

**THE  
BLACK  
BOOK  
OF  
PUSHBACKS**

**Volume II**



**Border Violence Monitoring Network**

The Black Book of Pushbacks was produced by a group of independent experts from the Border Violence Monitoring Network and their partners. The BVMN is a horizontal, self-organised network of grassroots NGOs including Are You Syrious, Centre for Peace Studies, Collective Aid, Disinfaux Collective, Escuela con Alma, Fresh Response, InfoKolpa, Mobile Info Team, No Name Kitchen, [Re:]ports Sarajevo, Josoor, Mare Liberum and Rigardu. In addition to coordinated monitoring and reporting, these groups perform a huge spectrum of activities; from humanitarian relief, providing integration support and legal assistance, to advocacy work.

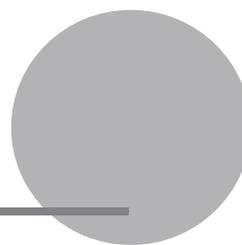
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# CROATIA



Reports of collective expulsions from Croatia have been well documented since the closure of the so-called Balkan route in 2016, with BVMN alone collecting 628 pushback testimonies, detailing the treatment of 6,328 people. The reports by UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants [1], Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights [2], Croatian Ombudswoman [3], Human Rights Watch [4], Amnesty International [5], Médecins Sans Frontières [6], \_AYS, CPS and Welcome Initiative [7], Danish Refugee Council [8] have all consistently corroborated BVMNs reporting and demonstrated the unlawful actions of the Croatian State.

The systematic practice of Croatian pushbacks has been further affirmed through testimonies of Croatian police officers shared by journalists [9] and through whistleblowers complaints to the Croatian Ombudswoman [10]. Police officers clearly described how they were ordered to “return everyone without papers, no traces, take money, break mobile phones or take for ourselves, and forcefully return refugees to Bosnia”.

Photo: Fractured forearm, Croatia to Bosnia-Herzegovina, BVMN:  
<https://www.borderviolence.eu/violence-reports/january-5-2020-0200-near-jagrovac-croatia/>



Over the last four years, the Croatian Ombudswoman's Activity Reports [11] have continuously highlighted how numerous migrants were denied access to international protection. Their expulsion took place without implementing any procedure prescribed by the Act on Foreigners [12] thereby ensuring no remedies were available. The conduct of the Croatian police described in the complaints may present a violation of Article 3 of the ECHR [13] - in both material and procedural aspects. This relates to breaches in the active torture and degrading treatment of persons, and the obligation of the State to carry out effective and detailed investigations.

Prior to being pushed back, people on the move are sometimes detained in formal facilities such as the Trilj and Tovarnik detention centres, but also in informal and inadequate facilities such as the notorious garage near Korenica police station, where people are held with no access to food, water or toilets [14].

Data collected by BVMN in 2020 indicated that up to 90% of all pushbacks may be impacted by one or more forms of torture or ill-treatment. Since 2017, BVMN member organizations Centre For Peace Studies and Are You Syrious have filed eight criminal complaints regarding pushbacks [15] and the use of violence and torture.

Three cases of pushbacks are currently pending against Croatia at the ECtHR: M.H. and others v. Croatia [16] (Articles 3, 5, 8, 14 and 34 of ECHR, Article 4 of Protocol No. 4), Daraibou v. Croatia [17] (Articles 2 and 3 of the ECHR), and S.B. v. Croatia (Articles 3 and 13 of the ECHR, Article 4 of Protocol No. 4 [18]). In 2019, courts in Switzerland referred to this body of law to justify suspending returns of asylum seekers to Croatia [19] under the Dublin Regulation [20], given that returnees could be at risk of refoulement.

Of increasing concern to BVMN is the continued unlawful treatment and pushback of children. In 2019, BVMN collected evidence demonstrating how punitive forced undressing was being used against children as young as 13. The activity report for 2019 of the Croatian Ombudsperson for Children [21] confirmed reception of 10 complaints about violations of migrant children's rights, mostly concerning unlawful expulsions of children at the borders with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. In 2017, a 6-year old Afghan girl was killed by a train minutes after she was pushed back from Croatia to Serbia [22]. In 2018, two 12-year old refugees were shot in their faces [23] by Croatian border police near the border with BiH.



Photo: Baton/tree branch injuries, Croatia to Bosnia-Herzegovina, BVMN:  
<https://www.borderviolence.eu/15983-2/>

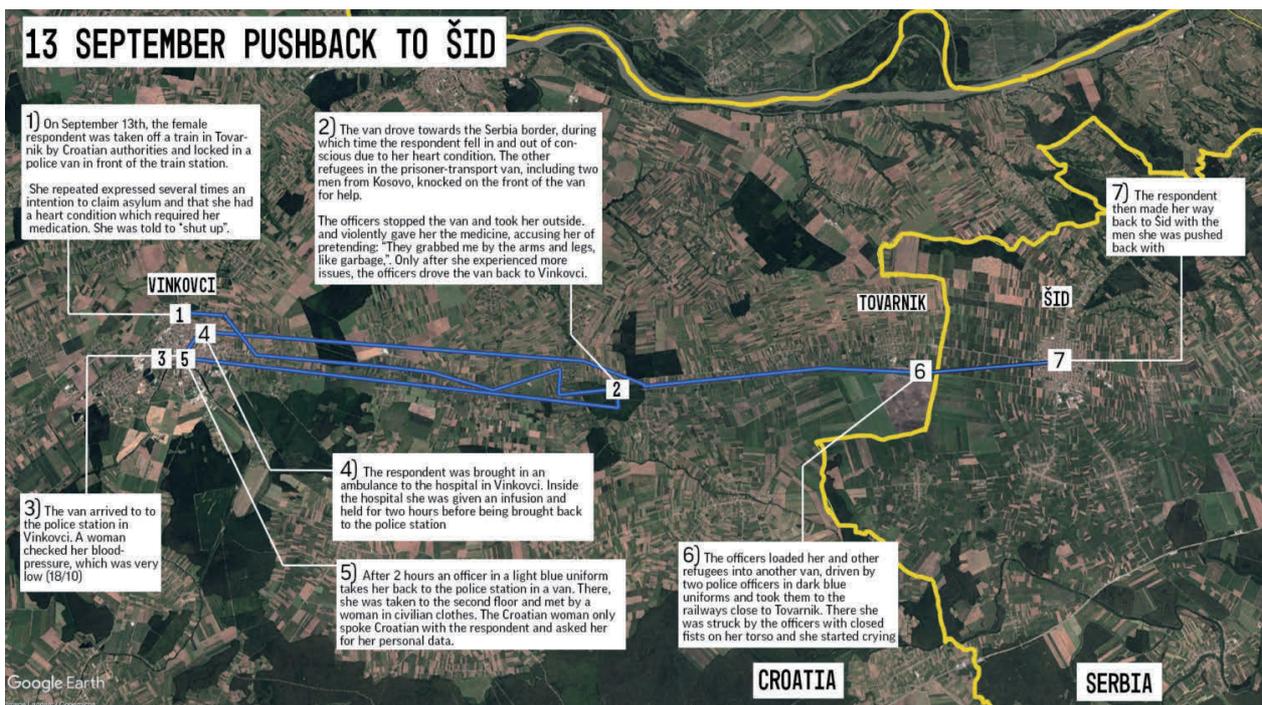


In addition to indiscriminate violence and the hunt for people at Croatian borders, police officers are entering buses, trains, stopping cars and patrolling large areas in search for migrants all over the country. Such raids sometimes end up in paradoxical situations where people who are legally registered asylum seekers and have been living in Croatia for years end up being “mistakenly” pushed back to Bosnia. Indiscriminate racial profiling and the complete disregard of people’s legal status was exposed in late 2019, when two Nigerian students with valid visas who came to Croatia to compete in a sports contest were illegally expelled to Bosnia based on the tone of their skin [24].

Although the Croatian Act on Foreigners [25] transposes the EU Returns Directive [26], Croatia appears to be violating key provisions of the Directive in regards to access to the asylum system, the principle of non-refoulement and the detention of third-country nationals, as well as the Asylum Procedures Directive [27], which stipulates the right to access asylum and to an individual procedure. Results of any investigation by the Ministry of the aforementioned allegations remain unknown to the public. The lack of effective and independent investigations demonstrates that the Croatian Government is unprepared to stop the violence and assure the rule of law.



Written by Sara Kekuš (CPS),  
Joseph Cripps  
and Milena Zajović (AYS)



Photos from top:  
Baton bruising, Croatia to Bosnia-Herzegovina, BVMN: <https://www.borderviolence.eu/violence-reports/july-29-2018-1400-croatian-border-with-bosnia-nearby-the-official-check-point-in-velika-kladusa/>  
Broken phones, Croatia to Bosnia-Herzegovina, BVMN: <https://www.borderviolence.eu/violence-reports/november-23-2019-0900-domio-italy/>

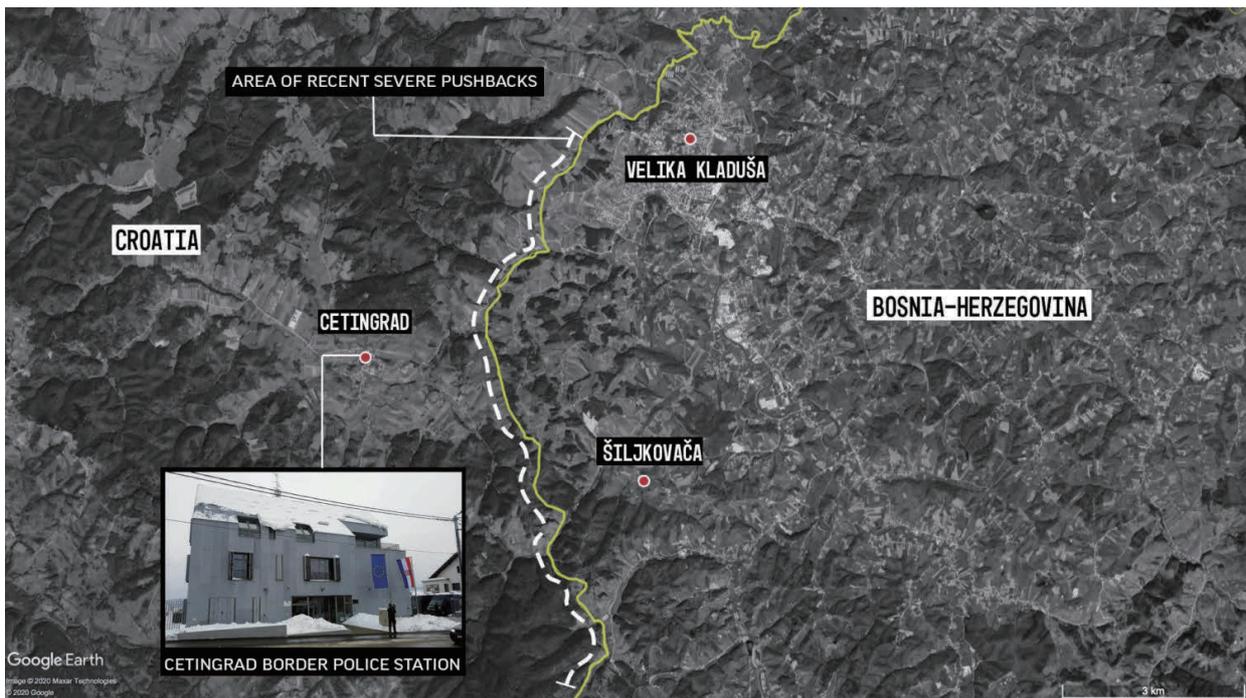


Photo: The whistleblower complaint to the Croatian Ombudswoman, March 2019 [28]  
English translation in right-hand text.

Poštovana gospodjo,

obraćam vam se za pomoć jer vidimo da jedini vodite brigu o zakonitom postupanju prema izbjeglicama i jednim ljudima prema kojima svakodnevno postupamo na nehumani i loš način.

Ujedinjeni narodi imaju pravo i radia na zaštiti državnih graniceve naše vrijeme. nas nekoliko više nemamo ni volje ni smage gledati što se radi sa tim ljudima. Svakodnevno ih vraćamo u BiH bez papira bez procesuiranja bez obzira o kom se radilo, žene djeca, prema svima isto. Nezaštićeni su i ako u iznimnim situacijama, kada je nešto medijski popraćeno.

Zapovijed načelnika i rukovoditelja i uprave da sve vraćamo bez papira, nema traga, useti nove mobitele razbiti baciti u ... ili si useti i izbjeglice na sili vratiti u Bosnu. To je istina kako postupamo sa njima, policajci na isposmo iz drugih PU su posebno okrutni u postupanju, jer su ljudi što su tu, a tu su kratko pa rade što žele bez kontrole, liše nas no jasnijare ruku, otisnaju. Ovo je žalostno ali intinito i to sve us blagoslov rukovoditelja iz policijske postaje i uprave.

Posebno nas par policajaca žalosti što na sve to nas potiču i to zapovijedaju rukovoditelji koji bi trebali raditi zakonito i to suzbijati i ne dozvoliti takove ponašanje policajaca. Na dnevnoj bazi ih vraćamo 20, - 30. Kada ih dovose iz drugih PU ljudi su iscrpljeni ponkad i protušeni i onda ih još ni vozimo tijekom noći i prebacujemo na silu u Bosnu.

Svega tu ima pa neki policajci posežu i za oružjem, to je sramno za ovu policiju, tako ju je nisam zamišljao kad sam išao u školu. Ja sam ih osobno tijekom noći vratio preko 1000, nastojim biti što humaniji, ali imam ... ako odbijem to raditi dobiti ću otkaz, a od čega su prehraniti oštel.

Nas nekoliko ima koji dijelimo isti stav vas molimo da spriječite ovakvo ponašanje i postupanje policije.

Sve ono što dolazi do vas, nastipni u medijima su tačni i vrlo blagi u odnosu što se radi u ovoj postaji.

Tekodjer jako je žalostno da se rukovoditelji u postaji, a naročito policijskoj upravi kada spomenu vaše ime iskazuju to na vrlo ružan i neprijatan način jer vi to nišim niste zaslužili, to ne dolikuje visoko obrazovanim ljudima ta vas časte zakovim epitetima i govorkama. Vi samo radite pošteno i tako vaš posao u skladu sa zakonima propisima i pravilima i tako bi trebalo biti i u policiji, ali našalao delako smod toga.

Još jednom vas molimo da osobnim angažmanom spriječite ove ružne poja ve koje mogu dovesti do tragičnih posljedica, a to nitko ne želi.

Vjerujemo u vas i vaše poštenje i zakoniti rad.

Nezadovoljni policajci RGP

REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA  
URED PUČKOG PRÁVONÁRANITELJA

Priloga: 20.03.2019  
PP H-1-616/19-32-1

Dear Madam,  
I am approaching you for help because we see you are the only one who cares for legality of dealing with the refugees and poor people whom we treat inhumanely and badly on a daily basis. I am an employee of the Border Police Station ... [redacted] ... and have worked on border protection for a relatively long time. There is a few of us who no longer have will and strength to watch what is being done to those people. Every day we return them to Bosnia, without papers and without procedure, regardless of who they are, women, children, everybody is treated the same way. There is no asylum, that doesn't exist, only - if ever - in extraordinary situations, when something is under media watch.

The chief of the station ... [redacted] ... and the officials in the Administration Unit give us orders to return everybody, without paperwork, without track, to take their money, to smash their cellphones and throw them into the ... [redacted] ... or take them, and return the refugees to Bosnia by force. That is the truth of how we treat them, the policemen who came from other districts to assist us are particularly cruel, because they are angry for being sent here, and they are here for a short time so they do what they want without any control, they remind me of janissaries, they beat, they snatch away. This is sad but true, and it all happens with the blessing from the chiefs of the police station and the headquarters. What particularly saddens a couple of us policemen is that we are encouraged and ordered to act like that by our bosses, who should be working legally and suppress such things, rather than allowing such behaviour of policemen. We return 20-50 people on a daily basis. When transferred from other police districts, the people are exhausted, sometimes beaten up, and then, on top of that, we transport them during the night and move them over to Bosnia by force. All kinds of things happen there; some policemen even pull their arms, which is shameful for this police, which is not how I imagined it when I went to school. I alone transferred more than 1000 people over the border, I try to be as humane as possible, but I have ... [redacted] ..., if I refuse to do this, I'll be fired, and how am I going to feed my family.

There's a few of us who share the same attitude and beg you to stop such behaviour and acting of the police. All the information that has reached you, the stories in media are correct, and very mild with regard to what is being done in this station. Also, it is very saddening that officials in the station, and especially in the police headquarters, when mentioning your name, do it in an ugly and inappropriate manner, because you absolutely don't deserve it, it does not behave highly educated people to use such expressions and curses against you. You only do your work honestly and with honour, in accordance with legal regulations and rules, and that is how it should be in the police too, but alas, we are far from that. Once more, we beg you to use your personal commitment to stop these ugly occurrences which could lead to tragic consequences, which no one wants. We trust in you and your honesty and legitimate work. Discontented policemen of the BPS ... [redacted] ...

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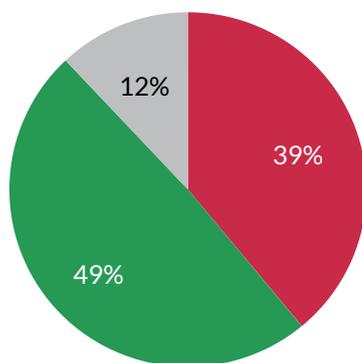
# STATISTICS

## Testimonies of pushbacks in Croatia

Year	Number of testimonies	Affected persons
<b>Overall</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>6,621</b>
2017	87	577
2018	191	1,737
2019	236	2,651
2020	110	1,656

### Pushbacks involving minors in Croatia

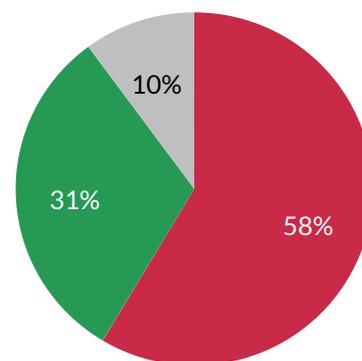
Percentage of testimonies in which at least one affected person was under 18 years old



■ Yes (39%)
 ■ No (49%)
 ■ Unknown (12%)

### Intention to ask for asylum in Croatia

Percentage of testimonies in which the affected people were pushed back, even though they expressed an intention to seek international protection.



■ Yes (58.59%)
 ■ No (31.31%)
 ■ Unknown (10.1%)

14/11/2020

## “I DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE”

**Date and time:** November 14, 2020 02:00

**Location:** Lohovo border crossing, south of Bihac, Bosnia

**Coordinates:** 44.71856488705, 15.922844898424

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 110 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, threatening with guns, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 12 male officers in grey military uniforms, 2 male officers in black Croatian police uniforms, at least 2 officers in black uniforms on the Croatia side of the border, 2 male police officers in black Bosnian police uniforms in Bosnia

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent's group consisted of around 110 people from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. He himself is an Afghan citizen.

The group walked through Croatia for approximately twelve days when they were stopped. The respondent explained that the group made detours and slow progress due to the group leader's advice.

On the night of the 13th or 14th of November, the group slept in a forest near 23 road, between Gornji Zvečaj and Generalski Stol [45.352677, 15.401469]. At around midnight, two cars arrived, one was a van and the other a smaller vehicle. According to the respondent, the officers – twelve men – came out of the cars, all dressed in grey military uniforms. They also wore grey face masks that only showed their eyes. The respondent describes the officers as very tall and strong. He calls them “commando”, which according to the respondent was also written on the back of their uniform.

By their behaviour, the respondent could identify one group leader – he seemed older than the others and gave commands. The officers fired their guns twice into the sky and shouted out, imitating wolf howls, and screaming out words such as “stop”, “fucking migrants”, and accusing the group members of being mujahideens and terrorists. They directed the whole group towards a small road nearby. The respondent reports seeing the officers bearing wooden sticks taken from the forest and using them in a few instances to make the group follow their instructions.

The group sat by the roadside [45.359066, 15.394999] for what felt like two hours to the respondent. He explains that he was forced to maintain a sitting position covering his ears with his hands, eyes to the ground. Hence, he could not see but from the screaming and moaning of

several other people he could tell that they were beaten by officers. He himself did not suffer any physical violence at this point. The respondent states that one man expressed in few words that he wanted to stay in Zagreb, to stay in Croatia. To this, an officer responded by saying “fuck you” and “no Zagreb”. As a result, the respondent explains that no other group member dared to express their intentions.

After what the respondent says felt like two hours, two more vehicles arrived. One of the vans was bigger than the other and both had the word “policija” inscribed on them. Two men in black uniforms, written “policija” on it, came out. The respondent reports that they insulted the group members and made jokes:

***“We will bring you to Germany.”***

Accompanied by boot kicks, the officers made parts of the group enter the van. In pairs of two, police cars kept coming and taking away group members. The third time a pair of police cars arrived, the respondent was loaded into one of the smaller vans. He explains that people jumped in voluntarily to avoid additional beatings from the officers. Pressed closely together, about 20 men were forced into the van in a standing position. They drove for what felt like multiple hours, according to the respondent. The respondent suggests that the officers intentionally drove in serpentine lines, trying to shake the van and make the people in the back suffer.

When they arrived a few meters away from the Bosnian border [44.710407, 15.924522], the officers made them exit the van. The respondent recalls the sun rising, it was already the early morning. There were other men in different uniforms waiting for them. The respondent remembered seeing two men, but cannot confirm whether there were other officers nearby. He says that they were both dressed in black, wearing black ski masks and black gloves, nothing written on their uniforms. They bore guns, knives, and batons. Everyone had to sit in line. An officer pulled on the respondent’s jacket and jumper, and they were instructed to give them all their personal belongings, which included their jackets, bags, sleeping bags, telephones, valuables, shoes, socks, jumpers. According to the respondent, some of the group members also had to take off and give them their t-shirt. Those people were left with nothing but pants on. He considers himself “lucky” for not being one of them. He did not have a telephone, but he gave away the 20 euros that he had in his jacket pocket, as well as his shoes and socks, his jacket, jumper, his backpack and sleeping bag. A fire was already burning when the respondent’s group arrived at the spot, in close proximity to where the men sat in line. They were forced to throw all their belongings into the fire.

After that, the respondent was part of a group of 20 people forced to cross the border into Bosnia together. They had to walk by an officer that struck each person on the back once or multiple times with a baton. He then yelled at them to “run, run, run”. The group met the street on the Bosnian side of the border and followed it, through the municipality of Lohovo to the crossing with the coordinates [44.714252, 15.925376].

At this point, a Bosnian police car with two officers awaited them. The officers wore black police uniforms. They told the group to walk to Lipa camp. When the group members complained about not having any personal belongings or shoes, the officers assured them that they would get everything in the camp. After that, the car left.

The respondent shares that he has never suffered such treatment from officers before, in any of the countries he has passed through.

*"I didn't see anything like this before. Iran is different. Turkey is different. Bulgaria is different."*

13/11/2020

## "YOU HAVE ASYLUM? THE OFFICER'S RESPONSE WAS: NO WAY!"

**Date and time:** November 13, 2020 03:00

**Location:** Pljesevica mountain, near Zavalje municipality

**Coordinates:** 44.767861362396, 15.779643906738

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 86 person(s), age: unknown, from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, threatening with guns, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 7 officers (male) in all green uniforms, wearing green ski masks; 5 officers (4 male, 1 female) in blue uniforms with "policija" written

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent is a 28-year-old Pakistani citizen. He was part of a 86 people group that crossed the border from Bosnia to Croatia. He is able to specify the number of people with precision as the group counted its members on a regular basis. The group consisted of male citizens from Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, and Bangladesh, and, according to the respondent, around 15 minors. They had been on their way for seven days when they came in touch with Croatian officers in the afternoon of Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup> at around two or three o'clock.

The group had crossed the E65 road between Delnice and Rijeka in the north of Croatia. Near 3 road, in the surrounding area or perhaps in the Risnjak national park (coordinates [45.416174, 14.631746]), the group found a place to rest in the forest because three men suffered leg and foot injuries. The respondent does not recall seeing any houses around. The officers first discovered the three injured men. While the rest of the group was trying to run away, they soon realised that multiple officers surrounded the group from different sides. The respondent describes that he has seen seven officers, all male, in green clothes. They wore green ski masks that only left their eyes and mouth visible. According to the respondent, their uniforms had the inscription "policija" on them and all officers bore big guns and wooden sticks from the forest. The respondent calls them "commando". As the officers shouted "stop", "don't run" and "I will shoot" multiple times, all group members came to a halt, frightened, and sat down.

While sitting in the grass, the respondent took out some of the bread he had brought. He said that an officer came up to him, slapped him in the face with his hand and shouted "Why do you

eat?”. The group had to sit for what felt like 1.5 hours to the respondent. After that, the officers made them walk in line to reach the road, about 20 minutes away at a slow walking pace. The officers shouted in Croatian and hit several group members on their backs with the wooden sticks. They also took photos of the group with their smartphones.

When the group got to the roadside, the respondent recalls seeing six white “policija” vans. Aside from the officers in green clothes, he saw five other officers, including a woman. They wore dark blue police uniforms. The group was told to sit down and eat the food that each group member had brought with them in their backpacks. They were asked to give away their lighters and knives, the respondent stated to have done so. When he asked one of the officers for a cigarette, he shouted “shut up” at him. One group member asked: “You have camp? You have asylum?” The officer’s response was “No way!”

The officers in green uniforms left, while the ones in blue uniforms made more than 30 people enter each van. The respondent was in the last van. They drove for what felt like multiple hours. When they came out, it was dark, and the respondent could only see forest in the surrounding. There were more police vans stationed than there had been before, around 16 according to the respondent. They had brought more people, apparently other pushed-back groups. One by one, the group members had to take off their clothes and hand it to an officer: jackets, trousers if they wore multiple, backpacks and sleeping bags. The officers took photos of the belongings, after that they threw everything into a fire that was already burning when the respondent arrived.

For a second time, the group members were told to enter the vans. They drove for what felt like an hour to the respondent. When they were allowed to leave the car, two officers stood there and made them run towards the Bosnian border. It was a small dirt road. There was no physical violence involved at this point, but the officers shouted, “go, run!”. After running for ten minutes, they reached a wire fence that they considered to be the border to Bosnia. It took the respondent and the other group members about four hours to walk to Bihac. On their way, they passed a village with a Christian church which the respondent identifies as the church of Zavalje in the southwest of Bihac.

**11/11/2020**

## **“GIVE US 50 EUROS, THAN WE WILL LEAVE YOU, IF YOU DON'T, YOU WILL SPEND FIVE NIGHTS IN JAIL”**

**Date and time:** November 11, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Border crossing Sot, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.172490897533, 19.34805331803

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 15, 18, 18 and 18 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 2 or 3 Croatian police officers, black uniforms, one black police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

In the night of the 11th of November, four young men, including the respondent, attempted crossing the border between Serbia and Croatia whilst being hidden in a truck. At the Batrovci border crossing point, the truckdriver was described to have opened his truck and saw the four men and asked them to come out of the truck.

Subsequently, two or three Croatian policemen wearing black uniforms approached them and ordered the group out of the van, during which time they were reported to have said: ***“Give us 50 euros, than we will leave you, if you don’t, you will spend 5 nights in jail”.***

Not being able to pay this money to the authorities, the four men were led towards a black police van and had to wait for a long time. After this, officers from the station drove them approximately 20 km up the Serbian-Croatian border to the border crossing point outside of the Serbia village of Sot near Camp Principovac. The waiting time and the driving time together felt very long. The respondent describes this time being between five and eight hours.

The van finally arrived there, at a spot where no one could see them, at which point the officers took the money the men had on them as well as their mobile phones. After this, the respondent described that there was a physical exchanged between the four men and the authorities for a time, between 5 and 10 minutes. The authorities used their hands and feet to fight as well as batons. After this fight, the four young men walked back to Šid.

09/11/2020

## “WHILE THEY WERE IN THE WATER THE OFFICERS THREW BIG ROCKS INTO THEIR DIRECTION ”

**Date and time:** November 9, 2020 00:01

**Location:** near the highway D6, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.519055298389, 15.440006589062

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 8, 11, 28, 28, 31, 34, 46 , from: Palestine, Iran, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian police officers in dark blue uniforms, 14 officers, of which 3 female, with dark uniforms, some with black ski masks

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

In this case, a group of four men, one Palestinian, three from Algeria and a single mother with her two daughters, of Iranian origin, were pushed back. The men were 28 to 46 years old. The age of the children was estimated by the respondent to be about 8 and 11. The mother herself could hardly be older than 28. The incident took place on November 9, 2020.

The men started walking together in Velika Kladusa, Bosnia and met the mother and her daughters later in the Croatian forest, only minutes before the police found the group in the woods.

At that time, they had been walking for 5 days into Croatian territory and found themselves about 35 kilometers from the Slovenian border. The respondent described that they left the D6 road and entered a wooded area in which they had walked about 4 kilometers before the police stopped them. A total of four police officers in dark uniforms were present. As it was during nighttime, approximately around midnight or one o'clock, the men could not see a lot.

***"On your knees, sit down, sit down!"*** the officers shouted to make them stop.

The group was surrounded, and each member searched for their mobile phones. Then the men had to undress while handing over their money. The mother with her children was separated from the now naked men. But the children as well as the woman also had to hand over their jackets to the officers while they waited in the woods for the ordered police van. This endured about an hour in which one of the officers made a fire out of the jackets and backpacks of the people-on-the-move.

The respondent describes that one police officer was leaning to the police car, drinking whiskey out of a glass bottle, while he was making fun of the men kneeling on the forest ground. He insulted all their family members as well as the men.

***"He said weird words. I don't want to repeat them. But I can tell you it was without any respect. He insulted my mother, my sister, everyone. Weird words."***

At this point the officers were also hitting the men with up to two-meter-long branches that they took out of the woods.

***"With the power that comes from the distance, they hit the big branches on our backs. I told them: 'please stop. Can't you see how thin I am? Please, please have pity. Pity, please.' But they laughed at me and hit me even harder."***

After a while an officer received a call that the van to pick the men up had arrived. The group was forced to line up and walk to the police van. The wife and children were put in a separate, normal car. The two cars drove together to a place next to the Croatian-Bosnian border.

The drive lasted about an hour. During this time, the driving officers turned the Air Conditioning down to freezing temperatures, so that the men, dressed only in boxers and T-shirts, were freezing in the back of the van.

They stopped at a place on the border, around 3:00 a.m. in a spot where there was a kind of small lake or pond. The car with the wife and children in it, pulled over to the side where they were forced to leave the car. The respondent claimed that there were 13 to 14 police officers waiting for them. Most of them were wearing balaclava masks and black uniforms, from which they would have removed the badges to make themselves unrecognizable.

**“And then the fight started. The first one had to go there. ‘Get naked!’ and then they hit him. After. The second one: ‘get naked’ and then bam, bam, bam. Next one: bam, bam, bam. It was like war.”**

The men were struck on their whole bodies and onto their heads with batons, branches and fists. While they struck the men, they were insulting them. Even though the officers didn't touch the children and their mother they were also insulting them. Plus, the respondent claims that the mother and her daughters must have seen everything that was happening from distance.

**“Then they say us: ‘now swim’. They speak, go into the lake and swim. Just imagine. It was night. So dark and so cold. Then they started throwing big rocks in our direction into the water. Imagine. It was dark, the men had been drinking. What if a rock would hit my head?”**

When the men got out of the water they had to walk over the border. The police officers fired several gunshots in their direction.

The indicated location refers to the point of apprehension, not to the pushback.

**08/11/2020**

## **“WE ARE NOT ANIMALS, WE ARE HUMAN BEINGS”**

**Date and time:** November 8, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Batrovci, Serbia

**Coordinates:** 45.0472251, 19.1069959

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 15-25 years old , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 2-4 Croatia police officers with green uniforms

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of November, a group of 15 men from Afghanistan attempted to cross on foot from Serbia into Croatia. The group first arrived near the Batrovci crossing border point, at which

point somewhere between two and four male Croatian police officers with green uniforms started running behind them and catching up to them.

When caught at a more hidden spot near the Batrovci crossing point, the officers were described as having ordered the group to stop and searching the group-members belongings. The respondent described that he and his fellow group-members had their money and their mobile phones taken from them. The respondent described trying to explain to the policemen how this money is essential to him since he does not have any family members in Afghanistan who could send him more money.

After taking their belongings from the group-members, these officers were described to have become physically violent with the guys using their hands, their feet and batons. The respondent described being hit on his ear and having his hair pulled. After this fight, which lasted four or five minutes, the group was told to run away back into Serbia.

**25/10/2020**

## **“BEATEN FOR KEEPING HIS POSSESSIONS”**

**Date and time:** October 25, 2020 14:00

**Location:** Sadikovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.121738, 15.734681

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 25-30 person(s), age: 17-37 , from: Pakistan, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 10-12 Croatian police officers in dark blue uniforms, "MUP" emblems, one white police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On Sunday, October 25, 2020 a group of 52 people-on-the-move crossed the border to Croatia in the forest near the Bosnian villages of Johovica and Donja Vidovska. The group members ranged in age from 17 to 37, and except for one Tunisian, they all came from Pakistan.

After crossing the border, they walked for several hours through the hilly Croatian forest next to the border. They encountered a hunter in the woods, and a few minutes later were caught by police, who the respondent suggests may have been informed by the hunter.

When the ten police officers, nine men and one woman, approached the group at around 13:00, many of the group members tried to escape by running back towards the Bosnian border.

Some five officers started running after the fleeing people to catch them and bring them back. About half of the men managed to escape, and the others were held by the police in a clearing [45.121738, 15.734681] close to Sadikovac. The police called their colleagues, who soon after arrived in a big white police van. The police officers present at this point were all wearing the dark blue uniforms, with a "MUP" insignia on their sleeves.

While waiting for the van to arrive, the remaining 25 to 30 people-on-the-move had to sit down. One after another they were intensively searched by the officers. All valuables, cell phones and power-banks were taken from them and stuffed into a large bag. A female officer hit the bag with the cell phones several times with her baton to destroy them. When the police asked for his phone, the respondent said he only had one; However when he was searched the officer found another mobile phone in his clothes.

All the people were stuffed into the van together. The first men to enter the van were handed the bag with the destroyed mobile phones. Because they were so many people, they had to squeeze themselves very tightly together inside. By the end of the 30-minute drive, they experienced breathing problems due to the lack of oxygen. The interviewee also said that the van driver was driving recklessly and the men were flung around inside the vehicle.

When the men arrived back at the border, which they crossed just that morning, they had to leave the van one by one and line up. In this spot were some more police officers, wearing balaclava masks covering their entire faces. The van driver informed one of those officers that the respondent had lied about his second phone.

The respondent was forced to sit down and one officer ran towards him, kicking him strongly in the torso. Another officer struck him five times with a baton, on his leg, knees, arms and lastly on his ribcage. The respondent described how he could not breathe properly and was gasping for air for 30-40 seconds after the last strike onto his ribs.

Lastly, the lined-up men had to walk, hands on their heads, back to Bosnia. When they arrived at the border, the Croatian policemen ran behind them, chasing them across.

The indicated location refers to the mentioned clearing close to Sadikovac, not to the pushback.

**23/10/2020**

## **"IT WAS A MASSACRE"**

**Date and time:** October 23, 2020 05:00

**Location:** Karlovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.489681, 15.571015

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 30 - 40 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, gunshots, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 10-15 Croatian police officers in dark uniforms and black ski-masks

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of six Algerian men, aged between 30 and 40 years old, were apprehended by Croatian authorities after they had walked for four days through the Croatian interior from Bosnia-Herzegovina. The men described that in shortly after midnight on October 23rd, they were close to reaching the city Karlovac, only needing to cross a bridge over a river next to the city center. The group of people-on-the-move waited in a wooded area about 900 meters away from the bridge, waiting for the situation to be safe so they could pass the bridge. At approximately 2:00 am, while they were still hiding in the woods, several police officers approached the men.

The respondent estimated that there were somewhere between 7 and 10 officers present that wore dark uniforms. They were described as having encircled the group of men, so that there was no chance for them to escape. In the forested area, the men were described as being forced to undress completely during which time one after the other their belongings were searched thoroughly for money. The men also had to hand over their mobile phones and power-banks. Completely naked, they sat on the wet forest floor for about an hour while the policemen called for another crew to come and pick them up in a large police van.

While they waited, the men were not allowed to look up. If they did, they were struck with batons. During this time, the officers were described as insulting the people-on-the-move. These insults left a special impression on the respondent:

***“They leave nobody out of your family. They insulted my mother, my father, my sister, my brother. All of them. They called me a son of a bitch, my sister a whore. They play with your mind; they try to deeply demoralize you.”***

When the van arrived to the forest, the men were allowed to put on a t-shirt and their boxers and were then forced into the vehicle with which they were driven back to the Bosnian border near Velika Kladusa. The drive took about an hour, and accordingly the men arrived at the border at about 4:00 or 5:00 am.

At the pushback site, they were forced to leave the van again, one at a time. Upon exiting the van, they encountered about 12 policemen that were covering their faces with black ski-masks. The respondent described that once again the men had to strip completely naked and then lie down to the ground. They then were struck from several police officers at the same time. The respondent claims that they were not only using their fists and batons, but also massive branches, which they took out of the forest and which were up to two meters long.

***“It was a massacre.”***

The respondent estimated that each man was beaten for about 15 minutes. After the beating was over, their bodies were taken and carried to the side. There, the officers piled the naked men on top of each other.

***“Never in my life will I be able to forget this. This humiliation, how they piled us up like dead animals”***

After all the men were struck, they were then forced to line up in a file and cross the border, back to Bosnia together. As they walked away one police officer fired several shots in their direction.

The indicated location refers to the initial apprehension, not to the pushback.

**22/10/2020**

## **“YOU HAVE TO GO BACK TO BOSNIA ”**

**Date and time:** October 22, 2020 23:59

**Location:** Buhača, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.184891429364, 15.776384297156

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 19 person(s), age: 3-45 , from: Afghanistan, Iran

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian police officers, one police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The pushback took place on October 22, 2020 right next to Velika Kladusa (NW Bosnia). The concerned group consisted of three families, two from Afghanistan and one from Iran (19 people in total). There were five women and at least five minors present, one of them only three years old. The two Afghan families started their journey together and were later joined by the Iranian family in the police van on the way back to the Bosnian border.

The two Afghan families started walking at around 05:00 to 06:00. on the same day in the forest next to the border area where they were staying. The interviewee estimated that they were just 10 minutes from the Croatian border, when they encountered a group of nine/ten young men. The group were wearing dark clothes and covering their faces with scarfs. They made the families stop and told them:

*“Stop, stop: give me everything from you.”*

When the families refused to hand over their belongings to the men, the masked group struck the male adults of the families. They also used a knife, cutting two of the members, one on his upper arm, the other on his belly.

*"They also give me a cut. They cut me with the knives."*

The interviewee described how the women and the children were very scared by the masked group and started crying. After the knife attack, the families decided to give over their possessions. Their bags, with all their food, water and money in it, their jackets and their shoes. The respondent thinks that their assailants were also members of the transit community on their way through Croatia. They were carrying back-packs and looked *"like the migrants"* to him. He also describes recognizing their accents in English.

Even though they were left scared, injured and without shoes and jackets the families decided to keep on walking into Croatian territory. After another four to five hours walk, they finally encountered two police officers in the woods, who told them to stop and sit down.

*"The police ask us: 'Why is you don't have bags?' We spoke: 'This is all we have left. Please help us.' [...] We say: 'please see us. We don't have nothing. Watch the weather. It is so cold. How we can go? Without shoes? We need your help.' They just say: 'no, you have to go'"*

*"I don't know why they don't understand us. They just say us: 'you have to go back to Bosnia'"*

The police officers called two colleagues who soon after arrived with a big white police van. All the family members were forced to get into the van and were then driven one hour back to the Bosnian border next to Velika Kladusa (in the Buhaca area on the Croatian side). Midway through this journey (after 30 minutes drive) the van stopped at the side of an unknown road and another family, consisting of eight people from Iran, were forced into the van.

When the vehicle arrived at the Croatian/Bosnian border, at midnight, all the families had to leave the van and walk over the border.

*"The say: Go! Fast, Fast!"*

Afterwards the pushed-back group walked another six hours through the night, without either shoes, jackets, food or water until they reached the place they were staying in.

*(Respondent pictured, having had his shoes stolen)*

**22/10/2020**

## **"PUSHED INTO THE RIVER"**

**Date and time:** October 22, 2020 16:00

**Location:** Glina river, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.208931237769, 15.808388493727

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 24-40 , from: Pakistan, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 police officers with grey/blue uniforms and 8 officers with black ski masks and dark uniforms

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

At around 7:00 a. m. on October 22, 2020 two Algerian men crossed the Croatian border next to the city Velika Kladuša, Bosnia. After they had walked for seven hours in the Croatian forest, they encountered two policemen with grey uniforms. Those two men stopped the two people-on-the-move, aged 24 and 40 years old, and ordered a police van, which soon after arrived at the spot and picked the two men up. Inside the white police van were already five other People-on-the-move from Pakistan.

The driver of the van drove all the men to a spot directly at the Bosnian-Croatian border, to a place just next to the river Glina. When they exited the van, one by one, several police officers in dark uniforms and black ski masks were awaiting them. Among the eight police officers was one female officer.

First of all, the people-on-the-move were individually searched for money and other objects of value. During this procedure the men were parallelly forced to take off their clothes until they were left only in a T-shirt and their underwear. Afterwards they had to hand over their phones and power-banks to the police. Later on, one officer put all of the stuff that they took from the men into a bag and hit it several times with a baton until all their devices were destroyed. Their bags were piled up on the side and set on fire.

Afterwards the men had to knee down, looking towards the ground. Several police officers, the respondent estimated five policemen, encircled him and started kicking and beating them individually from all sides. The respondent describes that he directly fell to the ground after one officer kicked him strongly on his upper body. While he lied flat on the ground the officers kept beating and kicking him several times.

Approximately one hour later, at 4:00 p.m., the men were compelled to put back on their clothes and line up in a file. They were then forced to enter the river Glina and swim over to the other side, where they arrived back in the Bosnian territory. The respondent describes how some of the men were pushed into the cold water by the officers when they hesitated to enter it. He describes that the water of the fast-flowing river was very cold. As the men were wearing all their clothes and were weak after the beating, the respondent was surprised that all the People-on-the-move somehow made it onto the other side.

***“I am sure if someone couldn’t swim, they would have died in this river.”***

Afterwards they were all soaking wet and had to walk more than 25 kilometers in the falling temperatures of the evening and during the night, until they reached Velika Kladuša.

***“Croatia is like this. Someone enters the country without papers, they will hit him.”***

19/10/2020

## “YES, YES ASYLUM - STATED THE OFFICERS BEFORE PUSHING THEM BACK”

**Date and time:** October 19, 2020 23:00

**Location:** near Velika Kladusa

**Coordinates:** 45.166639271413, 15.767101833488

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 25-35, 40 and 42 , from: Pakistan, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, pepper spray, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 male Croatian officers, 12 Croation officers with ski-masks

**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, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The two Algerian men that were push-backed on October 19, 2020 from Croatia to Bosnia were first apprehended by two Croatian police officers the same day, at 03:00 p.m. At this hour the two men, aged 40 and 42, were in a park in a small Croatian village. They crossed the Bosnian-Croatian border west of the Bosnian town of Bugar on October 18, 2020. The respondent estimated that they had walked about 14 kilometers into Croatian territory before stopping in the park to rest.

After the police apprehended the two men, they were taken to a “normal, small police station” nearby. In total they spent 5 hours at the station. During this time, they were interviewed by a Croatian official who asked them their names, countries of origin, etc. Their fingerprints and mugshots were taken. The men also had to sign a document, and although the writing was in both Croatian and Arabic, they were not given enough time to read it carefully. The interviewee described how he assumed that this would be the first step of his asylum application. When he asked the officer about it, the officer repeatedly said “yes, yes *asylum*”.

Before and after the interrogation the two men stayed in a small room and were not given either food or water. They were not allowed to use the toilet, though the interviewee requested permission several times.

At about 08:00 p.m. on 19th October, the two men were put into a large police van. In the back of the van were another 8 people-on-the-move from Pakistan that were rounded up in the same night. The van then drove to the border next to Velika Kladusa (Bosnia-Herzegovina).

When the police officers opened the van at around 10:30 p.m., the people-on-the-move found themselves in a patch of forest. The interviewee describes that there was a total of 12 police officers standing in the clearing. All of them wore black ski masks and Croatian police uniforms. One by one, the people-on-the-move were forced to leave the van.

The first thing they had to do was to hand over their cell phones, valuables and money to the officers. The interviewee gave 250€ to an officer, who put it into his pocket. Afterwards, he was forced to strip completely naked, his clothes were put aside.

The interviewee described that he was told to lie down, his face pressed into the forest ground. One of the officers standing in a circle around him stepped onto his head with his boot. The officer stamped strongly on the respondent's head, moving his foot back and forth on the head. Afterwards the men were struck with batons and fists individually while lying naked on the ground. During this, the police officers were insulting the men. The respondent estimated the time the officer struck him to be between 10 to 15 minutes.

Afterwards he was allowed to put his underwear and T-shirt back on. He waited, lying flat a few meters away while the remaining men were struck. The whole group then was forced to file up with their hands behind their heads and walk over the border back into Bosnia.

*(Injuries from group members incurred during the attack at the border)*

**19/10/2020**

## **“WE DON'T KNOW WHY THEY ARE BEATING US LIKE THIS”**

**Date and time:** October 19, 2020 16:00

**Location:** near Velika Kladusa

**Coordinates:** 45.183073830364, 15.776910842817

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 22 person(s), age: 22-35 , from: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 8 Croatian police officers, 2 police vans

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On October 19, 2020 at around 16:00 a group of 18 people from Bangladesh and Pakistan were apprehended by the Croatian police in an unknown rural area after walking some 9 hours into Croatian interior. The respondent, a 25-year-old Pakistani man, remembered crossing the border from Bosnia over a small mountain and then walking for several hours in the forest until they encountered the police officers, who told them to stop. The men were put into two big police vans, where they found four other men from Algeria who were already detained. In total the detained group was now 22 people.

The people-on-the-move were driven to the border somewhere near the Bosnian city of Velika Kladusa, where a police officer opened the door of the van in which the respondent was sitting. Seven people were then forced to leave the van. The respondent described how the people that stayed inside the van sat listening to the events outside while waiting for their turn to leave.

*"We were listening from inside the van how they were shouting and hitting the people. They were making so much noise, and we listen from inside the van."*

When the respondent was forced to leave the van, he described the situation he encountered as follows. There were eight Croatian police officers present, spread out over the patch of woods. Half of them, were wearing black uniforms, ski masks and gloves. The other half were wearing black-and-brown colored uniforms. A group of five officers were standing in a circle, one officer was standing just next to the van and another two were standing off to the side.

The police officer stationed next to the van searched the respondent for money and valuables. The respondent described how he was forced to take off one layer of clothing after another until he was standing fully naked in front of the officer.

*"Then he asked me to open my mouth. I opened my mouth and the police officer just slapped me in the face on the open mouth. With the hand."*

Next the respondent was called over to the group of five officers standing in the circle. When he arrived the men encircled him and told him to put his hands on his head. One of the officers ran at him and kicked him with his boot on his chest.

*"He kick, kick, kick my chest. And I fall down. I cannot breath. I make noise also. And he say to me: 'Don't make noise. Keep quiet.' How to keep quiet?"*

When he was lying on the ground the five police officers started hitting him from all sides with batons and sticks they found in the woods. After he was struck a couple minutes, he was forced to get back up. The officers allowed him to put back on his boxers, a pair of pants and a T-shirt. The respondent described how when he bent over to put on his pants, an officer kicked him strongly from behind so that he once again fell onto the ground.

*"I don't understand. We don't argue with them. We are so polite. Once they say: "lie down" we are lying down, but they beat us so much."*

Then the respondent was instructed to come the two policemen standing on the side. They made him lay face down on the forest floor and wait there for the remaining members of his

group. While he waited for about 20 minutes, he was randomly beaten several times on his back with batons. Additionally he claims that at one point an officer stepped on his head and pressed his face into the rocky ground with his boot.

*"We don't know why they are beating us like this. We are also humans. As humans we should not be beaten like this. We feel pain. As you feel I also feel."*

When all of the seven group members were finished with their beatings, they all had to stand up and file up in line with hands on their heads. The police officers then walked them a few meters over the border into Bosnia, flanking the filed-up men, and hitting them randomly.

The respondent was left with severe bruises on his back and legs, a swollen ankle and bleeding in his eye. Furthermore he described how he and other group members were coughing blood until the next morning because the police struck them on their kidneys.

The indicated time refers to the apprehension, not to the actual pushback.

(Photographs taken of the injured transit group in Bosnia)

**17/10/2020**

## **"IF YOU SEE HIS EYE, THEY HIT YOU"**

**Date and time:** October 17, 2020 18:00

**Location:** 12 hours walking from the border

**Coordinates:** 45.327580796116, 15.849983078125

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: 1-3, 8,9,10, 25-50 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 10 Croatian police officers wearing light blue uniforms

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The push-back took place on October 17, 2020. The concerned group is an Afghan family with a total of twelve members: The grandparents in their fifties, two sets of parents aged 26- to 35-years old and several children: three babies/smaller kids, and two girls and one boy aged eight, nine and ten years old.

They began walking early in the morning, at approximately 6:00 am, from the place where they were staying north of Vrnograc. After walking for nearly twelve hours into Croatian territory, they encountered two police officers somewhere in the forest. The officers ordered them to stop, and phoned another officer who came soon after, around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., to pick the families up. The officer drove the Afghans near Velika Kladusa, more than 20 kilometers away from where they were staying before in Bosnia.

When they exited the van, eight Croatian police officers with the light blue uniform reading "Policije" on the back and one police dog were waiting for them in a forest clearing. The family members were ordered to sit down and the officers encircled them.

The younger boy explained how he and his family were forced to knee down onto the ground, looking downwards. Each time one of them looked up, a police officer either threatened them with a gun or slapped them in the face. The children and women were not slapped, but the men were.

"You cannot see his eye. If you see his eye, they hit you."

Each of the family members were thoroughly searched for money, cell phones and other valuables. One of the mothers described feeling uncomfortable when the male officers touched her body to look for phones and money. She also described the anguish she felt when one of the officers stuck his hand deep into the pampers of her eleven-month-old baby boy to see if they were hiding a cellphone in there – which they were not.

While the officers only struck the adult males of the family with batons, some of the children and women also described experiencing violence from the police. The officers grabbed the small children very roughly and slapped the young boy on his back with their hands. They also hit one of the mothers on her face after she protested the violence against the children.

***"The police officer hit my mother."***

One of the two mothers claimed that the group spent what felt like an hour with the police officers. When they were finally told to leave and go back to Bosnia, they were compelled to hand all their backpacks over to the officers who set them on fire. Additionally, all family members had to take off their shoelaces and hand them over to the policemen. Without shoelaces, food and water, the family had to walk 20 kilometers during the night until they reached the abandoned house from which they set out the day before.

**17/10/2020**

**"IT'S A NIGHTMARE"**

**Date and time:** October 17, 2020 01:00

**Location:** Zagreb

**Coordinates:** 45.171824442235, 15.77055294024

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 16 person(s), age: 25-35 , from: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 2 police officers in Zagreb, 7 male Croatian police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On October 16, 2020 the respondent and three friends, all from Algeria, called a taxi in Zagreb, Croatia. After a few minutes of driving, the taxi driver then called the police and stopped at a nearby parking lot. After 10 minutes, at about 7 pm, two male Croatian police officers arrived, picked up the men and took them to a nearby police station.

At the police station the four men were each interrogated for about 10 minutes. They had to answer questions about their nationality, their names and other key data. The officers took photos of the group members as well as their fingerprints. Afterwards they were put into a white police van and driven towards the Bosnian border. On the way to Bosnia, the van stopped twice in other villages to pick up more people. At the first stop 5 people from Pakistan and at the second 7 men from Bangladesh got onto the van. The respondent described that during the ride the temperature was turned down so far that the men were freezing. He also described that the driver was driving so wildly that they could hardly stay in their seats. He braked very sharply, drove wildly in the curves, accelerated and braked constantly.

The police van stopped right in front of the border to Bosnia. Then 7 male police officers wearing light blue uniforms and ski masks, opened the door of the van. They forced the people to leave the van and walk with them over the border into the Bosnian territory. Somewhere in the forest, next to Velika Kladusa, they stopped and forced the men to line up into a file. First of all, they were asked to give all their money to the police officers. Then they had to get undressed and hand over all of their other belongings they were carrying with them.

“And then it started. It was like war. Seven against one”

One by one, the men had to leave the rest of the group and come forward individually. The respondent describes how he was surrounded by the 7 police officers who shone with their headlamps at him. He was beaten from all sides with batons and hands and kicked with feet. This lasted for 5 to 7 minutes for each of the group members. Afterwards their naked bodies were carried away and stacked up to a pile on the side.

He described how two men were laid down parallel to one another onto the ground, and then two more men were laid perpendicular on top of the first two, like a crosshatch. This process continued for multiple layers of men.

When the men were forced to walk away, back to Velika Kladusa, it was around 1am on October 17<sup>th</sup>. All of the group members had difficulties walking due to the beating by the police. The

respondent was left with an open wound on his head. Additionally, after this pushback, all of the men were left completely naked, not even wearing underwear.

“It is a nightmare. Maybe it is my fault, because it was me, who decided to do this route. I will not complain about it. You know, I only did it for the future of my two daughters, but I am thinking about going back to Algeria. One can not stand it. It is a catastrophe.”

15/10/2020

## “THEY TREAT US WORSE THAN ANIMALS ”

**Date and time:** October 15, 2020 04:00

**Location:** Buhača, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.187659406018, 15.781693360116

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: 27-35 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, threatening with guns, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6 male Croatia police officers, one police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The concerned group was apprehended by six male Croatian police officers on October 15, 2020 at 2:00 a.m., about three kilometers west of the Bosnia-Croatian border. The group consisted of 4 men from Algeria and 5 men from Morocco, ranging from 27- to 35-years-old. When the police officers stopped the men, they put them into a black van and drove them a few kilometers back towards the border [45.186800, 15.781288].

There the group had to exit the van one by one. Outside the van they were surrounded by several police officers who then struck them individually. The respondent describes how he could not see anything since they were in the forest without any light. Thus he had no chance to protect himself from the strokes.

***“They were beating me from every side with everything,” the respondent said. “With the baton, they hit me with their fists, they kick me. On my back, on my head, on my legs, everywhere.”***

He described how at one point he could no longer stand and fell to the ground, where the police kept striking him with their batons. Before the next man was forced to leave the van,

they picked up the respondent's body and carried him to the side, where they put him on top of the previous man they struck. "They make pyramids of our bodies," he explained.

**"They treat us worse than animals. Not even animals you would beat like the Croatian police beat us."**

The respondent estimated the men were beaten for about an hour. Afterwards they were forced to get up and undress to their boxershorts and remove their shoes. Their clothes and belongings were put in a pile and set on fire. The respondent is an asthmatic, so he asked one of the policemen if he could keep and use his asthma spray; instead the officer took the spray out of his hand and threw it into the woods.

All the group members then had to line up in single file, holding their hands behind their heads. When the respondent did not immediately put his hands behind his head, one of the police officers threatened him with his gun, whispering to him, "Next time I will kill you." The group was then forced to walk over the border into Bosnia accompanied by the six police officers. The people on the move were walking in single file with the officers flanking them on both sides. As all of the group members were seriously injured, they advanced very slowly, and the officers kept striking them to keep the group walking until they arrived. They walked for approximately ten minutes, and the police released the men at approximately 4:00 am in one of the forests surrounding Velika Kladusa.

The push-back resulted in serious injuries for all nine men: open wounds on their heads and legs, black eyes, welts and marks from the strokes, mainly on the upper body and extremities, and at least one sprained foot.

**11/10/2020**

**"HE HIT ME ON THE HEAD, ON THE BODY EVERYWHERE. THERE IS TOO MUCH PAIN I HAVE"**

**Date and time:** October 11, 2020 22:00

**Location:** Videkić Selo, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.145861, 15.774097

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 17-21 years old , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6 male Croatian police officers, two wearing light blue uniforms and two dark uniforms, (later they wore) ski masks,

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The concerned group, consisting of ten young people from Pakistan had walked for two days on foot through the Croatian interior after initially starting their journey from Velika Kladusa in Bosnia-Herzegovina. On October 11, 2020 at 6:00 pm, they were reportedly approached by two male Croatian police officers wearing light blue uniforms. The location was probably about 10 kilometers into the Croatian territory, near the small village of Videkić Selo outside of Slunj (45.061204, 15.655583). The two police officers told the group to stop and sit down, which they did. The two officers then called for 4 other police officers to come and join them. Until the other police officers arrived, the group members had to sit and wait on the ground. When the backup arrived, they came in a large van. Reportedly, the group was put into the large white police van and brought to a nearby police station. Most probably the Cetingrad Border Police Station.

At the police station the members of the group had to wait for what they estimated to be four to five hours, during which time they were interviewed individually by the police officers. During the procedure in which they had to present themselves, they were interrogated intensively.

***“They ask my name, my country, my mother’s name, my father’s name. They want to know everything.”***

With the information received, the Croatian officers filled out “many, many papers” which the young people had to sign afterwards. Additionally, they had their fingerprints recorded into a computer and the officers took photos of each of them. The interrogation as well as all the documents were in English, there was no translator present. The minor from the group reportedly claimed to be 20 years old and therefore did not receive any different treatment.

While they were waiting in the police station, they were not provided with neither water nor food. Whereas they could go to toilet the respondent claimed:

***“I didn’t want to ask them for anything. I don’t want to ask for water. I am understand directly that they not give food, no give water. They not help us.”***

After the interrogation the people were put back into the van and driven back to the forest on the backside of the Miral-camp in Velika Kladusa, near the village of Šiljkovača (45.145861, 15.774097). When one police officer opened the van again in the Bosnian forest, the respondent described seeing six male police officers were wearing black ski masks. In the following

moments, these officers forced the people to lie down onto the ground, lined up single file. ***“They told us to lie down as if we were sleeping, with the whole face turned to the ground.”*** The respondent claims that they were told not to look to the side. As soon as someone moved his head to either side, they got hit with a baton by one of the officers. ***“I also one time look to the side because my neck hurt very much and then he hit me onto my head.”***

The respondent described that for around an hour, the people-on-the-move had to remain in this downward looking pose. One by one they were forced to get up, were struck by one of the officers and then had to lie down on the floor, back to the others, again. The respondent explains that the officers used batons, fists and their feet to strike the young men one after another. He himself was beaten by the officer several times all over his body, but mainly in the pit of his stomach and on his ribcage. ***“He hit me on the head, on the body everywhere. There is too much pain I have”.***

After everyone was struck by the officers, and afterwards lied back onto the floor, they again had to get up one after another. This time they went besides and were there forced to undress and give all of their belongings to the officers. They burned their clothes and destroyed their phones. Whereas some of the group members were allowed to keep their shoes on, some were left barefoot. After they had burned the clothes of a man, they told him individually to go away before starting the same procedure with the next man in the file. ***“He was screaming to us: ‘Go! go back! I don’t like you. Fuck you. Motherfucker.’”*** The respondent described that after they had burned the clothes of the last one, the police officers started to run in the direction of the group members: ***“to make us go away. It was completely dark. We were in the forest, no light and no shoes and they run behind us [...] they scream: ‘go,go,go.’”***

***“This is not humanity. We are also humans.”***

**10/10/2020**

**““THEY BEAT YOU LIKE ANIMALS. THAT'S IT. IT'S NOT HUMAN ANYMORE.” ”**

**Date and time:** October 10, 2020 00:20

**Location:** Petrinja Bus Station, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1911155, 15.7673136

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 20, 30,32 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian police officers in civil, 8 Croatian police officers with black ski masks

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On October 9th, three Algerian men, 30, 32 and 20 years old, were apprehended at around 8:00 p.m. by two Croatian authorities in civil uniforms. They were at the bus station of Petrinja [where they just bought tickets for a bus to Zagreb]. Only a few minutes after getting onto the parked bus, the two officers made a passport control. Because of their missing papers, the men had to leave the bus immediately. Together with the two police officers, they drove to the nearby police station of Petrinja [Ul. Ivana Mažuranića 5A, 44250, Petrinja; coordinates: 45.441167, 16.285458].

At this station, the men were interrogated individually. Their personal information was noted, and they also had to sign a form, which the respondent claims not to know what it was about. "They tell you to sign it, and you sign."

Immediately afterwards, the three men were put into a van. Before they got in, they had to give their cell phones to the officers from Petrinia, who then drove them to the Bosnian-Croatian border near Velika Kladusa.

At the place where they stopped, around 11:00 pm, the three men were expected by "about 8 policemen" wearing light blue Croatian police uniforms and had black balaclavas covering their faces.

Individually, the three men had to leave the van one after another and undress completely. They also had to hand over their valuables and their money to one of the police officers. One by one they were then forced to get down on their knees and were then struck by several police officers surrounding them, while being completely naked. They were struck "with everything that is possible, batons, hands, feet." The respondent also claimed that the police officers were making fun of him, while they were beating him.

*"They beat you like animals. That's it. It's not human anymore."*

While being beaten, the respondent lost his implant denture (see photo), when a policeman rammed his knee into his face. He also claims to have had several bruises and welts, especially on his back and upper body due to the strikes. The respondent stated that the duration of the individual beating felt like 20 minutes. Afterwards the men were allowed to put their boxers back on, shoes and remaining clothes were piled up and burned.

09/10/2020

## “HIS PHONE AND JACKET WERE PUT ON FIRE IN FRONT OF HIS EYES”

**Date and time:** October 9, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Border crossing Batrovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.047783737436, 19.103393553814

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 30-35 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 2 Croatia police officers wearing black masks

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of four friends, including the respondent, crossed over from Serbia into Croatia on foot sometime during the second week of October. Together, they reached the second gas station on a forested stretch of the highway E70 after the city of Lipovac in Croatia, called Odmorište Spačva [coordinates 45.045220, 18.999356].

Three friends of the respondent were approached at this gas station while having a drink in Cafe 1 by the Croatian authorities. After this initial exchange, the respondent was the only one that managed to successfully run away from the officers and hide in the nearby forest. After running away from the authorities, the respondent stayed in hiding for three nights. On his fourth day, he described that two Croatian officers found him on the parking of the same gas station and put him in a police car. Shortly thereafter, they drove the man back towards the Batrovci border crossing.

When they arrived at the border, the officers asked the respondent to go out of the car. The respondent described that the officers wore black masks, and after he exited the vehicle, that they started fighting with the respondent while using a baton. The respondent described being hit by them, having his hair pulled and his phone as well as his jacket were put on fire in front of him. After the fight, the officers told him to run and cross the border towards Serbia.

07/10/2020

**“ WE HAD TO PUT OUR EYES DOWN. IF YOU LOOK INTO THEIR EYES, THEN THEY KICK AND HIT WITH STICKS.”**

**Date and time:** October 7, 2020 12:00

**Location:** Near Plitvički Ljeskovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.851077, 15.602289

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 50-60 person(s), age: 19-40 years old , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 10-12 Croatian officers, some in all black uniforms and some in camouflage uniforms, all male.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 7th October, at around 12:00 noon, a group of 40 to 50 people from Afghanistan were deported from Croatia to Bosnia. The group were all male and there were no minors present. The respondent, a 28-year-old-man, reported that a group of 140-150 people had been walking for 3 days in Croatia when they were caught near a lake [44.851077,15.602289]. There were 10 to 12 officers, some were in black clothes and a few were in camouflage uniforms. The uniforms had names on but the respondent said he couldn't read the names because *“we have to put our eyes down. If you look in their eyes then they kick and hit with sticks.”* The officers collected all the people in one place, and told them to take off their shoes. The officers checked the bags of the group and took all the money that they found.

After waiting a short time, 6 or 7 vans arrived to transport the group. There were 18-20 people in each van, no windows and no air conditioning. The respondent reports being in the van for 4-6 hours before arriving at a police station. It was impossible for him to know the location of this as he had no phone and no orientation after the van ride. The group were held at the police station for 4 or 5 hours in a concrete room. Several people asked to claim asylum in Croatia, but were ignored. No papers were presented and no-one told them what was happening. There were 50-60 people in the room, there was no food or water and no toilet facility. The respondent said *“They wait until night to deport us.”* The group were returned to the same vehicles as before (how many vehicles this time is uncertain) and were taken to this location (44.738864,15.907170). When they reached the border the officers took each group-member one at a time, searched their whole body and made a fire with all the belongings, including clothes. The respondent said he wasn't beaten badly this time, *“only two sticks”*, but his friend

was kicked and beaten with a baton. The group pushed back had to walk continuously until they reached the city of Bihac, Bosnia. It was too cold for them to stop moving without any clothing. Without phones, it took them one day to walk back to the city.

**03/10/2020**

## **“THEY TAKE EVERYTHING FROM YOU. NOT ONLY YOUR THINGS BUT ALSO YOUR MENTAL AND YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH”**

**Date and time:** October 3, 2020 16:00

**Location:** near Bogovolja, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.067988658594, 15.754767160136

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 25-34 years old , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** a group of seven croatian police officers of whom one female; the officers were wearing black ski masks and batons, one police car and a big white police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group, which consisted of 6 people, aged 25 to 34 years, left for Croatia during the night of October 3, 2020. They left at around 1:00 am on foot from Velika Kladusa in Bosnia. After walking about 30 kilometers in the forest along the Bosnian border, they entered to Croatia near the border town Šturlić. The respondent estimated the time at which they crossed the border to be around 2:00 pm.

According to the respondent, only a short time later they encountered seven Croatian police officers clad in dark uniforms. Of these seven officers, six were male and one was female. At this point the group was still walking in the forest and when the authorities took notice of the group, they shouted at them to stop.

***“There is police everywhere, so no chance to run away anyway.”***

In the following minutes, the police encircled the group shouting at them to sit down in a line.

***“They scream at you to sit down and not look up again. They scream all the time to you.”***

After this, the respondent described that he and his fellow group-members were beaten on their backs with a baton, one after the other – “as usual”. The respondent recalled that this time they were lucky “because they only hit us on the back.” Only one person of the group was hit several times onto his knees by the police, so that he now has difficulties walking. As they were not allowed to look up during the procedure the respondent could not tell what the police was doing in the meantime to the other members of the group. He did described that in the course of his interactions with authorities, he expressed an intention to claim asylum in Croatia.

***“Of course I ask them to get asylum. I ask every time. But they just laugh at you.”***

After around 15-20 minutes they were put into a large police van and brought back to a secluded section of the Bosnian border near Sturlic at which point they were told to leave the van. According to the respondent, they arrived back to the border at roughly 4:00 pm. After they left the van, the group was allegedly forced to undress to their underpants and a T-shirt. “Everything as usual”. All of the group-members had to give the officers everything they had with them: their phones and power banks, all of their clothes, including their shoes, their backpacks, their food and their money.

***“Like every time they made a fire and burn everything. The phones they destroy them with their batons.”***

After this, the group was told to walk back into Bosnian territory, which they did.

***“Then you have to walk back to Velika Kladusa and you have nothing. Really nothing. No phone, no money, no food, no clothes. They take everything from you. Not only your things but also your mental and your physical health.”***

**29/09/2020**

## **“THEY CONNECTED HIS PHONE TO THE LAPTOP THAT WAS IN THE VEHICLE TO RETRIEVE HIS DATA”**

**Date and time:** September 29, 2020 00:00

**Location:** north of Buzim, BiH

**Coordinates:** 45.106487242059, 16.096439758008

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 20 - 35 , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian officers with a surveillance van, 8 Special Forces officers in green uniforms and face masks, additional Croatian transportation van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Anonymous Partner

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of 4 men from Morocco crossed the border near Bužim (BiH) and walked through Croatia for 6 days. The respondent claimed he was in front of the group because he had the phone with the maps. On the 6th day, while the group was walking next to a village, one person saw them and called the police, so they decided to move toward a small path in the forest. The group were in a hilly area near to Osijek Vojakovački, on the border of Varazdin County in the north of the interior.

A few minutes later the group heard dogs barking, so they move faster toward the nearest highpoint in the forest (they were in the foothills of mount Gradec). Suddenly, eight police officers approached them. It seemed as though they had been waiting for them. They had two Belgian Malinois dogs (likely the ones heard earlier barking) and also parked nearby were 2 vans and 1 car with full equipment inside, such as computers, cameras and gloves. A further two officers were present – identified as the „drivers“ by the respondent – and were reportedly in charge of the equipment inside the van. The eight officers that captured them were described as wearing green uniforms with balaclava masks on their faces, carrying kalashnikovs (matching the description of Croatian Special Forces).

The apprehension took place at around 06:00 – 07:00. One of the group managed to run away, reducing the captured group to three. When the respondent tried to run he was stopped by one of the officers wearing green uniform and was beaten with a stick on his upper arm and his back. The officers took his phone and checked it and saw that the respondent had some pictures of him while training kick boxing and when the officer saw that asked him to put himself „en garde“ and started to fight with him.

***“He was big racist” stated the respondent.***

Two officers with balaclava masks, with another officer with green uniform started to punch him. All three from the group that had been caught were beaten by the police officers. After a while, he fell down and police officers keep beating him using sticks on his legs.

***„They beat me more because I had a phone and after they saw pictures of me in kick boxing“***

When they stopped, the respondent asked to call an ambulance but police officers started to laugh. After that they took his phone and money, they connected his phone to the laptop that was in the vehicle to retrieve his data. According to the respondent, this was to check the maps he had used to navigate. They then asked the group to take off all their clothes also their underwear, and they took their money that was hidden in the underwear, around 300 euros in total from all three people.

While checking the phone the officers found also a picture of a group hiding in the forest and asked one of them to find that place, while the rest of the group (the respondent with another person) were put inside the van. One van was filled with them two and drove until a main road, while the rest of the police officers took another person to go to find this other group about

5km far from where they were and once they found the spot the police told him he is a good guy because he brought them there.

From 08:00/09:00 until 20:00/21:00 the police officers drove the respondent and his friend around and time to time they were picking more people, from Pakistan and Afghanistan mostly (who have been caught earlier) and putting them inside the van. The respondent states that the officers were driving in a bad way and putting them cold then hot air to destabilize them, adding that they were feeling lack of air because of too many people inside the van. He describes the inside of the van as equipped with two benches along the sides of the van, one in front of the other, in a way that people inside started to fall down or were chocking against each other because of the cramped conditions. By the time they had finished collecting people there were at least 15 people in the rear detention area.

At around 21:00 that evening, the police stopped the van near the border, an area north of Bužim (BiH), according to the respondent. The officers asked them to go out one by one and took all their belongings and burned it into a fire place – but *“one officer was good and he gave me back my phone, maybe he saw my leg was broken”* the respondent claimed. After that, the people were forced to walk one by one in line between two rows of officers, who beat them with sticks. The group continue to walk and had to spend two more days in the forest there (in BiH) because the respondent couldn't walk.

The group reached Bužim, where they were stopped by two Bosnian police officers, one man and one woman, who wanted to bring them back in the forest. When they saw the injury to the mans leg they were under shocked and decided to call an ambulance. After that, the police officers left them there but the ambulance, which came around 1h later and drove the group to a tent built for Covid measures near the hospital of Bužim. There, the nurses called JRS (organization in charge of providing cultural mediator and medical follow up in USK). JRS apparently would not attend until the doctors sent them a picture of the injury of the respondent. When they finally arrived, they brought the respondent to the hospital in Bihać, where he was examined, xrayed, treated and after two hours was sent to be accomodated in TRC Lipa.

**25/09/2020**

## **“THEY DEPORTED ME ALONE, THEY DIDN'T EVEN CONSIDER MY PHYSICAL SITUATION.”**

**Date and time:** September 25, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Near Donji Zirvorac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.142931, 16.082282

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 41 , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 2 male Croatian regular officers in dark blue uniform jackets, 2 other officers one male one female, 2 medical professionals in orange uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Sometime around 25th September, a 41-year-old man from Iran started his journey to cross into Croatia from Sarajevo in Bosnia. This man has severe injuries to his back from a previous attempt to cross the border. The respondent remarked that he usually uses a wheelchair but was managing with crutches for his journey. He was driven in a car to a village on the Bosnian border, west of the city of Brod, where the car stopped. He then walked for 10 or 15 minutes to the bank of the Sava River, which forms the border between Bosnia and Croatia.

There was a small boat was waiting for him there. He crossed the river in the boat before being picked up by another car on the Croatian side of the river. This car drove him across Croatia towards the Slovenian border. There he was told to wait in the forest and another car would come and collect him. The man waited in the forest for a "few days". He was without food or water and had no communication about the car that was supposed to come. Eventually he had to seek help, **"I am so sick, I ask one of the locals in Croatia to call the police."** The respondent doesn't know the location of this as his phone was out of charge.

At around 4 or 5am on approximately the 3rd October the respondent sought the help of an older couple. "They served me well." and brought him a blanket and some water. The couple called the police and an ambulance. Two police officers in dark blue uniform jackets arrived (likely the 'regular' police), they were both male. There were also two medical professionals in orange uniforms who were also both male. **"They were mocking me and told the local people that it wasn't important."**

The medical professionals did not examine the man, they did not even touch him or come near him. "I insisted that I need medical help and asked for asylum." The officers made a reference to the fact that he is from Iran, implying that this was the reason that he would be deported back to Bosnia. The respondent explained that, by the time they put him in a vehicle to transport him, they had taken all his documents. This included legal papers, medical documents, his "yellow card" (the asylum seeker's card issued in Bosnia) and his driving license as well as photographs.

The officers transported the man in a van to a police station. He said that it was time for the change of shift of the police, around 7:00 am. He was left inside the van which was parked at the police station. One of the officers used the respondent's own money to buy him a Coca Cola and a sandwich whilst he waited. After some time he was let out of the van to wait in the parking lot of the police station. He was at the police station for a total of 4 or 5 hours.

**"They deported me alone, they didn't even consider my physical situation."** The respondent was handed over to two different officers, one man and one woman. By this time, the respondent was so unwell that he could not remember what color the uniforms of these officers were. They transported him in what was described as a black prisoners' van to the border between Croatia and Bosnia in an area with only forest around, near the Bosnian village of Štabandža [approximate coordinates of the pushback location: 45.142931, 16.082282]. These officers were not described as mistreating him, just telling him to cross the border alone.

He spent two nights here, the first night he slept in a cemetery, the second night he reached a house near the border in Bosnia outside of Štabandža. The family living in this house helped him, and he was able to use their wifi to contact his friends in Sedra Camp near Bihać who arranged a taxi to go and fetch him and bring him to Sedra Camp. He was later admitted to hospital.

**23/09/2020**

## **“THE POLICE OFFICERS STARTED TO SHOOT IN THE AIR WITH A GUN”**

**Date and time:** September 23, 2020 06:00

**Location:** North of Vrnograc (BiH)

**Coordinates:** 45.224192130625, 15.936035117847

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 18+ , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** gunshots, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 8 Croatian police officers (2 of which wore black uniforms and balclava masks)

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Anonymous Partner

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of seven men from Morocco crossed the border to Croatia from an area close to Bužim (BiH). After three days of walking, at around 01:30 in the morning on 23rd September 2020 on they were spotted by two Croatian police officers who shone a torch on them.

The group was strung out in a line, walking in pairs. When they were spotted by the officers on a small road, they started to run away. One of the police officers started to shoot in the air with a gun. The respondent was at the rear of the group, near to the police officers and heard the shots from close range, causing him to fall to the ground hard. He described how he felt that he had been badly injured on the shoulder and on his left knee, likening the pain to being shot and stating he was unable to move.

The police officers ran after the other men of the group, catching two of them, while the other escaped. The captured men started to argue with the police saying that it was wrong that they had injured their friend and asked the police officers to bring the respondent who was wounded to the hospital or to call an ambulance. The police officers denied the request and asked the two men to take him and put him in the van. They drove them until the border, driving in an erratic way that disoriented them and made them feel sick. The respondent started to yell because his leg was hurting a lot but the officers didn't answer his request.

At around 06:00 the police officers brought all three people back near the Croatian-Bosnian border (Bužim area), where two officers with black uniforms and balaclava masks on their faces received them with the support of another four police officers on the scene. Before exiting the van, they were asked to give to the police officers all their belongings and were told to continue their way to BiH. The two men started to walk, carrying the respondent in their arms, because he couldn't walk because of the injury to his leg. They walk around 500m and had to stop because of the difficulty of carrying the respondent. In that moment they saw another group of Moroccan men that had also been pushed back by the Croatian police. The two groups merged and they all helped the respondent to walk forward until they reached a small abandoned house, where they spent the night.

The day after they walked and arrived to a main road and they saw a big house, so one of the group decided to go to ask for help. The location of the house was around 5/6 km from where they were pushed back, in direction to the village of Vrnograc (BiH). One group member went and found a woman to whom he explained what happened and asked her to call the police. After a while, two Bosnian police officers came. They told the man who had requested help, *"if you lie we will punish you"*.

The police followed the person from the group to the point where the respondent and others were waiting for help. The respondent explained to them what happened and the officers agreed to call an ambulance, which arrived around 20 minutes later. The paramedic checked the respondent and told the police that the injury – severe injury to left knee – was probably caused while running and falling down. The paramedic took a bandage and cold water and put around the injury. After that he told the police to tell the respondent that if he wanted to go to hospital in Velika Kladuša he had to pay. Finally the police and the ambulance left the scene, leaving them alone.

In the meanwhile, the person that was seeking help and speaking with the local neighbor, saw a wheelbarrow and asked her if they could take it to carry the respondent. The person agreed and they walked 4.5km to arrive to her house. In the meantime, staff from International Organisation for Migration (IOM) were informed and three workers reached the house of the local woman where the group were sat waiting. The IOM staff decided to escort him to the hospital, so they asked the woman to drive him and they took the other people from the group inside their van. Once they reached the hospital in nearby Velika Kladuša, the woman went away and IOM workers accompanied him inside.

The respondent describes how he was roughly handled by the hospital staff (the same paramedic who had arrived on the scene near Vrnograc). According to the respondent, he believed the paramedic told the IOM workers in Bosnian that the respondent didn't have anything seriously wrong. However, the respondent spent 16 days in the hospital in Velika Kladusa, before being moved to Bihać hospital in October, where he had surgery on his leg. Now the respondent is accommodated in Lipa camp, but he still cannot bend the leg that was injured during the pushback.

15/09/2020

## “I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY”

**Date and time:** September 15, 2020 00:00

**Location:** 42 Road, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.921246435168, 15.602906764076

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 80 person(s), age: Reporter 23; others mixed , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), dog attacks, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Eight Croatian officers wearing all black

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 14th, a group of approximately 80 adult men and minors were pushed back from Croatia Bosnia near Bihać. The primary respondent making this report was a 23-year-old from Afghanistan.

In the days prior, he and his group ran out of food and water while making a transit attempt through Croatia. After two days without eating, they decided to turn themselves in to the police. They waived down a car on the D42 Road in Croatia at around 9:00 pm and asked the driver to call the police. He did so.

After some time, a total of eight officers, including one woman, arrived to the scene. The police who arrived wore black shirts and trousers, but no black masks. At this location, the men were robbed of their possessions including mobiles and money as well as their sleeping bags and rucksacks. Their clothes, except underwear were also taken from them.

Then they were ordered to get into several vans, described by the respondent as 'deportation vans', which drove them back to the Bosnian border with Croatia, near Bihać. The respondent described that they were incredibly crowded and that he believed there were at least 30 people cramped into his van. When they reached the border, the men were beaten with batons. They were told to run to Bosnia, however, the man giving this testimony said, this time they could not run, because they did not have shoes and were accordingly beaten more.

A police dog – a large, dark, German shepherd was also loosened to chase them. At least two members of the group were bitten, an adult and a minor.

As he finished making this report, the young man said, **“It is so cold, I don't understand [why they robbed and beat us, when we turned ourselves in and did not resist]”** – at that time, two days later, he had clothes, but nothing to keep him warm at night.

14/09/2020

## “MY 17 YEAR OLD BROTHER WAS BEATEN”

**Date and time:** September 14, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Bihac, Bosnia

**Coordinates:** 44.8119628, 15.8685645

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 44 person(s), age: Reporting family: 13, 16, 17; group mixed ages including adults , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** Eight Croatian officers wearing all black; unknown number of police officers

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On the evening 14<sup>th</sup> of September a group of 44 minors and adult men were deported from Croatia to Bihac. The primary respondent for this testimony was a thirteen-year-old boy who was accompanied in the group by his two brothers – 16 and 17 years of age respectively. At the time they were caught in the forests of Croatia, they had been walking for four days.

The respondent described that eight officers wearing all black uniforms and black masks – the respondent referred to them as “commandos” – apprehended the group in a forested area. They were beating the group-members after they caught them; they beat two men who had tried to escape particularly badly. The boy making this report and his sixteen year old brother were not beaten, but the 17 year old brother was beaten and described that his entire body was in pain, though the beating did not leave any marks. These officers ordered the group to stop and afterwards called for backup which arrived after some time in the form of a van.

The police who arrived as backup were described as wearing dark blue or black uniforms, distinct from those worn by the initially apprehending officers. According to the respondent, they loaded the entire group into a single van and drove back to the border. The respondent described the van as incredibly cramped.

The drive was described as taking approximately two and a half hours, after which time they were brought to a secluded area of the border near Bihać. It was still dark when they arrived. There, the police carrying out the pushback confiscated many if not all of the personal belongings of the group-members. For items of value, such as mobile phones, cigarettes, lighters, and chargers, the police were described to have set them aside to pocket. For items of less value – such as bags and backpacks and remaining contents like food – the officers reportedly threw them into a pile and lighting them on fire. After this, the group-members were told to walk back into the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which they did and then proceeded to make their way back towards Bihać.

13/09/2020

## ““THEY GRABBED ME BY THE ARMS AND LEGS, LIKE GARBAGE,””

**Date and time:** September 13, 2020 15:30

**Location:** Vinkovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.299746178284, 18.802293777335

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 (10 others) person(s), age: 45-50 , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting

**Police involved:** at least 5 Croatian police officers, one or two wearing light blue uniforms, the others dark blue uniforms.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent had started her journey into Croatia from Serbia with her daughter and son-in-law and around 7 other people-on-the-move on September 13th. On the way, the group separated because they were afraid of the risk of being apprehended.

The respondent wanted to take the train from Vinkovci (HR) to Zagreb (HR). She was already sitting in the train when an officer watched her from the outside. The respondent inferred that the officers must have been in the train station because they had caught around 10 Arabic speaking people on a goods-train previously [45.300082, 18.802153]. They were holding the people-on-the-move in the train station while searching the other trains.

After the officer had looked at her for 5 minutes he went inside the train and asked for her documents. When she responded that she did not have any, he took her to a van and forced her inside. When she was inside she knocked on the front and told the officers that she wanted to seek asylum in Croatia. She said she was more than 35 km into the country and that they would have to give her asylum. She also said, she has documents that she is chronically sick and that she did not feel well in that moment. She was afraid of having a heart attack.

One officer came to the back of the van and let her out. She showed her documents and said she has diabetes and uses insulin as well as a spray for her heart disease. She expressed her intention to claim asylum again. The officer responded by taking all the documents and throwing them on the floor as well as taking her bag and emptying it. There was no insulin in there but her heart spray. The respondent described that the officer then threw everything back into the van and insulted her in Croatian. The respondent repeated her asylum claims and expressed the illegality of the officers' actions. The officer told her something along the lines of

“shut up” in Croatian and forced her back into the van. This incident happened in front of the train station with civilians watching.

There were two police officers. One was wearing light-blue uniform and the other dark blue. The respondent described that the officer in light-blue uniform was inclined to take her to the hospital but the other one was opposed.

After the van started moving the respondent fell unconscious. The fellow people-on-the-move in the van only had very little water that they sprayed into her face to wake her up. Inside the van, there were two people from Kosovo and the others were Arabic speaking and had started from Šid, Serbia as well. They knocked on the front of the van. The van stopped after approximately 5 minutes. The officers opened the Van and took her outside. Someone found her spray. After she used that, while still laying on the ground, the officers kicked her and threw her back into the Van.

***“They grabbed me by the arms and legs, like garbage,”.***

This happened about 2 times more. The people-on-the-move knocking as soon as she got unconscious, the officers stopping, taking her out and kicking her while she was laying on the ground, visible for the others in the van.

After that they turned back to the police station in Vinkovci [45.28811, 18.80701]. They had not left the immediate area of Vinkovci because of the constant stops due to the respondent’s health. In the police station, the respondent still felt unwell. There was a woman that had some medical knowledge that checked her blood pressure which was very low.

Realizing the crucial state of her they called an ambulance and took her to the hospital in Vinkovci [45.292558, 18.818958]. Inside the hospital they treated her with some kind of infusion. The respondent was shaking a lot and needed insulin. After around 2 hours a police officer in light-blue uniform takes her back to the police station in a van. There she was taken to the second floor and met by a woman in civilian clothes. The Croatian women only spoke Croatian with the respondent and asked her for her personal data.

The respondent described again expressing an intention to claim asylum in Croatia. In response, the Croatian women reportedly told her “No problem, sign this” and handed her a paper which the woman-on-the-move signed. There was no higher ranking officer in the station, reportedly because of it being Sunday night.

After that they took her and other people-on-the-move into the van with two police officers in dark blue uniforms and took them to the railways close to Tovarnik. There she was beaten with fists on her torso and she started crying which the officer believed it to be “a role” – or an act. The respondent still has pain in her lower back from the beating and kicking by the Croatian police.

The respondent told us “At least deport us in a proper way, hand us to the Serbian police or something” but the Croatian police does not care. “They behave very badly, unpolite. Only insulting us”

The indicated location in this report refers to the place of apprehension, not to the pushback itself.

10/09/2020

## ““YOU JUST NEED TO WAIT AND WE WILL DECIDE WHAT WILL HAPPEN””

**Date and time:** September 10, 2020 05:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.148815235633, 19.160895481026

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 25-30 ,53 , from: Afghanistan, Iran

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving, misleading suggestions

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian police officers in dark blue border police uniform with Croatian coat of arms on the upper arm, 2 officers driving the Van with full face masks, 1 Van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** papers signed, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

At sometime between 8:00 an 9:00 pm on September 9th, the respondent and one other person-on-the-move (one Irani, one Afghan) entered into the Croatian village of Šenkovec, close to the River Sutla. In the days prior, the men had travelled through the interior of Croatia from Serbia with the intention of continuing on into Slovenia. The entered into the border village with the intention to buy water for themselves. During this time, a Croatian civilian spoke loudly towards the two, and called the police.

After some time, Croatian authorities arrived to the scene and asked for their documents. The respondent had a passport to show, without visa. The officers asked the other person-on-the-move for the same, however he did not have any documents to show. The officers then took both of them to what the respondent described as a small container which functioned as a police station. There were two female and one male officer at this location. The officers were wearing dark blue uniforms.

They checked the documents of the two people-on-the-move. The respondent additionally described that he had documents in his possession which alluded to his status as an engineer. Both he and his traveling partner expressed an intention to claim asylum. One of the female officers in the container handed him a paper to sign, however the respondent did not know what it said. The officers only spoke Croatian and did not have a translator present.

During their time in this container, the police officers were only chatting quietly to each other while they waited for a “deportation van” to arrive. The police officers had taken away the biscuits and water that the respondent and his friend had bought when they were caught, but at 3 hours into their detention, they were given back this food.

When the van arrived, the respondent noted that it had the word "POLICIJA" written on it. The two officers in the van were wearing full black face masks to disguise themselves. Their uniforms had the Croatian coat of arms on the upper arm. The people-on-the-move thought they would be taken back to Zagreb in order to access asylum procedures.

**"You just need to wait, and we will decide what will happen"** – about asking for asylum and the illegality of it being declined.

The two people on the move were then driven across the country to Tovarnik. On the way the van stopped somewhere in Croatia to pick up another group of people-on-the-Move. They ended up being around 10 people in the van in total afterwards. On another stop, the officers handed them a bigger envelope to put all their Euros and Kunas in. The officers kept all "modern" phones and powerbanks.

The respondent overheard the officers talking about him inside the car. He thinks they thought he would have more money, because he was an engineer, than his Iranian friend.

During the ride from Šenkovec to the Serbian border the officers took "unusual" roads, like dirt roads and drove very bad. The people-on-the-move inside the van felt sick because of this driving

When they stopped at the border to Serbia it was about 5:00 in the morning and they stopped where the railways from Tovarnik to Šid are. There they beat the respondent repeatedly on the legs and shoulders with a baton. The respondent asked for his passport and other documents back but instead of giving him his documents back they beat him again.

The respondent had hidden his Euros and Kunas while in the deportation van, but when they asked him to take off his clothes and shoes and searched him, they found the additional money. The respondent had the feeling the two officers focused on him because they had not found any Euros on him previously. They beat him again and insulted him.

The officers took him to Serbian territory and told him to "Go!" and never come back.

(Serbian territory: the respondent reported what happened to him at a nearby transit camp to HCIT. Then he went to the doctor to get pictures of his injuries taken. He is still in pain from the injuries. The complaint was sent to UNHCR)

**09/09/2020**

## **"THE BEATINGS COME DOWN LIKE RAIN"**

**Date and time:** September 9, 2020 20:00

**Location:** near Velika Kladusa, Bosnia & Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 45.036580963401, 15.751452681733

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 22 person(s), age: 16-32 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 12-13 Croatian "army" officers in green uniforms, an unspecified amount of camouflage army cars, 1 "army van", Croatian regular police, 1 Croatian police van, 6 Croatian police with black masks and black uniforms

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name KItchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 8th, 2020, 22 men aged between 16 and 32 years old – all from Afghanistan – left the Šturlić area of Bosnia on foot to get to Croatia. They were sleeping in the forest and woke up the following morning at around 6:00 am. The primary respondent reported that they crossed into Croatia sometime that morning.

At around 3:00 pm, they saw 12 or 13 members of what the respondent called "border army" waiting for them ahead, with a camouflage car parked several meters away. These men were described as wearing military green uniforms. They were not able to give the exact point of apprehension, but reported that it was in a hilly area still close to the Bosnian-Croatian border, and did not recall passing any significant landmarks. One respondent thought that because the "army police" seemed intent on intercepting them, they had been aware of the groups presence in the "jungle" for some time, and inferred that the officers had been tracking them prior to apprehension. The respondent attributed the camouflage color of the car to why they might not have noticed the police previously.

The officers yelled at the men "Stop!" before firing several rounds in an unspecified direction. The men complied with the order and sat down. After they sat down, the army officers inquired as to their names, ages, and countries of origin, writing them down in a notebook. They then frisked the entirety of the group, and confiscated telephones (eleven or twelve between the twenty-two of them) as well as their money, food, and water, and power banks. The primary respondent, a thirty-two year old man from Afghanistan, had three hundred euros taken from him at this time. They were then driven in one "army van", different than the camouflage car they saw in their initial apprehension, to an area that was described as similar to a parking lot; the respondent believed that it was some sort of army center.

The group and the army officers waited for about an hour at this center, before Croatian civil police showed up to take them to the border. The entirety of the twenty-two person group was then loaded in a single van and driven to the Bosnian-Croatian border. This van did not have windows or any source of light. Because of the amount of people in the van and the lack of windows it was extremely hot and difficult to breathe.

The drive to the Bosnian-Croatian border took what the respondent said felt like two to three hours, in which the driver took very sharp turns and drove very quickly. When they arrived at a stretch of the border about two kilometers from Velika Kladuša, the group was taken out of the van one by one. Because the van did not have any windows, the people in the van could not see

what was happening outside, but were able to listen. Several of them began to cry as they waited for their turn.

When the primary respondent was taken out of the van, he reported that six officers in black masks and uniforms were waiting outside. He described them as “like animals, tall and big”. The officers stripped him of his jacket, shoes, shirt and pants, leaving him in his underwear. One officer asked him “Are you smoking?”. When the respondent replied with “No, sir, I am not smoking,” the officer proceeded to use a baton to hit him squarely in the middle of his chest. After he beat the respondent for some time in this area, this officer said “Ok, no smoking for you now”. The six officers then lined up in rows of three across from each other and told the respondent to go to the middle of them, trapping him in between. The six officers proceeded to beat the respondent concurrently in a systematic fashion; the respondent described that one officer would beat his head, another his feet, another his torso area, one officer on each arm, and one on each leg. He said that the beatings came in such force and in such great amounts that they felt as though they were coming down upon him “like rain”. After several minutes of this beating, one officer screamed “Go quickly, run back to Bosnia!” Because the severity of the beating made it difficult to quickly flee, he slipped when attempting to run away. One officer then roughly pushed him facedown to the ground, grabbed his left leg to drag him backwards, and beat him on his left foot once again. After repeating their command for him to run to Bosnia, the respondent was finally able to run across the border, though he slipped several times once again while attempting to be quick in order to elude the officers.

After running about three to five hundred meters, he slowed down and tried to find the rest of his group. His sixteen-year-old brother likely had a broken arm; many other members of the group also sustained significant injuries. The group then walked back (with great difficulty) to Velika Kladuša.

**09/09/2020**

## **“TWO MEN PARTICULARLY ILL BECAUSE OF RECKLESS DRIVING”**

**Date and time:** September 9, 2020 00:00

**Location:** D1 road in Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.812704814334, 15.680500931532

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 14 person(s), age: Reporter 33; Group mixed including minors , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** Six Croatian officers in black; two Croatian officers in light blue shirts

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 9th, fourteen men and minors from Afghanistan were pushed back from Croatia into Bosnian territory. The primary respondent for this testimony was a 33-year-old man from Afghanistan. He described that in the day prior, the group had entered into Croatia on foot and were crossing the D1 road at which point they were approached and apprehended by six Croatian officers wearing all black uniforms. These officers came in two cars and, after ordering the group to stop and sit down, called for backup which came in the form of "deport police", as described by the respondent. These initial officers did not rob or abuse the group further.

After about four hours, two officers wearing light blue shirts, (similar to those worn by Croatian border police) arrived to the scene. Neither when they arrived at the border nor while waiting for the "deport police" were the group allowed to speak. They were simply told to sit quietly with their heads down. They made the group get enter into a large police van without air condition which had no windows in its back section. These officers then proceeded to drive the group for a long time, including in circles and as roughly as possible, back to the Bosnian border. Some of the group inside the van became ill and threw up during this time. Two men, the respondent described, became particularly ill.

When they arrived back at the border, the respondents described encountering several other officers who helped to facilitate the pushback. The police were ordering the group-members to take off their clothes (shirts, trousers), as well as hand over their phones, their travel bags and their money. They did not receive these back.

Reportedly, the officers then beat the group-members with batons and ordered them to run back into Bosnian territory. When the men were sent back to Bosnia, the police called a dog to chase them. This dog bit one man, however, the respondent did not give further details.

08/09/2020

**""WHEN THEY FINISH WITH MY FRIEND, THEY COME FOR ME""**

**Date and time:** September 8, 2020 22:00

**Location:** near Glinica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 45.210942698414, 15.945777451074

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 13 person(s), age: 28-37 years old , from: Palestine, Morocco, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 8 Croatian civil police, 7 Croatian police in black uniforms, black masks, and black boots, 2 Croatian police vans

**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, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

In the late evening of September 7th, 2020, a group of thirteen people (including one woman with her husband) from Palestine, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria left Bosnia to transit through Croatia. The primary respondent was a twenty-eight year old man from Tunisia, who said that he had been pushed back once before from Croatia and that the last time, the police were “good” to him.

Upon crossing into Croatia, the group continued walking through a forested area along the river. One respondent believed that they were in the border area of Maljevac at the time they were apprehended by the police. When they crossed the river – unspecified if this was through walking across a bridge or wading – they noticed two civil police officers waiting for them on the other side, as well as six more police officers ten or twenty meters further beyond the two initially apprehending them. They were then transported to a nearby police station.

When they arrived at the police station around midnight, they were fingerprinted and photographed, as well as made to sign documents without a translation or a translator provided. An officer also searched his phone; they opened the Maps.me application, and asked the respondent to show the intended route that he was attempting to take through Croatia.

The entire group was then placed in a cramped room for the night and through part of the following day. There was little lighting in the room, and the toilet was in the same room as the people. The group was held until 4:00 pm the next day without food, and could only drink water from the sink in the room, next to the toilet. At 4:00 pm, they were loaded into a windowless van and driven to a stretch of the Bosnian-Croatian border close to the Bosnian village of Glinica.

Though the primary respondent believed that they had been detained in a police station close to Maljevac (right on the Bosnian-Croatian border), the journey to the drop-off point took what the respondent said felt like five or six hours. This is because for the majority of the ride, the driver drove in circles, at some point circles small enough and at such a high speed to give the passengers the feeling that the car was spinning. While driving in circles, the driver turned on the air-conditioning to a high degree, making it difficult for the group to breathe. Several people vomited, and the woman of the group fainted.

When they finally arrived at the border, an officer opened the door and shone a bright flashlight into the van. The primary respondent said that he could still make out the black mask and the black uniform of the “cargo officer”. The officers proceeded to take them out of the van one by one; meaning that those who waited heard the Croatian officers beating their friends outside, knowing that at some point “when they finish with my friend, they come for me”.

When it was the turn of the respondent, the Croatian officer said "Come here," and took him outside the van, continuing to shine a bright flashlight in his face so that he could not see. The officer took his phone and five hundred euros given to him by a family member in France. He set his jacket, shoes and other clothes of his on fire. The respondent was then led down a small hill, where five more Croatian officers in the same black masks, black jackets, and black boots were waiting. When they arrived down the hill, this group of officers proceeded to beat him with batons. At some point when he attempted to look up at the faces of the officers, they proceeded to beat him even more aggressively. While they did not beat the Palestinian woman who came with her husband, they did take them both out of the van and brought them down the hill at the same time, forcing her to watch as they beat her husband. Several members of the group bore significant injuries, including facial injuries. After crossing the border into Bosnia, they spent the night in an abandoned house in Glinica.

07/09/2020

## "MINORS GAME" LOST IN CROATIA"

**Date and time:** September 7, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Velika Kladusa

**Coordinates:** 45.144985766836, 15.756488068154

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 21 person(s), age: Reporter 16; group all minors , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** pepper spray, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Eight Croatian officers in dark blue at apprehension; unknown number at station and deportation

**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, denial of blankets

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 7th, a group of 21 people-on-the-move – allegedly all minors – were pushed back from Croatia to Bosnia in the remote border area outside of Velika Kladuša. The primary respondent making this report was a 16-year-old child from Afghanistan.

According to the respondent, him and the rest of his group were initially apprehended in Croatia, close to the border of Slovenia. They had made their way to this location on foot in the previous week from Bosnia. They described being initially apprehended by two officers (1 man, 1 woman) who both wore dark blue uniforms. These officers made them sit and took their shoelaces during which time they searched their belongings. They called an additional six officers who then came, these officers were also wearing dark blue.

These officers took them to a police station in different vehicles. The respondent described that when they arrived to the police station, him and the rest of his group underwent a processing procedure during which time his picture was taken as was his personal information including his name, his parents' names, and where he was from. His finger prints were also taken in this station and he was made to sign a paper in a language that he did not understand.

The group was kept at this police station for two nights (around 48 hours in total) without regular access to food or blankets. During this time, he was asked by the officers why he was there and told not to come back; he told the police he only wanted to pass through, but they told him he could not.

After two days, the group was loaded in a vehicle driven back to the Bosnia border with Croatia. At the border, somewhere in the general area of Velika Kladusa, the respondent described that he was taken out of the vehicle and told to run back into Bosnian territory. During this time, he described that the police officers discharged a spray on his eyes and he "ran away very fast."

04/09/2020

## "IF YOU KEEP ASKING FOR ASYLUM I WILL FIGHT YOU"

**Date and time:** September 4, 2020 08:00

**Location:** Sturlic, Bosnia & Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 45.070631012331, 15.75318881103

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 17 and 34, unknown , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Morocco

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian officers in plainclothes, unspecified amount of Croatian civil police at police station, 5 Croatian civil police during transport to BiH, 2 Croatian police in black masks and black uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the night of September 3, 2020, two men, cousins aged between seventeen and thirty-four years old – both from Morocco – were sleeping in an abandoned house in the city center of Zagreb when Croatian officers entered and subsequently detained them. These men were dressed in plainclothes, described as a plain T-shirt and pants, as opposed to the uniforms of the Croatian civil police. They drove the men to a police station about five minutes away.

After being fingerprinted, photographed, and asked to sign documents without a translation, the seventeen year old boy asked for asylum several times while detained at the station, attempting to show them his camp ID in Bosnia and proof of his age. The first few times he asked for asylum, he was merely denied further procedure, but at one point the police officer told him “ Look, if you keep asking for asylum I will fight you.” They spent the night and through the next day until the following evening in a room without light or windows. The two men asked several times to use the toilet and at first were denied, but after the third or fourth time they asked they were finally granted use. This was the only time that they could drink water, from the sink next to the toilet; they were not given food during their time at the station.

The following evening, the two men were taken in a blue and white van driven by five Croatian officers in blue uniforms to the Bosnian-Croatian border. About halfway through the drive, they picked up around eight men from Afghanistan and Pakistan. The men described how the drivers of the van would alternate between driving at a high speed, and then suddenly and forcefully hit the brakes, creating an effect of the van moving “up, down, up, down”. They also turned up the air conditioning to an abnormally high degree.

It took about three hours total to drive from Zagreb to the Bosnian-Croatian border. At 8:00 pm, they arrived at a stretch of the border near to Šturlić, next to the Korana river. Two officers, one male and one female wearing black uniforms and black masks, waited at the border and proceeded to take the group out one by one from the van, the first being the elder cousin. When they took out the seventeen-year-old primary respondent from the vehicle, they took his jacket and shoes, poured gasoline on them, and set them on fire. While they did not burn his phone, they confiscated it in a plastic bag that presumably also held telephones taken from the rest of the group. He said that the male officer then began to beat him with a baton for several minutes, and after this the female officer administered a baton with electric shocks to his hip and thigh area.

The male officer then pushed him to the river and told him to go to the other side. This respondent could not say precisely how deep the water was, but said that it was deep enough that “maybe if I did not understand swimming, I am dead”. He then swam to the other side of the river. When he did not immediately begin to run away after emerging out of the river on the other side because he was cold and wanted to rest, the officer fired three shots in the air and screamed “Go, go, go!”. He then proceeded to run away to reunite with his cousin a short distance away, and they walked back to Velika Kladuša.

**03/09/2020**

**“ “THEY SEARCHED HER [THE BABY'S] WHOLE BODY”.”**

**Date and time:** September 3, 2020 00:17

**Location:** Road Number 1 Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.807161, 15.681725

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 20 person(s), age: 1, 26, 28 15-30 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?:** Yes

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 8-10 male officers in blue uniforms. 6-7 male officers in all black uniforms. 1 police dog.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 3rd of September a 28-year-old man from Afghanistan, along with his 26-year-old wife and their 18-month-old daughter began a transit attempt through Croatia. They left Borići Camp in Bihać at around 5:00 pm and walked from there to the mountain which marks the border. The respondent described how dangerous the forest was, saying that it was easy to slip and fall, and that there are wild animals like wolves, wild boars and bears. "You can't go directly, you have to change your way. We had women and children, it takes time."

They had been walking for more than 12 hours when they arrived close to the Croatia's D1 road. This is where the Croatia border police approached and apprehended the group. The respondent described that it was difficult to count the officers as they were hiding in the trees, but that there were around 8 or 10 officers, all of whom were male and wore uniforms consisting of blue shirts. The officers searched everyone. The respondent described that male officers searched his wife and his baby, looking for hidden money.

### ***"They searched her whole body".***

The officers in blue shirts stole the phones and money from the group, the reporter had 2 phones and some money taken. They were then all taken to a police station where the respondent described approximately 50 to 60 people were kept in a single windowless room for between 4 and 5 hours. They expressed to the officers that they wanted to claim asylum and the officers said "Sorry, can't" or did not reply at all. The family was then handed over to the officers in all-black uniforms. The family, along with 2 more families and 5 single men, were taken in the back of one van together. There were around 20 people including 3 babies and 2 older minors. The van was like a prison van, it had no windows or light. They were in the van for around 3 hours, the conditions were so poor that people became dizzy and ill.

After some time, this vehicle arrived at the Bosnian border near a forest in the vicinity of Velika Kladuša. The officers, 6 or 7 men dressed in black with a police dog, took the remaining belongings from the groups and burnt them. The respondent described having two bags burnt – one with food, diapers and clothes for his baby daughter, and the other with clothes for him and his wife. The officers burnt these bags, and then told them to walk across the border. If they did not start walking, they would use the dog to scare people to walk. They had no GPS to tell them where they were or where they should go. They slept in the jungle until it was light so that they could find their way. They started on the long journey back to Bihać – around 50km – which took two days, they slept briefly on the way.

02/09/2020

## “THE EU DON'T WANT REFUGEES, THEREFORE I WILL BEAT YOU”

**Date and time:** September 2, 2020 00:02

**Location:** near Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.151868136629, 17.194104087758

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 35 person(s), age: 16-32 , from: Bangladesh

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, gunshots, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian police in blue uniforms, unknown amount of Croatian police in all black with black masks at the border, 3 police vans

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of thirty-five men were pushed back from Croatia to Bosnia on the morning of September 2, 2020. The group had departed from Bosnia a few days before. The two primary respondents from this group were seventeen years old and twenty-five years old from Bangladesh; the other ages in the group ranged from ages fifteen to thirty-two, also from Bangladesh. All the members of the group had been pushed back on several occasions, and described their experiences of attempting to cross through Croatia as a cycle of “catch, deport, catch, deport”.

At around 2:00 am on the morning of September 2nd, the group was walking in the jungle a few kilometers outside of Zagreb. When ten members at the forefront of the group exited and crossed a small road, three Croatian police spotted them and shouted at them to stop. The group first attempted to flee, but the officers began to fire shots in the air. Because the group was scared upon hearing the shots, many of them stopped and immediately sat down instead of attempting to avoid detention. However, the respondent said that several members of the group continued to run away upon hearing the shots, but they were subsequently detained after discovering that two more officers were stationed a short distance away in the direction they were running. The respondents said that the officers in this initial apprehension kicked them at some point during detention, but were unclear as to when in the interaction this occurred. They described them as wearing blue uniforms, and thought that they were “normal” Croatian police.

After the entirety of the group was seated, the police inquired as to their country of origin, and then searched them and took their powerbanks, phones, jackets, and the rest of their possessions. They were not taken to a police station or asked to sign any other paperwork or complete any administrative procedures, and after a short wait they were transported in three

blue and white vans to the Bosnian-Croatian border. The respondents approximated that each van contained about 12 people.

They described that the van was “jumping” during the journey, suggesting that the driving of the officers was likely intentionally erratic. The conditions of the car (no windows, many people) made it difficult to breathe. During the journey, the group pounded on the sides of the car screaming “Oh my god, save us, save us!”. The trip took around five hours, but the respondents said that around two of those hours were not actually spent advancing towards Bosnia; on several different occasions, the police officers would stop the van for no apparent reason, lock them inside and detain them there for some time. This was especially terrifying to the boys because of the lack of air in the vehicle. The respondents believed that this was done as another form of punishment.

They were taken near the border north of Banja Luka, where they reported that a different set of police officers wearing all black with black masks were waiting for them. When they arrived, those in the respondents’ particular van were taken out of the car in groups of four or five. Once they had exited the van, the police officers beat them one by one as the remaining three or four watched and those left in the van listened. One respondent reported that while the officer was beating him, the officer screamed at him that

***“Germany, France says they don’t need refugees, and the European Union don’t want refugees, therefore I will beat you, go back motherfucker (sic)”.***

After crossing back into Bosnia, the group traveled to Bihac in hopes of entering the camp there. At the time of the interview, one of the respondents and others in their group were still barefoot, several of them with significant foot injuries and a noticeable limp. One respondent expressed his belief that if “they not give punishment (sic), not take our food, they give me one chance, the situation will be better.”

**01/09/2020**

**““THE WORST IS THEM TAKING OUR BELONGINGS. WE WILL TRY AGAIN AND AGAIN BUT WE DON’T HAVE PHONE OR MONEY ANYMORE””**

**Date and time:** September 1, 2020 01:00

**Location:** Forested area on the dirt road north of Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.198436623144, 19.166062765398

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 14 person(s), age: 16-30 years old , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, pepper spray, gunshots, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 4 croatian police officers (2 police officers wearing light blue uniform, 2 police officers wearing dark blue uniform and helmets) 1 police car, 1 police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

In the early morning hours of September, a group of 14 people-on-the-move were pushed back from Croatia to Serbia. In the previous hours, the men had crossed into Croatia from Serbia on foot with the hope of continuing on towards Slovenian but were stopped along a remote, dirt road in a forested area near Vinkovci by a group of two male officers who approached the group in a patrol vehicle. The officers, who were described as wearing light blue, short-sleeved uniforms, shouted at the group to "Stop!" and when the the people-on-the-move started to run away, they discharged their handguns into the air four times, after which they became scared and stopped.

The respondent told us that him and his friends were then ordered to sit on the ground and had to wait for 20-30 minutes with a lot of mosquitos biting them. The officers asked which languages the group-members spoke, after which point they only spoke in Croatian for the rest of their interactions and insulted the people-on-the-move.

When a van, described by the respondent as being a white prisoner-transport vehicle with police written on it, arrived to the scene shortly after, the officers directed them to enter it and they were then transported directly back to the Serbian border. Two male officers, wearing dark-blue uniforms and helmets, were described as driving this van. The ride in the took about 30 minutes from near Vinkovci to the pushback location. The pushback location was described as being very deserted, with no settlements or houses visible around and quite far away from the railway line. During the interview the respondent pointed into the direction north of Tovarnik.

Arriving to the Serbian border, the police took everything from the people-on-the-move including all their clothes except underwear. The respondent said, he watched the police take the "better" phones and money into their own pockets. The rest of the belongings was covered with petrol and burned.

The Croatian authorities were described as beating the respondent and his friends with batons and discharged a large amount of pepper-spray on the group-members. The respondent mimed to us how he was basically being blinded by it and therefore not being able to provide close descriptions of the police officers. He also said, that his eyes kept burning for another to days and that he couldn't see clearly because of that.

### ***"Two days I felt like my eyes were burning"***

From the place where they were pushed back, it took the people-on-the-move approximately six hours on foot to return back to their starting location.

25/08/2020

## “THEY ARE MORE CRUEL DURING THE NIGHT”

**Date and time:** August 25, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Zupanja, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.109587373404, 18.700330568044

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 25-30 years old , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, gunshots, dog attacks, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian masked police officers, 2 police cars, 1 van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

#### “They are more cruel during the night”

The primary respondent for this reports described that he and a group of three of his friends crossed into Croatia from Serbia on the 20th of August. After this, he described that the group walked on foot for 4 nights after which point his group was approached and apprehended by a group of Croatian authorities, apparently with the use of night vision or thermal cameras.

The respondent described that immediately before this, the group had slept for two hours in a forested area near the E70 highway, north of Zupanja. They were awoken, however by a group of six Croatian officers wearing black balaclava masks, standing over the him and his friends. At this point, the respondent described that it was in the middle of the night, in the early morning hours of August 24th at sometime between 2:00 and 5:00 am. According to the respondent, the officers had arrived to their location with two cars had with them at least one dog.

The officers discharged their firearms two times in the air next to their heads in order to scare them and, without talking or even asking any questions they started to beat them with batons. Afterwards the officers send their dogs to jump on the respondents.

According to the respondent, the dogs had muzzles so they could not bite and make marks on the bodies of people-on-the-move. The respondent said that the officers would stop the dogs from attacking and then refer back to beating with batons. This appeared to have been repeated a couple of times.

After this, the Croatian authorities searched the involved people-on-the-move and took and destroyed their phones. Apparently, the primary respondent carried a phone for navigation and was subsequently beaten more than his friends. He assumed that this was because the officers thought he was a smuggler. He also recalled that for every possession they had with them, they would have been beaten more.

***"Everything I took out of my bag, they hit me. Whatever it was, they hit me."***

Eventually, the group was loaded into a white Croatian police van and began to be driven back to the Serbian border with Croatia. During this time, the police insulted the respondent and his friends and their families.

Arriving at the Serbian border, the Croatian police took all their clothes. When the people-on-the-move were naked, the police put their clothes and shoes on fire. Including their broken phones and even the one bread they had. Being naked the respondent and his friends were beaten again and afterwards pushed to cross back into Serbian territory.

After the police let them go they needed 8 hours to find back to the camp they started from, because the place was so secluded and they did not have any phones to guide their way.

**23/08/2020**

**"REPORTED DEATH: "MANY PEOPLE SCREAMED THAT THEY DID NOT KNOW HOW TO SWIM BUT THE OFFICERS BEAT THEM AND FORCED THEM INTO THE WATER ANYWAY.""**

**Date and time:** August 23, 2020 21:00

**Location:** Forest area outside of Rupa, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.482126, 14.280089

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 33 person(s), age: 19 - 35 , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

During the last week of August – approximately the 23rd – a group of 33 people-on-the-move were pushed back from Croatia to Bosnia-Herzegovina. The group was composed of men from Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The primary respondent for this report, a 19-year-old from Afghanistan, described that his group of around 30 men had initially left from Bosnia-Herzegovina into Croatia around the 10th of August and had been walking for 12 days in the interior of the country when the Croatian

authorities apprehended them near the Slovenian border with Croatia. At this time, they were located near the small Croatian town of Rupa around 9:00 pm [coordinates of the point of apprehension: **45.482126, 14.280089**]. They were found by four male officers dressed all in black including balaclavas. When the police found them, the group scattered. The reporter explained how the officers had asked him in English to call out to those running away and tell them to stop. In Pashto he shouted "don't come, we are arrested by police" but he told the officers in English that he'd said "I told them to come, that there was no police anymore". Several of the group escaped and have since reached Italy. The reporter said that the Croatian officers did not take his shoes, as they did with others in the group, because he had told them he was Christian and not Muslim.

After their initial apprehension, the group was taken to a police station in Croatia where they were detained for around 3 hours [likely the Rupa Border Police Station]. During this time, the group-members mobile phones and money were taken from them [bills only, not coins]. After this time, the men were transported away from the police station in two vehicles. The respondent was placed in one of these vehicles – a windowless van with 8 others – and driven to the border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The respondent described that the location which they were brought to was marked by the Korana river and was around three kilometers away from a main road. There were no visible buildings he could see from this place. He also described there was another group of people-on-the-move who had been brought there who were not from his original group. It was still night time when they arrived..

The respondent recalled that 33 people were removed from the several vans which had transported them. Six officers were present, dressed all in black with balaclavas. The officers had their names on their uniforms but it was dark and some of the names were covered.

Everyone got out together, were lined up facing the water, and were told to get in the river and swim across: *"Everyone together. Tell everyone to go...Were in a line and beating until people go."*

Many people screamed that they did not know how to swim but the officers beat them and forced them into the water anyway. The respondent was with two friends who managed to help each other to swim across. Out of the entire group, they were not the first or the last to enter the water but rather in the middle, they were all very scared. Once they reached a main road, they orientated themselves and realized that they were near the town of Šturlić: *"Mountains and jungle, cross this and then the town [of Šturlić]"*. The three friends then had to walk the 40 plus kilometres south, through the town and down to Bihać.

Two days later, the respondent heard that two men from the deported group had drowned. One was a man from Pakistan who was a friend of a friend; the respondent recalled him screaming as he was forced into the water. The friend of the drowned man reported that another man was missing after that night and is presumed dead. This same friend has been in touch with the family of the deceased and is trying to organise the repatriation of the body to Pakistan.

20/08/2020

## “OLD MAN BEATEN PARTICULARLY BADLY”

**Date and time:** August 20, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Donji Stupnik

**Coordinates:** 45.7325728, 15.833047

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: Mixed: Reporter in 20s, others range from 13 or 14 to about 50 years old , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 officers in drab (probably special police); unknown number of special police

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On August 20 a group of seven Pakistani men were deported from Croatia to Bosnia. The primary respondent for this report is in his early twenties; the group also included a boy who was either 13 or 14 years old and an older man who was around 50. The respondent believed they the group was initially apprehended by authorities because they became disoriented and had to turn the GPS navigation on their phones on, after which point he inferred that the authorities were able to track them using their signals.

According to the respondent, the group was initially apprehended in the Croatian interior after having crossed into Croatia from Bosnia on foot several days prior. The group was stopped in a forest area near the town of Donji Stupnik by two officers who were described as “commandos” dressed olive drab uniforms (consistent with those worn by the Croatian Ministry of the Interior’s Special Police Units). The two officers commanded the entire group to sit down on the ground and then demanded their phones, electronics and food from them individually, gathering all of the items into a bag. Some time after this, the group was led into a police van and were driven directly back to the Bosnian border with Croatia, to a secluded area of the border south of Bihać.

At the border, the respondent described that they encounter an additional unit of police officers wearing all black uniforms, balaclava masks over their faces, and gloves (this description closely aligns with the uniforms often worn by the Ministry of the Interior Intervention Police Units), waiting for them. Once they were taken out of the van, these officers made them sit down on the ground again. After they were told to get up individually and were searched for money – about 30 to 50 euros were taken from each person. Then they were beaten with batons. The eldest man in the group was beaten particularly badly at this point.

The officers at the border then made a fire and burned all of their possessions which had previously been taken from them, including the electronics and their shoes and jackets / sweaters. Finally, the group was ordered to cross over the border back in Bosnia.

According to the respondent, a “commando” asked where he was from; when he learned that they were Pakistani he said this was a big problem; he had fought Pakistani in the war. The group then had to walk 10 hours to Bihac without shoes.

**18/08/2020**

## **“THE POLICEMAN PUT THE TORCH ON OUR EYES, WE COULDN'T SEE ANYTHING, WE COULDN'T SEE WHERE WE WERE GOING”**

**Date and time:** August 18, 2020 23:00

**Location:** Stari Laz, Croatia - Korana River, Croatia (Sturlić border)

**Coordinates:** 45.021344263657, 15.764042479675

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 16 - 27 years old , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Morocco

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, destruction of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian police officers (wearing blue t-shirts), 7 Croatian officers wearing black balaclava masks (possibly special forces), 2 police vans and one car

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On August 18th, at around 11:00 pm, a group of eight men (six from Afghanistan, one from Morocco and one from Pakistan) were pushed back from Croatia to Bosnia by Croatian officers.

The respondent of this report claimed that he was with a group of five friends when, around 6:00 pm in a forest in Stari Laz (50 kilometres from the city of Rijeka), three Croatian officers (wearing blue t-shirts and black trousers) approached, stopped them and took them to the police station in Rijeka. The respondent states that there were two other people on the move at the police station (one from Morocco and the other one from Pakistan), who had also been apprehended by Croatian police officers shortly before.

After spending about two hours at the police station, where neither food or water was provided to them, the eight people on the move were transferred into a van by seven police authorities (wearing black balaclava masks and dark uniforms) and moved a few kilometres before Bosnian border, next to Korana river (near the area of Sturlić). The respondent states that, during the two-hour journey from the police station to the border, the officers were driving fast, braking suddenly several times and that they could not breathe inside the van.

Once they arrived to the Bosnian border, the police authorities (wearing black balaclava masks consistent with those often worn by the Ministry of the Interior Intervention and Special Police Units) ordered them to get out of the van and sit down on the ground. People on the move were checked one by one by the officers and deprived of all their personal belongings, including shoes, socks and jackets. After that, one of the officers shouted "Go to Bosnia!", making them pass one by one and beating them with batons, kicks and forcing them to jump into the river.

The respondent claimed that he was the last of the line and was beaten first by a single agent and then by the others: "After him, I thought they had finished beating me". The respondent started walking towards Bosnia when, ten metres later, he was beaten again by another agent: "he beat me again, with too much power and I fell down". The respondent could not longer move his arm, he tried to get up but was forced by the Croatian authorities to jump into the river. He stated that the water was so high that he could not touch the ground. He grabbed the branch of a tree inside the river and he spent more than ten hours in the water, waiting for his friends to return back and help him.

The respondent says that after few hours, at first light in the morning, Croatian police officers returned to the site and, seeing him still in the river, shouted "go to Bosnia, we don't want you here!".

Another man that was in the group claimed that he went to the village of Sturlić to ask for help, but that he was taken away by residents. Then he found a rope and he went back along the river to pull the respondent out of the water. The respondent has several fractures in his right arm and has to wear a plaster for three weeks.

**15/08/2020**

## **"ALL MIGRANTS RESPECT POLICE, BUT THE POLICE SAY NO RESPECT"**

**Date and time:** August 15, 2020 01:00

**Location:** Beyond D1 in Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.80174791657492, 15.684224148367937

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 25 person(s), age: Reporter: 20; group mixed ages including minors, from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 10 to 15 Croatian officers, wearing camouflaged (possibly special police)

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On August 15 at around 1:00 am, a group of 25 young men were violently pushed back from Croatia to Bosnia by Croatian authorities. The young man who was the primary respondent for this report was a 20-year-old from Afghanistan, however, he recalled the group he was traveling with was demographically diverse, including persons from Pakistani and Bangladeshi. Minors were also present within the group.

The group had originally crossed from Bosnian into Croatia in the late evening hours of August 14th, and made their way on foot towards the D1 road – a major thoroughfare connecting the northern and southern parts of Croatia. Shortly after crossing the road, a group of approximately ten to fifteen Croatian officers came upon the group, with several of the officers discharging their firearms into the air. The respondent referred to the officers as “jungle police” and described them as wearing camouflaged clothing and being particularly dangerous.

The young men in the group were all ordered to lay prone on the ground.

***“All migrants respect police, but the police say no respect,”*** the respondent said.

He described that his group listened to the commands of the officers, but the police abused them anyways. Some of the officers were described to have taken pictures and videos of the group on their mobile phones and laughed at them. Some officers threw rocks at the group-members as they were laying flat on the ground; they were also stepped on and kicked. One officer reportedly tied a rope around a man's neck, as if to hang him, another officer protested, but he insisted. The man was reported to have been hung for some time, but survived.

Eventually, after being searched and abused, the group was transported in vehicles back to the Bosnian-Croatian border south of Bihac, whereupon they made their way back to the city.

15/08/2020

**“THEY KILL ME IF THEY HEAR MY VOICE. IF THEY KILL ME IT IS NO PROBLEM BECAUSE I CAN'T LIVE LIKE THIS.”**

**Date and time:** August 15, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Near the River Drava, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 46.3716868, 16.2869572

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 14-30 , from: Eritrea

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 10 Croatian officers 3 women and 6 or 7 men in light blue and dark blue uniforms, one van.

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On around the 15th of August a group of 28 people from Eritrea were resting in the forest near the border between Croatia and Slovenia. The group consisted of all men including 9 people under the age of 18, the youngest was 14. The respondent was a man in his early 20s. They were waiting to cross the River Drava when they were found by police. The respondent described more than 10 officers dressed in light blue uniforms. There were 3 women officers and between 6 and 7 male officers. When the police came, some of the group ran away into the trees – around 13 fled and evaded capture and 15 people remained. The police told the remaining group to lie down and take off their shoes. They were later permitted to put their shoes back on. The respondent reported that the police did not take any of their mobile phones – which surprised him as often the Croatian police take or break phones.

The respondent described the group of fifteen people soon thereafter being put in the back of a van which was the size of a minibus but had no windows. According to the respondent, the conditions inside of the car were terrible:

***“[If] someone needed to kill you they use this car. Some people were feeling the need to die in this car.”***

The journey in the back of the van took around 3 hours, during which time the vehicle drove them directly back to the Bosnian-Croatian border. Once they arrived, they were ushered out of the vehicle in a forested area near the border and told to walk. Despite having their mobile phones, no one had them charged, so it took them 17 hours to find their way to the town of Velika Kladuša.

The respondent was keen to say that he is searching for peace, not for money. He gave consent to this report to be written but was extremely insistent that the voice recording used to collect the data remain private:

***“They kill me if they hear my voice. If they kill me it is no problem because I can’t live like this.”***

**14/08/2020**

**““IF YOU HAVE MONEY, YOU GO BACK IN PEACE. IF NOT, THERE WILL BE PROBLEMS””**

**Date and time:** August 14, 2020 08:00

**Location:** Karlovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.497728288927, 15.534372699094

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 22-28 years old , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian police officers in blue uniforms, 2 Croatian officers in black uniforms with emblem and ski masks

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The primary respondent in this case, a 28-year-old man from Morocco traveling in a group with four other Moroccan men between the ages of 22-24, was pushed back from Karlovac, Croatia in the morning of August 20, 2020. Prior to this, he had made three unsuccessful attempts to cross through Croatia over the course of the past year and was pushed back every single time.

The group began their journey from the Bosnian town of Velika Kladusa and spent several days moving through Croatia, before reaching the town of Karlovac. At 8:00 am on August 20, 2020, the group began to cross a bridge over an unspecified river when they noticed 6 Croatian police officers waiting for them at the other side. The respondent described the officers as “regular” officers wearing blue uniforms. Instead of attempting to flee or otherwise resist detention, they finished crossing the bridge and met the officers on the other side. Upon arrival, the officers inquired as to where the group-members were from. The respondent reported their nationality and the police officers said “Ok, no problem” and instructed the group to sit down with their hands up and their heads down. At this point, the police did not further physically threaten the group but did not provide any further information about what was to come next.

The group was then transported to the central **Karlovac police station**, about a 5 minute drive away. They did not express intention to claim asylum and were detained at the police station where they were not given access to a toilet or food or water. After what the respondent said felt like 35-45 minutes, they were taken into a van driven by two Croatian officers. The drive to the Bosnian border lasted for what the respondent reported as 40 minutes, with the driving of the Croatian police officers described as being uncomfortably fast through bumpy roads.

When they reached the Bosnian border, the Croatian officers took the group outside the van. The respondent described this set of Croatian officers as wearing an all black uniform with the Croatian flag emblazoned on the arm, with black ski masks that covered the entirety of their faces. As the respondent was the only member of the group who spoke sufficient English, he acted as a translator for the remainder of the group. The officers told him “If you have money, you go back to Bosnia in peace, we do not touch you, but if not, there will be problems”. The respondent informed the officer that he personally did not have money, but that he would ask the rest of his group, however the rest also did not have any money.

After he reported this, the Croatian officer announced that each of them would be searched one by one. The officer said “You first, I will search for the marks. Give me your pants, shoes, shirt, all”. He was then stripped of shirt, pants, shoes, after which he was beaten by the officers

on the arms and torso with both hands and a baton. The officers then proceeded to beat the rest of the group one by one after removal of their clothes.

Their clothes were not returned after the search and subsequent beating. The respondent and the rest of the group also had their phones, the rest of their clothes and belongings, and their power banks forcibly removed, leaving them in their underclothes at the Bosnian-Croatian border. The respondent reported that the area they were left in was one that he had been dropped off at before in previous pushbacks, about a five hour walk from Velika Kladusa proper in a village with a mosque and a river. He was not able to provide more precise information than this.

After they crossed into the Bosnian border, the group walked the 5 hours back into Velika Kladusa.

**14/08/2020**

## **“THEY MADE US LINE UP TO GET BEATEN”**

**Date and time:** August 14, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Border area outside of Velika Kladusa

**Coordinates:** 45.23355916153901, 15.957904111718753

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 100 person(s), age: Two reporters in their 20s; others unknown , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** 10 Croatian officers (possibly intervention)

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

In the early morning of August 14th, a group of around 100 single males from Afghanistan and Pakistan were violently pushed back from Croatia to Bosnia near the A1 road. The young men who were the primary respondents for this report were in their early 20s. They believed there may have been some minors present in their group, but they could not be sure.

The respondents described that the group had crossed into Croatia from Bosnia and made their way into the Croatian interior. Along the way, they were initially apprehended by group of ten Croatian officers, including one woman, wearing all black, including balaclavas (possibly indicating a membership of an intervention police unit).

According to the respondents, the group-members were made to kneel and put their heads down. Anyone who looked up was hit. The officers asked who spoke English, and the

respondent explained that none of the men in his group volunteered because they were afraid of being seen as “bosses” and receiving even worse “punishment.” After this, according to the respondent, several of the officers took pictures and videos with their personal phones and laughed at the group during this time.

After this, each of the young men had their bodies and physical belongings checked for valuables such as money, electronics, and phones. The respondent described that he had hidden his phone in the waistband of his pants and during the search the officers found it and confiscated the device. The officers were also described as having taken the bags and shoes of the group-members. The young men did not see what was done with their belongings, they were not destroyed while they were watching.

After searching them, each young man was made to walk between two officers who beat him with batons. They described being beaten everywhere: Limbs, head, face, shoulders, torso. Then they were made to jump in the river to cross back into Bosnia near Velika Kladusa.

One of the respondents had a severely swollen bruise on his arm; the other had a bandaged foot from walking back barefoot.

11/08/2020

## “DEPORTED DURING A MEDICAL EMERGENCY”

**Date and time:** August 11, 2020 14:30

**Location:** Sturlic, Bosnia

**Coordinates:** 45.069656091987, 15.759139752734

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: Adults: late 20s / early 30s; 9 year old boy; 16 month old girl , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Initially: Two Croatian officers wearing black jackets and light blue shirts; additional officers with light blue shirts, gloves and face masks

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On August 11, a family was pushed back from Croatia to Bosnia, while experiencing a medical emergency. The primary respondent for this report is from Iran; he has a nine-year-old son and a sixteen-month-old daughter; together with his wife, they all initially crossed into Croatia from Bosnia near the town of Šturlić earlier that day.

After walking for two or three kilometers, his wife began to feel very unwell. The family approached a local house and asked the residents to call an ambulance; the police were called at this point. By this time the woman was unconscious; the respondent's son was very frightened and his daughter was crying because she was hungry.

An hour later two Croatian authorities wearing black jackets and light blue shirts arrived in a marked patrol car. The man asked them for an ambulance, but they spoke "bad words" to him, telling him to "get out of here." He continued to beg for an ambulance, and feared they wanted to "fight him," but he did not stop asking for help.

After the officers arrived, the group waited a further hour and a half in the rain; the officers said an ambulance was coming. All the while the woman was not awake.

The man then saw a prisoner-transport van down the road, approaching their location and hoped it was coming to take them to a hospital. He describes the driver as very fat, wearing a face mask (medical, not balaclava), gloves and a light blue shirt. He recalled that this man had an aggressive demeanor and was "ready to fight him". Again he begged to be taken to the hospital.

He was told by this man, "we are deporting you." "Please," he begged, "we are a family." The officers responded with anger and ordered him to put his wife in the car or else they would do it.

"Do you have a phone?" the officers asked, he confirmed and handed it over. "Do you have powerbanks?" Again the man making this report answered affirmatively and gave them the powerbanks. They broke the phone and powerbanks. They also took a small bag that contained documents, like their camp cards, and chargers. Everything was set on fire. They were only left with the large bag that contained diapers and children's things.

They were then driven in this van back to the border area north of Šturlič, after which point they were taken out of the van and told to walk back into Bosnia. Once on the other side of the border, they made their way towards the city of Velika Kladuša, during which time he carried his bag and his wife. "My son is small, but he had to carry his sister," he explained.

Along the way he managed to call the police; they called IOM, who manage the camps, to come get his wife, but did not themselves come. Again the family waited and the woman still did not awaken. Bosnian people came to help, bringing water and trying to wake the wife, but they could not take them to a hospital, because this is forbidden in Bosnia. Seven hours later an ambulance came: they had been deported at 2:30 pm and at 9:30 pm the ambulance arrived.

"These are not human rights," the man repeated.

11/08/2020

## “DOGS ATTACK AND VIOLENCE: CROATIA - BOSNIA BORDER”

**Date and time:** August 11, 2020 11:00

**Location:** In Croatia 5 km before the Bosnian border near Kulen Vakuf

**Coordinates:** 44.553940753123, 16.028319313281

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: unknow, all > 18 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** dog attacks, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 police officers (blue uniforms) + 6 police officers (1 woman and 5 men, wearing dark clothes and black balaclavas)

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Independent person

### ORIGINAL REPORT

In the second week of August, a group of 15 people from Pakistan crossed the border between Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia on foot, next to the Izačić area and progressed into the Croatian interior.

The respondent described that after crossing into Croatia, the group waited for a car that was supposed to drive them to Italy. On August 11th, after four days waiting for the so-called “taxi game”, the group had run out of both food and water and decided to go to the main road to be found by the Croatian police and be deported back to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

According to the respondent, two Croatian police officers (described by the respondent as “the regular ones with blue uniforms”) approached and apprehended the group in the Rudopolje area along the D52 road [44.842672, 15.469452]. After some time, these officers loaded the group into two separate vans, which they were kept inside for around. four hours and then took them to a police check point, about an hour away from Rudopolje (the group did not know the exact location of the check point as they were locked inside vans without windows).

At the police station the people were not interrogated, and their fingerprints and photos were not taken. They asked if they could have water and food but their request was denied.

After thirty minutes spent at the police check point, 6 police officers (one woman and five men, wearing dark clothes and black masks) with three dogs (German shepherd breed) put the group in a larger van and drove them near the Bosnian border, about two hours of walking from the Kulen Vakuf area.

The two respondents remember the name of one of the policemen, Dino, who was among the two who initially apprehended them near Rudopolje and was the same officer who assisted in pushing them back to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

After being locked up for an hour in the van, the group was ordered to get out of the van. At this point, the respondent described that the police told them to put their belongings in a ditch and then they set these things on fire. The officers then ordered them to line up in front of a tree-lined path (the respondents states that there were tree trunks obstructing the passage and that the path was so narrow that it was impossible for two people to pass) and yelled at them to run towards BiH one by one. When the last one of them (one of the respondents) was entering the path, a policeman unleashed the dogs and the respondent was attacked and bitten from behind by one of the dogs.

Once arrived in Bihać and obtained access to TRC Bira, the respondent was taken to the hospital to disinfect the wound and then immediately returned to the camp and underwent antibiotic treatment.

**29/07/2020**

**“THE SIX POLICE OFFICERS LET THE WOMEN AND KID TO CROSS THE BORDER AND TELL TO THE MAN TO SIT: THEN STARTED BEATING THEM.”**

**Date and time:** July 29, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Along the Croatian-Bosnian border near the Bosnian town of Sturlic

**Coordinates:** 45.067716294824464, 15.737682080615247

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 9 + 1 kid person(s), age: 4 - 30 , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), water immersion

**Police involved:** 2 special croatian officers + 6 regular police officers

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Independent person

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On July 29th, a transit group comprised of 9 Iranian people (4 adult males, 4 adult females, and a single four-year-old child) crossed into Croatian territory from Bosnia-Herzegovina on foot. After some time making their way into the Croatian interior, in the afternoon, the group was approached and apprehended on the Ž3266 road by two Croatian authorities who were described as wearing uniforms which match those worn by the Croatian special police. These two officers stopped the group and shortly after contacted other officers by radio.

After some time, six additional Croatian officers arrived to the scene. At least one of the officers drove a prisoner transport van to the location. The six new officers were described as being "regular police" who wore light blue t-shirts. These officers loaded the group into the van and drove them back to a secluded area along the Croatian-Bosnian border near the Bosnian town of Sturlic. Once they arrived to this area, the group had to wait here for wait around 4 hours without being given water or food. At around 8:00 pm, several officers let the women and kid cross the border, which was marked by the Korana river. The adult males in the group, however, were told to sit and wait.

The group claimed that the officers that were at this location were all covered in black clothing and ski-masks. The officers started striking the remaining men with a stick on the back and one of the group-members was even hit in the face. One group-member was thrown into the river. One of the officers fired into the air and told them to run across the borderline.

During their time with the Croatian authorities, the group-members' personal belongings were destroyed including their backpacks, sleeping bags and phones. The respondent for this report showed signs during this interview of Croatian police violence on his back and he had a bandaged arm.

**27/07/2020**

## **"THERE ARE TWO BIG CEMENT BLOCKS NEAR THE BORDER, THEY SPEAK US 'CROSS THEM AND GO BOSNIA'"**

**Date and time:** July 27, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Mali Obljaj, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.232111, 15.98862

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 22 person(s), age: 17,17, 20-28 , from: Pakistan, Kashmir

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, gunshots, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 4 male Croatian police officers with light blue uniform and Croatian emblem, guns and batons, 1 police car and 1 police van; 1 male and 1 female police officers with light blue uniforms and batons, 1 police car

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondents in this case, a group of 22 people aged 17,17, 20-28 from Pakistan and Kashmir, were walking in the jungle near the Slovenian-Hungarian border (approximate coordinates 46.282474, 16.172375, HR), when the Croatian police stopped them, at around 5:00 in the morning on the 27th of July 2020.

When they saw the police, the respondents tried to run away but the officers fired five or six shots in the air, scaring the group-members into stopping

**“We were afraid”**, says the respondent.

According to the given description, the officers were four males wearing light blue uniforms with the Croatian emblem and the writing “*police*”, armed with guns and batons and with protection masks on their faces. One police car and one police van were also there. As the respondent refers, the police officers spoke Croatian between each other and used English to communicate with the group on the move, also addressing them with “*bad words*”.

The respondents were pushed to the ground and were obliged to sit with their hands up in the air and the head down. In that position, police beat them on their back using batons and also kicked them. Afterwards, the officers ordered to the group to “*put the phones in a plastic bag*”, which they later put in the police car. Then, police burnt their backpacks with the whole contents.

**“I don’t know what happened to the phones”**, says the respondent.

None of the respondent asked for asylum, because they feared that the officer could use other violence on them.

**“Maybe they beat us again”**, says the respondent.

The group on the move waited a long time in that place, four or five hours according to the respondent. Then, the group was forced to enter into the police van, which only had a very small, closed, window. As the respondent refers, all the fans at the back of the van were closed, so that the air became soon extremely hot. The respondents needed to drink but were too scared to ask for it to the officers.

According to what the respondent perceived, the van travelled for around three hours. The officers often stopped the van and, at certain points, they drove recklessly.

**“They drive fifteen or twenty minutes and after they stop, drive ten minutes after stop, they do this many times”**.

Once arrived at the border (approximate location 45.232111, 15.988620, HR), the group waited many hours until another police car arrived, with one male and one female police officers wearing light blue uniforms and having batons with them. So, a total number of six officers was at the border when the pushback took place.

The group of respondents was beat again with the batons and the pushed back to Bosnia Herzegovina, around midnight on the 27th of July 2020.

**“There are two big cement blocks near the border, they speak us ‘cross them and go Bosnia’”,** says the respondent.

From there, the group reached the city of Vrnograc (BiH) around 5:00 in the morning on the 28th of July 2020, and then returned to Velika Kladusa (BiH), walking for around seven hours.

**20/07/2020**

## **“A WOMAN AND HER TWO CHILDREN CROSSING”**

**Date and time:** July 20, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Near Donji Vaganac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.912626, 15.740413

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 30, 9, 2 years old , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Two Croatian municipal police one male one female. Two Croatian border officers, both male, dressed all in black

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On approximately the 20th July 2020 a woman and her two children were pushed back from Croatia to Bosnia.

The primary respondent for this report was a 30 year old woman from Iran who was alone with her two children who are a 9 year old boy and a 2 year old girl. They started walking from 5 kilometres before the border with Croatia near Mala Peća in Bosnia, at night. According to the respondent, they walked across the border on a dirt road and through the forest to a local house. The respondent approached the house to ask for help from the people that lived there. She was very scared as she had previously seen single men being beaten by officers. And they were all very tired.

The local person in the house called their local municipal police and, after some time, two officers came – one male and one female. Reportedly, the officers asked the woman “Do you want to stay in Croatia?” and the respondent replied “Yes.” They then asked where she was from – she told them she was from Iran – and the officers said “You can’t stay here.” The respondent believes that this is because of the country she is from. The local people asked the municipal police where they were going to take them, and they were told that the family would be taken to camp in Croatia.

The municipal police then contacted another set of authorities (the respondent inferred that these were authorities directly responsible for border enforcement) and, after some time passed, two additional officers arrived to the scene. They were both male and both dressed in all-black uniforms. The respondent repeated her request for asylum in Croatia. These black-uniformed officers then put the respondent and her children into a police van and drove them back to the Bosnian border. They took her phone and her money and told her to walk. She was already tired and terrified. She had to walk for 5 hours carrying her two year old daughter while her 9 year old son had to walk. Finally, after much distress, they reached Miral camp near Velika Kladuša, Bosnia

**16/07/2020**

## **“THEY KICKED US, THEY PUNCHED US, THEY SLAPPED US.”**

**Date and time:** July 16, 2020 17:00

**Location:** Batrovci Border Crossing

**Coordinates:** 45.119195046252386, 19.221890484374978

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 16-30 years old , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 2 Croatians border officers wearing light blue tops and dark blue trousers and face masks.

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On the 16th of July at around 5 pm, a group of 5 males from Afghanistan aged between 16 and 30 years old were apprehended in Croatia at the Batrovci-Bajakovo border crossing along the E70 highway. The group had been hiding in a truck at the border checkpoint and passed through Serbian controls before being identified and apprehended by officers on the Croatian side of the border.

The officers who apprehended the group were described as wearing dark blue trousers, light blue short sleeved shirts and face masks – likely members of the Croatian Border Police. After the group were found in the truck, they were then commanded to exit the vehicle and were lined up against a wall in the border checkpoint complex.

The group also reported that they were beaten by the truck driver with a big stick upon their initial discovery. Driver's risk fines from authorities upon the discovery of stowaways in their vehicles.

The group was then kept lined up in this area for around 3 hours, during which time the officers were described as coming to kick, punch and slap different group members before returning to their office. The officers would then return at intervals to repeat these beatings, including hitting their heads against the wall. The officers also broke one phone. The group did not have any chance to express any wish to claim asylum in Croatia. According to one respondent: "They didn't give time for us to say [that we want asylum], they only beat, beat, beat."

Their names were recorded during this time but no fingerprints or pictures were taken of the group-members. Eventually, the Croatian officers called Serbian police who arrived and were transferred custody of the group. The Serbian police took them back to Serbia where they released them without further incident.

**16/07/2020**

## **"THIS IS MY LIFE, SO FIGHTING WITH ME, CROATIA."**

**Date and time:** July 16, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Batrovci Border Crossing, Serbia/Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.03608806342076, 19.109525717526598

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 20 person(s), age: 16-22 years old , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Croatia border officers in blue and black uniforms. Wearing face masks.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On the 16th of July a group of 20 Afghan males, aged 16 to 22, were apprehended inside a truck while attempting to cross into Croatia from Serbia at the Bajakovo-Batrovci border crossing along the E70 highway. The primary respondents for this report were 3 males from Afghanistan aged 17 to 22. The respondents recalled that the group had been hiding inside the truck for two nights before this. The group had hidden inside the truck and, on the 16th, passed through the security checkpoint on the Serbian side and upon their arrival to the truck scanner on the Croatian side were apprehended by Croatian authorities who forced them out of the truck.

The officers were described as wearing blue and black uniforms and face masks, consistent with those worn by Croatian authorities who secure the state's borders. They handcuffed everyone and then hit all group members with fists and with batons during this initial exchange. One group member had marks on his back (pictured) from the beating. They asked how many people there were and kicked one group member.

The police also smashed the phones with their feet and broke their powerbanks. The group were denied access to food, water and the toilet for around two hours, from 12:00 am to 2:00 am, as they were detained in the border station. The 22-year-old respondent recalled that he did not want to speak English with the police because he was afraid that they would assume he was the 'boss' of the group and detain him further. Eventually, the Croatia authorities called the Serbian authorities and transferred them over to their custody. The Serbian officers told the group to go to the nearby state-run camp but released them without further harassment. The group then returned back to their informal living arrangement in the forested areas outside of Šid.

14/07/2020

## “YOU CAN SEE JUST THE EYES OF THE AGENT, HE HAS MASK ON HIS HEAD”

**Date and time:** July 14, 2020 01:00

**Location:** the group was caught near the D32 road in the Gorski-Kotar region in an unknown location

**Coordinates:** 45.059658, 15.742047

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 + the group met about 40 people later person(s), age: 30 - 40 years old , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride

**Police involved:** 3 HR "special police" officers + 2 local police officers + 5 officers in black (likely Interventna Policija)

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, Independent person

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On July 14th, a group of four people, single men from Pakistan, were caught after the D32 road in the Gorski-Kotar region by three officers who were described as wearing uniforms consistent with those worn by the “**Croatian special police**”.

The officers stopped and approached the group, ordering them to sit on the ground as they called for the “normal police” to arrive to the scene to transport the group elsewhere. According to the respondent, after some

time, two **local police** officers arrived and loaded the group into the back of a prisoner-transport van and drove them to a nearby **police station**.

In the police station the group had to wait around 4 hours without being given any water or food. During this time, their requests to claim asylum in Croatia were ignored. They did not receive any information about what would happen to them. After 4 hours of waiting, in the evening, they were taken out of the station and loaded into another van. The respondents recalled that they spent around 4 hours in the van after this, during which time they were driven from the police station to the Croatian border with Bosnia.

One person claimed that they felt dizzy during the transportation because of the lack of air, the smell and the moisture and also the driving condition.

Once they arrived at the border at around 1:00 am, the two police officers told them to go and cross the border by walking. In that point the border line is the river.

In that location, the group claimed that there were around 5 officers from a different unit of police, who were described as wearing black uniforms and ski masks consistent with those worn by the Croatian Ministry of the Interior's **Intervention Police**.

– “you can see just the eyes of the agent, he has mask on his head” –

When they were left by the other police who drove them there, the officers from the **Intervention Police** asked them to sit with their hands up, but one of the older men in the group did not understand what he had to do and did not raise his hands high. This reportedly upset one of the officers who asked him again. After the third time that this man did not react in the way the officer was expecting, the police started to beat him on the stomach and the ribs with a stick.

At that point, they were forced to cross the river, but they said that they were lucky because in that point the river was not high and they could pass “more easily”, but as they reported, there was another group of 40 people who were on a higher point of the borderline/river and they had to cross it because the police were beating them hardly, so “for their safety they run into the river, but there was so high, to their head or even above all body”

The group observed by Croatian authorities went back to BiH side.

14/07/2020

## “THEY STAMPED ON HIS LEG, CAUSING IT TO BREAK.”

**Date and time:** July 14, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Near Vinkovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.14682686391276, 19.163341391705227

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 42 , from: Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** kicking, pushing people to the ground, threatening with guns, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian officers in blue uniforms without facemasks.

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On 14th July 2020, a 42 year old Tunisian man was violently pushed back from Croatia to Serbia. The respondent took a taxi from the town of Sid in Serbia to close to the border with Croatia. He walked across fields from the border until he was close to the town of Vinkovci in Croatia, some 40 kilometres from the border. At around this point, he was located and approached by four Croatian officers who were wearing all blue uniforms. Before he had a chance to ask for asylum in Croatia, they shouted at him to sit down and put his hands up. One officer drew a gun to make him sit down. After this initial exchange, the officers present took 800 Euros from the respondent. He described trying to film them doing so on his phone which caused the officers to become angry and take the rest of his money in retaliation. The total money taken was 1600 Euros and the officers also took a powerbank, a phone and a backpack with clothes in it.

After this the officers handcuffed him and, after some time, led him to a van which they closed him inside of in order to transport him to the Serbian border. There was another patrol vehicle there as well. As they began the drive back to the border, there were two officers who drove in the van and the other two drove in another police car in front.

When they arrived to the border, the respondent pleaded with the officers to give him some of the money back and his phone, so he could at least take a taxi. He yelled “give me my phone” at which point one officer took him from the van to near a metal fence and stamped on the respondent’s leg, causing it to break. The officers left him in the field near the train tracks [approximate coordinates: 45.147468, 19.163410] just across the Serbian border between Sid and Tovarnik. He then struggled to walk back to Sid in much pain, approximately 6.5 kilometres. He knew his leg was in very bad condition and he was very dirty from the encounter, so he

staggered to the hotel near the train station in Sid where he knew the owner and could seek medical help.

10/07/2020

## “PUSHBACK AFTER TWO NIGHTS IN CROATIA”

**Date and time:** July 10, 2020 00:00

**Location:** 20 km in the interior of Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.082658101180826, 18.960828470094196

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 18 person(s), age: Reporter 30 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** Local police; Border police

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On approximately July 10, a group of 18 persons from Afghanistan, including a young child, were deported from Croatia to Serbia. The primary respondent for this report was 30 years old and was travelling with his family.

Preceding their apprehension in the Croatian interior, the group had crossed into Croatia from Serbia on foot and had waited in a forested area for two nights. This forested area was approximately 20 km away from the border. The group had arranged to be picked up by a vehicle, however, no one came and the group eventually ran out of water. Facing dehydration, the group went to a nearby roadside to turn themselves in to the local police [exact location unknown]. After some time, the local police arrived to the group and then called for other officers to arrive to the scene to transport the group back to the Croatian border with Serbia. This second group of officers arrived with a van with no windows in the back carriage which the group was led into and driven to the border in.

They were not physically harmed nor were their possessions destroyed or stolen. However, they were all placed in a van to drive thirty minutes to the border with Sid. Though this van had a ventilation shaft on the roof it was kept closed in spite of the extreme heat. People were having trouble breathing and the child cried continuously, but the police refused to open the shaft.

After being driven back to the border, the group was taken out of the prisoner transport vehicle and told to walk back into Serbian territory.

08/07/2020

## “THEY SAID GO TO RIVER... THEY BEAT”

**Date and time:** July 8, 2020 23:50

**Location:** close to Sturlic (BiH)

**Coordinates:** 45.05745290324409, 15.744757632180297

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 20 person(s), age: 17 - 40+ years old , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Morocco

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, water immersion, threatening with guns, gunshots, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 8 Croatian officers wearing black uniforms and masks, 3 officers in green uniform (likely special forces), 1 driver, 5 officers, 4 male 1 female wearing masks.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, Balkan Info Van

### ORIGINAL REPORT

**The group, including several children from Kashmir, were caught and forced to squat in the pouring rain by Croatian police officers as a form of punishment. They were then held in a police station without food and water, having to urinate in a bottle when they needed the toilet. After being detained, the police pushed them back into Bosnia-Herzegovina through the Korana river.**

The respondent in this incident, an Afghan male, left BiH with 15 other people from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Three of the group were Kashmiris and were underage minors (approximately 17). The group walked for three days into the interior of Croatia, departing from Bihac (BiH). On 8th July, in the midmorning, the group were suddenly approached by Croatian police officers who had been hiding in some trees. The capture happened close to a stretch of river that the group were walking by. The weather was described as very poor and it was raining at the time.

*“They hid back side of tree, they fired gun and said ‘stop’”*

The officers were in black uniforms and had guns, they shouted for the 16 people to stop, aiming weapons at them. The first shot was fired into the air, and according the respondent this was followed by several others that were directed at the ground very close to them.

*“they fire near to our feat”*

The respondent said there were eight officers on the scene. He stated that they were wearing balaclavas: *“They covered their face, black mask”*. The officers ordered the transit group to the floor and told them to bow their heads:

*“down your heads, the rain was really fast”*

The group describe sitting in the rain while the officers removed their bags, spare clothing and food they'd been carrying. The police also took their phones, power banks and money. The money the officers kept, the electricals were placed in a plastic bag and left in the rain where they became damaged by the water. The group were held at this point in the rain without proper shelter and denied the possibility to drink or eat.

*“they didn't give information to eat”*

The police officers took pictures of the group and even reportedly filmed them. The respondent said he saw the “red light on camera” as they panned across the crouched transit group sat in the rain. The officers also questioned the group roughly, asking them:

*“Where are you from? Where are the others in your group?”*

The officers became angry when they found a small knife used for food by the transit group. The police removed it, becoming particularly aggressive about the eating utensil. The respondent shared that it was a small blade:

*“We are cutting for onion and food, we are hungry”*

The transit group were held for what the respondent suggested was 2-3 hours in the rain. Two or three more officers then arrived on the scene wearing green uniforms. They spoke with the officers dressed in black who appeared to share information on the group and what had occurred.

After this exchange, presently a further officer came with a Croatian police van and the transit group were ordered to stand and get into the vehicle. The respondent describes how the capturing officers jeered and abused them as they were loaded.

*“come with car, [the police] were very angry, said some bad words to us: ‘don't go to Europe, go to your country’”*

The van drove for a short while, bringing the group to a police station, where they arrived at approximately midday. At the station the group were not processed with any paper work or issued a decision on their removal, the police put them in a shared cell without any facilities (toilet, food, water). The cell was described as a “dirty room” and the group had to urinate in bottles because they were not allowed to access a WC.

The group were held in detention from around 12:00 – 22:00, then they were removed by the station officers and loaded again into a van. The respondent said that alongside the 16 of them, another four men were already detained in the back of the van. They were Moroccans that the police had already caught, bringing the total to 20 persons.

The van drove stop-start for several hours, with the officers taking long pauses and veering from side to side. The respondent states that the conditions in the rear were very poor and “some guys were vomiting”. The van stopped at the border after around 2 hours of driving, just before midnight on 8th July 2020. The van doors were opened and the group were called out individually by the police.

*“come to one-by-one, they stand two lines”*

*“They said go to river”*

The respondent said there were five masked officers, including one woman. The officers made two lines and used batons to hit people who they considered were not moving fast enough while shouting “run”.

*“they beat that guys”*

Once the transit group made it through the lines of police with batons, they had to swim across the river which came “up to chest” height.

*“behaviour of the police was like animal, [they] don’t give info to talk”*

*“they showed us not humanity, they broke our head, leg and hands”*

When the group arrived onto the Bosnian side of the river, they walked in the dark. The pushback occurred close to Sturlic, and the group walked for some hours, arriving to an abandoned house on the way to Cazin. They spent the night there because they were tired and injured. Their feet were blistered from the walking and soaked from being forced through the river. The next day they were walking close to Cazin and the Bosnian police stopped them. The officers had already detained a group of people with backpacks on the street, the respondent claims this was “stopping them go on game”.

The police officers stopped the pushed back group and told them “go to Lipa” (a camp 25km south of Bihac). The respondent said it took the group a total of 36 hours from their ejection across the border to the improvised shelter they were living (close to Bihac). Back at the squat, the respondent said he was still recovering from the ordeal. He and others were helped by local people after their return, especially to recover clothing and get some basic first aid for wounds sustained. The respondent said he was unsure about his safety in the building because local Bosnian police often raided it and took the inhabitants to the camp in Lipa. He did not want to be taken to Lipa because of the conditions inside and the isolated location:

*“No beds and some guys sleep in two, the situation for refugees is not good. [There’s] no shop or market, only one small shop, but very expensive, it’s a big problem”*

The respondent stated that sometimes large groups of people staying in abandoned buildings were taken in large groups to Lipa by the local Bosnian police. But once driven there, sometimes the camp staff weren't admitting people, so they would be left waiting by the entrance and eventually leave, walking back to Bihac.

*"They arrest here from squat and take to Lipa side. Why IOM don't give Lipa card? Why they are shift you to here?"*

The respondent said it was also hard for his specific age group. He said that as a young adult male he couldn't benefit from some of the additional protections and services that are directed towards minors in BiH. This disparity was most clear during the corona virus lockdown he said, where he and others felt their situation had become worse and more isolated.

*"we [adults] do not have that opportunity, lockdown for COVID-19 big problem for us"*

**03/07/2020**

## **"YOU'RE ALL CRIMINALS"**

**Date and time:** July 3, 2020 02:00

**Location:** 20 km from the Serbian-Croatian Border

**Coordinates:** 45.152269654855964, 18.828169913097515

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 15 - 32 , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Croatian officers, details unknown

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On July 3, a group of five young men, including two minors, crossed from Serbia into Croatia and were violently pushed back. They described making their way on foot approximately 20 km into the interior of Croatia, passing through the rural border areas surrounding the Croatian city of Tovarnik. At sometime between 2:00 and 3:00 am, the group described being stopped by two Croatian authorities.

At first, the officers fired into the air and upon approaching the group, ordered the group-members to lie down. During this initial exchange, the respondent recalled that one of the officers referred to him and his group as criminals. The respondent described that him and the rest of the group were not allowed to look at the two officers who eventually radioed in for

reinforcements. Soon thereafter, an additional four or five officers drove to the apprehension site and joined them.

Everyone in the group was beaten. According to the respondent, the first two officers kicked them five or six times and then punched them with closed fists. After their arrival, the additional officers also struck several of the group-members with their batons. The minors were not spared this abuse, even though they had been asked their ages.

Eventually, the group-members were loaded into a van and driven directly back to the Serbian-Croatian border outside of the town of Šid [Serbia]. Two other young men had also been apprehended and were pushed back with the group. The group was let out of the vehicle and thereafter made the long walk back to Šid.

**17/06/2020**

## **“WE'RE HUMANS, NOT ANIMALS”**

**Date and time:** June 17, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Unknown village in Croatia, across the border from Sid

**Coordinates:** 45.12243660000001, 19.2209294

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 20 person(s), age: Reporter 18; others young men, exact ages unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian officers matching the description of border police; 8 Croatian officers matching the description of special forces; 3 Serbian police

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

One night during the third week of June, a group of 20 young men crossed the border from Serbia into Croatia in the border area outside the town of Sid, Serbia. The young man, who was the primary respondent in this report, is 18 years old. His group walked on foot in Croatia for around two hours and were in a small village at which point they were stopped by three Croatian police officers wearing bright blue shirts and black trousers.

The respondent described that very soon after their apprehension, the police immediately became violent with the group and began to beat them. “We are human, not animals,” the young man recalled saying to the police, but they did not hear, they just continued to abuse them, kicking him like a football, he describes. All but two or three of the young men were beaten.

The border police called additional units whom the reporter described as wearing olive drab uniforms (he referred to them as “special forces” which is line with his description), eight of whom arrived and marched them to the jungle where they then beat them, too. He does not remember how long this went on. The police just beat them until they were tired.

Much of the beating was done to their legs, so they could not walk. One young man was made to lay with his face on the ground and the officers beat the back of his head. His face was injured so badly that one of his friends had to take off his t-shirt to staunch the bleeding. They were hit with batons and fists and kicked. Their phones were broken, their power banks taken and the 80 to 120 Euros each man had on him were pocketed by the officers (it is unclear whether the border police or special forces).

Eventually the Serbian police were called and the Croatian officers said something to them that the reporter did not understand. They too slapped the young men, but “only two or three times.”

At the time he gave the report, the young man still had bandages on his arm and legs, he has no photos of the others, for which he apologized and said, “I am not mad, I did not do this to myself.” The worst of the injuries appear to have been internal. He and his friends could not eat for three days; they could not move their hands or legs, they felt nothing but pain. Even two weeks later, the young man is in frequent pain where he was beaten.

**15/06/2020**

## “CROATIAN POLICE TOLD US TO RUN, THEN RELEASED DOGS”

**Date and time:** June 15, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Unknown

**Coordinates:** 45.1, 15.2000001

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: Reporter: 21; others mixed age including one minor , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, dog attacks, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian officers, details unknown

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of 11 young men, including a minor, who had started their journey in Serbia, were violently pushed back to Bosnia around the 15<sup>th</sup> of June.

The respondent, an Afghan man aged 21 years old, did not know where exactly in Croatia they were apprehended, their phones had died by this time. At around 2 pm they were caught by Croatian police – eight officers in two cars. He did not recall what the officers looked like because they were immediately ordered to lay on the ground after being apprehended and were told to shut up. Anyone who did not lay down or who spoke and, in particular, anyone who spoke English was beaten more severely. The police used their fists, feet and batons; they did not give the group the opportunity to explain that they had come from Serbia rather than Bosnia.

During this initial exchange with the officers, the group-member's money, phones and clothes were stolen from them. The young man who was the primary respondent for this report lost 250 Euros alone.

In total, the abuse from these officers continued for almost 20 minutes. They were then walked to the Bosnian border – about 2 hours from where they were caught. When they were near the border, the police told them to run and then released dogs to chase them. As the dogs chased the young men, occasionally catching, though not biting, them, the police watched, laughing and shouting. After about 10 minutes they recalled the dogs.

**28/05/2020**

## **“THE OFFICERS HAD CLEARLY BEEN DRINKING ALCOHOL”**

**Date and time:** May 28, 2020 13:00

**Location:** Near Vorkapić, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.272667, 15.94575

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 19 - 21, from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, Exposure to fire, Exposure to glass

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen, Independent person

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On May 25th, a group of three males from Morocco set out across the border between Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia, north of Vrnograc. They started from the border and entered Croatia, after which point they walked for three days. On their third day in the woods, May 28th, they were approached by a Croatian policeman who told them firmly “Stop, you will not run away”. The boys described this location where they were apprehended as being near a road close to the village of Vorkapić, Croatia (Approximate location: 45.272669, 15.945752). This area is under the jurisdiction of the Gvozd police station – whose chief is Mijo Rapić . Moreover, is is nearby

the town of Topusko where the Croatian Ministry of the Interior's notorious **Koridor** action unit is based.

The group of three stopped accordingly and calmly told the officer: "We won't run away, brother."

Afterwards the officer approached them further and began a thorough search of their belongings. He confiscated their mobile phones and backpacks, and told the boys to take off their shoes, clothes, jacket and everything else. The officer was described as being angry towards the boys and swore at them in the local language.

Sometime after this, the officer called for backup and for them to bring a "marica", or prisoner-transport van, to a road nearby. At some point after their apprehension, one of the group told an officer that his friends were quite young, and the police officer laughed and made a joke that they would still have to try to cross the border many times.

When the van arrived, the respondents described it as being all black and having no glass in the back half. The group were loaded into this van and driven back to the Bosnian/Croatian border. When they exited the van, the respondents saw the Glina river marking the border between the two countries and several additional police officers. Including the officers who drove them to the border, there were five Croatian police officers at this location, who were clad in black ski masks.

The officers took them out of the van and started hitting them in the face and on the body with a baton, knocking them to the ground and kicking them until they got up again. The boys remarked that the officers who were engaging in this violence towards them had clearly been drinking alcohol. First they hit one of the group who then ran away and first crossed to the other side of the river. The two remaining group members were still on the other side of the river with the police. The officers started hitting them with even more force. The two people stuck on the other side of the river were 19 and 20 years old respectively.

According to the respondents, the officers also took the glass bottles which they had been drinking from, smashed them, and pushed the boys towards the broken glass. It was also reported that there was a fire at the push-back location, which the group described as being exposed to.

According to the boys, one of the Croatian police officers who engaged in this behavior was quite young. In his estimation he was around 23 years old and was in an alcoholic state, beating them as much as he could.

They went back to Bosnia and saw houses, the group approached one house and a sympathetic local person showed the boys which direction to head back towards. Eventually, they made their way back to Sarajevo to recover from their wounds.

27/05/2020

## “THEY TORTURED US FOR THREE TO FOUR HOURS”

**Date and time:** May 27, 2020 05:00

**Location:** near road 42 in Karlovac county

**Coordinates:** 45.00649000832803, 15.415508110034194

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 18+ , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), threatening with guns, gunshots, smearing food on heads

**Police involved:** minimum of five officers in black wearing masks (Interventna), Croatian police vehicles

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

### ORIGINAL REPORT

**The Croatian police rubbed ketchup and mayonnaise into heads wounds of a transit group which they had caused with a rifle butt. The officers beat and traumatised the group for several hours, before driving them to the border and pushing them back to Bosnia-Herzegovina.**

The transit group left Bosnia-Herzegovina and walked into Croatia. The group consisted of five Pakistani men. Another 11 or 12 people were transiting close by, but this sub-group chose to walk ahead. The group was travelling close to road number 42, besides the rail track in Croatia. The Croatian police apprehended them on 26th May 2020 at about 23:00.

The respondent said that the police began beating them indiscriminately. The other transit group further behind fled and hid. Because of the darkness and aggression of the assault, the respondent does not recall all the weapons used by the police, but states for certain that they had guns.

*“They even fired shots close to our ears for the purpose of intimidating us they did this in spite of our reassurances that we won’t run away. Why would we run away? Once we’d been caught they beat us in such a way that I can’t even... they didn’t ask us anything, just started the beating.”*

The officers were wearing black uniforms and balaclavas. The respondent alluded to the Islamic headdress known as a “niqab” to illustrate that they could only see a slit for the officers eyes. He stated that only one officer wasn’t wearing a mask. The police attacked the whole group members:

*“There were five of them four of them beaten us each one of us was being beaten by two of them, when one of us passed out (fainted is the word they used) they would start*

*on the other. They beat us like they had the full right to beat us, I don't know what to say to you, to describe the kind of injustice they dealt us with. I told the highest ranking one that my bones were broken that they had broken my leg that I couldn't stand, he said not worry as they would proceed to break my other body parts such as chest, feet, head and arms. they kept on beating me”.*

From the point of apprehension at 23:00 on 26th May 2020, the respondent says that they were held by the police for six hours (during which most of the time officers were beating at least one of the five transit group members). He states that the officers took turns, and had drinks breaks when they were tired.

*“I don't know if they were drinking water or if they were drinking alcohol and then they would come back and continue beating us.”*

Describing the physical cost of this sustained assault, the respondent said that at least two of the men had broken or fractured arms.

*“Towards the end I had almost lost consciousness due to pain in my chest which was a result of wounds all over my body including the chest. I had a broken leg and arms. My ears were bleeding.”*

One of the biggest injuries came from multiple strikes to the head of the respondent with a rifle butt:

*“They struck on my head many times using the pistol butt and in spite of bleeding from my head which had three or four open wounds they continued hitting me even when they saw the blood. I don't want anyone else to go through what I went through.”*

The officers then laughed and mocked the man by staunching the wounds with food and condiments found in the mans rucksack:

*“We try the border crossing for a better future. We weren't trying to steal anything we weren't taking anything with us that could bring harm to anyone we didn't even have a knife which we could have needed to cut something to eat. We had mayonnaise and ketchup in our bags which they rubbed on our wounds. My head was bleeding and they rubbed it with ketchup and then mayonnaise and I had a bar of chocolate that they also rubbed into my head which had wounds I think they were trying to stop the bleeding by putting things on top of it. I had three or four cuts from being hit by the butt of a pistol on my head.”*

The respondent continued to be in sever pain from what he believed to be a break in his arm.

*“I don't speak a lot of English but the little bit of English I did speak I use to try and convince them to listen, but he kept saying I want to beat you I want to kill you. He was*

*getting happy like when you cut a birthday cake and you say happy birthday, little children say happy birthday just like that. My head was bleeding in several places and it showed him my hand is full of blood and he said happy birthday to you, no problem I just thought that they were beating me to kill me they tortured us for 3 to 4 hours”*

The respondent said that after the torture, the officers loaded the five injured men into a police vehicle. As they did this, they continued to hit the men with sticks. They were driven for a short time and then the vehicle halted. Each person was beckoned out individually by the Croatian police who were again holding sticks. The officers continued to beat them despite their already severe state of injury.

*“At this stage blood was dripping from three or four wounds on my head and when my friends were trying to lift me up to carry me with them they were hit by these policemen”*

Commenting on the episode the respondent states:

*“I had heard about the atrocities committed by the Croatian security officials but now I have personally experienced their highhandedness and brutal actions. If we had not obeyed them or tried to run away from them then they would have been justified in punishing us. But here we were that in spite of surrendering ourselves on their first command to stop we were meted out the severest torture.”*

*On return the group were helped by a local Bosnian man who: “witnessing our precarious condition took upon himself to help us by calling an ambulance and took us to his home where we took some rest and were fed.”*

The respondent found out the next morning (28th) that the other transit group of 11 men had also been pushed back.

*“The rest of the other group (approximately 11 people who had originally evaded the police) hid themselves during the night and I was told that on the subsequent morning they went to a village in Croatia and the villagers called the police and they surrendered themselves to the police who were wearing blue colour uniform.”*

Citing his difficult recovery, he said:

*“I came back to the camp only yesterday from the hospital where my chest and body wounds were examined and a report handed over to me but they didn’t give me any x-ray. I asked for these but they promised to release them to me in future. They prescribed some medicines, the procurement and availability of which have been promised*

*to me in due course. They have diagnosed two fractures on my leg and one on my arm. They put plaster on my arm. I was administered injections for pain. They put stitches on my wounds in my head. In addition I have a cracked jaw which hurts while eating and a cracked rib which hurts when I breathe. They issued me a medical report to that effect."*

**27/05/2020**

## **"PINNED DOWN BY FIVE OFFICERS AND ATTACKED WITH A KNIFE"**

**Date and time:** May 27, 2020 02:00

**Location:** Blata, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.032557045029286, 15.401388795384223

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 18+ , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, threatening with guns, gunshots, theft of personal belongings, knife attack

**Police involved:** 12 Croatian officers matching uniform of Interventna police, 2 vehicles

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

**Croatian police officers shot at the men's feet and beat them with batons when they found them in Blata, Croatia. Then, with four officers holding him down, one man had a knife pulled on him by a policeman, who proceeded to slice his palm and index finger open.**

The group of 10 or 11 Pakistani men left Bihac (BiH) on 24th May 2020 and walked on foot, crossing into Croatia. The respondent said they walked for three days. During this time they observed a larger transit group of about 80 people also walking in the area and moved away so as not to draw attention from the police.

On the 26th May 2020, the men reached some railway tracks, in order to avoid a longer detour they decided to walk a little by the tracks

*"We crossed a small river and kept going until we reached a railway track. I looked on the map and we were close to the E71 road"*

They started walking by the tracks in the dark, and at about 02:00 the next day (27th May 2020) they were spotted by police close to a small village called Blata (HR).

*"We are about to go past there, we were walking when suddenly in the jungle there was the train track on one side there was a ditch and on the other the mountain and we are walking in the middle on the train track. In this time the Croatian police arrives 4-5 men."*

Two officers shone torch-lights in their faces, while others shouted for them to stop. The officers were wearing black uniforms and had guns and batons, matching the description of Croatia's Interventna division. The group were then forced to link arms by putting a hand on the shoulder of the next person. In this way, the Croatian police forced them into a line and started marching them down the tracks.

*"We stopped there they told us to put our hands on the shoulders of each other "Hand over the shoulders" that's how they said it. So we put our hands on each others shoulders and we started walking as one, along the train tracks."*

The officers were carrying guns and shot at the men's feet as they walked. They also used sticks to beat the group:

*"They kept shooting us, they were shooting us so closely that the stones under our feet were flying they were being blown into pieces. After that they kept coming behind us slapping us, kicking us hitting us with sticks. After the sticks once we arrived at the original train station, like the ones in Pakistan or Iran or turkey even Greece"*

They arrived at the old station in Blata and were ordered to sit by the tracks and empty their bags. In the train station, a further five Pakistani men from another transit group were already being held and looked as though they had been beaten. At this point the respondent recalls the worst of the beatings beginning. Alongside the five officers that had caught them there were at least another five waiting on the station platform.

*"They beat me a lot there were 5 of them and 5-7 others standing on the platform. Those others started kicking me and hitting me with steel or iron rods they hit my knees legs and calves and on all my body my face a lot they kept me in the centre of them and beat me a lot. They then pushed me aside and started beating my friends I don't remember understanding what was going on, my head was full of blood my nose was bleeding. They hit me on the face so many times, on my back on my head with the butt of a rifle on my face my cheeks, my head they hit me on my back."*

Two police cars arrived with several other officers, the respondent recalls seeing a total of at least 12 police at the scene. The new officers, dressed in the same uniforms, spoke to the officers beating the men and then joined in themselves.

*"They told me to stand up "stand up. stand up" I wasn't able to stand up*

*So I was still on the ground and they hit me with rods. The thing that makes me sad is that they were smiling and laughing like properly laughing I couldn't understand why this had happened to us. May God help the other brothers (in the transit community)"*

Eventually, despite being ordered aggressively, the respondent was no longer able to stand. At this point, the police pulled a knife on him and pinned him down.

*"The third time they said stand up, when I wasn't able to stand up one took my arm and put one knee on my chest and another on my neck.*

*Two men were on top of me, one of them had a dagger strapped close to his knee. It was a black coloured dagger, he pulled it out and pointed it at my face. I said "no sir, no sir, please no sir" I moved my hand in front of it to move it from my face. So a third police man who was standing by took hold of my hand and another forth police man took my other hand and put both his feet on my hand. The second one on my body was hitting my legs with a stick he just kept hitting and hitting. God protected me."*

The respondent was immobilised by four officers, while the fifth used the blade to cut his hand which was pinned by his other colleagues feet:

*"The first on with the knee on my chest and neck and the dagger in his hand said something in another language then he knifed the index finger of my left hand, and blood start spurting out like a small shower, then he smiled, then he cut my middle finger followed by my palm with a larger cut. The whole hand is swollen beyond recognition. They then continued hitting my face and my nose. I kept saying stop please stop"*

The respondent was left severely injured and in shock. He stated that after the attack, all of the group (now about 15 people) were loaded into a police vehicle and driven to the border with Bosnia. The ejection from Croatian territory occurred close to the Bosnian town of Velika Kladusa. At the border the officers ordered the group across telling them to "run, run".

*"I couldn't even stand up, I fell out of the car onto the road, there were other Croatian police there, they also had stick but they didn't say or do anything to me. They told the other guys to pick me up with my arms around their shoulders and take me to Bosnia in English. Only I was cut with the knife. The first day my hands was so swollen I couldn't move them, now a week later I can start to move my fingers"*

Other members of the group described having broken hands, and one had a fractured eye socket. Relaying the shock of local Bosnian people, who saw them after they had returned on foot the respondent said:

*“When we were on the side of the road in Bosnia, we looked so bad that people driving by were taking photos throwing water and money at us we looked in such bad condition, they were so upset at seeing us like this. When I saw myself the mirror I got really worried”*

Those that could walk returned to Miral TRC, the closest camp in the area. The others had to wait for an ambulance to be sent in order to bring them back.

**26/05/2020**

## **“ATTACKED WITH STICKS AND KNIVES - WHERE IS THE HUMAN RIGHTS?”**

**Date and time:** May 26, 2020 00:00

**Location:** river in the locality of Licka Jesenica

**Coordinates:** 44.9964315, 15.4406462

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 14 person(s), age: 18+ , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), knife attack

**Police involved:** 20 Croatian officers dressed in black with balaclavas (Interventna division), three vans

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of at least 14 people originally from Pakistan reported that, on the night of 26th May 2020 around 01:00 they were intercepted by Croatian police officers who were wearing black uniforms and black ski masks over their faces. The respondents stated that at least 20 policemen were present, and the group was caught near a river in the locality of Licka Jesenica, Croatia (<https://goo.gl/maps/GREji2KQBGViv219>).

At the time of the arrest, the police made people sit on the ground and began to beat them up, hitting them with closed fists, batons and kicks. The group were then lined up and marched to 3 Croatian police vehicles parked nearby.

When the transit group were loaded into the van, they were made to lie face down on the floor of the rear compartment and were beaten again, including with the use of the butt of the guns. One of the respondents reported that he was attacked with a knife used by one of the officers. According to the group, the officers of the beating were on drugs or alcohol, and were amused and exalted by the situation and the more they beat the group the more they laughed.

At the end of the beating, the van was closed then driven for a short time. The vehicle stopped by the border with Bosnia Herzegovina, at the lateral height of Velika Kladusa. The fourteen

people were unloaded and were made to go by foot across the border. The officers told them to go holding each other's arm, since almost all of them were seriously injured and unable to walk unassisted.

Arriving in Bosnia and Herzegovina, an International Organisation for Migration vehicle took the group to the local hospital where they were treated (Sulejmana Topića 1, Velika Kladuša 77230, Bosnia & Herzegovina). The next day some of them were taken to the larger and better equipped cantonal hospital in Bihac for further treatment. In the medical report, it is stated that the patient claims that the injuries and bruises were caused by the Croatian police.

At the time of interview the group was located within Velika Kladusa's TRC Miral. Their case was the subject of several videos on social media portraying the extent of the injuries inflicted, and a feature story on **Bosnian Federal TV**. In the video shown, the narrator pans across a line of injured men and asks:

“where is the human rights?”

20/05/2020

## “[TAKE] OFF YOUR ALL CLOTHES”

**Date and time:** May 20, 2020 19:00

**Location:** Near Šturlić, BiH

**Coordinates:** 45.0518275931265, 15.74666940649855

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 20 - 43 , from: India

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian officers in black uniforms with ski masks, 4 other officers

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 16th of May, a group of 6 men originally from India crossed into Croatia from Bosnia with intention of crossing through the country in search of a better life in a European country. After walking for four days through the Croatian interior, the men described being stopped by a group of police officers on the morning of May 20th. The group was stopped as they walked on a small dirt road in the wilderness. The officers stopped the group and searched their belongings.

As their belongings were searched, the police officers confiscated the group member's mobile phones and paper money which they had on them. The group never received these items back.

*"They took our everything money mobile"*

Some time after their initial apprehension, a prisoner-transport van arrived along the dirt road and the group-members were loaded into it. The respondents described a long drive in the van, a bit less than an hour and a half, which took them to a police station where they were brought inside. The group spent approximately two and a half hours in this station, during which time they had their pictures taken by a police officer, one-by-one, and they were forced to sign a paper which had their personal information logged into it. The respondents did not have their fingerprints taken nor did they express an intention to claim asylum during their time in the police station.

Eventually, while it was still light out, the group was loaded back into a prisoner-transport van and, over the course of a two hour drive, were driven back to the Bosnian-Croatian border, near Šturlić, BiH.

When they arrived to the border, they exited the van and described seeing the Korana river flowing in front of them. They described seeing six officers, five of which had on black ski masks. They were dressed in such that matches the description of the black/dark blue jumpsuits worn by Croatian Intervention Police officers.

*"They are 6 men, 5 wore black masks and one was without a mask"*

The group-members then described orders by the officers:

*"And then departing time at Šturlić, near a river, they tell us "[Take] off your all clothes" and then they burned everything"*

Accordingly, each group-member was forced to take off their clothes and strip down to their underwear. They then described witnessing the officers burn this clothing in broad daylight. The men were ushered to cross the border back into Bosnia and described feeling humiliated, having to attempt to walk back to the town of Velika Kladuša without any clothing on:

*"I don't know any idea how can I go front of people how can I walk like naked"*

**15/05/2020**

## **"THEY DON'T REVEAL THEIR FACES AT THE BORDER BECAUSE THEY STEAL."**

**Date and time:** May 15, 2020 22:06

**Location:** In the rural areas surrounding Vinkovci

**Coordinates:** 45.143399341775456, 18.82455265465202

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 20 - 25 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian police officers, other Croatian border guards

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

In mid-May, around the 15th, a group of 6 men from North Africa crossed into Croatia near the town of Šid, Serbia. They started during the evening and made their way across the rural interior of the country on foot towards the Croatian border city of Vinkovci.

*"I tried my trip last week with my friends. We walked in the land of Croatia about 20 km in the dark night. It took us about 6 hours."*

At around this time, the group heard movement and hid in nearby patch of trees, and were soon approached by a group of around 5 Croatia police officers who acted aggressive and violent towards the group, hitting them with batons and kicks and strikes with their hands:

*"We were hiding in the trees until the Croatian police took us out. [Then] they used all means, beating with the stick and hands and their legs, [they hit] us without mercy and took us to the road [in a] the police van."*

The respondent described that before they entered into the police van. The van was white with police insignia painted onto it and had no windows. The authorities confiscated their mobile phones and money, which they had attempted to hide in their shoes. They were then placed in the van and driven back to the Serbian border. The whole process of being captured, searched, waiting for the van, and then being driven back took around two hours.

*"They took the phones and money from the shoes, and they [brought] us to the Serbian border, next to the railway, where they completed the beating without mercy, and stole everything from us using us like animals."*

*"It took us for two hours and brought us back to the Serbian border. There are other police at the border who have no mercy on the beatings...at the border, [they] cover the face to beat us without mercy. They don't reveal their faces at the border because they steal."*

Upon arriving back to the border with Serbia, the group was ushered out of the van. They described encountering several new officers who were waiting for them at this push-back location. They were described as wearing black ski masks (likely the Croatia border guard). These officers were also described as striking the group-members.

*"Their treatment is very bad, [they] do not treat us like a human being. Migrants are not [treated] by law"*

After crossing back over to Serbia, the group made their way to Principovac where they were able to gain entrance to the Transit Center there.

06/05/2020

## “THE POLICE USED SPRAY PAINT TO MARK THE PEOPLE'S HEADS”

**Date and time:** May 6, 2020 19:00

**Location:** Close to Poljana (BiH)

**Coordinates:** 45.21447404145811, 15.92877363767891

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 20 person(s), age: 20 - 45 (unknown if minors were involved) , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, India

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, water immersion, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Special Forces officers dressed in green uniform, four Croatian officers in black, 10 officers at the border

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, papers signed

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, Balkan Info Van

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent in this case, a Pakistani male, was walking through the Croatian forest when the incident began. On the 6th May 2020, the transit group he was in were close to the 61 motorway, near the Slovenian border.

Several authorities described as wearing green military style uniform with “*Special Forces*” written on it apprehended them and proceeded to search the group. The respondent said these authorities then called further police officers to the scene.

Soon after, four officers arrived with a van. The new authorities were wearing black uniforms. The transit group were loaded by these police officers into the rear of the van and then driven away. The van arrived at a police station where the group were taken inside, photographed and made to sign a sheet of paper.

In the station, the respondent said that he and others from the group asked for asylum. However in response the officers who heard this told them:

“*Shut up*”

The respondent states he was aware of at least 20-25 people detained at that point. 11 from Pakistan and other people from Afghanistan and India. The group were held for a while and given food. At approximately 16:00 the police loaded them into four different Croatian police vans.

The respondent’s van was driven by several officers. The van stopped at a certain point into the journey. Through the transparent partition that separated the driving cabin from the rear area, the respondent saw that the officers had got out to buy beer from the shop. The respondent

shares how the police officers were drinking the entire way from the shop to the border with Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The respondent said that when the van stopped it was early evening and nearby a small river close to Velika Kladusa (BiH) which by the respondent's description is likely to have been in the Poljana area. The officers unloaded the group one-by-one. Outside the van the police used spray paint to mark the peoples heads. The officers made crosses on the tops of the peoples heads and sometimes directed the paint onto their faces and mustaches.

After being sprayed with the paint, the officers ordered the group to take off their clothes and shoes, and also to hand over their money and mobile phones, which the police put in their pockets. The officers then burnt the clothes and other belonging left over.

As these were destroyed, the officers arranged themselves in a line. There were about 10 officers and they stood holding batons and stick of wood. The police ordered the transit group to walk past the line one-by-one. As they did this the police beat them with the batons and wooden sticks.

After this corridor effect was used, the police pushed the men into a stretch of river that borders Croatia and BiH and shouted at them that they should never return. They then had to walk several kilometres to get back to Velika Kladusa.

The respondent states he still has pain in his leg, which can't bear weight since the beating. He was also upset about the humiliating behavior and said the spray painting was done so the police could laugh and make them look "*like monkeys*".

The respondent states that after the incident he met with the other groups that had been divided among the three other police vans. He states that they had been subject to the same process of beating and spray tagging by the police. By his count, at least 20-25 people had been affected by this incident.

**06/04/2020**

## **"THE OFFICERS DID NOTHING FOR THE MAN WHO WAS LYING ON THE FLOOR"**

**Date and time:** April 6, 2020 20:20

**Location:** Close to Basara (HR)

**Coordinates:** 45.03150725838822, 15.760058080612168

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 16 person(s), age: 19 - 40 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 8/9 Croatian officers dressed in black uniforms, carrying batons. One large police car, one smaller car and one police van.

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 16 Afghans in this incident left from an area close to Sturlic (BiH) on 5th April 2020 by foot and crossed into Croatia. The group was made up of males aged between 19 and 40 years old. They walked for one day in the Croatian forest. On the following day (6th April 2020) one man in the group collapsed and was unable to walk. The respondent said that the individual was unwell and was unable to move or communicate with the others. The respondent described how the man:

***“fell down on the ground, not able to wake up or talk”***

The group became very concerned for the man and were not sure what injury/illness he may have. They picked him up and carried him to the closest village to seek help.

The transit group came to a road with some houses and looked for someone to assist.

***“We were going through a village”***

The respondent says he was looking for Croatian police officers and wanted to ask for them to bring medical attention for the man. Eventually the respondent saw one police officer and approached him asking for help.

***“I went to him, ‘we need help our friend is hurt’”***

***“we gave ourselves to Croatian police”***

The officer attended to the group of 16 and came to see the condition of the man who the others had lain out on the floor. The initial officer, wearing black uniform, was described as “behaving nice” and allegedly assured the transit group that the police would help them get him to a hospital. The officer called back-up and approximately seven police officers arrived at the location on the road.

The officers were dressed in black uniforms matching the first policeman they met. They came in two marked police vehicles, one described as a smaller car, and one in a larger car. These officers were reported to be rude and not as accommodating as the first. Immediately they began to act roughly with the 15 people who were standing. They searched the groups bags and ordered them to give over their personal belongings such as mobile phones (the respondent said only one person was able to retain their phone by hiding it).

Despite the respondents requests for medical attention, the officers did nothing for the man who was lying on the floor. Describing the authorities behavior, the respondent shared how “they even didn’t touch” the man, and made no efforts to check on his physical state. Soon after all the bags had been searched and possessions removed, a further officer brought a vehicle into which the group were loaded.

***“bring a car like a combi and put us in the car and bring us to the Bosnian border”***

The sixteen people were loaded into the back of the police van together. As the officers refused to touch or assist the man on the floor, the group members themselves had to pick him up and convey him to the van as he was still unable to walk and not verbally responsive. The van drove the group a short distance to the border with BiH and unloaded them from the back (again forcing the group members to carry the injured person).

At the border, described as an area of countryside, the police ordered the group of people to place their bags, jackets and possessions in a pile.

***“they took all, they start burning it, and after that they start beating”***

After setting fire to the groups clothing the respondent shared how they were attacked by the 7/8 officers who used batons (“black sticks”) to hit the group all over their bodies. 15 of the people were beaten in this fashion (the ill person was lying on the ground at this time) and the assault by the police officers caused injury to many of the group. This included two people who were beaten until they bled from their heads.

***“they beat us with, a black stick”...“broke two persons head”***

The police then ordered them to leave and walk back to BiH. It is estimated that they were pushed back across the border at approximately 20:20 on 6th April 2020. The respondent said that there was “water” in the border, matching the location of the Korana river which runs along the area identified by the respondent to be south of Sturlic (BiH). The group had to carry the injured man across the river because he was still unable to walk and in a bad condition.

The respondent said the group walked for around 20 minutes until they came across a road (45°01'53.9"N, 15°46'12.4"E). Here they stopped and called a local person for assistance. The call was at approximately 20:40. The group pinned their location, and took photographs of a sign which marked them as in the wider Trzac area (BiH).

The local person called the ambulance first, then somebody from the local government in Sturlic (BiH), before finally arranging for the police to pick the transit group up. According to the local person, the ambulance said they were busy and could not attend, despite the description of the unresponsive male who was injured.

Around an hour later the Bosnian police arrived at the marked location and collected three people from the group. This included the originally injured person, and the two people who had suffered impact blows from the beating carried out by the Croatian police. The other thirteen people had to walk back to Bihac (BiH) on foot which the respondent describes as taking around 13 hours.

The group were helped by local people who gave food and clothes, however the respondent suggests that the injured man taken to the hospital was not fully treated, and attributes this to a policy related to Corona.

***“the person who was injured, the police took him, the hospital said ‘we wont take him’, because Corona”***

The local person who assisted also shared that one of the group had a sever wrist/hand injury from baton strikes. However the police did not take this person to the hospital, and the man remains untreated, Describing the episode as a whole the respondent shared how he was frustrated with the treatment they received at the hands of the Croatian police:

***“i was really disappointed with their behavior”***

At the time of interview, the people affected by this case continue to sleep inside abandoned buildings and are unable to access camps because the respondents suggests there is either no-space, or they are “scared of going to Lipa” (a new large tent camp being constructed south east of Bihac).

**13/03/2020**

## **“SIX MINORS BEEN PUSHED-BACK FROM CROATIA, THREATENED WITH GUNS”**

**Date and time:** March 13, 2020 05:00

**Location:** near to Križevci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 46.075716, 16.656046

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 17, 17, 17, 16, 15, 14 , from: Egypt

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, threatening with guns, gunshots, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian officers (1 female 5 males) wearing dark blue uniforms and ski masks ; 1 official van, unknown officers ; 4 Croatian officers 2 wearing dark blue uniforms 2 wearing black uniforms with ski-masks

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Six minors aged between 14 and 17 years old, left from Bosnia-Herzegovina on March 9th into Croatia. Originating from Egypt, it was the first time that this group left from Bosnia to attempt to reach Italy.

After walking four days within the Croatian interior, on the 13rd of March, the group neared the town of Križevci (46°04'32.6"N 16°39'21.8"E HR). The group was walking along a forest path at which point six Croatian officers apprehended them. The respondents described six officers (five males and one female) wearing dark blue uniforms and ski masks. When the officers saw the group in transit walking, they shouted to them "*sit down!*" and discharged two gunshots in the air.

Afraid, the respondents immediately stopped and sat on the ground. The policewoman called for back-up via her talkie-walkie. While waiting for the other authorities to arrive, the group was violently frisked. The personal belongings of the group were stolen (phones, power-banks, phones) and put into a plastic bag. Their backpacks were emptied by the officers, who put the food inside into a plastic bag and then threw away the backpacks. The group was then forced to undress. Their jackets and jumpers were not returned to them. The minors only spoke Arabic and remarked at how difficult it was to understand what the authorities were saying to them.

After some time, one officially marked police van arrived to pick up the group-members. They were unable to describe the officers inside the police van but recalled experiencing a rough and forceful drive within the van, which was dark, without windows, and had the air conditioning turned on. During the journey, one of the respondents vomited inside the van.

After roughly 30 minutes of driving, the young respondents were driven to a secluded section of the Croatia/Bosnia-Herzegovina border (45°01'42.4"N 16°20'39.5"E HR) near Novi Grad (BiH) where four Croatian officers were standing. Two of them wore dark blue uniforms (one male and one female) and the two others (both male) were dressed in black uniforms and ski-masks.

At the border – as visible in the attached image – the respondents' mobile phones were destroyed by the authorities and before being given back. The respondents recalled that the officers were laughing at them as they did this.

The group of respondents also described seeing a fire when they arrived at the border. They inferred that some of their belongings that they did not receive back, the plastic bag the officers previously took from them, were burnt in this fire.

The group of respondents was ordered to go out from the van. The authorities shouted at them "*Quick, quick, never come back, go back to Bosnia !*". When the group-members began to run, one of the policemen pulled a gun on the group to threaten them to be quicker. After crossing into Bosnia, the group embarked on a long walk back to Velika Kladuša.

07/03/2020

## “THE POLICEMEN PULLED A LOADED GUN ON THE FOREHEAD'S MEN”

**Date and time:** March 7, 2020 04:30

**Location:** near to Topusko, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.240047, 15.88256

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 18 to 24 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, threatening with guns, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** unknown officers with thermal binocular ; 6 Croatian officers wearing dark blue uniforms and ski mask ; two official vans, unknow number of officers inside wearing dark blue suits and ski masks ; "a lot of" Croatian policemen wearing dark blue uniforms and ski masks, 1 official van, 1 official car

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

Very late in the evening of the 6th of March, six men aged between 18 and 24 years old (originally from Morocco) left Glinica (BiH) and crossed the border into Croatia.

After walking for a while, at around 12:30 am on March 7th, the group in transit were walking in a section of the Croatian forest near the village of Crni Potok (HR) (45.240047, 15.88256 HR). One of the group members – who was attempting to navigate the group through a mapping application on his phone – went alone further on the path to check if it was safe for the whole group. The respondent saw an undetermined amount of officers equipped with what he described as “*thermal binoculars*”. He inferred that it was thermal because it was a dark night and, indeed, as he noticed, it is not possible to see through “normal” binoculars during the night without high tech materials.

The respondent rushed back to his friends and to tell them to go back to Bosnia because he saw police, but almost immediately after returning to the main group, six Croatian officers appeared and surrounded the group. The six policemen were dressed in dark blue uniforms. All were male and two of them wore black ski masks over their faces.

Several officers threatened the group with firearms. The respondent recalled that:

*“When the police arrived I was saying to them “please, peace with us, peace” but they weren’t interested on that and pulled guns on us. I heard that they loaded it. One of the officers came to me with his gun and put it directly on my head while he was shouting on me “who’s the leader ? I know it’s you.”*

The officer then slapped the respondent in question because he did not find any clear "leader" ; the group was then frisked. The respondents then described being hit multiple times by several officers:

*"The officers ordered to us to make a line. We were sitting on the knees on the ground. The police put all our phones, money, power banks and food they found in a big [garbage bag]. After that, we were beaten with iron rods".*

Indeed, according to the group of respondents, those officers were armed with iron rods. The officers hit them with kicks as well. The group-members still had marks on their bodies from this violence at the time that this report was taken. One of the respondents described that their arm was broken from this incident (as shown in the picture above).

*"The worst thing is that it wasn't finish for us. This team of police took also our clothes to make us cold. This is torture."*

After this, the officers forced the group to undress and confiscated the group-members' shoes, jackets, jumpers, t-shirt, and pants. At this point, the six group-members were left in just their underwear in front of the officers who were described as laughing while watching them. All of their clothes were put in a garbage bag.

After this, almost nude and in a line, the group was brought to a small road path nearby. There, two official vans were waiting for them. The respondents were unable to describe the officers involved inside the vans because *"I was afraid and scared and the police forbid us to look at them threatening to beat us more"* explains one of them. They just noticed that those policemen were dressed in dark blue uniforms and some of them had ski masks.

The entire group was ordered to go into one of the two vans. A 20-minute-long drive of reckless and inappropriate driving was described. The van was windowless, dark and cold. *"One of our friends vomited inside"*. After those minutes, the van arrived at a secluded section of the border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (45.227696, 15.891313 HR).

The van parked at the end of a path and the respondents were taken out of it one by one. They noticed a number of policemen without but could not recall a precise number. The officers were wearing dark blue and black uniforms and most of them wore ski masks. There was a police car at the site as well, but there were no officers inside.

One respondent explains how the pushed-back proceeded :

*"They took me the first out of the van. Three policemen came inside, cough me by the collar and threw me outside while they closed the van's doors with my five friends inside. When I was on the ground, those three policemen beat me during ten minutes with the same iron rods than previously. I think it was about two meters. After what, they carried me until the river where an officer in ski mask was and threw me inside".*

Once in the cold water, the respondent swam until the Bosnian river's edge and ran until a hidden place where he waited for his other friends, who were pushed back in the same way as him.

At sometime between 4:00 am or 5:00 am on the 7th of March, the six wet and almost naked young men began a search for clothes or shoes in Bosnia, and headed on their way to go back to Velika Kladuša.

***"I have nothing to add. I just want to finish this action film. We are the peace. We are not animals".***

**06/03/2020**

## **"WE STILL HAVEN'T HEARD ABOUT OUR FOURTH FRIEND."**

**Date and time:** March 6, 2020 03:00

**Location:** near to Topusko, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.210948, 15.927609

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 17, 24, 24, 24 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, water immersion, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 2 Croatians policemen wearing dark blue uniform ; 1 Croatian officer wearing dark blue uniform, 1 official van ; 3 Croatians officers wearing dark blue uniform and 1 with ski mask / 2 Croatian policemen, 1 unofficial 4X4 ; 1 Croatian officer wearing dark blue uniform, 1 official van ; 3 Croatians officers wearing dark blue uniform including 1 with ski mask

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On the 6th of March, four young men, including one minor, all coming from Morocco, were walking in a forest in the interior of Croatia, attempting to transit through the country.

They had been in the forest for several hours already when a group of two policemen, wearing blue Croatian uniforms, stopped them at 1:00 am. The respondents described that the officers shouted at them: *"Stop, stop! and sit down !!"*.

At this moment, the initial group of four was split. Two started to run when they saw the police coming while the other two immediately stopped and sat out of fear. The two escaping men took different ways, so escaped alone. One of them was later deported to Bosnia-Herzegovina during the day after the two men in this report (*refers to the end of the transcript*) whereas to this day, they still have not heard about their other friend. At this point, the group of people being push-back turns to two.

One officer called for back-up from his talkie-walkie. They waited around 30 minutes and during this time, the respondents who were sitting on the ground, were violently frisked and questioned:

*"From where are you?; How old are you ?; Why are you coming here?; Is there other immigrants?"*

The respondents recalled that they could not fully understand the officers because they could not speak English nor Croatian. Moreover, with those questions, the police were also aware that they were dealing with a minor. The respondents reported that the police were haughty and mocking to them. During the frisking, all of the personal belongings of the respondents were taken (phones, money, power banks and the backpacks).

*"The police were laughing after each answer we gave to them. They laughed at us."*

The vehicle which arrived was an official white police van. It arrived with one officer inside. Once the group was inside the van and it began driving, they recalled experiencing abrupt driving which made one of them vomit. The air conditioning was on during the one hour of driving in the windowless van. The two respondents were driven directly to the border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, near Poljana (approximate coordinates 45.210948, 15.927609 HR) at around 2:30 am. The exact location was described as being at the end of a path in a forest. When the van's doors were opened, three policemen wearing blue suits were standing in front of it. According to the respondents, one was the van's driver and one of them was wearing a ski mask.

The officers ordered the respondents to exit the van. There, the ski-mask-clad officer hit the two young men. He beat them with a baton and kicks to their bodies. The respondents described that he was targeting their stomachs, legs and backs. The marks were still present on their bodies during the time of interview. After what the respondents described as five minutes, they succeeded in running across the border, after which point the officers did not follow them. The respondents never received back their backpacks.

They arrived at Velika Kladuša a few hours later and found one of their friends initially ran when police caught the group.

In short, the person described what happened to him as follows : *"I was alone, without phone, without my backpack in a village that I don't know, on the 7th of March. Three policemen wearing dark blue uniforms, driving a 4X4 stopped me and told me to sit."*

A police van arrived with two other officers inside and drove him for ten reckless minutes to an area of the border that the respondent was unable to locate. He just remembered to have been deported near a river in the forest and supposedly the same location as his two friends (45.210948, 15.927609 HR).

*"The chief of police took pictures of me with his phone when I was on the van"*

The same police layout as previous was described: three policemen wearing blue clothes including one with the ski mask.

In the van, the respondent was forced to undress: his jacket, jumper, shoes and socks were taken off and the officers threw them into the river. The man was dragged out of the vehicle

and struck while on the ground by the three officers for several minutes. After this, the policemen carried him until the edge of the river, which they then threw him into.

The respondent reported walking five hours wet, without sleeves and barefoot to reach Velika Kladuša and his friends on the 7th of March.

*"Today, we don't have any news from our last friend"*

**04/03/2020**

## **"NEXT TIME, TO MAKE ASYLUM, GO TO THIS ASSOCIATION"**

**Date and time:** March 4, 2020 00:30

**Location:** 45.12834, 16.084308, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.12834, 16.084308

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** (2) 9 person(s), age: 25 , from: Pakistan, Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 policemen in Bosnia wearing blue uniform and the Croatian flag ; 1 policemen in Bosnia wearing blue uniform and the Croatian flag, 1 non-official blue van ; 1 Croatian civil policeman and 1 policewoman, 1 civil car ; 2-4 policemen wearing blue uniform in the police station ; 2 Croatian officers wearing black clothes, 1 official van ; 6 Croatian policemen and policewomen wearing black clothes

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On March 2nd, a group of two 25-year-old men originally from Morocco left Mostar (BiH) on foot with the intention of reaching Gradac (HR).

After leaving, they two described being stopped near Ljubuški (BiH) (43.19046, 17.540555) at around 8:00 pm by two officers wearing dark blue uniforms with the word "Policija" on the back and a Croatian flag insignia on the arm. Those officers asked the respondents where they were coming from, where they planned to go, and searched their backpacks. After this, the officers called for back-up, according to the respondents, to bring them back to Mostar (BiH).

After around 15 minutes later, another officer arrived, driving a non-official blue van. He was described as wearing a black uniform with a Croatian flag insignia on the arm. He put on a ski-mask when he got out of the vehicle. This officer explained to the respondents that he would bring them 10 km away to Ljubuški (BiH), then he ordered them to go into the van.

When the van stopped, the driver shouted to the respondents not to move and he frisked them inside the van. The respondents inferred that this officer was only searching for money because when he found it, he stopped the frisking. Indeed, he found 100€ in one of the respondents' pockets. The officer pocketed the money and, after harrasing and shoving the other respondent – asking him for more money – he took them out of the van and drove off.

The two respondents continued their way in spite of the theft and engaged in another transit attempt several days later. They were near Buzet (HR) (approximate coordinates 45°24'38.2"N 14°03'10.4"E) on the 4th of March. The men described waiting for a bus in a small village at around 3:00 pm at which point two civil policemen (a male and female) asked the respondents for their identification papers. As they did not have any, they were brought to the Buzet police station in a civil car. There, the two friends were split and put in a room with one officer (clad in blue uniform) in each. During the procedures at the police office, the respondents had to converse with the officers without the presence of a translator. At the station, they were forced to undress to their underwear, and were frisked. The respondents inferred that the officers were searching for more money because the only belongings they took were 10 Bosnian marks. After this, the respondents were brought to another room where pictures of their faces were taken while they were carrying a paper on which their personal information (such as names and surnames, ages, nationalities, and addresses) were written.

The respondents expressed to the officers an intention to claim asylum :

*"I have my fingerprints in Slunj [HR], I know you can make asylum, I am searching for that. The policemen gave me this paper and said me : 'Next time, go at this address to make asylum!'"*

The respondent referred to the following picture:

The respondents explained that policemen said that if they go there for their next game and succeed to reach Are You Syrious?, they would just have to ask to them and they could make process the asylum claim. This was a lie.

The group described waiting around 20 minutes before they were brought to a police van driven by two officers wearing black clothes. They then described being driven for about 30 minutes before they arrived at a police station in Rijeka (HR) where they waited roughly 10 minutes in a room. After this, they were forced to go to another official van where around seven Pakistani persons were already inside.

At this point, the number of people pushed-back turns to nine. This entire group was then brought to a secluded section of the border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (45.12834, 16.084308 BiH) near Stabandža (BiH) on the 4th of March at around slightly past midnight.

At the border, six policemen and one policewoman dealt with the respondents. The officers wore black Croatian uniforms. One of them opened the van's doors and ordered the group-members to cross the border to go back to Bosnia-Herzegovina. At 8:00 am on March 5th, the two respondents arrived in Velika Kladuša, exhausted after two days of no sleep.

29/02/2020

## “I WAS TELLING THEM 'THIS IS MY FATHER, PLEASE LET HIM GO TO SLOVENIA, HE IS SICK, HE HAS MEDICAL PROBLEMS'”

**Date and time:** February 29, 2020 13:00

**Location:** Near the city of Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.159373, 19.130573

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 27 - 35 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian authorities (light blue uniforms with national crest), 1 police car, 1 police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 29th February 2020 a group composed of six people tried to move across the Serbian/Croatian border. In the group there was a woman and five men, all aged between 27 and 45 years old. The transit group all came from Morocco. At around 08.00 the transit group left the city of Sid (SRB) in order to reach the border.

After five hours walking through fields, at around 13:00, the group were shouted at to stop immediately. The respondent said that the location was near Tovarnik, Croatia (around 7 km away from the town), and the landscape was described as a field without any fence, just a small channel of water that bordered it, like a canal.

The way the police discovered the group was not clear as the respondent had not see the approaching authorities, but the group was convinced that there could have been some cameras hidden in the location where they were detected. At that time a police car arrived, with two Croatian authorities inside wearing regular blue uniforms with the crest of Croatia. After five minutes, another police van came over with one policeman inside. This van was used to load the transit group inside.

***“I was telling them this is my father, please let him go to Slovenia, he is sick, he has medical problems”***

The respondent reiterated that he was speaking very gently and kindly. The police responded aggressively, one officer saying: *“Shut up! Shut up!”*. The respondent was ordered to be silent with the threat of violence and the officer punched him in the face four times.

The transit group was then put in the police van, and taken back directly to the border (ten minutes of very fast driving). The group were pushed across the border into Serbia. They shared that the location was near railway tracks, 5/6 km away from the family camp in Sid.

The respondent shared that the group had suffered several violent pushbacks from Croatia in the same area. The first time was on 13th January 2020, where the same group of people were caught near Slakovci (HR) during the night. The respondent shared how the fact that it was night really made the incident more shocking. "Shock" is the exact word that the respondent used to describe the pointing of firearms at the group. While they were walking in the middle of a field, at around midnight, two Croatian police officers were hidden – allegedly camouflaging themselves with the ground. The officers reportedly then approached the transit group with assault rifles and scared them by suddenly pointing torch lights and the guns towards their heads, surrounding the entire group.

***"They jump out the ground and first said – Get down and put your hands behind your head – and after to lay down on our stomach on the ground."***

24/02/2020

## **"FOUR OFFICERS ARMED WITH BATON, HIDDEN IN THE FOREST TO HIT"**

**Date and time:** February 24, 2020 11:00

**Location:** 45.210948, 15.927609

**Coordinates:** 45.210948, 15.927609

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 30 person(s), age: 17-25 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria, Egypt

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 16 Croatian officers, Croatian flag, stars on the suits, police on the back, blue and black uniforms, three police vans, two police cars ; several officers on the police station ; three Croatian officers, three non-official vans ; four black clothes and ski mask officers

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

In late February, a group in transit, composed of five Moroccan men aged between 22 and 25 years old, left Velika Kladuša in the direction of Trieste (ITA). Together, they succeeded in

reaching Zagreb (HR) on the 24th of February. The group rested within the city close to the center in a flat where they joined other groups in transit (roughly 25 other people: aged between 17 and 25 years old, originating from Egypt, Morocco and Algeria). The group of five respondents inferred that someone nearby called the police:

*"It's a neighbor who call police to say there is a lot of immigrants here"* precises one of them.

At roughly 9.00 am in the morning, about 16 Croatian officers (including two women) entered the apartment. The officers wore different kinds of uniforms, but all were described as having stars and the Croatian flag. Their clothes were dark blue and black with the word "Policija" written on the back. When the officers broke into the flat, they shouted to the group of 30 persons *"Sit down!"*. Following this, all of the respondents were frisked. One officer took a plastic bag from his pocket and forced each respondents to put their money and phones inside. One of the respondents recalled the scene as follows:

*"Your money, your phones on the bag and go to the van"*

The group inferred that the police who apprehended them at the appartement did not rush them because they were in the city and there were many witnesses. The 30 people in transit had to exit the flat into vehicles: two official police cars and three official vans. The group was split into three; with eight persons in each van. In the two cars, the respondents could not recognize the suits nor the gender of the officers since they sat in front.

After roughly ten minutes of driving in a windowless and cold van, the group arrived in a police station in Zagreb (HR). The 30 persons were detained together in what the respondents qualified as a *"classroom"* in the police office. The respondents described waiting for one and a half hours before an officer began dealing with the group. One by one, the respondents had to enter into a small room where several pictures were taken of their faces and their profiles while they held up a paper with their nationalities, names and surnames, addresses, ages and parents' names. Just one of the respondents had his fingerprints taken. He explains :

*"[The policeman said] I know you, every times you come back, so I will take your fingerprints"*

The respondent in question explained that during his several previous times being pushed-back, his fingerprints were taken at different police stations. He inferred that this was the reason the police officer in Zagreb was able to access previous information registered about this respondent (name, age, nationality ...) and wanted to save his fingerprints at that police station as well.

The group of respondents spent the entire day detained at the police station without any official translator; until 11.00 pm when they noticed a change in the police team. The respondents explained that one officer spoke to them in English and that they could understand *"sometimes"*.

25 persons from the initial group of 30 were forced to go into three vans. The five others were Egyptians and were kept at the police station. The respondents explained that before they were led out, one officer asked them if they had come from Bosnia-Herzegovina or from Serbia, in order to deport them to the last country they were. Around this time, one officer that they had not seen before, was *"playing"* with them; pushing them and hitting them with his hand around the face and on the head. Outside, the group of respondents were again split in three groups. Thus, only the Moroccans and Algerians persons had to go into three non-official white

vans ; waiting for them in front of the police station. Once inside the van, the driver asked the groups to give him their money. The respondents imitated him: *"give me your money, give me kuna !"*

*"It has been a big changing of mentality, this team of police was very bad"*

The group of respondents noticed the harshest behaviour from those new officers. All of them wore black clothes, and were male. The respondents described a two hours marked by reckless driving with the air conditioning on. People vomited inside. After coming to halt, the non-official vans stopped at the end of a path in a forest (approximate coordinates 45.210948, 15.927609 HR). The drivers opened the van doors after going to the back on the vans. One of the officers ordered the respondents to leave the vehicles *"one by one, in a line"*. After a few seconds walking in the forest, the group was surprised by four officers wearing black clothes and ski masks.

*"Four policemen was hidden just near to the vans, on the forest and when we walked past them, they [scared] us to hit us with batons"*

The group of respondents were chased by four officers with batons for several meters = until they succeeded to cross the border. After this, the group walked to Velika Kladuša (BiH) for several hours on the morning of the 25th of February.

**23/02/2020**

## **"THE CROATIAN POLICE GIVES YOU NOTHING. WE WEREN'T EVEN ALLOWED TO GO TO THE TOILET"**

**Date and time:** February 23, 2020 12:00

**Location:** near Highway D32, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.567875375047635, 14.587033306640604

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: 29-43 years old , from: Afghanistan, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), gunshots, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 9 male and 1 female Croatian police officers wearing dark blue uniforms, 1 Mercedes van coloured blue and white, 1 Peugeot van; 6 male police officers wearing dark blue uniforms with ski masks, 2 police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Crowbar Crew

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The transit group (consisting of two male Moroccans, two male Algerians, and one male Tunisian aged 29-43 years old) left Velika Kladuša (BiH) on the 12th February 2020, before continuing through Croatia towards Slovenia.

At approximately 12:00 on the 23rd February 2020, the transit group were spotted near road D32, 15km away from the Slovenian border by 10 police officers (nine male and one female). The officers chased the transit group and fired five warning gunshots into the air. The officers screamed at the transit group to stop, and began to beat them with batons. One group member was sick and suffered an epileptic fit when officers beat him. The transit group asked the officers for medicine, but they ignored him and continued to kick the sick group member while he lay on the ground. The officers went through the transit groups backpacks and confiscated seven power-banks and roughly €600.00. The officers then forced the transit group to undress (with only their underwear remaining), hand over all of their clothes and belongings, and watch as the officers burnt everything.

The transit group was then taken to a police station via two vans (one a Mercedes and one a Peugeot). Already at the station was a group of 4 men from Afghanistan. Here, access to water, food and toilets was denied.

***“The Croatian police gives you nothing. We weren’t even allowed to go to the toilet.”***

At approximately 00:00, the transit group (now consisting of 9 males) were forced into a police van which could not fit everyone comfortably. Two officers in dark blue uniforms wearing ski masks drove the van to the Croatian-Bosnian border. Another van with four officers, all wearing dark blue uniforms and ski masks followed behind.

***“Everything was dark, when they opened the door of the van. I saw nothing”***

The transit group were forced to exit the van, were beaten by the officers with wooden logs laying on the ground in the forest, and were then pushed-back into Bosnian territory (BiH). One group member lost two teeth after being struck in the face with a log. The transit group of 9 walked approximately 15km to Velika Kladuša, wearing only their underwear.

**22/02/2020**

**“DO YOU KNOW HOW TO HIT TO PLAY BASEBALL ?”**

**Date and time:** February 22, 2020 05:00

**Location:** Katinovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.22659946425452, 15.896771349125194

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 23, 23, 24, 28, 28, 32 years old +9 unknown , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, water immersion, threatening with guns, gunshots, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 1 male and 1 female Croatians officers wearing dark blue uniforms ; 1 Croatian officer wearing dark blue uniforms ; 1 Croatian Special Forces officer with ski mask, 1 official van ; 4 male Croatian Special forces officers with ski masks, 1 unofficial white golf series 7

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On 22nd February, at roughly 4:00 am, one group in transit of six Moroccan and Algerian men aged between 23 and 32 years old were walking on a forest path in Croatia 14 km far away from Vojnić (HR) (45°18'28.63"N 15°48'55.89"E HR). The group of six were spread out along the path when suddenly two Croatians police officers (one female and one male) wearing blue uniforms appeared in the middle of the path.

The authorities pulled a gun on the group of respondents saying “*sit down, don't move!*”. Forced to obey and scared, the group sat down on the ground.

***“We didn't want to add anymore tensions. Everybody sat down, peacefully”***

The policewomen used her radio to call backup. The respondents described the female officers behaviour :

***“When she call her friends, she starts to laugh very high and even making kind of dancing in front of us. She was happy to catch six immigrants”***

The respondents were brought by the authorities a few meters away from the place they were caught. At this place, a group of nine Moroccans on the move were already sat on the ground, guarded by one Croatian policemen wearing a dark blue uniform. At this point, three officers were present and combined group of detained persons 15.

All the people-on-the-move were gathered together, forced to be sat on the ground. During the wait, the officers took the opportunity to frisk each group member. The respondents report that the officers took their personal belongings like power banks, money and phones.

"Everything they find, they take" adds one of the respondents. The authorities put all the stuff in one bag which they put it in the front of the vehicle.

After what the respondents felt was fifteen minutes of waiting, a police van arrived. Inside was one officer wearing green uniform. He parked just near to the group sitting on the ground. He rolled down the windows and said "*with a big smile*" :

***"Hey mother fuckers!"***

This officer, allegedly to be matching the description of the Croatian Special Forces, got out from the van to put the fifteen respondents inside, with the help of the three officers already present. Brought one by one, the respondents were pushed into the vehicle. The group reports that one of them was more violated than the others, saying that he was the only one to be hit by the van's driver at this moment.

*"It's because I'm the tallest, I seems to be stronger than the others"*

Alleged the group member who was disproportionately targetted by one officer. The group noticed that this officer was especially violent and aggressive, with an enraged behavior, and speaking only in shouts and grunts. The respondents informed the interviewer that this officer was the van's driver.

***"I am sure he took drugs. He wasn't normal. He was enraged like dogs [imitations of the driver officer noises]. He entered on the van and just shouted, hitting everywhere"***

The group of respondents report a reckless and abrupt drive: "*he was driving like a mad*". The trip was approximately one hour, in a windowless van while the air conditioning was on. The van stopped at a river-border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (45°13'37.61"N 15°53'50.78"E HR) at roughly 05.00 am on the morning.

At this location, when the van's doors were opened by the driver, the group of respondents could notice one unofficial car: "*golf Serie 7, white*". Four new policemen wearing green uniforms who were covering their faces with ski masks were waiting for the group of fifteen respondents. The group in transit noticed that the officer who was driving the police van was the same than previously "*he just added a ski mask, we can easily recognize him, he was already under the influence of drugs*" says one member of the group. At this point, five Croatian policemen, wearing green uniforms and ski masks was involved. The officers was armed with batons. At first, they forced to undress the respondents, still on the van.

***"They started to take our backpack, after our jackets, following our shoes and then, our hats"***

One officer made a fire with the respondents' stuff. *"When you go out of the vehicle, you will see the fire"* precises one of them. The policemen took four respondents at first ; letting the stay of the group in the closed van. The respondents describe the authorities way of biting :

***"They make a circle around you. They take you by the collar. You will go on the middle. They bit you with the iron rods, the hands and the kicks. When one policemen hit you, he gives you to the others. Do you know who they hit for the baseball ? They hit you until you fall on the knees"***

After this humiliating way of violence, those four respondents were *"threw"* into the river. The group reports that one of the officer was *"choosing"* the respondents to go out from the van. They describe :

***"The mad driver was pointing with his finger the next who will have to go outside. He was a monster"***

After the first group, just one of original transit group was brought to the rivers edge. The officers hit him with kicks and baton strikes, which forced the young man to jump into the river. Another group were ordered to get out of the van. This time the respondents recognized it to be the driver who brought them close to the fire where the officer asked : *"where are you from ? Why did you come here?"*. After the men answered, the driver shouted :

***"Go back in Morocco or I will burn you ! If I see you again, I will kill you "***

The entire group of 15 suffered this treatment of beating, and then coercion or physical pushes into the river. Describing how they fled into BiH the respondents said: *"when all our friends crossed the river we ran out of there"*. The original transit group of six began to run away from the river, at which point the police fired shots in their direction. The group heard around six gunshot.

***"If they had a chance to kill us, they would do it"***

Wet and without shoes, the six respondents walked until the first town where they could find someone to give them clothes and shoes. After 15 km walking, the group arrived in Velika Kladuša (BiH) at around 12:00.

12/02/2020

## “IF YOU TRY TO RUN, WE CAN KILL YOU!”

**Date and time:** February 12, 2020 13:00

**Location:** Graberje, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.3845958, 16.1705275

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 28-34 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 2 "Forest Security", 3 officers in dark blue uniform in one van, 2 officers in dark blue uniform with a big van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Crowbar Crew

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The transit group started their trip from Velika Kladuša (BiH) on 9th February 2020 at 18:00. The group consisted of eight males from Morocco aged between 28 to 34. After three days walking, close to the Croatian village Graberje at the road D37, the group were spotted by two officers described by the respondent as “forest security” with a “PDV” emblem on their chest. This happened at 13:00 on the 12th February 2020.

The authorities approached the transit group in a car which drove down and stopped on the street. One of the officers was female bodied. The officers were described as friendly. The respondent and the other group members asked them for asylum and to be taken to Zagreb to lodge a claim. The authorities denied them this and called for more officers.

After a short period of time three more officers, all male bodied wearing blue uniforms, arrived in a red van. The respondent described the officers as aggressive. The officers drew guns and pointed them at the respondent and the other group-members, stating:

***“If you try to run, we can kill you!”***

They searched the group and took their phones, their power banks and the money of all group-members. The arriving authorities beat one member of the group with a baton and beat another group-member in the face, using the open palm and the back of the hand, repeatedly.

The officers who just arrived called reinforcements again. Two officers, wearing dark blue uniforms, arrived in a big van. All group-members had to enter the van. The respondent states that it was very dark in the van and that the air was very bad – referring to a “machine” which

matches the description of the vehicles air conditioning unit – meaning the respondent felt tired and sick from the bad air.

The van was driven very roughly and erratically. As a result, the respondent and other group-members were being thrown around, their bodies hitting the walls, in the back of the van. After a 20 minute journey, the van stopped. One officer wearing a ski mask opened the door. He took the phones referenced previously and stepped on them repeatedly, breaking them in front of the respondent and the other members of the group. None of their belongings were returned. He told the group-members to leave the van. The respondent states the group had been brought to an area close to Glinica (BiH). The officers shouted at the group:

***“go to Kladuša go, go!”***

This was the last thing they said to the respondent and the other group-members. The transit group then walked back to Velika Kladuša (BiH), from which they continued to Sarajevo (BiH).

**11/02/2020**

## **“THE OFFICER SAID 'ASYLUM DOESN'T EXISTS IN CROATIA'”**

**Date and time:** February 11, 2020 17:00

**Location:** In a forest around Sisak, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.4850767, 16.3731156

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 24, 25, 26 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 5 or 6 Croatian officers wearing dark blue uniforms with ski mask, 1 official van ; five officers wearing dark blue uniforms and ski masks

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

During the night of the 8th February 2020, at roughly 17:00; three young Moroccans in transit were walking in a forest not far from Sisak (HR) when they were apprehended by authorities. The respondent cannot recall the exact coordinates where the Croatian police van stopped them, stating:

### ***“I can’t remember because I was stressed. I am choked”***

Between five and six police officers (male) wearing dark blue uniforms and using ski masks to cover their faces got out from the van and ordered the three respondents to lie, faces down on the ground. Immediately, the group were violently frisked. Their backpacks, money, phones and power banks were “*stolen*” by the Croatian authorities. In addition to taking the personal belongings, the police took off jackets and shoes from the respondents. Besides that, one of the officers took the opportunity to hit each of them with batons, while they were still lying on the ground on their stomachs.

Afterwards, the authorities set fire to the personal belongings of the group that had been confiscated. The respondent reports seeing one officer empty the food out of their backpacks into the fire before throwing them in as well. The respondent was unable to notice if the officers had kept the phones and the money with them or thrown these into the fire also.

### ***“I couldn’t watch this fire”***

The group on the move were brought to a police van parked nearby. The respondent supposes that some policemen stayed at this location when the vehicle left. No one from the group had been aware of where they were being taken and the officers did not inform them. The respondent was hit for asking a question to the officers, so remained silent.

### ***“I asked a cigarette to an officer, he slapped me. Then, I kept my mouth shut”***

After a one hour drive – reported as rough and erratically taken – the van (a windowless vehicle with uncomfortable air conditioning on – arrived at the border of Croatia / Bosnia-Herzegovina. At the border, the respondent reports feeling high levels of stress. The location was remote and he could not recall the precise place as it was dark.

An officer opened the doors of the van, which allowed the group on the move to distinguish about five police officers dressed in the same manner as the previous ones: dark blue uniform, “police” written on the back and faces covered with ski masks. The officers cried at the men as they disembarked the vehicle:

### ***“Go in Bosnia !”***

One by one, the respondents had to go out of the van and be beaten from the authorities’ batons. After this, they were forced to run to cross the border because the policemen were chasing after them armed with the batons. Early on the cold morning, after what the group on the move felt as ten hours of walking, they arrived in Velika Kladuša, without any shoes nor jacket.

Recalling a remark from one of the officers, the respondent shared how:

***“I asked to the policemen for asylum, he responded me ‘asylum doesn’t exists in Croatia”***

11/02/2020

## “I WANT TO ASK ASYLUM, INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN CROATIA”

**Date and time:** February 11, 2020 00:15

**Location:** South of Sadilovac

**Coordinates:** 44.923674420051405, 15.743669989180592

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 30, 27 years old , from: Palestine, Iraq

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** threatening with guns, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** six officers wearing dark blue uniforms with insignia on the sleeve (blue motif), bearing guns, one police van, one police car

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, Balkan Info Van

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On Monday 10th February 2020 a transit group of two men, a Palestinian aged 30 and and Iraqi aged 27, approached the Bosnia-Herzegovina border with Croatia. The respondent was travelling with a leg injury which impeded his mobility. While still in BiH, the respondent shared that walking in the woods the pair heard the engine noise of a low flying plane. Because it was late at night and dark, the respondent could not see the aircraft but said “*I heard it*” and that the noise was “*loud*”.

The transit group then crossed the border and walked into Croatia. He suggests they traveled for approximately 2km before being apprehended by the Croatian police in woodland very close to a small country road which was running in a valley. The respondent suggests the plane may have alerted the police to their presence, or that the police had used “*night vision*” tools. The respondent said that the capturing officers were Croatian police dressed in dark navy blue uniforms with badges on the arms that the respondent recalls having a light shade of blue in the motif. The officer approached the group in the woods with torches and shone the light beams in their faces.

***“When he put the light on us they ask ‘Algeria? Afghanistan?’”***

The respondent replied:

***“No Palestine, Iraq”***

The police ordered the transit group to remain where they were. The officers were holding handguns (“pistols”). One officer said to the respondent “If you run I will shoot you”. The respondent stood still and held up his arms, holding in one hand his bag. The officers led the transit group from the woods a short distance to the road. At the road was one Croatian police car and a police van described as “like minibuss”. There were a further two or three officers at the road, dressed in the same uniform (bringing to total to five/six authorities present).

At the road the transit group were ordered to remove their jackets and empty their bags onto the floor “in front of car light” (the police vehicle had its headlamps on). The officers then searched the two transit persons, pushing them over the bonnet of the car and patting them down. The respondent was searched first and recalls how they ordered him to “open your legs” so they could check his whole body. Despite his bandaged injury, the officers did not take any care of the respondents leg complaint or allow him to stand comfortably. During the search of their bodies, and search of their bags and clothing the police removed multiple items, including:

***“phones, three power banks, small bag, cigarettes, hats, gloves, shirts and pants [from rucksack], food, money... 800 Kuna”***

The respondent said that while his companion was being searched by police he made a clear verbal claim for asylum.

***“I want to ask asylum, international protection in Croatia”***

One police officer reportedly relayed this into a radio (“speaking on device”), but did not respond in any way to the respondents expression to claim asylum. The police continued to speak into the device and the respondent heard them mention “Velika Kladusa” and suggests they were asking which point the attending officers should push the group back at. After some radio communication the two transit persons were loaded into the van and possessions withheld, being placed in the front cabin of the vehicle. Describing the moment they were loaded into the van the respondent recalls asking for the jacket from the pile of possessions. He said that the police were reluctant to give anything back and he alleges that the officers were looking at their possessions and deciding whether to keep them. Suggesting what the police were saying he stated:

***“look at the sleeping bags, not from china shop, look at these jackets”***

Eventually the police officers allowed the respondent to take his jacket back, but he said that the officers were agitated and *“agressive, ready for any move”*. The transit group were loaded and driven for approximately four to five minutes to the border with Bosnia-Herzegovina where they were disembarked by three police officers dressed in the same uniforms, though the respondent did not look at them clearly in the dark, he suggests they were three of the initial apprehending policemen. One of the officer then made a death threat to the respondent, suggesting he would cut his throat:

***“This is Bosnia, if you come back, he sign like this [drawing thumb across the neck]”***

At approximately 00:15 on Tuesday 11th February 2020 the two transit persons were pushed back into BiH. The police officers shouted at them to leave quickly.

***“He shout run”***

The respondent and his companion fled around 500 metres into the territory of BiH. They then turned to see if they were being followed and saw police van was still parked on the border with it's headlamps facing them. He suggests the officers were waiting to ensure they had left the territory. The transit group then returned to Bihac (BiH) on foot, the journey taking six hours because of the existing leg injury that the respondent had.

The respondent explained how the conditions at the border had gotten worse in the time he had been trying to cross. At the time of interviewing, he said he had heard from several other groups that they had even been turned back from the border by Bosnian police. The respondent cites one example that occurred a day after his pushback where the transit group were apparently told by Bosnian border police *“got to camp”*.

**04/02/2020**

**“THEY MADE A FIRE WITH ALL OUR PERSONAL BELONGINGS IN FRONT OF US”**

**Date and time:** February 4, 2020 00:00

**Location:** Katinovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.23392736898767, 15.920847375363175

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 20, 22, 25, 27 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, water immersion, pouring water over one's head, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian officers wearing black uniforms ; 2 Croatian Special Forces officers, 1 official van ; 6 officers green jackets, black pants and ski masks, 2 official van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of five Moroccan men in transit tried to reach Trieste (ITA) by foot. They were aged respectively 20, 22, 25, 27 years-old. The transit group left Velika Kladuša (BiH) on 2nd February during the night. On 3rd February, the group was walking near to Sisak (HR) close to a river (45°28'53.6"N 16°21'03.4"E HR) when two male Croatian authorities saw them.

Shortly afterwards at approximately 17:00, the transit group were seized by four policemen wearing black uniforms (with "police" on the back). One of the officers shouted "*sit down, sit down!*". The group immediately stopped and sat down in the middle of a field where they had been spotted. One of the police officers called backup. The group in transit reports one policemen taking a picture of them and of the place where they were.

The group of respondents spent a long time waiting without any information from the officers. They were forced to stay sitting, surrounded by the four officers who were ignoring them.

After what the respondent felt as 30 minutes, one official police van arrived at the location. Two policemen wearing green uniforms, supposed by the respondent to be Croatian Special Forces, were in the vehicle and got out to frisk the group of the respondents.

***"They put our power banks, money and phones in a bag at the front of the vehicle"***

After, the two Croatian Special Forces took each respondents by the collar and "*threw*" them into the van. The officer shouted at them:

***"Go to the river!"***

At this point, the two Special Forces officers went into the van to drive it to another place with the four respondents inside, while the four previous policemen stayed around the place where the group were caught. The group in transit report reckless driving in a van without any windows where it was particularly cold.

After what the respondent felt was one hour of driving, the van arrived:

***"in a border in the middle of nowhere, near to a river"***

( approximates coordinates 45°14'02.3"N 15°55'12.9"E HR).

One officer opened the van's doors. The group in transit saw six policemen wearing green jackets, black trousers and ski masks. They also recall two police vans parked around the same place. The respondent shared that the two officers who drove the van stayed in it.

One of the ski-masks-officers ripped off clothes and backpacks from the group to set it on fire in front of them while there were forced to watch it, stuck in the van.

***“They took our jackets, jumpers, shoes, backpacks and made a fire with it in front of us”***

After the started of the fire, the van's doors were closed by one of the officers. The group supposes that their telephones, power banks and money which was taken previously was kept by the authorities because they could not notice the bag used to keep it among the amount of personal belongings that were being burned.

After what the respondents felt was roughly five minutes of waiting, the doors were opened.

An officer in a green jacket grabbed one of the respondents by the collar and violently threw him to the ground at the edge of the river.

This officer remained crouched near to the respondent, waiting for the other three group members. The group report the same treatment for the two first of them. Alternately, the two last group members were also beaten with a tree branch (by three others officers) after being abruptly tossed down by the river bank.

***“Those ones [the others three officers] had trees on their hands and beat me and my friend with it, on the arms, on the back, on the neck and on our face”***

When all the respondents were at the river's edge, the officers (the respondents are unable to remind the exact number of policemen at this precise moment) pushed all of them into the river.

***“when we was on the river they said us ‘go, swim and fuck you !!”***

The group in transit had to swim against the river flow late on the night on the 4th of February; forced by the Croatian authorities to go back in BiH at a deep section of the Glina River. They eventually reached the other bank very wet.

After what the respondents felt was five hours of walking, at roughly 03.00 in the morning (5th February), they arrived in Velika Kladuša (BiH) soaked and without any shoes nor jackets or jumpers.

02/02/2020

## “IF YOU LOOKED INTO THEIR EYES, THEY WOULD BEAT YOU AND HIT YOU WITH ELECTRICITY SHOCKS”

**Date and time:** February 2, 2020 15:00

**Location:** near Gornji Oštrc, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.71708659999999, 15.4166315

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 16-32 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria, Egypt

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, electric shock, water immersion, threatening with guns, gunshots, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 4 male officers with dark blue uniforms, 16 male officers and one female officer at the police station, 3 male officers and one female officer in black uniforms and with masks, in total 2 Vans used

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Crowbar Crew

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent travelled in a group of eight (including people from Morocco, Egypt and Algeria). They left Velika Kladusa (BiH) on the 28th January 2020. The group members were all male and aged between 16 and 32 years old (including two minors).

After five days walking – having crossed the Bosnian/Croatian border – the transit group were near Gornji Ostrc (HR), approximately 4 km away from the Slovenian border. When the group passed between two villages, they were approached from either side by a pair of officers. This apprehension occurred at 15:00 on 2nd February 2020.

The two male officers wore dark blue uniforms and caught five group members, three being able to avoid apprehension. All five detained people asked for asylum, which was denied by the authorities. Power banks, phones, money and the passports of the group members were taken. Two group members, one of them a minor, were heavily hit with batons. According to the respondent the minor allegedly suffered a severe injury to his leg from this incident. The officers continued to attack the group by pushing them onto the ground and then kicking them in the ribs. The respondent recalled how one officer punched a group member in the mouth with the fist. The person who received this blow suffered oral pain and their teeth allegedly turned black afterwards, suggesting severe decay from the impact.

The transit group was taken in a van to a police station in Croatia where they stayed for approximately two hours. According to the respondent it was very cold in the police station. The officers denied the respondent and the group water, food and medical support. There was

no translator present. The respondent remembers 16 male officers and one female officer at the police station.

At approximately 17:00 all group members were taken into a van by three male officers and one female officer wearing black uniforms and ski masks. The group were driven for some time, before being unloaded in the evening at a location where a river runs along the Bosnian-Croatian border.

***“If you looked into their eyes, they would beat you and hit you with electricity shocks.”***

According to the respondent the group were ordered to look to the ground by the officers at the border. When a group member looked into the eyes of an officer, they were either beaten with a baton or hit with an electric shock administered from a taser device. The officers took away the transit groups sleeping bags and backpacks and burnt them in front of the respondent and the other group members. The group members were forced to undress while pistols were pointed at them. They told the group members not to come back to Croatia. The officers forced the group members to walk into the river and swim to the other side to Bosnia-Herzegovina. They were not asked if everybody knew how to swim. The officers shot into the river while the group was crossing.

**29/01/2020**

## **“SOMETIMES THEY EVEN ORDER YOU TO TAKE OFF YOUR UNDERWEAR”**

**Date and time:** January 29, 2020 00:00

**Location:** near to Hrvatska Kostajnica, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.2184109, 16.5111607

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 14 person(s), age: 32, 32, 34, 52 years old , from: Afghanistan, Iran, Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 2 male Croatian police officers; 1 male and 1 female Croatian police officer, 1 official police van; unknown number of Croatian police officers in uniform at the police station; 6 male Croatian police officers in uniform, 2 official police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group in transit (four Moroccan men aged 32, 32, 34 and 52) were stopped by police at Zagreb train station (HR) while resting on the 28th January 2020 at around 09:00 (approximate coordinates 45°48'15.5"N 15°58'51.2"E).

The transit group were put into two police wagons, and then attempted to flee. *"I said to my friend to jump"*. Two were blocked by police while the two others managed to jump through the window and ran into the centre of Zagreb. Without a phone or any money, the two respondents decided to try and borrow a phone.

The transit group was spotted and apprehended by two police officers in uniform in Zagreb (one male and one female) later that day. After being frisked, the respondents were put in an official police van and were taken to a police station in Zagreb (HR).

At roughly 18:00, the respondents arrived at the station and were put into a cell. Inside, there were already multiple people from Morocco, Algeria, Iran, and Afghanistan. All of the respondents' personal belongings were left outside of the cell. Police asked to the group in transit to give them money, and then one by one called each group member out of the cell to answer questions.

***"if you have it [money], you should give it to him"***

The policeman asked to the respondents to write their personal information (full name, age, and nationality) on a blank piece of paper. Later, the respondents had to hold the paper in their hands while police took front and profile pictures of their faces. After the photos were taken, the group in transit requested asylum but were ignored by police officers. According to the respondents, the policemen ignored them throughout their entire stay at the station. The respondents had to sign a paper written in a foreign language that they did not understand. No official translator was present at the police station even though the transit group asked for one. *"They pressured us to sign"* affirms the respondent. Access to toilets, food, water, and the right to smoke was all denied at the police station.

At approximately 20:00, two official police vans arrived at the station, with three policemen inside each. In total there were now 14 people in the group in transit. The transit group was forced to split in two (seven per van) and were not allowed to retrieve their belongings from the station.

***"No one was able to get his stuff, police kept all at the police station"***

The driving was erratic and reckless, with one van blasting air conditioning and the other blasting heating. During the journey, the van stopped multiple times.

***“Everyone threw up. He [the policemen] was doing it on purpose. On the path, he would stop, restart, drive in reverse...during long time”***

At roughly 22:00, approximately two hours after leaving the police station, both vans stopped. They parked with their backs facing each other at the end of a path leading towards a forest. Two policemen opened the doors and shouted at the respondents to gather in one of the two vans. After approximately ten minutes, one policeman opened the van's doors shouting *“one by one !”*. One by one, each transit group member exited the van and was beaten by the police. According to the respondents, there were two policemen hitting and frisking, while the others were *“guarding the place”*.

***“If you give money is it okay. If you don't give money they hit you”***

Outside, police asked the group in transit to sit on the ground while they forced them all to undress. They had to take off everything, including shoes, jacket, t-shirt, trousers...

***“sometimes they even ordered you to take off your underwear”***

The police officers again asked the group in transit for money, again frisking them. The respondents allege that if you give the police your valuables, you will get off easier, but if they find something hidden on you, they will beat you harder. A few people from the group in transit were injured, one with a broken nose and another with a broken tooth...*“The aim is to scare you”*, says the respondent.

***“sometimes police search around with light because they are afraid someone is filming or taking photos of them because they are doing an aggression”***

When the officers had finished searching and beating the group in transit, they again split them into two groups of seven and put them in separate vans. The driving was reckless again, alongside the blasting of the air conditioning and heating, which made a few respondents sick.

The respondents cannot remember the time when they arrived at the border (approximates coordinates 45.2184109, 16.5111607 HR), but it occurred during the late evening. Again, one by one, each member of the group in transit was forced to get out of the van.

***“when you go out of the van they hit you with the baton”***

At the border, the respondents saw policemen destroying phones with their feet and batons. They also saw some families at this location, and suppose they had suffered the same treatment as their group.

***“If it is a good phone they [the officers] steal it, if not, they destroy it”***

From here, the group in transit of 14 walked what they assert to be around 50km to reach Velika Kladuša (BiH).

***“The Croatian police only work with migrants. Their job is to catch migrants. Even the Croatian people report us to the police, it is not humane”***

28/01/2020

**“THESE POLICEMEN ARE WORST THAN THUGS, THEY'RE BANDITS BUT THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO”**

**Date and time:** January 28, 2020 04:00

**Location:** near Mali Obljaj, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.223162, 15.990883

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: 22, 23, 24, 24, 25, 30 years old , from: Iran, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 2 male Croatian police officers: unknown number of Croatian police officers in uniform, 1 police van; unknown number of Croatian police officers; 3 male Croatian police officers, 2 police vans; 5 male officers in black clothing and ski masks, 1 unknown car

**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, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 27th January 2020 at roughly 09:00, the group in transit were stopped by two male Croatian police officers in Zagreb County (HR) (approximate coordinates 45.7720250,

15.8366780 HR). The group consisted of six males aged 22, 23, 24, 24, 25, 30 from Algeria, and were stopped while resting and changing their clothes in an abandoned wagon. A Pakistani man separate to the group was also in the wagon sleeping when the police apprehended them.

One of the officers was in uniform and the other was dressed in plain clothing. The police blocked all exits from the wagon so that – according to the respondent – *“we wouldn’t escape”*. Police asked the group in transit for their papers and passports but no one had any, so the officers called for backup, who arrived roughly one hour later, around 10:00.

The respondents were then ordered to walk until *“a road where it was cars and policemen”*. The respondent is unable to recall the exact number of police officers present, but remembers that they were wearing official uniforms and that a policewoman was among them. Police ordered to the transit group to get into a police van where they were frisked and had their phones and power banks confiscated and put into a plastic bag. They were allowed to keep their remaining belongings and backpacks with them, however the respondent chose to leave his backpack behind:

***“without reason, because I didn’t reflected, I was stressed. I could take it but I didn’t”***

The transit group travelled in the van for approximately 15 minutes before arriving at a police station. The police officers put the respondents into a cell, separating them from their personal belongings, where they stayed for around 15 minutes. In the cell there were already four Kurdish men from Iran.

One by one, the respondents exited the cell and were asked for the following personal information: names, parents’ names, ages and city of origin. When the officers took individual profile photographs of the respondents, they had to hold up the paper containing their personal information. The respondents were then forced to hurriedly sign documents which they could neither understand nor read as it was written in a foreign language. No translator was present in the police station when this took place, even though the respondents had requested one and the police said they would provide one. The respondent claims that *“he [the police officer] was making fun of us”*.

One of the respondents refused to sign the documents and questioned the content of the document and about the procedures which the police officers were following. The officers quickly became aggressive and refused to answer him. The officer just said *“sign sign...so then I sign”*. The respondent alleges that

***“it was the boss who forced us to sign”***

Some of the respondents asked for asylum and an officer said *“okay”*... but nothing happened. The respondents assume they spent roughly 10 hours in the police station, and were denied access to food, water, and the toilet.

At roughly 19:30, majority of the officers left the police station and the night shift replaced them. This consisted of three policemen, (aged roughly 35-40 years old according to the

respondent). The officers removed twelve people from the station and separated them into two groups (“six by six”), and forced them into two police vans waiting out front. The officers were extremely angry and aggressive, shouting at the respondents and psychically forcing them into the vans even though the respondents were already doing as they were told. One of the respondents was almost hit by a police officer during this transfer. When in the van, one officer demanded money while another aggressively shouted “no phones, no phones”. The respondent reports one officers saying, “it’s going to get out of hand”. In the van there were no windows and air conditioning was on:

***“It was cold, very very cold. It was a cell for the prisoners, not a normal van”***

The police drove recklessly for roughly 10 minutes, driving very fast before suddenly hitting the breaks. The police then stopped and parked the vans nearby to one another at the end of a path in the woods. There, the transit group, now consisting of 11 males, were loaded into one single van and forced to exit one-by-one under policeman orders.

***“we heard screams of our friends”***

The officers were armed with batons and had flashlights which they used to blind the respondents.

***“When you go outside they frisk you to find money and they say ‘money, money’. They should think that we were Syrians because Syrians have money. When you say no [that you do not have money], they beat you on the face”***

Police beat the respondents with their hands, batons, flashlights, and also kicked them. The respondents were mainly beaten around their ribs, but were also hit in the face and the backs of their heads. If the police officers found personal belongings other than money (like prescription glasses), they beat the individual harder. The respondent believes that the Kurdish men were beaten more than others.

***“I saw one of them with a broken nose full of blood”***

The money confiscated off the respondents was collected by one police officer, who put it in his pocket. The respondent alleges that the policemen were stressed, with one of them always checking around to make sure no one saw them.

***“They were stressed because it’s an aggression. They attacked us”***

The transit group were again separated into two groups and loaded back into the vans. Again, the police drove recklessly and blasted the air conditioning. The respondent alleges that he recognised the sound of beer cans being opened while the officers were driving.

At approximately 4:00 on the 28th January 2020, the two vans arrived at the border with Bosnia-Herzegovina (approximate coordinates 45.223162, 15.990883 BiH). There were five male officers wearing black clothes and ski masks and an unidentified car waiting for them. The three police officers who had transported the group from the station to the border, opened the van door and ordered to the respondents to get out one by one.

***“At this point you have to run because if not, they beat you with the baton”***

The respondent managed to secretly take three phones from the plastic bag and two backpacks with him before exiting the van and running across the border to escape from the officers. The officers followed the respondents for a couple of metres. The rest of the backpacks, phones and power banks remained with the officers.

***“They (the police) make business with the phones and backpacks they steal”***

From this point, the respondents walked for approximately five hours before reaching the city of Velika Kladusa (BiH). A Syrian family which was already at the border when the respondents arrived joined them.

***“It’s indecent, we’re human beings too. it’s very difficult for us, these policemen are worst than thugs, they’re bandits but there’s nothing we can do. I always go ahead, you can hit me or do what you want, you can only stop me by shooting. We’re not doing anything wrong. They’re racists. That’s the way it is”***

**25/01/2020**

## **“IF YOU CANNOT RUN THEY BEAT”**

**Date and time:** January 25, 2020 10:00

**Location:** Close to Lohovo (BiH)

**Coordinates:** 44.57283255684207, 16.01559928564451

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 16 - 30 years old , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 6 officers dressed in uniforms with insignia matching Croatian Special Forces, undisclosed number of Croatian officials in the station, unknown number of officer dressed in black with a Croatian police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A transit group of four Afghan males were travelling in the Croatian interior. The group included one minor aged 16 years old. On the morning of 24th January 2020 the group were discovered by Croatian authorities in a wooded area in the Croatian interior.

The description of the officers given by the respondent alleged their uniform to be green, and marked with an insignia “*like a knife*” which matches to the dress worn by Croatian Special Forces units. The authorities had hand guns (“*pistol*”) which they were holding when they approached the transit group. The officers included five men and one woman. The respondent describes how “*they collect*” the transit group from the woods, removing everything from them at the site of apprehension.

The officers demanded their jackets, bags and valuables, and searched each individual, proceeding to break their phones:

***“They will check everybody. If first time they [the transit person] doesn’t give, after [the officer began breaking phones] everybody gives”***

The respondent describes how the minor had 105 euros stolen from him by the officers, and several of the other transit group members had money taken. When asked if any of the group expressed intention to claim asylum the respondent said that the police officers ignored everything the transit group said:

***“they just like a wall”***

The Special Forces officers called a further unit of police officers dressed in darker uniforms who took the group of four in a Croatian police van to a station nearby. The respondent recalls how they were held in a detention cell together for approximately 24 hours without food or water.

***“They don’t allow for water, no toilet”***

The cell was described as unfurnished, and the transit group were forced to sleep on the cold floor. The respondent states that between the hours of 15:00 and midnight on 24th January 2020 the transit group were pleading through the cell door for the officers to provide some

food and water. However, he reports that the officers present in the station could only be heard laughing at these requests.

The group were removed from the station in the morning of the 25th January 2020. They were loaded into a police van along with one other Pakistani man who was being held in the police station, bringing the detained persons to a total of five. The group were driven for some hours during which the police turned on the airconditioning in the rear and reportedly emitted “some gases” through the vehicles ventilation system which made the group feel very sick.

The transit group were delivered to a spot on the border with Bosnia-Herzegovina. The respondent suggests this was in the late morning, at around 10:00. At the border there were numerous officers dressed in dark uniforms, the respondent was unable to recall the exact number. The officers stood at the back of the van and as the transit group exited, they beat the men and minor with batons:

***“one-by-one stick”***

The respondent recalls the slippery conditions which he says the police chose intentionally. There was compacted snow on the ground and the respondent describes how:

***“When they deport us [there’s] some ice on the ground... if you cannot run they beat”***

As the group slipped and fell the police reportedly targeted them with vertical baton blows. The Pakistani man who had been merged into the detained group was beaten severely over the shoulder and head. The transit group were ordered back into BiH and walked for around five hours, arriving back to Bihac from the southern side of the city. From the route they took back and the villages they recognized on the way, the respondents group were able to identify the area close to Kulen Vakuf (BiH) where they believe they were pushed back.

**20/01/2020**

**“TOMORROW YOU GO TO [VELIKA] KLADUSA, GO TO DOCTOR”**

**Date and time:** January 20, 2020 11:00

**Location:** near Katinovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.2104524, 15.9289446

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 29, 44 years old , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), forcing to undress, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 2 policemen with black uniform and police emblem, 1 police car; 2 policemen with black uniforms and official emblem, 1 police van; 5 police officers, of which 1 female and 2 male officers with black uniforms and 1 female and 1 male officers with blue uniforms and Croatian emblems; 2 male police officers with black uniform and ski mask, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, personal information taken, denial of food/water, medical aid denied

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondents in this case, two men from Algeria aged 29 and 44, were near Glina (HR) when they decided to leave a wooded area and reach a main street to ask for help. This call for assistance occurred on the 19th of January 2020. The older of the two respondents was feeling very sick and had severe pain due to kidney stones which impeded his mobility and made walking very uncomfortable. The younger respondent tried to stop several cars, approximately four, asking the passengers to call an ambulance since his friend urgently needed to go to hospital.

The older respondent was lying on the side of the street unable to move. After one hour, a police car arrived at the location of the two respondents. Two policemen wearing black uniform with the police emblem were in the car. The younger respondent asked the police to help his friend since he was "*malad grave*" [badly sick], but the police laughed at him, saying that his friend was just pretending to be sick. The police told the respondents that in ten minutes an ambulance would come to bring the older man to hospital, but no ambulance arrived.

After one hour a police van arrived, and officers loaded the two respondents and drove them to the police station of Glina (HR). The younger respondent remained in the police van while the older respondent was put into a cell in the police station. Prior to this he was ordered to remove his jacket by officers. After roughly 20 minutes, another police van with two policemen wearing black uniforms with official emblem arrived and brought the sick respondent out of the station and drove him to a hospital. At the hospital he was refused treatment. The police then drove him to a second hospital in which doctors treated the respondent. However, the respondent said he was treated "*with racism*" and medical staff showed "*no respect*".

The respondent had no chance to directly speak with the doctor, who only addressed the police officers and spoke in Croatian language. Blood and urine analysis and ultrasound were made as well as [*the respondent suggests was*] an injection "*for pain*". The respondent did not know what medication the doctors gave him since no translator was present to facilitate between doctors and respondent. The doctors denied the respondent further pain relief when he asked. The analysis results and medical report were handed over to police and not to the respondent. The respondent asked the officers to give him his medical report and the police refused. From the hospital, the respondent was driven back to the police station in Glina.

While the older respondent was in the hospital, the younger respondent stayed in the van for a period of time he perceived as one hour long, after which he was taken into the police station. Five police officers dealt with the respondent. There were three officers wearing black uniforms (one woman, two men) and two officers wearing blue uniforms with Croatian emblems (one man one woman). Allegedly, the police told the younger respondent:

***“we will bring you to Zagreb for asylum”***

The police gave what the respondent refers to as “*papers for asylum*” to fill with personal information. The respondent was asked for personal information and questions such as: how long he was on the move? Which country he had crossed to arrive to Croatia? Whether he had transited Bosnia-Herzegovina or another country. The respondent had fingerprints taken and was told a second time that he would be brought to Zagreb to apply for asylum.

After three hours in the cell, the younger respondent was joined again by the older man who had been returned from the hospital. The older respondent arrived at the police station and underwent the same process. He was asked for personal information such as name, surname, country of origin, age and had his fingerprints taken. The second respondent was promised by police officers to be brought to Zagreb the day after to ask for asylum and was put in the same cell with his younger companion.

The two respondents spent one night in the police station and did not receive anything else other than a little water and, for the older sick respondent one blanket for sleeping. The respondents were just wearing t-shirts and underpants since they were ordered to take all the clothes off before entering the cell. The telephones of the respondents remained in the clothes that had been confiscated. The police told the sick respondent to call in case of need, but during the night he asked for help due to the strong pain and the police answered him:

***“tomorrow you go to (Velika) Kladusa, go to doctor”***

The day after (20th January 2020), at 10.00 in the morning, the respondents were loaded into a police van with two male police officers wearing black uniforms and ski mask. The van was driven to the border with Bosnia-Herzegovina (approximate coordinates 45.2104524, 15.9289446). The respondents could not see out of the van, nor were they told where they were going. The respondents traveled for roughly 30 minutes and report the police driving recklessly. The older sick respondent threw up during this half hour journey. At the border, the same police officers who drove the van beat the younger respondent using batons and hands. The officers also kicked him with their boots. Then, the officers gave the respondents their backpacks and phones back and told them to go back to Bosnia.

#### ***Observations and Treatments:***

Once they arrived in the city of Velika Kladusa (BiH), the older respondent was brought urgently to the hospital by volunteers due to the immense pain which he was suffering (at which point he could barely walk). At the hospital, the respondent was roughly treated and given some tablets for gastrointestinal pain.

20/01/2020

## “I SEE IN THEIR EYES, THEY LOOK AT US AS UNDER-CITIZENS, AS SOMEONE UNDER HUMANITY.”

**Date and time:** January 20, 2020 00:00

**Location:** near Buhača, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.194799599999996, 15.7886054

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: 20-35 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used, insulting

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian policemen in blue uniform with the emblem "MUP", 1 police van; 2 policemen in blue uniform with the Croatian emblem, 1 police van; 2 male police officers in blue uniform, 1 female police officer in blue uniform; 1 male police officer wearing light blue shirt; 6 male officers, 2 in blue uniform and 4 in black uniform

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondents, a group of nine males aged 20-35 from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, were walking on a bridge in Karlovac (47212, Banska Selnica, HR) on the 19th January 2020, at approximately 15:30, when locals saw them and informed police of their presence. Minutes later, two police officers arrived wearing blue uniforms, with guns, boots and the emblem "MUP". The respondents ran to hide in the nearby fields for roughly 15 minutes:

*“trying our last chance, our last luck”*

However, the two policemen located them, pointed a gun to the sky and shouted “stop”. The respondents stopped and the officers remarked:

*“No problem for you, no problem for us.”*

At this point the respondent recalls officers asking whether there were Pakistani people in their group.

The transit group were ordered into a line and walked out of the fields to the main road where a police van was waiting. They were then walked to a bus stop where they were frisked one-by-one by the two police officers. The respondents had to take off their jackets, which police searched and gave them back.

*“They make [face and gestures] like we smell very bad.”*

Electronic devices like phones, power-banks and objects like knives and nail cutters were taken by police and put into a plastic bag, which was returned to the transit group later when they were pushed back across the border with BiH. While searching their backpacks, police found some cobs and told the respondents:

***“You eat cobs, what are you, animals?”***

After this, a second police van with two policemen wearing blue uniforms with the Croatian emblem arrived, loaded the respondents into the van and drove them for 20 minutes to what is identified as a “*basketball gym*”. It was impossible for the respondents to see out of the van since there were no windows nor did they know where they were going. The respondent believes that the “*basketball gym*” was in the city centre and was surrounded by big apartment buildings with “*maybe 20 floors*”. There, the transit group were frisked for a second time and spent roughly four-five hours at this location. A group of six people from Egypt were already inside the gym. Two male police officers with blue uniforms “*took guard*” of the transit group. The respondent says that the officers were making jokes with the group, and that “*most of them [were] positive*”. Nonetheless, the respondents alleges that

***“(I see in their eyes), they look at us as under-citizens, as someone under humanity. Like, ‘what kind of people do come to us, who are they? Who are they?’”***

One female police officer with blue uniform and “*maybe an higher grade*”, made the respondents sign some documents in Arabic and English which they had no time to read. No translator was present. Three of the respondents asked for asylum, however six respondents from Morocco did not, instead saying “*we are Moroccan..*”, assuming the impossibility for them to receive asylum. The respondents says:

***“I speak with them [police], I explain them my right to ask for asylum and that Croatia is an European member. My rights and United Nations and all, I explain to them point by point”.***

The female police officer told to the respondents that they would be brought to Zagreb for asylum applications but when she left, a police officer wearing a light blue shirt ordered to the respondents to take their personal belongings and go back to Velika Kladusa (BiH). The respondent describes the angry and serious attitude of the police officer, who wants to “*make fear to you*”.

***“They [the police] play very good theatre, like ‘we will break your phones and we will break your bones in the border’”.***

At approximately 23:00 on the 19th January 2020, the transit group were loaded into a police van with no windows and driven for roughly one hour to the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina (approximate coordinates 45.194799599999996, 15.7886054 BiH). Waiting at the border were six male police officers, two of them wearing blue uniforms and the rest wearing black uniforms. According to the respondent, the officers smelt like alcohol and were continuously yawning. The transit group exited the van, formed a line, were given back their personal belongings and then told to “*go back to Kladusa*”.

***“Generally they push us in the rivers, even if there is a bridge they force you to cross the river by walk. In Croatia they have a proverb which says ‘from water to freedom’ which is ‘od vode do slobode’. One time when I was pushed back from Sturlic, one policeman***

***taught me this proverb. So, every time I am pushed back, I repeat this proverb to the officers, from water to freedom”***

On the 20th January 2020 around 00:00, the transit group crossed the river and walked back to the city of Velika Kladusa (BiH). Referring to the experience of his pushback, the respondent said:

***“I really thought that, for the first time, political elections really changed things. Because now it is one week after the election of Zoran Milanovic, after the last president Kolinda Grabar, the murderer. But no, when we arrived back in Kladusa we saw another group violently injured, bones broken, phones broken... It was just our luck”***

**19/01/2020**

## **“WHAT WILL WE DO? WE HAVE HUMAN RIGHTS”**

**Date and time:** January 19, 2020 23:30

**Location:** HR border, close to Lohovo (BiH)

**Coordinates:** 44.73810580652982, 15.907275985425606

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 16 - 21, from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** kicking, threatening with guns, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 9 officers dressed in green (matching uniforms of Special Forces), 9 officers dressed in black uniforms, 1 jeep, 2 patrol cars, 1 combi

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, Balkan Info Van

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A transit group of seven people left from Bihac (BiH) and traveled on foot into Croatia. The group included six Afghani men (aged between 21-22) and one minor aged 16. The group walked for three days in difficult conditions due to the snow and cold weather.

At approximately 19:00 on 19th January 2019 the transit group were apprehended by Croatian police officers in woodland near to the motorway 71. Describing this moment as the “*arrest in jungle*”, the respondent shared how eleven uniformed police officers approached them suddenly, as if they had been hiding in wait.

Nine of the officers were dressed in green uniforms, and on the arm the word “*Policija*” was written. These uniforms match the description of Special Forces officers. Another two officers were dressed in black uniforms. The respondent suggests that the officers had found the transit groups footprints in the snow, and therefore followed them to this point. Two police vehicles were parked nearby, a jeep and a patrol car.

The officers stopped them, and one authority used his boot to kick the respondent in the right hip. The police had pistols in their hands, and the guns had *“red colour lasers”* fitted which were pointed at the transit group. The police observed that the respondent was holding his phone, and had the device plugged into a power bank. Seeing this, one officer began questioning the respondent, alleging that he was a smuggler. The officer stated:

***“You are boss”***

The respondent denied this and told the officers that the group needed the phone to navigate, *“without powerbank, without mobile we cannot go”*. The transit group asked the Croatian authorities for asylum, but the officers reportedly replied:

***“It’s not our job, it’s government job”***

The officers denied them the chance to claim asylum, instead they asked the group why they were making this journey as they appeared to *“look good”*. The respondent suggests that the officers perceived them as presentably dressed and polite, and therefore did not understand why they were travelling on foot to ask for asylum. The police reportedly asked:

***“You all are looking like good, why you leave your country?”***

The respondent replied:

***“We came for a future... we have no future, everyone has too much problem in Afghanistan. There is also Taliban”***

The officers responded to this by telling the group to *“try again”*. The respondent replied, *“then leave me go”*. But the police held the group at the point of apprehension and made a phone call to bring further officers.

At the spot in the woodland where they were caught the police demanded the transit groups phones, power banks and personal items, like rucksacks. The respondent describes how the police took three mobile phones and three power banks from the group.

***“When they catch me I told them, give me our bags and mobiles”***

The officers replied that they would remove the items and their return would be the *“job of border police”*.

The group were held at the point of apprehension for two hours. During this time they were denied food, despite making requests to the officers because of severe hunger. The respondent shared how told the officers:

***“We are are hungry, we want to eat something”***

The police responded by telling the group:

***“You will go in Bosnia and do what you want”***

The respondent described how the transit group were only allowed to drink water. This came from snow that they collected in plastic bottles. The respondent had some medication in his bag and states he was ill on the day of the incident. However the bag had been confiscated and the police refused to give him the medication.

***“I told him ‘I need medicine, I have medicine in my bag’, but they didn’t [allow him]”***

After around two hours wait, at approximately 21:00, seven more police officers arrived wearing black uniforms that matched two of the initial authorities on the scene. Four of the officers arrived in a combi vehicle and three in a patrol car. This brought the number of officials on the scene to a total of 18.

The transit group of seven were loaded into the back of the combi and driven for approximately two hours. The van stopped on a hilled area close to Bihac, the respondent was able to indicate the approximate location with GPS. The transit group were unloaded from the van at approximately 23:00. It was dark, so the respondent was unable to assess the full number of officers on the scene, but he suggested it was the same seven officers dressed in black who had arrived at the apprehension point at 21:00.

Outside the van the respondent described how the seven people had their possessions burnt in a fire by the police (including bags, phones and powerbanks): *“in the border they fire”*. The transit group were left with only the clothes they were standing in. When the police officers reached for the batons holstered at their waist, the respondent shared how the transit group ran in fear. Describing the attempted beating, the respondent stated that:

***“When they touch stick [police baton], we run away”***

***“They [the police] try, but we run... then they are laughing”***

The transit group fled down the hill and into BiH, crossing into the territory at approximately 23:30. The respondent observed some houses and by the suggested location, this was likely to

have been Lohovo (BiH).The transit group then walked for approximately 3.5 hours from the pushback location pinned by the respondent in order to arrive in the city of Bihac. Some were able to return to the Temporary Reception Centre Bira, but others did not have camp cards and had to sleep in abandoned buildings. This latter group included the 16 year old minor.

Recalling the incident, the respondent asked:

**“What should I do? What will we do? We have Human Rights”**

09/01/2020

## **“IF YOU WANT ASYLUM GO TO ZAGREB, NO ASYLUM HERE IN KARLOVAC”**

**Date and time:** January 9, 2020 23:00

**Location:** near Grabarska, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.146215, 15.774358

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 24-26 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, threatening with guns, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian policemen in black uniforms, one wearing a ski mask, 1 police van; 2 male and 1 female Croatian police officers in black uniforms, one wearing a ski mask, 1 police van; 1 female and 2 male Croatian police officers in blue uniforms, 1 police car; 1 female and 2 male police officers in blue uniforms with Croatian emblem; 2 male Croatian police officers in black uniforms, 1 police van; 4 officers wearing ski masks and black uniforms, 1 officer in civilian clothing with a police hat

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

At approximately 11:00 on the 9th January 2020, the transit group were stopped by two Croatian police officers while walking *“in the jungle”* (approximate coordinate 45.713556,15.372339 HR). The group consisted of seven males aged between 24-26 years old from Morocco and Algeria. The policemen, both wearing black uniforms with the police emblem and one wearing a ski mask, were hiding behind trees so that the respondents did not see them until one of them had a gun pointed at the respondent’s forehead. The officer said:

## ***“Stop and sit down”***

The transit group stopped and the two police officers forced them to sit by pushing them to the ground. The police asked the respondents how many people were in the group and ordered them to arrange themselves in a line. In line, the respondents were escorted out of the woods to the street where a police van was waiting. According to the respondent, the police told the transit group that their colleagues were arriving soon with pictures from cameras, to see if the respondents had lied about the number of people in their group.

In the street, the respondents were again forced to the ground. The respondents were kneeling down with their foreheads on the ground with their backpack still on. *“Don’t look at me”*, said the police officer wearing the ski mask. When one respondent moved his head up from the ground, the officer wearing the ski mask hit him. According to the respondent, this officer was the only one speaking and giving orders to the transit group:

## ***“just kagool (ski mask) speaks with you”***

One by one, police ordered the respondents to stand up and *“take off everything”*, so that their clothes could be searched. The respondents had to undress completely and stand naked in front of the officers. Police asked the respondents to hand over their phones and power-banks. Police searched one respondent’s backpack and found his powerbank inside. The officer who found the item asked the owner:

## ***“Why didn’t you give this?”***

The owner of the powerbank answered:

## ***“I am sorry, I forgot”***

The officers reaction was to beat this individual with his college, targeting the respondents head with their hands. The police set fire to the respondent’s backpack and threw a camping gas canister into the fire, some other clothes, food and another respondent’s power-bank. The respondents allege that the police were laughing while burning their belongings. One respondent tried to take his backpack off because *“it’s very heavy”*, but the police officers stopped him. *“No”*, they said. An officer proceeded to take another respondent’s backpack and put it on the back of the respondent for roughly 10 minutes.

After searching the transit groups clothes and bags, the police ordered the respondents to quickly put on their clothes. *“Quick quick quick”*, police told the respondents. The respondents allege they spent approximately 45-60 minutes here. The whole time, except while being frisked, the respondents were kneeling on the ground in the coerced position mentioned above.

At approximately 12:00, two male and one female Croatian police officers wearing black uniforms arrived in a second police van. One of the male officers was also wearing a ski mask. The respondent already knew the female police officer from a previous pushback (November 30, 2019 22:00 – Near Buhača, Croatia – Border Violence Monitoring Network). *“Another time you?”*, the officer told him and then turned to her colleagues and said *“don’t touch him, I know this person”*. The group was loaded into the second police van and waited in the van for roughly 10 minutes. Another police car arrived, in which two male and one female police officers wearing blue uniforms were sitting. The car and the second van drove together for roughly 20 minutes to a police station.

At approximately 12:30, they arrived at a police station. The respondent believes that he was in a police station in Karlovac (HR), as the female police officer who recognized him told when they arrived, *“you are in Karlovac”*. In the police station, two police officers asked the respondents for their personal information like full name, country of origin, age, name of the parents, city and address in their country of origin and signature. The respondent affirms:

***“I [and another respondent] have fingerprints in Croatia, I just tell them my code”***

According to the respondent, this ‘code’ is the identification number previously assigned to him by the Croatian police. In total, four police officers dealt with the group in the police station: the female officer wearing black uniform whom the respondent already knew and three police officers (one woman and two men) wearing blue uniforms. All of them had the police emblem on their uniform. No official translator was present in the police station.

Frontal pictures of the respondents’ face were taken. When photographed, the respondents were holding a piece of paper reporting their name and country of origin. The respondents were forced to quickly signed some documents written in Arabic which they did not have time to read nor understand. *“I don’t know what is this”*, says the respondent.

The respondent alleges that he addressed the female police officer whom he already knew and told her:

***“I have fingerprints here, if you want to help me and my friend with asylum”***

The policewoman answered:

***“I am sorry, no asylum here. If you want asylum go to Zagreb, no asylum here in Karlovac”***

One respondent asked for food but was denied this. In the cell there was a squat toilet covered by a blanket. One of the respondents asked to go to the toilet and police told him to lift the blanket up and use the squat toilet. After roughly two hours in the cell, another two people from Morocco were brought to police station and put in the same cell.

The respondents remained in this cell until approximately 22.00 on the 9th January 2020. The respondents (now a transit group of nine) were ordered to leave the station and were physically forced inside a police van. The van had no windows so the respondents could not see outside. The cold air conditioning was turned on in the back of the van; it was “so cold”, according to the respondents. Two male Croatian police officers wearing black uniforms drove the van recklessly (swerving left and right) to the border.

After approximately one hour, the van arrived to the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina (approximately 45.146215,15.774358, BiH), at roughly 23:00. At the border there were five police officers waiting, four of which were wearing ski masks and black uniforms and the fifth one wearing civilian clothes and a police hat. One by one, the respondents exited the police van. Two of the respondents were beaten with batons by three of the officers. One officer addressed the last two respondents who exited the van and told them

***“Don’t come another time because this is bad for you.”***

The officers gave the respondents a plastic bag containing their phones and power-banks which were all now broken.

***“I am sure they broke it in the police station.”***

“Go Bosnia”, police told the group. The transit group walked for roughly one hour, reaching the city of Velika Kladusa (BiH) at approximately 01:00 on the 10th January 2020.

**08/01/2020**

**“ONE OF THE RESPONDENTS FAINTED FOR ROUGHLY TEN MINUTES BECAUSE OF THE HITS HE RECEIVED.”**

**Date and time:** January 8, 2020 01:30

**Location:** near Buhača, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.194708, 15.790146

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 24, 24, 28, 29 , from: Morocco, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian police officers wearing civil clothes; 4 policemen with blue uniform uniforms and Croatian emblem on their shoulder and chest, 2 police cars; 5 male police officers with blue uniform and Croatian emblem, 1 female officer wearing civil clothes; 2 policemen with dark blue uniform, 1 police van; 8 officers wearing black uniforms, ski masks, boots covering the shin (up to the knees) and batons

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondents, a group of four people aged 24, 24, 28, 29 from Morocco, were stopped by three Croatian police officers while walking at the bus station in Zagreb (HR), at approximately 14.00 on the 7th January 2020. The policemen – who were not wearing uniform but “civil” clothes – told to the group “*stop, stop*” and asked them to show the documents. The respondents answered that they did not have passports nor any other documents. The officers which stopped the group called other policemen who arrived with two police cars and loaded the respondents, two of them in each car. These officers were wearing blue uniforms with the Croatian emblem on their shoulder and chest.

From the bus station in Zagreb, the respondents were driven for approximately 10 minutes to a police station. In the police station, the respondents were processed by five male police officers wearing blue uniform and Croatian emblem on their shoulder. The respondents had their phones taken, as well as money, powerbanks and some clothes.

### “*They take jacket, shoes, beanie, everything*”

The respondents were asked for personal information such as the name, surname, date of birth, country of origin and also for the name of the parents. The respondents had to sign documents they could not understand and were not supported by any official translator at the police station.

“*We don't know this language*”, shared the respondent in reference to the documents which they had to sign. A female police officer wearing civil clothes took frontal photos of the face of the respondents. The respondents were denied both food and water and when they asked for asylum police told them “*we do not give asylum*”.

The respondents spent what was perceived as five hours in a detention cell in the police station. “*It was cold*”, the respondents says, referring to the fact that police previously forced them to take off their clothes.

Around 20.00/21.00 the transit group was loaded into a police van where there were two policemen wearing dark blue uniform, and driven to the border with Bosnia Herzegovina (approximately 45.194708,15.790146). In the police van was not only the group of four respondents but also another man from Tunisia. The respondents refer to the police driving

reckless. The travel was perceived as three or four hours long and the respondent suggests they arrived at the border at 01.30 on the 8th of January 2020.

Eight officers wearing black uniforms, ski masks, boots covering the shin (up to the knees) and batons were waiting at the border for the group on the move. The Croatian police officers driving the van delivered the respondents' personal belongings to the officers at the border, who set everything on fire. After that, the officers arranged themselves in circle surrounding the respondents one by one and beat them with batons and kicked them with their feet. One of the respondents fainted for roughly ten minutes because of the hits he received.

"Go, go Bosnia", the officers told the transit group, who then walked back to the city of Velika Kladusa (BiH), a distance suggested as around ten kilometres.

05/01/2020

## "THEY TREATED US AS IF WE ARE NOT HUMAN, BUT EVEN ANIMALS ARE NOT TREATED IN THE SAME TREATMENT"

**Date and time:** January 5, 2020 02:00

**Location:** near Jagrovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.212103, 15.735006

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 (original group size: 3) person(s), age: 17,19,21 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, gunshots, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 2 male Croatian officers with black uniform with Croatian emblem, ski masks, boots covering the shin up to the knees, bulletproof protection, guns and batons; 2 male police officers with blue uniforms and Croatian emblem, 1 police van; 6 male Croatian officers wearing black uniform

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondents in this case were three people (aged 17,19,21). Two came from Algeria and one came from Morocco. The group of three were stopped in Croatia by two male Croatian officers

a few kilometers from the Slovenian border (approximately 45.749425, 15.432576 (HR)), at around 23.00 on the 4th January 2020. The respondent says that the officers were wearing black uniforms and ski masks, boots covering the shin (up to the knees), bulletproof protection, guns and batons.

The officers allegedly had the Croatian emblem on their sleeve arm of their uniform. The respondent reports the police shouting at them “stop” and shooting once in the air with a gun. The transit group stopped and the police forcibly pushed them prone to the ground, after ordering them to take off their jacket. In that position, the police beat the respondents with batons and kicked them all over their body. The respondent says that they laid on the ground in the cold night for what they perceived as one or two hours.

Another two male police officers wearing blue uniforms with the Croatian emblem on their arm arrived with a police van, loaded the respondents and directly drove them to the border to Bosnia Herzegovina (approximately 45.212103,15.735006). The respondent assert that the travel took two or three hours, and report the police driving reckless. In the police van there were another seven people from Algeria and Morocco, brining the total transit group to ten.

At around 02.00 on the 5th December 2020, the police van arrived at the border with Bosnia Herzegovina and the group of ten were released out of it “one by one”. Out of the van, six male Croatian officers wearing black uniform were waiting for the transit group. The officers had arranged themselves in circle, surrounding each respondent one by one, and beating them with batons and hands and kicking them all over the body. Several injuries were incurred from the two seperate beatings, including the fracture of one persons arm.

Describing the level of violence at this point in the incident, one respondent emphasized how:

***“In the border it’s very very very”***

The police forced the respondents to take off their trousers. The clothes were then set on fire and the transit groups phones were crushed with batons. Describing the assault and stripping, one respondent shared:

***“They treated us as if we are not human, but even animals are not treated in the same treatment”***

“Go, go, go”, the police told to the respondents. From the point they were pushed back, the respondents walked back half naked to the town of Velika Kladusa (BiH) under the pouring rain, with great difficulty due to the serious injuries caused by police. “Cold, cold cold cold”, said one respondent in reference to this return walk.

In Velika Kladusa the group sought medical help from volunteer paramedics. The diagnosis and treatment made by this field team goes as follows:

***“The first young man presented bruises in the neck and acute pain due to impacts in this area and inflammation***

*in the lower back due to police beatings with the batons and kicks. The second young man had bruises on both legs due to impact of the batons. The third young man presented a cut in the left leg due to the impact of the baton and inflammation; on the other hand, he presents a radius and scaphoid fracture in the left hand, and a fissure in the right hand. The three young people presented acute general pain and bruises in various areas due to police beating. All have required medical examinations and health first aid care, anti-inflammatory cures and analgesic medications, and psychological first aid due to a post-traumatic situation”.*

Additional treatment was sought at the hospital, where the above xray images were taken to assess the arm fracture, and splinting + bandaging was administered for the injury.

31/12/2019

## “THERE ARE PEOPLE-ON-THE-MOVE ON THE BUS”

**Date and time:** December 31, 2019 00:00

**Location:** near Basara, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.025686, 15.760109

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 25, 26, 27, 30 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 2 policemen wearing blue uniforms with Croatian emblem on their shoulder; 3 Croatian policemen wearing blue uniforms; 2 Croatian policemen, 1 police van; 6 Croatian policemen, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondents, a group of four people aged 25, 26, 27 and 30, were stopped by Croatian police officers on a bus travelling from Slunj bus station (HR) (approximately 45.116566, 15.585454), at approximately 15.30 on the 31st December 2019. The respondent reports the bus driver calling police and telling them that some people-on-the-move were on the bus.

Two policemen wearing blue uniform with the Croatian emblem on their shoulder arrived with a police van. The officers stopped the bus and asked the transit group to show their documents. The respondent stated that police went directly to the transit group and did not ask for documents to any other passengers on the bus. The respondents answered *"I don't have [documents]"* in response to the polices questions. The group was forced to leave the bus and loaded into a police van, which traveled a short distance to the local police station.

In the police station there were three policemen wearing blue uniforms. The respondents asked for asylum and police answered them:

***"go to Bosnia to ask asylum"***

No official translator was present in the police station, so the respondents could not properly understand what was happening, nor were the respondents given any explanation or document about the procedures being carried out. The police frisked the respondents, took their phones and their powerbanks and withheld them.

After approximately 30 minutes, the respondents were loaded in another police van which drove them to the border of HR with BiH (approximately 45.025686,15.760109), travelling for a period of time perceived as 10 minutes long. The respondent did not know where he was going nor had the van any window to see outside. The respondent reports the police driving reckless. Because of the dark, it was impossible for the respondent to distinguish the colour of the uniform of the two policemen who were driving the van.

Arriving at the border, the respondents were forced to pull off their jackets and their shoes while still inside the van. After that, the respondents were made to exit the van. Outside, another six policemen were waiting for the group. The respondent asserts that these police officers were wearing blue uniforms as well, but affirms that he cannot be sure because of the dark and also because the police were pointing the flashlights in the face of the transit group to blind them. One of the respondents asked to have his phone and powerbank back and stretched his hand towards a policeman, who hit his hand and back with the baton. During this interaction at the border another respondent was beaten by police with a baton as well. The respondent reports police shouting to them:

***"go go, go Kladusa"***

The transit group started to walk towards Bosnia-Herzegovina. Walking for approximately half kilometer from the point in which they were pushed back, the group crossed over a river by foot, the water reaching their hips. After crossing this they arrived back into BiH territory.

18/12/2019

## “THEY [THE POLICE] DO AS WHEN YOU WANT TO CATCH SOME ANIMALS, THEY DO LIKE THIS, LIKE: 'I CATCH YOU'”

**Date and time:** December 18, 2019 05:00

**Location:** near Buhača, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.183868, 15.776213

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: 19,24,65, 20-25 years old , from: Morocco, Egypt

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, gunshots, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian policeman wearing black uniform, 2 police vans; 2 Croatian policeman wearing ski mask, unknown colour of the uniform, 1 van.

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondents, a group of nine people aged 19, 24, 65 and 20-25 were walking near Blatnica Pokupska (HR, coordinates 45.510490,15.724805) when stopped by Croatian authorities, at approximately 02.00 in the night on 18th December 2019. Five male Croatian authorities wearing black uniforms stopped the group on the move, two of them coming from one side along the river and three of them coming from the opposite side.

When they saw the police, the respondents tried to escape but stopped as they met the other police officers coming. One policeman supposedly shot twice in the air and shouted “stop”. The respondent cannot remember if the police officers had any emblem on their shoulder, but he remembers that police had pistols, boots up to the ankle and no special body protection.

Two police vans were present.

The respondents were forced to sit on the ground, pushed by the police officers. The respondent tried to assist some of his fellow group members who could not understand the orders given by the police.

***“Some friends do not understand English, I just want to translate but they [police] say ‘stop!’ . I tell them that I am just translating, they answer me that that’s not my business”***

The respondent affirms that he continued to translate into Arabic all the police’s orders in order to help those in the group who did not speak English. When the respondent translated an order for a 65-year-old men:

***“sit down or I kick you”***

The police then told to the respondent:

***“this is the last time, don’t tell anything”***

The police forced the respondents to sit down by pushing with hands and made the group wait on the floor in the pouring rain. While sitting on the ground, the respondent states he was thinking alot, and therefore did not hear the following order by the police. In response the policeman shook him three times, kicking him with his leg and saying:

***“hey, look at me, I talk with you”***

The police took the phones and powerbanks of the respondents and withheld them. Referring to the way the officers sorted these items, the respondent said:

***“If they find a good telephone, they keep it, but if they find a bad telephone, they destroy”***

The respondent reports police asking to a member of the group for the password of the phone. Police frisked the respondent but could not find his phone, which the respondent had hidden in his underwear. Police took money, food, sleeping bags and backpacks of the respondents and set them on fire.

***“Just fire, as every time”***

***“They do not take clothes because we do not run too much. If we run they take everything”***

The respondent reports police addressing him with bad words such as “shut the fuck up” and laughing at him when asking of his country of origin.

***“Morocco, Morocco”***

Was what the officer repeated, laughing. The respondent asserts that at least one policeman had consumed alcohol, which he could smell from his breath when the policeman went close to his face and told him to shut up.

***“He comes to me and the last time he says -shut the fuck up-, between us maybe 20 centimeters”***

The respondents waited under the rain for a certain time and were later loaded into the police van, with police shouting at them “go go go” and pushing them with the hands. Describing the way the group was handled he said:

***“They do as when you want to catch some animals, they do like this, like ‘I catch you’”***

In the van, the police frisked the respondents again. “They know that I have something”, says the respondent, to whom police ordered to pull off the jacket. He asserts how:

***“They were so closed [by frisking] to my phone, if they find my phone it would be a big problem”***

While frisking, police took and destroyed the respondent’s camp ID card. The respondent reports police laughing at him in the group. To all the other respondents, police returned the camp ID cards back. But the respondent did not receive his, stating

***“I don’t know why just me”***

Two of the policemen who stopped the group on the move drove the van while the other policemen remained there “waiting for another group”, says the respondent. The respondent reports the police driving reckless: “crazy drive, everybody felt nauseated”, he says. Police did not give to the respondents any explanations on where they were going nor had the van any window to see outside. The respondents says “[anyway] we know that we are going to police station”. The respondent perceived the travel in the van as 45 minutes/ one hour long, at the end of which the van arrived to a police station.

The respondents did not enter into the police station and were instead transferred into another police van, which the respondent describes as “worst” [than the first]. In this second van there were other two policemen, both wearing a ski mask which covered their faces. The respondent was unable to distinguish the colour of the uniforms because it was dark nor can he remember if the van was a police van or a civilian one. None of the respondent asked for asylum because “no one think about that, everybody was scared”, says the respondent.

The respondents were driven to the border of HR with BiH (approximately 45.183868,15.776213), travelling in the van for a period of time perceived as 30 minutes long. Also in this case the drive

was reckless and the vehicle veered around the road. At the border, approximately around 05.00 in the morning, the police opened the doors of the van and told the respondents “go, go to Bosnia”. The respondent did not know where they were not could they see anything because it was dark. “I can't see anything there”, says the respondent. From the point they were pushed back to the town of Velika Kladusa, the respondents walked two or three hours, taking pauses to sit down and rest because of tiredness and rain. The group on the move arrived in Velika Kladusa around 7.00 in the morning. Referring to the incident, the respondent summed up stating:

***“I don't know why they do this, but what police does can't stop me. We don't care, we have a goal and we will do it. That's it”.***

14/12/2019

## “IT'S CATASTROPHE”

**Date and time:** December 14, 2019 11:40

**Location:** Durin Potok (HR)

**Coordinates:** 45.112382, 15.786133

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 37 person(s), age: 15 - 40+ years old , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco, Tunisia, India

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), water immersion, theft of personal belongings, cramping of 37 people in a van

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian officers with 2 unmarked cars, 2 Croatian officers at bus station, 15 Croatian officers with 3 large marked vans,

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On 11th December 2019 a transit group of 35 males (including at least two minors aged 15 and 17) left from Bihac (BiH) and traveled into the Croatian interior on foot. The group (from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh) walked for three days through the woodland and hills.

The respondents suggested that the group were close to the Slovenian border on 14th December 2019 when they approached a stretch of road. Describing their situation he shared:

***“We have no food, we go road”***

## ***“Food finish, everything finish, snow falling”***

It was approximately 08:00/09:00 in the morning and as the group of 35 approached the road they were apprehended by three Croatian police officers. The authorities were described as wearing dark blue uniforms and having stars sewn into the left breast of their uniform (one officer had two stars, the other two officer had one star). The officers had two unmarked vehicles parked by them. One of the three officers was described as the “boss”, and had some kind of badge hung around his neck.

The transit group were ordered to wait by the road. The group were ordered to hand over their phones and money to the police.

## ***“He [the police officer] take and stole everything... [incl.] money”***

The group waited until further police officers arrived in vans. The vans were large marked police vehicles and were driven by a further set of Croatian officers. The transit group were lined up and photographed with a mobile phone, before being forced into the back of one of the vans. Despite their being several vans, all 35 people-on-the-move were reportedly placed in the rear compartment of a single vehicle, making the conditions extremely cramped.

The transit group were driven from the site of apprehension in these extremely uncomfortable conditions. Halfway through the journey, the van stopped and a further two persons were forced into the rear compartment (bringing the total to 37). The two people forced in were men (one Tunisian, one Moroccan). They were later interviewed and shared that Croatian police officers had apprehended them at a bus station.

The transit group of two had been waiting on a bus, having already bought tickets from Slunj (HR) to Zagreb (HR). Croatian officers boarded the vehicle and ordered them off. The men suggested that the bus driver, or station staff, had alerted the authorities to their presence. The two men had then been held by Croatian police, before being transferred into the back of the van (carrying the 35 people initially caught).

The total journey from the first apprehension point took approximately 3.5 hours. The respondents (from both groups) shared how they were partially unloaded in a valley on a dirt road. Only 20 persons (approximate) were taken out of the van by police, meaning a further 17 were left in the rear of the van.

The portion of the transit group that was removed, which included two minors, was brought out into a corridor of Croatian police officers who stood in two lines either side of the vans double doors. The respondents suggest there was approximately 15 Croatian police officers. The transit group could see the two accompanying vans (which had not been used to carry any of the group) parked nearby.

Describing the situation that then unfolded, the respondents used horizontal arm movements to depict the motion of the baton swings inflicted on them by the police officers. The 20 persons were made to move through the corridor of officers and were all subject to this treatment, including the minors. Aside from the road, at the base of the valley where they had

been brought was a small river/watercourse. The group were forced to cross/ford this, by order of the Croatian officers. Crossing the water, the transit group became wet and cold, drenching their shoes and trouser legs.

The ejection across the border occurred at approximately 11:40 and the group walked a short distance to the R403b road in BiH, where they sat and rested. The three Croatian police vans then drove along the parallel dirt road on the Croatian side of the border, observed by the group and other eye witnesses. The respondents later indicated a nearby stretch of border, north of Durin Potok, where they believe the remaining 17 people left in the van were pushed back. Asserting a possible cause for this split of locations, one respondent shared that he believed the Croatian officers had observed eyewitnesses on the road in BiH, and therefore had moved from the original pushback spot at 45.112382, 15.786133 in order to expel the remainder of the group.

**“When they see your team [eyewitnesses on the road], they [the police] go”**

Based on the description of the respondents, the below map suggests the area from which the later group were removed (as confirmed by the direction of the three police vans moving north when observed).

The group, who had been robbed of their money and phones by the police, were then forced to walk approximately 13km along the road in the direction of Velika Kladusa (BiH). Describing the aftermath, the sub-transit group of two (Tunisian and Moroccan) shared their exasperation at the situation, stating *“it’s catastrophe”*.

The group walked for several hours and then waited until 17:00 to take the bus back to Bihac from a station close to Velika Kladusa. They did not return until 19:00 that night, where many were unsure if they could access the camp accommodation there because their IOM issued camp ID cards had also been taken during the pushback.

**08/12/2019**

## **“THE POLICE COLD ME”**

**Date and time:** December 8, 2019 23:59

**Location:** near Koranski Lug, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.061321, 15.74019

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 27, 32 years old, unknown, from: Pakistan, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, water immersion, gunshots, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 4 male police officers with black uniform and Croatian emblem; 2 male police officers with black uniform and Croatian emblem, 1 police van; 1 female Croatian police officer

with blue uniform, 5 Croatian male police officers with black uniform; 2 male Croatian police officers with black uniform, 1 police van; 6 male Croatian authorities wearing black uniform

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondents, seven men aged 24-33 from Morocco and Algeria, were walking in the woods just a few kilometers into the Croatian interior from the border with BiH (approximate coordinates 45.220103, 15.937941) when caught by Croatian authorities patrolling the area. This occurred at approximately 21:00 on 8th December 2019. The respondent identified the authorities as four male Croatian police officers wearing black uniforms with the Croatian emblem.

The respondent claims that the police shot with a gun twice in the air to stop them. Two of the respondents stopped and five of them escaped. Two of the police officers ran after them but did not catch them. The two respondents were forced to lay prone on the ground for a period of time perceived as ten minutes. Police took the phone and the powerbank of one of the respondents and crushed them with a baton. When the other two police officers came back, the two respondents were made kneel on the floor with their hands up behind the head. Police then frisked the respondents.

The police called another two male police officers who arrived with a police van and loaded the two respondents (bringing the total of officers present to six). These police officers were wearing black uniforms with the Croatian emblem. Another four Pakistani people (from another transit group) were already in the van. The respondent was driven in the van for a period of time he perceived as four hours long. The respondent did not know where he was going, nor could he see out of the window.

The respondent was brought to a building which he describes as “*blue*”. He did not observe any official “*police station*” sign. However, the interior part of the building looked like a police station. The respondent refers to the police station as the “*jungle station*”, saying that it was in a rural area and not in a city. Six police officers were in the police station, one female wearing blue uniform and five male wearing black uniform. In the police station, the respondents (now a group of 6) were forced to take their shoes off. They were told that they could have the shoes back later. The respondents never got their shoes back.

Inside the police station, the two respondents and the four Pakistani people were put in a cell. The respondent describes the cell as “*stinky*”. The respondents had their fingerprints taken from one finger only, and were forced to quickly sign a document. The document was both written in Arabic and English but the respondents had no time to read it properly. No one of the group asked for asylum. The respondent explains that he did not ask for asylum because [he believes that]:

“*Croatian police do not grant asylum to anyone*”

The respondents referred to a previous occasion in which Croatian police in Zagreb denied him the right to ask for asylum.

No official translator was provided to the respondents. The respondent refers being in the cell for a period perceived as six hours long. At approximately 23:00, the two respondents and the four Pakistani people were loaded in a police van. The police officers intimidated them with batons to forced them into the van. The respondents left the police station without shoes nor backpacks. Two male police officers wearing black uniform drove the van to the border with Bosnia-Herzegovina. The respondent perceived the travel as 40 minutes/one hour long. The respondent claims that at the border they waited in the van for approximately twenty minutes.

Approximately 24:00 the respondents could leave the van one by one. The two police officers who drove the van remained sitting in the van. *"They don't look"*, says the respondent. Outside of the van, six male Croatian authorities wearing black uniform were waiting in a line. The respondent affirms that the policemen were not wearing ski masks.

Nonetheless, the respondent could not see the police in the face because police were pointing flashlights in the face of the respondents. For the same reason, the respondent affirms that he was unable to see if there was any official emblem on the black uniforms of the policemen. The respondents were forced to run through the line and police beat them with the batons. The police shouted to the respondents *"go, go"* while beating. The last policeman in the line hit the respondent on the shoulder and on the leg with the baton.

*"They beat me here and here"*, says the respondent showing where he was hit. The respondent refers to still have pain in his shoulder. At the end of the line there was a small river with water reaching the respondents' knees. The respondents were forced by police to cross the river.

From the point of the pushback (approximate coordinates 45.061321, 15.74019), the respondents walked for approximately 40 minutes to reach a secondary road leading to the city of Sturlic (BiH). None of the respondents but one Pakistani man knew the area where they were pushed back. *"I know the street"*, the respondent reports the Pakistani man saying. The respondent affirms that he did not hear any sound that could be related to the presence of a city or town in the surrounding area. In all, the respondents supposedly walked for 4 hours to return to the city of Velika Kladusa (BiH). The respondent affirms that the transit group reached Velika Kladusa approximately 5:00 on 9th December 2019. Recalling the moment, the respondent stated:

***"On the way back to Velika Kladusa I wanted to kill myself, I hated the way back. I hate myself here with the Croatian police continuously deporting back"***

Talking about how he felt emotionally, the respondent ended by saying:

***"The [Croatian] police cold me"***

05/12/2019

**“THE OFFICERS FIRED TWO GUNSHOTS INTO THE AIR AND SCREAMED 'GO Kladusa, GO Kladusa, GO GO GO!'”**

**Date and time:** December 5, 2019 01:40

**Location:** Maljevac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1956712, 15.7936306

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: 24, 32 (ages of Moroccan men) , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, threatening with guns, gunshots, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 1 white Croatian police, 3 male Croatian police officers in black uniforms; 2 white Croatian police vans, 3 male Croatian police officers in navy blue uniform, 2 male Croatian Special Forces officers in black uniform and ski masks

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 30th November 2019, the respondent and his friend left Velika Kladusa (BiH) and walked through Croatia for five days before being caught by police. The respondents were in a vehicle driving along the D41 highway when police pulled the car over at 10:00 in the morning on 4th December 2019.

The car was travelling through Reka (HR) – a small town – and it is assumed that the car was stopped near this location: 46.113248, 16.7190801. Three male Croatian police officers in black uniforms took the respondents in one white Croatian police van to a police station near Lepavina (HR). They drove around for three hours before stopping at the police station (arriving around 13:00), it is suggested by the respondents indications that the station was here: 6JWF+94 Ludbreg, Croatia. The respondent said that the route they took did not make sense. Explaining the journey he said:

***“ce n’était pas direct / it was not direct”.***

At the police station, the police officers took the respondents fingerprints and photo of them holding their names on sheets of paper. The respondents asked the police for ‘asyl’ but the police said:

## ***“no no no, no asly, go Bosnia”***

The respondents were denied access to food and water. There was a toilet in their cell which they could use. In the room, there were five more people – three Bangladeshis, and two Pakistani males. There was also another cell next door, with four people inside. The transit group spent ten hours in the police station.

At 22:00, three male Croatian police officers in navy blue uniform and two male officers in black uniform and ski masks transferred the respondent and ten others in two white Croatian police vans to the border. The drive took two/three hours and involved erratic driving like swerving and slamming on the breaks. Some members of the group became sick and vomited in the van. It is suggested that the group was driven nearby to this location: 45.1956712, 15.7936306. This location was identified because the respondents could see a recognisable mosque near Velika Kladusa, and could tell their location was close to the Maljevac border crossing (official BCP between HR/BiH):

At the location, the masked officers dressed in black forced the respondent and his group to throw their clothes (everything except their underwear and t-shirt), some shoes (not everyone), backpacks, telephones and power-banks into one spot – and then poured gasoline over everything and set it on fire. If the phone or power-bank was good quality the officers stole it, if not, they burnt it.

The officers also stole €120 from the respondent. One-by-one the group in transit was forced to get out of the car and walk past the masked officers (described as “kagul”), who then spent five minutes beating each individual with their fists, batons, and by kicking them. The officers fired two gunshots into the air and screamed:

## ***“go Kladusa, go Kladusa, GO GO GO”***

The respondent was able to get away quickly because he still had shoes on, but some members of the group had their shoes burned in the fire. It took 15 minutes for the respondent to walk back into Velika Kladusa (corroborating the pinned location suggested as the pushback site. The group arrived at roughly 02:00 on 5th December 2019.

**05/12/2019**

## **“ON THE 4TH TIME, THE RESPONDENT STOPPED DUE TO FEAR OF BEING SHOT BY POLICE”**

**Date and time:** December 5, 2019 00:00

**Location:** 45.2152280, 16.0170810

**Coordinates:** 45.215228, 16.017081

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 20 person(s), age: 23-40 , from: Syria, Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 1 green Croatian Jeep, 3 male Croatian Special Forces officers in black uniform and ski masks; 1 white Croatian police van, 3 male Croatian police officers in navy blue uniform; 4 white Croatian police vans, 6 male Croatian police officers in navy blue uniform; 3 female and 7 male Croatian police officers in navy blue uniform

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

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

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On 24th November 2019, the respondent and a group including seven other people left Bihac (BiH) and walked for 12 days (approximately 200km) through the “jungle” (woodland) in Croatia towards Slovenia. On four separate occasions, respondent and his group assert they were observed by police, but were able to run away. On the 4th occasion, the respondent shared how he stopped due to fear of being shot by police:

***“on the fourth time, the police catch me. Police catch five person...three person runaway”.***

At 10:00 on 4th December 2019, a large green jeep with (‘police’ written in black writing on the side) came down a forest road and three male authorities – described as matching Croatian Special Forces officers in black uniform and ski masks – got out of the car. The eight transit group members ran, but the police began firing their guns into the air and screaming:

***“STOP STOP STOP”***

At the discharge of the weapons, some members of the group stopped. The respondent continued to run until he heard gunfire very close to him so he also stopped and put his hands in the air. Describing the moment he shared:

***“before catch two [people, the police] fire, and then some run, so police fire fire fire fire fire fire, stop stop stop, but no stop, they run”***

Officers continued to fire their guns 20-30 times in the air in order to bring back the three individuals who continue to run. However the three managed to continue moving away from the scene.

This left five remaining transit group members. One of the Special forces officers then apprehended the respondent by jumping in the air and kicking him two times in the neck:

***“I run 20 meters...stop stop...no stop, I run, police shoot in air...so I stop...police then kick me in the neck two times...he was two meters tall, like a giant”.***

Of the three attending Croatian police officers, two officers chased the three people who ran away into the forest, while one stayed behind to guard the five people who were caught.

For two hours the police forced the respondent and his group to sit on the ground outside in the cold while the officer sat in his car. At this location, the officers asked the respondent for his possessions:

***“do you have phone? Give me phone. Do you have knife?”, ‘No I have no knife, I have bag’...’so give me bag”***

The officers stole the respondents telephone and power-bank, and emptied his bag onto the ground in the surrounding forest area:

***“with Croatia [police], if telephone good...alibaba...if telephone no good, they give back or burn”***

After this, the police took individual pictures of the group in transit. When the respondent asked the police officers for international protection, the officer told the respondent that he would take his fingerprints so that he will never get asylum in Europe:

***“I ask for protection from Croatia...but nothing. The officer talk, talk, talk but he lies”.***

At around 12:00, one white Croatian police van with three male Croatian police officers in navy blue uniform appeared. Shortly after, the Special Forces officers who had chased the respondents friends into the forest returned – they appeared not to have found the three people. The officers transferred the group in transit into the police van and drove for five-six hours to a police station in Rijeka (HR).

En route, the van made three or four stops at other police stations – stopping for 30 minutes to one hour at each location. The van picked up several other groups in transit from these stations along the way. By the time the van arrived at the police station there were 20-25 people inside, it was very cramped. The van drove very fast and erratically (swerving left and right, with the driver stamping on breaks at random) and had the aircon turned up full-blast:

***“the problem is not cramped, the problem is the cold...  
the problem is the air”.***

The respondent spent two/three hours at the police station in Rijeka. They were forced to stand outside the station and had their pictures taken while holding a piece of paper with their names written down on it. The respondent was made to fill out and sign a document translated into both Arabic and English, asking for his personal information like name, age, DOB, nationality, information on parents etc. The group in transit was denied access to food, water and medical help. They were allowed to use a toilet inside the police station.

Around 22:00, everyone inside the station (including further transit groups who were present when they arrived) were transferred into four white Croatian police vans. There were roughly 20-25 people in each car with two male Croatian police officers in navy blue uniforms. The convoy drove for approximately eight/nine hours to Veliki Obljaj along the border with BiH – approximate coordinates 45.215228,16.017081. When the vans arrived at the location, there were roughly ten Croatian police officers in navy blue uniforms waiting for them (3 female and 7 male).

The group were unloaded at the border in the early hours of the morning on 5th December 2019. The police officers opened the back doors of the van at the same time and forced everyone to get out and walk down a road across the border. They had formed a line on either side of the road, and flashed torches in everyone’s eyes while screaming to go back to Bosnia:

***“I walked 25km back to Kladusa...no car, no taxi, no  
nothing...when I arrive, I sleep in the streets”***

It was a very fast process, taking no more than five minutes. The respondent shared that this was the first time he and his friends had not experienced physical violence from Croatian authorities when being pushed-back along the border. Although they had been attacked at the site of apprehension.

It took the respondent roughly ten hours to return to Velika Kladusa, arriving around 23:00 on 5th December 2019. The respondent said that he had to walk very slowly because he was extremely fatigued and injured from the police kicking him in the neck.

03/12/2019

## “THE DOGS JAW CLAMPED AROUND HIS LEG AND THE ANIMAL MAULED HIS UPPER CALF, TEARING THE FLESH”

**Date and time:** December 3, 2019 04:00

**Location:** Željava Air Base, HR

**Coordinates:** 44.830972, 15.764639

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 15 - 30 , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** kicking, insulting, dog attacks, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 14 Croatian police officers, 1 police dog (Belgian Malinois), 1 patrol car, 1 Skoda, multiple police vans, one officer dressed in a ski mask

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, Balkan Info Van

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 2nd December 2019 the respondent, along with five other Syrians, were waiting in the woodland close to the 52 road in the vicinity of Pogledalo (HR). The group included two minors aged 15, who were travelling unaccompanied having lost their families in Idlib, Syria. The group had been waiting three days for a vehicle to provide their onward transit. They had set off from Bihac (BiH) together with five minors from Egypt, but the weather conditions had been very harsh, including severe snow, and the group of Egyptian minors had returned to BiH.

At 22:53 that evening, the remaining six people telephoned the Croatian police requesting assistance because the snowfall was strong, they had little provisions, and were too cold to sleep outside any longer. The respondent recorded the telephone conversation with the police operator which included audio in English (as the operator spoke to the transit group) and background audio in Croatian (as the operator relayed the information to officers). The transit group asked the officers to come to their position and help, giving the location at which they were staying. Meanwhile in Croatian the operator alerted other officials, stating:

***“We have some migrants on the line... They are on the road 52”***

In reply to the transit group, the operator told them:

***“the police come, stay on the road”***

The transit group walked down from the woods to the road area indicated. The respondent pinned the exact location as the coordinates, 44.768814, 15.651120.

The respondent estimates that they arrived to the road approximately 30 minutes after telephoning police (at approximately 23:23). Two police vehicles were already on the road when they arrived (unidentified patrol car, and a Skoda). Present with them were three officers. Two were described as “normal” Croatian police officers, while the other was dressed in a ski mask. The officers had an unmuzzled dog with them. The dog was described as a dusty dark colour with a black snout. Comparing it to a German Shepard, the respondent stated that the animal had slightly shorter hair (corresponding to the features of Belgian Malinois).

The transit group stated that they wished to make an asylum claim in Croatia. The police response was to swear at them, officers shouting “Kurac” (meaning penis). The officers ordered the transit group to lie on the ground. In the meantime it seemed that between the officers they were arguing about something in Croatian. Soon another seven/eight officers arrived on the scene with Croatian police vans. The respondent says they were mostly male, but included one female officer.

The transit group, who were lain out on the ground, were attacked by the dog. The officers urged the animal to jump all over them and bite them. Many of the transit group members reportedly received bites during this assault. The respondents injuries were the most serious, as the dogs jaw clamped around his leg and the animal mauled his upper calf, tearing the flesh and almost hitting a major blood vessel.

The respondent said he pleaded with the officers to stop the attack.

### **“Please, please, please”**

But the police urged the dog on and were laughing as it bit him. After it was finished they congratulated the animal, stating “dobro, dobro, good, good”. The officers also used their heavy boots to kick at the transit group on the ground, the respondent indicating how they kicked the men and minors in the head and back.

The respondent suggests that the group were held at this point for approximately three hours. During this time the police officers removed all their phones, money and valuables. The respondent was able to retain his phone because he states the officers were unwilling to search his trousers since he was covered in blood from the dog attack.

A further van was brought and the six transit people were loaded into the back. They left the above coordinates at approximately 02:30 on 3rd December 2019 and were driven in a stop start fashion to the BiH border. The respondent stated that the journey took around 1:30 hours, but included regular stops where the vehicle remained stationary.

At approximately 04:00, the van stopped and the transit group were unloaded at the Croatian border with BiH. The respondent was able to pin the exact location of this drop off point which led to the pushback as 44.830972, 15.764639. The respondent states that there were three or four officers present (drivers and accompanying officers). The police shone torchlights into the faces of the men as they disembarked the rear of the van. They were then ordered into BiH on a small road which had signs marking the border between the two countries. The transit group

found that they were on an old abandoned airfield which straddles the border with Croatia and BiH. The men and two minors had to walk back approximately 7km to reach shelter, which was extremely painful for the respondent due to his leg injury.

**[https://www.borderviolence.eu/wp-content/uploads/video\\_2019-12-22\\_11-39-10.mp4](https://www.borderviolence.eu/wp-content/uploads/video_2019-12-22_11-39-10.mp4)**

The respondent sought help from locals, who assisted him in accessing emergency care from the main hospital in Bihac (BiH). The wound on his leg was stitched, but he remained in severe pain up until the time of interviewing. Access to follow up healthcare was also denied, and the respondent had to seek assistance from a local clinic who could redress the wound (having been told by hospital staff that he could not be treated outside of emergency incidents).

**30/11/2019**

## **“TAKE A TAXI AND GO TO ITALY”**

**Date and time:** November 30, 2019 22:00

**Location:** Near Buhača, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.183882, 15.776195

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 23-25 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** kicking, pushing people to the ground, threatening with guns, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, police denigrating and laughing, police making bad jokes

**Police involved:** 2 male Croatian police officers with blue uniform and Croatian emblem; 1 male and 1 female police officers with black uniform and Croatian emblem, 1 police van; 2 male Croatian police officers with blue uniform, 1 police car; 2 male Croatian police officers with black uniform; 1 male and 1 female police officers with no uniform but belt with guns; 2 male police officers with black uniform, 1 police van; 2 Croatian border police, 1 van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** fingerprints taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of food/water, false information given

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondents, six men aged 23 – 25 from Morocco and Algeria, were in Grabovac (HR) when stopped by the Croatian police approximately 13:00 on 30th November 2019. Three of the transit group were stopped while walking towards the bus station by authorities whom they identified as two male Croatian police officers. The police officers were wearing blue uniforms with the Croatian emblem. The respondents were asked for passports and they answered “I don’t have”. The police officers told them “stay”.

At that point, the police called other two police officers who arrived with a police van and loaded the three respondents. These police officers were wearing black uniforms with the Croatian emblem and were one male and one female. The respondents report of a person informing police that the rest of their group was in an abandoned house. The respondents identify this person as the farmer who was working in the fields near the abandoned house. The police officers wearing black uniforms drove the van with the three respondents to the abandoned house. When arrived, the three respondents were unloaded from the van. One of them tried to escape and police forced him to sit down on the ground.

In the abandoned house were the other three respondents of the group. Also a police car with two male police officers wearing blue uniforms arrived at the house. The three respondents in the house tried to escape from police. A police officer shouted them “stop” threatening them with a gun. The respondents stopped.

The respondents were denied taking their belongings from the abandoned house. One respondents said “*this is my bag, may I take it*” and one of the police officers in blue uniform answered “no”. Police took the powerbank of one of the respondents and run over it with the van when outside of the abandoned house. Another respondent was taken the shoes, the scarf and the jacket. He claims that a police officer set fire to his scarf and threw the lighter into the fire to make it blow up. The respondent says that “it was very cold”. The respondents report the police officers telling them to warm up with the fire and laughing at them. The respondents were ordered to sit down on the street. A police officer in blue uniform asked to one of the respondents if he spoke English and the respondent answered “no”. After a while, the same police officer asked them in English how many people there were in their group and the same respondent answered. The police officer told him:

**“you do speaking English, why did you say you didn’t”.**

After this the police officer kicked the respondent twice, in the chest and in the face.

All the six respondents were driven in the police van to the police station. They were not told where they were going nor had phones because the police withheld them at the front of the vehicle. Neither could they see out of the windows. The respondents perceived the travel as 20/30 minutes long. From the indications of the respondents and pushback location, it can be suggested this was likely to have been Slunj police station (HR).

At the police station, the respondents claim that they were not brought to an office but to what they identify as a “garage”. There, the respondents asked for food and water but they were denied both. The police officers told them “go drink and eat in Bosnia”. The respondents went one by one to an office where they were taken the fingerprints. Two male police officers wearing black uniforms were in the garage and one male and one female police officers were in the office. The police officers in the office did not wear any uniform but had belts with guns. The respondents were taken fingerprints of both hands and all fingers.

Police told the transit group that after this process they could stay in Croatia without any problem. Actually, after their fingerprints were taken, the respondents were told “go to Bosnia”. The respondents refer to police making jokes about them, telling:

### *“take a taxi and go to Italy”*

At which point the officers laughed at the transit group. No official translator was provided to the respondents. The respondents claim that they asked for asylum but were ignored by police. The respondents were forced to quickly sign documents they actually had no time to read. The respondents did not know what was the content of the documents. The documents were both written in English and Arabic. One police officer told the respondents “be quick, I want to go back home”.

The respondents were loaded in a police van and were driven to the border to Bosnia-Herzegovina (approximate coordinates 45.183882,15.776195). Two male police officers wearing black uniforms were in the van. The respondents could not see outside of the windows nor had phones with them. The respondents claim that at the border (where they arrived at approximately 22:00) there was a van which they identified as Croatian border police, with two police officers sitting inside. The respondents did not speak with them. The respondents were told “you are in Kladusa, go to Kladusa”.

From that point, the respondents walked in the fields for roughly half an hour to go back to the town of Velika Kladusa (BiH). The respondents crossed by foot over a small river with water reaching their ankles in order to return.

**28/11/2019**

## **““THE POLICE THOUGHT HE WAS ACTING...HOW CAN YOU ACT FALLING ON YOUR HEAD?””**

**Date and time:** November 28, 2019 19:00

**Location:** Sturlic, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 45.064912665401536, 15.747123456347708

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 30 person(s), age: 19, 27, 31, 47 , from: Palestine, Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 1 white Croatian police van, 2 male Croatian police officers in navy blue uniforms; 8 male Croatian police officers in navy blue uniforms; 1 white Croatian police van, 3 male officers in black uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 16th November 2019, the respondent and a group of three others left Bihac (BiH) and walked through the woodland of the Croatian interior for eleven days. Twenty kilometers before the Slovenian border, the group had run out of food and supplies, so they decided to walk into a town – Delnice, Croatia. Describing the moment, the respondent shared:

*“We gave up, we had no food and we had no map, so we gave up”.*

At 09:00 on the 28th November 2019, one white Croatian police van with two male Croatian police officers in navy blue uniforms apprehended the group in transit. The officers asked if the group in transit had phones or weapons – the group said no and they were put inside the police van. It is suggested from the respondents indications that the group was apprehended at this location – 45.402834, 14.805374. They drove for up to ten minutes to the local police station – 9QXX+6W Delnice, Chorwacja.

At the police station there were eight male Croatian police officers – four standing outside and four inside. The respondent shared how he thought two officers outside were kind, but the other two were mean. He stated:

*“they were not nice, they said hurry up, hurry up...they pushed us and put us in jail”.*

The officers outside did thorough body searches on all groups, and confiscated one power-bank. The transit group were put inside a room which resembled a shipping container, with one small square window on the ceiling; inside there were already seven male Palestinians and one man from Syria. The group waited for two and a half hours in this room.

Around 12:00, the officers attempted to transfer the group in transit into a van, but while attempting to climb into the van, a Palestinian man had a seizure, fell to the ground and hit his head. The group in transit begged the officers to help them as the man was not moving, but the officers just stood back and watched for five minutes:

***“they just stood and watched like nothing happened. I was shocked, I didn’t know the man but I was shocked. He is a human-being and he fell on his head and he shocked me...but the police thought he was acting...how can you act falling on your head? I was shocked.”***

After 10 -15 minutes an ambulance came for the injured man, and the rest of the group was taken back into the police station to wait for him to get back from the hospital. While waiting, another two groups were brought into the station and put in the same room as everyone else – one group with 6 Algerians and the other with eleven Afghans. The Algerian group told the respondent that one of their friends had had a seizure in the forest, so they ran into town (Delnice) and found the police to help their friend. There, the group was apprehended and their friend was taken to the same hospital as the man from Palestine.

Around 17:30, the men returned from the hospital and the officers asked the group to nominate an english translator (a person in transit to translate for the group). The respondent went with the officers and the two men who had returned from the hospital, and was forced to translate questions from the officers. The officers recorded the personal details of the men who had been to the hospital, made them sign a document (translated by the respondent) and took their picture. They also asked a range of questions regarding the route which the men had taken from their home countries, and their travel history since leaving. The document signed verified that the personal details of the two persons in question were correct. The officer began to lie:

***“We will bring you to the camp...but they were lying... there is no way into camp in Croatia”.***

After this self translated interview (roughly 30 minutes) all people in the police station were transferred into one white Croatian police van. Before getting into the van, each person was searched extremely thoroughly by police:

***“they confiscated everything...a Palestinian man was pleading ‘Gaza no money, please my friend, Gaza no money, please my friend’, but the officer told him shut up, shut up”.***

In total the officers took around €1,300, and all remaining telephones and power-banks. It was extremely cramped in the van, with roughly 30 people in the back, some standing and some sitting. Three male Croatian officers in black uniform and ski masks drove the group for 45 minutes to a border town near Sturlic (BiH), arriving around 19:00. One-by-one, each person inside the van was taken outside, beaten by the three officers in black with batons, their fists, and kicking, and then told to:

***“GO, GO, GO BOSNIA”***

Each individual spent a different amount of time being beaten. The respondent was only hit three times, however some people were hit 10-20-30 times. Describing the incident, the respondent shared:

***“I can’t understand how they chose this...I received three hits, but some guys received ten hits, twenty hits and more”.***

After crossing the border into BiH, the respondent and his group made a fire and spent the night in the forest because they did not know where they were. At around 08:00 the next morning (29th November 2019), they walked roughly nine hours (25km) back to Velika Kladusa (BiH), arriving at 16:00. The respondent said they took so long to get back to the town because they were lost in the forest and then were so tired from being on foot for +15 days.

**27/11/2019**

**“I AM SWIMMING BECAUSE THE WATER IS HERE ON ME (POINTS TO CHIN) BUT I HAD TO TURN BACK”**

**Date and time:** November 27, 2019 02:30

**Location:** Donje Jame, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.424728, 16.105709

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 17 person(s), age: 19, 23, 25 , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian officers in black/navy blue uniforms; 7 Croatian police in all black uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On 27th November 2019 a group of three men in transit, one from Pakistan and two from Afghanistan, were apprehended at approximately 02.30 in Donje Jame (HR). The group was originally traveling with 23 others in transit but at the river some decided to separate because not everyone could swim. Describing the depth, the respondent said:

***“I am swimming because the water is here on me (points to chin) but I had to turn back,”***

The respondent had to swim back, exited the river on the same side that he entered and he and two friends decided to return the direction they had come.

They were stopped by Croatian authorities in black and navy blue uniforms. One officer fired a pistol and yelled, “Stop.” The three men in transit, ages 19, 23, 25, were apprehended and brought from the location to a Croatian police station.

At the station one officer took photos of the men’s faces. They were not asked to sign documents. There was no translator but the respondent did express intent for asylum to one officer. The group was detained for about one hour. From the station they were transported in a white Croatian police van with no windows in the rear with fourteen other individuals from different groups in transit. Referring to the overcrowding in the police van, the respondent stated, “It felt like 40 of us.” The respondent also noted reckless driving and feeling nauseous. One member of the group vomited in the van and continued to feel sick into the next day, resulting in him going to the hospital.

The group was pushed back to the HR/BiH border at a time when it was still mostly dark. The respondent estimates that it was approximately 04.30. When the Croatian police van stopped the group was forced to exit the vehicle one by one and to walk through two lines consisting of a total of seven Croatian officers in all black uniforms. As the respondent exited he was beaten by each officer who hit him and the others with their batons and then passed them down the line. The respondent describes the officers as taking turns beating the individuals. The group was forced to remove their jackets which were taken and then burnt along with other personal belongings.

**25/11/2019**

## **“THE POLICE OFFICER BEGAN FIRING HIS GUN IN THE AIR”**

**Date and time:** November 25, 2019 00:00

**Location:** HR border close to Sturlic (BiH)

**Coordinates:** 45.04615651633449, 15.750496218932767

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: Respondent was 30 years old (eight other adults) , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, gunshots, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 22 Croatian authorities, several patrol cars, and three vans

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent, a 30 year old man from Pakistan, along with eight other Pakistani men had been in the Croatian interior for several days. On the 25th November 2019 they decided to stop a car on the motorway 1 and ask the driver to call the police. They could not carry on their journey through lack of provisions and the conditions in the woods and were requesting be returned to BiH. Describing their actions at this point the respondent said:

***“coming to the road, stop taxi [member of the public in a vehicle], ‘send me Bihac”***

The driver of the vehicle called the police, who arrived after 20 minutes in several cars. The respondent stated his surprise, that even after voluntarily contacting the authorities, on arrival one of the police officer began firing his gun in the air and shouting at them to lie down. They were surrounded by seven officers, who ordered the transit group to lie face down on the ground.

The officers proceeded to stamp on the back of the men’s necks with their heavy boots. The respondent explains how he was injured on the hand in the same process, as the police kicked them in this position on the floor.

They were held by the roadside while a further eleven officers arrived in three vans described as “combi, [like] this box”. The respondent and the rest of the transit group were forced to give their hats, jackets and shoes which were burnt on the roadside by the officers. The police used a canister of car fuel to light the possessions. The respondent who has issues with his sight and requires glasses, had his spectacles removed by the police and crushed with an officers boot.

Referring to the ordeal, the respondent stated his confusion at the police violence:

***“Why fight, I am a farmer”***

The officers used batons to beat the group of nine before they were loaded into the three vans. Describing the use of the batons the respondent said:

***“inside is steel, outside is plastic” and “big problem police for fighting”.***

The transit group were driven for approximately 30 minutes, arriving at a rural border spot which the respondent suggested was south of Sturlic (recognised from the route the group found walking back to Cazin BiH). At the border, four police officers were present as the transit group were unloaded from the van. It was now the evening of the 25th November 2019 and very dark. The transit group were placed at a very steep hill on the border with BiH and the Croatian authorities pointed a torchlight, the respondent recalling how he was told by the officers, “go downside” as he was ordered to climb down the hill into BiH territory.

The group then walked back to Cazin in the dark and the respondent was treated in the hospital for a fracture to his hand. The injury was still causing him severe pain at the time of interview, three days after the pushback.

**22/11/2019**

**“I KNOW WHERE MY BROTHER IS BUT I AM SCARED TO TELL THEM”**

**Date and time:** November 22, 2019 16:30

**Location:** Kastav, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.374015, 14.348382

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 27 person(s), age: 16, 20 , from: Pakistan, Syria, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian regular police in navy blue uniforms, 1 Croatian police vehicle; 8/9 Croatian police in black uniforms and ski masks, 1 Croatian police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken, no translator present, altering of personal information

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

**ORIGINAL REPORT**

On 22nd November 2019 at 16.30 two young Algerian males, ages 16 and 20, were apprehended in Kastav (HR). They were part of a larger transit group that had walked for twelve consecutive days. The two people, separated from the group to enter town to buy food, which they had not been able to do since seven days prior.

The local stores were closed so the respondent approached a private home and knocked on their door to ask for food. The homeowner answered and asked the 2 people to wait outside. The respondent could see that the man was making a phone call and he later inferred that he was calling the police. The homeowner returned with bread, butter, and milk. They were speaking outside of the home when two Croatian regular police in navy blue uniforms and one Croatian police car appeared at the site.

One officer asked the respondent, “Where is the rest of your group?” The respondent stated that they were the only two traveling together.

**“I know where my brother is but I am scared to tell them.”**

The rest of the group in transit, including the respondent’s younger brother, was sleeping at an undisclosed location nearby but the respondent refused to give information about the others in his group because he feared something bad would happen to them. Consequently, the respondent was separated from his younger brother who is a minor and they have not been reunited since.

The respondent was taken to the police station in Rijeka (HR). At the police station the respondent was asked for his personal information and when asked for his age he said, “I am 17.” The Croatian officer responded, “You are not a minor.” The respondent expressed intent for asylum but was told no. They were detained at the police station for three hours.

At about 20.00 (22nd November 2019) the group was transported in one Croatian police van allegedly with 25 people who were mostly from Syria and Pakistan. The group was pushed back to a wooded location about five kilometers from Velika Kladuša at approximately 23.00. Eight or nine Croatian police in black uniforms formed two lines to create a tunnel at the rear door of the police van. Officers ordered the respondent to exit the van and all individuals were beaten with batons as they exited. All persons on the move were forced to remove their shoes and jackets and officers then confiscated their bags. Clothed, the transit group were then ordered back into BiH.

**21/11/2019**

**“DON’T COME BACK TO CROATIA, MOTHERFUCKER”**

**Date and time:** November 21, 2019 02:30

**Location:** Tovarnik train station

**Coordinates:** 45.115349064883716, 19.074942298926317

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 40 person(s), age: 5-48 , from: Syria, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, reckless driving, pulled by hair

**Police involved:** 12 Croatian police officers, 1 police van (Fiat Ducato)

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken, no translator present, videoed

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

In the early hours of Tuesday 21st November 2019 a transit group of four men were apprehended by police at Tovarnik train station (HR). Hidden in a freight carriage of a train loaded with sand, they were detected by Croatian border officials at around 02:30. The two officers scouring the trailer were quick to remove the four transit people and bring them outside.

One of respondents recalled how they were located in a hollow in the sand and as they tried to exit, one of the group members was pulled out by his hair by one officer. The offending officer then delivered two fist punches to the respondents head, the officer shouting “*pičku mater*”, as the respondent was not deemed to be emerging from the sand quick enough. Outside the train the four group members found another five Croatian officers awaiting them. They were guarding more people-in-transit who appeared to have been apprehended from different trailers. Among them was a five/six year old boy with his father.

The four respondents, together with everybody else, had to sit down on the cold ground, and the officers withdrew more people from the carriages where they were concealed. Sitting and waiting, they had their information taken by the officers, such as names and nationality. This was done by a female officer, noting the details on a clipboard. The respondent could not assess the exact amount of people-on-the-move that were being held beside the tracks, but guessed it to be over 40 people.

No more violence was used around the train station. The respondent suggested this was the case because a camera unit was filming the whole process. While the apprehension was going on, a single police van identified as a white windowless Fiat Ducato was making trips to transport the 40+ people away. After around 30 minutes waiting aside the train, the group of four original respondents were loaded into this van, together with another fifteen people. Among them was the young boy and his father. It followed a torturous ride of approximately ten minutes. This was described by the respondents as the worst part of their experience. The driver sped and abruptly broke while driving the vehicle.

Over the course of the trip the driver sharply turned along the roads. The people in the back, sitting in complete darkness and not seat belted during the ride, fell over one another and hit the walls (without any protection).

***“Like a balloon. We were flying through [the van]. Left, Right, Left, Right.”***

When the transport finally came to an end, the van backed up until it stood still. When the backdoor was opened, the respondents saw a group of five further police officers standing in two lanes. Among them one “*big, fat guy*”. The nineteen people contained in the van were

unloaded and had to walk through two rows of officers (aligned in a tunnel formation) directing the way towards Serbia. The big officer was in charge of kicking the passing-byers. Managing to land strong kicks to one of the respondent's belly and thigh area, he shouted as he kicked:

***“Don't come back to Croatia, motherfucker”***

The group were pushed back into Serbia at approximately 04:00. Being insulted and beaten, the group gathered at the other side of the border and started making their way back to the town of Sid. After a 2.5 hour walk, they eventually reached their destination at approximately 06:30, 21st November 2019.

**14/11/2019**

## **“THEY TOOK EVERYTHING, INCLUDING MY MEDICINE”**

**Date and time:** November 14, 2019 20:00

**Location:** Srednje Prilišće, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.467346, 15.368886

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 20-27 , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian intervention police in dark blue uniforms, 1 Croatian police van, 8 Croatian police in black uniforms, 1 with ski mask

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On 14th November 2019 a group of four men from Syria were stopped at 06.00 near a road in Srednje Prilišće (HR). The group in transit was apprehended by two Croatian intervention police in dark blue uniforms. The group was transported in one Croatian police van to a police station in Karlovac (HR).

At the station the respondent was given documents to sign. There was no translation for the text but the document asked for the respondent's name and family name. The respondents were given a small board with a number written on it which they were required to hold as a Croatian officer took photos of them individually. The group was detained for about twelve hours.

The group was transported in one Croatian police van with no windows in the rear. The vehicle stopped close to the HR/BiH border and 4-5 km from Kladuša. All mobile devices were confiscated and withheld at the front of the police vehicle. The respondent did not have his cell phone to check maps but estimates the push back location to be in Pašin Potok (HR). At approximately 20.00 the group was forced to exit the van.

***“They threw us at night and remove my shoes and beat me.”***

Eight Croatian police in black uniforms forced the respondents to undress and remove his shoes. The group’s personal belongings including mobiles, power banks, and bags were confiscated and then burnt in a fire. “They took everything, including my medicine,” the respondent noted. The respondents were beaten with batons on their backs, shoulders, arms, and legs.

***“Of course they are more violent than any (other) time.”***

The respondent noted that the Croatian officers beat the group using their fists, batons, and by kicking. While the respondent was being beaten one officer wearing a ski mask screamed, “Don’t stay here! Go back to Bosnia!” The group was then forced to walk across the border back into Bosnia.

**14/11/2019**

**“THE OFFICER SPECIFICALLY TARGETED THE SOLES OF HIS FEET AND HIS TOES, SMASHING THEM OVER AND OVER AGAIN.”**

**Date and time:** November 14, 2019 18:00

**Location:** Croatia, east of Karlovac

**Coordinates:** 45.21338068641331, 15.932643047738338

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: 20-28 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian Specialnja officers, 2 Temelnja officers, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On Tuesday the 5th of November 2019 a group of nine people crossed the border of Croatia from Petrinja, Bosnia. They made their way on foot walking for nine days through the hilly terrain of Croatia, heading north-west in the direction Slovenia.

On the evening of November 14<sup>th</sup>, around 18:00, the men were passing a narrow valley, somewhere in the Karlovac county. When they had to cross a section the road, they were confronted by two Croatian authorities described as “*commando*” units, because of the olive uniforms and balaclavas identified by the respondent (coherent with dress of Croatian Special Police). The officers were holding a dog on a leash. Upon apprehension by the two officers, the respondent turned to see a further officer of the same description (with another dog) approaching from behind.

The officers held the dogs on long leashes, and also held what was described as electric tasers which they threatened the transit group with. The officers told them to lay on the ground, face down, with their hands behind their heads. The respondent said the earth was very cold. While in this position on the ground, the respondent asserts that one officer used his mobile phone and made a call.

For the next hour the group was kept in this position lying on the ground, and were not able to move. The officers occasionally kicked the transit group and were laughing over the mens reactions. A white windowless van driven by a single person arrived. The nine men were quickly ordered to enter the caged back of the vehicle. The ride that took them to a nearby police station, lasting 15 minutes. They were taken inside, and the whole group was detained in a small detention room of around 2x2 meter.

When waiting for further procession, the group asked for water, or if they were allowed to eat the food they were carrying in their bags. Both requests were denied by the guards. They were kept in the cell for approximately 10 minutes, and then ordered out, one at a time to follow two officers into another room next to the detention area.

In this room the police conducted a brief collection of the groups data such as name, surname, nationality and age. The respondent stated that it was at this time, just before getting searched, that he asked the officers for asylum. Shaking their heads, the officer replied:

***“No Asylum for you”.***

No translator was present to explain the situation. The respondent was then relieved of his belongings. His backpack holding clothing and small rations of food, a mobile phone, a power bank, as well as the amounts of 150 EURO and 170 KUNA. All the confiscated items were noted down on a sheet of paper and put in a big plastic bag – that bag and note would later be handed to the driver that transported them to their push-back location.

The respondent was then ordered into the back of the same van, awaiting the other members of his group to join. After around 45 minutes. When the group of nine was completely loaded, the van set of on a journey that lasts around 1:30 hours, ending at the border of Croatia with BiH.

At the border one by one the group was ordered out of the van. When it was the respondents turn, he descended the vehicle, finding himself surrounded by five officers of the same appearance as the three that had initially apprehended the group.

He was shouted at, but the words he could not understand given they were in local language. He was struck in the head by the fist of one of the officers present and then ordered to remove his shoes. Then he had to undress to his under clothes. He was left in only underwear (thermal leggings) and a long-sleeved shirt. One of the bigger officers was wielding a long metal stick, described *“like a baseball bat”*. After receiving multiple painful swings to his knees and thighs, two officers grabbed the respondent, holding his arms behind his back. His legs were then stretched on the ground and battered with blows from the *“baseball bat”*. The officer specifically targeted the soles of his feet and his toes, smashing them over and over again. The entire incident lasted approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

The respondent, in severe pain and hardly able to walk was then pushed down the hill that the van had parked on, with the words:

### *“Go Kladusa”*

This ejection occurred on the late evening of 14th November 2019. The respondent stumbled down the dark forest slope until he reached a little creek, leading him to a dirt road. Not knowing where he or anyone else of his group was, he spent the night at the side of that road. Waking up the next day, still in pain and freezing, he followed the sound of cars nearby until he met a farmer. Asking the farmer about the way to Velika Kladusa (BiH), he was pointed in the direction and limp his way to the town.

12/11/2019

## “THE GROUP WAS BEATEN AND THREATENED IN CROATIA AND THEN AGAIN IN BOSNIA”

**Date and time:** November 12, 2019 22:00

**Location:** Dobrenići, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.348475, 15.407517

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 17, 21, 26, 30, 34 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian regular police, 1 Croatian police van, 7 Croatian police in black uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On 12th November 2019 a group of five men from Morocco were apprehended in Dobrenići, Croatia at 18.00. There were three Croatian regular police, and when the group separated in an attempt to run away, the officers also separated and pursued the group on foot. One member of the group ran away from the officers and entered a church. He sat down in the church in a prayer position and police followed him inside and escorted him outside.

All members of the group were transported in a white Croatian police van with no windows in the rear. They were brought to a police station and entered through a back exit. They did not see street signs and are unsure of the exact location because their phones were confiscated by police and held at the front of the van. At the station they were denied food and water. They were not given documents to sign. They were detained for about two hours.

At approximately 20:00 the group was transported from the police station in a white Croatian police van with no windows. The respondent notes that the driver made wide turns and reckless driving caused them to feel nauseous. At approximately 22.00 the van stopped and the group was forced to exit. Seven Croatian police in black uniforms searched their pockets and confiscated mobile devices and money. Officers forced the respondents to undress by taking off their jackets and removing their shoes. The officers beat the group with batons on their knees and shins. Some of the men were also hit on their faces. One member of the group had visible marks along his nose and close to his eye.

The officers kicked them as they told them to:

*"Go back to Bosnia."*

After being pushed back into Bosnia the group walked back to Velika Kladuša and found an abandoned home to sleep in. While they were sleeping four men entered the house by kicking the door open. Inside the house one man fired a pistol and another man fired a shotgun from outside the house. The respondents jumped out of the second story window (suggested to be about five meters from the ground). One member of the group injured his ankle. When they jumped out of the window the group left the remainder of their belongings inside. The men who entered the house confiscated their bags.

**12/11/2019**

## **"WEARING ONLY BOXERS THEY WERE PUSHED INTO RIVER WATER UP TO THEIR WAISTS"**

**Date and time:** November 12, 2019 18:00

**Location:** Vojnović Brdo, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.26393, 15.604234

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 20, 21, 34 , from: Syria, Yemen

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian regular police in light blue uniform shirts and navy blue pants, 1 Croatian police van, 3 Croatian officers in black uniforms with ski masks (1 in ski mask)

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On 12th November 2019 at 15.00 a group of three men in transit from Yemen and Syria were apprehended by three Croatian police in light blue uniform shirts and navy blue pants in Vojnović Brdo (HR). One officer fired a pistol up into the air and shouted, "Stop!" The group stopped and was put into a Croatian police van with no windows in the rear. Previously, when the group was walking in the woods the respondent noticed a camera positioned at eye level in a tree. He believes the camera took a photo of them as they walked past, possibly triggered by a motion sensor. Referring to the group being spotted and stopped the respondent said,

***"Regular people and tourists are no problem, but they are same as me, a man."***

They were transported to a police station. At the station two Croatian officers (dressed in clothes matching intervention police) confiscated the respondent's phone and opened the application Maps Me. One officer looked at the locations pinned on the application while a second officer wrote information in a notebook. The group was asked to show their identification documents. They were detained for about two hours and denied food and water. There was no translator present.

At approximately 18.00 the group was transported in a white Croatian police van with no windows in the rear. The van stopped at the HR/BiH border and based on signs stating the distance to Bihać and the amount of time the group spent walking back to Velika Kladuša, the respondent assumes they were pushed back to Tržac (BiH).

Outside of the van three Croatian police in black uniforms yelled at the respondents to walk forward and then one officer who was wearing a ski mask beat them with batons. The officers searched their pockets and confiscated their three mobile phones, one power bank, and money. Their three bags, clothing, and shoes were removed and destroyed in a fire. The respondent was also wearing a hat which was forcibly removed and thrown into the fire. Wearing only boxers, the respondents were pushed into river water which was up to their shoulders by the special police officer wearing a ski mask.

While conducting the report the respondent requested, *“Write in your report that we will try and try again”*.

10/11/2019

## “HOW CAN YOU BEAT ME WHEN MY HAND IS ALREADY BLEEDING?”

**Date and time:** November 10, 2019 13:00

**Location:** Pribanjci (HR)

**Coordinates:** 45.45597, 15.249058

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 21 person(s), age: respondent was 24 years old , from: Western Sahara

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 1 Slovenian border officer and 1 Croatian border officer; 1 Croatian police van and 1 Croatian ambulance; 6 Croatian police in black uniforms and ski masks

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On 10th November 2019 the respondent was attempting to cross the border from Croatia to Slovenia with a group of five men from Western Sahara and Morocco when the respondent was separated from the group. The respondent, a 24 year old male from Western Sahara, was individually apprehended by the police when he requested medical care at about 13.00 that day. The respondent assumed there would be police or border authorities at the SLO/HR border on the bridge connecting Sečje Selo (SLO) and Pribanjci (HR). Therefore he approached this crossing to seek assistance.

At the location there was one Slovenian border officer in a blue uniform and one Croatian border officer in a navy blue uniform. The respondent approached the two authorities and said:

*“Look at my hand, please help me.”*

He showed the officers a large open wound on his left hand which was bleeding. In response the Croatian border officer asked:

*“Where is your group, where did they cross?”*

The respondent told the officer he was by himself and needed medical attention. The Croatian border officer then called for more Croatian police to arrive and for medical staff to transport the respondent in a Croatian police van. The male Croatian officer driving protested against taking the respondent to the hospital but the female emergency medical responder insisted it was necessary. At 14.00 the respondent was transported via ambulance to a hospital in Karlovac (HR). Someone from the hospital staff cleaned the wound on his hand and wrapped it in gauze. According to a document from the hospital, the respondent was diagnosed with:

***“swelling and inflammation of the right fist with less laceration of the third finger of the right fist.”***

At about 15.00 the respondent was transported from the hospital in a Croatian police vehicle to Karlovac (HR). Allegedly, the van stopped at the police station but the respondent was not brought inside and was instead detained in the police van for approximately four hours until 19.00. The respondent reports that about 20 people on the move (from other groups in transit) were loaded into the police van and then they were transported to the HR/ BiH border.

The van drove the respondent for about one hour. Six Croatian police in black uniforms and ski masks ordered the group outside of the van and then searched their pockets. Phones, money, and power banks were confiscated. The respondent pinned the push back location on his phone and claims they were in the woods within the Velika Kladusa municipality at 45.137198, 15.786798, inside of BiH territory. One Croatian officer took about 20 euros from the respondent’s pocket. The individuals were then forced to remove their shoes and jackets. The police beat the respondent and the others at the pushback site with batons and fists.

***“How can you beat me when my hand is already bleeding? My friend please stop.”***

The respondent said referring to his injured hand which the officer was further damaging as he beat him.

***“I am not your friend,” the officer responded.***

The Croatian officers continued to beat the respondent on his hands, arms, and back, before leaving them in the woods.

10/11/2019

## ““WE DEMAND ‘ASLY’, THEY SAY YES YES YES...AND THEN NOTHING””

**Date and time:** November 10, 2019 03:00

**Location:** near bridge over Glina, Poljana (HR)

**Coordinates:** 45.2248849, 15.9240727

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 24, 24 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, pepper spray, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 1 male Croatian police officer in light blue uniform; 1 Croatian police van, 2 male Croatian police officers; 2 male Croatian police officer in dark blue uniform, 3 male Croatian police officers in light blue uniform; 2 Croatian police vans, 2 male Croatian police officers in light blue uniform, 4 male officers in black uniform and ski masks, 1 male Croatian police officer in navy blue uniform.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondents walked from Velika Kladusa (BiH) to Zagreb (22nd – 27th October 2019). They then spent 12 days in Zagreb, sleeping in the bus and train stations. At 13:00 on 9th November 2019, the respondents were apprehended by one male Croatian police officer in a light blue uniform at Zagreb bus station (RX3V+G6 Zagreb, Kroatien). The officer said:

*“Come here, paper, naema paper”*

The respondent stating:

*“I don’t have”*

The officer made a phone call and the respondents were arrested and put into one white Croatian police van with two Croatian police officers inside. The van drove erratically for one hour (swerving left and right) and the officers turned up the aircon full-blast. Both respondents were sick and vomited in the van.

At 14:00 they arrived at the police station. There were five male Croatian police officers, two in navy blue uniform and three in light blue uniform. One officer told the two men in transit:

***“Sit down, sit down, sit down”***

Describing the conditions in which they were held the respondent stated there was:

***“no food, no cigar, no water, no nothing...we drink water in toilet”.***

The police officers put the respondents in a small cell and said “yes” when they asked for asylum, food, and water, but nothing happened:

***“we demand ‘asly’, they say ‘yes yes yes’...and then nothing”.***

The police officers laughed and made fun of the respondents. The respondents spent eleven hours in the police station.

At 01:00 on 10th November 2019, the respondents were put into one white Croatian police van with two male Croatian police officers in light blue uniform. En route, the officers made a phone call which the respondents thought was saying:

***“we have migrant...ok ok ok”***

They drove two hours to the border, arriving at a location near Glinica at around 03:00 (45.2248849,15.9240727). There were four male Croatian officers (with armbands) in black uniforms and ski masks, one male Croatian police officer, and one van waiting for them at the bridge near the border. The officers made a fire and put all of their clothes (except for underwear), shoes, telephones and power-banks inside. The officers stood in a long line 10-20 meters apart, and made the respondents walk along this line past each of them beating them with batons (all over their bodies) and one officer pepper spraying their eyes. The officers then forced the group in transit across a bridge yelling:

***“GO, GO, GO BOSNIA”***

The bridge had lots of holes in it and was described by the respondent:

***“it was dangerous”***

In Glinica, locals gave the respondents bread, water and some clothes:

## *“all Bosnia on border, good people”*

The respondents then walked 30 km (five hours) back to Velika Kladusa (BiH), arriving back at 06:00 on 10th November 2019.

05/11/2019

**““I ASKED THEM FOR ‘ASYL’, AND THE CHIEF, HE SAID YES...THEN HE DEPORTEDED ME”. ”**

**Date and time:** November 5, 2019 13:20

**Location:** Korana river close to Trzac, BiH

**Coordinates:** 44.995806, 15.78467

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 14 person(s), age: 30-35 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria, Egypt

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, water immersion, threatening with guns, gunshots, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 1 Croatian police van, 3 male Croatian police officers in navy blue uniform; 1 Croatian police van, 2 male Croatian police officers in navy blue uniform; 10-15 male Croatian police officers in navy blue uniform

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

At 13:20 on the 5th November 2019, three Croatian male police officers in navy blue uniforms apprehended the respondent and his group of five in the woods near the E71 highway at the give location – 45.092357, 15.223627 – near the motorway tunnel of Mala Kapela in the north of Lika-Senj County (HR). The group consisted of two Algerians and three Moroccans aged between 30-35 years old.

One officer fired his gun in the air once and then told the respondent that they had seen the group on their cameras in the woods. The officer who appeared to be in charge asked the group:

*“where are you from...how long have you been here...do you have any weapons”*

The officers searched their backpacks and confiscated all of their phones and power-banks. The officer in charge kept saying that he was the chief and that he would take the respondent to Zagreb:

***“I asked them for ‘asyl’, and the Chief, he said yes...then he deported me”***

After 20 minutes (at 13:40), the group in transit was loaded into a white Croatian police van (volkswagen Crafter) and driven away. The vehicle made a stop after 20-30 minutes to pick up another two groups in transit – seven Egyptians in one group, two Algerians in the other. The van drove for another 30 minutes to a police station in a “small town”. The van drove very fast and erratically (swerving left and right, stamping on breaks at random) and had the aircon turned up to the maximum. From the respondents statements it seems the group in transit was taken to police station: Ul. Bernardina Frankopana 19, 47300, Ogulin, Chorwacja.

At 14:30, the respondent and the other people held in the van (14 in total) were put into a small room (described to be not a cell) in the police station. The room was described as such:

***“the room...it was so dirty”***

There were lots of police officers in uniform at the police station. The group was allowed to eat and drink the supplies in their backpacks, and were allowed to use the bathroom. There were no procedures for asylum in the police station, the respondent stating:

***“no procedure...no procedure...no paper, no picture, no talking, no nothing...we were always asking for ‘asyl’ and he said ok ok...yeah yeah ok ok no problem...and then at midnight we were taken to the river”***

The respondent spent around 5-6 hours in the police station, from 14:30 until 19:30/20:30 (5th November).

Around 19:30/20:30, the respondent and 13 other people were loaded into a white Croatian police van by 2 Croatian police officers. They drove for 4 hours, stopping and starting a lot:

***“driving and stop after 20 minutes...driving and stop after 10 minutes...I don’t know why”***

At 00:00 on 6th November, the van arrived at the BiH border next to the Korana river close to Trzac, where there were around 10-15 Croatian officers in navy blue uniforms waiting with a fire ready. Describing their treatment, the respondent shared how:

***“they took our bags, they took our sleeping bags, tents, jackets and food, and put them in the fire”***

The location of the push-back was close the convergence of two rivers (Korana/Mutnica) at 44.995806, 15.784670. The police forced the group into the river, pushing them along a small dam that ran across the water and yelling:

***“GO, GO BOSNIA”***

***“it was so dangerous...if you fell, you are dead...the river was so strong and it was so dark”***

The group were in the middle of the river, following the wall which you could walk along, but was submerged under the water by which reached up to the peoples ankles. The respondent and his group crossed the first river and after 20-40 meters there was another stretch of the river which they could not cross because it was too dark and dangerous, and had to stop a night on the island separated by the water.

***“so we slept there, waiting for the morning to cross the second river...you can’t see anything and it was really cold”.***

At 06:00 on 6th November 2019 the respondent and his group crossed the 2nd river (via a fallen tree) – entering BiH territory. They then walked one hour along the river (near main road R403b) to reach Sturlic (BiH). The respondent then caught a bus from Sturlic to Velika Kladusa, but some members of his group had to walk because they had no money. Some members of the group had to go to the doctor in Miral camp because they were so cold from the river.

**03/11/2019**

**“YOU SAY NOTHING. YOU STAY QUIET.”**

**Date and time:** November 3, 2019 01:00

**Location:** Gorači, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.605835, 14.607686

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 19-28 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, water immersion, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian regular police in blue uniforms, 8 Croatian police in black uniforms and ski masks, 2 Croatian police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On 2nd November 2019 at 10.00 a group of ten men in transit from Algeria and Morocco were apprehended in Gorači (HR) by two Croatian regular police in blue uniforms. The group in transit had stopped to get water and cola at a store. The respondent was feeding a stray dog and when a Croatian officer approached the group and began to kick the dog in the neck repeatedly. The respondent and several others in the group yelled for the officer to stop. The officer stated,

***“You say nothing. You stay quiet.”***

The group was apprehended and then transported in a Croatian police van to a police station in Rijeka (HR) and detained for several hours. They were not given documents to sign. They were denied food and water.

At about 13:00 the group was pushed back to the HR/BiH border close to Šturlić. There were eight Croatian police in black uniforms, several of which were wearing ski masks. The officers beat the respondents with batons and with their fists. They searched the group’s pockets and removed all nine phones and several power banks which were hit and broken using batons. One respondent had 20 euros in his pocket which were stolen. The group was forced to remove their socks and shoes which were burnt in a large fire. Croatian police then stood behind the individuals and created a barrier to prevent them from walking away from the river. The respondent was forced to walk through the river.

***“The water was up to my waist,” he said.***

This use of the river resulted in the respondent’s clothing to be noticeably wet and cold until late that evening, and still damp when the report was conducted.

The respondent walked for three hours to Velika Kladuša with no shoes.

**02/11/2019**

**““EVERY TIME WE WENT TO ASK FOR ASYLUM THEY BEAT US. SO WE NEVER SAID IT.””**

**Date and time:** November 2, 2019 21:00

**Location:** BiH/HR border near Hadzin Potok

**Coordinates:** 45.067754630568984, 15.753971171505668

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 21 person(s), age: 23, 24, 24, 24, 24 years old (initial group) , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, pepper spray, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian police vans, 6 male and 1 female Croatian officers in black uniforms with ski masks, 1 male Croatian police officer in a blue uniform with stars on the shoulder; 2 Croatian officers in grey uniform; 1 Croatian police van, 2 male Croatian Police in black uniforms with ski masks

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

At 04:00 on the 2nd November 2019, two Croatian police vans apprehended a group of five men in transit – all were males from Morocco, aged 23, 24, 24, 24, and 24. Seven male and one female Croatian officers in black uniforms with ski masks and one Croatian police officer in a blue uniform with stars on his shoulder, caught the group at this location: 45.308814, 14.74816.

When the group in transit tried to request asylum, the officers yelled at them and hit them with batons, saying:

***“sit down, sit down”***

The Croatian police officer in blue uniform asked questions like:

***“where are you from, why are you coming here, do you have a knife?”***

But when the group in transit tried to respond, the officers (in black uniforms and ski masks) would pepper spray and beat them. These officers stole five telephones, money (totaling €1,400), five power-banks, clothes, shoes and backpacks – everything was taken except for the transit groups t-shirts, underwear and socks. The officers made them kneel in a line and then beat their bodies with batons and kicking. If the group in transit tried to look up or ask for asylum, the masked officers in black pepper sprayed their eyes and beat them harder. The officers held them at this point of apprehension for three hours (until approximately 06:30) and were laughing at the group in transit when they were beating them.

The group was forced into one of the Croatian police vans (windows blacked out) and drove 20-30 minutes to a police station, arriving around 07:00 (still 2nd November 2019). It is assumed that the group in transit was taken to this police station: Delnice Police Station (Školska ul. 25, 51300, Delnice, Croatia). The van drove very fast and erratically (swerving left and right, stamping on breaks at random) and turned up the aircon full-blast. Some members of the group in transit were sick and vomited in the car.

At the police station there were two local officers (one male and one female) in grey uniforms – they were described by the respondent as being kind. They asked personal questions like “age, name, from, and took our pictures”. The transit group of five were forced to sign a document written in Croatian that they did not understand. The group was put in one cell together and given one snack bar per person. They had access to a water fountain and the toilet. The group in transit spent two hours in the police station.

At 09:00 the group in transit were put into a white Croatian police van, alongside 16 other migrants from the police station who were in different cells based on their ethnicity (from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Morocco, Algeria, Iran and Tunisia). Two officers in black uniforms with ski masks drove the van. They drove for what felt like 10 hours (09:00 – 21:00) arriving at the border near to Hadzin Potok, BiH.

It was very cramped in the back of the van, with some people sitting and some standing. The driving was erratic (swerving left and right, stamping on breaks at random) and the aircon was turned up full-blast. Some members of the group in transit were sick again and vomited in the car. At one point, the van stopped and an officer said to the respondent: “oh problem with police Bosnia” – so the van pulled over and changed direction.

At 21:00 the van pulled over and the officers in black uniforms with ski masks told the respondent that they were waiting for Bosnian police to leave. After a few minutes, police officers got everyone out of the van, walked the group to the border and lined everyone up. The officers were kicking, pepper spraying, yelling and beating the group in transit with batons;

### **“GO, GO, GO Bosnia”**

The group in transit then walked barefoot through Hadzin Potok to Sturlic, where locals gave them clothes, shoes and some food. The group in transit then caught a bus from Sturlic to Velika Klauksa.

31/10/2019

## “THEY PUSHED ME INTO THE RIVER AND SAID, ‘GOOD LUCK.’”

**Date and time:** October 31, 2019 18:00

**Location:** Korana river, south of Sturlic BCP

**Coordinates:** 45.058979, 15.742521

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 28-36 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian regular police in blue uniforms, 1 Croatian police van, 8 Croatian officers in black uniforms with Croatian flag embroidered on the arm and ski masks; 1 Croatian police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On 31st October 2019 a group of six men on the move from Algeria (ages 28-36) were apprehended at approximately 10.00 in Karlovac (HR). They were stopped by two Croatian regular police in blue uniforms. The respondent stated that the group was transported in a Croatian police van to a police station in Karlovac.

At the station the respondent was not given food or water. The respondent expressed intent for asylum and was denied. The group was not given documents to sign. They were detained for about six hours and then transported in a white Croatian police van with no windows in the rear and 15 people in total.

**“We were packed like sardines.”**

The respondent notes that there was not enough space in the police van for the amount of people transported inside, and this meant the ventilation inside the van was not sufficient. Several individuals were nauseous and vomited during the transport. The journey lasted approximately two hours.

At approximately 18.00 the van stopped and eight Croatian police in black uniforms with the Croatian flag embroidered on the arm and ski masks were waiting at the location. The police formed two lines to create some kind of a tunnel and surround the individuals as they exited.

The transit group were forced out of the van one by one and beaten by the officers with batons as they exited.

The group was forced to undress on the spot and their personal belongings were burnt in a fire. They were then beaten again with fists, batons, and kicking by the eight officers. The respondent was mostly beaten on his legs. He has scars from a surgery required after a previous attempt at crossing the border and because these scars are visible, the respondent believes the police targeted his leg to cause more pain. The group was pushed back at a river location near the HR/BiH border at the approximate coordinates 45.058979, 15.742521. This area is marked by a stretch of the Korana river, close to Sturlic (BiH). Two officers fired pistols into the air and began pushing them into the river. The respondent reported on the officer actions saying:

*“They pushed me into the river and said, ‘Good luck.’”*

31/10/2019

**“INSIDE ONE CROATIAN OFFICER SAID JUST FOR JOKING HE THINK ABOUT ME LIKE ANIMALS. JOKING LIKE COME TO HIT BY BOXING, BY STICK. AFTER THAT LAUGHING, EVERYTHING”**

**Date and time:** October 31, 2019 09:30

**Location:** BCP Bajakovo, HR

**Coordinates:** 45.0480771677019, 19.098828565404347

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 16-17 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, destruction of personal belongings, Prolonged enforced squat position

**Police involved:** Two Croatian border officials, one officer in "olive-green" uniform (with German flag sewn in)

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the evening of 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019, three unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan (aged between 16-17 years old) entered the back of a truck in Serbia close to the Croatian border at the Batrovci/Bajakovo Border Crossing Point (BCP). When the vehicle passed the checkpoint on the

Croatian side (Bajakovo), the three minors were detected by border police officials. One male and one female officer opened the truck and ordered the minors to step down from the trailer, where the male officer was awaiting them. The female officer, described as being around 24 years old, recognized the transit group from a previous crossing attempt and warned them not to come again.

The transit group were then quickly led into the BCP building and down a set of stairs into a small detention area below ground, where another officer was awaiting them. This officer was stated by the respondent consecutive times to be German. The respondent asserted this because the officer was wearing a German flag on the sleeves of his uniform which was an "olive-green" color.

The empty basement room, was small in proportion and was described by the respondent as only having space for "seven or six people". It had no windows, but two doors from which you could enter. Having entered through one of the doors (coming of the flight of stairs), the respondent described the other door as being the entrance to an office. During the three minors detention in the room, the officers would retire to the adjacent room periodically (always leaving one officer to guard the group).

The three minors were subject to a pat down search, which resulted in the withdrawal of the minors telephones. The police officers also took their names, and the names of their mothers and fathers. The three minors were made to sign documents, provided only in Croatian with no translator present.

The three minors then spent the next four to five hours in the small room, being commanded to squat face down looking at their feet every time an officer was present. When they were not compliant with this order to stare at the floor, the minors were met with violence.

***"If we see police, they coming to hit a lot. [The officers stating] 'Why you look at me?'"***

***"They hit when you look. One police is inside, all the time."***

During their time in detention, several episodes of violence were inflicted upon the group. The respondent stated that the first he received was a series of fist punches by the male Croatian border officer that apprehended him (the assault with blows from closed fists lasting approximately 5 minutes according to the respondents statements). The officer, his female colleague, and the man in the green uniform shouted at the boys repeatedly to not look them in the face.

After the punches, the minors were left squatting in the position referenced above, but under the constant supervision of at least one officer. Later, the female officer began to strike the minors in a second bout of violence, this time with the use of a police baton. The respondent

described vividly how the “German officer” also took part in the beatings. When this officer was beating him with a baton, the authority targeted the respondents right knee. The respondent tried to protect his leg by shielding it with his hands. As a result the baton strikes impacted his wrist, drawing bruising that was still present even weeks after the incident.

Not only were the minors beaten repeatedly and shouted at, but the officers also mocked and threatened them. When the respondent had asked for water, he was denied and laughed at. Because he was looking at the officer’s face when requesting, he was also called an animal and received a frontal slap in the face. The officers were also stated to have humiliated the group by feinting at delivering blows (pretending to strike for the boys) but missing intentionally every time, just to intimidate and tire the group out repeatedly.

***“Inside one Croatian officer said just for joking he think about me like animals. Joking like come to hit by boxing, by stick. After that laughing, everything. [the police officer said] ‘Look at your foot’ “***

After four/five hours of intimidation and violent episodes, the minors were removed from the basement and given back their phones. Before handing them over however, the officers disabled the charging slots by damaging them with a screwdriver. The three minors were then pushed roughly up the stairs by the two border officers that had initially apprehended them and transferred to the Serbian side of the border by foot. The pushback across the border occurred at approximately 9:30 in the morning on 31st October. Once ejected from Croatia, the minors were handed over to two Serbian officers that drove them to the next exit of E-70, telling them to return to Sid walking. The boys arrived back at their improvised settlement around 12:00 of October 31<sup>st</sup>.

**28/10/2019**

## **“ONE CROATIAN OFFICER FIRED HIS PISTOL INTO THE AIR, SEEMINGLY TO INTIMIDATE THE RESPONDENTS”**

**Date and time:** October 28, 2019 01:00

**Location:** Vranovača, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.750584, 15.6727367

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 22, 25, 27 , from: Syria, Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), threatening with guns, gunshots, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian officers in navy blue and black uniforms, 1 Croatian police car, 2 Croatian police vans ; 8 Croatian police in black uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On 27th October 2019 at 20.00 a group of three men in transit, one from Morocco and two from Syria, were stopped by Croatian authorities while travelling in a larger transit group consisting of approximately 20 people. Two Croatian officers in navy blue and black uniforms fired pistols into the air and demanded that the group stop. The group was apprehended near Vranovača (HR). The officers lead the group to a nearby spot with one Croatian police car and two Croatian police vans. The transit group was divided and put into vans to be transported.

The respondents were taken to a police station. The respondent stated that they were in the van for about 20 minutes and assumed they were transported to Korenica (HR) police station (Postaja Granicne Policije Korenica). At the station one Croatian regular officer asked the respondent to sign a document with his personal information, including name and family name. The document was in English and Arabic but there was no translator present. An officer took photos of the respondents' faces. The group requested asylum, but were ignored. The group was detained for two hours in the station.

At approximately midnight on 27th October 2019 the transit group was driven for about one hour, transported in Croatian police vans with no windows in the rear and driven recklessly according to the passengers. The respondents state they were taken to a location close to the border with BiH near Bihać. They were disembarked from the vehicle on the border where eight Croatian officers were present in black uniforms.

Once outside of the van, one Croatian officer fired his pistol into the air, seemingly to intimidate the respondents. The group was ordered to remove their clothes and jackets. Their clothing and personal belongings were thrown into a pile and burnt in a fire which was lit by one of the officers. The police also confiscated the group's mobile phones and power banks, then broke the devices using police batons. Batons were then used by the police to hit the respondents on their backs and shoulders. Following these strikes with the batons, they were ejected across the border into BiH.

**27/10/2019**

**“THEY ARE NOT WAITING FOR US ANYMORE, THEY ARE ON THE OFFENSE, COMING TO STOP US IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE BORDER”**

**Date and time:** October 27, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Croatian side of the border, near Miral camp

**Coordinates:** 45.1392937764759, 15.774576496257396

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 25 - 35 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian officers (ski mask), 1 police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of seven men from Morocco started their trip on Sunday, 27th October 2019, crossing the border from BiH-HR near the IOM run refugee camp Miral in Velika Kladuša. Shortly after crossing the border, merely 5km into Croatian territory, they were caught in the “jungle” (forest) by three Croatian police officers driving a van.

***“They are not waiting for us anymore, they are on the offense, coming to stop us immediately after the border.”***

The group of seven was cornered to a yard of a nearby house and searched by officers who looked through their jackets. The property owner was present while this search was happening, but did not intervene or say anything. They do not know if the police knew him before. Afterwards they were taken to the police van and pushed inside.

The seven men in transit were not explained where they were being taken, what was going to happen. The van drove them to another location in the forest, near Velika Kladuša. The respondents described the situation that followed:

***“There was a hole there, waiting for us”.***

***“We were forced to remove our jackets, backpacks, everything we had and throw it in the hole. The police then brought gasoline, poured it over our things and set them on fire. Our phones were put in a plastic bag separately, we don’t know what happened to them, we never got them back.”***

There was no official procedure conducted. Neither provided was any food, water, or translation. The transit group did not try to express the wish to apply for asylum in Croatia. The respondent shared how being just within the interior of Croatia it seemed unbelievable to them that it would even be an option, so they did not try.

***“There were three police officers in blue uniforms marked ‘Croatian police’. One of them went behind the van and when he came back, he was wearing a black mask covering his face. We don’t know why he hid his face because all three of them started beating us.”***

After removing and destroying their belongings the police started beating them with their sticks.

***“If you try to defend yourself, they catch you and hold you while the third one is beating. If you try to free yourself from their grip it gets worse.”***

One or two of the policemen were holding the person subject to the beating, while the third one was beating them using their baton to hit their wrists, arms, stomach and back causing visible lesions and bruises on their skin (see photos below). They were then ordered to walk towards Velika Kladuša, while the police returned to the van and drove off.

**26/10/2019**

## **“THIS WALL, AND THIS WALL”**

**Date and time:** October 26, 2019 06:30

**Location:** Road border crossing E70 (Bajakovo) Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.047024505711335, 19.100812037903665

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 14-19 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), electric shock, destruction of personal belongings, thrown against wall

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian Border Police officers, unknown number of Serbian officials

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, Balkan Info Van

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

In the early hours of 26th October 2019, four young Afghan males, including two minors, attempted to cross from Serbia into Croatia via the E70 border crossing at Bajakovo. The transit group was removed from a vehicle on the Croatian side of the border at 05:00.

The respondent, aged 16, states that the doors to the vehicle were opened by three Croatian police officers dressed in uniforms, described as *"like blue"*. Three of the group tried to run to evade the police, but the respondent remained stationary and was taken by the officers. In the end, all four group members were caught by Croatian officers (now a total of four on the scene).

The transit group were led across the concourse area of the crossing and marched down a flight of stairs to a basement room, directly below the outbuildings of Border Crossing Point (BCP).

The respondent described the room as approximately 2m x 4m in size, and empty. The four police officers frisked the four members and took their phones, money and powerbanks. Then the officers began to beat the transit group.

The officers hit them with closed fists and used a baton to strike them. During the beating, one officer used a handheld taser to administer an electric shock to the respondents upper thigh. He also recalls being thrown about by officers in the small room, and one of his companions suffering a scratch on the hand from a protruding nail sticking out of the wall. Describing the manhandling of the group, the respondent stated how the officers pushed them:

***"this wall, and this wall"***

After the beating the four were forced to sign documents written in a language they did not understand. There was no translation during the period of detention, which lasted approximately 1.5 hours. During this time the officers took pictures of the groups faces and took their names/and details.

After this period of detention in the basement, the four were led out and brought across the border to the Serbian officers, the pushback occurring at approximately 06:30. The group were given their phones back, which had been broken by the Croatian officers.

The transit group were handed over to the Serbian police on the Batrovci side (SRB) along with the paperwork signed in the basement, but the Serbian police took this and ripped the pages in half. Then the four group members walked back to their departure point in Serbia.

**26/10/2019**

## **"ONE OFFICER PRODUCED A HANDHELD TASER AND USED IT TO ADMINISTER AN ELECTRIC SHOCK"**

**Date and time:** October 26, 2019 01:00

**Location:** Close to Lipovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.06446977063772, 19.098320001582465

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 16,18,19 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian police officers; 1 Croatian police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

At approximately 00:00 on 26th of October 2019 a transit group, consisting of three Afghan males aged 16, 18 and 19, were walking in the Croatian interior.

They were stopped by police in woodland near a small town, identified by the respondent as likely to be Rokovci (HR). The respondent suggested that the police had observed the transit group with night vision technology because the officers came upon the men suddenly with torch lights.

There were three authorities, the respondent could not remember the uniforms of the authorities due to the dark conditions, but he identified them as “Croatian police”. The officers showed their flashlights at the transit groups faces and shouted:

“Police, stop, sit!”

The men crouched to the ground in response, at which point the officers surrounded their position and began to beat the transit group with batons, punches, and kicking; in the process one officer produced a handheld taser and used it to administer an electric shock to the respondents leg.

Personal belongings were also removed by the officers. The transit group were then brought by the three officers out of the woods to a nearby roadside. As the men arrived at the road they saw a police van. The officers took the men’s pictures with a phone, then they were loaded into the vehicle which was described as having no windows.

The van doors were closed and it was driven for approximately 30 minutes. The respondents said the air conditioning in the rear was very cold and imitated the shivering it induced. at approximately 01:00 on the 26th of October 2019, the men were brought out of the van it was still dark and the respondent recalls the location as a baron area with no houses; “only jungle”.

As they descended from the vehicle the officers (the same three from the apprehension) were waiting at the rear and proceeded to break the men’s phones with their fists.

As for the other confiscated belongings:

“money and power banks in pocket”

is how the respondent described the method used by the police to steal their possessions. The officers then beat the transit group again, this time using a baton and swinging it at the back of their heads as they ordered the men towards Serbian territory. The respondent recalls being forced towards a ditch (and struggling to cross the area indicated).

The three men walked for approximately 15 minutes before finding they were completely lost, and with no GPS or roads to make their bearings the men were forced to sleep on the open ground with no blankets or provisions. When the sun came up they walked further, eventually getting their bearings and returning to the town of Sid (SRB). From the respondents description of the incident, the fact that it took the men approximately five hours to walk back, and their arrival point to Sid from the south side of the railway tracks, it appears the men were pushed back at the above proximate location (close to the Lipovac/Batrovci border crossing).

**26/10/2019**

## **“I JUMPED IN THE WATER BECAUSE I FEAR WHEN THEY BEAT YOU, THEY WON’T STOP”**

**Date and time:** October 26, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Drežnik Grad, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.941982, 15.69825

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 20, 26, 27 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), water immersion, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving, beaten with tree branches

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian regular police in blue uniforms, 11 Croatian police in black uniforms, 1 police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On 26th October 2019 a group of three men from Algeria were in transit in Croatia. They were stopped by two Croatian police in blue uniforms. The respondent shared how they were careful to be very compliant because of the knowledge they had about Croatian officials beating transit groups.

***“We didn’t want to run because we knew they are hitting immigrants.”***

The respondent shared that the group stopped in place when they saw the police fearing they would otherwise be attacked more.

The respondent expressed intent for asylum at this point. One officer answered him in the Croatian language. The respondent could not understand exactly what the officer said, but he knew he was being denied the right to ask for asylum. There was no translation offered.

At the initial point where the group was stopped, police took personal belongings, including bags, sleeping bags, wallets, phones and power banks and put their possessions into a bag. The bag was kept in the front of the police van with the officers. The respondents were then told to get into the back of the van.

The vehicle drove off, and spent the journey speeding and making sudden stops. The respondent believes they were driven along dirt roads because they were in the van for several hours and felt many bumps. When the doors to the van opened, two of the three men vomited. The van stopped next to the river at the Croatia/BiH border, approximately six kilometers from Šturlić.

Eleven Croatian police in black uniforms were waiting outside. One officer had a ski mask covering his face. Three officers stood in front of the men, three officers stood behind the men, and the other two circled the men in transit. The officers had sticks taken from trees, about 1.5 meters long, which they used to beat the three men.

Their elbows and arms were beaten the most, the respondent suffering a laceration to his arm during the attack.

### ***“They wanted to break my elbows,”***

The officers searched the men’s pockets and bags and confiscated 200 euros. The respondent had food in his backpack which was also confiscated. Their phones were taken then thrown onto the ground and stomped on until broken. The men were ordered to undress and the officers took their clothing, including socks, shoes, and jackets. Their personal belongings were destroyed in a fire.

### ***“We lost everything.”***

The men were left standing in nothing but their boxers. The officers formed a human barrier around the group on one side with the river forming a physical barrier on the other side. An officer then shouted, *“Now go back to Bosnia!”* .

***“I jumped in the water because I fear when they beat you, they won’t stop. I saw the video of the man dead in the river. I know what they can do.”***

The group had no choice but to walk through the river and continue back to Bosnia with nothing but their underwear.

*“We were so cold without shoes, without anything. We walked for about 6 hours”*

25/10/2019

**“WE HEARD TWO POLICE OFFICERS FIGHTING. ONE OF THEM WAS SAYING ZAGREB AND THE OTHER ONE 'NE NE BOSNA'”**

**Date and time:** October 25, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Near Bogovolja, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.080792603152574, 15.767720257324186

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 9 - 34 , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** Unknown number of Croatian police, Helicopter, Police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent started by stating:

*“We were very lucky with the police this time.”*

He explained the experience of a group of families from Iraq and Syria traveling from Cazin, BiH, on foot into Croatia. They walked around eight hours until they reached a river which they had to cross walking. The level of the water wasn't very high, but the children had to be carried on their parents' backs.

The journey led them to a mountain which they crossed, after which they waited in a remote area for a scheduled ride. After waiting for four days with no sign of this transport, the families ran out of food and water and decided to turn themselves in to the police.

***“We met some nice men cutting wood in the jungle who gave us food and water and pointed us in the right direction. We call this the wood-cutter’s road.”***

They noticed a helicopter circling above them and shortly after a police car with two Croatian officers appeared.

***“They were very nice police, they brought us water and biscuits and didn’t even search us, they didn’t destroy anything, there was no violence.”***

The group sat on the floor and waited for a police van to arrive. When the police arrived, the respondent shared that:

***“I said to them that I want to give my fingerprints but they just pointed at the van for me to go inside.”***

The van drove to a police station around 30 minutes away and parked in front of the station. They were waiting in the parked van for 45 minutes.

***“We heard two police officers fighting. One of them was saying Zagreb and the other one ‘ne ne Bosna.’”***

The police opened the door of the van so the group could breathe properly, but did not allow them to step outside nor did they remove the metal bars (wire mesh door that sealed the rear). There was no police procedure conducted vis a vis identification or paperwork. The van drove for another hour and a half to a remote mountain on the border with BiH. The police pointed the group the way to go, and then left.

On the way back the families had to cross another mountain, they continued walking for around 5 – 6 hours until reaching Velika Kladuša. There was no bus to take them to the camp so they slept in a garage until they found a way to return to Sedra camp.

**24/10/2019**

## **“I DON’T LIKE TO REMEMBER THIS NIGHT”**

**Date and time:** October 24, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Near Bobovica on E70, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.83249443471357, 15.716062326336441

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 27 , from: Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, insulting, theft of personal belongings, blinding with torchlight

**Police involved:** 8 Croatian officers in dark uniforms and ski masks

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of food/water, personal belongings removed

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent started walking from Bosnia in a group, travelling into the Croatian interior. After they had reached Croatia, the group split and he continued his journey alone along the highway to Ljubljana (A2 / E70). On October 24th 2019 , three kilometers before the border with Slovenia, he was caught by Croatian police in uniforms.

***“Please let me go, I am just passenger, I don’t want to stay here, I will just continue walking.”***

He was taken to a police station and detained in a cell without food, water or translator. He was given papers to sign in Croatian language, without any explanation of what was going on. His jacket and bag which had his money was taken from him and never returned.

After a while, he was put in a van and driven to an unknown location in the forest. He was made to leave the police van. There were eight police men wearing dark clothes, their faces covered with masks. The respondent stated:

***“I don’t like to remember this night. They told me go, run. I started to walk but they put their flashlight in my eyes and I couldn’t see anything. When I started walking, he pushed me and beat me with stick. I don’t know if it was a normal stick, it felt like iron, I felt my bones breaking. Every time I tried to start walking they would push me and beat my arms. I just put my hands over my head to protect myself because they were beating over my head. I saw blood, my clothes all in blood. Police saw my hands, the blood, they didn’t help me, they didn’t stop, they didn’t care. I don’t like to remember this night, really, I just want to forget, remove this thing [points to the cast on his right arm, mending the four broken bones in his hand] and leave this place.”***

After the police stopped beating him, he was pushed back into BiH, then the officers went in the van, drove off and left him there. The man started walking, after a while a man noticed him covered in blood and took him to the hospital where he got stitches.

22/10/2019

## “WE ASKED FOR ASYLUM AND THEY TOLD US 'OK' AND THEN TOOK US TO THE BORDER”

**Date and time:** October 22, 2019 12:00

**Location:** Jasenak, Ogulin, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.218466, 15.023786

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 13 person(s), age: 30-38 years old , from: Pakistan, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 5 male and 2 female Croatian special police in dark green uniforms, unknown number of officers in station + border

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of 3 Algerian men in transit were stopped in Jasenak, Ogulin (HR) on 22.10.2019 at 12.00. The respondent saw a camera along the roadside which flashed. The respondent believed it took a photo of the group. As they were walking in the woods near the roadside they were told to stop by Croatian special police in dark green uniforms. In total there were seven officers, five male and two female.

Three phones were taken and broken by the officers who used their batons to damage them. Two power banks were taken and kept by the officers. The transit groups jackets and two of the respondents' shoes were also taken. The group was then beaten with the same batons used to break the phones, but this time on their backs and knees.

The group was taken in one Croatian police van to a police station. The group was quickly transported from the spot where they were apprehended to the station. As this was a very short car journey, the respondent assumes they were taken to “Policijska Postaja Ogulin” the police station in Ogulin (HR).

The group were detained for about 30 minutes. Their personal information was taken and they signed a document which asked for each person's names and family names. The document was not translated. The respondent expressed intent for asylum and the officer who stopped them said:

## *“okay, okay asylum.”*

However, despite the repetition (or acknowledgement) of the officer, a no point was the respondent actually able to lodge a claim.

Instead, the group was taken from the station and transported from HR to the border with BiH. They were crowded into a van with a total of thirteen people. The other ten passengers were all from Pakistan. The respondent was forced to sit on the ground with his knees to his chest because there was no room. The driver recklessly made turns and some people fell onto the ground.

## *“It felt like 35 degrees in van,”*

said the respondent in reference to the air con. The group was in the van for approximately two hours.

The group was taken to a border area close to Bihać (*BiH*). The respondent told the police that they do not live in Bihać, so they needed a bus ticket to go back to Velika Kladuša. This request was denied and the officer told them to leave back into BiH territory.

22/10/2019

**“HOW CAN I APPLY FOR ASYLUM OR EXPECT TO BE GIVEN PROTECTION FROM A COUNTRY WHOSE POLICE OFFICERS FORCE ME TO STRIP TO MY UNDERWEAR AND STARTS SHOVING MY GENITALS WITH A TREE BRANCH IN FRONT OF MY WIFE AND CHILDREN?”**

**Date and time:** October 22, 2019 04:00

**Location:** Near Donji Vaganac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.90369650904179, 15.75297839909365

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 36 person(s), age: Minors to adults aged 35 , from: Syria, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, sexual assault, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian police officers, 2 patrol cars, 2 vans

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Group of 36 people (mostly families from Syria and nine single men from Algeria) started walking through the woodland near Bihać, BiH. They travelled to a mountain close to Bihać ("the Bihać mountain") with an abandoned cottage that people on the move use for resting and warming themselves up.

***"Croatian police also knows about this cottage, they sometimes come and make a raid, kick people out and take or destroy their belongings."***

After two kilometers of walking, there was another mountain at the bottom of which was Croatian territory. In Croatia they scaled another slope, it was completely dark at 22:00 in the night, with no moon. The group first noticed a helicopter, and hid in the forest, advancing slowly until they reached a highway which they crossed and continued walking up another large mountain for twelve hours.

***"We were scared to stop walking because of police. We tried to sleep somewhere but it was very cold and we were scared that the police would come if we didn't keep moving. It is hard to even eat because of the fear. The mountain was very steep and I had to carry my daughter on my shoulders, but the road was too rocky and we couldn't see anything so I fell down and tore the muscles in my calf [he shows his bandaged left calf]."***

They rested on top of the mountain and continued walking further into the interior. While waiting later that night in the woods, they saw police flashlights from the mountain top. They lay down on their stomachs to avoid detection. By now it was several days into their journey. On 22nd October in the early morning the respondent shared how the first contact with police occurred.

***"We slept in the jungle. I got up around 04:00 in the morning to catch some fresh air and see the sunrise when I saw four police officers approaching me. They were all holding tree branches about one meter or 1.2 meters long."***

The respondent continues:

***“When they came closer they pushed me with the branches until I fell on the floor. The phone fell out of my pocket and the police started stomping on it with their boots. They were getting angry because the phone wouldn’t break, the surface underneath was too soft.”***

The police surrounded the sleeping people. The respondent stating:

***“I was not allowed to go near my family and I was not allowed to put my shoes back on, I had to walk barefoot.”***

Police made them to form a line and start walking downhill. If they did not walk fast enough, the police started shoving their backs with branches to go faster. They were taken to a steel fence with two police cars and two vans parked behind it. They were made to sit down and walk one by one to the police officer who was wearing gloves and started searching their belongings.

***“Randomly, if they didn’t like you, they would point at you and say you, take off clothes and made you undress until you were only in your underwear. Then they took the tree branches and started shoving our genitals. It was painful. They were also telling us to give our phones otherwise we will be beaten.”***

Their jackets were taken off and searched.

***“When they discovered one woman hid her phone in the jacket, they took it and broke it with their sticks. They took jewelry from women.”***

Afterwards, the 36 people in the transit group were put in vans and driven around: “driving fast – stop suddenly – driving fast – stop suddenly”. People started vomiting in the rear of the van, there was no light, no air. The van stopped to pick up another Turkish man during the journey. Then the vans stopped and they were unloaded. The respondent stating:

***“We arrived to the burning point, we could smell it.”***

There was around fifteen police officers waiting for them. The transit group had to go out from the van and put their bag in fire. The last person that came from the van was given a bag with everyone’s phones and told to throw it in the fire.

*“They chose random people again and call them to come nearer and when they would approach the police, the person would get beaten with the tree branches. ‘If you say anything, we will beat you’, they said. It is better to shut up and do what they say. The only thing they asked was if we were Afghani or Pakistani.”*

The group were shown the direction to start walking, towards BiH, and were made to walk in pairs. They walked around 10 km back to Sedra camp in Bihać, BiH.

*“We didn’t try to apply for asylum. How can I apply for asylum or expect to be given protection from a country whose police officers force me to strip to my underwear and starts shoving my genitals with a tree branch in front of my wife and children?”*

20/10/2019

## “EVERYWHERE I ASK, THEY TELL ME THAT THEY CANNOT GIVE ME ASYLUM”

**Date and time:** October 20, 2019 06:30

**Location:** Glina, Croatia bus station

**Coordinates:** 45.340442, 16.088206

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 25, 32 , from: Iraq, Yemen

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian police in navy blue uniforms, 1 Croatian police car, 1 Croatian police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On 20th October 2019 at 06:30 two men in transit, one from Yemen and one from Iraq, bought bus tickets at Glina (HR) Bus Station. Before departure, two Croatian police officers in navy blue uniforms came onto the bus and asked them for documents. Because the two men had no documents, they were asked to get off the bus. In the bus station parking lot was one Croatian police car with two other officers, the two officers who boarded the bus had been in the vehicle

prior to apprehension. The respondent believes that the bus driver called the police when he saw the two men in transit.

The two men were told to get into the police car, and when they did one of the officers took a photo of each of their faces. They were transported to the Glina Police Station. The respondent expressed his intent for asylum stating:

***“Please, I need asylum.”***

The officer told him:

***“I’m sorry, I cannot help you.”***

Reflecting on this, the respondent stated:

***“Everywhere I ask, they tell me that they cannot give me asylum.”***

The respondent stated this was his eighth attempt to cross the Croatian border in hope of being granted asylum before the winter. The two men in transit remained at the station for about fifteen minutes.

From Glina police station, the two men were loaded into one Croatian police van with eight other people who were in transit. Between 08.30 and 09.00 the van reached a cement barrier in Bosanska Bojna (BiH) and everyone was told to exit the van. The man traveling with the respondent had a small mobile phone and one Croatian police officer took the battery from his phone. The officer took two power banks and the extra clothing which the respondent was carrying. A second officer then hit the respondent with a baton.

***“The officer who hit me, he is black in the heart.”***

The respondent was shocked by the violence which the officers use to abuse people in transit. After the attack, all ten people were ordered across the border.

20/10/2019

## “8 POLICE OFFICERS FORMED A TUNNEL AROUND THE GROUP TO REPEATEDLY BEAT THEM AS THEY WERE BLINDED BY FLASHLIGHTS”

**Date and time:** October 20, 2019 04:00

**Location:** Crevarska Strana, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.351798, 15.820606

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 24-28 years old , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, detainment in van, blinding with torchlight

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian regular police in blue uniforms, 8 Croatian police in black uniforms with ski masks, 1 Croatian police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On 19th October 2019 a group of four men from Morocco were in transit in Croatian territory. The group were travelling by car for approximately one hour when they arrived at a toll booth. At 20.00 a civilian waved at the vehicle and yelled, “*Stop! Immigrant! Arab!*”. The vehicle stopped and the civilian approached to ask the respondent if he is from Palestine. The respondent stated he is from Morocco.

Ten minutes later they were stopped by a Croatian police vehicle, inside which was five officers. The group was ordered to exit the vehicle and get into the Croatian police van. The respondent expressed intent for asylum and was told:

“*No, no asylum.*”

The group were not taken to a police station, but instead were detained inside the van for several hours while it sat stationary. At this point it was very dark and it was already passed midnight (on day of apprehension). The van was started and driven for some time.

At approximately 04.00 on 20th October 2019, the van stopped at the HR/BiH border near Velika Kladusa. Eight Croatian police in black uniforms were outside the van stood in two lines. The group exited the van one by one while several of the officers used flashlights to impair their vision as they emerged into the darkness outside.

The other police officers beat the men one by one and then pushed each man down the line. Together the eight officers created a tunnel to trap the group and continuously beat them with fists and batons.

After being beaten one officer commanded them to take out their four mobile phones, which were then smashed with batons by the officers.

**“I have lost all my memories,”**

remarked the respondent as he tried to look at photos of his family which were on his mobile phone. In total the officers took about 200 euros from the group, before ordering them to walk back to BiH. From the beating the respondent's lip was bleeding and he had a large bruise on his back which matches the shape of a baton.

**18/10/2019**

## **“THE RESPONDENT ASKED FOR A TOILET AND THE OFFICER GAVE HIM A PLASTIC BAG”**

**Date and time:** October 18, 2019 19:00

**Location:** Damalj, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.421079, 15.177911

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 25, 28, 30, 31 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian police in blue uniforms, 1 Croatian police officer with a black ski mask, 2 Croatian police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of 4 Moroccan men in transit were stopped by police officers near the river in Damalj (HR) on 18th October 2019 at approximately 19.00. The respondent believes a civilian, who saw the group moments prior, called the police and reported the group in transit. Four Croatian authorities in dark blue uniforms, suggested to be possibly border police, and one Croatian officer in a black mask ordered the group to stop. They simultaneously fired several pistol

shots towards the group in transit. The four group members all put their hands up above their heads and remained stationary.

The officer wearing the mask ordered each person to empty their pockets and ordered the one man with a small bag to empty his bag. The officer confiscated five mobile phones and a total of 300 euros. The group was forced to undress and was transported to the police station wearing only boxers in one white Croatian police van with no windows.

***At the police station the respondent requested food asking, “Anything to eat? We haven’t eaten in 2 days. Water?”.***

The officer ignored this question, and the request for asylum made by the group. Throughout they were denied food and water, and were not processed officially. When the respondent asked to use the toilet, one officer handed him a plastic bag. The officer surveilling them while detained in the cell was drinking alcohol. The respondent believes from the smell that the officer was drinking whiskey. The respondent was commanded to not look at the officer’s face. When they lifted their faces to look up, the officer screamed at them and told them to look down.

After being detained, the group was forced into another Croatian police van with no windows and no air circulation. The driver recklessly made wide turns that caused the respondent to fall off of the bench in the back of the van. The respondent said he could hear the driver laughing. Several persons vomited in the van.

The van stopped on the Croatian side of the border with BiH (near Šturlić) at about midnight. Four officers in ski masks kicked the group in transit as they descended from the vehicle. The respondent stated that one officer had steel-toed boots.

***“It felt like his boot was cutting into the leg when he kicked us.”***

The officer in the ski mask grabbed one of the men by the ear and pulled him back and forth while making dog noises. Another officer used his baton to hit one of the men in the stomach.

During this ordeal, there was an enforced silence by the officers.

***“You can’t do anything, just stay quiet.”***

The men were ordered to not speak. The driver took the group’s phones and power banks which had been confiscated during apprehension and then broke them as the group watched. Their clothing and shoes were put into a pile and lit on fire, then the group were pushed back into BiH. The transit group of four walked an estimated 30 km from Šturlić to Velika Kladuša with no shoes and no jackets.

18/10/2019

## “IF WE SAY ANYTHING THEY WILL BEAT US. SO WE DON'T SAY ANYTHING.”

**Date and time:** October 18, 2019 17:00

**Location:** Kukuljani, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.408356, 14.417543

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 21, 25, 25, 26, 28, 30, 38 , from: Palestine, Syria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian police in blue uniforms, 6 Croatian police in black uniforms, 2 Croatian police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On 18th October 2019, at approximately 17:00, a group of seven men in transit were stopped by two Croatian police officers in blue uniforms in Kukuljani (HR). Upon apprehension, they were transported by a white Croatian police van with tinted windows. The van drove them for approximately one hour, but the respondent is unsure of which police station they were taken to because they could not see from the van. They were immediately removed from the van at one of the doors to the police station.

In the police station, the respondent's personal information was taken, including name and family name. One officer took a photo of the respondent's ID card. Photos of their faces were also taken. All seven members of the group were forced to sign a document issued to them by the officers. Six of the men were unable to understand the document and were denied a translator.

***“Because we are here illegally we don't want to make any problems with the police. If we say anything they will beat us. So we don't say anything.”***

The respondent suggests that the group in transit was intimidated by the police into signing the documents.

The respondent, who knew the most English, was the last person from the group to be called up to the desk to sign the document. There was no translator present, but his understanding was that the document stated that the officers at the police station had helped the group in transit and given them food and water. In reality, the respondent says no one was given food or water at the station.

***“I suffer more from this because when they catch us I am so tired and hungry but they do not accept me and give me food even after I get sick in the car (police van). We drink from dirty water on the trip and we are too afraid to buy food in Croatia.”***

The respondent expressed intent for asylum and one officer laughed at his request.

From the police station the group was transported in one white Croatian police van with no windows. The drive was approximately one and half hours. There was no air moving in the van and the temperature inside was extremely hot.

***“When the doors on the van close you cannot take a breath”***

The van stopped on the Croatian border, near to Bihać (BiH). Once taken outside of the van, the group in transit was beaten on the back by officers with batons. Six Croatian police in black uniforms forced the group to undress and put their personal belongings into a pile which was lit on fire. Their jackets, shirts, and backpacks were burnt. The respondent put his hands over his head and face to protect himself and then his arms and elbows received many blows from the baton. Officers used batons and stomped on their phone to break them.

After beating the group, one officer said:

***“Go now and I never see you again.”***

A second officer laughed and said:

***“Try again.”***

Then the transit group were ordered back into BiH, where they walked half naked to reach shelter.

16/10/2019

## “THE BABIES’ DIAPERS HAD TO BE TAKEN OFF TO SEARCH THE BABIES. THEY WERE NAKED IN THE FOREST IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT”

**Date and time:** October 16, 2019 03:30

**Location:** River in village of Glina, HR

**Coordinates:** 45.3382624, 16.090970900000002

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: Included infants aged 10 months, and a 1 year old , from: Palestine, Syria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 2 civilian clothed Croatian officers, 1 pick-up truck. 3 officers in green uniforms (likely Croatian Special Police Uniforms ), 1 police van, 6 officers in black uniforms (matching descriptions of Croatian Interventna officials)

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

Two families (Palestinian and Syrian) started their trip from Velika Kladuša, BiH. The families consisted on men, women and minors, including: a pregnant woman, a one year old toddler and a 10 month old infant. They entered Croatian territory and walked on foot, arriving to a river. Just as the river entered the small town of Glina in Croatia, by the building of a courthouse, at around 03.30 in the morning on 16th October 2019, they were stopped by two police officers in civilian clothes and made to enter a pick up truck.

***“We asked to be taken to camp, we said ‘azil, we want azyl.’ The civilian police just laughed at us.”***

The two families in transit were driven for around 1–1.5 km to a forest by the river, they were made to leave the vehicle. There was a steal container there and three men wearing green clothes (common uniform of Croatian Special Police). The families were forced to take their jackets off, including the children and babies (one less than two years old and one 10 months old). Describing the incident, the respondent said:

***“Me and my friend had to lie down on our stomachs with our hands behind our heads, our wives and children had***

***to kneel and put their hands behind their heads. Police was laughing and taking pictures of us.”***

The families phones were broken and taken away by the officers.

***“They asked me to take off all my clothes except my underwear and they were searching me, my body with their hands. My friend also. I had to take everything out of our bags and they took it away. Our wives they just searched through clothes with some machine, detector. The children were also searched, the babies’ diapers had to be taken off to search the babies. They were naked in the forest in the middle of the night.”***

There was no translation offered, no papers were given, and no contact with police in uniforms (during the apprehension and transport they were only addressed by the civil clothed officers). The transit groups appeals to be taken to a “camp” (asylum centre) kept being ignored. They were not given food, when they asked for water, the police brought it, laughing. It was dirty water from the river with visible sand and mud in it. They were sitting on the ground for about one and a half hours when they were put in a police van and driven for a short time.

The van parked and didn’t move for two hours. There was no air, the pregnant woman started feeling sick and vomiting. The group started knocking on the door for help, to get air, but were ignored. After, the van started driving again with what was described as:

***“insane speed on a road full of rocks. Children became sick and started vomiting. One child came back from the trip and is still sick.”***

Again, the police van parked and remained parked for one hour, without explaining to the detained families in the back where they were going, why they were stopping and still being denied food and water. They were driven again, this time to the border area with BiH. When they came out of the van, there was six police officers in black clothes wearing ski masks and a cement barrier.

***“They beat me with the stick behind my knee, me and my friend, in front of our wives and children. They were pushing us and yelling go, faster, faster. They were not Croatian, they spoke only English.”***

They were made to climb the barrier and jump off it, the police followed them for around 200m to make sure they continued walking and then they drove off. The two families then walked around 5km to reach a town where they could find a bus to take them to Velika Kladuša, BiH.

16/10/2019

## “THEY DIDN'T ALLOW US TO SAY SOMETHING”

**Date and time:** October 16, 2019 02:30

**Location:** Border crossing Bajakovo, Croatian side close to Lipovac

**Coordinates:** 45.04777175178943, 19.102405378030085

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 16,16,17 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian border officers, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

In the early morning hours of the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019 the group of three underaged boys tried heading into the interior of Croatia through border crossing on the E70 motorway, concealed in a vehicle. Shortly after passing the check point, the vehicle was pulled over and the loading space opened, exposing the group to three border police officers, dressed in dark blue uniforms. One female officer, not wearing a jacket, was dressed in a navy blue shirt according to the respondent.

Picked up by the officer's searchlights they were swiftly ordered to dismount the vehicle, whilst the officers were taking pictures of the situation with their cameras. After the apprehension, the three minors were commanded into the border station and led into a detention room. The respondent shared that they did not resist the arrest in any form.

After entering the detention cell, the group was strip searched and relieved from everything they had in their pockets. This included mobile phones, power banks and a small amount of money. One of the officers pocketed the belongings and entered the next room, where the three minors could hear various other officers chatting. The boys were held for some while sitting in a coerced squat on the ground. Asked, whether the intention for asylum was expressed, the respondent denied:

***“We didn't talk, we didn't talk. They didn't allow us to say something.”***

They were then handed over documents in Croatian and English, which they were ordered to sign. When the officer that had taken their devices returned from the other room the first round of beatings started. Still squatting they would receive a series of intense bashes and kicks to the heads and legs. The respondent, the day after the incident in severe pain, states that they

would target the back of their heads and their ankles for a session of beatings that would last for over 10 minutes.

***“They beat us and now we are hurt, we have pain [...] in the head and the leg while we were sitting there [showcasing squat with hands over head] They were very angry, you know”***

When the officers had finished they would leave the young men in one corner of the room and sit down in the other to play cards. After approximately 30 minutes the officers then got up and started the next round of beatings that did not last as long as the first, but was similar in its character.

After it ended, they were ordered to get up and led outside of the station. Here they were loaded into a white windowless van that consisted of a caged department, where they would sit in complete darkness. After a short ride of around three minutes they would be ordered to step down the vehicle at the Serbian side (Batrovci) of the same border crossing. The group received back their phones, that had been broken by the police allegedly during the time they were taken to another room at the border station, according to the respondents statement. The glasses were shattered and the plug entry for chargers and the slot for sim cards were disabled, as well as the sim cards taken.

They were then handed over to another police officer, which the men believed to be Serbian, who showed them the way back to the town of Sid. Making their way back to Sid on foot, they passed the long lines of cars that were waiting for border inspection. Being released in the middle of the night, they asked the drivers for food and received a few canned items from some of them, since they had just been relieved of what they packed for their journey.

**15/10/2019**

## **“A WINDOWLESS DETENTION CELL”**

**Date and time:** October 15, 2019 17:00

**Location:** Bajakovo border crossing

**Coordinates:** 45.0479830432769, 19.102518705929015

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 15-17 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian border police officers, 1 police van, unknown number of Serbian police, 1 vehicle

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the early evening of 15<sup>th</sup> October the three young males (all minors) intended to enter Croatia at Bajakovo border crossing, hidden in a car. Shortly after crossing the checkpoint, the car was pulled over and the three were quickly found and ordered to leave by two officers, dressed in dark blue uniforms as used by Croatian border police. According to the respondent that order was followed without any form of resistance.

The respondent asserted their swift detection was the result of the use of scanners deployed along the border, as there was no extensive inspection of the vehicle leading to their detection. Once apprehended, they were moved into the border station and led down into the basement where they found a – following the respondents statement –

**“*windowless detention cell*”.**

After descending into the basement, the three were relieved of their personal belongings by the officers, such as their mobile phones, power banks and a significant amount of money. Regarding himself, the respondent mentioned at this point the amount of 110 Euro was stolen. After the officers had withdrawn everything apart from their clothing, the beating started. The two officers that had them detained, together with another two that were in the stations basement, battered the group for around ten minutes, using their fists and rubber batons, as well as kicking them with their *“heavy boots”*.

When the violence had finished, the names of the detainees were taken and they were made to sign documents, provided in Croatian and English. Note, that the respondent himself does not speak either of the languages and a translator was not present at the time. None of the three individuals expressed the intention to ask for asylum at any point.

When the officers had completed their documentation, the group was ordered to leave the station and loaded into the back of a white, windowless van, that consisted of a caged compartment. The respondent believed this to be a Fiat – Transit. After a short ride of two minutes they were disengaged at the Serbian side of the border (Batrovci) and given back their electronics, but not without the officers destroying them first. The police disabled the charging ports with screwdrivers and broke the glasses of the phones with their boots.

The three were then handed over to Serbian authorities, who drove them back to the town of Sid and released them at the city limits.

15/10/2019

## “WE ARE NOT TERRORISTS, WE ARE ONLY LOOKING FOR A GOOD LIFE TO TAKE CARE OF OUR FAMILIES”

**Date and time:** October 15, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Buhača, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.191148, 15.7515638

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 26, 27, 30, 31, 33, 35, 36 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, threatening with guns, gunshots, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian police in navy blue uniforms, 5 Croatian Interventna police in black uniforms with ski masks, 1 Croatian police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of seven men from Morocco ages 26, 27, 30, 31, 33, 35, 36 were stopped in Buhača (HR) shortly after crossing the border from Velika Kladuša (BiH).

Four Croatian police officers in navy blue uniforms spotted the group and yelled at them to, “*Stop! Stop!*”. The officers fired several gunshots towards the respondent’s feet. The group was forced to sit on the ground with their hands behind their heads. While on the ground, the officers kicked the men in their legs. The respondent noted, “*their large boots*” which he felt seemed meant to hurt others. Prior to being stopped, the respondent saw a large, green drone in the area.

The group was not taken to a police station but was asked for personal information of their names and family names. The officers gave them each a document to sign which was written in Croatian language. There was no translation.

The respondent expressed intent for asylum and one officer replied by saying, “No asylum. Go to Bosnia.” The respondent attempted to tell the officer:

***“We are not terrorists, we are nothing. We just want to have a home and to not have so many problems in our mind. I have four diplomas and I can do good work. We***

*are only looking for a good life to take care of our families.”*

The group was then forced into a white Croatian police van and were transported to a small road off highway R403a (that leads to Cazin (BiH)). The police in blue uniforms who were driving the van told them to “Go” and get out of the van. There were five Croatian police in black uniforms and black ski masks waiting outside of the van which transported the men. The officers beat the men with batons on their backs and on their legs. One man in transit was beaten on his chest.

*“When they were kicking us we yelled ‘Allah, Allah, help.’”*

This beating left bruises on their backs and the respondent had pain and swelling on his back which inhibited him from walking upright. The group was forced to undress and the officers took their shoes, bags, and jackets.

The officers told the group to leave and to, “Go to Bosnia camp.” So the transit group was ejected over the border into BiH. The respondent noted:

*“We go to the camp and we see the problems from outside and we all say we should not enter, so we walked back to Velika Kladuša.”*

The respondent noted that there were continued problems with the camps on their return, but also that the local BiH police were forcibly removing people from city centers and squats and driving them to locations near camps.

15/10/2019

## “THEY ASKED TO BE TAKEN TO ZAGREB FOR ASYLUM AND WERE TOLD, 'NO, YOU CAN'T'”

**Date and time:** October 15, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Jezera, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.844055, 15.808321

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 22-25 years old , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), water immersion, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** Unknown number of Croatian police in blue uniforms, 7 Croatian police in black uniforms, 1 police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of four men in transit were spotted by a civilian at the Jezera (HR) bus station on 14th October 2019. The civilian called the police and when two Croatian officers began to approach the group, the respondent and one other man from the group ran to a nearby park. The other two members of the transit group were caught at the bus station (and were later pushed back into BiH).

The respondent and his friend hid in the trees with the intent of continuing their journey, but soon were spotted by Croatian police. At approximately 00:00 on 15th October, Croatian police in blue uniforms stopped the two men in transit. The respondent expressed intent for asylum and told the officer:

*“We want to go to Zagreb to get asylum.”*

The officer responded:

*“No you can’t. You can go to Bosnia.”*

The two men were then transported in a white Croatian police van with tinted windows which they could not see out of. They were taken directly to the Bosnian border, the respondent suggesting the transport was some way into the BiH interior. The respondent estimates the coordinates of the pushback are 44.844055, 15.808321. Near the river in Papari (BiH) the men were ordered out of the van where seven Croatian in black uniforms were present.

Only one of the officers spoke. The other six officers formed a perimeter around the two men. The one officer demanded the respondent take out his phone and power bank. The respondent was forced to give them to the officer. The officer also took the respondent’s sunglasses. Then the encirclement of officers took turns hitting the men with batons. The respondents were pushed into the river with their clothes on, and the Croatian police left.

**15/10/2019**

**“[WE] UNDERSTOOD THAT WE ARE ALIVE BUT DON'T UNDERSTOOD ANYTHING [ELSE]”**

**Date and time:** October 15, 2019 00:00

**Location:** North-west Karlovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.223318981163644, 15.905261285687743

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 50 person(s), age: 18-26 , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pepper spray, water immersion, threatening with guns, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 10 Croatian special police officers, 3 Croatian temeljna police, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** no translator present, denial of food/ water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A large transit group of 48 young men started their journey in Bihac, Bosnia-Herzegovina on the morning of 10th October 2019. After passing the border to Croatia on foot, they headed north across the undulating terrain of Croatia's interior. Over the course of six days they walked through the forests, sustaining themselves by only small rations of food since they were avoiding cities and other places of attention. On the evening of October 15<sup>th</sup> they were somewhere in the north western part of the Karlovac county, a 2 hour walk from the Slovenian border.

Not long after dusk a buzzing sound in the sky caught their ears. Steadily approaching, it turned out to be the whir of a surveillance drone, which had targeted them from afar and hovered over them for a couple of minutes. The group tried to walk away quickly uphill, only to be ambushed by a unit of ten officers when they reached the top. They were described by the respondents as wearing olive uniforms like that of Special Police and were coated in camouflage patterns. The officers had circled the transit group.

At gunpoint, the group was made to sit down and ordered to hand over weapons of any kind. Supposedly, some members had with them knives which were given into police custody. The police then quickly "identified the smugglers", as the ones that had been leading the group with GPS and apparently being the only ones in possession of smartphones. Without further frisking, the 50 people were led down the hill to a narrow road, where three additional officers dressed in the light blue Polos and navy blue shirts, coherent with descriptions of *Temelnija* police, were awaiting them with a white van.

The big group was then divided to fit into the van that would transport them in two rounds to their destination close to the Bosnian border. This was also described as the moment, in which the men saw their guides (identified as the smuggling agents by police) for the last time, since they had been separated from the others. The four respondents entered the back of the van as part of the first round, together with another 15 persons. It was then when one of the officers in green uniform would spray the inside of the van with a form of gas, that caused feelings of nausea and unconsciousness among the people inside. The door was then closed shut, leaving them in total darkness.



***“So the police officers put a gas on [us] in the van and [we] felt vomiting and tears from the eyes and dizzy feeling”***

It followed a drive in the van, that lasted for approximately three hours according to the respondents. In respect to their condition throughout that ride it was stated by all four respondents:

***“[we] understood that we are alive but don’t understand anything [else] ... and we were alive but not able to move”***

When their transportation came to a halt, the backdoor of the van was opened and the men were ordered outside, finding themselves inside a courtyard from what they believed to be a police station. At the spot the three officers present, being identified as the same squad the group encountered after their apprehension by the officers in green uniform, started to strip search them. According to the respondents they were relieved of everything they had with them apart from the clothes they wore.

This included backpacks, tents, personal belongings and, as stated by three of them the amounts of 60, 80 and 350 Euro. No photos or fingerprints were taken, as the group never entered the building of the police station. They were at no point made to sign any documents. Neither had they explicitly expressed their intention of claiming asylum, telling the authorities they would not want to stay but rather transit Croatia. Following their statements, the officers informed them that even if they were asking for Asylum they would not get it.

***“We did not even see a pen.”***

Although the situation inside the police station did not last longer than 10 minutes, the group was exhausted from their journey and the gas that they have been exposed to during their transport. Asking the officers for food or water, they were denied.

***“we were so badly hungry, but they didn’t give anything to us. [we] asked for water, but they didn’t give it to us.”***

After the frisk had ended and their belongings were confiscated, the group was ordered back into the van again. It followed a short ride of around 10 minutes after which the men encountered themselves at the shore of a river, when descending the vehicle. The three officers commanded them to run through the river, being the border to Bosnia. One of the officers would swing for them with a police baton, missing most but still managing to hit a few of the men in their backs. The group, soaking wet after the crossing, made its way into Bosnia direction Velika Kladusa. They would walk for around ten kilometers to find an open space encampment of migrants where they would spend the night.

The following day they received the news that the two men that have been taken into separate custody allegedly were brutally beaten up by Croatian officers before being pushed back.

According to the respondents, they believed the two men had even been fatally wounded during this ordeal, dying later in BiH hospital. However, Border Violence Monitoring Network was not able to confirm the validity of this accusation at the time this report was published.

14/10/2019

## “[THEY] STARTED BEATING MEN WITH STICKS, THEY BEAT ME ON MY SHOULDER AND BACK”

**Date and time:** October 14, 2019 03:00

**Location:** South east of Komesarac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.09186791983132, 15.769071046238082

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 35 person(s), age: 2 - 45 (including minors aged 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8) , from: Palestine, Syria, Iraq

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, threatening with guns, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 10 Croatian officers dressed in blue uniforms with guns, 2 police cars, 3 vans, 6/7 officers in camouflage uniform

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A Syrian family joined a group of 35 people (mostly families from Syria and Palestine and a few single men from Iraq), and attempted to cross the Bosnian-Croatian border. They started walking from Velika Kladuša and walked for a day and a half through the woods and mountains. Once they were inside Croatian territory they decided to take a rest in the woods. The group fell asleep only to be woken up at 03:00 in the morning of 14th October 2019 by rapid gun fire and shouts of, “Freeze!”

They family noticed ten men in blue uniforms of Croatian police surrounding them, firing shots in the air:

*“like in a movie, they forced all men to lie down on their stomachs with our hands behind our heads, women no, they were just standing aside”.*

Not long after, the police ordered them to make a line and start walking, while police was escorting the line on both sides, pointing their guns at them.

***“We walked maybe 30 minutes, we reached a place with a hole already waiting for us, the fire was already burning, ready for our stuff. They took everyone’s backpacks, bags and sleeping bags and for single men they took jackets also. Everything was burned. I asked if I can take my baby’s food from the bag and they said no, took my backpack and threw it in the fire.”***

They were searched over their clothes and had their phones taken away from them. Some phones were thrown on the ground and stomped-on with police boots while some were just taken away and never returned. Two police cars and three vans arrived, everyone was forced to go inside them and driven for an hour to the police station where they were detained for two hours with no food, water, access to toilet or the presence of a translator.

***“They didn’t even talk to us, we asked them to take our fingerprints, one man in the group spoke good English and he explained to the police what we want (referring to asylum claim). The police was just laughing and didn’t do anything.”***

Instead, the transit group were again put in the three police vans which drove for around one hour and a half to the border-area, where they were made to go out of the vans and saw six to seven police in camouflage uniforms waiting for them.

***“Commandos [this described officers in uniform and masks.] in camouflage color started beating men with sticks, they beat me on my shoulder and back [he shows a picture of the bruises from his phone] and kicking us in our knees or behind our knees, yelling at us to start walking faster. They were walking behind us, beating and yelling for a few hundred meters then they stopped and we were told to continue by ourselves.”***

Once returned to BiH, the group walked for four to five hours to reach Velika Kladuša, where they took the bus to Sedra camp, close to Bihac.

12/10/2019

## “CROATIAN AUTHORITIES STOOD ON EITHER SIDE OF THE MEN AND BEAT THEM FROM THE FRONT AND BACK SIMULTANEOUSLY”

**Date and time:** October 12, 2019 10:00

**Location:** Jezera, Croatia (Bus Stop)

**Coordinates:** 43.789844, 15.63149

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 30, 32, 36, 40 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian regular police in blue uniform, 7 Croatian police in black uniforms and ski masks, 1 Croatian police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On 12.10.2019 a group of 4 Algerian men were in transit. At approximately 10.00 they attempted to take a bus from Jezera (HR) to Zagreb. At the bus station in Jezera the group was stopped by one Croatian regular police officer in a blue uniform. The respondent described how the officer came “rushing over” to them when he spotted the group at the bus station.

Upon apprehension, the group was transported in one Croatian police van to a location near the HR/ BiH border, close to Bugar (BiH). The van stopped near the river Korana, approximate coordinates 44.936602, 15.737301. The respondent commented on his reaction to seeing the cold water.

**“I am so afraid because I do not know how to swim.”**

The respondent shared that he had been pushed into the river during one of his 11 previous attempts at crossing the border. He feared how deep this section of the river near Bugar was, because we was not able to swim.

The respondent expressed intent for asylum and the officer told him:

**“No asylum for you.”**

There were seven Croatian police in black uniforms and ski masks covering their whole face, except for their eyes. One officer giving commands ordered the group to empty their pockets and take out their mobile phones. The officer confiscated two mobile phones, two power banks, 30 euros, and 100 Croatian Kuna. He put the money in his pocket. Two officers stood either in front or behind each member of the group and beat the individual on his front and backside simultaneously. The group was hit with fists and beaten with batons on their arms and backs. Officers pushed the men to the ground then ordered them to stand up and go into BiH territory.

The group walked for 4.5 hours from Bugar to Šturlić and then returned to Velika Kladuša (BiH).

**09/10/2019**

## **“THE VIOLENCE HE SAW IN IRAQ IS SIMILAR TO THE VIOLENCE IN CROATIA”**

**Date and time:** October 9, 2019 06:00

**Location:** Johi, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.447333, 15.302784

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 43 person(s), age: 17, 18, 20, 24, 24, 25 , from: Pakistan, Syria, Iraq, Egypt

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, threatening with guns, gunshots, dog attacks, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 9 Croatian police in black uniforms and ski masks, 3 Croatian In police in navy blue uniforms (one marked as "GENERAL"), 1 police dog, 7 police vans

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A caravan of 43 people on the move, including individuals from Syria, Iraq, and Pakistan were walking through Croatia on 9th October 2019. One of the groups consisted of six men from Iraq and Egypt, and included one 17 year old minor. Two families with a total of six small children were also present.

At 06.00 when most of the group was sleeping in a wooded area before the SLO/HR border in Johi (HR), nine Croatian police in black uniforms and ski masks arrived to their sleeping spot and fired several gunshots. They had one police dog which the respondent described as looking like a German shepherd.

The men in the group were ordered to sit on the ground with their hands behind their heads. The police dog which had no muzzle was then released from its chain and the dog bit one of the men on his cheek. The two families were removed from the area by two Croatian police vans. Unaccompanied children were separated and made to sit and watch as the officers used batons to beat the group in transit. The minors who were in their early teens, and generally unaccompanied, were also beaten. Some of the men resisted as the officers hit them. The respondent reported that he believes the men from Pakistan were beaten more than the others.

***“For me it’s normal. I saw my son, my brother take fire (gunshots) to their heads.”***

The respondent shared that he had attempted to cross the border seven times since fleeing the destruction of his home in Mosul, Iraq, and the death of most of his family. He shared that he continuously experiences violence at the Croatian borders and notes the similarities between Iraq and Croatia.

While the group in transit was beaten, three Croatian Intervention police in navy blue uniforms arrived in two more police vans. The respondent remembers at least one of them having “GENERAL” written on the back of his jacket. The nine officers in black uniforms saluted the three officers when they approached the group. One of the commanding officers told the nine officers in black, “*Congratulations,*” and “*very nice job.*” The respondent assumes this praise was in response to catching the large group in transit.

Officers then searched everyone’s pockets, suggested to be looking for money and mobile phones. Approximately 400 euros was taken from the group of six in transit with whom the respondent was travelling, and put into the officers’ pockets. If a person had a nicer phone, the officer also took it and put it in their pocket. Bags, jackets, and shoes were forcibly removed from the group in transit.

The groups were then divided and transported by seven Croatian police vans. The respondent was in contact with one of the families traveling in the caravan and he reported that the two families with young children were taken to a camp in Croatia. None of the others from the caravan were brought to a police station. The group of six in transit was transported to the border near Šturlić (BiH).

In the police van the respondent vomited because of the officer’s reckless driving. The vehicle made wide turns, sudden stops, and had no air circulation. The respondent noted that it “*felt like I was sitting on top of the engine,*” because of the extreme heat in the van. At Sturlic they were unloaded and pushed back in BiH.

06/10/2019

## “POLICE PUNCHED HIS ARM AND BACK UNTIL HE BEGAN TO CRY AND FORCED HIM INTO THE VAN”

**Date and time:** October 6, 2019 16:00

**Location:** Draganić, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.575608, 15.620943

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 20, 22, 27, and 30 , from: Morocco, Yemen, Egypt

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian police officers in civilian clothes with a badge (1 male and 1 female), 2 Croatian regular police, 7 Croatian Intervention police in black uniforms with black ski masks, 2 Croatian police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On 6th October 2019 a group of four men from Yemen, Morocco, and Egypt were traveling by vehicle from Zagreb (HR) on highway E65 towards Rijeka (HR). The respondent noted that the conditions on the road were “*high traffic.*” The group was stopped by Croatian police on highway E65 in Draganić (HR).

At about 16.00 the group was stopped by one man and one woman who did not identify as police, and were wearing civilian clothes. The authorities did show the respondent a badge which was in their pocket. The authorities were standing outside of an unmarked vehicle when they stopped the vehicle which was transporting the group of four people-on-the-move.

The authorities asked to see the respondent’s phone. The respondent asked them, “*Please, no delete maps.*” The male authority said “*Okay,*” and returned the phone. The authorities asked the respondent for his documents, and asked the group where they were traveling to.

One of the authorities opened the door of the vehicle and ordered the entire group to exit the vehicle, and to “sit only.” The respondent reports that the group remained sitting on the floor beside the vehicle for what felt like between 30 and 40 minutes. After that time an official Croatian police van came to the point where the group was stopped.

Inside the Croatian police van were two Croatian police officers. One officer came out from the van and approached the respondent asking him:

“*Where phone? Where money?*”

The respondent was then forced to give his phone to the officer and to give the money from his wallet to the officer. The officer took approximately 150 euros and 50 Bosnian convertible marks from the group. Three members of the groups had phones, and the arriving police officer took one iPhone and one Samsung phone but the third phone, which was an older Huawei phone was given back to the respondent. The respondent asserted that the third phone was returned because it was less expensive.

All four men were told to get inside the police van. At this point one group member, the Moroccan man, asked the officer who was driving:

***“Where is my phone?”***

The officer responded by telling him to:

***“Shut up! Shut up!”***

The officer then grabbed him by the arm and proceeded to punch the man’s arm, and hit his back while the officer again said, “Shut up. No speak.” The man began to cry and was then pushed inside the van. Inside the vehicle were nine others from another transit group that had been brought in the rear area by the newly arrived officers.

Because so many people were crowded into the van the respondent had to sit with his knees to his chest while they were driven for approximately three hours. Inside the van he described how it was:

***“hard to breath because there was no air.”***

The respondent noted that the air conditioning/ventilation fans were not working. The respondent could not see out the windows and was unsure of where they were transported. They arrived and were unloaded from the vehicle at a police station.

At the police station the group was detained in a cell about 4 by 4 meters with only a cement floor to sit on.

***“It was very bad. It looked like no cleaning for maybe one years. The toilet was full and the smell was so bad.”***

The group was detained for several hours and had no translator. The respondent expressed intent for asylum and the officer said, “No asylum.” The respondent shared how he had tried to express his need for asylum to the Croatian police:

***“There are so many problems in my country. I can’t go back. I have no home and everything was all burnt. I want asylum. I need asylum. I will stay anywhere, in camp, please.”***

After several hours detention, the transit group were transported in a Croatian police van brought to a border area near to Bugar (BiH). On the the HR/ BiH border seven Croatian Intervention police officers in black uniforms with black ski masks surrounded the group as they exited the van. The officers kicked the men in the legs and yelled, “Go back to Bosnia.” One officer kicked one of the men in his groin. The respondent stated that it felt as if they were beaten for one hour. After the assault, they were forced across the border from Croatia to Bosnian territory.

**30/09/2019**

**“WE CALL THEM SARDINE CANS, BECAUSE THEY ARE COMPLETELY CLOSED, NO AIR AND THEY STUFF YOU INSIDE SO YOU CAN’T MOVE AT ALL.”**

**Date and time:** September 30, 2019 02:00

**Location:** Near Sadilovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.93947995029267, 15.739374633967032

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 150 person(s), age: Mixed minors and adults (One respondents children were aged 8 and 9) , from: Syria, Iraq

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, gunshots, dog attacks, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** Approx. 13 at site of apprehension. A further 27 (some in ski masks) with ten police vehicles

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

**THIS PUSHBACK ACCOUNT IS RECORDED FROM THE TESTIMONY OF TWO SEPERATE FAMILIES, WHO WERE BOTH TRAVELLING IN THE SAME CARAVAN.**

### **Testimony 1, taken on 12th October 2019:**

The respondent and his wife joined a group of 150 people who decided to try to cross the Bosnian – Croatian border by foot on 27th October 2019. They were walking for three days until they reached a highway in Croatian territory. Being completely exhausted, on 30th September, the whole group sought shelter in mountain woodland to rest. At approximately 02.00 in the morning the respondent was woken up by gunshot sounds.

***“It was dark and I heard shooting from a gun, I woke up scared. I saw people running and I heard more shots. I realized police was surrounding us. I heard them approaching shooting and yelling ‘sit down’”.***

Around 12-13 police officers were surrounding the area where the group was sleeping, pointing guns at them. The group were forced to stand up and make a line and start walking down hill, all while police walking beside them pointing guns at them.

***“The mountain was very steep and full of rocks. It was very difficult to walk, especially for people in the group that had injured legs from walking previous days.”***

They were walking downhill for an hour until they reached the valley where ten police vans were parked.

***“We call them sardine cans, because they are completely closed, no air and they stuff you inside so you can’t move at all.”***

There was more police next to the vans, they were wearing ski masks covering their faces.

***“Those are the ones beating, they were beating us with sticks. Before they put us in vans, they search us completely and they take everyone’s phone and smash it. They put the smashed phones in a big bag and took the bag away.”***

Once they were put in vans, they were driven for an hour and a half to a remote area on the green border with BiH. There was a huge bonfire there, prepared in advance. The police made them go out from the vans one by one and instructed them to take their bags and throw them in the fire.

***“They said to us to take our luggage and throw it in the fire and then stand on the right side next to it. Everyone was forced to do this.”***

When the burning of the belongings was done, the police told them to start walking, they were walking between a mountain and a steep valley. Police was escorting them for ten minutes, then they told them to continue walking by themselves, they just showed them the direction from Croatia into Bosnia. They were walking for six hours until they reached Bihać.

...

**Testimony 2: taken on 29th October 2019 with a family of three from Iraq (Father 34, children 8 and 9)**

Referring to the same incident, the respondent stated:

***“I was pushed back two times since I arrived (in BiH). First I want to tell you about my first push-back because the police mistreated us so much, it was horrible.”***

The respondent, from Iraq, and his two sons left Bihać (BiH) as part of a group of 150 people travelling on foot into Croatia. They walked three days through the woods and mountains until they arrived to an agreed location.

***“We waited the whole day in the jungle until we fell asleep. In the middle of the night, around 02:00 in the morning I woke up with police voices, gun shots and a flashlight pointing in my face. There was around 40 police coming from all sides surrounding us. They gathered everyone in a group and told us to make a line and start walking downhill.”***

It wasn't a long walk down the mountain, at the bottom of which there were seven police vans (“sardines”) with more officers with masks over their faces. Once they arrived to the vans, the police started searching everyone.

***“There was no police women to search the women, just men searching them. They thought they are hiding something beneath their hijab so they started touching and shaking their heads.”***

Men were forced to take off their jackets and they took away everyone's phone. Some people chosen at random were beaten with sticks. They were put in the vans and driven for around two hours to somewhere close to the border.

The respondent described a fire pit made by the police:

***"2×1 meters with fire already burning. They forced us to throw everything inside the fire. They put the phones in a plastic bag and held it over the fire a little bit, pretending like they will burn them, then they took them away somewhere, keeping them for themselves."***

Again they were put in vans, driving around at high speed and on bumpy roads that made people inside the vans start throwing up

***"We were drinking water from the ground and my son got poisoned from it, he was throwing up a lot. I asked them to take us to the hospital but they refused. They didn't really talk to us, they just pointed fingers."***

The police stopped the vans by a very steep road ("like slide") and pointed the group to start walking in complete darkness without having any possibility to see where they were going. The transit group stumbled down the hill into BiH. They were walking for six hours until reaching a village 30 minutes from Bihać where they took a taxi to return to the camp.

**27/09/2019**

**"COME BACK TO BOSNIA, THERE IS NO ASYLUM FOR YOU."**

**Date and time:** September 27, 2019 18:00

**Location:** Grabovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.973659, 15.650234

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 22, 25, 26, 26, 30 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, water immersion, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 10 Croatian Interventna police officers, 1 police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A transit group of five Algerian men travelled from Velika Kladuša (BiH) into Croatia, with the intention of reaching Zagreb (HR). At approximately 18:00 on 27th September 2019, the group were apprehended in the town of Grabovac (HR) by ten Croatian Interventna police officers.

The men were stopped by police as they were walking through the urban area of Grabovac. Eight Croatian Interventna police officers were stood outside of a marked police vehicle and two were waiting inside the van. The authorities were dressed in black shirts with the Croatian flag stitched to the uniform, and wearing black trousers.

The respondent asked for asylum and in response an officer asked to see his documents. The respondent displayed his Bosnian issued documents, but the officer responded, "This is Croatia" and punched the respondent in the right eye, breaking his glasses. The respondent expressed his request for protection again, stating: "I need asylum". But the officer responded:

***"Come back to Bosnia. There is no asylum for you."***

The group were told to board the rear part of the police van, meanwhile they were hit with batons by the officers as they entered the vehicle. The group recalls the van as a white vehicle without windows. The men sat on either side of the van on benches without seat belts. Inside the rear there was a sunroof which was closed.

Respondents were unsure of the amount of time they spent in the van because they vomited several times and began to feel dizzy and weak because of the heat and the winding journey. The temperature inside the van was exceptionally hot and there was no light inside the vehicle. The driver was reported to have maneuvered the vehicle with additional turns and at a very high speed. The respondent banged his hands on the partition of the van (separating compartment and cabin). He shouted to the driver, "stop, please stop!"

When the vehicle finally stopped and the respondents were allowed to exit, there were eight Croatian Interventna police standing in two lines outside of the exiting doors of the van. The authorities were wearing the same black uniforms, but this time equipped with black ski masks and headlamps. The respondent reported the authorities were also wearing what appeared to be boxing gloves. As the men were told to exit the vehicle, the authorities used batons about half a meter long to beat the individuals as they exited. Officers used their fists and gloves to punch individuals on the face, shoulders, and backs one by one and then demanded the next person exit the van in order to receive the same treatment.

Once outside of the van the authorities took personal belongings from the individuals. First they cut the straps of all five backpacks, then emptied the objects out of each backpack. The respondents were permitted to keep perishable food, but all food containers were confiscated. One *Eurocream* (chocolate spread) container was confiscated and burned because, according to the respondent, the officers suspected that the men were hiding valuable items inside food containers. Officers confiscated four phones, four power banks, five pairs of shoes, five pairs of trousers, five shirts, four sleeping bags, and seven jackets. The confiscated items were burned in a fire, except for one phone and a total of 150 euros, which were taken and put in one officer's pockets.

After the individuals were left with only their boxers and the remnants of their bags, they were lined up horizontally along the river and told to look down. The respondent states he was shivering.

***“As I was shaking a police officer threw water from a bottle on me and said ‘I help you, I help you!’ I was so cold and I told him “my heart, my heart please stop”***

The individuals were then told to lay face down on the ground and authorities proceeded to stomp on their backs and use their feet to kick their torso and ribs. The respondents were told to keep their heads down or they would be beaten for looking up. Then one officer commanded, “When I say ‘go’, you go.” The same officer yelled, “Go!” and as the individuals attempted to stand up they were beaten with batons again. The only direction to run was into the river. The ones who did not run immediately were beaten harder on their backs with the batons. The respondent reports that the baton being used on him by the closest officer broke in half because of the force used to wield it against his back.

After crossing the river and out of Croatian territory, the respondent walked in the dark and in only boxers, heading through the forest from Šturlić to Velika Kladuša (BiH) with no shoes.

**26/09/2019**

**“WE WERE WET. THEY PUT COLD AIR (AIR CONDITIONING). EVERY TIME ONE OF US CLOSING EYES, DRIVER DO LIKE THIS (IMITATING RECKLESS DRIVING).”**

**Date and time:** September 26, 2019 11:00

**Location:** Croatian border near to Stabandža, BiH

**Coordinates:** 45.140871440951294, 16.078623163556358

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 19, 22, 35 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 12 Croatian officers, 1 police van. Dark blue uniforms with "policija" written on the arm and sewed on Croatian emblem

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 26th September, at approximately 07:00, attached to a HGV (large truck), two Algerian men and a young man from Morocco left Serbia in the direction of Slovenia. After four hours clinging to the vehicle, completely soaked from the pouring rain, the group attempted to alert the driver and stop the truck. One of the men could no longer hang on, or endure the pain and severe cold, so they began to shout and to throw things onto the road to catch the attention of other drivers and stop the truck.

They began to alert people to their presence at approximately 11:00, close to the city of Zagreb (HR). The respondent reports that when the vehicle eventually stopped, the police, described as being dressed in dark blue uniforms, arrived and arrested the three men, putting them into a reported police van.

They drove for what the respondent felt was approximately 10 minutes. The respondent asked where there were going and one of the officers answered "100km away". Nonetheless, one of the other men confirmed that they were able to see a sign on the road in the opposite direction saying "Zagreb, 3km". The men observed this sign very shortly before the van stopped, intimating that the locations they had halted at was still in the outskirts of the city.

The three respondents recall being surprised to discover that they had been brought by the police to what they described as a makeshift garage, rather than to an official station. The conditions were described by the group as unsanitary.

*"It was not a police station, it was like a room, a garage, very dirty, smelling very bad, no nice people."*

The respondents state they were taken inside the empty garage facility. The interior was very dirty and smelt bad. They describe that inside were four chairs, and the men were confronted by three policewomen and five policemen. When they entered one of the men asked for a jacket because he was wet and cold from the journey on the truck. In response to the mans request one of the officers struck him with his police baton, to make him understand that the answer was negative. The same response (baton strike) was given when another person in the group asked to go to the toilet. At some point, a policewoman offered them a bottle of water and a small bag of chips, after which her colleagues started to argue. The respondents suggest that the officers present did not agree with her providing them any food or water.

During their detention, which lasted approximately one hour, the officers took a picture of each person. The men were given boards to hold in front of them with their hands while the photos were taken. As no identity procedure was followed or explained to them, the transit group did not know what was written on the boards, nor the purpose of the pictures.

After this, the transit group report being taken out from the garage and back to the police van. The men were still wet from their initial journey and describe the officers as purposely putting on the air conditioning during the whole drive to make them feel even colder, and induce sickness.

*"It was so cold. We were wet. They put cold air [air conditioning]. Every time one of us closing eyes, driver do like this [imitating reckless driving]. We could not sleep, They did not want us to sleep. Stop and then go and then stop [describing how the driver was stopping the van abruptly many times]. I vomited several times."*

The group was driven in these conditions for what they felt lasted four hours. Then, the two officers dropped them at the border close to BiH, where four other officers were waiting for them. They were described by respondents as wearing dark blue uniforms and jackets, with "Policija" written on their arms and what they identified the Croatian emblem sewed on. The officer began to beat the men onsite using their batons, failing to return any of the belongings confiscated.

*"The first officers had put our phones in a bag and our money in an envelope. 50 euros, 100 euros. But the border police did not give it back. They kept the money and they beat us with their police batons when we asked for the phones."*

Another respondent commented:

*"I had an operation here [showing the marks on his left arm] but they beat me on my arm. They see the marks and beat harder."*

The group appealed to the officers explaining that they were coming from Serbia and wanted to ask for asylum in Croatia. But the officers pushed them back to Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country from which they had not entered Croatian territory. According to the groups description, the location is estimated to be near Stabandža (BiH), on the Croatian side of the border.

After being pushed back, the group walked approximately 20 km till they reached a small village in BiH, where there was a "big mosque". They slept outside in the cold, with no dry clothes or any blankets. The day after, on Friday 27th September, the group noticed a road sign indicating "Bihać 60 km" to the left and "Kladuša 30 km" to the right. They walked all day in order to arrive to Velika Kladuša.

23/09/2019

**“ME ALONE, ALL POLICE. MAYBE 45. FIVE CARS. BINOCULARS. WE WERE FIVE ALGERIAN AND ME MOROCCAN. THEY TOLD MY FRIENDS 'GO' AND ME 'STAY'. THEY BEAT ME.”**

**Date and time:** September 23, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Croatian border near Šturlić

**Coordinates:** 45.05399954456475, 15.741286969531302

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 20-40 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, water immersion, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, pushing into river

**Police involved:** Croatian officers wearing black uniforms and green masks, 5 police cars

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On 23rd September, after one day walking in the Croatian forest, the transit group of five were caught and surrounded by what the respondent recognized as five cars from the Croatian police. According to the interviewee, there were between 25 and 45 officers. The respondent expressed how he still felt fear, even after the events of being seized, stating:

***“Me alone, all police. Maybe 45. Five cars. Binoculars. We were five Algerian and me Moroccan. They told my friends ‘go’ and me ‘stay’. They beat me.”***

The interviewee described how he was surrounded by a large group of officers, dressed in black and wearing green ski masks. The police told his companions to go away in one direction, and had him walk to the other side of a path. Once they had isolated the respondent, they broke his phone and removed his bag with his clothes. They struck him several times with police batons and kicked him, causing injuries to his back which are pictured below.

Describing the following actions of the police, the respondent explained how the officers took him to the top of a hill which led down to a river (the Korana). The respondent states:

*“They pushed me into the river from the top of the mountain (hill).”*

While falling down, the respondent injured himself on his legs, neck and hands as he was rolling down through the bushes. The pictures below detail the injuries incurred in this fall.

The officers forced the respondent back into BiH territory and the group walked back to their initial departure point, finding they had been ejected in a location close to Šturlić.

*“When me down, I walked and there (pointing at location on map) was Šturlić. I walked 26km to Velika Kladuša.”*

**22/09/2019**

**“I WAS ON THE GROUND AND THEY BEAT ME ON THE HEAD WITH THEIR BATONS. I FEEL DIZZY (IMITATING DIZZINESS AND FAINTING).”**

**Date and time:** September 22, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Rijeka, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.3270631, 14.442176000000018

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: 20-40 years old , from: Pakistan, Syria, Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers dressed with blue shirts and black jackets, with emblem of Croatian police sewed on, 1 police car, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

It was night time on 22nd September 2019 when a group of six people, three Moroccans and three Algerians, who had left from Šturlić (BiH) five days before, were caught by the Croatian police near Rijeka (HR). The respondent described four officers dressed with blue shirts and black jackets. They had the emblem of the Croatian police sewn onto their uniform.

The six people was taken to a police station in Rijeka and detained for approximately two hours. The respondent said that there was a policewoman among the officers at the police station. There, the officers took their picture, their fingerprints, and had them sign a paper, although no translator was present to explain the content. The six people were also denied food and water.

Then the group had to enter in a white police van with six other people: two from Syria, four from Pakistan. The passengers now numbered twelve (and will be referred to during the rest of the testimony as an entire transit group). The merged transit groups were driven to the border with Bosnia, another police car accompanying the van in escort fashion.

Once at the border, the twelve people had to walk under police supervision for about one kilometer to a place where there was a “block of concrete” and six officers waiting for them. Describing the following events, the respondent stated that the officers stood by the concrete border marker:

***“took our phones, our backpacks, our sleeping bags. And they beat us.”***

The respondent described how the police wielded batons and beat him, striking him several times on different parts of his body. All twelve people were beaten by the officers, “one by one”. The six officers waiting at the border stood in a line as the group were ordered to move forward. As the transit group passed (with the officers on their left hand side, the police began kicking and beating with fists and batons.

One person was struck on the head, causing multiple lacerations to the skin, bruising and blood loss. Describing the ordeal the respondent shared:

***“I was on the ground and they beat me on the head with their batons. I feel dizzy (imitating dizziness and fainting).”***

After the beating, the transit group was told to leave and cross back into BiH. They started walking in the dark of the night and arrived in Velika Kladuša, approximately twelve kilometers away, on the morning of 23rd September 2019. The exact location of the pushback is unknown given that none of the group had any phones left to check the GPS (given all items were kept by the police). Moreover, it was night time, the people-on-the-move were in shock, and the one beaten on his head was bleeding and needed assistance to walk, as he was feeling dizzy. The respondent also shared that the group was very afraid that the police would follow them to make sure they would not walk back.

**18/09/2019**

## **“THEY WERE LAUGHING AND THEY BURNED MY CLOTHES”**

**Date and time:** September 18, 2019 01:00

**Location:** Vela Voda, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.405349, 14.698418

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 25-34 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), threatening with guns, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian Special Forces officers in green uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On 17th of September 2019 at approximately 7.00 a group of eight men in transit from Algeria and Morocco were stopped in Vela Voda (HR) in a mountainous area in the woods. The respondent pinned the location where the group was stopped on *maps me*, data which has provided the geolocation for this report. The group was stopped by six Croatian Special Forces officers wearing dark green uniforms. An unspecified number of officers were wearing black ski masks. The officers had pistols which they held in the direction of the respondent in order to intimidate the group.

All bags were taken from the group in transit and confiscated by the officers, along with clothing and shoes. Twenty euros were taken from the respondent and put into the pocket of one Croatian Special Forces officer. Six phones confiscated from the group were broken with batons by the officers. The broken remains of the men's phones were then put into a pile with their clothing and shoes, and set on fire.

*"They were laughing and they burned my clothes."*

The respondent reports that the authorities were laughing as their personal belongings were being destroyed in the fire. While the items were burning, authorities in black ski masks used batons to hit the respondent and his companions on the legs, causing at least one individual to bleed from his lower leg.

The group was forcibly removed from the wooded area and transported in two white police vans to Rijeka police station. They were detained at the station, during which time they were denied food. There was no translator present at the station. The respondent expressed intention for asylum, but got no response from the officers present. The officers only wanted to gather if the men had documents, aside from this, they did not speak to the detained transit group.

*"They asked for passport and documents. We don't have. Then they stop talking to us."*

Following this question there were no further conversations with the authorities in the station.

At 20:00, after approximately thirteen hours in detainment in the station in Rijeka (HR), the group was told to board two separate police vans. The respondent was placed inside a van along with others. The rear compartment had no windows, and they were locked in for approximately five hours, while the driver maneuvered the vehicle in a very erratic fashion. The respondent reports that the male officer who was driving made fast, sharp turns which made the group inside feel sick. The respondent vomited several times during the course of the journey.

The van drove through the night, stopping early the next day (approximately 01:00, 18th September 2019). The group had been driven to a point in Croatia near to the border with BiH, close to the town of Velika Kladuša. It was dark when the officer opened the van doors and unloaded the group. Here they were ejected from Croatian territory into BiH.

**15/09/2019**

## **“THEY TELL ME 'NO. NO ASYLUM.'”**

**Date and time:** September 15, 2019 10:00

**Location:** Sisak, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.44907300000001, 16.37213500000007

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 30, 30, 34 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pepper spray, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian regular police in blue short sleeve uniforms with Croatian flag, 2 Croatian police vans

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On 15th of September at 10:00 a group of six Moroccan men in transit approached the train station in Sisak (HR). Croatian regular police in blue uniforms with short sleeve button down shirts (with sewn in Croatian flag) spotted three of the men from the group. The respondent, and two others, were less than 20 meters from Sisak train station, but while trying to enter the train station they were captured by Croatian police. Two officers were outside of the ticket booth in the train station and two were inside vans outside of the train station. In total two Croatian police vans were present.

Upon apprehension the respondent asked for asylum three times. He stated:

*‘I ask them “Help me, I want asylum in your country,” but they [Croatian regular police] tell me “No. No asylum.”’*

*Then they tell me "No water. No food." They just ask me two questions "Where are you from?" and "Where are you going?" That's it. Just two questions.'*

The three men were ordered into one of the police vans. They sat on benches on either side of the van and had no seat belts. The respondent and companions were denied water by the officers. There was no translator present. The van drove the three men from Sisak to border of Croatia with Bosnian. The respondent described the location as close to the Bosnian border town of Velika Kladuša.

At the border the three men were unloaded from the van by the Croatian police. The officers took the respondents' three phones, three sleeping bags, three backpacks, and three pairs of shoes. In addition, one of the officers used pepper spray, directing it onto the respondents. The respondents were then hit on the back and shoulders with batons by several of the officers present and forced towards BiH territory.

The three respondents then walked for two hours back to Velika Kladuša with no shoes, and having had all their belongings confiscated.

**13/09/2019**

## **"WHEN THE DOGS ATTACK YOU, THE POLICE DOESN'T STOP THEM. THEY SMILE AND CONGRATULATE THEM."**

**Date and time:** September 13, 2019 17:00

**Location:** Koranski Lug, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.04429724406873, 15.755019879687552

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: 22-37 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, water immersion, dog attacks, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian officers of whom at least four were wearing face-masks

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of nine young adults, six Moroccan and three Algerian, arrived in Šturlić (BiH) on Thursday 12th September 2019 and waited for the cover of the night to cross the border into Croatia. The following day (13th September 2019), as they walked in the forest in Croatia,

approximately 7 km in from the border, two dogs appeared out of nowhere and attacked them, biting one of the men's arm (see Figure 1). In the meantime, six Croatian officers arrived on the scene; two on foot, and four in a van that the interviewee described as a white Croatian police vehicle. The interviewee described how, as the dogs attacked:

*"The police did not say 'stop'. There were two dogs; one had a muzzle, the second didn't. The dogs made us fall on the ground. My friend protected his face with his arm and was bitten by the dog."*

During the apprehension of the nine men, the interviewee described how the Croatian police encouraged the dogs behavior. Stating:

*"When the dogs attack you, the police doesn't stop them. They smile and congratulate them."*

The interviewee explained how the nine men in the group were then assaulted by the police officers. They were each struck several times on their body by the six officers, who wielded batons. After beating them, the officers asked for their bags, their phones, their money and had the men take off their shoes. The officers then burnt all the confiscated shoes, and bags.

*"They take bags and shoes and make a [describes a pile with hand gestures] and burn all [making the gesture of a lighter]."*

After this, the transit group was put in the police van which had initially arrived on the scene, and were then driven to the border. The interviewee felt that the drive lasted 25 to 30 minutes. When they arrived at the location, estimated to be near Koranski Lug (Croatia) given the respondent indications on the map, the officers put on face masks and started to kick them with their feet and struck them again with police batons.

*"We had to go out of the van and run. [There were] two officers on each side. They beat us with batons. They insult us. After we had to walk all night without nothing. No bags, no shoes, no food. They took our money too."*

It was around 17:00 (13th September 2019) when the police officers indicated to them the Korana river separating Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and ordered them to cross and leave. Barefoot, the group started its way back to Velika Kladuša (BiH), walking slowly because of the pain from their injuries, and without any food owing to the fact it had been taken with their bags and burnt. They finally arrived in Velika Kladuša on 14th September 2019, the day after their pushback. During the following days, the group looked to the help of volunteers to get new clothes, having lost much of theirs to the police when their bags were burnt. They also

sought medical assistance for their injuries. The person bitten by the dog was taken to the hospital in Bihać (see Figure 2), and treated there three days after the wound was inflicted.

According to the medical record (see Figure 2), the injury on his arm matches with the type of wound received from the bite of a police dog, corroborating the testimony of the interviewee, namely that Croatian police had set dogs on the group three days earlier, causing serious injury. Aside from the dog bite, the man's wrist was injured and he suffered reduced mobility. The x-ray at the hospital revealed a fracture (see Figure 3), showing that the strength of the dog bite had broken his bones.

10/09/2019

## “THE DOG WAS JUMPING ALL OVER MY BODY AND CHEST”

**Date and time:** September 10, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Rijeka, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.344892, 14.456509

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 22-28 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), water immersion, dog attacks, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 9 Croatian police officers wearing all black clothing and black ski masks revealing only their eyes

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent in this incident traveled in a group of five Moroccans. The respondent stated he had been living outside of the formal camps in BiH for eleven months and this was his thirteenth attempt at crossing the border. He began his journey from Velika Kladuša (BiH) and walked for five days through Croatia, reaching the city of Rijeka (HR).

On 10th September, the respondents group walked through the forest and followed a river towards Rijeka. Here, they were stopped by nine Croatian police officers wearing all black clothing and black ski masks revealing only their eyes. One police officer took his gun from his side holster and pointed it at the men as he commanded the group, “Stop and sit.” The same officer then told the group,

*"We are coming with an army and they are bringing more dogs."*

At the site of apprehension, one dog (of an unspecified breed) was present with the police force. The dog did not have a muzzle and was encouraged by the police officers to jump on the respondent's body. The dog jumped up onto the respondents chest and snapped its jaws in the mans face. The dog did not bite the respondent or break skin with its teeth, but the dog did leave several scratch marks along the respondent's forearms.

Then a police officer asked the respondent to remove his phone from his pocket. The same officer asked the respondent for his passcode and proceeded to look through the contents of his personal phone. The respondent was unsure of what the officer was looking for. The respondent asked for asylum at the point of apprehension and received no response from the officer who continued to search through his phone.

The police officers confiscated all five bags from the transit group and the all the items contained in them, including clothing and two wallets. The police removed money from the wallet then returned the empty wallet to the respondent. The money, totaling up to 55 euros, was put in the officer's pocket. Shoes were removed by the officers from all five men. The five bags, clothing, and five pairs of shoes, along with several blankets were laid into a pile and then set on fire by the police.

The site of apprehension was by a river, and after the men had been stripped of shoes and jacket, one of the police officer pushed the respondent into the river. Some of the apprehending police officers left after this incident, and some others loaded the transit group into a van.

The group was transported in what the respondent described as one white police van. There were no windows on the van and the group experienced very reckless driving. The group was in the van for about 4.5 hours. The group was forced to exit the van in Maljevac (HR) near the Croatian-Bosnian border where they were ordered to walk back to BiH.

**04/09/2019**

**"I DON'T KNOW WHAT I SIGN. NO TRANSLATOR. HE TOLD ME 'SIGNE ET DÉGAGE' ('SIGN AND FUCK OFF'). HE DID NOT LET ME READ."**

**Date and time:** September 4, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Sekulići, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.7325227, 15.308048699999972

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 22-24 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 10 officers dressed in green and wearing ski masks, 3 police cars

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On September, 2nd, 2019 at 5.00, a 24 year old man from Morocco started his journey from Velika Kladuša, small town in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) close to the Croatian border. Accompanied by four other young men from Algeria, the man walked for several days with the intention of reaching Ljubljana, Slovenia.

After two days walking in the forest with a small bag carrying limited food and only one change of clothes, the transit group arrived near the border between Croatia and Slovenia, at the North of Sekulići (Croatia). That night, three police cars arrived with ten officers dressed in green and wearing ski masks. The police quickly approached the transit group. Other group members manage to run away ,but the respondent and one other friend were circled by the officers.

***“They use binoculars. They put the cars and they hide.”***

This initial seizure occurred in the early hours of 4th September between 03:00 and 04:00. The spot in which the two remaining group members (from now on referred to as transit group) were captured was described as forest, located on what the interviewee called *“a mountain”*, in reference to the steep woodland of the Croatian countryside.

When the two men were circled on the hill, an officer approached the respondent and pushed him down the slope, causing the respondent to fall directly into the trees and bushes where he injured his leg.

Recalling the assault, the respondent described how he was forcibly pushed to the ground, stating:

***“One police push me and I fell on my leg”.***

The transit group were then taken to a police station in a police car. The respondent didn't know the location, but felt the transportation lasted between 50 minutes and one hour. According to the respondent, they arrived at this location at around 5.00. Inside the police station, the officers wrote down their names and country of origin , took his friend's phone and all their money. The respondent was seen by a medic that checked his leg which was severely injured. They were not able to drink, eat or go to the toilets and were asked to sign a paper without understanding it. Recalling the procedure the respondent stated:

*"I don't know what I sign. No translator. He told me 'signe et dégage' ['sign and fuck off']. He did not let me read".*

The transit group were then transported in a police van to a point at the border with BiH, approximately 8 km from Velika Kladuša (BiH). The pair were forced to cross the border back into Bosnia. The respondent was feeling dizzy and limping because of his leg, and thus struggled to return. The day after (on 5th September), he met volunteers in Velika Kladuša who took him to the hospital, in order to be checked by a doctor and receive a dressing on his injury.

31/08/2019

**"I WAS NEVER TREATED LIKE THIS BEFORE... IT IS HORRIBLE... THEY TREAT US LIKE ANIMALS... AS WE DON'T HAVE ANY RIGHTS..."**

**Date and time:** August 31, 2019 23:30

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1555213, 19.14918720000003

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 25-32 , from: Morocco, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, burning personal belongings

**Police involved:** 4-6 croatian border police officers, 2 big white police vans, one small car

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken, beating and kicking, burning personal belongings

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen, Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the night of 31st of August a group of three men, two from Tunisia and one from Morocco, aged 25-32 were walking near the town of Slakovci (HR). They had been walking for three days in the Croatian interior. Soon after their arrival in Slakovci, two Croatian police officers dressed in black detected the three men. The respondent said that the two officers called their colleagues and after some time two big white police vehicles arrived. The respondent recalled how the police searched the men and asked for their personal information, including country of origin and name. The young men did as they were asked. Subsequently, the police started to search through their backpacks as well.

One of the men asked for asylum and the police flatly denied him. When they finished the inspection, the police asked the young men to get inside one of the police vans brought to the scene. The young men were sat together in one vehicle while their back bags and phones were searched further by the police.

After the initial two responding officers, a further four had joined, making the total at the site of apprehension six. The three men who had been loaded into one van drove, in escort with the other van, to the town of Torvanik (HR). The driver of the van in which they were held drove very fast and rattled the vehicle about the road. After a twenty minute drive the vehicles stopped near the train station *Zeljeznicki Kolodvor Tovarnik* (32249 Tovarnik, Croatia). The respondent recalled how the van was parked next to an electrical fuse box stood by the roadside. The respondent estimated that this fuse box was approximately 600 meters away from the train station.

***“It was near the Tovarnik station. It is exactly 600m away from Tovarnik station. This spot where they took us. The drive was very short, only 20 minutes. And on purpose, they drove very fast and didn’t care about us. How we feel while driving”.***

After arriving to this spot, the respondent stated that the officers then began to unload the men from the vans one by one and confiscate their clothing and shoes.

***“As soon as we were at the fuse box station, the border police called one by one, not all at the same time. That was strange for me, that never happened to me before like this. One after one, the first one was my friend. But we couldn’t see what the police was doing with him. Because we were in the car and the door was closed. So, we didn’t know what was happening. After I get out of the car, I have seen my friend’s shoes (of the first man) on the ground. I could recognize immediately the shoes of my friend”.***

The respondent said when it was his turn, he could see the shoes of his friend on the ground and next to the shoes he found the backpack of his friend.

The police asked the respondent to take off his jacket and his shoes. The respondent followed the orders and gave everything to the officers.

The respondent asked for his phone to be returned, which it was. But the officers denied giving him back his backpack. One of the police officers tried to punch the respondent in the face, but couldn’t reach. The young man fled, running away from the attempted blows of the officer. He ran back across the border to Šid (SRB), but having had his shoes removed, was forced to do so barefoot. In total, he ran for 8 km.

The third man in the van was then forced to exit by the officers. They coerced him also to remove his shoes and jacket. Four police officers started to beat him up. They kicked him brutally and pushed him to the ground. They kicked his face and back with heavy boots fitted

with steel toe caps. While some of the police officers were beating the third man, the rest of the policemen made a fire and threw all confiscated backpacks and shoes, charging cables, money and other personal belongings in the fire.

***“As the police were beating me, they made immediately a fire and I have seen how our clothes and back bags got burned... ”***

After the police were done with destroying the items, the third man walked back to Šid (SRB) barefoot and with no jacket on. The men state that the eventual pushback across the border occurred at around 23:30. When describing the treatment at the hands of the Croatian police, specifically the beating, the respondent stated:

***“I was never treated like this before... It is horrible... They treat us like animals... As we don't have any rights..”***

**26/08/2019**

## **“MADAM, WHY CROATIA NO GIVE STAY [DOCUMENT] TO UNDERAGE PEOPLE?”**

**Date and time:** August 26, 2019 04:00

**Location:** near Gašnica, 47km north of Banja Luka, BiH

**Coordinates:** 45.18535378718172, 17.078589730864223

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 30 person(s), age: 16-35 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 3+ regular Croatian police officers, 2 police cars, 2 police vans, 11 Croatian Intervention police officers, 3 dogs

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of 30 Pakistani men concerned in this incident had been travelling for three days, having left from Bosnia-Herzegovina to seek international protection in a safe country. The respondent suggests that while crossing through a small village, composed of three to four

houses, a local woman had seen the group and called the police. The respondent asserts this occurred at approximately 04:00.

The group walked on a little further, at which point three policemen described as wearing pale blue shirts and dark blue trousers reportedly came out of the trees. The respondent suggests that a number of other officers could be seen in the woods, attempting to look for other people in transit.

Upon spotting the respondents group, one police officer fired his gun in the air and some of the people in the group stopped directly, while some others tried to run away. However, the police officers were accompanied by dogs, which the police set upon the transit group, urging the animals to run at the people trying to escape. Three dogs with muzzles were used to stop one person trying to run away. No one in the group got injured at this point, but they feared injury from the aggression of the dogs and their police handlers. According to the respondent, when the police caught the transit group, they used a baton to beat people, in order to prevent them from running away again.

The police gathered all the members of the group and took their bags, they also performed a frisk search of all of them. According to the respondent, the transit group had to undress, and were only allowed to keep their underwear on. The police took phones and money, along with any other belongings that had monetary value. In the end, the police only gave the transit group their clothes back. At one point, an officer began asking questions to the group. He held a baton which he struck people occasionally with, meanwhile scrolling through their confiscated phones,

*"Checking all people bags, and after destroy all things, destroy shoes, pocket money. How you come, how are locations, who knows location, why? It is too much torture, why they must know location"*

*"He think, 'where is the boss?' only seek 'where is your boss?'  
I said, 'I don't know', police deport? No boss in this game.  
Beating people. 'Where is your boss? Show me your boss!' I said, 'no boss in here, boss run away.'"*

According to the interviewee, the main interest of the officer was to find whom in the group was in charge of smuggling.

One of the respondents was a minor. He was a 17 year old from Pakistan. He said he had stated his age verbally to the officer, but the police officer did not acknowledge his statement. The minor in question had initially tried to evade the police at the site of apprehension, but was instead caught and beaten (see description of assault above).

*"My age is 17 but because you know small people stay here [in camp], but why? Why 17 year age , I am not a big age, I am under 18 age! They say police talk you no 17! 21, 22. It's not original age, but Croatia police [says so]."*

The respondent reports that the police officers then made the group walk to a road where two police vans were parked. They were detained on site for approximately two hours with this police team. Fifteen people were loaded into each van and were driven to the border, north of Banja Luka (BiH) by the Croatian officers. The two officers driving the vans were reportedly wearing the same blue uniform. The driving conditions were hard to sustain, and according to the respondent:

*"It was very hot in there, and very difficult in there, and a few people going to nearly on the dead point. Too much problem there.  
Yes have many people vomiting. Maybe 2 hours [drive]"*

When the vans arrived at the border, different officers from those at the site of apprehension opened the doors and the group were ordered to go out one by one in a line. The officers were described as wearing black uniform with a belt and carrying a big baton, and the approximate number of officers present was eleven. They were all wearing ski-masks with the exception of only one officer. The officers beat the transit group with batons and used dogs, setting the animals to run at them. The dogs chased the transit group at their heels towards Bosnia-Herzegovina. The group ran in terror, and many of the group members reported falling down and hurting themselves from impact on the ground. The respondent described the violence of the final moments of the pushback as follows:

*'Go out all people , one line, go one, go one, and open the door, stick and dogs run back all people. [...] He say all people "go, go! Heide", and after he is open the door the dogs run at the back of people. People fall down. All people, one, two person, broken his bones, shoulder, when they fall down.'*

21/08/2019

## "THEY CLOSE THE DOOR AFTER EACH ONE"

**Date and time:** August 21, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Rijeka, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.3270631, 14.442176000000018

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: 15-30 years old , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, electric shock, gunshots, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings, pushing into a river

**Police involved:** 9 Croatian officers (Green uniforms) and 6 Croatian officers (black uniforms without flags or emblems), 1 Croatian police van without windows in the back

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent left Sturlić (BiH) at approximately 03:00 on 15th August 2019. He traveled along with a group of eleven other people from Algeria, all Kabyle.

The transit group, including four minors, had been walking in the forest for six days when they were apprehended by Croatian officers while passing by agricultural fields („pistes agricoles“) near Rijeka (see map below). This initial police contact occurred at 6:00 on 21st August 2019. According to the respondent, the area was watched by drones and helicopters; the officers were hidden in the fields and wearing green uniforms. The transit group heard someone shouting:

**“Stop!”**

Then the officers emerged and ran at the transit group. The respondent tried to run away but claims he was attacked by an officer using a taser. The weapon was handheld, and used to shock the respondent with a electrical current.

**“It was a taser like for the beard [electric razor], wireless“.**

Nine officers suddenly surrounded the group from all sides and held them at this point.

The respondent tried to make a video of what was happening with his phone. An officer asked what he was doing and then the respondent stopped. The officer seized the phone and immediately began demanding the passcode in order to look up the GPS route the men were taking via the google maps application. The other officers began to frisk and remove all items from the other men:

**“First they asked phones, then knives, bladed weapons, power banks, and then money. They love money. [Then] they undressed us. Completely. To see if we [were hiding] something.“**

The respondent said that his group asked to “go to camp“, but the answer they got from the officers was negative. After that, the people from the group were beaten several times by the officers who were using police batons, and then forced to enter into the back of a police van with no windows, where they were held for what the respondent felt was fourteen hours. During this time they were not allowed access to a toilet, or offered anything to eat or drink

anything. The respondent stressed how they found it difficult to breathe during their containment, due to the high temperature inside.

***“They beat us and after they take us in the truck. Very hot. There were fans to breathe but they did not put them on.”***

When the van started, they were driven to what the respondent thinks was a police station:

***“I know because there were holes in the [side of the van] and I saw... and [we could hear] the keys. [...] We stayed 14 hours. From 07:00 to 22:00. No toilets. Nothing. I asked ‘water’ but no reply.”***

Later, at night, the twelve people were taken within the same van to the border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The respondent recalls the location as near to Velika Kladuša, next to the river.

There, six officers described as being dressed in black and wearing ski masks were waiting for them, aligned on one side.

***“When they beat me I try see name, sign... but nothing (in reference to their uniform).”***

***“They made us go one by one. They had masks, headlamps so we cannot see them. They close the door after each one. Six, like this (showing on a paper with his finger) in line and beat us one after the other. They let one go out and close the door [of the van].”***

When taken, one by one, out of the van, the officers first removed the individuals shoes and tossed their bag onto an already lit fire. Then they kicked and beat each transit group member separately. The respondent described being beaten with police batons, especially targeted towards his joints (elbows, wrists, knees), and punched in the stomach. When the police had finished with one person, the officers kicked that person into the river and opened the door of the van for the next person to suffer the same treatment.

***“The last one had his shoulder dislocated. The first and the last they beat [them] too much.”***

Referring to the vulnerability of the group, the respondent stated:

***“We have minors. Disabled. Problem. Not good.”***

***“I said them ‘we have disabled [person]’. Look (showing the feet of his friend). Several operations. Problem.”***

But according to the respondent, the police officers questioned how the man had already made transit into Croatia, and questioned the persons disability. To the last person exiting the van, an officer handed a bag containing their phones.

### ***“a bag – all broken“***

Once everyone had been removed from the van and beaten, the respondent described how a police officer began shooting in the air with his gun and pushing the men towards the river marking the border. The men were forced into the water by police. The physical expulsion is alleged to have occurred at approximately 20:00 on 21st September 2019, fourteen hours after they were loaded into the van near Rijeka (HR).

Pushed across the river back into BiH, the group walked back to Velika Kladuša, barefoot, without any clothes left, aside from the wet clothes they were wearing, without any money, and without working phones with which they could seek support from friends and family.

**18/08/2019**

## **“I WAS AFRAID OF HAVING MY HEAD SMASHED.”**

**Date and time:** August 18, 2019 22:30

**Location:** near Sturlic, Bosnia-Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 45.031615, 15.759882

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 21-31 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On August 14 at night, a group of ten individuals from Algeria and Morocco left from Sturlic for their transit attempt towards Italy. They walked through the woody and mountainous Croatian inner land for four days. As they were drinking rain water and from small streams and were not very well equipped to walk during these hot days and cold nights, one individual caught fever and continued hiking while taking paracetamol.

*"We saw lots of animals, we saw the bear in the area where you are not allowed to go [note of the reporter: Military training area 'Eugen Kvaternik' in Croatia], but we had to cross. And we slept there. When health is good we say hamdoulillah, it's life."*

The group went through the Croatian military training area "Eugen Kvaternik" (see Fig. 1), aware of the risk of running into Croatian Special Forces who are, according to the respondent, often present for trainings in this area.

Fig. 1: Military area "Eugen Kvaternik" in Croatia

On their fourth day of transit, on August 18 at around 7.00 or 7.30 PM, the group was discovered by three officers whose uniform description matches with Croatian Special Forces, armed with batons and big weapons that the respondent describes as kalashnikovs. (See Fig. 2, estimated coordinates: 45.183399, 15.346270)

Fig. 2: Point of apprehension

*"Maybe they saw us on a trail. We were on a trail and while we walked they came, one behind us and two before us, they were three. One says stop, he shoots with a gun in the air."*

The respondent reports that three men were trying to run away and the officers took this as an excuse to beat four people from the whole group with batons while apprehending them. They were mainly beaten on their torsos and extremities, however one individual was also severely beaten on the head which resulted in a bleeding wound.

*"They did not hit me because I had taken my ventolin spray saying 'I am asthmatic', I showed my ventolin spray to them when they approached me with their batons, I showed it so they spare me. I was afraid of having my head smashed. They hit my friend and another one, and two others."*

It took the three officers five minutes to apprehend the group. They were casually asked their nationality and group size, bodysearched and told that they would hand them over to police. In total, the three officers took six phones, five power banks and 550€ in cash from the whole group which was later given to the second unit. The officers described as Special Forces had a van parked somewhere else and walked around one or two kilometres to get to this point together with the group. The van had camouflage colours and no windows in the back, the whole group was put in the back of it and they drove around one hour to the exit of the military zone – "a gate like an official entrance where it says 'forbidden to enter'".

At this gate, around 8:30 PM on August 18, they were handed over to another unit of three police officers in a van. Two of them were wearing light blue uniforms, one of them a black suit.

*"They say like that 'where are you from, how many people are you', we say we are ten, they search us and they put us in the van."*

*"We said 'Can we make asylum in Zagreb?' and they just replied 'OK OK'. We told the military and the police, both of them said 'OK OK'."*

In this second van, they drove around one hour and thirty minutes while taking several brakes without the door being opened for the group. The respondent describes the back of the van as

very hot and the driving purposely reckless in order to create confusion and vertigo amongst the individuals.

At around 10.30 PM on August 18, the van arrived on a little forest trail near Sturlic (BiH) on the Croatian side of the border (See Fig. 3, estimated coordinates: 45.031615, 15.759882)

Fig. 3: Estimated point of pushback

They opened the door of the van, blinded the individuals with torches and let them exit one by one, standing on both sides of the door while beating them with batons. (See Fig. 4)

Fig. 4: Bled in the inside of the eye resulting from beating with batons

There was another police van with windows present and around five more police officers, all wearing the same black suits like the one officer from the team that was already present at the exit of the military area. At this point, all officers were smelling strongly of alcohol.

Next to the van, there was a fire lit and all individuals were forced to burn their luggage.

*"You got out from the van and he asks you where is your bag, you say 'this one', he tells you 'take it' and you find fire and he tells you 'put it inside'."*

After that, the officer pushed them towards Sturlic from where the group had to walk back to Velika Kladusa around 25 kilometres.

**18/08/2019**

## **"GO GAME. SLEEP AND WALK. EAT LITTLE. THAT IS HOW I CELEBRATE EID."**

**Date and time:** August 18, 2019 01:30

**Location:** Near Štrbački Buk

**Coordinates:** 44.6560109, 16.0097328

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 84 person(s), age: 10-45 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 2 regular Croatian police officers, 4 Croatian intervention police, 10 Croatian army officers, unknown number of Croatian police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 17th of August 2019, a group of 84 Pakistani men and minors, aged 10 to 45, were apprehended by Croatian army officers near the Croatian-Slovenian border in the forest at approximately 09:00. The respondent, a 23-year-old Pakistani man, described how the group had gone on “game” during Eid, stating:

*“Sleep and walk. Eat little. That is how I celebrate Eid.”*

Contact with authorities began when two army officers came upon a few members of the group and told them to be silent. These two army officers called in eight other officers, who then surrounded the group, some of whom were sleeping. These officers instructed the men in the group to “come and sleep” by which they meant they wanted the men to lie flat on the ground face-first, which the men and minors did.

Then two army officers began taking bags and inspecting them along with blankets and clothes. The transit group were then frisked and asked if they were carrying weapons. The army officers instructed the group to remove all their shoes and put them in their bags, so they would not be able to run. After this, they instructed the men to “sleep” again. The men lay face down on the ground for another five to ten minutes until a van arrived.

The group was put into a line and made to walk about five minutes through the forest until they reached train tracks. The entire group was still without shoes while walking, as they had not been allowed yet to put them back on. Before having the group walk in this line, the army officers took about 25 members of the group and, in smaller groups of four to five, tied their right hands together. This was done to those that were the first in the line to ensure that they were not able to run away.

Once the group reached the train tracks, they walked another 11 to 12 minutes along the train tracks until they reached a train station. The men then sat at this train station while police vans arrived. The men were put into police vans, with about 17 to 18 men put into each van. All the vans were thus overcrowded. They were all driven to a police station, with the drive taking approximately an hour and thirty minutes. The respondent states that this was not a good police station:

*“Very bad, small. Has one big room where all [84] people go and inside is one plastic toilet and one water shower.”*

At the police station, the respondent was given a sheet of paper in Urdu. This paper instructed him to fill out his name, nationality, name of village, name of parents, where he is going. After filling out this sheet, the respondent signed it at the bottom and the police took a photograph of him with this sheet of paper. The police did not take any fingerprints from the respondent. At the police station, the respondent asked for asylum. The police told him:

*“No, don’t have asylum. Go back Bosnia.”*

As for the approximately 11 to 12 minors that were in the group, some as young as 10, the police, according to the respondent, did not treat them differently from the adults. When the minors asked for asylum, the police officers repeated the same answer they gave to the adults:

*“No, no, no. Go [to Bosnia].”*

The respondent stated that he felt he was in the police station for about 10 hours. Four to five people were beaten when exiting the vans to the police station, but the respondent was not beaten during the course of the detainment and pushback. The group was given small amounts of food: one bottle of water, hard biscuit bread and a small piece of chicken.

At nighttime, at around 22:00, the men were loaded into vans again. In the respondent’s van, two police officers wearing light blue shirts and dark pants – a description fitting the regular Croatian police officers – drove the van for approximately two and a half to three hours. The police stopped twice for breaks – the respondent states this was once to go to a restaurant and again for an unknown purpose. During these breaks, the police left the group in the van which was incredibly hot. People vomited inside the van from the heat and the reckless driving.

The police drove the group to the Bosnian border south of Bihać, among “mountains.” At around 01:30 on the following day (August 18th), the police opened the vans and made the groups exit the vans. The respondent only recalls seeing three to four male Croatian officers wearing all black although he is not sure how many there are in total. They were not wearing masks. The respondent states that the police did not beat anyone at the border; however, the police created a fire. In this fire, they threw the group’s “bags, phones, blankets”. The police burned all their belongings, apart from their shoes. The police told the group:

*“You go this way, go down [the mountain], you go to Bihać.”*

The group then walked back to Bihać.

**07/08/2019**

**“THEY LOOK AT US VERY ANGRILY AND SHOW US THEIR BATONS, LETTING US UNDERSTAND THAT THEY WILL USE THEM ON US LATER.”**

**Date and time:** August 7, 2019 22:00

**Location:** near Maljevac border crossing, Bosnia-Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 45.191255, 15.784444

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 23 person(s), age: 25-32 , from: Pakistan, Iraq, unknown

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On July 31 at 10:00AM, a group of fourteen Pakistani men between 25 and 32 years old crossed the Bosnian-Croatian border near Bihać (BiH), where they had been staying in tents in the forest for the previous couple of days.

They walked through forests and mountains for seven days, experiencing high temperatures during daytime and cool weather at night. They ate one piece of bread everyday and drank rain water, as they ran out of drinking water soon after their departure. Due to the fluctuations in weather conditions, one man caught a cold and had to continue the journey while having fever.

*"For seven days, everything was okay, but then the problem started!"*

On August 7 at 2:00PM, in the a forest near the route E65 (approximate coordinates see Fig. 1) the group crossed a dirt road when a white van without any insignia passed by.

Fig. 1.: Estimated place of apprehension

When they saw the van, they tried to hide next to the road, but the van stopped and immediately returned towards them, so they started running into the forest as fast as they could. However, two men in plain clothes got out of the van and started to shoot at them, aiming at their legs, which made the men immediately give up and return to the dirt road with their hands up.

Getting closer to the two men, the respondent saw them properly and described them as two very tall and muscular men in their thirties

*"with the body of police officers, but wearing no police uniforms or boots, just jeans, t-shirts and slippers."*

The men told the respondent and his friends to sit down and take off their shoes in order to make it impossible for them to escape. They spoke English well and explained to the respondent that they were special police and that they would call for more police officers to come.

*"They were asking: 'Why are you going there?' and I said 'I am from Kashmir, the situation is not good there. We are walking for seven days, we are close to Slovenia, please, let us go!'; but they only replied 'It's our duty, we can not let you.'"*

The respondent spent a while talking to the officer about the situation in his home country Kashmir, which they were aware of and interested in. Despite the fact that the two self-proclaimed special police officers were shooting at the men at the beginning, the respondent

had an overall positive impression of them, describing them as *“very nice and respectful”*, unlike the other officers that took them over later on.

After two hours waiting in the forest, a windowless police van arrived and four police officers got out. The respondent described them as ‘local police’ wearing light blue button down shirts, dark blue trousers and black boots.

*“They looked at us very angrily and showed us their batons, letting us understand that they will use them on us later.”*

The newly arrived officers didn’t talk to the group at all, only with the men who apprehended them. The respondent assumed that they already knew each other. They searched all their bags, their bodies, and took their phones, money and power banks. In total the police took 70-100€ from everyone, six phones and four power banks. The whole procedure took around 40-50 minutes and all fourteen men were put into the windowless police van.

They drove around around two or three hours on bumpy roads, being thrown back and forth in the van. Additionally, the car didn’t have air conditioning and it reached an unbearably hot degree.

Arriving at a small police station that the respondent was not able to identify as he no longer had his phone and was disoriented from the car ride, the four officers, who the respondent described as local police, opened the door for a couple of minutes. One of the officers came to the back and asked for the passwords for a couple of the phones. The respondent assumed this was to get information about the transit group’s route. This officer also put his head in the car and asked the group casually where they were from.

Before leaving, they put nine more men in the van from Iraq and other Arabic speaking countries whose nationality the respondent did not know. He estimated most of the men to be in the same age as the respondent’s transit group (25-32), with only one of them significantly older (around 50 years old). They left the police station around 5:00PM with a total of 23 apprehended individuals in the back of the van. They drove for what seemed to be three or four hours, according to the respondent. The car ride was very uncomfortable with the additional people in the vehicle because there was not a seat from everyone.

*“They give a punishment in the van, they know that all people are not in good condition.”*

During the drive, the respondent was talking to a man from Iraq who was heavily injured. Due to the mindset of the respondent after hours of driving, he was not able to identify the place nor the exact time of the pushback, but he estimated it to be at around ten in the evening at a place near the border crossing point Maljevac (HRV, see map, coordinates are estimated).

Two of the police officers who picked the group up from Croatia were standing to the left and right of the van’s door. A couple of meters away from the first two officers, there were two new police officers dressed in black uniforms and were standing in the same line as the first two police. They took the men out of the car two by two.

The officers in blue beat them with batons from both sides and pushed them towards their other colleagues in black, who continued to beat them with sticks and kicked them down a hill towards the Croatian border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. The respondent and some of his friends stumbled and fell down from the kicks of the second officers. From the beating with

batons, the respondent received a visible bruise on his leg and an injured elbow (see Fig. 2 and 3).

Fig. 2: Bruise from beatings with batons

Fig. 3: Injured elbow from beatings with batons

After this treatment, the group of Pakistanis and some of the Arabic speaking men gathered downhill on the Bosnian side of the border because they were exhausted and disoriented. When the two Croatian police officers in black saw them, they followed them in order to beat and push them further towards Bosnia while crossing the border themselves. The officers chased them through a field and then returned to their other colleagues.

They were shouting while they were beating the group and also the men were screaming in pain as they were beaten. The respondent assumed that because of this noise, some of the local Bosnians living in the neighboring houses next to the border called the Bosnian police.

On the other side of the crops field, the fourteen Pakistani and four of the Iraqi men sat down to rest a little bit and to decide what to do and where to go now. The respondent didn't know where the five other Arabic speaking men had gone. The group spent around 5 minutes sitting there when a bunch of police officers with torches approached them. At first they tried to run away as they thought it was a new unit of Croatian police following them, *"but the officers said: As-salam alaykum, we are from Bosnian police."*

*"They asked: 'Where is Croatian police? They deported you?' And I said: 'Yes, they deported us and beat us very badly. They are at the road over there',*

Two Bosnian police officers with torches ran through the field and up the hill to the road with a third officer following behind. They spent a while speaking loudly and angrily to each other on the road while the transit group sat together with some of the other Bosnian police officers. After this interaction with Croatian police, the officers came back, called another van and the group was driven 8-10 minutes to the police station where they were given food and a place to sleep. In the morning, they were brought to the hospital to receive treatment for the injuries they received from Croatian police.

**06/08/2019**

**"THEY ARE GIVING TORTURE TO US. AFTER [SO] THE GUYS NOT COME BACK AGAIN."**

**Date and time:** August 6, 2019 21:00

**Location:** Staro Selo Topusko (CRO) / Poljana (BiH)

**Coordinates:** 45.212255913458996, 15.929094058681358

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 16 - 23 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 3 policemen wearing green army uniform and German flag on the shoulder/ Frontex , 5 policemen blue shirt and dark trouser, 1 policewoman

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of eight Pakistani men began their journey from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Having spent several days moving through Croatia towards Slovenia, the transit group made a break to eat in a forest, near to a river. The group had just begun to eat when suddenly three police officers came out from a car.

The respondents described how the officers wore green military t-shirts and trousers. On the sleeve was a German flag and a blue armband. According to the respondents, the transit group asked the officers where they came from, and the officers explicitly replied that they were from Germany.

The respondents described these three police officers as behaving nicely to them and, suggesting they felt respected by them. The transit group were held at the point of apprehension, staying approximately an hour waiting for another police team to come. While waiting, the officers from Germany asked them about several subjects. First they asked questions about their identity, but the officers did not write anything down.

*“Where are you from, What’s your name, How old are you? They don’t write’[...]They asking about everything, about Islam, about which one country your are relative , what are you doing, where are you going, why you are going to this way, they are asking, discussing this topic.”[...]” they are asking. ‘You are Muslim, Sunni, Shia?’ ‘you believe Allah, God?’”*

The three officers took all the belongings of the group and put the collected items in a bag. The group was frisked and the officers took their chargers, phones, power banks, torches, sleeping bags and their bags. After taking all belongings, one of the officers took a picture of the face of all of them, asking them to smile.

Two vehicles arrived presently, carrying four to five policemen as well as one policewoman. The respondents suggested that these officers were called by the first team (the three German officers). The five new officers arrived in a van and a car and were wearing regular uniform, blue t-shirt and dark blue trousers (closer to a shade of black).

The transit group were put into the windowless police van, inside which was no light and because of the weather condition, also extremely hot.

The transit group were brought to a police station, most likely located in the city of Karlovac (Croatia). The van was parked on the public road outside the station. The building was described by the respondents as forming a "U" shape, on the left was a big building, however the transit group were taken to the right. They were detained for three hours and a half in a big room with four windows, but they were high and meaning the group were unable to see anything out of them. The respondents described the place they stayed as :

*"One big room, too much people [were] present here. We are coming, I think 20 people is also present here in this room. Big room. Same like this one. Inside, in the police station. Look like closed. Big one gate. Closed. Air is coming, too much hot. Air is not coming fresh. Window are closed. High. Above the gate, four window, but we cannot see. Big door. [like a] Garage. One gate police station, big gate black, and second one, room gate is blue, light blue."*

While the transit group were waiting, a family from Iraq came and were placed in the room. But the family were then removed an hour later. According to the respondents, they did not received water in the room. Moreover, some people asked to go to the toilet, but the access of this was also refused.

The transit group were then transported to the border without any interview or questioning from the officers at the police station. They were pushed into a police van. Approximately 24 people were in the van. There was not enough place for everyone, so the police officers shoved the remaining people from the rear doors to cram all the transit group in. In these conditions, the detained passengers were forced to arrange themselves, some people sitting on the floor while others sitting on them. The back door of the van was composed of two Plexiglas panels on both sides, with a smaller door in between composed of one Plexiglas panel, with integrated metal mesh.

The condition in the van was not bearable, so the transit group had to knock at the walls to stop the van. However the respondents declared that the van was equipped with a camera and a microphone above the door, as well as a light which was off.

After an hour of driving, the van finally stop, an officer came and opened the door of the van. The transit group could see they were out of town, nearby a forest on a big road. The officer looked at the people inside the van and asked "why do you knock?". The group asked in vain for him to switch on the air conditioning because the temperature inside the van was very hot and the air was not ventilated in any way. But the officer closed the door and kept driving the group in exactly the same conditions. Three people including one of the respondents threw up in the van. The van, had two ventilator grids on the ceiling and one under a bench. But none of these were turned on.

The respondents thought that the way was longer than it was supposed to be, and made intentionally so by the officers because they could feel the van turning around, especially just after getting in it, in town. Then they felt the van going up and down hill. One of the respondents spoke about "torture" when he explained the situation in the van. It was his view that the officer behaved this way to make people in transit give up their intentions to reach Western/Northern Europe.

*"They are giving torture to us. After [so] the guys not come back again."*

When they arrived at the border, they were surrounded by a forest. It was approximately 21:00. A fire had already been lit on the ground. The group got out one by one and had to stay in line by order of the officers. One officer proceeded to throw the belongings of each person into the fire, which was lit very close to where they had parked the van. Then the officers took the group, and walked them in a line to the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, located a few meters away. At the border two officers beat the people one-by-one with sticks, and kicked them and pushed them towards the Bosnian side. Nearby was a concrete block (signifying the national boundary) and the transit group had to pass this in order to reach BiH. According to the respondents testimony, this border marker is likely to have been located in Poljana.

*"[the officers] beat 2/2 sticks, you know big [baton] one, black. And who look it [at the police officers], they say, "why you [are] looking me?" They beat. We are afraid, they break heads, legs, hands. We are afraid of them. We are not looking to them."*

The officers who arrested them at the site of apprehension had told the group that they would make sure that the next officers would give all their belongings back, they did not get anything (having witnessed much of it being burnt at the border). Some of the people in the group were not even returned their shoes. The two respondents had a total of 380 euros stolen and for the entire group a total of 4 phones, 4 power banks, and 4 charging cables stolen.

**05/08/2019**

**"I TOLD THEM: "STOP! YOU'RE HURTING ME. I CANNOT BREATHE.""**

**Date and time:** August 5, 2019 15:00

**Location:** Near Šturlić, BiH

**Coordinates:** 45.055214, 15.752755

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 18 - 45 years old , from: Afghanistan, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, theft of personal belongings

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent described leaving with a group of six other Algerian men from Velika Kladuša on the 1st of August, after which he walked down to the border town of Šturlić and rested for a day. The respondent, who is 18 years old, was the youngest member of the group. In the early morning hours of the 3rd of August, the respondent and his friends crossed into Croatia.

*"I went to Šturlić, walking 23 kilometers in one day. We stayed there for one day to rest and the next day we went on [into Croatia]."*

The respondent stressed his belief that it was important to attempt to cross the border during the first hours of the morning, inferring that police apprehension along the border at night are more violent and back by more surveillance technology:

*Yes, because during night there are drones. You see them, I think there is ten. They see you. You cannot cross the border during night because when the police catches you in the night, they beat you a lot. They break you. There is different police during the night and during the day. The police during the night is dresses [in black uniforms and masks] like this. The policeman who [later] beat me was wearing a mask. That way you cannot remember him.*

Once in Croatia, the group continued walking for two days in the interior until an forested area near the village of Čuić Brdo (HR) [45.039954, 15.629608].

*The second day we heard voices but we didn't know if they are policemen or other people. We had to cross the big road, that leads to Zagreb. 200 meters before that road, two friends went to see, if the road is free to cross. They came back with a policeman, who pointed a gun to their heads. Just one old policeman, I think he was 50 years old. He told us to stay here and called another one, who came after 5 minutes.*

Thus, the group was apprehended, initially, by a single, middle-aged Croatian police officer at around noon on August 5th. He was soon joined by another officer who waited with the group.

When they were apprehended, the respondent described that entire group was apprehended. None of them attempted to run away or escape, despite there only being a single Croatian police officer who initially apprehended them. The respondent described that this was mainly due to their group not having multiple mobile phones.

*"When you are in Croatia and you walk one day or two days...you don't run. Because when you run the group's gonna spread: Three go there and two go there. Some people don't have a phone. When you are in Croatia and you don't have a phone and you don't have a powerbank, you're done. You cannot walk because you must have GPS. Me, I don't have a phone any more because I was in Croatia and they broke my phone two times already. This time I didn't have a phone. We could run from that policeman because he was alone, just one policeman and seven people. We could run easily. But I don't have a phone and I asked my friends: "What shall we do? Shall we run or shall we stay?" They told me: "Let's stay." So we stayed."*

Several phones were also taken from the group before their push-back. The respondent described that, before they were confiscated, the group-members were made to unlock their phones, ostensibly so the officers could access the route in which they were attempting to walk through.

An hour after their initial apprehension, one more officer arrived to the scene with a large vehicle which would later return the group back to the Bosnian-Croatian border. The respondent described a lack of communication between the initial officer and the group, which later turned to hostility once the third officer arrived to the location. This third officer was described as being perhaps 27 years old, with green eyes, tall, and having short cropped hair. This third officer would later strangle and kick the respondent in the face at the border during the push-back procedure.

*"He didn't talk to us at all. When the third policemen came, the one who punched me on my face, he asked us: "Do you have a friend, who escaped?" We said: "No." Then he slapped one of us in the face. For nothing, just like that.*

*"After one more hour, a third policeman came; the driver of the car, that took us to the border. Until that point there hasn't been a fight. But after they took us to the border, they opened the door and we could see them getting ready for beating."*

*"They told us to come and took us to the car, a big car. One by one entered. While driving the car, he suddenly stopped and we all fell on the floor."*

Furthermore, the respondent described their being a lack of oxygen in the vehicle and finding it difficult to breathe during their containment inside.

*"We couldn't breathe inside because there was no oxygen. The air condition wasn't working or he didn't switch it on. So we couldn't breathe."*

The respondent also recalled that on their way back to the border, the vehicle stopped and three Afghan women entered the van who were later pushed back with them.

*"On the way to Bosnia they also caught three people. Two girls, 18 or 19 years old I think, and their mother. I guess she was around 50 – 55 years old. She couldn't breathe."*

*"They were caught in a different area, next to a village. They were about to take a bus to Zagreb. They wanted to ask for asyl in Zagreb. They bought a bus ticket in that village. Everybody in Croatia calls the police when they see you. So they caught them and took them with us to the border. The old woman couldn't breathe. She thought she was dying because she was old and she couldn't breathe."*

Once they finally arrived back at the border, it was around 3:00 in the afternoon. The respondent described that there were somewhere between eight or nine police officers at the border who participated in their push-back process. At this location, the Korana river marked the border between Bosnian and Croatia. The water of the river rose to the respondent's thigh. The respondent described that of the eight or nine police officers present at the push-back location, however only one officer wore a black balaclava mask over his face. The respondent inferred that the officer wore this mask to protect his identity.

*[He wore this] because he is beating immigrants. If immigrants remembered him, they would kill him. So if he is dressing like that, you cannot remember him.*

It is of note that the officer that kicked and strangled the respondent did *not* wear a mask. This officer was the third to arrive on the scene of the group's apprehension and was described as

driving the group back to the Bosnian-Croatian border. It is of interest that the respondent recalled that the officer changed his clothes between their initial apprehension and push-back

*"He changed his clothes. First, when we were caught, he wore blue clothes. Later he came with black police clothes."*

It should be noted that the respondent described the Croatian police officers during this procedure as being unusually violent. He inferred that this was, perhaps, due to him being that last group-member to cross over the border.

*"They beat us one by one and then they told us to go to Bosnia. There was a river to cross to enter Bosnia. So each of us crossed the river after being beaten up. Some people got beaten up hard, some people got beaten up less. Me, the last one, they beat a lot. The first and the last ones get beaten up the most. One grabbed my shirt and another one punched me. Like that I couldn't protect my face. When the policeman got tired from beating, the second one grabbed the back of my shirt. I told them: "Stop! You're hurting me. I cannot breathe." He grabbed me like that and kicked my face two times with his leg."*

The respondent described that during this violent interaction with the Croatian police officers, he took a moment of inaction to escape and run away, back into BiH.

*"He forced me on the ground and then kicked me. When he saw that I was about to lose consciousness, he left me and within 5 seconds I ran. He was about to beat me more but I ran. Because when you enter Bosnia, he won't follow. So we went, I was bleeding for 5 hours."*

*"[I bled] from my nose. Now my nose is broken, here and here."*

In particular, the officer in the mask and the "third officer" who transported the group back to the border were described as engaging in physical violence with the respondent.

*"[The masked officer] didn't beat me so bad. He didn't punch me in the face. He beat me just on the arms and legs. But the ["Third officer"] who kicked me on the face, hurt me so much. It felt like, when he beat me, my nose just cracked, it broke. And then I was bleeding for five hours. It was too much blood."*

The respondent described that only the men were subject to physical violence during the push-back, and in particular the first and last group-members to leave the vehicle. The three women were able to return to Bosnia without such treatment or violence.

*"They didn't beat women. They beat just us."*

After the entire group crossed back over the border, they walked back to Šturlić (BiH) where they attempted to take a public bus back to Velika Kladuša however they were refused by the bus driver. Accordingly, they rested for the rest of the night and walked the 20 km distance back to Velika Kladuša the following day.

27/07/2019

## “CROATIAN POLICE HATE ALL IMMIGRANTS ”

**Date and time:** July 27, 2019 03:00

**Location:** Fužine, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.3049852, 14.714836900000023

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 20-35 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 17 Croatian police; 3 police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken, papers signed, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On July 19 around 8:30PM, a group of ten individuals from Algeria began their transit attempt from Gradina (BiH) near the town of Velika Kladuša. The group walked for eight days in the forests of Croatia. They drank water from the rivers they passed and only ate once a day to conserve their food.

They walked during the days and slept at night in order to be able to navigate their way through the forests using the light of the sun. On July 27, they reached Highway 3 near the Croatian town of Fužine (see map below). They waited until 3:00AM to attempt to cross the road, however, when they tried to cross there were seven police officers who saw them. The respondent reported that they were dressed in dark blue uniforms and that they all wore black ski masks over their faces.

The police shouted “stop!,” and the group members obeyed the order. The respondent reported that the police were driving a white Renault Master van that had no windows in the back.

The police ordered the group members to enter the van and the police drove them 20 minutes to a police station.

*“They drove military style; very fast and dangerous.”*

At the station, the individuals gave their personal information and the respondent reported that they were forced to sign a paper that stated the police did not beat them.

For twelve hours they stayed in one room at the station. The police did not give them any food or water and they could not access the toilet. In the station, the police searched all of their bags and then returned them to the group. The police then ordered the group back into a van and drove for about an hour to the Bosnian border near the town of Šturlić (BiH).

They arrived near the border around 10:00PM and while the group members sat in the van, the police took their mobile phones, money and bags.

*“When you say give me my money or my phone, they will beat you, so you should just go.”*

There were twelve police officers at the border, the respondent reported that they were all wearing black ski masks. The police then called out the group members one by one. There were three officers standing outside the van and they were holding up flashlights. The respondent believed this was to blind them before they had to run through the officers who would try to beat them.

After passing through the first three officers who held up the lights, the group members then had to run through four or five more officers who hit them using batons, their hands, and their feet as the group members ran towards the Korana River on the Bosnian border.

From the border, the group members walked 25 kilometers back to Velika Kladuša.

**26/07/2019**

## **“THE POLICE BEAT ME WITH GUN ON MY HEAD BECAUSE I RUN TWICE”**

**Date and time:** July 26, 2019 16:00

**Location:** 13km from Velika Kladuša , near Crni Potok, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.2260786, 15.9017159

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 85 person(s), age: 23, 16-40 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, threatening with guns, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian police vans, 3 Croatian police cars, 9 regular Croatian police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of 85 Pakistani men and minors – aged 16 to 40 – travelled together through the forest in Croatia in the lead up to this incident. The respondent – a 23 year old man from Pakistan – shared that early in the morning of July 26th the large group began to split into smaller sections in order not to be detected. However, during this process one of the smaller groups

observed a police car which also spotted the group. Then, two more police cars arrived on the scene.

The respondent began running in the forest. One police officer spotted him in the “jungle” (wooded terrain) from about five to ten meters away, then ran back to the police car. The police then followed in a police car down a small road which the respondent was running across.

The respondent ran with many people from his group and while they ran, someone accidentally knocked the respondent’s glasses off. Without his glasses, he was not able to see so the respondent returned to find his glasses. When he found his glasses, a police officer caught him and put a gun to his neck to threaten him. The police officer pushed him to the ground then kicked him twice in the shoulders. The police officer was male, wearing “jeans” and a black shirt. The respondent describes him as a “civil police officer.”

This police officer then told him to return to the road. The respondent followed the officer’s directions but then when he reached the road, the respondent attempted to run once again into the forest. He came upon a house where two people gave him food, water and 100 Kuna (Croatian currency). The respondent stayed in the house for 10 minutes, but the people told him to run because they said the police are everywhere in this area. The respondent then stopped a family in a car and asked to use their GPS to find the direction to Slovenia and the family offered to drive him to the Slovenian border. However, while talking to this family, the police apprehend him in a car. The police put him in a police van, which promptly arrived after the first car. In this van, there were ten people from the respondents original group. The apprehension occurred at approximately 07:00. The Croatian police, however, told him to get out of the van because they recognized him from his glasses as the person who ran from the police twice. They asked him why he ran two times and then they ordered him to sit on the side of the road, where one police officer beat him with a baton on his hands, kicked him on his back and shoulders, and hit him on the head with the butt of a gun. The officer then took the respondents shoes and put them in a plastic bag and put the respondent back in a van.

The police drove 15 minutes to a police station, where they arrive at approximately 08:00. At the police station, the police gave the respondent a sheet of paper in Urdu that asked him to fill out his name, his family’s name and his nationality. They took his fingerprints and a photo, but they did not make him sign anything. He was then put in a windowless room with 11 other people and one camera. They were in this room for about three hours and at first, they were denied food, water and access to a toilet but gradually, the police gave them small amounts of water and hard, stale bread and biscuits.

The respondent asked for asylum but the police told him “no”. Two minors also asked for asylum in the police station. They told the police they were minors and did not want to go back to Bosnia. The police respond by saying “no, you go back to Bosnia.” The group were not beaten inside the police station.

The respondent was then put in a van with eight other people. There was also another van full of 10 people that were caught. The police kept them in the van for 20 minutes without turning on the engine and the van was very hot and had no fan. Then, the police drove the van for about three hours until they reach the border with Bosnia, approximately 13km from Velika Kladuša.

The transit group were pushed back at around 16:00. The police opened the van doors and told one person to come out. When this person came out, they took his phone and smashed it, then handed it back to him. Then, they hit him once with a baton but the respondent states

this was not a very forceful blow. The police officers took all the powerbanks from the group. Then everyone else exited the van, but the last to exit were not beaten. These group members were just told to go across the border into Bosnia, which they did. They then walked all the way to Velika Kladuša and when they were not able to find a taxi or bus, they walked all the way back to Bihać.

**26/07/2019**

## **“WHY WOULD THE POLICE THROW STONES AT ME? WHY!?”**

**Date and time:** July 26, 2019 16:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.8046875, 15.978812500000004

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 18 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, theft of personal belongings, jumped on, spat on, hit with stones

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian Police

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On Friday the 26th, at approximately 4 pm a lone 18-year-old Algerian man crossed the Serbian-Croatian border on foot and then shortly boarded a train to Zagreb (see map below). Once he arrived in Zagreb, a passing police car stopped him. After being detained in Zagreb just outside of the train station, he was attacked by two police officers whilst two more officers watched from an additional vehicle that was parked across from the attack.

The attack by the police officers occurred at approximate 6 pm and lasted for ten minutes. The police officers grabbed the man by the back of the neck and pushed him to the floor. While the 18-year old was laid face down on the floor, the two police officers took it in turns to jump on his neck. Throughout the attack, the police swore at the young man and routinely spat on him.

Once the police officers stopped the attack, they drove him to the train border between Croatia and Serbia. Once at the border, the same officers carried out another attack on the young man, this time using kicking him and punching him. They stole his shoes and 40 euros and then made him walk barefoot over the train border. The young man asserts that the police knew that the floor was littered with sharp stones and rocks and would have been painful and dangerous for him to walk across barefoot. As he was crossing the border, the two police officers then started to throw stones at him.

26/07/2019

## “PUSHED BACK BY CROATIAN AUTHORITIES AND ATTACKED BY LOCAL SERBS”

**Date and time:** July 26, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Batrovci border crossing

**Coordinates:** 45.04714031222532, 19.10345736219051

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 18 - 35 years old , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On Friday, July 26th a group of 5 young men crossed the Croatia-Serbian border on foot. After a day of walking in Croatia, the five men were stopped and detained by a passing police car. Shortly after two police vans arrived and the group of five men were driven back to the Croatian-Serbian border crossing of Batrovci. The five men told the police officers that they were seeking asylum to which the police laughed and suggested that they were only able to give asylum in the back of their police van. The police kicked and shoved them towards the border crossing and told them not to return.

After crossing back into Serbia, the group of 5 men then sought refuge in a nearby abandoned building where they hoped to spend the evening. In the evening a group of 10 men aged 20-25 came and attacked them with baseball bats and wooden poles. The group attacked all five guys and beat them to the floor where the Algerians were forced to huddle into a ball to protect their heads and body. They managed to flee the attack by jumping through a small window in the house and ran barefoot away from their attackers. They spent the night sleeping in the jungle. During the attack, the group of men took two phones, two power banks and the Algerians' jackets.

The next day, at 10 am, an old man pulled over next to the group in a golf car. The man told them to leave their location and not to come back. The group of 5 Algerians apologized but before they had a chance to leave the old man told them that he was going to phone a gang of guys who beat up migrants to come and make them leave.

24/07/2019

**““I LOOKED [AND SAW] A CAMERA. I HAVE BEEN THROUGH THIS 16 TIMES AND I HAVE NEVER SEEN A CAMERA.””**

**Date and time:** July 24, 2019 22:00

**Location:** near Velika Gata, Bosnia-Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 44.94138723597196, 15.731916225014515

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: 18 - 30 years old , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, gunshots, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 11 left from Šturlić (BiH) on July 21st and continued into Croatia with the intention of crossing into Slovenia. On their fourth day of walking through the Croatian interior, perhaps 16 km away from Rijeka, the group was walking during daytime along a small path in a forested area.

*“There is too many police, they see me when I cross the trail to jungle. They wait [for us there]... they leave their car there and they are walking and they listen. Because when you are walking through the woods there is too much wood on the floor \*crack, crack, crack\*. When you are walking in the jungle and you are walking across the trail, they cannot know where is your direction. And when they are walking, two police, two police, and two police. And when they hear.”*

The respondent described the strategy, he believed the Croatian police officers used to track down his transit group. He described his understanding of this strategy as a team of police officers breaking off into a number of groups of two, spreading themselves throughout a heavily trafficked section of forest. Then, as the respondent described it, the officers wait and stay silent in order to listen to the sounds of transit groups moving through the forest, naturally making noises as they step onto fallen branches and leaves. When one pair of officers hears the noises of a transit group walking through the woods, they then communicate with the others to triangulate the direction and the location of these noises.

*“This is the new tactic of the police...because before, when you are in the jungle [they] cannot catch you. When you come to Strulic, there is too much woods, he knows that we are not walking on the trail. Before we were walking on the trail, but we choose the path.”*

The respondent described him and his group realizing that they were being tracked by the police and attempting to evade them. It was his impression that the police had anticipated this and purposefully positioned themselves at a bottleneck area of the terrain.

*"The police lead you to [a certain direction]."*

*"When I cross the path, I look behind and there is too many bushes with thorns, and I run. There is no flat ground, you cannot walk through. It is too much tall."*

*"He knows me, when he sees me, he knows that I will return here or here, and when I return, he catch me."*

Two police officers apprehended the respondent and his friends on a small path. Upon approaching, the officers took out their firearms and told the respondent and his friends to "Stop, stop!" and fired their guns into the air three times. All group-members were then caught.

*"We are catch on the street, two by two"*

*"The [police officers] knows, they wait, they wait for all persons to cross, because he knows"*

At this point, the respondent again remarked on the evolving strategies of Croatian authorities in the region of Šturlić.

*"Every day, they learn, every day there is immigrant and they learn about how we are going. If we go through the jungle or the path or not, where is the turn..The police knows and they set up...his cars or patrols here. In the jungle, two by two by two by two."*

After the apprehension of the group, one of the police officers put his foot on the chest of one of the group-members who he had forced to lay on the ground. Soon after this, another three police officers arrived at the scene. These officers also wore light blue t-shirts and long pants.

*"First coming two, then coming three"*

The officers were described as demanding the group's phones and belongings:

*"The first words [they asked us] was 'Where is the phones?'"*

*"Give me you phone, give me your phone, give me your phone, and all person is give. One person does not give."*

*"The phone is important, who take the person, who is the leader...but we people Algeria, we don't have a leader, all is the same"*

*"The second thing is check bags"*

*"And they began one by one to check the bags. And they begin to check and throw out the things in the bags. There is one friend, he threw out his shoe and left him with one shoes. And all, and find power bank and took the cable and cigarettes and headphones. And these things, all put in one pile."*

The respondent described the officers making two piles of all of the groups belongings, one for valuable items such as power banks, phones, cables, cigarettes, and headphones, while the other was for the group's food. The respondent described a number of electronic devices such as phones and powerbanks being stolen at this time by one officer.

*"They take phone, and put in a plastic bag [along with] lighter, and cigarettes, power banks, all in the plast [bags]. And all of the food in different bags. And he stole my phone and one powerbank. He stole all of the powerbanks and stole one phone. It was a nice phone."*

*"I understand Bosnian language, it's the same language [as Croatian] and when he was looking at the powerbanks and when he picked up one he said 'Oh! It's new! It's a good one. I take this one! This good for me. I take one'...and he took three packets of Camel cigarettes"*

*"Before his two other friends came, he stole maybe three powerbanks."*

During the process of searching their bags, the officers told the entire group to remain at one place with their hands raised. They went through the group, telling each individual to walk over to a certain officer, who would check them and escort them to a nearby van which had arrived to transport them back to the border. During these actions, the respondent described seeing one officer repeatedly engage in actions of violence against the group-members.

*"And here, they beat, one friend they beat...one person he beat, just one."*

*"One police beat, five person"*

*"My friend he [was checked by the officer] here, when [the officer] finish, he begin for another person, and he check this friend, and he is coming to the car, and when he is coming to the car he beat this person. I don't know. He was normal, he check him and was talking with him and then he tells him to sit and he kick him. And then he is checking another person, he checks [their] face, my friend, and he punched [him in the stomach]. And one person here, he beat him. He says 'You come here' and he is slowly walking, and this person he kicks in the back. Tell him 'quickly!'. And he checks another person and tells him...I don't remember."*

The respondent described another member of his group experiencing violence from one of the apprehending officers at the scene for failing to keep his arms raised in the air over a long period of time.

*"He tell him before, because when you put this bag here, you can behind something. He said to all people 'Put your hands in the air' and this man does not because he is tired, you know, and he puts his hands down and the [police officer] is coming and they kick him on the sides [by kicking him]. You know they have [metal] in their boots."*

The respondent expressed relief at being able to evade direct violence from this officer, attributing his luck to his young appearance.

*"They don't beat me, I don't know, I look younger."*

After this ordeal, when the group had been led to the van, the group was then driven directly back to the Bosnian-Croatian border, a journey which took approximately two hours. During this time, the car drove very fast in a disordered manner, leading the respondent to get sick while in the van. When the group arrived back to the border, they were taken out of the van as a

group. The respondent described seeing one officer, hidden in the darkness, holding a camera which emitted a red light.

*“And the new thing I looked [and saw] a camera. I have been through this 16 times and I have never seen a camera. I look and I see just the night and all I see is the red light.”*

The officer with the camera and two other police officers were waiting for the group when they arrived at the border. In addition, two officers transported the group back to the border in the van. The entire group left the van at the same time, followed by the cameraman, and they continued down a path that led to a river with tepid and dirty water. This path, which was described as very small, eventually led them into Bosnia near Velika Gata (BiH), at which point they wandered for some time before finding their way back to Šturlić.

17/07/2019

## “THEY FIRED THE GUN TO THE LEFT AND RIGHT OF OUR BODIES”

**Date and time:** July 17, 2019 12:00

**Location:** Prijeboj, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.84371659999999, 15.6761828999999958

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 6, 29, 29, 25, 39, 24, 23, 25, 30, 30 , from: Pakistan, Palestine, Syria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** gunshots, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 12 Croatia police, 2 dressed in light blue uniforms, 10 dressed in black; 1 police car, 2 police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On July 16, a group of ten individuals began their transit attempt from Vučjak camp near the city of Bihać (BiH). The group included a six year old child. They walked about six or seven hours from camp to the border and entered Croatia around 7:00AM on July 17.

After crossing the border, they walked for two hours, which they believed was approximately four kilometers inside Croatian territory. They were near the Croatian village of Prijeboj (see map) when two police officers saw them and ordered them to sit down. The officers were described as dressed in light blue uniforms and drove a signed police car. The respondent states that the officers fired a gun at the group six times.

*"They fired at us! Not in the air, but to the left and right of our bodies. The small boy was afraid and crying."*

After five minutes, five or six more male officers came and the respondent reported that they were dressed in all black. The officers dressed in light blue ordered the group members to give them their backpacks and they looked through everything inside. The respondent states that their mobile phones and power banks were confiscated and they were then ordered inside a police van and driven for 30 minutes to a police station.

*"We got out of the van at a police station but we did not go inside. They put us inside a garage next to the station."*

The police put everyone inside of what was described as a "garage" and put their bags outside of the room. The room already hosted a group of people from Algeria and Morocco. It was a windowless room without a toilet. When the group asked to use the toilet, the police refused. They also asked for food and water but the police refused to give them this as well.

*"I don't know how long we were in the garage, maybe one or two hours. After they caught us, I lost track of time."*

Later, four police officers dressed in black ordered the group members out and into a van. They drove one hour to the border. The van was very hot and the driver was swerving.

*"There was an oxygen problem in the van; there was no oxygen. Some people started vomiting."*

Around 9:00PM, they arrived at the Bosnian border. There were more police officers dressed in black, but the respondent couldn't remember how many. The police ordered the group members out of the van and then started a fire and put all of their bags in the fire. Then the police gave back four telephones, instead of the ten that were confiscated. Because of this, an argument started between the group about who should get the telephones.

The police ordered one person to go ahead of the rest of the group. He walked to the border and waited ten minutes. Then the police shouted "go, never come back" and the rest of the group followed, walking to the border.

The group walked from the border to Bihać and then to Vučjak camp. It took them twelve hours to arrive at the camp from the border.

**16/07/2019**

## **"WHEN THE POLICE SHOT THEIR GUN I WAS SO SCARED"**

**Date and time:** July 16, 2019 13:00

**Location:** Vinkovački Banovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1858125, 19.0473124999999975

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 21,25,28,31,40 , from: Iraq, Mongolia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pepper spray, gunshots, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian Police

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On July 15th, a 21-year-old Iraqi Kurd crossed into Croatia through the Serbian border at 11 pm. During the crossing into Croatia, the responded and his two friends aged 28 and 31 walked for half a day stopping in the city of Vinkovački Banovci to board a train and continue their journey (see map below for location).

Whilst waiting at the Vinkovački Banovci train station the group of three young men met two Mongolians (25 and 40 years old) who were undertaking a similar journey. Both groups of men waited for several hours for the train to come but because it was a public holiday, no train arrived. After waiting, one of the Mongolian man caught the attention of a passing local and asked when the next train would come. Shortly after the interaction between the group and the passing local, the police arrived and detained all 5 men. The responded believes that the local must have phoned the police on recognising that they were people-on-the-move. He also alleged that in Croatia the police will reward locals with the equivalent of €20 if they inform the police about any passing migrants and refugees.

Once the two police officers arrived, the Mongolian man attempted to flee the train station prompting the police to shoot their gun up into the air. The police detained all 5 people and searched their belongings. The police then proceeded to attack all five members of the group. The Croatian police hit the men with batons and then pepper-sprayed them in the face. It was estimated that the attack lasted for 20 minutes. The responded said he was left with lasting pain in his eyes after the pepper spray.

Once the attack stopped the police drove the group of 5 men to the Croatian border. They were driven in one police van and one police car. Once at the border the police took their shoes from them and told them to walk across the border.

**13/07/2019**

## “THE POLICE ONLY LET US DRINK FROM THE TOILET WATER”

**Date and time:** July 13, 2019 14:00

**Location:** Along the E70 highway, Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.7595296818042, 16.23871886236634

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 17,18,19,25 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?:** Yes

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian Police, 2 police cars, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, 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

On July 13th, four young men from Afghanistan aged 17, 18, 19 and 25 travelling inside of a commercial vehicle, crossed into Croatia through the Serbian-Croatian border. Whilst the men were still in the vehicle the driver pulled into a parking spot, opened the back of his truck and found the group of four men. He swiftly reclosed the rear-doors and called the police.

At 2 pm, two police officers came and arrested the men and in two separate cars drove them to a police station in Zagreb. The respondents estimate that their apprehension happened just outside of Zagreb to the east (for approximate location see map below). The police confiscated their bags and phones and at 3 pm took them inside to the police holding cell. During their 24 hours of detainment at the police station, they were housed inside a single cell without beds and were not provided with food. The only water that they were given came from a toilet located outside their cell that was accessed twice.

After the 24 hours, they were taken by police van to the Batrovci border crossing. They were made to add their name and signature to a document that the police retained and did not give a copy to the man. It was only available in English, so he did not understand anything. No translation was made available. Once the document was signed the group of five men were pushed back into Serbia where they were forced to walk back on foot to the nearest village.

11/07/2019

“ “[THERE IS A BLOCK OF BETON,[MEANT CONCRETE] BIG. AND SAY RUN, AND IT IS NIGHT. [...], HAVE THERE HOLE. SOME PEOPLE FALL AND PUTTING HERE AND HERE (SHOWING THE INJURIES ON HIS ARMS)”

**Date and time:** July 11, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Staro Selo Topusko (HR) / Poljana (BiH)

**Coordinates:** 45.212150561625165, 15.929057879031234

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 72 person(s), age: 16-35 , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** unknown number of Croatian Special police (green uniform - described as army/Commando), 13 Croatian intervention police, 3 vans

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of 72 people from Afghanistan and Pakistan were sleeping in the Croatian forest to rest after several nights walking from Bosnia. Around approximately 4.00 pm, a team of what the respondent described as “army” officers, wearing green uniforms, wakes this group up. The interviewee thinks that the officers found them through the use of cameras. They ask them to wake up and ask what they are doing there. One of the officers asks who of the group can speak English. No one answers. The officers then ask them to stand and they call another law-enforcement team to come to take them.

While waiting, the army checks the people-on-the-move, asking them if they have any weapons such as knives or pistols. Then they take each person’s phone and check their maps to look at their locations. Then they put the belongings into a bag. The officers ask the group to undress to their underwear. The officers then thoroughly search their clothing along the seams, searching for money that could’ve been hidden. The officers then return the clothing but not all of the shoes.

Three police vans come and 25 people are put into each vehicle. The interviewee describes the van as having two benches on each side where six people can sit on both sides. The others who are not able to sit then sit on the floor or on other people’s legs, which was the case for the interviewee. The conditions inside the van while driving made people in the van feel sick. The interviewee describes the inside of the van as really hot and lacking air. The group members are close to vomiting and are afraid that some members of their group could die from these conditions.

*“That bus, he closed the van, one is 25 person all together, three hours. And he don’t open the van, putting bum, bum, bum (miming beating actions) open van and all throw up. No light, it is closed. It is hot. Same like it’s closed everything. Don’t have air, everybody throw up. No sit, they have sit for six person there [indicating with his hands both sides of the van] and all down. He (the translator speaks of the interviewee) is sitting on leg of people. He want feeling like [throwing up] everybody. Maybe one/two person [could] die because it don’t have oxygen and [police] don’t listen.”*

They drive for three hours. When they arrive at the Bosnian border, the police make people exit the van two by two. It is between 11.00pm and 12.00am when they exit the van. Most of the

group is barefoot, their shoes and socks having been taken by the officers where they were caught.

There is already a fire at the border when the group exits the van. The interviewee said that he could see a policeman feeding the fire with the shoes, making it bigger and bigger. The interviewee estimates the amount of police officers as around 10 to 12. The interviewee sees that 5 to 6 policemen are standing on both sides of the back of the van when he exits the van. This matches the description of the Tunnel Trick that has been reported in other pushbacks from Croatia.

Although it is dark, the interviewee states he could see that the police officers are wearing dark uniforms and ski masks. In total, the interviewee estimates that all people exiting the vans are beaten. He expresses the fact that the police beat the first two people exiting the van and the last people exiting the van harder.

After this beating, the people-on-the-move run away. While running, many fall due to the darkness and the rough terrain, including holes in the ground and tree branches. While running, some people are injured by a block of beton [concrete] located approximately twenty meters away from the parked police van. People trying to escape the police officers' violence would run unknowingly into this block of concrete, which would injure their legs and/or feet.

The group then walks to Velika Kladuša for thirteen kilometers. According to their descriptions of the pushback location, including the block of concrete, appears to correspond with Poljana, BiH.

**11/07/2019**

**““MY CHILD IS CRY ‘PAPA! PISTOL!’””**

**Date and time:** July 11, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Glina, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.34023774728486, 16.088041557009774

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 5 - 35 years old , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?:** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, threatening with guns, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

With the intention of travelling to Zagreb in order to ask for asylum, the group of six crossed into Croatia on the evening of July 10th from an area of the border near Velika Kladuša (BiH). From there, the group walked around 30 km in the interior of Croatia, nearing the town of Glina (HR) (approximate location on the map below).

When nearing the town, the group described being stopped by three police officers in black ski masks, who approached the group as they travelled in a forested stretch of land near a road. The officers led the group out onto the road where they made them wait for some time. Later, the respondent described a considerably large number of police officers and vehicles, given the size of their transit group, arriving to the scene. The respondent described seeing over 20 police officers in total arrive to the location, in seven different vehicles – three vans and four sedan-sized police vehicles. There was no reason apparent to the respondent for this disproportionate response.

After their apprehension, the group was split in two, due to the mother in the group experiencing a medical complication related to her pregnancy. At this point, the mother and her husband were brought in an ambulance to a medical clinic approximately 20 minutes away whereas the two children in the group, along with the two male group-members were taken to the nearby police station in Glina (HR).

After spending approximately one hour at the medical clinic, the mother and her husband were split apart, with the husband being brought to nearby police in Glina, thus rejoining his children and the rest of the group, while the mother was brought to a larger hospital more than an hour away.

The husband in the group described his wife as rejoining the rest of the group approximately two hours later, after spending some time in this larger hospital. She was given several medication tablets during her interaction with the doctors at the hospital, however these were confiscated by the police officers who transported her back to the police station.

*“Hospital give tablet, police clipsy tablet”*

At one point in the police station, the father in the group, frustrated at the manner in which the officers were interacting with his family and their repeated requests for asylum, shouted to one of the officers “Don’t touch my family!” In response to this, the respondent described that one of the officers took a rectangular taser, which he held in one hand, and jabbed it into the rear end of the father, administering to him an electric shock.

The father described becoming so desperate during their stay in the police station to secure an asylum procedure for his family that at one point he even collapsed down onto his hands and knees to beg the officers at the station to allow his family to access the procedures. They responded, repeatedly, “No.”

The group spent the rest of the night and the next morning at the police station. Late in the afternoon of July 11th, the group was moved into a van at the police station and driven back to the Bosnian-Croatian border. This journey took approximately one hour.

Once they arrived back to the border, the respondent described that there were four police officers waiting for them on arrival. They wore uniforms consisting of navy blue t-shirts and

long black pants. They had a small, sedan-sized police vehicle at the scene which was described as a Volkswagen. Several of the group's powerbanks and mobile phones were broken by the police officers at this point. In total 130 Bosnian marks were taken from the group, along with 270 EUR, and six packets of cigarettes.

After breaking their phones, the officers ushered them quickly over to a nearby border stone and forced them to go over it, back into Bosnian territory. During this time, the officers were described as using direct and harsh language towards the group:

*"Go! Go! Go!"*

*"This is my country!"*

As they arrived to the border stone, the children in the group found it difficult to go over it themselves and took extra time to climb over with the assistance of their parents. The respondent described that in response to this delay in the procedure, the officers became angry.

Finally, the father described that before they were pushed back that he, along with the other two men in the group, were made to take off their pants and t-shirts, leaving them in only their underwear. These clothes were taken and thrown onto the pile of belongings which would later be burnt by the Croatian police. Specifically, they sited their backpacks, sleeping bags, and clothes thrown onto a fire and being burnt. Only the adult group-members belongings were burnt at this point. The children in the group were able to keep their bags and belongings. The respondent described how the officers put their belongings in a pile, poured gasoline on it, and lit it on fire.

The respondent, the father of the children in the group, voiced anger and frustration at the manner in which the Croatian police officers addressed his children during the push-back. He cited a moment in which the officers at the location began to use their guns to usher and point in the direction in which the group should continue. While conducting this behavior, the officers waved their handguns passed the heads of the children, leading them to begin crying.

*"My child is cry 'Papa! Pisto!'"*

The group was pushed back near the village of Glinica, approximately 22 km away from Velika Kladusa. The family travelled to the IOM-run Miral Camp, which they were turned away from.

**10/07/2019**

## **"HOW THE POLICE TAKE CARE OF PEOPLE IS NOT HUMAN. THEY ARE MONSTERS!"**

**Date and time:** July 10, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Sisak, Croatia.

**Coordinates:** 45.4850767, 16.3731156000000006

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 26, 30, 34, 42 , from: Morocco, Burundi, Egypt

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** kicking, jumped on

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian Police, 1 Police Vehicle

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 8th of July 2019, four men (a 34-year-old Burundi, two Moroccans aged 26 and 30, and one Egyptian aged 42) crossed into Croatia via train. After exiting at an unknown train station the group travelled on foot for two days until they ran out of food 27KM from Zagreb. They estimate that they stopped and were then apprehended in Sisak, Croatia.

At 3 pm, after a suspected tip-off from a local who had spotted the 26-year-old Moroccan man travelling alone to buy more food, six police officers arrived and apprehended him. After forcing him to give up the location of the group, the six police officers travelled with the young Moroccan to the abandoned building he and the other men were temporarily staying. Upon entering the building, the Croatian police officers searched their belongings and forced them to pack all the stuff into their bags.

After having their belongings searched, the men were ordered by the police to sit down on the floor. Once sat down the police officers started to jump on and kick the four men in the head and body for 30 minutes. The four men cried for the officers to stop, but this did nothing to help stop the attack.

The police then took the four men and drove them to the border, arriving at 1 am Thursday. At the border, the men were ordered to "Go! Don't come back" and then ensured another 15 to 20-minute attack by the police, where again they were kicked in the head and body.

Since being violently pushed back from Croatia, the men now report a variety of health problems associated with the attack by the police. One of the men is suffering from a swollen leg after the police had jumped on it, and one of the men now has problems with his left ribs after the police continuously kicked them.

**08/07/2019**

**""WHEN I RUN, I FALL DOWN. I CAN NOT RUN.""**

**Date and time:** July 8, 2019 02:00

**Location:** Back-side of IOM-run Miral camp in Velika Kladuša

**Coordinates:** 45.1625516904502, 15.76344766554871

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 16 - 35 , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, water immersion, destruction of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 6 officers of Interventna Policija, 2 drivers, 10 police officers with unknown uniform

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Starting his journey with the hope of reaching Western Europe, the interviewee walked from Bosnia and Herzegovina with a group of fifteen people in which at least four were underage. The walk lasts nine days. While walking through the forest at approximately midnight, six Croatian officers wearing green uniforms shouted at everyone to stop. They switched on a powerful light:

"In jungle, they have big light which show all the jungle, all lightened and stop. Some people try to run, other catch [are caught]."

One of the police officers asks who could speak english. No one answers. The police then ask who in the group comes from Pakistan and who comes from Afghanistan. The Afghan members of the group were asked to lie down while the Pakistani people had to sit. The interviewee explained that the police do this because Afghan people tend to try to run away, prompting the police to do this.

The police ask if they have weapons but did not frisk them. A police van arrives while they are waiting.

One by one, they enter into the van, and are driven for about two hours in difficult conditions. The interviewee expresses that there is something in the air which makes them feel sick. The interviewee says it reminds him of tear gas he has been sprayed with before.

"[The driver drove] fast and one time break, all the car moving. All guys were like if they drink, maybe before gas inside, we were coughing." " Inside the van, no understand what is inside, all get head problem."

A bit before the border, the van stops and the officers make the people get out of the vehicle one by one. Once out, they are frisked and the croatian officers scrutinizes their clothes, particularly the seams, to be sure that nothing is hidden in their clothing, such as money. The police sieze all the phones, powerbanks and money and put them in a bag. The police also sieze some people's shoes and bags.

Once the police finish with this process, they drive again for about ten minutes and arrive at the border.

The police park the van so that the back of the van is parked facing towards the border. The officers then ask the people to get out of the van one by one. They are pushed out of the van.

The respondent said that he could not see his surroundings because the police officers did not use flashlights, but he felt the beatings coming from both sides.

*“One by one outside the car, when I go running, too much car tires, too much car tires [on the floor]. When I run, I fall down. I can not run. 5/5 police [five officers were on both side], big big police. I never see where he hit, too much punch in the stomach.”*

The respondent said that the officers beat the individuals in several different ways. He could not see what was going on but he could feel beating from both sides. He feels the police hit him with batons. He is punched in his stomach and on his wrists and he is also kicked on the knee. The respondent still has his bag with him, but after he tries to escape from the “police-officers-beating-line”, one of the officers grabs him by his clothes and pushes him into a stream. The respondent says that the water went up to his hips and his belongings got all wet.

He thinks that there were five officers on either side while he was exiting the van. He doesn't know what their uniforms looked like because, as he states, there was no flashlight used by the police that would allow him to then see their uniforms.

The respondent said that four or five young individuals, most of them probably 16 or 17 years old, were subject to the same treatment from the officers.

The group then walks back to Velika Kladuša for an hour, and arrives from the back-side of the IOM-run Miral Camp at approximately 3.00 am.

**06/07/2019**

## **“THEY DO THIS TO MAKE US GIVE UP FROM ENTERING CROATIA.”**

**Date and time:** July 6, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Šmrekovac, BiH

**Coordinates:** 45.1660543, 15.7653869

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 17-19 person(s), age: 20, 23; rest unknown, from: Pakistan, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian Special police officers, 4 regular Croatian police officers, 1 Croatian police van at border

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the morning of July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, at approximately 08:00, the Croatian police apprehended two Algerian men, aged 20 and 23, near a river in Croatia. The two Algerian men had been walking with three other Algerian men, aged 25, 27 and 34, for about six days. By the respondents' estimation they were approximately 70-80 km from Bosnia, having travelled from Velika Kladuša towards the Slovenian-Italian border.

When the five men had run out of water, the two respondents went out to find a river for water, carrying only the bottles they had and their backpacks. But, as the respondents noted, where there are rivers, there are usually people. After getting water, the two men were caught by Croatian police who then took them to the police station. One of the men was beaten by the police with their batons. They struck him on both his knees, his shins, his wrist and his back before being taken to the police station. The other man was not beaten. Before being taken to the police station, the police took their phones and put them in a bag. At the station, the police interrogated them on how many people they had travelled with, what point they entered Croatia at and the route they had taken. At the police station, the police didn't take their fingerprints, gave them papers and didn't take any pictures. The respondents asked for asylum at the police station but the police told them, "*not for you.*"

Then, from 10:00 to 22:00, the police held the group in a Volkswagen police van, parked in the sun. This van was, according to the respondents, used for prisoners. The interviewees note that it was a very hot summer day, and the inside of their van was even hotter and they "*suffered.*" The police did not give them water. Signs of fatigue and possible fainting were visible among other people in the van with them. In a two meter space, the police packed, according to the respondent's estimate, about 17 to 19 people, of which some were minors.

In this group, there were the two respondents from Algeria, and they believed the rest of the men were from Pakistan. Police officers, wearing the darker blue or purple shirts, came back to the van and pulled all the men's phones out of a bag and asked for the owners to come open the phones with their passwords. The interviewees noted that the police did this because they will take the phones for themselves, especially the good ones.

At nighttime, the police drove the van to the border, but before getting to the border, the police drove for an hour or two around the border to exhaust and disorient the people in the van and to ensure that they didn't clearly memorize where they were. The disorientation was described by the respondents as if they "*forget everything*" and had a "*half mind.*" The police "*drive crazy*" which disoriented the respondents and made it difficult to stand or sit in the van since there was nothing to hold onto in the back of the police van and there was nowhere to sit. The respondents stated that some people threw up during this journey.

At the border there were about eight to nine police officers with black masks, some fully on, some only covering the upper half of the face, who shone lights in their eyes. Of these eight or nine police officers, four to five were "special police" wearing all black and 4 wore light blue shirts. The respondents noted that they were very big and muscular. One of the interviewees was the first out of the van and he asked the police for his phone. The police then grabbed him by his t-shirt and cursed at him.

The police took some men's shoes and their backpacks. They took one of the respondents' 20 euro notes and ripped it in front of him. The respondents state that the police did not make a fire, but in other pushbacks they've experienced the police used to burn possessions. Then the police put the transit group in a line and began beating them. The first and last people in the line received especially heavy beating. One of the respondents stated that since he was in the front of the line, he was beaten more by the police officers. He was beaten on his shoulder and back. The respondents state that looking at the police officers invited extra beatings.

After they beat them in the line, the officers told the men to go across the border. The second respondent, the one that was beaten before the police station at the site of apprehension, stated that he was not beaten at the border. The men began running in this line to the border and into the river that forms this section of the border. The men stated that the river was high enough to reach their chests, their estimation being one meter or one meter and a half. The respondents stated that the beating was quick and they thought this quick beating was meant to make them jump into the river. It was also quick because, as the respondents said, the police are "afraid of journalists" capturing or seeing what is happening. Having experienced multiple pushbacks before, the respondents stated that:

*"Every day, the racism is getting bigger and bigger."*

These events at the border occurred in the early nighttime hours of July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019. After the men ran across the border from Croatia into Bosnia through the river, the police threw over the bag with the phones. Out of approximately 16 phones, only 2 were left in the bag. As the respondents noted, this is a very significant act of violence: without their phones, they are not able to travel because they need a GPS and they are not able to contact their families or friends.

**05/07/2019**

## **"THEY DON'T GIVE ME SLEEPING BAG, PHONE, POWERBANK, ALL THE SLEEPING BAG ON FIRE IN A LITTLE PLACE"**

**Date and time:** July 5, 2019 04:00

**Location:** 14 kilometers away from Bihać

**Coordinates:** 44.8596674, 15.732346600000028

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 25 person(s), age: 16-35 , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** threatening with guns, Set on fire their belongings

**Police involved:** 10 to 12 Croatian intervention police, unknown number of croatian special police, 2 police vans, 1 smaller police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of 25 people – aged 16 to 35 from Afghanistan and Pakistan – is walking towards the Slovenian border in Croatia. This group was walking in the forest at about 1am when they heard two gunshots and were asked to stop walking by the police. According to the interviewee, a Afghan men in his 20s, three young policemen were already in the forest, waiting for groups coming. They were wearing grey-blue shirts and dark trousers. This is the same uniform that the other officers, which they meet later, is wearing.

When the group hears the fire in the air, they stop.

*“All the group had to sit down and stand up one by one.”*

They then empty their pockets and the officers sieze and put all their phones, powerbanks and money in a bag. Then they are frisked by the officers, who also searched their backpacks.

Approximately 25 minutes later, two other officers arrive in a dark blue french-brand van. The first police team gives these new officers the bag of belongings.

The group of 25 people enter into the back of the van and are driven to a police station. There, they are put into a windowless room where approximately 35 other people are already kept waiting. They wait approximately 30 minutes at the police station and are not interviewed. They are not allowed access toilets.

*“[At the] police station, no see anyone and again go back to Bosnia.”*

*“No give asylum for underage, deport Bosnia.”*

Three minors are in this group of 25 people. The interviewee states that they observe no difference between how the police treat the minors and how they treat the adults.

The two groups are then put into two dark-blue vans. The interviewee states that the two drivers who pick up the group up in the forest are the same drivers who now drive them to the border.

At the border, there are three vehicles present: the two vehicles transporting the two groups and another police car that is already there.

They arrive at approximately 4.00 am. One officer opens the door to the back of the van and the group has to exit the van one-by-one and walk in a line. There are eight to ten policemen present.

*“They don’t give me sleeping bag, phone, powerbank. All the sleeping bag on fire in a little place.”*

According to the interviewee, they did not get their belongings back. Instead, the police officers amass all the sleeping bags and set them on fire. The group leaves the location without being beaten by the officers and then walks back to Bihać, which takes them three hours

**03/07/2019**

## **“THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE POLICE IS SO DANGEROUS. WE ALL JUST FEAR THEM”**

**Date and time:** July 3, 2019 06:30

**Location:** Vrbanja, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.04432521127122, 18.98538661991597

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 16 person(s), age: 13-25 years old. , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian Police, 7 or 8 Croatian Intervention Police, 1 Police Car, 1 Police Van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On Wednesday 3rd July a 15-year-old boy from Afghanistan travelling amongst a group of 16 boys and young men aged 13 to 25 crossed into Croatia from Serbia. Across the border, two police officers described as wearing normal uniforms spotted and stopped the group of people on the move at around 6.30am. With the support of 7 or 8 officers, described as intervention police, that had arrived in two control compact vehicles, the group was arrested and detained. The respondent said the apprehension and attack occurred in the “jungle” parallel E70 shortly after the parking space “Resting Spacva”.

Once the additional officers arrived, both the regular police and the presumed intervention police launched an attack on the group of young men and boys that lasted between 20 to 30 minutes. The police indiscriminately kicked, punched and struck the group of boys and young men with batons. Regardless of the age of the boys, they were all targeted the same, with the police taking little care to avoid their faces or heads during the attack.

Once the attack stopped the Croatian police took everyone’s power banks and mobile phone chargers and broke everyone’s phones. The respondent described both “*regular police*” and “*intervention police*” as having carried out the attack.

Once the attack stopped, the Croatian police put the group of people on the move into a police van described as white with no windows and drove them to the Serbian border and told them

to walk across the border. They crossed the border by foot and arrived at the nearest Serbian village of Ilinci at 8 am.

**28/06/2019**

## **“THEY TOLD US: GO TO BOSNIA, DON'T COME BACK!”**

**Date and time:** June 28, 2019 10:30

**Location:** near Sturlic, Bosnia-Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 45.06522, 15.74766

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 51, 25, 19, 22, 23, 27, 40, 45 , from: Syria, Somalia, Turkish Kurdistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used, theft of personal belongings

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group consisting of a mother (51) with her two sons (25, 19) and one friend (22) from Syria, two single women from Somalia (23, 27) and two older men from Turkish Kurdistan (40, 45) left Velika Kladuša on June 27 at 10:00 PM for their first transit attempt towards Croatia.

They were walking around 8 kilometers in two hours, waiting for their taxi to call them, and when they finally got the call, they waited for two more hours for two taxis to arrive. Once the two taxi arrived, it took them a while to negotiate the price with the driver and once the taxi had brought them to a place close to the border, they were waiting 30 more minutes for their friends in the other taxi whose driver confused the way, so they ended up crossing the border by foot near Sturlic at 3.30 AM on June 28.

They walked around 12-15 kilometers through forests and mountainous land until 8:00 AM when they found an empty mountain hut, and as they were exhausted, they entered to sleep there for some time. Only the Syrian mother didn't find rest and stayed awake to keep watch on the group. After approximately 30 minutes, two police vans and one police car approached the hut.

*“One officer was shooting in the air, shouting ‘Get out, Get out!’”*

The respondent describes the eight police officers to probably come from two different units: Some of them wearing black uniforms and the others open blue jackets. The group got out of the hut very quickly leaving their bags inside, and was then told to get their bags from inside and to pile them up in front of the officers. They checked all their bags, collected five phones and the same amount of power banks from them in a plastic bag and bodysearched the two

Kurdish men as well as one of the men from Syria. However, they didn't take any money from the group.

The other Syrian man tried to explain them that they want to apply for asylum because as Kurds they are an oppressed minority in their country, but the officers didn't listen and just told them to get altogether in the back of one of the windowless vans. In the van, there were handcuffs to fix people on the seats, but the officers didn't take use of them. The driver's cab was only connected to the back through a small window which was covered by a yellow curtain.

They drove for approximately 1h30min in the van until they reached a road near a white border stone, it was around 10:00 or 10:30 AM on the 28 at this point.

The officers opened the door, made them get off the van and gave them the plastic bag with all their phones.

*"They told us: Go to Bosnia, don't come back!"*

Five minutes after they passed the border stone, they checked their phones in the bag and realized that they were all broken, the officers probably went with a knife in the part to charge it. They continued to walk for three kilometers and then called the same taxi as the previous day to come and pick them up. They were driving to Velika Kladuša and staying in front of Miral camp for the next days.

**27/06/2019**

**"WHY DO THEY DO THIS? WE ARE HUMANS LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, WE DON'T WANT TO HARM CROATIA, ONLY TO REACH EUROPE."**

**Date and time:** June 27, 2019 10:00

**Location:** Ilača

**Coordinates:** 45.1812992, 19.0989409999999968

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 24, 30 years old , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, destruction of personal belongings

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the morning of July 27th, two Algerian men aged 24 and 30 started walking from Šid (SRB) to Croatia, crossing the border around 8:30AM. They walked to the town of Ilača (see location marked on the map below), from where they intended to get a bus to Zagreb. Around 10:00AM, while they were waiting for the bus, three vans containing five police officers, with descriptions matching regular Croatian police, pulled up. Two of the officers ordered the men inside one of the police vans, after which they were transported to a quiet road through a nearby forest and ordered to get out of the van.

The two officers proceeded to punch the two men in the face and hit them in various places on the body with their batons. The respondent suffered a wound on his right lower abdomen (figure 1). The photograph was taken during the interview, 4 days after the incident. The officers also smashed the phone of the respondent, cursed at the men in English and said things in Croatian which the respondent didn't understand.

*"Why do they do this? We are humans like everyone else, we don't want to harm Croatia, only to reach Europe. When they catch us, I understand they can decide to give us asylum or not, but I don't understand why they beat me and break my phone."*

About ten minutes after arriving at the country road, the police ordered the two men back into the police vehicle, with the officers kicking them as they climbed inside. They were then transported to the border near Tovarnik (HR), where around 11:00AM they were let out of the van and told to walk back into Serbia while the two police officers stood and watched them.

(figure 1)

25/06/2019

**“"AND YOU DON'T SEE THE OBSTACLE HERE AND YOU FALL DOWN AND THE OTHER STARTS BEATING YOU."”**

**Date and time:** June 25, 2019 01:00

**Location:** 40 km within the interior of Croatia passed Velika Kladusa

**Coordinates:** 45.178187032819835, 15.370221775669279

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 18 - 35 years old , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, threatening with guns, destruction of personal belongings

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of six people left from Velika Kladuša (BiH) on June 22nd and walked in the interior of Croatia for two days. In the early morning hours of June 25th, at around 1:00 am, they left the cover of the forest in order to cross a road which ran through this largely uninhabited, forested region. Although they were just trying to cross the road to get to the other side, the group found that it was full of thorny plants. This being the case, they decided to continue down the road for a while, and eventually came across a small bridge which was positioned over a river (approximate location marked on the map below). The group was approximately 10 meters away from the bridge at which point several police officers arrived in a civilian car. The first car carried "normal" officers, wearing blue uniforms.

These officers called for backup and shortly after another car arrived to the scene. There were six officers between these two cars in total. The second car carried two officers in black uniforms which the respondent described as "combat" uniforms. There were no other cars passing the group during their apprehension near the bridge on the roadside. It was on a street in the middle of the forest. An Arabic translator present during the testimony collection relayed his recollection of the event:

*"First thing they put the lights on him, and then pushed him back and he fell backwards and they beat him with a baton and with their knees. He got his nose broken."*

The respondent described that during the course of their apprehension, him and his friends experienced a high level of violence from the police officers. The respondent in particular described being pushed over by a police officer, falling back and then being straddled by a police officer and who hit him several times with a baton before taking the butt of his gun and swinging it at his nose. After this single blow to the nose, the respondent described the officer turning him on the other side and, again with the butt of the gun, hitting him four times in the [back] of the head until he fainted. The respondent then described regaining consciousness a short time later, during which time he was still being struck by a police officer.

When asked why he thought that he had received this treatment, the respondent voiced his opinion that:

*"That's how police treat illegal immigrants, it is quite normal to be that brutal."*

While he was being treated like this, the respondent described that his friends received somewhat different treatment from the officers. The respondent inferred that perhaps since he was the only group-member with a telephone in his possession at their time of apprehension, he was selected as the target of this violence. His mobile phone was taken at this point and later broken. The other group members were beaten, but not like the respondent.

The group was later put in a police van together and were brought back to the border between Croatia and Bosnia. It took them approximately an hour and a half to drive from the site of apprehension to this location. There was a river at the push-back site which ran between Bosnia and Croatia. There were four officers in total present at this site who wore dark blue uniforms. The respondent recalled there being some sort of barriers which were described as trees cut sideways.

*"There was kinds of obstacles there"*

*"Like a tree, like a normal tree, put it on the side"*

Nearby the area where the group was brought back, the respondent described there being a large boulder where the police officers put his broken telephone on the rock and they asked him to pick it up. The officers had already taken several things from the phone, such as the memory and SIM cards. The respondent was the first man to be taken out of the van. They were taken out one at a time.

*"Once you pick up the telephone, the first police officer starts beating you. And you run. And you don't see the obstacle here and you fall down and the other starts beating you."*

*"They made it on purpose to make people fall."*

*"You fall here and the two men start beating you up"*

The respondent then described getting himself up before stumbling down to a nearby river which marked the border of Bosnia and Croatia. At this moment, the officers seemed to lose interest in him. The respondent then heard an officer saying to another officer to "Pick the other one" after which they went back to the van and took one of his friends. The respondent described hearing the screams of his friend being struck by the police officers.

*"The brutality has the purpose to make you weak"*

*"Even though I was covered in blood, they still beat me"*

Additionally, the respondent described seeing his friend's backpacks, food, and extra clothing burned by the police officers.

*"At first you just see your things [in a pile] on the side, and then you go [into Bosnia] and if you turn back you see the fire."*

According to the respondent, the place where they returned the group is well known because it is always the same place. He described it as being around 15 km away from Velika Kladuša.

**24/06/2019**

## **"ALL PEOPLE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO MOVE FREELY"**

**Date and time:** June 24, 2019 10:00

**Location:** Kutina, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.03276110297051, 16.194960891601568

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 24, 25, 28 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, destruction of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 2 police officers, 1 police vehicle. According to description one of the officers had police uniform with 2 stars on the shoulder emblem: senior police inspector, the other police officer was in civil clothes.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** no translator present, questioning

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A small group of 3 Algerian friends (age 24, 25, 26) started their journey from Sarajevo, where they spent a couple of days resting in a friendly hostel after their first failed attempt to cross Croatian border. During the time in hostel they managed to regain focus so they made a new plan for the crossing and decided to go to Banja Luka by a bus on June 23. After they arrived to Banja Luka they waited until the nightfall, payed for taxi and arrived in Gradiška around 1:00AM.

From there they continued their journey on foot, covered by the night. The group was aware that river Sava is too dangerous to swim across so they searched for a boat along the coast.

After some time the group managed to find a small port with a few boats. At first they felt defeated as almost every boat was chained, but they eventually found an unchained boat. They rowed across the river and managed to get across the border around 3:00AM.

After they crossed the border they walked in the forest for about 20 kilometers and at 6:30AM they decided to take a break and change clothes. They threw away all their extra clothing and equipment in attempt to keep low profile and not to attract too much attention from the local population as their plan involved riding the train. Since they walked in the forest near the river they suffered injuries from mosquito bites.

After a short break, the group went to Draganići and bought three tickets for the train to Zagreb for 77 Kuna, approximately around 17 euros per ticket. The train arrived at 9:00AM and the group entered the train. Since only one of the group members spoke English, the conductor was suspicious and the respondent believed that the conductor was the one that contacted the police. They fell asleep soon after the conductor left.

The next thing that they remember is being awoken by a voice asking for identification. Two police officers entered the train at the Kutina station at 10:00AM. The local police patrol consisted of one male officer in civilian clothes and the other officer was a female wearing the police uniform with 2 stars on the shoulder emblem. From the given description she could have been a senior police inspector.

They apprehended the group and took them off the train and into the police vehicle. The respondent said that the driving was normal, that the air conditioning was on, and the respondent also said that they drove for about 20 minutes until they arrived at the police station.

When they arrived to the police station they were allowed to use the toilet and to drink water, and then they were questioned inside the police office about their intentions, routes, and where they came from.

The respondent said that they didn't ask for asylum and that officers didn't take their fingerprints. After that a second police team was called to come and pick them up. The respondent said that the local police called the "border police".

After one hour in the local police station the second police team arrived driving a white and blue van. They were pushed inside the van by four police officers, three men and one woman. There were other people in the van as well – two women, two Egyptian males and 3 Algerians. The respondent wasn't sure about their age but he was certain that one woman was pregnant.

The van had no open windows and no air conditioning and respondent said that he believed the driving was deliberately reckless. They drove up a windy mountain road and the pregnant woman started vomiting. No water was given to them at any point.

At this point, respondent got angry because the pregnant woman was treated badly.

*"They are all racists", he said, " The Croatian police officers are racists, you can't treat a pregnant woman like that"*

The respondent said that he doesn't know when they arrived at the location in the mountains near border and that the location where they stopped had no phone signal. The respondent said the location was near Glodina, a village in Bosnia, but on Croatian side of border.

Three male and one female officer took them out of the van, trashed their phone connectors and told them to 'go.' They had to walk around five hours to Bosanska Otoka stopping by a river which was on their way to drink and refresh themselves. They arrived to Bosanska Otoka at 7:00PM.

In Bosanska Otoka they managed to get into the train and went back to Sarajevo.

At the end of the interview, the respondent took a deep breath, looked me in the eye and said: "All people should be allowed to move freely, all people".

**23/06/2019**

## **"TAKE YOUR MOBILE AND GO, OR I'LL KILL YOU."**

**Date and time:** June 23, 2019 17:00

**Location:** Lužani-Malino, Croatia.

**Coordinates:** 45.170505, 17.716822699999966

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 26-29 years old , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian intervention police, 5 Croatian police officers, 3 police vehicles

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A single man from Afghanistan, who appeared to be in his late twenties, crossed the border from Serbia into Croatia near Tovarnik (HR) on the evening of July 22. He walked along the train tracks the entire night, as well as most of the next day, taking only occasional breaks to rest and eat.

He was captured by police at 5:00PM on June 23. At this point, he had recently passed a sign indicating he had walked 125 kilometres along the train tracks in Croatia, as well as on a bridge, which would have placed him near Lužani-Malino. He described the two officers who captured him as wearing dark blue uniforms, and subsequently picked out the country's intervention police when shown a variety of Croatian police officers in uniform.

The respondent reported that the two officers who found him immediately started kicking him and hitting him with their fists. He estimated that the attack from the police officers lasted ten minutes. Once the attack subsided, the police took 200 Euros in cash that the man had on him and they broke his mobile phone. When the man asked the officers for the memory card in his phone because it contained sentimental pictures of his mother, sister and friends, the respondent reported that the police held a gun to his temple and told him to take his broken phone or he would be killed.

Shortly after three vehicles with five officers came and deported him back to Serbia, the officers did not ask him any questions or seek to determine the cause of the deportation but put him in the car and drove him to the Croatian- Serbian train line border.

At the border, the man was placed against a two-meter high fence and was beaten by the officers deporting him. Since the attacks by the police officers, the man now suffers from pain throughout his whole body when he walks and breaths. He has sustained injuries across his body but significantly on the right side of his chest, head and hands. Once forced across the border he arrived at the train station at 9:00PM, where he spent the night.

**22/06/2019**

**“AND ALL OF THESE BORDERS, NOBODY TREATED US [LIKE THIS]”**

**Date and time:** June 22, 2019 17:00

**Location:** Staro Selo Topusko, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.21219548101352, 15.929048902736781

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 13 person(s), age: 35, 15, 28, 13, 5, 7, 35, 20, and four other people 25-30 years old, from: Syria, Iraq

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, gunshots, destruction of personal belongings

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

*"We go from Velika Kladaša, about 13 persons [other than myself], we have 3 women, and 3 girls – children – and the other parts of the group young [men]. We go from Velika Kladaša on a Friday [June, 14th]"*

Over the course of seven days, the group walked across the interior of Croatia through forests, over mountains, and through rivers. On the third day there was "crazy rain" and "lighting that arrived to the ground." All of their possessions were soaking wet with water. After four days in the forests they had finished all of their food. They found an abandoned mountain house and found water inside to drink. At some point during their journey, the husband and wife in the group took their two youngest children (ages 5 and 7 years old) and turned themselves in to the police. Their other two children (ages 13 and 15 years old) stayed with the rest of the group.

On the 21st of June, the next Friday, the group arrived at the Kolpa river at border of Slovenia. The group attempted to cross into Slovenia across an old, wooden bridge which was half broken and strewn with broken tiles.

When they initially approached the bridge, they saw that there were Slovenian police officer stationed near the bridge on the other side and decided to wait for them to leave. After waiting for several hours and watching the Slovenian authorities leave the area, the group prepared to cross. One man from the group went down to check the road on the Croatian side of the border and at this point two Croatian police officer who were sitting under the bridge saw the group member checking the road.

They told the group members to come out of the forest, but the group did not want to. The police carried two firearms – one big and one small – which they fired into the air when the group resisted their orders to come down from the forest.

*"When we come here Croatia police have two men. [They say to us] "Stop! Stop! Sit down! Sit down!"*

One of the officers wore a dark blue t-shirt and pants. He was described as having blue eyes and short blond hair, and being around 30 years old. The other officer wore a dark grey uniform and was described as also being around 30 years old, but carrying more weight. Neither wore hats.

The officers searched the group, took their mobile phones, power banks, a woman had a knife which they confiscated.

*“They were maybe polite with us”*

Still, the respondents described being uncomfortable with the way they were treated by these officers.

*“They ask me, are you hungry? And I say “so much, I have not eaten for many days” and they start laughing*

The police told the group members to sit on the ground and to take out their phones and money and put them on the ground. The group waited one hour sitting on the ground before three more police officers arrived driving a large white van without windows. They were dressed the same way as the police officer in the dark blue uniform. The respondents described seeing all of their items which had previously been confiscated being put in a bag and taken to the front of the car.

*“And our mobile phones and power bank in bag, in one bag”*

The group was then loaded into the van which they described as cramped, completely dark, and poorly ventilated. They were then transported to a police station, which took around 30 minutes to arrive to.

*“It’s night in the car and no air”*

*“We get in the car, the big car, and go to the police center, the station.”*

When they arrived at the station, the respondents described being put into a very small cell together.

*“We enter the station and they put us in a room. A prison, it was a prison.”*

*“Not clean”*

*"13 persons in one room maybe 2 meters and 3 meters"*

*"We enter and close the door, we are 13 persons come to this prison. It had toilet and water. After about 5 minutes, we have woman have a problem. We need a doctor, no doctor. Wait wait wait. We have a children who is hungry. Wait wait wait"*

After some time in the cell, the group-members were brought out again and processed by the officers at the station who took down their information and wrote it into a document.

*"After that they take our document. As a report. Name, surname, your father, your mother, age."*

One of the respondents who spoke English well was told to translate for the other group-members at this point.

*"I was translator between the police and my friends. I write the information in their documents"*

One of the respondents asked the officer if these documents could potentially be harmful to him and his friends and was told no. It was just for documentation, he was told. The respondent was under the impression at the time that this information would be sent to the UNHCR. After finishing the information, the group-members then had their pictures taken with this information.

*"After we take this document, it is finished, they take picture with name and date"*

At around this point, the fifteen and thirteen year olds in the group were taken by the police to a closed camp in Zagreb where their parents and younger siblings were put after they left the group and turned themselves into the police two days earlier.

The rest of the group was then taken back to their cell and told "Go to sleep" at around 8:00 am. Five hours later, at around 1:00 pm, the group could hear that another group from either Iraq or Iran was placed in the cell next to them.

*"We hear in the next room, children was crying, many children."*

Finally, at about 2:00 pm, the group was approached by a police officer who took them three at a time back to the van which had initially transported them to the police station. They were able to take their personal bags with them in the back of the windowless van. However, the

plastic bags in which their phones and power banks were being held was taken into the front of the van. The vehicle then drove for two hours to an unidentified location before stopping and taking on another passenger in the front.

*“After two hours the car stops. We hear the police laughing, laughing, laughing...and another man gets [in the car], we don’t see this man.”*

The respondents inferred that the individual who entered the car at this point was the police officer who would later beat them particularly severely at the border. Finally, after another hour of driving, they arrived at the Bosnian-Croatian border

*“After one hour we arrive to the border of Croatia and Bosnia. In the border there is a wall, maybe 1 meter high... The police come to the car. You and you and you, come here...”*

While still locked inside of the van, the group could hear the police officers outside breaking their phones with rocks, chuckling amongst themselves.

*“We heard them laughing when they broke our phones”*

They discovered later that their phones had been broken by some sort of hammer and chisel [pictures above]. When the door was finally opened, the group-members briefly saw a man dressed entirely in black, clad with a black balaclava mask, talking with the three other officers present at the push-back site.

*“When they open the door, I see him with police talking”*

*“[He wore a] black mask. Same D’aesh”*

*“This D’aesh man [was dressed in] all black, he doesn’t show any of his body, just his eyes”*

The three other officers were dressed in dark blue uniforms, with one older officer being identified as a potential leader. The respondents described initially seeing this masked man motioning to the other officers to wait as he headed down a pathway into Bosnia. Because she was ill, the police escorted the woman who was sick out of the van and told her to wait for the rest of the group a hundred meters away from where the van was parked.

After the officer with the balaclava mask headed off down the path, the men described being taken out of the van three at a time and being told to pick up their bags before being told, forcefully and suddenly, "Hajde, go!" by the authorities next to the van, who threatened them with their batons.

*"Go! Go! Go! Go! Go!"*

*"The first police [hit] you, but not fast, and we run 'Go! Go! Go!'"*

As each group of three ran away from the officers stationed next to the van, they encountered the masked officer who was hidden perhaps ten meters away, down the path on the Bosnian side of the border. As the group members ran down this path, away from the previous officers, the masked officer was described as jumping out from a hiding place between two trees. The officer was described by several group-members as holding a club-like weapon well over a meter in length with two hands, which he swung forcefully at each passing group, attempting to hit them. The respondents described the blows from this weapon as having a large amount of force behind them. They remarked at how different it was from a typical police baton.

*"[After] 5 meters or 10 meters, this man between the trees come here. He have a tall stick, and kick you, kick you"*

*"The sticks that police have are maybe a half meter, [this was] not like police. Very tall...maybe silicone or wood, maybe about two meters"*

*"Have stick, not like police. Very tall."*

The majority of the group was able to evade the officer, receiving only glancing blows, however one member of the group, a 50-year-old father, slipped and fell onto the ground after being hit by this officer's club. He described feeling this club strike his body eight times, as the officer swung the weapon at him with two hands.

*"Boom! Boom! Boom...I see him, [it was like he] needed to kill me. Angry, angry angry, angry angry."*

*"When we run fast, he maybe [hit] you one or two [times]. We run fast. My friend 'T.' fall down in this area, and he [hit] one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, times."*

*"Huge man, big man"*

The older group-member described being hit twice on his back, on his left and right arm, his backside, and on his head by this long club. Originating from Syria, he likened this officer's uniform and tactics to those used by the so-called Islamic State back in his home country.

*"What you think D'aesh make in Syria, he make like this here"*

*"And the police [next to the vehicle] see all of this"*

After escaping from the masked officer, each pair of three ran around a bend in the road further into Bosnia and waited for the rest of their group to pass this gauntlets. Finally, when all of the group had passed through this procedure, the man in the balaclava mask returned to the other police officers at which point one of the officers took out his pistol and fired it into the air three times.

The group then walked down a mostly straight road which eventually passed by a supermarket. After approximately 20 km of walking, they finally reached Velika Kladusa. The men had crossed many borders in the last months since leaving their homes in Idlib and escribed disbelief at the level of violence that they had encountered in Croatia:

*"And all of these borders, nobody treated us [like this]"*

*"It's not just with our group, it's all groups"*

**20/06/2019**

**"WE WANT ASYLUM IN CROATIA, WE ARE REFUGEES!  
THE POLICE ONLY LAUGHED THEN THEY SLAPPED  
ME IN THE FACE"**

**Date and time:** June 20, 2019 03:00

**Location:** Željava, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.85946948792225, 15.733665723998001

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: 6, 7, 23, 24, 24, 25, 21, 34, 34 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian police dressed in black with masks over their faces, 7-8 Croatian police dressed in dark blue uniforms; one police van, one police car

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

An Afghan family which included nine people, including two children, left from Bihać (BiH) on June 20 at 9:30PM. The night before the transit attempt, all but three men from the family were staying in a safe house near Bihać. The three men were told by the house's security that they could not stay there so they slept in a squat nearby. On June 20, the entire family met outside the safe house and began walking to the border.

They climbed a mountain to cross the border in the rain. They found a small road that the respondent believed nobody used. One member in the group could not walk well in the forest because he was overweight and so they walked fifteen to sixteen kilometers on this small road. Suddenly, the group members saw a car coming so they hid in the grass and once the car passed they continued on their way.

Five minutes later there was a dog barking so they hid themselves between the trees which had sharp thorns sticking out of them (approximate location marked on the map below). They stayed there for five minutes and then they saw police lights. This was around 2:00 or 3:00AM. The respondent described that the officers shouted "come out" and they fired about three rounds of ammunition into the air, around 30 shots in total. There were nine to ten police officers present and two wore black ski masks over their faces. The other seven or eight dressed in dark blue clothes.

The respondent believed that the police used night vision goggles and had seen them in the forest. Three people escaped and ran through the trees but the respondent stayed with the rest of the family. The three who escaped couldn't find a way through the woods and the police eventually caught them, and the respondent reported that the police hit them. The police had dogs that they brought close to the group. The two young girls were scared and started crying, but the police didn't care and they just started laughing. The respondent told the police, "please stop the girls are scared." The police replied "fuck off."

*"Any time we tried to talk to the police they gave us one punch and one kick in the back in the head."*

The police told the group members to take out their phones. The whole group except one man gave the police their phones. That man put his phone in his daughter's jacket, believing that the police would not search a small girl. The police asked where is your phone, he said "I don't have phone." However, the police checked his daughter's jacket and they found the phone. They started beating the man in front of his daughter. Then, the male officers searched all the bodies of the women. The women and girls were crying but the police laughed. The police took all the group's phone chargers, money (2,700 Euro), and searched their bags. The police gave the bags and sleeping bags back to the group members and told them to stay in the line where they were sitting on the ground.

One police asked the respondent "are you the leader," I said "no, no, no."

The police asked where they wanted to go, and the respondent told them:

*"We want to stay here. We want asylum in Croatia. We are refugees."*

When he said this, the respondent reported that the police laughed and slapped him in the face. They said "here is not your house." They told the group members to stay in the line. First the police let the children and women inside the van, and then they told the men to enter one by one. As the men entered the van, the police kicked them in their backs and hit them in the head with their batons.

It was dark inside the van and the police blasted the air conditioning at a very cold temperature. The police drove them around one and half hours to the border.

*"We couldn't hear anything because the sound of the cooler was so loud. It was freezing cold."*

The police drove fast, swerved a lot and braked suddenly so that the group members fell onto each other. At 6:00AM the car stopped and the police told the family to come out. There were three police officers present. The respondent explained that they started a fire. "We thought now we can go." But they told us "throw your bag in the fire."

The respondent was particularly upset about this because in their bags they had enough food for fifteen days, as well as new shoes and sleeping bags.

*"We didn't throw our bags in the fire but they started beating us, so we threw it in [the fire.] They didn't care, they just said 'throw it.' They even wanted our jackets so we had to throw our jackets in too."*

The respondent asked the police about their phones and money and the police responded that "there are no phones." One of the women in the group asked for her tablet back. She explained to the police that it was for her daughter to play games, but the police didn't care.

The police pointed out a windy path in the forest and told the group members to 'go.' On their way back through the forest, the respondent reported seeing bloody clothes, and what the respondent believed to be police gloves on the ground. They walked sixteen kilometers back to Bihać. A Bosnian person bought tickets for all of them to return to Sarajevo.

Since the time that this push back occurred, one of the girls in the group has wet the bed every night.

13/06/2019

## “THEY HIT US WHEN WE ASKED FOR OUR STUFF BACK AND THEN TOOK A LIGHTER AND STARTED A FIRE”

**Date and time:** June 13, 2019 05:00

**Location:** Donji Furjan, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.060335889105225, 15.74214676093061

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: 22-30 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian police officers

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of eleven men from Algeria and Morocco departed from Bihać (BiH) at 1:00PM on June 12. They traveled by bus to the border town Šturlić (BiH), where they found a squat to spend the night in before they attempted to cross the border into Croatia in the early hours of the morning on June 13.

They walked around four kilometers from the center of Šturlić, where they had slept, to the border at around 4:00AM. They looked for the best way to cross the Korana river that was about ten meters wide. They found a shallow place that they could walk through. They crossed into Croatia around 4:30AM. Once they entered Croatia they walked for fifteen minutes until the police caught them.

The group saw three male police officers who were patrolling the area on foot. The police were between the ages of 30-45 and were wearing black uniforms. The police said “stop,” which the men did and they put their hands on their heads.

The respondent believed that the police called more officers for support because within a few minutes two more officers arrived on foot. The group members lay on the ground in a single line. The five officers demanded the group members to give them their bags, which they did. The police also confiscated eleven phones from the group. The respondent managed to keep his phone hidden in a sandwich.

*“One guy had his passport in his bag, when he asked the police for his stuff back they kicked him into the river that we were lying next to.”*

The respondent claims that when others asked for their bags back as well, the five officers began kicking and pushing the group members. Three people fell into the Korona river as a result of the officers' use of force.

*"When we all asked for our bags back, [the officer] took a lighter and lit them on fire. Five of us were on the Croatian side of the border and six were already back in Bosnia. I hid the phone in my sleeve and made a video of the police burning our stuff."*

<https://www.borderviolence.eu/wp-content/uploads/feuer.mp4>

Eventually the group members who were still in Croatia joined the rest of their group on the Bosnian side of the border around 5:00AM. They waited on the Bosnian border for two hours until the police left and the fire had died down and then they crossed the border again to check their burnt possessions before they returned to Bosnia and went back to Bihać (BiH).

13/06/2019

## ““THE PROBLEM IS THE COLONIZATION, I WOULD NOT BE IN CROATIA AND BOSNIA WITHOUT IT.””

**Date and time:** June 13, 2019 03:00

**Location:** Pašini Potok, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.17096, 15.76723

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: 20 - 35 , from: Morocco, Algeria, Egypt

**Minors involved?** No

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

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of twelve left from Sturlic (BiH) on foot in the evening of June 7th. They continued walking through the interior of Croatia for five days. During this time, the twelve-person group decided to split into two smaller groups of six. On the morning of June 12th, the group had progressed to a point in Croatia that was approximately 65 kilometers away from Trieste. On this day, at around 11:00 am, one of the groups was apprehended by two Croatian police officers.

The respondents described that the officers used a layered approach to apprehend the group. They described seeing a olive-drab car, in the style of a jeep, in the forest which they inferred called other officers to look for them.

*"You have one car in the jungle, a green car, just to see the guys, and then they call the police to go and collect them"*

After this first group was apprehended, the respondent described him and his other group-members being searched, along with their bags, and having their money, phones, power banks confiscated as well. Between the two groups, seven mobile phones and ten power banks were also confiscated. They did not receive any of these items back. In total, the respondents described having 190 EUR taken from them which was also not returned.

One of the respondents noted how before they were apprehended by the Croatian authorities, he had deconstructed his phone, taking the back case and his battery out and putting them into his bag. When the officers looked at his phone they did not break it further. He was able to retain his phone however the rest of the group had their devices later broken. Reflecting on this event, one of respondents noted how absurd it was that Magrebi men regularly face the stereotype of being thieves from people within the transit community as well as from Croatian police officers when the most rampant theft that they encountered comes from Croatian authorities who regularly confiscate their mobile phones and personal possessions.

After this first group of six's initial capture, they were asked by the officers where they were from. According to one of the respondents, the officers voiced their displeasure towards the group after they said they were from Morocco and Algeria. The first group of six was then loaded into a small, windowless van which arrived to their location after some time.

Around 30 minutes later, the second group of six was apprehended by two other police officers, presumably from the same unit.

*"Two guys catch the first group, two guys the second group"*

*"You catch the (first) 6 persons at first, you put in the car. Before you put in the car, they say 'Get up get up' We get up."*

Once both sub-groups had been loaded into the same windowless van, both of the respondents described a prolonged period of detainment as the van drove around for a period of what felt like ten hours between unidentified locations.

*"[The van was] going around to look for other people"*

The respondents described that over the course of this time, there were four instances in which the back door of the van was opened. The first instance occurred as a result of the air quality in the van. The respondents recalled that it was hard to breathe in the back of the van, due to its overcrowding and a lack of oxygen.

*"We don't have place to breathe, [there was] no oxygen"*

At one point during their prolonged containment within the back of the van, the respondents described frantically pounding on the walls of the van in an attempt to communicate to the officers in the front of the vehicle that they could not breathe.

*“Open the door, oxygen, oxygen, they come around and open the door, [look at us] and close”*

The group was also denied access to water during their containment. During their detainment in the van, the respondents described their group requesting numerous times to the front of the van for water. After several hours, they described that the door was opened and a single group-member was offered water.

*“One police officers asked “You want water?” “Just one guy he gives the water...For what reason?”*

The respondent inferred that this was an attempt to divide the rest of the group. At another point, the respondents also described the back of the van being opened by an unidentified officer whom they believed to be the leader of the group of police officers.

*“The boss for the police arrived, came, opened the door, and closed the door”*

The respondents described one final occasion during their containment within the back of the van during which one of their group-members, a man from Algeria, began complaining about a problem with his heart. Only one of the group-members spoke English well enough to communicate with the Croatian police officers and was accordingly asked by this man to tell the officers about the medical problem.

*“If you don’t take this man to the hospital, he might die here”*

This exchange happened at around 4:00 pm on June 12th, however an ambulance did not arrive for this man until 2:00 am on June 13th. The ambulance was emblazoned with a red cross on it. The ambulance drivers asked the English-speaking group-member what had happened, took the at-risk Algerian man out of the van, gave him some tablets, brought him back to the car, and made them wait again. The respondents recalled that at this point he wanted to beg to the officers to push them back, even if it meant being hurt by the Croatian police officers, since they were so tired of being in the van.

At around 3:00 am on June 13th, the respondents described their van being parked in a secluded, semi-rural area along the Bosnian-Croatian border, outside of Velika Kladusa. Once the back door of the van was opened, the respondents saw that the van was parked with its back side facing down a hill which led to a waterway which separated Croatia from Bosnia. There were seven police officers armed with batons positioned outside of the van. The officers at the push-back location all wielded large batons and were described as wearing uniforms with dark blue shirts with short sleeves and black pants. They also described seeing to smaller police vehicles parked at the push-back site, in addition to the transport van.

The group was then made to exit the van and get into a line. They were told: "Put your right hand on the shoulder of the man in front of you".

After walking in this fashion closer towards the border-stream, the men were then taken in pairs, two-by-two. The pairs were walked up to the waterway. At this point, the police shouted "Go! Go! Go!" and swung batons at them.

*"Go! Go! Go!" and beat you to run away into the river"*

One of the respondents described an observation that frequently the first and last group-members to be pushed back are those who experience the most direct physical violence. Specifically, the respondents noted how they were in the first and second pairs of people to be pushed back.

*"I see they is beat "M.", I am second and I am run"*

*"The first one, the last one, this is the problem"*

During the push-back, one of the respondents' collarbone was broken by a stroke from a baton and the other respondent's forearm was bruised from a baton stroke.

The respondents described that there were two Egyptian men who were part of their group, both of whom were very short, and that when they were forced into the waterway, the water rose up to their chests. They did not know how to swim and risked drowning if they lost their footing.

*"After I am in Bosnia, it is night and you cannot see, they broke all the phone, you don't know the place you are, you know nothing. You must wait until the morning. You don't know where you are, are you in the north? In Bihac? Nothing."*

The group returned back to Miral camp at around 5:00 am later that morning. One of the respondents described entering Miral with dirty clothes, taking a shower, and going to sleep.

The respondents voiced their frustration of being forced to return from Croatia to dismal and humiliating camp conditions in Bosnia inside of the IOM-run Miral Camp.

After concluding their description of the ordeal that they faced in Croatia, one of the respondents voiced his frustration with the colonial legacy of his country and the extraction of natural resources from Morocco and other migrant-producing countries by wealthy European states.

*"The problem is the colonization, I would not be in Croatia and Bosnia without it."*

He also commented on what he described as the greater political motivations for violent border controls.

“This is Europe, Croatia maybe in five years [will become part of] Schengen. This is the problem.”

13/06/2019

““WHEN THE POLICE CATCH, THEY STRIPPED AND TAKE OUT OUR CLOTHES, ONLY KEEP UNDERWEAR, THEN [THE TWO POLICEMEN TRIED TO] BROKE MY PHONE [...] BROKEN MY PHONE, TAKE MONEY, 150€, TAKE BAG, EVERYTHING, POLICE HIT ME AND MY FRIENDS””

**Date and time:** June 13, 2019 00:00

**Location:** pushed back 20 kilometers away from Velika Kladusa

**Coordinates:** 45.22544676292148, 15.968884890684649

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

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

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, 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:** 2 Regular Croatian policemen , 1 driver with the same uniform, 7 to 8 intervention police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of three friends left from Bihac by walk aiming to cross the Bosnian/ Croatian border. They took a taxi to go further and continue walking to cross a river, they keep walking in a mountain amongst “too much animals and insects”. At approximately 9.00 am the group reported hearing firing three times nearby them, two policemen arrested them and beat them with batons to be sure they could not continue. The officers called “their friend, and coming a van”. These two policemen were described wearing a “pale blue shirt with short sleeves with a

*dark blue trouser, as well as the driver coming afterward. One gun on one side of the belt, baton other side with gas spray bottle"*

While waiting for the driver and the van,

*"When the police catch, they stripped and take out our clothes, only keep underwear, then [the two policemen tried to] broke my phone"*

*"broken my phone, take money, 150€, take bag, everything, police hit me and my friends"*

According to the second interviewee, one of the policemen stole his phone

*"Samsung 9, new, very good. They look location and take in pocket, but iPhone 5, not good, just broken"*

When the second police team arrived, they almost crashed the van into one of the interviewees, he ran away at the last minute to avoid it.

*"The driver say 'I am crazy' [talking about himself] , only one driver in this van, open the van and drive from left to right"*

The two interviewees think that the police station was approximately 15 minutes away from the place where they got caught. The interviewees suggest it was Kutina police station but are unsure, because they never got the information of the location they were being taken to.

They were detained an entire day in a room near the police station *"no light, no window, all night, a lot of insects in the room and concrete floor, we sleep on the floor, not give me eat, just water"*

At one point one of the interviewees needed to go to the restroom, he mimed that that became an emergency, the police shouted at him *"you stay here!"*.

One by one they were taken out of this room to go and answer questions concerning their name, surname, date of birth, fathers name. After the interrogation, the officers took pictures of their faces. The officers took their registration document from Bosnia and did not give them back. According to the interviewees, they had to sign a paper written in English saying that they got their belongings back, including their phone, but only the broken phone was given back.

At approximately 9.00 pm, a policeman opened the door and made them go into a van. The respondent says that it was very hot inside the van.

*"Sometimes slow, sometimes fast, sometimes break fast, I feel dizzy, I want to throw up"*

The van stopped after approximately three hours driving at the border. Twenty kilometres away from Velika Kladuša.

The door of the van opened, and the two interviewees mimed the scene, the first one did not even have time to stand, a policeman took him from the neck of his t-shirt and pushed him out of the van accompanied by kicking his behind, making him fall. Then he tried to run away, but they stated about seven to eight policemen beat them with batons while. The policemen's

headtorch was blinding the interviewee while he was aggressed by the officers. They were saying "go, go, go". One by one they got the same treatment.

Then the group of three friends walked back to Velika Kladuša. They had no money anymore to get any food, fortunately, the broken phone is still usable.

10/06/2019

**"I SAID: 'NO, I DON'T WANT TO GO OUT, I AM FROM PALESTINE...!', AND THEY STARTED TO HIT ME WITH THE BATON ON THE HEAD AND DRAGGED ME OUT OF THE CAR."**

**Date and time:** June 10, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Croatian/Bosnian Border next to Baljevac, BiH

**Coordinates:** 44.8308, 15.7632

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 20-29 years old , from: Palestine, Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 2 plain clothes Croatian police officers, 5 regular Croatian police officers, 1 car, 1 marked police vehicle

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent began his journey in a group of 4 and travelled from Bihać (BiH) to the border, where he crossed into Croatia. The respondent described the fear the group members had of the Bosnian police while transiting Bihać.

*"We have to be very careful in Bihać, because Bosnian police is looking for us and when they see us, they beat us and take us back to Sarajevo."*

Having travelled for many days, the group finally reached Zagreb (Croatia). The members decided to split up at this point and take different routes. The respondent stated how they feared being seen in a visible group would cause them to be deported.

*"When police sees four people that look like refugees, they directly take them."*

The respondent was cautious about waiting for the bus in Zagreb. He checked out the exact time of departure, because he knew that police controlled the bus station intensively, and he could not be seen waiting around in public for long periods of time.

*"It's impossible for us to wait for the bus like everybody else. You have to go to the market or elsewhere and then go directly into the bus when it's departing. When you wait at the station, police is coming."*

When the respondent boarded the bus, two Croatian police officers in civil clothes came towards him and asked him for papers in order to gain proof of his identity, and where the respondent was from. When the respondent stated he was from Palestine, the police ordered him to come with them. The police officers forced him into a car and drove him to a police station in Zagreb. The respondent shared how:

*"Two days before, two people from Morocco went to Zagreb and were caught by police. Then the police brought them to the camp. I told this the police officers and asked them: `Why are you not taking me also to the camp? I want asylum, I'm a refugee from Palestine, I have no country! Why do you do this?'"*

The respondent showed the police his passport from Palestine, but they ignored it completely. There was no translator present and the police just said in English: "No, no! Shut up! Go, go!" The respondent also requested something to eat and drink, but only received water. The Croatian police didn't take fingerprints from him, they just forced the respondent to sign some paperwork, which they never gave to him, or offered copy/receipt of. They also searched his entire body and took everything from him, including money, his phone and other personal items. After three hours in the police station, the officer came to remove him.

*"I said to them: `Please wait my friend, I want to speak with you', but they just screamed at me: `No! You shut up!'"*

Then the two police officers put him into a marked van with seven other people not previously known to the respondent. They were driven for three hours to the Croatian/Bosnian border close to Bihać. The respondent described the car ride as very unpleasant: he felt as if the police officers cooled the backside of the van intentionally down via air conditioner and drove extremely erratically, so that the people inside smashed their heads against each other.

*"When the car stopped the police opened the door and screamed `Go, go, go!' but I stayed inside and said to them: `No, I don't want to go out, I am from Palestine...' and they started to hit me with the baton on the head and dragged me out the car."*

In total there were five Croatian police officers and two of them wore balaclavas over their faces. Every officer had a baton in their hand and punched and kicked all of the people, as they went out of the car one by one.

*"To me they said that I am very bad, because I tried to argue with them and to explain my situation. They knew that I am not stupid and hit me more than the others, so that I shut up."*

The police officers also took a bag with the belongings of the eight individuals from the police station in Zagreb to the border, but never gave it back to them. The officers even pulled out their phones in front of the respondent and smashed them to the ground and stepped on them. The Croatian officers also stole money from the group, witnessed directly by all the people present. From the respondent they stole 560€.

*"Normally the police should have given us all the things back, but they stole and destroyed everything."*

From the border the group had to walk what felt like six hours through the forests back to Bihać. The respondent also stated that they had to be careful not to be seen by Bosnian police upon returning, because according to the interviewee, the police is now not very different from the Croatian police.

*"I just want to go somewhere safe, to a new country. I want to change everything and start new."*

The respondent states that of the original group of four he left in, he and two others had been deported, who had also been apprehended after separating in Zagreb.

08/06/2019

## “GO AND DON'T LOOK BACK”

**Date and time:** June 8, 2019 03:00

**Location:** near Prijeboj

**Coordinates:** 44.841708291204604, 15.667685661840778

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: 20-34 , from: Kurdish

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian police officers, a police car and van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of eleven Kurdish people, including ten men and one woman (aged from 20 to 34 years old), started their journey on June 2 at 4:00PM from Sarajevo by car. They drove up north to Bihać (BiH) and then continued to walk for about 4 hours in the forest before taking a break at a designated pick up point in Croatia.

The respondent said that a car was supposed to come the next day during the night time to pick them up but the car never showed up. The group stayed in the forest for three days without food or water hoping that the car would come. The respondent quite vividly remembers the weather and says: "it was very wet and cold, and it rained quite heavily."

After three days in the forest the group heard a car engine, but unfortunately it wasn't the car they had hoped for. Instead of a taxi to Slovenia, it was the police car that came to the designated point to pick them up at 3:00AM as the respondent recalls.

Two police officers got out of the car and told the group members to lie down on the muddy ground. The police searched the group and took their mobile phones as well as their money. The respondent confirmed that the police officers confiscated around 800 euros from the entire group.

After the search the first two police officers called for another police patrol and after some time more officers came in a van.

The respondent couldn't remember their uniforms or the details of the police car, but he clearly remembers that the ground was muddy and cold and that they had to lay in the mud and wait for the second police patrol to arrive.

The respondent said that they drove for about 45 minutes to police station and that the driving was quite reckless. "The car had no windows", he said and explained that air conditioning was not working at all.

Inside the police station men and woman were held in the same room and the police interrogated them without a translator present. Afterwards the police photographed them. The respondent remembered six police officers being present in the police station and he also briefly mentioned another group that was held in a prison cell.

The respondent's group had no translator present during investigation, they never asked for asylum, they were not given any food, water and were not allowed to use the toilet. The respondent recalled that the group spent two hours in the police station.

After that the group was again pushed into the van and respondent says that they rode for about an hour and 45 minutes until they reached the Bosnian border.

After they got out of the van the police gave back their mobile phones but kept the money. "Go and don't look back", one of the police officers said while the others pointed at the distance, "Go, Go.", they yelled.

It took them seven hours to reach Bihać on foot since they had no money to pay for transportation.

**08/06/2019**

## **““IF WE DON'T HAVE SHOES, WE CAN'T COME AGAIN.””**

**Date and time:** June 8, 2019 01:30

**Location:** 45.175248, 15.776959

**Coordinates:** 45.17529953797454, 15.77562830583497

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 14 person(s), age: 5 - 45 years old , from: Iraq

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** pushing people to the ground, insulting, theft of personal belongings, Theft of shoes, Open handed slap

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of fourteen (five children, five men, four women) conducted two transit attempts over the span of one week at the beginning of June. It is of note that the group was apprehended by Croatian police very near to the border, at identical locations twice.

During their initial transit attempt, the group left Velika Kladusa late in the evening of June 4th. The group was then stopped shortly after the border, while crossing a bridge, by five Croatian police officers at around midnight. The respondents described being stopped by five police officers who wore uniforms consisting of light blue t-shirts, black pants, and a hat with the Croatian flag on it.

**|** *“They were waiting”*

One of the officers was described as being overweight and approximately 170 cm tall. He was described as clean shaven, with green eyes. He wore glasses and was approximately 45 years old.

The officers told them to give over their phones, and they did. They quickly walked the group the short distance back to Bosnian-Croatian border and told them to “Go, go, go!” During this

confusion, the father in the group got into an argument with one of the officers over his shoes, the officer forcefully pushed him to continue towards the border at which point the father tripped over his daughter who was walking next to him. The girl fell onto her elbow on the ground, sustaining an injury that was later treated by a local doctor in Velika Kladusa in the following days.

Several days later, in the late evening of the 7th of June, the group again attempted to cross the Bosnian-Croatian border. They attempted to cross at the same location as their previous attempt, approaching the same bridge that they had previously been apprehended on. According to the respondents, they had believed that this location would be safe this time since they intended to wait until the officers' shift had changed.

The group was caught again by the Croatian police in the same location which they had been caught on the evening of June 4th, earlier in the week. One of the respondents described the group as walking across the bridge at which point a car of five police officers pulled up behind them. The respondent inferred that they had been watching the group and waiting for them to pass over the bridge. The respondents described being approached by the officers at around 1:30 am in the early morning hours of June 8th. While this process occurred, one civilian car passed by the group on the bridge.

The officers told them to stop and sit on the ground, which the group complied with. They were then told by the officers to hand over their phones, which the group complied with. One of the officers opened a group-members' phone and searched his for his mapping application, and observed to the man that he had the app Maps.Me on his phone. The respondent inferred that for this reason his phone was later broken. The police officers broke the telephone with a flashlight, smashing the screen. Not all of the group-members' phones were broken.

The respondents described that on this occasion, the Croatian police officers were comparably violent. During their exchange with the officers, one of the officers was described as feigning as if he were going to strike a mother in the group with his fist. The officers were also described as striking one of the female group-members with an open hand in the left eye.

The officers demanded that the five male group-members take off their shoes and hand them over. The respondent remarked that he believed this was an attempt to deter further transit attempts:

*"If we don't have shoes, we can't come again."*

The officers told the group "Take your phones and go", and the group collected the smashed remains of their mobile phones and belongings. However, when the male group-members attempted to take their shoes back, they were told to leave without them.

When the group-members picked up the rest of their belongings, the officers told the group:

*"Go ahead, take your garbage."*

The group was then walked back to the border. After crossing back into BiH, the group walked approximately one hour back to Velika Kladusa. In total, the group only described spending approximately 15 minutes in interaction with the Croatian police officers.

07/06/2019

**“AT ONE POINT THEY HAD BEATEN US FOR SO LONG THEY WERE BOTH TIRED. THEY TOOK A 2 MINUTE BREAK AND STARTED BEATING US AGAIN.”**

**Date and time:** June 7, 2019 16:00

**Location:** In a forest by the E70 highway in Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.08620827463551, 18.812880616859502

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: 20-28 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the evening of June 6, nine Afghani men crossed the border from Serbia into Croatia near Batrovci after leaving from the Serbian town of Šid. They walked all night through the nature surrounding the E70 highway, and then stopped at daybreak to wait until it got dark again (the approximate location is recorded on the map below).

Around 4:00PM they heard the distant sounds of men talking. After a few minutes, two police officers arrived, with their uniforms being described by the respondent as similar to those of Croatian intervention police. The officers immediately started to beat the men with their hands and batons, as well as kicking them. The men begged to be taken to safety in Zagreb, to which the officers' only reply was “No. Don't come back to Croatia.”

After a while the officers took the men to a nearby country road in a police vehicle, and upon arrival searched the members of the group one by one. They smashed all the phones and power banks they found (figure 1), threw away the food the men had brought, and confiscated a knife one member had taken with him to prepare food during their long days of walking.

(figure 1)

At another point the officers asked the men who the boss was, to which the men explained they did not pay money for someone to help them cross, or otherwise the officers would've found it upon searching them, and they would've been in a vehicle in the first place. The officers, seemed unsatisfied with this explanation and responded by beating all members of the group.

Between beating them, searching them and walking them from one location to another, the police were with the men from 4:00PM until about 6:00PM.

*"At one point they had beaten us for so long they were both tired. They took a 2 minute break and started beating us again."*

Their ordeal ended when they were picked up by Croatian police (uniforms described as matching regular Croatian police) and taken back to the Serbian border in a van. The police left them there there around 7:00PM, after which the men had to walk back to Šid for four hours.

The incident left several of the men with sustained injuries: even though this interview took place sixteen days after the incident, the respondent reported still feeling intense pain when doing any lifting. Another member of the group is still taking painkillers for a stinging pain on the right side of his chest, and a third was left with heavy bruising on both arms (figures 2 &3).

(figure 2)

(figure 3)

07/06/2019

## “SEVEN POLICE IN ONE-LINE WAIT, TWO PERSONS GO OUT, TWO BY TWO, ALL FIGHTING, EVERYTHING THEY FIGHT”

**Date and time:** June 7, 2019 11:30

**Location:** 85 kilometers away from Velika Kladusa

**Coordinates:** 45.388879872470056, 14.753845786759257

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: 20-35 years old , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 4 croatian special forces , 2 croatian policemen wearing plain clothes, 7 croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 11 people left Bosnia on foot. After walking for several days through Croatia, they approached the Slovenian border. On June 7th, approximately 25 km away from the border (approximate location marked on the map below), they were apprehended by six Croatian policemen. Four of the officer wore green uniform green which were described by the respondents as "commandos". The other two officer were described as wearing plain clothes.

*"They were waiting, they say 'stop!', they were strong "*

The officer made the group wait and called another team of officer to come over to take the group.

The group waited half an hour before being taken in a van described as a windowless police van: white with the blue stripes on the sides. They were then driven to a police station approximately 15 to 20 minutes away. The van was parked in the yard of the station and the group-members were made to exit one by one into the station. Inside, the respondent had to answer what his name, his father name, his age and nationality was. Then, the group-members had their pictures taken with a panel, which had his name and surname written on it.

*"One by one we go out of the van, we answer question and go back to the van. Too much hot in the van [...] one Pakistani smoked inside van"*

Some of the group-members asked to go to the toilet, however the officers refused. Otherwise, the group-members were provided water when asked. They waited in the van for two and a half hours for everyone to be done with the processing. After everyone answered the questions, they left again. The people driving the van were the same as those from the police station. While they were driving towards the Bosnian border, the car stopped frequently.

*"Drive 15 to 20 minutes, then wait, wait 5,6 minutes, then go again. Drive like this too much"*

The respondent described being driven approximately four to five hours and arriving to the Bosnian-Croatian border at night time.

*"Seven police in one-line wait, two persons go out, two by two, all fighting, everything they fight"*

According to the respondent, the seven policemen were waiting at the border for them to arrive. They wore uniforms comprised of blue, short-sleeve shirts and dark trousers. The group had to exit the van two-by-two and had to run along the line to a bridge representing the border between Croatia and BiH. During this process, they were struck by the batons of the seven police officers. They found their phones, but the screens were broken.

They walked back to Velika Kladuša which was the closest city from where they were pushed back.

06/06/2019

**“THEY TOLD ME: COME HERE, AND I COME HERE, I DON'T RUN, BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE ANY PROBLEMS WITH ANY COUNTRY, WITH ANY POLICE, WITH ANYBODY. NEXT TIME I WILL RUN.”**

**Date and time:** June 6, 2019 04:30

**Location:** near Zagrad, Bosnia-Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 45.18473886581339, 15.777296637912741

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 3, 5, 5, 16, 28, 30, 32, 37 , from: Kurdistan Region of Iraq

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, water immersion, threatening with guns, gunshots, theft of personal belongings

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A family consisting of a mother (28), a father (30), male twins (both 5) and a girl (3) accompanied by three single men (37, 32, 16), all from Iraqi Kurdistan left Velika Kladuša on May 3 at 4:00AM and crossed towards Croatia near Maljevac (HR). After three days of walking through the Croatian forests, the group was running out of food and water and the children, especially, were very hungry and thirsty, so the group decided to leave the forest and try to ring the doorbell of a local person to ask for food.

*“I ring at the door and say: Please, please, can you help me, I need food for a baby!”*

The inhabitants didn't open the door even though the respondent believed they were at home as the lights were switched on when they came and were turned off when they rang.

On June 6 around 3:30AM the group was apprehended by Croatian police officers at a small street after crossing the highway D1 near Veljun (HR, see Fig. 1)

Fig. 1: Point of apprehension

*“They told me: Come here, and I come here, I don't run, because I don't have any problems with any country, with any police, with anybody. Next time I will run.”*

The two officers waiting for them in a van on the other side of the highway were wearing “local police uniform” and were described as “old” and “very nice and respectful”. They offered the children some biscuits, asked for their nationality, body searched the male individuals, took one phone from them and called for another unit that arrived after around fifteen minutes.

Two younger (at a guess aged 35-37) officers with dark blue uniforms arrived with a van that the respondents describe as a “van for bad terrorists, not for family” meaning a windowless transporter. This second police unit asked them where they were planning to go, and when they said that they intended to go to Zagreb (HR) to stay there, the officers just said “No, go back!”

They drove for fifteen minutes to a place that the respondent assumed from previous transit attempts to be a police station – even though he was not sure as the door of the van remained closed all the time – and they waited in the van for twenty minutes.

They continued to drive to a small street on the Croatian side near the border (see map), where at 4:30AM the police let all the individuals out of the van at the same time. Around ten police officers in three smaller police cars were present by then, plus the two officers driving the van. Nine of them were male, one was female, one of them was wearing night vision goggles. They were wearing no masks and were equipped with black batons, guns and torches.

They blinded the individuals with the torches, asked all people but the woman and the children for their shoes and started shouting “Go, go!”, shooting in the air and pushing them down the slope towards the border with their black batons. (See Fig. 2)

Fig. 2: Bruise from beatings with batons

The respondents claimed that the female officer was giving the orders but not doing anything by herself. The group started running down the hill, one of the men was very slow as he was carrying two of the children. One of the officers loaded his gun, put it at the man's temple pretending to shoot him with his children in his arms and then, instead of shooting, he beat him on the head with the stock of the gun and pushed him down the hill. The man stumbled and fell down, one of the boys injured his hand while falling. (See Fig. 3)

Fig. 3: Injured hand of one of the boys

The children were very frightened of the shooting and cried. Two officers chased the group to the river shouting “Fuck you, fuck you!” and waited until they crossed the small river (see map).

The group walked back to Velika Kladuša and was hosted for the night by a local family living next to the border.

*“What happens to you? I don't have any gun, I don't have any knife, I don't have anything. Why? I don't have problem with your country, I just want to go.”*

06/06/2019

**“YOU GIVE ME PASSPORT AND RESPECT ME AS A HUMAN, THERE IS NO PROBLEM, I COME AND GO. IF YOU DON’T GIVE ME PASSPORT, I WILL COME MANY TIMES AND TRY AGAIN AND AGAIN.”**

**Date and time:** June 6, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Korenica, Croatia; Croatian/Bosnian border near to Lohovo

**Coordinates:** 44.729763, 15.913962

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 30, 39 years old , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 8

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water, sleep on concrete ground

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent in this incident was a converted Christian from Iran, who had been a displaced person for 18 years. He asserts that he was targeted by the Iranian and Turkish secret service, because of his international friendships and spent several periods in prison, because he was framed as a spy. Having been removed multiple times from EU-countries, the respondent stated he was attempting once again to seek sanctuary in a place where he would not be endangered because of his political and religious beliefs.

The respondent travelled together with another man, and together they started from Livno (BiH) and went through the wooded mountains, crossing into Croatian territory at 06:00 in the morning on 6th June 2019. Heavy rain started as they walked and the pair was forced to endure 15 hours of rainfall as they passed through the forest. The respondent described how they stopped in a village:

*“There we got rid of everything, all of the clothes because it was wet and very smelly.”*

The transit group travelled further in the Croatian interior and were ultimately able to stop for some rest and in order to buy something to eat. The respondent stated:

*“We were so hungry. Luckily, police didn’t catch us.”*

However, the transit group encountered police approximately one hours drive from Rijeka. The two men were observed on a bus by a civilian who left the vehicle to inform officers at a motorway services.

*"In Zadar everything was good. But afterwards, one hour from Rijeka, we stopped at a gas station on the highway, where there also was a police station. One men went out of the bus to this police station and told the police there, that we are maybe refugees. He heard us how we spoke our language."*

Upon alerting the authorities, three Croatian police officers came out of the station and approached the pair in transit to ask if they had passports. The respondent recalls how:

*"First I said, `Yes, I have a passport and a bus ticket!´ but then I looked to my friend, and they realized we are refugees."*

*"You know, this is like a game. You go one way, and maybe a snake is waiting for you, so you have to hide and go another way. But for us this game is serious."*

The Croatian police officers took them inside the station and began to question the two group members.

*"One of them was really racist. But when I explained my situation, and asked them, how they can do this to us when we are Christians, they were sorry and a bit nicer. But anyways they called the border police."*

Then one male and one female officer, described by the respondent as Croatian border police, arrived at the station. They wore a dark blue uniform and batons on their belt. As they entered, they began to yell at the transit group.

*"They were really aggressive, like dogs barking at us. They asked, why are we coming to their country. But we are refugees."*

The respondent replied to the officers:

*"You give me passport and respect me as a human, there is no problem, I come and go. If you don't give me passport, I will come many times and try again and again."*

Then the Croatian police officers forced the men into a van and drove the transit group three hours to the police station in Korenica (Croatia), next to the border with Bosnia.

*“When they let us out of the van, they brought us into an old garage, with just a concrete floor. It’s just a prison. We got no food, no water and we had to piss in bottles that were standing on the ground. There were only three very dirty thin mattresses lying on the floor.”*

In the station, the police officers took pictures of the documents that the two group members had with them, and questioned them further regarding their name and where they were from. There was no translator present in Korenica police station. The officers didn’t take fingerprints and didn’t give the group members any papers to sign. After some time, 16 persons from Pakistan were also brought to the same prison/garage in which the two group members were detained. In total the respondent and his companion spent 15 hours over the night in the garage.

*“The Croatian police sees us as animals. They were really racist and didn’t want to understand us. But Germany and other EU-states pay money to Croatia, that they protect the borders like this.”*

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2019, having passed a night in the garage, the two group members, along with the 16 Pakistani people also detained, were taken out of the garage into a police van. The group were loaded into the vehicle at 07:00 and then were driven for one hour, after which they arrived to the border of Croatia with Bosnia. The respondent describes the conditions during the journey:

*“It was no space and very little oxygen in the van. When we arrived there, the police took our belongings, made a fire and burned it. It was a horrible place, many, many things from other push-backs were lying on the ground. But luckily this time they didn’t hit us.”*

Then the three Border police officers with guns and batons ordered them to go 2 km downhill through a forested area to the Bosnian side of the border. Out of fear, the group members didn’t resist and followed the orders.

*“When we got in the first village, we went to a house and begged for water and bread. Then we had to walk 10-15 km to Bihać. We were very tired and it was exhausting.”*

31/05/2019

## “ONE OF THE FIRST THING THEY WERE DOING: TAKE SELFIES WITH US!”

**Date and time:** May 31, 2019 01:30

**Location:** near Poljana, Bosnia-Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 45.210365, 15.92611

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 14 person(s), age: 24, 33, 29, 29, 35, 37, 38, 34, 7, 10, 40, 45, 19, 34, from: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

One Algerian family from Oran consisting of a mother (40), a father (45) and two daughters (7, 10), together with five Kabyle single men (24, 29, 33, 35, 37), a woman and a man from Morocco (29, 34) and three single men from Tunisia (19, 36, 38) departed from Velika Kladuša (BiH) at 6:00PM on May 26. They crossed Glina River and walked for four rainy days and nights through the forest in the Croatian inner land. While crossing a street near Pokupsko (HR), they were seen by a local family who, the respondent assumed, called the authorities. One hour later, the police arrived in the forest near Pokupsko (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Place of Apprehension

Around midnight on May 30, eleven police officers encircled the group. They were wearing night vision goggles, masks, dark blue uniforms and massive boots. They shot in the air and shouted “Stop, Stop!” as they blinded the individuals with flashlights. The officers were shouting at the group in the Croatian language and told them to hand over their luggage. They also took pictures of them with their smartphones.

*“One of the first thing they were doing: take selfies with us!”*

The police men waited for more officers to arrive, however they seemed not to be bored while waiting for the other officers to arrive. Instead, they tried to pass the time by cheerfully socializing with each other. They were laughing and chatting and the respondents witnessed some of the officers getting more and more drunk while sipping on their hip flasks. The police casually asked the respondents for their nationality and their planned destination. When the respondents replied that they want to go to Zagreb (HR) in order to ask for asylum, the officers answered:

*“Shut up, shut up!” and “five minutes Velika Kladusa, five minutes!”*

After 30 minutes, more officers wearing the same uniforms arrived which made a total of 25-30 officers on the ground.

The police escorted the group members to a nearby street where five police cars were waiting for them: two vans, one prisoner transporter (according to the respondent, they were all Mercedes Sprinter) and two smaller police cars. All fourteen individuals were taken into the windowless prisoner transporter. Inside the van there were two benches facing each other and a fan inside made a monotonous noise during the one hour drive. The respondents felt that the drivers were deliberately driving recklessly and some of the individuals had to vomit during the drive.

Arriving at a point on the Bosnian side of the border near Poljana (see map), the individuals were taken out of the van two by two (see Fig. 2) by six or seven of the same police officers as before, who stood on both sides of the van's side door.

Fig. 2: Sketch of the procedure at the border by one of the respondents

*"They made a line of policemen at the right, one at the left, two by two of us in the middle running towards the luggage. They stopped us, body-searched us, took our money, our phones. The good phones they keep, the bad phones they destroy in front of us. [...] Afterwards punches, kicks and beatings coming from both sides."*

Fig. 3: Swollen knee from beating with batons

Fig. 4: Bruise from beating with batons

Just after getting out of the van, they were body searched and their cell phones were taken, as well as around 600€ altogether. The officers kept in total nine or ten power banks and five cellphones for themselves and destroyed seven more with the black batons that they also used to beat the respondents.

Fig. 5: Destroyed phones

The women were body-searched by male officers as well and beaten like the others, only the children were spared the whole procedure.

Fig. 6: Bruise on woman's leg from beating with batons

The respondents' had the impression that the taller individuals were, in general, exposed to harsher treatment and stronger beatings than the shorter people. He believed the same was true for those individuals who protested against the treatment. One man from Tunisia not only beaten with the baton, but also punched and kicked on the legs, arms and his torso, as well as being beaten on his head several times. The individuals that already passed through the entire procedure waited down the slope for their friends and family members to arrive. It took around 20-25 minutes for all individuals of the group to endure this procedure. As the push back was

located close to a river and they had to move forward away from the border and the officers, the individuals had to cross the Glina River just after the pushback.

They walked back to Velika Kladusa with soaked clothes, some of them limping.

**30/05/2019**

## **“WE ASKED POLICE TO PUT THE BABIES IN THE CAR WHILE WE LIED ON THE WET GROUND, BUT THEY REFUSED”**

**Date and time:** May 30, 2019 03:00

**Location:** Drežnik Grad, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.9461324, 15.682583499999964

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 13 person(s), age: 8 month old, 1 year old, 11 people 24-28 years old , from: Iran, Iraq, Turkey

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian officers, 2 police vans, one police car

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of thirteen individuals, all Kurdish from Turkey, Iraq and Iran, left Bihać (BiH) around 4:00PM on May 29. They traveled in a car to the border for about 20 minutes and then began walking.

After crossing the border into Croatia, they walked in the forest for eleven hours. They were standing above a two-lane highway at 3:00AM when two male police officers approached the group and fired a gun in the air. After firing the gun, the police shone a flash light at the group members and ordered them to lie on the ground.

*“The ground was wet and cold. I asked them to put the babies in the car, but they said ‘no.’”*

The group lay on the ground for 20 minutes as the police waited for a third officer to arrive. He arrived driving a fifteen seat van and the three police officers began to search the individuals on the ground and confiscate all of their mobile phones, chargers, and power banks. The police took one group member’s phone and hit him in the head with it. The same officer hit another man in the face with the heel of his palm as he conducted the search.

The respondent believed that the police spent about three minutes searching each individual making the total time of the search around 30 minutes. The police put all the confiscated electronics in a bag. Once the search was finished, the police ordered the group members into the van. The police drove them for two hours and dropped the group in a forest on the Bosnian/Croatian border at around 6:00AM.

At the border the police seemed to drop the phones in a fire pit, but the respondent believed that

*"They only pretended to put the phones in the fire pit. After the police said 'go, go, go,' I went back to look for the phones but they weren't in the pit."*

After searching for their confiscated possessions and not finding them, the group walked five minutes to reenter Bosnia and Herzegovina. They found a taxi near the border and returned to Bihać.

**26/05/2019**

## **"IS THIS THE SYSTEM?"**

**Date and time:** May 26, 2019 13:00

**Location:** Near Banija Karlovac

**Coordinates:** 45.4765731, 15.8108195

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 6months, 21, 24, 30-35 , from: Palestine, Syria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, threatening with guns, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian police officers

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

<https://www.borderviolence.eu/wp-content/uploads/Push-back-Bea-Part-1..mp4>

### **Video 1**

The group started the journey from Velika Kladuša on the 24th of May around at around 3:00 pm. They walked for two days in the forest, moving at a slow pace because of the baby, the fragile health condition of one the men (the uncle of the interviewee, who had survived a bomb attack back in Syria), and his wife who was pregnant.

On the 26th of May, at 1:00 pm, in a location around 50 km inside Croatia, five Croatian policemen appeared, threatening them with guns and ordering them to stop. The officers searched each of the group-members and confiscating their phones, powerbanks, money, and the camping gas they carried for preparing the milk and water for the baby.

“Can I ask? Is this the system when the police finds me and catches me, they take my phone, is this the system or just bad police?” enquired the respondent at this point. He then described how he got hit in the head with a baton after asking for asylum.

Three days passed the incident, when the interview was conducted, there was still a palpable bump in his head. “I told them we want to go to camp, my uncle is sick and his wife is pregnant, when I said that, they fight me and they fight my uncle, because my uncle he doesn’t want them to fight me.” recalled the respondent, claiming that because of his uncle reacting just verbally to the officer who was assaulting him, another officer came and kicked the man, the situation ended with both officers pointing guns at their heads and telling them to sit down.

The policemen, after ordered everyone one to form a line and enter in the police van. The group was driven, in what the respondent describes as a reckless way, for an hour and a half until the border.

*“This driver was a dangerous driver and everything was dark.”*

At the Croatian/Bosnian border the group was told to leave the van one by one. Pictures of all the faces, but the baby, were taken and names asked. The group was then told to start walking back to the Bosnian side.

*“I asked the police what about our phones, we had five phones, and my 300 euros, but he said he did not know anything about that he did not see any phones. At this point I had to stop talking because the gun is back pointed at my head.”*

The man described that his uncle’s wife was the only one able to talk with the officers without being threaten and so she asked for one phone, which was the only one they returned. All the other personal items, including the camping gas for the baby were never given back. The group then walked back for between four and five hours back to Velika Kladuša, where they arrived around 7:00 pm.

<https://www.borderviolence.eu/wp-content/uploads/Push-backvid2.mp4>

[Video 2](#)

16/05/2019

**“THE POLICEMEN ASKED THEM FOR THEIR PHONES AND BROKE THEM IN FRONT OF THEM.”**

**Date and time:** May 16, 2019 05:00

**Location:** south of Zeljava, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.828689, 15.767291

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 26, 27, 27 years old , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian policemen in dark-blue uniforms for apprehension; unknown number of officials in police station; 4 policemen (two of them wearing ski masks) at the pushback site. -1 white police van and later one more van.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of three men got on a bus from Sarajevo to Ljubljana, Slovenia, on Monday 13th May at 4 am. They stayed in the bus engine room for more than 48h.

On 15th May, the bus stopped at the border between Croatia and Slovenia. The respondent estimates that it was at the bordercrossing between the cities of Rupa (HR) and Jelšane (SLN), on the road A7.

Croatian authorities conducted a search in the bus, checked the engine and found them. The three policemen carrying out the search asked them to get out and sit down on the ground. They were wearing dark blue uniforms. They asked them for their phones and broke them in front of them.

*"They searched us but they did not find any money on us. Then they told us that we were going to be taken to a camp in Zagreb".*

The bus left resuming its journey, and the officials called for reinforcement.

At that point, the respondent and the two other men asked for asylum. The authorities reiterated that they would be taken to Zagreb. A white van arrived with two other policemen who were wearing blue uniforms as well.

The group had to wait from 6.30 pm to 1 am at the bordercrossing point and then were taken to a police station with the van. The respondent was not able to estimate the time spent in the van. Once there, the authorities took pictures of them holding a document with their names and ages at the chest level. They were asked to fill and sign two documents written in English. One of the documents had a few words in Arabic, i.e. "Father's name" and "Mother's name". The officials also took their index fingerprints.

*"Everything happened really fast, we didn't stay more than 10 minutes in the police station. It was very crowded."*

The three men and a large group of people from Pakistan and Afghanistan, including a woman and a child, were then taken into a large van. The van headed to the Bosnian border. They arrived there on 16th May at 5 am, near the estimated coordinates of 44.828689, 15.767291. The whole group got out of the van and the respondent saw four Croatian policemen, two of them wearing ski masks.

*"They just told us to go and we started walking towards Bihać on a road for 1km. There were two Bosnian policemen and a police van there waiting for us. They first told us 'go back to Croatia' but then let us continue the way towards Bihać".*

Once they arrived to the city, the respondent took a bus and came back to Sarajevo.

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15/05/2019

## “THE PUT HIM ON THE FLOOR AND JUMP ON HIM UNTIL THEY BROKE HIS ARM.”

**Date and time:** May 15, 2019 01:00

**Location:** Border crossing Batrovci / Serbian side

**Coordinates:** 45.047329561139506, 19.10694122314453

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 17, 18 years old , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground

**Police involved:** 2 Serbian border officers

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The two respondents reported leaving from the main squat in Šid (SRB) in the late evening of the 14th of May. One is 18 years old, while the other is 17 years old. Both are from Afghanistan.

They entered into a truck parked on the Serbian side of the border with the intention of crossing over to Croatia. At around 1:00 am, what the respondents described as two Serbian border officers opened the truck and found the two individuals. One respondent ran away from the police officers and escaped into the nearby forest, however the other was not able to do the same. The one who didn't escape described that, without any words, the two Serbian police officers punched, kicked, and beat him with a baton all around the body. He recalled that the officers forced him onto the ground and jumped on him until they broke his arm.

He finally ran away from them and walked three hours before arriving back to the squat in Šid.

The day after, volunteers from No Name Kitchen went with this respondent to the hospital in Mitrovica (SRB) where he received an X-ray which revealed that his arm was broken during this incident.

13/05/2019

## ““I TELL HIM, NO I AM MUSLIM AND HE SAID: THIS IS NOT MY PROBLEM””

**Date and time:** May 13, 2019 05:00

**Location:** Near Sisak, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.4850767, 16.373115600000006

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: 6 months, 7, 24-35 , from: Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** threatening with guns, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian special police officers

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group started walking from Velika Kladuša at around midnight on May 10th. After three days of walking in the forest, while crossing a road, the group was stopped by five Croatian authorities at around 5:00 am on the 13th of May. they got caught, while crossing a road. The officers were wearing what the respondent described as uniforms similar to those worn by the Croatian Special Police.

The policemen pointed their guns at the group, ordering them to stop.

*"My husband said: Why are you doing like this? We are a family, We have a baby, you can't do it like this"*

The respondent described that they requested the authorities to take them to a camp, claiming that their baby had gotten sick during their travels and that one of the women was in fragile health due to a previous surgery she had in Iran. The officers replied positively, agreeing and saying there was no problem. They then searched the group, touching only the men, and removing all phones, money, camping gas, and sleeping bags. In addition, one of the men was told to undress in order to have a full body search.

The respondent described that the policemen then registered their names and took pictures of everyone's face but the baby's. The officers ordered the female respondent to remove her hat for the picture, even after she said she did not want to due to her Muslim beliefs:

*"I tell him, no I am muslim and he said: This is not my problem"*

She also inquired why they were not taking pictures of her child and asked them to register him also, however the policemen ignored her.

The respondent described that later, the other female of the group asked to be taken to hospital because she was in pain, due to her infected surgery scar. The officers ignored the request and told the group to go inside the police van. They were driven by two policemen for one hour and a half until the Bosnian border, where they ordered the group to leave they vehicle and go back to Bosnia.

The respondent described that they were, at this point, exhausted and had no knowledge of their location. As a result they decided, even though it was day time, to sleep by the street. At around 6:00 pm, a Bosnian couple that lived nearby this location found them. The locals provided them food, milk and let them take a shower at their house. However they are not allowed to do this, having to after explain this to the group and telling them they could not stay there.

Around 8:00 pm, after being given directions on the way back to Velika Kladuša they restarted walking. The respondent then described that a Bosnian man who passed in front of them with his car, told them to stop, and that he could call a friend who would come and give them a ride if they wanted to pay. The families agreed and waited by the road, until this man showed. They ended by paying him 45 euros to be taken back to the city where they arrived around 10:00 pm.

11/05/2019

## “I’M A PERSON, WHY LIKE THIS?’ ”

**Date and time:** May 11, 2019 06:00

**Location:** Tovarnik train station, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.157832361855085, 19.144878387451172

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 35 years old , from: Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian regular officers (5 with hood) , 1 police car

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A 35-year-old man from Tunisia reports having left on his first game the 11th of May, from the train station in Šid (SRB) at around midnight. He walked about 20 kilometres, until he reached the train station in Tovarnik, Croatia. He was soon arrested at this location, at sometime between 5:00 and 6:00 am, by a group of six Croatian police officers dressed in what were described as municipal uniforms. The officers arrived in a vehicle, five of them were described as wearing a hood.

They asked in English where he was from that he said Tunisia. He said also that he had previously been living in Germany and asked for asylum. The police officers refused, saying: ‘no, you are shit.’

The officers apprehended him and threw his bags and mobile phone away into a nearby river. They forced him onto the ground and hit him several times with a baton and kicked him.

The respondent asks:

*'I'm a person, why like this?'*

After being beaten by the police, the respondent arrived back to Šid at around 12:00 a.m., after walking for six hours.

During the respondent's interaction with the interviewer, he had several marks on his face, and the long mark of a stick hit on his abdomen.

**08/05/2019**

**“THEY [THE POLICE OFFICERS] ASKED: WHERE ARE YOUR FRIENDS? BUT IT'S THEIR JOB TO CATCH PEOPLE, NOT MY JOB, I DON'T TELL THEM.”**

**Date and time:** May 8, 2019 04:00

**Location:** near Maljevac, Bosnia-Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 45.190535, 15.783799

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 24 person(s), age: 25-35 years old , from: Pakistan, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, electric shock, threatening with guns, gunshots, theft of personal belongings

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On May 5, around 5:00AM in the morning, a group of 14 Algerian men left Velika Kladuša (BiH) towards Croatia. They walked for 3 days mostly on forest paths while avoiding big streets, the respondent estimates the distance that the group walked by foot as around 60-70km. It was raining most of the time, the paths were muddy and the group got lost more than once due to the maps on their phone bugging because of the humidity.

On 8 May in the morning, the group walked along a highway to find a way to cross it and ended up crossing it from above at a point where it passed through a tunnel.

Around 4:00AM in the morning on the same day, on their attempt to cross a small street just after the highway (see Fig. 1), the group was stopped by 4 police officers in one car and one van waiting for them. They had parked the cars in a way that formed a lane of approx. 15m and were waiting at the other side of the street. As soon as the group left the forest and entered the small street, they turned on the blue light and

*“they shoot too many times in the air, like 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, maybe 8 times in the air.”*

The group started to run towards the forest at the other side of the street, but the respondent and some of his friends were too exhausted to run quickly enough. The respondent reported that one of the officers was equipped with an electric teaser and used it on one of his friends while the group tried to escape, and when his friend running next to him was stopped, the respondent quit running as well.

*“They share what they do: One with the teaser, one shooting in the air, two with batons.”*

Four more individuals who were too tired to seriously attempt to escape from the police officers – so finally six people of the original group – were caught, told to go to the floor in basic english and threatened with weapons not to move.

*“Anyone they were catching was beaten, but they don’t beat too much at this point, just a little bit to make you scared and not run away. The big beating was later when they took us back.”*

The respondent and his friends were casually asked where they were from, where they want to go.

*“One of us said: ‘Asyl, asyl!’ but one of the police said: ‘Go Bosnia asyl!’”*

They were asked for their phones and their pockets' content and the officers took at least 80€ from the men, their phones and cigarettes.

*“If they ask you to give your mobile and you hide it, they will remember, so you better give it when they ask.”*

During the interaction with the six men on the street, the officers made no move to catch the other individuals from the group who continued their journey through the forest for five more days and were finally pushed back to Bosnia from Slovenia.

*“They [the police officers] asked: Where are your friends? But it’s their job to catch people, not my job, I don’t tell them.”*

After 20-30min, another van without windows arrived which the respondent identified as Mercedes Sprinter and the six people were taken into it.

They spent a whole day in the van, driving on good and less good streets, stopping for several hours from time to time and not being provided food nor water. Around three or four hours before they were brought to the Bosnian/Croatian border, a group of around 10 men from

Pakistan joined the group in the back of the van. As there were no more spots on the two rows of the back seats, most of the newly apprehended men had to sit on the floor.

In the morning twilight of the 9 May, the whole group was released at a small street with a slope on both sides on the Croatian side of the border with Bosnia near Velika Kladuša (see Fig. 2).

The men were taken out of the van one by one, pushed down the slope at the side of the street towards the border and beaten with batons, fists and feet by police officers standing on both sides just after the van's door, shaping a confusing tunnel of strikes, punches and kicks that the individuals had to pass through while stumbling down the slope.

The respondent describes the whole procedure as very quick, less than one minute, he recognized though that there were two police cars parking next to the Mercedes Sprinter. He estimates that the police officers who apprehended the group were not present any more.

*"No police is working 24 hours, they sleep, we not."*

However, it was not possible for him to identify the police officer ultimately as they were wearing black masks by then. The group was not given their phones back.

After having gone through it, the respondent waited at the foot of the slope for his friends to pass the "tunnel", crossed the green border towards Bosnia-Herzegovina together with them and walked back to Velika Kladuša in the sunrise.

**01/05/2019**

## **"I ASKED FOR AN ADVOCATE AND A TRANSLATOR, BUT THE POLICE SAID 'NO'"**

**Date and time:** May 1, 2019 11:00

**Location:** near Gradiška, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 45.15918769266062, 17.24069028984377

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 20, 26, 27, 28 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 5-10 Croatian police officers, 1 police car and 2 police vans; 3 SFA police officers in Bosnia driving one dark blue van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Four Moroccan men left Velika Kladuša (BiH) on April 26 at around 5:00PM. They walked to the Croatian border and, after crossing it, walked through the forest for five days inside the country. They slept when it was daylight and walked at night. During this time they never exited the forest.

On May 1 around 11:00AM, three Croatian police officers wearing dark blue uniforms approached the group members in the forest, while they were lying down to rest. The respondent believed that these officers had been watching them at night with night-vision goggles and that they waited for the individuals to rest before approaching them.

The officers asked the men where they were from.

*"I told them we are all Moroccan and they told us to lie on the ground and wait. Then they took our phones and money (100 Euro)."*

After five minutes, two more officers arrived, a man and a woman around 35 years old. The group was then led to a spot where a white police van and car were parked. They were loaded into the van and transferred to a police station, which was a 20-30 minute drive from their site of apprehension.

At the station, the police questioned each individual. They asked how many people were in the group, how many days they walked from Bosnia into Croatia, why they left Morocco, and which airport they left from in Morocco. The respondent answered all their questions. He then gave his fingerprints and signed a paper.

The group stayed for two days in the station, where they were locked in a room with more people-on-the-move who had also been apprehended. The respondent did not disclose the nationalities, age or gender or these other inmates. They all slept on the floor of the cell. Access to a toilet, food and water were provided when requested.

During this time, the respondent and his group requested asylum.

The police returned the other inmates in their jail cell to Bosnia. However, the respondent and his three group members were not returned. They were informed that their asylum application had been refused. After two days, the police told them they must go to a closed camp in Zagreb (HRV).

*"I asked him 'why'? They said it's the second time they catch us in Croatia so we must go to closed camp."*

According to the respondent, while the four men were detained in the station, the Croatian police accused them of forcible robbery. He continued that the police refused his request for an attorney and forced him to sign papers acknowledging that he had committed this deed – all without any translation or understanding of the documents he had signed.

*"I told the police I do not understand the document, but they would not give me a translator."*

The respondent became aware of this retrospectively. After he returned to Bosnia, a local person translated the documents for him. He then understood of which crime he had been accused.

The respondent stated his innocence. He stressed that the group had remained in the forest the entire time they were in Croatia, and they did not encounter any other individuals who they could have robbed.

Nevertheless the group was sent to the closed camp in Zagreb. They stayed here for two months.

The group was driven by the police for half an hour from the police station to this closed camp. Upon their arrival, they were ordered to take off their clothes and put on dark blue Lotto brand clothes.

Upon their arrival, they were put in a six person room with bunk beds. The respondent reported that guards in the camp were not violent, but that some of them were racist and discriminatory. They were fed three times a day and the camp respected their Ramadan practices, making food available to them after sun down and in the early hours of the morning before the first light of day.

On May 29, after 25 days in the closed camp, two police officers ordered them in a police van and drove them to the Gradiška border crossing at the Croatian/Bosnian border. The Croatian police handed the four men over to the Bosnian SFA authorities, who gave the men a document explaining that they must leave Bosnia within five days and drove the individuals to the Ušivak (BiH) camp in Sarajevo in a black van.

**01/05/2019**

**“WHEN THE POLICEMEN APPROACHED THE THREE MEN, THEY PULLED THEIR PISTOLS, RELEASED THE SAFETY CATCHES AND POINTED AT THEM.”**

**Date and time:** May 1, 2019 03:00

**Location:** Forest outside Donje Prilisce, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.468253, 15.378361

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 17, 17, 25 years old , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), threatening with guns, destruction of personal belongings, pushing into river

**Police involved:** First 2 officers: dark uniforms with a badge saying "RH" on the shoulder, armed with guns, one of them female and one "very young" male. - Later 4 officers in blue shirts and dark-blue trousers, one of them with a star on his shoulder. - Later 4-5 officers wearing ski masks. - One white van with inscription "POLICIJA" on its side

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of three men (two of them 17-year old minors) set out from Velika Kladusa in the night between the 26th and the 27th of April 2019. After crossing the border to Croatia, they walked for four days. During that time, they crossed three rivers by swimming.

In the night between 30<sup>th</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> May, they were approaching the border with Slovenia. When they were in the forest between the highway E65 and the Croatian villages of Donje Prilisce and Srednje Prilisce (coordinates 45.468253, 15.378361), they were apprehended by two police officers. The respondent suggested that the police may have used night vision devices, because at the moment of their encounter (approximately 3:00 A.M.) the group was concealed in the middle of the forest, not even on a path.

One of the police officers was a woman, the other one was a man whom the respondent described as very young. They wore dark uniforms with a badge on their shoulder. There were the letters RH on the badge. They had big headlights with them. When they approached the group, they pulled their pistols, released the safety catches and pointed at the three men. The respondent said he felt intimidated.

The policemen shouted at them "*Sit Down!*", then the group was searched and their mobile phones were taken. The male officer beat them with a baton and handcuffed them, destroyed the phones and then called reinforcements.

A group of four policemen arrived. One of them was wearing a star on his shoulder and giving orders to the patrol. The group was taken into a white van with the letters POLICIJA written on its side. During the subsequent transport, the three group members asked multiple times for asylum and declared their age, receiving "Yes" as an answer but with no factual consequences.

The van was driving for approximately 3,5 hours until it reached the border between Croatia and Bosnia near Basara (HR) at the coordinates 45.028003,15.7598213. The three men were told to get out of the van. Outside, four or five policemen with their faces covered by ski masks waited for them and started to beat them. After the beating, they pushed the group into the border river (Korana river) and told them to leave.

The three men then walked to Velika Kladusa which they reached after about four hours of walking.

28/04/2019

## “THEY WOULDN'T EVEN OPEN THE DOOR FOR THE TOILET”

**Date and time:** April 28, 2019 20:00

**Location:** Vrhovine, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.848718294918996, 15.423381361872543

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 30, 30, 47, 36, 36, 17, 12, 2 , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** pushing people to the ground, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 local police officers, 10-12 border police officers, all wore dark blue uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Independent person

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of nine individuals from Iran, including three families – the respondent and her husband (both 30 years old), their family friends – husband (47 years old), wife (36 years old), their two children (2 and 17 years old), and a mother (36 years old) and her daughter (12 years old), departed from Bihać (BiH) in a taxi at 6:00 pm on 24 April. They rode in the taxi for twenty minutes and then disembarked and spent five hours walking towards the border. They arrived at the border at 10:00 pm, but two Bosnian police officers saw them and told them to go back to Bihać.

Instead of returning to Bihać, the group carried on. The respondent reported that a Bosnian man invited them to spend the night in his cabin. They slept there and at 5:00 pm on 25 April they left the cabin and once again started walking towards the Croatian border. They walked three hours from the house and crossed the border at 10:00 pm. That night they did not sleep and continued walking until the sunrise. They slept in the forest during the morning and afternoon.

For three days they continued walking through the forest at night and resting during the day. The weather was very cold, windy and rainy and after two days they ran out of food and water.

On 28 April at around 13:00, in the town of Vrhovine (HRV), the respondent reported that she bought train tickets at the station in Vrhovine to go to Ogulin (HRV). While they waited for the train, they asked a Croatian couple to give them food and water.

The respondent believed that the couple called the police after this, because as they waited for help, one female and one male police officer arrived in a white car. They were reported to have been wearing dark blue uniforms. The respondent stated that these two officers stayed with them on the road for four hours until 10-12 male police officers, who they believed to be border

police officers also clad in dark blue uniforms arrived in three vans. The respondent reported that these border officers were all between 30-40 years old.

The officers took four phones from the group. When the two year old child was hugging her father to stay warm, the respondent claimed that one officer pushed the child down. The officers also took 1,500 EUR from the group members.

The officers shouted at the individuals to get in the vans. The respondent believed they rode in the van for two hours and described arriving "at prison" in the county of Zadar (HRV) at approximately 8:00 pm on 28 April. The officers ordered the group into a windowless jail cell with white tiled walls and concrete floor.

"They wouldn't even open the door for the toilet"

The officers locked them in a room with other single men had also been apprehended. One, a 17-year-old boy, had been stabbed in the arm by the group's smuggler after an argument about payment.

The officers refused him any medical care.

The respondent and her group were locked in the cell for 24 hours without food, water, toilet or blankets. They knocked on the door to ask for a toilet, but the officers did not open the door. On 29 April around 8:00 pm the officers ordered the group out of the cell and drove them for three hours back to the Bosnian border. They were ordered out of the vehicle in the mountains where the respondent and her group walked for 30 kilometers in the heavy rain back to Bihać.

**28/04/2019**

## **"TELL YOUR FRIENDS WE KILL PEOPLE HERE."**

**Date and time:** April 28, 2019 16:00

**Location:** Tovarnik train station, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1550923832336, 19.148788644722686

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 29 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, threatening with guns

**Police involved:** 10-12 Croatian intervention police officers, 1 police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 28th of April, a man from Algeria and his two friends (two men from Morocco) attempted to transit Croatia by entering a train in Šid, Serbia where they had been living on the streets for many days.

At around 4:00 pm, as they were crossing the checkpoint of the Croatian border in Tovarnik (HR), police officers dressed in uniforms described consistently with those worn by Croatian intervention police saw them. The respondent recalled being apprehended by a group of 10 to 12 officers in total – including two who he described as wearing different, pale blue uniforms.

In this moment, the respondent ran to escape from the authorities, as he was "too afraid". One of the policemen then drove a van – described as a Mercedes Sprinter- that was parked behind the train, until he caught up with him. When the officer reached the respondent, he pointed a gun toward his head, and cocked it. The respondent then stopped running, after which point three other officers described as intervention police officers joined the one already present, put him on the ground by force, and began to beat him with their batons and their boots on the head, the ribs, the legs and the stomach. The respondent stated that in this moment he was sure they would kill him. After some time, they stopped and ordered him to go back to Serbia.

When he started to walk toward the Serbian border (which was only around ten meters away), one of the officers followed him and struck him again with a large wooden branch, even though the respondent was already badly injured and was struggling to walk. Before he crossed the border, the policemen told him:

*"Tell your friends we kill people here. Don't come here. Tell your friends we kill people."*

The respondent recalled that during his exchange with the officers, his two friends who were caught by the police in the train were brought behind the train station, out of the public eye, and were then beaten violently by the rest of the authorities from the group. The friends were similarly told by the supposed Croatian intervention police officers to spread the message that they would kill people who try to cross the border.

During the many hours walk to reaching Sid again, the respondent recalled that he thought he would die. Die from the pain, the injuries, the weakness and the dehydration, since before all this they had to hide for more that 12 hours in a train.

**27/04/2019**

**"IF YOU ARE SICK GO TO BOSNIA, TAKE MEDICINE, I DON'T CARE ABOUT THIS!"**

**Date and time:** April 27, 2019 14:00

**Location:** Highway A1 near Gornje Dubrave, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.3062082, 15.2790608

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 23, 25 , from: Syria, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, destruction of personal belongings, reckless driving, pushed into a river

**Police involved:** Unspecified number of Croatian policemen at police checkpoint. - 1 woman dressed in grey and 1 man in dark-blue uniform without cap in a white van - Unknown number of Croatian policemen in a police station. - 5 "very big" persons clothed in white-grey uniforms and ski masks without any emblems on the shoulders. - 2 white vans and 1 car.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed

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

**Reported by:** BASIS

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent started his journey on Thursday 25th April 2019 with a bus from Sarajevo to Livno (BiH). Once there, he met with a friend and they walked for an hour on foot to a place to change the clothes to be ready for the forest. Subsequently, they walked for several hours by foot, crossing into Croatia. They walked on the street, and whenever a car passed by, the two hid to avoid detection. At around 4:30 am on April 26th, they found an old house. It rained and the two men decided to sleep in the house until 5:00 pm.

The two men waited until around 10:30 pm before continuing walking to Sinj, a small village in Croatia. The next morning, Saturday 27<sup>th</sup>, they took a bus towards Split.

From Split they took the bus to Zagreb. After two hours, the bus stopped for a break near Gornje Dubrave around which time they were caught in a police checkpoint. All passengers were checked for their passports. The two men had no documents and were asked to leave the bus, it was 2:00 pm at this point. The respondent mentioned seeing a large number of police officers.

The respondent was asked where he was from and where he intended to go to which he responded "I don't have document" and "I am an immigrant". These officer called another detachment of police.

He asked for asylum and said he was sick (he has anemia):

*"I want to asylum office. I am sick, I want to take asyl here"*

The police answered:

*"If you are sick, go to Bosnia, take medicine, I don't care about this"*

They waited twenty minutes until two police cars arrived, including a white van. There was a female officer in the white van, dressed in grey without a cap and a male officer, in a dark blue uniform without cap as well.

The two men were searched and frisked along with their luggage. The mobile phone of the respondent was also taken at this time. Subsequently, a police officer told them to get into the

windowless van. The officer mentioned the “nice behaviour” of these two persons. It was between 2:00 and 3:00 pm at this point.

They entered the van, and as the AC was turned on, cold air came out of two ventilators. They drove for about an hour to a police station.

After arriving in the police station, the two men received back their backpacks but not the mobile phone. Before being taken to a room, they were re-examined, including the backpacks. Later on, they were given some food, and after five minutes of conversation they were given a lighter to smoke. Then, after further questions, they got coffee. After two hours of waiting, police came to take pictures. In addition, they were given papers to fill in, with names, father’s name and age. The papers were in English and Arabic.

Again the respondent asked for asylum and described his illness. In response the police officer said “go to Bosnia”. Thirty minutes later, seven Algerian people and four Kurdish people (including one woman) joined the two men in the room.

After one hour, all 14 people in the room had to get on a van.

*“Like chicken. We could not breathe.”*

The ride took two hours and some people in the vehicle vomited because of the reckless way the car was driven. They reached another police station and only the respondent and his friend were taken out of the vehicle and had to sign papers. The policeman did not want them to see what content was in there, he was covering the content with his hand.

*“I know the paper but if I not sign they beat me so hard.”*

Then they drove for another two hours. Some people in the vehicle were exhausted and slept, others cried and some had to vomit again. It was dark when they stopped and the doors opened.

The respondent could not pin point the location where they were brought to. However, he stated it was the “near Bosnian-Croatian border.”

Five “very big” persons clothed in white-grey uniforms and ski masks without any emblems on the shoulders were standing in front of the opened door. They took out of the car a group of three people and closed the door. The people inside could hear screams. Then, the door was opened again and the next three people were taken out of the vehicle. The respondent and his friend were the last ones. They were beaten with the hands of the officers and with batons and were kicked. In this situation the glasses of the respondent were destroyed.

There was a river next to a car and the respondent described how he was taken by the shoulder and pushed into the river. He explained this river was around one meter deep and ten meters wide. They crossed the river to escape from the officers.

They were without orientation and walked in the wet clothes for several hours. After some time they found a house and a person who was there, this person saw them and said “hajde hajde” and “go go go!” The first recognisable location they found was Velika Kladuša. Here they met a male member of the public with a dog. He wanted to beat them and harassed the men with his dog. Another person passing by stopped him before this could happen. Finally they found

friends in Velika Kladuša and received dry clothes, food and blankets. It was Sunday the 28th at around 1:00 pm. The following day, the respondent saw his mobile phone with another person and took it back. He mentioned that someone took the bag with all the mobiles and sold it in Velika Kladuša.

After describing the pushback, he said:

*"I am feeling like a dog, not like a human. This I will never forget all my life this fucking shit. Why? Catch me, okay: but not like that! Why they beat woman? I cant back to Algeria, I have nothing in Algeria."*

**25/04/2019**

## **"THEIR BAGS WERE HIDDEN UNDER THE VAN, SO THAT THEY HAD TO COME BACK AND FACE MORE BEATING TO GET THEIR BELONGINGS BACK."**

**Date and time:** April 25, 2019 02:00

**Location:** Zvecaj, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.3944033, 15.4352855

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 17, 17, 25 years old , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 9 Croatian officers (first 2 in black uniforms, then 3 in blue shirts and dark-blue trousers, then 4 with ski masks). One white van.

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of three men (two of them aged 17 years, one aged 25 years) entered Croatia in the night between the 20st and the 21st of April 2019 in the region of Velika Kladusa (BiH). After four days of walking, they reached a wooden bridge on the Mreznica river near Zvecaj (HRV, coordinates 45.3944033, 15.4352855) on 25<sup>th</sup> April, at around 2:00 a.m.

Here, two policemen stopped them. Their car was hidden on the other side of the bridge, towards Zvecaj, to the right of the group, while the policemen were hiding on their left. As the group went right to have a clear view of the highway, the policemen reached them from the back. They were two men, dressed in black. The group members were told to hand over their phones. The policemen looked up the group's route on the phones and then broke them. They then handcuffed and beat the three group members. All of them required asylum and claimed to be minors, shouting "*Mineur!*" and "*Azyl!*".

The policemen then called for another group of policemen, who arrived on a white van. This group was composed of three officers wearing blue shirts and dark blue trousers. They put the group into the van and drove for about three hours to the Bosnian border.

At the border, the group was told to get out of the van. A group of four policemen with their faces covered by ski masks beat them. Their bags were hidden under the van, so they had to come back and face more beating to get their belongings back. After this, they walked about two hours to Velika Kladusa.

This incident contained details of treatment very similar to another incident which had occurred a week earlier. This previous report can be found [here](#).

**22/04/2019**

## **“IT WAS A LOT OF FIGHT, BLACK STICK, ELECTRONIC STICK, EVERYBODY STICKS.”**

**Date and time:** April 22, 2019 08:00

**Location:** Štitar, Croatia, 2-3 hours from Rastovica rest station, A3

**Coordinates:** 45.109241114641485, 18.68697166442871

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 14, 10, 4 - 18 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 1 normal Croatian police officer, 7 border/intervention police officers with dark blue uniform

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A 14-year-old boy and an around 20-year-old man went on game together with 13 other people from Afghanistan. Around ten of them were minors. The group started walking from the abandon factory Grafosrem in Sid late in the evening on April 19, 2019. Their plan was to reach a taxi.

After three days, on April 22 at 8 pm, they state that they recognized a drone flying behind them. At that point, they were in a forest close to the highway A3, an around two to three hour walk from ‘parking number three’, Rastovica rest station.

10 minutes later, a group of eight Croatian officers arrived. One of them was described as a civilian officer, wearing a blue T-Shirt showing a ‘small face’ while the rest were dressed in dark blue uniforms, three of them had batons with them.

They asked everyone to sit down in one line and to put all their personal belongings, e.g. their phones, money, food, energy drinks in front of them.

The officers then took the belongings of the individuals, piece by piece, and threw them into the forest. In some cases, they only took the batteries out of the phones.

When they arrived at the 20-year-old respondent, they saw that his phone was in his pocket. They asked him to hand it over, which he did, and took out the battery. Then, they also wanted him to hand over his Monster energy drink. But when he gave his drink to the officer, a drop spilled on the officer's uniform. Immediately, the officers began to beat him with batons and kick him.

Then, they also beat other individuals: the respondent states they used batons and an electric taser.

*"It was a lot of fight, black stick, electronic stick, everybody sticks."*

The 20-year-old respondent states that everyone was silent.

*"All people no speak. Speak? Fight!"*

Finally, they put the whole group in a Croatian police van and brought them to the Batrovci border crossing. The driver was driving very harsh and some individuals got sick.

*"Driver this side, this side."*

When they arrived back in Sid, it was around midnight.

**21/04/2019**

## **"FIRST, HE THOUGHT HIS ARM WAS BROKEN, BECAUSE HE COULDN'T MOVE IT."**

**Date and time:** April 21, 2019 06:00

**Location:** Batrovci, Serbia

**Coordinates:** 45.0386063, 19.133864200000062

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 26, from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 3 police men in one unofficial black car who detected him, afterwards three other officers who beat him. All were wearing the official uniform with the Croatian flag on it.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The 26-year old men had left Algeria four months ago. He stayed in Sid for just eight days before he went on game on April 21, 2019. He left at 10 pm and made it to the Croatian border, clinging on the underside of a train for 30 minutes. He was traveling with around eight more people on the move who all got caught. After the first half an hour under the train, he continued traveling inside for four to five hours until he arrived to a city whose name he doesn't remember. There, the authorities searched the train and detected him. They took him to a police station and made him fill a document, both in Arabic and English, where he had to write down his name, age and country. They further took photos of him, but no fingerprints.

Afterwards, he was taken back in an unofficial black car to the Serbian border to the Batrovci crossing. When they arrived, three other officers kicked and beat him with a baton for around 10-15 minutes. The whole time, he was trying to cover his face with his arms, since a friend of him who was beaten ended up with bruises all over his face. The officers kept telling him to take down his hands, but he didn't do it in order to protect himself.

*"I felt they wanted to beat my face."*

When they finish beating him, they broke his phone in two pieces and then returned it to him. Then they started shouting:

*"Run, no more train!"*

Although his injuries were so bad that he couldn't move, the officers kept telling him to run away.

First, he thought his arm was broken, because he couldn't move it.

*"It was very cold and I want to cover myself with my jacket. But it doesn't work, because I cannot move my arm."*

When he could finally walk again, he had to return to Sid by foot, which took him five hours. He arrived back there at 12 pm.

**19/04/2019**

**“SOMETIMES THEY TAKE MONEY, BUT MOSTLY BEAT”**

**Date and time:** April 19, 2019 09:00

**Location:** Mihaljevac

**Coordinates:** 44.76598304702662, 15.714310197140776

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 13 person(s), age: 17-45 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 8-9 croatian police officers with black uniforms and masks on their face, 2 croatian police vans

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of thirteen started the journey from Bihać on the evening of April 17th, waiting for the night to fall to start their walk. At around 10:00 pm they crossed the Croatian/Bosnian border and continued through a forest for one entire night until reaching Mihaljevac.

It was there that, on the the morning of April 19th, at around 9:00 am, approximately eight Croatian authorities approached the group with weapons drawn, demanding to see their documents.

*'We cross the village and police is looking everywhere, when we after go in the forest we were crossing the main road and police comes saying 'kill you, kill you, kill you' pointing guns.'*

The group stopped and said they did not have any documents. The officers then asked for their money, phones and power-banks, threatening to beat them if they refused. The group-members said that they obeyed because it was not their their first time in this situation and they understood that the threats are real.

*'Sometimes they take money, but mostly beat'*

The officers then took the money and destroyed the phones and powerbanks with their feet, throwing them inside the river after.

*'He broke all phone and he put in the canal'.*

The group was after put in two police vans and brought to the Bosnian border near Šturlić. Some of the men asked for their money back, but the officers refused to return it. The migrants walked almost during an entire day the 26km distance of the way back to Velika Kladuša.

19/04/2019

**“WHEN THEY FOUND A QUR'AN ON ONE OF THE MINORS, THE TALL POLICEMAN STARTED SCREAMING "WHAT IS THIS?", BEAT THE OWNER, THEN THREW THE QUR'AN ON THE GROUND, STUMP ON IT AND FINALLY THREW IT IN THE RIVER.”**

**Date and time:** April 19, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Veljun, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.252806, 15.545264

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 17, 17, 25 years old , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 10 Croatian officers (first 2 in black uniforms, then 4 in blue shirts and dark-blue trousers, then 4 with ski masks). One white van with dark-blue inscription "POLICIJA" on its sides

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of three men (aged 17, 17 and 25 years) started their journey on the 17th of April. They started from Velika Kladusa (BiH) and crossed the border to Croatia on foot. After two days of walking in Croatia, they reached a bridge over the Korana river near Veljun (HR, approximate coordinates 45.252806, 15.545264). Here they were apprehended by two policemen who had hidden their car on the other side of the bridge. They were dressed in black uniforms.

One of them was perceived as more aggressive and described as a tall, strong and bald man, but not considered a higher-ranked officer. The policemen asked the group for their money and their phones. They searched the phones for the route the group had followed and subsequently broke the phones. They also searched the three men. When they found a Qur'an on one of the minors, the tall policeman started screaming: "*What is this?*" He then beat the owner, threw the Qur'an on the ground, stamped on it and finally threw it into the river.

The policemen called another patrol. The group then asked for asylum and the minors declared their age by shouting "*Mineur*", but the policemen answered: "Yes" in a sarcastic way, handcuffed them and hit them with batons on their arms and knees.

After the beating, a white van with "POLICIJA" written in dark-blue letters on its sides arrived and four other policemen took charge of the group. They were wearing blue shirts and dark-blue trousers. The group was told to enter their van. After approximately 70 minutes of driving, the tall, bald policeman made the van stop, opened the back door and asked the group for

their money again. This person followed the van until the border with Bosnia which they reached fifteen minutes later.

At the border, the group was taken out of the van and beaten by a squad of four or five people who had their faces covered by ski masks. The tall, bald policeman took part in the beating, too, with his face uncovered. The group's bags were hidden under the van, so that they would come back to ask for them and expose themselves to the beating again. After 5 minutes of this, the bags were given back to them and the group was let free to go. They crossed the border with Bosnia in a location close to Velika Kladusa. The respondent noticed a border sign on the road they were walking on. After 2 hours of walking, they reached Velika Kladusa.

This incident describes almost identical treatment to another recorded incident which would happen during the following week. This other report can be found [here](#).

18/04/2019

## “GOOD MESSAGE IN CROATIA TODAY”

**Date and time:** April 18, 2019 06:10

**Location:** Ilača, Croatia, train station

**Coordinates:** 45.17344542594754, 19.08947467803955

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 30, 40 , from: Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, insulting

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian police officers, 2 younger ones, approximately between 20 and 30 years old and 2 older ones, around 50 years old. One of the older ones had a mustache

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The two Tunisian men, 30 and 40 years old, went on game around midnight on April 17, 2019. The 30-year old had been living for eight years in 14 different European without papers until he got deported from Austria to Tunisia. The other was born in Germany, but also got deported to Tunisia. Both had legally entered Serbia by plane with a tourist visa and stayed in the country for one month.

*“The animal in Europe, he can eat, he can sleep, he is good. But we?”*

They had left from the train station of Sid and started walking through a forest. After around five hours, they had walked 20 km.

*“It was 20 km, because we turn around Tovarnik.”*

They left the forest to enter the train station of Ilač (HRV), and after smoking a cigarette, four Croatian officers arrived. Two of them were younger, between 20 and 30 years old, and two older, around 50 years old. One of the older ones had a mustache. One respondent explained that he is going on game almost every day and that it wasn't the first time he met those officers.

*"I know them."*

The officers asked for their passports and what they were doing in Croatia. The 30-years old respondent explained that he was going to Italy to see his family there, while the other one said that he was going to Germany, because he born there. He also showed them his German birth certificate, but as it didn't have a photo on it, they didn't believe it was real. Further, he explained that he was planning to go to the consulate to make a passport, but the police understood 'report' instead and started to act violent towards him. They pushed him on the ground, beat him with batons and punched him.

One of the respondents said of this experience:

*"Good massage in Croatia today."*

Before leaving the two people on the move at the border, the officers assured to beat them up even more if they would ever see them again in Croatia.

*"This morning, it was miserable."*

During the interview, the 40-year old respondent said that he thinks his ribs are broken and the other concluded:

*"Life is hard, I can't sleep until I pass this door."*

**18/04/2019**

**"ME AND THE MINORS ARE WITNESSES OF ALL THE VIOLENCE THAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST, AND THIS SCARS WILL STAY INSIDE OURSELVES."**

**Date and time:** April 18, 2019 04:30

**Location:** Bosnian/Croatian Border at the River "Glina" next to "Crni Potok"

**Coordinates:** 45.217018, 15.857698

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 14-19, 24, 32 , from: Syria, Iraq

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** pushing people to the ground, insulting, gunshots, forcing to undress, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 3 police cars with 7 policemen and one dog

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group consisted of five male individuals: a 32-year-old Palestinian-Syrian male, a 19-year-old male from Iraq, and three Kurdish-Syrian brothers aged 13, 17, and 24 years old. The eldest Kurdish-Syrian brother is mentally disabled.

The group of five left from Velika Kladuša (BiH) and crossed into Croatia before walking for around three days. On the third day, at around 1:30 am, the group was attempting to sleep in a secluded area in a forest when they were detected by Croatian authorities. The respondents described feeling as if they were in a movie since a helicopter hovered above them.

*"We aren't criminals, we are just refugees, we have our food and some blankets and want to continue our trip towards a safe place where we can have asylum."*

Shortly after, a very bright light was pointed at them and a voice on a loudspeaker rang out in English, saying: *"Raise your hands and don't move."* The group-members raised their hands above their heads for about 5 minutes with the helicopter above them until a group of Croatian police cars arrived to their location. There were three police cars, with seven policemen and one dog in total. One of the officers was described as being called "Marco", and appeared to the respondents as being the leader of the operation. The interviewee described this lead officer as being of average height and being around 40 years old.

The respondent communicated to this officer the ages and nationalities of all of the group-members, voicing that they wanted to seek asylum. He also explained to the officer the previous injury which the 13-year-old minor had experienced during a previous transit attempt which had required surgery (a result of smoke intoxication). The respondent explained to the officer that there was no adequate medical treatment for this injury as a refugee in Bosnia and that this was why they need to continue. The lead officer told the respondent "No" and that they should leave and not come back again.

*"When we said to the police that we need asylum, we just received the answer that they don't want refugees here anymore."*

Because it was dark and the police officers positioned themselves in front of the lights of their cars, the group-members were not able to notice more specific information and details about the operating officers. Every group-member was made to undress and were searched for weapons, drugs, phones and money.

The respondent begged one of the officers to allow the 13-year-old minor to put his clothes back on as he was worried about the effect that the cold might have on his lung injury. In response, the officer called them "son of a bitch" and "motherfucker". The respondent described this officer as trying to undress the 13-year-old with a police baton and pushing him back after he was undressed. This process of searching the belongings of the group-members was conducted very thoroughly and lasted for 2 hours. One of the officers threatened the respondent during the search of his bag with the words: *"We will talk later"*, since the police officer had received a voice message via radio on his shoulder saying *"Hajde, hajde"*.

After this, the police officers hurried and ordered the group to enter a prisoner van. After a 20-minute ride they found themselves in a place in the woods with about 60 other apprehended people-in-transit. At this location, the officers put an additional ten people inside the back of the prisoner van. They were then driven with five other vans to a point in the woods along the Bosnian-Croatian border where a small river (the Glina) marks the border. The distance between the prisoner vans and the small river was about 30 meters. The police officers forced about 60 to 70 people (from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Morocco and Algeria) to jump 1.5 meters down into this small river. When all the refugees were out of the prisoner vans, the police officers ordered them to stand in one big group together. One officer shot a bullet in the air screamed: *"Hajde, Hajde!"* Everybody fell into the river and were wet afterwards. There were many Croatian police officers (so many that the interviewee could not provide a concrete number) which stood on the other side of the river, screaming *"Go back to Bosnia"*. The respondent remarked that one of the police officers wore a helmet with a red light on it.

The original group of five were not beaten, however the 13-year-old was pushed by one officer during the process of the search and all of them were pushed when they had to cross the river at the border.

*"We don't have injuries from this push-back, but I am here now since almost 1 year and 14 times pushed back. So me and the minors are witnesses of all the violence that happened in the past, and this scars will stay inside ourselves."*

During the mass-push-back which the group was part of, the respondent described witnessing the pushing, kicking and beating of other individuals

*"They beat them, like someone beats his horse. Where exactly, they don't care, on the head, in the face, on your bag and your arms, they just want to make you scared."*

The respondent remarked that he believed that the Croatian officers were intentional in the way that they communicated violence onto people-in-transit:

*"And also the Croatian police is not stupid, they don't make you visible injuries anymore, now they treat you all the time in such a humiliating way that mark stays inside of you. They know what they do."*

The push-back location was near to Velika Kladuša and after 2 hours of walking they reached the city. During this push-back no fingerprints were taken, no medical treatment happened, no papers were signed, and no pictures were taken.

Towards the end of the interview, the respondent remarked that in his experience, the violent enforcement of EU borders had forced him and his friends into more dangerous transit behavior:

*"If we wouldn't have to do the games and put ourselves in danger because of the laws of the European governments and the treatment of the Croatian police, we wouldn't have to face so much suffering. At the game where X almost died, I really believed in humanity and thought that the Croatian police would bring us to a hospital, but I was disappointed."*

18/04/2019

## “THE OFFICERS THREATENED THE RESPONDENT WITH ELECTRIC BATONS AND PUSHED HIM”

**Date and time:** April 18, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Trbušnica border crossing, Bosnia and Serbia, Granični prelaz Trbušnica bridge

**Coordinates:** 44.541911, 19.182515

**Pushback from:** Croatia, Bosnia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia, Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 18, 27-30 , from: Morocco, Turkey

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, electric shock

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian police men with light blue uniforms. 2 Bosnian police men with dark blue uniforms. 1 white van and 1 white police car

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

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

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of four, two from Turkey, two from Morocco, started their journey from Bihac and entered Croatia by foot. The respondent doesn't remember the exact day, around April 10, 2019, but recalls walking six days until arriving to Rijeka.

There, they were apprehended in the outskirts of Rijeka, near the coordinates 45.324509, 14.496193 at around 2 am by four Croatian officers wearing light blue uniforms. The officers arrived in a white van, asked them to lay down on the ground and started checking their pockets. They took their phones and money and returned all after a check. Afterwards, while the people on the move were still lying on the pavement, they started beating them with batons. The respondent asserts gotten hit at least three to four times on the low back and head.

Then, they had to enter a van and were taken to a police station, an estimated hour far away. Once there, the police officers started to interrogate them:

*“How long have you been walking? From which city did you start?”*

The individuals received a number written on a paper along their names and the police took photos of each of them holding the paper in front of their chests.

They spent the rest of the day, an additional night and the following day in the police station, sharing the same cell. There was only one single bed in it which the four of them had to share to sleep. They didn't get any water or food and started drinking water from a tap in the cell.

At night, the group was taken with around 20 other people in a van to an area located near the Croatian-Bosnian border (roughly estimated coordinates 45.268058, 16.059115). All of them, except the respondent, were told to get off the van and to cross the border to Bosnia. The respondent thou had to remain in the car.

*"I asked 'where am I going?', but the police did not answer me. They also took my phone and money."*

He was taken to a forest next to an unpaved road at the Bosnian border, where a white police car and two Bosnian officers in dark blue uniforms with Bosnia's flags on the sleeves were waiting. The Croatian officers handed over the respondent's belongings to the Bosnian officers and told him to enter the Bosnian police car.

After an estimated seven-hour drive, they reached the Serbian Border on April 18 at around 11 am. The Bosnian police returned the respondent's phone and money and took him to Granični prelaz Trbušnica bridge (coordinates 44.541911, 19.182515).

This was the same place where he had entered Bosnia from Serbia, however this was eight months ago in August 2018.

*"They left me on a bridge. On the other side was Serbia and they told me to go there"*

The officers threatened the respondent with electric batons and pushed him.

He walked around 11 km inside Serbia and returned to Bosnia through another bridge around 3 am.

*"I still do not know why I was the only one to be pushed forward into Serbia".*

It was a double push-back in less than 24 hours: from Croatia to Bosnia and from Bosnia to Serbia even though the respondent didn't come from Serbia.

**17/04/2019**

## **"I HATE YOU!"**

**Date and time:** April 17, 2019 02:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia, Serbian-Croatian border

**Coordinates:** 45.15021052447769, 19.16966734846426

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 22 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** 5-6 officers, all of them wearing the official uniform with the Croatian flag sewed on it

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, papers signed, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The 22-year-old men from Afghanistan had been in Sid for seven months and states that he went on game around 50 times.

April 16 was the day of one of his attempts. He left the abandoned factory in Sid at 9 pm and arrived near the Croatian border at 1 am. Together with six other people on the move, he entered a truck which started moving towards Croatia the next morning at 7 am. The authorities detected him on the scanner. They opened the door and took him and the others out of the truck and pushed them into a white van with a windowless backspace.

*"Inside it was like a jail."*

There were around five or six officers, all of them described as wearing an official uniform with the Croatian flag sewed on it. Around 11 am the people on the move were taken to jail where they had to wait until 2 pm without water, food or the possibility to use the toilet. In the jail an officer asked the respondent for his forename, family name and age.

After this, he was handed out a paper written in Serbian. When he asked about its content, they just told him to sign it. When he refused, the officer beat him up and kicked him in his knees.

One officer showed him a baton, shouting:

*"I hate you!"*

Afterwards the group of seven was deported to Serbia. After a three-hour walk, they arrived back to the abandoned factory in Sid at 5pm.

**15/04/2019**

**"YOU MUST NOT SPEAK. DON'T SPEAK, DON'T ASK. IF THEY ASK YOU, YOU JUST ANSWER "YES" OR "NO". IF YOU SAY SOMETHING, THEY HIT YOU."**

**Date and time:** April 15, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Korenica, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.7431, 15.70631

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 6, 17, 17, 16, 17 and 20-39 years old , from: Libya

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** pushing people to the ground, insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, papers signed, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

It was a group of 15 persons, 8 men (20-39 years old), 1 family with an 6 year old child and 4 minors (17,16,17,17 years), all from Libya (one of the minors was born in France and has papers for that, the mother has papers from Libya). Croatia has a good relationship with Libya.

They started in Bihac and walked over the mountains to cross the border. The family wanted to go to Slovenia and joined the group of 12 people. *"We took them with us, but they couldn't really walk in the forest/Jungle. It was too much for the 6 year old child."*

When they reached the border they were exhausted, so they rested for a bit on the Bosnian side of it. Suddenly there were 2 Croatian special force police officers in green uniform and big guns in their hand from 2 sides coming towards them, shouting: *"Stop, stop! Police!"* But the group kept on walking and crossed the border to the Croatian side together. *"They didn't say that we should go back to Bosnia, they wanted to catch us."*

When they reached the Croatian side, the mother of the 6 year old child collapsed to the ground because she was sick. Then 2 other special force police officers came and surrounded the group and called the police. After some time, 6 police cars with 7 Croatian police officers in dark-blue uniform came and some officers took the family into a separate car, to drive them to a hospital. The rest of the group was forced to stand in a line and the officers yelled at them: *"Don't look me in the eyes!"* Then they ordered them to knee down on the ground and searched them one by one.

*"You must not speak. Don't speak, don't ask. If they ask you, you just answer "yes" or "no". If you say something, they hit you."*

They searched all their bags and clothes, also the shoes, socks and underwear. The police took some things out of the backpack, what they the officer thought the people will not need and threw it in the woods. The money, phones and power banks they put into a white bag. *"All of us were silent, because we were afraid to get beaten."*

The police officers were insulting them in Croatian language and acted very disrespectful towards them. After that, they forced them into a transportation (prisoners) van, to bring them within 20-30 minutes to the police station in Korenica. *"This is the worst police station. All policemen there are brutal and racist."*

There they took them into "the garage", which is a place without toilet, beds or blankets only bare concrete ground and one water faucet. After some hours they brought them upstairs to the second floor, where one woman and one man in civil clothes from the integration office

gave them about 20 documents in Croatian language, which they had to sign without any translation. One person said: *"I don't sign, I have to understand the documents. Maybe it's for deportation!"*. One police officer just responded: *"No, just sign! It's the same if you sign or not, it doesn't change anything."* They also took fingerprints of every finger from every person. Afterwards they took 3 persons of the group in a kind of a hospital for immigration very near (5min by car) to the Korenica police station. There a Palestinian translator asked them in Arabic language: *"From where are you? What are you doing here? Where are you going?"* and doctors took a blood sample for analysis of 2 persons from them. This information/result they apportioned among everyone of the group, so they filled in the data from the 3 persons for everyone else.

After 30 minutes they brought the 3 persons back to the garage. After this the 4 minors were separated from them and brought out of the garage. *"There were two women coming in a silver car who were from an organization, that takes care of minors. We wanted to speak with them, but the police didn't let us. 2 of the minors were brought to Zagreb, one to France, because he was born there and one to Germany."*

The rest of the group, 8 persons, spent in total 48 hours in the garage. *"They brought us also some food. They did this, because the association, I think the UNHCR, knew, that we are here. They heard about us from the family in the hospital. Normally they don't give you anything there. We had a special treatment because they put a sign, like a cross, on our hands, to mark us for transportation to the camp in Trilj. On this day they let 10 men from Pakistan wait in the van, that was standing in the yard all night and all day. Then they pushed them back directly."*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> interviewee was already detained in "the garage" in Korenica two times before the described detention. He pointed out, that there was a significant worse treatment and more people inside "the garage", when he was there in winter.

*"The floor is all concrete, it is cold, we have to sleep on it. There is only one water faucet and a small heater on the wall. The door is blue and there is very much written on it in many languages, like dates, names, and from where, like Pakistani, Algerian, Moroccan, Arabic, Iran, Syrian, from everywhere."*

*"We could go only 2 times per day to the toilet, in the morning and in the evening. For this they take us outside to the yard, where there are 3 plastic toilets. If you want to get something out of your backpack, you have to ask a police officer, who comes once a day and maybe you get it. If you knock on the door, they don't hear you. People have to piss in a bottle."*

After 2 days in the garage, they let them out and drove them within 3 hours in a van to the closed detention prison in Trilj. There the situation was better for them, they got food, clothes, could wash themselves and there were also toilets.

*"There was a new relation between us and the police in Trilj. They know that we are good and most of them were nice to us. But one of them, a tall, very fat guy with blue eyes and bold head was very rude and racist. He was the worst of all."*

After 15 days in the camp, when they were not able to call anyone, because they had no money, one police officer and the director of the camp came to them. They showed them all the papers, which included information of where they were caught, personal facts about themselves and what they said, when they were questioned. After that, they gave the about 20 documents to another police officer. They had to sign all of them but never received any of them. Also there was a paper that described the "Exit" of Croatia. *"One document also said,*

*that we are going to justice (the judge)."* After that the director and the one police officer drove them in a car 3 hours back to the police station in Korenica. There in the bureau, the director handed over the documents to a police officer from there. He also said: *"These people are good, they need to go back to the camp."* To the group of 8 he said: *"It is a 50/50 chance, either you go to Zagreb or you go to Bosnia."* They were sent again to this small hospital next to the police station and after 15 minutes the officers decided to deport them back to Bosnia.

As a result, one police officer from the police station of Korenica and one officer from the camp brought the persons in a van to another small police station in Donji Lapac, which is next to a huge hospital.

*"There is very dangerous police. All with big batons and all very racist."*

When arriving there, one police officer opened the back door of the van and the group saw another van, who was directly standing in front of it, already with open doors. So they were forced to walk 5 meters from one car into another.

*"When the police of Trilj handed us over to the border police they said: "Don't hit them!" And the police really didn't hit us. But when I was alone with them, they hit me."*

Then they drove them near the Croatian/Bosnian border on a forest road. When they were let out, one policemen came and asked harshly, while threatening them with a baton: "Who has a phone? You are 8 people, so bring me 8 phones, I want to see 8 phones! If you don't give me your phone, I will hit you!"

*"He tried to scare us with this, of course, not everyone of us had phone. So we gave all we had and he destroyed the charging area with a screwdriver and put it in a white bag. In the forest there is a huge pile of things they steal from people, like food, backpacks, phones, power banks, everything. The sleeping bags they burn."*

Then they walked with them about 100 meters from the road through the forest towards the border, one police officer in front and one behind them, insulting them. After they walked some small forest path downhill they gave the white bag to one person of the group and told him to run so far, that they cannot see him anymore. When this person was gone, they ordered the rest of the group to walk further down the path to the Bosnian side of the border. There was a big rock, that marks the border, then a fence and the river. After crossing the river, they walked about 30 minutes back to Bihać.

One of the Interviewee is in contact with the family, who was separated from the group, when they where caught. He knows, that they are now in a closed camp in Croatia, next to the Serbian border.

*"One of the minors, who was brought to Zagreb told to the UNHCR about us and they tried to contact us in the camp, but because we were deported after 15 days, they couldn't find us."*

**Coordinates of the Push-back:** 44.7318, 15.9084

**Police Station in Donji Lapac:** 44.55299, 15.96031

**Detention-prison in Trilj:** 43.6222, 16.7339

13/04/2019

**“WHY ARE [YOU] HERE? WE DON'T LIKE YOU, WE DON'T WANT YOU, GO AWAY FROM HERE.”**

**Date and time:** April 13, 2019 12:00

**Location:** Rijeka

**Coordinates:** 45.443605435420714, 15.10231226801136

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 13 person(s), age: 4, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 25-45 , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, threatening with guns, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Special croatian police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group left from Bihać and crossed into Croatia on foot during the early morning hours of April 1st. They walked for very long hours throughout the days, starting walking at around 6:00 am stopping to sleep at around midnight. After 10 days of transit, the group arrived to the Rijeka area and moved north from there.

After a total of 14 days of journey, at around midday on April 13th, the group was nearing the Croatian/Slovenian border, when they were apprehended by two Croatian authorities, who they described as wearing green uniforms similar to those worn by the Ministry of the Interior's *Specijalna Policija*. Soon after, the officers called backup and eight other officers later arrived to the location.

The group of officers was composed of two females and eight males. It was snowing at the time and the police officers gave gloves to all the group-members. They placed the children first inside one the van while the women and men had to walk for 2 km to the other van. The group was then taken to a police station in Rijeka at around 7:00 pm.

In the station, the officers searched the group and asked directly for money.

*'I started saying we don't have any money and they say you have money give me money.'*

One of the male group-members had 1000 EUR hidden in his pants which the officers found after searching him. The respondent described the officers as saying 'You told me that you have no money how you have money?' and then giving this group-member 4 or 5 snaps with a baton and kicking him. The respondent recalled that this group-member was sick after this incident and spent one week in a hospital in BiH after returning. The officers in the station were

then described as forcing the male group-members to undress before searching them again. If they refused, one of the officers would beat them with his baton until they obeyed. Once finished with the men, the officers were described as then searching the children and later the female group-members, also forcing them to undress to their underwear. Money, phones and power-banks were taken from everyone.

The group stayed in this police station overnight, during which they were only given food in the morning. The respondent recalled that this food was not very good and was not enough considering that at this point they had not eaten for more than two days. He recalled that they let the children eat most of the food.

In the station, the group had their pictures and names registered the next morning. After this, two officers appeared with the group-member's sleeping bags and began to rip them with a knife, throwing them into a garbage bag in front of the group.

*'We said please no because we have children we need those things for sleeping in the refugee camp.'*

Around 12:00 pm, three policemen took the group to two different vans.

*'He used a lot of bad words and said [why are here? we don't like you, we don't want you, go away from here.] They pushed us, they didn't care if it were men, women or children they were just pushing everyone and saying [go, go away, we don't want you here] and they put us inside of the van and said [stay here and shut up otherwise we will beat you]'.*

The vans took the people on the move to another police station where they were forced to sign a paper and after which they drove for two or three hours before arriving at a location on the Bosnian-Croatian around 20 km away from the city of Velika Kladuša (BiH). The group was left at the border at around 4:00 pm after which time they walked to the city, reaching it at around 1:00 am. They went to Miral camp and asked to stay there for the night, but the IOM representative at the entrance at the time replied that the camp was full and that it was not possible to take them and only gave them blankets. In the morning, after sleeping in the street in front of the camp, the families called the Bira camp in Bihać where they were registered and a van came to pick them up and take them there.

**12/04/2019**

**"IF YOU COME HERE AGAIN, SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN, THERE WILL BE A BIG, BIG PROBLEM!"**

**Date and time:** April 12, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Croatia, Croatian-Bosnian border, between Čujića Krčevina and Baljevac

**Coordinates:** 44.809397012674246, 15.72590357666013

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 19, 19, 20 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Three Croatian border police officers in dark blue uniforms, weapons on their belts

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** no translator present, physical violence, denial of medical care

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of 12 young individuals from Afghanistan and Pakistan, aged 19-22, started to walk from Bihać in the evening of April 9, 2019.

*"We were scared and lucky to not meet the Bosnian police, because they stop you, they don't let you go to Croatia and tell you to go back to [the] camp."*

After the first night it became very rainy and all of them got really wet, all their clothes, shoes, bags and even their provision was soaked.

*"It gets very dangerous, everything gets wet and slippery when you walk in the middle of the forest over the mountains. You don't see this on the GPS."*

After three days of walking, they were able to cross the border to the Croatian side. Most of the group was exhausted and some had great issues with walking. Due to three days without shelter in the rain, the skin on their feet had gotten soft and white and began to peel off.

*"It feels like you are walking on needles."*

As they were crossing a street, a police car was suddenly coming towards them. Nine individuals of the group managed to escape, but three were caught. They were interrogated for three hours by three Croatian border police officers, wearing dark blue uniforms and weapons on their belts.

*"It is possible that someone saw us because Croatian people, if they see refugees they call the police."*

They were trying to get information from them about some smugglers, but the individuals didn't know anything about that. The border police was obviously not satisfied and acted rude and disrespectful towards them and drove them only a few minutes with a van to the next police station. When they were allowed to get off, the border police started to beat them and forced them to hand all their belongings over to them. They took their phones, money, backpacks, sleeping bags and even a bracelet and a necklace while threatening them with a return to the camp in Bosnia:

*"If you come here again, something will happen, there will be a big, big problem!"*

Wearing their wet clothes, they were then detained in a room for two hours and threatened by the police with extensive jail time. They never took any fingerprints nor photos from them,

neither did they give them any papers to sign. As there was no translator, the border police officers told one of the individuals, who was able to speak English, to translate for the others.

When two of the individuals who had bad wounds and pain on their feet, asked for medical care, one border police officer just looked at them disgusted and said:

*"Jebiga" which means "Fuck off".*

They insulted them, their mothers and their families frequently and finally decided to deport them.

They then drove them in a van 20-30 minutes to a forest at the Croatian\ Bosnian border. During the trip they cooled the inside of the van down with the air condition, so they were freezing in their wet clothes.

*"In summer they turn on the heating."*

When they were able to get off the van, the border police started again to beat them with their fists and kicked them several times in the stomach. Even when they were already lying on the ground, trying to protect themselves, they kicked them in the back. They had no orientation and didn't know where to run to. As they were afraid of running again to the Croatian side of the border, they didn't try to run away in the first place. After the three border police officers were done with their beating, they waited in their van for 20 minutes, watching them shivering on the wet ground and finally drove off.

The three friends were all freezing and took off their wet, cold clothes. Two of them could not walk anymore due to great pain on their feet. They made up a plan and the one who could still walk, made it in 30 minutes to the next village. There he found a taxi driver, who he could convince to bring him to the camp in Bihać. From there he had to beg the security guards several times to enter the camp in order to borrow some money from a friend. Finally, the guards brought the friend to the entrance and he gave the money to the taxi driver, begging him to get the other two friends.

*"The Croatian police is very hard with refugees. If they catch us they don't see us as humans. They look at us as if we were donkeys."*

Coordinates of detention: **44.9319, 15.5522**

**10/04/2019**

## **"THEY SMELL OUT OF THEIR MOUTHS FROM ALCOHOL."**

**Date and time:** April 10, 2019 01:00

**Location:** Lohovo, Croatia, Croatian/Bosnian border next to Lohovo

**Coordinates:** 44.72772, 15.91557

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 23, 24, 27 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, gunshots, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6 male Croatian officers, 1 female Croatian officer, all with guns on their belt and batons on their belts or in their hands. Later 4 drunken Croatian police officers with batons and guns in their hands

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of three left Izačić on April 9, 2019. When they spotted a truck with a Slovenian license plate, they crawled under it and clinged to the underside of it. After some hours, they arrived in Zagreb in a big logistic center. When the truck stopped, the three persons ran away, but one of them fell down and four security guards ran towards them, grabbing the one who stumbled. While fixating the individual on the ground, they called the authorities. The two friends of him saw what happened and decided to return to him. 10 minutes later, six male and one female Croatian officer arrived and took the three of them to a van. They drove for one hour inside the city of Zagreb, and then brought them directly to the Bosnian border. They didn't get any documents to sign, nor did the police take any fingerprints or offer medical treatment or food and water. There was no translator present at any time. In general the police officers didn't really communicate with them beside laughing at them and insulting them, so the people on the move didn't really have a chance to express their need for asylum.

When they got off the van at the Bosnian border near Lohovo, one officer took photos with his smartphone of each of their faces and asked them about their country of birth. Then the officers searched their bodies and took everything from them, their phones, money, power banks and cables. Afterwards, four drunken officers without face cover started beating them hard with batons and kicked them while laughing.

*"They smell out of their mouths from alcohol."*

The three individuals tried to cover their heads with their hands and arms, scared the officers would kill them.

*"The most important is to protect your head, because when they hit you on the temple, it can be lethal."*

One of the individuals who tried to protect himself with his hand from the batons, got a bad injury on the wrist (see photo). It felt like almost broken. One officer also had his badge on the chest turned inside out, so that it wasn't visible anymore. After some time the officers laughed and one of them took out his gun, shot twice in the air and yelled:

*"Go, march! Run!"*

They were able to stand up and run away to the Bosnian side of the border. After, they had to walk about 14 km to Bihać in the middle of the night through the forest, injured on arms, legs and knees.

08/04/2019

## “FIRST WE HEARD NOTHING, BUT THEN WE HEARD THE SCREAMING AND THE BEATING. THEN THEY TOOK ME OUTSIDE.”

**Date and time:** April 8, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Border-area between Buhača and Zagrad

**Coordinates:** 45.1875, 15.7805

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: 20-25 years old , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

They started as a group of 12 people on April 4th from Bihać and they walked over the course of four days to Slovenian/Croatian border. It was very cold and rainy so they had a lot of troubles walking. When they reached the Kupa-River, they realized, that the water is too high for them, so they sat down to make plans for crossing it. Then they were spotted by four Croatian police officers in a car, who were apparently patrolling the border area. The police car stopped next to them and the officers said: “*Sit down, Motherfuckers!*” Then they phoned other police officers and after some time a small transportation van came towards them. Without asking them or giving them anything, they took pictures of everyone and forced the group in the van and started driving. None of the police officers gave them any documents to sign or took any fingerprints or offered medical treatment or food. No one of the group had the chance to ask for asylum. Instead they insulted them a lot with terms like “*Jebem Te Gulpa*” (Fuck your dumbass), “*Jebem te Family/Sistra*” (Fuck your Family/Sister), “*Jabi ga*” (fuck off), “*Marsh!*” (Go!). They deported them directly to the Croatian/Bosnian border within 2 hours.

When the van stopped at the border they opened the back door.

*“First they took my friend. They said: “One by one, fuckers!” They brought him outside and closed the door behind him and we were listening, if he gets beaten. First we heard nothing, but then we heard the screaming and the beating. Then they took me outside. There were 5*

*policemen in front of me with balaclavas, sticks in their hands and guns on their waist. First they took my sleeping bag and threw it aside. They searched my whole body, took my phone and money and put it in their pockets. When I started to go towards the border, one policeman kicked me in the back, so I fell down on the ground. The 5 police officers circled me and started to beat me with sticks and hands and kick me with their feet from every direction, in my face, on the head, on my whole body. After some time I could run away.”*

Like this everyone of the 12 persons was beaten and robbed one by one. The sleeping bags were put on a pile and some police officers burned them.

Three of the policemen were directly standing in a row in front of the border. 1 police officer stood on the Bosnian side of the border and was watching the other side, probably making sure that no one sees the beating. 2 police officers were standing next to the backdoor of the van, to search the people and take their stuff. Also other policemen were standing around the car, so in total there were 10-12.

After that the group of 12 persons had to walk about 1 hour to Velika Kladuša.

**06/04/2019**

## **“THEY WERE ALL PUSHED TO THE GROUND, PUNCHED, KICKED, HIT WITH BATONS AND ELECTROCUTED WITH TASERS”**

**Date and time:** April 6, 2019 18:00

**Location:** In the forest next to the river Kolpa. On the Croatian side of the river Kolpa, on the Croatian side of the border, near the Croatian village of Sracak.

**Coordinates:** 45.564979, 15.299195

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 15, 18 (interviewee), the other five 20 - 24 years old , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, electric shock, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Initially there were 4 Croatian police in uniform, with 2 dogs (not used for attacks) and 2 cars. The police radioed for back-up and after a few minutes 6 more police officers came in a van and joined in with the violence.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken

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

**Reported by:** BelgrAid

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of seven Afghans transited across Croatia before arriving at the Kolpa River which marks the Croatian border with Slovenia. On this day, April 6th, the group began to cross at which point four police officers in two cars, with two dogs, found two group-members who were still on the Croatian side of the river.

The 18-year-old respondent's younger brother (a 15-year-old) was on the Croatian side with one other person. The police were aware that this boy was 15 years old, as they found and examined his papers from Bosnia. The respondent described that police officers threatened to beat the 15-year-old minor if the others did not return. The respondent and his older brother swam back across the river, whereas the other three group-members had hidden from the police on the Slovenian side of the river). By the time the respondent and his older brother climbed out of the river, six more Croatian police officers had arrived in a van.

On the Croatian side of the river, the respondent described the ten officers as becoming violent with the group, including the 15-year-old. According to the respondent, they were all pushed to the ground, punched, kicked, hit with batons, and at some point administered electric shocks through a taser-like device to the group-members. The interviewee spoke in English to the officers and asked them to avoid his kidney as he has had long-term medical problems there. This resulted in the officers deliberately aiming for his kidneys while they were kicking him.

The respondent described telling the police officers that they were refugees and that they wanted to seek asylum in Croatia. The police officers continued to beat them and kept shouting "Why you come?" at the group-members.

The officers accused the respondent of being a smuggler because he could speak English, and he inferred that they focused particularly on him during the violence. The respondent described that the violence lasted around five minutes, and resulted in a worsening of the interviewee's kidney problems, as well as multiple ribs broken. The others had severe bruising. After the beating, a number of the group's possessions were taken. €330 were stolen by the officers from the group, as well as their phones and chargers. Their jackets and jumpers were taken from them – the only clothes they were allowed to keep was one t-shirt, one pair of trousers and their socks and shoes. Their backpacks and the rest of their clothes were thrown into the forest.

The group was handcuffed and put in the van. Two of the group-members were wet from swimming across the Kolpa river, and now none of them had any extra clothing layers. The police officers subjected the group to extreme temperatures in the back of the van using the air conditioning system, switching regularly between extreme heating and extreme cooling for the four and a half hour journey to Zagreb.

At the police station in Zagreb, the respondent once again expressed the intention to seek asylum, saying: 'I want to stay here in Croatia to seek asylum'. The response from the police officer in charge of the police station was: 'You cannot stay here'. The respondent lodged a complaint with the police officer in charge, telling him that the group had had their phones and money stolen by the police officers who had found them. The police officer at the station responded by saying: 'Do you have any more money?'. The interviewee said: 'No, they took everything'. The police officer replied: 'If you had more money, I would take it now'.

At the police, the respondent described being slapped several times by police officers, again targeted because he spoke English. All four of the group were photographed at the police station. They had to write down where they come from and their parents' names.

They were detained in this station for two nights, before being collected from their cell on April 8th sometime between 3:00 and 4:00 am. They were driven in a van and followed by two cars filled with police officers. They were driven to the Bosnian-Croatian border, near Velika Kladuša. The back doors of the van were opened and there were six police officers on each side on the doors in a line (12 officers in total, plus 4 dogs). They were armed with batons. The group was pulled out of the van two at a time, and chased back into Bosnia while being struck by police batons.

**05/04/2019**

## **“THEY DID NOT STOP BEATING UNTIL THE MAN HANDED OUT HIS PHONE AND HIS MONEY.”**

**Date and time:** April 5, 2019 10:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia, later stops Tovarnik and Šid

**Coordinates:** 45.8038253, 15.9934726

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia, Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 20, 20, 21, 30 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** First contact: Croatian police officers, 3 men and 1 woman (in civil clothes, in a white van without inscription)/ Second contact, at the police station: several men. 4 (in dark blue uniforms) of them interrogated the individuals and used physical violence/ Third contact, deportation: by 3 men (in dark blue uniforms) in 2 white vans without inscription and a motorboat

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, no translator present, denial of food/water, physical violence, theft of personal belongings

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of four men started their journey from Velika Kladusa (BiH) and crossed the border into Croatia on April 3rd, 2019 around at 3:00 am. They continued walking into Croatia during the following nights, choosing a route through mountains and forests.

In the morning of April 5, they reached the city of Zagreb (CRO) without having encountered the police. They headed to the bus station, planning to continue their journey by bus. Around 10 am, when they were walking on the pavement of a road in the city (approximate coordinates 45.8038253,15.9934726), a white van without an inscription stopped next to them. Three men

and a woman, all of them in civil clothes, got off the car. They told them to stop, to kneel down on the pavement and to put their hands up in the air. The four people on the move did as they were told. Afterwards they had to get into the van.

The group was driven some ten minutes to a police station still inside the city of Zagreb. There were many policemen in dark blue uniforms at the station. Four of them interrogated the group, while they had to kneel down on the floor in their cell:

*They don't let you stand upright.*

When the men were asked for their origin, one of the two reporting individuals answered Morocco. A few moments later and without any additional words, one of the policemen kicked him into his right jaw. By the time of the interview, i.e. five days after the incident, the jaw was still hurting.

The four men were told to hand over their money and phones. When one of them hesitated to do so, the policemen started to beat him with a metal baton. They aimed at his head and when the man protected his head with his arms, they hit his elbow so badly that the man had to go to hospital after being pushed back. They did not stop beating until the man handed out his phone and his money. In total, the policemen took 400 euros and four phones from the men. They never returned their belongings.

Later on during the interrogation, the policemen beat all the four men with metal batons as they thought they were part of a larger group and supposed that they were covering their alleged peers. According to the interviewees, there were no other group members. The four individuals were beaten once again after not answering the question from which country they had entered Croatia. By doing so, they had hoped to reduce the risk of being pushed back. The policemen also threatened them with electric shock batons, however they did not use them.

The four men asked for asylum and to be taken to a camp in Croatia, but the policemen reacted by shouting at them:

*No, you go back to Serbia! Don't come back to Croatia!*

The policemen assumed that the men had entered Croatia from Serbia.

The individuals were kept inside the police station for around one to two hours. They didn't get any water or food during that time. No pictures of them were taken and they were not told to sign any papers.

Around noon, they were taken from their cell and told to enter the backspace of another white van. The backspace did not have any windows. After an estimated four hours drive, they arrived in Tovarnik (HRV) where they had to change the van. While changing vehicles, they were once more beaten by policemen with batons. The van which they had to board was white as well, and was driven by three policemen in dark blue uniforms.

After some ten minutes of driving from Tovarnik, they arrived to a river which the interviewees believed was the border river. There was a small motorboat which they were told to board. The policemen also went onto the boat and drove it to the other bank where they told the four men to get off and walk to Šid (SRB). It was around 4 pm by then. After walking an estimated 15 kilometers, the four men arrived to Šid at around 10 pm the following evening.

On the next day, April 6, the men took a train to Belgrade. Two of them needed health care due to violence administered during the push back (one man for his elbow, another one for his knee). They stayed in Belgrade and went to a hospital there. The other two men took a bus to the Serbian-Bosnian border and crossed the border on a bridge by foot. While crossing, they were detected by the Serbian and the Bosnian police, however they managed to escape. They then took a bus to Tuzla (BiH) and another one to Sarajevo.

04/04/2019

## “NEXT TIME WE CATCH YOU IT WILL BE DIFFERENT, WE WILL KICK YOU AND SEND YOU TO JAIL!”

**Date and time:** April 4, 2019 08:00

**Location:** outside Melinovac (HR)

**Coordinates:** 44.7329662, 15.9124559

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 20-28 years old , from: Syria, Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian policemen with dark blue uniforms, insignia on sleeve, batons. 1 van with «Police» written on the side

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent, a Syrian man, set out from Bihac with two Moroccans and an Algerian on March 31st. All of them were aged between 20 and 28 years old. Over the course of four days, the group walked approximately 60 kilometers in Croatia through mountainous and forested terrain. On the fourth day, (April 4th) the group was intercepted at a road crossing at around 5:00 am by three police officers. The officers told them to stop, and stated to the group:

*“We saw you coming, 20km away.”*

The officers' attitude was direct, but generally polite, according to the respondent. The respondent believed that the policemen knew that they were too tired to run away. The officers then ordered them to hand over their phones, before pushing and shoving the group members. When in possession of their phones, the respondent described the officers as breaking them in front of the group.

They were then loaded into the back of a van which had the word “Police” written on both sides. In the van, there was a barrier separating the front seats, which were taken by the police,

from the back seats, which were taken by the group. The police then asked the group where they had started their journey from. The group told the officers that they had started from Velika Kladusa because they preferred to go back to Bihac and they had heard that the police usually pushes people back to the opposite place than the place they state. The group was then asked how many times they had tried to cross the border before. All of them said that it was their first time. The police officer then threatened them:

*"Next time we catch you it will be different, we will kick you and send you to jail."*

The group was kept for somewhere between 2 and 3 hours in the back of this van as it drove back to the Bosnian-Croatian border. The respondent recalled that the driving was erratic, changing from fast to slow and to fast again. The journey took longer than it should have because the police stopped for a coffee break on the way. Meanwhile, they left the group in the van without food or water.

At around 8 am on April 5th, the van reached the Bosnian-Croatian border near Melinovac (approximate coordinates 44.7329662, 15.9124559), some ten kilometers away from Bihac (BiH). The officers had thus indeed taken them to the opposite place from what they had stated. The policemen told them to get out and said:

*"Do not try again!"*

It took the group four hours to walk the ten kilometers back to Bihać as they reported being very tired and dehydrated.

**04/04/2019**

**"I THINK THE POLICEWOMAN WAS TELLING HIM NOT TO HIT ME. HE LOOKED VERY CRAZY, LIKE A RABID DOG."**

**Date and time:** April 4, 2019 06:00

**Location:** Imotski, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 43.446525, 17.215998

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 29 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used, reckless driving, police paid for bus ticket with his money

**Police involved:** One male and one female Croatian police officer in light-blue uniforms. The policeman was tall, bald and strongly built, the policewoman had short black shaved hair on the lower part of the head, with blonde short hair at the top. She was tall and slim. - Unspecified number of Croatian policemen in plain clothes. - Unspecified number of Bosnian policemen. - Darkblue van with white letters "Policija" on the door in Croatia. - 1 police car in Bosnia.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

One Algerian man set out on his own from Sarajevo to Tomislavgrad (BiH) by bus at around 11:00 am on the 3rd of April. He then arrived in Posusje (BiH) at 4:00 pm and started walking towards the border at 5:30 pm.

After waiting for the night, he approached the border at 10:30 pm, arriving at Imotski (HRV) bus station at 2:30 am. Along the way, a police patrol car slowed down while he walked along the road and looked at him but continued on. He then waited for three and a half hours at the bus station for a bus. Several policemen walked past during this time, none of them disturbing him.

At around 6:00 am on the morning of April 4th, after waiting for so long for a bus that was late, he cursed out loud in Arabic. 15 minutes later, two policemen walked up to him. The policemen were regular Croatian police in light blue uniforms, a woman and a man. The policeman was tall, bald and strongly built, he was very nervous and acted in a slightly crazed way. The policewoman had short black shaved hair on the lower part of the head, with blonde short hair at the top. She was tall and slim and was more calm than her partner.

*"They asked: 'Where are your papers?', I answered: 'I don't have'"*

*"'Who's with you?, they kept asking, and even though I told them I was alone, they continued: 'You can't have come here alone, where are your friends?'"*

Other policemen in civilian clothes then arrived and started looking for other people as they didn't believe that he had come alone. At the same time, the first policeman and policewoman searched his backpack, leaving his small shoulder bag. They asked him if he had a knife and after he said no, they didn't search him.

*"'How long did you stay here?' and when I told them I had been here for 3.5 hours their answer was: 'You are not lucky'"*

After this, they took him into the big dark blue van, with tinted windows, that said 'Policija' in white on the door. As they were walking to the car he said:

*"I need to go to the asylum office, if you can' and they replied 'No asylum office, back to Bosnia!'. I insisted that I was feeling sick and they still told me 'Back to Bosnia!'"*

He was inside the van for around 15 to 20 minutes. The policemen drove really fast on a very windy road. He was sitting in the back of the van, which was blacked out. All this time, the policewoman was talking to the policeman a lot, insisting on something.

*"I think she was telling him not to hit me. He looked very crazy, like a rabid dog."*

When the van stopped, they opened the door, pointed towards a direction and told him:

*"This is Bosnia, go!"*

After walking for around 500 meters, he started to be around houses and saw a Bosnian police car just stopped along his way. He said good morning and the Bosnian policemen answered:

*"No good morning, get in the car!"*

They took him to the police station in Posusje and, once there, they checked his bags, pockets and patted him down. Then they asked:

*"Why are you in Croatia? Don't go cross the border again, it's a mistake!"*

By this time it was already 7:00 am and although he kept asking for food and water, they didn't even acknowledge his request. By the time he left the station at 7:30 am, he had not been given any food or water even after repeatedly asking for it. They didn't ask him for papers.

*"While I was in the police station, the policemen mocked me, laughed at me, didn't give me food or water when I asked."*

At 7:30 am they took him from the police station to the bus station and, with his money, bought a bus ticket to Sarajevo and put him on the bus.

04/04/2019

## "DRIVER VERY BIG PROBLEM."

**Date and time:** April 4, 2019 04:00

**Location:** Lipovac, Croatia, at the Odmorište Spačva gas station on highway E70/ A3

**Coordinates:** 45.04535868472382, 18.99832248687744

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 22 person(s), age: 16, 16, unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, forcing to undress, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 20-25 Croatian border officers (Croatian flag emblem, dark blue uniform, black balaclavas), 2-3 dog, 1 undercover Croatian officer, 1 German Frontex Officer (Military uniform, Frontex emblem), 4 Croatian police cars, 2 Croatian police vans

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Two 16-year-old Afghans went on game by foot, late in the evening on April 3, 2019. They left together with 20 other Afghan people on the move, among them between five and ten minors, from the abandoned factory Grafosrem in Sid. They walked through the forest around 25 km in six hours until they reached the

second gas station, Odmorište Spačva, on highway E70 after the city of Lipovac (HRV). There, they reported seeing a x-ray camera and a drone.

*"There was a vrrrr camera. And private police in a black car was watching at us with binocular glasses. It was undercover police. The man had a red color face, very big and only hair on the sides."*

After being detected, they assumed with the help of the cameras by the undercover officers, six police cars arrived within 10 minutes. The respondents describe the cars to have been four normal Croatian police cars while two were vans. There were between 20 and 25 policemen, described as wearing dark blue uniforms with a Croatian flag on the shoulders and black balaclavas. They were also two to three leashed and barking Rottweiler dogs. The officers asked all people to sit down. They asked one of the respondents if he was speaking English. He answered:

*"No me Pashto, Urdu, pičku materinu!"*

The respondent states that one other individual who was speaking intermediate English was forced to get completely undressed. He got beaten with a baton.

*"It was a very big fight."*

During the interview, whilst he was in Belgrade one respondent explains he visited a hospital:

*"All body pain, go doctor."*

While the Croatian police were reportedly very violent and beating everyone with batons, another officer arrived. The respondents described this officer as wearing *"military clothes"*, with reported seeing a blue armband showing the European Union's flag and the Frontex logo as well as the word Frontex written on it, they stated that on the back it said "Border police". The respondents state that he may have been a Frontex officers when they are shown photos of Frontex officers during the interview. One respondent explains, that once this officer arrived, the Croatian police calmed down. This officer told one of the other officers to stop beating the respondent, due to his low age. The respondent said that he thought the officer was German due to his accent and his physical appearance:

*"German police face, all body, me understand, all body is European Union, me speak ich lieb dich."*

They finally put 12 of the individuals into the police van, the rest of the group had managed to escape before the police arrived. The respondent explains that it was very cold inside the van and the driver was changing the speed of the car radically. He did this probably on purpose as they were on the highway where the speed is supposed to be pretty constant.

*"Driver very big problem."*

Finally, the van arrived at the police station in Sremska Mitrovica (SRB) but none of the people on the move had to enter the police station. As some individuals had been eating biscuits and drinking energy drinks inside the van, the officers ordered them to clean.

Afterwards they were sent back to Sid by train.

01/04/2019

## “IT WAS LIKE A PRISON INSIDE.”

**Date and time:** April 1, 2019 04:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia, on the Croatian side of the Serbian-Croatian border near the spot where the trucks park

**Coordinates:** 45.15698543475, 19.171343365052962

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 19, from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride

**Police involved:** Croatian special police (who was hitting the interviewee) with commando boots dressed in dark blue with Croatian flag on the arm. Another policeman was watching

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent is 19 years old and crossed the border from Serbia into Croatia with a group of nine other people-on-the-move from Šid on March 31, 2019, at 20:00. The group entered Croatia by foot, when the Croatian authorities discovered them in the early morning of the following day (1st April 2020). The officers spoke Croatian and were dressed in blue, wearing special boots and uniforms showing the Croatian flag on the arm. Eight individuals from the transit group managed to escape back to Serbia, but not the respondent.

The respondent was caught at 04:00 by the Croatian officers and beaten up at a parking space in front of parked trucks. At that moment, just one officer was present. The officer crashed the respondent's head against a wall. Then he beat him with a baton in his ribs and also kicked him in the ribs and continued to beat him all over his body.

After the officer beat him up, he was put in a white van with reinforced glass windows and pushed back to Serbia. He was accompanied only by the policeman who was driving the van and who the respondent described was was not from the same unit as the others. The policeman drove very fast, without light and with no ventilation. He describes the situation:

***“It was like a prison inside.”***

The respondent didn't ask for asylum. He didn't have to give his fingerprints, nor were photos taken. There was also no lawyer or translator present.

At the time of the interview, his forehead, nose and chin showed traces of violence. He couldn't lie nor sit down. His finger was also injured and he complained about pain in his legs.

31/03/2019

## “THEY RAN AWAY AND SUDDENLY HEARD ONE OF THEM, 27 YEAR OLD OUSSAMA, SCREAM.”

**Date and time:** March 31, 2019 03:00

**Location:** Otočac, Croatia, 20km east from Otočac, at the north-west end of the national park Plitvička jezera

**Coordinates:** 44.927919, 15.455765

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Different police presence in different places, no detailed description

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of ten men from Algeria started their journey in Izačić, Bosnia-Herzegovina. The exact date is not known. On March 31, 2019, they were walking through a forest about 20 km east from Otočac, at the north-west end of the national park **Plitvička jezera**. At 3:00 am, the group saw a light and assumed that it was the police. They ran away and suddenly heard one of them, 27 year old Oussama, scream.

He had fallen into a cave-like hole in the ground, where he would later die.

Two of the group managed to walk around 14 km to the next village. Around 12:00 am they explained their situation to a Croatian woman. She called the police who arrived 20 minutes later.

The police took the men back to the forest. They were accompanied by a forest-guide. At the initial site where they had fled, the group witnessed the forest-guide make preparations to recover Oussama's dead body — nine hours after his death.

While waiting for the body to be recovered, the officers asked for their phones and money. They confiscated their phones, destroyed some of them, and burned their sleeping bags. At no point, did the police show any interest or concern; nobody asked about their situation after the tragic incident or what happened with their friend.

The police then brought the rest of the group to “a garage” in Croatia, approximately one hour away by car.

*“The garage was full of urine.”*

Nonetheless, the group had to stay there for three nights without lights, sleeping in the cold.

Afterwards they were brought to the detention camp in Trilj. There they were detained the second time, without medical treatment. The police took all the food from the group and only gave them a little to eat after leaving them two days without any food. But the food situation didn't improve significantly:

*"The portions were really small and we also had to pay for them."*

All of them had to give fingerprints from all fingers and their photos were taken. The police told them to smile in the camera and made fun of them, which the group perceived as very disrespectful. They further had to sign around 10-12 papers, written in Croatian and without any translation. Indeed, the police officers covered the parts of the text of the papers with their hands, so that it wasn't possible to read it. They just pointed at the parts where the people had to sign the documents. None of the nine documents they signed were handed them over to them.

The group also expressed their claim for asylum at the police station and as well at the camp in Trilj. This was denied and ignored.

After ten days of detention, on April 11, the group was deported back to Bosnia. The Croatian police let them off the car on the Bosnian side of the border near the town Bihać. At around 8pm, the group of nine arrived in the center of Bihać.

During the whole process no one experienced physical violence from the police, but they still felt treated in a humiliating way, especially regarding the previous death of their friend.

The group of nine still want the body of their friend to be returned to Algeria.

*"We want him to be buried in a dignified way."*

Personal assessment of the interviewer:

It is very unusual to keep people for such a long amount of time in the detention prison in Trilj. Most of the time it is almost empty because people are brought directly back to Bosnia. It is possible that the Croatian police kept the rest of the group in Trilj to prevent that information about the incident reaches the public in time.

**Dead person:**

Name: Oussama

Surname: B. (full name is known to Border Violence Monitoring)

Age: 27 years old, exact date of birth is unknown

Place of birth: Skikda, Algeria

**<https://www.borderviolence.eu/wp-content/uploads/0d23eae273e6d94e6bb9e3705d4fd931.0.mp4>**

30/03/2019

## “WHEN THEY FOUND PHOTOS AND VIDEOS OF HER DANCING, THEY WATCHED THEM LAUGHING.”

**Date and time:** March 30, 2019 06:30

**Location:** Croatia, on a road 150 km from the Bosnian-Croatian border towards Zagreb

**Coordinates:** 45.655147756634854, 16.38708677208615

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 28, 27, 6, 11, 8, unknown , from: Iran, Syria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** insulting, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers, detected by officers with one police car, caught by officers with 10 police cars (4 city police cars, 2 border police cars, 2 undercover police cars)/ at the border police station: 5 male officers and 2 female (6 in dark blue uniforms with the flag of Croatia, 1 in a light blue uniform) and the immigration police/ transported by a van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On March 30, 2019, a group of 15 people on the move from Syria (2) and Iran (13) were waiting for two hours on the side of a road, 150 km from the Bosnian-Croatian border towards Zagreb.

Among the group were two families. One composed of a mother (28 years old), father (27 years old) and their two children (6 and 11 years old). The other a mother, father and one child (8 years old). The remaining eight were individuals.

At 6.30 am, a police car passed them and within thirty minutes two “city” police cars arrived. Soon after, two border police cars and two undercover police cars arrived. The people on the move had been in the wilderness for four days and were very tired.

One of the families had decided to ask for asylum, but the police didn’t talk to them. They then had to stand in a line until a van arrived. All 15 people had to enter the back of the van which became very crowded. It was narrow and had a fan, one light and no windows.

*“The deportation van was like [a] prison.”*

The interviewee reports that they arrived at a police station after a 30-minute drive. Everyone was let off the van. In the police station, the officers started searching each of them, including the children. The interviewee describes the place as a new building with four identical rooms with bed frames inside. He assumes it was built for deportation and that the immigration police were inside. He saw seven officers inside the station, five men and two women. All of them were wearing dark blue uniforms showing Croatian flag. One wore a light blue uniform.

Asked by one individual where they were, one police officer answered that they were close to Bosnia and near a river.

After the officers took all the backpacks and phones from them, confiscated their money and other property, they sent everyone to a room. Then they brought each person out of the room to question them. The individuals were asked about their nationality and age and if they entered Croatia with the help of a smuggler. Using two different phones, the police took photos of all individuals, including the children. The interviewee assumes that they were photographed for two different ministries.

He was further asked for the password of his phone which the officers wrote down and started checking his last call's numbers. He also mentions that the police checked the photo gallery of another female individual. When they found photos and videos of her dancing, they watched them laughing. He was then made to sign papers whereby no translation was offered.

*"I think the papers said I would like to deport myself. We asked for asylum and they were laughing at us. I don't know why."*

One man in the group could speak English. The interviewee watched the English-speaking man talking with the police officers and saw him starting to cry after hearing the policemen's words.

After questioning this individual, it was revealed that the police had offered the group food — pork and cheese.

*"We said we don't eat pork, and they said we have nothing else then. We asked for water and they said no. We could drink directly from the sink, but the sink was very dirty."*

The group was kept in the police station for approximately 12 hours. At 11:00 pm the following evening, they were driven 3 hours and 45 minutes to what the respondent described as "a bad place". There they had to leave the car and walked five hours to a small Bosnian village. As they could find neither a taxi nor a bus so late in the night, they had to wait outside the village until 7:00 am the following day.

**30/03/2019**

## **"SEVEN BORDER OFFICERS THEN KICKED EACH OF THEM AND TOLD THEM TO GO BACK TO SERBIA: "HAJDE GO SERBIA.""**

**Date and time:** March 30, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Obrežje, Slovenia, Croatian/Slovenian border-crossing

**Coordinates:** 45.84605096179892, 15.693626403808594

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Slovenia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 15, 17, 18, 18, 19, 25 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** kicking, insulting

**Police involved:** 4 Slovenian border officers, 1 Croatian police van, 7 Croatian border officers

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** fingerprints taken, no translator present, photos taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The six friends from Afghanistan, 15, 17, 18 (2), 19 and 25 years old, stayed in the squat of Sid, on the old factory Grafosrem. When they left for the game on the March 28, 2019, it was already late evening. Once they arrived at the Batrovci border, they entered a Turkish truck, transporting sewing thread, which was parked just before the border. After two days driving through Croatia inside the truck, some biscuits being the only food to eat, four Slovenian border officers stopped the truck at the Slovenian side of the Obrežje border-crossing. When they opened the back, they found the six friends.

*"The policemen were tall and muscular."*

The police asked them to get off and brought them to the police station right at the border-crossing where they had to stay for two hours. Fingerprints were taken and a close-up photo of each of them. The six friends asked for asylum but

*"The officers said no".*

Then, two Croatian border officers came and put them in a police van. They were verbally aggressive, saying

"Hajde pičku materinu" (English: "Come on, go back to the vagina of your mother").

After a four to five hour drive, they ended up at the Batrovci border crossing. Seven border officers then kicked each of them and told them to go back to Serbia:

*"Hajde go Serbia".*

They started walking and, after a three to four hour walk, arrived back at the same squat of Sid they had left around two days ago. The translator of the interview (a person on the move, also living in the squat) says about their condition:

*"When he come from Slovenia, he is very hungry."*

**30/03/2019**

**"WE WERE SO SCARED, WE CANNOT REMEMBER."**

**Date and time:** March 30, 2019 00:00

**Location:** near Lohovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 44.7434882, 15.9195052

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 25-38 , from: Morocco, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** insulting, threatening with guns, gunshots, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 'a lot'

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On Monday, March 25, 2019, the group of six, three Tunisians and three Moroccans, left Velika Kladusa (BIH) to cross the border to Croatia. Due to heavy rain, they had to wait two days near the border and continued walking afterwards for four days through the forest.

On March 30, around 9.30 am, the group was stopped in the forest near Glibodol (HRV) by a man and a woman in hunting clothes. According to the respondent, this approximate location was here: 44.98330100902659, 15.358535294666805.

The woman had a firearm which "looked like a sniper or hunting gun" and the man hold a smaller firearm that "looked like a 9 mm gun." The six of them wanted to run away, but the man shot two times in the air with his gun, so they decided to stop.

*"They scared us and we stopped."*

The two people took the phones and power banks from the people on the move, broke them and threw them on the ground. They further took the food the six were carrying with them, and burned their sleeping bags and backpacks. Afterwards, they ordered them to start walking, following the road, telling them:

*"Go back and don't get back here."*

They entered a car and followed the group of six, while pointing one of their firearms towards them. The woman took a photo of the group walking on the road. They drove behind the group for around seven kilometers and then turned around.

The people on the move decided to search for a police officer because they didn't have the resources anymore to keep on traveling. The two people who had stopped them neither identify themselves as authorities nor did they hand them over to any authorities. After walking for a bit, the group saw a police car standing still on the road. They approached it and found two Croatian officers inside, wearing green uniforms with the word 'police' written on their shoulders. The officers asked them if they had any phones, power banks or money with them, so they explained what had happened to them. The officer asked if they could remember the license plate of the car the man and woman were driving.

*"We were so scared, we cannot remember."*

The officers called another van to pick up the group of six.

This van first brought them to the police station in Blata (HRV). Afterwards, some other officers brought them with a different car around 20 km to another police station near Bihac, where already other people on the move were waiting. They were brought altogether to a big garage-like building, where they had to stay between 2.5 and three hours. Now the group of six was with about 20 Pakistani people on the move. The police brought another 18 people from Afghanistan. The police asked the Afghans to open a phone with its code, but nobody wanted to do so as all locations were saved in that phone. So the police brought the Afghans out of the garage and then the rest of them could hear them screaming. Afterwards, the Afghans returned, beaten up by the officers.

During the night, all people on the move were then brought together to the border and dropped near Lohovo. They then went back to Bosnia.

**30/03/2019**

## **“THERE, THEY SPOTTED SOME OFFICERS ALONG THE ROAD AND HEARD THE SOUND OF DRONES.”**

**Date and time:** March 30, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Donji Vaganac, Croatia, near Donji Vaganac

**Coordinates:** 44.9121892, 15.728742199999942

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 24, 26 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian officers in blue uniforms

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

In the night between March 30 and 31, two individuals left from Bihac (BIH) with the aim of entering Croatia. Around 12 am, they were near the Croatian border, in the area around Bihac between the cities of Donji Vagana and Mala Peća. There, they spotted some officers along the road and reported hearing the sound of drones.

They decided to wait for them to pass. Around 4 am, they finally crossed the border to Croatia. Near Donji Vaganac (HRV), two Croatian officers described as wearing blue uniforms stopped them. The officers asked them if they had phones, money or weapons with them. They further did a body search and also searched their backpacks. Then they had to enter a car and were deported to Bosnia, near the city of Izazic.

29/03/2019

## “THEY CAUGHT THE WOMEN FIRST AND THE CHILDREN, SO ALL THE MEN WENT BACK TO THEM.”

**Date and time:** March 29, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Glina, Croatia, on the blue bridge in Glina

**Coordinates:** 45.3382624, 16.090970900000002

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 9, 12, 14, 25, 31, unknown , from: Syria, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** insulting, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6 who detected the people on the move and 3 who deported them

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

After having been on the move from Bosnia for four days, the group of seven people on the move, including a family with three underage children, were caught by the authorities on a blue bridge in the city of Glina, Croatia. The Croatian officers first caught the woman and her children, so the three men who were traveling with them decided to return to the police as well.

*“They caught the women first and the children, so all the men went back to them.”*

At first, there was one big police car, but soon after two other police cars arrived. The respondent described that there were six officers, four of them wearing blue uniforms and two in civilian clothing, all of them carrying guns. When the officers detected the group, they told them that they were illegal in Croatia and therefore needed to go back to Bosnia. They asked them if they had knives or other weapons with them or money. The people on the move denied all. Then, the officers took their phones. The group of seven asked for asylum and the officers answered, that they would not get asylum in Croatia.

The group had to enter a van and was brought to a parking lot in front of a police station where they had to stay inside the van. Three other officers then drove them to the Bosnian border. They returned their phones, however, the group discovered that some of the charge inputs were broken.

It was around 1.00 am when the people on the move were pushed back to a spot in Bosnia in the middle of the woods. They walked for seven kilometers until they decided to sleep outside in the woods that night. On the next morning they were able to get a bus back to Velika Kladusa.

One of the respondents mentioned:

*“The worst is, the police does not care about the well being or safety of the children nor the woman.”*

26/03/2019

## “‘I SAID ‘SORRY, SORRY, SORRY!’, BUT THEY CONTINUED TO BEAT ME.’”

**Date and time:** March 26, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Pasjak, Croatia, near Pasjak

**Coordinates:** 45.4774601, 14.2226431

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 39 , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, electric shock, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers (all in black uniforms), caught by 2 men (tall, armed with a gun and a (electric) baton, with a police car) and joined by another man (with a van), at the border station 4 men and 1 woman, deported by 2 vans

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, papers signed, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent is a 39-year-old Iranian man. He started his journey from Bihac (BiH) on March 18, 2019, around noon. He entered Croatia by foot, crossing the border in the forest west of Bihac. The respondent was on his own.

After seven days of walking in Croatia, he reached the Slovenian border near Pasjak (CRO) in the night from the March 25 to 26. In the forest around the coordinates 45.4774601, 14.2226431, he was caught by two Croatian policemen. They were tall and armed with a gun and a baton, wearing black uniforms. They shouted

*“Stop!”*

Then they pointed at him with their guns. The respondent stopped. The police officers pulled out their batons and started to beat him.

*“I said ‘Sorry, sorry, sorry!’, but they continued to beat me.”*

They were beating him on his head and back and kicked him into his hips and legs. At the time of the interview, ten days after the incident, the man was still in pain and had a bruise on his backside. He was limping and needed a bandage on his right foot and a crutch, as the images show:

The baton the policemen used was electric and sent electric shocks into the respondent's back. The interviewee demonstrated how his body first straightened and then quivered each time he was hit.

Whilst beating him, the two policemen were at times laughing, at times calling him a terrorist.

*"But I said 'I'm refugee. I just come from Bosnia to here.' They very, very beat. Five minutes, until they were tired."*

Then, the two policemen made a call, and one more Croatian police man, also wearing black uniform, arrived with a van. The respondent was told to enter the van and the police kicked him once more while he was getting in the backspace of the vehicle. This area had no windows and was lacking oxygen. Although the van was not driving fast, it was driving in many curves, which made the respondent vomit.

After an estimated one-hour drive, they reached what the interviewee believes was the border station of Jelovice (45.509348, 13.968095). It was still night. When he got off the van, he saw trucks and cars crossing the border. He also saw that the van had been followed by the car of the two other policemen who had first detected him.

In the station, there were five other police men, one of whom was female, wearing the same black uniforms. The officers told the respondent to hand over his money and cell phone. They took his money, 100 Euros, and his phone, a Samsung Galaxy. All of was were never returned.

*"He took my money and my phone in his pocket. He didn't destroy the phone because when you have an expensive phone, they keep it for themselves."*

The respondent then had to take off all his clothes, including his shoes and even his underwear. For an estimated five minutes he was totally naked, then they gave him back his clothes.

*"They said 'No go to Croatia, go to Bosnia Bihac'. And they shouted at me 'Don't go to Slovenia, don't go to Italy!'. But I said next time I want to go to Italy."*

The policemen put the respondent into a cell where already ten other people on the move (four Iranians, some Pakistanis and some Somalis) were waiting.

*"I said 'hungry, hungry, hungry', but they said 'no food, no food'. They only gave me water."*

The respondent spent the rest of the night in the cell. At the next morning, the policemen came, telling him to sign a paper. The paper was in Farsi and English, not in Croatian. The respondent described the content of the paper was saying something like 'Don't go to Croatia the next time, stay in Bosnia'. One of the police officers put the signed paper into his breast pocket, without giving him a copy.

The respondent and his cellmates were then told to enter two vans. He was in a van with the Pakistani men, while the other Iranians and the Somalians were transported in the second van. Again, the backspace of the van had no windows and lacking oxygen. And again, the respondent vomitted.

*"It was very dark inside."*

After an estimated six hours drive, they arrived in a forest at the Croatian-Bosnian border. The interviewee located the push-back to the South of Zeljava (CRO) around the coordinates 44.828267, 15.7520597. The men were told to get off the vans and to walk over the border into Bosnia. The respondent started walking with three Somalians.

*"There was wind and rain. I was very wet, also my leg was wet. And my leg and my foot hurt a lot. It was dangerous to walk in the forest, very steep."*

After a while, they found a road, and after an estimated three hours walk, they reached Bihac (BiH). It was already dark by that time. The next day March 27, 2019, the respondent took a bus to Sarajevo.

**26/03/2019**

## **"THE POLICEMEN JUST TOLD THEM THAT THEY ARE NOT WELCOME AND MUST NEVER COME BACK."**

**Date and time:** March 26, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Đurin Potok, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1072483, 15.7787256

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 22 person(s), age: 20-30 years old , from: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** insulting, destruction of personal belongings, exposure to jerky style of driving, making people fall down and vomit

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian policemen with dark blue uniforms, insignia on sleeve, ski masks, batons and guns. 1 white van with «Police» written on the side.

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of seven men set off from Velika Kladuša (BiH) and walked for 10 days through the Croatian interior, later being apprehended by Croatian authorities in a forested area near the Croatian-Slovenian border on March 26th, 2019.

Three Croatian police officers, whose faces were covered by ski masks, were described as bursting out of the forested area in which the group was moving through and shouting "*stop, sit down, sit down!*". The officers had their guns drawn and aimed at the group. The respondent described being very scared and that the group did as they were told.

The officers soon after demanded the group-members' phones. Upon receiving them, the officers forcefully inserted a lever device into the power connectors of the phones, rendering them broken. The group was questioned about their age, whether anyone was a minor, and where they came from. The group-members were then ordered into a line next to a van at which point the three officers took a selfie with them. The respondent remarked that the officers laughed and insulted the group during this time, and that he felt humiliated.

The officers then corralled the group into the back of the van, which had no seats, where 15 other people-in-transit (who had previously been apprehended) were already waiting. The respondent described the van as being very cramped, remarking that he felt sorry for the women and children in the van (who were part of the group present in the van when he arrived in the back). The group was tired and thirsty. While being transported, the officers drove erratically resulting in the people in the back being thrown about by the inertia and getting sick.

The group of now 22 persons were dropped off around 10 to 15 kilometres south of Velika Kladuša, in the region of Đurin Potok (approximate coordinates 45.1072483, 15.7787256).

The officers did not provide the group with water or directions, but just told them that they were not welcome and must never come back.

**23/03/2019**

**“PIČKA TI MATERINA! YOU ARE DOGS! WHY YOU CAME HERE? FUCK YOUR MOTHER! MOTHERFUCKERS! YOU ARE TERRORISTS!”**

**Date and time:** March 23, 2019 22:00

**Location:** Modrus, Croatia, on a road 23 between Modrus and Jezerane

**Coordinates:** 45.097456, 15.210371

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 17, 20-30 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, electric shock, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers (in black uniforms, wearing caps and no masks): Apprehension by 2 men ("Policija" or "Police" written in the chest, a white van - Mercedes Sprinter - with the inscription "POLICIJA"). Transport by 3 men, at the border 3 men and 1 woman (2 police cars)

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of six men started their journey from Bihac (BiH) on March 21, 2019. Around 6 pm, they crossed the border to Croatia by foot, west of Izacic (BiH). The following two days, they continued walking in Croatia without being detected by the police.

Around 10 pm on March 23, the group was at a distance of 30 or 40 km from the Slovenian border. Near the Croatian city of Modrus, they had to cross a road to continue their journey through the forest. The interviewees believe the place to have been at the approximate coordinates 45.097456, 15.210371. When they stepped on the dark road, a white van with the inscription "POLICIJA" arrived. The interviewees assume that the policemen had detected them by using a night-vision device. Two police men, wearing black uniforms saying "Policija" or "Police", got off of the van. They wore caps and their faces were unmasked.

One policeman pointed with an electric taser at the people on the move, the other one with a gun. The six men didn't run away. The policemen then started to insult them both in Croatian and in English:

*"Pička ti materina! You are dogs! Why you came here?! Fuck your mother! Motherfuckers! You are terrorists!"*

The people on the move did not say anything because they were too afraid.

*"You can't say anything! We were afraid to say anything, we were afraid of taser."*

The policemen then told them to kneel down in the snow, with the hands on their backs. The men had to stay in this position for a long time, an estimated half an hour. One of the policemen made a call, supposedly to a police station. After that, the policemen pushed them with their hands in the back, they fell on the ground and were lying in the snow, face down on their stomachs. They had to stay in this position for another estimated half an hour.

*"I almost couldn't breathe because it was so cold."*

*"They did the same to our 17 years old friend although I explained to them that he was a minor."*

One of the men asked to seek asylum, however the policemen directly answered:

*"No, not in our country."*

The policemen asked the people on the move where they had started their journey.

*"We told them we came from Bihac."*

One by one, the six men then had to get up, were searched and then brought into the back of a van. The policeman who searched them pushed them gruffly and punched each of them.

*"He punched some of us in the head, the others in the chest, and another one in the back."*

One of the respondents was beaten on his knee from a policeman using his electric taser like a baton to beat. The policeman beat the man's knee so badly that he was still limping, having pain and having his knee bandaged by the time of the interview (i.e. some two weeks after the incident), as the photo shows:

The policemen didn't find the money the men had hidden inside their belts. However, they took all four phones the group of six had with them (one Oppo phone of 150 Euros value, one

Samsung G5 of 200 Euros value and two Huawei phones) as well as the chargers and power banks and put them into a bag.

In the van's windowless backspace, the air conditioning was running on a very cold level.

*"They drove very fast, and braked very hard and made many curves to make us vomit. I felt worse than ever before in my life, my head was hurting and turning so much!"*

There were seats in the van's backspace but no seat belts.

*"I fell two or three times from my seat because of the head turning and the curves."*

The other five individuals also fell from their seats on the van's floor, and all six men had to vomit. The men knocked on the van's walls and shouted to stop the air conditioning, but the policemen didn't answer.

After an estimated 90 minutes drive, the van stopped for ten to fifteen minutes. The respondents think this was in a larger city but are not sure as they weren't allowed to leave the van. The first two policemen left the van and were replaced by three other policemen who were wearing the same black uniforms and caps.

One more estimated hour of driving under the same conditions followed.

It was still night, around 2 am on March 24, when the van stopped in the forest. There were already two other cars waiting. When the policemen opened the door, the group of six recognized three policemen and one policewoman who were probably wearing the same black uniforms. However, it was too dark to see their faces. The policewoman directly started to insult them, shouting in English:

*"You motherfuckers, don't come again! Go now!"*

One by one, they were told to leave the van. As soon as the addressed person got out, the policemen closed the doors, started to beat him with sticks and pushed him away from the car. The policewoman meanwhile continued to insult the individual. This procedure was repeated for each one, and whilst trying to avoid the beating, each of the men ran into a dried streambed around five meters from the van's backdoor. The respondent believes that the stream marks the border between Croatia and Bosnia at that spot.

The respondent who was the last to leave the van, reported that he was kicked in the back and stumbled down into the streambed. The police men threw the bag with the phones after him, but all phones had been crushed.

When the six people were crossing the streambed, the police officers were laughing and shouted at them to go back to Bosnia. The officers checked with a torch that the group didn't return.

Early on March 24, after an estimated hour or five kilometres of walking, the group reached Velika Kladusa (BiH). Even though the men had correctly declared to the Croatian police that they had entered Croatia near Bihac, they were thus pushed back at about 50 km distance from Bihac (roughly estimated location of the push back: coordinates 45.162418, 15.7647092).

23/03/2019

## “HE MAY BE LEFT WITH A DEFICIT IN HEARING AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE ASSAULT.”

**Date and time:** March 23, 2019 13:00

**Location:** Maljevac, Croatia, in the area of Maljevac

**Coordinates:** 45.41154902689586, 15.284432005129474

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 23-35 , from: Algeria, Egypt

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** Four Croatian officers, all male, dark blue uniforms with an emblem containing yellow and black on their sleeves

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of initially ten people, four Algerians, two Egyptians and four Moroccans, started their journey in Sturlic (BIH), on March 16, 2019. They crossed the border to Croatia by foot. After a few days of walking in Croatia, the group split and the four Moroccans chose another route.

The remaining group of six men, aged between 23 and 35 years, continued walking for seven days. At 1:00 pm on March 23, they were walking in a mountainous area on an unpaved road some four kilometres away from the Slovenian border, around the area of Bosiljevo (HRV). Suddenly, a police van approached them and four male officers got out off the van. They were wearing dark blue uniforms, with a yellow-black emblem on the sleeves, carrying batons and guns on their belts, and told the people on the move to “stop.”

The two Algerians and two Egyptians stopped, while the two other Algerians ran away into the forest. The respondent supposes they managed to escape as he hasn't seen them since. One officer made a call. Then the four migrants had to hand over the two phones and three power banks they carried with them, but not their money. The officers checked the content of their phones and kept them.

Further, they were asked for their countries of origin and their migration route. The four of them answered truthfully and afterwards requested asylum. One of the officers answered with an angry expression on his face:

“No asyl!”

The officer then took the migrants harshly by their shoulders and pushed them into the backspace of the van, slapping the respondent once strongly on his ear. The respondent instantly felt a heavy pain in his ear. While his hearing was not affected at first, this changed after a while. When he had returned to Sarajevo, he saw a paramedic three weeks after the incident. The paramedic made the following written statement:

*“The patient I saw had ear pain and a problem with hearing. This appears to have been a result from an openhanded strike to the head. On examination of the patient, he had tenderness over the temporal and zygomatic structures as well as a ruptured tympanic membrane (ear drum). The rupture will heal in a few weeks providing the ear remains dry and without infection. He may be left with a deficit in hearing as a consequence of the assault.”*

The backspace of the van had one small window in the top, no seats and it was very cold inside. The four of them had to sit on the plain floor during the very fast and winding drive.

After an estimated three to four hour drive, the van stopped and the four individuals were told to get off onto a small paved road. A small village was visible at some distance. They were still on the Croatian side of the border around Maljevac (HVR) and near Velika Kladusa (BIH). It was now the afternoon of March 23th.

The officers destroyed both phones' charging inputs with a stick, while the group had to watch. Then they casually threw the phones on the ground and said:

*“Go to Bosnia!”*

The group of four started walking in the direction they were told. After walking an estimated nine kilometres on paved roads, they arrived to Velika Kladusa (BIH), still during daylight. From there, they first took a bus to Bihać and then to Sarajevo.

**22/03/2019**

## **“ ONE OFFICER THEN POINTED ALONG THE ROAD TOWARDS THE BOSNIAN BORDER AND SAID: GO!”**

**Date and time:** March 22, 2019 14:15

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia, close to the train station

**Coordinates:** 45.8105345, 15.927713799999992

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 28,36,28,26 , from: Algeria, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers, caught by 2 and joined by 2 officers (male, blue uniforms, pistols, caps, Croatian flag on the arm and insignia on the shoulders, a police van), at the police station 2 officers, deported by 2 officers (a police van) and joined by 3 officers (a police car)

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On March 22, 2019, at around 1:00 pm., a group of people on the move arrived at Zagreb (Croatia) bus station and walked from there to the train station. After they had bought train tickets, they had to wait several hours before the departure of their train which was scheduled for around 3.10 pm. They left to look for a café or restaurant to wait to reduce the chance that the police would question them. When they had searched for a place to sit for around half an hour, they encountered the police.

A police car drove past them at 2.10/ 2.15 pm, as they were walking on the street close to the train station around the coordinates 45.811037, 15.927692. The car stopped, two officers got off the vehicle and walked to the men. One man from Tunisia immediately ran away. None of the police men ran after him, but one of them spoke Croatian into his radio device.

The police men asked in English for the men's passports. The interviewee was the only one of the three who spoke English and responded:

*"No I don't have papers, I don't have a passport."*

Hearing this, the same officer spoke again into his radio device.

Then the group waited on the street without being bounded or handcuffed. After around 15 minutes a police van and two more officers arrived. The Tunisian man was placed in the back of the van, with his hands cuffed in front of his body. All four police men wore blue uniforms showing a Croatian flag on the arm and insignia on the shoulders, they also had caps and were carrying pistols.

The officers didn't ask any further questions, neither explained the situation to the people on the move. One officer opened the back of the van and told the men in Croatian to enter the car. They drove for around 10 minutes until they arrived at a police station. It was large, with three floors, coloured in grey, and an around two meter high metal fence surrounding the building and a gate with a single officer in a booth. A car park was at the back of the building.

At this point the Tunisian man's handcuffs were removed. All of them were brought into the police station and taken into a room on the first floor with nothing in it than a small table with several chairs around. There were two new officers in the room, one of them searched the men, laying out all their belongings on the table, but not stealing anything from them. After the officer finished searching the men, the interviewee requested asylum.

*"As he took his gloves off I said 'Sir, we want asylum here in Croatia, we want to do asylum here in Croatia'. He smiled and said "no asylum here in Croatia. Go to Bosnia."*

Both officers then left the room, closing the door. The men didn't receive water or food and tried to get the officer's attention to ask for water and find out more information, but the officers didn't respond. The men waited in the room for five to ten minutes.

Then two new officers came into the room and said 'Heidi', which the men understood as 'Let's go'. Following this, they had to enter a police van's backspace, with two new male officers in the front of the van. They drove for around five hours, without handing water or food to the men. The men got cold during the journey as the air conditioning was turned on.

The van stopped and the group waited for around 10-15 minutes while they heard another car arriving and some people talking. They later found out that it was another police car and some officers. Then they started driving again for another 20-25 minutes to the Bosnian border. Although a precise location could not be named, the respondent stated it was in this area: 45.122275 15.482337.

One police officer opened the door, and said to the Tunisian man who had run away in Zagreb.

*"You come!"*

The Tunisian men got off the van and the officer immediately closed the door. The other five inside the truck heard the officers talking to the men partly in Croatian, partly in English, but couldn't understand anything.

They then heard the sounds of the man being beaten. The man later told the interviewee what occurred. He was circled by five officers, not able to understand what they said to him. One officer pushed him and the others hit him with their fists and legs. The interviewee described that the Tunisian man had visible bruising on his right eye, a cut on his lower lip and his shins. No photo evidence exists of this as the man didn't want it to be recorded. One officer then took the man's phone and used a lighter to melt the back, breaking the motherboard and ensuring it was not usable anymore and irreparable.

After about five minutes, an officer opened the door again and gestured for all men to exit. At this point the interviewee saw, that the two officers had been joined by another three officers in a separate police car. The men were standing in the forest on an unpaved back road in the dark, it was around 10 pm. One officer then pointed along the road towards the Bosnian border and said:

*"Go!"*

The men walked 10 to 15 meters down the road to a small river. When the road tailed off to the side in a curve, the officers gestured for the men to carry on straight, off the road and through the river. They couldn't see how large the river was due to the dark and the interviewee asked the officer:

*"How I cross this river?"*

He didn't answer but came and pushed the Tunisian man they had beaten up before into the river. The river reached up to about knee height and was around five to six meters wide. The men walked through the river and then continued for around one hour, about 5-6 km, back to Velida Kladusa.

22/03/2019

## “LAST TIME I WENT ON THE 'GAME', IT WAS AGAIN LIKE BEING INSIDE OF A HORROR MOVIE.”

**Date and time:** March 22, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Croatia, one day walking from the Serbian border

**Coordinates:** 42.7011836775152, 21.601202312492205

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 32 person(s), age: unknown, 12-13 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Croatian local police, unknown number

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A. actually lives in the old Grafosrem factory in the small border village of Sid (Serbia). Since the individual left Kabul, it has been a long way crossing borders and countries such as Iran, Turkey and now the Balkans.

*“Last time I went on the ‘game’, it was again like being inside of a horror movie.”*

Three days outside of the squat for nothing, only more frustration. The group of 35 people on the move was walking on a Croatian road, but split up in smaller groups of about ten people. When the police discovered them, they managed to escape by running into a forest. After A. had walked many hours, the police found them again. They caught everybody, beating all, even the three children around 12 and 13 years old. Police attacked them with sticks, hitting their heads and legs without making any distinctions. They further took the money and mobile phones, which they never returned.

Afterwards, the group was brought to a Croatian police station, obligated to stay there in silence for three hours, beside answering the officer’s questions:

*“Where do you go? Why you stay in the forest?”*

A. had to give personal data, e.g. his mothers and fathers names and his date and place of birth. During the process, the police officers remained silent, not giving any information about the situation or their rights and didn’t provide them with water.

After three hours, some people were sent to the jail and A. and the others were deported back to Serbia by car.

Reported in English on March 24, 2019.

21/03/2019

## “THE MORE EXPENSIVE PHONES ARE KEPT BY THE POLICE. THEY RETURN ONLY THE LESS VALUABLE PHONES.”

**Date and time:** March 21, 2019 20:00

**Location:** Donji Vaganac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.9071192, 15.7327089

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 20-30 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** More than 10 Croatian police officers in different locations (all men), wearing darkblue uniforms. One car and totally six vans. 1 dog.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### ORIGINAL REPORT

Around 8 pm on March 21, 2019, the group of six men crossed the border from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Croatia by foot at the approximate coordinates 44.9086187,15.7468935 near Vikici (BiH). After some 300 meters of walking in Croatia, they heard a car approaching. The car's lights were switched off. The car stopped at some distance, then came closer and stopped again. Three police men got out of the car, pulled out their guns and told the group of six to stay where they were. They asked:

“Where do you go?”

The group replied:

“Asyle, asyle!”

The policemen answered:

“Ok asyle, walk!”

They then told them to walk some 300 meters further into the Croatian interior. At that point, a van with more police men arrived. Now the group of six was accompanied by 8 to 10 police men in dark blue uniforms and one dog. They told the individuals to empty all their pockets and to put their money and phones on the ground. Then they were told to kneel down and to

hold their hands behind their heads. The police men poured the contents of the men's bags on the ground.

After, the group of six was told one by one to go to the police car, where they then had to put their hands on the car and to spread their legs, so the police could search them. When they found another phone that one of the individuals had tried to hide, they started to beat him with a stick on his fingers, elbows and knees. The man started bleeding on his knee, his elbow and his knuckles – as the photos below demonstrate.

Then, they had to enter the backspace of the van. The air-conditioning was turned on and it got very cold in there. After an estimated 1.5 to 2 hours drive, the van stopped at a police station.

The group of six was told to enter a garage. Inside the garage they found dozens of other people on the move. The interviewees did not notice women or children among them.

“It smelt like in a dirty toilet. I apologize for the word choice, but there was shit, piss and garbage all over the floor. The smell was very bad. The garage was not very big, but there were so many people inside.”

While entering the garage, one of the interviewees asked the police men for some water to drink, but they just laughed at him and closed the door.

After they waited around 1,5 hours in the garage, the police came to open the door and told all people on the move to enter five big vans. In the vans, they again started the air-conditioning on a very cold level.

After an estimated two hour drive, the five vans stopped. The people were told to get off and found themselves in a mountainous area in the middle of the night. The police men handed over a bag filled with mobile phones to one of the individuals:

“Here you are.”

Standing by, they were laughing how the people – most of whom did not know each other – had to sort out which phone belonged to whom.

“They do that in order to cause an affray among the migrants and to make fun of us.”

The main interviewee said that his phone (a Huawei) was not in the bag, neither were the phones of several other individuals.

“The more expensive phones are kept by the police. They return only the less valuable phones.”

The police men then asked:

“Somebody speaks English?”

The main interviewee said yes. The police men then looked at him with faces full of hate, shouting at him:

“This is Croatia, here is Croatia!”

After, they told the group of estimated several dozens of people to stand in a line of two by two persons, and started hitting and pushing people into the line. Afterwards, seven police men without guns, led the group in line an estimated 20 minutes into the forest until they reached what was probably the border, and told them to go to Bosnia.

At first, there was no road, but later they found one and followed it. The group of six stopped in an abandoned house and slept for a few hours. The next day, March 22, 2019, they started walking again and arrived to Bihac at around 4 pm. On the same day, they took a train to Sarajevo. The interviewees estimated the total walking distance from the place where they had been left out of the vans to Bihac to have been some 20 km.

**21/03/2019**

## **“THE INDIVIDUAL HEARD THE OFFICER FIRING ABOUT 10 WARNING SHOTS AS THEY FLED”**

**Date and time:** March 21, 2019 06:00

**Location:** Donji Vaganac, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 44.912025019223854, 15.726393175062185

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 17-25 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Three male Croatian police officers wearing dark blue uniforms. Each officer had a pistol and a baton. One Croatian police jeep.

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

At around 6 am on March 21, 2019, the group of six men were walking along a dirt road, big enough for vehicles passing. After they crossed the Croatian border, visible through a large sign saying “Welcome to Croatia”, they continued on the road. They were in the vicinity of Donji Vaganac.

After around 20 minutes, they saw one Croatian police officer. He was wearing a dark blue uniform without cap and carried a pistol and a baton. One of the individuals instantly raised his hands, saying:

*"No problem, I go Bosnia."*

When they noticed the police officer making a call on his radio device, they ran away to the direction they came from. The individual heard the officer firing about 10 warning shots as they fled. They ran for 10 minutes and managed to cross the border to the Bosnian side, when a white jeep with the Croatian police insignia followed them across the border. The car stopped and a different officer than the first one got off the car, yelling:

*"Stop! Stop!"*

The three police men brought the group back to the Croatian side of the border. At this point the interviewee remembers one police man beating them while one sat in the car and another police man observed the situation. They hit them for about five minutes in their arms and legs. The police screamed:

*"Go back to Bosnia."*

So the six of them ran away again to the Bosnian side. This time, the Croatian police didn't follow them. The group walked for 12 km to a town they remembered as Rujnica and slept in the forest near the town until nightfall.

**20/03/2019**

## **"I SAY 16, I AM 16 YEARS OLD. HE JUST WRITE 20 ON THE PAPER"**

**Date and time:** March 20, 2019 09:00

**Location:** Batrovci, Croatia, on the Croatian side of the Batrovci Scanner

**Coordinates:** 45.04793814286389, 19.102278506640687

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 16, 18 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** insulting

**Police involved:** Arrest : 15-20 Croatian police officers, mostly very tall and quite fat, shaved hairs ; using a very basic English. All males, except one woman. Deportation : Serbian police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, 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 two young Afghani men aged 16 and 18 went on game late in the evening on March 19, 2019. They walked until the Batrovci border and entered a Bulgarian truck, parked just before the

border. The next morning, the truck left and passed the Serbian scanner without any interruptions. But just after passing the Croatian one around 9 am, the border police opened the truck and found both respondents. The police officers were numerous, between 15 and 20. When they asked the two individuals to get off the truck, they referred to him as Taliban.

*"Come Taliban!"*

The officers walked with them to a room on the Croatian side of the border, where already four other people on the move were waiting. Everybody was interviewed, asked for family name and first name, the country of origin, and a signature. When the interviewee declared he was 16, the police man wrote down 20.

*"I say 16, I am 16 years old. He just write 20 on the paper."*

After two hours waiting in this small room, between five and ten Serbian border police men came and brought the group to a similar room, though this time on the Serbian side of the border. The respondents were locked into one of the many small, windowless cells for around five to six hours. They were left in complete darkness, didn't get any food or water during this time and were allowed to use the toilet only for one minute. The toilet was located outside, around ten meters far from the room. During their detention no information about the ongoing process of their case was given to them.

Finally, the police transferred them in a 'Serbian prison van' (see photo) and drove in the direction of Sid.

*"They drive us in a prison van, a Serbian prison van."*

While Sid is located 20 minutes by car from the Batrovci border, the drive took three hours. The backspace of the van was windowless and it was also very cold due to the low temperatures outside, just 1 °C, and no heating inside the van. Both respondents tried to get information about their situation by knocking on the walls, but didn't receive any answer.

When the van stopped and the police men finally opened the doors, they were in Sid, in front of the Chinese market on Cara Lazara street, located a few meters away from the local police station. The officers ordered them to go to a camp in Belgrade.

**20/03/2019**

**"GO AND DON'T COME BACK. IF YOU COME BACK WE WILL ATTACK YOU."**

**Date and time:** March 20, 2019 02:30

**Location:** Melinovac

**Coordinates:** 44.738539, 15.906933

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 29, 26 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 2 police officers and one military officer. Deep navy blue uniforms, caps, Croatian police symbols, carrying pistols and batons. Military officer carrying a 60 cm wooden baton, the color of wood, in his hand, jacket and trousers, no hat, green color uniform. 2 police vans and one police car, with visible insignia, white in colour with blue line in the middle, with 'Policija' written on the side

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The two men stopped at an abandoned house in the village of Glibodol, Croatia, at 11 am on March 19. The house was small with one storey, bare white brick and a red tiled roof. They slept outside in sleeping bags on the roofed terrace. At 4.30 pm, two police officers and one military officer woke them up. The officers spoke only little English and told them to get up in order to search them. In the following, they took the phones and power banks from the two of them which they wouldn't see again. Then the officers took photos and told the two individuals to pick up their things. The two people on the move collected their belongings in such a hurry, that one of them forgot his sleeping bag. They were then led 400 meters to another house. On the way one officer asked one of the individuals:

*"Why you come here?"*

*"There's a storm, we just want to hide from the snow".*

The individual then asked if the officer could help them and that he needed a doctor. He further asked if they could be taken to a camp, not specifying any particular one. Both was answered by the officer with 'Ok, ok'.

They two individuals arrived at a house where they found around 40 Pakistani men standing, who had previously been caught by the police. Around seven officers, two female and five male ones, were watching over them. In addition, there were two military officers with semi-automatic rifles. The two interviewees were brought to a separate room and stayed there for around 1,5 hours. They were searched again but nothing more was taken from them. Occasionally the police would check on the men, but without asking any questions.

Afterwards, all people were told to leave the house one by one and to enter a police van. The interviewees were the last two to leave. The group of Pakistani men were brought to a van close to the empty house. All people on the move entered the van except two. These two joined the interviewees, and they walked together to a second van on the opposite side of the road, next to a house where around 20 people, all Pakistani, were waiting in front of it. Those people on the move had not been with the group waiting in the former mentioned house. The four individuals entered the van. At this point there were two police vans and two police cars. They closed the doors of the windowless backspace which prevented the individuals from seeing where they were going. They were also unable to speak to the officers in the front of the van. It was cold in the van and the drive was very bumpy so five people got sick, including one of the interviewees.

After approximately 1,5 hours, they arrived at a place 'like a big garage', which the interviewees suppose to be part of a small military area. All four of them got off the van, but although they saw the other van, they couldn't see any of the 40 people on the move that had been inside. They never found out what happened to them. The garage had three brick walls, one metal shutter and a stone floor covered with a thin plastic sheet. In front of one wall was a several meters long row of rubbish, some in plastic bags, some in open bins, smelling like urine.

*"It smelt like a bad toilet."*

*"It was freezing cold, you couldn't sleep because of the cold. Our clothes were wet from walking in the snow."*

The group was locked inside without any police for four to five hours, not having any water, food or toilet. Some of them were forced to urinate in the corner. After two hours the shutter opened for the first time and two officers entered. They took 15-20 of the individuals with them and immediately closed the shutters again. After two more hours, the shutters were opened again and the rest of the group was taken to an open area around 300 meters from the garage, walking one after each other. To keep people in line, the officers hit them with large metal torches on legs and arms. They arrived at two military officers with black fabric masks covering their faces, holding semi-automatic rifles.

*"We were like chickens, I didn't want to remember that moment. We were like animals."*

The officers asked them:

*"Who speaks English?"*

One of the interviewees responded that he did.

*"The men said, tell everyone, that if you come back we will attack you."*

The group continued walking through ice and snow, walking over a mountain. One officer with a rifle at the head of the line, the other at the rear. When one of the individuals stepped out of the line to use his inhaler for his asthma, he was beaten on the chest with the butt of a rifle, but not hard enough to leave visible marks. After around 15 minutes, the officers led them to a track that was well trodden.

*"Go and don't come back. If you come back we will attack you."*

They then walked for an hour until they reached a main road.

*"It was snowing and really hard to keep walking."*

From there, they continued walking through the night all the way back to Bihac, arriving there at 6 am. On the way they met many people on the move walking in the same direction. All of them had been pushed back.

20/03/2019

## “BECAUSE OF THAT SITUATION, I LOST MY BABY.”

**Date and time:** March 20, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Turjanski, 30km away from Croatian/Bosnian border

**Coordinates:** 44.80040634574748, 15.539712290295938

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 30 person(s), age: 2,4, unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** police officers with vans and cars

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent is a pregnant woman and mother of two children aged two and four. In a group of 30, she left to cross the border, walking for four days through forests and mountains until the authorities detected them.

*“We saw that they were so angry, I thought they want to kill us.”*

The officers said:

*“Open the phone, we want to watch what do you have.”*

They knew that the group had probably saved the locations of their route on their phones. When the group handed over their phones, they broke some of them. The officers pushed all 30 individuals into a small car. The respondent described being insulted by the officers during this process.

*“We sat there, it was very hot. And I was so tired.”*

The respondent saw that they beat some men with their hands, but not the women. The officers were described as saying said:

*“You shouldn’t come anymore. When we see you again we will do bad stuff with you all. Don’t come anymore!”*

The respondent reflected that during this time she was scared.

*“It was so hard for us.”*

The officers brought the woman and her children back to the camp in Bihać, where she declared her intention to seek asylum, also telling them that she was pregnant.

*"I told them that I'm pregnant, I need to go to the doctor, I felt pain, and we didn't eat for two days, we didn't have water."*

Nonetheless, the officers refused to let her leave the camp. They neither had to give their fingerprints nor to sign any papers. The respondent expressed her frustration with her situation at the end of the report:

*"I don't know what I can do. With small children, the situation here in the camp is not good, everything is very hard. We don't have enough food, we don't have a good bathroom, it is not good for children. The shower, everything is very bad. There are so many people here. We have to share the room, I live with another family, everyone else do the same. It's really difficult for families to live like this.... Since four years I [have been travelling]. I was in Turkey, Greece, Serbia, and then here and everywhere it is the same. I don't know what can I do now. I just want to make a beautiful life for my children."*

*"It is a really hard situation for refugees right now in Bihac."*

18/03/2019

## "SIR, I AM NOT A TERRORIST – I AM REFUGEE!"

**Date and time:** March 18, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Lohovo, Croatia, at the Croatian/ Bosnian border next to Lohovo

**Coordinates:** 44.729039, 15.91538

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 30 person(s), age: 17-26 years old , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, pointing gun at the face

**Police involved:** three officers wearing blue uniforms in a police car, a prisoner van, four police officers leading the group through the woods

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The 21-year-old man and his 24 year old friend, both from Pakistan, started from Bihać on April 16, 2019, with a group of 30 other young Pakistani men aged 17 to 26 years.

After two days of walking, one Croatian citizen saw the group in the Croatian woods. The respondent supposed that this person might have called the police, as 10 minutes after the incident, three officers wearing blue uniforms arrived with a police car.

The respondent and others of the group decided to run, but his friend, who normally is always with him, couldn't run, due to his hurting foot. At the time of the interview, it was still hurting him. So one of the

three officers was able to catch this friend, which made the respondent return to his friend, to not be divided from each other. Thus, the officer caught him too and insulted them:

*"Next time you come, we shoot. We have dogs, we have cars, we have helicopters, we have weapons, we have everything to stop you!"*

One of the officers was pointing with his gun to the face of the respondent, whilst standing next to him. He defended himself:

*"Sir, I am not a terrorist – I am refugee!"*

The officers called for reinforcement and 20 minutes later, a prisoner van arrived and brought the group in a three to four hour drive directly to the Bosnian border near Bihać. The temperature in the car was about four degrees, and they drove really harsh which made the people inside falling from one side to the other.

The respondent says, his experience is, that if you are pushed-back near Bihać, the officer's violence is less than if you are dropped off near Velika Kladuša.

This time the respondents themselves weren't victims of physical violence, but other people of the group were pushed by the police officers towards the direction they were leading them. It were four police officers leading the four people they had caught in a row through the forest.

The respondent supposes, the Croatian officers must also be poor people, because they always ask for money, phones and food.

*"Germany gives cameras to Croatian police with which you can see up to 8 km in the night!"*

*"I've been here for six months, and I had six games. Once I'll reach France I'll write a book about all this!"*

**17/03/2019**

**"THE GROUP OF TEN WAS LEFT BY THEMSELVES INSIDE THE VAN FOR 18 TO 19 HOURS WITHOUT FOOD, WATER AND TOILETS."**

**Date and time:** March 17, 2019 00:00

**Location:** near Velika Kladusa, Bosnia

**Coordinates:** 45.198095, 15.798897

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 20-34 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, theft of passports

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian officers in green uniforms, 6 Croatian officers in blue uniforms (5 male & 1 woman), 1 van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

After the group of ten people on the move had walked through the forests for ten days, they were detected by Croatian officers in Buzet. They had just sat down in the mountains for a short food break, when two Croatian officers in green uniforms saw them. The officers told the group to get up and asked if they carried knives or guns with them. Afterwards, the individuals had to undress in order to be searched by the officers. They also searched their bags, checked the phones to see the locations on google maps sent via Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp and looked through all their personal photos as stated by the respondent.

They took their power banks, phones and passports and called other officers to pick them up. When the group of people on the move asked for asylum, the officers denied it and started laughing. A group of six Croatian officers in blue uniforms, five men and one woman, arrived and the individuals were told to enter the van.

The group of ten was left by themselves inside the van for approximately 18 hours without food, water and toilets. Afterwards, they were brought back to the Bosnian border. The estimated location is shown on the map.

When they arrived at the Bosnian border, the officers returned their power banks and phones in a bag, but not the passports. Also, one iPhone 6 was missing.

They beat each of them with a baton, telling them:

*"Go, go, Velika Kladusa!"*

They were five kilometers far away from Velika Kladusa.

**15/03/2019**

**"SOMETIMES THEY LET YOU OUT ON THE GROUND AND SOMETIMES THEY PUSH YOU DIRECTLY IN THE RIVER."**

**Date and time:** March 15, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Korenica, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.743079324534335, 15.706336525194956

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 25-50 , from: Algeria, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 10 Croatian police officers with balaclavas, guns and batons, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of five men from Algeria and Tunisia was detected in Croatia at sunset on March 15, 2019, near the Slovenian border. Two male Croatian officers in dark blue uniforms with Croatian flags on the arms and uncovered faces arrested them. The individuals requested asylum, which was ignored by the officers, and they drove them in a van to the police station in Korenica.

When they arrived they made them enter an old garage next to the police station, back then used for cars. Now it seems to be used to detain people on the move like a prison or a room especially for push-backs. It is dirty, there is no water or food, no toilets, only dirty bottles on the cold, bare concrete ground. The officers searched the clothes and bags of the individuals, pushing them and shouting at them, insulting them in Croatian.

While searching their whole bodies, they destroyed all their phones and took the power banks and the cables from them. Luckily they didn't find one individual's money, because he was able to hide it.

*"But normally when they find it, they take it, no discussion. Because they break your phone, you don't know where you are or what time it is. You have no chance to call anyone or document things."*

They didn't give them any papers to sign, neither took fingerprints nor photos and ignored their requests for asylum.

They didn't let them take food or water or anything else with them and locked them in the cold garage.

*"Sometimes you have to stay a whole night, without food or toilet."*

In this night, the people had to stay six hours in the garage. The respondent was already five times in this garage and the procedure was always similar like the one described above.

Around midnight, they put them with many other people in a small prison van. In total there were 40 persons inside. When they started to drive, they turned the air conditioner on a low level, to make people suffer and freeze. They also drove crazily, stopped several times abruptly, so that the people fell hard against the walls. This trip took around one to two hours.

When they left the van, ten police officers with balaclavas beat them up all over their bodies and pointed with flashlights into their eyes in the middle of the night.

*"They beat you, they kick you and shout at you. All of them had guns on their belt, some of them had batons."*

They even broke the arm of one individual.

*"But if you get out of the car you don't see much, also because of the flashlights and you don't look back, you just run. Sometimes they let you out on the ground and sometimes they push you directly in the river."*

From the place where the van had stopped, they had to walk three hours back to Velika Kladuša (BIH).

*"Even if you stop at a gas station and try to call the Bosnian police, they don't come or help you."*

The respondent mentions that within the last two months, the treatment of the Croatian authorities improved and is now less violent.

*"Before you saw lots of people with black eyes, open wounds and broken legs, black marks on the whole body. But lately they just push you, kick you and break your phone, steal stuff. I think this is also because of reports."*

In his opinion, it is a big problem that Western Europe countries don't know about this violence.

*"They make no difference, if it is a man or woman or child, they beat them all, kick them and push them naked in the river. Also female police officers beat people."*

**13/03/2019**

## **"THE CAR STOPPED AND THE CROATIAN OFFICERS TOLD HIM: 'GO TO BOSNIA.'"**

**Date and time:** March 13, 2019 23:30

**Location:** Metkovic, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 43.0493, 17.663492

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 38 , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** pushing people to the ground

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian police, deep blue uniforms. 1 sedan car. At the border 2 Bosnian officers and later 5 more Bosnian officers

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The 38-year-old Iranian man was heading to a bus station, when he ran into two Croatian officers in deep blue uniforms who were waiting for him after a tip off at the north end of Lučki most bridge in Metkovic. Standing outside the car (Sedan), they asked for his passport, and he replied:

*"I have no passport. I am tourist."*

They asked him:

*"What hotel are you staying in?"*

He answered that he wanted to catch a bus to Zagreb.

They asked him why he was going to Zagreb and he didn't answer. The police then pushed him down and found his camp ID from Ushivack camp, located in the East of Sarajevo. They took his phone, but returned it to him at the border, and asked him to enter the car. They drove back five minutes to the other side of the border, where they met two Bosnian officers. The car stopped and the Croatian officers told him:

*"Go to Bosnia."*

No further questions were asked, also not if he wished to claim asylum. He walked for five minutes down the road, where he met five other Bosnian officers who asked to see his ID card. They also told him that he needed to go to Bosnia.

So he walked for two hours back to the nearest bus station and traveled back to Sarajevo.

13/03/2019

## "DOES THE POLICE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BEAT ME UP?"

**Date and time:** March 13, 2019 04:00

**Location:** near Velika Kladuša, Bosnia

**Coordinates:** 45.201028, 15.79761

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 28,30,21,21 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, gunshots

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian officers with two cars, both white and of the size of a VW Polo, all wearing dark blue uniforms with the emblem of the Croatian flag on the upper arm

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of four men left Bihać (BIH) on March 8, 2019, around 5 pm. After four to five hours, they crossed the border and entered Croatia. The group continued walking for four days through rural areas, forests, hills, mountains. They even saw a bear with a cub. The group was equipped with a tent and sleeping bags.

On the fourth day, they had to cross a main street to enter another forest. It was in the region before Vrata (HRV), where the authorities awaited them. It were four officers with two cars, both white and of the size of a VW Polo, all wearing dark blue uniforms with the emblem of the Croatian flag on the upper arm, one of them had a binocular hanging around his neck. The respondent supposed, that they might have been tracked with night vision binoculars as it seemed as if the officers already expected the people on the move stepping out of the forest at exactly this spot.

*„Maybe this street is generally under surveillance.”*

It was around midnight when they got caught.

*„The police men screamed ‘Stop! Stop!’ and shot two times in the air.”*

The group of four stopped and were ordered to wait. The only thing the officers asked, was how many they were in total. After around ten minutes, a big white van arrived. Before they had to enter the van, they were frisked but nothing was taken from them. The driver's space and the backspace of the van was separated by a little window which was also the only window for the backspace. The driver and one other officer were sitting in the front of the van. When they started driving, they also switched on the air conditioning on a very cold level. It cooled down the van during the whole three-hour drive. The group repeatedly knocked on the window to ask the officers to turn off the air condition, but they didn't react.

*„Stop klima [air condition]! Stop klima! We shouted many, many times, but they did not switch it off.”*

Around 4 am, the Croatian police van arrived approximately 300 meters away from the first houses of the city of Velika Kladuša (approximate location is shown on map), where some more officers were waiting for them. When the door of the van was opened, they shouted:

*„Hayde, hayde one by one come out!”*

The respondent was the first one to get off the van. Like an escort, officers were standing to both sides. Three of them punched the interviewee quite hard on the left side and his back and beat him with batons. When he tried to escape the attack, the fourth officer ran after him and punched him with his fist in the face, so one glass of his glasses broke. His friends got off the van after him. All of them tried to run as fast as they could, but couldn't escape the beating. The last member of the group got badly punched on the back (see photo). The whole time the officers were shouting:

*„Go Bosnia! Hayde! Hayde!”*

According to the respondent, the officers insulted them using Croatian expletives, laughing extremely loud at them and trying to harass them. He also recalled their appearance. One was around 45 years old, the second a heavy set man and the others were around 30 years old, tall and strong.

After some meters of running, the group reached a very small river, crossed it and walked to the IOM Camp Miral outside Velika Kladuša.

In the end the respondent asked the person conducting the interview:

*"Does the police have the right to beat me up?"*

He explained, that this violence by Croatian officers happens so frequently, that it somehow became normal.

**13/03/2019**

## **"FUCK ALGERIAN! GO BOSNIA! DON'T COME TO CROATIA!"**

**Date and time:** March 13, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Maljevac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.203306, 15.793667

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 23, 27, 31, from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, destruction of personal belongings, reckless driving, cutting up the shoe soles

**Police involved:** 2 officers in black uniform, with hat and military boots, a white IVECO van. Two other ones, with black uniform, 1.90 m height, men, hooded and both of them blue eyes.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of three Algerian men (aged between 23-31) left Bihac on March 12, 2019, around 12 pm, walking towards the 12 km far city of Izačić. Once they arrived there, they slept in the woods for a couple of hours. Around 3 am, they continued walking to the 20 km far village of Jazera where they arrived around 11 am. When they stopped at a bus station, two police officers came towards them. The respondent described them:

*"Black uniform, with hat and military boots."*

They told them to enter a white IVECO van. The group of three had to stay in the van's backspace in the darkness. The air conditioner was running and it was very cold. According to the respondent, the driver was changing the speed constantly to make them fall. After a 30-minutes drive, they arrived at the Slunj police station. The officers then asked for their documents:

*"Give me papers!"*

While they were checking their papers, the three individuals requested asylum. The officer's answered:

*"No asylum. Go Bosnia."*

After they checked their documents, they took all their personal belongings, i.e. tobacco, lighters, money, €250, and mobile phones (one of them a Samsung A5 2017). Once they finished frisking them, they brought the group of three to a room where they had to wait around four hours. They didn't get food and water, but also didn't ask for it.

Around 6 pm, two officers entered the room and told the three individuals to follow them. The respondent described them:

*"Black uniform, 1.90 m height, man, hooded and both of them blue eyes."*

They were brought again to the white IVECO van and drove for another 30 minutes, again with no light, with cold air conditioner and with changing speed. Around 6.30 pm, the van stopped, and they had to get off one by one. The respondent was the first to get off the van. He described the place:

*"It was a forest and there was a river."*

The two officers told him to kneel down and to take off his shoes. When he told them that he had a problem with his feet, they started to hit him, so he took off his shoes and one of them cut up the soles. After, they to hit him with a baton on the feet and all over his body while shouting at him:

*"Fuck Algerian! Go Bosnia! Don't come to Croatia!"*

At some point, he was able to get up again and ran away barefoot with his injured feet for around five kilometers until he arrived at Velika Kladusa.

12/03/2019

**"THEY DO THIS TO SCARE US. THEY WANT US TO STOP. BUT I WILL NOT GIVE UP. I WILL TRY AGAIN."**

**Date and time:** March 12, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Delnice, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.3987305, 14.801610799999935

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 19-30 , from: Syria, Iraq, Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** Slovenian officers, Croatian border officials

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On March 3, 2019, a group of 5 men, aged 19-30, left Bihac at 1 am towards Croatia. They reached Slovenia after nine days of walking. After a long hike up a mountain, the group felt very tired and hungry. With the plan to buy some food and water, they entered the small village of Lozec. They were recognized by some citizens of the town, who called the authorities by phone.

Suddenly a big dog, followed by a couple of officers, attacked one of the five individuals.

*„I understand that the locals get scared when they see us. After nine days of walking we were dirty and exhausted. But if I would have known that they are going to call the police, I would have stayed in the forest. I can endure hunger, thirst and exhaustion, but not another push-back to Bosnia.“*

They were brought to the police station, where the individuals were asked for asylum, but their requests were ignored. They had to tell their names and nationalities and their fingerprints and photos were taken. Following this procedure, each one of the group received an official paper, that everyone was asked to sign – but no translator was present at this time.

*„I asked them what the paper says, but they only said that we crossed the border illegally and have to pay 500 euros. They made us sign it.“*

The police took all their personal belongings away and put them in a closed room. They were detained for 24 hours at the police station.

*„We begged them to give us asylum. We begged them to tell us what will happen to us. But they didn't answer.“*

After being released, they were brought to a van. During the drive, the group asked repeatedly if they were taken to Ljubljana.

The officers answered:

*„Yes, Ljubljana.“*

*„You know when I knew they won't bring us to Ljubljana? When I felt the road. The road towards Croatia is a bad one. I felt we were on that road.“*

Once at the border, they were handed over to the Croatian authorities. They were brought to another police station, where they were again asked for asylum, but the officers just answered with a simple:

*„No.“*

The officers asked for the paper, that the group received from the Slovenian officers and threw it in the trash. Without any formal procedure, they had to enter another van.

The ride to the Bosnian border took around three hours. During the whole time, the driver used to speed up very fast to then slow down suddenly, so that the individuals would fall back and forth. It made them feel extremely dizzy and sick.

*„They do this to scare us. They want us to stop. But I will not give up. I will try again.“*

They were allowed to leave the van at a spot located 22 km away from Velika Kladusa. Their personal belongings were handed over to them, but the officers confiscated their money. They were told to go back to Bosnia.

The interview was conducted in cooperation with *Thé et Café pour les réfugiés*.

**08/03/2019**

**“AT THIS MOMENT WE WERE FAR AWAY FROM THE FIRST CITY AND YOU KNOW, WITHOUT PHONE MEANS WITHOUT MAP!”**

**Date and time:** March 8, 2019 09:00

**Location:** Komesarac, Croatia, near Komesarac

**Coordinates:** 45.10001096018364, 15.772490684475088

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 25-30 , from: Iraq, Morocco, Eritrea

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** insulting, theft of personal belongings, theft of official documents

**Police involved:** 5 police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the March 8, 2019, a group of six men aged 25-30, started to walk from Velika Kladusa to Sturlic (BIH) at 7 am. After Sturlic, they continued by foot for five to ten kilometers and crossed the border to Croatia. They kept walking for three more hours through the Croatian forest. They reported hearing the sound of a drone in the forest, and recognizing a camera, after which the group faced three people dressed in what they described as military-style uniforms, telling the people on the move to stop.

They stated that:

*“We were in a kind of military area.”*

The officers brought them to a police station. At this point, their phones and personal items, i.e. their money, cigarettes and IOM camp cards were taken by the officers. The whole group requested asylum but got a negative answer.

*“They were laughing and said ‘no, you will not get asylum here!’ “*

After they took all their personal belongings, the individuals also had to write down their names, nationalities and parents names on a paper, before the officers took photos of them. Finally, they had to sign some documents without any translation. Even after asking for it, they didn't get any. The whole group was detained at the station for five hours. After requesting asylum again and being ignored again, they were brought to the Bosnian border with two cars. They didn't have any food or water and the officers also didn't return any of their personal belongings, not even the IOM camp cards.

*"At this moment we were far away from the first city and you know, without phone means without map!"*

The respondent described his suspicion that several days later, one of the stolen phones was used by the Croatian authorities to get information about other people on social networks.

08/03/2019

## "THEY ARE TREATING US LIKE ANIMALS, THEY DON'T SEE US AS NORMAL HUMANS."

**Date and time:** March 8, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Slavonski Brod, Croatia, the locations are all around the Croatian-Serbian border and the Serbian-Bosnian border

**Coordinates:** 45.1629298, 18.0081565

**Pushback from:** Bosnia, Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia, Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 35,35 , from: Algeria, Libya

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, theft of personal belongings, theft of official documents

**Police involved:** 8 male Croatian officers in dark blue uniforms, 1 white Mercedes van, 4 police officers at police station, 4 officers around Croatian-Serbian border, Bosnian police in car

**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, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The journey of the two men from Libya and Algeria (both 35) started around March 7, 2019, near the city of Bosanski Brod (BIH) at the coordinates 45.1253588,18.0053567.

They entered Croatia by crossing the Save river in the night around 3 am on March 8. To cross it, they used a small, abandoned boat that they found on the Bosnian bank of the river.

On the Croatian side, they walked for about one hour until the city of Slavonski Brod (HRV). On their way, they saw a group of officers, but managed to stay undetected.

Around 4 am, they reached the bus station of Slavonski Brod at the coordinates 45.1629298,18.0081565. They were intending to take a bus that would take them to Zagreb. Instead, they saw a taxi with an official taxi sign on its roof. It was a gray Mercedes. They talked to the taxi driver and he offered them to take them to Zagreb for €200. While the two individuals were discussing among each other whether they would accept this offer, the taxi driver made a call.

As it turned out, he called the police. As the respondent believed, the taxi driver had noticed that the two of them were people on-the-move. The respondent mentioned that according to his knowledge, the Croatian authorities reward citizens who report people-on-the-move to the police.

After a short time, when they were still standing in front of the taxi, the authorities arrived. It were around 8 male Croatian officers in two cars, wearing dark blue uniforms. Among those were also the ones whom the two men had seen before. They were told to enter a white Mercedes van and were driven to a nearby Croatian-Bosnian border post around the coordinates 45.1568823,18.0022095, where the Croatian officers talked to the Bosnian authorities.

Then, the Croatian officers brought them back to a police station in Slavonski Brod. The two individuals requested asylum, but the officers just started to laugh and said no. At this point of the interview, the respondent mentioned that he felt that the officers were racist against Arabic persons.

The officers took their cigarettes, money, €100 and a smaller amount of Bosnian currency and their Bosnian camp IDs.

*"They took everything that we had with us, except our phones and the part of the money that I managed to hide from them. They took even the perfume bottle that my friend had with him".*

They were never given back those belongings. When the officers took the camp IDs and the Bosnian money, they looked at it and laughed. The respondent had the impression that they were deriding these Bosnian documents.

At the police station, they were brought to a cell. The respondent mentioned that he saw the flag of the European Union at the wall of the corridor on the way to the cell. After they entered the cell, four officers came and beat them. One of them slapped the respondent in his face, and the respondent's friend was kicked in his back and legs. During the attack, the officers were talking to each other, but not to the two people on the move.

They further told the two men to fill out several papers where they for example had to write down the names of their parents. Also their fingerprints were taken and on the machine, which they used to take the fingerprints, there was also a sign with the flag of the European Union. The respondent was then told to write down his name on a paper and to hold it in front of his chest, while the officer took a photo of him. The officer explained that they were taking this information in order to register them for a camp in Croatia where their request to stay in the EU would be considered. However, as it turned out, this explanation was only to make fun of the two men, the respondent explained.

Around 7 am, after around three hours at the police station, two officers came to their cell and took them back to the same car, the white Mercedes.

After a two-hour drive, the car stopped in front of a building with EU and Croatian flags. A man wearing civil clothes stepped out of the building. He had some papers in Croatian with him and the two individuals were told to sign them inside the car. Although they don't understand Croatian, they didn't get

any explanation about what the content of the papers was. They were not even given time to have a closer look at them before signing as the respondent recounted. Next to the field where he was asked to sign on one of the papers, the respondent recognized the sign of a flag resembling the flag of Croatia. Afterwards, the two officers in the car asked them:

*"Where do you want to go? To Bosnia?"*

The two of them said yes. In fact, however, they were brought to the border between Croatia and Serbia. The respondent stated that the officers obviously aimed at humiliating them by their misleading questions.

After some 15 minutes driving, the car stopped in a forest and they were told to leave the car and to go to Serbia. The two individuals replied that they didn't want to go to Serbia, but to Bosnia. The officers answered that they should just leave now, without their belongings as the respondent asserted.

So the two of them first started to walk in the direction of Serbia, but after a while decided to change their way and headed towards Bosnia, using the GPS of their phones. During the interview, the respondent couldn't recall the exact location.

They had followed a railway track for a few hours, approximately 20 kilometers, when they were stopped by four officers in a car. After one of the four officers had made a phone call, the same two officers who had driven them to the Serbian border before, arrived with the same van. They told them to enter the van and drove back to the same spot in the forest where they had let them out before. They laughed at them and told them to go back again. The respondent felt humiliated by this treatment.

*"They are treating us like animals, they don't see us as normal humans. They find it funny to let you walk for 20 kilometers and take you back again."*

He further mentioned that during the several hours in the custody of the police (meanwhile it was about 1 or 2 pm and they had been arrested at 4 am), they were neither given food nor water. He said that he did not ask the police for it because he felt it would be pointless:

*"Even if you ask them, they would not give it to you. The Croatian police behavior is cruel, I just wish that this will change."*

The two individuals started to walk and reached a Croatian village a few kilometers from the border. The villagers were friendly to them, a boy helped them to buy some food and to charge their phones.

Around 6 pm, some 15 hours after they had entered Croatia, the two of them crossed the border to Serbia. They walked for eight hours, around 30-40 kilometers. They saw Serbian officers on their way, but they didn't take notice of them. The two crossed a first river and then reached the Save river which marks the border between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina there. Around 2 am, they found a long bridge (most probably at the coordinates 44.9095444,19.2961859) and were able to cross. They used a walkway underneath the main lane of the bridge which they accessed through a door.

After 1,5 hours of walking in Bosnia, they found a gas station where they ate something. A man at the gas station called a taxi for them to get to the next bus station, however no taxi arrived. Therefore, they continued walking. It was raining.

When they went to a market to buy some food, two locals called the police. The Bosnian police arrived by car, drove them back to the border to Serbia and told them to cross it.

So they had to enter Serbia again and walked in Serbia until they reached the same walkway underneath the Save bridge to come back to Bosnia again. This time, they walked through the forests in order to stay undetected and finally reached Tuzla (BIH). From there, they were able to take a bus to Sarajevo.

They arrived to Sarajevo seven or eight days after they had entered Croatia.

**06/03/2019**

## “[...] WE FELT SUDDENLY LIKE ANIMALS, NOT LIKE HUMANS.”

**Date and time:** March 6, 2019 03:00

**Location:** Glina, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.3382624, 16.090970900000002

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 24 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** kicking, destruction of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 5 officers wearing masks and dark uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On the March 6, 2019, at 6 am, two people, a man and a woman, left Velika Kladusa and crossed the Croatia border. From there, they walked all day long through the forest and mountains. Exhausted by the previous walk the two of them decided to sleep a few hours in the forest, around Glina (HRV).

Around 3 pm, while they were still sleeping on the ground, both of them suddenly got kicked several times. When they opened their eyes, they saw five officers surrounding them, wearing masks and dark uniforms. The respondent claimed to have asked immediately for asylum again and again, but the officers didn't reply. One of them asked the two people on the move aggressively:

*“Where you come from? What you want in Croatia?”*

So the two of them asked for asylum again and another time officer ignored it.

While one officer with mask took all the clothes from their bags and put them on the dirty ground to make everything useless the respondent asserted, another one took €200 from them and broke their mobiles phones. Finally, the officer put the broken phones in a plastic bag and gave them back.

The two individuals were terrified and were told to enter a van. The respondent assumed that the driver intended to make them feel sick by driving very recklessly.

*"He drive like a crazy man. He played by suddenly stopping the car, start again, stop, then start again."*

After one hour, the van stopped in a forest near the border. One officer violently made them get off the van, the respondent recounted. It was dark and one officer showed them in which direction they should walk, shouting:

*"Go back Bosnia!"*

*"We were walking in the direction of Bosnia, without having the right to apply for asylum, without knowing where we were, without our phone, without our money, we felt suddenly like animals, not like humans."*

It took them one day to return to Velika Kladusa. Exhausted, they went to the Miral Camp, run by IOM, but since the officers had taken their camp cards, they weren't allowed to access medical care and food.

The interview was conducted in cooperation with *Thé et Café pour les réfugiés*.

**06/03/2019**

## **"YOU KNOW, WHEN YOU ARE HOMOSEXUAL, EVEN IN THE OFFICIAL CAMP IT'S DANGEROUS"**

**Date and time:** March 6, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Near Bogovolja, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.06947, 15.750353

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 25-30 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 1 officer on bus, 2 police officers at police station, 2 police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** fingerprints taken, photos taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On March 5, 2019, a group of four left Velika Kladuša at 6.30 am to reach Croatia. They crossed the border a few hours after and walked until Slunj (HRV).

On March 6, 2019, after 14 hours of walking with some rests in the forest, the group took a bus in Slunj at 8.30 pm to Zagreb. They enter the bus, but after 10 minutes it was stopped and one officer entered the bus, asking for passports. The group expressed that they did not have passports but wanted to seek asylum in Croatia. The officer didn't answer anything, but showed them to follow him out of the bus.

After, they had to enter a police van and were driven to the police station where one officer asked them for their personal belongings. Another one took their phones, money and cigarettes. Two members of the group explained that they are in dire need of asylum as they are members of the LGBT community which is forbidden by law in their home country. The officer started laughing and replied:

*"We don't like homosexuals here, and we don't want homosexuals here."*

The two members of the LGBT started to feel afraid, because all staff at the police station were watching them now with hostility and laughing about them. After asking again for asylum, the group had to give fingerprints, sign documents and photos were taken. They didn't know what they signed, even after asking for an explanation, the respondent asserted.

The respondent told, that he was terrified at the police station due to the hostility of all officers around them.

After one hour they had to switch into another van, where they saw another group of four people on the move. The two people of the LGBT community didn't feel comfortable at all, because the four other people on the move also started reacting hostile due to their sexual orientation.

*"They saw it with my way of talk and my way of dress, everywhere I'm going it's dangerous for me just because I want to be as I am."*

The following drive in the van was very rough.

*"The officer was driving like crazy. We were afraid cause we also didn't know where we were going."*

Finally, the car stopped near a road and the officer aggressively asked all people to get off the van. The other officer who had all phones, took them and destroyed them with his baton in front of the group. All the officers were laughing, saying things like:

*"You are criminal, never come back here or we will do the same with your face."*

After a few minutes the officers pointed in one direction and told them:

*"Now you will go back to Bosnia and never come back!"*

They were around 20 km from Velika Kladusa (the approximate location is indicated on the map).

*"I wanted to go to Europe to be safe, to live as a human, and look I'm just an animal here! Now I don't have anything to live, what am I supposed to do? You know, when you are homosexual, even in the official camp it's dangerous. I've been raped in the IOM camp shower, and now I am supposed to go back there?"*

The interview was conducted in cooperation with *Thé et Café pour les réfugiés*.

27/02/2019

## “WHY DO YOU BURN MY CLOTHES? - THE OFFICER RESPONDED: IT'S MY JOB!”

**Date and time:** February 27, 2019 14:30

**Location:** Velika Kladusa, Bosnia

**Coordinates:** 45.212624, 15.821943

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 17 person(s), age: over 18 , from: Pakistan, Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers, caught by 6 local officers (dark blue uniforms with the Croatian “RH” emblem on the arm, at the police station 30 local officers (some in the same dark blue, some more light blue uniforms), deported by some local police officers (with a van), at the border around 15 officers in black, with black masks

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

*The group of ten men from Morocco and Algeria crossed the border from Bosnia to Croatia somewhere near Isačić (BIH) in late February and continued walking in Croatia.*

*“We walked a lot in forests, sometimes through small villages, sometimes even we crossed high mountains.”*

After six days of walking, the group’s phones had run out of battery. They were somewhere in rural countryside of Croatia without having GPS. Therefore, the group decided to continue on a standard road instead of walking off-road as before. After five or six kilometres, around midnight between February 26 and 27, a police car stopped them. One of the officers told the group:

*“Stop! Stop! I will shoot if someone try to run!”*

Six of the group stopped, and four ran away, but the officers did not shoot in their direction. There were six officers, all wearing dark blue uniforms with the Croatian "RH" emblem on the sleeves, according to the respondent.

*"For sure they all were 120 kilogram, the Croatian police always looks like action movie stars. They were all like 25 till 30 years old and so strong and tall."*

One of the officers told the remaining six people on the move, that they would bring them to Zagreb. The men were then searched one-by-one and their mobile phones and power banks were taken. The officers also took the group's three tents and backpacks, piled them up and set them on fire.

So the respondent asked the officer:

*"Why do you burn my clothes?"*

The officer responded:

*"It's my job!"*

The respondent then told the officer:

*"You can burn my tent, but why you burn my personal clothes?"*

Again, the officer responded:

*"This is my job!"*

Afterwards, they were driven with a van for around 30 minutes. The air conditioning for the backspace was switched on the coldest level and the six individuals were freezing.

*"We asked them several times to switch off the air condition. They didn't react, they were listening music. They didn't care."*

They arrived at a large police station in a small village. The building was two stories high and inside were about 30 officers at work. Some were wearing the same dark blue uniform, others lighter blue uniforms as the respondent recounted. The group was locked in a small cell, around 12 m<sup>2</sup> without toilet, water or heating. Before they were locked in, the officers searched them again and took their money and cigarettes. The respondent had 200 Euros and 190 HRK in his pockets.

Then, the six individuals were taken one-by-one to an office and questioned. Photos, fingerprints and personal information, i.e. name, nationality, date of birth, father's and mother's name were taken. They also had to sign the paper with their personal information, but also one paragraph written in Croatian which the respondent didn't wasn't able to understand, but didn't receive any translation.

After some hours, seven Pakistani people on the move were brought to the same cell. In total the group of six spent around 12 hours in this cell. Eventually, around 12.30 pm on February 27, an officer opened the cell, saying:

*"Come! Come! To the car!"*

All 13 people on the move got their phones and money back and had to enter a van.

As the van started driving, the police officers again switched on the air conditioning on the coldest setting. And again the people on the move asked the officers to turn it off, but received no reaction to this request.

After about two hours of driving, around 2.30 pm, they arrived to a remote spot in the forest, next to a river near the border to BIH outside Velika Kladusa (estimated location is shown on the map).

All 13 individuals were asked to get off the car. Afterwards, the van left and the group of 13 recognized around 15 officers waiting for them in the dark, wearing black balaclavas.

*"Their clothes black and I think they have heart also black."*

The officers formed a circle around the people on the move. First they took their money and phones, putting the good quality phones in their pockets and destroying the less valuable ones with their batons.

*"Then they told us: 'Take off clothes. All!'"*

They were forced to take off everything except their underwear. Although there was snow on the ground, they had to take off their shoes.

They were still encircled when the officers began to beat them and to strike their naked bodies with batons. The respondent got hit mainly on the back, one other individual's arm was broken and he had three big wounds on his head.

*"When they beat us they say ugly words in Croatian. Because this happened to me more than twenty times already I know the words. They say 'Fuck your Mother' and 'Son of a Bitch'."*

If someone tried to flee the circle, he was caught and beaten even more. The respondent didn't remember how long the violence took, but eventually they let them run away. Some individuals were able to take one piece of clothes with them, the respondent for instance was able to grab a pair of pants, however none of them had shoes.

So the group of six started walking back almost naked and barefoot six to seven kilometers back to Velika Kladuša, partly through the snow.

When they arrived, they went to see a local doctor. The doctor gave them medicine for a cold but did not want to hear their story or listen to what has happened.

**26/02/2019**

**“NO ASYLUM HERE AND DON'T GO BACK TO BOSNIA, GO BACK TO YOUR COUNTRY!”**

**Date and time:** February 26, 2019 14:00

**Location:** Sadilovac, Croatia, close to the Bosnian-Croatian border in a forest along to the Korana river, near Sadilovac

**Coordinates:** 44.9368077268385, 15.737195888942097

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 25-28 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, insulting, water immersion, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers, caught 2 (one car) and followed by 4 (one car), at the border 6 officers (in uniforms emblazoned with the Croatian flag on the sleeve, putting on black masks)

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of seven men was walking in 35 to 40 km distance from Bihac (BiH) at the Croatia side of the Bosnian-Croatian border to take a bus from Plitvička Jezera (HRV). There, in the afternoon of February 26, 2019, a group of officers arrived, asking them for their passports. The people on the move expressed that they didn't have any and that they wanted to seek asylum in Croatia.

*“No asylum here and don't go back to Bosnia, go back to your country.”*

Then, the group was told to enter the backspace of a police car. Four other officers were following them in another car, and they drove towards a forest near the Bosnian border. During the journey, one of the officers started talking about a famous Algerian football player:

*"I don't like him, because he is Muslim and I'm Orthodox."*

The group soon stopped in a forest near Sadilovac (HRV) and the Korana river. They then had to give their phones to the officers, who never returned them.

Afterwards, the officers put on balaclavas and took the individuals out of the car, one-by-one. Upon exiting the car, each of them was beaten with batons by the six officers. These officers all wore uniforms with an emblem of the Croatian flag on the sleeves. Subsequently, they were pushed into the nearby, hip-high water, which was very cold, as the outdoor temperature was around 0 °C at this time.

*"They pushed us in the river. The police knew that we won't die in the river, it was not deep enough, but they knew that we can't come back because it was so cold and we had no dry clothes."*

After the push-back, the group of seven escaped back to Bosnian territory.

**26/02/2019**

**"ONLY COMING ON BOSNIAN BORDER, THE BLACK POLICE...ONLY BLACK POLICE BEAT."**

**Date and time:** February 26, 2019 01:30

**Location:** Sadilovac, Croatia, 25km away from Velika Kladuša

**Coordinates:** 44.96144174067973, 15.73712041972658

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 40 person(s), age: 24 , from: Afghanistan, Bangladesh

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian police officers (4 male, 1 female) in blue uniforms, 4 vans, 20 police officers, half dressed in standard Croatian police uniform, half dressed in black with balaclavas

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On February 20, 2019, a group of 40 (among them minors) left from Velika Kladuša. After they crossed the border to Croatia, they continued walking through the country for six days for around 120 kilometers.

On February 26, at approximately 1.30 am, the group was apprehended by five Croatian officers – four men and one woman, dressed in blue uniforms.

They were told to wait, and five or ten minutes later another four vans with windowless backspaces arrived to the scene. The group of 40 had to enter those and was driven to a police station.

There, they were searched and their food, money, jackets, bags, shoes and phones were taken. Although the officers told them they would give them back their belongings, once they returned to Bosnia, they immediately broke the “bad” phones. Afterwards, they had to hold a sign with their home country and cities written on it and photos were taken, but no fingerprints. They were all made to sign documents in English, which they didn’t understand.

The group of 40 was detained for 14 hours at the police station in a badly ventilated room. The respondent complained to an officer about the lack of air.

*"[If] this room have two people or three people, it's ok... but more people, it's not have oxygen...I tell police...it's not have water...somebody dead".*

The room was very crowded and too small for 40 people. They also didn't receive any food or water, even though they asked for it.

*"He said no water, why would I give you water. Go to Bosnia there you have water."*

Later, the group was driven three hours to the border and released at around 8 pm. At the border there were twenty officers, half of them dressed in standard Croatian police uniforms, half of them completely black and with balaclavas as stated by the respondent.

*"Only coming on Bosnian border, the black police...only black police beat."*

The 40 individuals had to get off the vans one-by-one and were immediately beaten by the officers with batons and kicked with their heavy boots:

*"Foot, sticks, everything...they beat everyone."*

*"I do not understand why he hit me...why crazy in Croatian police...Why too much crazy we don't know... so not a humanity...why too much hate...why you hit me, why you need my everything."*

The respondent compared the abuse several times with the picture of the officers playing football, but using the men as their ball.

Afterwards, the group of 40 walked back around 25 to 30 kilometers to Velika Kladuša (BIH).

At the end of the interview, the respondent mentioned his poor mental health several times and connected this to his continued problems in transit:

*"I have a depression, I think one time I will [become] mad, because I have too much depression, I have a family depression, I have a for my life depression what time I make a good life... no suffer this life...I don't like this life in Bosnia."*

**25/02/2019**

**"NO, NO WAY, WE ASK FOR ASYLUM, THEY WILL BEAT US TOO MUCH LIKE DOGS."**

**Date and time:** February 25, 2019 09:00

**Location:** Gejkovac, Bosnia

**Coordinates:** 45.20785223689, 15.825986415388

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 19-27 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 5 officers. 1 driver + 5 Officers at the border in navy blue uniform

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of seven Afghani men (aged between 19-27) crossed the border to Croatia at a spot near Velika Kladusa. They walked for three days through Croatia.

On February 25, they were five kilometers away from the Slovenian border, in the town of Rosopajnik (HRV). At around 2 am, the group took a rest in a forest and decided to sleep for a while. At 7 am, they suddenly woke up from the sound of shots, fired in the air by five Croatian officers. The officers started to kick them with their boots, which left visible marks on the respondent's hands and face. The officers shouted at the group in a language they didn't understand, probably Croatian as the respondent claimed.

When asked if they had requested asylum, the respondent answered.

*"No, no way, we ask for asylum, they will beat us too much like dogs".*

When asked if they tried to talk to the officers in English, the respondent explained that he pretended not to know English. He was scared, the officers would otherwise think that he was a smuggler and beat him up even more.

*"[They] will beat you too much."*

He showed a photo of his broken finger from the last time he attempted to translate when he encountered the authorities.

The seven of them had to wait at the spot around one hour until a large vehicle arrived. They had to enter it and were driven for approximately one hour to the Bosnian border. When they arrived, five officers were already waiting for them, lining themselves up on both sides of the van's doors. One of the officers, who was driving the van was quite big and all wore dark navy blue uniforms and had their faces and heads uncovered.

As the seven individuals got off the vehicle, they were beaten with batons. The respondent jumped out in the middle of the seven of them and could therefore avoid being beaten. He managed to ran fast over the border and escapee the officers.

The phones, money and cigarettes were initially taken from the group. At the border, then their phones were returned in a bag. First, they were glad to see that none of them got destroyed, however they soon discovered that the SIM cards and charging inputs were damaged and useless. The respondent said, already ten phones got destroyed within the eight months he was going on game repeatedly.

Rosopajnik (Hr) – Approximate location of the spot where the group was caught by Croatian authorities

The approximate area in Gejkovac (Bosnia) where the group was pushed-back by Croatian officers

**24/02/2019**

**“DURING THEY WERE WALKING, ONE OF THE OFFICERS HIT ONE OF THEM WITH HIS FLASHLIGHT ON THE HEAD.”**

**Date and time:** February 24, 2019 23:30

**Location:** Maljevac, Croatia, around five kilometers inside Croatia, after crossing from Velika Kladusa

**Coordinates:** 45.19605567471912, 15.796383789501988

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: 28-32 , from: Albania

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, water immersion, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6 officers in Croatian police uniforms, 1 van

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 24th of February 2019, two Albanian men crossed the border to Croatia near Velika Kladusa. When they were around five kilometers far from Maljevac (HRV), they encountered two male officers in Croatian police uniforms.

The two officers were running towards them with their flashlights and the two individuals put their hands in the air. The officers told them to put their hands on each others shoulders and to walk down the mountain for around 150 meters until they reached the police car.

During they were walking, one of the officers hit one of them with his flashlight on the head. At the car, four other officers were waiting. As soon as the two of them arrived, the now six officers began to punch and kick them. They didn't hit their heads, but targeted their ribs in particular as the respondent recounted. One of them got three broken ribs after he had fallen to the ground and was being kicked on his body and head. Nobody talked to them, the respondent asserted. They begged them to end the violence:

*"Please, please, stop!"*

When they finally stopped, the officers checked their bags and documents. When they saw their passports, they continued to treat them harshly, however less violent, according to the respondents. They were then taken to a van with ten other people-on-the-move inside.

They were driven around ten minutes to a river and then told to cross it in order to reach Bosnia.

When they were already close to the riverbank, the officers hit them once more with their batons. The group was forced to wait in a row, and they were hit and forced into the river one-by-one. The river was around three or four meters wide and waist-deep and the respondent lost one shoe when he was crossing the river.

Also his phone was taken and never returned.

**24/02/2019**

**"THE RESPONDENT'S HEAD WAS UNDER THE WATER WHILE THE OFFICERS WERE BEATING HIM."**

**Date and time:** February 24, 2019 02:00

**Location:** Lipovac, Croatia, in a forest on the Croatian side near the Batrovci border crossing

**Coordinates:** 45.06165678407416, 19.0904792762268

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 16, 16, 17, 18 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, water immersion, pouring water over one's head

**Police involved:** 10-15 Croatian officers, 3 police cars

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of four Afghani, between 16 and 18 years old, crossed the Serbian-Croatian border on February 23, 2019.

They left the abandoned factory Grafosrem in Sid (Serbia) late at night. They arrived around 2 am close to the Croatian border, near Batrovci on the right side of the highway, in a forest where the Bosut river passes by. When they tried to jump over the around 3,5 meter high fence, one of them hurt himself between his fingers.

Just after passing the fence, they saw a red light in a tree which turned out to be an x-ray camera. A few minutes later, three police cars arrived, carrying around 13 officers with the Croatian flag on their uniform.

*"They all very tall and big."*

They four friends were caught and pushed into the river. The officers kicked them to make them stumble into the water. The respondent's head was under the water while the officers were beating him.

At the end, they brought them back to the Serbian side and told them to leave.

The clothes and all the belongings of the four of them were completely wet.

**23/02/2019**

## "THE INTERVIEWEE'S HEAD WAS PUSHED UNDER WATER WHILE THE POLICE WAS BEATING HIM."

**Date and time:** February 23, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Lipovac, Croatia, between the Batrovci scanner and the Bosut river

**Coordinates:** 45.0561941, 19.072865900000001

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 16,16,17,18 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, water immersion, pouring water over one's head

**Police involved:** Between 10-15 police officers, in blue uniform with the Croatian flag, in three police cars. They are described as big and very tall officers.

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The interviewee aged 16, and three other men from Afghanistan (aged 18, 17 and 16) went on game late evening on February 23, 2019. Around 2 am they arrived close to the Serbian/Croatian border at Batrovci on the right side of the highway, where the Bosut river is passing by. They jumped over an around three to four meters high fence, where one respondent hurt himself between the fingers.

Just a few minutes after passing the fence, three police cars with around 10-15 police officers arrived.

*"The police saw us with thermal cameras."*

The officers arrested the group of four and pushed them into the river, using sticks and kicking them with their feet to make them stumble. The interviewee's head was pushed under water while the police was beating him. All clothes and belongings of the people on the move got completely wet.

The interviewee declares they barely talked to the police and the police barely talk to them, he just specified he was from Afghanistan.

In a three hours ride, they were afterwards deported back to Serbia.

**20/02/2019**

## **"WHEN THE POLICE GOT OFF THE VEHICLES AT THE PUSH-BACK LOCATION, THEY PUT ON BLACK BALACLAVAS."**

**Date and time:** February 20, 2019 07:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia, Zagreb train station

**Coordinates:** 45.81053449999999, 15.927713799999992

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 28-30 , from: Algeria, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** group of Croatian police officers; push-back: 2 Croatian officers with black balaclavas

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On February 18, a group of three men crossed the border to Croatia near Velika Kladusa (BIH). The group walked two days before reaching Zagreb (HRV) on the morning of February 20. At around 7 am, a group of officers apprehended the three of them at the train station in Zagreb. They drove them to a police station which took around twenty minutes. At the station, they were frisked in an office and their personal belongings, including their money, were taken. When the group expressed their intention to claim asylum, they were told they could do so later.

The group was exhausted from their previous two days of walking, a journey done without food or water. Accordingly, one of them asked for water. He was sent to drink water in the restroom. After having drunken a lot of water in a very short time, he fainted for several minutes.

*"It is from the low blood pressure. I have this since I was a child."*

When he woke up, an ambulance had arrived. Personnel checked the individual, gave him an injection, and decided to bring him to the hospital. He arrived there at approximately 8 am and got two infusions, a x-ray was taken, and then he got a third infusion.

*"They also gave me bread with cheese."*

Throughout his stay at the hospital, one officer was present. When he wanted to go to the toilet at 9.30 am, he fainted again after walking a few meters. Although still lacking full health, he left the hospital with the officer at 12 pm.

In the police car on the way back to the police station, he received a paper written in Croatian, that he couldn't understand. Therefore, the paper was translated for him. One of the three officers told him, that he had to pay a fine of 1,575 Croatian Kuna (€212,30) for his recent hospital stay or else go to prison.

After a 15-20 minute drive, they arrived back at the police station. At 1 pm the individual was brought to the cell where the other people on the move were waiting. Still hungry, they asked for food many times before they received a small amount.

At around 3.30 pm, the group of three asked an officer if he could buy food and drinks for them with their own money which had been taken away from them in the morning. However, they didn't receive food until 8 pm. At this point, a new shift had begun and a new officer was in charge. The individuals asked him about the asylum procedure in Croatia, and he answered that he would bring them to a refugee camp near Zagreb.

*"You can do the asylum there in the camp."*

At around 8.30 pm, they were brought to a police van, thinking they would go to the camp that the night-shift officer had described. Instead, they were driven for two to three hours to a secluded spot along the Bosnian-Croatian border, approximately 35 km away from Velika Kladusa. In their van were two officers and they were accompanied by two more officers in a car.

When the police got off the vehicles at the push-back location, they put on black balaclavas. One-by-one, the three of them were forced to get off the van.

*"One of them said 'Fuck you' and they started beating us like crazy."*

The three individuals were beaten with batons on their legs, arms, backs and heads. The respondent left with two visible wounds on his head and bruises throughout his body (see photos taken two days after the incident).

After crossing the border to Bosnia, the group had to walk around 35 km back to Velika Kladusa and arrived there around 6 am.

17/02/2019

## "OUTSIDE WAS SNOW, INSIDE COLD AIR CONDITION"

**Date and time:** February 17, 2019 06:30

**Location:** close to Velika Kladusša

**Coordinates:** 45.145957, 15.772707

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 29-31 , from: Algeria, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 2-5 officers in dark blue uniform. At the border: six officers with black uniforms and black balaclavas

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of three left Novi Grad (BIH), a town directly on the Croatian border, on February 15, 2019. For 1,5 days, they walked through forests and predominantly remote areas without taking

a break. They didn't see a single person, only dogs.

*"That was the distance of risk. During this part you cannot make a break."*

They walked about 35 kilometers until they arrived in the small village of Majur (HRV) around midnight. When they found an abandoned house, they decided to sleep there. At 4.30 am, they took a bus from Majur to Sunja (HRV) and then a crowded train to Zagreb (HRV).

When they arrived at the train station in Zagreb at 6.30 am, there were officers waiting in front of every train door. They stopped them and asked for papers. When the three individuals responded that they don't have papers, the officers said:

*"Okay, then come with us. "*

The officers took them in two different cars to a police station in Zagreb where they searched them and took their personal belongings, i.e. money and phones. Afterwards, they were asked for their personal details, i.e. name, surname, date of birth. They later had to sign forms which contained all this personal information, after which they had their photos taken. They were not informed about what was going on.

*"They told us that they will bring you to the camp in Croatia and that they are just getting the paperwork ready, but this was a lie."*

They were detained together in one cell from 7 am till 10 pm and got food at some point. After 10 pm, several officers arrived and accompanied them to a van, around the size of a Mercedes Sprinter, and a cage inside. The two officers who picked them up wore dark blue uniforms with a pistol, a baton, handcuffs and a pepper spray on their belts.

*"Come, come!"*

The trip in the van took approximately 1,5 hours during which they were exposed to cold air.

*"It was insanely cold in the van, during the whole trip the air condition was on, really strongly on. Outside was snow, inside cold air condition."*

For the last five to ten minutes of the trip, a small 4x4 police car followed the van. They stopped on a remote forest road. The back door was opened, and an officer grabbed the bag with the collected phones and the money of the respondents. He closed the door again and started smashing the phones outside with his colleagues. After this, they put the bag with the phones back, opened the second door and said:

*"One person!"*

The Tunisian male went first. After him, they closed the door again.

*"Then we could hear him scream. Aiii, aiiii, for one or two minutes they beat him very hard many, many times aiiii, aiiii, ahh."*

*"Go! Don't come back!"*

One of the officers shouted at the Tunisian, then they let him run away.

After, one of the respondents was called to step out. Next to the backdoor of the car the two officers from Zagreb were standing in their normal uniforms. Lengthwise of the van there were

six officers with black uniforms and black balaclavas standing in a row. The respondent had to pass all of them. The first shouted at him:

*"Go, go, go!"*

Then the second beat him several times very strong with his baton on the leg.

*"The police men was very tall, more than 1.90 m and strong."*

One of the respondents just ran as fast as he could for approximately 50 meters before he arrived at a normal border crossing on a small street blocked with a table high block made of white concrete. The street was quite wide but not tarred. He couldn't see much because it was dark but was able to find the other individual of the group there (see estimated location on map).

The last individual was handed out the bag with the smashed phones and the money, €200 and 200 Kuna. He was hit by a baton so hard that he lost the bag and when he went to pick it up, the officers hit him even more. They continued hitting him several times on the right shoulder which a doctor some days later diagnosed as being broken. He then managed to escape, ran towards the border and found his two friends hiding behind the concrete block.

They walked back to Velika Kladusša, which was five to six kilometers away.

Image of the individual with the broken arm being treated.

X-Ray and report which reads: Fracture Tuberculum Majus.

**16/02/2019**

**"[THEY] FORCED ONE GUY OF THE GROUP TO TOTALLY UNDRRESS HIMSELF [...] [AND] KICKED IN HIS GENITALS."**

**Date and time:** February 16, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Buhača, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.18993595846912, 15.771776795800747

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: 20-28 years old , from: Syria, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, forcing to undress

**Police involved:** 7 men and 1 woman police officers from the Croatian border control in one van wearing dark blue uniforms, two of them had their face half covered. In the second police van were around 6 Croatian male police officers, 2 vans

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 11 men (1 from Algeria and 10 from Syria) started walking in the evening of the 16th of February 2019 from Velika Kladuša to the border of Croatia. They crossed the border at night time in Pašin Potok (HR). They had to cross a small, tiny brook and during the crossing they saw lights from a car. The group ran to the next house they saw and tried to hide from the car. The car came closer and turned off the lights and drove slowly towards the house. The group was trying to escape but they were too late. In the van were around 7 police officers and one female police officer. They got quickly out of the van and surrounded the group. The police made them to stand against the wall from the house. The interviewee described that some of the police officers were totally drunk.

*"We smell that they drank beer."*

The police started beating them – punching, kicking and during they got beaten up the officers were insulting them as they were shouting "Motherfucker" and "Fuck to Muslim" etc. The only female in the group of police officers the interviewee described as "a crazy woman". She laughed through the whole procedure in a very inappropriate way. All the officers were wearing the same uniforms – dark blue, heavy black boots, black gloves with a plastic part over the fist bones and a black hat as stated by the respondent. Two of the officers were wearing as well a face covering mask. The mask covered though only half of the face, up to the nose. The way of beating from those two officers were similar to each other and filled up with more hate. The interviewee described:

*"Their way of beating was more violent compared to the others."*

As well in the group was as described "the chief", an older man without hair. During the humiliating one police officer forced one guy of the group to totally undress himself. Naked standing there he got kicked in his genitals. They threw wooden sticks against them as well.

*"They kicked us like a ball."*

One younger looking police officer got into the situation and was trying to calm down the situation while saying "dobro, dobro". The interviewee described it like he was saying to the others "It's enough now.". One of his colleagues answered him with pointing a fist into his face.

The beating lasted several minutes. As another police van turned up, they stopped and suddenly around 6 other police officers were standing beside them. Those police officers were all men. They started searching the people-on-the-move, but in a very carelessly way as the respondent recounted.

*"They searched us too quick to really find something."*

Right away the second police group asked everyone to give out their phones and power banks. They broke the phones with their black torches and put them together with the power banks in a bag.

After the second police group walked everyone to one van, they had to enter the van. While sitting in the van, the police officers were calling twice one person out and made them to collect the rubbish around the van.

Finally the van started to move. The group was sitting in a VW-Transporter without windows and the back was separated by metal. They drove for only a few minutes to the property of Buhača (HR) at the border to BiH. The “good” police man, the one who intervened the beating, opened the door. He said:

*“Don't be scared. You can go out, go to the border.”.*

They walked with him a few minutes as one of the group recognized that he forgot something in the van. The officer let him go back to the van to grab his stuff. As the guy went back the other officers walked up to him and beat him again. Everyone now started to run towards the border. They got to the brook where the water reached up to the knees and crossed there into BiH.

During the push-back were around 14 police officers around. They were mixed from the two groups at the apprehending. The only female police officer was as well around at the push-back.

The people-on-the-move did not receive their phones back as the respondent asserted.

**14/02/2019**

## **“[THEY] RECEIVED A SMALL AMOUNT OF BREAD TO EAT, BUT HAD TO DRINK OUT OF THE CELL'S TOILET”**

**Date and time:** February 14, 2019 02:00

**Location:** Budinjak, Croatia, area of Budinjak, about 10 km far from the Slovenian border

**Coordinates:** 45.78184599374266, 15.476623660266114

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 23 person(s), age: 22-27 , from: Syria, Morocco, Western Sahara

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** gunshots

**Police involved:** Initial capture: 3 Croatian officers with handguns, 1 police car; pushback: 20 Croatian officers in black uniforms, covered with face masks, 1 large police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

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

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of three left Velika Kladusa (BIH) on February 6, 2019, and crossed the border to Croatia at Bosanska Bojna. From there they walked through Croatia towards Slovenia for eight days. On February 14, at around 1 am, the group was apprehended by several Croatian officers. The three individuals attempted to run away but the officers shot with their handguns towards them, so the group stopped out of fear of being shot as stated by the respondent. There were three officers, two in a police car and one outside of it. The officers walked towards them, told them to wait and called another car.

As soon as this other car arrived, the group of three was taken to a police station in Jastrebarsko (HRV). There, they got searched, their phones were taken away and the officers asked if they had any money on them. The group responded that they didn't.

*"If the police had found my money, they would have taken it – I know. I hide it."*

The three individuals expressed their intention to claim asylum but the officers denied this request. Instead, they had to sign a paper which asked in Arabic, English and Croatian for their name, surname, name of parents, country of origin, where they were and where they wanted to go. The group members didn't receive a copy of these papers. After, they had to hold a paper with their personal information in front of them while photos were taken. They got detained for seven hours in a cell and received a small amount of bread to eat, but had to drink out of the cell's toilet.

Afterwards, they had to enter a large van where already a group of about 20 Syrian people on the move were waiting. They were driven to the Bosnian-Croatian border close to Poljana (BIH) and told to leave the van. Prior to that, the officers returned their phones.

Around 20 officers, all dressed in black and covered with balaclavas stood on one side of the vehicle. One very tall officer walked with the whole group of around 23 people to the border, using a flashlight, and told them to go.

After crossing the border, the initial group of three walked around 13 km back to Velika Kladusa.

13/02/2019

## "IT WAS SO COLD, LIKE A FREEZER INSIDE"

**Date and time:** February 13, 2019 03:00

**Location:** Drežnica, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.16097555521035, 15.081011479882818

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 22-30 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, gunshots, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, threatening with baton

**Police involved:** Capture: 4 Croatian police officers in black uniforms, Pushback: 4 officers in black uniforms and black ski-masks

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On February 13, 2019, around 3 am, the group of three was caught by the Croatian authorities in the area of Drežnic (HRV). There were two police cars, one with two male officers, the second one with one male and one female officer, all in black uniforms. The officers made the three men lie down, facing the ground. One of the officers put his feet on the neck of one of them to keep him down. The officers then called another car which the group of three had to enter. This car drove them directly to the border of Bosnia near the city of Šturlić, which took around one hour. It was mostly dark inside the car, only sometimes they had some light.

*"It was so cold, like a freezer inside."*

During the drive the officers were shouting at the people on the move to not come back. When the van door was opened at the border area next to a river, there were four officers waiting outside, dressed in completely black uniforms and balaclavas. All three of them got off the van and were forced to run towards the river. One officer followed them with a baton, attempting to beat them. The other officers shot their handguns in the air. They shouted at them to go back to Bosnia and forced them into the river. The water of the river was waist high. During their interactions, the officers confiscated two of the group's phones. One of them was broken and returned, the other one was stolen.

Reflecting on this experience, one of the respondents compared the idea of Europe to a mother, framing himself and his friends as her reluctant child:

*"We are like an adoptive child trying to please his mother."*

11/02/2019

## "SIX CROATIAN BORDER OFFICERS IN DARK UNIFORMS WITH BALACLAVAS PUSHED-BACK THE TWO MEN."

**Date and time:** February 11, 2019 03:00

**Location:** Glinica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Coordinates:** 45.209639002292654, 15.93228111957751

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 35,46 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 4 officers in standard uniform, 6 border officers of Croatia in dark blue uniforms with balaclavas

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The two men left from Vrnograč (BIH) in the evening of February 10, 2019, and made their way by foot to Glina (HRV) through forests and mountains. Along the way, the respondent described passing by several remote houses where dogs barked at them. At some point after exiting the forest, the two of them walked along a road where they crossed a red light situated on the street. Some minutes after, they saw a car approaching and hid themselves back in the forest. It was a police car, however it did not stop and drove away.

At around 3 am, they entered the village of Glina (HRV) and some minutes later a civilian car turned up and two officers in standard uniforms exited the car. They searched the two people on the move and took the one phone they had away.

They called for backup and two more officers arrived. Those drove the two individuals in a one-hour drive back to the border of Bosnia at the area of Glinica (BIH) and Poljana (BIH). At around 4.30 am, on February 11, six Croatian border officers in dark uniforms with balaclavas pushed-back the two men as the respondent asserted (see estimated location on map). The officers returned their phone, but it was completely damaged.

The group of two then walked about 20 km back to Velika Kladuša.

11/02/2019

**“YOU COULDN'T ASK, YOU DIDN'T HAVE GPS, I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE I WAS”**

**Date and time:** February 11, 2019 02:30

**Location:** Near Grabarska, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.163471, 15.762931

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: over 18 , from: Palestine, Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, pepper spray, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving, threatening with a knife, ID cards taken

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers, caught and robbed by 4 officers (with a van), officers at the police station, violating at the border 10 officers (9 in black and one in blue uniform, in masks, 7 with batons and one with a knife, two police cars)

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of eight men left from Velika Kladuša on February 7, 2019. They carried dates, bread, milk, tuna, water and chocolates for themselves to eat along their journey. On the third day of walking, around 9.20 pm on February 10, the group was walking in a forest around 8 km outside of Slunj (HRV) and divided into two sub-groups of four individuals. One of these groups was soon caught by four Croatian officers who then forced them to lead them to the other sub-group. All eight were then led to a van nearby and driven to a police station, which took approximately 1,5 hours by car.

*“THEY PUT US IN A VAN, AND INSIDE [THE VAN] HE DROVE LIKE A CRAZY MAN [MOTIONS BEING THROWN BACK AND FORTH]...JUST BECAUSE WE WERE INSIDE, YOU KNOW, AND ONE TIME HE STOPPED AND ONE POLICE OFFICER OPENED THE BACK OF [THE CAR], OPEN, AND HE SAW NO ONE CAN SEE, THIS SPRAY FOR EYES, IT MAKE PROBLEM IN OUR EYES. HE DID THAT AND HE CLOSED [THE DOOR] AND HE WENT.”*

At the police station, they had to stay inside the van for around three more hours while the air conditioning was running on a low level. The individuals were not offered food or water. They did not ask for asylum and they were not asked for any personal information about themselves.

Eventually, they were driven with the van once more, this time to the Bosnian-Croatian border, where they arrived around 2:30 am on February 11. It took them around 40 minutes to reach this place from the police station. There, the respondents saw ten officers, of which seven had batons and one had a knife. Nine officers wore a black, while one wore a blue uniform. In addition, two police cars were present. Their van parked in between the two, leaving one car on each side.

The respondents were threatened with taunts by them.

*“Here, they opened door and they started [making fun of] us. Smile and “Hahahaha”, the police with cargo [masks], you just saw the eyes.”*

Then, the respondents had to get off the van one-by-one and were beaten up and insulted by the officers. One individual was tricked by the knife-wielding officer, posing a threat of hurting him with the knife.

*"He want to hit him [with the knife]. He want just to make him scared."*

Another one's pant got cut with this knife and also their sleeping bags were cut open.

While not everyone described experiencing this knife-play, each individual was being beaten with batons by the officers.

*"When we went out, they slapped us. They beat three or four times and then we ran off."*

They were hit with batons primarily on arms and backs. The respondents all were told various swear-words in Croatian such as "U pičku materinu" by the officers as well as repeatedly to leave "Hajde, hajde".

When the men were initially captured, they were compelled to put their electronic devices, five phones and three power banks, into a plastic bag. They never received these back.

*"And when you were in border, you asked where is my phone, and they say it is with your friends, go, and then when you asked the friends they say it is not there."*

In addition, €280 were taken from them during this incident as well as their tent which the officers would not let them to take with them. One of the respondents expressed frustration at the manner in

which his group was pushed back into what was essentially in the middle-of-nowhere without any idea of where they were.

*"You couldn't ask, you didn't have GPS, I didn't know where I was... At 3 am there was no one outside. You couldn't ask anyone where you were."*

After the push-back, it took the group seven hours to return to Velika Kladusa on foot. When they returned to the Miral camp, they were told by the private security there that since they did not have IDs they were not allowed to enter.

11/02/2019

## **"YOU WON'T COME BACK TO MOSTAR! IF YOU COME BACK, WE WILL PUT YOU IN PRISON"**

**Date and time:** February 11, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Vinjani Gornji (official border crossing)

**Coordinates:** 43.4601109, 17.2848895

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 17,20,24,26 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** More than 10 police officers in Croatia, partly dark blue uniforms, partly black uniforms with batons, guns and masked faces. Four police officers in Bosnia and Herzegovina (all men) in black uniforms. 1 blue Volkswagen and 1 blue van in Croatia. 1 black van in Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken, no translator present, denial of food/water, handcuffed

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of four men started their journey in the early morning of February 10, 2019, by taking the regular bus around 7 am from Mostar (liH) to Posusje (BiH, 43.471353,17.3199588). They arrived in Posusje around 8.30 am and crossed

the border by foot not far from the official border crossing at Vinjani gornji (43.4600983,17.28512). After around two hours of walking, they reached Imotski (CRO, 43.446294,17.2125697). From there, they took another regular bus to Split and switched into another bus to Zagreb. They arrived at Zagreb bus station in the afternoon of February 10.

However, when they got off of the bus, four officers were there and asked for their documents, so they answered that they don't have documents. After two more officers had joined, the people on the move were taken to a police station in a blue Volkswagen with some black color on it. Two of the officers accompanied them and after a 10-15-minute drive, they reached the police station.

At the police station, all four individuals got handcuffed. They didn't have to sign any papers, but were told to write down their names and photos were taken. The officer didn't believe that the youngest was only 17 years old. When the group of four asked for a translator they were told there is none. The officers wanted to know where they had crossed the border, and they said that they entered Croatia between Posusje and Imotski.

One officer asked:

*"What do you need in Croatia?"*

They answered:

*"We want to have asyl in Croatia".*

The officer said:

*"No asyl here in Croatia, go back to Bosnia."*

So the respondent asked:

*"Why no asyl, we are in the capital of Croatia here."*

The answer of the officer was:

*"No, you can't stay in Zagreb or in the rest of Croatia. It is closed. You can take asyl in Bosnia."*

When the respondent asked again why that was the case, the officer slapped him and the other three individuals on the back of their heads. Then he and four of his colleagues in dark blue uniforms started to beat them on their arms.

The officers took their money, €400, four phones and four power banks as well as their luggage. When the respondent asked the officers for his bag because he wanted to eat some of his food in there, the police refused to hand it out to him. They also didn't give them food or water.

In total, the group of four was kept at the police station for around twenty minutes. Then, four other officers arrived, wearing black uniforms, masks on their faces and carrying batons and guns. They told them to enter the backspace of a big blue van which had a camera on the ceiling of the backspace. The four individuals stayed handcuffed during the whole ride.

After several hours of driving, the van arrived at the official border crossing between Imotski and Posusje (43.4601226,17.2844274). It was dark by now. The Croatian officers made a phone call, and after less than five minutes four Bosnian officers arrived with a big, black van. The Bosnian officers were wearing black uniforms with white letters «Policija» on their back. The Croatian officers took the handcuffs off and returned their luggage, however they didn't return their money and their phones. They then pulled out their batons, beat the four individuals, shouting:

*"Don't come back!"*

Afterwards, they had to enter the Bosnian van and were driven for around 20-30 minutes or 20 kilometers until they stopped in a dark forest. On the ground there was some snow and it was very cold. The four Bosnian officers then told the group of four to leave and not to return to Mostar. The respondent asked if the officers could bring them to Mostar in order to take a bus or a train from there to Sarajevo. But the officers refused and told them:

*"You won't come back to Mostar! If you come back, we will put you in prison. Or we will take you over the border to Montenegro".*

They started to threaten the migrants with their batons and told them to leave now.

The four of them thus started to walk in the forest but stopped after a while. It was a very cold night. They had food with them in their bags and managed to make a fire, but couldn't sleep. They spent the rest of the night in the forest.

The next morning, February 11, 2019, they resumed walking. After around five kilometers, they met a Bosnian man who was very tall. They told him their story and asked him for money to pay for bus tickets to Sarajevo. He gave them some money and showed them the direction to walk to the bus station of Mostar.

*"He was a good man."*

After another 15 kilometers of walking, the group reached the bus station of Mostar without being seen by the police. They bought tickets and returned to Sarajevo by bus.

**07/02/2019**

**"THEY RAN IN THE DARKNESS AND COULD NOT SEE, [SO THEY] RAN DIRECTLY INTO THE RAVINE WHICH PRECEDED THE RIVER AND FELL INTO IT"**

**Date and time:** February 7, 2019 03:30

**Location:** Jarce Polje, Croatia, between Jarce Polje and Vodena Draga, near the Slovenian border

**Coordinates:** 45.435012812158426, 15.38805116733397

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 22-31, from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** kicking, insulting, pepper spray, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian officers, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On February 7, 2019, the group of six was apprehended between 3 am and 4 am by four Croatian officers around 10 km far from the Slovenian border.

The officers shouted at them, hit them and used pepper spray. The group was made to wait in the woods and the officers called another car. While they were waiting, the officers took photos of them holding a paper in front of them where their name and surname were written on. One phone was taken away at this point, another one was broken. Further, the officers took an unidentified amount of money from the group.

Finally, a van arrived and drove the group of six back to the Bosnian-Croatian border for about an hour.

At the border there was a street which ran alongside an empty river valley. All six of them had to get off the van at the same time and run towards the border. The officers shouted at them and hit them with a baton. One officer used his boot to kick them. One of the individual's teeth were hurt from the kicking. Since they ran through the darkness and couldn't see anything, the group ran directly into the ravine which preceded the river to fall into it at one spot.

06/02/2019

## “YOU RUN TODAY, TOMORROW WE CATCH YOU”

**Date and time:** February 6, 2019 23:00

**Location:** close to Velika Kladusa

**Coordinates:** 45.205787801652, 15.802588999222

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: over 18 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers, caughts by 2 men and 1 woman (black or dark blue uniforms, older, a large white van size of a VW-Bus), at the police station 3 men (strong, black masks), at the border violating 9 men (black masks) and 1 woman

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of six men from Algeria and Morocco left Bihać in the direction of Croatia in the early morning hours of February 1, 2019. For six hours they walked through forest areas, sometimes on small roads, sometimes off-road. They were heading towards an abandoned airport just behind the border in Croatia. Once they saw a large white van in the size of a VW bus, but they were able to hide. They continued walking for four days through remote Croatian forests.

*"Forest, forest, forest. Sometimes we sleep. Walking, sleep, walking, sleep. It's dangerous on this way. [We were] walking for days in the jungle."*

Eventually, the group arrived at the Plitvice Lakes National Park, where they approached a highway bridge on the D429 road at around 3 pm on February 5. Hidden, they could see several officers standing on the bridge. Since they needed to cross this bridge, the group waited more than nine hours for the authorities to leave. The next day, at around 1 am, the officers left and the six of them were able to cross unhindered. They continued their way for six more hours through the forest and somewhere between Blata (HRV) and Lička Jesenica (HRV), near the D42 road, they stopped to sleep. They put up their tent and slept nearly ten hours.

At some point in the afternoon, during they were sleeping, one individual left the tent to urinate and was seen by a Croatian citizen who probably called the officers, according to the respondents. Soon after, three Croatian officers arrived to the location in a large white van and approached the tent around 5 pm. The officers, two male and one female, were wearing black or dark blue uniforms and were approximately 50 years old. The officers opened the zipper of the tent and found the six of them sleeping.

*"They don't speak anything. Just, hello, police! Give me telephone!"*

The officers didn't ask for their papers, they waited outside the tent and collected four mobile phones from the group of six. Then, they told them to pack their belongings and shortly after they had to walk to the van, one after another. At this moment, three of the individuals escaped from the officers. One officer shouted:

*"You run today, tomorrow we catch you!"*

The three people that didn't flee, were taken into the windowless backspace of the van. The officers immediately switched the air condition on the coldest level. The respondent asked if they could turn it down, but the officers didn't react.

*"Please, please stop of the air condition, we are so cold."*

The van left soon after and drove for approximately one hour. When they arrived at a police station, the officers left the car and entered the station while the three of them had to stay in the van with the air conditioning running. After one hour, three new officers returned to the van. All three were tall and strong men, wearing black balaclavas.

*"They were tall and strong. Police Croatia is like berserk."*

Soon, they drove off for around three hours, with the air conditioning was running throughout the drive. They again asked several times to switch it off. All three individuals had to vomit. They felt very sick and had headaches because of the cold and the lack of orientation. The respondents claimed that the officers recognized, that they were vomiting but didn't do anything.

Around 11 pm, the van stopped in a forest approximately 100 meters away from the Bosnian-Croatian border close to Velika Kladusa (BIH). The back of the van was opened and the group saw nine officers wearing balaclavas. The officers took the men aggressively by the hand and led them towards the direction of the border as stated by the respondents. One female officer smashed their phones with a baton in front of them. Then the nine officers started to hit the individuals with their fists, hands, feet and batons. The three young individuals laid on the ground, attempting to protect their heads. When the officers finished, they shouted:

*"Go, go!"*

The group of three stood up and ran away. Meanwhile, the officers took their backpacks and threw them into the small river and kept the broken phones.

The group of three ran some 50 meters after the border, stopped, and hid themselves. They waited until the officers left and then returned to the push-back spot to take their backpacks out of the river. The smartphones were gone. When they were just on the other side of the border, they saw a car coming to the same spot and soon thereafter they could watch some officers beating up another three people. One of them had a broken leg afterwards.

The closest houses were only approximately 600 meters away, however the owners were all asleep. They then walked to Velika Kladusa.

**03/02/2019**

## **"AFTER THE BEATING, HE HAD LOST THREE TEETH, HIS NOSE WAS BLEEDING AND HE WAS IN HEAVY PAIN"**

**Date and time:** February 3, 2019 00:06

**Location:** Zeljava, Croatia, Croatian-Bosnian Border between Zeljava and Baljevac

**Coordinates:** 44.8187871, 15.7223125

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 20 person(s), age: 19,22,25,26 , from: Iran, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, dog attacks, destruction of personal belongings, handcuffed

**Police involved:** More than 10 police officers in different locations Dark-blue uniforms. Two vans and one smaller police car. ca. 4-6 dogs.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of four men from Algeria (19,22,25 and 26 years) started their journey in Bihac, around 8 pm on February 2, 2019. Around 10.30 pm they crossed the border to Croatia near Vikici (BIH), at the approximate coordinates 44.8905703,15.7566522. In Croatia, they walked towards Jezerce (HRV) from where they intended to continue to Zagreb.

After around one hour of walking, and not having reached Jezerce yet, a car approached them (approximate coordinates 44.8785459,15.6968122). The motor was turned off, and after a short while five dogs were released from the car. They ran towards the four people on the move. The respondent reported that one of them bit him into his left leg, close to the ankle. However, the dog's teeth didn't enter his leg because he was wearing two layers of trousers due to the cold. He was then able to escape the dog by climbing a tree.

Three or four officers then got off the car. According to the respondent, they were wearing blue uniforms, and on their sleeves there was an emblem containing the letters "POLICIJA". They told the dogs to sit down and the group of four to climb down from the tree.

The respondent then asked:

*"Please give me asylum papers so that I can rest in Croatia for a while, I will then continue my journey to another country."*

The officers laughed:

*"No."*

So the individual then tried to escape and ran away, but was soon caught by the dogs again. The four officers started to beat the people on the move, using their fists and batons, shouting:

*"Fuck you, you are a big fuck you!"*

The respondent said:

*"Don't touch me!"*

But they continued beating all parts of his body, including his face for around 10-15 minutes. After the beating, he had lost three teeth, his nose was bleeding and he was in heavy pain. The photo shows, how the injuries looked like more than seven weeks after the incident.

Afterwards, the officers made a call, and a van with three more officers arrived. The four of them were handcuffed and told to enter the back space of the van. There were no proper seats but a plank without seat belts as the respondent recounted. They were driven for approximately one hour until they reached a police station.

In the police station, the officers took all their money, a total of €350, and their mobile phones as stated by the respondent. The officers first checked the phones in order to find out which migration route the group of four had taken from the Bosnian border to the place of their apprehension. Afterwards, they put the phones on the floor and smashed them with the handles of their batons and by stamping on them with their heavy boots. In addition, they broke the SIM cards of the phones. The group of four didn't have to sign any papers nor were photos or fingerprints taken. They were then locked into a cell for around two hours.

Around 4 am on February 3, the officers opened the cell and they had to enter another van where already around 15 other people on the move were waiting. The van was quite small and very packed with around 20 persons inside.

*"They transported us like luggage."*

During the two-hour drive, the air condition in the backspace of the van was very hot and the respondent witnessed two Iranians passed out during the drive. The respondent pointed out that the officers did not support these two men in any way after the transport:

*"They did not give them medication, juice or at least water."*

The van stopped in a forest when it was still dark, estimated between Zeljava (HRV) and Baljevac (BIH) at the coordinates 44.8187871,15.7223125. The officers told the people on the move to get off the van and to hand their shoes and bags over to them. They then set some shoes on fire and cut through the shoulder straps of their backpacks while laughing, the respondent asserted.

*"They talked to us like with dogs, with animals – they do not treat us like humans."*

One of the officers then made a call, and after a while the Bosnian authorities arrived by foot at some distance. Some Croatian officers went over to them and returned after a short conversation. They then pushed the people on the move to walk in one respective direction:

*"Go Bihac, go Bihac!"*

There was no road, and the ground was covered with trunks and spiny plants. The respondent describes, that the Croatian officers used torches and a kind of binoculars to make sure that they did not deviate from the specified direction. The Bosnian authorities watched the scene.

After an estimated four hours or 15 kilometers of walking, the people on the move reached Bihac (BIH) at the coordinates 44.8149552,15.8371348.

30/01/2019

**“MAYBE [WE] SIT TWO HOURS ON THE GROUND, IT IS SNOW, WE ARE STAYING LIKE THIS AND YOU DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO MOVE”**

**Date and time:** January 30, 2019 20:00

**Location:** Bogovolja, Croatia, close to Bogovolja

**Coordinates:** 45.06777580000001, 15.748140299999932

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: unknown , from: Tunisia

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, theft of personal belongings, remaining in one position for several hours

**Police involved:** around 50 police officers in blue Croatian uniforms/ black uniforms/ civilian clothing, some wearing long rifles in 5 or 6 cars, 1 police van

**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?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of five men from Tunisia left Velika Kladusa on the night of January 30, 2019. They walked towards Croatia with the intention of meeting someone who would drive them to Slovenia.

After they crossed the Croatian border, they walked less than one kilometer, crossing a small river leaving their shoes soaked by the water. Then, they arrived to a mosque which was the prearranged location to meet their driver. At approximately 8 pm, two officers passed by this spot and apprehended the group. The respondents recounted that the officers carried pistols and wore dark blue uniforms which had the words “Policija” written on them in yellow lettering. First, the officers searched the group of five and took their personal belongings.

*“We sit down and it’s wet place and they say ‘stay, sit down’, and we sit down there, and they took our mobile phones, money, cigarettes, some sweets to eat in the street on our way”*

They were then forced to hold a specific position for two hours, sitting on their knees with their hands behind their backs.

*“Maybe [we] sit two hours on the ground, it is snow, we are staying like this and you don’t have the right to move. If you move, he kick you, if you move to change your position, for example, you will sit on your ass”*

*“Already we have maybe nine or ten hours with eat nothing, and we have some food in our sack [but] they don’t let us to eat”*

Although two officers initially apprehended the group, after a period of several hours, more than 40 officers had arrived to the scene. They had the intention of arranging for a trap which would enable them to detect the group's driver. The officers had seen that somebody had called the group via WhatsApp and immediately decided to set up a police group to catch the driver:

*"Later come maybe 40 or 50 policemen. [To] catch the driver."*

One of the respondents described the situation as a trap that the officers decided to put into play:

*"When you want to trap a mouse, you make something to trick."*

So, the more than 40 officers dispersed in a circle around the location next to the mosque where the driver was supposed to pick up the group. Several of these officers carried long rifles, similar to Kalashnikovs as stated by the respondents. They were described being from the same unit as the officers who originally apprehended the group of five. Most of them were wearing dark blue uniforms. Nonetheless, several of the officers wore different, black uniforms and some civilian clothing. The respondents described that one of the officers who arrived later was the "boss" of all the officers in the scene:

*"The group of police men said this is the boss and he promises you to have [asylum]."*

They further described this man to be approximately 38-year-old, average height, around 180 cm, with a weight of around 80 kg, no beard and short brown hair shaved at the sides. He didn't wear a uniform, instead he wore plain clothes looking like black sportswear, one respondent recounted.

The respondents also described another officer in detail, a female one, quite tall and muscular, perhaps 180 cm, her hair cut short and shaved on the sides, around 30 years old, carrying a pistol and a radio device. Similar to the "boss", she also didn't wear a uniform, but plain clothes. She was responsible for taking photos of the group and asked them where they were from.

In total, there were five or six cars dispersed around the scene, waiting with their lights turned off. In addition to this, there were around seven groups of officers by foot around the scene. There were also two officers who stayed with the group of people on the move, as they waited for the smuggles.

*"Even if you think to run away, you can't. All the place is surrounded by policemen."*

*"We are writing with [the driver]... We organized with a car driver to come to pick us up, so they stayed waiting for this driver and they say for us 'Act like normally, like nothing happened to you. Stay here and when [the] car comes, when the car driver comes, just go normally without doing any act and they promised us to give asyl if we help him to catch this man."*

When asked if they felt like they had the option *not* to take part in this police action, the respondents said:

*"No, you don't have this option. If you don't do like this, you will get smacked."*

Accordingly, the group followed the officer's instructions. When the car approached, the officers ordered the five of them to approach the road.

*"When the car comes from this side, they stop just here and they say to us 'Go, go, go'."*

The car driver stopped his car and the group entered:

*"We just open the door and go inside the car and the scenario starts. All the place is surrounded by policemen."*

*"We go inside the car, then they shoot gun in the sky, then [they] catch us again, 'On your knees' staying maybe two more hours and then we go."*

Immediately, several officers started shooting in the air with their guns before the rest joined the scene and encircled the car. At this point, the group of five were again told to get on their knees and to put their hands behind their heads and then had to remain in this position again for several hours.

After this, the group was taken to a police station which was approximately twenty minutes away, likely in Slunj (HRV). They arrived there between 1 and 2 am on January 31. The group was still wet from their previous hours in the cold, and they reported that nobody offered them anything during their time in the station.

*"We stayed like that, wet, without nothing, without food."*

The group was neither offered food, water or blankets during the almost 24 hours they were kept in the station:

*"It's a small room, maybe 3 meters. It's dark. No something to make us warm, nothing. Just something to sleep for one person and we stay five [persons]."*

After a period of several hours, they were asked by some officers for their names, surnames, and country of origin. Then, photos were taken while they had to hold a sign with their name, date and nationality on it. They were also made to sign several papers:

*"[We signed] three papers. And they didn't give us the time to read the papers. The first paper is with the Croatian language, just one in English but... when I ask him 'let me read what I will sign' they say 'Just sign, just sign'"*

Later in the morning the group's fingerprints of each whole finger and then in addition of each fingertip were taken.

One of the respondents was taken to Karlovac (HRV) later in the day, at approximately 5 pm and the rest of the group stayed in the station. The individual was transported in a police car which had windows, so he could see outside. He described traveling through mountains on this journey for some time before passing a sign which signaled one direction led towards Zagreb while another direction led towards Split. The car turned towards Zagreb until they reached Karlovac where he met a judge:

*"Then they took me, only me, to Karlovar to meet the judge."*

He was brought there to speak on behalf of the group because he is speaking English almost fluently. Before arriving to the judge, his shoe strings as well as the string from his hoodie were confiscated from him:

*"They make me go there, they put out my shoes chords...so when I was walking, all people see."*

*"They took me there and he [the 'judge'] say 'Say the truth and I will help you to have asyl'. So I say the truth, I told him all the story but the police investigation goes in the wrong way. In the police investigation, I see the paper, it is in English, they don't say that we help [them] to catch this driver. They don't write*

*this. So the judge ask me and I tell him about this story, how we helped the policemen to catch this driver and how they promised us to have asyl. He say 'Okay, okay, okay'.*

After he had told his initial story in English, an Arabic translator arrived who then talked to the judge in Croatian for a bit. The translator in Karlovac was described as being middle-aged, between 55 and 60 years old. During the interview with the respondent, he told him that his child was the same age as him, 26, and that he was married to a Bosnian woman. He didn't speak a clear Arabic dialect so the respondent isn't sure whether he was from Egypt or Syria. The respondent was asked with the help of the translator about his name, if he had previously known the driver, how much he had paid for him, why he left Tunisia and what his previous job was. Then, they returned him to the original police station where he had to stay for four more hours:

*"When I come back from Karlovac we stay four more hours and they kick us out."*

*"That's it. Then they bring me back to the jail and stay for maybe four more hours and then maybe at 9 or 10 pm they take us, put us back in the car and move back to Bosnia."*

It was a twenty-minute drive from the police station back to the border. In total, there were five officers present during the push-back with one car in addition to the transportation van present at the location. One officer stayed in the other car during the push-back, another one wore a balaclava while the others had their faces exposed. They were all wearing the same dark blue uniforms as the officers from their capture the previous night.

*"They work in the same police station."*

When the group of five arrived, they saw that the van they were transported in was parked, facing in the direction of a stream which rose up to their knees.

*"Just open the door of the car [and] you see the river."*

In the dark, there was an officer standing on each side of the car's back door, leaving it impossible to move in any direction other than towards the stream. They were taken out one-by-one:

*"They put us in the border, just in the border [makes a close space with his hands]: This is the river and he put us in the car here. They open the two doors of the car and say 'Go! Go! Go!'. They make us afraid. And then we start walking like normally and then they start to kick us and we go, we don't know the place, we don't know nothing. It's dark. It's night, it's dark. We start running, running, and then they [are] running behind us and they start kick us in the back. They don't show us where is the way, where to go, where are our location, they say nothing."*

*"First, they don't kick, they just make gesture, act like they will hit us but they don't hit us. When we are already walking towards the river, then they start. Only in the back."*

They were beaten by slightly flexible batons made out of rubber.

After they crossed to the other side of the stream, one of the officers took a bag which had their mobile devices and some money in it and threw it over to the other side of the river, the respondents asserted. They had originally brought €80 to Croatia but only received back €60.

They didn't eat or drink anything for the whole time of their detention:

*"Eight hours before we start the trip we don't eat nothing. So when the police catch us we stay more than 24 hours without eating nothing, without drink nothing, just toilet, and the toilet is inside the jail."*

Also at no point an asylum process was started, other than promised by the authorities first.

An older image of the mosque where the group was forced to kneel for several hours and later take part in a sting operation in Bogovolja (HRV).

29/01/2019

## **"WE WERE ALL SO WET, BODIES WET, CLOTHES WET, NOTHING DRY"**

**Date and time:** January 29, 2019 21:00

**Location:** close to Grabarska, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.134813144445, 15.779263801227

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 16 person(s), age: unknown , from: Pakistan, Arab countries

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** 5 officers in green army clothes with long military-style rifles arrived in green jeep, 10 more officers, 1 van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of five Pakistani men left by foot from Bihać (BIH) to Croatia on December 25, 2018. After walking for four days in Croatia, on December 29, they were apprehended by the authorities along the road D42 in the mountains at around 9 pm. According to the respondent, five officers in green army clothes, carrying long, military-style rifles arrived in a green jeep and stopped them.

*"It looked as if they wait for us. They only come out when we are near to them and catch us."*

Shortly after this, five more vehicles arrived with ten more officers, one being in command of the rest of the group as the respondent believed.

The group of five had all of their bags checked and their mobile phones and power banks taken away. One of the officers took photos of the group.

The five of them then had to enter a van and was driven for 50 minutes to a location which the respondents described as a base or a station for the officers who apprehended them. Afterwards, they were driven for 20 minutes to a police station where they made a short break to switch vans before being driven again for 15 minutes to a different police station. At this station, 11 more people on the move from Arabic countries entered the van as the respondent recounted.

At around 9 pm, the whole group of now 16 was then returned to a secluded area at the Bosnian-Croatian border, close to Grabarska. There, they had to get off the van and were forced with batons to move towards a stream running along the border. The officers followed them, hitting them with batons on their legs and back torsos to make them move faster as the respondent asserted. When the group of 16 arrived at the stream, the officers threw their personal items, i.e. sleeping bags, phones, bags, into the water and pushed the 16 individuals into the stream. In total, four mobile phones, six power banks and €80 was stolen by the authorities.

*"The water was mid deep, like four feet maybe."*

One of the individuals was able to return after the push-back and retrieve one of the waterlogged power banks. After this, the group of 16 started walking back, waiting in a small, abandoned house close to the border for the night to pass. All of them were wet and very cold and therefore weren't able to sleep during the night.

*"We were all so wet, bodies wet, clothes wet, nothing dry. We were freezing the whole night. No one slept."*

**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:** close to Velika Kladusa

**Coordinates:** 45.195441, 15.779305

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 14 person(s), age: 28 , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** threatening with guns

**Police involved:** 3 policemen in dark blue uniform Croatian flag on their arms + handguns, 1 male officer & 1 female officer in police van, 3 police officers at the station, 1 police van

**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 Algerian men 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 as stated by the respondent.

*"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. The respondent described how one officer 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 respondent recounted how 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 on 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 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 as stated by the respondent.

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.

21/01/2019

## **" HE PUT HIS SHOE ON HIS FACE, GOT ON HIS KNEES AND PLACED HIS GUN ON THE RESPONDENT'S RIGHT TEMPLE"**

**Date and time:** January 21, 2019 02:30

**Location:** 20 kilometres away from Velika Kladusa, Bosnia

**Coordinates:** 45.216636, 16.016038

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 15, unknown , from: Iraq

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Two officers in dark blue uniforms with guns, three officers in van, 1 officer in van, 3 police officers in dark blue uniforms + unmasked, 1 car

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of two men and 1 minor from Iraq left from Bosnia on the night of January 20, 2019, at 6 pm and crossed the border Croatia with the intention of continuing to Glina (HRV) to take a bus:

*"We were walking in the forest before we reached the bus station."*

The snow was high in the forest and as they walked it reached up to their chins. After walking several hours, the respondent, a 15-year-old minor, described seeing a police patrol:

*"I saw a police patrol, they were searching the area and [we] turned around from the police and went down into the forest."*

When the police left, the group went back to continue walking on the road they had been on previously. But shortly after, the group came upon what was described as "police camp" at approximately 1 am. In the middle of the forest, the authorities were camping in tents, waiting for people on the move to pass by:

*"They had their own tents, waiting for whoever comes around"*

The respondent had been walking at the head of the group, and he described that perhaps he was walking too fast at this point which put some distance in between him and the other individuals. When they passed through the tents, the officers heard their footsteps. Two officers exited their tents and with their guns drawn they told the group to stop as stated by the respondent.

When the officers told them not to move, they froze. The respondent laid down in the snow, one officer approached him and kicked him in the face. The respondent described how the officer put his shoe on his face, got on his knees and placed his gun on the respondent's right temple. This officer was described by as being big, around 32 years old, around 180 cm tall, his head shaved on the sides with short hair on the top and wearing a dark blue uniform.

The 15-year-old respondent expressed, that it was the first time anyone had ever pointed a gun at his head and that he was terrified:

*"He didn't even ask about [my age], from the first time he came, he beat."*

Then, the officers checked his phone and saw that the respondent had GPS data pulled up. After this, they searched his belongings. The three of them didn't ask for asylum as they didn't get the chance to do so.

*"They never gave us the chance to ask for [asylum]... the officers started to beat [me] and kick with their shoes."*

The same patrol that the group had successfully evaded before, arrived to the scene in a van with three officers. Shortly thereafter, another van arrived with one officer as claimed by the respondent.

The people on the move had to enter the second van, which then took them back in a 30-minute drive to the Bosnian-Croatian border at approximately 2.30 am on January 21. When they arrived back to the border, there was one car and two officers waiting for them. The respondent recounted that the two officers also wore dark blue uniforms and had their faces unmasked.

The three of them had to get off the van one by one. The respondent was the first. He was told by one of the officers to come closer. The officer then broke his phone, returned it back to him, and told him that Velika Kladusa was twenty kilometers away.

The three of them then attempted to walk back to the camp but since their phones had been broken, and they didn't have access to GPS, they got lost and didn't find their way back until 7 am the next day.

**20/01/2019**

## **“THE RESPONDENT'S SHOULDER WAS PARTICULARLY INJURED, LEAVING HIM IN PAIN FOR FOUR DAYS AFTER THE INCIDENT”**

**Date and time:** January 20, 2019 00:00

**Location:** Batrovci, Serbia

**Coordinates:** 45.02771848990921, 19.122420094233348

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 20 person(s), age: one 16, others unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Eight Croatian officers wearing blue uniforms emblazoned with Croatian flags, 3 police cars, 1 large vehicle

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

Around the 20th of January 2019, the group of 20 men (among them a 16 year-old minor) from Afghanistan attempted to transit Croatia. They had been walking for two days before they were apprehended by Croatian officers in a forest near a Croatian motorway.

The respondent described that the officers turned off the lights of their car in order to come closer to the group to arrest them. After a short while, two more police cars arrived at the location, one after the other, carrying altogether eight officers. According to the respondent, the eight Croatian officers wore blue uniforms emblazoned with Croatian flags.

The officers began to hit the 20 individuals without any warning as the respondent recounted. They kicked them first, and later used their batons to beat them up, also targeting their heads.

*“It was too much”.*

The respondent asserted that all the officers present were part of the attack. The respondent's shoulder was particularly injured, leaving him in pain for four days after the incident. Upon returning, the respondent consulted a doctor at Principovac camp (SRB) to calm the pain.

The officer also destroyed the individual's cigarettes and energy drinks, the respondent recounted. A second episode of violence happened soon after.

*"I look in the eyes of one of them, and they start again."*

The officers asked him to sit on the ground, which was wet due to the rain, and pointed with a light directly in his eyes. Parallel, the officers began to hit the individuals once more for close to 30 minutes as stated by the respondent.

Afterwards, a large vehicle arrived, and the group was brought back to Serbia. The respondent explained, that he didn't ask for asylum.

*"The police was very angry. Nobody can ask for asyle."*

During the 30-minute car ride, the temperature in the vehicle was very cold. When they arrived near Batrovci, the 20 of them had to get off the vehicle one by one.

They then crossed the Serbian border.

**18/01/2019**

## **"HE BEAT HIM AND STRUCK HIM MULTIPLE TIMES ON HIS BACK WITH THE BATON"**

**Date and time:** January 18, 2019 23:30

**Location:** Maljevac, Croatia, Croatian side of Croatian-Bosnian border close to official checkpoint of Maljevac

**Coordinates:** 45.195511321228665, 15.793980530224644

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: one 45-50 years old , from: Afghanistan, Morocco

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, water immersion, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian police officers (with large Nissan car, later a large van), at the police station 4 men and 1 woman, at the border 3 officers in dark blue uniforms, 2 black-masked

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of seven (aged between 45-50 years) left Velika Kladuša (BIH) around January 13, 2019, and headed towards Croatia. Most of the individuals were from Afghanistan however there were also some from Morocco. After they entered Croatia, they walked through the deeply snow covered forests, which hindered their progress significantly. Although they had enough food with them, the snow remained a persistent problem for them, and they considered giving up.

On the fifth day of walking, in the afternoon of January 18, they decided to walk into a nearby town, hoping to find some authorities who might take them back to Bosnia. They all felt very cold and all their clothes and sleeping bags were wet. One of the individuals walked into the town, while the others were waiting outside of it. He approached a Croatian man who was washing a car, trying to ask him in English, if he could call the police.

The man just answered:

*"Go, go!"*

Afterwards, around 4.10 pm, all seven of them went to a cafe together and asked the people there to call the police.

After around 20 minutes, four Croatian officers arrived with a large Nissan car. The officers told the seven people on the move to stay there. Three officers asked them if they carried knives or guns and checked their belongings, while the fourth officer stayed in the car. The officers took the phone of the respondent, telling him, they would return it later, which never happened. They brought water and cigarettes for the group of seven.

*"They were good people."*

The respondent asked the officers:

*"Do you have the possibility to apply here for asylum in Croatia or not?"*

They answered:

*"Yes but not here, you can ask at the police station."*

After around 1,5 hours, a large van arrived. The seven of them had to enter the van and was taken to a small police station. They drove for one hour at a low speed, around 40 to 50 km/h. When they arrived at the station, they were searched once more. The officers also took photos of each with a smartphone as the respondent asserted.

There were five officers at the station, different from the officers who initially apprehended the group. The respondent recalled that one of them was a female who had long, dark brown hair in a ponytail. She was tall, around 30 years old and strongly built.

The respondent describes the officers in the police station as more negative towards the individuals. They also took the respondent's power bank and never returned it.

*"It was a good and expensive one."*

The officers looked at the serial number and commented among each other that it was a good device. One of the officers told the others:

*"Give me, I want it!"*

The respondent describes that he can understand the Croatian language well enough, since he has spent several months in Bosnia. The officers only took the respondent's power bank, not any property of the others from the group.

Although the respondent had intended to ask the officers at the police station about asylum, following the initial officers' advice, he didn't trust them and thus didn't ask.

*"When they talked with me, they did not do it with respect, they did not respect me."*

The seven of them didn't leave the van when they were at the police station. They were locked inside the windowless backspace for approximately one hour, between 8 and 9 pm.

Then, they drove them back very fast for around 2,5 hours to the Bosnian border.

When the men arrived close to the Maljevac (HRV) border checkpoint, around 11.30 pm, they encountered two officers, wearing black balaclavas and carrying batons. Additionally, there was one uncovered officer. The latter had short hair, a shaved face, and was aged between 30 and 35. All of them wore dark blue uniforms as the respondent recounted. The whole group was instructed to leave the van:

*"Go Bosnia!"*

At this point, the masked officers attempted to beat the respondent, however as he put his baton down for the strike, the respondent grabbed the officer's hand and pushed him. The officer got angry and attempted to strike again. Then, the respondent managed to escape and ran with the other six towards the border. The van was very close to the border, approximately 30 meters away. Nonetheless, one of the masked officers made it and caught one of the individuals, a Moroccan aged between 45 and 50 years. He beat him and struck him multiple times on his back with the baton as stated by the respondent.

As the other six continued running, they fell into the waist-high water of a stream running at the border.

After the respondent had crossed the stream and entered Bosnia, he turned around and discovered his Moroccan friend being beaten, which made him angry. He told the ones standing with him on the Bosnian side:

*“It’s not good what the officers are doing!”*

Afterwards, the respondent reported seeing the officers throwing the beaten man into the water.

When all the seven finally were on the Bosnian side, they tried to walk back to Velika Kladusa, but didn’t know where they were. Therefore, they knocked at the door of a house and the owner told them to walk three kilometers in a certain direction. At this point, it was around 1 am on January 19.

17/01/2019

**“ME, I AM AFRAID BECAUSE HE WORE A SKI-MASK. I'M WONDERING: WILL HE BEAT ME, WON'T HE BEAT ME?”**

**Date and time:** January 17, 2019 23:00

**Location:** close to Velika Kladuša

**Coordinates:** 45.188372160736, 15.782510617998

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 2 police officers in dark blue uniforms and hats, 2 more in black uniforms and with handguns on their belts

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 16th of January 2019, two men from Algeria and Morocco left Velika Kladuša (BIH) at around 10 pm. They walked the whole night and stopped at an abandoned building to sleep during the day, close to the village of Kupljensko (HRV).

*“At 5 am, my friend wants to get rest because we walked a lot. We found a place, like an abandoned house, it is really cold, I made a fire and we sleep from morning to night. After it is night time, there is snow, a lot of snow, I did not see it because I was sleeping.”*

The respondent's friend's shoes were already completely soaked from the snow at this point, leaving the two ill-prepared to continue. Nevertheless, they began to walk again in the evening, but were not able to hide themselves due to the snow. Cars were passing close to them as they had to walk on a road. After a few minutes, a car stopped at their level, and they recognized a white police car with two officers in dark blue uniforms and hats. The authorities stopped them and told them not to move and to declare everything that they had with them, i.e. phones, power banks, money. After they were frisked, the officers called for backup and half an hour later, a white police van arrived. The two officers in the van wore black uniforms and carried handguns on their belts, the respondent recounted. While waiting, the two men had to stand without moving. One of the officers asked them if they had passports or documents, but they only had a registration card from a camp in Bosnia.

They were then brought to the Bosnian border at approximately 11.30 pm, close to Velika Kladuša. There, one officer opened the door of the van, telling them to leave.

*“Me, I am afraid because he wore a ski-mask. I'm wondering: will he beat me, won't he beat me? I am scared when they opened the door, I think they will catch me, then I began to walk fast but one policeman told me to wait, and then he gave me my phone back.”*

16/01/2019

“[...] THE OFFICERS HIT EACH OF THEM IN THE FACE  
[...]”

**Date and time:** January 16, 2019 09:00

**Location:** Knin, Croatia, train station

**Coordinates:** 44.0366818, 16.198088399999996

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 26,28 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 4 police officers, not in uniform but armed with guns, one big white car

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Aid Brigade Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The two men left Livno (BIH) with car to reach the Croatian border. When the car stopped near Ugarci, they got off and crossed the border in a forest by foot. Walking was very difficult for them, as the snow was 0,5 meters high. They arrived at the D33 road and walked next to the train track to the city Knin (HRV). From there, they wanted to take a bus to Zagreb.

Shortly after they sat in the bus, it was stopped and the authorities made the two of them exit. They put them into a car, after they had taken their money and phones. Then, the two of them were driven to the border, which took them around 2,5 hours. The two individuals were told that they had two choices. Either they would give their fingerprints or they would drive them to a very bad place from where they would have to walk back for about 1,5 days. Accordingly, the two of them decided to give their fingerprints.

Afterwards, they brought them to the Bosnian border, stopping at a forest. When the two individuals got off the car, the officers hit each of them in the face and left them without water or food. They finally found a car which drove them back to Livno and took a bus back from there to Sarajevo.

15/01/2019

## “THE OFFICERS ACCUSED THE RESPONDENT OF BEING THE BOSS OF THE GROUP AND A SMUGGLER”

**Date and time:** January 15, 2019 22:00

**Location:** Sombor, Serbia

**Coordinates:** 45.84785912170368, 18.84369301463846

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: one 14 year old minor, unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Seven Croatian police officers wearing blue uniforms with Croatian flags, two police cars, one police dog

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On January 15, 2019, a group of ten crossed the Serbian-Croatian border by foot from Sombor (SRB) at a river. Shortly after, seven Croatian officers with two police cars arrested them.

Minutes after apprehending the group of ten, around 10 pm, the officers turned violent towards them.

*“They beat us, all the officers.”*

Afterwards, they were brought to a nearby police station where a second episode of violence occurred. The officers accused the respondent of being the boss of the group and a smuggler. Then, they stole the charger of his phone and his lighter. There was no possibility for the individuals to ask for asylum.

Straight after, the group of ten was pushed-back to Serbia.

10/01/2019

## “WE WOULD MELT THE SNOW TO DRINK THE WATER”

**Date and time:** January 10, 2019 10:00

**Location:** Rijeka, Croatia, close to the Slovenian border, North of Rijeka

**Coordinates:** 45.189974, 15.783597

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 13 person(s), age: unknown , from: Syria, Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, water immersion

**Police involved:** Croatian officers, caught by three (in olive green uniforms, with riffles and a white van, maybe army officers), violating at police station several officers and on the border 6 officers (with black masks)

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 13 men from Syria, Morocco and Algeria left Bihać (BIH) on January 2, 2019, and crossed the Croatian border. From there, they walked for three days through the mountains.

*“We were severely constrained by the cold and snow.”*

After passing the mountains, the group of 13 continued walking for five more days. They were poorly equipped for the weather and ran out of food and water quickly.

*“We could not eat because we could not carry food for ten days.”*

At some point, they even started eating snow to hydrate themselves.

*“We would melt the snow to drink the water.”*

*“ We would share all things, even one packet of ramen between me and four others.”*

Almost all their shoes and socks were soaked with water by the eighth day of the journey.

As the 13 individuals came closer to the Slovenian border, their ordeal increased due to the presence of many Croatian authorities in the forest they were moving through at that point.

*"There were a lot of police on the road and we sat to wait for the police to go to continue along the road and it took us a long time like this and there was difficulties to sit and difficulties sleeping from the severity of the cold."*

On the ninth day of their journey, January 10 at around 10 am, when they were somewhere close to Slovenian border north of Rijeka (HRV), they were apprehended by three Croatian officers. They wore olive green uniforms and carried long rifles, similar to M-16s, the respondent asserted. He described that these officers who initially stopped them were kind and did not treat them unfairly.

Shortly after being apprehended, the group of 13 was loaded into a white van and driven for approximately one hour to a police station in Rijeka. The respondents reported that there was a drastic change in the way that they were treated by the officers in the station, compared to the once that apprehended them first. At the station, they were physically harmed and detained for a long period in a van parked at the station.

*"We were arrested by the army and handed over to the police. There was no one who could speak English. They beat us at the police station in Rijeka. [The police officers] put us in the car for six hours without food or water."*

Upon their initial capture by the Croatian authorities, several individuals expressed their intention to claim asylum in Croatia. The officers explained to them that they would be able to request asylum. Nonetheless, upon reaching the police station in Rijeka, each individual's asylum requests were either ignored or denied. Four of the Syrian individuals expressed their intention to claim asylum in Croatia, but were told by the officers:

*“You need a passport to prove you are from Syria.”*

The others, who were from North African countries, were told by the officers that there was no opportunity for them to claim asylum in Croatia as the respondent recounted.

While at the police station, the group members had their photos taken individually and were made to sign a document in a language they didn't understand. When one of the respondents resisted the demand to sign this document, he was being violently intimidated to do so.

*“I told them I don't speak English and he grabbed me by the head and punched me.”*

The respondents then were brought with a van to the Bosnian border at approximately 5 pm the following evening. They arrived to a secluded section of the Bosnian-Croatian border close to the Maljevac (HRV) border checkpoint at approximately 8 pm. There were six officers wearing balaclavas waiting for them. The 13 individuals had to get off the police van and had to walk one by one through two parallel lines of officers. As they moved through, the officers hit them with batons. One of the respondents describes being hit on his head by a baton.

The last officers in line then pushed them towards a stream, marking the border between Bosnia and Croatia. When they reached the water, they were pushed by an officer into it. The water was waist-high and cold.

Finally, around 10.30 pm, they were pushed-back to Bosnia.

10/01/2019

## “THE WOMAN WAS CRYING, AND THEY [MALE OFFICERS] KEPT FRISKING HER”

**Date and time:** January 10, 2019 00:00

**Location:** close to Crni Potok (HRV) and Velika Kladuša (BIH), approximately 150 m away from the river

**Coordinates:** 45.212349, 15.832186

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: one 19 year old , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, water immersion, sexual assault, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving, male officer frisking a woman

**Police involved:** Croatian male police officers, caught and violated by 2 officers with one car and some other officers with another car and a van (white, no windows in back), at the border physically attacking at least 12 officers (in black, with masks, possibly from special forces)

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 11 people-on-the-move from Syria left Bosnia at 10.30 am on January 10, 2019, and soon crossed the Croatian border. They walked on the trails, leading through a forest in Croatia. The temperature was around  $-7^{\circ}\text{C}$ , and as a result, the drinking water they were carrying froze.

*“For the woman who was with us, it was too cold, then we went to walk on the main road, and there, the police caught us.”*

After about 11 hours of walking, around 9 pm, the group reached road 1, about one kilometer away from Slunj Croatia. They were apprehended by two male Croatian officers in a car. Shortly after, another car and a windowless, white van arrived. The officers present aggressively demanded that the group of them handed over their belongings, the respondent recounted. The respondent asserted that twelve phones were taken from them as well as the power banks, headphones, chargers and money. The group never received any of these back.

The 11 of them were then driven to a police station, the respondent believes it was in Slunj. There, one of the officers told them:

*"If you are nice, we will be nice."*

Nonetheless, the respondent reports that:

*"Some were beaten, some were not, at the police station. They humiliated us, we were treated with humiliation."*

The group-members were brought out of the van in small groups, one by one, two by two, and a maximum of three by three. They were taken to the yard of the police station and frisked once more. As the officers frisked the female individual, they found a phone which she had hidden when being searched the first time.

*"I've a question, is it normal that a man frisks a woman? A policeman frisked the woman, he did it on purpose, just to make us angry. The woman was crying, and they kept frisking her."*

*"He pushed her, and she began to cry then he stopped. When she began to cry, he took out his baton, and she had to stop. He was humiliating her [showing with his hand how the policeman was pushing her]."*

After around one hour, they returned to the van and were driven back to the Bosnian border. On the way, the 11 of them decided, to run out of the van all together in the same moment when the officers would open the doors.

*"The driver drove as a reckless driver, he did it on purpose. Drove from the left to the right. Four people threw up."*

They arrived at the border close to Crni Potok (HRV) and Velika Kladuša (BIH) 1,5 hours later. The driver parked the van approximately 150 meters away from a river on a small road near a forest. Then, the officers made the people-on-the-move enter this river with breast-high water by encircling them.

*"They deported us to a place with a small river, they pushed us into it by force."*

*"They act with us like animals."*

*"There were a lot [of policemen], more than twelve. I don't know how much, but they were all wearing ski-mask, it was full darkness, even my finger I couldn't see it."*

The respondent thought that the officers were from the special forces, as they wore black uniforms.

Some individuals managed to run away, but some got beaten.

08/01/2019

## “THE FACE, THEY BEAT ME ON MY FACE, EVERYWHERE ON MY FACE”

**Date and time:** January 8, 2019 03:00

**Location:** Bihac, Bosnia, close to Bihac, just after the border crossing

**Coordinates:** 44.83040454336067, 15.764308816745597

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: one 28, others unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** 10 Croatian police officers in black uniforms and masks

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of seven left from Bihać (BIH) early in the morning on January 8, 2019. At around 3 am, they arrived at the Croatian border. A few meters after crossing it, when walking on a hill along a small path, they were ambushed by several officers in a curve of the path.

*“It was all night, all black.”*

*“They have night visions binoculars.”*

Three officers suddenly stood in front of the group, two persons on each side and another three stepped behind them. In total, the group of seven got surrounded by ten officers wearing black uniforms and balaclavas.

*"After they turned on their flashlights and fired once in the air."*

All the individuals then had to kneel down and were forced to hand out their bags and phones. Then, the ten officers began to beat them up:

*"The starter is the kicks and then they beat with sticks and closed-fist."*

*"Even after we took out our bag, we put our hand behind of our neck. Normally they can not beat us [when we are] in this position."*

While they were beaten with batons and fists, the respondent tried to protect himself with his hand.

*"The face, they beat me on my face, everywhere on my face."*

*"After they beat us [completely], my phone and 110 euros they stole. As usual."*

*"When they break phones, they give them back directly, but at this time they put them in their pockets."*

In total, the officers stole at least €1100, five phones and four power banks. Then, the group of seven was asked where they come from, and they responded that they were from some other Arab countries.

After the attack, the seven individuals managed to run away. They returned to Bihać walking, and continued by bus to Velika Kladusa (BIH). The next night, the respondent tried to sleep, but he was in such pain, that it was impossible. Thus, at approximately 2,30 am, he went to the hospital in Velika Kladusa. The first doctor he saw refused to provide any health care. However, the second one approached him and offered to take a look at his injury, but secretly. This doctor thought that one of the thumb bones was broken and made a bandage to the respondent. He did not suggest the victim to come back later in the morning for x-ray to confirm the

diagnostic. He provided him three painkillers for the rest of the night and the next day.

05/01/2019

## “THE TWO OFFICERS THEN QUICKLY PUT ON THEIR BALACLAVAS BEFORE TOSSING A SMOKE BOMB INSIDE THE VAN”

**Date and time:** January 5, 2019 23:00

**Location:** Rijeka, Croatia, north of Rijeka

**Coordinates:** 45.21025, 15.818896

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 20-30 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, pepper spray, water immersion, gunshots, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings, exposure to smoke bomb and tear gas

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian policemen at place of apprehension, later 3 more uniformed policemen, later 12 tall muscular policemen some of whom wore a black uniform and ski masks. 1 red 4x4 jeep, 2 white vans.

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On December 28, 2018, a group of 10 men from Morocco, aged between 20 and 30, left Bihac (BIH) by foot around 9 pm. They had been walking for seven days, before they got apprehended by the Croatian authorities a few kilometers outside the town of Rijeka on January 5, 2019. At around 8 pm, the group was detected in the middle of the mountains by three officers in a red jeep 4 x 4. When the group of 10 saw them, one of the officers shot five times into the air with his gun shouting:

*“Stop! Stop! Stop!”*

The officers then made them kneel down in the snow, and the one holding the gun called reinforcement. 15 minutes later, two officers arrived with a big white van. They made the group enter the van one by one and started the engine. After a 30-minutes drive, around 9 pm, the van stopped in a big closed parking lot full of police cars.

When the back doors of the van were opened, the ten of them faced 12 tall muscular officers waiting for them. The respondent and his group got off the van one by one and each time one person got off, one of the officers beat him with his bare hands on the neck. Then, the same officer took the same person to face a wall of the parking area, hands on the wall. After this, they spoke in Croatian and made the ten of them remove their jackets. They were standing in the snow with t-shirts, trousers and shoes. The officers then hit the people facing the wall on the inner side of their legs to make them spread the legs. Subsequently, one officer took the phones, money and belongings from each and put everything in a black bag.

While facing the wall, some of the people on the move asked for their jackets back, since it was freezing. The officers firmly said:

*"No."*

Then, three of the ten asked for asylum, but the answer was just:

*"No asylum!"*

After this episode, the officers made the group enter another van of the same kind as the first one. Two officers of the same group in black uniforms and balaclavas entered the van and started the engine. At the same time, they turned on the air conditioning, making the temperature drop even more.

The van drove around 45 minutes before arriving at the Croatian-Bosnian border, around 7 km far from the Bosnian border city of Velika Kladusa (estimated on the map.) The van stopped a few meters away from a river.

When the two officers opened the rear door, the respondent realized that another car with the remaining 10 officers inside had been following them. The two officers then quickly put on their balaclavas before tossing a smoke bomb inside the van, which exploded and stunned the people inside. Immediately after, the officers used teargas against the ten individuals who were still inside the van, the respondent asserted. The ten of them then managed to rush out of the van and were repeatedly beaten up with batons by all officers on the spot.

Afterwards, around 11 pm and in the middle of the snow covered forest, the respondent and the other nine were kicked into the river, while the officers yelled at them:

*"Go Bosnia!"*

*"Fuck you!"*

They did not receive back their phones or money, nor their jackets and sweaters.

28/12/2018

## “WHEN THE POLICE SEE THE BLOOD, HE STOPPED TO BEAT ME”

**Date and time:** December 28, 2018 03:30

**Location:** Maljevac, Croatia, 8km from Velika Kladuša

**Coordinates:** 45.200273321575175, 15.787044650814323

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 23 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** Initially: 4 Croatian officers, Push-Back: 3 officers in dark blue uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 11 initially left on December 27, 2018, at around 11 pm from Velika Kladuša (BIH). They crossed the Croatian border and were walking around 7 km through the forest, which took them around 1,5 hours, when they were approached by the authorities:

*“They light on their car in a curve on a forest way. We’ve looked. [the police said] ‘Stop! Stop! Police! Police!’ And fired twice.”*

*“Me I stopped, I try to run a bit, but then I stopped”*

There were three officers outside and a fourth one sitting in the car. When the people on the move began to run, the officer in the car turned on the vehicle and began to drive after them. Then one of the other officers fired his gun in the air and they all stopped.

They were frisked in the forest and asked where they came from. The entire group had a power bank with them and only one phone with a broken screen from a previous game, which wasn’t taken. Despite being frisked, the officers did not find their money. A medium-sized police van arrived 10 minutes after. The three of them had to enter it and were brought back through the forest. When they arrived at the border:

*“My friend gets out first, he gets off. Then my second friend and me, last. There are three policemen. I think that the boss is a bit fat, not muscular. He has no hair, it is him who beat me. The other they beat my friends. When I want to go away fast, fast, I hit a small rock and the chef he made fun of me. I looked back and he beats my arms. I protect my head with my arms but I have pain in my arm. When the police see the blood, he stopped to beat me. I stand up and I ran away. Alhamdulillah this is not so bad (showing the wound on his head bleeding out of his bandage)”*

After being pushed back, the three friends walked back for around 30 minutes to Velika Kladuša. In the morning the respondent went to see a doctor of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and was told that he did not need stitches but needed to be checked again three days after to control for any infection.

24/12/2018

## “BUT BECAUSE WE ARE STRONGLY BEATEN, WE LOST THE PLASTIC BAG”

**Date and time:** December 24, 2018 11:00

**Location:** Plitvička Jezera, Croatia, Plitvička Jezera Bus station

**Coordinates:** 44.87256475264679, 15.633412468261668

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 23 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** Croatian officers; white, windowless van with blue stripe. At the border: five officers wearing balaclavas, one more white vehicle with blue stripe

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of three Algerian friends left Bihac (BIH), walking towards Croatia. On Monday at around 10 am, they arrived at the Plitvicka Jezera Bus station (HRV). They had been waiting there for about one hour when Croatian officers arrived and arrested them. They had to enter a white, windowless van with a blue stripe indicating a police vehicle.

*“They took us to a police station, I don’t know where we were because in the van, we cannot see anything.”*

They were driven for around 30 minutes to a police station where they were well treated:

*“They even got us cake.”*

At the police station, the group was told that they would be taken back to Bosnia later that night.

One of the individuals expressed his wish to claim asylum, but the officers just laughed and made fun of him. The same happened, when he tried to express it again at the border during the push-back.

The three of them had to stay for four hours at the police station and were driven to the border at around 5 pm. After a 30-minutes drive, they arrived at the border where they waited around 10 minutes inside the van until the door was opened.

Three officers were standing in front of the van, two others a bit further. After the three friends got off the van, the officers covered their faces with black balaclavas.

*"They asked us to lie on the floor and take out our shoes. After I took them out, I tried [to take them back], they beat me two, three times with a baton, I ran to try get my shoes back, they were 2 or 3 beating me."*

*"I think that it is a military section, this isn't the police who beat us. There is a unity for it, they stay at the border, the other [Croatian Police] are normal [...] But they are all from Croatia, because they have a sign on their arm, with their uniform, they all have a Croatian Police sign." (These claims are quoted directly from the respondent)*

*"They put their ski masks afterwards, but they are young, in between 18, 31 and 35 years old. It is a really muscular people, they are athletes. [...]."*

The respondent also stated that they were wearing night-vision glasses.

*"They could see us, but we cannot see anything."*

The respondent noticed another vehicle, white with a blue police stripe, present there. When he exited the van, one of the officers returned their phones back in a white plastic bag. However, while being hit by the officers later, he lost the bag, in addition to his money, bracelet and neck chain.

*"But because we are strongly beaten, we lost the plastic bag"*

All three individuals were targeted with similar force by the officers:

*"The first person, they beat him a bit, and then he escaped. After the policemen beat me and my friend. My friend, they beat him with [...] shoe, here [showing his lip], a safety footwear."*

After being pushed-back, the officers left and the respondent ran away. He walked for around four to five hours without shoes through the cold until a Bosnian farmer saw him and gave him emergency shoes.

**23/12/2018**

## **"THEY ALSO SPENT THE NIGHT THERE, BUT WERE DENIED WATER AND FOOD"**

**Date and time:** December 23, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Glina, Croatia, at the river Glina that separates Croatia and Bosnia, near Velika Kladusa

**Coordinates:** 45.197248, 15.79864

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia, Serbia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 17-27 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, water immersion

**Police involved:** 20 officers dressed in black without identification and wearing balaclavas.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, 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

A group of 18 men from Afghanistan were chain pushed back from Croatia to Bosnia, then from Bosnia to Serbia.

The group of 15 started their trip on December 20, 2018, 9 pm. They crossed the Serbian-Croatian border by foot and continued walking through the Croatian forests for three days. At some point, they got lost and one of them went to the main road in order to find the direction to Slovenia, but somebody saw him and called the police. While the whole group was walking on the main road, a red civilian car arrived and two men asked them to sit down.

"It was just normal car and they ask us to sit down on the road."

Five minutes later a white Croatian police van arrived, picked them up and drove them to a police station in a small village, the respondent asserted.

They spent five to six hours there, during which they were asked for their names and family names and had to sign a document. They also spent the night there, but were denied water and food. On the next morning, they were driven to the border between Croatia and Bosnia, although one individual asked to be deported to Sid as he came from Serbia. After a four-hour drive, they arrived at the border. When they got off the van, 20 Croatian officers, dressed in black uniforms with no identification marks and wearing balaclavas, deported the group. They beat them with batons and kicked them as the respondent called to mind. After that, they pushed the 15 individuals into the river Glina, near Velika Kladusa.

They spent the night in the forest, making a fire to dry their clothes. Afterwards they walked to Velika Kladusa and asked for bus tickets to Serbia, but the vendor denied it because of "police problem".

Hence, they walked back three days to Bihać (BIH). During this walk, people were giving them food and clothes. They arrived to Bihać, where they stayed for three days. They had no money, so one individual asked his family to send him some. The Bosnian authorities then caught them near the city center and drove them to a police station. The respondent again asked to be deported to Serbia.

After some hours in the police station, they had to enter another van and were driven for 15-20 minutes to the Serbian border:

*"There is Serbia."*

They then took a bus to Tuzla and then to another city that the respondent doesn't remember. From this city, they took a bus to Belgrade and then another one to Sid. They arrived there after 11 days, most of them sick.

The respondent claimed he has been deported 45 times: 38 times he tried by entering a truck and seven times by "taxi game".

21/12/2018

## “THEY TOOK US OUT OF THE VAN AND BEAT US ONE BY ONE, THEY BEAT EVEN THE KIDS”

**Date and time:** December 21, 2018 09:00

**Location:** Grabovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.867102942354, 15.758963340028

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 19 person(s), age: one 23 years old, one 16, others unknown , from: Syria, Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 2 police officers wearing blue uniform with batons and guns, 1 civil car, 3 police officers wearing blue uniform with batons and guns, 1 van, later 2 officers in plain clothes

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 10 men from Algeria and Morocco left Bihac on December 18, 2018, and walked along the Korana river (HRV). While they were walking, at around 5.30 am, a 16-year-old Moroccan boy fell down the hill. Considering the fall, the Moroccans in the group believed that their friend didn't survive and decided to keep on walking. The respondent and his friend though, decided to search for the fallen person. After walking around for three hours, they finally found him. They immediately called a number he took for the police's number and told the person answering, that someone fell and might be in need of help. The number he called was an emergency phone number, he found in the phone's address book and believed that it was the 112 number. The fallen boy was in poor shape, he had two broken legs as well as a broken back and his face was destroyed, the nose probably broken, the respondent recounted. They picked him up on his shoulders and legs and started walked, hoping to find somebody who could help them. After seven hours walking through the snow, they finally found a house where they dropped the boy off. They knew that people were inside because smoke was coming out of the chimney.

The two friends then both walked until Grabovac (HRV) where a civilian car came up to them with two persons inside wearing blue uniforms.

*“The one who catch us at the bus station had a baby face, he looked nice, but in the end, he was the one who beat the worst”*

While they were waiting with the two officers, a van with three more officers arrived.

*“They arrive and they get out the van and they start beat us with batons. They hit my leg.”*

The two friends tried to explain to the officers what happened to the Moroccan boy, but they didn't give them any chance to speak.

Afterwards, they were driven in the windowless backspace of the van for around 40 minutes. At one point, the van stopped and a group from Syrians, three women, two children and four men entered. The altogether eleven people on the move were then driven for another hour to the Bosnian border.

*"They took us out of the van and beat us one by one, they beat even the kids."*

At approximately 9 am, the officers took the respondent out of the van at the border and beat him again at his leg and back with batons.

*"It's like a line, one after one, when you run, one [officer] beats you again"*

At the border, there were two officers wearing plain clothes, two officers with the car and three officers from the van. The latter were the same who had caught them at the bus station. The driver of the van was about 45 years old, overweight, with somewhat blonde hair, wearing a blue uniform. The others were all young according to the respondent, wearing the same blue uniforms and carrying batons and guns on their belts.

After being pushed-back, the group walked back to Velika Kladuša (BIH) and arrived there at approximately 1 am.

**18/12/2018**

## **"IF YOU DON'T STOP, I WILL SHOOT YOU"**

**Date and time:** December 18, 2018 14:00

**Location:** Crni Lazi, Croatia, close to the Slovenian border in the municipality of Crni Lazi in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County

**Coordinates:** 45.52234378711899, 14.484490245996085

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: one 71 years old, others unknown , from: Syria, Algeria, Egypt

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, insulting, gunshots, walking barefoot through the snow, officers are taking selfies

**Police involved:** initial capture: 12 men in green uniforms with "NATO" insignia on it (maybe German), carrying automatic rifles; two officers in the van; pushback: around 9 officers wearing black ski masks and headlamps on their foreheads

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** papers signed, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of seven left Bihac by foot and continued walking for seven days through Croatia. They then approached the Slovenian border, as they had walked in average 18 hours per day and hence covered a long distance. At this point, they had begun to run out of food.

In the afternoon of the seventh day, around 2 pm, the group was around two kilometers away from the Slovenian-Croatian border, close to the municipality of Crni Lazi. At that point, they were stopped by the authorities.

*"They look like army soldiers."*

There were twelve officers dressed in green uniforms with the "NATO" insignia on it. The respondent believed that they were German, claiming that he heard them speaking in German. Initially, the officers attempted to stop the group and shouted:

*"Stop! We will not do anything to you!"*

They carried automatic rifles which they used to shoot in the air after the seven of them did not immediately stop. Several individuals attempted to flee at this point, as they were scared of the gunshots and only thinking of running away. But as the respondent started to run, the officers fired close to him instead of in the air, shouting:

*"If you don't stop, I will shoot you"*

He stopped. As a punishment, he was then forced to take off his shoes and had to walk barefoot for 15 minutes through the snow, a distance of about one kilometer, back to the spot where the group then had to wait for a van to pick them up. There, he received his shoes back. He was in an immense amount of pain and discomfort due to what had happened and told the officers leading him back to the van:

*"Just shoot me."*

Four of the group were caught initially, three of them managed to run away.

Initially there was one "army" car and later four more cars arrived. Several officers were taking selfies with the individuals and making fun of them.

*"They act as if they are so happy and proud because they catch us."*

The van arrived with two more officers, an older and a younger one. The older officer was a "respectful man" while the younger one was described as "too much racist", being angry at the group and spitting on the ground close to them.

The group of now four was then brought to a police station where one of the group-members told the officers present that they were hungry and wanted to eat. They were not given food and instead kept in the van outside of the police station for six hours:

*"They police didn't even allow [us] to take our own food from the bags."*

At that point, there were 15 people on the move inside the van. The additional individuals in the van were Algerians who had also been caught during the same day and brought to the van at the police station shortly after the respondent's group arrived.

The van's ventilation was not turned on during this period, making it difficult to breathe. The respondent described banging on the side of the van for a long time to ask for more air:

*"I try and try, but nobody answered."*

They were also not allowed to use the bathroom during this time. When the respondent told the police that he wanted to apply for asylum, he was pushed-back into the van and told:

*"There is no asylum here in Croatia."*

There were many officers at the police station from which the respondent was fairly sure that it was located in Rijeka, because the drive from their initial point of capture to the station was only fifteen minutes.

No fingerprints were taken, but they had to sign a paper written in Croatian. Hence, they didn't know what they signed and the respondent was too scared to ask for translation.

*"If [I] asked them a question, they would beat [me]"*

At around 8 pm, the group of 15 was driven back to a secluded area of the border, south of Velika Kladuša. When the van was parked, the individuals had to get off one by one and were pushed-back across the border. At the border, there arrived two vans with people on the move to be pushed back. The respondent was the first one of the second group to be pushed-back. After exiting the van, one of the officers grabbed him from the back on his neck, forced his head down and pushed him to the ground. Once he fell on the ground, he was beaten by the officers present with batons until he managed to get up again. He described being insulted during this process, specifically he remembered the officers speaking negatively about Islam. There was one 74-years-old man from Egypt who the officers at the border also beat up with batons just as they did with everyone else in the group as the respondent asserted.

The officers all wore black balaclavas and had headlamps on their foreheads which shone into the eyes of the people on the move and prevented them from being able to see or orientate themselves.

When he was already at the Bosnian side of the border, the respondent asked the officers where his mobile phone was. The officers started to run after him with their batons, so he ran away himself.

**17/12/2018**

**"AT THAT TIME, YOU ARE AFRAID, ALSO YOUR CHILD IS AFRAID, WOMAN IS AFRAID, SO MANY POLICE"**

**Date and time:** December 17, 2018 15:00

**Location:** Lička Jesenica, Croatia, close to Lička Jesenica train station

**Coordinates:** 44.973666264074815, 15.444079427539009

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 7,9, unknown , from: Iran

**Minors involved?:** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Initial capture: 2 male police officers in dark blue uniforms; during pushback: 10 police officers with black face masks, black uniforms, carrying batons

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of seven left on December 12, 2018, from Bihać. It were three Iranian men and an Iranian family with mother father and two children, seven and nine years old. They walked for several days during which it was snowing. After five days and approximately 60 kilometers, they couldn't move efficiently anymore because of the huge amount of snow. Also, they had begun to run out of food. The father reported that they only had sleeping bags to keep them warm at night and it was so cold that it was hard for them to find any sleep. Faced with this, he considered calling the police to alert them of the group's location:

*"I was searching about the police number, I cannot [find it] because we did not know the number, we had no internet to search the number."*

*"After one hours, we move from this place and I enter a train station, slowly I go inside but three men are inside. I tell him sir can you give me food, water, and bread and he says no problem, I bring. But I think there is one man who is his boss. But he tells me no problem, you can go there and sleep. But I go there one night and sleep and next police is come"*

They arrived at this train station in the afternoon around 3 pm and were told that they could sleep in a dirty building for the night. They stayed in this building the next day as well, but in the afternoon two male officers approached them. One of them was perhaps 28-years-old, the other one around 50, both wore dark blue uniforms as the father called to mind.

The father inferred that one of the men he had originally talked to had called the police. The officers told the group of seven to leave the house one by one. Outside they had their bags and belongings checked and a lot of their things were taken away:

*"They checked everything. First they take the mobile. [...] Small knife, food, power banks, razors, everything they take. But I tell him sir, you can take everything just please leave me my mobile, he says no, no, after going to the other station, I give it to you."*

In total, €800 were taken from them as well as three phones. They were told that they would receive it back once they were in Bosnia, but did not.

The group was put into a police van which the two officers had arrived in. Before entering the van, the father witnessed how the two officers started a fire to burn the seven sleeping bags and one small tent.

*"[...] I told him "Please sir this is my sleeping bag" but he says "I don't know this language, is that Bosnian language? I don't know" and while the police is talking they were making the fire."*

They were then driven to a police station with ten officers waiting in front of it. The seven of them didn't enter the building, but were questioned in front of it:

*"Are you fine? Are you okay?"*

One of the respondents then asked them to stop the air conditioning, which they did.

The group didn't ask for asylum but one of them brought up to one of the officers that he had a form declaring he was a Christian, however he got no response.

Approximately ten minutes later, they continued the trip in the van, followed by around seven to ten officers in two smaller police cars.

When they arrived at the border, the respondents saw his friend being taken out of the van and two lines of officers standing on each side of the van in the snow:

*"[When they] open the door, I am looking outside [and there were] five police on this side and five police on this side, making the line."*

The officers present during the push back wore black balaclavas, black uniforms and were carrying batons. The men of the group were taken out of the van one by one. After each, the doors were closed again and the individual would be pushed-back to the Bosnian side of the border. One of the men tried to protect himself from the anticipated beating by wrapping his head and torso in a blanket.

*"Everyone going there explained to me if you get arrested by police Croatia you get hit"*

Despite being a little protected, he was hit on his upper right thigh by several baton strikes, which left his leg swollen almost a week after the incident.

The father was taken out of the van after his friend, and had to cross a distance of around 300 meters before actually reaching the border while he was hit in the back with a baton:

*"Also that time when they open the door, there was too much beating and pushing. And this was the time where I also asked if they had my cell phone but he say I put in your plastic bag they gave me. Also, this is when they start the torchlight saying you go this way, this way"*

During his push-back, he described being taken alone and was therefore confused about what was expected of him.

*"Inside the van the police... didn't explain to you what they want you to do. They open the door, slowly you are coming out and police start beating you. [For the entire walk] down to the border, the police is beating you."*

He also was afraid for his children:

*"In this time, I didn't think about mobile, power bank, money, only that time you can think about moving your wife and child. At that time, you are afraid, also your child is afraid, woman is afraid, so many police."*

The father was handed out a plastic bag supposed to have his belongings inside by one of the officers before crossing to Bosnia:

*"After I am coming inside Bosnia, open my plastic I see that my mobile, my everything is not there. I go back there but police is coming, they say "What do you want?" I tell him "Sir, please give me my mobile, my power bank, no problem, you take the money, this is yours" but he says "Go, go, go""*

The women and children were taken out of the van last:

*"First my friends, after I am going out, after I am back, they take my child, then they take my wife."*

The children were crying when they were escorted to the border, however this action passed without the use of violence:

*"The woman and children they did not touch."*

The whole group walked one hour from the border to the Miral camp in Polje, outside of Velika Kladuša.

16/12/2018

## “ THE BRANCH TORE INTO HIS RIGHT EYELID, LEAVING HIM WITH AN OPEN WOUND”

**Date and time:** December 16, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Pašin Potok, Croatia, push-back between Pašin Potok (HRV) and Smrekovac (BIH)

**Coordinates:** 45.17136039432026, 15.769016836567744

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: unknown , from: Yemen

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, water immersion, theft of personal belongings, throwing ice and snow

**Police involved:** initial capture: 2 Croatian officers, push-back: 9 officers in black uniforms with black balaclavas

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** papers signed

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of eight men from Yemen crossed by foot from Bosnia to Croatia on the night of December 13, 2018, leaving from a spot close to Velika Kladuša. From there, they walked for three days through Croatia before reaching a point where they were picked up by a car and driven towards Slovenia in the morning. Shortly after entering this car, they were stopped by two Croatian officers who took them out of the car. They had to wait until a van arrived which drove them in a 30-minute drive to a police station.

The police station had a glass entrance door, followed by a hallway. The group was led down the stairs to a room in the basement where they had to sit down on the floor. They stayed there during their whole time in the police station. At the station, the officers made them sign a paper that none of the eight could understand as it was written in Croatian. At one point he asked one officer for asylum who seemed to be the head officer for asylum in Croatia according to the respondent. The officer replied:

*“Are you a doctor? Are you a doctor? I take you. [If you are] not a doctor, I can’t take you”*

There was a translator present for some time who translated from Arabic to Croatian. He was described as an elderly man from Sudan, around 65 years old, with white, balding hair and dark black skin.

The group had to stay in the room from the morning until the late evening.

*“And they take us in the night because they want to beat us”*

They left at 9 pm in a white van with a blue stripe on the side. After being driven for around 25 minutes, followed by two other police cars, they arrived at a second police station. From there, the group of eight was driven for 30 minutes to the Bosnian-Croatian border where they arrived at around 10 pm. All of them had to get off the van and was surrounded by a group of nine Croatian officers wearing black balaclavas and black uniforms.

*“We are eight and the police nine.”*

After they left the car, the officers started to punch and hit them with batons as the respondent asserted. Afterwards they were told to walk around 70 meters to the border, marked by a stream with waist-high water. The officers walked with them, hitting them to keep the eight of them together. With beats, they directed the group of eight towards the stream and began forcing them into the cold water. Several of the officers picked up ice and snow from the ground and threw it at the individuals while they were walking.

*“[They] take the ice and throw”*

First, the respondent hesitated to enter the water and was therefore struck down to the ground by the strike of a baton. When he fell on the ground, he received a kick to his torso which made his head crash down into a broken tree branch. The branch tore into his right eyelid, leaving him with an open wound.

*“Hit me [into] wood.”*

After the officers saw the man screaming because of his eye, they continued to hit him and pushed him into the stream:

*“Go! Go! Don’t come back to Croatia!”*

When he entered the stream, the officers threw pieces of ice at his back. They then took the eight phones, ten power banks and €150 which the group of eight was carrying with them.

After they entered Bosnia again, the eight of them walked around five kilometers back through the snow to the Miral camp with their clothes and shoes soaked through from the water of the stream.

14/12/2018

## “[...] THEY THREW EVERYTHING WE NEEDED IN IT [THE FIRE], EVEN BELONGINGS FROM THE FAMILY”

**Date and time:** December 14, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Prijeboj, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.84378315601301, 15.673747233496101

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: one 26 years old, the others unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** 6 military officers, with green, military uniforms, and rifles with scopes, 1 military van. 7 police men and 1 police woman with dark blue uniform, 4 of them with ski masks, white Mitsubishi police car, white Volkswagen police van. More police officers at police station and during push back, 1 police van, 2 other vehicles.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of eight men walked for two days before crossing the road 504 nearby Prijeboj (HRV). Along the road, there was a traffic light blinking and a building which looked like a warehouse. After they crossed this road, they kept walking for around 15 minutes until what the respondent described as a green military van stopped behind them. Two individuals escaped. Inside the van there were six officers, wearing what the respondent described as green military uniforms and carrying assault weapons with scopes, described as similar to snipers, and night vision glasses.

*“They were not policemen, they were army forces.”*

One of the officers talked shortly with the respondent, and translated with Google Translator:

*“My work is to find you and then calling the police.”*

This officer took photos of the 13 of them with his phone. Afterwards, the officers called the police who arrived around 40 minutes later. While some officers were looking for the two escaped individuals, the other 13 had to wait kneeling.

One of the people on the move then got punched in his face and one of the respondents was kicked with a knee on his left wrist which made him fall down. He stated that he was not able to stand up for around two minutes because of the pain. Eventually, the officers found one of the two escaped individuals.

Seven men and one woman in dark blue uniforms arrived with the word “Policija” written on their backs. They came with what was described as a white Mitsubishi car and a white Volkswagen van with a blue stripe and the word “Policija” written on it. All of them carried guns and batons on their belts and four of

the officers wore balaclavas, those were the ones who beat them. The woman put down her balaclava towards the end of the exchange before leaving. She was blond, with short hair, wearing a hat and was between 35 and 40 years old.

*"The woman she had boy hair style."*

When those officers arrived, the group was allowed to stand again. Then, the group of now 14 had to enter the van's backspace which was described as having silver walls, two benches on both sides and a strongbox under at least one of the benches. There was place for at least six persons on both benches. There were two ventilators on the ceiling and on the floor were eight hobbles. A camera was placed in one of the corners.

Whilst the group was with the officers, a neighbour, a young man with his dog, went out of his house to see what was going on. The police told him to call them if he would see the individual who escaped.

The officers frisked their bags and took some food, sleeping bags, phones, power banks, tents from some but not all of them. Some of the individual's belongings were left more or less untouched. In total, the officers took seven power banks, six phones and €625. The respondent described being slapped by one of the officers, after saying that he wasn't a Muslim:

*"They talk to us in a violent way, they were proud that they caught people who tried to cross the footpath, but for us it was upsetting to see a government acting this way."*

They were then brought to a place, approximately five kilometers away, which they described as follows:

*"A garage, like an old barrack. Just beside was an entrance and a police station in front of the building. The building was 25/30 meters large with a blue door. There was a yard in between the police station and the building. The road to access there was a small one. [...] Inside of it was a sink and a heater. There were no windows, but three lights on the ceiling."*

When the 14 of them arrived at this location, they were told to leave their backpacks at the entrance. They hence had to stay there without sleeping bags and food. The respondent asked for his bag and for food and socks, but was refused. There were regularly shifting squads at this place, and many officers passed by to look after them.

At approximately 10.30 pm, the respondent and another single man entered a van, thinking they would be brought to Zagreb. Once they left with the van, they couldn't see what was going on but could feel that the van got stuck in the snow and couldn't move any further. The van then turned around and drove back to the police station at approximately 12.30 am.

Between 9.30 and 10.30 am, the group of 14 left the place again, but this time with different officers and accompanied by two other vehicles which were each carrying eight to ten persons. There was an Iraqi family, father and mother with their two year old child and the brother of the mother, inside the van. In addition, there were five single men in the van, one Pakistani, two Iraqis, and the two respondents. It was cold inside the van because the air conditioning was turned on. The woman had her period and she and her husband tried to stop the van in order for her to use the toilet. Her husband hit the wall for a while to make them stop, which the van did, but only for one second to then continue.

*"They [policemen] dropped us out in the middle of nowhere, they told us to go to Bosnia"*

The respondent described the location as 45 kilometers away from Velika Kladuša (BIH) and 50 kilometers away from Bihać (HRV) from his presumption, in the mountains. The push-back point was in Croatia, approximately five kilometers away from the border.

*"When we went out of the van, a fire was burning, they threw everything we needed in it, even belongings from the family".*

One officer wanted to take the blanket which was wrapping the baby, but another one stopped him from doing so. They threw their hats, sleeping bags and tents into the fire.

While they were in the van, it stopped for around ten minutes and the van went up an inclining road. When they opened the doors to make the people on the move get off, one by one, the officers asked them if they had belongings left in their bags. They frisked them again and put all things left also into the fire, for instance, sleeping bags and blankets.

All phones that had been confiscated by the officers earlier were put into a bag inside the strongbox in the vehicle and later returned unaffected.

One of the people on the move carried a camping cutlery kit with him and in order to find it, an officer slapped him strongly and kicked him with his knee. A similar exchange happened to a man who had a lighter, he was punched with a closed fist and fell on the floor.

The respondent had to unroll his sleeping bag on the floor and had to throw his belongings onto it. He had a tuna can and a bottle of water which one of the officers kicked away:

*"If I would have tried to take it back, he would have punched me"*

Towards the end of the interview, the respondent expressed frustration and confusion towards the treatment he experienced from the Croatian officers:

*"They do whatever they want."*

In particular, it was the way how the family was treated, that stuck with him:

*"The scene which shocked me was about the family, the baby was crying, they took everything from them."*

**14/12/2018**

## **"WE FOUND TWO WOMEN THERE, BECAUSE WOMEN DON'T CALL THE POLICE"**

**Date and time:** December 14, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Plitvička Jezera, Croatia, Plitvička Jezera bus station

**Coordinates:** 44.869736230668565, 15.629048771126804

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 23, 23 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 4 officers wearing dark blue uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent left Bosnia together with three other persons by foot.

*"We crossed the border at approximately 5 am because they have night vision binoculars, then we crossed and entered in the jungle, we walk aside the way. We walk to cross the border, about 20, 30 minutes."*

*"We found two women there, because women don't call the police. There is a young girl, we ask her at what time is the bus [...] The bus left already."*

The group had missed the bus by a couple of minutes and hence had to wait for the next one. When it arrived, they divided their group by two.

*"We, we were two, we went into the bus with my friend. Me, I don't have problem with the driver, but my two other friends when they get in, he said "your passport". He asked my passport, but there is no passport. We went out of the bus. We left from this place. [...]"*

After this refusal of access of the bus, the respondent inferred that the driver called the police.

*"The police passed by, with speed, they saw two persons in the bus station. My friends, they ran away, they went into the jungle. We came back to the bus station."*

Once again, they divided the group into two and the respondent walked to another bus station with one of his friends. Five minutes before the bus arrived, they were apprehended by the Croatian authorities.

*"The bus, it passed when the police frisked us."*

They were arrested by four officers in what they described as a dark blue Dacia Duster, wearing dark blue, uniforms. The officers made them enter a van and another team of officers brought them to a police station. They didn't know the location because their phones were taken while they got frisked and the backspace of the van was windowless.

*"The police, they caught us, but they did not give us anything. [There] was some bread. We saw it when we entered, it was some bread, here for maybe two days, three days, I asked bread, they did not want to give me."*

There were already other people on the move at the station who had been apprehended previously :

*"It was a family, but this time they didn't beat us. This family they caught it in the jungle, in another place."*

The respondent described the police station as following:

*"They put us in a cell, but I don't think it was a cell, it is more like a garage, there is a sky blue door and a floor tile. In the middle there is water evacuation. On the car park, there is a Ford from the police, a Ford Fiesta and two vans."*

Before leaving the station, the family was asked where they wanted to go. They answered Bihać. The officers then drove all people on the move in a 30-minute drive to the border, while they turned on the cold air conditioner.

The respondent describes the situation at the border:

*"They hit us a lot, the other times, they always hit us. But this time, it is the only time they did not beat us and I think it is because of the family, because there was a woman and children. This time they didn't beat us."*

When they came back to Bosnia they walked on a small path until an intersection indicating to the left Bihać and to the right Sarajevo. They started walking towards Bihać and later on took a small bus which drove them to the city.

10/12/2018

## "WE DON'T GIVE YOU ANY FOOD"

**Date and time:** December 10, 2018 19:30

**Location:** Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.4018856853377, 14.62745217143538

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: unknown, from: Syria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, threatening with baton

**Police involved:** 6 police officers in forest green uniforms, police station: 3 female officers, 2 male officers, Pushback: 6/7 officers wearing black ski masks

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

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

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Previously the group of five Syrian men had been living in Velika Kladusa's Miral camp, but traveled to Bihać since they believed that leaving from here would increase their chances of walking undetected. They crossed the border to Croatia by foot from Bihać (BIH) on November, 29, 2018. It was snowing during the first two days of their journey, so they decided to wait in a secluded area for the weather to get better. The snow then turned into rain which continued for another day and a half, so the five of them waited also for the rain to pass before continuing their journey.

Approximately six days after the weather cleared, they passed through the small town of Vrata in Western Croatia. After Vrata, they continued walking for two days and were approached by six Croatian officers in dark green uniforms at around 7.30 pm. One of them was referred to as Daniel by one of his partners as the respondent asserted. The boss of this group told the five of them:

*“Stop and put your hands down!”*

The group of five then had to wait for a police van to arrive and was driven approximately 1,5 hours to a police station in Zagreb. When they entered the station, they saw three female officers and one male. Shortly after this, another male officer arrived to frisk them and their belongings. He asked the five whether or not any of them had any identification or papers and then gave everyone a paper to sign. The respondent couldn't understand the paper but signed it anyway.

All five people on the move were very hungry since they had almost run out of food and therefore been trying to conserve what was left. When they asked one of the officers for food he responded:

*“We don't give you any food.”*

The respondent later was asked to open the Maps application on his phone and from where he had gotten the maps and pinned locations from. He replied that he didn't know. The group then spent the night at the police station.

In the morning they still hadn't received any food. The respondent was desperate and offered to give the officer money to go out and buy them some food. The officer though responded with taking out his baton and threatening the man with it, the respondent attested.

At around 1.30 pm, the group of five had to enter a police van along with one Algerian man and one Afghani. While entering the van, the respondent asked if he could have his bag since there was a bit of food left inside, but was told: “No.” They arrived at the Bosnian border at 5 pm and had to wait inside the van for one hour until it was dark. Then they were taken out of the van, which was parked above a downward sloping hill, one by one. There were six to seven officers with black balaclavas waiting for them. When they exited the van, they shone bright flashlights into the faces of the individuals which made it difficult for them to see any distinguishing characteristics past this. The respondent ran as fast as he could back to the Bosnian side of the border and, although the officers present swung at him with their batons, he only received one blow to the back. Some of the group of five however, were not as fast and received strikes from batons on their faces and torsos.

After reaching Bosnia and waiting for the rest of his group to come back as well, the respondent walked to a nearby house where he asked the resident for food, since they were so hungry. They were given something to eat and walked back to the Miral Camp.

**09/12/2018**

**“FORTUNATELY, I RAN BECAUSE [THE POLICE OFFICER] HIT ME WITH SO MUCH VIOLENCE”**

**Date and time:** December 9, 2018 21:00

**Location:** Buhača, Croatia, rural area between Buhača and Zagrad

**Coordinates:** 45.1855499682272, 15.779159096774151

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** 3 male police officers, 1 police car, later 2 male police officers, 1 smaller dark blue police van with inscription "POLICE". 2 male police officers, 1 bigger white police van with inscription "POLICE" at the police station. 4 male police officers wearing black ski masks, armed with batons at the border

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Two Algerian men left Bihać (BIH) on December 4, 2018, by foot, crossing the border to Croatia with the intention of continuing to Italy. They had walked for five days through Croatia and on December 9, between 3 and 4 am, they left the forest and stepped onto a road. At this time it was snowing, and they had absolutely no idea where they were, though they had passed a village a short time before.

They intentionally went onto the road because they were looking for the police. One of the respondents was very sick, he had injured his knee and knew that he could not make it all the way to Slovenia. As a result, they decided that it would be better to give up and turn themselves in. They believed that the police would bring them back to Bihać.

*"When I went out of the jungle, there was countryside. I looked for the police because I felt too cold. Then they came, what is normal because if you go out of the jungle, police will arrive."*

At this point, none of them considered that they could be subject of police violence.

*"I believed that they would bring me to Bihać, but I didn't know that they would beat me. When I went out of the van [at the border], they beat directly."*

Shortly after they stepped onto the road, a police car arrived. Three officers stopped and asked them several questions:

*"Where are you from?"*

– *"Algeria."*

*"Do you speak any English?"*

– *"No."*

These were the only questions the respondents recalled being asked during their entire interactions with the Croatian officers that night. While they had to wait for a van, they were frisked and one of the three officers gave them cigarettes. All police officers that they interacted with were male.

After 30 minutes, the and two officers arrived. It was a smaller dark blue van with the words "POLICE" written on it. The two of them had to enter it and were brought to a nearby police station.

There, they switched the vans and two new officers were now in charge of them. The second van was a bigger white van, also with the words "POLICE" written on it. They had to stay inside the police van at the police station for three hours.

*"They did not let us leave. It was so cold, very cold, inside."*

There was a window in the van from which they could see what was happening outside, but due to the nighttime, the respondents couldn't describe any of the surrounding details of the station. Then, they had to change to another van, parked directly next to their former one. During their time at the station, they signed no documents and had no photos or fingerprints taken. They didn't request asylum at the police station or at any other point during their experience because they had heard from their friends that it was impossible:

*"You can not claim asylum in Croatia."*

They were later brought in a 30-minute drive back to a secluded section at the Bosnian-Croatian border outside of Velika Kladusa, and had to get off the van one by one. There were four officers at the border waiting for them, wearing black balaclavas and carrying batons. With those, they hit the two individuals on their upper thighs, shoulders, and hands. One of the respondents was hit by an officer with his fists. He couldn't see anything, but was also beaten with batons and kicked in his back. The four officers were standing in a line some meters apart from each other outside the van and positioned close to a stream which runs along the border.

The respondent who had to get off the van first, described that he had just enough time to pick up his backpack before the officers started to beat him. At one point they took off his shoes and threw them away. When he went to pick them up and bent over he was hit twice on the back with a baton:

*"When we arrive there [at the border] I went out of the van first. When I went out, they beat me and told me, "take your shoes off" and then continued to beat me [imitating his body bent and a policeman beating him with a stick], then they threw my shoes away and then I crossed [the river]. Fortunately, I ran because [the police officer] hit me with so much violence."*

He then ran away and got wet while crossing the stream. Later, he managed to find his shoes again, but nonetheless ended up walking back with only one of them, as he had lost the second one somewhere in the mud in the darkness of the forest.

The other respondent described that after his friend was taken out of the van the officers closed the door, and he was waiting inside for 10 minutes. He didn't have time to take his bag when he finally had to get off. It had clothes, shoes, and a phone inside. They had no money taken from them, however one of the respondents had one of his phones broken and then thrown away into the night by one of the officers.

After being pushed-back by the Croatian officers, the two men had to walk approximately one hour back to Velika Kladuša (BIH). It was approximately five degrees Celsius in that night, and the ground was wet from all the rain earlier that day.

06/12/2018

## “ACCORDINGLY, HIS HAND WAS THEN STRUCK BY THE BATON, CAUSING SERIOUS INJURIES ON HIS FINGER”

**Date and time:** December 6, 2018 20:00

**Location:** Snos, Croatia, close to Snos

**Coordinates:** 45.17264354549455, 15.648449924235251

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 26 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** initial capture: 2 male officers in black uniforms, 12-13 male officers. At police station: 3 officers. At the border: 12-13 officers with black ski masks covering their faces, 4 police cars, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 26 left Bihac (BIH) and crossed the border to Croatia on December 4, 2018. They walked for two days and in the evening of the second day, at around 8 pm, they left the forest and crossed a road. There, a police car with two male officers in black uniforms, carrying guns in their holsters, stopped them. The officers exited the car, fired two bullets in the air and shouted:

*“Stop! Stop! Don’t run!”*

All 26 individuals stopped. It appeared as if the police had been waiting for them, because shortly after being stopped initially, a group of three more police cars arrived at the location.

*“At first it was just one police car but then in one minute came three more police cars.”*

In total, there were twelve to thirteen male officers arriving in these three additional cars. At some point during their interaction with this group of officers, one of the individuals was asked if he had a phone and lied in response, saying no. When the officers then found the phone in his bags, they hit him on his hands and legs with batons. His injuries were quite painful and upon his return to Velika Kladuša (BIH), he sought treatment at the local hospital and was x-rayed. The results though ultimately determined that he didn’t have any broken bones.

After ten minutes, a police van arrived which the group of 26 had to enter after all their bags were checked:

*"They check all of our bags and everything and then they put us into the van"*

During this entire process, none of the individuals asked the authorities for asylum because they had been caught by Croatian authorities before and had been told a number of times that they were not allowed to apply for asylum.

The group was then driven for around twenty minutes until they arrived at a secluded section of the Bosnian-Croatian border outside of Velika Kladuša between 8.30 and 9.30 pm. At this point, the door of the van was opened and individuals had to get off altogether at the same time.

Immediately after exiting the van, the 26 individuals were confronted by three officers with batons who hit him on their legs, hands and heads.

*"Three police beat me for one minute. They didn't say anything to me."*

They then forced them towards the border. The respondent also encountered officers hiding behind trees, who also hit him with batons to make him continue moving towards Bosnia.

*"Then I moved closer to the border and there were six police officers hidden there"*

In total, there were approximately twelve or thirteen officers present at the border. They wore black balaclavas, however the respondent recognized some of them as being the same individuals from the initial point of capture. Some stood off to the side and behind the van during the push-back. It was difficult for the respondent to say exactly how many officers were there:

*"It was so dark and they beat us so much"*

At one point during his push-back, the respondent was hit on the head with a baton and put his right hand up to protect himself. Accordingly, his hand was then struck by the baton, causing serious injuries on his finger. He later sought treatment from MSF and got provided with a splint for his finger.

After the push-back, the group of 26 crossed the border to Bosnia and walked for one hour back to the Miral camp outside of Velika Kladuša.

The respondent had earlier tried to cross the Croatian border twice, but as he had never been attacked by the Croatian officers, he was now shocked:

*"I did not understand that they would be violent towards us, it was the first time I was beaten up."*

**06/12/2018**

## **"POLICE OFFICERS WITH BLACK SKI MASKS WERE BEATING THEM WITH BATONS"**

**Date and time:** December 6, 2018 00:04

**Location:** Close to Tovarnik, nearby a road, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1648822, 19.1522058000000047

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 17-25 years old , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 13 officers in dark blue uniforms (5 of them wore black ski masks), 1 police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 6th of December the group of 15 men waited for a taxi nearby a road, close to Tovarnik. The group was aged mainly between 20 and 25 years old, however there were also two minors aged 17 years old. Before their taxi came, the group was stopped by a group of three Croatian police officers at 4:00 am. The respondent was under the impression that his group may have been detected by thermal-imagery cameras. The officers asked the group to sit down, and asked them where they were from. They answered that they were from Afghanistan and nothing more was asked. At some point at this location, violence transpired: all the members of the group were beaten, in the face, eyes, and mouth.

The three first police officers called for back-up and ten more officers came. Then, officers wearing black masks beat the group again, with black batons, for about ten minutes. After this second episode of violence the police asked the respondent to stand up. He was hit in the face. The group was taken back to what the respondent described as a truck scanning point at the Croatian/Serbian border, and violence occurred again at this spot, "near the border house" in the dark. They were then returned to Serbia, where the respondent sought treatment at the local hospital for having had his nose smashed and bleeding.

**05/12/2018**

## "EVENTUALLY, THEY HELD THE RESPONDENT BY HIS SHOULDER AND PUSHED HIM INTO THE SEWER"

**Date and time:** December 5, 2018 21:00

**Location:** Matulji, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.364569289430555, 14.32813152296751

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 16, 17, 24, others unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, threatening with guns, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 7 Croatian police officers (six male and one female), 15 officers, some wearing black face masks

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of eight found a house in the forest near Matulji (HRV), after having walked for ten days. They wanted to spend the night there, but at approximately 9.30 pm, seven officers entered the house and asked:

*"Where do you come from? Where are you going."*

And immediately began to hit the individuals. After this, they took their money:

*"Give me phone, money, all, all, everything, whatever what."*

In total, €450 were taken and nine phones were either taken or broken. Concerning the respondent, they took €150 from him and two phones.

There were two male officers who were more violent than the others. They were about 45 and 48 years old, one of them was wearing a black balaclava, the other had gray hair. They broke the group's phones while the other officers monitored the people on the move and continued asking questions. There was also one female officer with shoulder-length, blond hair.

One of the officers was pointing his gun towards the group of eight, in order to make them stand still. Then he ordered the eight to kneel down on their knees and to put their hands behind their heads. They were asked how long they stayed at this house and the respondent answered:

*"Six hours."*

One by one, they told the eight of them to stand up. They were then forced to undress completely. The officers then inspected them using a flashlight. Afterwards they were allowed to dress again, but had to stand in the same position for approximately three hours before being able to leave the room. To make them enter a white van, the officers grabbed them by their coats. The respondent supposed that the van was a Mercedes, but wasn't sure. The van's backspace was windowless and the air conditioning was turned on cold during the drive.

After a three-hour drive, they arrived at the Bosnian-Croatian border, close to Velika Kladuša (BIH). They stopped next to a forest and a sewer, somewhere behind the official border official check point of Velika Kladuša.

*"Near the place where was the protest a few months ago."*

There were two vans at this location: one on the edge of the road leading to the check point, and one on the field where the group were transported into.

There, 15 officers were waiting for them, standing just outside of the van. Some wore black balaclavas, some didn't. When they parked the van, the eight of them were thrown out of the van one by one. The

officers kicked them and beat them with batons. Both groups of officers, with and without balaclavas, beat the eight of them, however the covered ones beat more and stronger. They also insulted them:

*"Picko matre!"*

*"Fuck you!"*

*"Go, go Bosnia!"*

Eventually, they held the respondent by his shoulder and pushed him into the sewer. Throughout, the officers were laughing, making fun of the eight of them.

When the respondent went out of the sewer, he ran away, took off his clothes, and kept running in underwear until the city center of Velika Kladuša. He arrived there around 3 am with injuries on both feet and one knee.

The eight of them didn't express their wish for claiming asylum.

**04/12/2018**

## **"PSYCHICALLY HE [THE MINOR] CHANGED, BEFORE HE LAUGHED BUT NOW, HE IS GIVING UP ON HIMSELF"**

**Date and time:** December 4, 2018 06:00

**Location:** Sutla, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.88717247655778, 15.68414095849539

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 17, 25, 42 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Several Slovenian police officers, several Croatian police officers, 2 Croatian officers wearing a black uniform, 2 police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

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

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of three friends left Bosnia by foot on December 3, 2018. They took a bus from Slunj (HRV) to Zagreb (HRV). In Zagreb, they took the train at 7:43 pm to get to Sutla and arrived there at 8:45 pm. After they arrived at the train station, they walked around to find a proper spot to cross the border, but

everywhere they went, they could see officers. They also tried to find a way to cross the river and found a small bridge with water passing under.

At approximately 6 am, they could see a white van on the Slovenian side, and supposed that they had called the Croatian authorities. Another white van arrived. When the officers went out of the van, they shot in the air, and then caught the interviewee and beat him with a baton on his head and legs. The 17-year-old boy tried to run away, but they caught him also and beat him strongly with a baton. The beating officer was male, in his early forties overweight with white skin, bald, and wore a black uniform.

They were asked their nationalities and stated:

*"My friend said 'Morocco', he was beaten a lot. I said 'Palestinian', I was beaten a bit."*

The three individuals were then brought to a border station nearby which took them around five minutes by car. They sat on a seat in the back of a van with windows.

At the police station one of the officers hit the respondent in the back of the head with his closed fist. They were then frisked one by one, their phones were taken and never given back. Afterwards, they were held in a cell without a bed but with chairs inside. When they asked for water and food, they were refused.

They were then made to sign a paper with their personal information written on it twice. After this, the officers took a photo of the respondent holding a sign which had his name and surname written on it. When the respondent requested asylum, they laughed and answered:

*"No asylum."*

He also said that he didn't speak English and asked for someone who could speak Arabic to understand the situation, but nobody came. There were many officers in the station but the interviewee spoke about two officers in particular.

One was nice, the other bad. The latter was male, around 1.90 meters with white skin a five-day beard, blue eyes, salt and pepper hair, being around 29 years old, and wearing a black uniform. He is the one who beat the respondent. The nice officer was a bald man with white skin, also wearing a black uniform.

From the police station, they were brought to the Bosnian-Croatian border around 20 km away from Velika Kladuša (BIH), arriving there at approximately 5.30 pm. The van was quite hot since the heater was on. The driver was driving fast, swerving from right to left, making them fall on both sides. Upon their arrival at the border, their phones were destroyed with a baton. Five officers were already present there and there was a fire in which they threw the group's sleeping bags and phones. The officers shouted at them:

*"Here is Bosnia [showing Bosnia with his arm], if you go Croatia, I will kill you."*

*"Welcome Croatia [while they were laughing]."*

*"Idemo, idemo, march, march!"*

After crossing the border, the three of them walked back to Velika Kladuša (BIH) and arrived there at approximately 8 pm.

The respondent had attempted to cross the border ten times previously, including four times where he expressed his intention to claim asylum in Croatia. However, his request has always been denied. Therefore, he is nowadays, he is thinking about doing a voluntary return to Morocco.

*“My dad earns from his retirement €150 per month, for a flat, the rent, there is €50 left to live, what for? It is misery”*

One of the respondents spoke about the 17-year-old boy in the group:

*“Psychically he changed, before he laughed but now, he is giving up on himself.”*

04/12/2018

## “YOU MADE A CRIME, I’M UNDER 18 AND YOU CATCH ME AND YOU WROTE 2000”

**Date and time:** December 4, 2018 00:03

**Location:** Lukinić Brdo, Croatia, on a road coming from the Serbian-Croatian border

**Coordinates:** 45.49033437018348, 17.234910131910283

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 24 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** kicking

**Police involved:** 4-5 Croatian police officers in blue uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, denial of access to toilets

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The authorities arrested the respondent together with the group of 23 people on the move at around 3 am. They were about three hours away from Zagreb, on a road coming from the Serbian-Croatian border. The group had been traveling in vehicles which had picked them up after two days of walking. Shortly after entering the vehicles, the authorities stopped the group and shortly after they transported them with two vehicles to a police station near the Serbian border. Eight of them had to enter the first vehicle, the rest was driven with the second one.

At the police station, the officers asked the group who spoke English to which the respondent raised his hand. He was asked where he was from and declared Afghanistan.

*"We come from a war country. I want to come Europe, Europe has humanity. I heard Europe has humanity but if Croatia is doing this kind of acting so other country will do too."*

At the police station, the respondent was the only one being locked in a cell. While locked inside, he asked several times to use the toilet, but the police denied him this. Additionally, he asked if the windows could be opened to get some fresh air, to which the officers told him:

*"Stop, sleep."*

He was kept in custody for three days, being released on the evening of the third day. During those days, they took the group's photos, and wrote down their names, country of origin of the respondent, as well as his family name and date of birth. As a date of birth he wrote 2002, but one of the officers changed it to 2000. He complained about this procedure:

*"You made a crime, I'm under 18 and you catch me and you wrote 2000".*

Then the officers closed the file and told him he was free. He asked for asylum, but was told:

*"No stay here, there is no paper."*

The location of the push-back is unknown, but the respondent described there being "a big stone". They were kicked before they left.

01/12/2018

## **"WHEN YOU RUN, SOMEONE HIDES AFTER THE TREES [AND HITS YOU IN] THE FACE IN THE TEETH IN THE KNEES"**

**Date and time:** December 1, 2018 08:00

**Location:** Zdihovo, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.42274362662195, 15.221098060070403

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: unknown , from: Syria, Iraq

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian police officers, 8-12 officers in black uniforms, 1 police van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the night of November 28, 2018, the respondent left together with a group of six of his friends by foot from Velika Kladuša. They crossed the border to Croatia with the intention of walking to Slovenia and then continuing to Italy. All of them were Kurdish, some from Syria, some from Iraq. Although the weather conditions were quite bad from the start, the group walked for three days.

*"We left at night, the first night we are sleeping in an empty building and [then] walking three days, three days raining and snowing. The river was like freezing. Very bad weather. Two from my group [looked like they] were going to die from cold because we were wet."*

At 3 am on the third day the seven of them entered an empty building in a forest next to a road to shelter from the cold. Some cars saw them entering and the respondent supposes, that those might have been the ones informing the authorities. Shortly after the group entered, several officers approached the building and shot three times into the air. The seven of them remained silent.

*"We are silent when police is coming, when they were shooting. They say 'Go! Go! Go!' we didn't do anything."*

The officers didn't enter the building and eventually ended up leaving. Still, it seemed that they were aware, or suspicious, of the presence of people in the house. Despite the respondent's insistence to leave, the group decided to stay for the night.

*"We must change this place, the police know where we are."*

Ultimately, however, the group stayed in the house because they were so cold and so wet that they saw no other option. Two officers returned to the house around 8 am.

*"The police return in the morning, when the light comes, they saw footprints and broke the door down. Two police at first show up, they broke the door. Later they brought a police van which had one officer and two police in the van. They took everything, mobiles, power bank."*

They broke down the door to their house, made contact with the group, and then called for backup which arrived in the form of a van and three more officers. The respondent recognized one officer who had caught him twice before, but this officer didn't recognize him. Their phones, money, and power banks were taken and never returned. Afterwards, they had to enter the van.

The head officer spoke first with the respondent, then with the others, asking:

*"Who speaks English?"*

So the respondent replied with yes. The officer then announced that he was a Croatian police officer and that the seven of them were arrested because they had crossed the border illegally. As a result, they had to enter the van to go to a police station where they would be brought to a prison.

*"I told him no problem we just need warmth."*

The seven of them were still freezing, but contrary to what the officer had told them, they didn't take them to a police station.

*"We go to border directly."*

After the group entered the van, they were driven directly to a secluded section of the Bosnian-Croatian border, at approximately 1 pm. After they arrived, the seven of them were taken out of the van in pairs, just the last three had to get off together.

*"Then just two by two they take us out of the van and close the door. Loudly."*

The respondent was part of the last three and immediately after he left the van, he was being beaten with batons and witnessed one of his phones being destroyed by an officer. However, he had managed to hide another phone in his dirty sleeping bag. One of the group members had €150 stolen from him, however the respondent himself was able to keep his money hidden in his underwear. While around eight officers were present during the push-back, only four or five of them committed violence against the group. All the latter wore black balaclavas.

*"The masks were special for commandos, like when I worked for Americans in Iraq".*

The three officers who drove them to the border didn't actively participate in the violent push-back.

*"They just [stood] by laughing at us."*

*"When we get out of the van, one stood here with a baton and said 'Don't come another time motherfucker' and raised a baton behind his head with two hands and brought it down with full force."*

What made it even more difficult for the seven of them to escape to the Bosnian side of the border was the snow covered, slippery ground. The respondent also lost his shoes in the snow.

*"With all of the snowing, you cannot run fast."*

While running back he discovered more officers hiding behind trees, chasing the people on the move in the direction of the border.

*"When you run, someone hides after the trees [and hits you in] the face in the teeth in the knees."*

One of his friends from Iraq, had his nose broken at this point.

*"When you are running, someone hides [and] after three meters and then starts hitting you. When you are down in the earth, someone kicks you."*

The last officer the respondent encountered before entering Bosnian, unlike the others, was unmasked.

*"He was very big and muscular like Dwayne 'the Rock' Johnson."*

He was around 180 cm tall, 35-years-old, had green eyes, white skin, and was clean-shaven except for a mustache.

*"He hits you just on the head, just on the face."*

The respondent described having an interaction with this officer centered around his frustration and confusion with his violent treatment:

*"I told him, 'Why? We are all human' and he hit me. My friends who were already in the forest watched me as I did this. I told him, 'I am not scared of you, I am just a refugee, I won't kill anything I won't steal anything'. He told me, 'You get out, motherfucker'. He was scared of me, he was scared of us."*

The respondent had attempted to cross Croatia several times before but explained that this was his first time experiencing violence of such magnitude at the border:

*"It was the first time they hit me like that, but I've seen so many people with broken teeth, broken eyes."*

**30/11/2018**

## **"[...] THE OFFICERS TOOK MORE THAN €1000 AND NINE PHONES AND FOUR POWER BANKS FROM THE GROUP OF 11"**

**Date and time:** November 30, 2018 10:00

**Location:** Rupa, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.47701565714017, 14.279416119140592

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 17-40 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 3 officers in sky blue shirts and dark blue trousers, 4 officers in dark blue uniforms, 1 white van with a blue stripe on both sides and with windows in the back

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of eleven left Bihać (BIH) by foot with the intention of moving towards Trieste (ITA). They took all their belongings, tents, backpacks, and dried food with them. During their journey, it was snowing and

temperatures dropped to around -5 °C at night. After seven days of walking, they saw a dead bear in a Croatian forest. At the end of their tenth day of walking, the group slept in an abandoned house. Later in the night, a group of four Algerian people on the move also entered the same house to sleep. The day after the two groups continued their journey together.

On November 30, 2018, the 15 of them left the house at approximately 5 am. At around 9 am, a car with hunters drove down the road and stopped about 20 meters away from the group, a person looked into their rear mirror and drove away. The group kept walking. About an hour later, a police van came, fired a gun into the air four times, and stopped the group. Four of the 15 ran away and the officers fired again in the air, however they didn't manage to catch them. The 11 remaining people were frisked by the officers, who were angry because of the escaped individuals. The officers had arrived with a large, white van with a blue stripe on both sides and a window in the back. They were wearing sky blue shirts and dark blue trousers.

The spot of apprehension was approximately five kilometers away from the Slovenian border and 40 km away from Trieste (ITA).

At around 2 pm, they were brought to a police station. Before entering the van, the respondent asked for their phones back, however the officer present instead handed them over to the driver of the van. The respondent remembered seeing a road sign saying "Rupa" on the way to the police station. There, the group was first brought into two cells, and then one by one were brought to a room with a yellow door and a blue number on it. The individual of the group who spoke the best English stayed with the officers to translate. Each of them was photographed, carrying a panel with a number on it. The respondent had number 2, the English speaking individual number 1. The respondent expressed his wish to claim asylum in Croatia, to which an officer answered:

*"No asylum, camp is full, go back to Bosnia."*

The individual who translated filled out a paper with each individual's information – name, surname, date of birth, country of birth, place of birth, name of mother, name of father and if they passed through Serbia or Montenegro, and then each interviewed person had to sign it. They were frisked again, and their money was taken as well as their phones and power banks. According to the respondent, he asked for food but was refused. Thus, he then asked them to take his money to buy food, but they still didn't want to.

They stayed approximately three hours at the police station before leaving at 4 pm. After being driven for approximately 2,5 hours, they reached the border. However, it was difficult to know the exact time since they were sitting in the back of a police van without any phone or watch with them. While they were inside, the driver broke often and suddenly, and drove down a bumpy road which made people fall over one another in the back. Moreover, the air conditioning was on. One of the van's doors had a caging. When the van arrived near the border, they stopped quickly at a police station. There they were made to sign three A4 papers and left again after 20 minutes. The papers were written in a language that none of the 11 could understand, probably Croatian.

Then they continued until reaching the border. When they got off the van, four officers were there, swinging their batons in the air and shouting:

*"Go, go, go!"*

They were all dressed in dark blue uniforms. The respondent asked for his phone back while they were returning their bags, but as an answer just got beaten with a baton. In total, the officers took more than €1000 and nine phones and four power banks from the group of 11.

After reaching the Bosnian side of the border, they walked back 16 km to Bihać (BIH) which took around four hours.

**30/11/2018**

**“THEN TWO OFFICERS TOOK BATONS OUT OF THEIR CAR AND WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING, THEY STARTED TO BEAT THEM, TELLING THEM NOT TO COME TO CROATIA AGAIN”**

**Date and time:** November 30, 2018 00:06

**Location:** Županja, Croatia, near a petrol station in Županja

**Coordinates:** 45.07822609827917, 18.697039205310034

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 17, 17, 20 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 4 officers wearing blue uniform (one of which with stars on it), 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of three left Serbia and soon after crossed the border to Croatia. After four days of walking through the forests the three of them, including two 17-years-old minors, were arrested between November 30 and December 1, 2018, close to a petrol station in Županja. Four officers in blue uniforms initially arrested two of them at 6 am and brought them to a police station close by. One of the officers is described as being around 45 years old, with stars displayed on his uniform.

The officers asked them what they were doing in the forest and who their leader was. The officers also checked the GPS data on their phones. While checking the phones, one officer pointed at one individual, declaring that he was the boss. Then two officers took batons out of their car and without saying anything, they started beating them, telling them not to come to Croatia again, and shouting questions. Other officers told the violent ones to stop. Nevertheless, the violence occurred for about ten minutes and the one individual being accused of being the boss began to bleed.

Afterwards, the officers told them not to come again to Croatia, and that Afghani and Pakistani people weren't welcome there.

*"No Pakistani, no!"*

The group was asked again about the identity of their boss as well as their destination country. One of them answered he wanted to reach France, to which one officer answered:

*"No, you will not. It is my job to stop you people from coming in Europe."*

At the end of the conversation the officer told them they would bring them to Šid, and then beat them again for 10 minutes.

At 2 pm, the third individual who had evaded capture came to the petrol station where the other two had been apprehended before. The respondent stated his thoughts that the owner may have called the authorities which arrived shortly after him to arrest him. He was pushed-back to Šid between 2 and 4 pm, while the other two were pushed-back earlier at 8 am in what they described as a large car. Their money and phones were taken, the latter were smashed. The two of them didn't ask for asylum.

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

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback 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 (4 confirmed in black uniforms, wearing masks), 2 police vans

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**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.

29/11/2018

## “THEY TREATED US LIKE ANIMALS OR WORSE”

**Date and time:** November 29, 2018 02:00

**Location:** Buhača, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.18660310615787, 15.779482464889725

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 19-45 , from: Palestine, Syria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, water immersion, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 10 masked officers, 1 police van, 2 police cars

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The two friends reported that had spent two days in Croatia prior to their game in an attempt to track the movement and patterns of the Croatian border authorities before leaving as a group of four. During this time, one of the two described:

*“[We] learned everything about them, when they go and watch and when they change people.”*

After this, they reportedly returned to Velika Kladuša, took their friends, and the four of them left on November 27, 2018. The group arrived at the border, watched the officers change shifts around 2 pm and crossed into Croatia by foot. They walked around three hours and then hid themselves in the forest to wait for the next day. It was quite cold at this point, with a steady rain that turned soon into snow. The group exited the forest and walked for around three hours before they came across an abandoned house with running water inside. The group entered the house to take a rest and some water. The respondent stated he believed that at this point some officers were watching them from afar with night vision glasses. He reported that he saw those officers, but the rest of the group didn't believe him and continued talking

and making noise. The officers were drawn in closer to the house by the noise and eventually made their presence known, shouting:

*"Stop! This is the police!"*

The four of them offered no resistance. At this point, there were only two officers but after initially apprehending the group, they radioed for back up. A short time later, three police cars arrived, one large van and two smaller police cruisers. In total, ten officers arrived with those. They then took two of the friend's phones, one power bank, and more than €350. They never received any of these personal belongings back.

Shortly after these devices were taken, the officers began to search the bags of the group and discovered that in one backpack, there was a phone which he had tried to hide from them. Angry at this, one of the officers took it out of the bag and began to hit the owner of the bag on the head with the phone. The officer raised the phone back behind his head and brought down the phone with force to hit the individual on the forehead with the front side of the phone and began to repeatedly ask:

*"What is this? What is this?"*

Another officer then punched him in the jaw with a closed fist and kicked him in the chest so hard that he fell backwards from where he was sitting and tumbled down the hill which was behind him.

*"They treated us like animals or worse. They laughed at us and beat us as they search my things and threw them into the ground. It was snowing and was so cold."*

The officers present at this time all wore black balaclavas except for one officer who wore glasses which were hiding his face. The respondent described him as a "normal" officer insofar as he didn't see any identifying marks which would signal him as outranking any of the other officers present. The respondent stated his belief that this individual was working on a computer and that this computer was related to the reasons of their capture. Specifically, that he had used it to track their location via GPS on their mobile phones.

The group of four was then taken back to the Bosnian-Croatian border and when they arrived had to get off the van one by one. Each of them was then hit by the officers with batons and pushed to fall down a hill into a small stream close to the Bosnian side of the border. The respondent was taken out of the car and beaten by the officers with batons.

*"He wanted to hit me on the head. I put my hand on my head to protect my face so he hit me on my knee."*

One of the respondents also mentioned that as he fell down while trying to escape back to Bosnia.

*"[The officers] dragged us on the dirty road."*

25/11/2018

## “IF I WOULD HAVE DOCUMENTS, WHY WOULD I TAKE THIS RISKY WAY?”

**Date and time:** November 25, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Basara, Croatia, Croatian/Bosnian border, Basara/ Rakovica, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.032348, 15.761138

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: 21-26 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, gunshots, lifting up and throwing to the ground

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian officers in camouflage, several police officers, 6 officers wearing balaclavas

**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, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Border Violence Monitoring

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 11 walked for 11 days, mainly on snow covered ground, from Bihać (BIH) towards Rijeka (HRV). By walking through the forests during the days and on the road during the night, they covered a distance between 30 and 35 km per day. On their way, they saw many wild animals. Near Rijeka (HRV), six Croatian officers in light green uniform caught them. Four of the 11 started to run away, but three officers immediately chased them and caught them all.

*“When I see police in blue uniforms I run, but when I see army police, I don’t run.”* (The respondent has used the term ‘army police’ here to refer to those individuals in light green uniforms).

The officers were screaming:

*“Stop running, why are you running?!”*

One of them shot a bullet in the air.

In general, the officers treated them well compared to other Croatian officers in blue uniforms. Because the group of 11 hadn’t eaten anything for three days, they were starving, and the officers gave them fish and whiskey. One of them somehow tried to connect with the respondent whilst waiting for the Croatian officers and showed him a photo of an Indian friend who is a cook.

*“He thought I am Indian, you white people think we look all the same, but I know the difference between Pakistan and Indian people.”*

Afterwards the group of 11 was brought to the police station in Rijeka (HRV). At the police station they were asked for their documents and the respondent answered:

*"If I would have documents, why would I take this risky way?"*

At this time there were about 100 people on the move detained at the police station. They took photos from each of the 11 individuals and asked them about their names and country of birth, names of their parents and why they came to Croatia. No fingerprints were taken, no translation to their mother language was provided, and they received no medical treatment. All of them signed a paper with their personal information, which was never handed out to them. They were told that they would be brought to Zagreb and would be able to apply for asylum there, which turned out to be a lie.

After just one hour at the station, the group of 11 and nine other people on the move were brought in a prisoner van to a spot at the Croatian–Bosnian border near Velika Kladuša. When the van's doors were opened, they faced two rows of officers standing next to the back door.

Six officers wearing balaclavas and batons were then beating the 20 individuals violently, except one minor. One after another had to get off the van and was punched and kicked from each side. The respondent asserts that this technique is called the Tunnel-Trick.

The respondent explained how two officers took his arms and legs, lifted him up and threw him on the ground. He said that he was lucky and didn't fall so hard on the ground, but his shoulder was still hurting after one month.

The other respondent was separated by two of the officers, had to kneel on the ground and was beaten with fists, batons and kicks. He was injured on his head and bleeding (see photo).

Coordinates of capture: **45.558001, 14.075889**

**24/11/2018**

**"THEY BEAT WITHOUT ANY PITY, THEY DON'T HAVE HEART. THEY ARE CRIMINALS"**

**Date and time:** November 24, 2018 08:00

**Location:** Near Bihać, Croatia, at the Croatian side of the border

**Coordinates:** 44.88393256806346, 15.714426834615551

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 28-38 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 12 masked officers in dark blue uniforms, 1 police van (Iveco)

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of five left Bosnia by entering the underside of a truck at a village nearby Bihać (BIH). They crossed the border to Croatia on the evening of November 23, 2018. Shortly after crossing the border, the truck driver parked the vehicle to sleep for the night before beginning to drive again the next morning. The next morning, on November 24, at about 8 am, one of the individuals moved around and made some noises in the back of the truck. Supposedly after hearing these noises, the truck driver stopped the vehicle and called the authorities. The officers arrived in a white Iveco police van with a blue stripe on the side and a windowless backspace.

The five of them got off the truck voluntarily without any opposition and faced seven officers wearing dark blue uniforms. They were then handcuffed and frisked in the parking lot. All their belongings were checked and their phones and money were taken. The respondent expressed his wish to claim asylum in Croatia, but the officer responded:

*"There is no asylum here, you go back to Bosnia".*

Each one of the five had to write down his name, surname, and country of origin on a form but didn't have to sign it. One hour after the first police van, a second one arrived with another officer and one driver. The officers already present handed the latter ones a bag with the group's phones over. Then, the group of five had to enter the back of the second police van. Their driver was a 40 to 45 year-old man with white skin and brown hair.

*"The driver, he only does the transport, he just brings refugees to the border, that's it".*

*"One by one we get out of the van, the other stayed in the van. The door is closed after each person getting off, one by one, they get beaten. My friend in the van he doesn't see what is happening. After they say go away, go away. After a new person – ta ta ta (imitating with his hand someone who beat) – after go away".*

*"They beat without any pity, they don't have heart. They are criminals".*

There were ten officers waiting at the border when the van arrived. All of them wore black balaclavas and dark blue uniforms, one of them was female. The push-back was approximately 28 kilometers away from Velika Kladuša (BIH).

As soon as the five of them got off the van, they were beaten with a large baton, around 1.2 to 1.5 meters long. The respondent was beaten on his head four times with that baton which left him with an open wound. He was also beaten on his arm and knee, not only with a baton, but also with trees branches. Further, the officers destroyed all the group's phones with their batons.

After they managed to run away and crossed to Bosnia, at around 11 am, they stopped a random van driving on the road and asked the driver to bring them to a hospital. He gave them a lift to the Miral camp near Velika Kladuša (BIH). There, the security called an ambulance for two of the people, including the respondent. At the hospital, he received two stitches on his head. He asked for a medical paper attesting the wound and the medical care, but according to him the doctor refused to give him.

23/11/2018

## “IN THIS MOMENT, YOU START TO FEEL THAT YOU ARE NOT EVEN HUMAN”

**Date and time:** November 23, 2018 23:00

**Location:** Bosnian-Croatian border area close to Maljevac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.186309, 15.781281

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 20-45 , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 7 Croatian officers wearing ski masks, 2 police cars, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On the night of November 23, 2018, the group of three started walking from an area close to the official border checkpoint between Maljevac (HRV) and Velika Kladuša (BIH) with the intention of passing through Croatia and continuing till Slovenia. The three of them had walked approximately 6 or 7 kilometers into Croatia when they entered an open field lined with trees.

They were hiding underneath several of the sparsely placed trees as several Croatian officers drove a car close to their position, got off, and appeared to be looking for someone. After some minutes, the officers talked via their radio device with somebody and then began to approach the group's position more precisely. The respondent inferred that there was another team of officers placed elsewhere, observing the field from afar with the assistance of an infrared or night-vision device. Shortly thereafter, the five of them were spotted by the officers, approached, and taken out of their hiding place. One of the individuals was taken by the officers, beaten and slapped in the face.

They took their phones and searched through their bags for any other valuables.

*“First, they asked about phones, knives, anything sharp, next they beat. Power banks stolen, cables too.”*

The respondent had two phones on him and gave the police one of them which he had been using for GPS, but kept the second, smaller phone hidden in his bag. The second phone had a special meaning to him, and he was afraid the officers would break it. Also the rest of the group handed over their phones to the officers. When the officers discovered the respondent's second hidden phone, one of the officers stood up, walked over to him, and gave him a single kick with his army boot directly into the eye socket (see photo). After that, the officer began to punch him with closed fists on different parts of the body, which left the respondent with breathing difficulties.

While at first there was only one police car present, later more joined, and in total, six officers were present. The officers arrived in at least one large van, which was the same van that would carry the group of five back to the border. One of the other cars was equipped with a large spotlight.

The group was then loaded into the waiting van and brought them to a secluded area of the Bosnian-Croatian border outside of Velika Kladuša (BIH). On the way, the driver sped up the van rapidly and then made an emergency break which forced the five individuals in backspace to slam against the sides of the van. The respondent blacked out for a moment after hitting his head on the van and had a visible mark on the back of his ear, which he attributes to the incident. After the drive, they had to get off the van one by one and were beaten by five Croatian officers.

*"One brings you from the car, the other stays inside the car, and four officers start beating [us] and the final one, in front of a valley, and down is Bosnia and he catch him, start giving him some kicks and pushes him so he falls down."*

One of the officers held the men by their arms, while another held them closer to the neck. Then they walked them to the border and started to kick them, to hit them with batons and closed fists. They were each hit for around ten minutes in the ribs, knees, the back of the head, and the face.

*"You try to escape and you find four persons already behind you and find the final one at the line of the border. He is just waiting, the last kiss."*

During the interview, a person in the background led out a high-pitched scream in response to the previous statement. The respondent commented on that:

*"There was screaming even more higher than this. No mercy. You can't even breathe... You can't breathe. Just screaming. High screaming, that's it."*

When the respondent tried to avoid the hits, they kicked the back of his knees, so he would fall down, asked him if he was trying to escape and then hit him even harder.

*"The worst is that they are insulting us, they start laughing and make jokes when they are starting to beat us. In this moment, you start to feel that you are not even human. You just try to escape, just to run and go and then they make you fall down again and start beating you. And this is the worst part, you just want to survive and they make you fall down and start laughing and start beating more and more."*

The respondent was the last to leave the van and described the rest of his group waiting for him somewhere after the border.

The five of them were exhausted but walked back the 5 km to the Trnovi camp in Velika Kladuša and fell asleep.

The respondent had superficial bruises on his body and ear due to the beatings and the sudden breaking of the van. In addition, his eye was swollen, bruised, and scabbed over as a result of the kick in the face from the officer.

23/11/2018

## “WE TRIED TO RUN AWAY, BUT WE WERE WEAK AND THE POLICE THEY WERE FOUR IN GOOD CONDITION”

**Date and time:** November 23, 2018 16:00

**Location:** nearby Čehići, Bosnia

**Coordinates:** 44.978549392995504, 15.784888959277396

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: some 17, others unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian officers in green uniforms, 11 officers in dark blue uniforms, 2 police vans, 1 police car, 1 pick-up truck

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

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

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 11 left Bihać, crossed the border to Croatia and continued walking for nine days.

*“We arrived nearby the Slovenian border, before to get to the border, it began to freeze, we could not keep walking in the jungle, we will fall, it is cold, there is wind.”*

Due to the weather conditions, they decided to continue on the road but after five kilometers, four officers wearing green uniforms arrived.

*“We tried to run away, but we were weak and the police they were four in good condition. They fired and then caught us.”*

*“They caught me, they forced me to my knees, then they called the police van. We have walked one kilometer, on foot. Then we arrived at a police van. They caught ten persons before, more or less [...]. There is some Algerians, some Egyptians.”*

At the van, there were two or three more officers, wearing dark blue uniforms. They transported the group together with other people on the move who were already inside the van to a police station.

*“We exited the van to go to another van. To take my name and everything, there was two vans. After the police took us one by one, we went down the van, they ask us what our name is and took a picture. It was on a small parking. After I saw a building, it is the police station. It isn't far, just beside. When you go, on your left side there is a building, it is a bit on an upper part, and the police station is down.”*

They didn't enter the station but switched vehicles there and did the administrative process on the parking lot. The officers asked the 11 individuals for their identity and made them sign papers in a language none of them could understand. They didn't take fingerprints.

*"By the way, I never give my real name. I'm afraid because I already try to leave Bosnia several times. I'm afraid, they will say 'we already beat this guy and he came back'. Sometimes I say that I am from Algeria, sometimes Tunisia, sometimes Syria and my name, it is never a real one."*

The respondent expressed his wish to claim asylum in Croatia:

*"Normally each person should have the right to claim asylum. For example, when I go to Croatia, I have the right to claim asylum. Them, they can't give me the kit, normally it should be like this, but they will even not give you the right to claim it. At night, they will bring you back. I asked for asylum, but they laughed at me. They told me 'who told you that you can get asylum here, there is no asylum' and they made fun at us."*

When the respondent was in the van, they looked at him, laughed and said:

*"This is your bus!"*

They separated the group by two and made them sit in different vans. They had to wait for hours inside the van which was medium size, maybe a Toyota or Nisan. The 15 people stayed in it until approximately midnight, without any food or water.

*"We were 15 persons in the van, we can not even sleep, because the van is a small one."*

*"The van was closed, [I could see] just a bit, there was a small window behind the driver, with a curtain, you can see a bit. After, we hit the van, because we heard people just aside the van, police officers. We hit the van, we will ask them to give us food and drink. But, no answer."*

Finally, they were brought to the Bosnian border. While they were stopped there, one officer carrying papers opened the door, looked at them and closed it again. Outside of the van there were approximately six officers wearing dark blue uniforms and two officers a bit further away. A female officer was the first standing outside of the van. When the respondent exited the van, he dropped something onto the ground and the woman demanded him to take it back, but he got afraid to be beaten and left without it. After this, about five officers beat them with batons.

Altogether, there were four vehicles at the border. Two vans transporting the people on the move and two cars, one of them a pick-up truck.

When the group entered Bosnia again, they arrived on a road, where they could see a mosque up a hill on the left side. Then they saw a sign for Velika Kladusa to the right and Bihać to the left. Walking further they passed a gas station and a checkpoint, though they were not sure if it was for a highway or a border checkpoint.

19/11/2018

## “THE POLICE STOPPED IN A DARK PLACE AND STARTED BEATING THE 4 GUYS”

**Date and time:** November 19, 2018 23:00

**Location:** Ostarije, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.2136741, 15.279088

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 24-29 , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 1 Croatian officer in uniform, 3 officers in civilian clothing

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Aid Brigade Sarajevo

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of four men started walking from the camp in Bihać (BIH) on November 17, 2018, in an attempt to cross the border to Croatia. They walked for three days and crossed the Croatian border in a forest. At some point they wanted to cross the road D42 to continue to the Slovenian border.

They believe that someone saw them and called the police, because the officers were already waiting for them. They didn't explain what was going to happen to the four of them. Some people were watching when they had to enter police cars which would bring them back to the border near Bihać (BIH).

The respondent supposes that, because there were so many people watching at the spot of apprehension, the officers later stopped at a dark place and started beating the four in the head with their fists. When they were already laying on the ground, the officers kicked them in the head and ribs. Then they took their phones and €1000 from the respondent.

They left the four of them at the border, so the group had to walk back to the camp in Bihać (BIH).

19/11/2018

## “I RAN SO FAST, I WAS SCARED, BUT THEN I FELL AND THEY HIT AND HIT”

**Date and time:** November 19, 2018 05:00

**Location:** Slunjčica, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.084450123889305, 15.590267958730351

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 32-42 , from: Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 10 Croatian officers (7 of them with yellow square on shoulder, 3 with two yellow squares on shoulder), 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of three men left from a place near Velika Kladuša by foot at 8.30 pm on November 17, 2018. At around 5 am on November 19, they decided to walk towards Slunj (HRV) on road D1. Four kilometers away from Slunj a white Ford police van with one blue stripe stopped and the officers checked the men. They confiscated their three phones, chargers, power banks, €400, a razor machine and lighters. It were about eight officers, seven males and one female. Six of them were officers of an intervention group, recognizable by the emblem of a yellow square on their shoulders. Two of them were leaders of intervention group, recognizable by the emblem of two yellow squares on their shoulders. All were equipped with pistols and pepper spray. After about 30 minutes, a second van arrived with two officers. It looked like the other van but was a Volkswagen.

“There is no windows in the back, also no seats, nothing.”

One of the officers was about 170 cm tall with black hair, white skin, wearing navy blue uniform with two yellow squares attached to it. They suppose he was also a leader of the intervention group. The second officer wore the same uniform but with only one yellow square, was around 185 cm tall with white skin, blond hair and green eyes.

The group of three had to enter the back of the van and the driver drove them very fast and initiated several emergency braking maneuvers. As the van arrived near a forest of Buhača (HRV), the men were commanded to step outside and faced six officers in navy blue uniforms. The officers told them to grab their bags and walk a bit further. But as the group followed this command one of them got threaten with a baton. So another one began to run, fell down, and was immediately beaten with batons.

“I ran so fast, I was scared, but then I fell and they hit and hit.”

Another one was kicked in the hollow of his knee by an officer and stumbled. While they were escaping, they saw one of the officers putting the bag with all their phones inside on a stone and destroying them with his baton. Afterwards he took out all phones and threw them after the running men.

After the officers had left, the three of them returned to the spot to take their mobile phones. All electronic devices were destroyed and all money was stolen.

17/11/2018

## “MERKEL IS WAITING FOR YOU”

**Date and time:** November 17, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Near Knin, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.0313785937584, 16.198891314872753

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: unknown , from: Iran, North Africa, Kurdistan, Albania

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, water immersion, pouring water over one's head, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings, handcuffed, pushing head under water in a swamp

**Police involved:** 15 Croatian officers (among them several superiors), some wearing black masks

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 12 left Bosnia on November 13, 2018. They crossed the border to Croatia by foot at night with a group of eight. Once in Croatia, they walked approximately six hours and stayed one day hidden in a forest waiting for a smuggler.

Four individuals were the first ones to enter a taxi, heading towards the Slovenian border. They arrived there at around 4 am and were waiting for the second group to come, but didn't find them. After waiting for some time, they began to walk for approximately one hour towards a village. Because they felt unsafe on the road, they decided to return to the forest. At around 6 am, two officers who were hiding behind the trees appeared and switched on their head lamps. One of them pointed a gun on the respondent's temple. Another individual of the four got afraid and stepped back, and got beaten on the leg and head with a baton by an officer until he fell. They all put their hands up and were handcuffed two by two. Then, they had to enter the backspace of a police van.

After 15 minutes of driving, they arrived at a small police station. As they got off the van, one officer kicked one of the three saying:

*“Go back to Afghanistan!”*

They also insulted the whole group:

*“You bitch, you are motherfuckers!”*

The officer then brought them to a small cell where they were detained 36 hours. The room was very cold and had only two wooden beds for the four of them. They were commanded to undress themselves and the officers checked their clothes and bags in order to confiscate phones, power banks, and personal documents. As the group asked for food the answer was:

*"If you want food you should pay us."*

*"I think they were waiting for more person coming, that's why they keep us there."*

There were four officers involved during their detention. They were two old men, one of them very large and two women, in addition another officer at night.

Later, eight other people on the move arrived at the police station – one man from Iran, six men from North Africa, and one man from Albania. The group was told to fill out forms with their names, surnames, dates of birth, country of origin and languages. Later, photos of each of them were taken. In the evening of November 16, they were all led into the windowless back of a van and driven to another police station, where the Albanian man got off and one Iranian entered. The respondent saw three masked officers standing outside and noticed the rank of them:

*"'Probationer with secondary school' and 'probationer with college' and another uncovered officer, a 'sergeant'."*

The respondent had recognized the emblem of the Croatian officer on his sleeve and described him as a big man with white skin and short blond hair.

At this time the group had grown to a number of 12 people. The police van drove about an hour more until they reached a small forest at the Bosnian border near Velika Kladuša. The group in the van could hear how the officers destroyed their phones, but then the ventilation was turned on, and they were no longer able to hear what was happening outside. Afterwards the sergeant opened the door and told one individual to get off to then close the door again. When it was the respondent's turn to get off, he saw all their bags on the ground and one officer ordered him to take his bag. After he picked it up, they began to beat him, so he instantly fled towards the forest, down a hill. Because it was already dark at this time, he fell above a handmade one-meter wood barrier. Due to the construction and the location of the barrier the respondent assumes it was a trap made by the Croatian authorities. When he stood up, he tried to run again but two officers switched on their head lamps and began to kick and beat him with batons. After he managed to escape again, two other officers appeared and joined their colleagues, all laughing and shouting:

*"Merkel is waiting for you."*

The officers then formed a tunnel in which they beat the individuals. They also beat the 17-year-old boy with a baton on his breast. At the end of this tunnel, the whole group were violently pushed into a swamp. The about one meter deep mud water prevented them from running away. One officer pushed the head of one individual under water three times, so he couldn't breathe.

At this point the group of 12 missed seven people, one of them lost his shoes in the mud while another man's leg was badly injured by a hit. Two people had to carry him until they reached an abandoned house in the forest where the group started a fire to warm themselves. The 17-year-old boy was coughing blood.

The next morning, they returned to the spot to find their bags, but nothing was left. Then, a taxi drove them to Velika Kladuša. Back there, they found one of their friends again. He had to flee alone after the officers beat him and injured his elbow. In Velika Kladuša he went to the hospital to check if his elbow was broken, but he needed to wait one day because the x-ray department wasn't opened over the weekend. The group estimated fifteen officers to have been involved in this violent scenario.

15/11/2018

## “THE BROTHERS WERE IN THIS PRISON FOR EXACTLY ONE MONTH AND 24 DAYS”

**Date and time:** November 15, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Bus station Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.8150108, 15.981918899999982

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 19-24 , from: Tunisia

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian police officers (one with a black mask), several Croatian prison officers, 1 black van (driver in plain clothes), several Bosnian officers, 1 police car (a Dacia Duster)

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

In mid-November 2018, the two brothers left Bosnia and took a bus to Croatia. When they arrived at the bus station in Zagreb, three officers approached them and gently asked them to follow them to a van. The brothers were told they would be arrested.

*“In front of everyone they were nice, but when we arrived at the van, oh, oh they changed.”*

When the officers opened the doors of the van, a man wearing a balaclava was waiting inside.

*"At the boot of the van, he sat on a seat, when I got in, he told me to come here, in Croatian, I don't understand. After I tried to catch his baton, because he beat us too much with my brother, and he is small. When I caught it, he put us in handcuffs, and he beat again... The handcuffs in our back, he beat us until the police station."*

The two of them were detained for three days at the police station, which was in a place they couldn't locate.

*"He took you to an office, beat, beat and then you went to cell, after another person coming, after 'Sign!' after beat, beat, beat, after back to cell. We spent three days like this. Without eating, without drinking, there is toilet in the cell, but the sink doesn't have water, there is only the toilets and its flush water."*

At the police station, the two brothers refused to sign some papers. Although a translator was present during this time, he didn't translate those papers.

*"We didn't sign, because we understood nothing on the paper. He [the policeman] demanded us to sign or he would beat. The Syrian, the translator, he told me: 'You, you are the boss, you sign the paper, you will spend five years in jail'. That's why I didn't sign."*

The translator was described as a person who:

*"Had a big beard, he is Syrian or maybe Iraqi, he spoke a bit Arabic, like 'Inshallah' or 'Alhamdulillah', but he didn't speak Arabic. He didn't have hair, but a big beard. He was about 45-50 years old. I saw him only the first days, when we were taken with my brother, but in jail I don't see anyone, just policemen."*

Then, photos were taken of them, but when their fingerprints were attempted to be taken, they resisted and once again refused to sign any paper.

*"Just [the policeman said]: 'You, you are a boss with your brother, and you make people passing the border in Croatia, and you will spend five to ten years in prison.' But they had nothing, they took my phone, looked my gallery, the map, my contacts, and I even don't have a Croatian SIM card. We did nothing, just walking, that's it."*

On the fourth day, the brothers were transferred to a prison described as a big jail, with many blocs. In their section, there were six rooms with 35-55 persons sleeping in them. Each of the rooms contained a sink and bunk beds of three levels.

Every day, they were allowed to leave the room for half an hour, together with the persons of two other rooms. At this time, they used to get a shower, go to the bathroom, eat a sandwich and go outside to a closed yard. The toilet and the shower were in the same room.

*"There were enough toilets and showers for everyone in this short time, at least."*

The persons from three rooms were going outside at the same time, followed by the group of three other rooms and so on.

The brothers asked for a lawyer, but never received an answer to this request.

*"There was no one to answer our question, I spoke English, French, Arabic, nothing, [the policemen speak] just Croatian language."*

The brothers were in this prison for exactly one month and 24 days. The day before they were released, a female officer who had previously treated them well alerted them they would be released at around noon the day after. She gave them back their belongings, as well as their phones and chargers, however not their money. Almost €300 in total had been taken.

The day they were released, on January 12, 2019, they were taken to a black van, similar to a Volkswagen transporter without seats in the back. The respondents were then driven to the Bosnian border, handcuffed. There were two persons in the front of the van: the driver, who wore plain clothes, and one of the officers from the prison. They arrived at some official border checkpoint.

*"In front of everyone, there were some policemen, some people, cars, there was a bus at the border, it looked like a border checkpoint."*

The officer spoke for around ten minutes with the Bosnian officers. The Croatian driver stayed in the van with the two respondents, and later took off their handcuffs. After this, the brothers changed into another police car, which was perhaps a Dacia Duster with police insignia on the side. Their phones had run out of battery, so they didn't know where they were and what time it was.

The two of them were brought to Sarajevo, in front of the camp, where they were told:

*"Here is the camp, go".*

The brothers had no access to any lawyers or legal processes while they were in jail and also afterwards, when they were released and pushed-back.

15/11/2018

**“[...] THAT THEY WERE NOT ALLOWED TO ENTER THE CITY [BIHAC] BECAUSE IT WAS CLOSED FOR PEOPLE ON THE MOVE ”**

**Date and time:** November 15, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Ogulin, Croatia, Croatian-Bosnian border, no official border crossing, unpaved road in the mountains

**Coordinates:** 44.740804, 15.7910748

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 25-35 , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 3 police officers in dark blue uniform (2 men, 1 woman), 1 mini van

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** [Re:]ports Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of five started their journey in Bihac (BIH) and entered Croatia through the mountains near the town of Baljevac (BiH), approximate coordinates 44.8093127,15.7856758. They walked through Croatia for four days until they reached the mountains near the town Ogulin. There was heavy snowfall and it was very cold. They were freezing. After several days of walking in the snow, the feet of the respondent got swollen and the shoes he wore were too small. The group decided to go to the train station of Ogulin in order to buy a ticket to Rijeka (HRV).

They approached Ogulin from the southwest, in the middle of the night. At the outskirts of the town, approximate coordinates 45.2564994,15.2149026, they were stopped by the authorities. There were three officers, one of them was a woman. They asked them:

*“Where are you from?”*

They said that all of them are from Iran. The officers then asked if they had papers and the five of them replied that they didn't have any. Then, the officers searched them and put their phones into a plastic bag.

The five then expressed their wish to apply for asylum, but the female officer said:

*“You do not want to stay in Croatia, you want to go to Italy or Germany. We cannot allow your request. If you want to deposit a request for asylum, you have to go yourself to a police station in Zagreb.”*

The people on the move did not insist further because, according to the respondent:

*“We knew that this would be useless: When the Croatian police catches migrants in the jungle or in the mountains, they always deport us even if we ask for asylum. I even know other people who reached*

*Zagreb and went to a police station to ask for asylum there; some of them were deported back to Bosnia without their asylum request being checked. What happens in Zagreb (if you make it there) depends on the policemen, of your luck.”*

After that, the officers told them to enter their van. The van had two front seats and eight seats in the back where the five of them were sitting. The officers drove them to the Croatian-Bosnian border, approximate coordinates 44.740804,15.7910748, which took around three hours. When they arrived, they told them to get off the van and returned them the plastic bag with their phones. They then showed them which way would lead them to Bosnia and told them to go there. It was an unpaved road in the mountains and no official border crossing.

After 3 – 4 hours of walking, the group reached the first village in Bosnia and after some four more hours, they reached Bihac.

Outside Bihac they were stopped by two Bosnian officers were wearing dark blue police uniforms.

*“This is the normal uniform of the Bihac police.”*

The officers told the group of five, that they were not allowed to enter the city because it was closed for people on the move. The five men explained, that they had been living in the Borici camp in Bihac, but didn't have their camp IDs with them. As the respondent had a foot injury and swollen feet due to walking many days through the snow in too small shoes, he urged the officers:

*“I asked the police to please let us enter the city. The police officers saw that I could not walk normally, but they said they can't allow us to enter the city. Then they put us in another caravan (I think it was dark blue) and drove with us into the middle of nowhere, we did not know where we were.”*

From there, the five of them started to walk on a road, and after two days of walking they reached Bosanski Petrovac (BIH), coordinates 44.5517832, 16.3643404. From there they took a bus to Sarajevo.

14/11/2018

## **“THEY ONLY SHOUTED AT US: 'WE ARE POLICE, WE ARE POLICE!' AND AFTER STARTED SHOOTING AROUND US”**

**Date and time:** November 14, 2018 23:00

**Location:** Svinica Krstinjska, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.20093637774997, 15.801081375013382

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 19-30 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 12 Croatian officers, wearing black uniform

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of six men and one woman traveled by foot from Velika Kladuša (BIH) to Croatia, from where they wanted to continue to Italy in order to seek asylum. On their third day of walking along an unmarked forest pathway next to a big river, they got detected by 12 Croatian officers in black uniforms. When the officers saw them, they didn't ask any questions, and just started shooting around with their guns:

*"They only shouted at us: 'We are police, we are police!' and after started shooting around us."*

When the officers caught them, they attacked all men with batons. Afterwards the seven of them were directly transported to the Bosnian border. When they arrived at the border, five officers were standing inside the car and others were waiting for them outside. The officers told them to get off the van and to sit on the ground in one row. Then, the officers started attacking all men with batons again. The young woman, who was also being pushed-back together with the men, was not physically attacked, but was made to sit next to them and had to silently watch the attack.

The respondent tried to speak out and to negotiate with the officers in order to possibly ask to access the asylum procedure in Croatia, but was silenced by hits of batons:

*"I did not have the chance to say anything ... pffff ... if you speak, they beat you. They took our all money, phones, everything we had."*

When the officers attacked the group, they shouted at them to go back to Bosnia.

The group of seven then walked back to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladuša. The whole push-back took about two hours.

14/11/2018

## "[...] THEY WERE ATTACKED WITH ELECTRIC SHOCKS AND REPEATEDLY GOT THEIR HEADS HIT WITH A BATON"

**Date and time:** November 14, 2018 12:00

**Location:** Delnice, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.398013032098675, 14.799764156341553

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 27, 27 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, electric shock

**Police involved:** Several Croatian officers, 1 Dacia Duster, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** fingerprints taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The two cousins had entered Croatia inside the back of a truck. As the truck driver stopped to unload goods, he found the two men. He told them to step outside and called the authorities. The officers arrived and checked the truck to see if the truck's tarpaulin was destroyed but it had remained untouched, since the respondent had prior experiences climbing into trucks. The officers first questioned the truck driver, if he had taken any money from them and if so which amount. Later on, the group of two was asked the same questions, and they denied having paid anything.

After the officers checked the tarpaulin once more, they took the two people on the move to a police station in a Dacia Duster. The station was described as a small old station with only two rooms. There, they filled out a form with their name, surname, date of birth and country of origin and their fingerprints were taken.

Afterwards the two men were driven around one hour in a windowless police van to a second police station in Delnice (HRV). The respondent remembered three or four cells on the first floor. The two of them were led to the basement, where three officers were waiting for them in the dark.

First, the respondents were asked if they spoke English. The two of them denied, they only spoke Arabic. Thereupon, both were separated for an interview. Whenever the officers asked questions, both were beaten with a baton independently of each other.

*"The interview was like torture. They ask, so you have to answer. But no matter if you answer or not, they beat you anyway with their baton."*

During their interview the officers asked about their migration route, how they climbed into the truck and if they paid the driver. The officers didn't believe the statements of them, so they started to beat them again. Though, this time they were attacked with electric shocks and repeatedly got their heads hit with a baton.

*"'Speak this man brought you here for money or I beat you', the police officer commanded and beat the interviewee heavily, he answered: 'No no, this man, [the truck driver], not bring me here for money. I put myself here with my cousin'."*

The respondent reported, that the officers offered them asylum in Croatia, if they admitted the truck driver had assisted them to cross the border in exchange for money:

*"We accept your asylum, we take you to the camp with paper, with everything, just tell us that this man take the money and put you inside [the van], it's simple."*

Four papers were presented to the two of them to sign. As their pleas for a translation was rejected, they refused to sign. In response, both were beaten again.

Afterwards, the officers drove them about 2,5 hours to the Bosnian-Croatian border. The driver was awful, so that the respondent felt sick:

*"We wanted to throw up, they don't care about we are inside the car, if you die or alive, they don't care".*

When they arrived at the border, they had to get off van one by one. It was dark already, so they hardly saw anything. The respondent walked about two meters when suddenly several officers began to beat him with batons. One female officer threatened them:

*"Next time if we arrest you or catch you, we will beat you so much, kill you or put in prison".*

The respondent remembered a handmade, wooden wall at the push-back place, where people who escaped from the Croatian authorities had to climb over. Further below he recognized a river.

After the two men had run away from the Croatian officers, they began to walk back through a forest where they passed a small road and found a taxi. The respondent reported about many evidences of police practices, such as destroyed phones and torn jackets.

13/11/2018

## "WE FELT LIKE MAYBE THEY WOULD KILL US"

**Date and time:** November 13, 2018 06:00

**Location:** road D6 from highway E63, at a bridge over the Dobra river, outside of Karlovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.51577621213487, 15.474186905253532

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 16,17, others unknown , from: Syria, Egypt

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, handcuffed

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian police officers, 7 officers in black uniforms (some wearing black ski masks)

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** papers signed, no translator present, denial of access to toilets, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On November 11, 2018, a group of eight men crossed the Croatian border from Velika Kladusa (BIH) with the intention of continuing through the

country until Slovenia. They walked for two days before they eventually reached the road D6 from the highway E6 bridge over the Dobra river on the outskirts of the city of Karlovac on November 13. When the eight of them were walking across the bridge in the darkness of the early morning, they were apprehended by six officers.

Immediately, the officers started to treat them with physical violence. The officers did not seek to communicate with them apart from swearing:

*“Motherfucker! Fuck you!”*

The eight individuals were forced to the ground and the officers put their feet on their faces and backs to keep them in place. The 16-year-old minor remembers that, while the officer had his foot placed on his back, he struggled to breathe.

Shortly after, the group was taken to a police station in Karlovac which was about 10 minutes by car away from the bridge. Upon arriving there they were placed inside in a basketball hall, handcuffed, and hit again with batons and fists from muscular officers wearing balaclavas. The group was kept handcuffed and forced to stand in the basketball court for two hours before their processing. They ended up staying in the police station until the evening without water, food or the possibility to use a toilet.

Then, around 1 am on November 14, they were taken with a van and driven for about 30 minutes to what they described as an *“officer’s building”*. There, they switched cars and were also made to sign several documents written in Croatian and without a translator.

*“We don’t know what [we signed].”*

At the police station, several individuals asked to apply for asylum in Croatia, but an officer responded:

*“Asylum in Croatia is full.”*

At some point during the group’s time at the station, an officer approached the van and sucked in his breath rapidly, what the respondent described as being similar to Hannibal Lecter in the movie ‘Silence of the Lambs’, and screamed:

*“We will kill you!”*

Then, another officer started rattling his baton against the side of the van, attempting to intimidate the passengers.

The men stayed at this place for around one hour, and were kept in complete darkness and unsure about their safety for the majority of the time.

*“We felt like maybe they would kill us.”*

When the eight of them were finally brought back to the border, the officers there took them out of the van one by one, locked the door behind each and then beat them up. Altogether, six officers with black balaclavas and black uniforms beat them, while one unmasked officer observed the scene. The eight of them were not able to provide a detailed description of the observer because the other officers pointed with flashlights in their eyes. The eight individuals were beaten for roughly five minutes each before being pushed across the border, at which point the next individual was taken out from the van.

The officers had formed a line with one officer standing every two meters. When the individuals were beaten, one officer was hitting them with a stick, two officers kicking them and also hitting them with batons, and one more officer punched them. They all were hit in their face and sides. Perhaps the most difficult part of their push-back was facing the last officers.

*“He was very big, the last one, and looks almost like professional boxer.”*

This large officer waited for them in the middle of the pathway that was formed by the line of the other officers and hit them in their kidneys and faces:

*“Everybody was beaten in the kidneys, we don’t know why kidneys. It was like we are a punching bag.”*

During this procedure, the eight individuals felt humiliated by the lighthearted nature with which the violence was conducted. While they were struck by the batons and cried out, all they could hear was laughter:

*“When we cry they laugh.”*

Further, the officers at the border broke several of the group’s phones and chargers, and also stole several power banks as well as a tablet. No money was taken from them because they were hiding it in their underwear. While the officers were going through the belongings of the men, in order search for items to steal or break, they allegedly would pull out an item and say with exaggeration such as:

*“Ooh a tablet!”*

And then, for example, smashed the item to the ground and laughed.

It was very dark when the group continued walking through the forest after their push-back, and as a result they repeatedly kept tumbling to the ground, getting all their clothes wet. That’s why the group was feeling extremely cold and tired when they reached Velika Kladusa again after five hours of walking after the push back.

11/11/2018

## “[...] THEY WERE EXPECTED TO JUMP OVER THE OBSTACLES IN ORDER TO GET THROUGH THE OFFICER LINE AND REACH BOSNIAN SOIL”

**Date and time:** November 11, 2018 19:00

**Location:** River side of Kolpa, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.460779, 14.826531

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: unknown , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** Dark blue uniforms, black uniforms, wearing ski masks

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, papers signed

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of nine left Velika Kladuša (BIH) in November 2018, with the intention of crossing through Croatia to Slovenia and from there to Italy. During their journey across Croatia, the group encountered a group of five bears as well as a number of hunters, which they begged not to inform the authorities.

After about one week of walking, they approached the Kolpa river bordering Slovenia in the early morning hours. When they arrived, they found the river to be flowing much stronger than they had anticipated. The respondent tested out the feasibility of crossing the river. As the rest of the nine were already tired, they decided to light a fire to make tea. Soon after, just when the respondent returned to the group, they saw flashlights coming down from the mountain and inferred that someone had seen their fire and informed the authorities about their presence. They immediately put out the fire. While several officers passed close to their campsite, they remained undetected and the officers proceeded past them unaware of their presence. At this point, an argument broke out between the eight about what they should do next. Some of them wanted to attempt to cross the river immediately, whereas others wanted to pass the river closer to a waterfall downstream. An elderly man in the group decided he wouldn't be able to cross the river in any case and would wait for the officers to find him. His son also decided to stay.

As several individuals were preparing to inflate plastic bags to use as flotation devices on the river, they turned their heads and saw again several officers coming down from the mountain with their pistols drawn. They ordered the group of eight to stop, which they did.

They were then taken to a nearby police station where they had access to an Arabic translator via phone, were photographed, and made to fill out papers, written in Arabic. One of the respondents remembered that their paperwork was titled "Declaration of Refugee". Several group members asked for asylum, but the officers responded negatively. They told the group that if they had presented to the police station,

then perhaps they could have given them asylum, but since they were caught in the forest, they could not offer asylum.

The group stayed in the police station for roughly three hours before they were put in a van which drove them back to the Bosnian-Croatian border.

One of the individuals has a hearing device implanted in his ear as a result of the injuries sustained from having been close to two suicide bombings in his home town in Syria. As he had heard, that beatings at the border are the usual procedure, he was afraid someone could destroy it. On the way back to the border, he told the officers in the van about this injury. The officers told him that they wouldn't beat them up, but that they would chase them to the other side of the border. When they arrived at the destination, the door to the van was opened, and they were told several times by the officer:

*"This is the road to Kladusa."*

The eight of them had to get off two by two, and after each two the van doors would be locked again. Upon stepping out of the vehicle, the couples found out that there were other cards and other officers waiting for them behind the vehicles with balaclavas, gloves, and batons. The Croatian officers were situated in two lines which ran from either side of the van down the road leading to Bosnia, meaning they had to run in between them to get to the Bosnian side of the border. What surprised the group, however, was that in between the lines of officers were obstacles which they described as similar to the types of fences horses jump over in competitions. The group explained that they were expected to jump over the obstacles in order to get through the officer line and reach Bosnian soil.

*"When you want to pass, they start beating you up, when you run away you find an obstacle where you have to jump. When you jump you find another, they start beat you up, beat you up, until the second obstacle, when you jump on the second obstacle, you find another two [police officers]"*

After the eight of them completed the obstacles, two final officers, equipped with big batons, started chasing them across the border. One of the individuals ran through the line of officers, fell down while jumping over an obstacle, and immediately several Croatian officers began to start kicking and beating him. Although this individual wasn't present during the testimony collection, the respondents remarked that the middle of his face had been hit particularly badly.

Further, two phones and two power banks were taken from them during this process.

After the eight of them made it to the Bosnian side, they walked back 5 km to Velika Kladuša and treated their wounds.

**08/11/2018**

**"I DON'T WANT TO MAKE MY FAMILY EMOTIONAL"**

**Date and time:** November 8, 2018 09:00

**Location:** 15 km north of Velika Kladusa, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.212457011084624, 15.822223797030574

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 65 person(s), age: 20-25 , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 10-12 Croatian officers, several black-masked officers at the border, 2 light-green jeeps, 3 police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, videos take

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On November 8, 2018, the group of 65 left at around 1 am from an area outside of Velika Kladusa and walked towards the Croatian border. When they reached the border after four hours, around 5 am, they slept in a forest. Later, they walked again for about one hour until they came upon a road around 15 km north of Velika Kladusa, on the Croatian side of the border. The group rested on the side of the road for just one or two minutes before what they described as a light green, jeep-like “army car” with either five or six officers drove towards them. This car was soon followed by another, similar car with another six officers.

Most of the group tried to escape by running into the nearby forest. The officers shouted:

*“Stop, stop!”*

One of them fired a gun three times – two shots in the air and one in the ground, towards the general direction of the group. Most of the group stopped running.

*“All people they catch.”*

The officers then called for backup. While they were waiting for it to arrive, they took photos and videos of the individuals. Afterwards, they were loaded into vans, and brought back to the border. The vans were very crowded, with approximately 25 persons crammed inside.

At the border, they had to get off the van five by five. The officers locked the door after every five and beat them.

*“They beat very badly.”*

The respondent describes that upon exiting the car they faced four officers wearing black masks in a line:

*"Every 3 meters or five meters there was a police officer."*

During this exchange, one of the officers screamed at him:

*"I am a Croatian police officer, I am crazy!"*

Asked, if the individuals asked for asylum in Croatia, the respondents remarked:

*"No we didn't ask because every time before they did not give us."*

The respondent described how they could only see the noses, eyes and lips of the black-masked officers. One of them was described as quite big. When the respondent's friend had to get off the van, he tried to avoid the punches when the officers approached him and begged them:

*"Please, okay, okay, don't beat me."*

Despite this, three officers beat him on the back of his head and on the sides of his body, hitting him so strong, that he fell on the ground.

After the beatings finished, several of the officers shot guns in the air twice, shouting:

*"Motherfuckers!"*

The respondent remarks that the officers were very angry.

It was late the following evening when the group was left at the border close to Velika Kladusa. On the road back, a Croatian woman talked to them. The individuals asked if she could bring them back to Kladusa. After one hour she came back and some individuals went with her, but she demanded a payment of 5 EUR per person for the ride.

When asked if he talked to his parents about what had happened to him, the respondent replied:

*"No [I won't tell them about what happened in Croatia] because if I told them that they beat us they would be very emotional. I don't want to make my family*

*emotional. Because I am emotional, no problem, but why make my father [and] my mother [emotional]?”*

08/11/2018

## “WHEN THE RESPONDENT ASKED FOR HIS PASSPORT BACK, THE OFFICERS TEARED UP HIS DOCUMENT [...]”

**Date and time:** November 8, 2018 02:30

**Location:** Vukova Gorica, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.45400136324231, 15.335662464475718

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 20 person(s), age: unknown , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Several Croatian police officers in plain clothes, some masked, some in uniforms, lower and higher ranks

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent left Velika Kladuša together with a family, consisting of father, mother and their two children aged three and five, and another man aged 36 on October 27, 2018. After crossing the Croatian border, they walked 10 days through the country before arriving at the border river Kolpa near Vukova Gorica (HRV). The 36-years old man swam across the river at night to enter Slovenia. The river's current was fast, so he had difficulties to reach the river bank. At one point, the group lost sight of their friend, so they stayed on the Croatian side of the river for two more days, searching for him and screaming his name.

At some point, a Slovenian officer noticed them from the other side of the river. Soon five officers in plain clothes arrived in a police van. The group was driven to a police station about an hour away. At the station the officers took a photo of the respondent holding a panel with his name, surname and date of birth. His phone, power bank and passport were seized. The respondent asked about the friend

who fell into the river, but didn't receive an answer. He also tried to access the asylum procedure:

*"I need asylum in Zagreb."*

The officer replied:

*"Asylum in Croatia is just in television".*

The respondent further recognized the rank of two officers, one wore the rank of a "probationer with college", another was a "senior police officer".

He was later told to enter a van which was already crowded with around 20 other people on the move and the backspace was therefore lacking oxygen. The family entered a different van with two other families. After two hours of driving, the Croatian officers pushed them back in Buhača (HRV) at a small path next to some houses near a forest. Masked officers told them to get off the van one by one and then beat them with batons. When the respondent asked for his passport back, the officers tore up his document, threw it away, beat him with a silver baton and kicked his back. Another individual was beaten and attacked with pepper spray. Also this time, the respondent noticed the ranks of the violent officers – among them allegedly a "Instructor in headquarters of intervention Police" and "Commander of intervention Police".

08/11/2018

## **"THE OFFICERS ALSO HAD TIED TRIP WIRES BETWEEN THE TREES [...], INVISIBLE AT NIGHT"**

**Date and time:** November 8, 2018 00:00

**Location:** close to motorway 1, about 25 km from Bosnian border into Croatian territory

**Coordinates:** 45.265451376361234, 15.565504939782386

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 70 person(s), age: 15-45, seven minors, from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, threatening with guns, gunshots, theft of personal belongings, transporting people in vans with no ventilation/ lack of oxygen

**Police involved:** 4 officers (light green uniforms), 20-25 officers (black uniforms), 3 police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of around 70 males, seven of them minor of age, crossed the border from Bosnian territory to Croatia in the night of November 7, 2018. They walked for an entire night and rested the following day in the woods. As night fell, they began to walk again.

*“Then we were close to motorway 1, we walk around 25 km inside Croatia.”*

Around midnight, when the 70 individuals were walking in the dark along a pathway, they heard some shouts from nearby. Shortly thereafter, four officers dressed in what the respondent described as light green military-style uniforms approached them. They carried handguns on their belts and one withdrew his weapon and shot three times into the air above the heads of the group.

The 70 of them were ordered to wait on the path, guarded by the four officers holding their guns. Soon after, 15 – 20 Croatian officers dressed fully in black arrived via the road nearby. These officers ordered the group to sit down.

*“They take our cell phones, money, power banks, cigarettes, everything.”*

Moreover, the officers never returned the confiscated belongings to them. The individuals were then searched.

Then photos were taken, though not from every individual but just from the whole group of 70 together. The photos were taken with a phone and one of the officers even took a selfie with the 70 people on the move behind him. The individuals were not questioned and when asked if anybody requested asylum in Croatia, the respondent described:

*“When someone wanted to speech, they said “eh, sit down!”... Everyone was scared of what will happen next [if they speak].”*

Afterwards, they had to enter three vans which had arrived to the scene as they were being searched. Around 25 people had to enter the backspace of each vehicle which became very cramped and the individuals were lacking oxygen.

They drove for around 30 minutes before arriving to a small road between trees and bushes. Off the road was some gravel with large concrete blocks on it. They were approximately 20 km southwest of Velika Kladusa (BIH), on the border area leading to Sturlic (BIH) .

There, the doors of the vans were opened and the individuals had to get off in groups of five. They were pushed towards the direction of Bosnia, kicked and punched by the officers. Then, when they were laying between the concrete squares, they were ambushed by around six officers. They were dressed in black uniforms carrying batons. They hit, punched and kicked them even more. The respondent describes how a 17-year-old boy was hit across the mouth with a baton, injuring his face.

*"They even hit the boys and on the mouth."*

Meanwhile, a man aged 45 protested, asking the officers not to hit him because of his heart disease. Nevertheless, the officers continued to beat him, leaving contusions to his torso.

The officers also had tied trip wires between the trees that were measuring one foot above the ground, and invisible at night. As the individuals fled towards Bosnia they were tripped and fell, landing on an assortment of sharp bushes, brambles and sticks that the officers had put on the ground. The respondent described how the officers chased the group laughing and shouting:

*"Go, go!"*

The 70 of them finally managed to escape and made their way back to the improvised camp in Velika Kladuša (BIH).

**07/11/2018**

**"IN MY LIFE, I HAVE NEVER HEARD A VOICE SO MAD, THEY SCREAMED LIKE THIS"**

**Date and time:** November 7, 2018 10:30

**Location:** 500 meters from the border, between the villages of Buhača (HRV) and Zagrad (BIH)

**Coordinates:** 45.18640928760524, 15.779101010185173

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 16 person(s), age: 17, others unknown , from: Pakistan, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** several Croatian officers, 2 police cars, 1 van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the evening of November 6, 2018, the respondent traveled along with a group of four from Velika Kladusa (BIH) towards the Croatian border with the intention to cross the country towards Slovenia and then continue to Italy. Along the way, they met another group of people on the move who were also intending to cross, so they followed that group for a while. At a certain point the groups split up, one headed to the left and the other to the right. At around 5.30 pm the following night, the respondent's group arrived at an area around 500 meters away from the Bosnian-Croatian border, between the villages of Buhača (HRV) and Zagrad (BIH), and hid itself in a forest on an elevated spot, offering a view of the border. There, they settled down to rest for around four hours. The respondent then saw a police car driving back and forth several times on the Croatian road at the border. Scared, the group remained sitting in silence for another hour. It was then 10.30 am on the following morning, November 7, as they still waited for the car to leave. However, soon another police car joined it. The group watched a female Croatian officer exiting the vehicle. Eventually, the latter of the cars left and came back a little later and the four of them could watch some people on the move exiting the back and being beaten by the officers present.

*"They open the car, go out one by one. Just one and close the door, they beat him so much, after, leave him. And second, out, one by one, and close the door, not the whole group, one by one. Twelve people in the car. There is a third car that comes, four people from Algeria is inside. Same thing, one and close the car, beat, beat, beat, beat, so hard. And leave him."*

They witnessed the officers beating those men primarily on their heads and on mouths. Afterwards, some officers began to shoot into the air to scare the people on the move and make them run away. The cries of the men being beaten stuck with the respondent.

*"In my life, I have never heard a voice so mad, they screamed like this. In my life."*

After watching these beatings, the respondent's group waited for the authorities to leave before calling the injured men out to join them. Thereafter, they cleaned the men's wounds with water and provided the group with food:

*"We give them water, we give them food, someone was bleeding a lot. We gave him some medicine."*

From there, they all walked back to the relative safety of Velika Kladuša (BIH). The respondent later describes the terror he felt witnessing this incident, which he reflected on his own status as a person on the move pursuing asylum in Europe:

*"I [felt] very scared. Too many police, and disappoint, and morale down, and we can't cross the border... It's too many police... and it's beating so much and make too many people bleeding. It's not simple beat. It's like some people had destroyed heads."*

Regardless, he reiterated his determination to keep trying:

*"It is very important, I will try. If I can cross the border, I will do it. If I can't I will come back, and I will do it again – every day and every day."*

07/11/2018

**"THEY TOUCHED MY WHOLE BODY. THEY WERE TOUCHING ME EVERYWHERE"**

**Date and time:** November 7, 2018 10:30

**Location:** Mracelj, Croatia, northeast of Mracelj in a forest

**Coordinates:** 45.228070280683404, 15.796535422352463

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 16 person(s), age: 20-40 , from: Bangladesh

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 12 Croatian officers, in black clothes and masks (some with star symbols on their uniforms)

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

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

Reported by: No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 16 men were crossing Croatia with the intention to continue to Italy, where the respondent wanted to apply for asylum and find work. When they were walking through a forest northeast Mracelj (HRV), on November 7, 2018, at around 10.30 am, they were detected by five Croatian officers dressed in black and with balaclavas. Two of them had star symbols on their uniforms.

They asked the 16 individuals where they were going to, so they answered that they wanted to cross Croatia and continue to Italy. But the officers only told them:

*"You won't go to Italy."*

Then, they had to undress except for their underwear, and were frisked:

*"They touched my whole body. They were touching me everywhere."*

They took all the money and cigarettes, and destroyed their phones with batons. Afterwards, they had to enter a van without getting any explanation about where they were going. It was difficult to breathe inside of the van as all 16 individuals were squeezed into a small, windowless space without ventilation. After a 20-minute drive, the van stopped at the Croatian-Bosnian border at 11.30 am, close to the official border checkpoint in Maljevac (HRV)/Velika Kladusa (BIH).

The respondent then realized that he was going to be pushed-back to Bosnia without having accessed any legal assistance or procedures. He was scared that he was going to be attacked by the officers. They opened the door of a van and asked him to get off first:

*"I speak to the police: 'Brother, please, no fight, no fight.' But he was just telling me: 'Fuck you, fuck you, fuck you!'. They took us one by one from the car, and I was the first one. Five police were fighting me. And after me, the next person... Police was beating me with sticks to my head, and to my body. I fell down and they were kicking, maybe 5 or 8 minutes. I told him [officer]: 'Please, sir, don't beat me.' And he was just saying: 'Fuck you, fuck you.' I don't know why the Croatian police speak to me like this."*

The respondent noticed seven officers present during the push back. All were dressed in black uniforms and wearing balaclavas, so the people on the move

couldn't see their faces and identify them. Five of them, all male officers, were physically attacking the group with batons while shouting at them to go back to Bosnia and insulting them:

*"Fuck you!"*

Two other officers who had star symbols on their uniforms, one woman and one man, were watching the violent push-back. The respondent was sure that all the officers were from Croatia because they were greeting each other in Croatian:

*"Dobro, kako si? Dobro".*

As a result of the physical attack with batons, the respondent got injured at his lip, had a bump on his head, bruises on his back, a swollen ankle, and a little cut behind his ear.

07/11/2018

## **"THERE WAS NO OPPORTUNITY TO CLAIM ASYLUM DURING THE ENTIRE INTERACTION WITH THE AUTHORITIES"**

**Date and time:** November 7, 2018 00:00

**Location:** close to Vinica and Kolpa river, Croatia, Slovenian-Croatian border

**Coordinates:** 45.45444986445383, 15.252114811961974

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: one 17, others under 35 years old , from: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 10 Croatian officers in black uniforms (wearing face masks), 1 white van, 2 patrol cars

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of seven, including one 17-year-old minor, had been walking through the Croatian countryside for ten days before they were seized by the authorities in the north of the country. By that time, they had been following the road number 71 and had almost reached the border river Kolpa and the town of Vinica (HRV) at the Croatian-Slovenian border.

Late evening of November 6, 2018, while walking near the southern bank on a small tarmac road, the group passed a Croatian local, dressed in civilian clothing. The person walked back into a house and made a call. The group supposed that he contacted the authorities. Shortly after, while they were still on the same road, four Croatian officers dressed in black approached the group and shouted at them to stop. The officers ordered the group to sit down.

*"Sit down... [then] they searching us, investigation... [they] take mobile, money, they don't [give] back."*

The seven individuals were frisked and €50 was taken from one individual, €100 from another.

*"Bullshit police, I've never seen like [this] before."*

The group of seven were then ordered to stand in a line to wait for a van. No details were taken and no receipt of arrest given and the minor was treated like the others, without receiving any special protection. After a while, three vehicles arrived, one white estate van and two patrol cars. All seven of them were loaded into the rear passenger area of the estate and driven for around three hours to the Bosnian border close to Maljevac (HRV).

When the van stopped, they had to get off one by one. It was around 12.30 am so the seven individuals could see very little. Immediately after exiting the van, the individuals found themselves in an ambush of six Croatian officers, dressed in black wearing balaclavas and pistols. They used batons to beat the individuals, also insulted them and pushed them away from the rear of the estate, shouting:

*"Leave this place."*

There was no opportunity to claim asylum during the entire interaction with the authorities. Though the respondent and the others attempted to ask, they were consistently ignored.

*"They don't have any system to apply for asylum, I asked three times and they don't accept me."*

One officer asked him:

*"Why do you leave your country?"*

To which he replied:

*"I have political problem."*

The Croatian officers only laughed and continued to ignore his wish to seek asylum.

Some individuals sustained lateral bruising to the upper back as a result of heavy baton strikes. The others all had similar injuries and one man later went to the local hospital in Velika Kladusa to have his arm checked for potential fractures to the fibula bone.

07/11/2018

**""DON'T TOUCH HIM, HE IS NOT AN ANIMAL, HE IS HUMAN LIKE YOU""**

**Date and time:** November 7, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Near Donje Selište, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.327268, 16.046255

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 20-50 , from: Syria, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 13 officers, 9 wearing black ski masks, 1 van, 2 transports

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of four men left Velika Kladuša (BIH) in the direction of Croatia on the night of November 6, 2018. They coordinated their movement with another group of four men in a different location. After

crossing the border, the group of four walked for approximately six or seven hours towards the town of Glina (HRV) with the intention of taking a bus from there. After walking a distance of approximately 20 km, they were caught by six officers:

*"The police say 'Stop, stop!' and fired their guns in the air three times. We stay on the ground and after the police beat [us] with their fists."*

The officers asked, where they were from and when they responded individually with "I am from Syria" or "I am from Algeria", they beat them more, for approximately 10 minutes. During this time, they searched all of their clothes, broke three phones, and took approximately €400 from them.

Afterwards, the four of them were put into a van and brought back in a convoy with two other cars carrying officers to a spot at the border close to Velika Kladuša (BIH). Once they arrived there, their van was positioned in such a way in relation to the other cars that they altogether formed sort of barrier. When the van doors were opened, the respondent could see the blockade which was formed by the other cars.

*"It was like a pyramid, [or a] corner."*

*"When they open the door, you can't go away, [you can only] look at the police. You see the police, thirteen police."*

He was the first one having to get off the van and was beaten by a group of 13 officers. The majority of the officers were wearing black balaclavas, but four of them were without masks. Due to the use of flashlights that they were pointing in his eyes, he wasn't able to distinguish any identifying characteristics of their faces.

He was beaten for approximately 10 minutes, passing a distance of around 20 meters. While attempting to pass the line of officers, he was hit with batons. Halfway, he was intentionally pushed down onto the ground and then hit by all 13 officers with batons and fists:

*"Halfway, they push you down and beat you again, all police."*

He got up again and stumbled the remaining meters towards the border, all while being hit. When he finally reached the safety of the Bosnian side, an officer screamed at him:

*"Motherfucker, go to Bosnia and never come back!"*

His rib was broken during the attack and another individual's nose was badly hurt (see photo).

The respondent then had to walk back alone through the darkness without any sense as to where he was:

*"No light, no nothing. You can't see a single thing... I don't have GPS or anything... When I could hear the police beating people, when I heard screams, I came back. I feel this is not Bosnia, this is Croatia, and another way. Maybe 10 minutes after this, I see the light. I hear some people say "Hey, hey, come here, this is the way, come on". I make that. And drink [their] water".*

The respondent already tried to cross Croatia five times in total before this attempt and voiced his frustration about the brutality of the authorities he has experienced:

*"Inside the migrant you find everything. The good, the bad, the drinker, the junkie, the doctor, the engineer, everything. But you must make a filter. Don't judge someone when you see him drink or take drugs. First, talk with him. You can't judge a book by the first page and the last page. You must read the whole book. Maybe you see me take drugs or you see me drinking. I am not a bad person, I have my own problems... I am without my country, I am leaving my family, I am leaving everything, my work, to try this plan."*

Finally, he remarked on his perception of the violent push-back in Croatia:

*"From my experience, what I read in books, what I listen to in the news, when you catch someone inside some country without papers, just take him outside the border. Don't touch him, he is not an animal, he is human like you. Why did 13 police beat me for ten minutes in the dark, in the night? It is not legal, brother."*

07/11/2018

## ""THIS IS MY FUTURE, I MUST DREAM, I MUST, I MUST""

**Date and time:** November 7, 2018 00:00

**Location:** near Rijeka, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.3270631, 14.4421760000000018

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: Unknown , from: Pakistan, Egypt

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian officers (3 men and one woman, in black uniforms), 1 van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent left Velika Kladusa (BIH) alone and crossed the border to Croatia, where he wanted to apply for asylum, by foot. He walked almost 180 km through difficult terrains, forests and mountains until he almost reached Rijeka (HRV). He said that he had pain in his ankle, he had sprained it at some point and his foot was bleeding from a blister. Therefore, he struggled to continue his journey. On November 7, 2018, he was caught by four Croatian officers, three men and one woman, wearing black uniforms.

He told the officers about the pain in his ankle and asked them if they could help him to reach medical assistance. But they didn't react to his request and told him to undress completely, including his underwear, and frisked his body while he was standing there naked. The officers took his money, 20€ and phone.

*"I asked him, why did they act to me like that? I am not dangerous, I am not a thief. I don't want to stay in Croatia, only [passing] in jungle. I need asylum in Europe and stay in Europe. But the police only said to me: This is my job."*

Then, the officers transported him with a van to the Bosnian border, without letting him access any legal procedures or obtain medical help. He said that the van stopped on the way to the border and picked up six Pakistani people on the move, who were later pushed-back with him to Bosnia. Once they arrived at the border, approximately 18 km away from the official border checkpoint near Maljevac (HRV)/Velika Kladusa (BIH), the officers told the seven of them to get out of the car and started beating the Pakistanis with batons while shouting at them to go back to Bosnia. They did not physically hurt the respondent though.

After the push-back at around 11 pm the following evening, the respondent walked back 18 km with his injured, bleeding ankle to Velika Kladuša. There, he was later treated by a team of doctors from Medecins Sans Frontieres. At the end of the interview, he explained that he could not return to Egypt due to the violent government. This was his sixth attempt to reach asylum in Europe, and he says that he will keep trying despite all the difficulties or injuries:

*"This is my future, I must dream, I must, I must. I tell you my sister, maybe I finish my dream, maybe I finish my life. I need to finish my dream and my future, I need to see Europe. And if this is not finished, I finish my life. Maybe death, maybe walk."*

**06/11/2018**

**""WE HATE ALL OF YOU [...] ONLY BECAUSE YOU ARE FROM THE MIDDLE EAST.""**

**Date and time:** November 6, 2018 16:00

**Location:** Woodland around 20 km south of Slunj, near the village of Novo Selo, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.4240143, 16.38312529999996

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 27-35 years old , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 13 officers in black uniforms, some wearing black masks, 1 police van, 1 white estate car

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Seven men were travelling on foot through the eastern Croatia before they encountered the Croatian police. The interviewee tells that their intention was to arrive at the northwestern city of Rijeka, on the Croatian coast.

At 5pm on 5th of November 2018 this group of Iranian males left the makeshift camp (known as Miral) in Polje, and walked south from the municipality of Velika Kladusa in Bosnia to reach the border area with Croatia. The group crossed the borders at dusk and the interviewee says they spent approximately six hours resting overnight in the forest before continuing on foot into Croatia. The following morning on 6th of November, at first light, the men continued their journey and walked for around twelve hours. The respondent tells that they were walking in exposed woodland around 20 km south of Slunj, near the village of Novo Selo, when they were observed by a stationary white police van. The time was approximately 4pm.

*"We couldn't hide, it was fall."*

Unable to conceal their position from the police, the men tried to move away from the vehicle, heading in the opposite direction into the forest. They followed a track in the woods, but as it bent around a low hill, they were apprehended by four Croatian police officers dressed in black uniforms. About the police the respondent remarked:

*"[They were] border police, it was obvious."*

These officers made the group sit down on the track and wait in silence while they called a colleague. Soon another male officer dressed in similar black uniform arrived on the scene. The men were ordered to:

*"Stand up and follow me."*

The seven men were made to march in escort by these five officers and brought to a village a short distance away. The men were ordered again to sit down, this time on the roadside in a semi-residential area where there were houses. The respondent says that they were forced to sit on the ground, while local Croatians walked past. The officers frisked the bodies and removed the belongings of the men in front of the civilian witnesses. At this time the victims asked the police for the opportunity to make an asylum claim in Croatia. But the officers only responded by laughing and insulting the group in Croatian.

*"The same thing happened before [when asking for asylum]. They [the Croatian police] didn't even listen."*

The respondent tried to reiterate his intention for asylum, telling the police that he was being persecuted in Iran for his Christian faith. He asked the officers:

*"Aren't you Christian?"*

To which he said they replied:

*"We hate all of you, doesn't matter if you're Christians, only because you are from the Middle East."*

After the body searches and theft of possessions the men were loaded into a white combi vehicle. This was brought by an officer as they were sat crouched in the village. All seven individuals were put into the rear passenger area of the van. The man interviewed describes how the heat in the back of the combi was raised by a thermostat, so that the journey to the border was nauseous.

The trip took around 30 minutes and when the van was stopped, the back doors were opened to the passenger area. It was dark outside, and they had arrived at the rural border area (Croatian farmland on the border with Bosnia, close to Bosnian town Zagrad) at around 6 pm.

At the back of the van stood a circle of four officers dressed also in black. They wore face masks, so the respondent could not see any identifying features. One of the officers beckoned them out one by one. As each of the victim came out, the Croatian officers beat the men with police issued batons and kicked at their shins with reinforced black boots. The officers struck the men over the head and on the torso with the truncheons, and kicked their ankles and lower legs. Once these four officers had finished with each man, they shouted at the victims to pass through a small gap in the bushes (in the direction of BiH territory). The respondent shares how:

*"They [the Croatian officers] told us to run."*

The men were pushed through into a small track and believed they were being set free back into Bosnia. But at the end of the short path were four more officers in black concealed. The further ambush also wore black Croatian police uniforms and were wearing face masks. They struck the men with batons and kicked/tripped them as they emerged from the bushes. The whole ordeal lasted around 10-15 minutes, after which all the eight officers returned to their vehicles and left.

All the men were severely injured and disorientated. It was dark and they sat crouched in some bushes, waiting to see if the Croatian officers would return. When they felt it was safe to move they began walking, trying to find their bearings and return to Velika Kladusa. However it was dark and they were unable to recognise the terrain. The men spent a further night sleeping outside in the cold (with open wounds and bruising from the attack by Croatian police). In the morning they began to walk again, hoping to find their way.

However, the group accidentally walked into Croatian territory, bewildered by the open farmland. When the men saw a woman trying to make a phone call (which they believed was to the police), they realised they had crossed back into Croatia. They headed in the opposite

direction and eventually found a road leading back through the west side of Zagrad into Bosnia. By this route they returned to the improvised sheltered accommodation near Velika Kladusa.

The injuries sustained are consistent with lateral strikes applied with extreme force using a blunted smooth object such as a baton/truncheon. The scars are consistent with the form of assault described above and were treated the following morning on 7th of November 2018 at Miral (improvised camp) by the MSF field clinic.

05/11/2018

## “THERE WAS NO OXYGEN AND CAR WAS DRIVING FAST AND I WAS VOMITING”

**Date and time:** November 5, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Petrova Gora, Croatia, in a forest West of the town

**Coordinates:** 45.30166648136561, 15.774703317475087

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 21-56, from: Iran, Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), threatening with guns, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving, no ventilation inside the van's windowless backspace

**Police involved:** 5-10 Croatian officers, in black clothes, wearing black ski masks, 2 police vans

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent traveled together with nine other men by foot from Velika Kladusa (BIH) to Croatia. They were walking through a Croatian forest, west of the town of Petrova Gora, at around midnight on November 5, 2018, when they were detected by five Croatian officers. They were dressed in black clothes, wore balaclavas. When they saw the group of ten, they started shouting at them to stop and shot their guns. The respondent didn't see if they were pointing at them or in the air when shooting.

*"I don't see if they shoot air or us. I just scare."*

The officers then called for backup and shortly after two vans arrived. As the respondent speaks basic English, he understood the officers asking him for his name and nationality. The officers then body searched all the group and found all their phones, as well as their money and power banks. They never returned any of these and destroyed the phones. The respondent articulated his wish to access the asylum procedure in Croatia:

*"I need asylum in Croatia."*

He had hoped that he could access legal assistance in Croatia. But when he tried to speak out, the officers only told him to be silent.

They were then transported in one van for around one hour to the Bosnian border without being taken to a police station or given access to legal assistance and asylum procedures.

*"There was no oxygen and car was driving fast and I was vomiting."*

After arriving at the border around 1.30 am, about 15 km from Velika Kladusa (BIH), they were tired and feeling sick from the fast drive with lack of oxygen. One officer opened the door of the van and told the ten of them to exit one by one. Outside, they could see officers in black clothes and balaclavas waiting for them. Each of them, was then physically attacked by those while running back to Bosnia.

*"At the border, they were shouting at us: 'Go, go, go, go!' and beating us with batons. Open car and one by one, pa pa pa pa with baton. I fell and broke my leg."*

The respondent's friends then helped him to walk back 15 km with his broken leg to Velika Kladuša (BIH). Also the respondent's friend got injuries from the physical attack, having pain in his shoulder and legs.

03/11/2018

## ““THEY DIRECTLY DEPORTED US. NO POLICE STATION, THE PROCESS WAS ILLEGAL””

**Date and time:** November 3, 2018 10:00

**Location:** Gojkovac, Croatia, on a small road in a forest close to the town

**Coordinates:** 45.200116, 15.6827313

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: 17-35 years old , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian police officers, 3 officers in black uniforms (2 men, 1 woman)

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of six traveled from Velika Kladusa (BIH) by foot and crossed the border to Croatia on November 3, 2018. They started their journey at around 3 am. At approximately 10 am the same day they were walking along a small road through a forest, close to Gojkovac (HRV), when they were detected by four Croatian officers. The six of them tried to hide behind a tree because they feared being brought back to Bosnia. However, the officers saw them and started shouting at the men to come out.

When they stepped out of the bush, the officers asked them whether there were more people from their group hiding and if they had knives. The respondent mentioned, that he felt being treated like a criminal:

*"We said that no, we did not have any more people. He was shouting at me: 'Yes, you have!' But we did not, we were just 6 people. After they asked us if we had some knife and checked our food and everything. He asked us where we bought our food and drink. I said to him that in Bosnia. He said that I lied. But who would give it to me in Croatia, I bought it in Bosnia."*

The officers told the six of them to sit down next to the road and to undress completely. Then, they frisked their bodies and found five phones from which they

broke four and stole the newest one and around €350. Finally, the officers took their bags and threw them into the forest, with all the belongings inside.

The respondent tried to speak to the officers about whether the six could access asylum procedures in Croatia. But when he tried to speak out, the officers told him to be silent. A boy, who was 17-years-old, told the officers that he was underage and also asked for asylum in Croatia. The officers only responded to him that he should have stayed with his mother because he was a child. After waiting 30 minutes almost naked in the cold, a van arrived with three more officers dressed in black uniforms, one of whom was a about 35-years-old woman. They ordered the men to get dressed and to enter the van and then drove them to the Bosnian border:

*"They directly deported us. No police station, the process was illegal."*

Once they arrived there, between the villages of Crni Potok (HRV) and Ponikve (HRV), at around 11.30 am the same day, they were told to get off the van one by one, were physically and verbally attacked and ordered to cross a river back to Bosnia:

*"They were saying to me: 'You are [from] Pakistan, you are like dog, like bullshit, terrorist.' One officer tortured this poor guy [pointing at the 17 years old boy], boxing him into legs and hitting him two strikes with sticks. They said to us by the border: 'This is the river, go to the river, go, this is Bosnia.' But I said, 'How we could go to the river?' But they said to us that if we don't go, they would hurt us. Where we could go? In Bosnia, we do not have any home. But he [an officer] was saying that it was not his problem that we had to go. He said: 'Do not stay in Croatia, go!' After, we are coming to the river, it was like three or four foot water. After we crossed the river.'*

**02/11/2018**

**"THE ROOM WAS ABSOLUTELY PACKED WITH PEOPLE. IF I STAYED THERE ONE NIGHT, I WOULD DIE"**

**Date and time:** November 2, 2018 23:00

**Location:** Near Suhor, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.48943226536151, 14.777234112304654

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 13-30 years old , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 4 officers in blue uniform, several other officers in black uniform and face masks, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of six, including one 13-year-old boy, traveled by foot from Bihać (BIH) to Croatia. They didn't have the intention to stay in Croatia and apply for asylum there, but rather wanted to pass through Croatia and Slovenia to Italy. They wanted to cross a river at the Croatian-Slovenian border but due to its depth and fast current, they got scared of drowning and decided to walk back. On the way back, still nearby the border, they were stopped by a group of four Croatian officers.

When they caught the six of them, they only asked them where they were heading to. After that, the officers talked between themselves in Croatian, so the group didn't understand their conversation. The officers then started acting aggressively towards the people on the move and took their personal belongings:

*"They started beating us. Their behavior was very bad. One young guy was very stupid, he was throwing our bags from a mountain, and we had everything in our bags. They threw it from the mountain. They were telling us rubbish things about our families, like mother fucker and things like this."*

They then told them that if they gave them all their money, they would set them free. Accordingly, the six of them handed the officers all of their money, €500 in total. The officers took the money and called for back up. Shortly after some officers dressed in black clothes and balaclavas arrived.

*"Military police arrive. They are all black and look like soldiers."*

One of them told the group of six to enter the van, without specifying what was going to happen to them next. When they were walking towards the van, the latter arrived officers were verbally attacking them, kicked them into their legs and pushed them, so that one of the respondent's friends fell on the ground on his face.

The car first took the group to a police station in a city, which they couldn't identify as the van had dark windows. When they arrived there, all of them were taken into a cell, where they were detained for several hours.

*"Inside of room of the jail there was no air, you could not breathe. The room was absolutely packed with people. If I stayed there one night, I would die. Absolutely closed and dangerous, there was no air, not possible to breath. They took our food, we had little bit of food in our bag, and water, but they took it and threw it outside".*

After three hours, the officers dressed in black and with balaclavas returned to the cell and told the group to follow them. All twenty people who had been detained in the same cell were told to enter a van and were then deported straight to the Bosnian border, without accessing any legal procedures. The journey to the border took around 3,5 hours.

Once they arrived, they were told to get off the van, one by one, and were then physically attacked by the same officers who had been transporting them:

*"Military [Croatian police] were standing in two lines. And then, start hitting us while people running. They don't care, they hit into eyes, head, on the back, they don't care. There is nobody asking them questions or taking any action against them. They are beating humans like animals. They were beating us and laughing. They were kicking us and laughing, they were enjoying, like we were football."*

The 13-year-old boy was also attacked and had pain in his knee and legs. At the end of the interview, the respondent expressed his confusion about the officer's action towards people trying to reach asylum in the EU territory:

*"I am completely confused why they were beating us. I understand that we are illegal, we are refugees, we are using their borders, and their land. But we don't want to hurt anyone. We don't want to stay in Croatia. Despite of that, I don't know why they are beating us. They don't have right to beat us. There are the rights we have, even animals have the rights and we are humans".*

02/11/2018

**"I SAID TO THEM I WAS 16, AND THEY SAID: 'NO 16 YEARS OLD!' AND SLAPPED MY FACE. I WAS CRYING"**

**Date and time:** November 2, 2018 21:30

**Location:** Bosanci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.43738304747329, 15.247328793090787

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 16-19 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, no ventilation in the van's backspace/ lack of oxygen

**Police involved:** 7 Croatian officers, part of them with ski masks and black clothes, 4 officers at police station

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of seven, including three minors, traveled by foot from Bihać (BIH) to Croatia. They intended to walk all the way to Italy to apply for asylum there. They walked for 15 days, the last five days without any food or water. While they were walking in a Croatian forest, they were detected by a group of seven Croatian officers. When they caught the boys, they questioned them about where they were heading to. They responded honestly, explaining that they were traveling to Italy and didn't want to stay in Croatia. The officers responded aggressively:

*"They say no, you are not going to Italy, you go back to Bosnia."*

The officers then hit the respondent on his eyebrow and pushed him so that he fell. Afterwards, they ordered the group of seven to sit down and frisked their bodies. They confiscated all their mobile phones, power banks and money.

Afterwards they were transported to a place which the respondent called "*deportation center*". It was a police station where they were investigated by a different group of four Croatian officers. Then, they were driven for two hours to the Bosnian border in a van.

*"They drove us with a closed combi car. It was freezing inside and there was no air, we cannot breathe."*

In addition to the cold, there was a lack of oxygen in the van so that they had difficulties to breathe. When they arrived at the border Bosnia, the respondent's older brother asked the officers if they could return their phones. One officer responded to this by threatening him with a pistol.

*"When my brother asked if they could give us our mobiles back, the Croatian police man pulled his gun out and placed it to the head of my brother. They just said to us to go back to Bosnia".*

When the group was told to get off the van one by one, they were again physically attacked by the officers wearing balaclavas and black clothes, while being pushed back to Bosnia. The officers were aware of the minor's young age, but refused to pay special attention.

*"I said to them I was 16, and they said: "No 16 years old!" and slapped my face. I was crying. Two [officers] had guns and they were shooting into the air and saying: "You go to Bosnia, if not, I will fight you." Three men were crying. But he [police] was saying to us: "Go, go, go!" I did not eat food for four days. My shoes were full of water and I had wet clothes. After they pushed us back, I was walking on the road and drunk a water from the road from the ground from my hands because no one gave me water or food. When I came here to Bosnia, one man gave me water, after two hours, one group gave me food and to my brother".*

The seven of them walked back to Velika Kladuša (BIH), where they stayed one night on the street. The following day, the No Name Kitchen volunteer which conducted this interview met the respondent who explained what had happened to them the previous night. He showed them his bandaged hand and explained that he was in big pain. The volunteer walked with him to a hospital in Velika Kladuša , where he was refused to be treated by medical staff with the words:

*"No doctor here for you."*

Two days later, he was treated by MSF.

02/11/2018

## “DURING THIS EXCHANGE, THE OFFICERS CONFISCATED THE BAGS, PHONES, AND MONEY OF SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS”

**Date and time:** November 2, 2018 02:00

**Location:** highway E65, close to the village of Rapain Klanac, town of Brinje, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.96406650000001, 15.087732599999981

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 20-50 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian officers, large figure, 1 van

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On October 22, 2018, a group of seven men left Bosnia and crossed the border to Croatia by foot with the intention walking through to Slovenia until Italy. On the afternoon of November 2, the group had progressed to the E65 highway, outside the village of Rapain Klanac (HRV), close to the town of Brinje (HRV). At approximately 2.20 pm, the group was approached by two large Croatian officers who yelled at them to stop.

The seven of them followed their orders and stopped. Then, the two officers approached the men further and began beating them with their fists and kicking them, one by one. One of them was hit on his head, his legs and his arms.

*“Shoes... [begins to mimic kicking] and boxing [begins to mimic punching].”*

Later, a police van arrived to the scene and the group entered the van after being kicked at the same time in pairs of two:

*"Two two kick, two two kick, two two kick."*

During this exchange, the officers confiscated the bags, phones, and money of several individuals. €130 were taken from the respondent and €900 from another individual. With that money, the group had intended to pay a smuggler in Slovenia.

They were then made to sign a document and were photographed as well. They were not provided a translator, so they were not able to understand what they signed. Further, they were asked how long they had stayed in Bosnia and how long they had been walking in Croatia.

Then, on November 3 at approximately 2 am, the group of seven was brought back to the Bosnian border close to Vojni (HRV) and Velika Kladuša (BIH), and were told:

*"Go!"*

Once they were taken out of the van, running to the Bosnian border and kicked by the officers, swearing at them:

*"Fuck you!"*

*"One one kick, one one kick."*

After that, the group walked back to Velika Kladuša.

**02/11/2018**

**""TYPE HERE YOU ARE 18, 19, DON'T TYPE YOU ARE 17""**

**Date and time:** November 2, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Serbian-Croatian border, near Šid, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.14689825231942, 19.165654436621026

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 13 person(s), age: 17-25 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 4, Croatian officers, 2 police cars, 1 white van. Several officers at the station (one female)

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On October 28, 2018, 30 Afghan men aged between 17 and 25 crossed the border from Serbia to Croatia. After three days of walking, they reached a forest in Croatia where they were picked up by two vans which were supposed to take them further north. At this point, they separated into two groups, with 15 people in each van. During their ride to Slovenia, a police car tried to stop them. One of the van's drivers jumped out of the moving vehicle and accordingly one of the individuals pulled the hand-brake to stop the vehicle. All the individuals exited the van and ran into a forest. 13 of them reached the forest and hid there for two days, during which time they ran out of food.

*"We were starving and we were so thirsty."*

As a result, they decided on November 2 at around 3 am to search for the authorities.

The group of 13 walked on a main road for around 45 minutes before reaching a village. There, they found a woman and asked her to bring them some water, telling her they would pay for it, and to call the police, but she walked away. At around 4 am a man in a car told them the location of the police station and on their way there, two police cars appeared with four officers. They were told to sit down and wait. The 13 of them explained, that they were the ones who had called the police and told them their story. They also explained that last time they had eaten had been 48 hours ago, to which the officers responded with laughter and told them they were "good boys". Then the officers gave them some water they were carrying in the cars, and told them to wait for another ten minutes. A police van arrived to pick them up and brought them to the police station.

There, they were interrogated and asked for food and water. While they were answering the officer's questions, someone brought them chicken, Coca Cola, and some cake. The individual who spoke the best English filled out a form with the information of each of them. There was one woman with short red hair, which the respondent described as appearing to be the boss. She checked all the sheets and when she noticed one person was under 18 she asked:

*"Who is A.?"*

And went to him to slap him hard, as she shouted:

*"Type here you are 18, 19, don't type you are 17!"*

After this, the boy changed his age on the sheet and all of them signed their forms.

Afterwards, one officer wrote each person's name and age on a different paper which they had to hold in front of them while photos were taken. They were not asked for their fingerprints. The female officer told the group that she knew they were doing the game in a van, but they denied this.

The 13 of them then had to move to another room to talk to two different officers. There were two women from different organizations, the older was in her forties. The younger one led them into a room to talk

with no officers present. They were wearing uniforms, but different from police uniforms. These two women asked the group a number of questions:

*"Why did you leave Afghanistan?", "What did your parents do?", "Why are you trying to reach Europe.", "Why did you leave Serbia?", "What problems did you have in Serbia?"*

The individuals told them about the problems associated with the Taliban in Afghanistan. One of them showed photos of his father working at the Pakistani border while another showed a letter from Taliban ordering him to leave the Afghan army or else he and his family would be murdered. The two women wrote down everything. When the people on the move asked them for asylum, they answered:

*"Sorry, is not our decision, it's police decision. We just type your story".*

Accordingly, they also asked the officers for asylum, but the answer was:

*"No, our government says no refugee coming here".*

Before the deportation they asked to charge their phones, and the police accepted. Thou they didn't allow them to turn them on:

*"If you turn on your phones I will beat your phone".*

The group stayed at the police station for about five hours. Then they had to enter a white police van with a windowless backspace and no light inside and were driven to the Serbian border. One by one they were asked by the officers to sign a form which was written in Croatian. One of the individuals asked:

*"What I am signing? If I don't read I can't sign"*

He was told to shut up, and threatened if he didn't sign he was going to be beaten. He tried again, to ask for a copy of the signed sheet and was answered:

*"Just sign and sit down, no talk with me".*

When they arrived at the border, the officers returned their phones and pointed to the direction of Serbia. The group was walking for one hour without seeing any village, so they called a taxi which took them to the train station in Šid.

**29/10/2018**

**"BUT IF I GO BACK TO SYRIA, I WILL HAVE TO JOIN ASSAD'S ARMY AND YES, I WILL BE MADE DANGEROUS"**

**Date and time:** October 29, 2018 23:00

**Location:** Svinica Krstinjska, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.206501945082636, 15.804025990067771

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 20 person(s), age: two of them 22-29 years old, others unknown , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, forcing to undress, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving, theft of national ID, lack of oxygen in the van's backspace

**Police involved:** Unknown number of officers, face masked with black uniform, 1 Van

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The two men walked together from Velika Kladuša (BIH) to Croatia in order to take a taxi from there, organised by a smuggler. While they were waiting for it, Croatian officers found them. They ordered them to sit down, insulted them and forced them to undress. Thereupon they were body searched and their personal belongings were confiscated.

*"They told us to sit down, searched our bodies and stole our stuff, my phone, money, passport, clothes. They got us naked and were kicking us from the back. They were telling us: "You don't go to Europe, fuck you, go back to Bosnia!"*

*"They also took our Syrian ID and threw it away. I said to them that this was my Syrian ID, and the officers responded: "Fuck you and Syria." I told him that I was Syrian Kurdish and that I did not want to cause any problems. But they just kept telling me to go".*

Afterwards, they were transported in a van back to the Bosnian border. Along the way the van stopped to pick up another group of people on the move. As they were now too many persons in the windowless backspace, they were lacking oxygen. The driver was driving very fast and aggressive. Even though they were initially picked up only a few kilometers away from the Bosnian border they drove around for three hours.

*"They put us into the big van that was not open and did not have any windows. They told us to go into the car, and they were driving very fast and kept breaking, so I had a problem, I started being sick and vomiting. Maybe three hours, they were driving with us around. In one car, we were 15 or 20 people".*

As they arrived at the Bosnian border, the officers opened the door of the van and pointed a strong flashlight into everyone's eyes, so they couldn't see anything later. Then, the officers wearing balaclavas and black clothes, told them to exit the van one by one and individually attacked them.

*"I could see nothing for five minutes I went out of the car because they pointed a torch into my eyes. Also, there was a hill by that border, and they pushed me down that hill. I could not see anything. And I was rolling down from that border. I go here for life not for money. I wanted to speak to them. When they realized that I could speak English, they told me: 'You speak English? OK, come here.' And they started beating me. I said to the police that I did not want to stay there, that I just wanted to go. They just told me: 'Fuck you, and go!' They had big metal sticks and were wearing masks. They hit me into legs, back, chest, and my face, they were also punching me and kicking me."*

*"At the car, two police officers were beating us. When they finished, another two police were beating us. And one police was holding me and another was kicking me. But before they started attacking us, they pointed really strong torch into our eyes, so when I got out of the car, I could not see anything, Oh my god. And they just kept shouting: 'Go, go, go, go Bosnia!'"*

The officers were only attacking the men who were visibly older than 18-years-old and did not hurt the minors who were also being pushed back. At the end of the interview, the respondent said he didn't want money or wealth in Europe, but he needed safety. Now, after the European Union closed its borders in front of him and violently returned people on the move to Bosnia, he is considering going back to Syria:

*"If I have no problem in Syria, I would not go to Europe. I have everything I need in Syria. Just there is a war, and that is the problem. But maybe I don't want to go to Europe anymore, I will go back to Turkey and from there to Syria. Police is very dangerous here because they treat me like I am dangerous, but I am not dangerous. But if I go back to Syria, I will have to join Assad's army and yes, I will be made dangerous. Croatia is dangerous, so now, I will also turn into a dangerous person because I will have to return back to Syria and join the army for eight years and fight".*

28/10/2018

## "AFTER THE ASSAULT THE MEN COULD BARELY WALK"

**Date and time:** October 28, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Gornji Bukovac Žakanjski, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.626265864268404, 15.341080445947455

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 22-29 , from: Palestine, Syria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian officers in blue uniforms, 5 Croatian officers in black uniforms, wearing face masks and holstered pistols, 1 estate car

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 15 men traveled by foot through Croatia. They had been walking for three days when they were suddenly blinded in the dark by the headlights of a police car. They couldn't see the car, but they heard it driving towards them while they were at a semi-rural, very dark spot. Four Croatian officers in blue uniforms approached them and forced the men to hand over their belongings including

money and phones. When one of them told them he just wanted to pass, the police replied:

*"You will go back".*

The 15 of them were then detained for approximately 24 hours while they were questioned about their means of travel. After this, they were separated into different vehicles. The respondent had to enter an estate car with one other 22-year-old individual and was driven for around 2,5 hours until midnight when they reached a farmland area. Soon after, the doors of the van were opened the officers started beating them:

*"I only walk one minute [before they started to beat] my hand, my head, my leg."*

Five officers dressed in black Croatian uniforms and wearing balaclavas attacked him from all sides. One of the individuals was asked by one officer:

*"Where are you from?"*  
– *"I am from Palestine."*

The officer replied by beating him even more with his baton. As they were beaten on the ground, the officers insulted them. Eventually the attack finished. The resulting injuries include severe contusions on the head, hands, arms and legs. After the assault, the men could barely walk. But with no money and phone they were forced to do so anyway, 30 km from the point of push-back all the way to Velika Kladuša (BIH).

**24/10/2018**

**"HE FELL [...], HE WAS CRYING VERY MUCH. HE WAS CRYING VERY MUCH BUT THEY DID NOT LET HIM GO"**

**Date and time:** October 24, 2018 04:00

**Location:** Near Maljevac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.2010151, 15.785225800000034

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 17-23 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 8 officers (6 male, 2 female), four of them wearing black uniforms and masks, 1 police van, 1 police car

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent and his two friends, including one 17-year-old minor, traveled by foot from Velika Kladuša (BIH) to Croatia. They were on their way to Slovenia, where they wanted to apply for asylum. The second day at around 4 am, they were crossing the road A1, and were detected by a police helicopter. Following that, eight officers, six men and two women, arrived at the road in two cars, one small white police Skoda and one white van. Four of them were waiting inside of the car while the other four, wearing black uniforms and balaclavas, were talked to the three of them.

They only asked the three of them whether they had knives but did not ask them any other questions about their names, nationality, age, or why they were walking through the Croatian territory. After that, the officers frisked their bodies. They didn't find any money but took their phones and crashed them with batons in front of them. Then, all three were directly transported with the van to the Bosnian border, where they were attacked with batons and pushed back to Bosnia:

*"When we came to the border, he [police officer] entered the van and beat three people inside of the van, and after also outside. And when we crossed [the border], there was even more punishment, three other people beating us. [...] They [police] had torches, and they were pointing into my eyes. They were on both sides and I was in the middle and I could not see from which side they were beating me. [...] My friend fell and injured his leg. He fell when four people were beating him, he was crying very much. He was crying very much but they did not let him go. [...] One who is 17 got seven or eight [hits with the] sticks, but he was running fast and he fell, and more people were beating him. He was saying that he was 17, but they did not leave him".*

While the three of them were running away from the spot of their push back, the officers were shooting with a gun around them, shouting:

*"Go, go, go to Bosnia!"*

After the attack, the three friends walked back to Velika Kladuša (BIH), where they temporarily stay under a plastic sheet tent in the makeshift camp. On the way back, a local Bosnian school bus driver stopped and offered them a free ride.

*"We were walking from the border five hours and after we saw a student van. The driver asked us to come inside of the van but no money. No problem, you sit. And the Bosnian driver took us. Bosnian people are very good, very helpful".*

**23/10/2018**

**""THEY TOOK THEIR GUN AND PLACED IT TO MY HEAD. THEY WERE ASKING ME: 'WHERE ARE YOUR FRIENDS?' ""**

**Date and time:** October 23, 2018 05:00

**Location:** Near Maljevac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.2010151, 15.785225800000034

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 16-30 , from: Pakistan, Palestine, Syria, Iraq

**Minors involved?:** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), threatening with guns, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, lack of oxygen in the van's windowless backspace

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian officers in blue uniforms, 2 Croatian officers wearing black clothes and masks

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent walked alone from Velika Kladuša (BIH) to Croatia. He intended to continue to Slovenia and then to Italy, where he wanted to seek asylum. While he was walking in Croatia, close to the Slovenian border, he got detected by three Croatian officers. They stopped him, started frisking his body and threatening him with guns:

*"They had guns. They took their gun and placed it to my head. They were asking me: "Where are your friends?", while they were putting the gun into my head and telling me to sit down. They asked me: "You need cigarette?" and took my cigarettes and threw them away."*

Afterwards, he was transported to a police station in Rijeka (HRV). He went through a short investigation procedure there, being questioned about his nationality and his intentions of crossing from Croatia to Slovenia. At the end, they took a photo of him and made him fill out a document with his identifying features such as name, country of origin, and age. The respondent mentioned that the Croatian officers at the police station treated him with respect at the police station and provided him with food and water.

After several hours he was transported from to Bosnia together with other people on the move, all male. On the way, the van stopped once, picking up more people on the move. One of the individuals was 16-years-old. The journey was difficult for the group of now 10 as they lacked oxygen inside the van's backspace:

*"It was a closed car where there was no air, just a little bit air. So, we had a problem to breath."*

When they arrived at the Bosnian border, the officers ordered them to get off the van in groups of four. Then, they took their money, phones and power banks while searching their bodies. When they found a good phone, they put it into their pockets, while damaging the old phones with batons. Then, the ten of them were physically attacked by two officers wearing black uniforms and balaclavas, waiting outside of the van.

*"They were beating us at the border close to Velika Kladuša ... They took us four by four out of the car and were beating us ... They finished with 2 people, me and my friend were the last. We were running after. They were shouting at us to move and run. I tried to ask them to give me back my money and phone, but they said to me no question and kept beating me ... There was a hill and they pushed me from that hill. One guy was 16 years old, he told them that. Another man was 22 years old, but both got beaten*

*by the police. They did not care if you were young, or child, or old, no problem, they [Croatian police] beat everyone."*

The respondent then walked back with the other nine to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladuša (BIH). He had pain in his back, legs, hands and a headache. One of his friends, who was 16-years-old, had pain all over his body.

**23/10/2018**

**"[...] THE OFFICERS CHASED THE INDIVIDUALS DOWN INTO A STEEP RAVINE AND BEAT THEIR HEADS WITH BATONS [...]"**

**Date and time:** October 23, 2018 03:00

**Location:** Northwest of Rijeka, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.3762277827319, 14.068288987097503

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 22 person(s), age: 15-38 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian officers in blue uniforms (some more at the police station), 6 Croatian officers in black and wearing face masks, 1 estate car

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

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

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

After seven days of walking through Croatia, the group of 22, including two minors aged 15 and 17, was caught by two Croatian officers wearing blue uniforms. The officers shouted at them to stay still as they were searching them, taking their personal belongings. Then they had to enter the tight rear passenger area of an estate car and were brought to a police station. There, all of them were searched again and had to undress. The officers also ripped up their Bosnian papers.

Their personal details, i.e. name, nationality, date of birth, fathers name, were written on a board which they had to hold in front of them while photos were taken. The officer in charge registered the minors as being over 18 years old to deny them the access to legal protection.

Some individuals asked for the opportunity to claim asylum, but the answer of the officers was:

*"Stay no, Croatia stay no."*

They were detained for eight hours without getting any food or water. Afterwards, they had to enter the estate car again. All of them got sick, while they were driven severely cramped for around four hours. At 3 am, they arrived at a rural border area close to the Glina river where the 22 of them had to get off the car one by one. Six officers dressed in black and wearing balaclavas were waiting for them. Each individual was then attacked by four officers, two of them restraining the individual and two others beating him with batons.

They received bruising and skin trauma across their bodies and heads from the severe assault. One individual's knee was struck severely with a baton, causing a major sprain and swelling. He also suffered from a sprained ankle. Then, the officers chased the individuals down into a steep ravine and beat their heads with the sticks until they fell down. When they finally escaped, the officers shouted:

*"Go Bosnia!"*

21/10/2018

**"THEY WERE JUST SAYING TO US: "FUCK YOU MUSLIM, FUCK YOUR BROTHER, FUCK YOUR MOTHER""**

**Date and time:** October 21, 2018 19:00

**Location:** Near Šturlić, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.072177, 15.760576

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 16, 18 years old , from: Iraq

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian police officers in dark blue uniforms

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The two boys walked from Velika Kladuša (Bosnia) to a remote forest in Croatia, about 10 km far away from the Bosnian border, from where they were supposed to be picked up by a people smuggler. The smuggler promised the boys to take them to Slovenia, from where they would have continued in a different car to Italy. They felt there was no legal chance for them to reach asylum in Europe, and for this reason they decided to pay 2.500 Euros to a "taxi driver" who would help them. They reached the arranged point around 6 pm, and were waiting for a taxi, but were detected by two tall police officers in dark blue uniforms, one of whom is described as

having grey hair. When the police saw them, they started verbally and physically attacking them:

*“They were just saying to us: “Fuck you Muslim, fuck your brother, fuck your mother, just shouting at us and after beating us”.*

One of them told the police that he was 16 years old, but the officers did not pay attention to this and kept beating him by kicks and punches. Then, the police stole two phones from the boys that they had bought before their journey, one for 200 Euros. They asked the officers, whether they could apply for asylum in Croatia, but the police responded to them that in Croatia, there was no asylum for them and kicked one of the boys into the legs.

Following the physical attack, the boys were transported by a car directly to the Bosnian border for their deportation. The journey took about 30 minutes, and there were the only ones inside. The car was driving very fast and was stopping occasionally, so that they were falling from one side to another. When they arrived at the border of Croatia with Bosnia, close to Sturlic (BiH), the police told them to get off the car, one by one, and again, physically attacked them while shouting at them to go back to Bosnia:

*„They hit me into my head by a baton. They also hit me on my leg although I told them that I had a scar there. They were then hitting me into my neck and my hand [showing me swollen hand and bruise on the neck]. They also kicked into my friend's mouth”.*

The boys then walked by foot to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladuša and arrived there around 4am. They lost their last money that they had paid to the smuggler and got stranded for longer time in the Bosnian transit, with no legal way forward and no adequate accommodation before the winter in Bosnia starts.

Both kept visible injuries from the beating. The older had several bruises around his body and swollen right hand caused by kicks, pushes and attacks by batons. The underaged boy had a swollen mouth caused by several kicks into his face. The older one had several bruises around his body and a swollen right hand caused by kicks, pushes and attacks by batons.

**21/10/2018**

**“IN FRONT OF EVERYBODY, THE CROATIAN OFFICERS STARTED TO BEAT TWO MEN WITH BATONS [...]”**

**Date and time:** October 21, 2018 10:00

**Location:** Along the highway E 71, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.22453419278037, 15.268178927123358

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 5 years old girls, unknown , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian officers, 1 white van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Independent person

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 15 started from Bihać (BIH) on October 16, 2018. After they crossed the border to Croatia, they continued walking until they were on the highway E 71 close to the town of Ostarije (HRV).

It was around 10 am when the authorities arrived with a white van and transported them to a police station. There were already three families with two under five-year old girls waiting, who had previously been caught while crossing Croatia.

In front of everybody, the Croatian officers started to beat two men with batons and ripped off all the documents they signed at the police station before arriving at the border. They also ripped the medical papers of one individual who suffered a walking disability caused by an explosion in Afghanistan. This was the fourth push-back for him. The other times, the officers had left him next to Bihac at Lohovo (BIH).

At around 9 pm of the same day, all people on the move were pushed back to the Bosnian side of the border in a forest next to Poljana (HRV), 20 km from Velika Kladusa.

19/10/2018

**“THE KIDS WERE [...] THE CHILDREN SHOULD NOT SEE SOMETHING LIKE THIS. MAYBE THEY WILL NEVER FORGET THIS”**

**Date and time:** October 19, 2018 04:00

**Location:** Near Baići, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.215501, 15.713286

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 5-30 years old , from: Iraq

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 12 officers in dark blue uniforms and civilian clothes, 3 police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent and his family, his sister and her two children, walked from Velika Kladuša (BIH) to Croatia, from where they wanted to continue to Slovenia to seek asylum. They had been searching for a safe place in Europe and chose Slovenia as they considered this as the first country in the EU that was safe for them. They did not want to apply for asylum in Croatia as they had experienced several episodes of violence there at the border.

The fourth day of their journey, when they were walking through Croatia, around 35 km from the Bosnian border, they were detected by 12 Croatian officers. The officers were acting aggressively towards the family and questioned them:

*"Did you come here with smuggler? Where are you from? What you want in Croatia?"*

Then, they frisked their bodies, including the woman and children, and took all their personal belongings. Following that, the officers physically attacked the respondent with their hands, in front of the children:

*"They [Croatian police] were asking me: 'Who is with you?! Tell us!'. I told them just this family. 'Are you sure?', I said to them, 'Yes, I am sure'. It was just me, my sister, and her two kids, one child is 5 years old and one 7 years old. [...] They broke the phone that belonged to my sister and hit me into my back and my leg also, something horrible. The kids were crying, and they did not care. They did not care. The children should not see something like this. Maybe they will never forget this."*

After the physical attack, all of them were transported straight away in a 40-minute ride to the Bosnian border. Inside the van, there were already other people on the move who had previously been caught by the authorities. The car was driving very fast and the respondent felt sick. At around 5 am, they arrived at the border and were told to get off the van one by one. Then, the officers again attacked everyone, except women and children, and told them to go back to Bosnia:

*"They [Croatian police] took us one by one from the car and started beating us. The children were crying and screaming and they [Croatian police] did not care."*

At the end of the interview, the respondent told that he had never experienced worse treatment than by the Croatian authorities during his journey through Europe:

*"I came from my country, from Iraq, walking in the mountains. I saw the Turkish army, the Greek army, Albanian, Montenegrin, and Bosnian Army. They are all different, but Croatian police and army are so bad, why? In the end, we are all humans. Why do they do this? Why do they hit me? They do you do this to my sister with the kids crying? I don't know. Maybe they hate Muslims, I don't know".*

18/10/2018

## “THE POLICE WANTED TO TAKE IT [MONEY], BUT ONE PERSON [POLICE OFFICER] WAS VERY GOOD AND GAVE ME THE MONEY BACK”

**Date and time:** October 18, 2018 16:00

**Location:** Pašini Potok, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.18681740992225, 15.780770027551625

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: 30-40 , from: Iran, Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), gunshots, destruction of personal belongings, reckless driving, lack of oxygen in the van's windowless backspace

**Police involved:** 6 officers, aged around 40 (dark blue uniforms), 1 police van, 2 cars

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent and his two friends traveled by foot from Velika Kladuša (BIH) to Croatia. After they crossed the border to Croatia, they walked for 30 km in about six hours. At some point, while they crossed a forest, they were detected by six Croatian officers in dark blue uniforms.

*“We were in the jungle and could hear police coming. They shoot three, four times. When they caught me, they broke my phone and three power banks.”*

When the officers arrived, they broke the respondent's phone and the three power banks of the group. They then asked the three of them about their nationality but didn't ask any further questions. The respondent tried to explain to the officers that he wanted to stay in Croatia and seek asylum, but they refused his request without any formal investigation of his case and access to the asylum procedure:

*“I said to them [police] that I wanted to stay [in Croatia]. They said: “No, no, no. It does not have space for you, go back. I don't have camp here, here it is full, it is full”, this is what police said to me.”*

Then all of them were taken with a police van straight to the Bosnian border which took around one hour. In the van, they met six other male people on the move who had been caught previously. The journey to the border was difficult for them because the van did not have any windows and was lacking oxygen:

*“The oxygen was not good, the person from Morocco was not feeling really well. The car was driving very fast.”*

The van stopped in a remote area close to the official border check point in Maljevac (HRV), next to a steep hill and a small river. When they arrived, the police officers took all personal belongings, except the bags themselves, from them and destroyed them. While some officers were taking their belongings, one officer refused to participate and decided to return them their money that his colleagues wanted to steal:

*“At the border, they stole two telephones. I had 1500 Euros. The police wanted to take it, but one person [police officer] was very good and gave me the money back.”*

Afterwards, they had to get off the van one by one. Outside, some officers were waiting for them and once they individually exited the car, they all started physically attacking them with batons, shouting at them to go back to Bosnia.

*“Three times or four times, they hit me by baton, into my head and they also hit my friend. Five or six times beat me under my back and legs. They could not beat me in the upper part of back because I had my bag on. And after, they pushed me into the river. After, I run away, actually it was hard night, hard night.”*

This incident was just another episode of violence in the respondent's life. He had already attempted to seek asylum in the EU four times and every time was ending with a similar violent push-back from the Croatian authorities back to Bosnia. He also was financially exploited by human smugglers and previously had decided to pay €2300 for a human smuggler to be transported from Bosnia to Italy, but was caught by the police in Slovenia, from where he was deported to Croatia, followed by a violent push-back to Bosnia. Finally, he lost the contact of his smuggler and had spent his money in vain.

16/10/2018

## “[...] WHILE THE OTHERS USED REGULAR AND ELECTRIC BATONS TO HIT THEM”

**Date and time:** October 16, 2018 04:20

**Location:** Close to the Croatian frontier with Slovenia (Grivac)

**Coordinates:** 45.460044932828026, 14.837183968298405

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 32-37 , from: Bangladesh

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, insulting, electric shock, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 12 Croatian officers in black uniforms, 6 of them wearing face masks

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of seven were walking through Croatia when they saw lights which either came from a flashlight, or a camera fixed on the Slovenian side of the border river to Croatia.

Soon after, six officers in black Croatian uniforms arrived. They shouted at them:

*"Sit down!"*

Then, the officers kicked them in the back of their legs to force them to the ground. They had two large German shepherds with them which were barking and jumping at the individuals.

They searched the seven of them and took their personal belongings, including €300. Afterwards, they were loaded into an estate car. None of them was asked for personal details, nor did they sign any documents, or receive any form of processing. They were driven in cramped conditions for four hours until they arrived West of Velika Kladuša.

When the car stopped, they had to get off and found six other officers dressed in black and wearing balaclavas waiting for them outside.

*"No face, all masks."*

At once, all six of them started beating the group of seven. They beckoned the men in pairs and then attacked them from all sides. At some point some officers were restraining the individuals while the others used regular and electric batons to hit them. It was during these assaults that one individual suffered severe ligament damage and muscular contusion to his wrist.

As they crouched, suffering from nausea and the shock of the assault, the officers took the phones they had stolen from them and smashed the screens with their batons in front of them. They didn't return the broken phones and just ordered the seven of them to go back, gesturing towards Bosnia.

The group walked back to Velika Kladuša (BIH), severely wounded.

**15/10/2018**

## **"HE USED SEVERE FORCE, HITTING THEM IN THE FACE, ON THE TORSO, ARMS AND LEGS"**

**Date and time:** October 15, 2018 12:30

**Location:** Near Pašin Potok, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.170309, 15.766164

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: unknown , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** The initial captors were two Croatian officers dressed in blue who participated in the theft of belongings and loaded the men into the cramped conditions of the estate car. The other set of perpetrators were 6-7 officers, all dressed in blue uniforms who enacted the violent pushback. They were all male, apart from one woman. The primary offending officer using a gun to threaten the group wore a face mask to disguise his identity

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 15 had been walking through the forested hills of Croatia for four days, when they were apprehended by the Croatian authorities.

The authorities detected them near the roadside of the road M1, approximately 30 km north of the town of Slunj (HRV). They had been walking through a forest when they were observed at a short distance by two Croatian officers dressed in blue uniforms. They were ordered to stop and sit down. The group complied and waited while the officers checked their belongings and frisked them. The officers told them that they would be treated fairly if they co-operated now. When they took their phones, they told them:

*"If you give your cell phone now you will get it back at border."*

Afterwards, they were led by the two officers to the road where a police car was parked. Shortly after, a van arrived, and they were immediately loaded into its backspace. The van was cramped and, they drove in this condition for over an hour.

When the van stopped, they found themselves in a semi-rural, hilly farmland area with some small houses in the distance. Six or seven more officers were waiting for them there, all dressed in blue, one of them was female. One of the male ones stood closest to the back of the van, wearing a balaclava and carrying a large gun at a shoulder harness.

*"He had big, big gun. Look like Kalashnikov."*

As the 15 individuals began to exit the van, the officer fired three rounds with his gun into the air, just over their heads.

He then withdrew a black baton from the holster on his waist and began to attack every individual during exiting the vehicle. He used severe force, hitting them in the face, on the torso, arms and legs. One individual was struck heavily across the eye socket and nose, causing bruising and bleeding. The other officers stood back and laughed as the main perpetrator with the balaclava attacked them.

*"The police sit more back and laugh."*

Afterwards, one of the other officers approached the group and gave them back some of their now destroyed phones.

*"If you (people on the move) be good, we police be good with you, but they lie to us, they hit us and stole our phones."*

The group fled back to Bosnia to escape further violence, because once again the officer with the baton began to threaten, and even chased them. It was just after midday when they walked for an hour until they arrived back at the camp in Velika Kladuša (BIH).

One of the group sought medical treatment from the MSF field clinic for severe contusions and internal bleeding, a blood blister, below the right eye socket (see document and medication). The other individuals also suffered superficial injuries on arms and legs.

11/10/2018

## “PERFUME [MAKES] BIG PROBLEM IN BODY”

**Date and time:** October 11, 2018 04:00

**Location:** Near Poljana, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.213556, 15.929028

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 19-27 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, pepper spray, electric shock, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian officers, (black uniforms), 2 custody officers (blue uniforms), 2 police vans

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of eight had been walking for nine days through Croatia and eventually were crossing a stretch of uninhabited countryside, with no nearby villages. The men were walking alongside the E65 motorway, following it towards the town of Rijeka (HRV), when they were approached by around five officers from a side-track. All officers were dressed in black Croatian uniforms and stopped the group by shouting and surrounding them. Then, they ordered them to hand over their personal belongings and searched each of them. Along with the frisk, their bags and mobiles were removed.

Afterwards, they had to walk a short distance to two police vans and were driven to a nearby police station where they arrived around midnight. The group of eight was not processed, photographed, or made to sign any papers. Two officers in blue Croatian uniforms just brought them in a group cell and after about an hour, around 1 pm, the eight individuals were taken outside and loaded into an estate vehicle. There were already 14 other people on the move sitting inside the vehicle's backspace. The vehicle left the police station with the group of now 24 people and due to it being very cramped, some got sick:

*“One person was vomiting.”*

*“First time in AC, more in heater and one perfume, red color.”*

The officers raised the temperature in the backspace and heated it for around 30 minutes and more individuals became sick. When they heard them throwing up, they stopped and sprayed pepper spray inside the backspace.

*"Perfume [makes] big problem in body."*

The journey lasted around three hours, and by the end all passengers were suffering from the combination of heat, pepper spray and motion. The vehicle finally stopped, and they found themselves at a rural border area where a track led down to a steep ravine with a small river.

They were told to exit in pairs and were immediately beaten by the six officers dressed in black Croatian uniforms who had arrived with a van. The respondent was punched and kicked and beaten with batons. One individual was assaulted with an electronic baton which was put to the back of the young man's knees, causing him to shout and jump away in pain. Meanwhile, another individual was handed out a bag containing their broken phones, all irreparably damaged.

The officers stood in the form of a corridor around the back of the van and beat all 24 individuals to then chase them down into the steep river valley, shouting at them and raising their batons. The group of 24 fled and entered Bosnia again.

It was just dawn, when they started walking back for half the day to the camp in Velika Kladuša (BIH). They were sick and exhausted. From Velika Kladusa, the group quickly returned to Bihac, as they had no money or space to stay. Once in Bihac, two of the individuals went to the camp in Borici to access medical assistance at the field clinic.

The men sustained bruising and skin trauma from the assault at the border. They also suffered from motion sickness induced by the cramped transport and use of pepper spray. The interview was conducted with one individual as the others had already left to the Borici camp to access medical care.

**11/10/2018**

## **"SOME STARTED VOMITING INSIDE AND CHILDREN STARTED CRYING. IT WAS REALLY AWFUL, HARDER THAN THE BEATING"**

**Date and time:** October 11, 2018 01:00

**Location:** near Gornji Furjan, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.04581745850764, 15.681776951342727

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 17 person(s), age: two children 9-13 years old from one family, others unknown, from: Palestine, Syria, Iraq

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, pouring water over one's head, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving, lack of oxygen in van's backspace

**Police involved:** 3 officers at apprehension. 10 additional officers, one of them female (dark blue uniforms)

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

In the morning, a 36-year-old man came close to the informal camp in Velika Kladusa (BIH) where "No Name Kitchen" provides showers. He could barely walk and looked disoriented and tired. He sat down on a chair and explained that he had been brutally attacked by the Croatian authorities at the Bosnian border the previous night, where he was pushed-back together with 16 individuals:

*"They made a half circle in front of the car, called people out of the car one by one in order to beat them. There were children and woman. They also beat the woman because she tried to hide her phone under her clothes and they found out, so they hit her by a baton. Her children and we could see it. Children were crying. But the police did not care. They kept telling me: 'Fuck you, fuck your mother' and after shouting at us, 'You go back to Bosnia.' It was horrible, they were deporting us around 3 am and for three or four hours after, we were searching for each other in a forest. They were beating also an old man who was there with us and now has a broken finger. ...Do you have a cigarette? I have money [pulling ten marks out of his pocket] but I cannot go to the supermarket because I feel so dizzy and tired. I keep vomiting blood. I can't eat anything as I vomit it out. I think I may have maybe internal bleeding from so many kicks into my body."*

Later in the afternoon, another four individuals who had been pushed-back together with this man arrived. One of them, a 35-year-old individual who could speak fluent English, explained what happened to him and his friends the previous night at the Croatian-Bosnian border. He had started walking together with 16 people on the move, including one family with three children, in Sturlic (BIH) and crossed the border to Croatia, with the intention to apply for asylum in the EU. He explained that all of them have difficult situations in their homelands, escaping war and violent governments, and for this reason they have searching for safety in Europe.

*"We have very bad situations in our countries. Especially in my case, I have a brother in prison in Palestine because of political reasons. My mother, they shot her on the way home in Syria. I have no way to go, only to Europe. His [friend] family is for three years lives in Austria. He tries to go with them, he's 64 and was kidnapped in Iraq. This other guy's family is in England, same case. We don't need European money, we need European safety."*

He then told that, when they were crossing a Croatian forest road around 1 am, they could hear voices of officers and could see their flashlights in the dark. Soon after, a police car with three officers arrived at the road where they were walking:

*"The car was driving so fast that they almost crashed the family with kids who were on the road. We [the men] were hiding at first, but we came out because we did not want to cause any problem and did not want to leave the family there."*

A few minutes later, another three police cars arrived with ten more officers wearing dark blue uniforms. The respondent remembered one of those officers to be a tall woman. Their group leader was supposed to be a corpulent man around 40 years old. One of the individuals could remember the registration

number of one of the cars: HR (CROATIAN FLAG) ZG 156. The officers told the group of 17 to put their bags in front of them and removed their phones. A woman, mother of three children, told the officers that she didn't have a phone, but when they frisked her body, they found one hidden under her clothes. When the officers discovered this hidden phone, they attacked her with a baton in front of her crying children.

*"It was very hard for us because we saw a woman being beaten by the Croatian police and we couldn't do anything. They beat her so much with baton."*

The officers didn't ask any questions and directly drove them to the Bosnian border with a small van. The 17 were cramped inside and therefore the backspace was lacking oxygen which caused breathing difficulties.

*"They put all of us in the car. We are 17 persons with the children, they put us into very small car, van, into a boot. They were driving very fast, like on purpose. Some started vomiting inside and children started crying. It was really awful, harder than the beating."*

After a 30-minute drive, the car stopped at the Bosnian border. The officers opened the van and told all individuals to get off, either individually or in pairs. Then, they attacked them with batons and kicks while pushing them back to Bosnia, including the 64-year-old man:

*"One man was still vomiting, and they saw him vomiting and they started beating him. They hit his arm. They then told me to come out of the car and they asked me: 'Where are you from?', and I said to them: 'I am from Syria.' He answered: '#What is the matter with Syria?!' and started beating, beating, beating. After he told me: 'Go!'. OK, so when I started walking I had pass all of them, nine police men, while they were all attacking me by batons."*

*„They threw water on me and after, they beat us with sticks [batons]. They put my shoes on my chest and head and said very hard words to me. I fell, and they kept beating me although I was on the ground. I was rolling, and they kept beating me.“*

All were trying to run away, but in that remote forest location in the dark night, they struggled to find the way out. They also had lost their bags when they were trying to escape so as soon as they could hear the officers driving away, they returned to search for each other and for their bags. They found many broken phones and cut chargers on the way from previous push-backs of other people on the move at the same spot. On their way back, they could also hear screams of other people on the move from far away who were also being pushed-back in the same night and attacked by the officers.

*"When we found each other they [police] brought other persons to the same point and we could hear their voices. We could hear screaming like a hell. We were very afraid because we could hear lots of crying from far away. The kids were very afraid. We could hear lots of crying noises."*

09/10/2018

## “I WAS SCARED WHEN I WAS GOING BACK. THEY KEPT KICKING ME WITH LEGS AND PUSHED ME INTO THE JUNGLE”

**Date and time:** October 9, 2018 19:00

**Location:** Brezovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.04443803152618, 15.629788879700868

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 30-40 , from: Iran, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian officers, one of them female, one police van

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of three men walked from Bihac (BIH) to Croatia where they wanted to find a safe place where they could apply for asylum and find work. In their home country Iran this had not been possible due to the totalitarian government. After a few days of walking, the authorities detected them and started shooting around them with their guns.

*“I can hear six bullets when the police shoot.”*

All three of them stopped immediately and were scared of the officers who began verbally and physically attacking them. They questioned them about their intentions in Croatia, but when they tried to explain their situation, they didn't let them say anything and attacked them at every occasion:

*“When I saw the police, they asked us what we were doing here. I said that I wanted safe country, save my life. And he did not listen to me, only kick. He did not let me to speak, they were very bad, beating us by baton, kicking my friend, many kicks, many kicks, only kicking us, no speaking to us. One person was very, very, very bad and he kept calling us mother fuckers. He was very rude.”*

Then, one officer asked them where they were from and afterwards told them to enter the police van. The lights of the windowless backspace were turned off, so the three of them were sitting in total darkness not knowing where they were going or what would happen next. The car was driving very fast and stopped once to pick up one other Tunisian male. After 1,5 hours, the driver stopped in a remote area near the official border check point in Maljevac (HRV), close to Velika Kladuša (BIH). The officer, a woman, opened the door of the car and started shouting at the individuals to get off.

*“One police officer was very bad, it was she, woman who kept shouting: ‘Go, go, go!’. It was very cold, and I did not have warm clothes. They were shouting at us: ‘Go, only go!’. It was in a forest, it was foggy, very cold, it was very bad.”*

After they got off the van, the officers searched through their bags and stole everything they had inside, including their money, taking from the respondent around €60. Further they took all three phones and destroyed them by smashing them with their boots. Afterwards they started again to attack them with batons, kicks while shouting at them to go back to Bosnia.

*"I was scared when I was going back. They kept kicking me with legs and pushed me into the jungle [forest]. I fell and scratched my face and my body. My friend was attacked by a baton. My friend's legs hurt, and he has a headache. This one [showing me a bruise on his belly] is from a kick and push."*

After the push-back, all four of them walked back to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladuša.

**08/10/2018**

## **"THEY CALLED A TAXI WHICH NEVER APPEARED BUT INSTEAD OF IT, A CROATIAN POLICE CAR ARRIVED WITH ONE OFFICER"**

**Date and time:** October 8, 2018 23:00

**Location:** Croatia, close to Slovenian border

**Coordinates:** 45.770995417148114, 15.571789003381355

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 23 person(s), age: one little boy, others unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian officers in uniform

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of 23, one married couple and one family with a small girl, were walking through Croatia near the Slovenian border on October 8, 2018.

The group stated that they called a taxi which never appeared but instead of it, a Croatian police car arrived with one officer. After a few minutes, five more officers joined walking, wearing uniforms and using binoculars. They took every individual one by one into a van described by interviewees as a similar size to a Ford Transit, with a windowless backspace. Inside, they were frisked and registered. This process took

around four hours, and at some point, both women and the child were crying. One of the individuals was begging not to be taken into jail.

After that, they report that all the 23 of them were taken back with the van to the Serbian border which took them one hour.

**08/10/2018**

## **“THEY WERE VOMITING INSIDE THE CAR BECAUSE THE POLICE OFFICERS WERE DRIVING VERY FAST AND SWINGING THE CAR LIKE THIS”**

**Date and time:** October 8, 2018 15:00

**Location:** close to the official border check-point in Maljevac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.198287847191146, 15.793369353277512

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 19-30 , from: Afghanistan, Iran

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, destruction of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 7 Croatian officers (6 males, 1 woman also attacking, in police uniforms). First officers wore civil clothes.

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of 10 young men walked from Velika Kladusa (BIH) to Croatia with the intention to apply for asylum in Zagreb. They had been walking for two days through Croatia in the rain and on October 8, 2018, arrived approximately 50 km away from Zagreb.

There, at an unmarked forest location, they got detected by Croatian authorities. The officers wore civil clothes and called their colleagues to whom they handed them over. Those seven officers, wore police uniforms and questioned the respondent and his friends about their identities and intentions in Croatia. The respondent explained to them that he was from Afghanistan and wanted to apply for asylum in Zagreb:

*“I told them that I wanted to stay there [Croatia] if they would allow me. They just asked me where I was from, my age, what was my name, but [took] no fingerprints. If they [would] take fingerprints no problem, I [would] give my fingerprints to take asylum. But they don't give us asylum, not for us. Also my friend told them: ‘I go to Zagreb and I will stay there.’ But the police officers just said to him: ‘Zagreb is not good for you, Zagreb is full, in very bad condition.*

*The camp is full.' But that time also my other friend said: 'No problem, I want to stay in Zagreb.' Another police man told us: 'Why don't you want to go to Germany, France', like this."*

The officers didn't allow any of them to access the asylum procedures. Instead, they directly deported them to the Bosnian border. Before the push-back, their phones were taken.

The drive with a van to the border area close to the official border check point in Maljevac (HRV) was very fast, so the individuals were falling from one side to the other and some of them got sick:

*"Three persons were vomiting. They were vomiting inside the car because the police officers were driving very fast and swinging the car like this."*

When they arrived at the border around 8 pm, they were given their phones back, all of them destroyed. Then, they were told to exit the van one by one, and attacked them with batons and kicks. Three officers were standing on the left side and another three on the right side behind the van, creating a passageway, through which the ten of them had to walk while being beaten:

*"When we went out of the car, they beat us very much, very badly. They were kicking me. One of them was a woman, taking a stick into her hand. I fell down, and they continued kicking me here, here and here [pointing at his neck, hip, and groin]... I am very tired, very confused about everything. When we went out of the car, they just beat us. Two days not good food not water, two days in rainy jungle, rainy night, up to morning we woke up in the jungle. When police catch, they behave like this... I think it is not fair to beat refugees, and not right. We are not criminals. We just want to get away from here."*

**08/10/2018**

## **"THERE WAS A BIG HILL, AND THEY PUSHED MY FRIEND FROM THAT HILL, SO HE WAS ROLLING DOWN FROM THAT HILL"**

**Date and time:** October 8, 2018 00:00

**Location:** close to the village Lapovac in a forest, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.2262370833347, 15.568851476690725

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 18-35 , from: Palestine, Syria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), gunshots, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 4 officers, wearing masks and black clothes

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of ten young men walked from Velika Kladuša (BIH) to Croatia, from where they wanted to continue via Slovenia to Italy to seek asylum. The fourth day of their journey, around midnight, they were walking in a forest close to the village Lapovac (HRV). At that spot, they were caught by the Croatian authorities who were shouting at them to stop and started shooting in the air with guns:

*"The police officers were shooting to the air when they saw us and were shouting: 'Sit down, sit down, sit down, sit down!', bum, bum [shooting]. They took our mobiles into the pockets: 'Give me your mobile!'. And power banks, they destroyed our power banks."*

The officers frisked their bodies and questioned them about their nationalities, names, and afterwards checked their identification cards and passports. The officers took the Syrian passport of his friend and threw it away, so that he now doesn't have an ID anymore. Beside taking their phones and destroying their power banks, the officers also took around €300 from them, which they had in their pockets. They were further asking them for the names of their parents. After the short verbal investigation, all ten individuals were directly deported to the Bosnian border with a van.

The 30-minute drive was very fast and all of them were falling from one side to another in the backspace. At the border, the officers told the group to get off the van and physically attacked them while pushing them towards Bosnia:

*"By the border, four police men were beating one person. And the police was shouting: 'Go Bosna!'. They took us one by one. They closed the door of a car, and after this beating one. After, they opened the door, they took another person and started to beat him up. There was a big hill, and they pushed my friend from that hill, so he was rolling down from that hill... They kept shouting: 'Go, go, go Bosna!'. They hit one with a baton on his head [photo]. I have now problems with my head."*

At the end of the interview, the respondent explained that he was trying to reach Europe to find a place where he can claim asylum, live in peace and study, which was impossible in his homeland Palestine:

*"All of us have big problems in life. In Syria is war. In Palestine, my two brothers were shot in Gaza by the Israeli army. I have one brother, twins, who also got shot a bullet into his knee, but he survived."*

The respondent a bump on his forehead and bruises on his knee caused by the attack with a baton (photo). His friend had scratches on his right part of the face (from his forehead till his chin) caused by the officers pushing him, which made him fall down a steep slope into some bushes. Others had bruises and pain in their back and legs as a result of the kicks, punches and batons from the authorities.

05/10/2018

## “[...] THEY ALSO THREW US TO RIVER, AND KEPT PUSHING US TO THE RIVER. THEY WERE BEHAVING LIKE ANIMALS”

**Date and time:** October 5, 2018 15:00

**Location:** In a forest close to Slivnjak, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.23927099361661, 15.603528780223769

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 20-30 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 14 Croatian officers in blue uniforms, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of eight men, walked for three days through Croatia after they had left from Velika Kladusa (BIH). They wanted to continue to Slovenia to apply for asylum there. Two days before reaching Slovenia, on October 5, 2018, four Croatian officers detected the group in a small forest. They were described as all male, one of them obese, some supposedly around 40 years old, the others around 30.

They sprayed an irritant spray on the individual's faces and in the eyes, and afterwards questioned them about their nationality and intentions in Croatia. The respondent asked if he could apply for asylum in Croatia, but they just smirked without further responding to him. The officers were acting aggressively towards the group of eight and kept shouting at them. They then locked them into the backspace of a police van, where they were detained for several hours.

Late at night, when it was dark outside, ten other officers arrived and deported the eight individuals to the Bosnian border. There, they were told to get off the van and the officers broke their phones and took all their money:

*“They [the policemen] took my money and stole everything and broke my phone. No money. From home, they sent us money, we bought new phones and power banks, but everything we had bought they stole and broke again.”*

Then, the officers attacked the eight individuals with batons and pushed them into a river, shouting at them to go back to Bosnia:

*“When they were deporting me, they were beating me very hard. They were beating also other people. Two man beating us, they also threw us to river, and kept pushing us to the river. They were behaving like animals.”*

The respondent showed his back where he had a red mark from a baton strike (see photo), and told that he had a lot of pain:

*"I cannot sleep, I sleep on the other side, on my belly, because my back is in too big pain. And this is the problem with the Croatian police because this is not only one time, many time they act like this and with other people, not only with me. People have broken hands, fingers, legs."*

After the push-back, the eight of them walked back to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladusa (BIH).

04/10/2018

## "THERE, THE OFFICERS DIDN'T ASK FOR THEIR FINGERPRINTS BUT REGISTERED THEIR MOBILE PHONES"

**Date and time:** October 4, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Golubici Samobor, Croatian interior, close to Slovenian border

**Coordinates:** 45.7776022223946, 15.54180066906838

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** Croatian officers, caught by one, more at the police station

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

In the night of October 4, 2018, the two men were caught by one Croatian officer in uniform, when they were hidden in a truck near the Croatian-Slovenian border.

The officer took them out of the truck and drove them to a police station, supposedly a Croatian one. There, the officers didn't ask for their fingerprints but registered their mobile phones.

Afterwards, the two of them were driven with a bus to an area near Sid (SRB), together with 18 other people on the move.

03/10/2018

**“[...] I WAS VERY SCARED. THE TOLD US: 'IF ANYONE RUNS FROM HERE, WE WILL SHOOT HIM.'”**

**Date and time:** October 3, 2018 11:00

**Location:** Kestenovac, Croatia, a forest in the inner Croatian land

**Coordinates:** 45.21967740779098, 15.647671664525774

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 34 person(s), age: 16-39 , from: Afghanistan, Bangladesh

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian officers in civil clothes, 6 officers (two drivers, two in blue uniforms and two in black clothes and with masks), 1 car, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 34 walked from Velika Kladusa (BIH) to Croatia. They didn't have GPS, but were led by two young boys, whom the respondent referred to as “leaders” and whom the group had paid for showing them the way to Italy. They intended to apply for asylum in Italy.

On the second day of walking, on October 3, 2018, around 11 am, the group was caught by six men in a civil car, claiming to be Croatian officers. Some individuals tried to escape and to hide themselves between the bushes, but the officers pulled out their guns and started shouting that everyone had to come out of the bushes because they would otherwise shoot them. Since everybody got scared, they all came out of their hiding places. The officers were acting aggressively towards the group and pointing their guns against the men, threatening them.

*“I was really scared as when the police caught us, they pointed their guns against me, and told me not to move. I was very scared. They told us: ‘If anyone runs from here, we will shoot him.’”*

Afterwards, the officers told everyone to sit down in a line, and they had to hand out all their belongings. They took the respondent's bag with his phone inside and €165.

*“All of us had to sit down in the line, and the policemen told us to put our bags in front of us. After, they told us to put all our stuff out of our bags, one by one. All the people had to give everything they had to the police: mobile phones, money, wallets. They [the police officers] took everything we had. They also checked our bodies, and if they did not find anything, they told us to go inside the car. And, they took all of our bags, mobiles, power banks.”*

Following check-up, this group of officers in civil clothes called another six officers, two drivers, two in blue uniforms and two in black clothes, who arrived at the place with a white police van. Then, this new officer group transported them to the Bosnian border. On the way, they stopped the car two times to pick

up more people on the move. After 1,5 hours, they arrived at the border at an abandoned road at around 3 pm. The respondent asked whether he could apply for asylum in Croatia, but didn't get any response.

At the border, the officers pushed back all people on the move, one by one, to Bosnia and physically attacked them:

*"The police told one of the men to come out of the car, and they closed the door. We could hear how they were hitting him so much. And after, they said the next one to come out, all of us one by one. There was one wall by the road, and there was standing two policemen with sticks in front of it, and after there was another wall, where there was other two policemen standing in front of it, also with sticks. So, two policemen were hitting us before that wall and when we crossed this wall, another two policemen, who had masks, were again hitting us. We could see only their eyes. They hit all people, and after when we were walking down, they were kicking us. And when we were walking away from Bosnia, they ran and hit us from the back to make us go faster."*

The individuals walked down the hill where they were pushed back by the officers, and there they found the first individual of their group who had been attacked. He had some of their bags, as the officers gave them to him after the attack, but when they opened them, they were either empty or contained broken phones, cut cable chargers and empty wallets:

*"I had a little bit of money before, but now I don't have any. They also broke our phone chargers, took my phone and my official registration paper in Bosnia. After [the incident], we walked back and stopped a driver whom we paid five euros each for taking us back here [Velika Kladusa]."*

The respondent's friend had a fractured hand due to the baton strikes and his arm in plaster. A 36-year-old individual had a fractured toe and got pain in a leg muscle, so that he walked with support of a walking stick (see photos and MSF medical document). Others of the group had scratches around their body and pain caused by the violent attack..

**03/10/2018**

## **" AFTERWARDS, THEY ORDERED THE 18 OF THEM TO RETURN BY FOOT TO THE TOWN OF SID IN SERBIA"**

**Date and time:** October 3, 2018 02:00

**Location:** Boksic, Croatian interior, around 15 km after the Serbian-Croatian border

**Coordinates:** 45.19990845605422, 19.06500372050425

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 18 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 8 Croatian officers in uniforms, 3 police cars

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

At 2 am on October 3, 2018, the group of 18 were walking from Serbia to Croatia.

They had already walked about 15 km after the Serbian border, when a police car with two officers appeared. Five minutes later, two more cars arrived with six other officers, all wearing uniforms.

These eight Croatian officers then took all their phones, 15 in total, and destroyed them. Afterwards, they ordered the 18 of them to return by foot to the town of Sid in Serbia.

So the 18 individuals walked back around four hours to Sid.

02/10/2018

**“[...] [THE OFFICERS] DROVE IT [THE CAR] VERY FAST, SO THAT WE WERE FALLING FROM ONE SIDE TO ANOTHER”**

**Date and time:** October 2, 2018 22:00

**Location:** near Straza, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.45673258509522, 15.411406136949608

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 30-40 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 1 female Croatian officer, 10 Croatian officers in black uniforms, 1 police van

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of three men started walking in Velika Kladusa (BIH) and crossed the Croatian border, heading further North, with the intention to reach Italy and seek asylum there. After three days of walking,

on October 2, 2018, they had almost reached the Slovenian border. At around 10 pm that evening, they were walking in a forest close to the village of Straza (HRV), where they were detected by the Croatian authorities. A female officer caught the men, asked them for their identification papers and questioned them about their intentions in Slovenia.

According to the respondent, this officer treated them with respect, and they didn't have any problem with her. Following the short verbal investigation by her, the three of them were transported by a police car to a police station near the Bosnian border where they were handed over to around 10 Croatian border authorities. Those however treated the group of three "like animals". First, they frisked their bodies and then took all their phones and money. They were told that once they were going to be deported, all their belongings would be returned, but they would later only receive their phones back, completely destroyed.

*"One officer was the worst. He had no hair and maybe he was between 40 or 50 years and he is with blue eyes."*

When the three of them tried to ask the officers whether it was possible to apply for asylum in Croatia, this bold man shouted at them in Croatian something they didn't understand, and hit them with a baton. According to the respondent, this man was probably the one who would later attack them the most during their push-back to Bosnia. Afterwards, the men were transported by a van to a forest at the Croatian-Bosnian border nearby the official border check point close to Velika Kladusa (BIH). There they were pushed back and physically attacked:

*"They [the policemen] put us into a big car and drove it very fast, so that we were falling from one side to another. They turned on the heater really high, and after switched on air conditioning very high, so we had problems to breath and felt sick. They stopped the car in some abandoned place. We were sitting and waiting inside the car for a very long time. I suppose that the policemen were waiting until it got very dark outside, so that no one could see how they were attacking us. When it could be around four in the morning [on the 3rd October], they told us to get out of the car. It was really dark: the lights of the police car were also switched off. We started feeling the hits by batons from all sites and could hear the screams of the police officers attacking us. I think all of them, 10 officers, were beating us and shouting at us to go back to Bosnia. I did even not know from where the hits were coming from, we could just feel them, everywhere, on our back, legs, head, face. This is racism."*

After the attack and push-back to Bosnia, the three of them had several injuries. All their bodies were covered in bruises and scratches. The respondent's face was also scratched, one friend had a bruised leg (see photos), and the other's back was in pain. They nevertheless had to walk back to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladusa (BIH), where their violent journey had started. All of them were then treated by a nurse from No Name Kitchen.

02/10/2018

## “[...] THEY WERE TOO AFRAID THEY WOULD BE ACCUSED OF BEING SMUGGLERS IF THEY SPOKE ENGLISH”

**Date and time:** October 2, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Tenja, Croatia, southeast of Osijek near the highway 230

**Coordinates:** 45.516883523685514, 18.74369275029312

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 26 person(s), age: 20-26 , from: India

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 3 officers in uniform (2 male, 1 female), 1 man without a uniform, 1 police car

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Aid Brigade Sarajevo

### ORIGINAL REPORT

During the night October 2, 2018, the group of 26 men in their early and mid twenties were crossing Croatia by foot. In a forest next to highway 230, near the village of Tenja, southeast of Osijek, they were spotted by the authorities which used searchlights fixed on their car. There were two male and one female officer in uniform accompanied by a large man without a uniform.

They apprehended them in the forest next to the highway, and immediately beat them with batons until they fell to the ground. They then continued beating and kicking the individuals laying on the ground. None of them asked for asylum because they were too afraid they would be accused of being smugglers if they spoke English. After they were badly beaten, the officers searched their pockets and took all their valuables. Each person had around €200 and a phone. The police took €5000 in total and 20 phones. The expensive phones were kept and the others smashed. After haven taken the valuables, the officers decided to empty the entire content of their backpacks and put it into plastics bags. They then returned the empty backpacks.

When the officers were done, they took them to the police station in two vans, 13 in each. At the station, their photos were taken, but no fingerprints. They didn't know in which town the police station was because they couldn't see out of the van. When they asked for water their request was refused.

At around 5 am, the police vans drove the 26 individuals to a place near Sid (SRB) about 10 km far from the Serbian border, where they had to get off the vans. The officers yelled and forced them to go back to Serbia.

They walked back to Serbia in the dark without navigation or flashlight and without any money.

When asking for details about the push-back, they told their story without any anger towards the officers. They were rather only confused why a person would rob and beat another person. The only hint of

sadness was when they spoke of the beautiful turban fabrics they carried in their backpacks that were dumped in a plastic bag.

01/10/2018

**“[...] THE DOCTORS TOLD HIM THAT HE WOULD NEED TO REST [...], TWO OFFICERS CAME AND PICKED HIM UP [...] ”**

**Date and time:** October 1, 2018 00:00

**Location:** a hospital in Rijeka, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.3270631, 14.442176000000018

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** reckless driving, interrupting medical care

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian male officers. Caught by two, deported by three of them

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of eight started from Bihac (BIH) on September 19, 2018, crossed the border to Croatia and continued towards Slovenia. When they were walking through the Croatian forests about 20 km from the Slovenian border, the respondent started to feel very sick. Hence, the other individuals called the police to help him and then went away, leaving him behind alone waiting for the police. The officers arrived soon and called an ambulance because of his serious health condition.

The respondent was taken to a hospital in Rijeka (HRV) and operated for an intestinal ulcer on September 21. The medical staff were very thoughtful. He was treated there for 12 days, until the end of the month. Then on October 1, even though the doctors told him that he would need to rest for

a few days more, two officers came and picked him up to take him to some barracks.

He was locked in a van for a whole day, and during the following night the vehicle was driven by three other officers in a hazardous way, especially for someone who was supposed to rest. It was on the October 2, when the officers pushed him back with seven other people on the move around Poljana's area (HRV), next to Velika Kladusa (BIH).

01/10/2018

## “YOU KNOW, THEY [MALE OFFICERS] WERE TOUCHING MY WIFE EVERYWHERE”

**Date and time:** October 1, 2018 00:00

**Location:** 10-15 km away from the border close to Bihac, Bosnia

**Coordinates:** 44.8150207626052, 15.697971228968072

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 3, 12, 16, 29, 31, 54 , from: Iran, Iraq

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, sexual assault, gunshots, reckless driving

**Police involved:** Croatian officers. Caught by 7 males (with 5 cars), deported by 20 males (from border police, in blue uniforms)

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The family, father, mother and their three year old daughter left Bihac (BIH) together with another family from, father and two children. They crossed the Croatian border and walked for around 5 km through Croatia before they were picked up by a car organized from a smuggler. They had paid €1000 each to be transported from Croatia to Slovenia, where they wanted to apply for asylum. Already previously they had been violently pushed back from Croatia several times. The respondent wanted to initially apply for asylum with his family and for this reason he wanted to go to Slovenia. He believed that doing the trip by foot with his small daughter and wife without the help from a smuggler, would be impossible for their family.

After around 10 km of driving, the car was detected by the authorities. Some officers with five police cars started to chase them and simultaneously fired guns to make the driver stop. When the smuggler stopped, around seven male officers told the families and the driver to get off the car. The driver got arrested for the illegal transport of undocumented persons.

Then, the officers told the families to lay on the ground and frisked their bodies, including women and children:

*"They told us to lay in the ground, all of us, also my baby. They did not speak nicely to my baby. My friend, a man from Iraq, was telling the police: 'I am a Muslim, please help me.' And the police said 'The Muslims killed my father during the war, I don't want to help you.' I told that the man who killed his father was not my friend and asked why they didn't speak good to me. He [one officer] said to me 'Shut up' and kept speaking to me very badly, called me 'picko matre' [mother fucker]. They [the policemen] searched our bodies, also of my wife and my daughter. They [the officers] were touching them and then kept doing it. You know, they were touching my wife everywhere. I said them: 'Please brother, don't touch my wife and daughter, please, don't touch them.' I kept asking them 'Please, don't touch them.' But they told me 'Shut up' and kicked into my legs [covering his eyes with his hands]. I asked them why that happened, because I am not a terrorist, I am a refugee. This is not good behavior to us."*

He then asked the officer whether him and his family could apply for asylum in Croatia and access the formal accommodation asylum center there. The officers answered:

*"Okay, we'll take you to the camp."*

But instead of taking them there, the two families were transported directly to the Bosnian border. They were driven there by a big van very fast, so that they were falling from one side to another. The car finally stopped at the Bosnian border in an abandoned forest around 20 km away from Velika Kladusa (BIH).

There, the 20 border officers in blue uniforms told them to hand out all their belongings, such as cigarettes, money, phones. They stole €200 from the respondent and around €100 from each. Then, the officers told the families to go back to Bosnia, and started pushing them, attacking them with batons:

*"By the border, after they robbed us, they [the policemen] pushed to my wife and shouted at her to go back to Bosnia. They kept telling my wife bad things. They also pushed my friend, who is fifty years old, and now he has a problem with his knee. My friend told me. 'Don't worry, come and we will come to Croatia later'. One of the officers could hear it and said: 'After you'll go to Croatia?' and took a baton and hit this man into his leg. They were acting to us like we'd be terrorists. There was another Pakistani man who was being deported with us and I could see how the officer was hitting him with a baton too."*

After the attack, the families walked back to Velika Kladusa (BIH). The respondent was very frustrated by the asylum and border system in Europe, that gives him no options to find a peaceful life for him and his family:

*"I just want to find a safe place, not too much money or big house. I just want a peaceful life. Look [showing me the photo of his destroyed car after an explosion by the Iranian government], I had problems with the government in Iran. I just want a safe place in Europe and peace."*

Because of the strike with a baton, the respondent's friend had pain in his knee. His wife was traumatized by the sexual harassment and has since felt concerned to move around the camp unaccompanied.

30/09/2018

## “THEY THEN HAD TO FIND THEIR WAY IN THE DARKNESS [...] INJURED AND WITHOUT ANY LIGHTS OR GPS”

**Date and time:** September 30, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Near Ogulin, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.27169612968551, 15.214627300781217

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 21-25 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** Three officers

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Aid Brigade Sarajevo

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 30, 2018, three Croatian officers detected seven men in their early twenties hiding in the woods near the highway E71 close to the town of Ogulin (HRV).

They asked who spoke English and all of them denied, afraid they might be accused of being smugglers if they had GPS and spoke English. The three officers then lined them up, made them drop their bags and began beating them with their batons. Afterwards, they searched their pockets and bags and took all of their valuables: seven phones, an unknown number of power banks and all their money, €1050 in total.

Then, the group of seven had to enter a police car and was driven to the mountains at the Bosnian border.

When they arrived, the officers forced them to get off the car in the dark and told them to walk towards Bosnia. The seven men didn't get any food or water during their custody. They then had to find their way through the mountains in the darkness back to Bihac (BIH), injured and without any lights or GPS.

29/09/2018

## “HE HIT HIM SO STRONG, THAT HE FELL ON THE GROUND”

**Date and time:** September 29, 2018 01:00

**Location:** forest close to Ogulin, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.323436, 15.264074

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 20-26 , from: Iraq, Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 8 Croatian officers in black clothes

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of eight left Velika Kladuša (BIH), crossed the border to Croatia and continued walking north through the country. The third night, when they were walking through a Croatian forest, around midnight, they could hear a drone flying above their heads. Soon after, they could see the authorities running behind them and shouting at them to stop. When the officers caught them, they pointed flashlights into their faces and shouted at them in Croatian, so none of the eight understood what was going on.

One officer then grabbed the respondent on his shoulder and started hitting him with a baton, first on his back and after on his head and face. He hit him so strong, that he fell on the ground (see photo). The four officers were also beating the other individuals with batons on their heads and backs. The respondent's friend tried to speak to the officer and ask for asylum, but every time anyone tried to say something, the officers gave him a hit with a baton, so the men stopped speaking. Then, the officers shouted at them to enter their cars and transported them directly to the Bosnian border, around 20 km away from the official border check-point in Velika Kladuša (BIH).

As the van's backspace was windowless, the group of eight couldn't tell where the exact location of the push-back was. When they arrived at the Bosnian border, the officers told them to get off the car. Then, they frisked their bodies, searching for their phones and money. They took all their seven phones and their money, €2000 in total.

In the end, the officers started shouting at the seven individuals to run back to Bosnia.

The group of seven then walked back to Velika Kladuša (BIH) despite the fact that the respondent was injured from the attack and the wounds on his head and face were bleeding. The next day, No Name Kitchen's nurse treated his injured face and head.

**27/09/2018**

**“THE OFFICERS IMMEDIATELY BEAT THEM WITH BATONS AND HANDCUFFED THEM”**

**Date and time:** September 27, 2018 15:00

**Location:** close to Slovenian border, Sosice, Croatia  
**Coordinates:** 45.73742948857466, 15.366731015426126  
**Pushback from:** Croatia  
**Pushback to:** Serbia  
**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan  
**Minors involved?** Unknown  
**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), theft of personal belongings, handcuffed  
**Police involved:** 6 Croatian male officers  
**Taken to a police station?:** yes  
**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** No  
**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 12 had started in Bosnia and tried to enter Slovenia after crossing Croatia. They report that, on September 27, 2018, at about 3 pm, when they were walking near the Slovenian border, they were arrested by six officers. The officers immediately beat them with batons and handcuffed them before taking all 12 of them to a police station.

There, the 12 individuals were registered and the officers took their jackets, blankets, money and phones. The group of 12 had to spend the night in the police station without receiving food or water although they asked for it. They did not ask for asylum.

Early the next day, the group was told to enter a van with 10 other people on the move. All 22 individuals were then transported to a spot near Sid (SRB), and dropped off there after a four-hour drive.

**26/09/2018**

**“NO ASYLUM HERE, JUST GO AND DON’T COME BACK. WE CAN NOT HELP YOU PEOPLE”**

**Date and time:** September 26, 2018 08:00  
**Location:** Imotski, Croatia, Autobusni kolodvor  
**Coordinates:** 43.4465246, 17.215997799999997  
**Pushback from:** Croatia  
**Pushback to:** Bosnia  
**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 27,33 , from: Algeria  
**Minors involved?** No  
**Violence used:** no violence used  
**Police involved:** 2 cars, 6 officers - 5 men and 1 woman  
**Taken to a police station?:** unknown  
**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes  
**Reported by:** Aid Brigade Sarajevo

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The two men started walking from Mostar (BIH), crossed the border by foot near Posušje (BIH) in the night and then arrived at Imotski (HRV). It was very cold while they were walking, and they encountered a lot of dogs on their way which they were scared of.

Once arrived in Imotski, they went to the bus station where they wanted to buy a ticket to Rijeka (HRV). However, the authorities were already at the bus station and asked them for their documents and IDs. Then, they searched them for drugs, but they had nothing on them. The two individuals asked the officers for help, explaining that they wanted to continue to Italy to seek asylum there. The officers answered:

*"No asylum here, just go and don't come back. We can not help you people."*

The respondent told one officer that it would be a big problem to return as the two of them might even die on the way due to the low temperatures. The officer replied:

*"That's not my problem."*

They again told them to walk back to Bosnia, which they finally did. On the way they slept for one night in an open garage in Posušje (BIH) and in the morning they hitchhiked back to Sarajevo.

25/09/2018

## "THE 17-YEAR-OLD FEMALE MINOR WAS FORCED TO SIGN AS AN ADULT"

**Date and time:** September 25, 2018 04:00

**Location:** Close to Vinica, Slovenien

**Coordinates:** 45.4614158, 15.253571

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 17-26 , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** insulting

**Police involved:** Several Croatian border police officers in sky blue uniforms, aided by Slovenian border officers, 1 estate car

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken, papers signed

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of seven, including women, men and one minor, walked for four days through the Croatian forests. Their interaction with the authorities began near the Croatian border with Slovenia. The group was walking beside the border river and were observed by Slovenian officials from the far bank. The border officers pointed flashlights in their direction and shouted at them to go back. Soon after, some Croatian officers caught them and transported them to a police station. The seven individuals asked for asylum but the officers simply ignored the request. When one man began to insist, one of the officers just shrugged his shoulders, saying:

*"I don't know."*

The officers took their names and other personal details and forced them to sign papers. The 17-year-old female minor was forced to sign as an adult. When the group questioned this, the officers started to shout and harass her. They hurried the process by shouting: "Name, photo and go!" After this, the group was put into two separate cells, one for the men and one for the women. They were detained there for around six hours.

*"There was no window, no air in the cells."*

The small cells were around 2 x 2 meters big with one single bed, and not enough space for the individuals to lie down or sit comfortably.

Finally, they were driven with what the respondents described as an estate car for around five hours to the Bosnian border. The journey was sickening due to the stuffy air and heat inside the car. The seven of them had to get off at a rural border spot leading down onto a steep section of the Gina river. Then, the officers pushed them towards the border and told them to walk back to Velika Kladusa (BIH). It was just daybreak when they started walking and in the early afternoon they finally arrived back to the camp.

24/09/2018

## "FOR MUSLIMS NO ASYLUM"

**Date and time:** September 24, 2018 02:30

**Location:** Rijeka, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.337692, 14.468684

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 15-26 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** insulting, pepper spray, theft of personal belongings, breathing problems in the van's backspace

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian officers in blue uniforms.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of five, including two minors, left Bihac (BIH) and walked for six hours, crossing the Croatian border, until they reached a small town in Croatia. There, they were picked up by a car, organized from a smuggler, who was supposed to transport them to Italy. If they reached their destination, they would each pay €2000 to the smuggler, in total €10000. They didn't see another option for them to apply for asylum in Europe than through a cooperation with smuggler networks. They didn't find a possibility to legally transit Europe.

*"They took expensive mobiles into their pockets, and normal mobile broke. They took 100 euros from me. They beat us, men, hard, saying to us to go to Muslim man country, that they do not have space in Europe. "This is not for you Europe, go to Muslim man country!", they kept repeating to us. No human rights. Where is the European Union? Where is the European people? All is blind. I am Muslim, but I read in the Bible and in the Bible is written, respect the humanity and the human rights. I respect the Bible, but Croatian police do not respect Muslims."*

Once they were picked up by the smuggler they started driving north. When they were passing through the town of Rijeka (HRV), the car was stopped by the Slovenian authorities. The officers questioned the five of them why they came to Slovenia, using abusive language. Then, they were transported to a police station in Rijeka. At the police station, they asked the officers whether they could apply for asylum in Slovenia, but one officer supposedly responded:

*"For Muslims no asylum."*

The driver of the car who was also the smuggler was only charged €2200 and then released:

*"It is a business, Croatian business. Catching refugee, not a taxi driver. Only 2.200 fine for the driver, and the lawyer, but the driver is free now. No jail, nothing."*

Then, they were first transported with a van through Croatia to the Bosnian border. During the drive, they had problems to breath inside the van as the officers had used an irritant spray inside of the backspace before the individuals entered.

*"They used spray, oxygen problem, I had eyes problem in the car. They sprayed and closed the door. We were vomiting because of oxygen problem."*

The van stopped at several police stations to pick up more people on the move. When they reached the Bosnian border, the officers told them to get off the van. They then first broke their phones, stole their money, and afterwards attacked them physically and mentally.

The group of five and other people on the move who had been pushed back, including seven women, had to walk back in the cold night to the camp in Velika Kladuša (BIH).

23/09/2018

## “I WAS NOT CRYING ABOUT MONEY AND PHONE BUT BECAUSE I FELT DESPERATE”

**Date and time:** September 23, 2018 02:00

**Location:** 20 km away from Velika Kladuša, Croatia, Croatian-Bosnian border

**Coordinates:** 45.05980583155904, 15.734214185676364

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 26 - 32 , from: Syria, Iraq, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 3 male Croatian officers in blue shirts

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of 13 men left Velika Kladuša (BIJ), and crossed to Croatia where they separated. A group of four continued walking through the Croatian interior. When they were in a forest close to the Slovenian border, they were detected by three Croatian men in blue shirts. Two of the four individuals tried to run away, but the officers caught them. Then, they attacked all four of them, hitting their backs and faces with batons, breaking their phones, and stealing their money.

*“They [Croatian police] stopped and started beating us, at the Slovenian border. They broke our phones and stole our money, 200 euros from me. When the police broke my phone and stole my money, now I cannot talk with my wife and children. From who can my wife find money for me that I can continue my trip? I had an idea to go to Europe and work and send my family money and after, take them to Europe, but now... It is not the first time, this is the second, that the Croatian police beat us and steal our money.”*

One of the individuals tried to speak out and ask for asylum in Croatia, but the officers didn't allow him to say anything. When he tried to speak out, he received a hit by a baton from one officer. All four individuals were then put into a van and deported back to Bosnia, without any opportunity to access the asylum procedures. On the way to the border, the van stopped at several police stations to pick up other people on the move. The van then stopped 20 km away from Velika Kladuša (BIH) at around 2 am, but the respondent couldn't remember the exact location because he didn't have his phone to see GPS and it was too dark to recognize the area. When they arrived at the border, the officers told all individuals to get off the vehicle and to return to Bosnia:

*“The police told us to quickly go and don't change the direction, ‘Quickly, quickly, go!’, they said to us. I was crying for one hour afterwards in a forest. I was not crying about money and phone but because I felt desperate. I do not remember the phone number of my family, so I cannot call them.”*

The respondent also cried at the end of the interview while explaining to me his fear of having to go back to Iraq, where the situation is dangerous for him. In addition, his family would be disappointed by his journey that was for nothing:

*"I want to go back to Iraq, but I have nothing. If I go back to Iraq, my family will ask me what I have been doing for one year when I was out of my country and now coming back with nothing. For the first time when the police caught me and broke my phone, and for one month I have not spoken to my wife and family, and now I cannot support them. My children keep asking about me, but I cannot talk with them ... Now, I come back with nothing, and lost my job. I was a police man in Iraq. I never ever beat anyone. I am human and person, we are similar, I cannot do anything to anyone."*

**23/09/2018**

## **"THEY NEITHER RECEIVED FOOD NOR WATER, EVEN THOUGH THEY ASKED FOR IT"**

**Date and time:** September 23, 2018 01:00

**Location:** Tupcina, Croatia, close to the Slovenian-Croatian border

**Coordinates:** 45.71970011068391, 15.438520674985853

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** Croatian officers

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of 45 started their journey in Serbia and after they crossed the Croatian border, they continued walking north through the country.

When they were already close to Slovenia, they had run out of food and didn't eat anything for two days. The interviewees stated that, at some point, Croatian officers arrested them and immediately beat them with their batons. The group was then kept in detention for more than three hours. They neither received food nor water, even though they asked for it.

Then, the interviewee states that 10 individuals of the 45 had to enter a bus and were pushed back to Serbia near the town of Sid (SRB).

22/09/2018

## “[...] SO I SAID OK, I NEED TO GO ILLEGAL WAY BECAUSE THERE IS NO LEGAL WAY FOR ME”

**Date and time:** September 22, 2018 13:00

**Location:** near Rastovača, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.926, 15.651521

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 24-32 , from: Palestine, Libya

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, insulting, destruction of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** Two Croatian officers caught him. The men were deported and attacked by a group of four Croatian officers, three males and one female in dark blue uniforms.

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent said that he met a Bosnian man, an “agent”, who offered to transport him by car from Croatia to Italy for €700. This man promised the respondent to first take him by car close to the Bosnian-Croatian border, from where the respondent would walk for 20 min to an arranged spot in the Croatian National Park, where the “agent” would later pick him up and continue to drive him until Italy.

The respondent decided to choose an illegal option of border crossing because he didn't think there was any other way for him to reach protection. All his efforts of legal transit in the past failed. He had first applied for the US visa from Gaza but got rejected with an explanation that he was not qualified enough, although his English was at the level of a native speaker and he was a College graduate. Then, he applied for a visa to Turkey for two times, but again, he was rejected:

*“My life has been full of rejections, so I said OK, I need to go illegal way because there is no legal way for me.”*

The “agent” picked the respondent up in Bihac (BIH) and drove him to the Croatian-Bosnian border:

*“Before he left me in that point [border], he asked me for money for oil [petrol]. Then, I showed him how much money I had, I had 60 euros in my wallet. He snatched it from my hand and told ok, walk, don't worry, just 20 min. I will find in the park, we will go to Italy directly.”*

So, the respondent walked to the arranged spot in a forest, but no car was waiting for him there. Although he kept calling the “agent”, he couldn't reach him via phone and at some point his phone run out of battery. He therefore kept walking through the forest, but later decided to sleep and continue in the morning because he got lost and couldn't see anything in the dark:

*"I cannot describe how freezing it was that night because, I guess it was under zero, my whole body was shivering. I did have a sleeping or anything because according to that man's offer, he would take me after 20 min. In that time, I did not think I would need a sleeping bag with me. It was freezing, it was entering in my bones. At 5 o'clock, I started to move again."*

On the next morning around 11 am, he reached a small town in Croatia, where he wanted to charge his phone and get in contact again with the Bosnian "agent". But he immediately raised attention from a local Croatian old man, who called the police. When he noticed two officers in blue uniforms arriving in a civil car, he tried to hide behind a van on the street. He could hear one officer asking a local boy whether he could see a person on the move around, because they were searching for him. The respondent supposes that the boy pointed behind a van because he was scared to lie. The officer walked behind the van where the respondent was hiding, and shouted at him:

*"What are you doing here?"*

He then gave him several kicks into his legs. Afterwards, the officers frisked the respondent's body and told him to enter their car.

He was driven to a remote area in a town to an abandoned building. The officers were driving very fast, so he kept falling from one side to the other inside the car. When they reached the abandoned house, he was handed over to another four Croatian officers, three men and one woman, who wore dark blue uniforms. One of whom was tall, half bald, with blond hair and blue eyes and could be around 32 years old. Inside the house, there were already three other people on the move. The four officers were acting aggressively towards the respondent, using abusive language and pushing him so that he fell on the ground. He asked the officers whether he could apply for asylum in Croatia and tried to explain to them that he needed international protection due to the conflict in Gaza, where he came from:

*"I need to seek asylum I come from Palestine, Gaza, the situation in my country is very bad, there is a conflict and no job for me and my family. I need to have protection in Europe. But the police just said: 'You need asylum?' and laughed at me."*

Further, the officers took the individual's phones and returned them later damaged (see photo). Around 1 pm, after one hour in the house, the officers transported all of them to the Bosnian border, around 20 km away from Velika Kladusa (BIH). Once arrived at the border, the officers shouted at the individuals to run, followed by physical attacks with batons.

*"When they said to me run, I knew they were going to beat us. Especially one man who was looking very scary. And they did. When I was running they hit me into the back part of my head, neck and back [crying]" ... "I experienced three wars in Gaza in 2008, 2012, and 2014 when my house and the house of my neighbors was destroyed, but I have never experiences so much inhumanity like in Croatia. Croatian police were acting like beasts."*

The respondent then walked through the forest but didn't know where he was going, so he stopped at an abandoned house and stayed there over the night. The following day when he was walking, a local Bosnian man stopped his car and took the respondent and the other men back to Velika Kladusa (BIH).

21/09/2018

## “THE RESPONDENT PERSON HAD CUTS ON HIS HAND CAUSED BY THE ELECTRIC SHOCKS”

**Date and time:** September 21, 2018 03:00

**Location:** Forest close to the official border check-point in Velika Kladuša, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.194948, 15.765689

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 16-29 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 9 Croatian border officers, wearing black clothes

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of six men left Velika Kladuša (BIH), crossed the Croatian border and were walking for three days through the country. Their walk was getting difficult at some point when they run out of food and water and the respondent had a headache throughout the journey. While they were walking through a forest, they were caught by the authorities. The officers asked them whether they were Muslims, and when they said yes, they started acting aggressively towards them. They attacked them with batons, followed by using electric shocks:

*“They [...] started beating us, bump, bump, bump. They had electric shock. I said why do that because this place is Europe and you don’t do that. Understand, I am a man like you, I am not an animal. He [police officer] said to me than I am an animal. He used the electricity and also baton.”*

The respondent tried to ask the officers whether he could apply for asylum in Croatia, but they threatened him to not to speak as they would otherwise beat him even more. After that, the six of them were locked inside a police car and transported to the Bosnian border. The car was driving fast, so the men were falling from one side to another.

In the night, they reached the Bosnian border at a forest close to the official border check-point in Velika Kladuša (BIH). Nine officers dressed in black deported the men back to Bosnia. Once they arrived at the border, the officers stole the group’s phones and attacked them once again while pushing them back to Bosnia.

The respondent had cuts on his hand caused by the electric shocks. He tried to seek medical support in the local hospital in Velika Kladuša (BIH), but got refused as he couldn’t pay the 20 Bosnian Marks fee. Therefore, he treated the wound by himself, provisionally sewing his open wounds (see photo).

19/09/2018

## “BUT THE OFFICER JUST LAUGHED AND SIGNED THE PAPER FOR HIM WITH HIS OWN HAND”

**Date and time:** September 19, 2018 18:00

**Location:** Near Rijeka, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.3270631, 14.442176000000018

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 16-40 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** dog attacks

**Police involved:** Eight officers, six in black commando uniforms, two in sky blue border wear

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of four, including minors, were apprehended by Croatian officers near the city of Rijeka (HRV) as they attempted to walk from the northern suburbs to a nearby village.

Two men dressed in civilian clothes approached the group of four, shouting at them to stop. The four men were scared and started to run away from the unidentifiable men. But the two strange persons had dogs leashed nearby and quickly set the Alsatians after the group. The dogs barked and ran after them, snapping and growling as instructed by the shouts of the two Croatians. Several times the animals jumped at the men, snapping violently at their heads. The two then called the police and an estate car arrived along with two other cars. In total there were now eight officers, six in black uniforms and three in sky blue clothes.

The four individuals had to enter the estate car and were driven north. They knew this because when they were unloaded twenty minutes later they found themselves at the Slovenian-Croatian border. There, they were detained in a container on the Croatian side and processed. The officers made them sign papers with their names, ages and nationalities, and then took photos of the four individuals holding the respective papers in front of them. The four of them didn't want to sign the deportation paper and the respondent requested again and again for asylum, telling them that either they would give him asylum:

*“Or you shoot me!”*

But the officer just laughed and signed the paper for him with his own hand. Aside from this the officers also wrote down 18+ for the minor, crossing out the date of birth that he had written recording his actual age as 16. During the ordeal all four individuals asked several times for the opportunity to claim asylum. At one point one of the younger officers was trying to listen to the minor, but his superior, an older man, interrupted him and told them that they were all going to be deported. After around an hour at the station they had to enter the estate car again and were driven for around five hours to the Bosnian border. On arrival the group was taken out of the car and told to walk, passing by the officers already waiting there.

Two of them were dressed in black and three in sky blue. They were on the Croatian side of the border, near the official border crossing of Maljevac (HRV). In this incidence, they were returned their belongings and ordered to leave Croatian territory.

Initially it were two civilian informants who assaulted the group by setting dogs (Alsatians) on them. The denial of asylum rights occurred on the Slovenian and Croatian border and enacted by Croatian border officers. The violent push-back was carried out by two officers dressed in black who drove the estate car, and at the border another five suspected Croatian officers joined.

**12/09/2018**

**“[...] THE OFFICER AIMED A CANISTER OF PEPPER SPRAY INTO THE BACK OF THE VAN, CAUSING THE INDIVIDUALS TO CHOKE AND CRY”**

**Date and time:** September 12, 2018 22:50

**Location:** near to Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.7939494614755, 15.980545608984357

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 19-51 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pepper spray, threatening with guns, gunshots, destruction of personal belongings, lack of oxygen in van's backspace

**Police involved:** Croatian officers, one officer was dressed in a blue uniform, one estate vehicle and two police vans. Shortly after 10 officers, all dressed in blue Croatian uniforms.

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The group of ten, including one elderly male, had been traveling by foot for several days through the Croatian interior. At some woodlands near the southern suburbs of Zagreb, they were detected by the authorities. A flashlight pointed at them through the trees. Moments later, a man began to shout at them to stop. This was followed by two loud gunshots as a handgun was fired just over their heads. The group sat down and waited for the officers to reach their position. One officer was dressed in a blue uniform and continued to point the gun at them, asking:

*“What are you doing here?”*

The way he asked this made some individuals scared that he might shoot at them again. The respondent described how they treat them *“like animals”* and that the ten of them repeated telling the officers:

*“We don’t want to hurt anybody.”*

The officer ignored them and ten more officers arrived on the scene within 20 minutes. They came with one estate vehicle and two police vans. They were all dressed in blue uniforms consistent with those worn by Croatian police, and searched the individuals and took their phones, money and power banks. The group was not taken to the station but loaded into the back of the van. It was dark and the officer pushed him towards the back doors of the van, shouting:

*“Get in!”*

The individual replied:

*“Sir the back doors are locked, I can’t get in. What are you doing with me?”*

In response, the officer pushed the individual stronger against the back doors and kicked him strongly in the ankle. After this the doors were opened and all ten of them had to take a seat in the back. The journey took around two hours, but after already 30 minutes the ten of them were feeling sick from the lack of space and oxygen. One man knocked on the grill that connects the drivers cabin. The respondent tried to get their attention of the officers to get some fresh air for the other individuals who were vomiting. After a few minutes, the van stopped, drawing up onto a slope at the side of the road. Then, the individuals heard the passenger door being opened and after the back doors were opened although they didn’t arrive at the border yet. According to the respondent, instead of making them get out the van, the officer aimed a canister of pepper spray into the back of the van, causing the individuals to choke and cry. The skin of the individual sitting next to the door was burnt from the intensity of the assault. The doors were slammed again, and they continued driving towards the Bosnian border.

When they stopped again, they found themselves at a rural spot near the Glina river. The ten officers in blue and another four officers in black uniforms made a circle around the back of the van. When the doors were opened, each individual was summoned out one by one. On the ground in the middle of the circle the officers threw a plastic bag full of broken phones. As the individuals got off the back of the van, the officers asked them individually to find their own phone amongst the others in the bag.

As soon as they bent to look into the bag, the circle was closed around them and the officers beat them on the heads with black batons. They were also kicked as they tried to get up and find their balance. Even those who didn’t attempt to bend down to find their phone were beaten badly. When asked if the group had tried to claim asylum the respondent described what would happen if you made any questions about asylum:

*“He (Croatian officer) starts to box you... If anyone talks, they start to beat.”*

After 15 minutes, the group of ten was told by the officers to go, and they pushed them towards the river and across it to Bosnian territory.

11/09/2018

## “THEY SHOUTED AT THE GROUP: 'SIT DOWN AND SHUT UP!'”

**Date and time:** September 11, 2018 23:45

**Location:** 20km from Velika Kladuša, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.2587938313759, 15.556693024023389

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 16-25, one minor , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** no violence used, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian officers, six officers wearing black commando uniforms

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of five had walked through the Croatian woodlands for one full day. At night, they camped approximately 20 km far from Velika Kladuša (BIH). They had made a small fire to keep them warm, but when an officer saw the flames, a patrol arrived at their location. At a nearby track, two cars pulled up, carrying six officers in black uniforms. They shouted at the group:

*“Sit down and shut up!”*

When one of the individuals later asked the officers for asylum, they replied:

*“No, you go (back to Bosnia)!”*

The officers then checked their pockets and took all their belongings. Then, the group had to enter what was described as an estate car which was driven for 15 minutes. When they got of the car, they realized that they had been taken back at the Maljevac (HRV) border crossing from where they had left Bosnia just some hours ago.

The officers told them to walk back into Bosnian territory. At this point they returned their phones, but they kept the power banks, headphones and cables.

10/09/2018

## “[...] THE POLICE TOOK THEIR PHONES FROM THE CAR AND DESTROYED THEM WITH BATONS IN FRONT OF THEM”

**Date and time:** September 10, 2018 17:00

**Location:** near to Ogulin, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.29902761734411, 15.099141092397758

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: unknown , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian officers, ten officers wearing black commando uniforms, four officers wearing sky blue uniforms

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of nine had been walking for four days until they were around 100 km inside the Croatian interior, coming from Bosnia. At that point, they were observed walking through some light wooded area at approximately 5 pm on September 10, 2018.

They were initially detected by two officers dressed in black. They ordered the individuals to stop and sit down. Within ten minutes many more officers arrived to the scene with two estate and one patrol car. There were five officers dressed in sky blue uniforms and another eight in black uniforms. The group was frisked and got all their belongings were taken.

All nine of them asked for asylum several times, but their requests were totally ignored or responded with shouting by the officers.

From the roadside they were loaded into one of the estate cars and driven for around 2,5 hours. When the car stopped, the back doors were opened and the officers told them to go. When the group asked about their belongings, the police took their phones from the car and destroyed them with batons in front of them.

09/09/2018

## “ [...] AND BROKE THEM [THE PHONES] IN FRONT OF THEM WITH A BATON TO SMASH THE SCREENS”

**Date and time:** September 9, 2018 22:00

**Location:** Rijeka, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.3270631, 14.4421760000000018

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 18-32 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used, theft of personal belongings, lack of oxygen in van's backspace

**Police involved:** Croatian officers, at the push back: four officers in sky blue shirts

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of six young men had been walking for one week in the woodlands of Croatia. On Sunday evening, on September 9, 2018, they were stopped by two officers wearing black uniforms that they described as Croatian officials. They walked around a parked car towards the group of six while shouting at them to stop. The group complied and waited as the officers searched them and took their belongings.

An estate vehicle arrived and was used to transport the six individuals for approximately 10 km to a police station in the suburbs of Rijeka. At the station, they were brought to an office and each was ordered to sign a deportation paper, including names, ages, nationalities and a photo of their faces. The six of them asked for asylum in Croatia and asked the officers to make an application that evening. But they just replied:

*“You can ask for asylum in Zagreb, but we are not in Zagreb.”*

They were detained in a cell for around two hours before being driven five hours back to the Bosnian border. They travelled in the back of what they described as

an estate car with no light or adequate ventilation. Already tired from walking, the confinement made the group feel very sick.

Eventually, they arrived at a rural border area which they knew to be the area of the Croatian border opposite to the Bosnian town of Poljana. Four officers were waiting there in sky blue shirts. The officers took them out of the van and told them to walk towards Bosnia. When they asked about their phones, the officers replied by taking a bag containing the devices and broke them in front of them with a baton to smash the screens. Then the phones were returned and the six individuals returned to Bosnia.

**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

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback 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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**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 described as wearing black "commando" uniforms took their mobiles, powerbanks and around 300 euros. Finally another officer in blue uniform consistent with Croatian police arrived and loaded them into what was described as a 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. According to the respondent, 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.

**07/09/2018**

## **"THE FAMILY ASKED FOR ASYLUM, BUT THE OFFICER IGNORED THEM"**

**Date and time:** September 7, 2018 06:00

**Location:** 4km from Luciča, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.340783190777685, 15.47939779182991

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 26, 1 , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 1 arresting officer in civilian clothes (jeans and jacket), 2 commando officers in black uniforms

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 7th. 2018, A family of three on the move, had been walking through the Croatian countryside for seven days. The father and mother took turns carrying the one year old daughter who was too young to walk. At dawn on September 7th. 2018, the family was walking near the town of Lučica. It was twilight, around 03:00, and the three people moved on a track that ran round the village. From the shadows a man dressed in civilian clothing (jeans and jacket) stood up from a chair and ordered them to stop. Then he approached, showing them a Croatian police badge.

The man told them to wait for a police car to arrive. The family asked for asylum, but the officer ignored them. The father told him he would do what was needed for an application and that the police could take their fingerprints. But the officer only replied "no".

After fifteen minutes a standard white patrol car arrived with two officer dressed in black driving the vehicle. The men conversed with the officer in civilian clothing and then loaded the family into the back of the car. They were driven for approximately 2 hours until they arrived at the border near to the road crossing of Maljevac which permits traffic into V.Kladusa. They were taken out of the car in an abandoned area near the Glina (river) and told to walk back to town.

**06/09/2018**

## "THEY ASKED SEVERAL TIMES FOR ASYLUM, THE POLICE BECAME ANGRY AND TOLD THEM TO BE QUIET"

**Date and time:** September 6, 2018 00:30

**Location:** 10km south east of Rijeka, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.31676851653887, 14.876426354543014

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 35-46 , from: Iraq

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 3 officers in sky blue Croatian uniforms, 1 civilian without police identification

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 6th, 2018, a group of four Iraqi men had walked for several days in the wooded hills of the Croatian forest. They were travelling on foot towards the town of Rijeka, following a B road. It was late in the evening and the group was passing through an industrial area with several workshops and factories. They passed a house next to a large factory for aluminum production. A sensor light was triggered on the building and shined on the men. At this point a dog began to bark nearby and alerted by the sound, a man dressed in civilian clothing came from the building. He told them to stop and wait with these words: "Stop, Croatian Police"

The man in civilian clothing told them he was a police officer, but at no point did he show them any identification papers. The four men stopped and sat by the roadside. After a short time one patrol car and one combi vehicle arrived on the scene. The patrol car had two officers inside, the combi was driven by one. They all wore the sky blue shirts and navy trousers consistent with the uniform of the Croatian police. The four victims were then searched and had all their belongings taken. This included bags, phones, powerbanks, food and money. While the police officers conducted this seizure of items one of the group asked several times for asylum. The victim told the police officers:

"We respect you, (but) we have war in our country."

To this the police replied:

"You are illegal."

When the victim asked again the police became angry and told him to be quiet. They also asked the members of the group where their smuggler was. The men replied that they were just walking alone but the police did not seem to believe them. After being frisked and having their belongings taken away, all four men were loaded into the back of the combi and two officers drove them back to the border to Bosnia.

After approximately 4.5 hours in the back of the combi (with no light or adequate oxygen) the group was unloaded at the Croatian side of the border near the road crossing of Maljevac. At the rural area to the side the police took the mobiles they had confiscated and walked towards the men. The officers looked through the GPS points on the phones and then broke them with a single forceful strike with their batons. Only then did they return the belongings to the men.

It was the middle of the night and the group asked which way to walk back to Velika Kladuša. The officers, described as Croatian police, told them to walk through the woods and sent them in a south easterly direction, meaning it took them double the time to arrive back to the camp than it would have been going the right way.

03/09/2018

**“THEY TOLD HIM HE WAS LYING AND SAID DIRECTLY TO HIM THAT HE MUST SIGN HIS YEAR OF BIRTH AS 2000. ALL THREE MINORS WERE REGISTERED AS ADULTS IN THIS WAY”**

**Date and time:** September 3, 2018 23:00

**Location:** Rijeka, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.21386416162564, 15.930939906780964

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: 15-41 , from: unknown

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 8 croatian police men, dressed in blue

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, papers signed

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group concerned in this incident were made up of eight men and three minors. They had walked for five days before their capture near the Croatian town of Rijeka. They were observed by police in a semi-rural area on the east of the town at around 11:00 on September 2nd. 2018.

Two officers dressed in blue uniforms consistent with those of the Croatian police approached the group from a parking area near some industrial units. The police shouted at them to stop and the group complied. The police officers searched them and confiscated their possessions (incl. phones, money, bags and powerbanks).

The respondent states that, after an hour, two white combi-vans were brought and the group was divided between the two. The eight men were put in one vehicle and the other three minors were put into a separate combi-van. They were driven to a nearby station.

When they arrived, they were taken into a room to be processed. Each man had a photo taken and gave his name, age and nationality (no fingerprints were taken) on a document that he was then ordered to sign. The men asked for asylum in Croatia but the police just told them to “shut up”. The group did not insist further because the police were shouting at them, but some of the older men asked again on behalf of the minors. The police told them again to be quiet and ignored the request for the children to claim asylum.

When it was time for the underage boys to be processed the police became angry again. The sixteen year old child was asked to give his date of birth and when he signed it as 2002 the officers began to shout at him. They told him he was lying and said directly to him that he

must sign his year of birth as 2000. All three minors were registered as adults in this way, despite being 15, 16 and 17.

The processing took around two hours, with the men all being held in one room, while the minors were coerced into changing their age. After this they were moved into an adjoining cell for some hours. During this time they were given no food or water.

At around 18:00 or 19:00 the group was led from the station and loaded into a combi-van (note that at this stage, all the group members were now listed as adults and thus contained in one vehicle). The drive took around 5 hours and upon arriving at the destination the men were unloaded at a rural spot on the Croatian frontier.

The three men interviewed described how four boys had vomited on the journey because of the lack of oxygen and the heat. When asked, they described the experience as punishment.

At the border, four officers in blue came out of the front cabins of the combi-vans and told the group to walk towards Bosnia. When the men and children asked for their belongings back, the police laughed and gave back a plastic bag containing their confiscated mobiles. When the group received them, they realised that the devices had all been put into water and were irreparably damaged.

The arresting officers were dressed in sky blue and were made up of 4 men from what the respondent described as a Croatian detachment close to Rijeka that participated in the theft of belongings. The processing officer in the station was dressed in the same uniform and participated in the misrecording of the childrens ages. At the border a further four officers delivered the men to the frontier near Poljana and enacted the illegal pushback.

**02/09/2018**

**“THEY ASKED THE OFFICERS TO LET THEM FREE IN ORDER TO REACH SLOVENIA, BUT THE OFFICERS REPLIED - SORRY, IT’S OVER, IT’S OVER.”**

**Date and time:** September 2, 2018 22:00

**Location:** 5 km from the Slovenian border, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.7916893454309, 15.495579684545305

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown , from: Egypt

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 2nd. 2018, 2 people from Egypt attempted to move from Serbia through Croatia to Slovenia. When they reached 5 km near the Slovenian border, they had been walking for 3 days without food. Because of hunger, they left the forest and went into a small town. There, they asked for directions to Slovenia, some Croatians told them to go in the opposite direction, but a little girl told them the right direction to go. They also tried to ask for food at a house in the village, but their request was rejected.

About 5 minutes later some Croatian police officers arrived to arrest the them. They were taken to a Croatian police station, where they were registered, and their mobile phones were checked. They asked the officers to let them go in order for them to reach Slovenia, but the officers replied "Sorry, it's over, it's over". They spent the night in the police station, and the officers provided them with water and donuts.

The next day they were put into a bus, and an officer gave them 2 bottles of water and biscuits. They were then driven back to Sid, Serbia.

**01/09/2018**

**"HIS TWO SMALL CHILDREN WERE REALLY TIRED, BUT THEY WERE CALLED NAMES AND SCARED BY THE POLICE THROUGHOUT THE DEPORTATION"**

**Date and time:** September 1, 2018 21:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.8150108, 15.981918899999982

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 2, 4, unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** insulting, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A family of four in transit, including two small children, had hired a smuggler, whom they paid 3500 euros in total for transport from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Italy. They began their journey from Bihac (BiH), crossing the border into Croatia, from where they were transported by car and taken to a forest area near Zagreb. The family where supposed to wait in this location for further transport. The family waited in the forest for two days, without enough food, water and warm clothes. The conditions were poor and it started to rain heavily.

The father of the family, tried to get in contact with their transport and he was told to go to the city center of Zagreb to apply for asylum. The smuggler said that they could safely apply for asylum in Zagreb because of their family status which would ensure them access to asylum procedure. The smuggler also told them that his other clients, twelve single men, also managed to apply for asylum in Croatia with a positive decision, so the family should not be concerned.

On 1st. September 2018, the family went to the asylum center in Zagreb, which the father made referred to as "Pinica" (Porin), and asked the staff for help to lodge an asylum claim, and to accommodate them. But the staff called the police, who took the whole family to a police station. They arrived at the station at 21:00 (on the 1st of September). The family stayed in the police station until 02:00 on the 2nd September 2019.

The police officers took photos of the family and took their fingerprints. According to the father of the family, two police officers were acting aggressively towards him and intimidating him in front of his wife and children. He shared that one police officer also tricked the family by telling them that they could access the asylum procedure, which was later found to be a lie because they were deported back to BiH.

***"I was sitting on the chair, and the police kept kicking into it and shouting at me: 'What is your name? Where did you come from?' They kept laughing at me, saying: 'Oh yeah, everybody is coming from Bosnia now. Fuck you!' They were using very bad words. I said to them that I wanted to apply for asylum in Croatia. But they said: 'No asylum for you.' But other police officers said 'Okay, asylum for you, just wait.' But they deported us back."***

At 02:00, the whole family was transported by van to the Bosnian border, close to the official border crossing near Velika Kladusa. The police told them to get out of the car and then took their 100 Bosnian Marks (the last money they had) and their mobile phones. Afterwards, the officers shouted at the whole family to go back to Bosnia.

The father of the family explained that his two small children were really tired, but the officer were calling them names and scaring them throughout the deportation. The family lost all their money and did not have any other way to proceed to Italy, where they wanted to apply for asylum. They also lost their place in formal temporary accomodation center "Hotel Sedra" (BiH), because they were away for more than three days. At the time of recording this interview, the family were sleeping outside in the makeshift camp at Trnovi, in Velika Kladusa.

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

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback 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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**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 a popular crossing point to Slovenia) the group was spotted on some open woodland. From a side road two officers described as being dressed in black commando uniforms approached the group and ordered them to stop. According to the respondent, 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 described as wearing 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 a blue shirt and navy trousers, consistent with 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.

**01/09/2018**

**“THE OFFICER HIT HIS RIGHT EYE SOCKET, WHICH WAS LEFT BRUISED AND HIS SIGHT WAS TEMPORARILY AFFECTED.”**

**Date and time:** September 1, 2018 02:00

**Location:** Karlovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.4928973, 15.555268299999966

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: unknown , from: Syria, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers in black commando uniforms, caught and robbed by 3 officers (initially with white jeep), physically attacked by 6-7 border police officers

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 1st. 2018, A group of seven people on the move traveled on foot from Velika Kladusa, walking directly north into the Croatian interior. After walking for two days the group

was moving through an area of rural/suburban woodland near to Karlovac and was spotted by a police patrol vehicle (white jeep) on a nearby road. Two officers jumped out of the car while the driver waited inside the vehicle. These two officers, described as being dressed in “*black commando uniforms*”, shouted to the group to stop. The victims complied with this instruction and waited for the officers to reach them.

The police told them to sit down and began to body-search them. The officers stole all their belongings, including bags, jackets, mobiles, money and power banks. They also removed all White Papers (Bosnian documents), which they did not return. The victims asked for permission to go back to Bosnia.

A small van was brought to the roadside and all the seven people were loaded into the back of it. It took approximately an hour to deliver them to a rural border location, during which the men stayed in the dark with inadequate ventilation. There the doors were opened and the group was told to go out. They were on the Croatian-Bosnian border, near Poljana.

Along with the initial officers, 6-7 more officers were waiting outside, all dressed in black. The group was told to stand while the police searched their bodies again, in spite of having all their belongings taken at their initial seizure. When it became apparent that one member of the group, a 17 year old Algerian male, still had a mobile phone in his pocket, the police began to shout at him in Croatian. He pleaded with the officers politely, asking them not to take it. But the officer closest to the man used the reinforced heel of his boot to stamp hardy to the victim's upper foot. The officer also hit his right eye socket – cheekbone area which was left bruised, and his sight was temporarily affected. When everybody had been searched, the police told them to walk down into a small stretch of stream (a gully/tributary of river Glina).

When whole the group was standing in the ditch, the officers, standing at the bank, said “*heidi*”. As the men started to move, the officers began to beat them with batons. Some officers jumped lower to kick and strike the victims across their back as they tried to escape across the stream and into Bosnian territory. There were left visible baton strikes across the kidneys, consistent with these blows from behind, especially on the back of one of the victims.

The victims crossed into Bosnia and knew from previous push backs that they were around 20 km westwards from Velika Kladusa. It took until early morning to arrive back to the town, having no money for the bus.

**31/08/2018**

**“THEY CIRCLED US SO THAT WE WERE IN THE MIDDLE AND THEN THEY BEAT US”**

**Date and time:** August 31, 2018 15:00

**Location:** Close to Vinica, Slovenia

**Coordinates:** 45.467479780157774, 15.250700757152117

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 18 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Caught and robbed by 3 Croatian male police officers, deported by 6 Croatian male police officers (the driver wearing white clothes, other five who were physically attacking the men in black uniforms)

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On August 29th. 2018, a group of 18 men left Sturlic (BiH) and walked through Croatia. They paid between 200 and 300 euros each to a smuggler, who was supposed to pick them up by a van from the prearranged point in a forest close to Vinica (Slovenia) and transport them to Trieste (Italy). The men crossed the Road number 1 and then the Road 42, and hid in a forest to wait for the smuggler.

The group spent one night in the forest. The following day around 3 pm, a man appeared close to them, wearing civilian clothes, and signaling them to come out of the forest to enter a van that would transport them to Italy.

*"This man said to us: "Come, come, come. We are not police and no police is coming. We will take you to Italia." Okay, so we went into the car. When we were inside of it, the man said to us: "Wait until the next car is coming." Okay, were waiting. But two or three minutes later we could hear some voices and see some men who had guns. And one of them said: "Sit down here, we are police", but they did not have police ID cards. We were sitting for one hour on a road, it was raining heavily, while he called to the police station."*

Then 3 police officers arrived at the place. They stripped all the men naked and frisked their bodies. They told all men to give them their money and phones and did not return them. The interviewee explained that the policemen stole 1000 euros from him and between 50 to 300 euros from each of the other men.

*The police asked that who has money and who has phones. All the boys gave him their telephones and money. And when we got to the border, we asked them to give our mobile phones, but they said no. This is business for the Croatian police.*

Then, the police officers took them to a police station, but the interviewee did not know its location because they were transported by a car with no windows. At the police station, the interviewee and other men told the police that they wanted to apply for asylum in Croatia. But the men were only investigated for the purpose of identifying a smuggler within their group. They were denied access to the asylum procedures:

*We all asked to apply for asylum in Croatia. They said: "Okay, no problem." When we came to the police station, they asked who could speak English, me and my friend could. They asked us who was the smuggler, how much money, all of information I gave them. Also, one was searching through my phone my pictures and saying "This is your smuggler", but I was saying "No, no, this is my brother." When then they had finished the investigation, they said to me go.*

Following the investigation at the police station, the men were transported by a van to the Bosnian border (Sturlic) for their deportation. There was one driver in white clothes and five police (described by the interviewee as "commandos") in black clothes in the car. The interviewee explained that the journey to the border was difficult, because there was almost no oxygen inside the van and they were driving very fast, turning from one side to another, so that the men kept falling from their seats.

When they arrived at the border, the interviewee asked the police officers to return their phones and money, but the police refused. After that, the police officers dressed in black told the men to leave the car three by three. When three of the men were outside the car, these officers started verbally threatening the men and physically attacking them with kicks and metal batons while pushing them back to Bosnia.

*When we were being deported at the border, I said: "Give my mobile and give my money back." He [a police officer] said: "No, go!" The police told three persons to come out of the car. We came outside and they circled us so that we were in the middle and they were beating us. And after it was finished, another three persons. They were beating us outside the car, three by three. They [were acting very hardly], telling us "Go! Fuck you!" like this "Pichko Matre"*

After the violent push-back, the men slept rough one night in Sturlic, and after that walked back to Velika Kladusa. The interviewee stated that he wanted to return back to Serbia now because there was no accommodation for him in Bosnia, which makes the transit difficult especially over the winter. He also explained that he could not try to go to Europe now because he had paid his last money to the smuggler whom he had lost contact with.

*I was calling the smuggler, but the phone was off. And I cannot find where that smuggler is, in Bosnia, Serbia, Bihac, Velika Kladusa, I don't know. This time we don't have money anymore. I cannot call my family for more money. They do not have work in Kabul and they are poor.*

**31/08/2018**

**"THE MINOR RECEIVED SEVERE IMPACT WOUNDS TO HIS RIGHT EYE AND EYE SOCKET, HE WAS ATTACKED FROM ALL SIDES BY ALMOST ALL OF THE OFFICERS"**

**Date and time:** August 31, 2018 02:00

**Location:** Skrad, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.4314803, 14.905421499999989

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: unknown , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers in black uniforms, caught and robbed by 3 officers, at the border 9 border police officers physically attacking the men

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On August 31st. 2018, a group of seven young males and one minor, traveled on foot through woodland, from Bosnia into Croatia via the border near Sturlic. They walked in westwards towards the town of Slunj, and from there followed the highway number 1 northwards. Approximately 10 km from the Slovenian border, the group were spotted by a police unit traveling by car.

Two officers dressed in black approached them and shouted at them to stop. The group complied with this instruction. They were then told to sit down and wait. After around 15 minutes a "combi-style" police van arrived and all eight men were loaded into the back of it. They were delivered to a nearby police station where their names were taken and belongings removed.

The group spent an hour there, but signed no documents nor gave any fingerprints. Despite their requests, they were not given any food or water. After an hour at the station, the group were again told to go into the van and driven for around 1,5 hrs. The van was driven erratically and the lack of oxygen in the back made all the members of the group feel sick.

At the Croatian-Bosnian border, about 25 km north from Bihac, the "combi" was stopped and parked, still with all eight people inside. As the back door was opened, the transit group found a row of police on either side of the van (six in total), all dressed in black uniforms. The eight individuals were told to go out one by one. At this point the corridor of police officers started to beat the men with forceful overhead strikes, using batons.

It was during this attack that the minor received severe impact wounds to his right eye and eye socket. The injury was caused by a diagonal plane baton strike downwards onto the victim's face, consistent with the overhead assault from the lines of police. The individual described how he was attacked from all sides by almost all of the officers.

At the border the police did not return any of the groups belongings which had been confiscated. This included money, mobile phones and power banks. The group did not sign any documents or give any fingerprints, despite the group asked for access to apply for asylum. The officers only replied "Shut up!" or "No!"

30/08/2018

## “THE POLICE OFFICERS WERE ACTING AGGRESSIVELY, AND POINTED GUNS AGAINST THE FATHER OF THE FAMILY.”

**Date and time:** August 30, 2018 23:00

**Location:** Near Velika Kladuša, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.21749534471175, 15.72892478613278

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia, Croatia

**Demographics:** 13 person(s), age: unknown , from: unknown

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** threatening with guns, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Four Croatian police officers, wearing blue shirts and black vests, in unmarked police car.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On August 30th. 2018, a family of three and ten men walked from Velika Kladuša (Bosnia and Herzegovina), crossed the border to Croatia, and walked further into Croatia where they were supposed to be picked up by a taxi. After two days of walking in Croatia, at around 11 pm, the whole group was detected by four Croatian police officers wearing blue shirts and black vests, who were sitting in a civil car (unmarked police car). When the police approached the group, the mother of the family explains that she started crying and begging the police to let them go, but the police did not listen.

All respondents explain that the police officers were acting aggressively towards them, pointed guns against them, and attacked the father of the family while his wife and two year old daughter were standing next to him. Afterwards the police conducted body searches and robbed them of their belongings:

*When they [police] saw us, they put out their guns and pointed them against A. I don't know why. After the police attacked A, pushing him. ... They searched us maybe ten times. They took off our clothes, they searched through our bags, took mobile, power bank, sim cards, everything. They stole our phones, 12 phones in total, power banks, and headphones.*

*The police did not take off my clothes for some reason, they respected that I was a woman. But they [police] searched me as well, touching me and stole my two power banks. From some people they [police] took 500 euros from other 200 euros maybe 15, different for different persons.*

The mother of the family further explained that her daughter was cold, thirsty, and hungry, so she asked the police for water and food. But the police did not care that they had a baby with

them and refused to provide water and food. Afterwards, the police told the family to walk from the forest back to Bosnia, while they wanted to take all single men to a police station. The father of the family asked the police if they could transport him, his wife and his small daughter back to the Bosnian border because it was dark, night and the family did not know how to walk back without a phone and GPS navigation. But the police rejected his request and left the family in the forest, where the family stayed overnight and in the early morning, they walked back to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladuša (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

All single men were taken by a van to the police station. The respondent, from the group of men, did not know the location of the police station because the car had dark windows, so he could not follow the direction of their journey. The respondent states that the journey to the station took over an hour. The men arrived at the police station at around midnight. According to the respondent, the police kept questioning the men for three hours, repeating the same questions with the aim to identify a smuggler within the group:

*We stayed the whole night in the police station. Maybe until 3 am, they kept asking us: "Who are you? Why are you coming here? All the time, again and again. Just asked, answer, asked, answer. They were trying to find the leader, the smuggler.*

The single men were all deported by a police van to Starlik the following day early in the morning, from there they walked back to Velika Kladuša.

At the end of the interview, the mother of the family explained that they decided to hire a smuggler as there was no legal and safe transit to Europe for the family. The interviewee further explained that without a smuggler's car transport, it would take them two weeks of walking in the forest with their baby. Such a walk would be difficult and risky for the whole family. For this reason, they became reliant on the smuggling networks, who have financially exploited them multiple times.

*Walking in the forest with baby is very difficult. It is very cold in the night. We do not have enough food. In the forest, we eat mainly biscuits and drink the water from a river. For this reason, my daughter's stomach is very bad, and she kept vomiting the last time in the forest. We cannot just walk the whole way so that is why we must hire a smuggler. But the last two times he did not show up and we were stuck in the forest for days. It is always the same – we clean ourselves, have a rest, border crossing, and back, we clean ourselves, have a rest, border crossing and back, and again and again. I am very tired of this.*

The father of the family was asked if he had any physical injuries caused by the police attack, he responded:

*I am [physically] good but mentally not good. My mind is not good. I am very stressed. I did not sleep the whole night.*

29/08/2018

## “THE WOMAN WAS FORCED TO TAKE OFF ALL HER CLOTHES AND WAS TOUCHED BY MALE POLICE OFFICERS”

**Date and time:** August 29, 2018 07:00

**Location:** 8 km from the border (Velika Kladuša), Croatia.

**Coordinates:** 45.188258597875226, 15.663693462890592

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: unknown , from: Iraq

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Four Croatian police officers, wearing blue uniforms

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The two respondents stated that they did not believe in the possibility of legal and safe transit to Europe, as there was no transit zone for them to ask for asylum in Europe by the Bosnian-Croatian border. For this reason, they decided to hire a smuggler who would have transported them from Croatia to Europe, where they wanted to ask for protection. One respondent explained that him and his brother, as well an Iraqi family of four (mother, father and two sons) arranged a smuggler whom they would pay after reaching their destination – Germany.

The whole group of 6 people left Velika Kladuša (BiH), walked across the border to Croatia, and continued to a forest around 8 km far away in the inner Croatian land, where they were supposed to wait for a taxi to pick them up. The smuggler did not specify to them any time of their pick up, he just told them to wait in this unmarked forest location. The group was waiting in the forest for three days and three nights. The respondent stated that those three days in the forest were hard for them, especially for the children, because during the day it was hot and in the night it was very cold and they did not have enough blankets and warm clothes. The second day, they ran out of water and food and they still had not received any messages from the smuggler.

On the fourth day at around 7 am, they were detected by four Croatian male police officers in blue uniforms. The police first questioned the people about their origin and their intentions in Croatia. After that, the police stripped all adults naked and frisked their bodies. The woman was also forced to take off all her clothes and was touched by male police officers. The officers also searched the children but did not take off their clothes. The father of the family stated that the police stole their four phones, two power banks, and took 200 euros from the family.

The family said to the police that they wanted to apply for asylum in Croatia. But none of the officers reacted to their request and did not take anyone to the police station or enabled them

to access the asylum procedures. Instead, both families were directly pushed back using a van to the Bosnian border – close to the official border check-point in Velika Kladuša (BiH). From there they walked to the local makeshift camp.

**27/08/2018**

## **“EACH PERSON WAS EXPOSED TO BATON STRIKES AND KICKS FROM TEN OFFICERS”**

**Date and time:** August 27, 2018 02:00

**Location:** 5km south of Sturlic, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.0299375, 15.758812499999976

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 35 person(s), age: 16-37 , from: Pakistan, Nepal

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 2 police officers dressed in blue uniforms, 1 police car, later 10 croatian police officers in black uniforms, 2 police vans, one unmarked police car

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On August 27th. 2018, a group of 31 men and four minors were walking into the Croatian interior from the border near Sturlic. After three days of walking the 31 adult males and four minors were following the dense woodland on the side of freeway no 1. It was approximately 02:00 am and the road was very dark, so the group were unaware that they have been observed, until two shouting police officers approached them. The officers were dressed in blue uniforms and pointed guns and torchlights at the group.

The 35 members of the group were ordered to approach the roadside where they found an unmarked police car. There the police shouted at them to sit down. They then waited approximately for an hour, guarded by the two officers, until two combi vans arrived.

In the vehicles were ten Croatian police officers dressed in black uniforms. They came out and after discussing with the two initial officers, the police began to systematically search the men and remove their belongings.

Once this had been carried out, the people-on-the-move were loaded into the two combis and were driven south down route 1. The journey took approximately two hours. At this time the men and children were sick from the lack of ventilation and the cramped conditions in the back of the van.

The journey ended as they were delivered to an unknown border location. The two vans stopped and the people-on-the-move were held inside until officers opened the back doors. At the rural site, unknown to the group, the 10 police officers dressed in black were waiting. The sun was coming up and the interviewees estimated it to be around 05:30 am.

The police officers beckoned them out one-by-one and proceeded to beat them heavily with regular batons. At one time, each person was exposed to baton strikes and kicks from ten officers. The group sustained injuries to their torsos and heads, as well as across their forearms as they tried to protect themselves.

The respondent was also manhandled by the officers and shot at from close range with a pistol loaded with rubber bullets. The respondent was shot in the side of the head, causing abrasion and swelling to his right ear and temple. He further suffered severe bruising to his left midriff, caused by impact from the police batons which created contusions on his upper torso.

As each man was beaten individually, the attack lasted 30 minutes. After this they were shouted at by the officers to walk back to Bosnia. None of their possessions were returned, apart from their broken phones. The group crossed the border and walked for an hour back to Sturlic where locals helped them with a bus fare back to Velika Kladusa.

Because of the group size it is difficult to account for all the injuries sustained during this attack, however it can be said that most suffered temporary bruising and impact injuries from the assault with police batons.

The respondent received medical treatment for his gunshot wound. The rubber bullet fired at the side of his head caused severe bruising, and impaired the victims hearing. He was administered restorative medicative cream for this and the bruising to his intercostal muscles (left ribcage). The doctors recommended him to rest for 15 days and lie only on his back. At the time of the interview the victim still could not sleep because of the pain, neither could he lie on his side. See medical report pictured below.

**25/08/2018**

## **“THE VICTIM WAS ASSAULTED HEAVILY TO THE KNEE WHICH IS NOW ALMOST IMMOBILISED”**

**Date and time:** August 25, 2018 02:00

**Location:** Between Maljevac and Velika Kladuša, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.19149450174305, 15.777405897461222

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 17, other ages unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Croatian police in black uniforms, armed with rifles, officers in blue uniforms, four smaller jeep-type vehicles and one large van

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent was part of a group of 25 people, Afghans and Pakistanis, who were walking for three days in the Croatian countryside. The incident involved the respondent and two other young males who were caught, just south of the border of Croatia-Slovenia. The larger group were spotted attempting to cross the stretch of river, protected by a border fence.

The police spotted the interviewee and his companions by the river and began to shout at them. The group were scared and fled into the nearby woodland (back into the Croatian interior). It was dark and hard to see anything in the forest. The group became dispersed and consequently the respondent and two other young males were caught.

They saw a police officer in the trees pointing a gun at them, which the victim described as a military style rifle. The officer was dressed in a black uniform and shouted at them to "stop". They complied with the order and froze, waiting for the police to arrive to their position. There were two officers present during this encounter, the first being joined by a border officer dressed in blue who handcuffed the three men and pushed them out of the woods.

By the road they found more cars, presumably used by the officers who were in pursuit of the other 22 men who fled from the scene. There were four smaller jeep-type vehicles and one large van. The respondent and his companions were put into the back of the van, with no windows or ventilation.

It was dark inside, and they couldn't breathe properly. He described how the driver veered from side to side, even though the road was straight, just to induce car sickness and nausea. The van delivered the victim and the other two young men to a border area they knew to be on the outskirts of Maljevac. He identified 6/7 male police officers waiting for them (one in the distinctive blue of the border police). The respondent describes how it was hard to tell because they were brought from the van one-by-one. The police, dressed in black uniforms, beat them individually with electronically charged batons.

The respondent was assaulted heavily to the knee which is now almost immobilised. He was also struck across the back of the head and pushed to the floor. The beating lasted for approximately 20 minutes, during which the police forced them to empty their pockets and stole all three of the men's phones, power bank's and even their energy drinks.

The three addressed the police in English, but the officers only replied telling them to "shut up", and referred to them as "pičku materi". Throughout the attack, they were handcuffed and incapacitated.

The officers did not take their names, fingerprints, or give them any documents to sign. But as a final indignity, the policeman made the three men clean rubbish from the back of the van. They shouted at them and pushed them towards the rear of the van and forced them to collect the accumulated garbage that had been sat in the back of the vehicle, including food packaging, empty water bottles and random trash. The three men asked for something to eat and some water, but the officers denied them refreshment and continued to force them to clean, even though their hands were bound.

Eventually they were released, but only to allow the officers to chase them towards Bosnian territory. This occurred 2 kilometres from the main official border crossing by road in to V. Kladusa.

The officers who caught the three men in the Croatian/Slovenian border area were dressed in black uniforms. They were armed with military style rifles, and drove jeeps (along with one van for transporting the victims). At the border the perpetrators were equipped with electronic batons which they used to beat the victims. One border police officer was also witness to the incident.

The right knee of the respondent was bruised and suffered ligament damage from the impact of the blows. He attended the MSF clinic in V. Kladusa in order to have it bandaged. The respondent remained in considerable pain, even with the pain relief offered to him by the doctors.

**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

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback 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:** 5 Croatian border policemen in black uniforms, one Croatian policeman in a blue shirt

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent 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 respondent 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 respondent wearing black clothes. The respondent explained that the officers pointed guns at them and started shouting at the men to lay on the ground. Afterwards, the officers called three other police officers dressed in black and one officer in a blue shirt (all Croatian) who were supposed to push the men back to Bosnia.

The respondent 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 pushed 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 though "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 respondent 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 respondent's friend left to Sarajevo the following day.

21/08/2018

**“THE BACK DOOR OF THE VAN WAS OPENED, BUT THEY WERE BROUGHT OUT INDIVIDUALLY SO THAT THE FOUR OFFICERS WAITING AT THE BORDER COULD BEAT THEM WITH THE BLACK ISSUE BATONS.”**

**Date and time:** August 21, 2018 11:00

**Location:** 30km north west of Sturlic, Croatia.

**Coordinates:** 45.01169106525231, 15.734471701072493

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?:** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 4 Croatian police officers in black uniforms

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The group of people on the move concerned in this case, travelled in a group of four on foot, heading NW through the Croatian forests near the border crossing at Sturlic. After 10 days of walking, the group were using a single track gravel road that was flanked by trees on both sides.

At approximately 11am they heard a car approaching and where met by a police patrol vehicle. Two officers dressed in black uniforms jumped out, one pointing his handgun at them. The police shouted at them to stop, which they complied with.

The four men were searched, at which point their power banks and money were taken. The three that had mobile phones watched as the officers broke the screens, damaging them irreparably. A van was brought to transport them back to the border to Bosnia. The four people were loaded into the back of the vehicle. It had no windows or ventilation and they describe the sickening journey they had as the driver continuously swerved across the road to make them sick.

After approximately an hour's drive, they were brought to a rural border location unknown to them. The back door of the van was opened, but they were brought out individually so that the

four officers waiting at the border could beat them with the black batons. The 4 officers, dressed in black uniforms, attacked all attacked each person, one by one.

The blows brought out bruising on the hands of the victim, but all received severe impact injuries to the head, legs and torso.

After being beaten, the group were told to walk back into Bosnia. They headed back east on foot, only to find that they had been pushed back near to Bihac (approximately 30km from the city). Even though they had been pushed back at midday, they took another twelve hours to reach shelter in V. Kladusa, forced to walk on foot because they had no money or means of transport.

The police involved in this incident were dressed in black uniforms. The two arresting officers (though no paperwork, or processing took place) were armed with handguns. At the border, they and two colleagues from the same unit used standard issue police batons to inflict violence on the four victims.

The incident occurred over bayram, meaning the primary health services were disrupted and the victims were unable to access treatment for several days, at which point there was not much that could be done for the severe bruising suffered.

**18/08/2018**

## **“I ASKED HIM TO KILL ME, BUT HE SAID: I AM NOT GOING TO KILL YOU BUT BEAT YOU”**

**Date and time:** August 18, 2018 03:00

**Location:** Gejkovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.21672281752685, 15.824333757122758

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian policemen, wearing black clothes and gloves, 2 Croatian officers wearing blue shirts

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On August 18th. 2018, the interviewee and his friend walked from Velika Kladuša (BiH) to inland Croatian. Soon after they crossed the border to Croatia, they were caught by 2 Croatian police

officers, wearing blue shirts. The police acted politely, questioned the respondent and his friends about their intentions in Croatia and offered them water. The officers called 5 other police men, wearing black clothes and gloves, who directly pushed the respondent and his friend to Bosnia.

The respondent asked these officers whether he could claim asylum in Croatia, but he got a negative response: "No asylum for migrants, only for refugees", and they refused to take the young men to a police station to claim asylum in Croatia. According to the respondent these 5 officers destroyed their possessions, robbed them, and physically attacked them during their deportation back to Bosnia:

*This group of police took all our phones and a power bank, charger, watch, everything we had, put it under the wheel, and drove over it, back and front. Afterwards, they took us inside the car and drove us to the forest where they were beating us. It was night, and they took us like 30 meters inside of that forest. There was no light, and they were beating us with the sticks. We could not see their face properly or from where they were coming to beat us. I was just covering my face to protect myself... One police man was laughing, the other was taking videos and pictures, joking. I asked him to kill me, but he said: I am not going to kill you but beat you.*

The respondent further said to me that the police stole his 500 euros. According to him, the whole incident of pushback when the police robbed them and attacked them took about one hour. Afterwards, the police took the men to a place about 2 km far away from the official border check-point in Velika Kladuša where there was a river. The police pushed him and his friend into the river and told them to go back to Bosnia.

**16/08/2018**

## **"THEY PUT ME ON THE GROUND AND KEPT BEATING ME"**

**Date and time:** August 16, 2018 08:00

**Location:** Close to the Slovenian border, Croatia.

**Coordinates:** 45.855617135628975, 15.506406044048276

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: unknown , from: Pakistan, Iran

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian police officers (working in police station close to the Bosnian border)

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent and other two men from Iran left from Velika Kladuša (BiH) and walked for three days to Zagreb (Croatia), from where they took a taxi to move on further within Europe. The taxi was stopped by the Croatian police close to the Croatian-Slovenian border around 8am and all men were transported to the police station, where they were detained until around 9 pm. Inside of the police station, the men were questioned by the officers about their names and nationalities. The respondent clearly stated to the police officers that he wanted to claim asylum in Croatia. One of the police officers promised to call the immigration officers, who would help them to access the asylum procedures, but they never arrived.

Afterwards, the men were asked by the police to sign a paper that was written in the Croatian language and none of them understood the content of the paper. The respondent asked the police several times what was written on the paper, but the police ordered the men to sign it and stop asking questions and did not provide a translator or any explanation of the purpose of signing this paper. Afterwards, the men were deported to the Bosnian border together with two men from Pakistan (they were five in total). The journey from the police station to the border took around 2,5 hours. According to the interviewee the journey was difficult because the van was closed, had no windows nor ventilation, and there was a lack of oxygen inside, so the men had problems breathing. They were also driving very fast and the men felt sick.

The men were driven close to the Bosnian border (the area around Velika Kladuša), where they were handed over to other 3 Croatian police officers. These 3 police officers took the men and told them to get into another car and drove them to a nearby forest. The respondent did not know the exact location of this forest, as the car had no windows, so he could not follow the directions. He however states that the forest was close to the official border-check point in Velika Kladuša, and there was a corn field and water spring nearby. When they reached this forest, it was around midnight. The forest was dark, there were no lights.

The police first broke the men's phones and stole their money, taking 500 euros from the interviewee, 300 euros from his one friend and 1000 euros from the other friend. The police also stole the men's bags. Afterwards, the men were told by the police officers to get out of the car, one by one, and started physically attacking them with batons:

*They took my friend outside and closed the door. I could not see through the door as there were no windows, but I could hear how they were beating him. This took around 5 minutes. Afterwards they told me to get out of the car and I knew I was going to be beaten. Two police officers took my hands and one was beating me by a plastic baton into my back, legs, and everywhere. After, they put me on the ground and kept beating me. Their faces were red, and I could smell alcohol from them. I was trying to escape, but I fell into the water. They shouted at me to go back to Bosnia. I ran to a little hill and fell down.*

After the respondent had fallen he escaped from the police and went on to search for his friends. All of them were pushed to different parts of the border. Once they found each other, they walked back to the camp in Velika Kladuša, and after that they all left to Bihac.

15/08/2018

**“HE TOLD THE POLICE THAT HIM AND THE OTHER MEN WANTED TO APPLY FOR ASYLUM IN CROATIA, BUT THE POLICE IGNORED THEIR REQUEST AND REFUSED TO TAKE THEM TO THE POLICE STATION”**

**Date and time:** August 15, 2018 23:00

**Location:** Close to Slunj, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.06176019999999, 15.782485700000052

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: 18-30 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 8 Croatian Police Officers

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The interview concerning this incident, was conducted with one respondent with the help of a translator from Pashtu to English.

A group of eleven men walked from Velika Kladuša and crossed the Croatian border through a forest. On the second night, the group crossed a road, where they were detected by army officers. The army told the men to enter their van, and the group did so. According to the respondent, the army officers gave them some food and called the police. He further explained that the army took their phones and power banks and gave it to the police.

After that, eight policemen arrived and transported the men to the Bosnian border in two vans. The respondent told the police that he and the other men wanted to apply for asylum in Croatia, but the police ignored their request and refused to take them to the police station and access the asylum procedures. Instead, the police drove the men straight to the border to Bosnia, to an unmarked mountain area close to Šturlić.

When they arrived at this location, the police told the men to get out of the vans in two groups. The first group went out of the van while the second one stayed inside waiting. As soon as they left the car, the policemen started beating them with batons:

*I went out and some of them were beating me. I started running away but they were more policemen beating me.*

While one group was attacked by the police outside of the van, the other group who was inside of the van was also attacked by other police officers. The respondent further explained that some of the people got beaten with sticks that produced electric shocks.

Following this violent incident, the police gave back the power banks and chargers. After that, the police took all men's mobile phones, placed it under the tire of their van, and drove over them so that the phones were fully damaged. The men then walked through a forest back to Velika Kladuša which took them around 3 hours.

All men had visible bruises and scratches around their legs and back, caused by the police attack with batons.

**14/08/2018**

## **“THE POLICE TOOK HIS NAME BUT IGNORED HIS REQUEST FOR ASYLUM, SPEAKING ONLY IN CROATIAN AND FAILING TO RESPOND TO HIS CASE OF PERSECUTION”**

**Date and time:** August 14, 2018 10:30

**Location:** 20 km east of Velika Kladusa, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.218132542985906, 15.926658801519011

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 45 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** insulting, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Three police in civilian clothes in Ogulin. Two officers at Croatian-Bosnian border: one in black uniform, one in the blue uniform of the border police.

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The respondent had been travelling for six days with a group of thirteen other people on the move from Pakistan. At the village of Blata in the Croatian interior, he separated from the group with the intention of following the train line from Blata to Ogulin, where he would be able to catch a train to Zagreb.

Walking alone, he followed the road into the town of Ogulin. At approximately 10:30am, while walking along the roadside, he was observed by a group of people standing inside a carpentry shop. The people, of whom the victim identified two young men and one middle aged woman, were dressed in civilian clothes and shouted at him to "stop, stop!".

They then shouted for him to come over to them, stating that they were police. The victim cooperated fully and walked from the road to the wood workshop. They held out some accreditations displaying that they were police officers. Despite the victim's cooperation, he was immediately grabbed by the two men and forced into the shop building. The two men held him forcefully in the air, picking him up by either forearm.

The victim, a thin man of middle age, protested at this force, reminding them that "*I cannot run, I am walking for six days*". The people ignored this and brought him forcefully into the property (private commercial building). There, they began to search him and his bag, which they took away with all his belongings. They asked for his name and nationality, which he gave them.

The older woman, wearing a black T-shirt and blue jeans, spoke to him asking "*where are the others? Are you with other migrants?*". The civilian police did not believe that he was travelling alone and spoke harshly to the victim, urging him to reveal where the rest of his group were. He replied truthfully, telling them he had been walking on his own since Blata. They continued to tell him he was lying throughout the incident.

The captors called the local police and a car arrived to take the victim to the station in Ogulin. At the station the police took his name but ignored his request for asylum, speaking only in Croatian and failing to respond to his case of persecution in the Baluchi region of Pakistan. After an hour at the station, where the victim signed no documents nor gave any fingerprints, a police van with a lone driver transported the victim from Ogulin.

The drive took approximately 45 minutes and when the van stopped he was pushed out onto an abandoned area by a thin stretch of the Glina river, next to some industrial works. The driver opened the back of the van and the victim was greeted by two more Croatian police officers who had been waiting at the border. One was in black uniform and the other was in the blue border police attire. They immediately started to laugh at the victim, making jokes with the driver that he had brought "*just one*" migrant.

While they mocked the victim, the two officers searched him again. They continued to laugh at him and then, what the victim described as an act of pity, they returned his mobile which had been taken at the station. They did not, however, return the victim's jacket, rucksack and the rest of his belongings. They told him to start walking and when he asked where he was, the police said the location was just 2km from V. Kladusa.

However, the victim, tired from six days walk, began the journey on foot back to the camp and found that they had pushed him back at least 20km from V. Kladusa. He was exhausted and walked for several hours until a local Bosnian helped him with food and water and offered to drive him back to the camp.

The victim was left in shock from the experience.

14/08/2018

## “THE OFFICERS TOLD THE MEN TO GET OUT OF THE CAR AND PHYSICALLY ATTACKED THEM WITH BATONS”

**Date and time:** August 14, 2018 10:00

**Location:** Near Zagorje, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.29957857882797, 15.573196796133175

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: 16-40 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian police officers, 1 woman and 5 men, two of them were dressed in casual clothes but proved their identification through showing their police badges

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent and the other men walked from Velika Kladuša to Croatia. After two days of walking, the men crossed the first motorway in Croatia and were walking through an unmarked pathway in a forest. Between 10am and 11am, they were detected by two police officers, a woman and a man, who were dressed in casual clothes but proved their identification through showing their police badges. The police shouted at the men to come out and searched their bodies. Then, the officers questioned the men about how they entered Croatia and about their intentions in the country. The police took the men's mobile phones but returned them back just before they were pushed back to Bosnia. The respondent stated that he asked the police for asylum in Croatia but got a negative response:

*We told them that we wanted asylum in Zagreb. But they said “no, you can't stay here”. The two under 18, minors, they were also pushed back. They were shouting at us and using very abusive language*

According to the interviewee, the police rejected taking them to a police station and access the asylum procedures. Instead, the men were picked up by four other police officers (all males) and a van, and where pushed back to Bosnia. During the journey to the Bosnian border, the men struggled to breathe inside the van as there was a lack of oxygen:

*It was like a closed van. Everyone started vomiting there because there was too hot and no air. We told the police can you please switch on the AC, but no AC. The car drove very fast and moved like this and this [showing sharp curves]. The car was driving maybe for one and half hour*

The police drove the men to the Croatian-Bosnian border, close to the town Starlik, in an abandoned location. The respondent said that the van stopped on the top of a hill, in a forest. After that, the officers told the men to get out of the car and physically attacked them with batons.

*They [police] gave us two or three sticks and said: "Go!". And I was just running. They gave me two sticks into my back. But I wore a jacket and bag so that protected me. And no one got injured. When they started hitting us, we were just running down of that hill*

After the violent incident, the whole group walked back to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladuša. The interviewee has been trapped in the Bosnian transit for the last two and a half months. He stated that he came from the district of Jalalabad (Afghanistan), which has been occupied by ISIS, and has no possibility of returning. Although the interviewee has attempted to cross the border to Croatia ten times, with the intention to apply for asylum there, he has continuously been denied access to any formal asylum procedures and violently pushed back to Bosnia.

13/08/2018

**"I WAS HOLDING IN MY ARMS MY THREE YEARS OLD DAUGHTER AND THEY KEPT BEATING ME WHILE I WAS HOLDING HER, SO I FELL ON THE GROUND AND MY BABY GOT INJURED IN HER BACK."**

**Date and time:** August 13, 2018 15:00

**Location:** Forest southwest of Slunj, Croatia,

**Coordinates:** 45.05923066561585, 15.562565783302716

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 3-40 , from: Afghanistan, Iran

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian local policemen (the other one described as big, muscular, wearing a beret, having a pistol and a baton, maybe 40 years old) with a closed police van without windows

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The two families involved in this incident walked from Bihac to Croatia and wanted to continue to Zagreb to apply for asylum there. When the whole group was walking in a forest, close to the village Slunj (Croatian), they were detected by 10 police officers, wearing black uniforms.

According to the family members, the officers were acting polite towards them, questioned them about their nationality and their intentions in Croatia. They also offered them water, acted nicely to the children, and further offered transport to a hospital to one of the men who fell while walking in the forest.

Afterwards, the officers called 2 local police officers in blue shirts, who arrived with a police van that was closed and had no windows. These officers transported the families to a police station. People had problems breathing inside the van due to lack of ventilation. The police were driving very fast, and some of the family members were vomiting. The drive took about 40 minutes.

At the police station, the father of one family clearly stated that he and his whole family wanted to apply for asylum in Croatia and asked the officers to call the UNHCR for the assistance with the asylum procedure. But the police did not call UNHCR, they only took photos of all family members and wrote down their names. Then, the police told the families that asylum was not a problem for them and asked them to wait for transportation to a Croatian asylum accommodation center. The families were locked in a small room while waiting at the police station:

*We got closed in the police station, in a very small room, and I could not breathe there and I was vomiting. I asked the police to open the door but they took batons and started hitting it. She [a police officer] said that only if you need a toilet, she would open the door.*

After a few hours, the families were told to get into a van, for their transportation to the camp. But the van stopped after a few hours of driving close to the official border check-point in Velika Kladuša (BiH) instead of the Croatian asylum accommodation center. The police told all the people to get out of the van and then smashed their phones with batons). Then the officers started pushing the families towards the Bosnian land and physically attacking them.

*They said come, come, and one took a baton and told us to go to [Velika] Kladusa. They were beating all of us, women and men, to our back and to our legs. The police kept shouting at us to go fast. I was holding in my arms my three years old daughter and they kept beating me while I was holding her, so I fell on the ground and my baby got injured in her back. They also pushed my 9 year old daughter.*

*When we arrived at the border, I said to my mum that I was cold. She wanted to give me a jacket, but the police was beating my mother. The police said: "Go, go!" and was pushing my mother. I said to her I was very cold, and I just asked my mother to give me jacket, but the police said go go and was pushing my mother, so she fell. After, they were beating my mother with batons. Plastic batons. (9 year old daughter).*

After the violent incident and push-back to Bosnia, both families walked to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladuša.

13/08/2018

## “THE OFFICERS BEAT US AND PUSHED US INTO THAT RIVER, AND ANOTHER TWO BEAT US WHEN WE WERE COMING OUT OF THE RIVER ON THE OTHER SIDE”

**Date and time:** August 13, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Near the official border checkpoint of Maljevac (Croatia)

**Coordinates:** 45.19584500666835, 15.79510041077424

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 22 person(s), age: respondent 27 years old, age of the others unknown , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, pepper spray, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving, pushing into a river

**Police involved:** Unknown number of officers at the place of apprehension. - 6 officers in blue shirts at the place of pushback.

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent and 10 more men, all of them from Afghanistan, started their journey in Sturlic (Bosnia) and crossed the border to Croatia by foot. After three days of walking, they crossed Route 1 in Croatia and continued walking in a forest. In that forest, however, they were caught by Croatian officers.

The officers frisked the men's bodies, searching for their money and mobile phones. They took all money from the men (100 Euro in the case of the respondent) and broke their phones.

The respondent told the officers his name and nationality and asked them whether he could apply for asylum in Croatia. But the officers did not let him speak and when he or other men tried to say something, they reacted by physically attacking them.

After that, the group of 11 Afghani was joined with another 11 men from Pakistan. The whole group of now 22 men was then directly pushed back to Bosnia in a police van. According to the respondent, the driver was driving very fast and was braking the car in a way that everyone was falling down from their seats. After one hour, the van arrived to an area close to the official border checkpoint of Maljevac. There, they were handed over to other Croatian officers wearing blue shirts. These officers were acting violently against the men:

*“When they brought us to the border, they handed us over to other officers, in blue shirts. They kept telling me, “Picko matre, picko matre”. They told us to put our hands behind our heads*

*and put a wooden stick under the elbows of each of us. They sprayed our eyes [with an irritant spray]. There was a river, and three officers were standing in front of the river and three officers behind the river. The officers started beating us with sticks [batons] and pushed us into that river, and another two were beating us when we were coming out of the river on the other side, shouting at us "Go!". All 22 people were beaten".*

The respondent did not recognise the faces of the perpetrators because it was dark and because the officers kept pointing torches into the men's faces while they were beating them, so they could not see anything else than the lights. Following the violent incident, all the men walked back to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladaša. The following pictures show the respondent's bruises which were caused by the authorities' violence.

**13/08/2018**

## **"THEY STARTED BEATING US WITH BATONS AND PUSHED US INTO THE RIVER"**

**Date and time:** August 13, 2018 00:00

**Location:** forest close to route 1, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.21969289797656, 15.575162807350125

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 22 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian officers

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The interviewee and 10 other men, all from Afghanistan, walked from Starlik (Bosnia) to Croatia. After three days of walking, they crossed the Road 1 in Croatia, and continued into a forest where they were caught by the Croatian police. The police searched the men's bodies, searching for their money and mobile phones. They stole all the men's money and broke their phones. The interviewee told the police his name and nationality, and asked them whether he could apply for asylum in Croatia. But the police did not allow him to speak and when he or other men tried to say something, the officers responded by physically attacking them. Afterwards, the men together with 11 other Pakistani males were directly deported to Bosnia

with a police van. According to the interviewee the police were driving very fast. After one hour, the men arrived at an area close to the official check-point in Velika Kladuša, where they were handed over to Croatian police officers, who were supposed to deport them back to Bosnia. These police officers were acting violently against the men:

*When they brought us to the border, they handed us over to other police men, in blue shirts. They kept telling me, "Picko matre, picko matre". They told us to put our hands behind our heads and put a wooden stick to each under our elbows. They sprayed our eyes [with an irritant spray]. They started beating us with sticks [batons] and pushed us into that river, two were beating us to go into the water and two when we were coming out of the river on the other side, shouting at us, "Go!". All 22 people were beaten.*

The interviewee did not remember the faces of the police officers because it was dark. The police kept pointing torches into the men's faces while they were beating them, so they could not see anything, only the lights. Following the violent incident, all the men walked back to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladuša.

11/08/2018

**"ALL THE MEN WERE REPEATEDLY HIT BY STICKS, INCLUDING THE THREE MINORS, WHILE THEY WERE TRYING TO WALK BACK ACROSS THE BORDER."**

**Date and time:** August 11, 2018 02:00

**Location:** Forest near Vojnic, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.294605, 15.776925

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 13 person(s), age: 16-29 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 6 police officers (wearing blue uniforms) and 2 special border forces (wearing a black suit).

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of 13 people-on-the-move from Pakistan started from makeshift camp in Velika Kladuša and crossed to Croatia, from where they wanted to continue to Slovenia. When the men were walking in a forest, approximately 40 km into Croatia, they were detected by 6 police officers. The men clearly stated to the police that they wanted to apply for asylum in Croatia,

but the police officers did not respond to this and refused to talk to them. The officers took all the men's mobile phones, power banks, stole their money, and pushed them back to the Bosnian border:

*They said give me mobile, but they did not give it to me back. The police did not speak to us otherwise. They also stole our power banks, and money, 2200 euros from one, 50 euro from another, and from other 100 euros. Afterwards, they took us in this big car to the border and deported us. When we wanted to speak to them, they said to us to shut up and kept telling us many bad words, like 'picko matre, picko matre'.*

None of the men knew the route of the journey to the Bosnian border as the van in which they were pushed back had no windows. This caused a lack of oxygen inside the van so that the men had difficulties breathing. Besides 6 police officers, two special forces soldiers in black uniforms were also present during the pushback to Bosnia. Once the whole group reached the Croatian-Bosnian border, the men were told to get out of the car. The two black-uniformed men started physically attacking them with plastic sticks, and shouting at them to go back to Bosnia. All the men were repeatedly hit by sticks, including the three minors, while they were trying to walk back across the border. Seven of them had severe injuries mainly on their backs and legs. After this violent incident, the whole group walked for three hours until they reached Velika Kladuša.

After the interview, the men agreed to be checked and treated by the first aid medics from the No Name Kitchen team. After the examination of the men, No Name Kitchen medics observed second and third grade contusions at the back, legs, and stomach of 7 young men (including the minors) caused by the physical attacks by non-sharp objects. Medics further observed a minor rib fracture of one man caused by a physical aggression. (see photos below)

**07/08/2018**

**“ALL MEN EXPRESSED THEIR INTENTION TO APPLY FOR ASYLUM IN CROATIA, BUT THE POLICE REJECTED THEIR WISH ANSWERING 'NO ASYLUM'”**

**Date and time:** August 7, 2018 22:00

**Location:** Near route A1, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.988599, 15.647922

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 20-37 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 20 Croatian police officers, 2 vans and 3 cars

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of 10 men, all from Pakistan, crossed the Bosnian border to Croatia from Velika Kladuša. When they were 20 kilometres inside Croatia, walking on the Road A1, they were detected and caught by the Croatian police. The group of police officers that found them were around 20, in 2 vans and 3 cars.

All men expressed their intention to apply for asylum in Croatia, but the police rejected their wish answering: "No asylum".

The police officers told the men to give them their mobile phones and money. The police took the men's phones and money but did not return them back.

Then, the men were driven to the Bosnian border, close to Šturlić, where they arrived around 1 a.m. At the border, the police told the men to leave the car in groups of 2. As soon as they left the car, they were attacked by the policemen with sticks. Two police officers attacked each man, one after another.

**07/08/2018**

## "THE MEN WERE TOLD TO SLAP EACH OTHER ON THE FACE, WITH THE OFFICERS LAUGHING AT THEM"

**Date and time:** August 7, 2018 11:00

**Location:** In a forest close to Skrad (Croatia)

**Coordinates:** 45.413106, 14.801882

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: 17-35 years old , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, Forcing the people on the move to slap each other

**Police involved:** 5-6 officers at the place of apprehension. - 8 officers (4 wearing black uniforms and 4 in sky blue uniforms) at the place of the pushback. - Several police vans, one of which was without windows

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed, no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of 11 men from Algeria left Velika Kladuša on foot and crossed the Croatian border through the forest. They walked during the day using the cover of the forest, and waited for the night to cross exposed areas. After 10 days of walking, the group ran out of food near Skrad (Croatia) and started to look for a supermarket. Two members of the group went out of the forest to a small market place at around 11am on 7th August, where the employees welcomed them well, but did not accept payment in Euros. The two men then found themselves at a nearby currency exchange but were asked for passports to change any money. A woman passing by eventually changed money on their behalf, and the 2 men went back to the supermarket to buy supplies for the group still waiting in the forest.

Just after the two men walked back into the forest to rejoin the entire group, they were intercepted by 2 officers in uniforms and were moved to the side of the road. They were given water and searched for phones and powerbanks. The 2 officers were driving a police van (Mercedes or Volkswagen), and were soon joined by another police car with 3 to 4 officers. 10 members of the group were then put in the police van which had regular space for only 6 persons, and 1 person was told to sit in the police car.

The group told the police their intention to not stay in Croatia but to leave to Italy as soon as possible, but did not receive any response. Then they asked about the possibility of staying in Croatia but did not get an answer either.

Around 12am – 1pm, the group was driven to a police station which the respondent believes was in Rijeka. Photos were taken, and everybody was asked to sign a paper with names and date of birth. The document was in Croatian, and no translation was made available to the group of Arabic and French speakers. They were given drinking water and were allowed to smoke, while their bags were being checked in a corner of the room.

Around 9-10pm, they were given back the food which the group had bought earlier in the supermarket and they had this food as dinner. The 11 men were told that they will be driven to a “big house” and were put into a police van.

After 4 to 5 hours of driving, the van eventually stopped at another police station, where the group waited around 1 hour in the van. The group was searched again. The respondent described this search as an “aggressive search”. They were forbidden to talk. Another paper without any translation was given them to sign, and the respondent said they were forced to sign this paper by the threat of being beaten. At this moment, all the phones taken earlier were given back in one bag, all of them smashed (see picture). The batteries, the SIM cards and the memory cards were missing, and neither was the money in the bag that had also been taken from them.

The group of 11 men was then put in another van. Other than the previous vehicles used to transport them, this van had no windows and no air-conditioning. Around 3am on 8th August, the van stopped at an unknown location, and the authorities took two of the Algerians out of the van. The group of officers was composed of approximately 4 men wearing black uniforms,

and approximately 4 men in sky blue uniforms. The respondents mentioned that due to the night it was hard to register the precise number of people at the scene.

The 11 men were taken out of the car two by two, surrounded by the officers. They were told to slap each other on the face (around 5 times each), with the officers laughing at them. After that the officers beat them in unison with batons. One of the four respondents mentioned that he fell on the floor and was acting as dead in the hope of escape.

As they escaped two by two from the beating of the officers, the group scattered and tried to find each other in the dark forest calling for their friends. The officers were still following them through the forest and into a corn field. In the hurried escape, one group member left his bag in the cornfield and went back to collect it later. This is when he found other items abandoned by refugees, together with the same papers the Croatian police made them sign at the police station.

Around 4am on 8th August, the group of 11 men were back in Bosnia. Completely disorientated, they only realised they were back in Bosnia because of the car number plates. With no money or directions they found their way back to Velika Kladuša following the landmarks of the Mosque and the Castle.

All members of the group had injuries from beating with sticks. The 4 people interviewed had bad bruises on their back, on their arms, and their legs (see picture).

**04/08/2018**

## **“THEY HIT ME BY A METAL BATON TO MY MOUTH AND I LOST MY TOOTH. THEY ALSO HIT ME INTO MY KNEE THAT GOT TWISTED”**

**Date and time:** August 4, 2018 04:00

**Location:** Close to Glinica, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.218529, 15.939089

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 27-30 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** Four Croatian police officers, wearing masks and black clothes, a big white van

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

4 men from Morocco walked together from Velika Kladuša to Croatia. The whole group was caught by 4 Croatian police officers in the Croatia close to Glinica. One of the men managed to escape, the others were physically attacked with metal sticks and electric-shock sticks by the Croatian police:

*They hit me by a metal baton to my mouth and I lost my tooth. They also hit me into my knee that got twisted.*

When the police stopped beating the men, they took them directly to the Bosnian border for their deportation. Once they arrived near the border, they made the men undress, searching for their money and mobile phones. They stole 500€ from the respondent. Afterwards, the police told the men to walk back to Bosnia and started shooting in the air with their guns. The men walked 40 km until they reached the makeshift camp in Velika Kladuša.

04/08/2018

**“ALL OF THEM WERE SEVERELY BEATEN, INCLUDING THE 17 YEARS OLD BOY MULTIPLE TIMES ON HIS HEAD.”**

**Date and time:** August 4, 2018 01:00

**Location:** Croatian inner land, forest near Perjasica

**Coordinates:** 45.2947473, 15.465978800000016

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 17-27 years old , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 9 Croatian police officers wearing uniform, with 3 cars and 1 dog

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** no translator present

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

**Reported by:** Balkan Info Van

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of 6 left Velika Kladuša on foot and crossed the Bosnian – Croatian border. After 3 days walking and sleeping rough in forests the weather turned to heavy rain and conditions worsened, becoming especially difficult for the purposes of navigating through forest at night.

As the group came out of some woodland onto a road (around 1am), an unmarked vehicle was waiting at a nearby road crossing and approached them. 2 policemen wearing black uniforms

came out. The behaviour of these 2 policemen was described as good and respectful by the three respondents. Around 1 hour later, a police van (combi) with 2 other policemen arrived at the same location. The officers were wearing different uniforms, described as sky blue shirts and dark blue trousers. They started searching them for phones and money.

Following the search, the group of 6 people including 1 minor were driven to a police station at an unknown location, where they were searched again, one of the men reporting they were badly treated: "officer's behaviour was totally rubbish, like animals".

The group first mentioned to the police their intention to ask for asylum in Croatia, which was ignored and denied, including the case of a 17 years old boy. Seeing that the police wouldn't give them a chance to apply for asylum in Croatia, the group asked for a permission to continue their journey towards Slovenia, stating they won't stay in Croatian territory. No translator was available at any stage, and the police men (with only basic spoken English) were reported to have replied in English only to offer offensive remarks.

No photos, finger prints, nor papers were taken from any members of the group. After half an hour at the police station, the 6 people were driven near the Bosnian border in the same police van, with an escort of 2 other police cars (a total of 9 police men).

When the vehicles stopped at a forest nearby Velika Kladuša, the policemen took the migrants out of the car one by one and violently beat them using their sticks (4 to 5 policemen at a time). All of them were severely beaten, including the 17 years old boy multiple times on his head. A police dog was thrown at one of the migrants as they tried to escape. The group walked back to Kladusa at around 3-4am, both their phone and money had been kept by the police.

Bite marks of the police dog.

**03/08/2018**

## **"THE POLICE ATTACKED THEM WITH METAL STICKS AND ELECTRO-SHOCK BATONS, INCLUDING THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN"**

**Date and time:** August 3, 2018 01:00

**Location:** Forest close to Perjasica, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.29920982022068, 15.45956491012987

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: 14-45 , from: Pakistan, Iran

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride, insulting, electric shock, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

*I am a woman from Iran. I just wanted to go to Slovenia, but the police caught me on the way and they were beating me badly on my legs and the whole body. The police took all my money, 500 euros, and put inside of their pockets. They took all our mobiles, they took my son's laptop, they slapped me on my mouth and everywhere. They acted like animals, they are not humans. I am 47 years old and had my child with me, a son, 14-years old. They also hit my son, they slapped him into his face.*

The woman explained that she, her son and 13 other people walked for seven days from Velika Kladuša to Croatia and wanted cross further to Slovenia to apply for asylum there. When the whole group was walking in the Croatian inner land, close to the road E65 nearby Perjasica at around 1am, they were caught by the Croatian police. The officers talked to the whole group politely, questioned them about their nationality and about their reasons for entering Croatia. Afterwards the police stole all mobile phones, and drove them to Croatia where the group was handed over to the Croatian border police for their deportation back to Bosnia. No one from the group was taken to a police station and enabled access to asylum procedures in Slovenia or Croatia, although some of them clearly stated that they wanted to apply for asylum.

During the transportation to the Bosnian border, a Croatian police officer was driving fast and was turning from one side to another, so that people inside were falling from their seats. The border police drove the whole group to the Bosnian border, in a forest about 10 km from the makeshift camp in Velika Kladuša. The police told them to get out of the car, three people at a time. According to the respondent, the police stole everyone's money and all their possessions, including 500 euros from her, which was her last money, as well as her son's laptop. The officers took between 50 and 100 euros from each of the other people in the group. After searching everyone's bodies, and robbing them, two police officers stood by the car and four others created a row a few meters from the car.

*Two police men were standing in front and other four were standing by the border, if we want to run somewhere. You know, one guy, he wanted to run. But they pick him up from his back and threw him down and were beating him badly. And other three men who wanted to run away, they sent a dog to chase them, so they stopped.*

The police told them to go back to Bosnia, but once they started walking from the car, the police started physically attacking them with metal sticks and electroschock weapons, including the women and children.

*They were hitting us and laughing at our backs. They had both sticks and electric sticks. One police man hit me that I fall on the ground, and after he was hitting me by a baton, and after every hit he was laughing: "Ha, ha, ha, ha!". After, he slapped me into my mouth. He also slapped my son. One man was electric shocked into his body. ... When we were walking back, we stopped, and all were crying together for few minutes because it was very hard time for us. And after, we went back to the camp [in Velika Kladuša].*

*The man who was beating the most, he was very thin and small face, little hair, and moustache, and his teeth were big outside of his mouth. And he was beating and laughing. He had a normal police uniform, blue shirt.*

**28/07/2018**

## **“THE OFFICERS SHOUTED AT THE MEN TO GO BACK TO BOSNIA AND STARTED PHYSICALLY ATTACKING THEM”**

**Date and time:** July 28, 2018 07:00

**Location:** Near Podgorje, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.335541812172046, 15.831555490774122

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 19-46 , from: Syria, Iraq

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** Five Croatian police officers with two police cars. None of the officers could speak English except for few words. All of them were at the age between 40 and 50 years old. Two of them were acting violently and attacking the men, one of them was big and overweight, another one was tall with blond hair and blue eyes.

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The interviewee and other 4 men left Velika Kladusa and wanted to move towards the middle of the EU, to apply for asylum. The interviewee and his friends reached a small town in the Croatian inner land and wanted to continue by bus to Zagreb, but they were detected by 5 police men on July 28th. 2018 at around 7am. The men did not remember the name of the town and lost the exact GPS location as their phones were broken by the police later on. The interviewee asked the police whether him and other men could apply for asylum in Croatia, but the officers ignored his request. The police transported all the men in a police car, directly to the Bosnian border for their deportation, without taking them to a police station or enabling them to access the asylum procedures.

When the men reached the Bosnian border, the police told all of them to take of all of their clothes, including their underwear, and one officer searched their bodies, searching for their

mobile phones and money. According to the interviewee the police broke any older phones and kept the newer ones, and stole from them 5000 euros in total. Afterwards, the officers shouted at the men to go back to Bosnia and started physically attacking them.

*"First, they took my money and broke my telephone and after, they were fighting me and kicking me into my legs and shouting to go. I asked him, why you do this? Respect. Why you do this? This is wrong. We are not guilty. We just want to go away. I just want to go to my family. I don't want to stay in your city. But he kept shouting to go back to Bosnia ... This was the first time when we tried to cross the border from Bosnia. And we lost everything. Now, how we go? Everything is gone. We have nothing."*

The interviewee had bruised arms caused by the attack with police batons. He did not seek any medical aid and refused to do so even after the interview.

The assault was carried out by five Croatian police officers with two police cars. None of the officers could speak English except for a few words. All of them were at the age between 40 and 50 years old. Two of them were acting violently and attacking the men, one of them was big and overweight, another one was tall with blond hair and blue eyes.

**23/07/2018**

## **"A POLICE OFFICER PAID 50 EUROS TO THE LOCAL PERSON, AS A REWARD FOR CALLING THEM AND HELPING THEM TO CATCH THE KURDISH FAMILY"**

**Date and time:** July 23, 2018 22:00

**Location:** Forest close to Begovo Brdo, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.18184492758069, 15.703102477722837

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 23 person(s), age: 4 months - 38 , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6 police officers in 3 cars, three wearing army uniforms and three police uniforms.

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent and a group of families left the makeshift camp in Velika Kladusa and walked to Croatia with the intention to exercise their right to claim asylum once they reach the EU (Croatia). When they were walking through a village called 'Begovo Brdo', a local person noticed them and called the police. Six officers arrived immediately in three police cars and caught the whole group. The interviewee saw how one police officer paid 50 euros to the local person, as a reward for calling them and helping them to catch the Kurdish family. The respondent asked the police whether they could apply for asylum in Croatia, but he got a negative response and was attacked by the officers.

*"I was telling them [police officers] that we are from Syria and asked for asylum. But they said only: "Shut up! Don't talk!", and spitted on us. I tried to speak to him again five minutes later, saying that we have women and children. But they started attacking us with batons. They attacked this man [pointing at the father of two small children] to his both arms, and after started attacking everybody. Ok, he attacked the man, but why he attacked the women and children? Are they crazy? He also attacked the pregnant women into her back"*

The police did not allow the families to access the asylum procedures and did not take them to a police station. Instead, they drove them by a car to the Bosnian border for their deportation (20 minutes driving). When the car reached the border, the police opened a door and ordered the whole group to get out and to walk back to Bosnia. The interviewee started questioning the police. "Why are you acting like this? We are from Syria, you know that we have problem there". But the police only responded, "Go! Shut up!". The police proceeded to push a one-year-old child and started beating the whole group again with batons. Then, the police officers stole 500 euros from the group, as well as their newer mobile phones, and destroyed any older phones, smashing them on the ground.

Afterwards, the police told the families to walk back to Bosnia, shouting at them to walk faster. The 9-months pregnant woman did not feel well and told this to the police officer, asking for help, but the police officer spat on her and shouted at everybody to keep walking faster. The whole group got back to the makeshift camp in Velika Kladusa late at night.

The interviewed families were checked and treated by the first aid medics from the No Name Kitchen team. According to the medics, four adults (two women and two men) and one-year-old baby had bruises around their body from the attack with police batons. One man had fractured bone in his left hand, also from the attack with batons.

**21/07/2018**

## **"THEY BEAT HIM IN THE HEAD, SMASHING HIS CHEEK"**

**Date and time:** July 21, 2018 11:00

**Location:** Croatian-Bosnian border area, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.14950844698078, 15.75544852945336

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 16 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Algeria

**Minors involved?:** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 10 Croatian police officers in uniforms, one especially violent officer: tall, bold man with a red face, smelling like alcohol

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent walked with a group of people on the move, through the night in a Croatian forest. At 11am the next morning the police found them. The group was about 9 km from the border. The police saw them walking in the forest and shouted from the road "Come here, come here!". Two police officers who put them in a van. The group immediately asked to claim asylum, which they repeated several times. The police told them to "shut up". The police drove the group back and pushed them out on to a field, near the woods at the Bosnian border. It was on the south west side of Velika Kladusa, but the group did not know where they had been taken. First just two police officers made the arrest, but there were 8 more officers waiting at the border. When the respondent got out of the car they were waiting with sticks, standing in a line. He explained how the police made sure to steal all their possessions, phones, money, power banks, even cigarettes. The interviewee described how these 10 police officers beat the group with sticks.

*"They beat me 'till I couldn't breathe".* When he fell they kicked him on the ground and kept hitting him. They raised their batons high and *"beat us right to the bone"*. Afterwards the group tried to run, but a police officer tripped the respondent and continued to hit him while he was on the ground. Sometimes there were four police officers hitting one person at the same time. They beat the respondent in the head, smashing his cheek. The group could smell alcohol on the police officers breath. One of the police officers started to search a woman, the police officer groped her breasts and touched her body. The woman pushed him back and the police beat her to the ground. The strikes brought out long red marks on her stomach. Eventually all these 16 people escaped and ran towards Bosnia. The respondent told us how the police chased them with sticks, beating them on the back. The police officers kept chasing them even after they crossed the border.

The respondent described another experience before this one, where a particular officer had scared him to death. The perpetrator beat him to the ground and shouted at him to lie down. Then he took his gun and fired a shot into the ground, right next to his ear. "I couldn't hear anything after that" he stated.

The group walked back to Velika Kladusa after that. They were so shocked that took some hours, before they started feeling the physical pain of their injuries. The women spent all day in the tent. They were injured and shocked. Later the interviewee went to the camp to check if they were okay, but they said they felt very bad.

*"We would take pictures or videos if we could. But the police always break or steal our phones. We only have the scars to show."*

Many members of the group received painful injuries as a result of the violence, and had been that morning to the MSF clinic. The interviewee's bruising was severe and he was in constant pain. The women of the group received first aid from No Name Kitchen.

This image shows the laceration and severe bruising suffered as the result of a truncheon/baton striking the right cheekbone of the victim. The photo was taken only 9 hours after the incident and already the bruising had developed extensively, causing severe pain to the victim and impairing his sight. The wound had hemorrhaged after impact and was very sore to the touch.

This image shows the impact of a baton on the victim's right collar bone/naval area. This "follow through" action is consistent with the cheek injury, confirming the type of blow inflicted. The two wounds corroborate the victims testimony that the officer delivered the blows with great forces from a vertical plain, striking the victim repeatedly with an upward/downward motion. To draw blood and bruise the skin in such a way suggests that the force applied was great, and could only be consistent with an arm action whereby the offending officer used the full length of their limb, holding the implement above their head, and bringing the weapon down using the shoulder as a pivot. These wounds could not be delivered with the use of a simple forearm action pivoting from the elbow.

The photo shows an injury sustained to the elbow, also inflicted by the police. The mark is consistent with the use of the victims arms to protect his head from the strike of a baton. This confirms the testimony of the victim, that police beat the victim and that the only recourse was to protect his head from the harsh blows by holding up his arms. As a result, he sustained bruising and cuts to his forearm.

The image on the left shows bruising and friction marks applied to the skin of a companion to the victim. The marks cover the length of the back and were inflicted by multiple strikes with a baton. The vertical lines are consistent with the same "overhead" arm action described in the above evidence. The location of the wounds on the victims back (stretching from ribcage to torso) also confirm the testimony provided that the police officers beat the group from behind as they tried to flee the scene.

21/07/2018

**“ALL WOMEN WERE CHECKED EVEN UNDER THEIR UNDERWEAR. THEY ALSO CHECKED MY HAIR. THEY CHECKED EVERYTHING.”**

**Date and time:** July 21, 2018 10:00

**Location:** near Cetingrad, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.161097388431266, 15.729578532670644

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** unknown person(s), age: 15-40 years old , from: Iran

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), sexual assault, threatening with guns, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, reckless driving

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian policemen, tall and in police uniforms, the one who was the most brutal had blue eyes and blond hair

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group consisting of the respondent's family and a number of other persons from their camp left Velika Kladusa in the early morning of July 21st 2018. They crossed the border by foot and walked into Croatia. After an estimated 25 km of walking, the group was detected and stopped by 5 Croatian policemen in the area of Cetingrad (HR).

The family tried to speak to the policemen and to ask for asylum, but the only answer they got was: “*Shut up!*”. The police started searching through the pockets of all people for their phones and money. They took and kept the money and destroyed the group members' phones.

After that, the police stripped all men naked and frisked their bodies. When they were done with the men, the police told all women to take off their clothes and then touched all their body parts, including the breasts and genitals:

*“They checked all our body, everything, took our clothes. Outside, all men could see us, our underwear. They just told the men to put their faces to the other side. All women were checked even under their underwear. They also checked my hair. They checked everything.”*

When one woman tried to resist the body frisk and pushed a police officer away from her, the police officer started beating her so that the woman fell on the ground.

Following the body checks, the police told the whole group to get into a big van and transported them to another place, which they could not identify because the van had dark windows. The car was driving so fast that the respondent's older daughter started vomiting. The respondent asked the police to stop and give them water, but the policemen did not react.

After 30 minutes, they reached a spot which the respondent described as being in the mountains. The group members were told to get off the van. The policemen then stood into a circle and told the five single men which were part of the group to come into the middle of that circle, and started attacking them with metal batons:

*"The refugees were in the middle of the circle. The police like a circle, and they were beating them with batons. 5 policemen on 5 single. Every policeman was beating one single men and kept beating them. One man was crying and other was vomiting, they wanted to go back to Bosnia, but the police kept beating them. After when they finished, we walked a bit to the Bosnian land and the police again kept beating them, again 5 policemen were beating 5 men."*

After the beating, the policemen took the men, including the respondent's son, into a car and drove them to the Croatian-Bosnian border close to Bihac where they pushed them back into Bosnia. The families were transported to a different place, closer to Velika Kladusa. Again, the van was driving very fast and people were falling from one side of the van to the other. After an estimated hour of driving, the driver stopped in a mountainous place where they were to be pushed back:

*"When we opened the car, they [police] said to us to come out. We saw just tall mountains, very steep, surrounded by trees and thorny plants [showing scratches around her legs and feet]. The police said to us to come here, and my bigger daughter was vomiting in the car, she was sick, and my husband was holding her and coming with her out of the car. I was walking out of the car in front of my husband. I could hear that the police started beating him with batons, but I did not see it as I was with my back towards him, walking in front. My smaller daughter was walking as the last one and she saw her father being beaten. When my daughter saw her father being beaten, she said to the police: "Please, stop beating my father and beat me instead of him." And the police started beating my daughter [pointing at her daughter's swollen eye and crying]. In this mountain path, the police said to me: "Go straight go back!". But there was just a steep hill full of trees and thorny plants, and I told him "Where back? Where? I don't know where." The police took a gun and put it into my head and shouted: "Go, go, go!". and I was so scared, I thought he was going to kill me [crying]"*

The respondent's family walked for one hour in a forest, trying to find the way back to Velika Kladusa. When they reached a road, they managed to stop a passing car. The driver took them to Velika Kladusa and offered them food and water which they refused to accept however. After 20 km of driving, they reached Velika Kladusa.

The first aid medics from the No Name Kitchen team treated the group members and observed the following manifestations: second grade contusions on the left eye of the fifteen years old girl caused by a physic aggression without object (see photo below). On the left side, the medics found an injury cause by first grade contusions because of a non sharp object, causing a hematoma all along the left side.

Furthermore, a man aged 21 years had stretches and wounds on his back caused by hits with a metal baton:

10/07/2018

## “WHEN THE FAMILIES ASKED FOR ASYLUM IN CROATIA, THE POLICE REFUSED TO TAKE THEM TO A POLICE STATION OR PROVIDE THEM WITH ACCESS TO THE ASYLUM PROCEDURES”

**Date and time:** July 10, 2018 12:00

**Location:** 13 minutes drive from Velika Kladusa, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.19731362993234, 15.747117299432489

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 30 person(s), age: unknown , from: unknown

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

According to the respondent, four families and 10 single men hired a smuggler who would transport them by car from Bosnia to Italy. The families decided to use the smuggler services as they did not believe in any legal option of border crossing to Europe, due to the tight and restrictive controls by the EU external borders. The respondent states that some families paid a smuggler 1000 euro and others 2000 euros in cash (for the whole family). She further explained that all the families and the men were transported in cars, with a smuggler, to a forest in Croatia, located 13 minutes of driving from Velika Kladusa, where they were dropped off to wait for another transport.

The families and the men were waiting in the forest without a shelter and sleeping bags for five days with no further information from the smuggler. They had only cans of fish and limited water that they ran out of after the third day. The respondent's mother had heart problems and did not have any more medicine with her, so they could not stay in the forest any longer. Other families with small children, the youngest was one year old, did not have any more energy to stay in the forest after the fifth day, and decided to start walking to Croatia. The families, in total 20 people including small children, started walking further to Croatia, but were detected by the Croatian police after a few minutes. The police officers captured the whole group and stole their mobile phones:

*“They took our mobile phones. And we say, the first time you were breaking our phone and now we don't have any other phone. The men [police] checked our bag and they stole our phones. ... We respect the police when they catch us because it is their job. But they don't respect us. That is our phones and money and for a refugee, his money is everything because here, we cannot work.”*

After that, the police officers transported all 20 people in one car to the Bosnian border, where they just said to them: "That is Bosnia! Go back! That way!". When the families asked for asylum in Croatia, the police refused to take them to a police station or provide them with access to the asylum procedures. This was the respondent's third attempt at crossing the border with the intention to apply for asylum in Europe. The respondent reported that the previous time, her and her younger siblings were caught by the police in Zagreb, where they also asked for asylum. That time, the police officers started laughing at her and her siblings and told them: "Ok, we give you asylum", then they were ordered to sign a document, filling in her name and nationality, but when she had signed the paper, her and her siblings were deported by car to the Bosnian border.

10/07/2018

## "THE POLICE DID NOT ASK THEM ANY QUESTIONS AND KEPT BEATING THEM FOR SEVERAL MINUTES, INCLUDING THE TWO MINORS"

**Date and time:** July 10, 2018 00:00

**Location:** 6 hours walking from Velika Kladusa, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.294645, 15.78429

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 18 person(s), age: 16-30 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 6 police men with sticks and hand guns, one car and a dog

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 6th July 2018, 18 Pakistani men aged 16-30 started from Velika Kladusa, Bosnia towards Croatia. After 6 hours walking, they were stopped by a group of 6 police officers with a police car and a dog, the police immediately started beating them with sticks. The police did not ask them any questions and kept beating them for several minutes, including the two minors. Several men tried to express their intention to ask for asylum to the police officers, but the police refused to speak to them and only kept saying: "Stop speaking!" The police officers stole from the men around 2000€ and 16 mobile phones. After that, the men were all put together in a police car and pushed back to the Bosnian border, where they shouted at them to run and go back to Bosnia.

07/07/2018

## “THE POLICE MEN WERE BEATING THEM WITH STICKS ON THEIR BACKS, LEGS, ARMS AND HIPS WHILE SHOUTING: 'GO, GO, GO!'”

**Date and time:** July 7, 2018 04:00

**Location:** Forest near Karlovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.519605975471194, 15.543528146227231

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 20-25 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 5 plain-clothed police men and 6 police men in uniform

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On July 7th. 2018 at 4 am., a group of ten men aged 20-24, all from Algeria started walking from Velika Kladusa in order to cross the Croatian-Slovenian border. In a forest, near Karlovac, the men were caught by a group of 5 plain-clothed men, armed with sticks and pistols. These men drove the whole group to a police station in Karlovac, where they were handed over to local police officers. In the police station, the men had to give their names, nationalities and parents' names.

The police officers were verbally attacking the men, expressing their disapproval of Arabic and Muslim people. The whole group was held in the police station for the whole day without water and food. One of the men expressed his wish to apply for asylum in Croatia, but the officers ignored his request. At around 10pm, a new group of 6 police men in police uniforms and face masks took the men into a police van and transported them to the Bosnian border. At the border, the police men took the group out of the car, stole 6 mobile phones and 700€ from them and broke 4 of their phones (see picture). After that, they were beating them with sticks on their backs, legs, arms and hips while shouting: “Go, go, go!”.

05/07/2018

## “THE POLICE STOLE 100 € FROM THE TWO MEN, THEIR TWO MOBILE PHONES AND THEIR PASSPORTS”

**Date and time:** July 5, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Forest near Karlovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.47842983823902, 15.601197674228501

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 23, 25 , from: Morocco, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian police men

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On July 5th. 2018, two men (23 and 25) from Morocco and Algeria walked from Velika Kladusa towards Slovenia. They were in a forest close to Karlovac where they were detected by five uniformed Croatian police officers in a car. When the police caught them, they did not ask the men any questions but immediately started pushing them and beating them with sticks. One of the men was beaten on his face, shoulders and chest, the other one received strokes on his back. The police did not take the men to a police station and did not take their finger prints, they were only pushed back to the Bosnian border in the police car.

During the drive, one of the men expressed his wish to apply for asylum in Croatia, but the police rejected him: “No asylum for you in Croatia”. During the push back in the police car, the police stole 100 € from the two men, their two mobile phones and their passports. When they arrived at the border, the men were taken out of the car and the police started shooting their guns in the air and shouted at the men to go back to Bosnia. Both men walked back to Velika Kladusa with scratches, wounds and one bruised clavicular.

04/07/2018

## “ME AND MY FRIEND, WE HAD A PROBLEM TO BREATH, THERE WAS NO OXYGEN IN THE CONTAINER”

**Date and time:** July 4, 2018 14:00

**Location:** village near Malička, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.298799612187075, 15.848419701839816

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: unknown , from: Palestine, Algeria, Libya

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent walked with a group of people on the move for 6 days, from Bosnia (Velika Kladusa) to Croatia. When they reached a forest near the village called Malicka, located in Croatian territory, the men were caught by the police on July 4th. 2018 at 14.00.

*“They [Slovenian police] caught us, we went to the small car, 8 people like prisoners, no food, no water, no light inside of the car. They treat me like an animal, no food, no water, nothing. It looked like box inside of the van. We talked with him, he said: “Don’t say anything”. I asked for asylum, but he said: “No asylum in Croatia, asylum is closed”*

Croatian police took the men’s finger prints, identified their nationality and age. After that, the police searched the men’s pockets and body, but did not steal any money from the interviewee because he hid them under his fingers and in his mouth. When the interviewee showed the police his identification documents from Bosnia, a police officer tore them up. Afterwards the men were brought into a container, where they had problems to breathing, as there was a lack of oxygen. The interviewee asked the police to open the door and provide them with food and water, but the police responded by verbal threats and physical attacks.

*“Me and my friend, we had a problem to breathe. There was no oxygen in the container. I say them [police] please, I don’t have oxygen, but they close the door, and started beating on the door of the container with batons, and after pushing us, and my friend fell down. He pushed my friend two times. He [police officer] say: “Why are you coming to the border? Why are you coming to Croatia?”, and pushed my friend on the floor and after beating him with batons to his shoulders. My friend was asking them to stop”*

After the police stopped attacking the respondent’s friend, they started questioning the respondent and verbally and physically attacking him.

*"They pushed me and said to me, "Speak to me!" and took a dog close to me and he was barking to my face. I said "I am like you, why you act like this? Just that you have a paper and I don't have a paper?". He asked me where I was from and I said I was from Libya. But they said, "No, you are not from Libya!" They did not trust me that I was from Libya, I don't know why. They kept calling me "Plcko Matra" [mother fucker]. They talked with me like with a terrorist"*

After 50 minutes of detention in the van, the police transported the men directly to the Bosnian border, where the men were told to walk back to Velika Kladusa.

**17/06/2018**

## **"HIS CHILDREN WERE SCARED AND WERE CRYING"**

**Date and time:** June 17, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Close to Radonja, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.29600792542612, 15.740627431250005

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 9-40 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian border police officers

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The respondent left with his two children and two other adult males from Velika Kladusa around 5 pm. The whole group walked across the Croatian border and were in the hills in inner Croatian territory, when they were caught by 2 Croatian police officers. The man was trying to explain their situation to the police officers, that they only wanted to pass through the country to France, where his wife was waiting for them. He was also tried to explain to the police that he had an operation on his heart recently and felt weak, but the only response he received was the officers repeatedly shouting at them: *"Shut up!"*

His children were scared and were crying. The police has not asked any questions about whether the group wanted to apply for asylum, where they were from, and their reasons for entering Croatia. The police did not use any physical violence against any member of the group but stole 180 euros from the respondent and mobile phones from all the adult men. He was trying to explain to the officers that he had all the information about his medical condition and treatment and personal documents saved in his phone, and asking the police to keep the phone for this reason, but the police did not return his phone. Afterwards, the whole group was pushed back to the Bosnian border, from where they walked back to Velika Kladusa where they arrived at around 3am.

16/06/2018

## “ONE OF THE BORDER-PATROL OFFICERS SHOT AT HIM THREE TIMES”

**Date and time:** June 16, 2018 23:00

**Location:** Near Donja Brusovača, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.216495992263994, 15.72998442587891

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 24 person(s), age: 20-30 , from: Pakistan, Libya

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 2 Croatian border officers (wearing green uniforms and equipped with assault rifles), 2 Croatian border police officers with a van

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent, and his two friends started walking from Velika Kladusa towards Zagreb through the hills and forests. About 10km from the Croatian border, they were detected by the Croatian army-border patrols equipped with assault rifles. He and his friends started running and the soldiers shouted at them to stop. When he was at a distance of around 300 meters away, one of the border-patrol officers shot at him three times. The interviewee explained that he could feel the bullets flying close to his head, so him and the other men stopped.

Afterwards, they were pushed back to Bosnia by two police officers in a van, along with other 21 Pakistani men. The respondent asked the police officers to claim asylum in Croatia, but he received a negative response from an officer, saying that there was no asylum in Croatia for him. The police officers took his phone and money. Later on, the other Pakistani men told him that they were also robbed by the police officers. When the police stopped at the Croatian-Bosnian border, all men were told to walk back to Bosnia. The respondent asked the police officers if they could return their phones, but he got a negative response and was beaten.

*“When I asked the police to give us back our mobiles and money, he just said: ‘Go, go, go! and punched us by a metal stick and kept shouting ‘Go, go, go!, and kept punching us to go.”*

16/06/2018

## “BOTH MINORS EXPRESSED THEIR INTENTION TO SEEK ASYLUM IN CROATIA, BUT THE POLICE OFFICERS REJECTED THEIR REQUEST”

**Date and time:** June 16, 2018 20:00

**Location:** 1 km away from Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.721130843795805, 16.075302689062482

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 17 , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian border police officers (wearing uniforms), 1 police car (van)

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent and his friend crossed the border from Bosnia (Velika Kladusa) to Croatia and were both caught by the Croatian border police, one km from Zagreb. The police took both minors to a nearby police station. The respondent and his friend showed to the police officers their Syrian passports, and the officers were thus aware of their age and nationality.

Both minors expressed their intention to seek asylum in Croatia, but the police officers rejected their request. The respondent also stressed that he had a problem with his leg, after the 30km walk, which the police officers ignored and instead they drove the two minors to the Bosnian border, to deport them back to Bosnia. When the police delivered the two minors at the border, they took their phone, placed them on the ground, and drove over them, destroying them.

13/06/2018

## “THE POLICE OFFICERS PHYSICALLY ATTACKED THEM USING BATONS AND ELECTRO-SHOCK WEAPONS”

**Date and time:** June 13, 2018 17:00

**Location:** 20km from the Bosnian-Croatian border, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.20803072392909, 15.776332997656255

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 16-30 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian border police officers (wearing uniforms), 2 police cars (van)

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Five people walked from Velika Kladusa (Bosnia) and crossed the Croatian border. Police detected the group after they had reached Croatian territory, and took all of them to a nearby police station by van. The men expressed their intention to apply for asylum, but the police officers ignored them. Their fingerprints were taken and afterwards they were deported to the Bosnian border by police van. When the men were dropped off behind the Croatian border in Bosnia, the police officers physically attacked them using batons and electro-shock weapons, hitting the men in the face, skull and back. Afterwards the police took their phones, power banks and 200 euros, and told them to go back to Bosnia while verbally attacking them:

*"Police said to us: 'Go back and not come, fuck you!' They were saying: 'You are terrorists, Taliban!'"*

The interviewee has been in Bosnia for 8 months and this was his 50<sup>th</sup> unsuccessful attempt at crossing the border to Slovenia. Although he repeatedly stressed his intention to seek asylum in Slovenia, he was rejected.

04/06/2018

## "THEY ASKED FOR ASYLUM, THE POLICE OFFICERS SAID YES BUT AFTER 7 HOURS, THEY WERE PUSHED BACK"

**Date and time:** June 4, 2018 15:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.04733931319819, 19.105025088671937

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown, from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Two men from Pakistan were caught near Zagreb, while they were hiding in a truck. They made noise because the truck had stopped and the driver saw them and the police was called. The police arrived after one hour, and took the two men to the police station. Pictures were taken. They asked for asylum, police officers said yes, but after 7 hours, they were pushed back to Batrovci, at Serbian-Croatian border, together with another couple.

**10/05/2018**

## “POLICE OFFICERS SEARCHED THEIR BACKPACKS, SLAPPED ALL OF THEM IN THE FACE AND STOLE THEIR PHONES”

**Date and time:** May 10, 2018 14:00

**Location:** Near Batrovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.045398758803245, 19.096785342578187

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 20 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

20 men from Afghanistan were caught in a Croatian forrest, 6-7 hours from the Serbian/Croatian border. They were waiting in the forrest for a person who did not arrive, so when they saw a police car, they stopped it. The police officers searched their backpacks, slapped all of them in the face, and stole their phones. A van arrived and the police officers pushed them back to Batrovci. They asked for asylum but the police officers didn't reply.

10/05/2018

## “THE POLICE PLACED THEM IN A VAN FOR 2 HOURS WITH VERY COLD AIR CONDITIONING”

**Date and time:** May 10, 2018 12:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.15545332646198, 19.17423750546868

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

2 men from Pakistan were caught in the truck scanner at the border Tovarnik-Sid, while hiding in a truck. The police placed them in a van for 2 hours with very cold air conditioning. They asked for asylum but it was rejected. The Croatian police wrote down their names, names of their parents and how many times they have tried to cross the border. Serbian police took them to the police station and gave them a paper with orders to go to Adasevci camp.

05/05/2018

## “THEY SHOWED HIM A GUN AND TOLD HIM NOT TO COME BACK AGAIN OR THEY WOULD KILL HIM”

**Date and time:** May 5, 2018 03:00

**Location:** Sid-Tovarnik border, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.147575, 19.164551

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, pushing people to the ground, threatening with guns, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 3 police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

An Algerian man was walking near Tovarnik, when 3 police officers caught him. They asked about his nationality, he said Syrian but the police officers did not write it down. He was pushed back to the Sid-Tovarnik border. They asked him what he had in his backpack and he took everything out. He asked for asylum, but the police officers denied it. Afterwards the police officers checked his pockets and took his money (400 Kunas and 120€) and destroyed it. When the man asked why they did it, they kicked and beat him (for 15 minutes approximately) in his head, legs and back, while he was laying on the ground. They showed him a gun and told him not to come back again or they would kill him. He picked up his backpack and ran away.

04/05/2018

## “HE ASKED FOR ASYLUM BUT THEY REJECTED IT”

**Date and time:** May 4, 2018 14:00

**Location:** Rugvica, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.7417667, 16.228759500000024

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?:** Yes

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** two police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A minor from Afghanistan was walking near Rugvica, Croatia, when the police caught him. Two police officers took him to the police station where they took a picture of him, wrote down his name and the names of his family (he told them

that he was a minor, but the police did not write it down). He asked for asylum but they rejected it. He was pushed back to Batrovci.

**29/04/2018**

## **“THE THREE PEOPLE ASKED FOR ASYLUM AND THE POLICE OFFICER REPLIED 'FUCK OFF'”**

**Date and time:** April 29, 2018 15:30

**Location:** forest near Vinkovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.2879058, 18.805678100000023

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

Three Afghani people were caught in the forrest near Vinkovci, and two of them were beaten by police officers. The police officer kicked them in the head, arms, back and legs, and beat them with batons. The police officers took their phones, checked for GPS location, and took their money (70 euros). The police asked them where they had crossed the border. The three people asked for asylum and the police officer replied “Fuck off”. Afterwards, the police pushed them back to Batrovci.

**26/04/2018**

## **“THEY ASKED FOR ASYLUM AND THE POLICE REPLIED 'NO'.”**

**Date and time:** April 26, 2018 12:00

**Location:** Near Brcko, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.8726563, 18.810627599999975

**Pushback from:** Croatia, Bosnia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Two Afghani people were caught by police in Brcko (5 minutes walking from the Bosnian-Croatian border). They asked for asylum and the police replied 'No'. The police officers said that they would pass them on to the Croatian authorities. They were then moved to Gunja (Croatia). The police checked their phones and took pictures of them. They stayed in detention the whole night, and at 11am. the police officers moved them to another place of custody. The police officers asked questions about their families and also checked their bags. The Croatian police pushed them back from Batrovci to Serbia.

24/04/2018

## “THE POLICE KICKED THE 3 MEN IN THE KNEES AND BACK”

**Date and time:** April 24, 2018 10:00

**Location:** 50km from Serbian-Croatian border, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.04686626258112, 19.096875430951968

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Three people (two of them from Afghanistan and one from Pakistan), were walking on the road 50km. from the border when the police saw them. The police officers did not beat them at the

catchment place, but later the police beat them at the deportation point. The police kicked the 3 men in the knees and back.

They asked for asylum, but the police replied "Go, picku materinu, Serbia" and "go Bosnia". The police checked their phones looking for GPS and pictures. They were then pushed-back in Batrovci.

**24/04/2018**

## **"THE 2 MEN ASKED FOR ASYLUM AND THE POLICE OFFICER REPLIED THAT ASYLUM WAS NOT POSSIBLE AND THAT THEY SHOULD NOT COME BACK AGAIN"**

**Date and time:** April 24, 2018 03:00

**Location:** Bjelo Brdo, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.5175929, 18.87195410000004

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

Two men from Algeria were caught in Bjelo Brdo. Police officers took them to the police station, where the police asked about their country of origin and age. The police took pictures of them holding a piece of paper with their name written on it.

The 2 men asked for asylum and the police officer replied that asylum was not possible and that they should not come back again. They were pushed-back to Batrovci.

19/04/2018

## “DURING THE PUSH BACK THE POLICE SAID TO THEM - DON'T TRY AGAIN OR I KILL YOU”

**Date and time:** April 19, 2018 12:00

**Location:** Near Bartrovci-Bajakovo crossing, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.04623710158407, 19.097122343997626

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 16-30 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 5 police officers and 11 men without uniform ("Private police officers") with 10 vehicles

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On April 19th. 2018, a group of 5 people from Afghanistan (including two minors) were caught by Croatian police on the Croatian side of the border crossing of Batrovci – Bajakovo. There were 11 police officers in civilian clothes and 5 uniformed police officers in 10 vehicles. The group asked for asylum but the police did not respond.

When the police officers took them closer to the border they started to beat the men. Three “civilian police officers” beat them more in front of the uniformed police for approximately 20 minutes. The interviewee was beaten hard by the police and multiple times, in the head and on his legs, causing great pain. When the blood started to flow from his mouth one police officer commented that ‘the ketchup was coming from his mouth’. Two times, a police officer beat the interviewee with a stick while the ‘civilian police officers’ were beating the rest of the group. They were beaten especially by one ‘civilian police officer’, whom the others referred to as ‘The Boxer’. When he started to beat them he said “Now you will see my boxing” and he was wearing knuckle dusters.

The police checked all their mobile phones and later on broke them and stole the money they had (ex. 20 euros from the interviewee). Afterwards they were pushed back to Batrovci, and were told not to try and cross the border again, and that the EU was paying them a lot of money to protect the border. The interviewee told the police that he would report to UNHCR what occurred that day. The police answered that they had no problem with him doing this. During the pushback the police said to them ‘Don’t try again or I kill you’.

18/04/2018

## “THE POLICE OFFICERS HIT HIM IN THE LEG, AND HE WAS PUSHED BACK TO SERBIA”

**Date and time:** April 18, 2018 12:00

**Location:** Tovarnic train station, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.147575, 19.164551

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 4 border police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A minor from Afghanistan was caught in a train at Tovarnik train station. He did not ask for asylum and 4 border police officers took him to the border area. The police officers hit him in the leg, and he was pushed back to Serbia at the border of Tovarnik-Sid.

12/04/2018

## “THE POLICE BROKE THEIR TWO MOBILE PHONES, AND PROCEEDED TO BEAT THEM”

**Date and time:** April 12, 2018 12:00

**Location:** Near Lipovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.0561941, 19.072865900000001

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Croatian border police

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A family of 7, (2 men, 3 women and 2 children) from Afghanistan crossed the border near Bratovci – Lipovac. The Croatian border police saw them near the road and caught them. They called for more police. The police took their mobile phones and asked them with whom and how they came to Croatia. The group answered that they came on their own by walking, and asked for asylum. They stressed that one member of the family were disabled, a 12 year old girl with polio. There was also a two-year-old child in the family. The police responded that they were not giving asylum.

The police broke their two mobile phones, and proceeded to beat them. Afterwards they pushed them into the police van. Before entering the van, the police threw the bag belonging to the interviewee into the forest. Along with his bag he thus also lost his wallet, money and his clothes. They beat the interviewee person and his cousin, the only two men in the family, with sticks and by kicking them all over their bodies. The police told them to never come back to Croatia. They pushed them back to Serbia, somewhere in the field.

**11/04/2018**

## “HE ASKED FOR ASYLUM BUT HE WAS PUSHED BACK AFTER 2 HOURS”

**Date and time:** April 11, 2018 12:00

**Location:** Velika Gorica near Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.7142122, 16.075243099999966

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A minor from Afghanistan was caught in Velika Gorica, near Zagreb on April 11th. 2018, at 12am. He was in a truck. The police took him to the police station. He asked for asylum but he was deported after 2 hours. They asked for his personal informations and wrote them down, but

they did not give him any papers. The officers from the police station took him to the border and hit him in the head with a stick. After that, he was pushed back to Serbia near Batrovci.

**13/03/2018**

## **“WHEN THE 4 MINORS ASKED FOR ASYLUM THEY WERE KICKED AGAIN”**

**Date and time:** March 13, 2018 12:00

**Location:** Bajakovo border crossing, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.048007, 19.101581

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 14, 14, 15, 16 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Croatian police at the Bajakovo border crossing

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** forced to pay fee

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

4 unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan (14, 16, 15 and 14 years old) were in a trailer at the Bajakovo border crossing, where they were detected by a scanner and arrested at the Croatian border post.

5 police officers took them out of the trailer and proceeded to beat and kick them. The violence stopped momentarily when one of the officer, a women, said « no kick, CAMERA ! ». When the 4 minors asked for asylum they were kicked again. They were asked to write their names and, when some didn't know how to write they were beaten.

They were kept for 8 hours in a closed room with the air conditioning on, before being transferred in a car to the Serbian police. They were brought to Sid Police Station at 8am. Throughout all this, the minors asked 10 times for permission to go to the toilet and the police continuously refused them access to use a toilet.

In Sid police station, the Serbian Police threatened them with the possibility of going to jail or to pay 50€. They didn't receive any document neither in Croatia nor in Serbia.

12/03/2018

## “THE POLICE PUSHED THEM BACK TO SERBIA.”

**Date and time:** March 12, 2018 11:00  
**Location:** Near Zagreb, Croatia  
**Coordinates:** 45.70425004719904, 16.059738710248894  
**Pushback from:** Croatia  
**Pushback to:** Serbia  
**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan  
**Minors involved?** Yes  
**Violence used:** no violence used  
**Police involved:** Police at a village near Zagreb  
**Taken to a police station?:** yes  
**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** papers signed  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes  
**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A transit group of five people, including 3 minors and 2 adults transitted to Croatia from Bosnia. They travelled and arrived in a village near the capital Zagreb.

In this village, the group presented to a police station where they asked for asylum. The Croatian police officers present told them they could start the procedure. They signed papers written in farsi. However, the group were then removed from the police station and pushed back to Serbia.

The pushback occured at approximately midday on 12th March 2018.

21/02/2018

## “THE OFFICERS TOLD HIM THAT IF HE TRIES TO CROSS THE BORDER AGAIN, THEY WOULD KILL HIM”

**Date and time:** February 21, 2018 23:00  
**Location:** Close to Batina, Croatia  
**Coordinates:** 45.8286690894168, 18.83766914597163  
**Pushback from:** Croatia  
**Pushback to:** Serbia  
**Demographics:** 22 person(s), age: 20-30 , from: Pakistan  
**Minors involved?** No  
**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings  
**Police involved:** Croatian police officers  
**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On February 21st. 2018 in the evening, 22 men (from Pakistan, all about 20-30 years old) walked from Sombor, Serbia towards Croatia and crossed the Serbian-Croatian border. They were moving through Croatian territory towards Hungary, with guidance from a man (originally from Afghanistan but now citizen of Serbia). The group crossed a river and continued walking for about five minutes before getting caught by Croatian police officers at around 11 pm. The interviewee didn't know the way and he thus couldn't describe the place in detail, but apparently the river was a smaller branch of the Danube river and they were moving on the Croatian side.

The men did not express any intentions to seek asylum. After stopping the men, the officers searched their bodies and belongings, and further checked all their mobile phones. The officers looked through pictures, messages and contacts saved in their mobile phones. The interviewee was the only one who spoke English, so the officers accused him of being 'the boss', meaning a smuggler, and thus treated him worse than the others. The man denied this and tried to explain that he had only been in Serbia for a month and thus couldn't be a smuggler, but the officers didn't believe him.

The officers broke their phones, pouring water over them and tearing out a piece of the phone. Next they were taken into a room in a building close by, where some of the officers violently attacked the men. The police officers beat them with hands and a stick, and kicked them. The officers still accused the interviewee of being a smuggler, and thus beat and kicked him more severely, especially beating his legs. Afterwards, his knee was badly injured, so that it was swollen and painful, he couldn't walk properly and was limping for several days.

After the incident the men were transported by car to the Croatian-Serbian border, where the officers made the men stay inside the car for the rest of the night, about 12 hours, until they were released the next morning on the 22nd. of February. The officers then took pictures of the men and wrote down their personal details, but did not give them any written documents or take any fingerprints. After that the men were ordered to go back to Serbia, and the officers told the interviewee that if he tries to cross the border again, they would kill him, and the men returned to the Serbian side.

**20/02/2018**

## **“THE MEN ASKED FOR ASYLUM BUT THE POLICE REJECTED IT, SAYING THAT CAPACITIES WERE FULL”**

**Date and time:** February 20, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1648822, 19.152205800000047

**Pushback from:** Croatia  
**Pushback to:** Serbia  
**Demographics:** 13 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan  
**Minors involved?** Yes  
**Violence used:** no violence used  
**Police involved:** Croatian police  
**Taken to a police station?:** unknown  
**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes  
**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of 13 men from Afghanistan (including 1 minor) crossed the Serbo-Croatian border near Sid by walking. During the night Croatian police caught them in the fields near the train station of Tovarnik. They had cameras and they commented to the men that they saw everything. There were 5 policemen. The men asked for asylum but the police rejected it, saying that capacities were full and that the camp was full. The police took a picture of every person and did not give them any papers. The police placed them in a police car and drove them back to the Serbian border near Sid.

17/02/2018

## “THEY REQUESTED ASYLUM BUT THE CROATIAN POLICE TOLD THEM THAT ASYLUM DOESN’T EXIST IN CROATIA”

**Date and time:** February 17, 2018 23:00  
**Location:** Near Buhaca, Croatia  
**Coordinates:** 45.1911155, 15.767313599999966  
**Pushback from:** Croatia  
**Pushback to:** Bosnia  
**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: unknown , from: Algeria  
**Minors involved?** Unknown  
**Violence used:** no violence used  
**Police involved:** Croatian police  
**Taken to a police station?:** unknown  
**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes  
**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of four people, all Algerians, crossed from BiH into Croatia. Shortly after crossing the border, when walking near the area of Buhaca, the Croatian police caught them and put them

into a van. The Croatian police drove them a short distance and then took them out of the van and pushed them back towards Velika Kladusa.

The respondent shared how the group did make a verbal request for asylum, but this was requested by the Croatian police who told them that asylum doesn't exist in Croatia.

**17/02/2018**

## **“SOME OFFICERS ANSWERED THAT THE ASYLUM PROCESS WAS CLOSED”**

**Date and time:** February 17, 2018 13:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.8150108, 15.981918899999982

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: unknown, from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The interviewee spent some time in a coffee shop in the city center to get internet connection. He went out on the streets and was arrested soon after by 4/5 police officers, all men, not wearing any uniforms but undercover and driving a blue van. They asked for his documents, he stated that he did not have any and that he wanted to request asylum in Croatia. Some officers answered that the asylum process was closed. He suffered no physical violence, but was pushed back via the Batrovci border crossing point and asked to get out of the vehicle and to go back to Serbia. When he asked again about asylum some officers told him “next time you come you will get asylum”. It was the 45<sup>th</sup> time he had attempted to ask for asylum.

**16/02/2018**

## **“THE POLICE DID NOT SAY ANYTHING, BUT PLACED THEM INSIDE A VAN”**

**Date and time:** February 16, 2018 02:00

**Location:** Croatian/Bosnian border : near Miljkovici

**Coordinates:** 45.1981268, 15.810540599999968  
**Pushback from:** Croatia  
**Pushback to:** Bosnia  
**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: unknown , from: Iraq  
**Minors involved?** Yes  
**Violence used:** no violence used  
**Police involved:** Croatian police  
**Taken to a police station?:** unknown  
**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** No  
**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of 5 people, a family from Iraq, crossed over to Croatia. They walked 10-12km. from the border in the Miljkovici forest, where the Croatian police arrested them. The police did not say anything, but placed them inside a van. Inside the van there were 3 babies, 4 women and 4 men. The Croatian police left them in Velika Kladusa.

14/02/2018

**“POLICEMEN PULLED THEM UP INTO KNEELING POSITION, ORDERING THEM TO KEEP THEIR ARMS IN THE AIR, AND PROCEEDED TO HIT THEM WITH BATONS”**

**Date and time:** February 14, 2018 02:00  
**Location:** Vinkovci, Croatia  
**Coordinates:** 45.2879058, 18.805678100000023  
**Pushback from:** Croatia  
**Pushback to:** Serbia  
**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 29 , from: Algeria  
**Minors involved?** No  
**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, insulting, theft of personal belongings  
**Police involved:** five armed policemen  
**Taken to a police station?:** unknown  
**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes  
**Reported by:** Info Park

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A man and a woman from Boufark, Algeria, both aged 29, tried to cross the border to Croatia on the night between February 13th. and 14th. 2018, with intentions to seek asylum and stay in

Croatia. They were traveling alone on foot for several hours when Croatian police intercepted them nearby Vinkovci at 2am. In their words, there were 5 armed police officers who immediately pushed them on the ground, using a lot of force and searched both the man and the woman, taking their backpacks, their mobile phones, and about 50 euros that they had with them.

During the search police officers shouted at them in a language they did not understand. After they had been searched, policemen pulled them up into kneeling position, ordering them to keep their arms in the air, and proceeded to hit them with batons in the general area of thighs, back and neck, using offensive language the whole time and occasionally spitting on them.

The man tried to explain to them that they wanted to ask for asylum and several times he said "Asylum" and "Azil" hoping that the policemen would stop the beating and allow them to stay in Croatia. But one of the police officers got mad at these words and punched him in the head with his fist, breaking his nose and knocking him to the ground. Around 4am., the man and the woman were handcuffed and escorted to the Serbian border in a police vehicle, after which they were released and ordered to walk back to Serbia.

Both the man and the woman returned to Belgrade in the afternoon and were treated at Doctors without borders (MSF) clinic. The man has medical documentation which confirms that he suffered a broken nose, a fractured left hand and visible bruises on his face, back and thighs.

**13/02/2018**

## **"THIS PERSON, 21 YEARS, WAS BEATEN SEVERELY ALL OVER THEIR BODY"**

**Date and time:** February 13, 2018 12:00

**Location:** 1km north of Donje Prilisce, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.486769, 15.387504

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of people, including one minor, were on the move from Bosnia. They were walking for 3 days. Some policemen in civilian clothes stopped them, they called for additional police

officer to arrive, from the Croatian National Police. When the group were stopped, one person started to run away, but 3 police officers caught him. One police officer took his cell phone and checked google maps. Once he finished, he destroyed the phone. This person (21 years) was beaten severely, all over the body. He subsequently had injuries in the right ribs and the right foot.

The group were taken to a police station, where they spent 2 and a half hours, while police was checking their phones, specifically tracking google maps. In the police station the previously assaulted person endured another violent attack by the police kicking him.

Afterwards, the group was taken to the Bosnian border, 20km north from Velika Kladuča. The police officers threatened them, "If 2<sup>nd</sup> time you come, I'll take you to prison". They added that Croatian local people will call the police if they see them walking around.

**12/02/2018**

## **"THEY ASKED FOR ASYLUM BUT THEIR REQUEST WAS REJECTED"**

**Date and time:** February 12, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Vinkovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.2879058, 18.805678100000023

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 6 Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of three people from Afghanistan (aged 19, 24 and 29) walked for 2 nights and 1 day, from the Serbo-Croatian border to the town of Vinkovci. From there they wanted to take a taxi, but a taxi driver called the police. Five to six police officers arrived in three police cars, to the taxi parking space.

The police kept the group in this space during a number of interrogations. They asked for asylum but their request was rejected, with the explanation that it was not possible to seek asylum and that they should return back to Serbia.

The police officers searched their clothes and bodies. The police took their mobile phones and searched the content of the phones, asking about the pictures they had stored, and about people who were on these pictures. They returned the mobile phones to them afterwards. The

police didn't take any personal information or give them any official papers. They were driven in a police car back to the Serbian border, where they were pushed back on the trails Tovarnik – Sid.

**06/02/2018**

## **“ONE OF THE PEOPLE SUSTAINED A SWOLLEN CALF AS A RESULT OF THE BEATING”**

**Date and time:** February 6, 2018 02:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.147575, 19.164551

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On February 6th. 2018, at 2am, 3 people from Afghanistan crossed to Croatia and were arrested by the police while walking on the side of a road. They were put into a van, where the cold air conditioning was activated for 3 hours.

They were deported at Tovarnik's railtracks, at the deportation point they were beaten. One of the people sustained a swollen calf as a result of the beating.

**05/02/2018**

## **“THEY REQUESTED ASYLUM ADDING THAT THAT THEY DIDN'T WANT TO GO BACK TO SERBIA, BUT THE POLICE DIDN'T WANT TO ACCEPT THEIR REQUEST”**

**Date and time:** February 5, 2018 14:30

**Location:** Near Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.68838398355318, 16.392532913671857

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Two men from Afghanistan (one minor, 17 years old) were caught by Croatian police near Zagreb. Coming from the Serbo-Croatian border they came out of a truck and started to walk on a road towards Zagreb. The Police caught them at about 55km. from Zagreb, at 2.30pm. They brought them to a police station about 2 km from Zagreb. The interviewee could not specify the precise location of where they were caught, nor the location of police station to which they were taken.

At the police station the police officers took their personal information, and prepared papers that were not given to them. Afterwards they took a picture of both of them. One mobile phone was taken away and not given back.

They requested asylum adding that that they didn't want to go back to Serbia, but the police didn't want to accept their request. They were kept in a police station for two hours, until they were taken by police car to the border crossing Bajakovo – Batrovci and were pushed back to Serbia.

**05/02/2018**

## “ THE VAN STOPPED AND ONE POLICE OFFICER OPENED THE BACK DOOR OF THE VAN AND HIT A MAN WITH A BATON”

**Date and time:** February 5, 2018 10:00

**Location:** Dobova, Slovenia

**Coordinates:** 45.8970349, 15.660114300000032

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:****Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen**ORIGINAL REPORT**

Three men from Algeria were caught by the Croatian police at the border crossing Harmica – Dobova. They were hiding in a train, and were caught by 4 police officers in 2 cars. They asked for asylum, and at first the police responded that they would accept their request and that they would be taken to the asylum camp in Zagreb. They were driven to Zagreb in one police van along with an Irani family, whom were also caught at the border. From Zagreb they were transferred to another police van and were taken to the Serbian border.

The police van drove very fast and the police turned on the cold air conditioner during the drive. The men were kicking from the inside and were shouting to the police to turn off the cold air. The van stopped and one police officer opened the back door of the van and hit a man with a baton. Around midnight they were pushed back to Serbia, from Tovarnik to Sid.

**04/02/2018****“TWO OTHER PEOPLE FROM THEIR GROUP WENT TO JAIL IN SREMSKA MITROVICA”****Date and time:** February 4, 2018 12:00**Location:** Bajakovo border crossing, Croatia**Coordinates:** 45.047704, 19.103008**Pushback from:** Croatia**Pushback to:** Serbia**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan**Minors involved?** Yes**Violence used:** theft of personal belongings**Police involved:** Croatian border officers/ Serbian police officers**Taken to a police station?:** yes**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken, forced to pay fee**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen**ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of 4 people from Afghanistan passed the Serbian border-scanner control post, but were later detected at the Croatian border-scanner control at Bajakovo border crossing. They were hiding in a truck. The interviewee, from Afghanistan, described the encounter with the police in these words:

*"They called me Taliban. I asked for asylum but they said no. This was a third time that I seeked asylum. I know if I come to Zagreb they won't give me asylum."*

The police kept them for 8 hours in a police van. They took pictures of them, took their personal data and took their mobiles but didn't give them any papers. The Croatian police pushed them back and transferred them directly to the Serbian police, who took them to the police station in Sid.

At the police station they were asked for their personal data and were sent to a court. The judge said that they had to pay 50 euro each for the illegal border crossing. The interviewee payed for himself and for one minor. Two other people from their group went to jail in Sremska Mitrovica.

**04/02/2018**

## **"AT THE DEPORTATION POINT THE POLICE OFFICERS MADE HIM LAY ON THE GROUND AND STARTED TO KICK HIM"**

**Date and time:** February 4, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Vukovar, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.3452377, 19.001020400000016

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** kicking, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

One man from Algeria had reached Vukovar by walking, before 5 police officers caught him. They took him in to the police car. He asked for asylum but they rejected his request. The police officers took all the money he had (200 euros), his mobilephone and a bag with his personal belongings. They drove him to the border, close to Adasevci. At the deportation point the police officers made him lay on the ground and started to kick him. Then they pushed him back to Serbia.

03/02/2018

## “THE POLICE BEAT THEM AGAIN AT THE DEPORTATION POINT, NOT FAR FROM SID, AND LEFT THEM IN A DESERTED AREA”

**Date and time:** February 3, 2018 02:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.183706, 19.171923

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of 5 people from Afghanistan crossed to Croatia. They were arrested by the Croatian police 20 kilometers from the Serbian/Croatian border.

When they asked for asylum the police answered positively saying : « Yes, I give you asylum ». One police officer declared he was going to make a phone call in order to take them to Zagreb. Then, a police van arrived and they were told that they were going to be deported to Serbia. And the police officers proceeded to violently attack them, beating and insulting them repeating « picku matre ».

The police beat them again at the deportation point, not far from Sid, and left them in a deserted area.

02/02/2018

## “BOTH WERE TAKEN TO PRISON IN SREMSKA MITROVICA (...) THE JUDGE CHANGED THE AGE OF THE MINOR, DECLARING THAT HE WAS 18 YEARS OLD”

**Date and time:** February 2, 2018 02:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1648822, 19.1522058000000047

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride

**Police involved:** Croatian and Serbian police

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, forced to pay fee

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Two men from Afghanistan (one minor, 17 years old) were caught by the Croatian border police at the border crossing Sid – Tovarnik around 1:30 a.m. During the scanner check they were detected, as they were hiding inside of a truck. They were brought out of the truck, and the police officers placed the two men inside of a “small police car” and turned on the cold air conditioning. They kept them there for 7 hours, from 2:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Before being locked in the car, the 2 men told the police that they didn't want to go back to Serbia because they were encountering many problems there (“my health, my family, money, and other things, a lot of things, ...”). The police responded: “this is a border, we don't give an asylum to you”. They didn't ask them any personal information.

After 7 hours of being held in the car with the cold air conditioning, Croatian border police transferred them directly to the Serbian border police at the same border crossing, Sid – Tovarnik. The Serbian police brought them to the police station in Sid.

They went to court, where the judge was asking them to pay a fine of 5000 RSD (50 euros) for illegal border crossing. They didn't have enough money so both men were taken to prison in Sremska Mitrovica, where they spent 6 days. The judge changed the age of the minor, declaring that he was 18 years old and wrote in an official document that he was born on 1.1.2000. (copies of the original documents given by the judge and after by the prison police are available).

**02/02/2018**

## “THEY ASKED FOR ASYLUM BUT THE POLICE RESPONDED THERE WAS NO ASYLUM FOR THEM.”

**Date and time:** February 2, 2018 00:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1648822, 19.1522058000000047

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** Croatian police  
**Taken to a police station?:** unknown  
**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes  
**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

10 Algerian men were hiding in a train, when they were found and caught by the Croatian police at the train station of Tovarnik. There were 7 police officers. They asked for asylum but the police responded that there was no asylum for them. They were driven in a police van to the border side near Adasevci, where they were pushed back to Serbia. From there they walked one hour to Sid.

01/02/2018

**“THE POLICE AND THE JUDGE WARNED HIM THAT IF HE WOULD TRY TO CROSS ONE MORE TIME HE WOULD BE SENT TO JAIL FOR TWO MONTHS”**

**Date and time:** February 1, 2018 00:00  
**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia  
**Coordinates:** 45.1648822, 19.152205800000047  
**Pushback from:** Croatia  
**Pushback to:** Serbia  
**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan  
**Minors involved?** No  
**Violence used:** exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride  
**Police involved:** Croatian and Serbian police  
**Taken to a police station?:** unknown  
**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes  
**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A man from Afghanistan tried to cross the Serbo-Croatian border, by hiding in a truck. At the scanner check on the Croatian side of the border crossing Sid – Tovarnik he was caught by the Croatian police. They were searching the truck for two hours, removing pieces of the truck. When they found him they started to yell at him and took a picture of him inside the truck.

The police didn't let him take his shoes from the truck. He asked for asylum but the police was laughing at him saying "Terrorist, terrorist!". He was taken to a small room at the border crossing where the police asked for his personal data filling out some forms, and they also took his fingerprints. They didn't give him any of these papers.

They put him in a police van and turned on the cold air conditioning, he was kept there for 2 hours. Afterwards Croatian police transferred him directly to the Serbian border police. He was still without shoes. Serbian police drove him to the police station in Sid where they were asking him for his shoes commenting "Croatian police crazy!".

The police in Sid asked him for his personal information. He went to court where the judge asked for the reasons why he was attempting to cross the border. During the trial the judge didn't give him possibility to pay a fine for an illegal border crossing. He was sent directly to jail in Sremska Mitrovica where he was kept for 10 days. The police and the judge warned him that if he would try to cross one more time he would be sent to jail for two months.

**22/01/2018**

## **"A JUDGE DECLARED THAT THEY HAD TO PAY 50 EUROS OR 5000 DINARS FOR ILLEGALLY CROSSING THE BORDER FROM SERBIA TO CROATIA"**

**Date and time:** January 22, 2018 10:00

**Location:** Tovarnik

**Coordinates:** 45.1648822, 19.1522058000000047

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** Croatian and Serbian police

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, forced to pay fee

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

2 men walked across the Serbo-Croatian border, with an aim of reaching Zagreb, the police caught them in Tovarnik. They asked for asylum but the police answered that there was no asylum in Croatia, that they had to go back to Serbia because they "*have no documents, no passports, no ID, you are illegal, so go back*".

The Croatian police transferred them to the Serbian police. The 2 men were brought to a police station in Sid and to a court. A judge declared that they had to pay 50 euros or 5000 dinars for illegally crossing the border from Serbia to Croatia. The 2 men didn't have the money to pay, and the judge informed them that they should go to jail for 5 days. They did not receive any documents from this trial nor from the judge's decision.

They were transferred to the jail in Sremska Mitrovica. The police gave them a document stating that they would be jailed for 7 days and that their fine was 7000 dinars. In the end they were jailed for 8 days.

**17/01/2018**

## **“THEY GAVE HIM A DEPORTATION PAPER, GIVING HIM 30 DAYS TO LEAVE SERBIA AND A PROHIBITION OF ENTRANCE FOR ONE YEAR”**

**Date and time:** January 17, 2018 03:30

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1565, 19.171649

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride

**Police involved:** Police officers described as Croatian border officers, police officers described as Serbian police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken, forced to pay fee

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

Two men from Afghanistan tried to cross the Serbo-Croatian border, by hiding in a truck. At the scanner check on the Croatian side of the border crossing Sid – Tovarnik they were caught by police officers described as Croatian police. First the police took a picture of the two men while they were inside the truck.

The interviewee declared that after his clothes were searched, the police didn't allow him to take his shoes from the truck. He asked for asylum but the police told them "Go back to Serbia!". He was taken to a small room at the border crossing, where the police asked for his personal data, filling in some forms. They didn't give him any papers.

Afterwards they put him in a police van and turned on the cold air conditioning. He was kept in the van for 6 or 7 hours, from 4am. to 11am. At around 11am. Croatian police transferred him directly to what he described as the Serbian border police. He was still without shoes when the Serbian police drove him to the police station in Sid. At the police station the police asked again for his personal information.

He went to a court, where the judge asked him to pay a fine of 5000 dinar (approx. 50 euros) for illegal border crossing. A fine he had already paid once in July last year. This time he didn't have

enough money so he was sent to jail in Sremska Mitrovica, where he was kept for 5 days. They gave him a deportation paper, giving him 30 days to leave Serbia and a prohibition of entrance for one year. The other man who was with the interviewee person also went to jail for the same period of time.

**12/01/2018**

**“THE OFFICERS ALSO SHOWED THEIR GUNS, THREATENING THEM THAT IF THEY WOULD EVER COME BACK, THEY WOULD BE KILLED”**

**Date and time:** January 12, 2018 03:00

**Location:** close to Dubrovnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 42.65066059999999, 18.094423799999996

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Bosnia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: unknown , from: Palestine

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 4 police officers described as Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The interviewee was attacked by 4 police officers. The 4 officers beat him, kicking, punching and using truncheons on his back, arms and legs. As a consequence of this attack his left foot was broken. The officers also beat the other people in his group, including 2 minors. They took their water and poured it out. The officers also showed their guns, threatening them that if they would ever come back, they would be killed. The violence lasted about 30 minutes.

Then they were deported at the Bosnian border, on the way to Trebinje, and left in a nearby forest. During the violence and the deportation they were continuously insulted by the officers.

**31/12/2017**

**“ONE OFFICER TOLD HIM THAT CROATIA DON’T NEED PEOPLE LIKE HIM IN THE COUNTRY ”**

**Date and time:** December 31, 2017 17:00

**Location:** close to Apsevci village, Croatia  
**Coordinates:** 45.07065494501785, 19.07573027304693  
**Pushback from:** Croatia  
**Pushback to:** Serbia  
**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: unknown , from: Azerbaijan  
**Minors involved?** No  
**Violence used:** no violence used  
**Police involved:** police described as Croatian border police  
**Taken to a police station?:** unknown  
**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes  
**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of people were in the forrest, when a police officer saw them. This officer called his colleagues. They were caught by two police officers. The interviewee declared that the police found them using their night cameras. When the interviewee asked for asylum, one officer told him that Croatia don't need people like him in the country because of the cultural difference. The police dropped them in Batrovci, and let them walk away.

17/12/2017

## “THE 4 MEN WOKE UP AS THE POLICE STARTED KICKING THEM, AND THEY WERE BEATEN AND KICKED BY THE POLICE OFFICERS”

**Date and time:** December 17, 2017 01:30  
**Location:** Near Batrovci on the Croatian side, Croatia  
**Coordinates:** 45.0495562, 19.101440300000036  
**Pushback from:** Croatia  
**Pushback to:** Serbia  
**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: unknown , from: Syria, Egypt  
**Minors involved?** Unknown  
**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings  
**Police involved:** Croatian border police  
**Taken to a police station?:** unknown  
**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown  
**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

4 men (1 from Egypt, 3 from Syria) tried to cross the border from Serbia on foot. A group of police officers, reported as Croatian, apprehended them while they were sleeping under a

bridge. There were more than 15 police officers and several cars. The 4 men woke up as the police started kicking them, and they were then continuously beaten and kicked by the police officers. The police searched their bags and pockets, took the money they found from 2 of the men and 2 of their phones were smashed.

One member of the group told the police about an illness he had and stated that he needed to go to Zagreb to be treated, but his request was refused. A police officer explained to them that the reason for this was that they had committed illegal entry. They were put in a van, and driven back to Serbia. In a place close to the border crossing at Batrovci, the officers pushed them back. They came back to Sid after walking all night long.

**01/12/2017**

## **“THEY ASKED FOR ASYLUM, BUT THE POLICE REJECTED THEIR REQUEST, SAYING THAT THERE WERE NO PLACES LEFT, THAT THE CAMP WAS FULL”**

**Date and time:** December 1, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Banovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1850574, 19.065677100000016

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** Croatian border police with a car

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of people on the move were in the third village from the border, near a train station. A local woman helped them by giving them food. They were considering going on a train, but 2 police officers arrived in a police car and stopped them. After 10 minutes another police officer arrived in a police van. They asked for asylum, but the police rejected their request, saying that there were no places left, that the camp was full. They were taken to the border in a police car, and were pushed back to Serbia, to a site around 8 km away from Sid. On the Serbian side they walked in the direction of Sid.

15/11/2017

## “WHEN ONE OF THE YOUNGEST BOYS FELL ASLEEP, ONE OF THE POLICE OFFICERS SLAPPED HIM IN THE FACE”

**Date and time:** November 15, 2017 09:00

**Location:** 3 hours drive from the border, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.128427, 19.225707

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 13-30 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** catchment: 4-5 Croatian police/ deportation: some Croatian police in blue uniforms/ next interrogation: several Serbian police/ violence: chief of Sid police station (undercover officer, male)

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken, papers signed

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On November 15th. 2017, in the morning, a group of 7 men walked from Šid, Serbia across the Serbian-Croatian border and continued by car going West for 3 hours. The driver had ordered them to leave their shoes, so that police couldn't catch them because of muddy footprints on the floor of the car. However, at about 9-10 am., the car was stopped by a scanner at the Croatian border. The men didn't see where they were driving, and where thus in doubt about whether it was the border to Slovenia or Bosnia and Herzegovina.

4-5 police officers, described as Croatian, told the men to leave the car, asked for their destination and searched their bodies and belongings. They asked why the men didn't have shoes, and the men told the truth. The men expressed their intention to seek asylum. Afterwards they were transported (about 5 minutes drive) to a police station in a Croatian city (the men didn't see where they were driving or which city it was). At the station they confirmed their intention to seek asylum, so the police interrogated them. They also asked why the men didn't have shoes, and the men again answered truthfully.

The police gave each of them an already filled out asylum registration paper, written in English, to sign, and took their fingerprints and photos. The police didn't talk so much, but silently carried out the procedures. After about 30 minutes at the police station, without being given any documents, the men were transported for about 20 minutes driving to the Serbian-Croatian border near Sid, Serbia. They were pushed back to the Serbian side and handed over to the Serbian police, who took them to the local police station (MUP).

The police, supposed to be Croatian, explained that this was done because the men passed through Croatia illegally. At the Serbian police station they were interrogated again. The Serbian

police accused the men of lying about their ages, and threatened to transfer them to Presevo camp. One of the police officers asked about their shoe sizes, but never came back to give them shoes. When one of the youngest boys fell asleep, one of the police officers slapped him in the face and denied him permission to sleep. In total they spent about 5 hours at this police station. Afterwards, on the same day at about 5pm., the police released the men.

14/11/2017

## “THE TWO MINORS WERE THREATENED WITH BEATINGS, IF THEY DID NOT FALSIFY THEIR BIRTHDATE (...) THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY THEY COULD DEPORT THEM”

**Date and time:** November 14, 2017 16:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.149431, 19.163021

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 17, 18 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?:** Yes

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** catchment: 6 Croatian police, police station: several Croatian police, transportation to deportation and deportation: 4-6 Croatian police, all in blue uniforms, transportation in closed police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of people walked from Šid Serbia across the Serbian-Croatian border and continued walking West for 10 days. Just before reaching Zagreb they stayed with a friend and asked him if they could get help with registering for entering asylum procedures at the Zagreb UNHCR office. The friend warned them not to go there, because the place is surrounded by police. The men hadn't had food or anything to drink for 3 days, so they asked some locals. The locals denied their request and threatened to beat them with stick and to let their dogs attack them.

As they were feeling scared and insecure, the men tried to go to the UNHCR office, but didn't manage as they were caught by 6 police officers, on November 14th. 2017, at about at 4pm. They searched their bodies and belongings, asked for their documents, and broke their phones. The men expressed their intention to seek asylum, so the police transported them in a closed police van (they couldn't see where they were going) for about 1-2 hours, to a police station in a Croatian town.

At the station they confirmed their intention to seek asylum, and they were one by one interrogated in separate room. The police once again searched their bodies and belongings. The men had no money but their one remaining phone was confiscated. They were asked to fill out their personal details on a form. The two minors were threatened with beatings, if they did not falsify their birthdate to indicate that they were over 18 years old, and the police explained straightforwardly that this was the only way they could deport them. The police took photos but not fingerprints. No registration for asylum applications were done and no written documents were given to the men.

The youngest man had pain in his leg, but the police threatened to beat him if he couldn't walk faster. After about 2 hours the police declared that their superior had decided that the men should be deported back to Serbia. 4-6 police officers transported them in a closed police van (the men didn't know where they drove), for about one hour to a deportation place at the Serbian-Croatian border, near train rails between Tovarnik, Croatia and Sid, Serbia. They arrived there on the 14th. at about 12pm. The police let the men out of the van and ordered them to "go back to Serbia", so the men ran to the Serbian side and travelled back to Sid Serbia.

**12/11/2017**

## **"THE POLICE OFFICERS MOVED CLOSE TO THE 3 MEN, AND STARTED BEATING THEM "**

**Date and time:** November 12, 2017 00:00

**Location:** 7km from the border Serbian border, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.25038091709242, 19.032487040385604

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: unknown , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

3 people crossed the border from Serbia to Croatia and were caught by police 7km. into Croatian territory. One of the police officers, who saw them first, called his colleagues as soon as he saw the 3 men. As more officers arrived, all the police officers moved close to the 3 men, and started beating them very hard. They asked for asylum and the police officers answered "no asylum, go back to Serbia", and threatened to kill them if they ever come back to Croatia. They were brought back to the Serbian border in a car, where the police kicked them and ordered them to go back to Serbia.

10/11/2017

## “THE POLICE KICKED THE MEN AND BEAT THEM WITH HANDS AND TRUNCHEONS”

**Date and time:** November 10, 2017 04:00

**Location:** Vinkovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.218176, 18.78494

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: 15-25 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** 5 Croatian policemen, all male in black uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### ORIGINAL REPORT

12 men from Afghanistan (15 – 25 years old), walked across the Serbian-Croatian border from Šid, Serbia, and for about 60-70km. into Croatian territory, towards Zagreb. They were caught by 2 police officers on a bridge, on November 10th., 2017 at about 4-5am. The police pointed at the men with flashlights and shot a few times into the air. The police asked the men for their personal details and destination, and they insisted on wanting to know who the leader of the group was. One of the men showed his identity card from the Obrenovac camp. The men didn't express their intention to seek asylum, because the police seemed very angry and behaved so aggressively that the men were afraid of being beaten.

The police searched their bodies and belongings and asked for their phones, which they threw into the river (4 phones). Afterwards they called for 3 more police officers, and they all forced the men to walk a bit further away (about 2 minutes walk), to a spot where they violently assaulted them. The men were ordered to kneel down and to tell them who their leader was. The police kicked the men and beat them with hands and truncheons to all parts of their body. If the men raised their hands the police would hit them in the back of the head. All the men were beaten in this manner.

Afterwards 2 police officers transported the men in what they described as a big police van, to a pushback spot on the Serbian-Croatian border, called stone-place (2 big stones) near 70 road and Batrovci Serbia, where some officers, described as Croatian border police, were waiting for them. The police ordered the men to go to Serbia, and the men ran back to Serbia.

10/11/2017

## “THEY KICKED THE MEN AND HIT THEM WITH FISTS AND BATONS [...] TO ALL BODY PARTS.”

**Date and time:** November 10, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Apsevci, Slovenia

**Coordinates:** 45.050394, 19.101044

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 17, 20, 25, 26, 30 years old , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** catchment: 4 police officers, examination and detention: several police officers, transportation: 4 Croatian male police officers in blue uniforms, violence: several Croatian male border police officers in black uniforms, big police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken, papers signed

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### ORIGINAL REPORT

5 men from Afghanistan walked across the Serbian-Croatian border from Šid, Serbia and continued in an air conditioned fridge truck. They travelled about four hours and crossed the Croatian-Slovenian border in a freezing container before making noises in order to make the driver release them. Even though the men pledged the driver not to call the police, the driver did, so four police officers, described as Croatian officials, arrived (45.050394, 19.101044). The police questioned the men for their personal details, how they came to Croatia and their destination. The men expressed the intention to seek for asylum, and explained their difficult situation (right for international protection, preference to transit due to several countries not responding to their rights as asylum applicants, incapability of Serbia to offer adequate refuge and often extreme attempts to cross the borders). The police denied these pledges and stated their intent to push them back to Serbia in arrogant and angry manner. One of the men asked to enter Slovenia for requesting asylum there. The police denied that again and called other police officers with a police van to pick them up and to transport them to the police station in a Croatian town. The men again expressed the intention to apply for asylum. The officers collected their personal details and other information and put them in detention in a cell for the rest of the night and next morning (11th of November). Saturday afternoon the men were asked to fill in deportation papers, after that they were transported by a police van, driven by four police officers to the Serbian-Croatian border where several border police officers committed acts of violence at about 4:30 pm. The police released the men from the van one by one in a queue and at the same time treated them with violence one after another. They kicked the men and hit them with fists and batons (long thin black with armrest) to all body parts. The treatment lasted a few minutes per man, and all of them were treated equally bad. Overall the police seemed very angry and behaved disrespectfully, especially the one beating the interviewed man. He pledged the police:

*"Don't beat migrants, we are humans, not animals",*

Without any response.

After that the men ran to the Serbian side of the border and walked back to Sid, Serbia, where they arrived the same evening about 7 pm.

**Injuries:**

The men were in pain located in several body parts. One interviewee got beaten on the left thigh and leg so much that he couldn't walk properly the following days. After the pushback the stress due to the intensive journey (several days walking without nourishment enough, staying for hours in air condition cooling truck, detention, physical and verbal maltreatment, deprivation of basic human rights and finally, disappointment of deportation) escalated to anxiety attack.

10/11/2017

## "4-5 POLICE OFFICERS COLLECTED INFORMATION FROM HIM AND DETAINED HIM IN A CELL [..]"

**Date and time:** November 10, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Serbian-Croatian border, close to Batrovci, Serbia

**Coordinates:** 45.050394, 19.101044

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 20 years old , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** catchment: some Croatian police officers, police station: 4-5 Croatian police officers, deportation: 2 Croatian police officers, transportation in closed police van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The man walked from Šid, Serbia, across the Serbian-Croatian border towards the West with his friends for several days, then continued alone by truck container and switched to walking near Rijeka, Croatia. After he reached a Croatian town near the Croatian-Slovenian border the inhabitants saw him and, he supposes, called the police. At night between Friday, 10th and Saturday, 11th of November 2017 he was apprehended by police officials described as Croatian. They questioned him about his personal details and how he came to Croatia, and the man expressed his intention to apply for asylum. The police proposed that he should get access to apply for asylum in Zagreb. The man was transported by a closed police van (the man didn't see where they drove) to a local police station, where he amplified his intention to apply for

asylum. 4-5 police officers collected information from him and detained him in a cell without taking photos or fingerprints for registering an asylum application. The man explained that he had been pushed back to Serbia several times from Slovenia and Croatia but should be allowed to take refuge. The police didn't believe that he had been on the route alone, but the man tried to convince them. The detention lasted several, he supposes maybe 4-6 hours, and the man slept this whole time. After that the police declared that the man would be transported to Zagreb to be registered for asylum procedures. Two police officers transported the man in a closed police van (the man didn't know where they drove) a long way. The man slept the whole time, but when he woke up to ask where they were going, asking for asylum, the police assured that he is going to Zagreb for that. In the end, the next night on Sunday 12th of November 2017 about 2 am, they arrived at the pushback spot to Serbian-Croatian border near Batrovci, Serbia (45.050394, 19.101044). The police in the van released the man outside and ordered him:

*"Go back to Serbia",*

so the man ran to the Serbian side of the border and travelled back to Sid.

**06/11/2017**

## **"THE MEN WERE KEPT ALMOST 24 HOURS IN A CELL, WITHOUT GETTING ANY WATER OR FOOD"**

**Date and time:** November 6, 2017 20:00

**Location:** Near Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.149431, 19.163021

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: 13-23 , from: Afghanistan, Bangladesh

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** catchment: about 20 Croatian male police in blue uniforms, police station: several Croatian police, deportation: 8-9 Croatian police, 2 in blue uniforms and others in civil

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken, denial of food/water

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of 12 people walked from Šid, Serbia across the Serbian-Croatian border, towards Zagreb. They walked for three days and then continued by car for two hours. They were caught by several (about 20) police officers in blue uniforms consistent with that of Croatian police, in the area around Zagreb, Croatia, on November 6th at about 8pm. The group of people were asked to come out of the car, and the car drove away. They were transported to a police station in Zagreb, the journey took about 30 minutes.

They asked for asylum, and the police collected their personal details but didn't take any photos or fingerprints. The interviewee showed them his card from Principa camp. Afterwards the men were kept almost 24 hours in a cell, without getting any water or food. On Tuesday evening two police officers came to transport them, in what they described as a big police van, to a pushback spot at the border between Tovarnik, Croatia, and Šid, Serbia, next to the train rails, where they arrived at about 7pm. 8-9 officials described as border police officers were waiting for them at the border. The police searched their bodies and belongings, and confiscated several phones and chargers. The men once again asked for asylum, but the police denied it. The men were ordered to "go back to Serbia" from there, and so the men walked back to Šid, Serbia.

04/11/2017

## "THE POLICE OFFICERS SHOUTED AT THEM TO STOP AND STARTED TO FIRE THEIR GUNS"

**Date and time:** November 4, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Vinkovci train station, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.30022599999999, 18.802734999999984

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** more than 6 police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

6 people from Afghanistan arrived in Croatia, during the night, near Vinkovci. When they arrived at the train station in Vinkovci, a dog started to bark, and some people came out of their homes, so the 6 men ran into the forrest to hide. They came back later walking towards the train station in order to cross it. The police was in the corner of the station.

The interviewee was already injured on his left leg, and couldn't run away from the police. The police officers shouted at them to stop and started to shoot their guns. The 6 people laid down on the ground. Subsequently the 6 people were beaten by the police. They kicked them in their backs, and they were told "why are you here ? why are you coming here?". The interviewee asked for asylum, and asked the police to let him ask for asylum in Croatia, with his friends. The police told him to go back to Serbia, saying "we don't need you people to come here for the asylum".

The interviewee asked once again for help, claiming he wanted protection from a European country. 6 more police officers arrived at the train station, and the 6 men were brought back to the Serbian border. The border police warned them "if you come back here we will beat you".

**31/10/2017**

## **"ALL OF THE POLICE OFFICERS BEAT THE MEN WITH FISTS, STICKS AND KICKING THEM ON ALL PARTS OF THEIR BODY AND IN THE FACE"**

**Date and time:** October 31, 2017 23:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.147575, 19.164551

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 20-35 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 6 male police officers in blue uniforms and with black masks (only eyes seen)

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

4 men (23, 35, 32, 20 years old) from Afghanistan, crossed the Serbian-Croatian border by walking from Šid. They were caught by 6 police officers in blue uniforms, consistent with those of Croatian police, with black masks (only eyes seen), about 20 km from the border within Croatian territory, on October 31st. 2017, in the evening. The police asked for their personal details, and the men lied and said that they were from Syria, but stated their real ages.

The police searched their bodies and their bags, and confiscated their phones and all their money (400 euros). The men expressed their intention to seek asylum, so the police called a translator and let the men talk with him. The men explained their route and their need for asylum. In the end the translator talked with the police, after which the men were pushed back without any registration into asylum procedures, and without being given any written documents. The men were transported in what they described a big police van, driven by two of the police officers, accompanied by a small police car, driven by four police officers. They were taken to the Serbian-Croatian border near the train rails between Tovarnik and Šid, and arrived there a few hours later at about at 11pm.

After arriving at this spot, the police officers violently assaulted them. The men were beaten one by one, as they were released from the van one person at a time. All of the police officers beat the men with fists, sticks and kicking them on all parts of their body and in the face. The

first three men were beaten to about the same extent, for about 3-4 minutes each. The first man were beaten in both knee joints, resulting in pain and swelling (see Picture), and the police further beat him in the face, so that he lost a tooth. The second man beaten received injuries to his left leg and his clothes were ripped. The third person beaten suffered pain to his back as a result. The last man was treated the worst, as he was beaten for about 10 minutes, and he suffered pain and injuries to his face as a result (see Picture). He had bruises and wounds to his cheek, forehead, nose and underneath it. He lost a tooth and his lips were swollen (see Picture), and his tongue was bruised and cut. In the end the police pushed them back, shouting "go back to Serbia".

**31/10/2017**

## **"THEY ASKED MANY TIMES FOR ASYLUM, WITHOUT GETTING ANY ANSWER."**

**Date and time:** October 31, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Vinkovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.2879058, 18.805678100000023

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 3 policemen involved, all of them were wearing blue uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

2 people crossed the border from Serbia to Croatia, by walking for 3 days, until they reached Vinkovci. The police caught them there, while they were hiding close to a train. They asked for asylum, and one of them declared that he was from Syria. First, the police officers answered him in a positive manner, telling him that they would give him asylum, but he just had to wait for their superior to arrive. They were brought to a police station. When they asked again for asylum, after being taken to the superior officer, they didn't get any answer. They asked many times for asylum, without getting any answer about their case. They were put in a van, and pushed back nearby Tovarnik.

27/10/2017

**“THE OTHER ALGERIAN EXPLAINED THAT THE CONDITIONS THEY ARE LIVING IN SERBIA ARE UNBEARABLE AND THEY NEED TO GET TO CROATIA. AFTER THAT THE MEN WERE DEPORTED.”**

**Date and time:** October 27, 2017 05:30

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.14708, 19.123352

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 25, 20, 18 , from: Afghanistan, Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** Examination: several Croatian police in uniforms, interviewer of the Afghan: big male with reddish face, incidence of violence: two Croatian police in black border police uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

2 men from Algeria (25 and 20 years old), walked from Šid across the Serbian-Croatian border and were caught by what they described as 12 Croatian police officers, near Tovarnik Croatia, on the night between Friday 27th and Saturday October 28th. One man from Afghanistan, 18 years old, crossed the border by train, in a container and was caught by what he stated were several Croatian police officers, near the railway station of Tovarnik, Croatia at about the same time as the 2 men from Algeria.

All 3 men expressed their intention to apply for asylum. The respondents described how one big police van picked all three people, and transported them to Tovarnik police station. They all arrived at the police station on Saturday morning at about 5.30am. At the police station the belongings and bodies of the men were searched, and they were asked to hand over any belongings. The Afghan man showed them his mobile phone and the police insisted he should also show his money, the man needed to convince the police that he didn't have any.

The police officer interviewing him was described as a big male, with a reddish face. The police said that if he tried to come back to Croatia another time, the police would catch him. Only one of the Algerians spoke with the police, the other did not speak any English. They were asked for their personal details which were written down, but no pictures were taken. All men once again expressed their intention to seek asylum. The other Algerian explained that the conditions they're are living under in Serbia are unbearable, and that they needed to get to Croatia.

Afterwards the men were pushed back. They describe being transported in a police van, driven by what they assert were two Croatian police officers, to the border between Tovarnik, Croatia,

and Šid, Serbia, next to the train rails outside the building where the Croatian border police controls the border. At this place the police violently assaulted them. The two police officers released the men from the car, and violently attacked them one by one, in a queue. The two Algerians were beaten with a stick, on their legs and back. Another police officer beat the Afghan with fists, punching his left cheek, the incident took a few minutes. Afterwards the men suffered from pain, but there were no severe injuries. The men were then pushed back to the Serbian side and they walked back to Šid (Serbia), where they arrived later on Saturday morning.

**23/10/2017**

## **“HE ONCE AGAIN EXPRESSED HIS INTENTION TO SEEK ASYLUM, BUT THE POLICE ANSWERED THAT HE WOULD NOT GET IT”**

**Date and time:** October 23, 2017 07:00

**Location:** Samobor, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.81144, 15.64482

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 16 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** Catchment: 6 Slovenian male police/ Violence: 6-7 Croatian male border police in black border police uniforms (around 35 years old)/ Detention: several Croatian police, both male and female, in blue and black uniforms/ Deportation: 5 Croatian male police

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A 16 year old person from Pakistan, walked for 3 days from Sid across the border to the Croatian side, and continued in the back of a small van to the Croatian-Slovenian border and walked to the Slovenian side. He was caught about 10km. before the Slovenian-Italian border, by 6 police officers described at Slovenian, on Monday October 23rd. at about at 6 am. The man expressed his intention to seek asylum, but the police answered that he needed to ask in Croatia. After a while the police transported him in a police van to the Slovenian-Croatian border, to the place where the Croatian border police monitors the border. 6-7 police officers, in black border police uniforms, were waiting for him – the respondent asserted that they were Croatian police.

The police searched his baggage and body, and asked for his personal details. He once again expressed his intention to seek asylum, but the police answered that he would not get it, and complained that refugees go to Slovenia, get deported and try to apply for asylum in Croatia.

The man said he was sorry. Afterwards at about 7am. two of the police officers violently attacked him. One officer slapped him with open hand and the other was kicking him in the lower back. The violent incident lasted a few minutes. The man had pain in his back for the next days.

Afterwards, 2 other people on the move arrived in some other police cars, and the three were transported in a big police van (described as blue-black) driven by two police officers, to Zagreb. The interviewee was taken to Zagreb's main police station, where he arrived at about 2pm., and the two other people on the move went to another police station. At the station the man expressed his intention to seek asylum, and the officers took his registration. The police took his fingerprints and photos and the man was asked to write down his personal details. Afterwards he spent the night in a cell until the next morning, October 24th. at 11am., about 21 hours in total. The 5 police officers transported him in what was described as a big black police van to the Croatian-Serbian border, to the Croatian side near Batrovci.

The police ordered him to go back to Serbia. He asked for his registration papers, but they did not hand them over. After the push back the man returned to Sid.

20/10/2017

## “THE POLICE BEAT THEM, BROKE ALL THEIR PHONES AND TOOK THEIR MONEY”

**Date and time:** October 20, 2017 21:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1648822, 19.1522058000000047

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 7 person(s), age: 20-30 , from: Morocco

**Minors involved?:** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** There were 9 police officers, with « big car ».

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The interviewee declared that every day he has been attempting to go to Croatia, and has travelled between 30 and 70 kilometers after the border into Croatian territory, but the Croatian police always push him back to Serbia. He has also declared that he wants asylum in Zagreb, but the police never took this into consideration. Moreover he was deported from Slovenia, in Rijeka the police, described as Slovenian took his phone and beat him, before taking him to another police unit, described as Croatian, who deported him back to Serbia (6 policemen).

On the October 20th. he crossed to Croatia, and about 30km into Croatian territory the police caught him in the streets of Vinkovci, near the train station. At 9pm he was pushed back to Serbia. He was with 6 other people. The respondent described that there were 9 police officers, with a big car. The police beat them, broke all their phones, took their money and the sim cards were broken as well. He was pushed back to Serbia, and told not to come back to Croatia.

**19/10/2017**

## **“THEY CONFISCATED HIS MONEY AND PHONE, TOOK HIS JACKET, BLANKET AND BACKPACK AND SET IT ALL ON FIRE ”**

**Date and time:** October 19, 2017 01:00

**Location:** Apševci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.060242, 19.087319

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), threatening with guns, gunshots, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 5 male police without uniforms with small civil

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

4 men walked from Sid, Serbia, across the Serbian-Croatian border to the Croatian side, and were caught by 5 male police officers, without uniforms in a small civilian car, on Thursday October 19th. around 1am, and at about 10km. from the border. The police shouted “stop”, and two of them raised their guns, another of the police officers shot once, hitting near his feet. The interviewee stopped and kneeled down, while 3 other people ran away.

The interviewee said “I’m a refugee, don’t shoot me, I’m from Afghanistan”, and showed them an Afghan certificate from his phone in the pocket of his jacket. The police showed their Croatian police license cards. The 2 police officers with guns kept their weapons raised and pointed towards him. The 3 other police officers searched his body and his belongings. They confiscated his money (200 euros) and phone, they took his jacket, blanket and backpack and set it all on fire with a lighter and broke his shoes with a knife. Afterwards they started to beat him. 2 police officers beat him and while another waited, then they shifted and the third officer beat him. The 2 officers with their guns raised, stayed in this position throughout the attack.

The police hit with palms, fists and sticks (long thin black with handrest), on the left side of his body and on his right cheek. On the next day he got bruises and pain in his left arm, bottom and thigh, and his left little finger, wrist and right cheek were hurt and swollen. He didn't fight back, but tried to protect himself, and repeated his earlier words. The police put a tree branch in his mouth and to fix it they rolled his jumper around his head. They shouted "don't speak, go back to Serbia". After a while the man fled in bare feet and walked across the border to Sid, Serbia.

**17/10/2017**

## **"3 OF THE POLICE OFFICERS BEAT ALL THREE MEN WITH STICKS"**

**Date and time:** October 17, 2017 01:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.146975, 19.165006

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** 6 male policemen involved in the illegal and violent push back, 3 of them used physical violence

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** fingerprints taken, photos taken, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

3 men walked from Sid, Serbia, across the border to the Croatian side and continued by train to Zagreb on October 16th. In Zagreb city, at about 3pm. they were caught by 6 police officers (4 male and 2 female in uniforms). The men expressed their intention to seek asylum, so the police called the police centre of Zagreb near the place, and they walked there. Five male and two female police officers did the registration of asylum procedures for them. They collected their identity details (name, nationality, date of birth) and took pictures and fingerprints. In addition, the baggage and other belongings was searched and confiscated. Only some of the stuff was given back afterwards, and memory and sim cards were taken from one of their phones.

The men were asked to wait in a cell for about 20 minutes, after which the police declared that they would be transported to the asylum centre, in order to proceed with the asylum application. No papers were given to the men. At about 6pm. the men were taken into a big police van, driven by two male police officers. Four other police officers followed them in two

small police cars (all in uniforms). Instead of going to the asylum centre, the men were transported back to the Serbian-Croatian border between Tovarnik Croatia and Sid Serbia, near the train rails, to be deported on the 17th. at about at 1-2am. For About 10 minutes, 3 of the police officers beat all three men with sticks (long thin black with a handrest), hitting them on all parts of their bodies. Next the men were forced to go to the Serbian side, and they walked back to Sid.

17/10/2017

## “HE WAS PUSHED BACK FROM SLOVENIA TO SERBIA, AND 6 POLICE OFFICERS BEAT HIM WITH A TRUNCHEON”

**Date and time:** October 17, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.8028347, 16.0046130000000063

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** 2 police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On October 17th., a 24 year old person from Libya was at the UNHCR office in Zagreb. He talked to a women working there, and told her his name and that he wanted to register for asylum. She called the police. He was with another friend. The police arrived and took them to the police station where they had to stay all afternoon. His name was taken at the police station but he didn't get any documents. During the night they were deported in a van with 2 police officers. They were deported along with other people from Afganistan and Pakistan in the same vehicle. They were dropped at Tovarnik train station. The police ordered them to « go to Serbia ».

The interviewee declares that he was already used to police confiscating his phone and money, as it happened to him 12 days before this last push-back, where he was pushed back from Slovenia to Serbia, and 6 police officers beat him with a truncheon to his legs and arms.

17/10/2017

**“THE POLICE TOLD HIM THEY WERE TAKING HIM TO THE ENTER THE ASYLUM PROCESS, BUT INSTEAD HE WAS BROUGHT BACK TO THE SERBIAN BORDER”**

**Date and time:** October 17, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.796821931047745, 15.984665482031232

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 18 , from: Libya

**Minors involved?** No

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

**Police involved:** unknown number of police

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

An 18 year old person from Libya was caught by the police in Zagreb, on October 17th. 2017. He had called UNHCR, because he wanted to ask for asylum. The person on the phone had advised him to go to the police station to enter the asylum process, in order to reach a refugee camp. At the police station his name was taken, as well as pictures.

The police told him they were bringing him to a camp, and he was put in a car. He was bleeding a lot because he cut himself, so the Croatian police took him to a hospital. He stayed there for one day and received some papers from the hospital. The police told him they were taking him to the enter the asylum process, but instead he was brought back to the Serbian border, where he was beaten extensively by the police described as Croatian officials. He walked back to Sid.

16/10/2017

**“IN ORDER TO STOP THE ASSAULT, THE INTERVIEWEE CUT HIS LEFT WRIST ARTERY WITH A KNIFE MADE OF HIS ASTHMA MEDICINE PIPE”**

**Date and time:** October 16, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.147575, 19.164551

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan, Algeria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** Several policemen during the interrogation in Zagreb and the deportation back to Tovarnic; 5 policemen were involved in the violence activities

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

8 men from Algeria walked across the Serbian-Croatian border from Šid Serbia, and through about 10 villages in Croatia before continuing by train container to Zagreb. There 4 of them managed to apply for asylum, and were accommodated in a camp. The 3 others went there for one night including the interviewee. The next morning the men called the UNCHR office in Zagreb and expressed their intention to seek asylum. After they stated their personal details and explained their route, the officer reassured them that they could go to register at the police station, and they would get access to apply for asylum.

The men went to the main police station in Zagreb, where the police registered them and took pictures of them, after which they proceeded with an asylum application. The men received proper documents and were supposed to be accommodated at a closed camp near Zagreb. However, 2 police officers transported them, along with two Afghan refugees, in a big police van, to the Serbian-Croatian border near train rails between Tovarnik Croatia and Šid Serbia. At the border spot, 5 male border police officers described as Croatian violently assaulted them. In order to stop the assault, the interviewee cut his left wrist artery with a knife made of his asthma medicine pipe. The wound bled a lot, the police stopped and let him lie on the ground unnoticed for hours. Afterwards 2 of the Algerian and the two Afghan people walked back to Serbia. The interviewee was badly hurt, and stayed behind at the deportation place, with bleeding wounds, without receiving any attention from the police, for about 5-6 hours, before the police officers called a Croatian hospital near the border.

The interviewee was transported to the hospital and he recovered there for two days. The police came and the man again expressed his intention to seek asylum. Two police officers transported him in a big police van to the Serbian-Croatian border, near train rails between Tovarnik Croatia and Šid Serbia. The police took his documents from the hospital and demanded him to go back to Serbia. The man questioned the deportation, and the police responded that they were sorry, explaining that the order for the deportation came from higher ranking officers. Afterwards the man was pushed back to the Serbian side, and walked to Šid.

16/10/2017

## “HE WAS KICKED ALL OVER HIS BODY, ESPECIALLY IN THE HEAD”

**Date and time:** October 16, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1573886, 19.170352500000035

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 30 person(s), age: unknown , from: unknown

**Minors involved?** Unknown

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

**Police involved:** 15 police officers in blue uniforms

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

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of people on the move, were deported from Zagreb on October 16th. 2017. The police caught them in a forrest near Zagreb. They all asked for asylum, and the police officers answered that asylum was not possible. Afterwards, they were brought back to Serbia by car, and were dropped at the border at Tovarnik. Their phones were broken, and their money was taken. The whole group was beaten by the police. There were more than 15 police officers in blue uniforms. One of the men interviewed stated that he was kicked all over his body, especially in the head. The 2 men interviewed stated that it was the 15th. time they tried to cross the border.

14/10/2017

## “THE POLICE OFFICERS BEAT THEM FOR A FEW MINUTES”

**Date and time:** October 14, 2017 12:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.146975, 19.165006

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 23, 25, 16, 36 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

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

**Police involved:** catchment: 4 male police officers in blue police uniforms, deportation: 9-10 male police officers in black uniforms, violence: 3-4 of these police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

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

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

4 men walked across the Serbian-Croatian border and were caught by 4 police officers, on October 14th. in the morning. The police asked about their nationality and searched their baggage and belongings. One of the men (25 years) was ordered to take his clothes off, and his money (55 euros) was confiscated. Another person (16 years) had a phone, which the police destroyed. The men expressed their intention to seek asylum, but the police answered that this was not possible at this place, that they should go to Zagreb and that the asylum office there was closed at that time.

Next two police officers transported them to a deportation place on the Serbian-Croatian border between Tovarnik, Croatia and Sid, Serbia, near the train rails. 9-10 police officers deported them to the Serbian side, at about 12am. 3-4 of the police officers beat them for a few minutes, using their hands and kicking two of the men (16 and 23 years old), in their head, back and neck. Afterwards the men walked back to Šid, Serbia.

12/10/2017

**“THE MEN STATED THAT THEY WERE SEEKING ASYLUM IN SERBIA AND SHOWED THEM THEIR ID CARDS FROM ADASEVCI CAMP, BUT THE POLICE DIDN'T BELIEVE THEM”**

**Date and time:** October 12, 2017 03:00

**Location:** Vinkovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.150210987239, 19.158885018555

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 30, 25, 22, 20, 19, 18 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 6 policemen during apprehension, several in detention place, 10 policemen at pushback

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken, personal information taken

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

5 people-on-the-move walked from Adaševci, Serbia across the Serbian-Croatian border to Vinkovci, Croatia, and attempted to continue towards Zagreb in a train container.

They report being caught by 6 male police officers at Vinkovci train station, on October 12th, 2017, at 3 am. After that, they were transported in a police van to Vinkovci police station. The men stated that they expressed their intention to seek asylum, in English. The police filled out forms with their identity details, one form per person, and took pictures of them. The men stated that they were seeking asylum in Serbia and showed them their ID cards from Adaševci camp, but the police didn't believe them.

No further asylum procedures took place. The group report that the police then confiscated people's backpacks and other property, and put them in detention. They remained in a cell for about 12 hours. The men got water to drink and were allowed to buy food. No physical or verbal violence occurred.

On 12th October, at about 3 pm, respondents report that 10 male police officers transported them by a police van to the border near train rails between Tovarnik, Croatia and Šid, Serbia, where they were pushed-back to Serbia. They walked to Adaševci camp and arrived there at about 7 pm.

11/10/2017

**"THEY EXPLAINED THEIR DIFFICULT SITUATION AT HOME AND IN THEIR HOST COUNTRIES, BUT THE POLICE ANSWERED: "NO ASYLUM, GO BACK TO SERBIA""**

**Date and time:** October 11, 2017 05:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.15714, 19.147172

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 14-20 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 4 policemen, male, in Croatia border police uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On October 11th, 2017, at about 5 am, 5 people from Afghanistan were pushed-back at the Serbian-Croatian border between Tovarnik and Šid, near the train rails on the Croatian side.

The people-on-the-move crossed the border by train in a container and were caught by 20 police officers, near Tovarnik. The police called for four additional border police officers, who transported the people in a police van, to the pushback location, where the police violently assaulted them.

The police beat them with fists and palms, and were hitting them with sticks, on all parts of their bodies. The police searched people's bodies and their baggage. Their money and phones were confiscated.

The 5 men expressed their intention to seek asylum and explained their difficult situation at home and in their host countries, but the police answered: "no asylum, go back to Serbia". Afterwards the police pushed the men across the border and they walked back to Šid.

09/10/2017

## "THE MEN WERE SURROUNDED BY THE BORDER POLICE AND BEATEN FOR SEVERAL MINUTES EACH, AND PUSHED TO THE SERBIAN SIDE OF THE BORDER"

**Date and time:** October 9, 2017 03:00

**Location:** Vrbanja, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.150466, 19.163716

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan, Bangladesh

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking

**Police involved:** 10 male police officers in Croatian police uniforms, 3 male police in border police uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

28 people-on-the-move walked from Šid, Serbia across the border to the Croatian side, were 15 of them (9 from Afghanistan and 6 from Bangladesh) were caught by 10 Croatian police officers, near the highway at Vrbanja, Croatia.

On Monday October 9th, 2017, at about 1.30 am, 2 police officers transported the 15 men, in a closed police van, to the Serbian-Croatian border between Tovarnik, Croatia, and Šid, Serbia, near the train rails. 3 police officers in Croatian border police uniforms were waiting for them.

One by one, the men were released from the van, surrounded by the border police officers and beaten for several minutes each, and pushed to the Serbian side of the border. The police beat them with fists and batons (long black with armrest) and kicked them on all parts of their bodies. No belongings were confiscated.

After the police had beaten every one of them, the people walked back to Šid, Serbia. The men asked to enter asylum procedures in both Croatia and Serbia, but the police denied them.

**07/10/2017**

## **“THE POLICE SAID 'FUCK YOU GO TO SERBIA, NEXT TIME WE KILL YOU'”**

**Date and time:** October 7, 2017 17:00

**Location:** Ilača, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.142081012817, 19.157107656738

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: 21, 27, 37, 31, 22 , from: Morocco, Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6-7 police officers, 5 police officers, about 20-30 years-old, male, in Croatian border police uniforms, 1 female police officer

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On Saturday, October 7th, 2017, 5 men were pushed-back at the Serbian-Croatian border near Tovarnik, Croatia. The men had walked from Šid, Serbia across the border and for about 20 km into Croatian territory, before being caught by the Croatian border police at about 4-5pm. There were 6-7 male police officers. The police officers asked for the people's passports and nationality, and called for one female police officer to transport them in a police van to Tovarnik. 5 police officers continued the transport from Tovarnik to the pushback place on the Croatian side, where the main incident of violence occurred.

There were 5 police officers, about 20-30 years, male, in Croatian border police uniforms. All the men were beaten one by one by the police officers. One police officer held each person, while other officers beat the person. All men were beaten, and all of them sustained injuries as a result of the beating. The police hit them with thick batons with handles, on all parts of their

body. On the Croatian side, the police searched them and checked their baggage; one bag was confiscated. The police said “fuck you go to Serbia, next time we kill you”.

After that, the people-on-the-move fled a few hundred meters to the Serbian side and stopped to rest, as the injuries made their journey difficult. The same police officers noticed that they had stopped, followed them, and continued beating them.

The men ran away and walked back to Šid.

**03/10/2017**

## **“THEY WERE DROPPED 25 KM FAR AWAY FROM SID, TELLING THEM 'GO TALIBAN, DON'T COME AGAIN'”**

**Date and time:** October 3, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 44.973814659705, 19.094527577344

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: Unknown , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), pushing people to the ground, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian police officers, one with a black uniform, one without a police uniform and another one with a t-shirt

**Taken to a police station?:** no

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** No

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On the 3rd of October, 2017, 5 men from Afghanistan and Pakistan were pushed-back from Croatia to Serbia during the night.

The people-on-the-move entered Croatia and walked approximately 15-20 km inland. They were caught by the police close to a road. While they were being body-searched, the police pushed them on their car, with their faces against the vehicle. When one started bleeding, they stopped. Our interviewee got bruises on his face. He didn't ask for asylum, because he experienced that the police answers were always negative such as “fuck you” or “kill yourself”.

One other man's leg got injured because he was pushed by the police on the car. Three of their mobile phones were taken. It was the 5th time our interviewee's mobile phone was stolen in this way.

They were brought back to Serbia in a closed car: five people-on-the-move in the back and two policemen in the front. They were dropped 25 km far away from Šid, telling them:

*"Go Taliban, don't come again".*

The interviewee remembers three police officers: one with a black uniform, one without a police uniform and another one with just a t-shirt.

**01/10/2017**

## **"THE GROUP INCLUDED A MINOR, WHO WAS BEATEN THE SAME AS THE REST OF THE MEN"**

**Date and time:** October 1, 2017 20:00

**Location:** Vincovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.150550782205, 19.169017689941

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 26, 20, 25, 15 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 3-4 Croatian border police officers in uniforms, male

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On 1 October, 2017, around 8 pm, 4 people from Afghanistan who had crossed the border to Croatia by walking from Šid, Serbia, and were apprehended by 3 police officers near Vincovci, Croatia. The police asked for their nationality (no ages asked or pictures taken) and called 4-5 other police officers to transport the men to the border, to the pushback spot, where 3-4 Croatian border police officers were waiting for them.

At this location the border police officers assaulted them, beating them with batons (long black with handrest) and fists, and kicking them, on all parts of their body.

The border police searched the men and broke the screens of four phones, no belongings were confiscated. All the police officers took part in the beating. One person had their glasses broken. The group included a minor, whom was beaten the same as the rest of the men.

After that the men ran to the Serbian side and walked back to Šid.

01/10/2017

## “THE UNDERAGE BOY STATED THAT HE HAD AN INJURY IN THE BACK OF HIS HEAD, BUT THE POLICE TOOK OFF HIS HAT AND BEAT HIM IN THE HEAD”

**Date and time:** October 1, 2017 09:00

**Location:** Vinkovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.147105356678, 19.165278509766

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 17-32 , from: Iraq, Algeria, Armenia

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting

**Police involved:** 11 policemen at the apprehension, and 5 involved in the pushback, all male, with police uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On Sunday, October 1st, 2017, 6 people-on-the-move were apprehended by the Croatian police, about 20 km from the Serbian-Croatian border, about 10 km before reaching Vinkovci. They were pushed-back at around 11 pm near the train rails, at the Serbian-Croatian border near Šid, Serbia.

The group of 6 people from Iraq, Algeria, and Armenia walked from Šid, Serbia across the Serbian-Croatian border and were apprehended by 8 Croatian police officers with a small police van. The police called for 4 additional police officers, who arrived with a bigger police van.

The police proceeded to beat them, with punches and kicking, in their torso and on their legs, while also using verbal violence. The men and their baggage were searched by the police. They were asked to kneel down, and all 11 police officers beat and kicked them. The underage boy stated that he had medical problem, an injury in the back of his head, but the police took his off hat and beat him in the head.

After this first incidence of violence, 3 police officers transported the men in the bigger van to the pushback location on the border with Serbia and left. At this place 5 police officers were waiting and a second violent attack occurred.

The men were taken out of the van in a queue, and all 5 police officers hit them, one by one, while yelling insults about the men's families: "fuck your mother, fuck your sister, fuck your father". Afterwards the police said "go back to Serbia and never come back".

All the men expressed their intention to seek asylum, in English, first when the police first apprehended them and again when they were being pushed-back. At the point when the police caught them, they were asked about their nationality and age, and the people-on-the-move replied. There was no further response to their request for entering asylum procedures, and the underage boy was treated the same as everyone else. While they were being pushed-back to Serbia, they expressed this request again, and the police answered "fuck you no asylum".

After that the violence at the border, the people ran to the Serbian side and walked back to Šid.

**28/09/2017**

## **"THE POLICE OFFICER TOLD HIM TO GO BACK TO SERBIA, LOADED HIS GUN, AND SAID THAT IF HE CATCHES HIM IN CROATIA AGAIN, HE WOULD KILL HIM"**

**Date and time:** September 28, 2017 23:00

**Location:** Near Sid, Serbia

**Coordinates:** 45.172667, 19.18946

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 22 , from: Iraq

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, threatening with guns, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 violent policemen (one about 35 years, the other about 50 years old), 4-5 policemen who watched the violence

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, photos taken, personal information taken

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A 22 year old man from Iraq crossed the Croatian border by walking, and was caught by two Croatian police officers in uniforms, not far from Šid, Serbia, on September 28th, at about 9 pm. The police transported him in a police car to a police station. The interviewee couldn't see where they were driving. His baggage, phone, and money was confiscated, the police registered his name and nationality, and took a picture of him.

He was handcuffed in a cell, where he was held for a while, before the police came to the door of the cell. The person-on-the-move asked when he would be set free, and the police answered "fuck you don't speak shut up".

Two police officers came into the cell and started beating him. The man fell to the ground and the police continued beating him, while another 4-5 policemen were watching. After about 15 minutes the police stopped the beating, left the man in the cell, and went out. In total he was at the police station for about 2 hours.

After that, one police officer in uniform transported him in a police car back to the border near Šid, Serbia. The police officer told him to go back to Serbia, loaded his pistol, and said that if he catches him in Croatia again, he would kill him.

The police officer watched the men until he was far away on the train rails, on the Serbian side.

**28/09/2017**

## **"AN ELECTRIC SHOCK WAS APPLIED TO THE FIRST PERSON IN THE NECK AND TO OTHER TWO ON THEIR SHOULDERS"**

**Date and time:** September 28, 2017 20:00

**Location:** Opatovac, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.26145694650681, 19.170699539062525

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 21, 25, 27, 28 years old , from: Lybia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** electric shock, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6 policemen from Croatian border police in uniforms (about 25-40 years old)

**Taken to a police station?:** no

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The interviewee, a man from Libya, came from Serbia by foot in a group of 4 and got apprehended by the Croatian police on Thursday, 28th of September, 2017, at about 7 pm, circa 3 km from the Serbian-Croatian border on the Croatian side near Opatovac.

One policeman asked them in English where they came from and the men replied that they were from Libya. Apart from that, the policemen talked in Croatian/Serbian. Baggage and bodies were inspected, phone messages checked, charger cables were cut off, one phone scratched.

The men were driven by car to the site of violence. All four men were asked to kneel down in a row. One electric shock was applied to the first person in the neck and to two of the following persons in their shoulder blades. They felt a palsy of body parts for 1/2-2 minutes, but suffered no permanent injuries. One person was skipped.

After the violent incident, the men walked back to Serbia.

**28/09/2017**

## **“THE MINORS WERE TREATED AND BEATEN THE SAME AS THE ADULTS”**

**Date and time:** September 28, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Županja, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.042143856459, 19.101061398816

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: 13-21 , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, electric shock, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 6 male police officers in Croatian uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A group of 11 people on the move from Afghanistan and Pakistan, including minors, were caught about 70 km from the Serbian-Croatian border, at a petrol station near Zupanja in Croatia. They were pushed-back near Batrovci, Serbia.

After the police apprehended them, they asked about their nationality, after which the first incidence of violence occurred. The police beat all of the men, with fists and kicked them. The police asked “who can speak English” and beat the ones who could not even more. The interviewee asked for water, without a response from the police.

The group was then transported to a push-back location at the border with Serbia near Batrovci, in one police van and two police cars. After arriving there, the second incident of violence occurred. The police beat them with batons (long black with handrest), fists, and kicked them on all parts of their body. They also administered electric shocks to the men.

The border police searched the men and checked their baggage. They broke the screens of their phones with sticks, but no belongings were confiscated. 4 of the 6 police officers took part in the beating of the men, and beat them one by one as they were released from the van. The minors were treated and beaten the same as the adults.

The people-on-the-move expressed their intention to seek asylum and explained their situation in Serbia, but the police told them: “no asylum, fuck it, go back to Serbia”.

Afterwards the men ran to the Serbian side and walked back to Šid. The police have injured the right knee of the interviewee badly. A few days later he still couldn't properly move his leg and had to walk with crutches.

**21/09/2017**

## **“WHEN HE ASKED FOR ASYLUM, THE POLICE MERELY RESPONDED: NO - IN CROATIA NO ASYLUM, GO BACK”**

**Date and time:** September 21, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.146058025312, 19.164520828711

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 22 , from: Libya

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other)

**Police involved:** Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A person on the move reports being pushed-back from Zagreb to Serbia on September 21st. The respondent stated that the Croatian police caught him in the streets of Zagreb, and the police officers asked for his documents. He answered that he didn't have any. At the police station, when he asked for asylum, he respondent states that the police merely responded “no – in Croatia no asylum, go back”. He reports being beaten twice. The first time at the police station, especially being hit in the neck, head and legs. Then, two police officers brought him to the train station at the border between Serbia and Croatia, where he reports being beaten a second time.

19/09/2017

## “THE BEATING STOPPED WHEN THE INTERVIEWEE AND HIS FRIEND RAN AWAY ACROSS THE BORDER”

**Date and time:** September 19, 2017 03:00

**Location:** Vinkovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.020228712241, 19.102837240234

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 28, 30 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 3 or more policemen from Croatia

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** No

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The interviewee and his friend started to walk from Šid, Serbia on September 17th, 2017, at 3 pm. They crossed the Croatian border between Šid and Boksic, Croatia. They walked through two forrest in the area of Boksic and Berak and crossed road 57. On the 18th at 5 am they arrived in Vinkovci and arrived at the train station at 8 am. They couldn't get on the train because the interviewee's friend had severe abdominal/intestinal pain.

They were stopped by the Croatian police in a small police car with one female and one male police officer in uniforms, near the train station on the 19th at 2 am.

The interviewee asked in English about a hospital for his friend, and states that the female police officer was really friendly. They didn't ask for asylum. The police talked on their radio. Then one police van took the interviewee and his friend to Tovarnik, Croatia, from where a police van with three police officers in uniforms took them and transported them to the Serbian-Croatian border near Tovarnik, followed by another police van. They arrived at the border on the 19th at 3am.

At the border, the police officers confiscated their baggage, money and phones, and searched the interviewee and his friend. The interviewee told them about his friend's illness and that he needed to go to the hospital, but the police didn't answer. They instead pointed in the direction of the border and said "there's Serbia".

The police officers had long batons with handles, and one of them beat the interviewee once on his hand and four times on his his legs. One of them also beat his friend. The beating stopped when the interviewee and his friend ran away across the border and walked back to Šid in two hours.

18/09/2017

## “HIS FRIEND WAS SO BADLY WOUNDED IN HIS FACE THAT HE COULDN'T EAT AND CHEW FOR DAYS”

**Date and time:** September 18, 2017 23:00

**Location:** Lužani Zagorski, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.147300204778, 19.164962768555

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers with two vehicles

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

In the night between the September 18th and 19th, 11 people were pushed-back to Serbia. The police caught them before the Slovenian border, about 20 km from the border between Croatia and Slovenia. They asked for asylum, but the Croatian police refused, explaining that the Porin Hotel doesn't have space anymore.

They were taken back to Serbia in 2 vehicles, one with 6 and the other one with 5 people. The interviewee describes the vehicles as 'a big box without windows', and as such they could not see where they were going. The police officers brought them back to the train station at the border, and ordered them to go to Serbia.

This was not the first time our interviewee tried to reach Europe. Nine months ago the police had caught him and had taken everything he had (his luggage, his food, his mobile) and burnt everything. Two weeks before he had been beaten and the police stole his mobile phone, pretending to check it, and never giving it back. He even asked for his mobile back, explaining he needed to join his family, explaining how expensive a mobile is.

This time they were 6 people who were caught by the police and all of them were beaten, in front of a police office. The police officers asked them to sit down, and beat them one by one. The officers that beat them were not wearing uniforms and were not the officers that drove them back to the border, but others officers in civilian clothes. One of our interviewee's friends was so badly wounded in his face from the beating that he couldn't eat and chew for days.

14/09/2017

## “THE POLICE OFFICERS TOLD HIM THAT 'ASYLUM WAS CLOSED'”

**Date and time:** September 14, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.147026601892, 19.164864151465

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 25 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** theft of personal belongings

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

The interviewee reports being pushed-back from Zagreb to Serbia on September 14th, 2017. The police caught him at the Hotel Borin, and brought him to the police station, because he didn't have any identification documents.

The police officers reportedly told him that 'asylum was closed'. He was brought back to Serbia alone in a car with 2 police officers, at the railways in Tovarnik, at 2 am. The respondent reports that the border police was waiting for him there, and his money was stolen by the police.

13/09/2017

## “WHEN HE ASKED FOR ASYLUM THEY TOLD HIM THAT HE WAS TOO FAR FROM THE CAPITAL, AND TOOK HIM BACK TO SERBIA”

**Date and time:** September 13, 2017 08:00

**Location:** Near Sesevete, 18 km from Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.0444615330468, 19.105364669642

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 13 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A 16 year old person from Afghanistan reported being pushed back from Croatia to Serbia on September 13th. The respondent stated that the police caught him about 18km from Zagreb, and when he asked for asylum they told him that he was too far from the capital, so he had to go back to Sid. He was walking in a group of 13 people (only teenagers and young people). The police brought them back to Batrovci in a van, at 8am.

**09/09/2017**

## “WHEN THEY ASKED FOR ASYLUM, THE OFFICERS REPLIED, 'IF YOU COME AGAIN, YOU GO TO JAIL'”

**Date and time:** September 9, 2017 08:00

**Location:** Near Osijek, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.024553685392, 19.116513926978

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 25, 30 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 8 Croatian police officers in 4 cars

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 9th, 2017 in the morning, two people from Pakistan were pushed-back from Croatia to Serbia. The police apprehended them in a village near Osijek, while they were walking. There were 4 police cars, with 8 police officers.

The police officers stopped and pushed them, while they were walking. They ordered them to kneel down, before doing body-searches on them with gloves (shoes and socks were searched as well). The police were shouting questions about their identity (name, mother's name, origin and destination). Then they police pushed the people into a police car.

The police took their SIM cards and broke their mobiles, and 200 euros were taken from one person.

When they asked for asylum, the officers replied, *'If you come again, you go to jail'*.

They brought them back by van and dropped them off in a forrest, 4 hours walking distance from Šid.

**08/09/2017**

## **“THE 4 PEOPLE WERE BEATEN ONE AFTER THE OTHER, BY 2 POLICEMEN WHO BEAT EACH PERSON FOR ABOUT 20 MINUTES”**

**Date and time:** September 8, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Vinkovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.145458606956, 19.167196959863

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 19-20 , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 2 police officers from Vinkovci

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** denial of food/water

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

4 people from Pakistan were pushed-back to Serbia on September 8th, 2017. They were 4 people in a taxi with one taxi driver. A police car stopped the taxi and asked them to come into the police car. They were brought to the police station in Vinkovci.

In a closed room inside the police station, the police started beating them. Inside this small room, they were beaten one after the other, by 2 policemen who beat each person for about 20 minutes. They were asking them if they understood English, and asked for some information about the taxi, to check if they were English speakers. In the hopes of not being beaten, 2 people pretended that they didn't speak or understand any English.

When they asked for asylum, the police officers answered: *"If you don't speak English I don't give asylum"*. They stayed 2 hours at the police station. Each person was being beaten for

approximately 20-30 minutes. One of them was punched in the thorax and in the back. He still felt pain in his shoulder and his thorax at the time of the interview.

The people-on-the-move asked for water, but the police refused to give them some. The police took 2 phones and checked the contacts, and they didn't give them back. Afterwards the police pushed them back to Serbia. They were brought by a van to the border at the railway tracks. The police opened the doors of the van and ordered them to run.

**07/09/2017**

## **“THE POLICE CAUGHT 12 PEOPLE AND LOCKED THEM IN A CLOSED VAN FOR 15 HOURS WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER”**

**Date and time:** September 7, 2017 22:00

**Location:** Danube, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.76036767620949, 18.950042724609375

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of food/water

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

A 16 year old person from Afghanistan reported being pushed-back to Serbia on September 7th, 2017, at around 22 pm. The respondent states that he was caught in Croatia, while trying to cross the border by boat, on the Danube river.

According to the respondent, the police caught 12 people, including him, and locked them in a closed van for 15 hours without food or water. All of them asked for asylum, but the police refused.

They were brought to the police station in Zagreb, before being taken back to Serbia, to Sombor's camp.

06/09/2017

## “WHEN HE ASKED THEM FOR ASYLUM IN CROATIA, THEY ANSWERED THAT ASYLUM WAS CLOSED”

**Date and time:** September 6, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Near Vinkovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.149785878518, 19.176979064941

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 22 , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other)

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian policemen

**Taken to a police station?:** no

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 6th, 2017, a 22 years-old person from Algeria was apprehended along with 6 others people, 50 km after crossing the Croatian border, near Vinkivci. None of them had food or water left, so he had been sent to the nearest gas station for provisions. At the gas-station, the respondent reports being caught by 3 police officers who subsequently they punched him in the face and beat him. The staff at the gas station didn't react.

The respondent stated that the police then took him into their car and brought him back to Serbia. When he asked them for asylum in Croatia, they answered that asylum was closed. He also reports being told by one of the police officer that he was a terrorist. This was the fifth time that our interviewee was pushed-back.

04/09/2017

## “THE POLICE TOLD HIM THAT ASYLUM IN CROATIA WAS NOT POSSIBLE”

**Date and time:** September 4, 2017 02:00

**Location:** Rijeka, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.143804517343, 19.168859673227

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: 27 , from: Tunisia

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A 27 year old person from Tunesia was deported back to Serbia, on September 4th, 2017. The Croatian police caught him in Rijeka at 2 am, and brought him directly to Zagreb police station, where he was kept in a room for 4 hours.

As he was able to use his phone, he contacted a person from UNHCR by whatsapp, but they didn't answer. The police told him that asylum in Croatia was not possible.

The Croatian police brought him back to Serbia in a van, and dropped him at the railway, at the border. He didn't experience any kind of physical violence. This was the 7th time he tried to cross.

**04/09/2017**

**“THE POLICE TOOK HIS CLOTHES, THREW IT IN THE MUD, STAMPED ON IT AND GAVE IT BACK SOAKED IN MUD”**

**Date and time:** September 4, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Durdanci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.150932202944, 19.169769287109

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: 25 , from: Libya

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** threatening with guns, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 3 Croatian police officers, armed with guns

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The interviewee, a 25 year old person from Libya was pushed back from Croatia back to Serbia on September 4th, 2017. He was caught 68 km from the Serbian/Croatian border, in Durdanci, Croatia, together with 2 other people, by 3 Croatian police officers.

In the moment when the group of 3 was caught, the policemen pointed their guns at them. The police took his clothes, threw it in the mud, stamped on it and gave it back filled with mud. The also took his painkiller-pills for headache. The police officers also took people's shoes.

Furthermore, the police ordered the 3 people to sit on the ground. One police officer sat between two of them, took their heads under his arms and posed for photos. The 3 refugees were driven back to Serbia in 2 police cars and 1 police van, by 5 police officers.

04/09/2017

## “AS THE 12 PEOPLE WERE LEAVING THE VAN, THE POLICE USED STUN GUNS ON THEM”

**Date and time:** September 4, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Vinkovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.147637904034, 19.164107055078

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 12 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), electric shock, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 8-10 Croatian police officers with stun guns and a van

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 4th, 2017, our interviewee, a 16 year old boy from Afghanistan was caught by the Croatian police, along with 12 other people from Afghanistan, in the forrest near Visconsi, Croatia.

The Croatian police arrived in 3 police cars. They broke our interviewee's phone and took his money. All of the people-on-the-move were beaten by the police, after they were caught in the forrest.

Our interviewee asked for asylum, but none of the police officers replied. All of them were brought directly back to Serbia, by approximately 8-10 police officers in a van. The van stopped close to the railway at the border between Croatia and Serbia. As the 12 people were leaving the van, the police used electric stun guns on their bodies and necks, before letting them go.

01/09/2017

## “A FAMILY WITH A BABY AND TWO SMALL CHILDREN BEGGED THE POLICE NOT TO PUSH THEM BACK”

**Date and time:** September 1, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Srijemske Laze, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.150115023535, 19.167709350586

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 8 person(s), age: 5 months - 61, from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 1st, 2017, the police found 8 adults and 3 children in the forrest. The people-on-the-move explained their situation and journey to the police officers.

They had been waiting for a car for 3 days and were very hungry. They begged the police not to deport them, referring to the fact that they had a baby (5 months-old) and two small children (4 and 1 years), and that they wanted to ask for asylum in Croatia. Our interlocutor also explained that her mother had heart problems, but the police didn't listen.

The police officers called for more police cars to arrive. No food was given to the people. They were driven back to Serbia, and dropped at the border around midnight. It was the 2nd time they were pushed back.

01/09/2017

## “THEY BEAT HIM AND BROKE HIS MOBILE”

**Date and time:** September 1, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Vinkovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.2879058, 18.805678100000023

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 11 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), destruction of personal belongings

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On September 1st, 2017, a person was deported from Vinkovci, Croatia, to Serbia. The respondent stated that the police caught him around 11 pm, beat him and broke his mobile. He reported being with 10 other people, who were also beaten by the police and the police also broke their mobiles. The respondent states that they were brought back to Batrovci, Serbia in 3 vehicles.

31/08/2017

## “ONE BY ONE THEY HAD TO STAND UP AND WERE HIT WITH BATONS AND FISTS AND KICKED”

**Date and time:** August 31, 2017 21:00

**Location:** Croatia, railway tracks near Tovarnik

**Coordinates:** 45.148996, 19.16108

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: Unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, electric shock, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian border police with two small white cars and a white van

**Taken to a police station?:** no

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of nine people from Afghanistan, five of them underage, got caught by Croatian police officers in green uniforms with one star on shoulder on the D57 road outside of the village Orolik in Croatia (45.220235, 18.989764). They asked for asylum but did not get an answer, just:

*"Don't come here".*

Requests for food and water were denied. The police had two small white cars and a white van. The people-on-the-move were brought to the Croatian border, to the railway tracks near Tovarnik on the Croatian side.

The police forced the group to undress and sit on the ground. One by one they had to stand up and got hit with sticks and fists and kicked. They asked the interviewee if he speaks English and when he denied they hit him in the stomach and in the neck, and gave him an electric shock with a taser.

The others, including the minors suffered the same torture. The officers destroyed their phones (7) and powerbanks (5), gave them their clothes back and told them to run across the border to Serbia.

31/08/2017

**"THE POLICE FORCED THEM TO UNDRRESS AND SIT ON THE GROUND, ONE BY ONE THEY HAD TO STAND UP AND WERE BEATEN WITH STICKS, PUNCHED AND KICKED"**

**Date and time:** August 31, 2017 21:00

**Location:** Orolik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.14715516043, 19.164858604492

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, electric shock, forcing to undress, destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police (green uniforms)

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of nine people from Afghanistan, including five minors, were caught by Croatian police officers in green uniforms on the D57 road, just outside of the village Orolik in Croatia. They reported to have asked for asylum but were given no answer, just „no come here“. The respondents stated that their requests for food and water were denied and they were brought to the Croatian border at the railway tracks near Tovarnik, on the Croatian side. The police had two small white cars and a white van. The respondent recalled that police forced them to undress and sit on the ground. One by one they had to stand up and were beaten with sticks, punched and kicked. The interviewee was asked if he spoke English, he states that when he said no, he was punched in the stomach, hit in the neck and given electric shock with a taser. The others (including the minors) were also allegedly beaten and tasered. The officers destroyed their phones (7) and powerbanks (5), gave them their clothes back and told them to run.

**30/08/2017**

## “THE POLICE ASKED THEM TO GET OUT OF THE CAR AND TOLD THEM 'HERE NO ASYLUM, YOU HAVE TO GO'”

**Date and time:** August 30, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.15116071356, 19.169645366809

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan, Iraq

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On August 30th, in Zagreb, the interviewee, an 18 years-old boy from Afghanistan called the UNHCR. He gave them information about him, such as his nationality, the day he arrived in Croatia, and his geo-localisation. They told him that a police car would pick him up and bring him to the police station, to start the asylum procedure.

At the police station he explained his situation, that he arrived in Zagreb after a 9-day trip through the forrest, and that he wanted to ask for asylum and be placed in an open camp. The police explained to him that he first had to spend 5 days in a closed camp, before going to the open one.

Thinking he was going to a closed Croatian camp, he was put in a large car, which included other people-on-the-move, and they left the police station. The group included him, another Afghan and a family with children from Iraq.

After 4 hours of driving they arrived at the Serbian border. The police asked them to get out of the car and told them "*Here no asylum, you have to go.*" They were forced to cross the border into Serbia.

**30/08/2017**

## **"THE STAFF STARTED TO TALK TO THE POLICE OFFICERS ASKING THEM TO LET HIM GO INSIDE, IN ORDER TO GIVE HIM INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION"**

**Date and time:** August 30, 2017 00:00

**Location:** UNHCR Office in Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.153564063337, 19.171387283789

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: unknown , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, denial of food/water

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

In Zagreb, the interviewee, a 26 years-old man from Pakistan, was going to the registration office of the United Nations (UNRCR). In front of the doors to the offices, there were police officers. They apprehended him and he started to shout. Some people from the UNHCR office came out.

The staff started to talk to the police officers asking them to let him go inside, in order to give him international protection. But the police pretended they first wanted to register him at the police station, and that they would bring him back afterwards. He stayed in detention for 14 hours. He asked the police for food and water, but they didn't bring him anything.

During the night, around midnight, the Croatian police moved him and other people-on-the-move, who had been caught. They were moved from the cell into a van, and they were brought to the Serbian border.

The police took our interviewee's phone and powerbank, and 100 euros from one of his friend. Another of his friends got his phone back completely destroyed. They forced them to cross the border into Serbia.

**30/08/2017**

**“2 EMPLOYEES FROM UNHCR CAME DOWN TO TALK WITH THE POLICE, HE TOLD THEM THAT HE WANTED ASYLUM IN CROATIA, BUT THEY DIDN'T TALK TO HIM AND WERE HAVING A CONVERSATION ONLY WITH THE POLICE”**

**Date and time:** August 30, 2017 00:00

**Location:** UNHCR Office in Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.150658617491, 19.178940384375

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: unknown , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 5-6 Croatian police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

In August 2017, at around 1 pm, after 10 days of walking to reach Zagreb, the interviewee was heading to the UNHCR office in Zagreb. Before he arrived at the door, the police apprehended him. They were approximately 5-6 police officers. They asked for his documents and he answered that he didn't have any. The police asked him why he came, and he answered that he wanted to ask for asylum. They told him to stay where he was. 2 employees from the UNHCR (he recognized them because of their badges) came downstairs to talk with the police. He told them that he wanted asylum in Croatia, but they didn't talk to him and were having a conversation only with the police.

The police brought him and the 2 other people he was with to the police station. His mobile was broken by the police. They were pushed-back at 6 am, after spending 7-8 hours in detention. The police left them all without food. They received a small bottle of water per person. They were driven back to Šid in a van and released.

30/08/2017

## “10 POLICE OFFICERS WERE BEATING ONE PERSON AT A TIME, KICKING AND BEATING WITH BATONS”

**Date and time:** August 30, 2017 00:00

**Location:** UNHCR Office Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.150692414673, 19.176962584533

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 50 person(s), age: unknown, from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking

**Police involved:** Two police officers from Zagreb, 8-10 border police

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

In August 2017, the interviewee, a man from Pakistan, was pushed-back to Serbia along with 2 of his friends, in a group of 50 people in total. He said it was impossible to ask for asylum in Zagreb, because the police arrested them in front of the UNHCR office in Zagreb.

As they were taken back to Serbia, the border police beat them. After opening the doors of the van, they ordered them to go out one by one, and were beating them one by one as they left the van. 10 police officers were beating one person at a time, kicking and beating them with batons.

He declared that 2 police officers from Zagreb were present, and between 8-10 officers from the border police. The border police were the ones beating them, the police from Zagreb didn't, but they witnessed everything.

30/08/2017

## “ALTHOUGH HE INSISTED ON HIS RIGHT OF REQUESTING ASYLUM IN CROATIA, HE WAS PUSHED-BACK TO SERBIA MORE THAN 10 TIMES”

**Date and time:** August 30, 2017 00:00

**Location:** UNHCR Office in Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.150925575633, 19.174012762085

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: unknown , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), destruction of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian policemen from Zagreb

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

The 22 years-old interviewee left Pakistan in August 2016 and passed through Iran and Turkey. He tried to cross the border from Turkey to Bulgaria 4 times. During the first 3 tries he was caught by the Bulgarian police. They chased him with police dogs and beat him, before taking him back to Turkey.

The 4th time he made it to Bulgaria. In Bulgaria, the police brought him to Busmantsi, a detention camp on the outskirts of Sofia, Bulgaria. He was not allowed to leave the building for 4 months. He was often beaten by the guards in the camp. For example when he asked for a doctor, the guards refused and beat him. After 4 months in the closed camp, Bulgarian officials brought him to an open camp, where he was treated better. He made it to Serbia in his first attempt.

He has tried to cross the border from Serbia to Croatia approximately 10-15 times up until the time of the interview and was always deported back to Serbia. During these attempts, the Croatian police broke his phone with a stick.

One time he almost reached the UNHCR-office in Zagreb, but the Croatian police caught him directly in front of the building. He explained to the police that he wanted to ask for asylum. Although he insisted on his right of requesting asylum, the police took him to a police station, and placed him in a closed room. He kept on insisting that he wanted to ask for asylum. But the Croatian police pushed him back to Serbia.

He was put into a car, which included 4 people-on-the-move and 2 police officers. When he was released at the Serbian border, 5 police officers were there in total. He was not beaten, but his mobile phone was broken by the Croatian police.

In another attempt, the same person was pushed back from Zagreb while going to register in the UNHCR office, in the last week of August, with another person. Walking towards the door, the police stopped them and asked for their identification documents. Our interviewee declared that he wanted to go to the UNHCR office. The police told him "You stop here", and called more colleagues. He was then brought to the police station. He asked many times for asylum, the answer was always "No". He was deported back to Serbia. The Croatian police beat him and broke his mobile. He declared that he was pushed-back 5 times in one week.

30/08/2017

## “HE WAS SUPPOSE TO GIVE HIS FINGERPRINTS TO START THE ASYLUM PROCESS, BUT WAS INSTEAD BEATEN BY THE POLICE OFFICERS”

**Date and time:** August 30, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia,

**Coordinates:** 45.132686190869, 19.146546326626

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** unknown person(s), age: unknown , from: Libya

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other)

**Police involved:** Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

In August, 2017, the interviewee, a 18 years-old man from Libya, crossed the border from Serbia to Croatia by train. After he reached Zagreb he took a taxi, and asked for this address: CFP Studies (cesta 112 A), the address of an organization that helps people-on-the-move.

After introducing his case, the people he met from this organization took him to the police station, where he was suppose to give his fingerprints to start the asylum process.

Instead, the police officers beat him and he was placed in a van with other people on the move. They were driven to the Serbian border, several kilometers from Šid.

30/08/2017

## “SHE WAS REPEATEDLY MOCKED BY THE OFFICERS FOR BEING TRANSGENDER”

**Date and time:** August 30, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.147291593654, 19.164148930938

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** unknown person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan, Cuba

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), insulting, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On August 30th, the interviewee, a 40 years-old transgender woman from Cuba, moved from Monténégro to Croatia. She wanted to apply for asylum, under special conditions of being transgender.

When she arrived in Zagreb, she went to the camp (Hotel Borin), because it was late at night and she stayed there for two days. The staff in the camp told her to ask about the police documents and to go to the UNHCR. When she arrived to the UNHCR office, she was treated well, and was advised to go to the police station, in order to get permission to enter the asylum processes.

But at the police station she was locked in a cell, and the police officers took pictures of her. After more than 2 hours, she was placed in a car with other people-on-the-move from Afghanistan, and the police told them they were going to Serbia.

She was repeatedly mocked by the officers for being transgender. The police took her mobile phone, supposedly to search for information, but they kept it. The group was left in CHIP on the railway tracks. The Police were shouting "Go go go", and they beat a person who was running slower than the others.

Her wrist hurt for several days as a result of very tight handcuffs.

**30/08/2017**

**"WHEN THE CROATIAN RED CROSS ENQUIRED ABOUT THE PEOPLE CALLING FOR HELP, THE BORDER POLICE DENIED THAT THEY HAD CAUGHT THEM AND DENIED THEIR PRESENCE AT THE STATION"**

**Date and time:** August 30, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Near Dobova, Slovenian-Croatian border

**Coordinates:** 45.149320217819, 19.16923378623

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 21 person(s), age: 16-unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian border police

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On August 30th, 2017, a 16 year old boy from Algeria was apprehended by the Croatian police, on the border between Slovenia and Croatia. He expressed his intention to apply for asylum and told them he was a minor and needed help.

The police brought him to the police station close to the border, where the cells were already occupied by 20 other people-on-the-move. The police took their money, bags and phones.

One person managed to keep his phone, and called the Croatian Red Cross, explaining the situation, sending the GPS data, and asking for help. This organization apparently called the border police, who denied that they had caught them and denied their presence at the station. The police then asked for the phone that contacted this organization, and threatened to deport them if the phone was not handed over. They group denied having the phone.

The organization called them back on this phone and explained that the police would bring them to Zagreb in in order to start the asylum processes. However, the police put them in 2 big cars and took them to the border with Serbia. They pushed them across the border and warned them that if they come back they, would be pushed-back again. The group was beaten by the Croatian police just before being sent across the border.

**30/08/2017**

**“THE POLICE TOOK THEM OUT OF THE VAN ONE BY ONE AND BEAT EACH PERSON FOR ABOUT 3-4 MINUTES”**

**Date and time:** August 30, 2017 00:00

**Location:** UNHCR Office in Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.148721571305, 19.176193802344

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: unknown , from: Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 5-6 Croatian police officers in a van

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** denial of food/water

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

In August 2017, the interviewee was caught in Croatia along with 3 other people. In Zagreb they had been to the UNHCR office, and the police had caught them right in front of the entrance door to the building (5-6 police officers in a van).

They were brought to the police station. They stayed there for 6 hours, without food or water. He was body-searched, and the police took his mobile and never gave it back to him. Then they were brought by van to the border with Serbia.

While being pushed-back to Serbia, they were beaten by the police. The police took them out of the van one by one and beat each person for about 3-4 minutes, kicking, punching and beating them with batons.

**29/08/2017**

**“WHEN FILLING IN THE DOCUMENT, THEY WERE ASKED TO LEAVE THE SPACE FOR AGE BLANK, SO THAT THE MINORS COULD BE REGISTERED AS BEING OVER 18”**

**Date and time:** August 29, 2017 01:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.146409966733, 19.164599411286

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 15 policemen from Croatia, green and violet uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention, personal information taken, denial of food/water

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On August 29th, 2017, a group of four people from Afghanistan, two of them minors, were apprehended by the Croatian police in Zagreb. They were taken to the police station, where they were kept for 9-10 hours.

The Police officers collected their mobile phones and put handcuffs on their hands. The people-on-the-move asked for food and water, as they were very hungry, but were only given water.

One person had severe shoulder pain from the injury he got while jumping off the train. He asked for a doctor. The doctor checked the shoulder and said everything was okay. The person later had to visit a doctor in Serbia, and still could not move the shoulder and was taking pain-killers at the time of our interview.

When the people-on-the-move asked for asylum, the officer said he couldn't process this because his boss was currently away. When filling in the document, they were asked to leave the space for age blank – so that the minors could be registered as being over 18, as our interviewee reckoned.

The people were brought to the Croatian-Serbian border at the railway tracks near Tovarnik, on the Croatian side, in three white vans. There were about 15 Croatian police officers in green and violet uniforms. When leaving the van, the police opened the backdoor of the van, queued people up in two lines and told them to run. While the group was running across the border they hit them with batons. Our interviewee was hit twice in the back, twice on the butt. Also the minors were hit.

**29/08/2017**

## **“THEY KICKED HIM, PUNCHED HIM, AND ALSO TOOK HIS MONEY”**

**Date and time:** August 29, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Near Dakovo, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.153595521175, 19.171142578125

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, insulting, electric shock, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police officers

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On August 29th, 2017, a 27 year-old person from Pakistan, was apprehended by the Croatian police in a group of 10 people, near Đakovo. They waited for a van to arrive They were put into the van and after 2 hours of driving they were back in Serbia.

Our interviewee recalls being beaten by the police for about half an hour. The respondent stated that police kicked him, punched him, took his money, used an electric stun gun on them, and took everyone's mobiles and put them in their pockets.

They ordered them to go across the border to Serbia and to not come back to Croatia. When the interviewee declared that he had a friend in Europe and that he wanted to come to Europe, the police threw his mobile and told him that *"Europe is not for refugees, you are a terrorist, you don't come in Europe"*.

**29/08/2017**

## **"HE DECLARED THAT HE WANTED TO STAY IN CROATIA, BUT HE WAS PLACED IN A VEHICLE AND BROUGHT BACK TO SERBIA"**

**Date and time:** August 29, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.147421275112, 19.164276123047

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 15-unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** destruction of personal belongings

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

The interviewee, 15 years-old boy from Afghanistan, was pushed-back from Croatia to Serbia on August 29th, 2017. He was caught in the city center of Zagreb. The police asked him where he was from, he answered that he was from Afghanistan. They asked for his documents, and he said that he didn't have any.

The police officers brought him to the police station, where he asked to be registered and declared that he wanted to stay in Croatia.

He was placed in a vehicle and brought back to Serbia, along with 3 other people-on-the-move. There were two marked police cars, bringing them back to Serbia.

The police broke his mobile and dropped them off in the area at Šid's train station.

27/08/2017

## “THEY DROPPED THEM RIGHT AFTER THE BORDER, OPENING THE DOORS IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE”

**Date and time:** August 27, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Vinkovci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.140857595074, 19.156553954492

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: 25 , from: Syria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** no violence used

**Police involved:** 20 Croatian policemen from Vinkovci

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On August 27th, two people from Syria, were caught in Vinkovci by 20 police officers, who were in the town. They declared that they were not victims of any physical violence. The Croatian police put them in the back of a truck with blocked GPS and phone signal. They dropped them right after the border, opening the doors in the middle of nowhere, near the railway tracks, and they pointed to Šid, which was 6 km away.

23/08/2017

## “THEY ASKED FOR ASYLUM BUT WERE REJECTED WITHOUT AN EXPLANATION”

**Date and time:** August 23, 2017 16:30

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.129139693179, 19.079695128265

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 3 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** kicking, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police in Zagreb

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** denial of food/water

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On August 23rd, 2017, 5 police officers attempted to apprehend three people from Afghanistan, one of them a minor, in Zagreb at "Borin hotel" (Porin Reception Centre). They ran away, trying to reach the UNICEF office. The police officers caught them before they got there. When they were caught, the police officers kicked them several times.

They were put in handcuffs and brought to the police station. Their mobile phones were taken and they stayed at the station for 6 hours. The police only gave them water (after 2 hours of waiting), even though they asked repeatedly for food and were very hungry.

They asked for asylum but were rejected without an explanation. The officers said that they shouldn't have run away. A translator was present during the talks, but he or she only talked to the police and only translated a few things.

They were brought to the border with Serbia in a white police van and dropped off near Ilinci. Their mobile phones were given back.

**23/08/2017**

## "ONE OF THEM WAS SICK, BUT THE POLICE STILL BEAT HIM"

**Date and time:** August 23, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Zagreb, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.154689907953, 19.174040648839

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: unknown, from: Afghanistan, Pakistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** Croatian police

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** detention

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

A group of people on the move had stayed for three or four days in Zagreb. On 22 August, 2017 they went to the office of the United Nations to register, when they were apprehended by the police. The interviewee was in front of the UN office door, as the police came. He started to shout and UN officers came and asked the police to let him enter the office. The police told them that they will take him to the station for registration and bring him back later. They placed him in jail for 14 hours and took his phone and his bag with his other belongings, and they also took 100€ from a friend who was with him. The police beat them.

Two other men from the group on the move tried to run away when the police apprehended them at around 4 pm. The police officers kicked them in the back and took them to the police station.

One of them was sick, but the police still beat him before they brought him to the hospital. The nurse said that he had heart problems and asked the police officers to give him asylum, so that they could treat him. The police took him back to the jail and pushed him back to Serbia with the others. One day later he still had marks from electrode pads on his chest.

At midnight the six men, including the interviewee, were brought back to the Serbian border in a van and left there.

**13/08/2017**

## **“10 MINORS WERE COLLECTIVELY PUSHED BACK TO SERBIA”**

**Date and time:** August 13, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.156440306584386, 19.167022705078125

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: 13-17 , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other)

**Police involved:** Croatian border police with a bus

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On August 13th, 2017, 10 minors (teenagers between 13 and 17) were collectively pushed back to Serbia. They were caught right after the Croatian border, and all of them were beaten by the Croatian police. The police put them in a bus, stopped somewhere in Serbia and everyone was told to get out. They walked back to Šid from there.

02/08/2017

## “BEFORE LETTING THEM OUT OF THE CAR AND BEATING THEM, THE 7 OFFICERS PASSED AROUND BOTTLES OF LIQUOR AND PLAYED LOUD MUSIC FROM THE RADIO”

**Date and time:** August 2, 2017 23:59

**Location:** Near Otok, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.128803691600204, 18.821640014648438

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 15 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking

**Police involved:** No police with official uniform involved, aggressors were 7 men wearing black jeans and shirts, athletically trained and very drunk.

**Taken to a police station?:** no

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** No

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On the 2nd of August, 2017, at around 12 pm, 15 (mainly young) men, all from Afghanistan, were pushed back from Croatia to Serbia. They were caught approximately 40 km behind the Croatian border, on a small road in the forest.

According to the testimony, they were 7 police officers, not wearing official uniforms but black jeans and shirts, athletically trained and very drunk. The 15 men were too afraid to ask for asylum. They were violently assaulted, beaten with hands, batons and kicking.

The seven officers in plain clothes let the people out of the car one by one, beating them one by one. Before letting them out of the car and beating them, the 7 officers passed around bottles of liquor and played loud music from the radio. The interviewee stated that it seemed like a drinking game.

26/07/2017

## “IF YOU COME BACK I WILL SEND YOU TO JAIL WITHOUT FOOD AND WATER!”

**Date and time:** July 26, 2017 11:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1544041797003, 19.175610796484307

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: 23 , from: unknown

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), exposure to air condition and extreme temperature during car ride

**Police involved:** 4 officers, who wore blue uniforms and one of them a uniform with stars on his arm

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown

**Reported by:** No Name Kitchen

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On July 26th, 2017, at around 11 am, 4 people (around 23 years old), were found at a scanner close to the Croatian-Serbian border. The exact position can't be described, because the men were hiding since 4 o'clock in a container and couldn't see where the vehicle went.

When the police discovered them, they went into the container and closed the door. The 4 officers, who wore blue uniforms, beat the men, one by one, with batons. The interviewee asked to go to the toilet but was not allowed to do so.

Afterwards the police searched their bodies, took pictures of their faces and screamed, "*If you come back I will send you to jail without food and water!*" They were handed over to the Serbian border police, who brought them close to Šid in a white van which was very hot inside.

The interviewee sustained injuries in his left shoulder, arm, finger and on his back.

15/07/2017

**“THEY BROKE THE GLASSES OF ONE PERSON, TOOK ALL THEIR CELL PHONES, KEPT THE GOOD ONES AND THE OTHERS THEY DESTROYED.”**

**Date and time:** July 15, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Nijemci, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.145403403868244, 19.03003692626953

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 31 person(s), age: unknown , from: unknown

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** insulting, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 7 policemen, 1 policewoman (among them 6 policemen of the Croatian border police)

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown  
**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

31 people, 20 of them minors, were found by the police, next to a river in Croatia. They were forced to sit on the ground, and one by one they were ordered to stand up. Eight police officers came, six of whom were border police, were there with a white van and a police car. They asked if anyone spoke English and said to them in Croatian "son of a bitch". The group of people tried to cover themselves with jackets. They broke the glasses of one person, took all their cell phones, kept the good ones and the others they destroyed.

13/07/2017

## "THEY KICKED HIM IN THE STOMACH AND SHOUTED AT HIM 'GO BACK TO SERBIA'"

**Date and time:** July 13, 2017 02:00  
**Location:** Lipovac, Croatia  
**Coordinates:** 45.0480573, 19.098272299999962  
**Pushback from:** Croatia  
**Pushback to:** Serbia  
**Demographics:** 2 person(s), age: unknown , from: Pakistan  
**Minors involved?** Unknown  
**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking  
**Police involved:** 5 policemen from Croatia  
**Taken to a police station?:** unknown  
**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown  
**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

Two men from Pakistan crossed the border, hiding in the container of a truck. They were caught at a police control post near Lipovac. There were two Croatian police officers in uniforms, who removed them from the truck, then three more officers arrived. They beat the interviewee, and punched him in the mouth, causing a broken lip, kicked him in the stomach and shouted at him "Go back to Serbia". His friend was not beaten up.

12/07/2017

## “ONE BY ONE THEY WERE ORDERED OUT OF THE CAR AND BEATEN WITH POLICE BATONS”

**Date and time:** July 12, 2017 00:00

**Location:** Križ, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.806395760279, 18.907028763281

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: unknown , from: North Africa

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other)

**Police involved:** 4 or 5 policemen; only 2 took part in beating

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** No

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### ORIGINAL REPORT

On July 12th, 2017, five people from North Africa were beaten up by the Croatian police. The police found them in a small city close to Zagreb. There were four or five police officers, they asked them where they were from, how old they were and their names. They drove them to the northern border in a blue police van without windows. They stopped in the forest close to Sombor. At this time there were only two border police officers. One by one the people on the move were ordered out of the car and beaten with police batons.

07/07/2017

## “THE POLICE OFFICERS BEAT HIS KNEE AND BUSTED HIS KNEECAP, WHICH WAS SWOLLEN AND HE WAS UNABLE TO WALK. ”

**Date and time:** July 7, 2017 02:00

**Location:** Vukovar, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.151385390399, 19.169248549414

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 1 person(s), age: unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** No

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking

**Police involved:** 2 policemen from Croatia (in uniform)  
**Taken to a police station?:** no  
**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown  
**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On July 7th, 2017, an Algerian man was apprehended by police officers close to the Croatian town of Vukovar. The interviewee met the Algerian 4 hours before he was apprehended, and describes him as being drunk and drugged.

Two Croatian policemen in uniform found him, and took him by police car, to the Serbian border, 3 km away from the Šid train station. There, the police officers took him out of the car, asked him where he came from and proceeded to beat him up using kicking and police batons. The Algerian man was laying on the ground during the beating. As a result he got extensive hematomas on his back with two marks from the police batons. The police officers also beat his knee and busted his kneecap, which was swollen and he was unable to walk.

04/07/2017

## “EACH PERSON WAS PLACED IN THE MIDDLE AND BEATEN BY SEVEN POLICE OFFICERS”

**Date and time:** July 4, 2017 11:30  
**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia  
**Coordinates:** 45.156651353758, 19.176238392773  
**Pushback from:** Croatia  
**Pushback to:** Serbia  
**Demographics:** 9 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Algeria  
**Minors involved?** Yes  
**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), reckless driving  
**Police involved:** 7 policemen (Croatian border police)  
**Taken to a police station?:** unknown  
**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**  
**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown  
**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On July 4th, 2017, four Algerians, one underage Afghan and four Pakistanis were apprehended at 11.30am, at the Croatian border at Tovarnik. The 9 people were hiding in a train. There were seven police officers, all from the Croatian border police in blue uniforms. One of the police officers had a star on the shoulder and a “V” underneath it.

The 9 people were ordered into a white van and were driven back to the border. The police officer was driving very fast and applied sudden breaks in order to shock the group of 9 people. The 9 people were taken out of the car one by one. Each person was placed in the middle and beaten by seven police officers. Some police officers were using batons, some used tree-branches and some used their fists. When people fell down from the beatings, the police officers would pull them up and continue the beating. The police officers only asked for people's nationalities.

**11/06/2017**

## **“THREE PEOPLE, INCLUDING TWO MINORS, WERE HIT ON THE BACK OF THE HEAD NUMEROUS TIMES WITH THE BACK OF A LARGE GUN”**

**Date and time:** June 11, 2017 10:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.157008, 19.171075

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: unknown , from: Algeria

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings, hit in the head with the back of a large gun

**Police involved:** 10 policemen, wore balaclavas

**Taken to a police station?:** no

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On June 11th 2017, six men from Algeria (3 minors, 16 & 17 years old, and 3 adults) were in a train container heading to Slovenia when the train was intercepted by police at the Croatian customs in Tovarnik. There were 10 police officers present when the group was found inside the train. Three members of the Algerian group attempted to run and were individually tasered in the abdomen and buttocks.

The police forced the whole group to sit on the ground, while awaiting another police van, which transported them to an electricity building. While waiting, they asked the group for documents and the group said they had none. They were asked where they were going and they answered Slovenia. The response from the police was that Slovenia was closed and that they must go back. The group told the police that they were not refugees but migrants. Two vans took the group to the building, one van for the 10 policemen and one for the Algerians.

Upon arrival the police, now all wearing balaclavas to disguise their faces, took each person out of the van, and one by one started beating them. First, they shined lights in their eyes and four

policemen attacked each person, starting with punches to the face (police wearing combat gloves). Then batons were used to beat the persons repeatedly in the torso, head and legs. The police had metal toe caps on their boots and they kicked people repeatedly on the floor. Some people lost consciousness.

Three people, including two minors, were hit on the back of the head numerous times with the back of a large gun. The police took all valuable items from the group including mobile phones and considerable quantities of money (300, 500, 700 Euro from 3 members of the group). Afterwards the group was told to go back to Serbia and they did so independently.

**07/06/2017**

## **“THEY THREW HIM AROUND BETWEEN THE POLICE OFFICERS AND KICKED AND PUNCHED HIM WITH HANDS AND FEET”**

**Date and time:** June 7, 2017 16:15

**Location:** Šapjane (close to Slovenian border), Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.519211820425, 19.085005075

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 5 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking

**Police involved:** 15 policemen from Croatia, all in uniform, 3 wearing balaclavas

**Taken to a police station?:** yes

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:** photos taken

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On June 7th 2017, 5 people from Afghanistan, 4 of them minors, were caught in Sapjane, a Croatian village close to the border with Slovenia. They were in a train container from Šid. The police found them at a border control, and they took 3 of them out and started beating them. The 2 others saw this and tried to run away, but they were caught and the police put hand cuffs on them. There were about 15 policemen, 3 of them were wearing balaclavas, the masked police officers were the ones who were doing the beating.

All were Croatian police and wearing uniforms. They asked who spoke English and when one person told them that they spoke a little English, the police started beating him up first. The interviewee describes that the police ‘played football with him’, they threw him around between the police officers and kicked and punched him with hands and feet. The police also beat him with full water bottles. Another person asked if he could go to the toilet and the police started to beat him and told him to shut up.

Afterwards, they were taken to a police station, where the police took pictures of them and told them that they would be sent to prison for 7 days. The interviewee describes that the 5 Afghans started to beat their heads against the wall in order to avoid being sent to prison. Subsequently they were pushed-back to Serbia, without being sent to jail. When they got out of the police van at the Serbian border, the police beat them further and then let them go.

**02/06/2017**

## **“THE POLICE HIT HIM ON HIS SHOULDERS, BACK AND HEAD, CAUSING PAIN ON HIS LEFT EAR AND LOSS OF HEARING.”**

**Date and time:** June 2, 2017 00:00

**Location:** A village 30km from the border, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.26441621456382, 18.809967041015625

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 10 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Yes

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking, destruction of personal belongings, theft of personal belongings

**Police involved:** 10 police officers (8 with uniforms, 2 in plain clothes)

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** No

**Reported by:** Rigardu

### **ORIGINAL REPORT**

On June 2nd 2017, 10 people from Afghanistan, three of them minors, were caught in a village in Croatia, 30km from the border. When two police officers found them on the road, the 10 people on the move attempted to run away. The police increased its forces, as three more police cars with eight police officers arrived. 10 police officers in total, 8 were wearing uniform, 2 were without uniform but arrived in police cars as well.

The police beat the 10 people on the move, in the Croatian village and not at the border, using fists, feet and police batons. The police beat everyone in the group, asking them: “Where are you from? Who speaks English? Who wants asylum?” Nobody answered. They took the mobile phones and checked them. Two of the 10 people on the move had messages in English on their phones. The police destroyed these phones and threw them away.

After the beatings, the group of 10 people were ordered in to a van with no police sign on it. They drove them to the border and let them out. There was no Serbian police at the border. The group included a 17 year old boy. The police hit him on his shoulders, back and head, causing pain on his left ear and loss of hearing.

31/05/2017

**“WHEN THEY REACHED THE BORDER, THE CROATIAN BORDER POLICE BEAT THEM UP, ONE BY ONE.”**

**Date and time:** May 31, 2017 15:00

**Location:** Croatia, close to the Serbian border near Šid

**Coordinates:** 45.15412006008228, 19.205474853515625

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking

**Police involved:** 2 policemen from Croatia

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:**

**Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown

**Reported by:** Rigardu

## ORIGINAL REPORT

On May 31st, 2017 at around 3pm, four Afghan people on the move were caught by 2 Croatian police officers next to the railway. They were forced into a white van with no police signs or letters on it, but the police officers were wearing uniforms. When they reached the border, the Croatian border police beat them up, one by one, using hands, fists and feet.

31/05/2017

**“THEY DROVE THEM TO THE BORDER, TOOK THEM OUT ONE BY ONE, AND BEAT THEM WITH HANDS, FEET AND WOODEN STICKS”**

**Date and time:** May 31, 2017 05:00

**Location:** Tovarnik, Croatia

**Coordinates:** 45.1555727428423, 19.174575805664062

**Pushback from:** Croatia

**Pushback to:** Serbia

**Demographics:** 4 person(s), age: unknown , from: unknown

**Minors involved?** Unknown

**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking

**Police involved:** 5 policemen in uniforms

**Taken to a police station?:** unknown

**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:****Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Unknown**Reported by:** Rigardu**ORIGINAL REPORT**

On May 31st, 2017 a group of 4 people on the move from North Africa were beaten up by the Croatian police at around 5 a.m. The Croatian police found them at the border next to the train tracks just 200m into the Croatian side. The police were there with two cars, a small police car (Chevrolet) and a blue prison van. Before the group of 4 people where ordered into the car, one police officer slapped one of them in the face. There were 5 policemen in uniform. They drove them to the border, took them out one by one, and beat them with hands, feet and wooden sticks. The process took around 15 minutes, during this time there was no Serbian police present.

**31/05/2017****“WE TRIED TO ASK FOR ASYLUM, BUT THE POLICE DID NOT ALLOW US TO TALK”****Date and time:** May 31, 2017 03:00**Location:** Serbian-Croatian border near Šid-Tovarnik, Croatia**Coordinates:** 45.132083, 19.129111**Pushback from:** Croatia**Pushback to:** Serbia**Demographics:** 21 person(s), age: unknown , from: Afghanistan**Minors involved?** Yes**Violence used:** beating (with batons/hands/other), kicking**Police involved:** 15 policemen from Croatia, most in green uniform, 2 in black**Taken to a police station?:** unknown**Treatment at police station or other place of detention:****Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?:** Yes**Reported by:** Soul Welders**ORIGINAL REPORT**

On May 31st. 2017, around 21 people on the move attempted to cross the border to Croatia. The Interviewee who is from Afghanistan was hiding in a container along with 20 other Afghan men, including 5 underage boys. The Interviewee describes all 21 people being beaten badly.

The container was in the back of a train and the group of 21 people were all trying to be very quiet as it crossed over the border between Serbia and Croatia, so that the police wouldn't catch them. But at around 3am they were discovered. The police opened the container, when the train was in the first village in Croatia, crossing over from Šid. There were 15 police officers, most of them wearing a green uniform, and two were in black uniforms. The interviewee states

that the police officers were Croatian. The Interviewee states that they tried to ask for asylum but the police did not allow the group of 21 people to talk.

The police ordered them into a big van with no windows and a camera inside, and drove them back to Šid, Serbia. It was dark, about 4am when the police took them out of the van one by one. They could not see what was happening to the other people in the group, because they were locked in the van. The police still didn't allow them to talk and were shouting at them in Croatian. The police spent about ten minutes beating each person or child, and the interviewee describes that they were hurt very badly, including the children.

*"They used me like a football. Fists, booted feet, all over my body. They hit my face with a police baton and I couldn't see with my eye. They beat everyone like this. After each man had been beaten [us] they made us run away back to the forrest."*

# VIOLENCE AT THE BORDER: A MEDICAL PERSPECTIVE

A substantiated look at pushbacks and other rights violations at the borders through a medical lens contributes to the analysis of violence that is often coupled with these acts. BVMN's external partner Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) provides urgent medical and mental health assistance to victims of such violence. In conjunction with their role providing emergency humanitarian relief, they collate comprehensive medical documentation of the physical and mental repercussions of the European border regime. MSF has published several comprehensive reports [1][2] which assesses indiscriminate violence and the prevalence of pushbacks at the border. It is important to note that, in first hand-testimonies taken from patients, respondents substantially allege that State authorities are responsible for their abuse.

Specifically, at the borders of Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina [3] between 2016 and 2020, 940 medical consultations related to physical trauma and wounds were conducted by MSF; more than 60% of patients reported the alleged perpetrators as border authorities or police, including Bosnian, Serbian, Hungarian, Romanian, Macedonian and Croatian officials. These ranged from soft tissue injuries to open wounds, dog bites, and fractures, largely corroborating testimonials from the BVMN which describe acts of abuse that would result in such injuries.

The BVMN has reported on how torture and inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment has been ramped up this year in comparison with others (see 'Observed Forms of Torture'), with over a third of observed pushbacks involving minors. MSF substantiates these claims through their own data in a report regarding violence against unaccompanied children and young people at the border. [4]The report states that nearly 70% of children treated by MSF's mental health clinic in Serbia during the first six months of 2017 experienced direct violence. The majority (57%) had visible physical injuries, including cuts with razor blades and knives, severe beatings, food and water deprivation, or sensory deprivation. The youngest patient treated was just 12 years old. Most of the children treated by MSF reported state authorities as perpetrators (76%), of which majority (92%) were EU border forces: Bulgaria 48% (30), Hungary 27% (17) and Croatia 13% (8).

However the after-effects of systematised rights violations at European borders are not only physical; MSF regularly treats patients with anxiety, Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder and psychotic symptoms. In the wake of such reporting, MSF adds its voice to that of the Network to demand humane reception standards, access to healthcare, an immediate increase in monitoring and inquiry into allegations of cross-border violence, and into the denial of asylum and push-backs of migrants and asylum seekers by European Union Border Officials.

*Written by Hope Barker  
and Abby d'Arcy (BVMN)  
with information provided by Médecins Sans Frontières.*

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**1 Médecins Sans Frontières. (2017)** Serbia: Games of Violence. Available: <https://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/serbia-games-of-violence-3.10.17.pdf> [Accessed 04/12/2020].

**2 Médecins Sans Frontières. (2018).** Pushbacks, violence and inadequate conditions at the Balkan route's new frontier. Available: <https://www.msf.org/push-backs-violence-and-inadequate-conditions-balkan-route%E2%80%99s-new-frontier> [Accessed 05/12/2020].

**3 Médecins Sans Frontières. (2018).** Context Update; Bosnia and Herzegovina: Migrants face harsh conditions from dangerous winter to violence at the border violence, December 2018, Brussels; MSF (2020), Annual Review – Balkan Mission, Athens/ Brussels.

**4 Médecins Sans Frontières. (2017)** Unaccompanied Children and Young People Repeatedly Abused by EU Member State Authorities, <https://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/serbia-games-of-violence-3.10.17.pdf>, Belgrade/Brussels.

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**The Black Book of Pushbacks is dedicated to all victims of border violence, with a special thanks to those who chose to share their testimonies with us.**

