

Report on Push-backs from Slovenia to Serbia

Today, Moving Europe talked to people who have been pushed back in the night of the 16th February 2016 to Sid, Serbia. As media outlets confirmed, a train with 200 people has been returned from Slovenia, then to Croatia and to Serbian territory. These people are still stuck at the train station of Sid. The small camp is full, so a lot of people have been forced to spend the two nights outside. They have only received water and biscuits from the NGOs on site. But no one has informed them about what is going to happen to them now.

M, an individual from Afghanistan told Moving Europe what happened to him and a lot of his friends from Afghanistan, who have been returned together with him:

„We did not have problems traveling until the border to Slovenia. At the border the Slovenian police ripped apart our registration paper and wouldn't let us pass. We don't understand why. They asked us where we want to go and we said we want to go to Germany because there is war in Afghanistan. But they tore apart our papers and we had to go back to the Camp in Croatia. They told us to rest there and that they would fix our papers so we can travel on to Germany. But they lied to us. They locked us into Containers and told us to rest. But then they did not let us travel on to Germany, but forced us in to a train that went back to Serbia. Now we are back here, with many families and children. They lied to us. They didn't even let us go to the toilet. They forced us to go on the train and come back to Serbia. Now we are here and we don't know what to do. Can you help us? We have been sleeping outside for two nights and we only get biscuits and water. What shall we do now?“

These returns to Croatia are unprecedented. Although the push-backs to Croatia have been happening for an extended period, this is the first time that an official train brought people back directly to Sid. Previously, people were forced to walk back over the border on foot.

Furthermore, it is the first time that a large number of the people being pushed back are from Afghanistan and also some people from Syria and Iraq. These three nationalities have so far been allowed to travel on. There have been reports of border authorities in Slovenia asking people what their reason for travelling to Germany is. The authorities would only let people travel on who state that their reason for fleeing is war in their home country. As the group from Afghanistan responded precisely that, it is unclear why their registration papers have been destroyed and why they were forced back to Serbia. There is no legal basis upon which their push-back can be legitimised. They can only be read as a further indicator of the authorities' intention to close the corridor and reduce the number of arrivals in central Europe.

We call the responsible authorities in Croatia, Slovenia and Austria to explain this extra-legal action of denial of further travel and forced returns to Serbia. We further demand that these people be given new registration documents and be allowed to travel further to their country of desired destination on the official corridor.