

13/08/2018

"I WAS HOLDING IN MY ARMS MY THREE YEARS OLD DAUGHTER AND THEY KEPT BEATING ME WHILE I WAS HOLDING HER, SO I FELL ON THE GROUND AND MY BABY GOT INJURED IN HER BACK."

Date and time: August 13, 2018 15:00

Location: Forest southwest of Slunj, Croatia,

Coordinates: 45.05923066561585 , 15.562565783302716

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 10 person(s), age: 3-40 , from: Afghanistan, Iran

Minors involved? Yes

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride

Police involved: 2 Croatian local policemen (the other one described as big, muscular, wearing a beret, having a pistol and a baton, maybe 40 years old) with a closed police van without windows

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

The two families involved in this incident walked from Bihac to Croatia and wanted to continue to Zagreb to apply for asylum there. When the whole group was walking in a forest, close to the village Slunj (Croatian inner land), they were detected by 10 police officers, wearing black uniforms which the family referred to as "commando". According to the family members, the "commandos" were acting polite towards them, questioned them about their nationality and their intentions in Croatia. They also offered them water, acted nicely to the children, and further offered transport to a hospital to one of the men who fell while walking in the forest.

Afterwards, the "commandos" called 2 local police officers in blue shirts, who arrived with a police van that was closed and had no windows. These officers transported the families to a police station. People had problems breathing inside the van due to lack of ventilation. The police were driving very fast, and some of the family members were vomiting. The drive took about 40 minutes.

At the police station, the father of one family clearly stated that he and his whole family wanted to apply for asylum in Croatia and asked the officers to call the UNHCR for the assistance with the asylum procedure. But the police did not call UNHCR, they only took photos of all family members and wrote down their names. Then, the police told the families that asylum was not a problem for them and asked them to wait for transportation to a Croatian asylum accommodation center. The families were locked in a small room while waiting at the police station:

We got closed in the police station, in a very small room, and I could not breathe there and I was vomiting. I asked the police to open the door but they took batons and started hitting it. She [a police officer] said that only if you need a toilet, she

would open the door. (quote from the 9 year old daughter).

After a few hours, the families were told to get into a van, for their transportation to the camp. But the van stopped after a few hours of driving close to the official border check-point in Velika Kladuša (BiH) instead of the Croatian asylum accommodation center. The police told all the people to get out of the van and then smashed their phones with batons). Then the officers started pushing the families towards the Bosnian land and physically attacking them.

They said come, come, and one took a baton and told us to go to [Velika] Kladusa. They were beating all of us, women and men, to our back and to our legs. The police kept shouting at us to go fast. I was holding in my arms my three years old daughter and they kept beating me while I was holding her, so I fell on the ground and my baby got injured in her back. They also pushed my 9 year old daughter .

When we arrived at the border, I said to my mum that I was cold. She wanted to give me a jacket, but the police was beating my mother. The police said: "Go, go!" and was pushing my mother. I said to her I was very cold, and I just asked my mother to give me jacket, but the police said go go and was pushing my mother, so she fell. After, they were beating my mother with batons. Plastic batons. (9 year old daughter).

After the violent incident and push-back to Bosnia, both families walked to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladuša.