

26/03/2019

## **""I SAID 'SORRY, SORRY, SORRY!', BUT THEY CONTINUED TO BEAT ME.""**

**Date and time:** March 26, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Pasjak, Croatia, near Pasjak

**Coordinates:** 45.4774601 , 14.2226431

**Push-back from:** Croatia

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 39 , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, electric shock, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers (all in black uniforms), caught by 2 men (tall, armed with a gun and a (electric) baton, with a police car) and joined by another man (with a van), at the border station 4 men and 1 woman, deported by 2 vans

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

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

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

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

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

H., a 39 old Iranian, started his journey from Bihac (BiH) on March 18, 2019, around noon. He entered Croatia by foot, crossing the border in the forest west of Bihac. H. was on his own.

After seven days of walking in Croatia, he reached the Slovenian border near Pasjak (CRO) in the night from the March 25 to 26. In the forest around the coordinates 45.4774601, 14.2226431, he was caught by two Croatian police men. They were tall and armed with a gun and a baton, wearing black uniforms. They shouted

*" Stop!",*

and pointed at him with their guns. H. stopped. The police officers pulled out their batons and started to beat him.

*" I said 'Sorry, sorry, sorry!', but they continued to beat me."*

They were beating him on his head and back and kicked him into his hips and legs. At the time of the interview, i.e. ten days after the incident, the man was still in pain and had a bruise on his backside. He was limping and needed a bandage on his right foot and a crutch, as the images show:

The baton the police men used was electric and sent electric shocks into H.'s back. The interviewee demonstrates how his body first straightened and then quivered each time he was hit.

Whilst beating him, the two policemen were at times laughing, at times calling him a terrorist.

*“ But I said ‘I’m refugee. I just come from Bosnia to here.’ They very, very beat. Five minutes, until they were tired.”*

Then, the two police men made a call, and one more Croatian police man, also wearing black uniform, arrived with a van. H. was told to enter the van and the police kicked him once more while he was getting in the backspace of the vehicle. The backspace had no windows and was lacking oxygen. Although the van was not driving fast, it was driving in many curves, which made H. vomit. After an estimated one hour drive, they reached what the interviewee believes was the border station of Jelovice (CRO, 45.509348, 13.968095). It was still night. When he got off the van, he saw trucks and cars crossing the border. He also saw that the van had been followed by the car of the two other police men who had first detected him.

In the station, there were five other police men, one of whom was female, wearing the same black uniforms. The officers told H. to hand out his money and his cell phone. They took his money, 100 Euros, and his phone, a Samsung Galaxy and never returned them.

*“ He took my money and my phone in his pocket. He didn’t destroy the phone because when you have an expensive phone, they keep it for themselves.”*

H. then had to take off all his clothes, including his shoes and even his underwear. For an estimated five minutes he was totally naked, then they gave him back his clothes.

*“ They said ‘No go to Croatia, go to Bosnia Bihac’. And they shouted at me ‘Don’t go to Slovenia, don’t go to Italy!’. But I said next time I want to go to Italy.”*

The police men put H. into a cell where already ten other people on the move (four Iranians, some Pakistanis and some Somalis) were waiting.

*“ I said ‘hungry, hungry, hungry’, but they said ‘no food, no food’. They only gave me water.”*

H. spent the rest of the night in the cell. At the next morning, the police men came, telling him to sign a paper. The paper was in Farsi and English, not in Croatian. H. described the content of the paper was saying something like ‘ Don’t go to Croatia the next time, stay in Bosnia’ . One of the police officers put the signed paper into his breast pocket, without giving H. a copy.

He and his cellmates were then told to enter two vans. H. was in a van with the Pakistani men, while the other Iranians and the Somalis were transported in the second van. Again, the backspace of the van had no windows and lacking oxygen. And again, H. had to vomit.

*“ It was very dark inside.”*

After an estimated six hours drive, they arrived in a forest at the Croatian-Bosnian border. The interviewee located the push-back to the South of Zeljava (CRO) around the coordinates 44.828267, 15.7520597. The men were told to get off the vans and to walk over the border into Bosnia. H. started walking with three Somalis.

*“ There was wind and rain. I was very wet, also my leg was wet. And my leg and my foot hurt a lot. It was dangerous to walk in the forest, very steep.”*

After a while, they found a road, and after an estimated three hours walk, they reached Bihac (BiH). It was already dark by that time. The next day March 27 , 2019, H. took a bus to Sarajevo.