

26/10/2018

"AND I CAN'T TELL YOU THE FEELINGS OF THAT NIGHT"

Date and time: October 26, 2018 12:00

Location: near Strojopromet, Bosnia

Coordinates: 45.18553 , 15.815198

Push-back from: Slovenia

Push-back to: Croatia, Bosnia

Demographics: 20 person(s), age: 19-30 , from: Pakistan

Minors involved? No

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), theft of personal belongings, pointing flashlights in the eyes

Police involved: First caught by Slovenian officers. Later 25 to 30 Croatian officers in black uniforms and masks, with batons. One was shaved, another one had a mustache and a beard

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: personal information taken

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Unknown

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent left together with 40 men by foot from Bihac (BIH), crossed Croatia, and continued to Slovenia. After seven days of walking through Croatia, they reached Slovenia, from where they were supposed to be picked up by two taxis that were organized by some smugglers. The smuggler had not specified the time when he would meet them, so they were waiting in a Slovenian forest at the prearranged spot for five days. They ran out of food and water at some point and the respondent didn't feel well.

On the fifth day, two vans finally picked them up. The respondent was being transported in the backspace of one van together with 19 individuals of the original group. When they were around 4 km far from the Italian border, they were stopped by the Slovenian authorities. The van's driver immediately ran away and left them inside the car. The Slovenian officers were treating the men with respect when they caught them and transported them to a police station. At the police station, the Slovenian officers questioned them about their nationality and their intentions in Slovenia:

"The Slovenian police were asking us where we are from etc. I have the paper from Slovenia [the fine]. They said that I have a fine that I have crossed the border illegally, but if you can't pay it, it is OK, we will not request it from you. The behavior of Slovenian police was very good."

They were also provided with the help of a translator from Pakistan at the station. They spent one day in custody, and were afterwards transported to Croatia and handed over to the Croatian officers, who were also treating them with respect. In the end, the men were finally taken to the Bosnian border, where they were told to switch to a different car, driven by a different group of officers. Now, the Croatian border authorities were in charge of their deportation back to Bosnia. This Croatian officers drove them to a remote area close to the official border check-point in Maljevac (HRV).

Once they arrived there, they opened the door of the van and started pointing a flashlight to the individual's faces. The officers ordered them to get off the van one by one, pointing the flashlight in their eyes just before they would exit. Thus, they couldn't see anything when they stepped outside. Following, the officers physically attacked them. The respondent struggled to see from where the officers were attacking him from, as he had got blinded by the flashlight and the officers wore black uniforms.

"We were 20 in one van. They [Croatian border police] said to us to come one by one. They opened the door, one guy came out, they closed the door and we just hear the voices "oooo". They were in the shape of groups in five or six [police]. One group was standing near the van, one group little far from the van, another group also far from the van. Two police men hold one guy, put him down on the ground, then after, they started beating him. After three or four minutes, they said to him: "Go Italia! If you want to go to Italia, go to Italia! No go Bosnia, there is Bosnia!". But after when he was walking away, the other group [of police men] caught him and they beat him again. After that when the second group of police let us go, the third group caught us and started beating us again I could not run anywhere, they were everywhere in front of us ... One guy was telling them: "My arm is broken, my arm is broken!", but they did not leave him. They were laughing at us. When they were beating us, they were laughing ... You can see on my back I have lines after hit".

The Croatian authorities also stole the individual's bags, all their phones, money, and power banks.

After he arrived at the Bosnian side of the border, the respondent walked back to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladuša. He was struggling to walk as he was injured on his chest and legs:

"I was on a hill, and I fell from the top on my chest. I also had pain in my back and front and could see that the blood is coming from inside. I felt like I was drunk. I fell, and I was alone, I had no phone, and was thinking how to contact my friends now and take some taxi? My legs were shaking, so I could not walk. When I came down, no one was on the road. I needed a water. Nothing was in my pocket. One guy came to that road, and I begged him to give me water, and he gave me water. After, he went inside of a bar and I walked. I never forget this moment of my life. That was the first time, I am 22, but this night was very dark night for me. My chest hurt me like somebody shoot me on my chest. And I can't tell you the feelings of that night".

At the end of the interview, the respondent mentions that during this attempt to reach asylum in the EU, he had lost all his last money. Now, he struggles to move forward from the Bosnian transit, where he lives under a plastic sheet shelter in the camp in Velika Kladuša (BIH). At the same time, he can't return to Pakistan, back to a life in poverty:

"They [Croatian border police] took everything from us. They did not give us our bags and I had everything in my bag. If we belong to the strong family, we would not have to come here. But we are not financially strong, so that is why we came here. You know, in Pakistan, you work for 5 to 6 euros per day. In Europe, maybe it is 50 euros. You need – 3 euros for your food. What do you give to your family? How much money my family can send me [now]? I have already lost 2.300 euros in Bosnia because I paid to agent [smuggler]"