

16/05/2019

"THE POLICEMEN ASKED THEM FOR THEIR PHONES AND BROKE THEM IN FRONT OF THEM."

Date and time: May 16, 2019 05:00

Location: south of Zeljava, Croatia

Coordinates: 44.828689 , 15.767291

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 3 person(s), age: 26, 27, 27 years old , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Morocco

Minors involved? No

Violence used: destruction of personal belongings

Police involved: 5 Croatian policemen in dark-blue uniforms for apprehension; unknown number of officials in police station; 4 policemen (two of them wearing ski masks) at the pushback site. -1 white police van and later one more van.

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: [Re:]ports Sarajevo

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of three men got on a bus from Sarajevo to Ljubljana, Slovenia, on Monday 13th May at 4 am. They stayed in the bus engine room for more than 48h.

On 15th May, the bus stopped at the border between Croatia and Slovenia. The respondent estimates that it was at the bordercrossing between the cities of Rupa (HR) and Jelšane (SLN), on the road A7.

Croatian authorities conducted a search in the bus, checked the engine and found them. The three policemen carrying out the search asked them to get out and sit down on the ground. They were wearing dark blue uniforms. They asked them for their phones and broke them in front of them.

"They searched us but they did not find any money on us. Then they told us that we were going to be taken to a camp in Zagreb".

The bus left resuming its journey, and the officials called for reinforcement.

At that point, the respondent and the two other men asked for asylum. The authorities reiterated that they would be taken to Zagreb. A white van arrived with two other policemen who were wearing blue uniforms as well.

The group had to wait from 6.30 pm to 1 am at the bordercrossing point and then were taken to a police station with the van. The

respondent was not able to estimate the time spent in the van. Once there, the authorities took pictures of them holding a document with their names and ages at the chest level. They were asked to fill and sign two documents written in English. One of the documents had a few words in Arabic, i.e. "Father's name" and "Mother's name". The officials also took their index fingerprints.

"Everything happened really fast, we didn't stay more than 10 minutes in the police station. It was very crowded."

The three men and a large group of people from Pakistan and Afghanistan, including a woman and a child, were then taken into a large van. The van headed to the Bosnian border. They arrived there on 16th May at 5 am, near the estimated coordinates of 44.828689, 15.767291. The whole group got out of the van and the respondent saw four Croatian policemen, two of them wearing ski masks.

"They just told us to go and we started walking towards Bihać on a road for 1km. There were two Bosnian policemen and a police van there waiting for us. They first told us 'go back to Croatia' but then let us continue the way towards Bihać."

Once they arrived to the city, the respondent took a bus and came back to Sarajevo.