

21/04/2019

"THEY MAKE ME SIGN A LIE. BUT I KNOW THAT YOU HAVE TO SIGN OR YOU GET BEATEN."

Date and time: April 21, 2019 11:00

Location: Novo Mesto, Slovenia

Coordinates: 45.8021445 , 15.1607305

Push-back from: Slovenia, Croatia

Push-back to: Croatia, Bosnia

Demographics: 7 person(s), age: 22-29 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria

Minors involved? No

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, forcing to undress, reckless driving, pushing into river

Police involved: 4 Slovenian policemen in two vehicles (1 big white van and 1 car), later 1 more big white van. - One police station in Slovenia (especially mentioned one police officer who took the interview with a translator). - 3 Croatian police officers with sky blue uniforms. - 6 men and 2 women in black uniforms with ski masks (in Croatia). - White van with big blue letters on both sides saying "POLICIJA" in Croatia.

Taken to a police station?: yes

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

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: [Re:]ports Sarajevo

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 7 people were apprehended at around 11:00 am on April 21st at the Novo Mesto (SLN) bus station where they were waiting for the bus to go to Ljubljana. They had already bought their bus tickets, and the respondent still had his ticket at the time of the interview:

Two police cars stopped where the seven men were standing. As the respondent said, there was one large and one small vehicle with two policemen in each car.

"One car for police and one car for refugees".

The four policemen asked them for papers and the respondent answered them:

"No have documents, I am immigrant".

The police frisked them. While they were being checked one-by-one, they expressed the intention to seek asylum but the officers did not answer them. When the police finished their search, they brought them to the large vehicle, which described as a large white van.

"We went there for the police procedure."

The respondent described the journey in the van:

“The driving was so bad. I vomit two times.”

He explained that not only he had to vomit, but also two of his friends. He said that the policemen turned on the air conditioner, switching it from a very low temperature to the highest heat. The driver was also changing the speed of the car constantly, so that the seven men in the backspace were mixed up among each other and were smashed against the walls of the car.

After twenty minutes of driving, they arrived to a police station in an unknown village. The police officers who were driving the car asked them to put their personal belongings in a bag which they labeled with their names. Thereafter, they asked the seven men to take off their clothes in one room and then brought them into metal-barred “rooms”, putting two people in each room.

“They ask us to take our clothes. We end only in boxer and small t-shirt and they put us in jail.”

They waited there for 20 minutes until one police officer started to call them one-by-one to proceed with an interview.

When the respondent was called for the interview, there was a table between the police officer and him. An Arabic translator was next to the policeman. The translator asked the respondent which route his group had taken before they were apprehended. The respondent had to point out the route on a map on the computer. The policeman took the fingerprint from his right index finger and also took pictures of his face.

The respondent again expressed to the police officer that he wanted to seek asylum in Slovenia. The police officer answered him that he only has economical reasons to leave his country and therefore he would not be allowed to ask for asylum in Slovenia:

“The problem of Algeria is economic, no asylum. You will be returned to Bosnia.”

When the police officer finished the interview, he told him to sign some papers, translated in English and Arabic.

“They make me sign a lie. But I know that you have to sign them or you get beaten.”

When he said to the police officer that what was written in the papers was not true, the answer of the police officer was:

“Shut up and sign!”

Another policeman entered the room and brought him back in the jail and he waited there until all of the group had been interviewed. When the policemen finished the interviews, they brought the group back in the room where all their clothes were, so that they could put them back on.

They were then taken into a big white van, and a ride of approximately 15 minutes followed. The driving was described as “normal”. At the border between Slovenia and Croatia, the Slovenian officers handed the group over to Croatian authorities who then took them into another van. Then, they stopped in Karlovac (HR) at around 10:00 pm. The respondent saw three policemen in a sky blue uniform, wearing caps on their heads. When the group got out of the car, these 3 policemen told them “Welcome” and made them get into another large white vehicle with big blue letters on both sides saying “POLICIJA”.

They drove about two hours. The interviewee said that the driver put the air-conditioner really high and he was constantly changing the speed of the car to make them collide between one another and smash against the walls of the car. Some of the group members started to vomit. Recalling this treatment, the respondent expressed his frustration:

“Police border is big big big problem!”

Around midnight the car stopped next to the Glina river which marked the border between Croatia and Bosnia. When the door of the van was opened, the respondent saw 8 police officers in front of him (6 male and 2 female) wearing totally black uniforms and ski masks.

The police officers grabbed them by their jackets and forced them to get out of the car. At this point, they started to beat them with batons while they were shouting:

“Go river, don’t cross the border again!”

Some of the group members were kicked into the river.