

15/04/2019

"ONE WOMAN, 9 MONTHS PREGNANT, STARTED CRYING. THE POLICE SHOUTED AT HER: 'STOP CRY!'"

Date and time: April 15, 2019 06:00

Location: Strane, Bosnia

Coordinates: 43.77501709999999 , 18.84744079999996

Push-back from: Bosnia

Push-back to: Montenegro

Demographics: 22 person(s), age: nine months - 40 years old , from: Afghanistan, Iraq, Kurdistan

Minors involved? Yes

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

Police involved: 3 police officers in dark blue/black uniform („border special police”) without any emblems on it. The officer who beat one member of the group was described as average tall, not old, a bit fat with a „chubby, fat face”. They arrived in a „minivan from police Bosnia without windows. The car was around 2 meters long, blue and white. One police officer, who arrived later at the scene was wearing a blue uniform with 3 stars on its shoulders and an emblem of the Bosnian police. He spoke little English.

Taken to a police station?: no

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: photos taken, no translator present, denial of food/water

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: No

Reported by: Border Violence Monitoring

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 22 left Pljevlja (MNE) on April 11, 2019, by taxi. After reaching an area near the Bosnian border, they walked for four days through the forest. On April 15 around 6 pm, the group was apprehended near Strane (BiH), by three officers.

“It look like special border police. They had dark uniforms. With minivan from police Bosnia.”

When the people on the move first saw the officers, they immediately started running away. The officers got out of the car and shouted aggressively in Bosnian at them to make them stop, further scaring them by putting their hands on their guns attached on the halters. This made all the people on the move return, and they were ordered to stand in one spot. Only one individual was still hiding. When another individual called him in Kurdish to come back to the group, one officer hit him with three fist bumps. He boxed him two times in his right eye and one time on the right side of his head.

“He had a chubby and fat face.”

The one who was hiding came back to the group who was very scared, the children started crying and screaming. The officers told them:

“Stop speaking!”

One of the respondents mentions:

"We did not ask for asylum to the police in Bosnia. We were very scared!"

Another police car arrived and one officer, wearing a blue uniform with three stars on the shoulder, a hat and a Bosnian police emblem, stepped out of the car. When he arrived, the group first thought he might be good. He told the individuals to give him their mobile phones and to hand over their bags and registration cards from the camps in Podgorica. But when he found the registration paper from the camp in Podgorica, he harshly started to check the six people's phones, even forcing them to unlock them to check their calls, photos, messages and maps. The bags were searched by the other officers, but they didn't take anything away. Then, before being ordered to enter the minivan, the officers took a photo of the whole group.

"It was a very small car, and we had not enough space!"

Since the group's apprehension and the boarding in the minivan one hour had passed.

"One woman, 9 months pregnant, started crying. The police shouted at her: 'Stop cry!'".

The group was driven back for around two hours to the border of Montenegro. There, they were dropped in an abandoned place and told to walk back to Montenegro. The officer with the stars on his shoulder told them:

"Coming back, big problem!"

When one individual asked for the reason, the officer just answered:

"Big problem!"

Once the authorities left, one individual called the emergency number 112. He told the person on the phone that they are a group of 22, which just had been deported back to Montenegro and that they have one woman with them who is nine months pregnant and 11 children, the youngest 9 months old. He further told his conversation partner that they desperately need food and water in order to return to Pljevlja. The person on the phone assured he would organize something and told him that the group should wait. Around one hour later one Montenegrin police car arrived. The officers asked about the incident and the group explained the situation of the push-back by the Bosnian police. Afterwards, the police gave them food, water and shoes to leave shortly after. Food and water were from the Red Cross, like it is distributed in the camps, the shoes for the children being black with white flowers. Before the police left, the group asked for a bus or a taxi, but the police told them:

"We don't have a big car."

The group walked for around two hours on the road to Pljevlja and had to spend the night outside, making a fire against the cold and waiting for the next morning to come. Then they continued walking for around seven more hours until they reached Pljevlja. On their way, they approached several locals, and asked them to call a taxi, which was denied every time. Either the person didn't have a phone with them or the number of a taxi company. It has been reported that the public bus from Cajnice (BIH) to Pljevlja (MNE) never lets people on the move enter the bus, even though they are heading towards Pljevlja. Luckily though, this group was allowed to enter a bus from Pljevlja to Podgorica from where they went back to the camp located in the village of Spuz. Back in the camp, the person who was beaten by the Bosnian police didn't receive any medical treatment which he commented with:

"Doctors in the camp know nothing."

The doctor's statement apparently was:

"I can't help. I only have pampers."