March, 2019
Bosnia-Herzegovina

ILLEGAL PUSH-BACKS AND BORDER VIOLENCE REPORTS
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. Pushback 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.

Abbreviations

BiH - Bosnia and Herzegovina
Hr - Croatia
RS - Serbia
Sl - Slovenia
EU - European Union
MNE - Montenegro
An update on the situation in BiH

Warming weather and increasing movement

Although ECHO reported there to be an estimated 5,500 refugees and migrants in BiH during the month of February, it is likely that this number is rising. An increase in new arrivals of people-in-transit arriving to BiH from Montenegro was observed this last month. Importantly, field observations and local media both confirmed an increase in arrivals to the Una-Sana canton as well, in the localities of both Bihać and Velika Kladuša. Volunteers on the ground in Sarajevo have also noted an increase in the regularity of movement of individuals from the Bihać and Velika Kladuša back to Sarajevo in the wake of being pushed back.

Looking at the patterns from previous years, it is not surprising that human movement has increased along with the warming weather. For many groups seeking to transit further into Europe, the end of winter signals better chances for transit. Melted snow allows for faster movement through the terrains of the Croatian and Slovenian interiors. Warmer weather also decreases the need for groups to carry the same amount of heavy winter clothing to stay warm with.

As groups attempting transit opt to wear fewer layers of clothing, it is important to recognize how this dynamic relates to border violence. It is our observation that visible bruising from baton strikes are most common during the summer months, during which time fewer protective layers of clothing are worn. In contrast, during the winter months, heavy winter coats have the chance of providing some padding to the blows of baton strikes.

Politics in the Una-Sana Canton

Una-Sana Canton political figures warned residents of Bihać and Velika Kladuša this past month to secure their private property, sighting the threat posed by “migrants”. These warnings were accompanied with the claim that 18 vehicles have been stolen since the beginning of the year, ostensibly related to the doings of refugees and migrants within the canton. While these reports are not easily verifiable, the rhetoric used by cantonal politicians in communicating the statistics highlights the tension which certain locals feel in the region towards the visitors within their communities. Still, many local residents within the Una-Sana canton continue to engage in radical, and often unrecognized, acts of solidarity through their support of refugees and migrants residing within their region.

Return of Bosnian ISIS Fighters

This month saw the announcement from Bosnian authorities that the state was in the process of returning two BiH citizens who left the country to fight for ISIS in Syria. The pair were previously being held in detention by SDF-forces in Northern Syria. Bosnian media sources speculated that at one of these men is likely Ibroye Ćufurović
who was born and raised in Donja Slapnica, a village within the municipality of Velika Kladuša.

While this development does not directly relate to border violence in the region, it is of note due to connection that many of the people-in-transit have to the legacy of the Islamic State. Many Syrians and Iraqis who fled their homes in the wake of the Islamic States insurgency now find themselves in IOM-run camps in BiH. The return of BiH-born ISIS fighters underscores the complex nature of the conflict that these refugees have fled.

**Related media**

This past month saw the release of a report by Amnesty International entitled *Pushed to the Edge: Violence and Abuse Against Refugees and Migrants Along Balkan Route*. This document utilizes qualitative data to provide further evidence of the routine human rights violations manifested in Croatia through the form of violent push-backs and collective expulsions perpetrated by state authorities. The report recommended that EU authorities should:

> Decisively call on Croatia to immediately halt police violence at its borders and use appropriate measures to ensure Croatia’s full compliance with international and European Union law;

A wave a media interest followed this publication, with news outlets such as *The Irish Times*, *Deutsche Welle*, and *The Boston Globe*. In the report, our previous publications are cited as accompanying evidence towards the veracity of these repeated and continued testimonies of violence.

30 members of the EU Parliament signed a letter this month demanding action after reports from NGOs like *Are You Syrious?,* Amnesty International, Border Violence Monitoring, No Name Kitchen, Human Rights Watch, Doctors Without Borders/ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) concerning the ongoing human rights abuses along the EU’s external borders. The letter, which can be found [here](#), serves as an important step in the recognition of these continued abuses of power. A portion of the letter directly references this collaborative reporting project:

> In 2018, No Name Kitchen reported 1503 push-backs from Croatia to Bosnia solely at the border point near Velika Kladuša. The organization also collected 372 testimonies, involving nearly 2000 people on the move, between May 2017 and December 2018 in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, revealing that the Croatian, and in some cases the Slovenian authorities hinder people’s rights to asylum procedures and often violently push them back from EU territory, denying them the right to apply for international protection. Several testimonies also lead to the conclusion that Slovenia and Croatia were
cooperating with the intention of keeping potential asylum-seekers away from EU territory

In other news, Balkan Insight reported this past month that official data from BiH government ministries indicated that 12 “migrant” deaths were recorded within the country in 2018.
Trends in border violence

This month we have conducted 16 violence reports with individuals pushed-back from Croatia and Slovenia. In total, 13 of these reports were direct push-backs from Croatia while 2 involved groups which were initially apprehended in Slovenia. It is also noteworthy to point out that, in addition to these reports, we have included one report in this document of a push-back from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Montenegro. These groups of individuals consisted of predominantly men from a wide variety of countries including Algeria, Morocco, Iraq, Syria, Iran, and Tunisia.

Push-backs in BiH

Reports and observation from the field indicate the growing trend of push-backs from BiH to Montenegro along the country’s southeastern border (see report 3.1). Some of these push-backs occur near the town of Pljevlja (MNE) and others have been reported to have taken place near Vraćenovići (MNE). While testimonies of push-backs out of BiH are not exactly new - isolated cases have been recorded somewhat regularly over the last eight months - there has been an arguable increase in the frequency of these reports over the last month.

It is possible that this shift in border enforcement is related to developments within the broader Bosnian political discourse. Authorities announced this past month their renewed efforts to close their 600 kilometer-long border with Montenegro and Serbia to irregular transit. In this same vein, the Hungarian Foreign Minister proposed this past month to send 60 Hungarian border authorities to BiH to assist in the control of movement of irregular arrivals to the country.

This is an interesting trend to observe insofar as it represents a growth in the already pervasive regime of push-backs in the Balkans. Bosnia appears to be only the most recent state to be pressured into securitizing its borders in the region. It is also interesting to note, with this in mind, that there was an increase in reports this past month of BiH police officers directly assuming custody of push-back groups from Croatian authorities (see reports 1.8, 1.9 1.11).

Garage detention sites

Two of the testimonies collected within the past month referenced the detainment of large groups of refugees and migrants by Croatian authorities within garages (see reports 1.5 and 1.6). The treatment and method of detainment contained within these testimonies closely mirrors two testimonies which were collected in the month of December (see December reports 1.9 and 1.14a). In all of these cases, the respondents were not able to determine where exactly they were being held. Furthermore it was difficult for them to determine whether these garages were inside of an official police station or just unregistered compounds. Given the worrisome implications that detainment within unspecified garages strewn with garbage and
human waste provides, we have highlighted here the specific reports which detail this practice.

In one report from this past month, a respondent described being held in a garage along with several dozen other individuals:

“It smelt like in a dirty toilet. I apologize for the word choice, but there was shit, piss and garbage all over the floor. The smell was very bad. The garage was not very big, but there were so many people inside.” (Report 1.6)

This location was described as being approximately two hours drive away from the Bosnian-Croatian border.

A respondent from a different group described being held in a similar garage, albeit this location was described as being quite close to the Bosnian-Croatian border. He described the location as a “big garage” that had three brick walls and one metal shutter. Furthermore, the location was described as being inside of a compound used by Croatian authorities. The garage had a stone floor with a thin plastic covering the floor. One wall was lined rubbish, some in plastic bags, some in open bins. The pile was several meters long and smelt like urine.

“It smelt like a bad toilet.”
“It was freezing cold, you couldn’t sleep because of the cold. Our clothes were wet from walking in the snow.” (Report 1.5)

The men were left in this location between four and five hours. Inside the garage there were no police officers, they were shut inside with no water, no food and no toilet. People were forced to urinate in the corner. After four hours, the shutters opened and the men were led to an open area around 300 meters from the garage, after which they were walked approximately 45 minutes to the Bosnian border.

These reports are similar to detention sites that were described by two groups in testimonies from December. In one report, the respondent describes being taken by Croatian police officer after his capture to a location in the general area of Korenica (Hr) to a building which he described as:

“A garage, like an old barrack. Just beside is an entrance and a police station in front of the building. The building is 25 and 30 meters large with a blue door. There is a yard in between the police station and the building. The road to access there is a small one. [...] Inside is a sink and a heater. There is not any window, but three lights light on on the ceiling.” (December report, 1.9)

In another report from December, a different respondent described an almost identical garage detention site:
“They put us in a cell, but I don’t think it was a cell, it is more like a garage, there is a sky blue door and a floor tile. In the middle there is water evacuation. On the car park, there is a Ford from the police, a Ford Fiesta and two vans.”

“In the police station, when you enter, after on your right you see the garage, it is here.” (December report 1.14a)

Similar to the previous report, the respondent described being taken to a location which, given his description of travel times and push-back locations, would also locate the garage in the general area of Korenica (Hr)

Three of these four reports describe garage locations which could likely be within the general area of the Korenica (Hr) police station, the closest Croatian police station to the often-used push-back locations near Lohovo (BiH). It is possible that the garage housed on the premises of this station is the one described in several of these reports. The description of a compound used by Croatian authorities with main building and a garage in the rear, separated by a small courtyard certainly fits this description.

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the description used to describe these garage-detention sites - namely blue doors - does not match with the garage housed on the premises of the Korenica police station. Furthermore, Report 1.5 from this past month describes a 300 meter walk to a trail which leads to a push-back site along the Bosnian border, of which the Korenica police station does not provide. Additionally, the garage described in Report 1.6 from this past month was not located within an hours drive of Korenica.

To this end, it remains difficult to provide with certainty any information as to the exact whereabouts of these garage-detentions site. It remains unclear as to how exactly these locations are utilized in the broader mechanism of the push-back apparatus in Croatia, however the prolonged detention of groups inside of enclosed spaces strewn with garbage and human waste is 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>February</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>98 (82%)</td>
<td>22 (18%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>101 (84%)</td>
<td>19 (16%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>1,743</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1,396 (80%)</td>
<td>332 (20%)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistics on the last ten months of reports from BiH

The 193 reports written and published from June 2018 to March 2019 concerned 1,743 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 1,396 persons compared to approximately 332 from Slovenia. Reported push-backs from Italy to Velika Kladuša were exceedingly rare.²

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¹ This table does not include the single report conducted this past month concerning a push-back from BiH to Montenegro

² 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

13 Reports
[Report 1.1]

2 interviewees - Algeria and Syria - Group of 11
Unrecorded interview conducted on 4/3/19 in Velika Klauša

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - PHYSICAL VIOLENCE - FORCED TO UNDRESS - THEFT - DESTRUCTION OF PERSONAL ITEMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group got apprehended around Pašin Potok (HR) and pushed back in the area of Buhača (HR)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victimes         | Number of victims: 11  
Interview conducted in French with a translator  
Country of origin: Algeria and Syria  
Age: 20 - 28 years  
Minors: no  
Sex: male |
| Date and time    | The group started walking in the evening of 16/2/19 from Velika Klauša (BiH) to the border of Croatia near Pašin Potok (HR). They were soon apprehended and were pushed-back to BiH a short time later near Buhača (HR). |
| Details          | Paper signed: no  
Fingerprint taken: no  
Pictures taken: no  
Translator present: No  
Detention: No  
Asylum: no |

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The group of eleven men (one from Algeria and ten from Syria) started walking in the evening of February 16th from Velika Klauša to the border of Croatia. They crossed the border at night time in Pašin Potok (HR) during which time they had to cross a small, tiny brook. During the crossing they saw lights from a car. The group ran to the next house they saw and tried to hide from the car. The car came closer and turned off the lights and drove slowly towards the house. The group was trying to escape but they were too late. In the van were six to eight male police officers and one female police officer. The officers exited the van and quickly surrounded the group. The officers made them stand against the wall of the house.

The respondent recalled thinking that some of the officers had been previously been drinking alcohol.

“We smell that they drank beer.”

Shortly after this point, several of the officers became violent towards the group. The respondent described him and his other group-members as being punched and kicked by the officers during which time they were also insulted with words like “Motherfucker” and “Fuck to Muslim”. The female present within the group of police officers was described by the
respondent as “a crazy woman” who laughed through the procedure of violence. All the officers were wearing the same uniforms - dark blue, heavy black boots, black gloves with a plastic part over the fist bones and black hats. Two of the officers, however, wore ski masks covering their faces. The masks covered only half of their faces, up to the nose. The respondent recalled that the manner in which these two “masked officers” communicated violence were similar and filled with more emotion:

“Our way of beating was more violent compared to the others.”

The respondent also described an older, bald-headed, man as the leader of the group officers, referring to him as “the chief”.

During the one police officer forced one guy of the group to totally undress himself. Naked standing there he got kicked in his genitals. They threw wooden sticks against them as well.

“They kicked us like a ball.”

“They beat us with hate.”

One younger police officer entered into the situation and attempted to calm things down, saying saying to some of the other officers “dobro, dobro”. The interviewee described it as if the younger officer was trying say to the others “It’s enough now.”. One of his colleagues answered him by pointing a fist into his face.

The violence lasted for several minutes. As another police van turned up, the officers stopped and soon after six to eight other police officers were standing beside them. Those police officers were all men. They searched the group-members, but in a careless way.

“They searched us too quick to really find something.”

The second police group also asked everyone to hand over their phones and power banks. They broke the phones with their black flashlights and put them together with the power banks in a bag. After this, the second police group walked everyone to one van which the group-members had to enter. The van was described as a VW-Transporter which had no windows, with the back separated from the front by metal. While sitting in the van, the police officers were twice called one person out of the car and made them collect the rubbish around the van.

Finally, the van started to move. They drove for only a few minutes to a secluded location in Buhača (HR) along the border of BiH. The “good” policeman, the one who intervened the beating, opened the door. He said

“Don’t be scared. You can go out, go to the border.”

They walked with him a few minutes as one of the group recognized that he forgot something in the car. The officer let him go back to the van to grab his belongings. As the man went back, the other officers walked up to him and beat him again. Everyone now started to run towards the border. They arrived to a brook where the water reached up to their knees and crossed there into BiH.

During the push-back there were around seven to ten police officers around. They were described as being mixed from the two previous groups of officers. The single female police officer was present at the push back. None of the group-members received their phones back.
Pašin Potok (Hr) - The approximate location where the interviewees described being apprehended

[ Zoom in & out]
Buhača (Hr) - the approximate location where the interviewees described being pushed back

[Zoom in & out]
[Report 1.2]

1 interviewee - Algeria - Group of 1
Unrecorded interview conducted on 14/3/19 in Sarajevo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The respondent was apprehended shortly after entering into Croatia on the Lučki Most bridge in Metković (HR). He was later pushed-back to BiH a short distance away from Metković along the Neretva River.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victims          | Number of victims: 1  
Country of origin: Iran  
Age: 38 years old  
Minors: No  
Sex: Male |
| Date and time    | The man was apprehended on 13/03/19 at around 11:30 pm and then pushed-back to BiH at around 12:30 am, an hour later. |
| Details          | Paper signed: No  
Fingerprint taken: No  
Pictures taken: No  
Asylum: They did not ask for asylum. |

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

While heading towards the bus station in Metković (Hr), the respondent encountered two police officers in dark blue uniforms waiting for him after at the north end of Lučki Most bridge. Standing outside of their sedan-sized car, they asked the man for a passport to which he replied

“I have no passport. I am tourist.”

They asked him which hotel he was staying in to which the respondent replied that he was catching a bus to Zagreb. In return, the officers asked him why he was going to Zagreb and the respondent did not reply. The police then patted him down and found his camp I.D from the IOM-run Ušivak camp (Hadžići municipality, Sarajevo Canton). They took his phone (but later returned this to him at the border).

The officers asked the respondent to get into their car. They drove for five minutes back over the border where they encountered two other Croatian police officers. The car stopped and the police told the respondent to:

“Go to Bosnia”
The officers returned to him the belongings which they had previously confiscated and let him go. No further questions were asked.

He walked for five minutes down the road where he encountered five Bosnian police officers who asked to see his I.D card. They said that he needed to go to Bosnia. From there he walked for two hours back to the nearest bus station and travelled back to Sarajevo.

**LOCATIONS**

Metković - place where the group got apprehended (43°03'19.0"N 17°39'09.0"E) [Zoom in & out]
Doljani border Crossing - approximate place where they got pushed back
(43°02'57.5"N 17°39'48.6"E) [Zoom in & out]
[Report 1.3]
1 interviewee - Algeria - Group of 3
Recorded interview conducted on 15/3/19 in Sarajevo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - PHYSICAL VIOLENCE - VERBAL ABUSE - ROBBED - DESTRUCTION OF PERSONAL BELONGINGS (SHOES)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was apprehended in the town of Jezera (Hr) and was pushed back approximately 5 km outside of Velika Kladuša (BiH).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victims          | Number of victims: 3  
Interview conducted in French  
Country of origin: Algeria  
Age: 23, 27, 31 years old  
Minors: no  
Sex: All males |
| Date and time    | The group left from Bihać (BiH) in the early morning hours of 12/3/19 and walked to Plitvićka Jezera (Hr), arriving at around 11:00 am later that day. They were apprehended by Croatian police officers soon after who brought them to the Slunj (Hr) police station. From there they were pushed back approximately 5 km outside of Velika Kladuša (BiH) |
| Details          | Paper signed: No  
Fingerprint taken: No  
Pictures taken: No  
Expressed intention to claim asylum: Yes |

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

The group left from Bihać on March 12th at around 12:00 pm to Izačić (12 km) walking. They arrived to Izačić and slept in the woods a pair of hours. Around 3:00 am they walked around 20 km to the village of Plitvićka Jezera (Hr), which they arrived to at around 11:00 am. They stopped at a bus station at which point two police officers approached them. The interviewee described them as wearing:

“Black uniform, with hat and military boots”.

The officers told the group to enter into the back of their vehicle which was white IVECO van. The respondent described sitting in the back of the van in the dark, with the air conditioner turned on.

“It was very cold”

As the vehicle began moving, the officers changed the speed of the van erratically which made the group-members fall over repeatedly. After around thirty minutes of driving, they
arrived to the Slunj (Hr) police station. Upon entering the station, the officers present asked
the respondent for his documentation:

“Give me papers”

While they were checking their papers, the group-members expressed their intention to claim
asylum and one of the police officer answers them:

“No asylum. Go Bosnia”

After they checked the documentation, the officers took all the respondents personal
belongings: tobacco, lighters, 250€, and a Samsung A5 2017 mobile phone. Once the officer
finished frisking them, the group-members were brought to a room where they were kept for
around four hours, without food or water (they did not ask for either).

At around 6:00 pm later that day, two police officers entered into the room and told the
group-members to follow. The respondent described them as wearing black uniforms, standing
at approximately 1.9 meters high, and having hoods on. Both officers were described as
having blue eyes. The group of three were brought to the White IVECO van and driven around
thirty minutes, again with no lights, the air conditioner turn on high, and variable vehicle
speeds.

At around 6:30 pm, the vehicle came to a stop and the group-members were told to exit one
at a time. The respondent was the first to get out of the van. He described the place as being
heavily wooded:

“It was a forest and there was a river”.

The two police officers told him to kneel and take off his shoes. He told them that he had a
problem with his feet however they hit him so he took his shoes off. One of the officers cut
soles of his shoes. The officers then started to hit him with batons in the feet and all around
the body while they were shouting him:

“Fuck Algerian” “Go Bosnia” “Don’t come to Croatia”

After struggling to stand up, the respondent ran away barefoot over the border to BiH and
walked around five kilometers back to Velika Kladuša (BiH).
LOCATIONS

Plitvička Jezera (Hr) - Approximate location where the group was apprehended by Croatian authorities
Slunj police station - Where the group described being held by Croatian authorities
Maljevac (Hr) - Where the group described being pushed-back by Croatian authorities
[Zoom in & out]
1 interviewee - Algeria - Group of 4
Recorded interview conducted on 15/3/19 in Sarajevo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - PHYSICAL VIOLENCE - VERBAL ABUSE - DESTRUCTION OF PERSONAL BELONGINGS - THREATENED BY SHOOTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was apprehended in the Croatian countryside in the region of Vrata (Hr). From there they were directly brought back to Velika Kladuša (BiH).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims</td>
<td>Number of victims: 4 Interview conducted in French Country of origin: Algeria and Morocco Age: one aged 21, 21, 28, and 30 years old Minors: No Sex: All males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date and time</td>
<td>The group left Bihać (BiH) on 8/3/19. Four days later, they were apprehended in central Croatia. On 13/3/19 they were brought back to Velika Kladuša (BiH) and pushed-back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Paper signed: No Fingerprint taken: No Pictures taken: No Asylum: They did not ask for asylum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The group left from Bihać (BiH) on the 8th March 2019 around 05:00 pm. After four - five hours they crossed the border and entered Croatia. The group walked for four days. All the time through rural areas, forests, hills, mountains, they even saw a bear with her baby. The group was equipped with a tent and sleeping bags.

On the fourth day the group had to cross a main street to enter another forest. It was in the region before Vrata (Hr). There police officers awaited them. The respondent thought that they were maybe tracking them down with night vision binoculars. It seemed as if they were waiting for the group to come out of the forest on to the road. „Maybe this street is generally under surveillance“ the interviewee said. It was around midnight when they got caught.

**“The policemen screamed Stop! Stop! and shot two times in the air.”**

The group of asylum seekers stopped, they have been told to stay here and wait. The only thing they were asked is how many they are in total. They were four policemen with two cars (both cars white in the size of a VW Polo). The officers all wore dark blue uniforms with the
emblem of Croatia on the upper arm, one of them had a binoculars hanging around his neck.

After not more than ten minutes a big white van arrived. Before they had to get in the van, they were frisked but nothing was taken away from them. It was a car maybe also used for prisoner transport. There was a separation between the drivers space and the back of the car with a little window. That was the only window for them. There was the driver and one other police officer in the front of the car.

When they started the motor to drive off, they also switched on the air condition on a very cold level. The air condition stayed on for the whole trip that took approximately three hours. The group tried it many times to knock on the window asking for turning off the air condition, but they did not react.

“Stop clima [air condition]! Stop clima! We shouted many, many times but they did not switch it off.”

Around 04:00 am the van Croatian police van arrived approximately 300 meters away from the first houses of the city of Velika Kladuša (BiH).

Some other policemen awaited them. The door got opened and they shouted „Hajde, Hajde, one-by-one come out!“. The respondent was the first to get off the van. Left and right there were two policemen standing, like an escort. Three of them punched the interviewee quite hard on the left thigh and the back with the batons, the fourth policeman run after him and punched him with the fist in his face, so one glass of his glasses broke (see picture below).

His friends got off after him. All of them tried to run as fast as they could but got beaten. The last member of the group got hardly punched on the back (see picture below)

“Go Bosnia! Hajde! Hajde!“

They shouted after them. Also they were insulting them, using ugly words in Croatian the respondent reports. Also they were laughing extra loud at them, they tried to torment them.

The policemen had a small with car with them VW Polo size. They were wearing the dark blue uniform and no ski masks. One was a bit older, maybe around 45 years old and had a belly, the others were around 30 years old, tall and strong, the reporting person describes them.

After some meters of running the group reached a very small river, it was so small that they could jump on stones to cross it. Then they walked to IOM Camp Miral outside Velika Kladuša.

In the end the interviewee asks the person conducting the interview if the police has the right to beat him up. He seems astonished that this should not be happening. Because it is happening so often it became normal, he said.
The back of one of the group-members after returning from the border.
The glasses of one of the group-members after returning from the border
[Illegal Push-Backs and Border Violence Reports]  
March, 2019

[Report 1.5]  
2 interviewees - Morocco - Group of 2  
Unrecorded interview conducted on 22/3/19 in Sarajevo

<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 captured by Croatian authorities near Glibodol (Hr). They were then transported in a vehicle to a location approximately an hour and a half away which the respondents described as a garage. They were kept there for four hours before being pushed-back in between Općina Donji Lapac (Hr) and Lohovo (BiH).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victimes         | Number of victims: 2 (However the group was pushed-back with another group around around 5 Pakistani men)  
County of origin: Morocco  
Age: 26, 29  
Minors: no |
| Date and time    | The group was captured on 19/3/19 at around 4:30pm and detained in a nearby building for an hour and a half. After this, they were driven an hour and a half to a garage at an unknown location, kept there for four hours, and later pushed-back at around 2:30 am on 20/3/19 |
| Details          | Paper signed: No  
Fingerprint taken: No  
Pictures taken: No  
Expressed intention to seek asylum: Yes |

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The two men stopped in an abandoned house inside the village of Glibodol (Hr) at around 11:00 am on March 19th. The house was small, one-story building made out of bare, white brick with a red tiled roof. The men slept outside the house on the terrace, which was covered, in sleeping bags.

The men slept until they were woken at around 4:30 pm by three officers: two were described as “regular” police officers and one was described as being a “military” officer. The regular police officers were described as wearing dark, navy blue uniforms adorned with Croatian police emblems. They had caps on and carried pistols and batons. The “military” officer was described as carrying a 60 cm wooden baton, which was wood-colored. He wore a jacket and trousers, which were olive-drab, and had no hat on.

The officers woke the two men by saying, ‘Hello, Hello.’ The officers spoke only a little English but told the men to stand up and searched them, taking their phones and power banks; the men would not see either of these again.

The officers then took pictures of the men. They told the men to pick up their belongings, however one of the group-members forgot his sleeping bag in the hurry to collect his things.
After this, the men were led 400 meters to another house. On the way, one officer asked one of the group-members why they had come to the location. The man responded that

“There’s a storm, we just want to hide from the snow.”

The man then asked if the officer could help them and that the man needed a doctor. He asked to be taken to a camp, not specifying any particular camp. The officer said ‘Ok, ok’. They led the men inside the other house where they encountered around 40 Pakistani men who had been caught by the police previously. In this building there were around seven officers: two female and five male. In addition, were also two officers dressed in military-style fatigues, equipped with semi-automatic rifles. All of the Pakistani men were standing up.

The officers put the two respondents in a separate room for around an hour and a half. They searched the men and their bags, but did not take anything from them, having already confiscated their phones and power banks. Occasionally the police would check on the men but did not ask any questions.

Eventually, the officers told all of the men to leave the house one-by-one, leading them out of the building into a police van. The interviewees were the last two, leaving the building after the Pakistani men. The group of Pakistani men were led to a van nearest the house which was empty. The men all entered into the van except for two. These two men joined the interviewees and walked to a second van on the opposite side of the road from the house that contained around twenty other people, all of whom were Pakistani. The men in this second van had not been held in the house previously. The four men entered into this van. At this point there were two police vans and two police cars. The police cars were described as being white in color with a blue stripe down the side and the word POLICIJA written in the middle. They closed the doors, there were no windows in the van and they could not see where they were going.

They drove for around an hour and a half. The journey was very bumpy and around five people were sick during this period, including one of the interviewees. They were unable to speak to the officers in the front of the van during time and the van was described as being cold. They took the men to a place “like a big garage.” It had three brick walls and one metal shutter. The men described that the garage appeared to be inside of a small military area. All of the men exited the van. They saw the other van that had been at the house, but it was empty and they did not find out what happened to the men who had been inside it. The garage had a stone floor with a thin plastic covering the floor. One wall was lined rubbish, some in plastic bags, some in open bins. The pile was several meters long and smelt like urine.

“It smelt like a bad toilet”.

The men were left in this place for 4-5 hours.

“It was freezing cold, you couldn’t sleep because of the cold. Our clothes were wet from walking in the snow.”

Inside the garage there were no police officers, they were shut inside with no water, no food and no toilet. People were forced to urinate in the corner. After two, hours the shutter opened and two officers entered. They took fifteen to twenty of the men and led them outside and then closed the shutters again. After a further two hours, the shutters opened and the remaining men were led to an open area around 300 meters from the garage, walking in a single file straight line. To keep people in line the men were hit with large metal torches on the legs and arms. The men were led towards two officers dressed in military-style fatigues with black fabric masks covering their faces and holding semi-automatic rifles.

“We were like chickens, I didn’t want to remember that moment. We were like animals”.
The men then stopped. The officers with the rifles then asked the men, "Who speaks English?" One of the interviewees responded that he did.

"The men said, tell everyone, that if you come back we will attack you".

One officer with a rifle walked at the head of the line and the other at the rear, the men were made to walk. One of the men walked outside of the line to use his inhaler, he is asthmatic, and was hit on the chest with the butt of a rifle, but not hard enough to leave visible marks. They walked for around fifteen minutes through the snow and ice. They walked over a mountain. After fifteen minutes the officers led them to a track that was well trodden.

"It was snowing, it was really hard to keep walking."

They then walked for an hour until they reached a main road. They then walked all the way back to Bihać, arriving back at 6:00 am. On the way they met many people also making the trip back to Bihać, who had also been pushed back.
The string of houses near Glibodol (Hr) where the group described being apprehended by Croatian authorities [zoom in & out]
The stretch of border near Lohovo (BiH) where the group described being pushed-back by Croatian authorities [zoom in & out]
Drawing of the house where the two men were initially apprehended by Croatian authorities
[Drawn by the respondents]
Drawing of the garage where the two men described being detained for a period of four hours

[Drawing by the respondents]
3 interviewees - Morocco and Algeria - Group of 6
Unrecorded interview conducted on 25/3/19 in Sarajevo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - PHYSICAL VIOLENCE - THEFT - DENIAL OF ASYLUM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was apprehended by Croatian authorities near Donji Vaganac (Hr) They then described being pushed back from Croatia to BiH at an unknown location approximately 20 kilometers away from Bihač</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims</td>
<td>Number of victims: 6 (The group was pushed-back with an estimated two dozen other individuals) Country of origin: Two were from Algeria and four were from Morocco Age: between 20 and 30 years old Minors: no Sex: All males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date and time</td>
<td>They were apprehended on 21/03/19 at the approximative time of 8:00 pm. They were pushed back during the night near Bihač the day after, on 22/03/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Paper signed: No Fingerprint taken: No Pictures taken: No Asylum: Yes - ignored</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The group of six men crossed the border from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Croatia near Vikići (BiH) on the evening of March 21st by foot. After some 300 meters of walking into Croatia, they heard a car approaching. The car’s lights were switched off. The car stopped at some distance, then came closer and stopped again. Three policemen got out of the car, pulled out their guns and told the six men to stay where they were. They asked “Where do you go?” The migrants replied “Azyl, azyl!” The policeman said “Ok azyl, walk!” They were told to walk some 300 meters further into Croatia.

At that point, a van with more police officers arrived, meaning that there were then eight to ten policemen in total, with one dog. The officers all wore dark blue uniforms. They told the six group-members to empty all their pockets and to place their money and phones on the ground. They were then told to kneel on the ground and hold their hands behind the head. The policemen then poured the contents of the men’s bags on the ground. One of the migrants had a sausage in his bag. When the dog approached and began to eat the sausage, the policemen laughed and allowed it to continue.

The six group-members were told one-by-one to go to the police car where they had to put
their hands on the car and spread their legs as they were searched. One of the men had attempted to hide his phone and when the officers found it, they beat the man with a baton on his fingers, elbows and knees. The man bled from his knee, elbow knuckles (see pictures below).

The group-members were then told to enter the backs end of the van where the air conditioning was turned on and it was very cold. After an estimated hour and a half of driving, the van stopped at a police station where the group was made to enter a garage. Inside the garage, there were already dozens of other migrants. The respondents did not notice women or children among them. One of the respondents described the garage as follows:

“*It smelt like in a dirty toilet. I apologize for the word choice, but there was shit, piss and garbage all over the floor. The smell was very bad. The garage was not very big, but there were so many people inside.*”

The same respondent told that while entering the garage, he asked the policemen for water to drink but they just laughed and closed the door. After an estimated hour and a half of waiting in the garage, the police came to open and told all those present to enter into five large vans. In the vans, they again started the air conditioning on a very cold level.

The vans disembarked and after an estimated two hours of driving, the five vans stopped. The migrants were told to get out and find themselves in a mountainous area. It was in the middle of the night. The policemen had a bag filled with mobile phones and gave it to one of the many migrants and said “*here you are*”. They then stood aside and laughed while watching how the migrants - most of whom did not know each other - had to sort out which phone belonged to whom. The main interviewee said that his phone (a Huawei) was not in the bag, and neither were the phones of several other persons

“The *more expensive phones are kept by the police. They return only the less valuable phones*”.

He commented on the practice of returning the phones in one bag as follows

“The *they do that in order to cause an affray among the migrants and to make fun of us.*”

An officer then asked “*Somebody speaks English?*” to which the respondent replied that he did. In turn, the the officer then shouted at him angrily that “*This is Croatia, here is Croatia!*”

Then the group of several dozens were told to stand in a line (two by two persons) during which time the policemen hit several people with their batons to push them into the line. Seven policemen who did not have guns with them then walked the line of men an estimated twenty minutes into the forest until they reached what was probably the border. The police then told them to go to Bosnia.

At first, there was no road. Later they found a road and followed it. The group of six men stopped in an abandoned house and slept for a few hours. On the next day, March 22nd, they resumed walking and arrived to Bihać around 4:00 p.m. On the same day, they took a train to Sarajevo. The interviewees estimated the total distance from the place where they had been let out of the vans to Bihać as around twenty kilometers.
Donji Vaganac (Hr) - Approximate location where the group described being apprehended by Croatian authorities (44°54'25.6"N 15°43'57.8"E) [Zoom in & out]
Images of Injuries

Right hand (picture taken on 22 March 2019, i.e. some 20 hours after beating)

Left hand (picture taken on 22 March 2019, i.e. some 20 hours after beating)
Hands (picture taken on 25 March 2019, i.e. 4 days after the beating)

Elbow (picture taken on 25 March 2019, i.e. 4 days after the beating)
Knee (picture taken on 25 March 2019, i.e. 4 days after the beating)
[Report 1.7]
1 interviewee - Morocco and Algeria - Group of 6
Unrecorded interview conducted on 25/3/19 in Sarajevo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - PHYSICAL VIOLENCE - GUNSHOTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Attempted to cross near the Croatian town of Donji Vaganac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims</td>
<td>Number of victims: 6 (4 from Morocco and 2 from Algeria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview conducted in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview conducted in Arabic with translator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country of origin: Algeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age: one aged 25 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minors: Yes, one 17-year-old male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex: All males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date and time</td>
<td>The group were apprehended by the police at 6:00 am in the morning on Tuesday March 21st, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Paper signed: No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fingerprint taken: No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pictures taken: No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asylum: They did not ask for asylum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

On March 21st, at around 6:00 am, the group of six men walked along a dirt road which was large enough for vehicles. They passed a large sign saying “Welcome to Croatia” and continued down the road for twenty minutes at which point they saw a Croatia police officer wearing a dark blue uniform. The officer had no hat on but carried a pistol and a baton. The respondent held up his hands and said

“No problem, I go Bosnia.”

The police officer made a call on a walk-in talkie and the men ran away in the direction they had come from. The man heard the officer shoot the pistol into the air about ten times as they were running. They ran for ten minutes and crossed the border back into a Bosnia until a white jeep with the Croatia police insignia on the side drove up behind the men. The car stopped and another officer exited the car yelling

“Stop! Stop!”

The three police brought the men back to the across to the other side of the border so they
were in Croatia. At this point the respondent recalled one police officer striking them while one stayed in the car and another watched. He described being hit in the arms and the legs many times, along with his other group-members, for a period of around five minutes. The police screamed “Go back to Bosnia.”. The men ran away crossing the border again. They were not followed by the police. The men walked for two kilometers to a town they think may have been Rujnica (BiH) where they slept in a forest near the town until nightfall.

LOCATION

General area near Donji Vaganac (Hr) where the group described being apprehended by Croatian authorities
On the March 2nd at around 4:00 am the young man took the bus from Sarajevo (BiH) to Livno (BiH), a small city close to the border to Croatia.

"I tried three times."

For the first attempt the respondent left Livno on March 3rd in the morning. Croatian authorities caught him approximately one kilometer before he entered the city of Sinj (HR). The respondent asked for asylum, the policemen told him that he can’t ask for asylum and drove him back to Bosnia, approximately four kilometers outside Livno (BiH).

In the evening of the same day he tried again. He was walking to Sinj (HR) during the night. After around seven hours the same thing happened. He got caught and brought back to BiH in the morning of March 4th.
On March 6th, the respondent left Livno (BiH) in the evening at 8:00 pm to attempt to cross the border again. He walked in fields parallel to the road R416 to the direction of Caipićku (Hr), in Croatia the road has the number 219. The young man walked six to seven hours till he arrived in Sinj (Hr). Around 6:00 am he took the bus from Sinj to Split (Hr). Around 8:00 am he arrived in Split, where he took a bus at 8:45 am to Rijeka (Hr). It was a big bus from a company named “Globtour“. The bus stopped for ten minutes in Zagreb (Hr) and then continued the trip. There were around twenty people in the bus.

In the village of Crikvenica (Hr), at sometime between 6:00 and 7:00 pm, the bus had to stop because of a police checkpoint. The police checkpoint consisted of two small police cars, both the size of a VW Polo. Approximately six police officers were present and two of them entered inside the bus. One stayed with the driver while the other checked the passengers. The officer told the respondent

“Give me papers!”

In response he answered that he doesn’t have papers. After this, the policeman told him to come with him.

The officers drove him to the police station in Crikvenica (Hr) which took approximately fifteen minutes. The respondent described the station as a small building. First they brought him to an office with five or six officers inside. They took his phone away and asked him from where he traveled from. He showed them the tickets and they saw that he started his trip in Livno (BiH). The officers told him: “Okay, we will bring you to Zagreb and then to Livno.” After this, the officers took down his personal details and made the respondent sign the paper with his personal details. On the paper were also some sentences in Croatian which he didn’t understand. They did not translate this to him. When an officer gave him the paper to sign, the respondent asked for asylum. The officer responded: “Okay, we will take you to Zagreb now, there you can ask for asylum.” After this they brought him to a cell, where he stayed for around two hours. All the officers in this station were wearing dark blue uniforms which had a star on one of the upper arms and a cap.

At around 9:00 pm on March 7th they took the young man to Zagreb (HR).

“In Zagreb they started to beat me”

Two police officers drove him in a small car to Zagreb, which took them somewhere between two and two and a half hours. The respondent attempted to talk to the policemen in the car during this time:

“I asked them what will happen to me now and so on, they were friendly, they said you will get asylum there.“

At around 11:00 pm they arrived at the main police station in Zagreb (see picture below). First he was brought to an office on the ground floor and was asked identification questions again. They wanted to know his travel route, his name, his country of origin.

“They ask me where are you from, when I say Algeria they start beat me.”

Two police officers were sitting on the desk and three others standing between the respondent and the door. The first punch came from one of the policemen behind with a
baton.

“They start with the stick, then with the hand also, with the legs, with the foot, they beat me with everything. In the back, in the head also on the ear.”

The respondent described that he fell down when they kicked his legs. On the ground he tried to protect his head with his arms, but they punched his face with their feet. The whole incident took about seven to eight minutes, the interviewee estimates. The policemen hit him, then they stopped, he stood up again, then they hit him again. Each time the young man hoped that they are finished, then it started again. The reporting person shows the pullover he was wearing with blood on it (see picture below).

Also, they were shouting at him and humiliating him in Croatian.

“They were speaking pičku mater, jeben ti majka. I understand everything. Motherfucker, fuck your mother’s pussy.”

After the beating they continued with the interview. When they were finished he had to sign two pages written in Croatian language “with a lot of text and stamps on it”. No one translated it to him. The interviewee asked:

“Is this paper for asylum?”

The officer replied:

“No. It is for that you will go back!“
“You don’t have any right to ask for asylum.”

The respondent explained:

“I did sign it and not ask for asylum anymore because I know that they will beat me again, that they will do everything with me. I want to stay friendly that they don’t beat so much.”

That whole procedure took approximately somewhere between 30 and 40 minutes. They took a picture of the man but no finger prints. Afterwards three police officers escorted him to a cell. Inside the cell they hit him again and cursed him. “Smirti, jeben ti mater, jeben ti everything.”

“You are garbage, I fuck your family, I fuck your blood.”

One of the officers stayed outside the door, two came inside and used the batons to beat him on the back, on the back of the head, on the legs, on the shoulders.

“When they pushed the baton into my stomach, I fell, then they hit my head.”

After two or three minutes it was finished and they closed the door. He was alone in the cell from approximately 12:00 pm - 08:00 am. The respondent described that the officers were
all wearing the same uniform as in the first police station: dark blue with a cap.

In the morning one officer picked him up, told him to take all of his things, and come with him. The respondent reported that:

“In the morning they didn’t beat me, because there were a lot normal people to see it. In the night it was empty, just police."

Then they took him to a small car with three policemen.

“You will go back to where you came.”

The driving took approximately four and a half hours. Around lunchtime they arrived at the border between Sinj (Hr) and Livno (BiH), at the Kamensko border crossing. The Croatian policemen took him to the office of the Bosnian border control and gave him back his phone. Then Bosnian officers took him to Mostar (BiH) and let him go.

**LOCATIONS**

The man was apprehended outside the city of Crikvenica (HR).
The respondent recognized the building of the main police station in Zagreb (HR) as the place where he was detained for a night

[Petrinjska ul. 30, 10000, Zagreb, Croatia]
Kamensko Border Crossing station where the interviewee was handed over to Bosnian authorities [zoom in & out]
IMAGES OF INJURIES AND DAMAGES

A wound above the respondent’s eye, four days after the beating.

The respondent’s shoulder, four days after the beating.
The pullover he wore on the day with blood traces.
The four men started their journey in the early morning of February 10th by taking a bus at 7:00 a.m. from Mostar (BiH) to Posušje. They arrived to Posušje around 8:30 a.m. and then crossed the border by walking. They crossed the border not far from the official border crossing at Gornjani Vinjani. After an estimated two hours of walking, they reached Imotski (Hr) and from there, they took another regular bus to Split. From Split, they continued with another bus to Zagreb (Hr). They arrived at Zagreb bus station in the afternoon of February 10th.

When they exited the bus four policemen who were present within the station asked them for their documents to which they responded that they did not have any. After two more policemen had joined, the group-members were told that they would be taken to the police station. Two policemen stayed in the bus station while four left with the group. They were transported to the police station in a blue Volkswagen with some black on it. After somewhere between ten and fifteen minutes of driving, they reached the police station.

In the police station, all four men were handcuffed. They did not have to sign any papers, but
were told to write their names and were photographed. The policemen reportedly did not believe that the youngest of the migrants was indeed only 17 years old. The four men asked for a translator but were told there is none. The policemen asked them where they had crossed the border, and they said that they entered Croatia between Posusje and Imotski.

The respondent described an exchange in the police station after as follows:

One officer asked the group

“*What do you need in Croatia?*”

They answered:

“We want to have *asyl* in Croatia.”

The policeman told them:

“No *asyl* here in Croatia, go back to Bosnia”

The interviewee asked

“*Why* no *asyl*, we are in the capital of Croatia here.”

The policeman said

“No, you cannot stay in Zagreb or in the rest of Croatia. It is closed. You can take *asyl* in Bosnia.”

When the respondent asked “*Why*?” again, the policeman slapped him and his three friends on the back of their heads. Then the policeman and four of his colleagues started to beat the group-members on their arms. The five policemen who were beating wore dark blue uniforms.

In the police station, the officers took their money, phones and power banks (in total 400€, 4 phones and 4 power banks) as well as their luggage. When the respondent inquired about his bag, since he wanted to eat some of his food in there, the police refused him. The men were not given food or water by the police during their time interactions with the police in Croatia.

In total, the four men were kept in the police station for around twenty minutes. After this, four other policemen arrived who wore black uniforms and had their faces masked. They had batons and guns with them. The four policemen told them to get into the back of a large blue van. There was a camera on the ceiling of the back area. The four group-members’ hands were still handcuffed during the whole of the transport.

After several hours of driving, the van arrived to the official border crossing between Imotski and Posušje). It was dark by now. The Croatian policemen made a phone call, and after less than five minutes four Bosnian police officers arrived by a big, black van. The Bosnian policemen were wearing black uniforms with white letters *Polićija* on their back. The Croatian policemen took the handcuffs off and returned the four migrants their bags, however they did not return them their money (400€) and their four phones. They then pulled out their batons, beat the four men and said

“Don’t come back!”
The Bosnian policemen then told the men to get into their van and drove with them for an estimated 20 to 30 minutes, a distance of around twenty kilometers. They stopped in a forest, and the reporting person said he could not see any lights. On the ground there was some snow and it was very cold. The four Bosnian police officers then told the migrants to leave and not to return to Mostar. The reporting person asked the police to bring them to Mostar and explained that the migrants would not stay there but take a bus or a train to Sarajevo. But the policemen refused that, and they threatened:

“You won’t come back to Mostar! If you come back, we will put you in prison. Or we will take you over the border to Montenegro”. They started to threaten the migrants with their batons and again told them to leave.

The four men then started to walk in the forest but stopped after a while. It was a very cold night. They had food with them in their bags and they managed to make a fire but they could not sleep. They spent the rest of the night in the forest.

On the next morning, February 11th, they resumed walking. After an estimated five kilometers, they met a Bosnian man who was very tall. They told him their story and asked him for money to pay for bus tickets to Sarajevo.

“He was a good man”

He gave them some money and showed them the direction to walk to the bus station of Mostar. After another fifteen kilometers of walking (estimated), the group reached the bus station of Mostar without being seen by the police. They bought tickets and returned to Sarajevo by bus.

LOCATIONS

The group was initially apprehended by Croatian authorities at the Zagreb bus station.
The group was handed over to BiH authorities at the Vinjani Gornji border crossing 43.4601109, 17.2848895 [Zoom in & out]
[Report 1.10]
1 interviewee - Algeria and Syria - Group of 6
Unrecorded interview conducted on 27/3/19 in Sarajevo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - PHYSICAL VIOLENCE - THEFT - PUSHED INTO WATER - THREATENING WITH FIREARM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was initially apprehended by Croatian authorities near at night in Croatia near Skradnik (Hr) and were later driven in a car for two hours to a secluded area along the Bosnian-Croatian border and pushed-back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims</td>
<td>Number of victims: 6 (3 from Syria and 3 from Algeria) Interview conducted in English with translator Country of origin: Algeria and Syria Age: n/a Minors: No Sex: All males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date and time</td>
<td>The group left Bihać on 21/03/19 and were apprehended three days later during the evening of 24/03/19. They were pushed-back to BiH several hours later on the same day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Paper signed: No Fingerprint taken: No Pictures taken: No Expressed intention to claim asylum: Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

The group of six people were apprehended on March 24th at approximately 11:00 pm by two Croatian police officers in the area of Skradnik (Hr). The officers wore black uniforms and had a Mercedes-Sprinter van. The officers pointed their firearms towards the group and made them sit on the group. One of the officers called for backup and explained that there were six people, three from Syria and three from Algeria. The police checked the group’s bags and belongings before taking their phones and putting them in a bag.

One of the officers asked the group where they started had embarked from, to which one of the group-members responded Bihać. One of the group-members expressed his intention to claim asylum, however one of the officers responded

“No not in our country”.

The six group-members then entered into the officer’s vehicle which drove them directly to a secluded section of the Bosnian-Croatian border. Along the way, it was dark and it was cold, because of the turned on air condition. The police drove recklessly and dangerously, being described as breaking and exhilarating often.
The officers opened the van at which point the respondent described seeing four different police officers: three male and one female. They too, were dressed in dark black uniforms. It was too dark to recognize their faces.

The officers made them exit the vehicle at which point the three male officers began striking them with batons while the female officer was described as insulting them in English. Whilst trying to avoid the officer’s batons, the group ran into a nearby waterway which marked the border between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. While the group crossed over the river the officers laughed and shouted at them to go back to Bosnia. Once they reached the other side of the stream, the officers threw the bag of phones after them.
1 interviewee - Algeria - Group of 4
Unrecorded interview conducted on 27/3/19 in Sarajevo

Type of incident

| PUSH-BACK - PHYSICAL VIOLENCE - USE OF DOGS - DESTRUCTION OF PERSONAL ITEMS - THEFT |

Location

The group crossed the border from BiH to Croatia close to Bihać and were later apprehended several miles further into the interior by Croatian authorities in Zaklopača (Hr). The group was then taken to a police station in an unknown location before being pushed back to BiH near Željava (Hr).

Victimes

Number of victims: 4 (Later on, the Croatian police joined the group with about 15 more people)
Country of origin: Algeria
Age: 19, 22, and 25 years old
Minors: no
Sex: All males

Date and time

The group crossed the border from BiH to Croatia on 2/2/19 at approximately 10:00 pm and were apprehended a short time later, before midnight. The police held the group at a police station for around two hours or three hours. The group was then pushed-back in the morning of 3/2/19 at around 6:00 am.

Details

Paper signed: No
Fingerprint taken: No
Pictures taken: No
Asylum: They did not ask for asylum.

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

The group of four men started their journey in Bihać the evening of February 2nd. At around 10:00 or 11:00 pm, they crossed the border to Croatia and walked towards Jezerce (Hr) from where they intended to continue to Zagreb.

After an estimated hour of walking into Croatia, and not having reached Jezerce (Hr) yet (approximate coordinates 44.8785459, 15.6968122), a car approached them. The motor was turned off, and after a short while four or six dogs were released from the car. They ran towards the four people. The respondent reported that a dog bit him into his left leg, close to the ankle, however the dog’s teeth did not enter his leg because he was wearing two layers of trousers due to the cold. The man was then able to find a secure place by climbing a tree.

Three or four policemen then exited the vehicle. They wore blue uniforms and on their sleeves there was an emblem containing the letters “POLICIJA”. The policemen ordered the dogs to sit down and told the respondent to come down from the tree.

The interviewee reported that he then asked
“Please give me asylum papers so that I can rest in Croatia for a while, I will then continue my journey to another country”.

The policemen laughed and replied “no”. The respondent described attempting to escape by running away, but soon being caught by the dogs again. The police officers were then described as becoming physically violent with the four group-members, using batons and their fists to strike the men. While hit the group-members, one of the policemen reportedly said

“Fuck you, you are a big fuck you!”

The respondent said “Don’t touch me!”, but they continued beating all parts of the body, including the face. The interviewee estimated this exchange to have lasted five to ten minutes in total. After the beating, he had lost three teeth and his nose was bleeding. He said that he suffered heavy pain after that. The pictures on the following pages depict how the injuries over seven weeks after the incident.

The policemen later made a call and a van with three more policemen arrived some time later. The four group-members were handcuffed and told to enter the backspace of the van. There were no seats but except for a plank in the back space. They were transported for approximately one hour in the van until they reached a police station at an unknown location.

In the police station, the police officers took all money the four men had with them (350€ in total) and their mobile phones. The officers first checked the phones in order to find out which route they had taken from the Bosnian border to the place of their capture. The officers then put the phones on the floor and crashed them by using their heavy boots and the handles of their batons. In addition, they broke the SIM cards of the phones. The men were not given any papers to sign nor were photos of them taken. They were then locked into a cell where they waited for an estimated two hours.

Around 4 a.m. on February 3rd, police officers came to their cell and took them into another van. In the van were an estimated fifteen other people who had previously been captured by Croatian authorities. The respondent reported that the van was quite small and was very packed.

“They transported us like luggage.”

During the drive which lasted an estimated two hours, the heating in the backside of the van was turned on very high. Among the other van passengers, two Iranians passed out during the drive. The respondent pointed out that the police did not support these two men in any way after the transport,

“They did not give them medication, juice or at least water”.

The van stopped in a forest when it was still dark. The respondent estimated the push-back location to have been between Željava (Hr) and Baljevac (BiH) but was not able to verify this as his group did not have any phones anymore since they had been destroyed in the police station.

The policemen told the people to get out of the van and to hand their shoes and bags over to the police. They then cut through the shoulder straps of the backpacks and set fire to a part of the shoes. Meanwhile, the policemen were laughing.

“They talked to us like with dogs, with animals - they do not treat us like humans”.
One of the policemen made a call and after some time a Bosnian police officer arrived on foot some distance away. Several of the Croatian police officers went over to him and had a short conversation before returning back. They then said “Go Bihać, go Bihać” and physically pushed the group to walk in the respective direction. There was no road, and on the ground there was covered with with fallen tree trunks and thorny plants. The interviewee said that the Croatian policemen used flashlights and a kind of binoculars to make sure that the migrants did not deviate from the specified direction. The Bosnian policemen watched what was happening but did not do anything.

After an estimated four hours or fifteen kilometers of walking, the group reached Bihać.
The approximate location in Zaklopača (Hr) where the group was apprehended by Croatian authorities.

[zoom in & out] 44.8785459, 15.6968122
The approximate location near Željava where the group was pushed-back by Croatian authorities - 44.8187871,15.7223125

**IMAGE OF INJURIES**

Three teeth missing (picture taken on March 27th, over 7 weeks after the incident)
Scar on nose (picture taken on March 27, over 7 weeks after incident)
On March 19th, the group of six took shelter in an abandoned house near Rakovica (Hr) due to the cold weather and snow which the group had been exposed to on their attempted transit journey. Subsequently, they decided to make a fire to keep warm.

At around 1:00 pm, two police officers approached the house and discovered the group’s presence. Accordingly, the officers ordered the group to go outside. The police officers called for backup, after which two other police officers arrived. Without communicating further, the two officers became violent with the group. One of the migrants was kicked in the back by a police man and injured his knee because he felt down (see photo below). After this, the police officers did a full body search of the group-members. Subsequently, the group-members’ phones, power banks and official documents were taken away from them.

Soon after, the police officers told the group-members to get into a van and brought them to Zagreb (Hr). In Zagreb the migrants were taken to a police station and put into a cell. Here the migrants were taken one-by-one to have their fingerprints taken.

Afterwards the migrants were put in a van and brought back to the Bosnian-Croatian border where the police officers told the migrants to go to Bosnia. The migrants didn’t have any phones with them at this point and did not know which direction to go. Accordingly, they searched for a long time to find their way back to Velika...
Kladuša. Their phones, power banks and official documents were not returned to them by the police.

IMAGES OF INJURIES
[Report 1.13]  
1 interviewee - Morocco and Algeria - Group of 10  
Recorded interview conducted on 20/3/19 in Velika Kladuša

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - THEFT - DESTRUCTION OF PERSONAL ITEMS - DENIAL OF ACCESS TO TOILET - DENIAL OF ACCESS TO FOOD &amp; WATER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was initially captured by Croatian police in Buzet (Hr)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victims          | Number of victims: 10 (1 from Morocco, 9 from Algeria)  
Country of origin: Morocco & Algeria  
Age: n/a  
Minors: No  
Sex: All males |
| Date and time    | The group was apprehended on 17/3/19                                                                         |
| Details          | Paper signed: Yes  
Fingerprint taken: No  
Pictures taken: No  
Expressed intention to claim asylum: Yes |

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

The group of ten men crossed into Croatia from BiH and travelled on foot for ten days through the interior before being stopping in a mountainous, forested area outside of Buzet (Hr) to eat some food. During their meal, the group was approached by two Croatian police officers dressed in army green fatigues, similar in description to the uniforms of the Ministry of the Interior’s Specijalna Policija.

The officers told the group-members to stand up and inquired as to whether any of the men were carrying any weapons. The officers then conducted a body search of each group-member and forced them to undress. After this, the group-members bags were searched. Subsequently, the officers looked through the mobile phones that the group was carrying in order to see the locations that they had saved through their mapping applications. The officers also looked through the Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp accounts of the group-members and looked through the saved images within the phones as well.

The officers also took the power banks, phones and passports of the group-members and called for other police officers to arrive to the scene. The group-members expressed their intention to claim asylum in Croatia however they were told “No” by the officers who then laughed at them. Shortly after this, a group of six police officers, five male and one female, arrive to the scene in a van and told the group-members to enter into it.
The group-members were the left inside of the van for 18-19 hours during which time they were deprived access to food, water and toilets. The group-members were transported inside of the van the next day to the Bosnian-Croatian border, at a location around 20 kilometers away Velika Kladuša. At the border, the police officers present delivered the group’s power banks and phones back to them inside of a bag and told them to “Go, go Velika Kladuša” and that it was 5 kilometers away to Velika Kladuša. The officers struck each group-members twice with a baton.

One of the group-member’s iPhone 6 was missing from the bag. In addition, the group-members passports were not returned to them.
REPORTS OF GROUPS APPREHENDED IN SLOVENIA

2 Reports
[Report 2.1]
3 interviewees - Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran - Group of 13
Unrecorded interview conducted on 25/3/19 in Sarajevo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - THREATENED WITH FIREARM - FAMILY SEPARATION - DENIAL OF ASYLUM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group entered Slovenia near Zilje (Sl), and was apprehended around 2 km from this town in the Slovenian interior. The group was then kept in a police station near Veliki Nerajec (Sl), after which they were transported again to another Slovenian police station in an unknown location. They were then transferred back from Slovenia to Croatia on unknown highway border crossing. Finally, the group was pushed back from Croatia to BiH between Veliki Obljaj (Hr).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victimes         | Number of victims: 13  
Interview conducted in English  
Country of origin: Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran  
Age: 24, 26, 26, 26 years old, the oldest was about 50 years old  
Minors: Yes, 5 children between 7 and 14 years  
Gender: 3 adult women, 5 adult men |
| Date and time    | Journey started on 3 March 2019.  
Apprehended on 11 March around 9 a.m.  
Kept in two Slovenian police stations until morning of 12 March.  
Pushed back from Slovenia to Croatia and from Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 13 March |
| Details          | Paper signed: Yes  
Fingerprint taken: No  
Pictures taken: No  
Asylum: Yes |

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The group of twenty-four started their journey on March 3rd from Velika Kladuša (BiH) and crossed the border into Croatia near Miljkovići (BiH). The group walked mostly in the nights and slept in the forests. After several nights of walking, they ran out of food (except of some bread, walnuts and raisins). Eleven people decided to leave the group at this point and voluntarily go to the Croatian police who then took them back to Bosnia. The rest of the group, thirteen persons, decided to continue their journey towards Slovenia. Among the remaining group-members were five children between 7 and 14 years old, three women and five men.

After a total of eight nights and two days of walking, the group reached the border between Croatia and Slovenia on March 11th and entered into Slovenia at around 9:00 a.m. near Zilje (Sl). They crossed the Kolpa river by foot, with the water reaching their upper thighs. The father of the reporting family had to cross the river twice because his wife, who had her
menstruation and was generally weakened after the long walking, was not strong enough to carry any luggage through the river. There was heavy rainfall and the group was described as being quite wet and cold after crossing the river.

After another hour (approximately two kilometers) of walking into Slovenia, the group was apprehended by two Slovenian police officers who approached in a Renault Megane police car. One officer was male and of young age while the other officer was female. The female officer was described as being very angry, pointing with her gun at the group and shouting at them. She then put her gun directly at the temple of an Afghan man.

The two police officers made a call and shortly thereafter arrived two vans with two or three policemen in each of them. The police officers were wearing dark blue uniforms and had guns, batons, handcuffs and sprays on their belts. On their sleeves, there was a hexagonal or pentagonal emblem with the Slovenian flag and the letters “Policija”.

Two policemen led the son of the respondent family (aged 14 years old) away from the group without telling the parents where they would take him. The parents were very worried. It was noticeable during the interview how much this experience had unsettled them. The father told one of the policemen he wanted to go with his son, but was denied and taken gruffly by his arm and pushed into one of the vans. All of the men were told to get into the same van, while the women and the children had to get into the other van. The backspace of the vans had no windows and was very dark. There was just a small plastic window of maybe seven centimeters height through which they could see into the driver’s cabin. On the ceiling of the backspace, there were two ventilators. It was very cold in there.

The father of the reporting family said that the air in the car was very bad. He pointed out that he had never before had to vomit in a car, but during the 30 minutes transfer which followed he had to throw up twice. All other persons in the men’s van had to vomit as well. In the floor there was a kind of a hole where the vomit would go. When he put his nose to the crack between the wings of the back door and got a little bit of fresh air, he could get some relief. The father was under the impression that some kind of gas had been let into the backspace to make them vomit. He did not recognize a particular smell or a color of the air in the van. The men knocked on the van’s walls and shouted to stop the car and let them out. The policemen, however, just shouted back “Šuti! Šuti!” (“Shut up!”). In the women’s car, several people vomited as well, but the mother of the reporting family could not specify whether most or all of the persons in there were vomiting because she was so much absorbed by worrying about her son. After some thirty minutes of driving, the vans reached a police station near Veliki Nerajec (Sl). Once outside of the car, the sickness faded soon.

Meanwhile, the policemen who went with the son told him to show them where and how the group had crossed into Slovenia. By using the proper road (instead of the way through the forest which the group had taken), they reached the river within some 30 minutes. The policemen asked the teenager

“Would you like to stay in Slovenia?”.

When the boy said yes, they asked him why. The teenager said that Slovenia is part of the Schengen area and the economic and employment situation is much better than in Bosnia. The policeman answered “Ok”. The teenager asked him

“What can we do so that we can stay in Slovenia?”.

The policeman just replied:
“You can’t stay in Slovenia”.

The teenager asked him several times why they could not stay, but each time the policeman just answered:

“I don’t know”.

The teenager was then taken into a police car (a Volvo), driven to the same police station as the rest of the group and reunited with his parents.

In the police station, the group was given fast food. One by one of them was asked a series of questions, for example where they come from. The father of the reporting family told the policemen that he wanted to stay in Slovenia. They asked him

“How do you want to live here?”.

He replied that he wants to work. After that, they just said

“No, you just go back!”

After a while, the policemen took the group’s bags, put them into plastic bags, and searched everybody including the children. The group’s money and mobile phones were also taken at this point.

“They took everything except the clothes we were wearing. They took even our shoes and gave us slippers instead.”

All belongings that contained metal, such as their razors, nail clippers, scissors, needles and earrings, were thrown in a bin. The father of the reporting family then had to sign three or four papers, all of which were written in Slovenian. There was a translator present, however he did provide a translation for what was written on the papers. The father did not get a copy of the papers he had signed.

After an estimated three hours in the first police station (near Veliki Nerajec), they were told to get into two vans again. Inside the van, they again had to vomit. After approximately twenty minutes of driving, they reached another police station. In there, they were assigned one room per family. The room was warm, they were given food, blankets and sheets. The room did not contain a bathroom, but there was a toilet. They stayed in this location for one night.

In the next morning, two cars transported them to the Croatian border. The border crossing was on a highway. No river was visible. The Slovenian police gave the group their luggage back and handed them over to the Croatian police. The Croatian policemen were wearing dark blue uniforms. They told the whole group of thirteen persons to get into one van and to take their luggage with them into the van. During the following transfer, they had to vomit again.

After approximately one hour, the car stopped at a Croatian police station of unknown location. The two employees inside were wearing plain clothes. The people of the group were told to write their name on a paper and to hold this paper in front of their chest. The officers took pictures of them in this position. This was done one by one, also for the children. After that quick stop, the transfer in the van continued. Again there was vomiting. The father of the reporting family described this transfer as follows
“I just wished that nobody would speak to me, my head was hurting so badly and I was feeling so sick. I was feeling as if I would be dying.”

His son reported that there were no seats with seatbelts in the van, just a board at the wall where they could sit. Some children and also his mother fell down on the van’s floor.

“We were like zombies. I did not feel anything else but vomit and headache.”

After some an hours and a half, the van stopped in a rural, hilly location along the border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, east of Velika Kladuša, near Veliki Obljaj (Hr). The respondents described seeing a small road for tractors. There were villages nearby. The group had their phones and money returned to them but not their hygiene items which the Slovenian police had put into a bin. The Croatian policemen then said

“Hajde! Ideš, marš!”.

On their way to Velika Kladuša, they noticed dozens of broken phones on the roadside. After an estimated twenty five kilometers of walking, the mother of the reporting family fell down from exhaustion. It was already dark. They then reached a restaurant and asked the locals inside for help who then called the local police who took them to a hospital.

The Bosnian police acted friendly, according to the reporting family. After some two hours in the hospital, the mother was given a serum and the family went to Miral camp in Velika Kladuša. From there, IOM personnel brought them by car to the camp in Bihać. They arrived around 3:00 a.m. on March 13th.

In the end of the interview, the mother of the reporting family stressed that she will never forget this experience.

“Our deportation from Slovenia is one of the worst experiences I have ever had. This journey is a very difficult memory for me.”

The father nodded and added:

“And nonetheless, we will have to try again. We do not have another choice. Where else should we stay?”
Approximate location near Veliki Obljaj (Hr) where the group described being pushed-back by Croatian authorities [zoom in & out] 45.218623, 16.011921
1 interviewee - Algeria - Group of 6
Unrecorded interview conducted on 28/3/19 in Sarajevo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>PUSH-BACK - DENIAL OF ASYLUM - DEATH OF A GROUP-MEMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>The group was apprehended in the Slovenian interior on the 106 highway, near the village of Krkovo nad Faro (SI). After this they were taken to a police station around 30 km away from where they were apprehended. The next day they were driven to the Croatian border handed over to Croatian authorities at a highway crossing and detained in a Croatian police station before being pushed-back to BiH by Croatian authorities later that same day, approximately 16 km outside of Velika Kladusa (BiH).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Victimes         | Number of victims: 6
Interview conducted in English
Country of origin: Algeria
Age: One aged 27 years old
Minors: no
Sex: All males |
| Date and time    | The group left Bosnia on 15/3/19 and walked across Croatia for 12 days before reaching the Slovenian border. They crossed the Slovenian border at 5:30am on 24/3/19 and were apprehended by the Slovenia police several hours later at 9:00 am. They spent the night in the police station at approximately 10:00 am on 25/3/19 the group was driven around 30 km to a Croatian border checkpoint. From the border checkpoint, they were driven around two hours to a police station in the Croatian interior. From there, they were driven another two and a half hours to the Bosnian-Croatian border and pushed-back. |
| Details          | Paper signed: Yes (Slovenia and Croatia)
Fingerprint taken: Yes
Pictures taken: Yes
Asylum: Yes |

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

The group of seven men left Sarajevo on March 15th, 2019. They reached the border of Croatia in the day time and proceeded to walk through Croatia for 12 days. At approximately 5:30am on the morning of Sunday, March 24th, the group reached the Kulpa River and the border of Slovenia. One man decided to cross the river over a shallower, rocky area that led into a waterfall. The other 6 men decided to cross downriver from him. They all began to cross at the same time. The respondent led the group of six. The water was up to his chest and he navigated with a large stick. The group downriver were about halfway across the river.
when they heard a shout and saw the man stumble and fall on the rocks. He fell down the waterfall and into the water. He was carrying a blanket and a backpack of clothes and the man believes this caused him to submerge very quickly. All the men were screaming, but the man disappeared very quickly and the others felt they could do nothing. They quickly crossed the river and did not see the man reemerge at all. They were worried about the police and keeping quiet so they proceeded uphill from the river. The man said

“We were very tired and wet and we didn’t care anymore after seeing what happened to our friend.”

The group, now six people, walked through the forest until they reached a highway which the respondent described reaching after around three hours. At this point the man said they felt too tired to continue and were ready to give up. As they walked along the highway they were quickly stopped by an army truck. The man described the truck as having a camouflage pattern and being a pick up truck. There were two army personnel inside: one male and one female. They both excited the car carrying semi-automatic weapons. The respondent described that:

“The woman was showing off by pointing the gun at us.”

The army personnel asked if the men had any weapons on them. The army personnel called the police and three police cars arrived shortly thereafter along with two undercover police cars. There were six uniformed police officers present at this point. They wore dark blue uniforms emblazoned with Slovenia police badges and Slovenia flags. Two additional males were plain clothes police officers. The officers also called for a van which later arrived and was a light green and white color.

Each group-member was searched and their phones and power banks were taken. The respondent described that the he and the other group-members did not say anything about their friend who had been taken by the river to the police, since they had previously heard about another group who had told the police that their friend had died and the police responded with more violence. The van took the men back to the place on the Kulpa River that they described having crossed at. The policeman got out of the car and took pictures of the supposed crossing. They drove to a police station which the man described as being about 30 kilometers from where they were apprehended. They arrived at around 11:00 am. There were no windows in the van and they were driven directly into a garage within the station. The six men were taken into a large room and given flip flops, blankets and lunch. There were two bathrooms accessible from the room. A police officer made the respondent take out his earring and everyone had to hand over their jackets. After eating, each man was fingerprinted, asked for names and had pictures taken of them. There was no official translator present and one group-member translated for the others from English to Arabic with the police. Each man was given a paper with his name on it and the group-members inferred that these were papers which would allow them to begin the asylum process in Slovenia.

“We all thought we were getting asylum.”

One Algerian group-member who had previously been pushed from Slovenia to BiH was very excited, because the police had not registered or fingerprinted him previously or given him papers.

“The police seemed friendly and said they would take us to a camp.”
They had to sign many papers, however none of the papers were translated and no explanation was offered in what they were signing. The man remembered seeing the amount 450€ and inferred that this was a fine for illegally crossing the border. The men were later given dinner and were held in the room overnight. The next morning the respondent described that

“We knew something was wrong when a police officer came to the room in the morning and asked for the blankets and ‘asylum papers’ back.”

At around 10:00 am on March 25th the group was loaded into the same van from the day before and driven another 30km. They saw through a crack in the door that they had arrived at what looked like a border checkpoint. The car stopped and the police officers exited the car. They were held in the car for another 25 minutes during which time they overheard the Slovenian police officers speaking with someone outside of the van. They were not allowed to go to the bathroom so one man had to urinate in the corner of the van. The men were let out of the van and they could see they were at a Slovenia-Croatian border checkpoint. They were then led into the border station. One police officer collected their bags and turned the entire contents out onto the floor and stepped on their belongings in order to “search” their bags. One Croatian police women watched and laughed.

Each group-member had to sign a paper in a language that they did not understand. Each man was then given a card with their names on it. The respondent believed that the Slovenia police had given their information to the Croatian border police. The officer took pictures of each man holding up the card with their name and other information on it. The Croatian police officers did not speak to them or explain what was going on. They were loaded into another van and driven to a police station. The journey from the border to the police station took about two hours. They waited at the police station for around 20 minutes before six Pakistani men were also loaded into the van. They then were driven approximately 2.5 hours to the Bosnia border.

The respondent described the drive as “very fast and jerky.” He described falling around in the back of the car throughout the drive. At the end of the drive, the doors of the van were opened and each man was given back his phone. The respondent described being dropped off 16 km from Velika Kladuša and having to walk two hours before reaching the town.
The approximate location along the 106 highway, near Krkovo nad Faro (SI) where the group was apprehended by Slovenian authorities [zoom in & out] 45.486567, 14.900020
REPORTS OF GROUPS APPREHENDED IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

1 Report
1 interviewee - Algeria - Group of 4
Unrecorded interview conducted on 8/3/19 in Sarajevo

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

The group left on February 24th from Nikšić (MNE) with the intention of continuing onwards towards Bosnia and Herzegovina. From there they took a bus up to the border of BiH to Vilusi (MNE). They crossed into BiH and slept in the woods several hours. At around noon on February 25th, they walked into the town of Bileća (BiH). In Bileća two police officers in blue uniforms, which were described as being similar to uniforms of Republika Srpska police officers, recognized the group. The four started running away from the police, all in different directions, attempting to escape. The interviewee ran into a blind alley and accordingly gave up. The two police officers present were described as handling him roughly, forcing him onto the ground at which point one officer put his foot on the interviewee’s neck and the other began to beat him with a police baton. They were surrounded by houses. On one house the window opened and an elderly lady looked out and shouted at the police officers to stop.

“This woman saved me!”

The officers stopped and put the man into handcuffs and waited for the car to come and pick them up after which they drove him to the Vraćenovići border crossing in Deleuša (BiH). There he was asked by the police to give money for a bus which would take him to another town.
farther in Montenegro, however the interviewee responded that he did not have any money on him. The border police were described as warning him to never come back to BiH and that if he did, they would break all of his bones. After some waiting, they gave him over to the Montenegrin border control authorities.

“You know Montenegro police don't love Bosnia police.”

The interviewee described the hand over as being quiet and quick. The Montenegrin border police asked him why he was in handcuffs and what he did, since the handcuffs were unusual. Soon after, the Montenegrin border police asked if he would like to go back to BiH, he said yes, and was actually driven back to the border of BiH by these authorities and let out. He crossed again into BiH and made it finally through Mostar to Sarajevo.

“The government makes war in our mind. I am here to take a rest.”
Deleuša border crossing (BiH) - Approximate location where the group was pushed back by BiH authorities [Zoom in & out]