

04/03/2020

“THEY SHOOT ME IN THE ARM”



Date and time: March 4, 2020 10:00

Location: Near Pazakule BCP - Turkey

Coordinates: 41.65308144942135, 26.492536901042357

Demographics: 5 person(s), age: respondent 21 years old , from: Iran, Iraq, Algeria

Minors involved? Unknown

Violence used: gunshots, teargas

Police involved: Greek authorities with amour, tear gas launchers and assault rifles

Taken to a police station?: unknown

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: Unknown

Reported by: Balkan Info Van

ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent, a 21 year old male from Iran, arrived to the border of Turkey with Greece a week before the incident. He travelled by autostop from Ankarra (TUR) because he had no money to go otherwise. The respondent went to Erdine (TUR) where he joined with other people who had gathered at nearby Pazarkule border crossing (TUR), where the respondent had heard from televised news that the Turkish authorities had “*opened*” the border.

“*We want to go... but the way for us is not open*”

The respondent said at the time of interview that he had been “*protesting for eight days*”. The border to Greece was heavily defended from the GRK side, with police and military guarding the BCP and fence. The respondent remained in a makeshift camp on the Turkish side, and assembled everyday with the other people at the border hoping to be allowed to cross. Each time the people approached the border they were met with teargas and gunshots, forced to return back. He described the sleeping conditions back at the camp and how he and his friends had made their bed “*in the soil for eight days*” and the nights were very “*cold*”.

On the 4th March 2020, in the morning the respondent again assembled with a large group of other people (including a small transit group who he was interviewed with – made up of two Iranians, an Iraqi and an Algerian).

The respondent, together with many hundreds of other people-on-the-move headed to the border fence next to the BCP and from the Turkish side began protesting in order for their right to enter Greece. The Greek authorities on the other side of the border (divided by a

wire fence) responded aggressively, firing tear gas canisters from launchers and shooting across the fence.

The respondent recalls how the other Iranian man in his group was hit by one of these canisters in the chest, causing lacerations to his skin. Describing the actions of the Greek authorities the respondent said:

“They pointed their weapons at us [gesturing the shape of assault rifles]”

The respondent and others reportedly fled back away from the border. Describing this moment, he shared how they were *“very tired”* and had to *“flee”* from the Greek officers. As the large group of people ran back from the border the authorities from the Greek side began to shoot.

“They shot!”

The respondent and his friends ran back from the discharge of the weapons and as they ran they saw a man had fallen with a gunshot wound. He was bleeding from the ear and was described as *“shot on the ground”*. The respondent and his friends immediately came to the assistance of the man and helped him up off the floor. But having raised him, the officers from the Greek side fired further shots and one of them hit the respondent as he was holding the injured man.

“The shoot me in the arm”

The bullet shell punctured his left forearm and he also received a shrapnel wound to the right calf.



*Entry point of bullet casing (seen after stitching).
Photograph taken by Balkan Info Van on 8th February 2020.*





Exit point of bullet shell (taken after removal of bandaging by Balkan Info Van on 8th February 2020).

The respondent was carried away injured and went with others to the emergency department in Erdine (TUR) – **Sultan Murat State Hospital**.

He was treated there for his wounds alongside several others who had sustained injuries from the episode at the border.



Bandaging fixed to left forearm of respondent after bullet wound injury (Photograph taken by Balkan Info Van on 6th March 2020).

The respondent shared how he was confused by the extreme violence he had faced:

“I have problem, why? What sin I have? We are human too, we would like a life of peace”

He still had sever pain in the arm after the incident and was sleeping rough in the informal camp near Pazakule BCP when interviewed.



