

## "19-YEAR-OLD MOROCCAN DROWNED IN THE BORDER RIVER"

**Date and time:** March 24, 2019 08:00

**Location:** Near Velika Kladuša Municipality, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 45.216209, 15.95516

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

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 19, rest unknown, from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 9 Slovenian (2 in green, rest in blue uniforms) and at least 7 (1 in uniform, rest in civil clothes) Croatian police officers. According to his uniform one Slovenian police officers name is "Emin"

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** fingerprints taken, photos taken, papers signed, no translator present, forced to pay fee

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

From Velika Kladusa, Bosnia-Herzegovina, a group of seven left for 'the game'. After walking through Croatia for ten days, they came near the border with Slovenia. On their eleventh day of walking, at around 5:00 am, they entered Slovenian territory. Near the border of Croatia and Slovenia there is a river that the migrants had to cross. One of the guys, Mehdi from Morocco, a 19-year-old male, tried to cross the river, but the river grabbed him and he was not able to get out. Before the eyes of his friends he drowned in the river.

Because they were unable to help their friend, the other group-members decided to continue walking. When they were walking in a road a citizen spotted them. Shortly after this, around 9:00 am, two Slovenian police officers in green uniforms (a man and a woman) stopped the group. The police was carrying 'big' guns. The migrants were held at gunpoint and told to get down on their knees. The officers made a call to their colleagues, and soon after, two police men in blue uniforms arrived.

The police officers asked the group how many people they were, to which the migrants replied that they were with six people in total. The police officers said that they did not believe the group were only six people. At this point, the group-members told the police officers that one of their friends died in the river close by. However, the police officers did not want to listen to this and refused to go to the location that their friend had drowned. During this exchange, another police officer arrived who told the group to show him where they entered the border of Croatia and Slovenia. The migrants were put into a police van and were driven to the point where they entered Slovenia. Here, one of them was taken out of the van and the police officer took a picture of him in the area of the border. After he was told to get back into the van and all migrants were driven to the police station in Kočevje, Slovenia.

Inside the police station, the group-members had to stay in a big room with two toilets. They were provided with blankets. In the police station, there was one male officers working on the computer and one female officer doing

paperwork. There were two police officers that observed the group-members, both male. One-by-one the group-members were taken out of the big room to have their pictures taken as well as their fingerprints and were asked to give information on how they moved from Bosnia to Slovenia.

During the interview with the officers, there was no official translator present. One of the group-members who spoke English was told to translate for the others. After the interview, the group-members were given five papers which stated that they had to pay a penalty of 500 EUR for illegally crossing the border and were told to sign the papers, which were all in Slovenian. Afterwards the papers were taken back by the police. The questioning took from 10:00 pm until around 2:00 am. After this, the group-members were given food and water and spent the rest of the night in the police station.

Around 08:00-09:00 in the morning, the police told the migrants to come one by one and get into a car. They were brought to the official border between Croatia and Slovenia. Here they were handed over to the Croatian police, who took pictures of the migrants with their names in it. They were put into another van with Croatian police officers however only one of the police officers were described as wearing a uniform, the others wore civilian clothes. Then they were brought to another police station, in Croatia, where they had to wait for about 40 minutes in the van. There another group, six people from Pakistan, were brought into the van.

From here the van was brought to yet another police station in Croatia, where they were for about 15 minutes in the van. From here they were brought to the border with Bosnia. They were deported to Bosnia in the woods. There were seven police officers present, all men. The officers wore blue uniforms and carried firearms with them. One-by-one, the migrants were allowed to leave the van. The police that were present at the push-back gave them a bag with their phones and power banks that has previously been taken from them by the Slovenian police. Then the police told them to go by Bosnia and 'hurry up'.