



Border Violence Monitoring Network

Website: www.borderviolence.eu

Email: press@borderviolence.eu

Phone: +491631326652 (Signal)

Press Briefing - 19th November 2019

On Saturday 16th November 2019, a group of people-in-transit were fired upon by Croatian police with live rounds. The shooting occurred on Tuhobić mountain, Gorski Kotar (HR), an area close to the Slovenian border. One man was shot in the stomach and chest area and remains in a critical condition in a hospital in Rijeka (HR). The Croatian Ministry of Interior have stated this potentially fatal shooting to be an accidental outcome of regular border protection work. However, The Border Violence Monitoring Network are sharing their dataset of firearms incidents, proving the regular and systematic use of guns by the Croatian police during pushback operations. The statistics, drawn from the [common database](#), show:

- 19% of all recorded pushback cases from Croatia involved gun use, affecting 1279 people.

-In October 2019, 17% of recorded pushback cases from Croatia involved the threatening with, or shooting of firearms by police. This firearms use targeted a total of 285 people.

-In 2019, the pushbacks of 770 people from Croatia involved gun use. Of the 54 group cases:

-In 31 cases gunshots were fired by police officers

-In 33 cases guns were used to threaten respondents

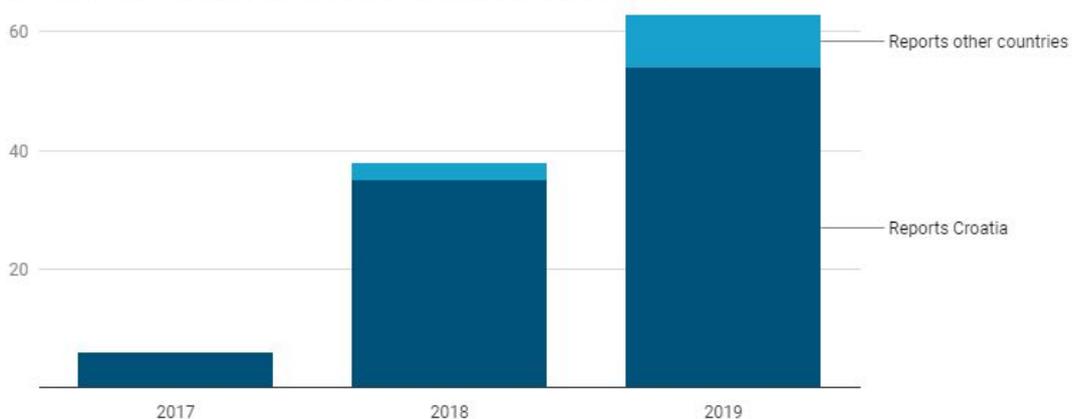
-Across the Balkan Region, BVMN has recorded 107 incidents of gun use by police, including:

-63 cases where gunshots were fired by police officers

-63 cases where guns were used to threaten respondents

Reports containing gun violence

Number of reports which contain "gunshots" or "threatening with guns" (or both of them)



Source: [BVMN-Database](#) · [Get the data](#)

EXAMPLES OF RECENT TESTIMONIES

Incident 1: “They started beating men with sticks, they beat me on my shoulder and back”

- **Date and time:** October 14, 2019 03:00
- **Location:** South east of Komesarac, Croatia
- **Coordinates:** 45.09186791983132, 15.769071046238082
- **Demographics:** 35 person(s), age: 2 - 45 (including minors aged 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8) , from: Palestine, Syria, Iraq

The group fell asleep only to be woken up at 03:00 in the morning of 14th October 2019 by rapid gun fire and shouts of, “Freeze!”. The family noticed ten men in the blue uniforms of Croatian police surrounding them, firing shots in the air:

“like in a movie, they forced all men to lie down on their stomachs with our hands behind our heads, women no, they were just standing aside”.

Not long after, the police ordered them to make a line and start walking, while the police was escorting the line on both sides, pointing their guns at them.

You can read the full report on this incident [here](#).

Incident 2: Family with a sick pregnant woman and children held at gunpoint

- **Date and time:** July 11, 2019 00:00
- **Location:** Glina, Croatia
- **Coordinates:** 45.34023774728486, 16.088041557009774
- **Demographics:** 6 person(s), age: 5 - 35 years old , from: Algeria

The pregnant mother of the family was hospitalized, and yet had her medication taken from her by police officers. The family begged for a chance to ask for asylum, but they were pushed back instead. The respondent, who had his child with him at the time, described a moment in which the officers began to use the guns to usher and point in the direction in which the group should continue while being pushed back from Croatia to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

“My child is crying: ‘Papa! Pistol!’”

You can read the full report on this incident [here](#).

Incident 3: Shooting guns to the left and right of a child's head

- Date and time: July 17, 2019 12:00
- Location: Prijeboj, Croatia
- Coordinates: 44.84371659999999, 15.676182899999958
- Demographics: 10 person(s), age: 6 - 30 years old, from: Pakistan, Syria, Palestine

A group of ten people, including a six year old boy, were apprehended by the Croatian police near the village of Prijeboj. The officers ordered them to sit, only to fire guns, barely missing their bodies. The shots frightened the young child to tears. The respondent recalled how:

“They fired at us! Not in the air, but to the left and right of our bodies. The small boy was afraid and crying.”

After being shot at, the group were taken to the infamous garage in Korenica police station, with no food, no water and no toilet. After the detention they were pushed back into Bosnia-Herzegovina.

You can read the full report on this incident [here](#)

These three cases stand out within a wider catalogue of violations which involve guns to threaten, intimidate, and almost wound. It is important to note that these cases are only those recorded by BVMN. The number of undocumented incidents, as well as those recorded by other agencies is thought to be far higher. All evidence of violent gun usage collected by BVMN can be found [here](#) in a combined document, listing every testimony that included firearms during pushbacks from Croatia. Along with the striking statistics, the weight of evidence presents the use of guns as more than an isolated aspect of the Croatian pushback regime. Instead, firearms are an embedded tool of violence, featuring in almost a fifth of all cases. As the recent shooting in Gorski Kotar confirms, a meaningful and independent inquiry needs to be carried out into the severe violations of Croatian police forces. Until such time, The Ministry of Interior will continue to follow a border security initiative which has clear life threatening consequences.

If you have further questions regarding this press release and it's content, or would like a comment from the The Border Violence Monitoring Network, please don't hesitate to get in contact via press@borderviolence.eu or by phone +491631326652 (Signal).

To find more from The Border Violence Monitoring Network visit the website, www.borderviolence.eu.