

17/02/2019

## "WE WERE TRANSPORTED LIKE ANIMALS"

**Date and time:** February 17, 2019 07:00

**Location:** Gacko, Bosnia, M6.1. near Gacko

**Coordinates:** 43.1744244 , 18.5178216

**Push-back from:** Bosnia

**Push-back to:** Montenegro

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 23-30 , from: Syria, Iraq, Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, threatening with batons

**Police involved:** More than 10 officers in different places in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1 woman, all others men). Most officers wore black uniforms with red-white emblems. Others wore uniforms with the Bosnian flag on the sleeves. Two different police cars (white vans)

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

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** No

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### ORIGINAL REPORT

After having entered Bosnia from Montenegro in the night, the group of four was standing at the side of road M 6.1 near Gacko (B I H), at the approximate coordinates 43.1744244,18.5178216 . It was a round 7 am. They were looking for a taxi to take them further into Bosnia . After a while, a white car stopped and three elderly officers stepped out , wearing heavy footwear and black uniforms with a red-white emblem on their sleeves . They asked the people on the move where they were from, wanted to see their papers and their belongings. The four of them handed over their camp IDs from the camp in Spuzh (MNE) , their phones and bags. Then, the officers searched them and their luggage . Their phones (iPhone 6, Samsung G7, a Samsung and a Huawei phone), chargers and power banks were put into a bag. They also took the pills one of the four had with him, even though he explained that they were not drugs but his medicine.

Afterwards, the four of them had to enter a white van 's backspace where they had to sit on the blank floor during the one-hour drive.

*" We were transported like animals."*

They arrived at the border near Kazanci (B I H ) at the coordinates 43.037979, 18.654556. Even though the ride was quite fast, the respondent didn't feel too afraid in the backspace, but felt uncomfortable when there were road bends .

Once they reached the border, an officer went into a small building at the coordinates 43.037979, 18.654556 . After ten minutes he returned to the van , and they were driven to Bileca (B I H ) at the coordinates 42.8759458,18.4288576 . After the one-hour drive, they arrived in Bileca and were told to get

off the van. Outside, there were three other male and female officers in the same uniforms. The first officers handed them over the bag with the phones. The three new officers took the first phone out of the bag, put it on the ground and, while laughing, crushed it with their shoes. The other phones followed.

The group of four were then told to get into the white van of the Bileca authorities. In the car, there were already two other people on the move. Again, all of them had to sit on the plain floor. After a ten minutes of driving, the car stopped near to a rubbish bin and the respondent saw one of the officers throwing the bag with the crushed phones, chargers, powerbanks and medicine into the bin. They continued the drive until they reached a small police station at the border post of Klobuk (BIH) at the coordinates 42.7105268,18.5464835. There, they were locked into three rooms, two in each. They asked for food and something to drink. The officers, wearing uniforms with no red-white emblems but with the Bosnian flag, brought them water but denied the food.

*"In general they were friendly."*

The group of now six were explained that they had to wait for a regular bus that would take them across the border to Niksic (MNE). When the bus arrived – it was a regular Bosnian bus with Bosnian plates – the officers from Bileca told the six of them to buy a ticket for €5 from the driver with their own money. One of the two individuals who the other ones just had met in the police van in Bileca had no money with him. The officer told the other five individuals to pay for his ticket as well.

*"We said no, we do not even know him. The police should pay for him."*

But one of the officers pulled out a stick and threatened to beat them if they would refuse to pay. When one of the men gave the bus driver a ten Euro bill and waited for the change, the latter just kept the money and said that this was the payment for the sixth ticket. He and the officers ignored their objections. In the bus, there were around ten persons. When they reached the Montenegrin side of the border, the border guards checked all passengers' documents. One of the other passengers had a Chinese passport, the others were probably Bosnian and Montenegrin citizens. The people on the move showed their camp IDs which the Montenegrin officers checked without comments. The bus arrived to Niksic (MNE) at the coordinates 42.7732902,18.9131029 in the afternoon around 3 pm.

In order to reach their camp, the group of four had to take another bus to Podgorica and then a taxi for 20 minutes to the camp of Spuzh.