

VIOLENCE WITHIN

SERBIA'S BORDERS



Border Violence
Monitoring Network

March 2021



INTRO

Distinct from the reporting on cross-border push-backs that the Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN) usually focuses on, this is the second report in a series analysing violence against people on the move (PoM) inside a state's borders along the Balkan Route. While the last report was on [violence within Greece's borders](#), this report focuses on Serbia. Violence, as documented in this report, refers to both direct physical aggression against PoM (i.e. any harm inflicted by a person, or a group of people, towards the physical body of a person), as well as destruction of their immediate necessities such as shelter, food or other essential possessions; or threats to their safety and physical integrity.

TIMELINE: SERBIA AS A TRANSIT COUNTRY

2011

Due to a heavier crack-down on the passage from Greek ports to Italy, more and more PoM start to use the Balkan route towards the EU. Their transit through Serbia becomes more visible for the first time, manifesting itself in public reports about their increased presence, as the first informal encampments, so called „jungles“, appear in Subotica.

NOV. 2015

The passage through the „corridor“ gets more narrow: everyone, except for nationals of Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, are excluded from travelling through it.

SINCE 2016

The Serbian borders with EU member states Hungary and Croatia get massively fortified and militarised with financial support from EU funds for internal security. Illegal, violent pushbacks by Croatian and Hungarian authorities are becoming part of everyday life of PoM travelling through Serbia, resulting in a lot of PoM being stuck in the country for a longer time under precarious conditions. The image of the EU who „stopped the flow“ of PoM travelling the Balkan route is fostered -- yet PoM continue to arrive, and pass through Serbia, as before 2015.

2009

The EU liberalises its visa policy for Serbian citizens, a big step towards Serbia getting the status of an official EU candidate (achieved in 2012).

SEPT. 2015

As a reaction to transit migration in a large scale, a state controlled humanitarian „corridor“ is established along the Balkan route, along which almost a million PoM are transported by buses and trains in the following months. While the other states (eg. North Macedonia, Croatia, Slovenia) heavily police and control the „corridor“, in Serbia PoM were left to

2016

The „corridor“ is closed. The European Commission signs the „EU-Turkey-Deal“ with the Turkish government in an attempt to prevent the crossing of PoM from Turkey

2020

In the course of 2020, anti-migrant positions are becoming more common in the Serbian political landscape. This ranges from right-wing demonstrations and national patrols, to fascist groups attacking PoM and their supporters, to politicians trying to win votes with „tough on migration“ rhetoric. Additionally, PoM suffer disproportionately from containment measures in response to the outbreak of Covid19, as they are moved into closed, overcrowded camps.

Find a more detailed timeline [here](#)

Our unique position as independent volunteers with a long-term presence in the region being in close social contact with PoM frames our perspective and analysis. We are aware that there are several important aspects of violence that are not covered in this report. Structural violence -- ranging from the European colonial legacy that shapes both the reasons for, and conditions of, flight and migration, to the daily realities of the EU border regime -- is not explicitly addressed in this report, though it makes all other types of violence possible in the first place. Similarly, the microaggressions that PoM face in Serbia on a daily basis, due to xenophobia, racism, Islamophobia and other intersecting systems of oppression, are not included -- both because these are very widespread, and because this report is not written by those who have a lived experience of being a PoM in Serbia. Instead, our methodology was focused on the most gross and identifiable violations of physical safety and integrity which we attempt to contextualise within local and EU-wide dynamics. Hence it is worth keeping in mind that the trends of violence, documented in this report, operate against the backdrop of both structural violence and daily microaggressions.

Methodology

- Research period: May-December 2020

- Methods:

- questionnaire with quantitative and qualitative questions, filled out by volunteers working daily with PoM in Serbia, including testimonies voicing the experience of 117 PoM
- long term participant observation in the field, providing insight into the daily realities of PoM, and the factors and causes shaping these realities

The data collected show a spectrum of violence PoM experience within Serbia's border. The first section details the trends in, and the types of, physical violence against PoM. The second section deals with violence against the immediate necessities of PoM -- we focus on evictions and forced transportation to camps, destruction of shelter, theft and property destruction, as well as pushbacks. And the third section deals with the threats to their safety and physical integrity, by looking at the denial of access to medical care and fascist violence and hate speech.



I. PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Physical violence is a regular experience of PoM during their time in Serbia. It is often accompanied by psychological violence consisting of racist insults, humiliation, threats and intimidation, forming a pattern of dehumanising behaviour and practices. We will first look at physical violence perpetrated by the police, then in the state-run centres, and finally by the local population in Serbia.

Police

Physical violence against PoM is most often committed by Serbian police officers; both national civilian police and the Gendarmery (žandarmerija), i.e. the armed police force with both military and civilian duties. Additionally, the Serbian military is mostly violent towards PoM when involved in pushbacks and in instances such as in Šid during May and September 2020, when military police were deployed to keep people out of town.

In the last months of 2020 there was an increase in reports of physical violence, primarily beatings, committed by police against PoM. At the Šid border crossing to Croatia, there are testimonies of police being physically violent towards PoM who are stopped from trying to cross the border. At the Serbian-Hungarian border, it has become a common occurrence that Serbian border police wait for people being pushed back by Hungarian authorities via the official border crossings, and are then often physically violent towards them. In another testimony, several groups of PoM were stopped by police at Horgoš border crossing and taken to the police station (most likely in Kanjiža, due to the short drive time reported) where the police officers took money from them, threatening to push them out of Serbia if they did not comply. Subsequently, the individuals were taken to a room where everybody was kicked, including minors. According to another testimony a group of people who were stopped at Horgoš border crossing were taken to the police station, where one person was beaten due to hiding his ID card, with the police officers also stealing half of the money they had with them.

A trend observed in many parts of Serbia is that the police are more aggressive and physically violent away from populated or public areas. According to one person: “if police catch people [on the move] outside of Šid city, they will beat them.” Similarly in Subotica, a PoM reported being followed by police officers to a less crowded part of the city where he was beaten.

After a big demonstration against PoM on the 25th of October police presence and violence in Belgrade has risen significantly, specifically in park Luke Čelovića and park Bristol (commonly referred to as “Afghan park”) as well as the surrounding areas. Hot-spots for physical violence in Belgrade include the police station and two spots in the vicinity of the parks where there are not many people around.

Violence within state-run camps

The Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (in Serbian: Komesarijat za izbeglice i migracije -- shortened as KIRS) is the governmental body which runs all the 19 asylum centres and reception transit centres (RTCs) in Serbia, often called “camps” by PoM. The conditions across KIRS-run accommodation regarding general reception conditions and treatment of residents by centre personnel, are reported to vary a lot between the different centres in Serbia. In centres such as Adaševci RTC and Obrenovac RTC, BVMN has regularly gathered testimonies of physical violence inflicted by the personnel working there. Centres with lower rates of violence reported may be due to lack of information and do not necessarily mean that conditions are better there.

In KIRS-run centres, PoM often face violence inflicted by security guards who work for private security agencies contracted by KIRS. There are multiple testimonies of physical violence against residents in Obrenovac RTC as well as Subotica RTC and Sombor RTC. Especially during lockdown in spring of 2020, violence inflicted by security guards seems to have spiked when residents in Obrenovac approaching the fence were beaten, on the basis of “preventing them from escaping.” There are also several reports of security guards as well as KIRS-personnel either taking PoM’s personal belongings or forcing them to clean centre facilities by withholding a form that would allow them to leave said reception centres.

Testimonies from Adaševci RTC suggest that staff are taking residents’ ID cards away from them as a form of punishment on top of testimonies of physical violence, emotional abuse and withholding of access to food. Another violent practice reported was the forceful confinement of PoM in Covid-19 isolation without any medical indication or symptoms.

In October of 2020 a particularly violent incident was reported. According to the report, a PoM arrived back at Sombor RTC after trying to cross the border to Hungary. Security guards did not believe he was staying in Sombor RTC previously and violently tried to force him to leave. When the concerned person did not comply they proceeded to force him into a vehicle and drove him to an unknown forest location where the group of security guards allegedly beat him, causing bleeding to his head. This practice of apprehending PoM, driving them to remote locations and leaving them to walk back after inflicting physical violence on them mirrors common practices by local police authorities.



Sombor RTC incident October 2020

“If you don't put on a mask, if you don't follow all the rules, they beat you and for 3 days you have to clean all the camp. Otherwise they don't give you food.”

- testimony from a person, staying in the Adaševci RTC in Autumn 2020

There are similar reports for Obrenovac RTC with several testimonies of an isolation room of 50 beds where residents are detained upon arrival for a time span between a few hours to two days. Reports suggest that this room is often over capacity with around 70 people being detained there without access to food and only one toilet available. This practice seems to be quite arbitrary as not all new arrivals to Obrenovac RTC report being put into isolation.

Apart from this, PoM have reported acts of sexualised violence by fellow residents in positions of power. These reports suggest administrative enabling of these acts of violence by providing the perpetrators with keys to rooms where the abuses took place. According to witnesses, alerting KIRS staff of the sexualised violence did not result in them taking steps to prevent this from happening again.

There are also several accounts of physical violence inside KIRS-run shelters for unaccompanied minors, especially from Bogovađa Asylum Centre (AC) south of Belgrade, with several testimonies of security guards physically and psychologically abusing the underage residents. Although video footage of [one specific incident](#) of violence that occurred in the night of the 11 May 2020 has led to the involved security guards being suspended, informal reports received by BVMN suggest that the violence in Bogovađa AC is systematic and thus this can not be seen

as an isolated incident. In December of 2020 Bogovađa AC gained public attention again, with media reports and publications by the [Ombudsman of Serbia](#) suggesting that there were “major riots” in the center on 17 December, resulting in many of the residents being transferred to Preševo RTC as a punishment. Given the poor manner in which residents are treated and the scarcity of support available to them, it is unsurprising that incidents expressing frustration against KIRS should occur.

Local Population

While PoM are often insulted, face racism and discrimination, direct physical violence by members of the local population in Serbia is a more rare occurrence. However, testimonies of such instances often include extensive force.

Many of these instances are committed by truck drivers, as PoM often try to cross one of Serbia's borders hiding inside or under lorries. Several testimonies report the use of metal poles carried by truck drivers, causing serious injuries. These incidents often go along with racist insults, death threats and other forms of verbal violence.



[Video](#) showing security guards being violent towards minors in Bogovađa AC in May of 2020.

DESTRUCTIONS, EVICTIONS AND FORCED TRANSPORTATIONS

In this section, we address the violence PoM experience in the form of destruction of their immediate necessities, namely their shelters and property. This includes evictions and resulting forced transportation of PoM, either to state-run accommodation centres or other locations, often far away from the border areas. We focus on the time-period from mid-May onward, when the severe [restrictions on movement of PoM](#), put in place on 17 March 2020 due to the Covid-related state of emergency, had been [lifted](#).

Evictions are a major disruptive tactic used by authorities in Northern Serbian municipalities as well as around [Šid](#), at the Serbia-Croatian border. Squats where PoM stay are regularly raided by the police, with people's belongings often destroyed or stolen and buildings cleared and bricked up to prevent an easy return. In evictions of informal tented settlements, the tents and all bedding items are often destroyed or burnt. These tactics of preventing PoM from returning to where they found temporary shelter date back to the evictions of the first informal settlements of PoM in Subotica



Remains of the squat in the Grafosrem building. Photo: Davy Jones

in 2011, but their use has increased in the aftermath of the 2015/16 events and the extension of EU-funded accommodation infrastructure. Evictions are often accompanied by forced transportation: police often come at night or in the early hours of the morning, and force the entire population of the squat into buses, using physical violence and/or verbal threats as a means of coercion. The buses then take them to one of the state-run reception centres, mostly to the South of Serbia. In some of these reported evictions, there are testimonies of racist behaviour by Serbian officials. PoM are often forcefully transported

"I want to know why refugees are locked up in a camp and prohibited from leaving, and Serbians wander about as normal. Where is the freedom and social justice?"

Message by a person that had been evicted and taken to Preševo RTC in October 2020.

all the way to the Preševo reception centre on the Serbian-North Macedonian border. Whereas previously people were usually able to leave (and make their way back to Belgrade or the northern borders) after 4 days, more recent reports suggest that there has been a change in policy in the RTC and people are

being held there for as long as for 2 weeks without the possibility of leaving. These forced removals also happen from official (i.e. government-run) reception centres, from where PoM are often relocated to the centres in the south. When around 100 people were evicted from Subotica RTC in [late October](#) and transported to Preševo, BVMN received reports of physical violence used by police officers. PoM were either not told where they would be taken or in some cases were even told they would be taken “to Turkey”, leaving them in distress for several hours due to fear of being illegally pushed back. Their fears were not unfounded, as Serbia has a history of conducting pushbacks to North Macedonia from the [Preševo reception centre](#) and [nearby locations](#), including initiating chain pushbacks to [Greece](#) and Turkey.

Another common trend in forced transportation by Serbian officials is the forced removal of PoM from squats or official reception centres and driving them away from urban centres. This was particularly common during the summer and there were regular reports of PoM being beaten or having their money or possessions stolen or destroyed during these procedures. PoM are then left in remote areas (such as forests or countryside) and left to walk back, often a journey of more than 5 hours by foot. In Šid, a trend had been documented since May 2020, when military police were present in the city: when they apprehended PoM in urban areas, they forced them to take a taxi and return to Adaševci or Principovac reception centre, often using physical violence.

“If you go outside they catch you, beat you and take you to the camp. The military called the police to come and take people to the camps, sometimes they asked people to take taxis. They were also waiting at the train station for the guys who come from Belgrade and one time the military beat one guy with a stick and broke his nose”

– Report from PoM about violence and forced transportation in Šid, August 2020

Since the military police left Šid in September 2020, the same practice has been carried out by local police forces.

BVMN has noticed an uptick in eviction actions as winter has drawn in, several major eviction actions have been attended by the Minister of Interior [Aleksandar Vulin](#), filmed and published on the social media of the Ministry of the Interior -- such as the actions in [Subotica](#), [Šid](#), [Belgrade](#) and [Vršac and Novi Kneževac municipalities \(in villages Vatin and Majdan\) in the North-East of Serbia](#).



Evictions and forced transportations from Subotica to Preševo RTC on the 25.11.2020, attended by the Minister of the Interior, Aleksandar Vulin

These actions appear to be a PR stunt, aimed at demonstrating that these politicians were firmly in control of what the far right is presenting at the “migrant threat” and addressing xenophobic fears of the local population, and perhaps to show strength in the time of rising discontent among the Serbian population over increased Covid restrictions.

3. OTHER THREATS TO SAFETY AND PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

In addition to the spectrum of direct physical violence against PoM, their shelter and property, there are several different forms of violence that threaten the safety and physical integrity of PoM. In this section, we will examine two trends in such violence: (1) the denial of access to a number of basic rights, with a focus on the right to medical care, and (2) hate speech and fascist violence.

3a. Denial of access to basic rights

PoM are illegalised in Serbia and hence largely denied or limited in their access to a number of basic rights. Apart from putting PoM in a precarious situation, this also lays the ground for systematic exclusion that in turn enables additional forms of violence. According to the law, PoM have the [right to seek asylum](#) in Serbia, which would enable them to interrupt their illegalised status, and in theory entitle them to [further rights](#), such as accommodation, basic material necessities, access to health care and education. In reality, however, access to asylum procedure is denied to many PoM, and even those few who manage to access it, often have their rights curtailed. In this section, we look into how access to medical care looks like for PoM on the ground.

Theoretically, PoM who are not registered as asylum seekers should have access to emergency care. If non-asylum seekers need access to medical treatment that is not considered to be an emergency, they need a paper of referral from a doctor in the reception or asylum centre. However, barriers exist to the access of such healthcare provisions.

Medical Care inside the camps

In Serbia there are [two official accommodation structures](#) for PoM – [asylum centres and reception centers](#), managed by KIRS. Access to medical care and the quality of the care provided varies a lot from centre to centre. There is limited access to doctors in the centres, since they don't work on weekends and there is usually only one doctor present per centre, some of which have official capacities of around 1000 people (Preševo and Obrenovac, for example). Reports from PoM suggest that medical equipment in the centres is often limited, and that medical care usually consists of giving basic medicine such as painkillers, cold medicine and sometimes vitamins.

The extent to which access to medical care varies from centre to centre is visible by comparing Principovac RTC and Adaševci RTC, both are reception centres in northwest Serbia. In Principovac, the doctor often provides scabies treatment, while in Adaševci they usually respond by telling people to wash their clothes, even in severe cases of scabies. People staying in Adaševci have reported having a broken limb and being denied treatment or referral papers for doctors outside of the centre. In Principovac, referral papers for treatment in external facilities seem to be more accessible.

Emergency treatments

Emergency health care is, in principle, available to anyone who needs it, regardless of their legal status. But in practice it is often an individual doctor who decides if the case is considered emergency or not without bearing any responsibilities for the decision, which can be based on personal prejudice of a doctor towards PoM. When PoM do receive medical care, their treatment by medical personnel is often hostile, discriminatory or degrading. Often ambulances do not respond to PoM, as evidenced by a testimony of an unaccompanied minor (UAM) who contacted the ambulance service near Horgoš, northern Serbia, several times for severe abdominal pain. The ambulance respondent contacted through the emergency number cancelled on him once he realised the caller spoke English, saying they only speak Serbian.

When seeking emergency treatment, PoM are often asked for their reception centre registration card and at which centre they are staying, before accessing treatment. According to one testimony from a PoM, he was asked for a referral paper from a reception centre doctor at an emergency room in Sremska Mitrovica while trying to access emergency treatment which he received only after a doctor made contact with the centre to check if he was really registered there. Likewise, a group of PoM was denied medical treatment at Subotica's hospital, despite one person having a head injury and a lot of bleeding. They subsequently sought help in Subotica RTC, where the ambulance was called for them, finally getting access to the medical care they required.

In one specific incident a PoM was turned away from 3 different hospitals before finally being treated, despite having a severely infected wound that needed urgent medical attention. A lot of PoM do not have the financial means to access private health care facilities, leaving them with no other options than to try their luck in receiving the care they need in public facilities.

Another [case documented](#) was that of a 13-year old UAM that had injured his foot trying to cross the border. After being turned away at the Subotica RTC as well as another medical facility, he was finally treated at Subotica hospital. After being treated the minor was told to leave, disregarding the hospital's legal responsibility to inform a social worker that would accompany him to a safe accommodation. After refusing to follow this legal obligation and notifying local police first, the hospital finally notified the social worker on call. Nevertheless this incident shows that even highly vulnerable PoM such as UAM often do not receive the support they are legally entitled to.

PoM accompanied by a third person from an NGO or a Serbian speaker seem to have a higher chance of receiving emergency treatment. But even then, they are often denied access and turned away.

Non emergency treatments

Non-asylum seekers can't access non urgent medical care without a referral paper from a camp doctor. However, there is limited access to these papers, due to both refusal to issue them by camp doctors, as well as restrictions on treatment or referrals of people staying outside of the camp system.

3b. Hate Speech and Fascist Violence

Hate speech is defined as public speech that expresses hate or encourages violence towards a person or group based on group characteristic such as race, ethnicity, sex, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.

While occasional local anti-migrant protests have been happening around Serbia, since the first [protest in Banja Koviljača](#) in autumn 2011, those protests have mainly been of the “not in my backyard” variety and have not been couched within the (inter)national organised far-right movements. While, starting from the 1980s, far-right movements in Western Europe in their reinvention process after World War II incorporated elements of [ethnonationalistic xenophobia with anti-“political establishment” populism](#), the far-right in Serbia was more concerned with stirring up hatred against the other Yugoslav ethnic groups. It was only in 2015, but much more explicitly in the last year, that Serbian far-right groups have incorporated the so-called migration crisis into their rhetoric.

The [“Great Replacement Theory”](#) -- spread globally by the far-right networks, who claim that supranational financial capitalists are planning to destroy Western nation states by replacing white Christian Europeans with Muslim immigrants -- had been, until recently, applied by the Serbian far-right mainly to their analysis of the independence of Kosovo. They saw the inde-

pendence of Kosovo as a loss of their territory to the (mostly Muslim) Kosovo Albanians, who were seen as ‘Islamic colonisers’ of ‘Christian land’ with the help of the ‘corrupt elites’ - i.e. NATO, who launched air strikes against Serbia in 1999, and Western diplomacy, who backed Kosovo’s independence in 2008. Since 2015, with the movement of PoM from mainly Muslim countries to Central Europe and Serbian ultranationalists’ self-victimization vis-à-vis crooked EU institutions and their effects on the region, an updated version of the Great Replacement Theory is more present than ever - resulting in increased discrimination, hate speech and violent behaviour towards PoM.

Internet Hate Speech

In Serbia, groups spreading hate speech against PoM, particularly on social media, have seen an [influx in members and interactions in the last year](#). and fake news on Facebook are Pokret STOP Naseljavanju migranata (English: Stop the settlement of migrants) and Narodna Patrola (English: People’s patrol).



Screenshot from [Youtube-Video of far-right politician Boško Obradović](#) illustrating the conspiracy of the islamisation of Serbia by mixing a dark liquid (allegedly representing PoM) and water (allegedly representing Serbia and Europe)

Content on these platforms usually includes hate speech referring to nationality and religion, fueling prejudices and stereotypes of PoM and even directly calling for acts of violence against them. Variants of the “Great Replacement Theory” are omnipresent: [One of the most prominent rhetorics](#) is the risk of a “Islamisation of Serbia”, presenting PoM as naturally different, often referring to them as aggressive and culturally/religiously inferior or as [religious extremists](#), presenting them as a danger to the constructed local or European values.

Another recurring rhetoric is the allegation that established media is covering up incidents connected to PoM and that the government is allowing policies that present a danger to Serbia and its citizens - a key rhetoric of anti-“political establishment” populism. A lot of the content, produced by these far-right groups, i.e. about security incidents involving PoM and accusing them of attacks (mostly on women and children), have been [proven to be fake news](#). Yet the spread of these fake news inevitably [results in fear and raises tension](#) among the local population, putting PoM at risk of far-right violence.

Local Patrol Groups

A lot of these Facebook and Telegram groups actively encourage people to take action offline. In the beginning of 2020, a Facebook page known as “No Surrender of Kosovo and Metohija” announced that they would start [daily patrols in Belgrade](#), renaming their group into “People’s patrol”.

There are also several public chat groups on platforms such as Telegram serving the same purpose, of which the “People’s patrol” chat has nearly 1700 members in January 2021.

There is a variety of content in these groups, raging from news articles about PoM, Instagram or TikTok Videos showing PoM, general information on the whereabouts of PoM, but also video footage of members patrolling areas in Serbia (mostly in Belgrade) showing the self-proclaimed people’s patrol approaching PoM in public, often stating they are journalists or undercover police, making up regulations and intimidating them.

There is information about local patrol groups forming in Northern border villages close to Subotica, [attacking taxi drivers](#) that are transporting PoM and allegedly visiting squat locations where PoM are staying to then notify local police authorities in order to achieve an eviction.



[YouTube video](#) showing members of Narodna Patrola Belgrade approaching PoM and taking photos of their camp ID cards

Demonstrations

Another offline result of the booming online communication of far-right networks was a series of anti-migrant protests in different Serbian cities in the course of 2020. The Facebook page “No Surrender of Kosovo and Metohija” called for an anti-migrant protest on 8 March 2020 in Belgrade in reaction to the incidents at the Greek-Turkish border, after Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced that he will no longer prevent refugees and migrants from travelling to Europe. Previously in February, there have been similar protests held close to the Serbian-Hungarian border in Subotica and in Požarevac. In Belgrade, around 200 people gathered in front of the government building for a rally and demonstration. Serbian and Greek flags were swung, banners with the Serbian cross and slogans like „You will not replace us!” were seen referencing the same “Great Replacement” rhetoric as the discussed Facebook and messenger groups. Speakers announced that [more street patrols would be set](#) up in case the Serbian government doesn't protect the country.



Right wing demonstration in Belgrade on March 8. Photo: Radio Free Europe

The objective of reaching the wider public on the streets of Belgrade as well as creating images and footage for their social media channels to convey a message of a formerly silent majority speaking up seemed to be reached: After the protest, the number of people liking and following the page increased significantly.

Later in the year, there has been another series of protests: For October 25th, the group “People's Patrol” called their followers on Facebook to come to the so-called “Afghani Park” (a park in Belgrade that is used as a gathering point by PoM since 2014) to „clean the park”. Migrant solidarity organisations like [Klikaktiv](#) called for a “Čaj solidarnosti” (Solidarity tea) as a [counter event](#) on the same day - evoking memories to the series of

“çay not borders” actions organised by [no border serbia](#) in 2015. In the end the police was present in the park the whole day, preventing PoM from staying there “for security reasons” and separating the two groups.

Unfortunately, the police presence in the “Afghani park” and the practice of preventing PoM from staying there was maintained even long after these events - which seemed like an indirect accomplishment of the “people patrol’s” intention to “clean the park”.

A couple of days later, on October 31st, local people in the Serbian-Croatian border town Šid gathered for an anti-immigrant protest, also advocating for the banning of the migrant solidarity NGO No Name Kitchen. The same demonstration happened one week later, this time accompanied by a counter demonstration organised by No Name Kitchen and activists from Belgrade.



Counter demonstration in Afghani Park on October 25th

B O R D E R V I O L E N C E M O N I T O R I N G N E T W O R K

BVMN is a volunteer led endeavor, acting as an alliance of organisations in the Western Balkans and Greece. BVMN is based on the efforts of participant organizations working in the field of documentation, media, advocacy and litigation.

We finance the work through charitable grants and foundations, and are not in receipt of funds from any political organisation. The expenditures cover transport subsidies for volunteers in the field and four paid positions.

To follow more from the Border Violence Monitoring Network, check out our website for the entire testimony archive, previous monthly reports and regular news pieces. To follow us on social media, find us on Twitter handle @Border_Violence and on Facebook. For further information regarding this report or more on how to become involved please email us at mail@borderviolence.eu. For press and media requests please contact: press@borderviolence.eu