

08/11/2018

"THE OFFICERS ALSO HAD TIED TRIP WIRES BETWEEN THE TREES [...], INVISIBLE AT NIGHT"

Date and time: November 8, 2018 00:00

Location: close to motorway 1, about 25 km from Bosnian border into Croatian territory

Coordinates: 45.265451376361234 , 15.565504939782386

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 70 person(s), age: 15-45, seven minors , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

Minors involved? Yes

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, gunshots, theft of personal belongings, transporting people in vans with no ventilation/ lack of oxygen

Police involved: Croatian officers, caught by several "special forces" officers" in light green military uniforms (with handguns), robbed, deported and beaten by 15 - 20 officers fully in black joined later with 6-7 more similarly dressed officers (using batons)

Taken to a police station?: unknown

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: photos taken

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: No

Reported by: Balkan Info Van

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of around 70 males crossed the border from Bosnian territory to Croatia in the night of November 7 , 2018. They walked for an entire night and rested the following day in the woods. As night fell , they began to walk again.

"Then we were close to motorway 1, we walk around 25 km inside Croatia."

Around midnight, when the 70 individuals were walking in the dark along a pathway, they heard some shouts from nearby. Shortly thereafter, four officers dressed in light green military – style uniforms approached them. They carried handguns on their belts and one withdrew his weapon and shot three times into the air above the heads of the group.

The 70 of them were ordered to wait on the path, guarded by the four officers holding their guns. Soon after, 15 – 20 Croatian officers dressed fully in black arrived via the road nearby. These officers ordered the group to sit down.

"They take our cell phones, money, power banks, cigarettes, everything."

Moreover, the officers never returned the confiscated belongings to them. The individuals were then searched.

Then photos were taken, though not from every individual but just from the whole group of 70 together. The photos were taken with a phone and one of the officers even took a selfie with his face on it and the 70 people on the move behind him. The individuals were not questioned and when asked if anybody requested asylum in Croatia, the respondent described:

"When someone wanted to speak, they said 'eh, sit down!'... Everyone was scared of what will happen next [if they speak]."

Afterwards, they had to enter three to four vans which had arrived to the scene as they were being searched. Around 25 people had to enter the backspace of each vehicle which became very cramped and the individuals were lacking oxygen.

They drove for around 30 minutes before arriving to a small road between trees and bushes. Off the road was some gravel with large concrete cubes on it. They were approximately 20 km southwest of Velika Kladusa (BIH), on the border area leading to Sturlic (BIH).

There, the doors of the vans were opened and the individuals had to get off in groups of five. They were pushed towards the direction of Bosnia, kicked and punched by the officers. Then, when they were laying between the concrete cubes, they were ambushed by around six officers. They were dressed in black Croatian uniforms carrying batons. They hit, punched and kicked them even more. The respondent describes how a 17-year-old boy was hit across the mouth with a baton, injuring his face.

"They even hit the boys and on the mouth."

Meanwhile, a man aged 45 protested, asking the officers not to hit him because of his heart disease. Nevertheless, the officers continued to beat him, leaving contusions to his torso.

The officers also had tied trip wires between the trees that were measuring one foot above the ground, and invisible at night. As the individuals fled towards Bosnia they were tripped and fell, landing on an assortment of sharp bushes, brambles and sticks that the officers had put on the ground. The respondent described how the officers chased the group laughing and shouting:

"Go, go!"

The 70 of them finally managed to escape and made their way back to the improvised camp in Velika Kladuša (BIH).