

22/08/2018

## "THEY TOOK MY LEG ORTHOSIS AND CRASHED IT WITH THEIR BOOTS, THIS WAS THE SECOND TIME CROATIAN POLICE BROKE MY LEG ORTHOSIS"

**Date and time:** August 22, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Around 45 km from Velika Kladuša, Croatia.

**Coordinates:** 45.364938705896385 , 15.491367217856919

**Push-back from:** Croatia

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 16, 22 , 24 , from: Iraq

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, threatening with guns, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian border policemen in black suits (one of them described as stout), one Croatian policeman in a blue shirt

**Taken to a police station?:** no

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The interviewee left with his younger brother and a friend from Velika Kladuša and walked to Croatia, where he wanted to apply for asylum. They were walking in the forest for five days and ran out of food and water. The interviewee reported that during the five days they spent in the forest, he only ate on one day and drank one bottle of water. He also has a physical disability of his left lower limb, and am using a leg orthosis, which made his walk even more difficult, especially in a forest terrain.

After five days, the men were walking inside of Croatia, approximately 45 km away from the Bosnian border, and were caught by 2 Croatian police officers whom the interviewee referred to as "commando" because they were wearing black clothes. The interviewee explained that the "commando officers" pointed guns at them and started shouting at the men to lay on the ground. Afterwards, the commando called three other police officers dressed in black and one officer in a blue shirt (all Croatian) who were supposed to deport the men back to Bosnia.

The interviewee clearly stated that he wanted to apply for asylum in Croatia, but the police did not react to his request. None of the men were taken to a police station or allowed to access to the asylum procedures. Instead, all of them were directly driven by a van to the Croatian-Bosnian border to be deported back to Bosnia. The van in which the men were transported did not have any windows or ventilation, and the men had significant problems breathing inside van. The police were also driving very fast throughout the trip, which took over an hour, and the men got sick:

*The van was closed. Sometimes it was a little bit of air and sometimes there was no air. They [the police] put there a little bit of cold air just enough so that we would not die and after they stopped*

When the car stopped at the Bosnian border, close to the official border check-point in Velika Kladuša, the men were told by the police to get out of the car. The interviewee explained that the police first broke their phones and stole their money, taking his 350 euros. Afterwards, these 4 police officers started physically attacking them while pushing them back to the Bosnian land:

*They told us to go. But I told them that I did not know where to go. I did not know where was the way back to Bosnia. And I saw our broken phones and thought "Oh God", and after the police started beating me. They were beating me with their hands, pushing me, and telling me: "Go, go, go!"... I told the police not to beat my brother because he was 16 years old. But they did not understand and were beating him too. They started hitting my little brother who is 16 years old, without asking anything. And after, they opened the cables of their sticks and hit my little brother. They kept saying to me: "Picko matre, fuck, fuck you, picko matre!". They also took my leg orthosis and after they crashed it with their boots. This was the second time they [Croatian police] broke my leg orthosis.*

The interviewee further explained that the police was also physically attacking his friend with a plastic baton that had metal inside. When the police attacked his friend, hitting him with the baton on his leg, his friend sustained a significant flesh wound. After the violent incident and push-back to Bosnia, the men walked together to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladuša. The interviewee's friend left to Sarajevo the following day.

*broken leg orthosis caused by the physical attack by the police, crashing it with their boots*