

12/03/2019

"THEY DO THIS TO SCARE US. THEY WANT US TO STOP. BUT I WILL NOT GIVE UP. I WILL TRY AGAIN."

Date and time: March 12, 2019 00:00

Location: Delnice, Croatia

Coordinates: 45.3987305 , 14.801610799999935

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 5 person(s), age: 19-30 , from: Syria, Iraq, Morocco, Algeria

Minors involved? No

Violence used: theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

Police involved: Slovenian officers, Croatian border officials

Taken to a police station?: unknown

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: Border Violence Monitoring

ORIGINAL REPORT

On March 3, 2019, a group of 5 men, aged 19-30, left Bihac at 1 am towards Croatia. They reached Slovenia after nine days of walking. After a long hike up a mountain, the group felt very tired and hungry. With the plan to buy some food and water, they entered the small village of Lozec. They were recognized by some citizens of the town, who called the authorities by phone.

Suddenly a big dog, followed by a couple of officers, attacked one of the five individuals.

„I understand that the locals get scared when they see us. After nine days of walking we were dirty and exhausted. But if I would have known that they are going to call the police, I would have stayed in the forest. I can endure hunger, thirst and exhaustion, but not another push-back to Bosnia.“

They were brought to the police station, where the individuals asked for asylum, but their requests were ignored. They had to tell their names and nationalities and their fingerprints and photos were taken. Following this procedure, each one of the group received an official paper, that everyone was asked to sign – but no translator was present at this time.

„I asked them what the paper says, but they only said that we crossed the border illegally and have to pay 500 euros. They made us sign it.“

The police took all their personal belongings away and put them in a closed room. They were detained for 24 hours at the police station.

„We begged them to give us asylum. We begged them to tell us what will happen to us. But they didn't answer.“

After being released, they were brought to a van. During the drive, the group asked repeatedly if they were taken to Ljubljana.

The officers answered:

„Yes, Ljubljana.“

„You know when I knew they won't bring us to Ljubljana? When I felt the road. The road towards Croatia is a bad one. I felt we were on that road.“

Once at the border, they were handed over to the Croatian authorities. They were brought to another police station, were they again asked for asylum, but the officers just answered with a simple:

„No.“

The officers asked for the paper, that the group received from the Slovenian officers and threw it in the trash. Without any formal procedure, they had to enter another van.

The ride to the Bosnian border took around three hours. During the whole time, the driver used to speed up very fast to then slow down suddenly, so that the individuals would fall back and forth. It made them feel extremely dizzy and sick.

„They do this to scare us. They want us to stop. But I will not give up. I will try again.“

They were allowed to leave the van at a spot located 22 km away from Velika Kladusa. Their personal belongings were handed over to them, but the officers confiscated their money. They were told to go back to Bosnia.

The interview was conducted in cooperation with *Thé et Café pour les réfugiés*.