

08/09/2018

"THEY IGNORED THE REQUESTS THE FATHER OF THE CHILDREN MADE FOR ASYLUM"

Date and time: September 8, 2018 01:00

Location: Near Trnovi, Croatia

Coordinates: 45.087168311075466 , 15.707023589453456

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 5 person(s), age: 44, 9, 12, 17, 22 , from: Afghanistan

Minors involved? Yes

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, electric shock, theft of personal belongings

Police involved: 2 commando officers in black Croatian uniform, 1 officer in blue Croatian uniform

Taken to a police station?: unknown

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: Balkan Info Van

ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 8th. 2018, 5 people on the move travelled on foot in the rain through Croatian woodland inland from the border crossing near Šturlić, Bosnia. The 5 people included a family of three (father, son, daughter), alongside one unaccompanied minor and a young adult male. The weather conditions made it hard for the group to navigate in the dark, especially with the difficult terrain. The group became lost and was forced to retrace their steps. As a result they were forced to sleep a night in the mountainous forests, as they did not know in which direction to proceed.

Later the next day they had reoriented themselves and were walking along a single gravel track some way further into the Croatian interior. From a large road that crossed the track they were observed by a patrolling Croatian police car. They tried to stay in the edge of the woodland, but the police called to them loudly "come out!".

They were brought to the roadside, searched and had all their belongings removed. The police were made up of two officers dressed in black. They ignored the requests the father of the children made for asylum. Instead they asked the 9 year old girl:

"Where is your mum? Where is your mum?"

They kept repeating this until she replied truthfully that her mother was in France. The father described how the police officers immediately leapt on this and told the family:

"Oh, so you want to go to France?"

The police used this assumption as a way to ignore their right to asylum. Rather, they continued to rob the group and humiliate them. The two officers in black commando uniforms took their mobiles, powerbanks and around 300 euros. Finally another officer in blue Croatian uniform arrived and loaded them into his combi vehicle.

The children described how there was no light, or oxygen inside and five were cramped in the back. After the trip all the family members felt physically sick and nauseous. The vehicle delivered them back to the road border between Croatia and Bosnia on the northwest side of Velika Kladusa. They were pushed out onto the tarmac next to the customs office. The officers told them to get moving, but did not give them any of their belongings back.

The father of the two children approached them politely and asked for them to return his son's mobile phone. The officers reacted angrily to the request and used an electric rod to assault him. They hit him several times in the back of his legs, causing immense pain. It hurt a lot, even though he was wearing three pairs of trousers (against the rain and the cold). The children were forced to watch as their father was beaten on the concourse of the border crossing. Then the family of three, the unaccompanied minor and the young male walked back into Bosnia, with all their possessions stolen.