

06/02/2019

"YOU RUN TODAY, TOMORROW WE CATCH YOU"

Date and time: February 6, 2019 06:00

Location: Blata, Croatia, near the D42 road between and Lička Jesenica

Coordinates: 45.01211398772231 , 15.417318691419496

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 3 person(s), age: over 18 , from: Morocco, Palestine

Minors involved? No

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

Police involved: Croatian police officers, caught by 2 men and 1 woman (black or dark blue uniforms, older, a large white van size of a VW-Bus), at the police station 3 men (strong, black masks), at the border violating 9 men (black masks) and 1 woman

Taken to a police station?: yes

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: No

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of six men left Bihać in the direction of Croatia in the early morning hours of February 1, 2019. For six hours they walked through forest areas, sometimes on small roads, sometimes off-road. They were heading towards an abandoned airport just behind the border in Croatia. Once they saw a large white van in the size of a VW bus, but they were able to hide. They continued walking for four days through remote Croatian forests.

"Forest, forest, forest. Sometimes we sleep. Walking, sleep, walking, sleep. It's dangerous on this way. [We were] walking for days in the jungle."

Eventually, the group arrived at the Plitvice Lakes National Park, where they approached a highway bridge on the D429 road at around 3 pm on February 5. Hidden, they could see several officers standing on the bridge. Since they needed to cross this bridge, the group waited more than nine hours for the authorities to leave. The next day, at around 1 am, the officers left and the six of them were able to cross unhindered. They continued their way for six more hours through the forest and somewhere between Blata (HRV) and Lička Jesenica (HRV), near the D42 road, they stopped to sleep. They put up their tent and slept nearly ten hours.

At some point in the afternoon, during they were sleeping, one individual left the tent to urinate and was seen by a Croatian citizen who probably called the officers. Soon after, three Croatian officers arrived to the location in a large white van and approached the tent around 5 pm. The officers, two male and one female, were wearing black or dark blue uniforms and were approximately 50 years old. The officers opened the zipper of the tent and found the six of them sleeping.

"They don't speak anything. Just, hello, police! Give me telephone!"

The officers didn't ask for their papers, they waited outside the tent and collected four mobile phones from the group of six. Then, they told them to pack their belongings and shortly after they had to walk to the van, one after another. At this moment, three of the individuals escaped from the officers. One officer shouted:

"You run today, tomorrow we catch you!"

The three people that didn't flee, were taken into the windowless backspace of the van. The officers immediately switched the air condition on the coldest level. The respondent asked if they could turn it down, but the officers didn't react.

"Please, please stop of the air condition, we are so cold."

The van left soon after and drove for approximately one hour. When they arrived at a police station, the officers left the car and entered the station while the three of them had to stay in the van with the air conditioning running. After one hour, three new officers returned to the van. All three were tall and strong men, wearing black balaclavas.

"They were tall and strong. Police Croatia is like berserk."

Soon, they drove off for around three hours, with the air conditioning was running throughout the drive. They again asked several times to switch it off. All three individuals had to vomit. They felt very sick and had headaches because of the cold and the lack of orientation. The officers recognized, that they were vomiting but didn't do anything.

Around 11 pm, the van stopped in a forest approximately 100 meters away from the Bosnian-Croatian border close to Velika Kladusa (BIH). The back of the van was opened and the group saw nine officers wearing balaclavas. The officers took the men aggressively by the hand and led them towards the direction of the border. One female officer smashed their phones with a baton in front of them. Then the nine officers started to hit the individuals with their fists, hands, feet and batons. The three young individuals laid on the ground, attempting to protect their heads. When the officers finished, they shouted:

"Go, go!"

The group of three stood up and ran away. Meanwhile, the officers took their backpacks and threw them into the small river and kept the broken phones.

The group of three ran some 50 meters after the border, stopped, and hid themselves. They waited until the officers left and then returned to the push-back spot to take their backpacks out of the river. The smartphones were gone. When they were just on the other side of the border, they saw a car coming to the same spot and soon thereafter they could watch some officers beating up another three people. One of them had a broken leg afterwards.

The closest houses were only approximately 600 meters away, however the owners were all asleep. They then walked to Velika Kladusa.