

01/09/2018

"THE OFFICERS AIMED HANDGUNS AT THEM AND SHOUTED AT THEM TO SIT DOWN"

Date and time: September 1, 2018 07:00

Location: Rijeka, Croatia

Coordinates: 45.3270631 , 14.442176000000018

Push-back from: Croatia

Push-back to: Bosnia

Demographics: 20 person(s), age: unknown , from: Pakistan

Minors involved? Yes

Violence used: beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

Police involved: Croatian police officers, caught and robbed by 2 officers (in black commando uniforms, using handguns to threaten the victims), at the border 9 border police officers physically attacking the men (in blue shirts and navy trousers, with several cars and one dog)

Taken to a police station?: unknown

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Yes

Reported by: Balkan Info Van

ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 1st. 2018, A group of 20 Pakistanis walked into Croatia from the Bosnian border near Sturlic. They traveled for three days through the woods in the mountains of Croatia, moving westwards, crossing the freeway numbered 1 near to Slunj, and heading north west towards Rijeka.

On the outskirts of the town (where the highway leads to the immigration crossing to Slovenia) the group was spotted on some open woodland. From a side road two officers dressed in black commando uniforms approached the group and ordered them to stop. The officers aimed handguns at them and shouted at them to sit down. The entire group complied and sat while the officers checked their bags and pockets and removed all their possessions. This included 500 euros and all phones and power banks of the group.

The men tried to communicate with the police in English, asking for asylum. The police, however, ignored the request and told them to "shut up". When they were being body-searched one victim asked again for the chance to claim asylum. The police officer frisking him took his BiH White Paper (15 day preliminary asylum seekers card) from his pocket. The officer told him:

No asylum, you have papers in Bosnia... You go back to Bosnia!

However, the officer withdrew the White Paper and did not return it. The officers called for a van and all the men were told to go into the back of the van, despite the lack of space and air. They were transported for approximately five hours in the van, with no food or water, to the Croatian-Bosnian border near Poljana. When the van stopped, the 20 men were held in the back with the doors closed for some minutes. Then an officer in a sky blue shirt and navy trousers opened

the back doors, summoning the men out in groups of three. There was a corridor formed by police officers on either side, nine in total, all dressed in the blue shirt and navy trousers of the Croatian border police. They also had a dog, a large German shepherd tethered to one officer, and it barked at the victims.

Once the men were out of the van, the officers beat the victims with overhead strikes with batons and kicked at their legs with steel toe boots. The three victims interviewed described how they received blows to their arms, legs, torso and head. The last ones leaving the van were the two minors (aged 12 and 14 years old). They were not beaten, but as the witnesses describe, the boys were forced to watch and listen to the cries of the eighteen others who were attacked by the police.

When the attack had finished, the police told the men to leave (threatening them all the way) and the men crossed the border into Bosnia. They walked in the rain, rejoining the road to Velika Kladusa between the villages of Glinica and Poljana. It took them four hours to return to the camp, and they were tired and soaked from the rain. The three victims interviewed asserted that this incident was just as bad, if not worse, than some of the previous beatings they had suffered from.