

15/11/2018

"THE BROTHERS WERE IN THIS PRISON FOR EXACTLY ONE MONTH AND 24 DAYS"

Date and time: November 15, 2018 00:00

Location: Bus station Zagreb, Croatia

Coordinates: 45.8150108 , 15.981918899999982

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 2 person(s), age: 19-24 , from: Tunisia

Minors involved? Yes

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, theft of personal belongings, handcuffed

Police involved: Croatian police officers, caught by 2 officers (beaten by a third officer having a black mask, inside their van), violating at the police station and prison several officers (robbed by a female prison officer), deportation by a prison officer (a black van and its driver in plain clothes); handed over Bosnian officers with a police van (a Dacia Doster); "translator" at the police station (not translating but intimidating, Syrian/Iraqi, speaking a little Arabic, a big beard, no hair, 45-50 years)

Taken to a police station?: unknown

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

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

In mid-November 2018, the two brothers left Bosnia and took a bus to Croatia. When they arrived at the bus station in Zagreb, three officers approached them and gently asked them to follow them to a van. The brothers were told they would be arrested.

"In front of everyone they were nice, but when we arrived at the van, oh, oh they changed."

When the officers opened the doors of the van, a man wearing a balaclava was waiting inside.

"At the boot of the van, he sat on a seat, when I got in, he told me to come here, in Croatian, I don't understand. After I tried to catch his baton, because he beat us too much with my brother, and he is small. When I caught it, he put us in handcuffs, and he beat again... The handcuffs in our back, he beat us until the police station."

The two of them were detained for three days at the police station, which was in a place they couldn't locate.

"He took you to an office, beat, beat and then you went to cell, after another person coming,

after 'Sign!' after beat, beat, beat, after back to cell. We spent three days like this. Without eating, without drinking, there is toilet in the cell, but the sink doesn't have water, there is only the toilets and its flush water."

At the police station, the two brothers refused to sign some papers. Although a translator was present during this time, he didn't translate those papers.

" We didn't sign, because we understood nothing on the paper. He [the policeman] demanded us to sign or he would beat. The Syrian, the translator, he told me: 'You, you are the boss, you sign the paper, you will spend five years in jail'. That's why I didn't sign."

The translator was described as a person who:

"H ad a big beard, he is Syrian or maybe Iraqi, he spoke a bit Arabic, like 'In s hallah' or 'Alhamdulillah', but he didn't speak Arabic. He didn't have hair, but a big beard. He was about 45-50 years old. I saw him only the first days, when we were taken with my brother, but in jail I don't see anyone, just policemen."

Then, photos were taken of them, but when their fingerprints were attempted to be taken, they resisted and once again refused to sign any paper.

" Just [the policeman said]: 'Y ou, you are a boss with your brother, and you make people passing the border in Croatia, and you will spend five to ten years in prison.' But they had nothing, they took my phone, looked my gallery, the map, my contacts, and I even don't have a Croatian SIM card. We did nothing, just walking, that's it."

On the fourth day, the brothers were transferred to a prison described as a big jail, with many blocs. In their section, there were six rooms with 35-55 persons sleeping in them. Each of the rooms contained a sink and bunk beds of three levels.

Every day, they were allowed to leave the room for half an hour, together with the persons of two other rooms. At this time, they used to get a shower, go to the bathroom, eat a sandwich and go outside to a closed yard. The toilet and the shower were in the same room.

"There were enough toilets and showers for everyone in this short time, at least."

The persons from three rooms were going outside at the same time, followed by the group of three other rooms and so on.

The brothers asked for a lawyer, but never received an answer to this request.

" There was no one to answer our question, I spoke English, French, Arabic, nothing, [the policemen speak] just Croatian language."

The brothers were in this prison for exactly one month and 24 days. The day before they were released, a female officer who had previously treated them well alerted them they would be released at around noon the day after. She gave them back their belongings, as well as their phones and chargers, however not their money. Almost €300 in total had been taken.

The day they were released, on January 12, 2019, they were taken to a black van, similar to a Volkswagen transporter without seats in the back. The respondents were then driven to the Bosnian border, handcuffed. There were two persons in the front of the van: the driver, who wore plain clothes, and one of the officers from the prison. They arrived at some official border checkpoint.

” In front of everyone, there were some policemen, some people, cars, there was a bus at the border, it looked like a border checkpoint.”

The officer spoke for around ten minutes with the Bosnian officers. The Croatian driver stayed in the van with the two respondents, and later took off their handcuffs. After this, the brothers changed into another police car, which was perhaps a Dacia Doster with police insignia on the side. Their phones had run out of battery, so they didn't know where they were and what time it was.

The two of them were brought to Sarajevo, in front of the camp, where they were told:

“ Here is the camp, go”.

The brothers had no access to any lawyers or legal processes while they were in jail and also afterwards, when they were released and pushed-back.