

28/05/2019

## "THE THREE MEN WERE STILL JUST IN THEIR BOXERS WHILE BEING INTERVIEWED BY THE FEMALE OFFICER."

**Date and time:** May 28, 2019 04:00

**Location:** Smarje-Sap, Slovenia

**Coordinates:** 45.9739374387156 , 14.618260966304433

**Push-back from:** Slovenia, Croatia

**Push-back to:** Croatia, Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 27, 29, 30 years old , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, gunshots, forcing to undress

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian officers shooting in the air near Zvecaj; 2 Slovenian policemen at place of apprehension; 1 Slovenian policeman and translator in Novo Mesto police station; 4 Croatian policemen taking the group over at Vinica border crossing (1 of whom was the "chief", with two stars sewed on his shoulder); 6 police officers (4 male and 2 female) in Karlovac police station; 8 or 9 Croatian policemen, all wearing ski masks, at the site of the pushback to Bosnia. - 2 police cars in Slovenia, 4 police cars and 1 van in Croatia.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

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

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent started his journey from Sturlic (BiH) with initially five other people approximately on 18 May 2019. The group was composed of two Syrians, one Iraqi and three Algerians.

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After four days of walking inside Croatia, the group reached a bridge over the Mreznica river, near Zvecaj (HR, coordinates 45.394045, 15.435721), around 11 P.M. On the other side of the bridge, at the left of the group, two policemen were hiding. They shot twice in the air and managed to arrest the two Syrians and the Iraqi member of the group, while the respondent and his two Algerian friends ran back into the forest located south the bridge, aside of the road. The policemen didn't run after them, and after having some sleep in the forest, they were able to cross the bridge without problems in the next morning and to pursue their journey.

On their tenth day of walking, i.e. 28 May, at 4 A.M., the group of now three men had reached Smarje-Sap (SLN, coordinates 45.9734212, 14.6185612). They were walking on the main road in the town center which runs parallel to the highway, when a Slovenian police car approached them and stopped them. Two Slovenian police officers in uniform asked them about their names, age and country of origin and then made them enter the car. They took them to Novo Mesto police station (coordinates

45.81729, 15.1548447).

In Novo Mesto police station, the respondent was interviewed. He sat in an office with one policeman and the translator. His fingerprints and photos were taken, and he was asked personal details such as his name, age, country of origin and the names of his mother and father and also about the road they had taken to reach Slovenia.

The respondent asked for asylum, but the translator directly refused that request, without translating it to the policeman. The translator told the respondent “you Algerians and Moroccans you don’t have the right for asylum in Slovenia, go ask asylum in France, Belgium, Germany“.

The respondent was made sign a paper in Slovenian language, the content of which he wasn’t able to understand. In this moment he perceived the policeman as being very aggressive, and he had the impression that if he didn’t sign he would have been beaten. Nevertheless his impression about the general Slovenian police behavior, especially compared to his experience in Croatia, was relatively positive:

*“Police Slovenia ok, police Croatia mushkila kabira [big problem]“.*

The respondent was largely impressed by the behavior of the translator, too. This person was described as being a middle aged Palestinian man, very aggressive towards the respondent.

*“Wallah he’s crazy. Police OK, but he’s crazy.“*

The respondent and his group were kept in Novo Mesto police station for the whole day, and he said he was given food and water. In the late afternoon of 28 May, he and his friends were taken to the border crossing in Vinica (45.4570672, 15.248562). The drive took about one hour.

At the border they were handed over to four Croatian policemen, one of whom the respondent described to have been the chief. The respondent saw two stars sewed on his shoulder. The Croatian officers handcuffed the group and took them in three separate police cars, with three policemen in each car, to Karlovac police station (45.4910003,15.5456485).

In the police station, they were put in a cell of about 2×3 meters, without toilet or beds. They were forced to undress, left with only their boxers on, and the door was closed behind them.

After an unspecified period of time, six police officers (four men and two women) entered the room. One of the women spoke fluent Arabic and interviewed the members of the group one by one. The three men were still just in their boxers while being interviewed by the female officer. They were asked for their personal data: name, age, country of origin, parents’ names, and then they were photographed and finally given back their clothes and personal belongings.

After this, they were put in a van and driven to the Croatian-Bosnian border. There were two police officers in the van. The group members disposed of appropriate seats in the back part. The van was followed by another police car, which the respondent remembered to be a Ford, with another two policemen inside.

The drive took around one hour until they reached the Bosnian border at the approximate coordinates 45.2237198,15.9661581. It was the 29 May around 5 A.M.

They were forced to get out of the van one by one. When it was the respondent’s turn to step out of the van, he saw a group of eight or nine policemen surrounding him, with ski masks on, pointing flashlights at his face. One of the policemen approached the respondent and searched him for his belongings, then he was forced to undress and beaten with batons all over his body. He estimated the beating to have lasted five minutes.

After the beating the respondent asked for his clothes and belongings, and this caused another violent reaction by the policemen. At this point the respondent had to throw up, and after this one policeman kicked him into the stomach and said “Go to Bosnia!”.

The group then walked back over the border and had some sleep in a forest near Glinica (BiH). After they woke up on the same day, they met a Bosnian family that hosted them for lunch and gave them new clothes and shoes. They then walked all the way to Velika Kladusa (BiH), which took them about five hours.