

19/04/2019

"WHEN THEY FOUND A QUR'AN ON ONE OF THE MINORS, THE TALL POLICEMAN STARTED SCREAMING "WHAT IS THIS?", BEAT THE OWNER, THEN THREW THE QUR'AN ON THE GROUND, STUMP ON IT AND FINALLY THREW IT IN THE RIVER."

Date and time: April 19, 2019 00:00

Location: Veljun, Croatia

Coordinates: 45.252806, 15.545264

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 3 person(s), age: 17, 17, 25 years old, from: Algeria

Minors involved?: Yes

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), destruction of personal belongings

Police involved: 10 Croatian officers (first 2 in black uniforms, then 4 in blue shirts and dark-blue trousers, then 4 with ski masks). One white van with dark-blue inscription "POLICIJA" on its sides

Taken to a police station?: no

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: [Re:]ports Sarajevo

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of three men (aged 17, 17 and 25 years) started their journey on the 17th of April. They started from Velika Kladusa (BiH) and crossed the border to Croatia by foot. After two days of walking in Croatia, they reached a bridge over the Korana river near Veljun (HR, approximate coordinates 45.252806, 15.545264). Here they were apprehended by two policemen who had hidden their car on the other side of the bridge. They were dressed in black uniforms.

One of them was perceived as more aggressive and described as a tall, strong and bald man, but not considered a higher-ranked officer. The policemen asked the group for their money and their phones. They searched the phones for the route the group had followed and subsequently broke the phones. They also searched the three men. When they found a Qur'an on one of the minors, the tall policeman started screaming " *What is this?* ", beat the owner, then threw the Qur'an on the ground, stump on it and finally threw it in the river.

The policemen called another patrol. The group then asked for asylum and the minors declared their age by shouting " *Mineur* ", but the policemen answered " *Yes* " in a sarcastic way, handcuffed them and hit them with batons on their arms and knees.

After the beating, a white van with "POLICIJA" written in dark-blue letters on its sides arrived and four other policemen took charge of the group. They were wearing blue shirts and dark-blue trousers. The group was told to enter their van. After approximately 70 minutes of driving, the tall, bald policeman made the van stop, opened the back door and asked the group for their money again. This person followed the van until the border with Bosnia which they reached fifteen minutes later.

At the border, the group was taken out of the van and beaten by a squad of four or five people who had their faces covered by ski masks. The tall, bald policeman took part in the beating, too, with his face uncovered. The group's bags were hidden under the van, so that they would come back to ask for them and expose themselves to the beating again. After 5 minutes of this, the bags were given back to them and the group was let free to go. They crossed the border with Bosnia in a location close to Velika Kladusa. The respondent noticed a border sign on the road they were walking on. After 2 hours of walking, they reached Velika Kladusa.

This incident describes almost identical treatment to another recorded incident which would happen during the following week. This other report can be found **here** .