

15/03/2018

## "THEN, THE MEN WITNESSED FROM THE FOREST HOW THE OFFICERS PUT BOTH OF THE HOUSES ON FIRE"

**Date and time:** March 15, 2018 11:00

**Location:** close to the Serbian-Hungarian border

**Coordinates:** 46.10973646837401 , 19.563216788085924

**Push-back from:**

**Push-back to:**

**Demographics:** person(s), age: , from:

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:**

**Police involved:** 1st case: 2 Serbian border police officers (male, in Serbian border police uniforms) with two "jeeps" / 2nd case: 2 local police officers (male, local police uniforms), later to 2 Serbian border police officers joined (male, Serbian border police uniforms), not the same officers than in the first case

**Taken to a police station?:**

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** No

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### ORIGINAL REPORT

In March 2018, two cases happened again between Serbian police officers and the migrants staying in an abandoned house close to the Serbian-Hungarian border (the specific location won't be shared to protect the anonymity). Usually 33 people are staying at this location in total, but during the incident just 22 men were at this place, mostly from Pakistan, about 4 underage and others older. The men have undergone violations from some Serbian police officers also earlier at the same place, and we reported the incidents from about one and half months ago, on Saturday 20th – Monday 22nd January 2018. The men are pretty sure that the officers are the same in all incidents.

On **Thursday, 15th March 2018, about at 11 am**, the group of people was waking up when 2 Serbian border police officers (male, in Serbian border police uniforms) arrived in two "jeeps" (Serbian border police form) at the place. The officers entered one of the houses, and the men inside stood up. The officers started to beat the men with sticks and kicked them with feet. Then, they claimed that they are officers from the closed camp in Presevo, near the Serbian border with Macedonia, coming to deport the men to Macedonia. Thus, the men should pack their stuff and leave the place, walk to the closest city center in order to be deported there. The men believed what the officers said, so they packed their bags and left the place, started to walk towards the forest, and the officers left also. Anyway, the men weren't yet too far away when the officers returned with one "jeep", again looking for the men at the place and noticed that the men did what they told them. Then, the men witnessed from the forest how the officers put both of the houses on fire. After that the officers left again, and the men returned from the forest to see their place of stay in flames. The men tried to save everything from the buildings that they could, like collected blankets, but were interrupted when the same officers returned again by their two "jeeps", noticing that the men had returned. The officers ordered the men to leave the place and to go to the forest to hide there. The men obeyed, and the officers stayed at the place. Apparently, the police officers had called for firemen, because after about 10-15 minutes (at this time the houses have been burning for about 40-45 minutes in total) some firemen arrived with their two fire trucks and started to get control of the fire. The

men tried to return to the field around the houses.

The police didn't let them come closer and also didn't want the men to talk with the firemen. In order to stop the men, the officers again committed violence towards them, hitting them with stick and kicking them with feet. After about 30-40 minutes the fire was extinguished, the firemen and the police officers left and the men returned to see the damage. Both of the houses were almost completely destroyed (pictures), as well as all items inside the house. The 22 men, that stayed at the place during the incident, had managed to save their personal items into their backpacks and also collected some bigger necessities, but the ones that were visiting a city at that time, lost everything they had left inside the houses. There was also some property: two men lost some money, one 150 and the other 80 euros, and some men had left their mobile phones. Next day, on Friday 16th March 2018 at daytime the owner of the land and houses arrived at the place with 2 Subotica local police officers (male, Subotica local police uniforms) to see the burnt buildings and asked the migrants about the incident. The men told about what was happening, so the police officers called for 2 Serbian border police officers (male, Serbian border police uniforms) to join them to investigate the accusations of the men. The officers weren't the same as the day before, and the men told this to the local police officers. The officers neither pay further attention to the accusations of the men, nor properly investigate the mistreatment and condemn the perpetrators. Next, the officers ordered the men to leave the place, go to the closest city and register themselves to an asylum camp. However, the owner said that the men can stay at the place, and he would repair the houses in summer because of the fire. After the conversation the officers and the owner left the place.