

03/02/2019

"AFTER THE BEATING, HE HAD LOST THREE TEETH, HIS NOSE WAS BLEEDING AND HE WAS IN HEAVY PAIN"

Date and time: February 3, 2019 00:06

Location: Zeljava, Croatia, Croatian-Bosnian Border between Zeljava and Baljevac

Coordinates: 44.8187871 , 15.7223125

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 4 person(s), age: 19,22,25,26 , from: Algeria

Minors involved? No

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, dog attacks, destruction of personal belongings, handcuffed

Police involved: More than 10 police officers in different locations Dark-blue uniforms. Two vans and one smaller police car. ca. 4-6 dogs.

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: [Re:]ports Sarajevo

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of four started their journey in Bihac, around 8 pm on February 2, 2019. Around 10.30 pm they crossed the border to Croatia near Vikici (B I H) , at the approximate coordinates 44.8905703,15.7566522. In Croatia, they walked towards Jezerce (HRV) from where they intended to continue to Zagreb.

After around one hour of walking, and not having reached Jezerce yet, a car approached them (approximate coordinates 44.8785459,15.6968122). The motor was turned off, and after a short while five dogs were released from the car. They ran towards the four people on the move. The respondent reported that one of them bit him into his left leg, close to the ankle. However, the dog's teeth didn't enter his leg because he was wearing two layers of trousers due to the cold. He was then able to escape the dog by climbing a tree.

Three or four officers then got off the car. They were wearing blue uniforms, and on their sleeves there was an emblem containing the letters "POLICIJA". They told the dogs to sit down and the group of four to climb down from the tree.

The respondent then asked:

" Please give me asylum papers so that I can rest in Croatia for a while, I will then continue my journey to another country."

The officers laughed:

“No.”

So the individual then tried to escape and ran away, but was soon caught by the dogs again. The four officers started to beat the people on the move, using their fists and batons, shouting:

“ Fuck you, you are a big fuck you!”

The respondent said:

“ Don’t touch me!”

But they continued beating all parts of his body, including his face for around 10-15 minutes. After the beating, he had lost three teeth, his nose was bleeding and he was in heavy pain. The photo shows, how the injuries looked like more than seven weeks after the incident.

Afterwards, the officers made a call, and a van with three more officers arrived. The four of them were handcuffed and told to enter the back space of the van. There were no proper seats but a plank without seat belts. They were driven for approximately one hour until they reached a police station.

In the police station, the officers took all their money, a total of €350, and their mobile phones. The officers first checked the phones in order to find out which migration route the group of four had taken from the Bosnian border to the place of their apprehension. Afterwards, they put the phones on the floor and smashed them with the handles of their batons and by stamping on them with their heavy boots. In addition, they broke the SIM cards of the phones. The group of four didn't have to sign any papers nor were photos or fingerprints taken. They were then locked into a cell for around two hours.

Around 4 am on February 3, the officers opened the cell and they had to enter another van where already around 15 other people on the move were waiting. The van was quite small and very packed with around 20 persons inside.

“ They transported us like luggage.”

During the two-hour drive, the air condition in the backspace of the van was very hot and two Iranians passed out during the drive. The respondent pointed out that the officers did not support these two men in any way after the transport:

“T hey did not give them medication, juice or at least water .”

The van stopped in a forest when it was still dark, estimated between Zeljava (HRV) and Baljevac (BIH) at the coordinates 44.8187871,15.7223125. The officers told the people on the move to get off the van and to hand their shoes and bags over to them. They then set some shoes on fire and cut through the shoulder straps of their backpacks while laughing.

“ They talked to us like with d og s, with animals – they do not treat us like humans.”

One of the officers then made a call, and after a while the Bosnian authorities arrived by foot at some distance. Some Croatian officers went over to them and returned after a short conversation. They then pushed the people on the move to walk in one respective direction:

“ Go Bihac, go Bihac !”

There was no road, and the ground was covered with trunks and spiny plants. The respondent describes, that the Croatian officers used torches and a kind of binoculars to make sure that they did not deviate from the specified direction. The Bosnian authorities watched the scene.

After an estimated four hours or 15 kilometers of walking, the people on the move reached Bihac (BIH) at the coordinates 44.8149552,15.8371348.