

27/08/2018

## "EACH PERSON WAS EXPOSED TO BATON STRIKES AND KICKS FROM TEN OFFICERS"

**Date and time:** August 27, 2018 02:00

**Location:** 5km south of Sturlic, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.0299375 , 15.758812499999976

**Push-back from:** Croatia

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 35 person(s), age: 16-37 , from: Pakistan, Nepal

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, threatening with guns, gunshots, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 police officers dressed in blue uniforms, 1 police car, later 10 croatian police officers in black commando uniforms, 2 police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** no

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On August 27th. 2018, a group of 31 men and four minors, were walking into the Croatian interior from the border near Sturlic. After three days of walking the 31 adult males and four minors were following the dense woodland on the side of freeway no 1. It was approximately 02:00 am and the road was very dark, so the group were unaware that they have been observed, until two shouting police officers approached them. The officers were dressed in blue uniforms and pointed guns and torchlights at the group.

The 35 members of the group were ordered to approach the roadside where they found an unmarked police car. There the police shouted at them to sit down. They then waited approximately for an hour, guarded by the two officers, until two combi vans arrived.

In the vehicles were ten Croatian police officers dressed in black commando uniforms. They came out and after discussing with the two initial officers, the police began to systematically search the men and remove their belongings.

Once this had been carried out, the victims were loaded into the two combis and were driven south down freeway no. 1. The journey took approximately two hours. At this time the men and children were sick from the lack of ventilation and the cramped conditions in the back of the combi.

The journey ended as they were delivered to an unknown border location. The two vans stopped and the victims were held inside until officers opened the back doors. At the rural site, unknown to the group, the 10 police officers dressed in black were waiting. The sun was coming up and the interviewees estimated it to be around 05:30 am.

The police officers beckoned them out one-by-one and proceeded to beat them heavily with regular batons. At one time,

each person was exposed to baton strikes and kicks from ten officers. The group sustained injuries to their torso and head, as well as across their forearms as they tried to protect themselves.

The interviewee was also manhandled by the officers and shot at from close range with a pistol loaded with rubber bullets. The victim was shot in the side of the head, causing abrasion and swelling to his right ear and temple. He further suffered severe bruising to his left midriff, caused by impact from the police batons which created contusions on his upper torso.

As each man was beaten individually, the attack lasted 30 minutes. After this they were shouted at by the officers to walk back to Bosnia. None of their possessions were returned, apart from their broken phones. The group crossed the border and walked for an hour back to Sturlic where locals helped them with a bus fare back to Velika Kladusa.

Because of the group size it is difficult to account for all the injuries sustained during this attack, however it can be said that most suffered temporary bruising and impact injuries from the assault with police batons.

The interviewee received medical treatment for his gunshot wound. The rubber bullet fired at the side of his head caused severe bruising, and impaired the victims hearing. He was administered restorative medicative cream for this and the bruising to his intercostal muscles (left ribcage). The doctors recommended him to rest for 15 days and lie only on his back. At the time of the interview the victim still could not sleep because of the pain, neither could he lie on his side. See medical report pictured below.