

02/11/2018

"TYPE HERE YOU ARE 18, 19, DON'T TYPE YOU ARE 17"

Date and time: November 2, 2018 00:00

Location: Serbian-Croatian border, near Šid, Croatia

Coordinates: 45.14689825231942 , 19.165654436621026

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Serbia

Demographics: 13 person(s), age: 17-25 , from: Afghanistan

Minors involved? Yes

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other)

Police involved: Four Croatian officers in two police cars, one white van. At the station: more officers, between them one woman with short red hair, probably the boss

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

On October 28, 2018 , 30 Afghan men aged between 17 and 25 crossed the border from Serbia to Croatia. After three days of walking , they reached a forest in Croatia where they were picked up by two vans which were supposed to take them further north . At this point, they separated into two groups, with 15 people in each van. During their ride to Slovenia , a police car tried to stop them. One of the van's driver s jumped out of the moving vehicle and accordingly one of the individuals pulled the hand-brake to stop the vehicle. All the individuals exited the van and ran into a forest. 13 of them reached the forest and hid there for two days, during which time they ran out of food.

"We were starving and we were so thirsty."

As a result, they decided on November 2 at around 3 am to search for the authorities.

The group of 13 walked on a main road for around 45 minutes before reaching a village. There, they found a woman and asked her to bring them some water, telling her they would pay for it, and to call the police, but she walked away. At around 4 am a man in a car told them the location of the police station and on their way there, two police cars appeared with four officers. They were told to sit down and wait. The 13 of them explained, that they were the ones who had called the police and told them their story They also explained that last time they had eaten had been 48 hours ago, to which the officers responded with laughter and told them they were "good boys". Then the officers gave them some water they were carrying in the cars, and told them to wait for another ten minutes. A police van arrived to pick them up and brought them to the police station.

There, they were interrogated and asked for food and water . While they were answering the officer's questions,

someone brought them chicken, Coca Cola, and some cake. The individual who spoke the best English filled out a form with the information of each of them . There was one woman with short red hair, which the respondent described as appearing to be the boss. She checked all the sheets and when she noticed one person was under 18 she asked:

"Who is A . ?"

And went to him to slap him hard, as she shouted:

"Type here you are 18, 19, don't type you are 17 !"

After this, the boy changed his age on the sheet and all of them signed their forms.

Afterwards, one officer wrote each person's name and age on a different paper which they had to hold in front of them while photos were taken. They were not asked for their fingerprints. The female officer told the group that she knew they were doing the game in a van, but they denied this.

The 13 of them then had to move to another room to talk to two different officers. There were two women from different organizations, the older was in her forties. The younger one led them into a room to talk with no officers present. They were wearing uniforms, but different from police uniforms. These two women asked the group a number of questions:

"Why did you leave Afghanistan?", "What did your parents do?", "Why are you trying to reach Europe.", "Why did you leave Serbia?", "What problems did you have in Serbia?"

The individuals told them about the problems associated with the Taliban in Afghanistan. One of them showed photos of his father working at the Pakistani border while another showed a letter from Taliban ordering him to leave the Afghan army or else he and his family would be murdered. The two women wrote down everything. When the people on the move asked them for asylum, they answered:

"Sorry, is not our decision, it's police decision. We just type your story".

Accordingly, they also asked the officers for asylum, but the answer was:

"No, our government says no refugee coming here".

Before the deportation they asked to charge their phones, and the police accepted. Thou they didn't allow them to turn them on:

" If you turn on your phones I will beat your phone".

The group stayed at the police station for about five hours. Then they had to enter a white police van with a windowless backspace and no light inside and were driven to the Serbian border. One by one they were asked by the officers to sign a form which was written in Croatian. One of the individuals asked:

"What I am signing? If I don't read I can't sign"

He was told to shut up, and threatened if he didn't sign he was going to be beaten. He tried again, to ask for a copy of the signed sheet and was answered:

“ Just sign and sit down, no talk with me”.

When they arrived at the border, the officers returned their phones and pointed to the direction of Serbia. The group was walking for one hour without seeing any village, so they called a taxi which took them to the train station in Šid.