

10/07/2018

## **"WHEN THE FAMILIES ASKED FOR ASYLUM IN CROATIA, THE POLICE REFUSED TO TAKE THEM TO A POLICE STATION OR PROVIDE THEM WITH ACCESS TO THE ASYLUM PROCEDURES"**

**Date and time:** July 10, 2018 12:00

**Location:** 13 minutes drive from Velika Kladusa, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.19731362993234 , 15.747117299432489

**Push-back from:** Croatia

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 30 person(s), age: unknown , from: unknown

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police

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

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

According to the interviewee, four families and 10 single men hired a smuggler who would transport them by car from Bosnia to Italy. The families decided to use the smuggler services as they did not believe in any legal option of border crossing to Europe, due to the tight and restrictive controls by the EU external borders. The interviewee states that some families paid a smuggler 1000 euro and others 2000 euros in cash (for the whole family). She further explained that all the families and the men were transported in cars, with a smuggler, to a forest in the inner Croatian land, located 13 minutes of driving from Velika Kladusa, where they were dropped off to wait for another transport.

The families and the men were waiting in the forest without a shelter and sleeping bags for five days with no further information from the smuggler. They had only cans of fish food and limited water that they ran out of after the third day. The interviewee's mother had heart problems and did not have any more medicine with her, so they could not stay in the forest any longer. Other families with small children, the youngest was one year old, did not have any more energy to stay in the forest after the fifth day, and decided to start walking to Croatia. The families, in total 20 people including small children, started walking further to Croatia, but were detected by the Croatian police after a few minutes. The police officers captured the whole group and stole their mobile phones:

*"They took our mobile phones. And we say, the first time you were breaking our phone and now we don't have any other phone. The men [police] checked our bag and they stole our phones. ... We respect the police when they catch us because it is their job. But they don't respect us. That is our phones and money and for a refugee, his money is everything because here, we cannot work"*

After that, the police officers transported all 20 people in one car to the Bosnian border, where they just said to them:

"That is Bosnia! Go back! That way!". When the families asked for asylum in Croatia, the police refused to take them to a

police station or provide them with access to the asylum procedures. This was the interviewee's third attempt at crossing the border with the intention to apply for asylum in Europe. The interviewee reported that the previous time, her and her younger siblings were caught by the police in Zagreb, where they also asked for asylum. That time, the police officers started laughing at her and her siblings and told them: "Ok, we give you asylum", then they were ordered to sign a document, filling in her name and nationality, but when she had signed the paper, her and her siblings were deported by car to the Bosnian border.