

29/08/2018

"THE WOMAN WAS FORCED TO TAKE OFF ALL HER CLOTHES AND WAS TOUCHED BY MALE POLICE OFFICERS"

Date and time: August 29, 2018 07:00

Location: 8 km from the border (Velika Kladuša), Croatia.

Coordinates: 45.188258597875226 , 15.663693462890592

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 6 person(s), age: unknown , from: Iraq

Minors involved? Yes

Violence used: forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

Police involved: Four Croatian police officers, wearing blue shirts.

Taken to a police station?: no

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

The two interviewees stated that they did not believe in the possibility of legal and safe transit to Europe, as there was no transit zone for them to ask for asylum in Europe by the Bosnian-Croatian border. For this reason, they decided to hire a smuggler who would have transported them from Croatia to Europe, where they wanted to ask for protection. One interviewee explained that him and his brother, as well as an Iraqi family of four (mother, father and two sons) arranged a smuggler whom they would pay after reaching their destination – Germany.

The whole group of 6 people left Velika Kladuša (BiH), walked across the border to Croatia, and continued to a forest around 8 km far away in the inner Croatian land, where they were supposed to wait for a taxi to pick them up. The smuggler did not specify to them any time of their pick up, he just told them to wait in this unmarked forest location. The group was waiting in the forest for three days and three nights. The interviewee stated that those three days in the forest were hard for them, especially for the children, because during the day it was hot and in the night it was very cold and they did not have enough blankets and warm clothes. The second day, they ran out of water and food and they still had not received any messages from the smuggler.

On the fourth day at around 7 am, they were detected by four Croatian male police officers in blue uniforms. The police first questioned the people about their origin and their intentions in Croatia. After that, the police stripped all adults naked and frisked their bodies. The woman was also forced to take off all her clothes and was touched by male police officers. The officers also searched the children but did not take off their clothes. The father of the family stated that the police stole their four phones, two power banks, and took 200 euros from the family.

The family said to the police that they wanted to apply for asylum in Croatia. But none of the officers reacted to their request and did not take anyone to the police station or enabled them to access the asylum procedures. Instead, both families were directly deported by a van to the Bosnian border – close to the official border check-point in Velika Kladuša (BiH). From there they walked to the local makeshift camp.