 2 am, went into a police station, signed a paper and left again.