

15/11/2018

## **"[...] THAT THEY WERE NOT ALLOWED TO ENTER THE CITY [BIHAC] BECAUSE IT WAS CLOSED FOR PEOPLE ON THE MOVE "**

**Date and time:** November 15, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Ogulin, Croatia, Croatian-Bosnian border, no official border crossing, unpaved road in the mountains

**Coordinates:** 44.740804 , 15.7910748

**Push-back from:** Croatia

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 25-35 , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 3 police officers (2 men, 1 woman). Uniform jacket and trousers were dark blue. On the sleeves there was the sign of the Croatian police. 1 big car (Van with 2 chairs in front, and 8 in the back)

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

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

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

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of five started their journey in Bihac (BIH) and entered Croatia through the mountains near the town of Baljevac (BiH) , approximate coordinates 44.8093127,15.7856758. They walked through Croatia for four days until they reached the mountains near the town Ogulin. There was heavy snowfall and it was very cold. They were freezing. After several days of walking in the snow, the feet of the respondent were swollen and the shoes he wore were too small. The group decided to go to the train station of Ogulin in order to buy a ticket to Rijeka (HR V ).

They approached Ogulin from the southwest, in the middle of the night. At the outskirts of the town , approximate coordinates 45.2564994,15.2149026 , they were stopped by the authorities . There were three officers, one of them was a woman. They asked the m:

*" W here are you from?"*

They said that all of them are from Iran. The officers then asked if they had papers and the five of them replied that they did n't have any. The n, the officers searched them and put their phones into a plastic bag.

The five then expressed their wish to apply for asylum, but the female officer said:

*" You do not want to stay in Croatia, you want to go to Italy or Germany. We cannot allow your request. If you want to deposit a request for asylum, you have to go yourself to a police station in Zagreb. "*

The people on the move did not insist further because, according to the respondent:

*" W e knew that this would be useless: When the Croatian police catches migrants in the jungle or in the*

*mountains, they always deport us even if we ask for asylum. I even know other people who reached Zagreb and went to a police station to ask for asylum there; some of them were deported back to Bosnia without their asylum request being checked. What happens in Zagreb (if you make it there) depends on the policemen, of your luck."*

After that, the officers told them to enter their van. The van had two front seats and eight seats in the back where the five of them were sitting. The officers drove them to the Croatian-Bosnian border, approximate coordinates 44.740804,15.7910748, which took around three hours. When they arrived, they told them to get off the van and returned them the plastic bag with their phones. They then showed them which way would lead them to Bosnia and told them to go there. It was an unpaved road in the mountains and no official border crossing.

After 3 – 4 hours of walking, the group reached the first village in Bosnia and after some four more hours, they reached Bihac.

Outside Bihac they were stopped by two Bosnian officers were wearing dark blue police uniforms.

*"This is the normal uniform of the Bihac police."*

The officers told the group of five, that they were not allowed to enter the city because it was closed for people on the move. The five men explained, that they had been living in the Borici camp in Bihac, but didn't have their camp IDs with them. As the respondent had a foot injury and swollen feet due to walking many days through the snow in too small shoes, he urged the officers:

*" I asked the police to please let us enter the city. The police officers saw that I could not walk normally , but they said they can't allow us to enter the city. Then they put us in another caravan (I think it was dark blue) and drove with us into the middle of nowhere, we did not know where we were."*

From there, the five of them started to walk on a road, and after two days of walking they reached Bosanski Petrovac (BIH), coordinates 44.5517832, 16.3643404. From there they took a bus to Sarajevo.