

30/03/2019

"I ASKED FOR A TRANSLATOR AND THEY JUST SAID 'NO SPEAK, SHUT UP'. THEN I FILLED THE DOCUMENT AND WHEN I WROTE THE REASON WHY I HAD TO LEAVE MY COUNTRY, THEY JUST CROSSED IT OUT."

Date and time: March 30, 2019 19:00

Location: Višnja Gora, Slovenia

Coordinates: 45.9579759 , 14.7401227

Push-back from: Slovenia, Croatia

Push-back to: Croatia, Bosnia

Demographics: 5 person(s), age: 27, 33, 43, 45, 45 , from: Palestine, Iran, Morocco

Minors involved?: No

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings

Police involved: 6 Slovenian police officers in dark blue uniforms with 3 white cars and 1 female officer with a white van.

- Unspecified number of Slovenian staff in a "prison". - Unspecified number of Croatian police officers in Croatian police station. - 10 Croatian police officers in blue uniforms and ski masks

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, papers signed, no translator present, forced to pay fee

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: [Re:]ports Sarajevo

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of five men left Velika Kladuša (BiH) on the 26th of March, at around 5:00 am and later reached the border with Croatia at 4:00 pm.

"We walked into the jungle. It was a mountainous area. From where we were, we saw a white jeep and two military officers with green uniforms and binoculars on a high unpaved track. We hid for an hour in the vegetation."

When the officers left, the group continued their journey. They walked until midnight and slept in the region of Karlovač.

At around 6:00 am they proceeded to walk through Croatia, towards Slovenia. They walked the whole day and around midnight they crossed the border. They walked for two more days in Slovenia, at the end of which their food and water supplies were gone. At approximately 4:00 pm on March 29th, they reached the city of Višnja Gora (SLN) and headed towards the train station.

"I asked for a ticket to Ljubljana and the man in the station told me that there were no more tickets. One minute later he said 'wait, I'm gonna see if I can get you one'. After ten minutes, the police arrived to the station".

The respondent saw three white police cars arrive to the train station, carrying altogether six police men in dark blue uniforms. They asked the group to sit down. Each man was searched and their phones and money were taken.

“They just asked us to sit down and did a regular search on each of us. They were not violent against us. But later... Later, at the police station it was different”.

A white van driven by a female officer arrived and carried the five men to a police station. The van didn't have windows so the respondent was not able to determine where the police station was located, however recalled that the ride lasted 25 minutes.

In the police station, the five men expressed their intention to seek asylum in Slovenia:

“I asked for asylum. Usually, when someone asks for asylum they bring him to a camp and start a regular procedure. But here it was not the case. The police told us instead ‘no asylum in Slovenia’ and then they told us to shut up”.

The group was taken to a small room with a few benches. They asked for water and food and the police brought them some water. Then, each group-members was searched again.

“They made us take off our clothes and carried out an extensive control. They looked everywhere, even in our holes down there”.

After that, they were brought back to the cell. At approximately 3.30 am, each man was taken individually to a room to fill a document in English. It was not translated, but the respondent understood that he had to fill it with his name, age, country of origin, the reason for leaving it and the reason for being in Slovenia.

“I asked for a translator and they just said ‘no speak, shut up’. Then I filled the document and when I wrote the reason why I had to leave my country, they just crossed it out.”

Then a photo was taken with a camera computer and each man had to give their index fingerprint.

“Everyone knows that ten fingerprints mean camp, one only means deportation.”

Officers handed them out five papers in English. The respondent asked again for a translator to which the authorities answered *“No speak, shut up”*. The respondent refused to sign the papers and he received an elbow bump on the back of the neck. He still refused to sign them and an officer signed them for him.

After that, he was brought back to the cell and waited around 30 minutes until all the members of the group were back to the cell. One of the five men roughly understood the meaning of the papers: that they were being fined for illegally crossing the border.

“The police took in total 300 euros from all of us”.

Afterwards, they were taken to a prison with a van and split into 5 cells, one per person, with toilets in it. Officers took their belts and bracelets. They were given a dinner and then they went to sleep. The following morning, at 9 am they received another meal and two hours later they were loaded to the same van by which they had arrived the day before. They were driven to the border with Croatia. The ride lasted approximately 40 minutes and the respondent believed that they stopped near the coordinates 45°38'05.3"N 15°19'21.5".

From there, Croatian officials took them in another white van to the police station in Karlovač. There, a picture of them was taken while they held a paper at chest level with their names, ages, country of origin and a number. They were loaded into the same van again and taken to the Bosnian border. At the estimated coordinates of 45.222414,15.836060, the van stopped and they were told to get off. The van left and 10 policemen appeared from what seemed like

“nowhere”. The officers wore blue uniforms and ski masks.

The respondent asked for his money and phone back.

“They told us to shut up and leave. We insisted and they took out their batons. They beat us on our backs when we were leaving. They beat me on the back of my leg, one of my friends on the back and a man from Iran on the knee.”

The five men ran and crossed the Bosnian border, later walking to Velika Kladuša.