

05/01/2019

## "THE TWO OFFICERS THEN QUICKLY PUT ON THEIR BALACLAVAS BEFORE TOSSING A SMOKE BOMB INSIDE THE VAN"

**Date and time:** January 5, 2019 20:00

**Location:** Rijeka, Croatia, north of Rijeka

**Coordinates:** 45.4110972 , 14.3997373

**Push-back from:** Croatia

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 20-30 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, pepper spray, water immersion, gunshots, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings, exposure to smoke bomb and tear gas

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian policemen at place of apprehension, later 3 more uniformed policemen, later 12 tall muscular policemen some of whom wore a black uniform and ski masks. 1 red 4x4 jeep, 2 white vans.

**Taken to a police station?:** no

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On December 28, 2018, a group of 10 men from Morocco, aged between 20 and 30, left Bihac (B I H) by foot around 9 pm. They had been walking for seven days, before they got apprehended by the Croatian authorities a few kilometers outside the town of Rijeka on January 5, 2019. At around 8 pm, the group was detected in the middle of the mountains by three officers in a red jeep 4 x 4. When the group of 10 saw them, one of the officers shot five times into the air with his gun shouting :

*" Stop! Stop! Stop! "*

The officers then made them kneel down in the snow, and the one holding the gun called reinforcement. 15 minutes later, two officers arrived with a big white van. They made the group enter the van one by one and started the engine. After a 30-minutes drive, around 9 pm, the van stopped in a big closed parking lot full of police cars.

When the back doors of the van were opened, the ten of them faced 12 tall muscular officers waiting for them. The respondent and his group got off the van one by one and each time one person got off, one of the officers beat him with his bare hands on the neck. Then, the same officer took the same person to face a wall of the parking area, hands on the wall. After this, they spoke in Croatian and made the ten of them remove their jackets. They were standing in the snow with t-shirts, trousers and shoes. The officers then hit the people facing the wall on the inner side of their legs to make them spread the legs. Subsequently, one officer took the phones, money and belongings from each and put everything in a black bag.

While facing the wall, some of the people on the move asked for their jackets back , since it was freezing . The

officers firmly said :

*“ No . ”*

Then, three of the ten asked for asylum, but the answer was just:

*“ No asylum! ”*

After this episode, the officers made the group enter another van of the same kind as the first one. Two officers of the same group in black uniforms and balaclavas entered the van and started the engine. At the same time, they turned on the air conditioning, making the temperature drop even more.

The van drove around 45 minutes before arriving at the Croatian-Bosnian border, around 7 km far from the Bosnian border city of Velika Kladusa. The van stopped a few meters away from a river.

When the two officers opened the rear door, the respondent realized that another car with the remaining 10 officers inside had been following them. The two officers then quickly put on their balaclavas before tossing a smoke bomb inside the van, which exploded and stunned the people inside. Immediately after, the officers used teargas against the ten individuals who were still inside the van. The ten of them then managed to rush out of the van and were repeatedly beaten up with batons by all officers on the spot.

Afterwards, around 11 pm and in the middle of the snow covered forest, the respondent and the other nine were kicked into the river, while the officers yelled at them:

*“ Go Bosnia! ”*

*“ Fuck you!”*

They did not receive back their phones or money, nor their jackets and sweaters.