

23/03/2019

## "HE MAY BE LEFT WITH A DEFICIT IN HEARING AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE ASSAULT."

**Date and time:** March 23, 2019 17:00

**Location:** Maljevac, Croatia, in the area of Maljevac

**Coordinates:** 45.1977089 , 15.7887938

**Push-back from:** Croatia

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 23-35 , from: Algeria, Egypt

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, destruction of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** Four Croatian officers, all male, dark blue uniforms with an emblem containing yellow and black on their sleeves

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

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

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

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of initially ten people, four Algerians, two Egyptians and four Moroccans, started their journey in Sturlic (BIH), at the coordinates 45.0617431, 15.7726162, on March 16, 2019. They crossed the border to Croatia by foot. After a few days of walking in Croatia, the group split and the four Moroccans chose another route.

The remaining group of six men, aged between 23 and 35 years, continued walking for seven days. At 1 pm on March 23, they were walking in a mountainous area on an unpaved road some four kilometers away from the Slovenian border, around the area of Bosiljevo (HRV). Suddenly, a police van approached them and four male officers got off the van. They were wearing dark blue uniforms, with a yellow-black emblem on the sleeves, carrying batons and guns on their belts, and told the people on the move to stop.

The two Algerians and two Egyptians stopped, while the two other Algerians ran away into the forest. The respondent supposes they managed to escape as he hasn't seen them since. One officer made a call. Then the four migrants had to hand over the two phones and three power banks they carried with them, but not their money. The officers checked the content of their phones and kept them.

Further, they were asked for their countries of origin and their migration route. The four of them answered truthfully and afterwards requested asylum. One of the officers answered with an angry expression on his face:

*"No asyl!"*

The officer then took the migrants harshly by their shoulders and pushed them into the backspace of the van, slapping the respondent once strongly on his ear. The respondent instantly felt a heavy pain in his ear. While his

hearing was not affected at first, this changed after a while. When he had returned to Sarajevo, he saw a paramedic three weeks after the incident. The paramedic made the following written statement:

*“ The patient I saw had ear pain and a problem with hearing. This appears to have been a result from an openhanded strike to the head. On examination of the patient, he had tenderness over the temporal and zygomatic structures as well as a ruptured tympanic membrane (ear drum). The rupture will heal in a few weeks providing the ear remains dry and without infection. He may be left with a deficit in hearing as a consequence of the assault.”*

The backspace of the van had one small window in the top, no seats and it was very cold inside. The four of them had to sit on the plain floor during the very fast and winding drive.

After an estimated three- to four-hour drive, the van stopped and the four individuals were told to get off onto a small paved road. A small village was visible at some distance. They were still on the Croatian side of the border around Maljevac (HVR) and near Velika Kladusa (BIH). It was now afternoon of March 23.

The officers destroyed both phones' charging inputs with a stick, while the group had to watch. Then they casually threw the phones on the ground and said:

*“ Go to Bosnia!”*

The group of four started walking in the direction they were told. After walking an estimated nine kilometers on paved roads, they arrived to Velika Kladusa (BIH), still during daylight. From there, they first took a bus to Bihać and then to Sarajevo.