

17/04/2019

## "WE SAID 'ASYL ASYL', BUT THE POLICE SAID 'NO ASYL, NO ASYL, CAMP IS FULL!'"

**Date and time:** April 17, 2019 09:00

**Location:** Rupa, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.4874167 , 14.2775503

**Push-back from:** Slovenia, Croatia

**Push-back to:** Croatia, Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 17-30 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Apprehended by 15 Slovenian police officers (two of them female) in blue uniforms, with an emblem containing the flag of Slovenia on their sleeves, batons, six vehicles and dogs. - Unknown number of Slovenian officers in the police station. - 5 Croatian police officers (among them one woman) in darkblue uniforms, with emblems containing the Croatian flag and white and yellow colors on their sleeves, and with caps with 4 or 5 stars on them. 1 Volkswagen A6, 1 small Mercedes van (white with no inscriptions) and 1 big Mercedes van (white with no inscriptions).

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

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

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

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

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of six started their journey in Velika Kladuša (BiH) on Friday 5th April 2019. They managed to cross Croatia without being detected by the Croatian authorities. After ten days of walking, they reached the border between Croatia and Slovenia.

They continued to walk in Slovenia, however after some 20 kilometers into Slovenia they were caught by the police. The location was in the forest near Mrše (SLN), around the coordinates 45.5865972, 14.0331938. There were 15 police officers (two of them female) who arrived by six cars. The officers were wearing blue uniforms, and on their sleeves there was an emblem containing the flag of Slovenia. They had dogs with them and were armed with batons but had no guns. It was 16th April around 6 p.m.

The police told the six men to hand over their phones. Still in the forest, the police checked the phones and then returned them to their owners. They also offered water, crisps and a cigarette to the six men. The six men were then told to get into the backspace of a van. There were no windows, and it was cold in the van.

After an estimated 40 minutes of driving, they reached a police station in an unknown location in Slovenia. The police took their fingerprints and took pictures of the six men.

*"We said 'asyl asyl', but the police said 'no asyl, no asyl, camp is full!'"*

The six men were given food and water and got a blanket for the night. They spent one night in the police station.

The next morning (17<sup>th</sup> April), the group of six was again taken to a van which transported them to the official border crossing between Jelšane (SLN) and Rupa (HR) at the coordinates 45.489552, 14.2778407. They arrived to the border crossing around 8 or 9 a.m. The Slovenian police handed the six men over to five Croatian police officers (among them one woman).

The Croatian officers were wearing darkblue uniforms. On their sleeves, there were emblems containing the Croatian flag and white and yellow colors. The officers were also wearing caps with 4 or 5 stars on them. The Croatian officers had two cars with them: one Volkswagen A6 and one small Mercedes van which was white and had no inscriptions.

The policewoman pointed at the six men with her gun, and they were brought to a building on the Croatian side of the border crossing. The lower part of the building was white, the upper part was blue, and there was a Croatian flag on it. The respondents recognised the building on Googlemaps (coordinates 45.4874167, 14.2775503):

Inside this building, the men had to fully undress. The officers took the men's clothes, their shoes, their jewelry and their watches. The men had to stay totally naked for an estimated four minutes until they were returned their clothes.

The men then had to write their name on a paper and to hold it in front of their chest. The officers photographed them in this position.

When the youngest member of the group – a minor of 17 years – was asked if he speaks English, he said no. As a reaction, one of the police officers slapped him into his face.

The police officers took the men's backpacks and sleeping bags, their money (ca. 1200 Euros in total), their phones (5 phones, among which one Samsung Galaxy S7J, one Samsung Galaxy S3 and one Huawei) and the powerbank they had.

When the officers started to crush the five phones in front of them, one of the migrants reached out and tried to take his phone back. But a police officer hit him with a baton on his fingers and kicked him on his ankle. At the time of the interview, i.e. four days after the incident, his index was heavily swollen as the following picture shows. The index was also causing a lot of pain, and the man reported that he had difficulties to find sleep due to the pain:

The policemen then continued to crush all five phones of the group.

After a while, the men were told to leave the border station and to get into the backspace of a big van. It was a white Mercedes without an inscription on it. Inside the van, it was very cold. There were narrow benches, but no seatbelts. One of the men had to vomit. The men asked the police officers to stop, but they did not react.

The van finally stopped on a small road in the forest. The respondents located the place to have been in the area of Bojna (HR) around the coordinates 45.1883599, 16.0377613. It was in the early afternoon of 17th April. The police officers told the men to get out of the van. They did not return the six men's belongings (backpacks, sleeping bags, money). The men were told to take off their t-shirts and their shoes and to walk back to Bosnia just wearing their trousers. Only the person with the injured finger was spared from this, and he could keep his shirt and his shoes. The officers then shouted at them:

*"No Europe, no Croatia, no Italy! Go, fuck you!"*

The officers hit them with a baton into their legs. One of the men was hit on his head.

The men walked towards Velika Kladuša. Without shoes and shirts, they were very cold. After a while, they met a Bosnian man who gave them shoes and water. After some 20 kilometers of walking, they reached Velika Kladuša in the evening of 17<sup>th</sup> April 2019.