



NO NAME KITCHEN

BORDER VIOLENCE

SPECIAL REPORT

MARCH - OCTOBER 2023

THE BLOODY BORDERS PROJECT



In recent years, EU state actors have spent billions to fortify their borders in efforts to block the migration of people who can't access to safe passage when seeking for a better life. A significant part of those resources are used to fund pushbacks, meaning the informal expulsion of people from one country to another without due process. They differ from regular deportations because they are not backed by any legal framework.

Since 2017, activists from No Name Kitchen are present at the borders of the EU, supporting people on the move to satisfy their basic needs, building mutual trust and collecting the testimonies from those who suffer violent pushbacks and other abuses.

This report is part of the initiative "Bloody Borders" to raise awareness among the civil society about how the taxes of the EU citizens are used to torture other human beings and to advocate for the transformation of the cruel EU's borders regime.

SOMETHING IS COOKING

Steam is rising, the stoves are burning with a strong flame, and people are coming in and out with trays full of testimonies, recordings and documentary evidence. What is going on in that kitchen?

Several months have passed since No Name Kitchen (NNK) decided to leave the Border Violence Monitoring Network in solidarity with the people who denounced workplace abuses. Although this was a traumatic decision —because NNK was the co-founder of this collective project —, being able to continue our monitoring and denouncing work according to our values, was also liberating. No violence should remain invisible.

Since then, at NNK we have continued to collect testimonies of border violence, giving value to every story and every nuance. However, we have also known how to pause the publications, take a step back, and analyze how we can enhance the impact of our reports in order to reach more people and generate more awareness about the illegality of what is happening. Also, about our responsibility as European citizens in what we allow or do not allow our political representatives to do.

To achieve this, we have a plan: in our reports, we are going to include testimonies of illegal pushbacks across borders, and also of rights violations perpetrated internally, in every detention camp, in every forest, in every abandoned building, widening our range of action to cover the different types of violence — administrative, psychological, physical and symbolic — that happen around the control of migratory movements.

We will go further and will also provide, along with the testimonies, a section of legal analysis that allows us to explain, in a simple way, why border violence is a breach of the legal, national, community and international framework; and finally, whenever there is documentary evidence,

we will try to develop a medical analysis of the physical consequences of border violence, in order to give our audience the possibility to corroborate the veracity of every testimony, according to the conclusions by health professionals with experience in the borders.



*Injury caused by a blow with a truncheon by the Hungarian border police.
Photo: NNK*

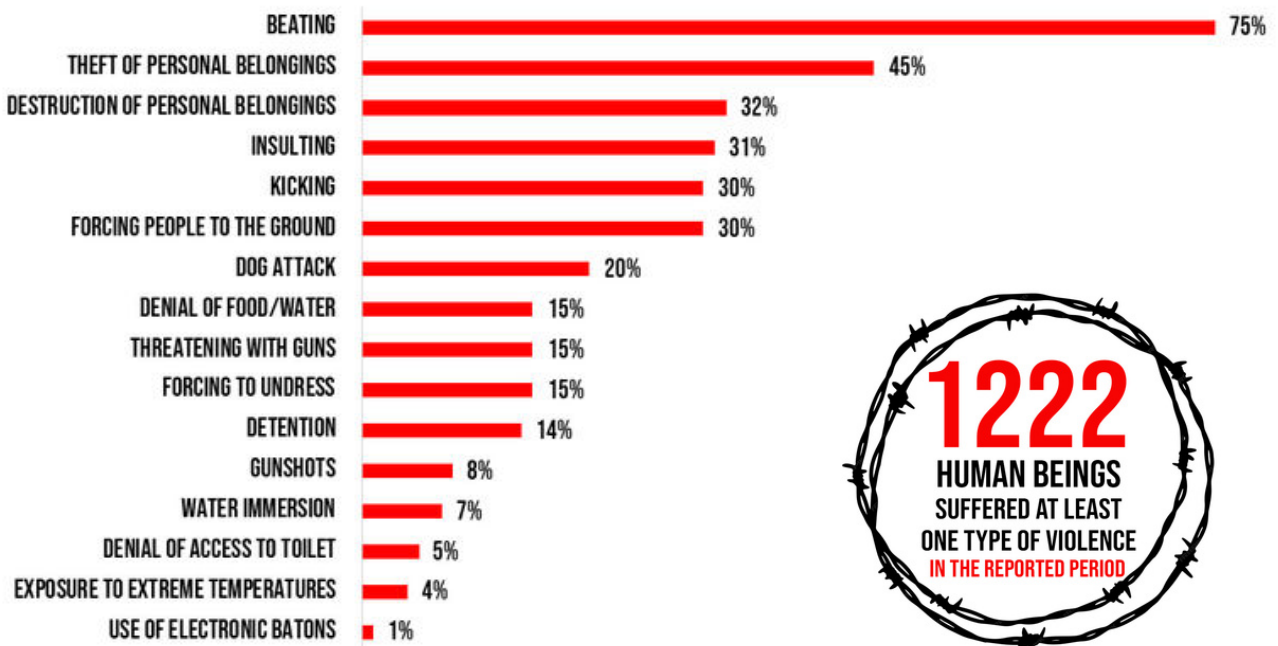
All the testimonies collected by NNK and the other groups that are joining the cause will soon be published on the 'Bloody Borders' project's website, which is still under construction. Nevertheless, it seemed reasonable to share an update of what is being cooked up. This is why we want to share with you a first sample, including a compilation of near 70 reports of border violence that have been produced in recent months, highlighting a case that took place at the border between Bulgaria and Turkey in order to investigate the legal and documentary part of it. In addition, we are also including a summary, in figures, of the reality that we observe every day on the borders of Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Bulgaria, Italy and Morocco.

We hope that, despite its high content of racism and cruelty, you find this report easy to take in, and that everyone feels invited to contribute with critical ideas and suggestions to improve our way of denouncing violence.

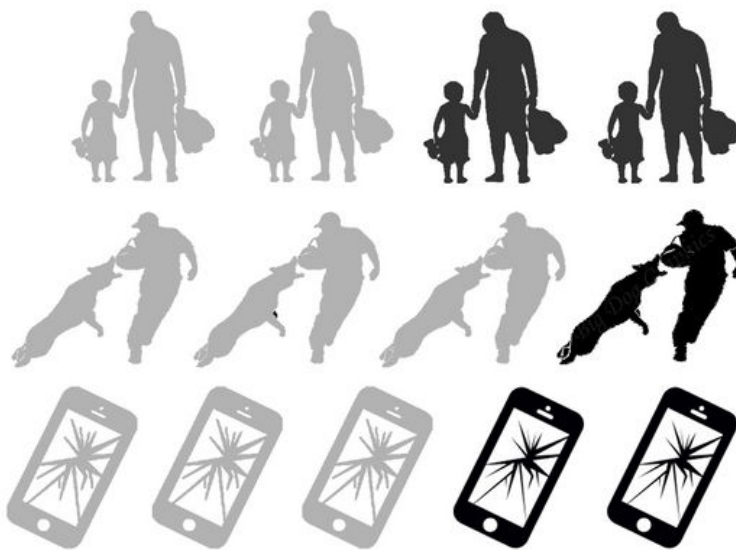
BREAKDOWN OF BORDER VIOLENCE FIGURES

The following breakdown analyzes 67 border violence reports, including 49 pushbacks and 18 episodes of internal violence, collected by NNK teams between March and October 2023. These reports have been produced by field reporters following NNK’s methodology to ensure consistent, facts-based and detailed descriptions, prioritizing the use of direct quotes from the survivors and minimizing the risk of re-traumatization during the interviews.

TYPES OF VIOLENCE USED DURING THE REPORTED PERIOD



1222
HUMAN BEINGS
 SUFFERED AT LEAST
 ONE TYPE OF VIOLENCE
 IN THE REPORTED PERIOD



43% PUSHBACKS INVOLVE MINORS

20% SUFFERED DOG ATTACKS

32% SUFFERED THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR BELONGINGS

As for the spectrum of aggressions, it includes direct physical violence, either against people on the move or against their basic necessities such as food or shelter; or specific threats of imminent and direct physical violence, arbitrary detention, torture, psychological violence, theft and the destruction of personal property.

WHERE ARE THESE PUSHBACKS HAPPENING?



Disclaimer: This map represents exclusively dynamics of border violence reflected in the testimonies collected by No Name Kitchen teams in Ventimiglia, Rijeka, Bihać, Šid and Subotica.



HIGHLIGHTED PUSHBACK REPORT: FROM BULGARIA TO TÜRKIYE

“When the dog bite us, they laugh”

The main respondent of the pushback is a 24-year-old man from Afghanistan, who travels alone within a group of 25 Afghans between 18 and 24 years old.

“Ten times I tried to cross there and ten times the police pushed me back; the last one, two weeks ago”.

According to the respondent, on 19th July, a group of 25 people, all of them from Afghanistan, were walking in a Bulgarian forested area. The respondent reports that the transit group came from Istanbul and managed to cross the Bulgarian border. He recalls that once in Bulgaria, the group walked for five days.

The respondent did not remember the exact place where they were caught by the police, but he recalls the number of the road being 53.

The respondent states that on the fifth day, while they were walking, a vehicle approached the group. Due to the stress of the situation, the respondent is not able to remember the color of the vehicle, but according to him, the vehicle had a Bulgarian flag on the sides. He recalls that three men dressed in uniform stepped out of the car.

**Not being able to remember certain details of situations is commonly connected to trauma and how human brains process and store information after traumatic situations.*

The respondent is not able to remember the color of the uniforms or any details due to the stress of the situation*, but he recalls them wearing *“the typical Bulgarian police clothes”*. The respondent reports that the police officers had a dog on a leash.

The respondent states that the police officers forced them to take their clothes and their shoes off and then, started to beat them with electric shock sticks *“and with any other thing they found on the floor”*. The respondent recalls how the police officers ordered the dog to attack them, *“when the dog bit us, they laughed. They were even talking in English with the dog”*.

According to the respondent, after the beating, the Bulgarian police officers put all the people from the transit group in cars and pushed them back to Turkey.

“They took even the food we were carrying. When they dropped us in Turkey we didn’t even have shoes”.

No possibility of asylum request was given to the group, and the respondent states that they were taken directly to the border.

MAP OF THE PUSHBACK

On July 19th the transit group is apprehended near the town of Yambol, after walking for 5 days.

The respondent recalls crossing road 53 before being assaulted by the Bulgarian Border Police.

Apprehension zone

65km to Turkish border

BULGARIA

Pushback area

TÜRKIYE

GREECE

As the respondent states, the group was taken directly to the border, without any possibility to claim asylum.

After the beating, the Bulgarian Border Police officers put all the people from the transit group in cars and pushed them back to Turkey.

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Image Landsat / Copernicus

LEGAL ANALYSIS OF THE REPORT

Pushbacks are illegal by nature, but each one includes a particular chain of events that determine which laws are broken and how the victims could initiate legal actions to claim justice. Following is a legal analysis of the above-mentioned report:

Prohibition of collective expulsions, enshrined in art. 4 Protocol 4 ECHR and art. 19 (1) EUCFR

The pushback was carried out in breach of the **prohibition of collective expulsions, enshrined in art. 4 Protocol 4 ECHR and art. 19 (1) EUCFR**, as well as the principle of non-refoulement, codified by the Geneva Refugee Convention and considered as a principle of jus cogens: the member of the transit group were not given the possibility to formalize their request for international protection, as clearly stated in the present testimony: *“According to the respondent no possibility of asylum request was given to the group, and he states that they were taken directly to the border”*. Adding to this, people in transit were coming from Afghanistan: COI (Country of Origin Information) available on the subject are nowadays unanimous in stating that Afghanistan is an extremely dangerous country, where people, in the event of return, run a serious risk of suffering torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and other irreparable harm.

Right to an effective remedy (art. 2 ICCPR, art. 13 ECHR, art. 47 EUCFR)

As a consequence, their **right to an effective remedy**- namely a way to challenge the denial of the possibility to access the asylum procedure (art. 2 ICCPR, art. 13 ECHR, art. 47 EUCFR) - was not granted, as no formal procedure was

started, and people on the move did not even get any information about the possibility to ask for asylum at any point; instead, they were taken directly back to the Bulgarian- Turkish border.

Moreover, the treatment enacted by the police officers towards them certainly amounts to **inhuman and degrading treatment**, as defined in art. 3 ECHR, as people were bitten by police dogs, forced to undress in the forest, hit with electric batons and other objects by police officers, and their belongings were stolen

Prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment (art. 3 ECHR)

As the ECHR Guide on art. 3 defines, with particular reference to **incidents involving state law enforcement personnel**: *“where an individual is [...] confronted with law-enforcement officers, any conduct by the latter vis-à-vis an individual which is considered to diminish human dignity and thus constitute a violation of Art. 3 of the Convention (Bouyid v. Belgium [GC], 2015, paras. 100-10)”*.

The same Guide also considers that: *“Treatment is considered to be “degrading” when it humiliates or debases an individual, showing a lack of respect for, or diminishing, his or her human dignity, or arouses feelings of fear, anguish or inferiority capable of breaking an individual’s moral and physical resistance”*

Right to the property, enshrined in art. 17 EUCFR, art. 1 Protocol 1 ECHR

Adding to this, people’s **right to the property**, enshrined in art. 17 EUCFR, art. 1 Protocol 1 ECHR was violated, as the officers stole people’s belongings.

EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICAL INTERPRETATION

For years, police, military and political representatives have denied the existence of systemic and institutionalized violence at the EU borders, accusing people of making up stories and even of self-harming. For those who monitor violence and witness the physical state in which people come back, this is unacceptable. Following, we include an interpretation* of the documentary evidence conducted by experienced border health personnel to assess, from a medical point of view, the degree of consistency between the verbal testimonies and the photographic material collected by the NNK team.



Lacerated contused wound approx. 15 cm in length. Dirty and potentially infected, at least a day old, amount of congealed blood.

In the proximal part of the wound, another more rounded, deeper, and still open lacerated contused wound is noted.

Medium extensive abrasion; second-degree burn; left scapula. The burn is heavily inflamed and exudative. A bruise is observed to the left of the elongated abrasion.

The bruise may correspond to a baton or a baton blow, and the burn may be caused by several causes, including electrical burn.



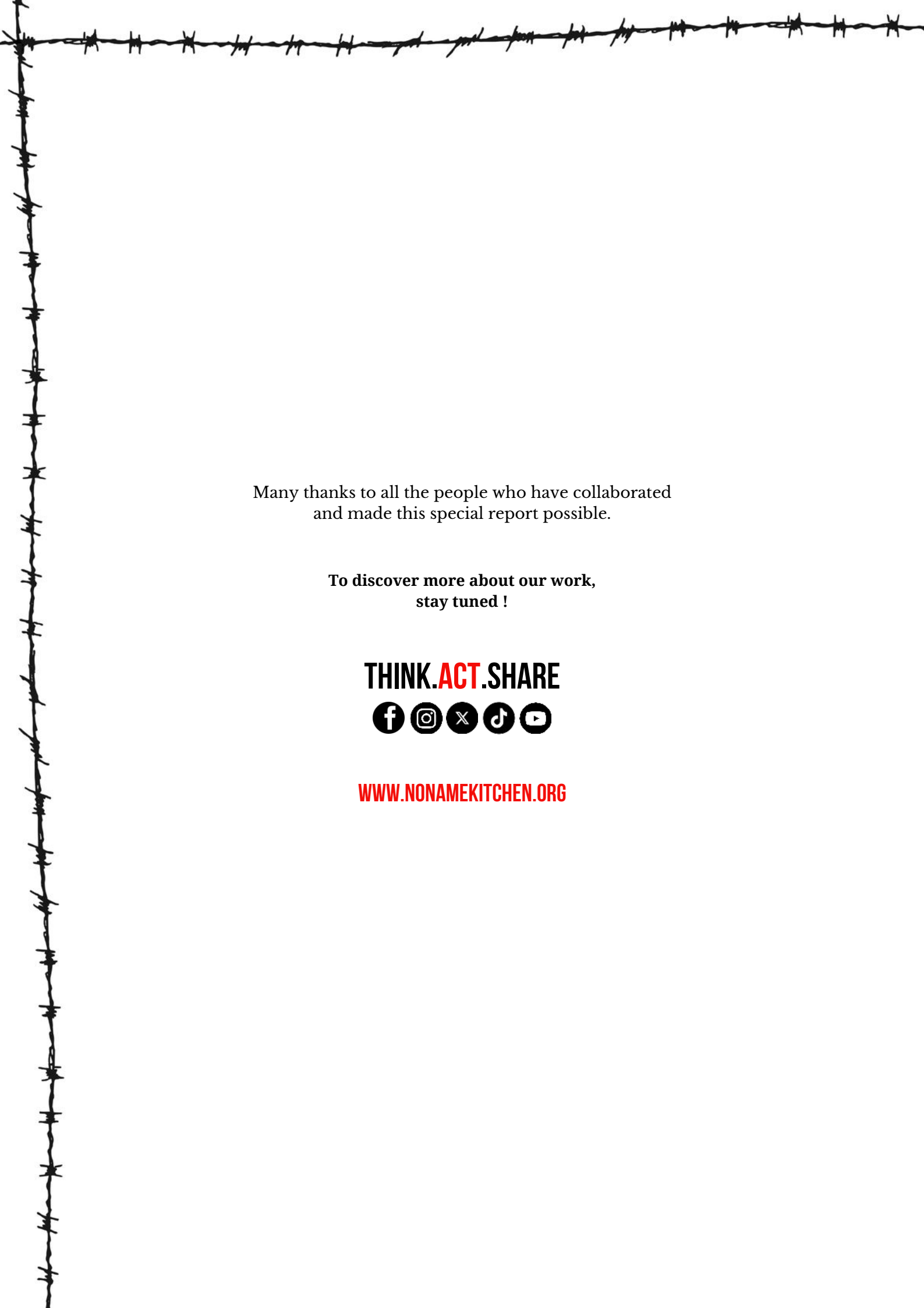
**Disclaimer: This is not intended to be a forensic medicine analysis in the legal sense, since this would require the face-to-face examination of a professional specialized in forensic medicine with license to operate in the territory where the person is being examined; and the examination should be carried out within 24 h of the violence suffered, fulfilling a whole series of other requirements to make a medical report useful for legal purposes. In short, another right denied to people on the move who are victims of violence.*

TABLE OF BORDER VIOLENCE REPORTS

DATE	LOCATION	TITLE	FILE
2023-03-15	Bulgaria	"The police enjoy what the dogs do"	download
2023-03-15	Bulgaria	The police started to insult them and to shot in the air.	download
2023-03-31	Bulgaria	"If you have a phone the police think you are involved in smuggling"	download
2023-04-12	Bulgaria	"The police left us there in our underpants and t-shirts"	download
2023-04-17	Hungary	"The police treat us like animals"	download
2023-04-24	Serbia	"The police entered the camp running, started beating everyone with batons"	download
2023-04-25	Bulgaria	"The moment the police saw us, they unleashed the dogs to attack"	download
2023-04-26	Serbia	"My 8-year-old brother, who was with me, was taken by the police"	download
2023-04-28	Bulgaria	"The officers stole our money and put it in their own pockets"	download
2023-04-29	Hungary	"The police were making fun of us. They were laughing"	download
2023-04-30	Hungary	"The police didn't respect old people, illness people"	download
2023-05-01	Hungary	"Even when I fell on the ground, one police officer kept on hitting on my chest"	download
2023-05-01	Bulgaria	They were obliged to sign documents without the presence of a translator.	download
2023-05-11	Hungary	"If you try to run, we will beat you up"	download
2023-05-15	Bulgaria	"The police took everything from me, even my humanity"	download
2023-05-15	Croatia	"When we asked for asylum the police said: 'You can't, we will deport you' "	download
2023-05-16	Serbia	"The police were hiding in silence, in the woods"	download
2023-05-18	Serbia	"When they catch you they beat you, [...] steal your money and bring you to Presevo"	download
2023-05-20	Bulgaria	"The police screamed 'fuck you' at him. He was 15"	download
2023-05-21	Hungary	"The police didn't speak to us, they just started beating us with sticks in the arms"	download
2023-05-21	Croatia	The police officers were shouting 'No asylum', and 'Hajde, hajde, hajde!' ('Let's go')	download
2023-05-22	Serbia	"The officer used his fist to hit him. Two children were watching. It was very bad"	download
2023-05-22	Croatia	"The more I cried, the more the police screamed at me and tried to hit me"	download
2023-05-25	Serbia	"A lot of people started running, others couldn't breath for the strong smell of gas"	download
2023-05-25	Bulgaria	"The police don't look, they just hit everywhere and the dogs continue"	download
2023-05-30	Serbia	"The officers just left me laying there. I crawled all the way back to the squat"	download
2023-06-01	Bulgaria	"It was the twelft time I tried to cross. The Bulgarian police are not human"	download
2023-06-04	Hungary	"The dog bit me in the face, [...] the children were screaming and crying"	download
2023-06-10	Bulgaria	The police took away all the member's money and their phones, backpacks and shoes.	download
2023-06-13	Serbia	"The police stole 100€ from me and beat my body with batons"	download
2023-06-16	Croatia	"I was scared about what to answer so I lied about our trip saying we came from Bosnia"	download
2023-06-18	Bulgaria	"We were in the water for 10 minutes to escape from the police shots"	download
2023-06-21	Bulgaria	"The dogs found out where we were and the police caught us"	download
2023-06-25	Serbia	"Now I don't have how to go to Europe and I am humiliated here"	download

TABLE OF BORDER VIOLENCE REPORTS

DATE	LOCATION	TITLE	FILE
2023-06-25	Hungary	"We weren't able to even move our hands from the pain"	download
2023-06-30	Hungary	"Two men punched me from both sides of my head and my friend's knee got dislocated"	download
2023-07-06	Morocco	"If you speak, they beat you"	download
2023-07-09	Croatia	The officer asked them to get down on their knees while pointing the gun at them.	download
2023-07-13	Ceuta	Administrative violence in Ceuta.	download
2023-07-19	Bulgaria	"When the dog bite us, they laugh"	download
2023-07-20	Hungary	Passport stolen before being pushed back from Hungary.	download
2023-07-21	Serbia	"The police started beating us, sometimes giving some punches and kicks"	download
2023-08-09	Croatia	In the course of the control one police officer smashed the phone.	download
2023-08-14	Ceuta	Pushback from Ceuta to Morocco by Guardia Civil.	download
2023-08-28	Ceuta	"The center's workers order the guards to exercise violence against them."	download
2023-09-04	Bulgaria	A nightmare in Strandzha forest: the horror at the border between Bulgaria and Türkiye.	download
2023-09-06	Croatia	From Syria through Serbia and Bosnia to Western Europe.	download
2023-09-06	Croatia	"We only want to pass through Croatia, we don't want to stay"	download
2023-09-08	Croatia	"I begged them to let us go to Germany, but they wouldn't let us and treated us violently"	download
2023-09-10	Bulgaria	"I don't know how many police there were, I just remember hearing the shots and running"	download
2023-09-19	Croatia	"I have lost all my photos, my memories, and my family and friends contacts"	download
2023-09-20	Bulgaria	"If you try to run, you will be beaten so badly you can't walk"	download
2023-09-22	Croatia	Shootings, beatings and nails ripped off.	download
2023-09-28	Croatia	"I was hit by the croatian police in the right eye and threw me to the ground"	download
2023-10-05	Hungary	Apprehension at Road A56.	download
2023-10-07	Croatia	"It's really hard, the Croatian police are really hard. I tried seven times, and they do this"	download
2023-10-09	BiH	"You are a stealer, Alibaba"	download
2023-10-17	Hungary	Two families violently pushbacked by Croatian police at the Serbian-Hungarian border.	download
2023-10-18	Croatia	"They didn't know what to do with us"	download
2023-10-19	France	"I have been in Europe since four years and I have never seen something like that"	download
2023-10-19	BiH	"I know I made problems"	download
2023-10-19	Croatia	The police started a big fire and threw all their belongings into the fire.	download
2023-10-20	Serbia	Police violence during eviction in Sombor.	download
2023-10-24	France	"We aren't asking Europe for anything. We just want to cross to join our families."	download
2023-10-28	BiH	On their knees, they watched their belongings burn.	download
2023-10-30	Croatia	Beaten and thrown into the river.	download
2023-10-31	Croatia	Pushed back with dogs.	download



Many thanks to all the people who have collaborated
and made this special report possible.

**To discover more about our work,
stay tuned !**

THINK.ACT.SHARE



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