

22/01/2019

"TO ME, THEY PUT A GUN ON ME, THEN WE WENT OUT, HE ASKED ME TO KNEE ON THE SNOW [...]"

Date and time: January 22, 2019 08:30

Location: Glina, Croatia, Croatian interior on the way from Velika Kladuša to Zagreb

Coordinates: 45.31921341749772 , 16.104840361836295

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 4 person(s), age: 28 , from: Algeria

Minors involved? No

Violence used: threatening with guns

Police involved: 3 policemen in dark blue Croatian uniform, 3 more officers in the van and at the police station

Taken to a police station?: yes

Treatment at police station or other place of detention: detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, denial of food/water

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: No

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of four left Velika Kladuša (BIH), on January 22, 2019. After they crossed the border to Croatia, they walked towards Zagreb. They walked the full night until they found an abandoned house to rest in and stayed there in different rooms. In the morning, a group of three officers entered the house after knocking strongly on the door. They wore dark blue uniforms with the emblem of the Croatian flag on their arms and carried handguns.

"To me, they put a gun on me, then we went out, he asked me to knee on the snow, but I didn't, I just put my hand in the air, and waited like this."

According to the interviewee, they began to shout at them and put on disposable gloves before frisking them outside. The respondent and the other three gave the officers their phones.

"Then they asked us some questions, 'Where do you want to go?' We answered that we want to go to Zagreb. Then they asked us how we wanted to go to Zagreb, we said 'on foot'."

After they finished the interrogation, the group of four had to walk hundreds of meters until they reached a white police van driven by a man and accompanied by a woman, wearing the same uniform as the officers who apprehended them.

While they were walking, the first group of officers became less aggressive and talked with the individuals. They made light fun about the potential of violence, with one of them showing the balaclava he had in his pocket. The mood was more relaxed, however the respondent still didn't know what would happen to them.

When they arrived at the van, the driver aggressively pushed them into the backspace, and they were driven to a police station. At the station, they were brought to a big room which looked similar to a conference room, with a board on the

wall, tables and chairs. One officers was in the room to monitor the four of them.

One by one, they were brought to another room and asked to fill a form with their name, surname, father's name, mother's name, country and region of origin. After this, the officer took a photo of them and a plate with their name and surname written on it.

After that, the respondent was brought to a room to clean his hands in order to give his fingerprints. He wanted to know the reason for giving his fingerprints, but couldn't understand the woman he asked, trying to explain it to him.

"I understood, 'fingerprint is asylum' and she spoke about orders. 'You have to give your fingerprints.' I told her 'If I give my fingerprints, I ask asylum, you don't send me back to Bosnia'. [She said] 'It is order, it is international fingerprints'."

He then gave his fingerprints, first his thumbs and then all other fingers. To finalize the process, the police asked him to sign a paper written in Arabic. He began to read it, but they took it away from him before he could finish, and asked him to sign it.

Then he returned to the conference room and attempted to sleep on one of the tables. They were allowed to use the bathroom, but were denied food.

"We asked for food, they don't want to [give us]. No cigarettes either, however I suggested to give [them] money to go and buy it for us. But in the end, one policeman found three cigarettes and gave it to us."

In the afternoon, they were driven towards the Bosnian border in a police van. On the way, they stopped and saw the three officers who apprehended them again. In the van, they were together with around ten other people from the move, supposedly Afghans or Pakistanis, who hadn't been at the police station previously.

When they arrived at the Bosnian border, somewhere between Bihac and Velika Kladusa, they all exited the van. One of the officers handed out bag a bag to the respondent with their phones and power banks and did the same with the second group of people. The phones were reset.

After the police van drove away, they walked towards Bosnia for around seven kilometers before they found a market where they bought food. On the way, they met a local person who brought them back to Velika Kladusa.