Notes

Methodology

The methodological process for these reports leverages the close social contact that we have as independent volunteers with refugees and migrants to monitor pushbacks from Croatia. When individuals return with significant injuries or stories of abuse, one of our violence reporting volunteers will sit down with the individuals to collect their testimonies. Although the testimony collection itself is typically with a group no larger than five persons, the pushback groups which they represent can be as large as 65 persons. We have a standardized framework for our interview structure which blends the collection of hard data (dates, geo-locations, officer descriptions, photos of injuries/medical reports, etc.) with open narratives of the abuse.

All names have been changed with respect to the anonymity of those who have been interviewed.

Terminology

The term pushback is a key component of the situation that unfolded along the EU borders (Hungary and Croatia) with Serbia in 2016, after the closure of the Balkan route. It now continues along the Croatian border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Push-back describes the informal expulsion (without due process) of those intending to seek asylum in EU territory, in contrast to a deportation. Push-backs have become an important, if unofficial, part of the migration regimes of EU countries.
An update on the situation in Velika Kladuša

**Miral Camp**

As of mid-January, the UNHCR estimates there are upwards of 5,000 refugees and migrants currently present in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Of this number, more than 500 likely reside in the IOM-run Miral camp outside of Velika Kladuša. In the last month, camp residents reported abuses of authority from the private security guards who monitor the camp. Rumors abound about whether or not the camp will become “closed” in the coming months. Moreover, confusion abounds about the official capacity of the camp.

Last month, the IOM invested in 40 converted shipping containers to provide extra accommodations for 200 people. There are three bunks beds per container, plugs and heater. Despite this, according to the information provided to a refugee who was refused entry to the camp in mid-January, Miral camp is at full capacity with 730 persons inside. In the last several weeks, new arrivals to the camp were required to go through a period of quarantine before being given access to the common sleeping areas. This quarantine area has capacity for approximately twenty persons inside and it is possible that the small quarantine capacity may be linked to these registration refusals.

Several individuals which had previously obtained registration cards for the camp were refused entrance after 11:00 pm, with the time being cited as the reason for denial. This sometimes-enforced-rule, like many others, has not been formally explained to camp residents. Similarly unexplained, is an apparent ban on residents filming their daily conditions within the camp. Several individuals have reported being reprimanded by private security guards for taking pictures of their breakfasts and for taking videos inside of the camp. While there are no restrictions on the use of cell phones within in the camp, it would appear that there are informal restrictions on using these cell phones in a “journalistic sense”.

A large security deployment was observed in the camp in mid-January. Upwards of fifty police officers from different departments were mobilized for this actions, with some wearing black uniforms and others dressed in green military fatigues. Some of the officers carried long rifles and others managed K9 units during their deployment within the camp. According to some camp residents, some drugs were found and various weapons were confiscated. The entirety of the camp present for this action was made to stand in a line and be frisked.

**Velika Kladuša**

An increase in the control and restriction over refugees and migrants has also been observed outside of Miral camp, in Velika Kladuša at large, over the past month. Several individuals have reported being transported to Miral while they were walking in the street within the city center during the evening. Others reports being taken to Miral in a similar manner in the morning. Once dropped off at Miral, they were free to continue moving unhindered, and many reported returning to the city after these exchanges.
Medical care

MSF ceased their operation within the Una-Sana Canton towards the end of January, handing off their project to the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) which now provides medical care to the residents of Miral camp. The DRC does not have any plans to provide medical assistance to those living outside of the camp in squats without registration. There are concerns that this has the potential to lead to a gap in medical assistance for individuals who may return pushed-back at the border and fail to access the camp due to its overcapacity.

Winter

Winter continues in northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nonetheless, the temperatures remained relatively warm for the first half of January. This resulted in a dynamic in which many groups left Velika Kladuša to attempt to cross through Croatia expecting warm temperatures, leaving many unprepared for the comparably colder temperatures in Croatia as well as the increased snowfall there. Many groups on “game” reported that the intentionally sought out the attention of authorities in an attempt to “self-deport” themselves. Nonetheless, many of the groups that intentionally sought out Croatian authorities in an attempt to return themselves to Bosnia and Herzegovina reported that they experienced violent pushbacks.

Status of solidarity work

The environment for independent solidarity organizations working to assist refugees and migrants in the Una-Sana Canton has continued to become more complicated in the past month. In particular, the operations of No Name Kitchen have been to a certain extent as a result of pressure exerted on the group from the cantonal authorities. In this period of increased friction between institutional actors and independent organizations, “going against the grain” of established assistance procedures has become a liability. This is particularly true for those seeking to provide assistance to those living outside of the system in squats or informal living arrangements.
Trends in border violence

This month we conducted fourteen violence reports with groups of individuals who were pushed-back to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ten of these groups were pushed-back directly from Croatia while four of the groups were initially apprehended in Slovenia. The individuals we conducted reports with consisted of a variety nationalities including Algeria, Syria, Darfur, Tunisia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The average push-back group size was around seven individuals.

Generally speaking, there has been less direct violence towards refugees and migrants observed along the Bosnian-Croatian border in the month of January in comparison to that which was witnessed in the summer or autumn. Specifically, the emotional nature of this violence, which one might describe as tactics of violence which incorporate prolonged violence, humiliation, or torture, has decreased. Push-backs in the month of January were typically carried quickly, with less people, in ways which left fewer physical marks of violence. While the manner in which violence is communicated onto the bodies of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants along the Croatian border has changed, it nevertheless continues to be structural. Rather than diminished violence, we should understand this shift as altered violence. Importantly, these tactics continue to serve the strategic purpose of enacting physical, emotional, and material costs on those attempting to transit towards the EU, with the intended effect to make continued transit attempts less appealing.

Croatian pushbacks around Velika Kladuša (BiH) have changed with the winter weather yet continue to incorporate strategic violence. For much of the summer and fall, it was common practice for Croatian police officers to take individuals one-at-a-time out vans and then force them to run through two parallels lines of police officers wearing headlamps and swinging batons. In comparison, during the winter months, pushbacks tactics have evolved to be carried out more quickly, with less police officers, while still enacting physical and material costs onto the pushed-back individuals. It has become common practice for an entire van to be cleared out at once, surrounded by a small contingent of police officers, and then corralled under the threat of police batons to run into bodies of near-freezing waterways along the border (see reports 1.3, 1.5, & 1.10). While there are smaller numbers of individuals returning with broken arms or with backs cross-stitched with the patterns of prolonged baton beatings, individuals are being regularly forced to walk between five and twenty kilometers from the border to the relative safety of Miral Camp in subzero temperatures with clothes soaked through with water. In this sense, the altered violence of the winter months utilizes the weather to communicate strategic, physical violence.

This winterized violence is not as visible as previous border violence yet still serves similar purposes. In addition to the physical trauma of forced water immersion, this push-back treatment enacts specific material costs onto the victims of border violence, making continued transit attempts harder. Whereas during the months of October and November the use of traps, such as tripwires or barricades, was a common feature associated with the Croatian pushback, this strategy has all but disappeared in the repertoire of violence used by Croatian authorities during the winter months. Rather, in the cold months of winter, the theft of winter clothing or shoes, the burning of sleeping bags, and the forced immersion of oneself into near-freezing water has become increasingly more
common (See reports 1.8, 2.1a, 2.1b). Sleeping bags, tents, coats, and shoes are necessities for transit during these months and one has to invest money or time in the re-procurement of these items before a new transit attempt. At the very least, they have to allow their soaked-through jacket the time to dry before attempting to cross again. This behavior follows a similar pattern to the procedural destruction and theft of mobile phones, money, and power banks which has persisted as an endemic characteristic of the Croatian push-back. In this way, the winter months have provided increased material costs for these authorities to target.

It is difficult to reliably identify the motivating factors for these changes. On the one hand, it is possible that this shift in tactics has been adopted in order to make push-backs less observable and therefore less risky. Given the strong surge of negative press coverage that Croatian pushbacks received in the autumn, it is possible that this is part of a strategic shift in tactics. On the other hand, one could also argue that the altered, more muted, nature of Croatian pushbacks in the winter months is a product of the weather. It is colder and there has been a blanket of snow on the ground for much of the past month and a half. One might point out that this makes it harder for large numbers of police officers to remain outside and move around effectively in the cold, and that this is why push-backs are being carried out in a manner which is quicker and conducted with less participants. Furthermore, less people are attempting transit in the winter months which makes it possible to infer that there are less police officers being delegated to conduct pushbacks on a nightly basis. The tactic of corralling a group of people to run into a freezing river under the threat of police baton is effective for the goals of these pushbacks and can be completed quickly.

While it remains difficult to identify the contributing factors to this shift push-back tactics, one can pragmatize that this altered violence continues to accomplish specific goals meant to further securitize the Croatian border from transit attempts. The enactment of physical and material violence onto the bodies of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants caught in Croatia and Slovenia serves to dissuade continued transit attempts. Although the manner in which this violence is accomplished has shifted, its rationalization and intention remains the same.
“Tunnel trick” method of push-back - previously used commonly

“Water trick” method of push-back - currently used commonly
Self-deportations

In the winter months, groups attempting to transit through Croatia and Slovenia are often ill-prepared for the cold weather conditions they encounter while walking for up to fifteen days through snow-covered forests. Sometimes, these groups “give up”. The hard conditions of the walking “game” prove challenging enough that groups sometimes purposefully alert authorities to their location in the hopes of being “rescued” (see Reports 1.5, 2.1b, & 2.2). We refer to this practice as “self-deportation”.

While the groups who opt to self-deport often declare their intention to apply for asylum in Croatia or Slovenia, they most often are returned back to BiH within the following twelve hours of alerting the authorities to their presence. Most self-deportation groups understand the likelihood of this outcome. Furthermore, most self-deportation groups understand the high probability of encountering violence from authorities during their eventual push-back to BiH. On the other hand, this underscores the adverse conditions that groups of people attempting to transit through Croatia and Slovenia are facing in these winter months. Groups are willing to purposefully expose themselves to police violence rather than continue on their journeys. On the other hand, the practice of self-deportation also highlights the predictability of the illegal practice of collective expulsions. Push-backs have become such a ubiquitous feature of transit attempts that, in practice, groups of people on the game utilize push-backs as a reliable, albeit dangerous, means of transport and return to BiH.

Slovenian translators

Groups of individuals returning to Velika Kladuša after being pushed-back from Slovenia routinely express frustration at their treatment by Slovenian translators. These frustrations are most regularly expressed at the way these translators conduct interviews without significant input from police officers and regularly delegitimize the lived experiences of asylum seekers fleeing conflict and trauma. Particularly notorious is a translator who is referred to informally by people-on-the-move as “the Palestinian” (see report 2.1a & 2.2). This individual has appeared in conservative Slovenian news media regularly over the years and is often described by these publications favorably, as a prime example of adopted nationhood and assimilation. The translator, who apparently lived for some time in Syria in the 1980s, is middle-aged and often wears sunglasses to his interviews. One individual described his interaction with the translator as follows:

“I see not like a translator, I see like a police. [He] asked me like police, not like a translator...He alone asked me.” [Report 2.1a]

Another expressed frustration at the erasure of his survival of conflict as a Syrian and described being asked by this individual:

“What is the problem in Syria? Syria is no problem” [Report 2.2]

The reports that this individual, as a civilian, routinely conducts translations with the demeanor of a state authority (adopting the responsibility of choosing which individuals are allowed to access asylum procedure in Slovenia) are worrying.
Report statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of reports</th>
<th># of persons concerned</th>
<th>Average group size</th>
<th># pushed back from Croatia</th>
<th># pushed back from Slovenia</th>
<th># pushed back from Italy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>38 (83%)</td>
<td>8 (17%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>119 (77%)</td>
<td>36 (23%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>172 (66%)</td>
<td>88 (34%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>182 (86%)</td>
<td>30 (14%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>211 (70%)</td>
<td>75 (25%)</td>
<td>15 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>237 (95%)</td>
<td>13 (5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>175 (93%)</td>
<td>13 (7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>63 (69%)</td>
<td>28 (31%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>1503</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>1197 (80%)</td>
<td>291 (20%)</td>
<td>15 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistics on the last eight months of reports from Velika Kladuša

The 162 reports written and published from June 2018 to January 2019 concerned 1503 persons pushed back from Croatia, Slovenia or Italy. A majority of the reported pushbacks had initially been apprehended in Croatia with a quantity of approximately 1197 persons compared to approximately 291 from Slovenia. Reported push-backs from Italy to Velika Kladuša were exceedingly rare.¹

It is important to understand the limit of this information. While these reports are conducting with individuals who return from the border with stories of abuse or violence, it would be misleading to say that the participants are selected at random. Rather, there are a variety of factors which might influence the conduction of a violence report, the most prominent being that these reports often target the most violent cases of border violence. To this end, despite our efforts to engage with the population of pushed-back individuals as evenly as possible, there are no methodological mechanisms in place to ensure that these participants are “randomly” selected. Rather than being viewed as hard data on the total group’s pushed-back from Croatia or Slovenia, these numbers should be taken for what they are, namely statistics on reported push-backs. There is no way to effectively say what percentage of total push-backs these numbers represent however it is safe to say that these reports only cover a fraction.

¹ The only report involving a push-back from Italy occurred along the Italian border where an Italian police team called the Slovenian police to take them in charge [October - report n°25].
REPORTS OF GROUPS APPREHENDED IN CROATIA

10 reports
[Report 1.1]
1 interviewee - Algeria - Group of 7
Unrecorded interview on 11.01.2018 in Velika Kladuša

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK – PHYSICAL VIOLENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was apprehended and pushed-back in a rural area along the Bosnian-Croatian border close to Bihać (BiH), on the Croatian side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims</td>
<td>Number of victims: 7 Interview conducted in French Country of origin: Algeria Age: 28 No minors involved: no Sex: Males Number of “games”: 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date and time</td>
<td>The group left on 08.01.2019 at approximately 3:00 am and got caught a bit after the border crossing and pushed the group back directly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Paper signed: No Fingerprint taken: No Pictures taken: No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The group left from Bihać (BiH) on the 8th of January, arriving at the border at approximately 3:00 am. A few meters after crossing, they were walked up a small path on a hill. There was a curve where they continued walking, but then, they were ambushed by several police officers.

“It was all night, all black”, “They have night visions binoculars”

Three persons were in front of the group, two persons were on each side and three other persons came behind them. In total, they got surrounded by ten policemen. They wore black uniform and ski-masks.

“At the turn on their flashlights, and fired once in the air”

All of the group-members then knelted. After this, the police officers forced them to take out their bags and phones. Once they gave everything to the officers, the ten police officers began to hit the group:

“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 on our neck. Normally they can not beat us in this position”
After they were asked where they come from, they responded that they were from some other Arab countries.

While they were beaten with sticks and fist, the interviewee showed how he tried to protect himself with his hand

“*The face, they beat me on my face, everywhere on my face*”

They managed to run away, and went back to Bihać on foot, then to Velika Kladuša (BiH) by bus. The respondent tried to sleep the next night, but the pain proved too difficult to make this possible. He went at approximately 2:30 am to the hospital in Velika Kladuša. The first doctor he saw refused to provide any health care however a second one approached him and offered to take a look at his injury, but secretly. He thought that one of the thumb bones was broken and made a bandage to him but did not suggest him to come back later in the morning, for X-Ray to confirm his diagnostic. He provided him three painkillers for the night and the next day.

“After they beat us properly, my phone and 110€ they stole. As usual”, “when they break phones, they give it back directly but at this time, they put it in their pocket”

In total, the perpetrators stole at least 1100€, five phones and four power banks.
1 interviewee - Syria - Group of 12
Unrecorded interview on 13.01.2018 in Velika Kladuša

Type of incident | PUSH-BACK – PHYSICAL VIOLENCE – SEXUAL HARASSMENT
---|---
Location | 1 kilometer away from Slunj (HR) on the road 1, they got driven to Slunj police station. They were pushed-back at Crni Potok (HR) Velika Kladuša (BiH) border
Victimes | Number of victims: 12
Interview conducted in arabic with French translator
Country of origin: Syria
Age: 19
No minors involved: no
Sex: 11 men, including the interviewee, a woman
Number of “games”: 2
Date and time | The group left on the 10/01/19 at 10:30am, they walked for 11 hours. They were apprehended on the same day at 9.30, were brought to the police station, where stayed 1:30, two hours.
Details | Paper signed: No
Fingerprint taken: No
Pictures taken: No

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

The group left Bosnia and Herzegovina on the 10th January. They walked through the trails which led through a forest ways during which time the temperature was approximately -7°C. As a result, the water they were carrying froze. As a result of these adverse conditions, the respondent described that:

“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”

The group was apprehended by two policemen who were driving a car. Shortly after, another car and a van arrived. The van was white and had no windows in the back. The officers present demanded that the group hand over the belongings in a manner which was described as aggressive. Twelve phones were taken from the group at this point as well as their power banks, headphones, chargers and money which they never received back.

They were then driven to a police station which the respondent described as being in Slunj, several kilometres away from the place in which they were apprehended.

There, one of the policemen told them “If you are nice, we will be nice”. Nonetheless, the respondent reported that:
“Some were beaten, some were not, at the police station. They humiliated us, they were treated with humiliation”

At the station, the group-members were brought out of the van by small group, one-by-one, two-by-two, and a maximum of three-by-three. They went into the yard of the police station and were frisked again. As the frisked the female group-member, they found a phone which she had hidden as she was searched the first time:

“I’ve a question, is it normal that a man frisked 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]”

They were taken out of the van to be frisked and were then returned to the inside of the van. They stayed approximately one hour at the police station.

“The driver drove as a reckless driver, he did it on purpose. Driven from the left to the right. Four people threw up”

While as they drove back, the group in the van decided to run out of the van all in the same time when they would open the doors. They arrived at the border an hour and a half later. Some people managed to run away, some got beaten.

“They deport us to a place where it was a small river, they push us into it by force”

The driver parked the van approximately 150 meters away from this river on a small off road near a forest. The policemen corralled the group to run into this river by encircling them. The interviewee said that the water level came until his breast.

“they [policemen] were a lot, more than twelve. I don’t know how much, but they were all wearing ski-mask, it’s 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.

“They act with us like animals”
[Report 1.3]  
3 interviewees - Syria - Group of 13  
Recorded interview on 13.1.2019 in Velika Kladuša

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - DEPORTATION - ROBBED – DENIED OF ASYLUM - FORCED TO UNDRESS - DESTRUCTION OF LEGAL PAPERS - FORCED INTO WATER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was apprehended in Croatia close to the Slovenian border, outside of Rijeka (HR). They were later brought to the police station in Rijeka (HR) and held in a van for a period of six hours before being brought back to a secluded section of the Bosnian-Croatian border, close to the Maljevac border checkpoint (HR).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victims          | Number of victims: 13  
Interview conduct in English  
Country of origin: Syria, Morocco, Algeria  
Minors involved: None  
Sex: Males |
| Date and time    | The group left from Bihać (BiH) on the night of 02/01/19 and walked for a period of eight days before being stopped in Croatia close to the Slovenian border. On 10/01/19, they were apprehended by Croatian police officers at approximately 10:00 am. From there, the group was driven one hour to a police station in Rijeka where they were processed and later kept in a van for a period of six hours. From there, the group was driven back to the Bosnian-Croatian border and pushed back at approximately 10:30 pm. |
| Details          | Expressed intention to seek asylum in the country: Yes  
Denied access to asylum procedures: Yes  
Paper signed: Yes  
Fingerprints taken: No  
Picture taken: Yes |

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The group of thirteen men from Syria, Morocco, and Algeria, set out from Bihać (BiH) on January 2nd and crossed the border into Croatia. From there, they walked for three days in the mountains and were “severely constrained by the cold and snow”. After passing through the mountains, the group continued walking for five more days. The group reported that they were poorly equipped for the weather and that they ran out of food and water quickly.

“We could not eat because we could not carry food for ten days”

One of the respondents observed that they had resorted to eating snow to hydrate themselves.

“We would melt the snow to drink the water.”
Another described sharing one packet of ramen between him and four other of his group-members. They described that almost all of their shoes and socks were soaked through with water by the eighth day of their journey. As they neared the Slovenian border, their ordeal became complicated by the presence of a large amount of Croatian authorities in the forest they were moving through:

“There were a lot of police on the road and we wait and sat to wait for the police to go to complete the road and it took us a long time this and there is difficulty to sit and difficulty sleeping from the severity of the cold”

Finally, on the eighth day of their journey, at around 10:30 pm the group was apprehended by a group of three Croatian authorities which the group referred to as “army soldiers” due to the uniforms which were described as olive green fatigues. They reported that the officers carried long rifles which were similar in appearance to M-16s. The respondents described that the officers who initially stopped them were amiable and did not treat them unfairly.

Shortly after being apprehended, they were loaded into a white van and driven approximately an hour to a police station in Rijeka (HR). The respondents reported that there was a drastic change in the way that they were treated by the police officers in the station, compared to the “army soldiers”. To this end, the group described being physically harmed by the police officers they encountered in the police station in Rijeka and furthermore described being detained for a long period of time inside of 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 dressed in army gear, several group members expressed their intention to claim asylum in Croatia. The “army” officers explained to them that they would be able to request asylum. Nonetheless, upon reaching the police station in Rijeka, each group member had their asylum requests either ignored or denied. Four of the members of the group from Syria expressed their intention to claim asylum in Croatia, they were told by the officers at the police station that “You need a passport to prove you are from Syria”. They others, who were from North African countries, were told by the officers that there was no opportunity for them to claim asylum in Croatia.

While at the police station, the group described having their pictures taken individually and having to sign document in a language they did not understand. When one of the respondents resisted the demand to sign this document, he described 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 described leaving in a van for the Bosnian border at approximately 5:00 pm. They arrived to a secluded section of the Bosnian-Croatian border close to Maljevac (HR) at approximately 8:00 pm. There, the described a six police officers in black ski masks waiting for them. The respondents then described being taken out of their police van one-at-a-time at which point they were corralled through two parallel lines of police officers who hit them with batons at they moved
through. One of the respondents described being hit on the head by a baton as it was his turn to move. After the individuals moved through the initial lines of police officers, they would be pushed to move closer and closer to a body of water which marked the separation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. When they reached this body of water, they described being pushed by a police officer into the cold water which rose up to their waist.

**LOCATIONS**

Approximate location of the group’s capture by Croatian authorities [Zoom out & in]
The approximate area in Svinica Krstinjska (HR) where the group described being pushed-back.

[Zoom out & in]
[Report 1.4]

2 interviewees - Tunisia
Recorded interview on 19.01.2019 in Velika Kladuša

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - DENIAL OF ASYLUM - DETENTION - PHYSICAL VIOLENCE - VERBAL THREATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The members of the group got caught at Zagreb (Hr) bus station and were kept in a unknown police station and brought to an unknown prison at an unknown city in Croatia. They were transferred from Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina in an official check-point. Then they were brought back to Sarajevo (BiH).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victims          | Number of victims: 2  
Interview conducted in French  
Nation of origin: Tunisia  
Sex: Males  
Age: The group members were aged between 19 - 24-years-old  
Minors involved : None |
| Date and time    | The two men were initially apprehended in mid-November stayed 3 days in a police station before being transferred to a prison where they spent exactly one month and 24 days. They were released from this prison around the 12/1/19 |
| Details          | Denied request for asylum: No  
Papers signed: No  
Fingerprints: No  
Translator present: Yes - Syrian |

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The respondent and his brother left from Bosnia and Herzegovina with the intention of taking a bus in Croatia. When they arrived at the bus station in Zagreb, three police officers approached them and gently asked them to follow them towards a van. They were told they would be arrested. The two brothers followed them.

"In front of everyone they [the three policemen] were nice, but when we arrived at the van, oh, oh they changed"

At the police van, they opened the door and a man was waiting inside wearing a ski-mask.

"At the boot of the van, he sat on a seat, when I get in, he tells me to come here, in Croatian, I don’t understand. After I try to catch his baton, because he beat us to much with my brother
and he is small. When I catch it, he put us handcuffs and he beat again [...] The handcuffs in our back, he beat us until the police station.”

The two men stayed three days at the police station, in a place which they could not locate.

“He takes you to an office, beat, beat and they go to cell, after another person come, after “sign!” after beat, beat, beat, after go 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, they refused to sign papers which were put in front of them. A translator was present during this time, but did not translate the paper they were asked to sign.

“We don’t sign, because we don’t understand nothing on the paper. He [the policeman] demand 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 « Inch’allah » or « allah alhamdulillah », but he doesn’t speak in Arabic. He didn’t have hair, a big beard. He is about 45/50 years old. I saw him only the first days, when we are taken with my brother but in jail, I don’t see anyone, just policemen.”

The two men had a picture taken of them. Additionally, their fingerprint were attempted to be taken and put on paper, however they resisted to give them 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, look 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, they were transferred to a prison described as a big jail, with many different blocs. In their section, there were six rooms of 35 to 55 persons sleeping in it. The room contained a sink and bunk beds of three levels.

Every day they could go out of this room for half an hour, with two other rooms. They had to used this time 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. The respondent declared that there was enough toilets and showers for everyone in this short time. The persons from three rooms were going outside at the same time, followed by the group of three other rooms.

They asked for a lawyer, but they never received an answer to this request:

“There is no one to answer our question, I spoke English, French, Arabic, nothing, [the policemen speak] just Croatian language.”
They stayed exactly one month and 24 days in the prison. The day before they were released, a policewoman who had previously treated them well alerted them that they would be released the day after, at around noon. She gave them back their belonging, as well as their phones and chargers, however not their money. Almost 300€ in total was taken.

The day they were released, they were taken to a black van, similar in make to a Volkswagen transporter without seats in the back. The respondents were wearing handcuffs. They were driven to an official check point on the Croatian-Bosnian border. In this black van, there were two persons in the front: the driver, who wore plain clothes, and one of the officers from the prison.

They changed the vehicle they were in at a place described as a checkpoint

“In front of everyone, there is some policemen, some people, cars, there is some bus at the border, it looks like a border checkpoint”

The prison officer spoke for a bit, around ten minutes, with the Bosnian police officers. The Croatian driver stayed in the van with the two respondents, and later took off their handcuffs. After this, they went into a police car, which was perhaps a Dacia Doster with police insignias on the side. They didn’t have battery on their phone, which made their orientation of time difficult. They did not know the place they were and the time of the journey.

They were brought to Sarajevo, in front of the camp, where they were told “here is the camp, go”. They described having no access to any lawyers or legal processes while they were in jail and when they went out.
[ILLEGAL PUSH-BACKS AND BORDER VIOLENCE REPORTS]  January, 2019

[Report 1.5]  
1 interviewee - Afghanistan - Group of 7  
Recorded interview on 19.1.2019 in Velika Kladuša

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - ROBBED - FORCED INTO WATER - PHYSICAL VIOLENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was apprehended in the Croatian interior. They were later brought to a police station in and held in a van for a period of several hours before being brought back to a secluded section of the Bosnian-Croatian border, close to the Maljevac (HR) border checkpoint.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victims          | Number of victims: 7  
Country of origin: Afghanistan  
Minors involved: None  
Sex: Males |
| Date and time    | The group left from Velika Kladuša in the second week of January. They were later apprehended and returned to the Bosnian border on the same day in the third week of January. |
| Details          | Expressed intention to seek asylum in the country: No  
Paper signed: No  
Fingerprints taken: No  
Picture taken: No |

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

The group of seven people left from Velika Kladuša (BiH) on the 13th of December. Most (5) of the group was from from Afghanistan however there were also several members from Morocco. As they walked through Croatia, the group encountered a large amount of snow, hindering their progress significantly. They had enough food, walking through the forest, however the snow remained a persistent problem for them. On the 5th day of walking, the group made the decision to enter a nearby town in the hopes of finding police officers who might bring them back to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The group of boys were very cold, all their clothes and sleeping bags were wet. In the town, one of the group-members approached a Croatian man who was washing a car and attempted to speak to him in English, asking him to call the police. The man told the group-member to “Go, go”.

The others group-members had stayed waiting outside of the town during this interaction, but after this, the whole group went to a café together and told to the people there to call the police. After 20 minutes, four police officers arrived in a large Nissan car. The officers exited the car and told the group to stay there. Three police officers approached the group asked them if they had any knives or guns and checked their things. The other officer stayed in the car. The officers took the respondent’s phone and told him that they would give it back later. They brought water and cigarettes for the group-members.
The respondent described the officers as “good people”. The respondent asked these officers:

“Do you have here the possibility to apply here for asylum in Croatia or not?”

They answered:

“Yes but not here, you can ask in the police station.”

After around an hour and a half, a large van arrived. The group was loaded into the van and taken to a small police station. The drive took around one hour and the van drove at a low speed, somewhere between 40 and 50 km/hr. When they arrived to the station, they again had all of their items checked and searched. They also took pictures of the group-members at one point, on a smartphone.

There were five police officers in the station. One of them was a female who wore her long, dark brown hair in a ponytail. She was tall, was around thirty years old, and had a strong body. The officers in the police station were different than the officers who initially apprehended the group.

The respondent described the officers in the police station in a more negative way. The officers there took his power bank, which he described as “good and expensive”. The officers looked at the serial number and commented amongst each other that it was a good device. One of the officers told the others:

“Give me, i want it”

The respondent described that he can understand the Croatian language well enough, since he has spent several months in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They only took the respondent’s power bank, not the others from the group.

Although the respondent had intended to ask the officers in the police station about asylum, as per the initial officers’ advice, he did not trust the officers and did not ask again.

“When they talked with me, they do not do with respect, they did not respect me”.

They did not leave the van when they were at the police station. They were locked inside, without windows, for a period of approximately one hour, between 8:00 and 9:00 pm.

At approximately 9:00 pm, the group began to be driven back to the Bosnian border. The car drove very fast for a period of approximately two and a half hour.

When the group arrived at the border, they encountered two officers who wore black ski masks on their faces and carried batons. Additionally, there was one officer who did not wear a mask. This officer with no mask had short hair, a shaved face, and was aged around 30 or 35-years-old. All of the officers were described as wearing dark blue uniforms.

The group was instructed to leave the van at the same time and told:

“Go Bosnia!”

The officer who did not wear a mask pointed to the guys where the border was.
The two masked officers attempted to beat the respondent with their batons at this point, however as one of the officers brought his baton down to strike him, he grabbed the officers hand and pushed him. This officer got angry and in response he attempted to strike him again. At this point, the respondent ran away towards the border. The van was very near to the real border, approximately 30 meter away. Nonetheless, one of the group-members, a Moroccan aged around 45 or 50 years, was taken by one of the masked policemen and was beaten, being struck multiple times on his back by a police baton.

When they were being corralled into Bosnia and Herzegovina, there was a body of water marking the border. As the group was fleeing from the officers’ batons, they fell into the water which reached up to their waists.

After he had crossed into Bosnia and Herzegovina, the respondent looked around to see his Moroccan friend being beaten by the police, which made him angry. He told them from the Bosnian side of the border that what they were doing is not good. After this, the police officers through the man into the water.

After they group was all on the Bosnian side of the border, they tried to walk back to Velika Kladuša. When arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina, they did not know where they are. They knocked the door of a house and the homeowners told them to walk three kilometers in a certain direction. It was around 1:00 am at this point.

The respondent never received his phone or power bank back from the police officers.
## [Report 1.6]

1 interviewee - Iraq - Group of 3  
**Recorded interview on 22.01.2019 in Velika Kladuša**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - ROBBED - THREATENED WITH A FIREARM - PHYSICAL VIOLENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was apprehended in the Croatian interior close to the town of Glina (HR). They were brought directly back to a secluded stretch of the Bosnian-Croatian border outside of Velika Kladuša (BiH) and pushed back.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victims          | Number of victims: 3  
Country of origin: Iraq  
Minors involved: Yes, the respondent was 15-years-old  
Sex: Males  
Games tried: 9 |
| Date and time    | The group was caught by Croatian police at approximately 1:00 am on 21/1/19 and returned to the Bosnian-Croatian border at around 2:30 am the same morning. |
| Details          | Expressed intention to seek asylum in the country: No  
Paper signed: No  
Fingerprints taken: No  
Picture taken: No |

### DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

The group of three left from Bosnia and Herzegovina on the night of January 20th, at 6:00 pm, and crossed into Croatia with the intention of continuing to Glina (HR) and taking a bus:

> “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 the group’s shins. After walking several hours in the forest, the respondent described seeing a police patrol moving around:

> “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 onto the road they had been travelling on and continued. Shortly thereafter, the group came upon what was described as a “police camp” at approximately 1:00 am. The respondent reported that at this site, there were police were camped out in tents, waiting for people to go by:

> “They had their own tents, waiting for whoever comes around”
The respondent had been at the head of the group and he described that perhaps he was walking to fast at this point which put some distance in between him and his other group-members. They passed through the tent and the police heard the footsteps of the other group-members. Two police officers exited their tents and with their guns drawn they told the group to stop.

One of the officers kicked the respondent in the face during this exchange. The officer told the respondent to “Stop”. When the police officers told them not to move, they froze. The respondent laid down in the snow, at which point the officer approached him and kicked him in the face. The officer put his shoe on the face of the respondent, crouched down to him, cocked his gun, and place it on his right temple. The police officer who put his gun to the respondent’s head was described as being heavyset, perhaps 32-years-old, with a head of hair which was shaved on the sides and short on the top. He wore a dark blue uniform, was clean shaven, and stood at approximately 180 cm.

The respondent, a fifteen-year-old boy originally from Iraq, reported 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.”

The police officers searched through his phone and saw that the respondent had GPS data pulled up. After this, they searched through his belongings. The respondent did not ask for asylum in Croatia because the police officers:

“Never gave us the chance to ask for azyl...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, shortly after they were caught, in a van. There were three police officers in this vehicle Shortly thereafter, another van arrived which carried only one police officer.

The respondent and his group-members were made to enter the second van, which then took them back to the Bosnian-Croatian border at approximately 2:30 am. It took the group around 30 minutes to drive back to their pushback site. When they arrived back to the border, there was one car which was waiting for the group which had two police officers inside. They also wore dark blue uniforms and had their faces unmasked.

They were taken out of the van one-by-one. The respondent was first, he was told by one of the police officers to approach, the officer broke his phone, returned it back to him, and told him that Velika Kladuša was twenty kilometers away. He then attempted walked back with his group to the camp but, since their phones had been broken and they didn’t have access to GPS, the got lost and didn’t end up finding their way back to the camp until 7:00 the next morning.
[Report 1.7]

1 interviewee - Algeria - Group of 4 persons
Unrecorded interview on 24.01.2018 in Velika Kladuša

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK – PHYSICAL VIOLENCE – THREATEN WITH A GUN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was caught approximately 50 kilometers away from Velika Kladuša in the Croatian interior while attempting to walk to Zagreb (HR). They were then brought to an unknown located police station before being brought to the Bosnian-Croatian border, south of Velika Kladuša.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victimes         | Number of victims: 4  
Country of origin: Algeria  
Age: 28  
No minors involved: no  
Sex: Males |
| Date and time    | The group was apprehended on 22/01/19 at approximately 8:30 am.  
They later brought back to the Bosnian-Croatian border at approximately 5.00 pm. |
| Details          | Paper signed: Yes  
Fingerprint taken: Yes  
Pictures taken: Yes |

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The group left Bosnia from Velika Kladuša (BiH) on the 22nd January and walked towards Zagreb (HR). They walked the full night after which they found an abandoned house to rest in. Two of the people in the group stayed in one room while two others were in another room. In the morning, a group of three policemen entered the house, first knocking strongly on the door and then entering. One of the officers was described as an older male while the two other were described as young. They wore dark blue uniforms with a Croatian flag emblazoned on their arms. They carried handguns.

“To me, they put a gun on me, then we went out, he asked me to kneel 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 scream at them and put on disposable gloves before frisking them outside. The interviewee and the people in the group gave the policemen their phones.

“The then 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”.

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After they finished the interrogation, they had to walk hundreds of meters to go to a white police van driven by a man accompanied by a policewoman, wearing the same uniform as the firsts policemen who apprehended them.

While they were walking, the first group of policemen became less aggressive and talked with the group. They made light fun about the potential for violence, with one of them showing the ski mask he had in his pocket. The mood was more relaxed, however the respondent still did not know what would happen to them.

When they arrived at the van, the driver was aggressive and pushed them into the back. After this, they were driven to a police station which the interviewee could not locate. There was a supermarket close to the station and in front of the building was a parking lot. The respondent describe not having any steps to go up while walking through the front door of the station.

When inside, they were brought to a big room which looked similar to a conference room. There were two writing boards on the wall, one black and the other white. There were tables and chairs in the room as well. A policeman was stationed in the room monitoring the four men.

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 of origin, and region of origin. After this, the officer took a picture of their face with a panel with their name and surname written on it.

After that, the respondent was brought to a room to clean his hand in order for him to give his fingerprints. The interviewee wanted to know the reason of giving his fingerprint and what would be the finality of it. The woman he asked to try to explain, but he did not understand everything.

“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”.

Then he began to give his fingerprints, he put his thumbs first and then the four other fingers. To finalise the process, they asked him to sign a paper writing in Arabic. He began to read it but according to the interviewee, they took it away from him to prevent him from reading it and asked him again to sign without reading.

Then he came back to the conference room and attempted to sleep on the table. In this room, they were allowed to go to the bathroom, however when they asked for food they were denied.

“We asked for food, they don’t want to. No cigarettes either, however I suggested to give 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 brought again into a police van, driving towards the Bosnian border. On the way they stopped and found again the three policemen who apprehended them. They were accompanied by a group of approximately ten Afghans or Pakistanis in the van. This group did not spend any time in the police station.
When they arrived at the Bosnian border, at a location between Bihać and Velika Kladuša (BiH), they all exited the van. A policeman gave a first bag to the interviewee with their phones and power banks and did the same with the second group of people. The phones were reset.

After the police van left, they walked toward Bosnia and Herzegovina. They walked approximately seven kilometres before finding a market where they bought food. On the way walking, they found a local person who brought them back to Velika Kladuša.

LOCATION

Approximate location were the interviewee described being apprehended by Croatian police
[Report 1.8]

2 interviewee - Afghanistan and Pakistan - Group of 8
Recorded interview on 25.1.2019 in Velika Kladuša

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - ROBBED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was apprehended in the Croatian interior. They were later brought to a police station in and held in a van before being brought back to a secluded section of the Bosnian-Croatian border, close to Bihać.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victims          | Number of victims: 8 
Interview conduct in English 
Country of origin: Afghanistan and Pakistan 
Minors involved: No 
Sex: Males |
| Date and time    | The group was apprehended in late morning on a day in the third week of January. After being apprehended, the group was driven to a police station where they stayed for fifteen minutes before being driven around an hour back to the Bosnian-Croatian border. They were pushed back at around 6:00 pm. |
| Details          | Expressed intention to seek asylum in the country: Yes 
Paper signed: No 
Fingerprints taken: No 
Picture taken: No |

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The group left from Velika Kladuša (BiH) on foot and walked for eight days in Croatia. Eleven people set out in the group however three ended up returning voluntarily back to Velika Kladuša because of the large presence of snow. Eight persons continued, of which the majority were males from Afghanistan, however one male from Pakistan was also present in the group.

The respondents described encountering a large amount of snow while walking. Furthermore, they described having inadequate amounts of food. On the eighth day of their journey, the group set up their tents at the top of a hill to sleep. At around 10:00 am or 11:00 am, the group slept inside of their tents at which a group of Croatian police officers approached:

“Sleeping time, police is coming, they catch me”

Somewhere between eight and ten police officers approached the tents and told the group-members inside to “Get up, get up, police!” After the group exited their tents, the officers searched their bags and their clothes. In addition, they confiscated the group’s power banks and mobile phones.

The police officers were described as “regular police” dressed in dark blue uniforms and carrying pistols. One of the officers took pictures of the group his phone, at first one-at-a-time and then later
of the whole group. When one of the group-members asked if he could apply for asylum in Croatia, one of the officers responded:

“No chance”

The group was told to quickly pack their bags and their tents. One of the group-members was pushed into the snow during this time for not moving fast enough. The group was then walked down to a nearby road and into two vans and loaded into a van which driven along the E65 road to a police station.

“This police station was in the border”

The respondents described being kept inside of vehicles for the duration of their time in the police station. The changed vans at the station, during which point one of the respondents described being told to leave his belongings in the previous van and never receiving them back.

“He say me, go to the other cars, I take my bags, he say to me ‘Don’t touch your bags, leave there’” After that we go to the other car, we sit there.”

At the police station, the group did not go through any formal processing, they did not have their fingerprints taken and did not sign any papers. There was no translator present during their time in the police station. The group was only kept at the police station for a short time before moving in the second van:

“Only in the car fifteen minutes. Fifteen minutes in the police station.”

When they moved in this van, another police van filled with family from Iran which included four women followed them. This group would later be pushed-back with them. The car drove perhaps one or two hours by car before reaching a secluded section of the Bosnian-Croatian border outside of Bihać (BiH) at around 6:00 or 7:00 pm.

“Shut up”

It took the group around two minutes to walk from the police van to the actual border. After this, the group was made to walk in a line across the border:

“This time, line, walking across border”

There were three police officers present at this location, one of whom was female with the other two being described as male. The female officer led the push-back line as the walked to the border. The two male officers followed behind. None of them wore masks. When they arrived to the border, one of the officers told the group:

“Go to street, go!”
The group did not experience any direct violence during their push-back however described being threatened with violence. The respondents described one of the officers during their push-back shooting his pistol in the air once:

“In the border I see my bag, my mobile, my power banks, my everything but [the police officer] say, “Go! Go!, I will beat you” and they shoot the pistols.”

In describing their push-back, the respondents alluded to how their experience being returned to Bihać (BiH) differed from their previous experiences being returned to Velika Kladuša (BiH):

“In Kladuša every time before, they are beat one-by-one”
“This time, the line deport, but before this [in Velika Kladuša] they are one-by-one, beat him, and leave”
“In Kladuša when deport, they have masks”

After crossing the Bosnian border, the respondents walked eighteen kilometers back to Bihać where they spent the night inside the IOM-run Bira camp. The returned in the following days to Velika Kladuša because, as they described it:

“Bihać camp is no good, there is nothing there in Bihać camp. Cold water shower.”

One of the respondents described being pushed-back from Croatia four times, during which:

“Every time I ask to I want azyl”

He was denied every time.
[Report 1.9]

1 interviewee - Algeria & Morocco - Group of 2
Recorded interview on 25.1.2019 in Velika Kladuša

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The two friends were caught on the road to Kupljensko (HR) while they were walking. They were pushed-back directly to the Croatian-Bosnian close to Velika Kladuša (BiH)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victims          | Number of victims: 2  
Interview conducted in French  
Country of origin: Algeria & Morocco  
No minors involved: No  
Sex: Males  
Number of “games”: 1 |
| Date and time    | The two men left 16/1/19 and were later apprehended on 17/1/19 at approximately 11:00 pm and were then released in the next hour. |
| Details          | Interview unrecorded  
Paper signed: No  
Fingerprint taken: No  
Pictures taken: No |

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The interviewee left Bosnia and Herzegovina from Velika Kladuša (BiH) at around 10:00 pm with a friend. They walked the whole night and stopped at an abandoned building to sleep over the day, close to the village of Kupljensko (Hr).

“At 5.00 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 interviewee’s friend’s shoes had become completely soaked from the snow at this point, leaving the two ill-prepared to continue. They began to walk again in the evening, however because of the snow they were not able to hide themselves while cars were driving nearby them and had to stay along the road. After a few minutes walking, a car stopped at their level and they saw that it was a white police car, inside of which were two policemen wearing dark blue uniforms and hats. The policemen asked them to not move. The officers asked the two men to declare everything that they had on them at the time: phones, power bank, money, etc., and then they were frisked.

After this, the police officers called another team of policemen who arrived a half-hour later in a white van which had “Policija” written on the side. The team who arrived wore black uniforms and
wore a handgun on their belts. While waiting, the two men had to stand without moving. One of the policemen asked them if they have passports or documents, but they only had a registration card from a camp in Bosnia Herzegovina.

After this, they were brought to the Bosnian border at approximately 11:30 pm, nearby Velika Kladuša (BiH). There, a policeman opened the door of the van they were transported in and asked 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.”

**LOCATIONS**

The road leading to Kupljensko (HR) where the interviewee described being apprehended

The border areas surrounding Velika Kladuša (BiH), where the two people were pushed-back
**[Report 1.10]**

4 interviewees - Tunisia - Group of 5  
Recorded interview on 1.2.2019 in Velika Kladuša

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - ROBBED - FORCED TO HOLD A POSITION - RESTRICTION OF ACCESS TO FOOD - RESTRICTION OF ACCESS TO WATER - PUSHED INTO WATER - PHYSICAL VIOLENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was apprehended in the Croatian interior, close to Bogovolja (HR). They were then brought to a police station which was located approximately 20 minutes away by car, likely in Slunj (HR). Later, one of the respondents was brought to a police station in Karlovac (HR). The group was later pushed back at a secluded section of the Bosnian-Croatian border close to Pašin Potok (HR).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victims          | Number of victims: 5  
Interview conduct in English  
Country of origin: Tunisia  
Minors involved: None  
Sex: Males |
| Date and time    | The group was initially apprehended by Croatian police at approximately 8:00 pm on 30/1/19. They were later brought to a police station at around 2:00 am on 31/1/19. One of the respondents was brought to a location in Karlovac at around 5:00 pm later that day. The group was then later pushed back at approximately 10:00 pm on 31/1/19. |
| Details          | Expressed intention to seek asylum in the country: Yes  
Paper signed: Yes  
Fingerprints taken: Yes  
Picture taken: Yes |

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The group of five men left from Velika Kladuša on the night of January 30th towards Croatia on foot with the intention of meeting someone who would drive them to Slovenia. They walked less than one kilometer into Croatia during which time they crossed a small river leaving their shoes soaked through with water. They arrived to a mosque which was the pre-arranged location to meet their driver. At approximately 8:00 pm, two police officers passed by this point and apprehended the group. These officers carried pistols and wore dark blue uniforms which had the words “Policija” written on them in yellow lettering.

Firstly, the officers searched the group, checking what they had on them. After this they put us in front of the mosque and

“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 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 police officers initially apprehended the group, after a period of several hours, more than 40 police officers would arrive to the scene with the intention of putting in motion a trap which would enable them to capture the group’s driver. The officers had seen that somebody had called them on WhatsApp and in this moment they decided to make a police group to catch the man:

“Later come maybe 40 or 50 policemen. When they catch the driver.”

One of the respondents described the situation as a trap that the officer’s decided to put into play:

“When you want to trap a mouse, you make something to trick”

To this end, the more than 40 police officers dispersed in a circle around the point in the road next to the mosque where the driver was supposed to pick up the men. Several of these officers carried long rifles which were similar to Kalashnikovs. They were described being from the same unit as the officers who originally apprehended them, with most wearing dark blue uniforms. Nonetheless, several of the officers were described as wearing different, black uniforms and others wear described as wearing civilian clothing.

The respondent’s described that one the officer who later arrived was the “boss” of the other police officers at the scene:

“The group of policemen said this is the boss and he promises you to have azyl.”

This individual was described as an approximately 38-year-old male who stood at average height, perhaps 180 cm, and weighed approximately 80 kg. The individual was clean shaven and had short, brown hair which was cropped at the sides. He did not wear a uniform, instead wearing plain clothes which were described as black sportswear.

The respondents described another officer in detail who was at scene, a female officer who was described as quite tall and muscular, standing at perhaps 180 cm. She wore hair cut in a “boy’s fashion” meaning that it was short and cropped on the sides. She was perhaps 30-years-old, wore a pistol on her side and carried a walkie-talkie. Similar to the “boss”, she also did not wear a uniform, instead wearing plain clothes. This individual took pictures of the group-members and asked them where they were from.
In total, there were five or six cars dispersed around the scene with their lights turned off, waiting. In addition to this, there were around seven officers station around the scene on foot in one group. There were also two officers who stayed with the group as they waited for the trap to be set in motion.

“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 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 azyl if we help him to catch this man.”

When asked if they felt like they had the option to not take part in this police option, the respondents described that:

“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 men to accordingly approach the road in one line.

“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”

The trap was sprung and several officers fired their guns in the air before the rest advanced to the scene and encircled the car. At this point, the group-members were again told to get on their knees and to put their hands behind their heads, they had to remain in this position again for a period of several hours.

After this, the group was taken to a police station which was approximately twenty minutes away from their sight of capture, likely in Slunj (HR). They arrived at sometime between 1:00 and 2:00 am in the early morning hours of January 31st: The group was still wet from their previous hours in the cold, and they reported that there were given no accommodations during their time in this station.

“We stayed like that, wet, without nothing, without food”

The group was not offered any food, water, or blankets during the close to 24 hours they were held at the station.
“It’s a small room, maybe 3 meters by 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 several officer what were their names, surnames, and country of origin. After this, they had their pictures taken with a sign below them that had 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 papers 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’”

The later in the morning the group’s fingerprints were taken. During this process, they took the print of each of individual’s fingers, all the way down to the palm of their hands. After that, they took their fingerprints from the tip again.

One of the respondents was taken to Karlovac (HR) later in the day, at approximately 5:00 pm. The rest of the group stayed in the station during this time. The individual was transported in a “normal” police car which had windows which he could see out of. He described travelling through mountains on this journey for sometime before passing a sign which signalled one direction led towards Zagreb while another direction led towards Split, he described the car as turning towards the way of Zagreb and following this road until the reached Karlovac. There, he described meeting a individual whom he described as a judge:

“That they took me, only me, to Karlovac to meet the judge.”

This particular respondent inferred that he was brought to Karlovac to speak on behalf of the group because he has a near-fluent command of English. Before arriving to the “judge”, his shoe strings as well as the string from his hoodie were confiscated from him before this:

“They make me go there, they put out my shoes chords...so when I was walking, all people see”

When he arrived to the “judge”, the respondent described being asked to tell his entire story:

“They took me there and he say ‘Say the truth and I will help you to have azyl’ 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 azyl. He say ‘Okay, okay, okay’”

After communicating his initial story in English, an Arabic translator then arrived who talked to the “judge” in Croatian for sometime. The translator in Karlovac was described as being middle-aged, at somewhere between 55 and 60-years-old. During the course of his interaction with the respondent, he remarked that his child was the same age as the respondent: 26. Furthermore, he remarked that he was married to a Bosnian woman. He spoke a dialect of Arabic which made the respondent believe that perhaps he was originally from Egypt or Syria.
The respondent was asked through the translator about his name, if he previously had known the driver, how much he had paid for the driver, what is the reason he had left Tunisia, and what he previous job had been.

The respondent then described returning to the original police station and staying for a period of 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 9:00 or 10:00 pm they take us….put us back in the car and move back to Bosnia.”

The respondents described that it was a twenty minutes drive from the police station back to the border. In total, there were five officers present during at push-back site, with one car other than their van present at the location. One officer stayed in the other car during the duration of their push-back. One officer wore a mask, while the other had their faces exposed. They were all wearing the same dark blue uniforms as the officers who had been present during the capture the previous night which led the group-members to infer that they were from the same unit as the men who had apprehended them previously:

“They work in the same police station”

When they arrived, they described seeing that the van they were transported in had been back up to face the direction of a stream. The respondents described that the stream rose up to their knees.

“Just open the door of the car [and] you see the river.”

There was a police officer stationed on each side of the car’s back door, leaving it impossible to move in any direction other than towards the stream. The respondents described being taken out one-by-one.

“They put us in the border, just in the border [makes a close space with 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. [motions someone feigning a strike with a police baton] 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.”

The respondents described the batons they were beaten with as being made out of rubber and slightly flexible.
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 wound it up and threw it over to the other side of the river. They had originally brought 80 € to Croatia but only receive back 60 €.

They had not eaten or drank water for the entirety of the time in which they were detained:

“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.”

Location of the group’s capture and forced involvement in police operation [zoom out & in]
Likely location of the police station in Slunj (HR) where the group was held
Location of the group’s push-back by Croatian police in Pašin Potok (HR) [zoom out & in]
An older image of the mosque where the group was forced to kneel for several and later take part in a sting operation [Bogovolja, HR]

Rough diagram of the sting operation the group was forced to take part in
REPORTS OF GROUPS APPREHENED IN SLOVENIA

4 Reports
**[Report 2.1a]**
2 interviewees - Egypt and Sudan - Group of 7
Recorded interview on 03.1.2019 in Velika Kladuša

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - DEPORTATION - ROBBED – DENIED OF ASYLUM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was apprehended in Slovenia. Later, they were brought to an official border checkpoint on the Slovenian-Croatian border before being driven to the Bosnian-Croatian border where they were pushed back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims</td>
<td>Number of victims: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview conduct in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country of origin: Sudan, Eritrea, Egypt, Syria, and Libya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minors involved: one 17-year-old from Algeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex: The six of the group were male however there was one, pregnant, female present in the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date and time</td>
<td>The group was apprehended by Slovenian authorities on 30/12/18 and were later brought to a police station in Slovenia later that day. They were kept there for a period of three hours before being transferred to another police station in Slovenia which they were kept in for the night. Later the next day (31/12/18) the group was brought to the Slovenian-Croatian border where they were kept in a border-checkpoint building until approximately 9:00 pm at which point they were again put in a van and driven to the Bosnian-Croatian border and pushed back at approximately 11:30 pm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Expressed intention to seek asylum in the country: Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denied access to asylum procedures: Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paper signed: Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The group of seven people left Velika Kladuša (BiH) on the 23rd of January and crossed into Croatia with the intention of continuing to Slovenia. Of the group there were two members from Darfur (Sudan), one member from Eritrea (a five-months pregnant woman), one member from Egypt, one member from Syria, one member from Iraq, and one member from Yemen. The group walked for nine days in the forest before reaching Slovenian soil. During this time, the group described the weather as terribly cold. The group crossed into Slovenian and continued approximately three kilometers further, up a mountain, before they were approached by a group of four Slovenian police officers. The group of police officers were comprised of three male officers and one female officers. Additionally, they approached the group with one black dog.

After the group was apprehended by the police officers, they were led approximately two kilometers down the mountain and at the bottom encountered more police officers, between four and five, and saw a number of police cars already parked. The respondents described seeing three medium sized police police cars upon reaching the bottom of the mountain. They had all of their belongings searched at this point. They reported that shortly thereafter this, a police van arrived.
At this point, one of the group members, described being taken in a car by two police officers back to the river which they had crossed to enter in Slovenia from Croatia. They took this specific group-member because he was the only one in the group who spoke English well and the officers were intent on being shown the exact point at which the group had crossed the river: One of the officers asked him:

“From where [did] you cross?”

The individual explained that he was not able to tell them the location because after crossing over the nearby mountain, and then returning in the police car, he had lost track of his direction. The individual reported that, in response, one of the Slovenian officers kicked him:

“[He] kick me, two times. After three, he tells me ‘If you lie [to] us, I kick you another time.’”

This officer was described as being tall, approximately 185 cm, with short hair and a clean shaven face. After this violence, the respondent reported that the other officer present tried to calm down his partner at this point:

“The other police tell him “Okay, okay”

After this transpired, the man was brought back to the group and they were loaded into the van, which had no windows, and driven to a police station. The respondents reported that it took them approximately 30 minutes to be driven from their point of capture to the police station.

After arriving at the police station, the group was taken into a small separate room, one-by-one, and interviewed by a translator. In this room, they were made to sign documents and explain the reason for their presence in Slovenia:

“One at a time, you write your name, take right index fingerprint, take picture, and then take you inside a small office room, after we finish talking, everyone is given a paper that they need to sign”

Each group member was given a bracelet to wear after this process with a number on it.

According to the respondents, a Palestinian translator arrived to the station approximately thirty minutes after they did and stayed for around two hours, approximately between 1:00 and 3:00.

One of the respondents expressed confusion and frustration in the way that they were forced to interact with the translator. According to him, when they spoke to the translator, it was without the presence of a police officer and the translator as if he were an officer:

“I see not like a translator, I see like a police. [He] asked me like police, not like a translator...He alone asked me.”

According to one of the respondents, the interview with the translator progressed with him first asking him which country he was from and why he came to Slovenia.
“He tell me ‘Okay, so why do you come here?’ and I tell him ‘Because I need asylum here’ and he tell me “Why you don’t make asylum in Greece or Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia?””

Later the translator asked the respondent how he know about Slovenia to which the respondent told him that he had heard about Slovenia in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

“He tells me ‘No! Many people here are liars, they come and then they go. You come, tell me true, where do you want to go? Which country? Do you want to go to Holland? To Germany? Where do you want to go?’ He searched my phone…and he reads my messages.”

The translator made the group members open their phones and put in the codes for him to go through their messages and contacts. He told the group members:

“I want to see what you have”

Several of the group members had Slovenian SIM cards in their phones and he was particularly interested in finding out where they had obtained these from.

One of the respondents described being handed his phone by the translator and being told that he needed to unlock it.

At the end of the interview, every group member was given a paper such as the one attached below. Nonetheless, the group reported that later, in Croatia, these papers would be taken from the majority of the group and were not given back.

The respondents reported that every single member of the group asked for asylum in Slovenia during their interviews and were told consistently that they would not be able to receive asylum because:

“You people, you always run.”

According to one of the respondents, during their time in the first police station, they observed their personal bags being thrown out into the trash. They never received them back:

“They take our bags and throw them in the rubbish”

After around three hours in this police station the group was then moved to another police station:

“We go to another police station and we sleep there, they give us food and then in the morning they give food again.”

“After [we left the first police station] we don’t see any way that the car goes because [they] close the car. Even you don’t have windows, nothing, until police station.”
They were kept in cells for the night with two persons in each cell. Inside each cell there was a toilet, a small window which did not open, and a wooden bed. It was described like a jail. There was a camera in each room. The group stayed the night there and left at around 9:00 am the next morning. They were driven to Croatia inside of a van with an Iranian refugee to the Croatian border. They arrived at the border at approximately 12:00 pm and kept in a border station for the majority of the day. In this station, they were made to sign several papers which were written in Croatian, a language which none of the group-members understood. There was no translator present and they did not understand what they signed.

When the group was handed over to the Croatian police at the border checkpoint by the Slovenian police, one of the latter officers asked one of the former officers who spoke English. The Croatian police officer informed this individual that

“Now you come in to Croatia, we don’t make you nothing...only we take from you some information and after you go back”

To this end, Yahiya reported that the officers wanted to assure the group that they would not harm them. After, they were taken into an office within the border station. Everyone was asked for their names and had their pictures taken of them. They were also made to sign papers which had their personal details and information on it. They did not understand what they signed and there were no translators present or officers who could speak English well enough to translate.

Later, at approximately 9:00 pm, the group was again put inside of a van and driven to the Bosnian-Croatian border which they arrived to at approximately 11:00 pm. At the border, the respondents described seeing three male Croatian police officers with stars on their shoulders. One had three stars on his shoulder, another had two, and the other had only one. Aside from this, the respondents also recalled seeing two female police officers at the pushback site, who remained farther away, at a distance in a small car.

The group was taken out of the van and told by the male officers that:

“From here, Velika Kladuša is five kilometers, you go”.

They described that before their pushbacks, the officer who had three stars on his shoulder told them that they would not beat the group:

“I know what problems you have and why you come here, and no problem”

According to the respondents, they were surprised that they did not encounter any violence during their push-back:

“Maybe [because it was] the New Year, they do not treat us nothing, because three people [in our group were] old people.”
The group was pushed back at approximately 11:30 on January 31st, New Years Eve, and they reported that as they walked back from their pushback site, they began to hear firework celebrations ringing out from Velika Kladuša.

“When we reach here, it starts the New Year celebrations”

The group had more than 400 € taken from them during the detention in Slovenia, as well as their extra clothes and two power banks, none of which was given back to them. The respondents reported that these non-cash items were thrown in the trash with their bags by police officers.
Location of the group’s capture and detention in Slovenia [zoom in & out]
One of the respondent’s Slovenian deportation papers
One of the respondent’s Slovenian deportation papers
[Report 2.1b]

1 interviewee - Darfur - Group of 7
Unrecorded interview on 30.1.2019 in Velika Kladuša

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - ROBBED - DENIAL OF ACCESS TO ASYLUM PROCEDURES - DESTRUCTION OF PERSONAL ITEMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was apprehended in the Slovenian interior, approximately 25 km away from the Croatian border. They were later brought to a police station and where they spent the day before being brought back to an official border checkpoint in Croatia. After spending some time in this location, they were brought back to a secluded section of the Bosnian-Croatian border, close to the Maljevac border checkpoint, and pushed-back.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victims          | Number of victims: 3  
Country of origin: Darfur, Eritrea, Egypt, Syria  
Minors involved: No  
Sex: The majority of the group was male however there was one, pregnant, female present in the group |
| Date and time    | The group left from Velika Kladuša (BiH) on 13/1/19. In Slovenia, the group was apprehended on the morning of 25/1/19 at approximately 9:30 am. The group was held in a Slovenian police station before being moved at 4:00 pm later that day to Croatia. The group was then pushed back to Bosnia at approximately 10:30 pm later that evening. |
| Details          | Expressed intention to seek asylum in the country: Yes  
Paper signed: Yes  
Fingerprints taken: Yes  
Picture taken: No |

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The group of five left from Velika Kladuša (BiH) on the 13th of January and walked for nine days in Croatia before reaching Slovenia. While through Croatia, the group encounter snow for the majority of their journey which reached up to their legs. After crossing the border of Slovenia, the group progressed over the course of two more a distance of approximately 25 km. This was their second time entering Slovenia with the intention of requesting asylum this month.

The respondent described entering into a town in Slovenia on the morning of January 25th with the intention of finding a police station to turn themselves into and request asylum. They had slept in Slovenia for two days before doing this.

When they approached the town, the respondent described being apprehended by two Slovenian police officers who approached his group in a small car at around 9:30 am. They wore a blue uniform which had two stars, one on top of the other, emblazoned on the officers’ chest. The respondent additionally described that these officers had “M61” marked on their shoulder.
The respondent described being taken to the exact same police station which he had initially been taken to the previous time he had entered Slovenia, earlier in the month, with the intention of claiming asylum.

During his time in the station, the respondent described being interviewed by a “good translator” which, in his opinion, conducted his job in a more professional way than the previous translator he had encountered in Slovenia. This translator was described as being male with tan skin and short hair. He spoke a Lebanese dialect of Arabic and was perhaps 50-years-old. The respondent explained that, in comparison to his previous translator, this translator only asked questions after being asked by the police officer in the room. He did not independently conduct the interview such as the last translator had.

Despite this, the respondent ran into difficulties during this interview, specifically in regards to his intention to claim asylum. During his previous processing in Slovenia, one of the officers had crossed out his intended destination of Slovenia and written in Italy. As such, the respondent described being told by the police officer in charge of his interview that they could not offer him asylum, since they believed he would just continue to Italy. The police officer, through the translator, asked Yahiya why he came to Slovenia and why he had left his country in the first place. He implied to him that Darfur is a safe place for people to live. When Yahiya began to explain to him that in his experience, and elaborating on his past experiences being tortured by police officers in the country, the police officer told him that he didn’t care and moved on to the next question.

The respondent described that all of his group’s bags, sleeping bags, and clothes were thrown out in Slovenia. He thought that perhaps this was because they wet and soaked through with water and accordingly the police officer did not want to keep them. He did not see the officer dispose of the bags but he never received them back.

Additionally, the respondent had his phone smashed by Slovenian authorities in the police station. He was later given this phone back. This behavior was surprising to the respondent who commented that he had only ever heard of Croatian police officer breaking phones before. During their time at the station, the female member of the group, who is pregnant, was taken to a doctor or hospital where they confirmed she was seven months pregnant.

The respondent described having to sign similar papers to the ones that he had signed previously in Slovenia. He did not have his picture taken while in Slovenia. In addition, he had one of his fingerprints taken by a machine. He was told that normally he had to pay a 480€ fine for crossing the border illegally however the authorities told him that they would not make him pay this time.

The group were later brought to a Croatian police station at an official border checkpoint with Slovenia at around 4:00 pm. At this location, the respondent described being made to sign several documents which were written in Croatian. They were held in this station for several hours before they were again loaded into a van and transported back to the Bosnian-Croatian border.

When the van finally reached the Bosnian border, they were taken out one-by-one. It was approximately 10:30 pm at this time. The respondent described that one of the officers present at the pushback site made actions like he wanted to hit them. He lunged at them with his baton but then stopped short before actually touching them. Another officer present stopped him or discouraged him from continuing because, according to the respondent, there was a woman present.
After crossing over to the Bosnian side of the border, the group walked five km back to Miral camp outside of Velika Kladuša. The group passed by the park in the city center of Velika Kladuša at at 11:00 pm and continued the rest of the way back to the camp.

The respondent had previously worked as a farmer, a tailor, an electrical technician, and a painter. He only his country after he was tortured by police officers in Darfur. To this end, the respondent described his desperation to find a safe place to re-start his life and be reunited with his child:

“All I want to do is to find a place to be and I will find a job and bring my boy to be with me”

He expressed multiple times his confusion that Slovenian authorities continue to deny him this opportunity.

**IMAGES OF THE INCIDENT**

![Image of the respondent’s broken mobile device]
Location of the group’s detention in a police station in Slovenia
1 interviewee - Syria - Group of 9
Recorded interview on 11.01.2019 in Velika Kladuša

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - DEPORTATION - ROBBED – DENIED OF ASYLUM - FORCED TO UNDRESS - DESTRUCTION OF LEGAL PAPERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was apprehended in Slovenia close to the town of Golac, 5 km away from the Croatian-Slovenian border. The group was later taken to a nearby police station where they were held for the night. The next day they were moved to a Croatian border checkpoint before being pushed back in Bosnia and Herzegovina, approximately 40 km away from Velika Kladuša.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victims          | Number of victims: 9  
                   Interview conduct in English with the use of a translator  
                   Country of origin: Syria and Palestine  
                   Minors involved: None  
                   Sex: Males  
                   Age: 24 |
| Date and time    | The group left Bosnia on 30/12/18. They were later apprehended on 1/1/19 at approximately 6:00 pm and taken to a police station where they were interrogated by a translator and spent the night there. On the morning of 2/1/19 they were handed over to the Croatian police and later pushed back on the same day at approximately 3:30 pm |
| Details          | Expressed intention to seek asylum in the country: Yes  
                   Denied access to asylum procedures: Yes  
                   Paper signed: Yes  
                   Fingerprints taken: Yes  
                   Picture taken: Yes |

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

The group travelled with a car close to the Croatian-Slovenian border where they were let out on the Croatian side. The group members did not understand the GPS locations they intended to travel towards and instead lead them on a circuitous route. They group walked around for seven hours before actually entering Slovenia at which point their internet ceased to work and their ability to navigate through GPS stopped. At around 9:00 am, the respondent voiced his desire to enter nearby town in order to access internet from a restaurant or cafe. The other group-members dissuaded him from doing this at this time. Nonetheless, by 6:00 pm, the respondent along with the rest of the group had grown despondent with the situation. They entered the town with the intention to find the police:

“I am hungry and I am no drink water today, and I go to the police”

When they encountered police officers, the respondent described that one of their first questions was as to where the group was from:
“I am speak ‘I am from Syria’ and they say ‘Okay, stay here’”

Within an hour, they were brought inside of a police station. The group was strip-searched in the police station together in the same room. Each group member was told to strip down to their underwear to have their clothes searched. The respondent strip down to his underwear but then was told that he had to also take off his boxers. He hesitated to take them off before a large, blonde officer who was described as approximately 25-years-old then forcefully told him that he must take off his underwear. He was the only group-member made to strip completely naked.

“All friends are not take off boxer”

He then remained completely naked for five minutes:

At sometime between 9 and 10 o’clock pm, a Palestinian translator arrive and began to interview the group-members alone, one-by-one. The respondent described that he talked to the translator for a period of two hours, which was much longer than any of the other respondents. The respondent described that the other group-members only talked to the translator for five minutes on average. He inferred that his interview was much longer since he had asked for asylum during his interview, unlike the other group-members:

“I am speak ‘I stay’, the rest of the group is not speak ‘I am stay’”

The respondent described that during his interview, there was three police officers in addition to the translator in the room. He described that him and the translator sat on one side of the table while the three police officer sat on the other side of the table, saying little. There were two computers in the room, one machine for taking fingerprints. He described that he had his fingerprints taken twice - one time with all ten fingers and the other time with his two index fingers. In addition, he was made to sign three different papers during the time in the police station, they were all written in Slovenian and he did not understand what the papers communicated since the translator did not tell him. He also had his picture of his face taken by a computer camera.

The translator asked the respondent several questions, one of which was what his intention in Slovenia was. The respondent described that he answered:

“I want to stay here. Yes. I want azyl.”

The translator responded:

“What is the problem in Syria? Syria is no problem”

To which the respondent replied:

“Are you crazy? Syria not a problem? Are you sure Syria is not a problem?”

The translator told him:

“Yes, I am sure.”
The respondent then explained to him that he was a lawyer in Syria, and that he only left the country because he had to and that it was very dangerous. To this, the translator told the respondent:

“You can stay in Turkey. You can stay in Greece.”

Shortly thereafter, the interview ended and the translator went to go speak to the police officers in Slovenian. During this interaction, the respondent reported that he heard the translator deride Islam to the police officers. He later responded to the officer:

“I am muslim, but I am not Daesh (ISIS), I drink alcohol...I am open minded. I have money. I am not crazy.”

After the interview finished, he returned to the room which had the rest of the group-members waiting. The translator left at approximately 1:00 am.

The group spent the night in the police station. All nine group-members slept on the floor in the same room and were each given one blanket per person. There was no toilet in the room and the respondent reported that he was not able to use the bathroom once during his time in the police station, even though he asked. The respondent described being given a meal at approximately 3:00 am which consisted of a small piece of bread and a type of meat which the respondent described as pork. As Muslims, the respondent and the other members of his group could not, and did not, eat the meat.

At around 6:00 am the next day, they were moved from the police station to the Slovenian-Croatian border in a van and given over to Croatian authorities who held them in a border station for some time. It took them approximately one and a half hours to drive from the police station to the Slovenian-Croatian border. The respondent was able to use the bathroom in this building. In addition, he described having his Slovenian deportation papers ripped up by Croatian police officers at this point. The respondent described the officer who did this as being perhaps 60 years old, with short, white hair and a moustache. This officer, like the other ones present at this police station, wore a blue uniform. He was also later present during the group’s pushback along the Bosnian-Croatian border.

The respondent described that as they left the Croatian border station, there were fifteen individuals inside the back of the van. In addition to the members of his group which were initially caught in Slovenia, there was also a number of Pakistani men with them. It took them a very long time to drive from the border station to the Bosnian-Croatian border, approximately six hours:

“He drive crazy. Stop five minutes, and go one minute. Stop, and go. Stop, and go and stop and go”

They arrived to the Bosnian-Croatian border at approximately 3:30 pm. There, the entire group was told exit the van at the same time, which they did. They were then corralled to moved towards the Bosnian side of the border. The respondent described there being four police cars present at the scene and approximately ten to twelve police officers present. They did not wear masks.
The respondent described having 30€ taken from him during the entire ordeal.

The respondent described being pushed back approximately 40 km south of Velika Kladuša. He remembered passing a sign which said precisely “Velika Kladuša - 40 km”. The group then walked for a distance of twenty kilometers before being picked up by a car which took them the rest of the way to IOM-run Miral camp (nearby Velika Kladuša).
**Type of incident**

PUSH-BACK - DENIAL OF ASYLUM - THREATENED WITH WEAPON

**Location**

The group was apprehended in interior of Slovenia and brought to an unlocated police station, a half an hour away from the place the members of the group were apprehended, still located in Slovenia. They were directly transferred to an official border checkpoint on the Croatian side. They were driven to Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the Maljevac/Velika Kladuša border checkpoint, where they stayed a bit and finally were deported a half an hour driving away.

**Victimes**

Number of victims: 5
Interview conducted in English
Nation of origin: Tunisia
Age: 30s, 40s
Sex: Males
Minors involved: None

**Date and time**

The incident happened in middle of January. After the group got caught in the evening, they were brought to a police station 30 minutes away from the place where they were apprehended and stayed overnight. The next day they were brought to a checkpoint at the Croatian border at 10:00 am. Then they were driven to an official checkpoint at the Bosnian-Croatian border, to be driven afterward to another location nearby Velika Kladuša.

**Details**

Denied request for asylum: Yes
Papers signed: Yes
Fingerprints: Yes
Translator present: Yes – Palestinian or from Lebanon

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The group left from Velika Kladuša (BiH) and walked to Slovenia. Eventually, they were caught by the Slovenian police while they were walking along a small path in a forest during the evening. They were approximately one and a half kilometers away from Italian border at this point. The respondent had seen the police inside the forest first, but had no time to respond. The group of five to six policemen fired in the air, at least three times and the group stopped approximately twenty meters away from them. The officers wore green military fatigues and carried long rifles. One of the officers was female.
The group was soon brought to a police van parked approximately 700 meters away from the place where they were apprehended. After this, they were driven for thirty minutes to a police station at the Slovenian-Croatian border.

When they arrived at the police station

“They [policemen] take our name, where you go, remove our clothes, jacket, shoes, all, all even underwear, in the office of the police station”

“we stay in the line, outside. Take our clothes and look pockets, money […] we stayed in line and speak for each person and one by one, take our clothes. I saw a policewoman here”

According to the respondent, the policewoman stayed in the office. They were then forced to take off all of their clothes and be full naked. Later, they were made to sign a paper requesting 240€, even though the officers had previously taken all of the money they had found in their clothes.

“After they bring me to closed room, empty room and we told him [to a policeman] we need some food because two days, no eat, and then they bring me biscuits, water and chocolate.”

Two hours later came a translator. The group did not know where he came from but they conjectured that he was originally from Lebanon or Palestine. He spoke to only one of the group-members. The translator compared a Tunisian as being the same as an Algerian, which the respondents interpreted as him implying that Tunisians are bad people. The respondent described that the translator interrogated them like a police officer. According to the interviewee, he conducted the interview without waiting for a question from the police officers.

“He did an interrogatory without the police in Arabic and then report whatever he wanted to the police.”

According to the respondent, at the police station, two military officers were there, but did not speak or interact with them. Apparently, they were just observing. Additionally, one policeman wearing a black uniform was there with the translator.

The second respondent expressed confusion with the way the translator interacted with them:

“I think he should ask everyone the same question, but he asked only our friend. [...] My friend is coming after 1.30, we think they will make same as my friend, ask me and my friends but they didn’t ask”

The translator was described as an old man, about 68 years old, brown eyes, about 65 kg for 1,65m, paper and salt hair. He wore glasses and had a strict demeanor. The respondent tried to remember the translator’s name and expressed that it was a name similar to “Ismael/Saleh Majid”. The respondent explained that he only saw the translator’s name briefly as he showed his work card to an officer at the station.

After the translator finished his interview, the policemen took the group-members to an office to take the fingerprints of their ten fingers.
A policeman came during the night to tell them that they would leave the next morning to go to Croatia. Accordingly, the next day they were brought to a checkpoint at the Croatian border at 10:00 am. They didn’t stay on the Slovenian side for long and were directly brought to the Croatian side.

“Police Croatia catch me same as animal.”

They had to undress fully again at the Croatian border station:

“They drop me in the street, but there is a space [inside], but they frisked us and remove my clothes. I told him “it’s really cold”, he [the policeman] told me “you have money, you have money” because I gave him my money, but he said, “you have more””

At this location, a Croatian police woman took a picture of the face of each members of the group. The group stayed approximately seven hours at the border checkpoint on the Croatian side before being transported to the Bosnian border in a van.

“Their were too afraid that they would beat us”

Eventually, they arrived at the official checkpoint at Velika Kladuša. The interviewee inferred that perhaps they were brought to the official checkpoint since they had more apprehended individuals to pick up. They were transferred to a police van in which there were three persons in the front: the driver and two policemen who were wearing black uniforms. A second van went with them to another place along the border. The respondents described that they drove half an hour from the checkpoint. When they arrived, the policemen opened the doors and ask them to leave. They did not use violence. Four of the group-members carried their friend out of the van because he still did not feel well. They waited until their friend recovered and walked back to Velika Kladuša.
The approximate section of the Italian-Slovenian border where the group described being apprehended (SL)