Guidelines for collecting testimonies on illegal pushbacks and police violence

As organizations providing help on the ground, we have noticed throughout the last months an ever increasing number of illegal pushbacks and cases of (physical and other) violence inflicted by the police on refugees. In order to bring this issue to public attention and thus, hopefully and ultimately, building up pressure on the responsible institutions we have decided to create a common and public database for these incidents (www.borderviolence.eu). This is supposed to unite as many reports as possible, collected by different actors, under one roof. Ultimately, the website can serve as a basis for getting in touch with the media. While working on the website, we have noticed that a common guideline for collecting these reports is of vital importance. **The idea is that you, as volunteers on the ground, use them as a basis for interviewing victims of pushbacks/violence. Ideally, the interview is recorded as an audio and later fed into the database by us. Please send any reports in written and/or audio form to: violence.report@rigardu.de**

When doing an interview:
- Make sure your opposite knows **why** you are conducting the interview and what their testimony will be used for. **Get consent**. Make sure they're **comfortable with you sharing** their story.
- Tell the interviewee that they will in any case stay **anonymous**. Neither pictures of their face nor their full name will be published. It is best not to create this kind of evidence in the first place – if you're making an audio recording, make sure it doesn't contain any full names.
- Wherever possible, conduct the interview in an environment as **calm and relaxed** as possible. Make sure there is nothing that can distract yourself or your opposite.
- Try to get as many details as possible, but **at the least the basic information asked for in the questions below**. However, be aware that your opposite might have had traumatic experiences which they don't want to share. If you get the feeling you're pressing too much, move on to the next point. If, at any point of the interview, the victim seems to be distressed, pause and confirm if they want to continue.
- If you're unsure whether your opposite's English is good enough for an interview, try to have a **translator** present

The following points are just guidelines and you don't have to follow them strictly – sometimes it's best to just let your opposite talk. However, if information is missing, ask questions afterwards, trying to cover all the main points. In reality some answers will appear naturally, but some may easily be forgotten or not considered worth mentioning by the victim.

When did the incident take place?
➢ date
➢ exact time
➢ duration

Where did the incident take place?
As detailed as possible – best would be a **GPS** location. Letting them show you the location on a map can be helpful.
➢ Name of (nearest) town/village? How long were you walking/driving since entering Croatia? Where did you cross?
➢ Was there a change of location from where the police found you / violence was inflicted?
➢ Where did they leave you after pushing you back?

Who was involved?
➢ Victim's personal details: (First) name, age, sex, country of origin
➢ How many people were with you? Personal details? Were minors involved?
➢ How many police officers were involved? Details – uniforms, looks, cars, etc

What happened?
➢ was there any **violence**? If yes:
  ○ what kind of violence was used?
  ○ did they use any weapons/items? sticks, batons, tasers, guns? were there dogs?
  ○ do you have any injuries? if yes, have you sought / received any medical assistance after? Can you describe / show the injuries? Do you have any medical reports that can be used (anonymized!)? Where possible, try to get pictures of injuries - but always get consent first!
➢ Did they take anything from you? If yes, what exactly?
➢ Did they ask you to read and/or sign anything? If yes, can you remember what it was?
➢ Did you ask for asylum? If yes, what was the reaction?