

17/11/2018

"MERKEL IS WAITING FOR YOU"

Date and time: November 17, 2018 00:00

Location: Near Knin, Croatia

Coordinates: 44.0313785937584 , 16.198891314872753

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 12 person(s), age: unknown , from: Iran, North Africa, Kurdistan, Albania

Minors involved? Unknown

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, water immersion, pouring water over one's head, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings, handcuffed, pushing head under water in a swamp

Police involved: Sergeant, probationer with secondary school, probationer with college

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention, personal information taken, denial of food/water

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: No

Reported by: Balkan Info Van

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 12 left Bosnia on November 13 , 2018 . They crossed the border to Croatia by foot at night with a group of eight . Once in Croatia, they walked approximately six hours and stayed one day hidden in a forest waiting for a smuggler.

Four individuals were the first ones to enter a taxi, heading towards the Slovenian border. They arrived there at around 4 am and were waiting for the second group to come, but didn't find them. After waiting for some time, they began to walk for approximately one hour towards a village. Because they felt unsafe on the road, they decided to return to the forest. At around 6 am , two officers who were hiding behind the trees appeared and switched on their head lamps. One of them pointed a gun on the respondent's temple. Another individual of the four got afraid and stepped back, and got beaten on the leg and head with a baton by an officer until he fell. They all put their hands up and were handcuffed two by two . Then, they had to enter the back space of a police van.

After 15 minutes of driving, they arrived at a small police station. As they got off the van , one officer kicked one of the three saying:

" Go back to Afghanistan!"

They also insulted the whole group :

"You bitch , you are motherfucker s!"

The officer then brought them to a small cell where they were detained 36 hours. The room was very cold and had only two wooden beds for the four of them . They were commanded to undress themselves and the officers checked their clothes and bags in order to confiscate phones, power banks, and personal documents. As the

group asked for food the answer was:

“If you want food you should pay us.”

“I think they were waiting for more person coming, that's why they keep us there.”

There were four officers involved during their detention. They were two old men, one of them very large and two women, in addition another officer at night.

Later, eight other people on the move arrived at the police station – one man from Iran, six men from North Africa, and one man from Albania. The group was told to fill out forms with their names, surnames, dates of birth, country of origin and languages. Later, photos of each of them were taken. In the evening of November 16, they were all led into the windowless back of a van and driven to another police station, where the Albanian man got off and one Iranian entered. The respondent saw three masked officers standing outside and noticed the rank of the men:

“Probationer with secondary school’ and ‘probationer with college’ and another uncovered officer, a ‘sergeant’.”

The respondent had recognized the emblem of the Croatian officer on his sleeve and described him as a big man with white skin and short blond hair.

At this time the group had grown to a number of 12 people. The police van drove about an hour more until they reached a small forest at the Bosnian border near Velika Kladuša. The group in the van could hear how the officers destroyed their phones, but then the ventilation was turned on, and they were no longer able to hear what was happening outside. Afterwards the sergeant opened the door and told one individual to get off to then close the door again. When it was the respondent's turn to get off, he saw all their bags on the ground and one officer ordered him to take his bag. After he picked it up, they began to beat him, so he instantly fled towards the forest, down a hill. Because it was already dark at this time, he fell above a handmade one-meter wood barrier. Due to the construction and the location of the barrier the respondent assumes it was a trap made by the Croatian authorities. When he stood up, he tried to run again but two officers switched on their head lamps and began to kick and beat him with batons. After he managed to escape again, two other officers appeared and joined their colleagues, all laughing and shouting:

“Merkel is waiting for you.”

The officers then formed a tunnel in which they beat the individuals. They also beat the 17-year-old boy with a baton on his breast. At the end of this tunnel, the whole group were violently pushed into a swamp. The about one meter deep mud water prevented them from running away. One officer pushed the head of one individual under water three times, so he couldn't breathe.

At this point the group of 12 missed seven people, one of them lost his shoes in the mud while another man's leg was badly injured by a hit. Two people had to carry him until they reached an abandoned house in the forest where the group started a fire to warm themselves. The 17-year-old boy was coughing blood.

The next morning, they returned to the spot to find their bags, but nothing was left. Then, a taxi drove them to Velika Kladuša. Back there, they found one of their friends again. He had to flee alone after the officers beat him and injured his elbow. In Velika Kladuša he went to the hospital to check if his elbow was broken, but he needed to wait one day because the x-ray department wasn't opened over the weekend. The group estimated fifteen officers to have been involved in this violent scenario.