

“They Refused to Call an Ambulance”: Death in Lipa caused by Deliberate Refusal of Medical Aid by Bosnian Authorities

Mukter Hossain, a Bangladeshi man, died in the Lipa Temporary Reception Centre (TRC) after medical care was repeatedly refused, highlighting deliberate negligence by camp authorities.

Lipa TRC is a facility intended to provide temporary shelter and basic services for people seeking asylum in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). On November 23rd, **Mukter Hossain**, a 41-year-old man from Bangladesh, died inside Lipa TRC after authorities refused to provide help during a clear medical emergency. His death cannot be understood merely as systemic neglect, but a **direct refusal to provide life-saving assistance**.

Mukter returned to Lipa on November 20th after being **illegally pushed back from Croatia while attempting to claim asylum**. He told residents that he had been beaten, including a heavy blow to the right side of his ribs with the back of a gun. Upon arrival at the camp, he was in severe pain and vomiting. The camp’s medical unit examined him superficially, only providing painkillers and antiemetic medication; there was no follow-up, diagnostics, or monitoring.

Over the following two days, his condition deteriorated rapidly. By November 21st, he could no longer eat or leave his bed. Residents repeatedly asked guards and camp staff to provide medical attention or call an ambulance. These requests were dismissed with excuses such as **“There is no medical staff now”** and **“We will send someone tomorrow.”** No care was provided.

On November 23rd, around 16:00, aware he was near death, Mukter called his family in Bangladesh to say goodbye. Shortly after, his breathing became irregular and laboured. He told those around him, **“I can’t breathe”** and **“I feel very cold.”** Witnesses describe clear signs of respiratory distress. Residents immediately went to camp police — the only authorities present that day — and directly requested an ambulance, explaining that Mukter could not breathe. Guards refused, saying **“We are eating right now”** and **“We will check tomorrow.”** This was not a misunderstanding; it was a deliberate choice not to act, despite the urgency and the possibility of saving his life.

At 17:15, Mukter Hossain died in his bed. Residents informed the camp guards, but no staff arrived for several hours. When they finally came, they confirmed his death. Witnesses report that security and camp staff instructed residents to **“not tell anyone what happened,”** threatened those who witnessed the negligence, cut off Wi-Fi throughout the camp, and delayed contacting medical personnel, who arrived much later that evening.

Mukter's death was preventable. Signs of acute medical distress - persistent vomiting, inability to eat or stand, and respiratory failure - were unmistakable. Emergency care was required and repeatedly requested. Authorities chose not to act. He was dehumanised to the point of fatal neglect.

His death also reflects the collapse of the medical system within Lipa TRC. Residents report that they rarely get to see a doctor. Official requirements for "minimum essential care" are not being met. There is no functional referral system, no access to essential medication or chronic illness management, and no psychologist despite severe mental health needs. These conditions allowed Mukter's repeated requests for help to be blatantly ignored.

Lipa TRC is managed by the Ministry of Security through the Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA), with technical support from IOM. SFA is the primary duty-bearer for healthcare and camp conditions. The Bosnian state did not merely fail in its responsibilities - it **actively ignored them**, causing the death of a man. Independent civil society reporting consistently highlights how overcrowded, isolated, violent, and medically negligent Lipa is. The forced merger of another transit camp, Borići TRC, into Lipa last year has further endangered families and minors. Mukter's death was not an accident; it was the foreseeable result of **deliberate non-assistance, chronic under-resourcing, a lack of referral pathways, and the decision by staff to ignore a person in a clear medical emergency**.

We call for immediate action:

- **Independent investigation** into the death of Mukter Hossain, including a full review of medical practices, staff conduct, and access to healthcare in Lipa TRC.
- **Immediate restoration of essential healthcare**, including daily medical presence, effective referral pathways, and guaranteed access to chronic-illness management.
- **Provision of mental-health support** delivered by qualified professionals.
- **Transparent and independent oversight**, including public reporting on medical provision and enforceable standards for healthcare access in all TRCs.

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