

20/03/2019

"GO AND DON'T COME BACK. IF YOU COME BACK WE WILL ATTACK YOU."

Date and time: March 20, 2019 02:30

Location: Melinovac

Coordinates: 44.738539 , 15.906933

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 2 person(s), age: 29, 26 , from: Morocco

Minors involved? No

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

Police involved: 2 police officers and one military officer. Deep navy blue uniforms, caps, Croatian police symbols, carrying pistols and batons. Military officer carrying a 60 cm wooden baton, the color of wood, in his hand, jacket and trousers, no hat, green color uniform. 2 police vans and one police car, with visible insignia, white in colour with blue line in the middle, with 'Policija' written on the side

Taken to a police station?: no

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention, photos taken, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: [Re:]ports Sarajevo

ORIGINAL REPORT

The two men stopped at an abandoned house in the village of Glibodol, Croatia, at 11 am on March 19. The house was small with one storey, bare white brick and a red tiled roof. They slept outside in sleeping bags on the roofed terrace. At 4.30 pm, two police officers and one military officer woke them up. The officers spoke only little English and told them to get up in order to search them. In the following, they took the phones and power banks from the two of them which they wouldn't see again. Then the officers took photos and told the two individuals to pick up their things. The two people on the move collected their belongings in such a hurry, that one of them forgot his sleeping bag. They were then led 400 meters to another house. On the way one officer asked one of the individuals:

"Why you come here?"

"There's a storm, we just want to hide from the snow".

The individual then asked if the officer could help them and that he needed a doctor. He further asked if they could be taken to a camp, not specifying any particular one. Both was answered by the officer with 'Ok, ok'.

They two individuals arrived at a house where they found around 40 Pakistani men standing, who had previously been caught by the police. Around seven officers, two female and five male ones, were watching over them. In addition, there were two military officers with semi-automatic rifles. The two interviewees were brought to a

separate room and stayed there for around 1,5 hours. They were searched again but nothing more was taken from them. Occasionally the police would check on the men, but without asking any questions.

Afterwards, all people were told to leave the house one by one and to enter a police van. The interviewees were the last two to leave. The group of Pakistani men were brought to a van close to the empty house. All people on the move entered the van except two. These two joined the interviewees, and they walked together to a second van on the opposite side of the road, next to a house where around 20 people, all Pakistani, were waiting in front of it. Those people on the move had not been with the group waiting in the former mentioned house. The four individuals entered the van. At this point there were two police vans and two police cars. They closed the doors of the windowless backspace which prevented the individuals from seeing where they were going. They were also unable to speak to the officers in the front of the van. It was cold in the van and the drive was very bumpy so five people got sick, including one of the interviewees.

After approximately 1,5 hours, they arrived at a place 'like a big garage', which the interviewees suppose to be part of a small military area. All four of them got off the van, but although they saw the other van, they couldn't see any of the 40 people on the move that had been inside. They never found out what happened to them. The garage had three brick walls, one metal shutter and a stone floor covered with a thin plastic sheet. In front of one wall was a several meters long row of rubbish, some in plastic bags, some in open bins, smelling like urine.

"It smelt like a bad toilet ."

"It was freezing cold, you couldn't sleep because of the cold. Our clothes were wet from walking in the snow."

The group was locked inside without any police for four to five hours, not having any water, food or toilet. Some of them were forced to urinate in the corner. After two hours the shutter opened for the first time and two officers entered. They took 15-20 of the individuals with them and immediately closed the shutters again. After two more hours, the shutters were opened again and the rest of the group was taken to an open area around 300 meters from the garage, walking one after each other. To keep people in line, the officers hit them with large metal torches on legs and arms. They arrived at two military officers with black fabric masks covering their faces, holding semi-automatic rifles.

"We were like chickens, I didn't want to remember that moment. We were like animals."

The officers asked them:

" Who speaks English? "

One of the interviewees responded that he did.

"The men said, tell everyone, that if you come back we will attack you."

The group continued walking through ice and snow, walking over a mountain. One officer with a rifle at the head of the line, the other at the rear. When one of the individuals stepped out of the line to use his inhaler for his asthma, he was beaten on the chest with the butt of a rifle, but not hard enough to leave visible marks. After around 15 minutes, the officers led them to a track that was well trodden.

"Go and don't come back. If you come back we will attack you."

They then walked for an hour until they reached a main road.

"It was snowing and really hard to keep walking."

From there, they continued walking through the night all the way back to Bihac, arriving there at 6 am. On the way they met many people on the move walking in the same direction. All of them had been pushed back.