

17/05/2019

""DON'T BEAT ME ON MY HEAD!""

Date and time: May 17, 2019 18:00

Location: Divin, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Coordinates: 43.030294127217694 , 18.294219558939176

Push-back from: Bosnia

Push-back to: Montenegro

Demographics: 4 person(s), age: 19, 27, 27, 31 , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

Minors involved? No

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), reckless driving

Police involved: 3 Bosnian police officers driving a van, 6 Bosnian police officers in van, one police woman and one police man at Delusa border crossing, all wore the Bosnian Federation emblem on their uniforms

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: No

Reported by: Border Violence Monitoring

ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of four individuals from Pakistan and Afghanistan (19, 27, 27, and 31 years old) depart Niksic (MNE) at around 3:00 am on May, 17th. They rode in a taxi for 75 minutes and got out of the taxi approximately one kilometer before the Bosnian border.

They crossed the border into Bosnia near Kazanci (BiH) around 5:00. They stopped and rested in the forest all day and left from the area near Stepen (BiH) at 21:00. They walked until 5:00 and stopped near Plana (BiH) to rest. On the second day, they slept during the daylight hours and started walking again around 16:00. They realized they were out of food and decided to walk along the main road to find a shop.

They walked down to the main road near Narat (BiH). After approximately two hours of walking, the respondent believes that a local person saw them near the town of Divin (BiH) and called the police. Around 18:00 three male police officers in their mid-30s wearing the emblem of Bosnia-Herzegovina arrived on the road where the group walked. They were driving a white van with blue writing on the side.

The police asked the four men for their passports. The respondent told them they did not have passports and instead they showed them their Montenegro police papers. The policemen took three cell phones from the group and 70 Euro. They were ordered into the police van and waited an hour sitting in the van without moving.

After another hour, six more male police officers arrived at the scene in another police van. The respondent believed that these were border police officers because of the BiH emblem on their uniforms and the *Granicna Policija* writing on the side of the van. The respondent reported that four of these officers were over 45 years old and the other two were in their early 30s. Once the second police van arrived, the group was told to switch into the newly arrived vehicle.

The police had pushed down the seats of this van and the men were forced to squeeze into the space on the floor of the

van. There was one policeman standing outside the van shaking his finger at the group inside. After a second hour of waiting, another police car driven by two policemen arrived carrying four Arabic men. The police ordered the four Arabic men into the van with the respondent and his group. The eight men were squeezed on the floor of the van, sitting with their knees into their chests and arms wrapped around their legs. Two officers started driving. The respondent reported that the officers were swerving a lot and reaching speeds of up to 120 km/h.

The respondent reported that the police drove the van one hour to the Deleuša (BiH) border crossing. When they arrived at the crossing, a policewoman counted the men and took them into a room. The four Arabic men were placed in another room from the respondent and his group. The respondent's room smelled very bad and had dirty clothes and socks on the floor. There were four chairs in the room, but the men were told to stand against the wall. There was no water, food or toilet provided to them.

A policeman was in the room with them and called them to him one-by-one. He ordered the group to remove their jackets. Once their jackets are removed another policeman came in with a baton and beat the men one-by-one. The police man was tall, with a zero-milometer shaved head, he was around 40 years old. He was wearing a blue uniform with the Federation emblem on the arm. The respondent reported that this officer hit them with his baton and hands on the head and shoulders of the men.

"My head was operated on. It is very injured. Don't beat me on my head!"

Despite this warning, the officer still beat the respondent on his head and shoulder. The officer shouted "No Bosnia" as he hit the men. He shouted many other things at them in what the respondent believed was Bosnian language, but he did not understand the meaning of these words.

The group watched as the police beat each person one-by-one. After the beatings they stood in the room for 90 minutes and then were told to come out. Two other police officers arrive and drove the van which earlier transported the group to Deluša. This time they drove the men to the Montenegro police. For two hours the group stood on the side of the road in the rain while they waited for the police to give back the group's documents, money and mobile phones. After two hours, their items were returned to them and the Montenegro police call the group a taxi, which they take back to Niksic (MNE).

For three or four days, the men had bad headaches and bruises from the baton strikes.