

22/03/2019

## " ONE OFFICER THEN POINTED ALONG THE ROAD TOWARDS THE BOSNIAN BORDER AND SAID: "GO!""

**Date and time:** March 22, 2019 14:15

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia, close to the train station

**Coordinates:** 45.8105345 , 15.927713799999992

**Push-back from:** Croatia

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 28,36,28,26 , from: Algeria, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers, caught by 2 and joined by 2 officers (male, blue uniforms, pistols, caps, Croatian flag on the arm and insignia on the shoulders, a police van), at the police station 2 officers, deported by 2 officers (a police van) and joined by 3 officers (a police car)

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of food/water

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

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

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On March 22, 2019, at around 1 pm, a group of people on the move arrived at Zagreb (Croatia) bus station and walked from there to the train station. After they had bought train tickets, they had to wait several hours before the departure of their train which was scheduled for around 3.10 pm. They therefore left to look for a cafe or restaurant to wait to reduce the chance that the police would question them. When they had searched for a place to sit for around half an hour, they encountered the police.

A police car drove past them at 2.10/ 2.15 pm, as they were walking on the street close to the train station around the coordinates 45.8105345, 15.9277138 [suggestion: 45.811037, 15.927692]. The car stopped, two officers got off the vehicle and walked to the men. One man from Tunisia immediately ran away. None of the police men ran after him, but one of them spoke something in Croatian into his radio device.

The police men asked in English for the men's passports. The interviewee was the only one of the three who spoke English and responded:

*"No I don't have papers, I don't have a passport."*

So the same officer from before spoke again into his radio device.

Then the group waited on the street without being bounded or handcuffed. After around 15 minutes a police van and two more officers arrived. The Tunisian man was in the back of the van, his hands cuffed in front of his body. All four police men wore blue uniforms showing a Croatian flag on the arm and insignia on the shoulders, also caps and carrying

pistols.

The officers didn't ask any further questions neither explained the situation to the people on the move. One officer opened the back of the van and told the men in Croatian to enter the car. They drove for around 10 minutes until they arrived at a police station, which was large, with three floors, colored in gray, and an around two meter high metal fence surrounding the building and a gate with a single officer in a booth. A car park was at the back of the building.

At this point the Tunisian man's handcuffs were removed. All of them were brought into the police station and taken into a room on the first floor with nothing in it than a small table with several chairs around. There were two new officers in the room, one of them searched the men, laying out all their belongings on the table, but not stealing anything from them. After the officer finished searching the men, the interviewee requested asylum.

*"As he took his gloves off I said 'Sir, we want asylum here in Croatia, we want to do asylum here in Croatia'. He smiled and said 'No asylum here in Croatia. Go to Bosnia'."*

Both officers then left the room, closing the door. The men didn't receive water or food and tried to get the officer's attention to ask for water and find out more information, but the officers didn't respond. The men waited in the room for five to ten minutes.

Then two new officers came into the room and said 'Heidi', which the men understood as 'Let's go'. Following, they had to enter a police van's backspace, with two new male officers in the front of the van. They drove for around five hours, without handing water or food to the men. The men got cold during the journey as the air conditioning was turned on.

The van stopped and the group waited for around 10-15 minutes while they heard another car arriving and some people talking. They later found out that it was another police car and some officers. Then they started driving again for another 20-25 minutes to the Bosnian border around coordinates 451222.75, 154823.37.

One police officer opened the door, and said to the Tunisian man who had run away in Zagreb

*"You come!"*

The Tunisian men got off the van and the officer immediately closed the door. The other five inside the truck heard the officers talking to the men partly in Croatian, partly in English, but couldn't understand anything.

They then heard the sounds of the man being beaten. The man later told the interviewee what occurred. He was circled by five officers, not able to understand what they said to him. One officer pushed him and the others hit him with their fists and legs. The interviewee described that the Tunisian man had visible bruising on his right eye, a cut on his lower lip and his shins. No photo evidence exists of this as the man didn't want it to be recorded. One officer then took the man's phone and used a lighter to melt the back, breaking the motherboard and ensuring it was not usable anymore and irreparable.

After about five minutes, an officer opened the door again and gestured for all men to exit. At this point the interviewee saw, that the two officers had been joined by another three officers in a separate police car. The men were standing in the forest on an unpaved back road in the dark, it was around 10 pm. One officer then pointed along the road towards the Bosnian border and said:

*"Go!"*

The men walked 10 to 15 meters down the road to a small river. When the road tailed off to the side in a curve, the

officers gestured for the men to carry on straight, off the road and through the river. They couldn't see how large the river was due to the dark and the interviewee asked the officer:

*"How I cross this river?"*

He didn't answer but came and pushed the Tunisian man they had beaten up before into the river. The river reached up to about knee height and was around five to six meters wide. The men walked through the river and then continued for around one hour, about 5-6 km, back to Velida Kladusa.