

29/11/2018

## "[THE POLICE OFFICERS] TAKE OFF SHOES AND BEAT ON THE FOOT"

**Date and time:** November 29, 2018 21:00

**Location:** Along road D42, Croatia, close a large wood market

**Coordinates:** 45.22579365221426 , 15.260150574247746

**Push-back from:** Croatia

**Push-back to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 17 person(s), age: unknown , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, gunshots

**Police involved:** 13 Croatian officers

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

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** No

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 17 left Bihac (BIH) by foot and crossed the border to Croatia on the evening of November 24, 2018. They walked for five days through Croatia. On the evening of their fifth day, at around 9 pm, while they were walking on the D42 road, a Croatian man observed the group passing by his house and supposedly called the police. After the 17 of them had continued walking for another hour on the road, they reached an intersection which was a short way after a large wood market. When they approached the intersection, the group discovered that there were four Croatian officers waiting for them. They were dressed in black uniforms and had black balaclavas. One of them had bright blue eyes. The officers told the group to stop, at which point four of the 17 attempted to escape. In response, one of the officers fired his handgun three times into the air. The officers got upset from the three escaping individuals, approached the remaining 13 and began to shine bright flash lights into their eyes. One of the officers told them:

*„Don't enter Croatia!"*

They then started beating all individuals, the respondent was hit several times with kicks and punches. Afterwards, their coats were searched for money and their bags for mobile phones. The officers took a total amount of €485 from different individuals. In addition, they took 11 phones and eight power banks.

They waited for some time at their initial point of capture before two small police vans arrived which they were told to enter. Eight individuals entered one van, and the five others another. The backspaces were windowless and the ventilation was very bad.

*"In the car, we can not breath, almost. There was no air."*

When all the 13 were inside the vans, the four officers called for back-up and soon after nine more officers arrived and started searching for the missing individuals. They were kept in these vans waiting during the individuals who ran away were located and brought back one after another. From their point of initial capture by the Croatian authorities at the

intersection the group was driven for four hours back to the Bosnian border. When they arrived, they saw many officers waiting there.

*„One police officer beat on the leg, one police officer beat on the hand, one police officer beat on the foot, one police officer beat on the head.“*

In addition to this, the officers intentionally destroyed their personal belongings

*„[There were] eleven sleeping bags cut with a knife by the police officers.“*

One officer was taking out an around 25 cm long knife and cut their sleeping bags open.

*„You press [a] button and [the blade] comes out.“*

They arrived back at the border around 12 pm close to a stream in a rural area where they could only see two houses around them. They watched how the officers would check their radio devices every two minutes and looked around with night vision glasses to ensure that there was no one observing their push-back. When they got off the van, they were forcefully handled by a group of nine officers. They would take one of them out of the van, two officers grabbed him on each hand and two other hold his legs, with the individual pinned onto the ground. Then, two additional officers hit him on the hands and legs with batons.

*„Two policemen beat on the hand.“*

After this, the individuals had their shoes taken off by an officers and were subsequently hit on the soles of their feet with batons.

*„[The police officers] take off shoes and beat on the foot.“*

While they were doing this to one individual, one of the officers told the man:

*„Don't cross Croatia!“*

The four of them who endured this treatment were the four individuals who initially ran away when the officers approached the group at the road intersection. The respondents inferred that the officers were intending this treatment as punishment for running away. One of the respondents who received this treatment had his feet bandaged by a medical provider in Velika Kladuša after returning from the border. The 13 others were hit with batons in their faces, chests, and legs however they did not receive the same individualized treatment as the four others. The group of 17 then gathered on the Bosnian side of the border before walking approximately ten kilometers back to the Miral camp outside of Velika Kladuša which took them about an hour.