

07/03/2020

“NO PLACE TO ESCAPE INSIDE”

Date and time: March 7, 2020 00:00

Location: Pazakule BCP (TUR)

Coordinates: 41.654762377142546, 26.494856263252327

Demographics: 4 person(s), age: 26, 20, 3, 2 years old , from: Syria

Minors involved? Yes

Violence used: water immersion, gunshots, tear gas, water cannon (with chemicals)

Police involved: Greek authorities (armed with mounted water cannon, assault rifles with rubber bullets and tear gas launchers). Turkish army and police, with jeeps and large military vehicles

Taken to a police station?: no

Was the intention to ask for asylum expressed?: No

Reported by: Balkan Info Van

ORIGINAL REPORT

The respondent, a 26 year old man from Syria, arrived at the Turkish border on Friday 28th February 2020 along with his wife and two young children (aged two and three years old). The family took a bus from Mersin (TUR) which brought them to Erdine (TUR), close to the border with Greece.

They went to the Pazakule BCP where the road leads out of Turkey and through Kastanies BCP to Greece. There, the family joined many thousands of others waiting to cross, sleeping in makeshift shelters “*in the open*” and with a consistent lack of water and food.

The location they camped in was dangerous because of the gas and water being launched over the border by Greek authorities based in Kastanies BCP. The respondent describes how he and his family spent the next ten days witnessing violence “*in every sense of the word*”.

On the 7th March in particular, the respondent describes how as it got dark the Greek authorities began spraying a water cannon across the fencing and launching tear gas cannisters into the crowd. The respondent states that during that night, he saw two people with severe respiratory problems to the extent that they were suffocating. He was also

concerned as a parent, because he had heard that a child had allegedly died from exposure to the gas.

The respondent shared that the demographic split was around 50% men, and 50% women and children. Referring to the evening of the 7th March 2020, the respondent recalls how the gas swept through the entire informal camp, and there was:

“no place to escape inside”

During the evening, as he and other groups of people approached the border barriers on foot, the Greek authorities continued to fire tear gas and use the water cannon. If anybody got too close to the border, the respondent described how the Greek authorities used assault rifles with rubber bullets, and fired at the people on the Turkish side.

“I saw them using gas bombs and rubber bullets”

The respondent also said that the fluid issued from the water cannon had a “virus” inside which caused severe itching and irritation to the skin for at least two hours for those who came in contact with it. The informal camp on the Turkish side was reported by the respondent to have no medical support to treat people. He also shared that during the night the “Turkish Army” had prevented people from leaving, using checkpoints and a perimeter fence.

“There was no escape, the Turkish Army close the gate so that we could not get out”



