

07/11/2018

"THEY TOUCHED MY WHOLE BODY. THEY WERE TOUCHING ME EVERYWHERE"

Date and time: November 7, 2018 10:30

Location: Mracelj, Croatia, northeast of Mracelj in a forest

Coordinates: 45.228070280683404 , 15.796535422352463

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 16 person(s), age: 20-40 , from: Bangladesh

Minors involved? No

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

Police involved: Croatian officers, in black clothes and masks, caught by 5 (2 with star symbols on their uniforms), at the border 7 (physical violence by 5 men, observed by one male and one female with star symbols on their uniforms)

Taken to a police station?: no

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: No

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 16 men were crossing Croatia with the intention to continue to Italy, where the respondent wanted to apply for asylum and find work. When they were walking through a forest northeast Mracelj (HRV) , on November 7, 2018, at around 10 . 30 am, they were detected by five Croatian officers dressed in black and with balaclavas. Two of them had star symbols on their uniforms .

They asked the 16 individuals where they were going to, so they answered that they wanted to cross Croatia and continue to Italy. But the officers only told them:

" You won't go to Italy."

Then, they had to undress except for their underwear, and were frisked:

" They touched my whole body. They were touching me everywhere."

They took all the money and cigarettes, and destroyed their phones with batons. Afterwards, they had to enter a van without getting any explanation about where they were going . It was difficult to breathe inside of the van as all 16 individuals were squeezed into a small , windowless space without ventilation. After a 20 – minute drive , the van stopped at the Croatian-Bosnian border at 11.30 am , close to the official border checkpoint in Maljevac (HRV) /Velika Kladusa (BIH).

The respondent then realized that he was going to be pushed-back to Bosnia without having accessed

any legal assistance or procedures. He was scared that he was going to be attacked by the officers. They opened the door of a van and asked him to get off first:

"I speak to the police: 'Brother, please, no fight, no fight.' But he was just telling me: 'Fuck you, fuck you, fuck you!'. They took us one by one from the car, and I was the first one. Five police were fighting me. And after me, the next person ... Police was beating me with sticks to my head, and to my body. I fell down and they were kicking, maybe 5 or 8 minutes. I told him [officer]: 'Please, sir, don't beat me.' And he was just saying: 'Fuck you, fuck you.' I don't know why the Croatian police speak to me like this."

The respondent noticed seven officers present during the push back. All were dressed in black uniforms and wearing balaclavas, so the people on the move couldn't see their faces and identify them. Five of them, all male officers, were physically attacking the group with batons while shouting at them to go back to Bosnia and insulting them:

"Fuck you!"

Two other officers who had star symbols on their uniforms, one woman and one man, were watching the violent push-back. The respondent was sure that all the officers were from Croatia because they were greeting each other in Croatian:

"Dobro, kako si? Dobro".

As a result of the physical attack with batons, the respondent got injured at his lip, had a bump on his head, bruises on his back, a swollen ankle, and a little cut behind his ear.