

01/04/2019

"I DON'T WANT FOOD AND WATER, I WANT ASYLUM!"

Date and time: April 1, 2019 00:00

Location: Maljevac, Croatia, at the Croatian-Slovenian border next to Velika Kladuša

Coordinates: 45.1975758906123 , 15.794529103613286

Push-back from: Slovenia, Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 3 person(s), age: 24-27 , from: Morocco

Minors involved? No

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, theft of personal belongings

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, papers signed, denial of food/water, no medical treatment

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: Border Violence Monitoring

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of three men started on March 23, 2019, from Bihać and crossed the border in a forest on the mountains. They walked seven days through the snow and finally reached the Slovenian border. Because they hadn't expected to walk that long, they didn't have anything to eat during the last three days and were only drinking water. On March 30 at 10pm, the three friends decided to cross the Kupa river by swimming through its at that time freezing water. When they reached the other side, there found themselves in front of a four to five meter high steel fence with barbed wire on the top. One of the three was the first to climb over it and got a deep cut in his right hand caused by the barbed wire.

"There was a lot of blood."

The two others managed to climb over the fence without hurting themselves, just to find two Slovenian officers in blue uniforms, carrying guns and batons waiting for them on the other side. They told the group of three to sit down and to keep still. The friends showed them the heavily bleeding wound and urged the officers to take the injured person to the hospital. But the officers just ignored this and let them wait for one hour sitting on the forest ground. They were freezing in their wet clothes and still hadn't eaten anything for three days. To stop the bleeding, the injured individual ripped his shirt and wrapped it around his wound.

Then they told them to enter a van and drove them 20 minutes to the next police station, which was most probably located in Kočeve. After 11 hours, at 9 am on the March 31, they finally brought the injured individual to the hospital, where they treated his wound. They gave him some papers to sign and there was also a translator from Palestine present.

While they were at the police station, they were offered food and water.

"I don't want food and water, I want asylum!"

When they asked for asylum, the officers said:

“ Okay.”

They had to sign a lot of papers, but didn't get copies of them. One officer also took photos of them and fingerprints from the index finger of their right hands.

“ If a person gets asylum, they take the fingerprints of all 10 fingers. If they just take one, you know they push you back to Bosnia.”

In the night after two days at the police station, they were brought with a van to the Bosnian border next to Velika Kladuša. There were in total 17 people on the move in the van and the drive took around two hours.

Once they arrived, around seven to ten Croatian officers with balaclava, guns and batons let them get off the van one by one and checked them. They took their belongings, i.e. their money, phones, power banks and cables. Then they beat them with their hands and batons and also kicked them.

“ The Croatian police sees us all as terrorists. That's crazy. I am a migrant and no terrorist!”

They were insulting them and told them:

“ Go, go!”

All of them didn't wear their badges on the uniforms so the people on the move couldn't identify them.

The group returned to Velika Kladuša after walking around three hours. After some time the injured person had to go to the hospital again, this time in Bihać, paying 100 Bosnian mak (€ 50) to get the stitches out.