

13/04/2019

## **"WHY ARE [YOU] HERE? WE DON'T LIKE YOU, WE DON'T WANT YOU, GO AWAY FROM HERE."**

**Date and time:** April 13, 2019 12:00

**Location:** Rijeka

**Coordinates:** 45.443605435420714 , 15.10231226801136

**Push-back from:** Croatia

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 13 person(s), age: 4, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 25-45 , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, threatening with guns, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Special croatian police officers

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group left from Bihać and crossed into Croatia on foot during the early morning hours of April 1st. They walked for very long hours throughout the days, starting walking at around 6:00 am stopping to sleep at around midnight. After 10 of transit, the group arrived to the Rijeka area and moved north from there.

After a total of 14 days of journey, at around midday on April 13th, the group was around one away from the Croatian/Slovenian border by walking when they were apprehended by two Croatian authorities, wearing green uniforms similar to those worn by the Ministry of the Interior's *Specijalna Policija*. Soon-after, the officers called backup and eight other officers later arrived to the location.

The group of officers was composed of two females and eight males. It was snowing at the time and the police officers gave gloves to all the group-members. They placed the children first inside of one the van while the women and men had to walk for 2 km to the other van. The group was then taken to a police station in Rijeka at around 7:00 pm.

In the station, the officers searched the group and asked directly for money.

*'I started saying we don't have any money and they say you have money give me money.'*

One of the male group-members had 1000 EUR hidden in his pants which the officers found after searching him. The respondent described the officers as saying 'You told me that you have no money how you have money?' and then giving this group-member 4 or 5 snaps with a baton and kicking him. The respondent recalled that this group-member was sick after this incident and spent one week in a hospital in BiH after returning. The officers in the station were then

described as forcing the male group-members to undress before searching them again. If they refused, one of the officers would beat them with his baton until they obeyed. Once finished with the men, the officers were described as then searching the children and later the female group-members, also forcing them to undress to their underwear. Money, phones and power-banks were taken from everyone.

The group stayed in this police station overnight, during which they were only given food in the morning. The respondent recalled that this food was not very good and was not enough considering that at this point they had not eaten for more than two days. He recalled that they let the children eat most of the food.

In the station, the group had their pictures and names registered the next morning. After this, two officers appeared with the group-member's sleeping bags and began to rip them with a knife, throwing them into a garbage bag in front of the group.

*'We said please no because we have children we need those things for sleeping in the refugee camp.'*

Around 12:00 pm, three policemen took the group to two different vans.

*'He used a lot of bad words and said [why are her? we don't like you, we don't want you, go away from here.] They pushed us, they didn't care if it were men, women or children they were just pushing everyone and saying [go, go away, we don't want you here] and they put us inside of the van and said [stay here and shut up otherwise we will beat you]'.*

The vans took the migrants to another police station where they were forced to sign a paper and after which they drove for two or three hours before arriving at a location on the Bosnian-Croatian around 20 km away from the city of Velika Kladuša (BiH). The group was left at the border at around 4:00 pm after which time they walked to the city, reaching it at around 1:00 am. They went to Miral camp and asked to stay there for the night, but the IOM representative at the entrance at the time replied that the camp was full and that it was not possible to take them and only gave them blankets. In the morning, after sleeping in the street in front of the camp, the families called the Bira camp in Bihać where they were registered and van came to pick them up and take them there.