

D♥BRODOŠLI!
أهلاً وسهلاً بكم!
WELC♥ME!

ARE YOU
SYRiOUS

**REPORT ON THE NEW WAVE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST
REFUGEES ON CROATIAN BORDERS**

Zagreb, 29 May 2017

Report on the new wave of violence against refugees on Croatian borders

“Can you protect us from the police? We already said that we want to seek asylum in Croatia, but they do not listen to us. They deport and beat us. What did we do wrong? Is our sin that we are refugees?”
(A message received on 16 May 2017)

During this year, activists from the NGO *Are You Syrious?* and the *Welcome! Initiative* have on several occasions warned against unlawful and violent police conduct towards refugees who cross the border into Croatian territory, mostly from Serbia. In this regard, we published the [Report on Unlawful and Forced Push-backs of Refugees from the Republic of Croatia](#) on 24 January 2017 and the [Second Report on Unlawful and Forced Push-backs of Refugees from the Republic of Croatia](#) on 7 March 2017. After the first report, we lodged a criminal complaint to the Ministry of the Interior on 26 January, followed by a complaint to the Ombudswoman. At the invitation of the Ministry of the Interior, we attended a meeting with the Police Directorate, other services of the Ministry of the Interior and NGOs engaged mainly in providing direct support to refugees in Croatia. The requests we made in those reports and meetings – enabling civilian oversight of the border, return of expelled refugees, a thorough investigation into unlawful returns to Serbia and sanctioning of violent and responsible persons – have not yet been fulfilled, or were fulfilled in an unsatisfactory manner, as in the case of the investigation. Our fundamental demand, **cessation of all violent and unlawful conduct towards refugees on the territory of the Republic of Croatia**, has not been met. Moreover, according to publicly available reports and press releases, as well as reports, witness testimonies and other material we received from refugees or persons who were in contact with refugees, there has since been a **multiple increase in the number of unlawful expulsions and escalation of violence on Croatian borders**.

According to the [UNHCR Serbia report](#), 262 people temporarily residing on Serbian territory reported in April 2017 that they were denied the right to seek international protection, i.e. asylum, in the Republic of Croatia. According to the UNHCR data, 246 people were expelled from Croatian territory into Serbia

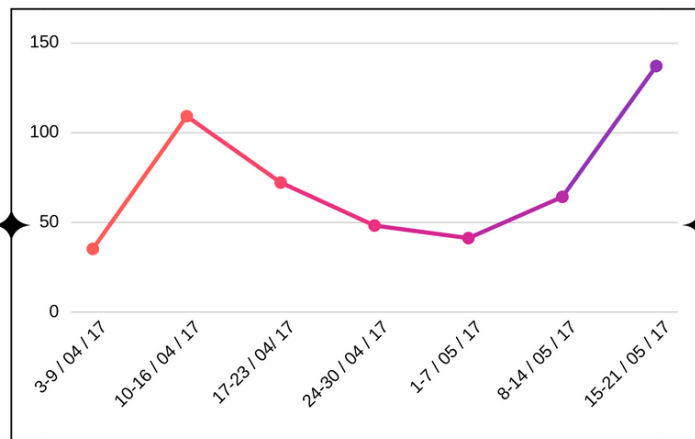
during the same month. The last few weekly reports of that UN agency clearly show an increase in violence on the Croatia-Serbia border.

According to the [UNHCR Serbia report, in the week from 15 to 21 May 2017](#),

they recorded “137 group push-backs” of refugees from the Republic of Croatia to the Republic of Serbia, double the number from the [previous week](#) when UNHCR Serbia reported 64 push-backs. In the UNHCR Serbia report for the week from 15 to 21 May 2017, they

stressed that, according to multiple testimonies, Croatian authorities deny access to the asylum system and apply excessive force during group expulsions.

Broj grupnih protjerivanja prilikom kojih hrvatske vlasti tražiteljima azila uskraćuju pristup sustavu traženja azila uz primjenu prekomjerne sile. Razdoblje: 3. 4. 2017-21. 5. 2017.



Izvor podataka: izvještaji UNHCR-a.

In the last few days, we also received worrying reports from Doctors Without Borders (*Médecins Sans Frontières*). The organization is continuously present in the field in Serbia and has warned about a recent “dramatic increase in violence” on the Croatian side of the border, especially near Šid in Serbia. Refugees who contact them daily in ever increasing numbers in search of medical assistance claim that they were beaten by groups of police officers on the Croatian border. According to medical findings, as seen in examples of medical documentation in Enclosure 1, the injuries for which refugees seek medical assistance correspond to their claims that the injuries were incurred after being hit by batons or fists, kicked, etc. The fact that some of the medical reports we received from the victims refer to incidents from a few weeks back, and that some of the people have sought medical assistance multiple times after repeated encounters with Croatian police, speaks to the fact that this is a continuous problem that escalated in the last few days, of which Doctors Without Borders and Doctors of the World

(*Médecins du Monde*) warned [the public on 26 May 2017](#). Doctors Without Borders stressed that they processed ten people who had sustained injuries on the Serbia-Croatia border in their clinic in Belgrade in the period from 19 to 25 May. Doctors Without Borders stress that all of those patients said that the violence was inflicted by Croatian police.

“The violence always takes the same form: hits from batons, destruction of mobile phones, money theft,” says the Doctors Without Borders coordinator for Serbia.

In the last ten days, the medical team of Doctors of the World treated 23 similar cases in their clinic in Adaševci, which also speaks to the significant increase in violence at the border. In Enclosure 2 we present a few photographs out of a total of 80 we received or took ourselves in the last few days, all showing injuries of refugees currently located in Šid. Our activist talked to many of them in Šid on 18 May 2017. While describing how they were pushed-back from Croatia, they showed her their injuries on torsos, arms, backs, legs, faces, etc. Some of them had fresh wounds. They were all visibly exhausted due to the conditions in which they live while they spend weeks hidden in the forest, mostly without money or any property except smaller bags with mobile phones (a connection with friends and family, as well as GPS), drained by numerous unsuccessful attempts to cross into Croatia and the European Union, distressed and frightened by what is happening at the border. On the same day, 18 May 2017, another group of volunteers who also provide first aid to refugees in Šid had more than twenty interventions. In their own words:

“We had many beaten people today, two of whom were brutally beaten and some five to eight who were injured. Something such as this does not happen all of the time, but it seems that such a wave occurs every few days, when we have many injured, some with serious injuries. We assume that all of the injured people come from the border with Croatia. But we are doctors so we do not ask where they came from. What we do ask is how it happened so that we could know how to treat it. Sometimes they tell us that they fell running or jumping over something while trying to cross, sometimes about fights among them, but often about police.”

In the last two weeks, we received almost daily individual reports from refugees or volunteers and others who are in contact with the refugees on cases of forced push-backs from Croatia, denial of the right to seek asylum in Croatia, police confiscation of property (mobile phones, chargers, money, etc.) and, most of all, severe physical violence against persons from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Morocco, Algeria, etc. who try to cross into Croatian or EU territory in places other than border crossings, in the absence of other options. On 18 May 2017, we received the following message on a mobile phone:

“Have you heard about the beatings? Croatian border police started to beat refugees again. Very brutally.”

The message was followed by photographs and video recordings related to “brutal beatings” on the Croatian borders, which can be seen in Enclosure 3. Those photographs and recordings refer to the violence which occurred on the Croatia-Serbia border in the night from 17 to 18 May when approximately 10 Croatian police officers beat up a group of six refugees, according to the message we received. The refugees involved were in hospital at the time when we received the message. They believe that they can determine the exact point and GPS coordinates of the place where violence took place, and that they can recognize police officers who beat them. Some of the refugees with whom our activist talked in Šid also said they could recognize police officers who beat them.

According to almost all testimonies we recorded in the last ten days, Croatian police forcibly pushes-back refugees who cross into Croatia territory from Serbia back to Serbia. In the process, as reported by a twenty-year old man from Morocco, they are “at least a little bit hit in 100% of the cases” while some of his “friends are now severely beaten”. The reports and witness testimonies refer to the same pattern according to which Croatian police officers take refugees found inland to the place near the Croatia-Serbia border in vehicles, after which they are transferred to another vehicle, a van, and taken to a place at the very border. According to numerous reports, they are there taken out of the van one by one, after which they are hit with fists, sticks and belts, as if they “were playing football” with their bodies, according to one message we received. The young man with whom we spoke in Šid told us that many of his friends were “severely beaten” at the border in the same manner. “They hit us everywhere. Three or four are in the hospital. One of them is 14 years old. I know that some were forced to take their clothes off and then beaten. Three or four of them.” A twenty-five-year-old man from Afghanistan reported a case from 17 May 2017 when 18 people, including him, were taken from a train at the Tovarnik train station at 2 P.M. “When the police found us in the train, they took us out and put us in a police van. There were many of us

and there was no air inside. They took us to the “jungle” [green field] near the border with Serbia [where they] made us sit and started to hit us hard. They used sticks and beat us with their heavy boots. They hit me on the head, face, legs, arms, back and private parts. My head still hurts and I feel severe pain in my chest because I fell on a big rock after they hit me.”

The case of severe physical violence on the Croatia-Serbia border that was documented several times (see medical reports in Enclosure 1) occurred during the night of 18 May 2017. That night, a group of seven refugees was stopped by the police near Vukovar, after which they took them to a place closer to the Croatia-Serbia border even though they expressed intention to seek asylum in Croatia. They were met by seven police officers there, who took them into another vehicle where they held them for another two hours. After that, the police officers beat them “like animals”, one by one, each for three to four minutes, with boots, wooden sticks and police batons. According to their report, they were then “pushed face-first into a ditch with water, like a small canal.” They said the police officers beat them on the head so that they fell on the ground. They also said that the police took some of their personal belongings, mobiles phones and money, a practice that was also reported in other testimonies. Refugees in Šid also told us that Croatian police officers destroyed their mobile phones or confiscated more expensive ones during the push-back.

In addition to numerous reports of violence related to push-backs of refugees trying to cross into Croatia from Serbia, we also received a report of violence against unaccompanied minors who tried leaving Croatia, of which we already [notified the public](#) (26 May 2017). Five boys who were located in one of the homes for children and youth and who tried to flee Croatia – on two occasions with the help of smugglers – were caught by the police both times, and physically attacked. According to their testimonies, backed by the employees from the home, on the first occasion, around 7 A.M. on 13 May, the police pulled the boys out of the car, slapped them and beat them. A similar situation occurred once again on 21 May around 11 P.M. when the police found the boys near the border crossing and took them to a police station, where police employees slapped them, beat them, pointed a gun to their heads and threatened them, seeking information on smugglers and the amount of money they paid. These and previous reports and other sources referred to in this report speak of severe forms of psychological, physical, and other kind of violence on persons of all ages, including children, which are

currently occurring at the borders of our country. These practices are the consequence of unlawful conduct of Croatian police, and more broadly, of the radicalisation and informal requests and procedures of the repressive European border regime that prevents refugees and others the very access to opportunities for a dignified life, even at the price of human lives, deaths in the Mediterranean, and elsewhere. As shown by this and other reports, as well as the case of the young man from Pakistan who died in the night from 12 to 13 May 2017 at the train station in Vinkovci while trying to bypass the traps of that regime, Croatia can now be deemed one of the more dangerous European land points on the map of forced and hidden movement of people towards a life in peace and safety.

Taking into account all of the above, the Welcome! Initiative and Are You Syrious? submit the following demands to Croatian authorities:

- Immediate cessation of all violence towards any refugees located on border crossings and the territory of the Republic of Croatia;
- Enabling access to the asylum system to anyone who seeks it;
- Immediate and thorough investigation and sanctioning of violent employees of the Croatian police, as well as responsible persons;
- Civilian oversight of Croatian borders;
- Return of unlawfully expelled refugees who still wish to seek asylum in Croatia to the Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers in Zagreb and Kutina, and the continuation of procedure following an asylum claim;
- Suspension of the Dublin Regulation and other oppressive mechanisms of border control that cause human suffering.



Country: _____
Name of the MSF medical structure: _____

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE – ADULT
Confidential document covered by medical confidentiality

Patient's last name and first name: _____
Age: 22
Sex: (M) F
Date of the medical examination: 19.05.2017.

Clinical examination

I, the undersigned (Name and title of medical staff) _____, certify that I examined the patient.
The clinical examination of this patient revealed the following elements:

pen head, feet, chest

Material circumstances

- ☐ The patient abstained from giving details on the circumstances of his condition
☒ The patient asserts that his condition was caused by the following circumstances with the following details:

Date: 18.05.2017.

Time: 23^h06

Place: Croatian border

Account of Circumstances:

We were captured by Croatian police in Vukovar in 8-9 PM. After searching us, regular police gave back our belongings and hand us over to Croatian border police. We were left in police vehicle for 2 hours. Then they took us to the forest and formed 7 man circle and beat us 15-20 5-6 min each with police bat, wood stick, fists and foot. When they finish beating us, they put us in trench with water and some of us was forced to go under the car. They took 2 cell phones (phone and galaxy), 1000 euros, what we collected for taxi. After that they show us direction with flashlight and sent us to go Serbian border.

The medical condition of the patient requires:

- ☒ Consultation at the clinic on 19.05.2017
☐ Hospitalization and/or work incapacity from _____ to _____
☐ Ambulatory care/ treatment until _____

Optional conclusion:

- ☒ The examination of the patient revealed physical marks and a psychic reaction that are compatible with his/her assertions.

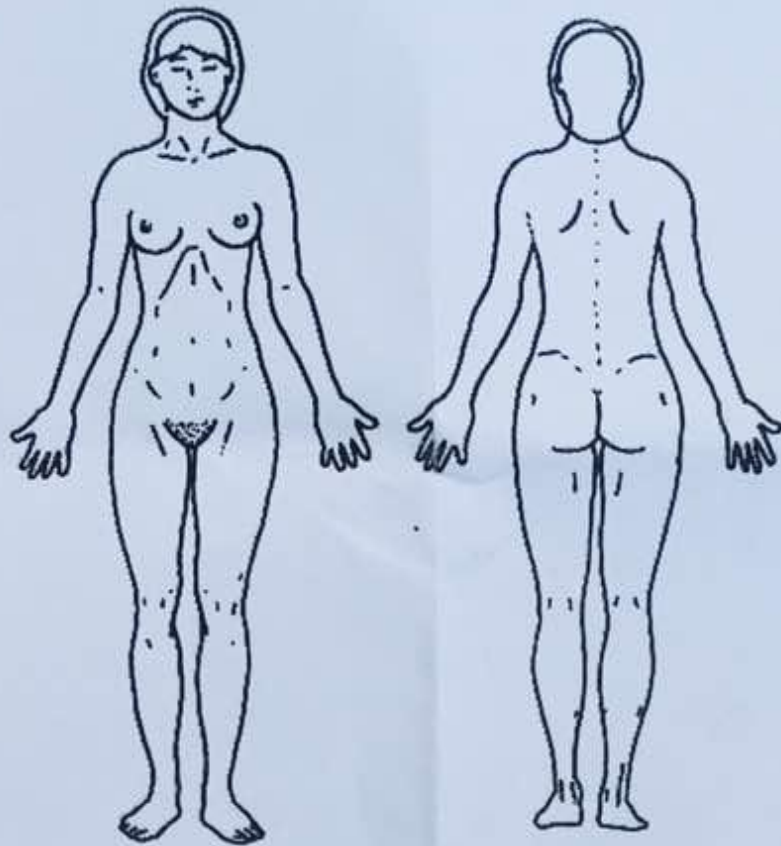
Certificate drawn up on 19.05.2017 in duplicate, one of the original being handed over to the patient for the attention of whom it may concern.

Signature of MSF medical staff

MSF stamp

Done in 2 copies (1 for patient, 1 for MSF)
Contact: MSF Legal Department: oripka@msf.org

Use arrows to indicate the parts of the body and specify your conclusions in writing





Country:
Name of the MSF medical structure:

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE - ADULT

Confidential document covered by medical confidentiality

Patient's last name and first name: [REDACTED]

Age: 19

Sex: (M) F

Date of the medical examination: 19.05.2017

Clinical examination

I, the undersigned (Name and title of medical staff) [REDACTED] certify that I examined the patient.

The clinical examination of this patient revealed the following elements:

Bruise, and pain on right left jaw
+ both ribs,

Material circumstances

- ☒ The patient abstained from giving details on the circumstances of his condition
☒ The patient asserts that his condition was caused by the following circumstances with the following details:

Date: 18.05.2017

Time: 12am

Place: Croatia border

Account of Circumstances:

Last night the group of migrants crossed illegally Croatia border. They've reached to Vukovar town in Croatia. Around midnight Croatia police catch them and return them to the border between Croatia and Serbia. After that they've surround them and started to beat them with nightsticks, by foot, wooden sticks. They were beaten by 7 police officers one by one. Every each of them was beaten for 3-4 minutes. This particular victim was hit by nightstick, fists, woodstick, foot in legs, arms, and head.

The medical condition of the patient requires:

- ☒ Consultation at the clinic on 19.05.2017
☐ Hospitalization and/or work incapacity from to
☐ Ambulatory care/ treatment until/...../.....

Optional conclusion:

- ☒ The examination of the patient revealed physical marks and a psychic reaction that are compatible with his/her assertions.

Certificate drawn up on 19.05.2017 in duplicate, one of the original being handed over to the patient for the attention of whom it may concern.

Signature of MSF medical staff

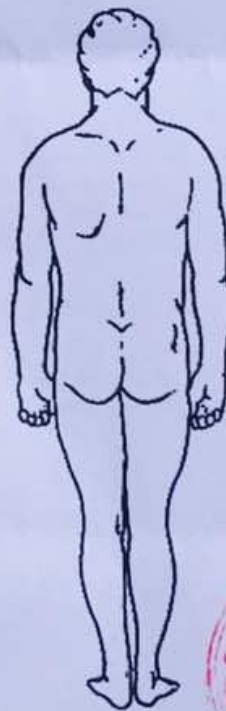
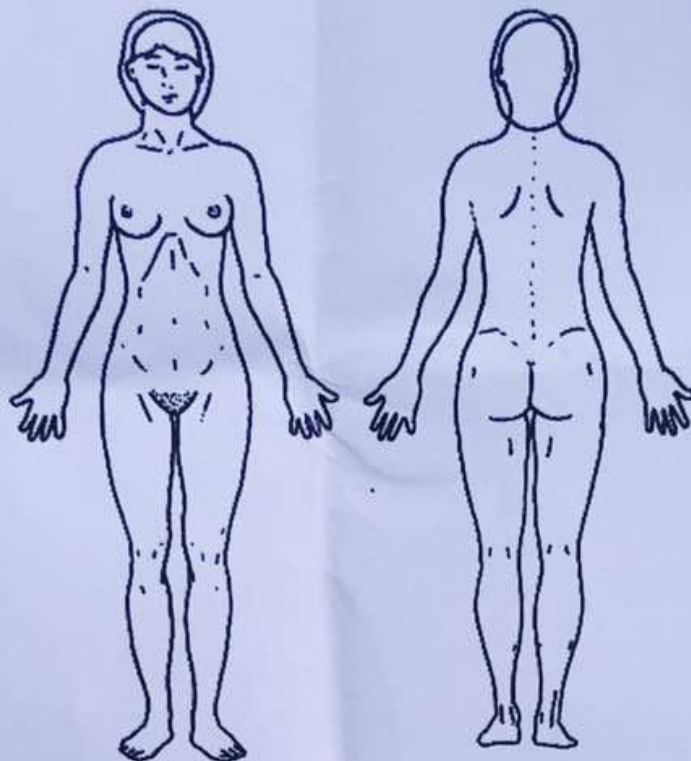
[Signature]

Done in 2 copies (1 for patient, 1 for MSF)

Contact: MSF Legal Department: oripka@msf.org



Use arrows to indicate the parts of the body and specify your conclusions in writing



Date
19.05.2017

Signature of MSF medical staff



MSF stamp



Country:
Name of the MSF medical structure:

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE – ADULT
Confidential document covered by medical confidentiality

Patient's last name and first name: [redacted]
Age: 17
Sex: M F
Date of the medical examination: 15.05.2017

Clinical examination

I, the undersigned (Name and title of medical staff) [redacted] certify that I examined the patient.

The clinical examination of this patient revealed the following elements:

wound cut on left hand / finger

Material circumstances

- ☒ The patient abstained from giving details on the circumstances of his condition
☒ The patient asserts that his condition was caused by the following circumstances with the following details:

Date: 16.05.2017

Time: 21:00

Place: [redacted]
Account of Circumstances:

Crossed border, attacked by police, they attack whole group, the patient with shock on hand. He fell and hit head, then they put him in the water.

The medical condition of the patient requires:

- ☐ Consultation at the clinic on 16.05.2017
☐ Hospitalization and/or work incapacity from to
☐ Ambulatory care/ treatment until

Optional conclusion:

- ☐ The examination of the patient revealed physical marks and a psychic reaction that are compatible with his/her assertions.

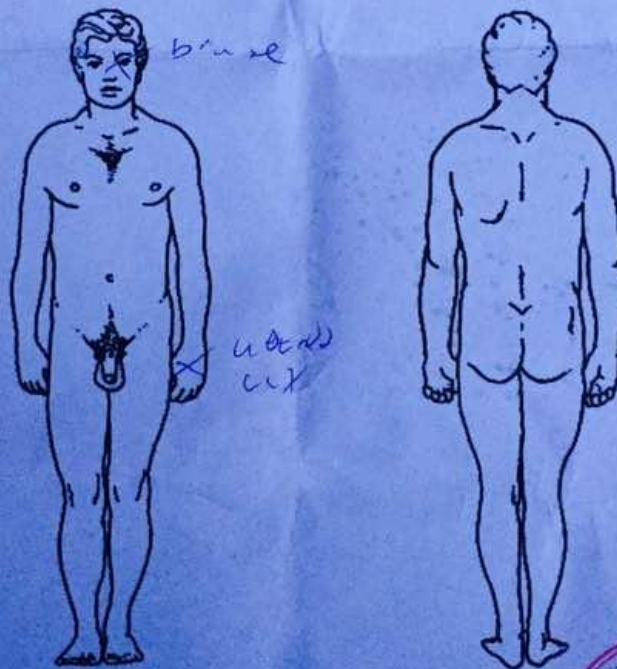
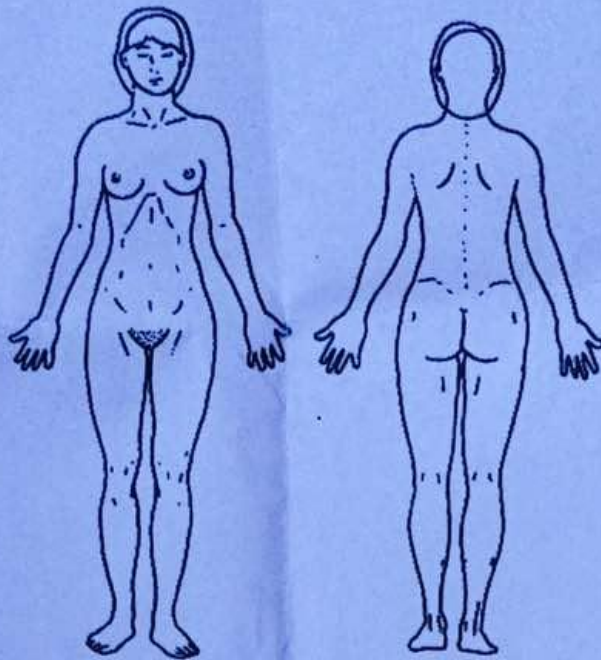
Certificate drawn up on 16.05.2017 in duplicate, one of the original being handed over to the patient for the attention of whom it may concern.

Signature of MSF medical staff

Done in 2 copies (1 for patient, 1 for MSF)
Contact: MSF Legal Department: oripka@msf.org



Use arrows to indicate the parts of the body and specify your conclusions in writing



Date

Signature of MSF medical staff

18.05.2011
19.05.2011

Lee





Country:
Name of the MSF medical structure:

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE - ADULT
Confidential document covered by medical confidentiality

Patient's last name and first name:

Age:

Sex: ☒ M ☐ F

Date of the medical examination: 19.05.2017 Friday 19. May. 2017

Clinical examination

I, the undersigned (Name and title of medical staff) certify that I examined the patient.

The clinical examination of this patient revealed the following elements:

Hand right bandaged and hurt

Material circumstances

- ☐ The patient abstained from giving details on the circumstances of his condition
☒ The patient asserts that his condition was caused by the following circumstances with the following details:

Date:

18. May. 2017

Time:

21:00

Place:

Account of Circumstances: Coratia

Tired crossing border checked
by election police and hit
by 17.18 police and sent to...

The medical condition of the patient requires:

- ☒ Consultation at the clinic on 18.05.2017
☐ Hospitalization and/or work incapacity from to.....
☐ Ambulatory care/ treatment until

Optional conclusion:

- ☒ The examination of the patient revealed physical marks and a psychic reaction that are compatible with his/her assertions.

Certificate drawn up on 18.05.2017 in duplicate, one of the original being handed over to the patient for the attention of whom it may concern.

Signature of MSF medical staff

Done in 2 copies (1 for patient, 1 for MSF)
Contact: MSF Legal Department: oripka@msf.org



JMBG

Patient:

Pacijent: [REDACTED]

OBAVEŠTENJA SAM O: dijagnozi i prognozi bolesti; kratak opis, cilji, i korist od predložene mere, vreme trajanja i moguće posledice preduzimanja ili nepreduzimanja iste; vrstu i verovatnoću mogućih rizika, bolne i druge sporedne ili trajne posledice; alternativne metode lečenja; moguće promene pacijentovog stanja posle preduzimanja predloženih medicinskih mera, kao i moguće nužne promene u načinu života; dejstva lekova i moguće sporedne posledice tog dejstva i PRISTAJEM NA PREDLOŽENU MEDICINSKU MERU shodno članu 11 i 16 Zakona o pravima pacijenta ("Službeni glasnik RS", broj 45/2013).

pacijent:

broj prot.: P4-____/17

datum: 21.05.17 15:05 odeljenje: Ortopedska ambulanta

Dg: • Posebni pregled, neoznačen - Z01.9

Nalaz: ■■■■■■■■■■ INTERNI UPUT ZA: RTG ■■■■■■■■■■

desni lakat i desni rucni zglobox2

Pacijent je dužan da se nakon obavljenog dijagnostičkog pregleda vrati u ambulantu iz koje je dobio uput!

Pacijent je dužan da se nakon obavljenog dijagnoz

Lekar:

spec. ortopedije

broj prot.: P4. /17

datum: 21.05.17 15:31 odeljenje: Ortopedska ambulanta

Dg: • Fractura ossis navicularis (scaphoidis) manus /susp./ - S62.0

Nalaz: Tucen od strane uniformisanih lica.

zali se na bol u ruci desnoj.

Klinički bol u predelu anatomske burmutice

Rtg bez sigurnog znaka kostane traume

Rtg bez sigurnog znaka kostane traume
Tp Gips sina za skafoidnu kost, analgetika, Andol IxI.

Kontrola u Poliklinici KCS u drugi ponedjeljak sa uputom u lth.

Lekar:

spec. ortopedije



Country: Serbia
Name of the MSF medical structure:

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE - ADULT

Confidential document covered by medical confidentiality

Patient's last name and first name: [redacted]
Age: 17
Sex: M F
Date of the medical examination: 19 05 2017

Clinical examination

I, the undersigned (Name and title of medical staff) [redacted]

certify that I examined the patient.

The clinical examination of this patient revealed the following elements:

bruises + pain legs + back

Material circumstances

- ☐ The patient abstained from giving details on the circumstances of his condition
☒ The patient asserts that his condition was caused by the following circumstances with the following details:

Date: 19 05 2017
Time: ROSIAN BORDER
Place:

Account of Circumstances:
POLICE PICKED THEM UP NEAR UKHAR AND DROVE THEM TO BORDER
CE (ROSIAN) THEY KEPT THEM FOR 8 HOURS IN QUIACHA AND THEN THEY
THROW IN A CIRCLE 4 PEOPLE, TOOK THEIR BELONGINGS (PHONE, WOODEN)
BEAT THEM WITH STICKS, LEGS AND HIT THEM ON THE HEADS.
ICE WAS FILMING AND LAUGHING. IF SOMEONE TRIES TO ESCAPE
THEY WOULD BEAT THEM AGAIN, THEY THROW THEM IN THE CREEK, AND
ONE OF THE GUYS WERE HIT WITH HIS HEAD ON CONCRETE WALL.

THEY SAID THAT THERE WAS AN OLD FIGHTING MAN AT THE POLICE WHO
THEY CALLED THAT WAS SEVERELY BEAT.

The medical condition of the patient requires:

- ☒ Consultation at the clinic on 19.05.2017
☐ Hospitalization and/or work incapacity from to
☐ Ambulatory care/ treatment until

Optional conclusion:

- ☒ The examination of the patient revealed physical marks and a psychic reaction that are compatible with his/her assertions.

Certificate drawn up on 19.05.2017 in duplicate, one of the original being handed over to the patient for the attention of whom it may concern.

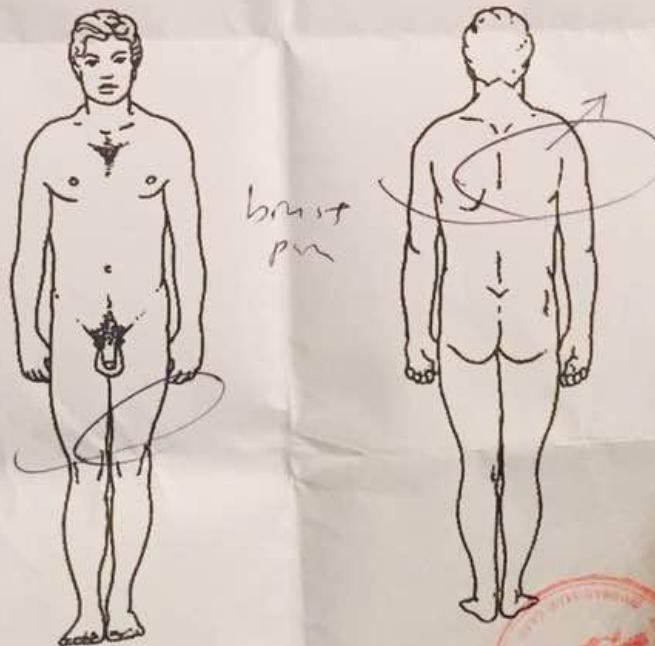
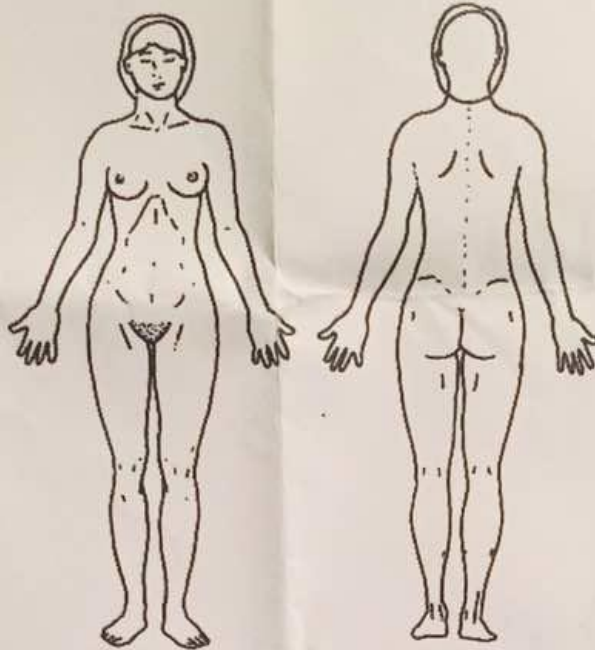
Signature of MSF medical staff

[Signature]

Done in 2 copies (1 for patient, 1 for MSF)
Contact: MSF Legal Department: oripka@msf.org



Use arrows to indicate the parts of the body and specify your conclusions in writing



Date

19/05/2021

Signature of MSF medical staff

[Handwritten signature]





Country: _____
Name of the MSF medical structure: _____

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE

Confidential document covered by medical confidentiality

Complementary information to medical certificate dated/...../.....

Patient's last name and first name:
Age: 17 Sex: M ☐ X F ☒ Patient Code:
Address of patient:

I, the undersigned (first and last name), MSF medical staff, certify that:

During the consultation, the patient declared that:
(Complementary information to the patient's narrative included in the afore-mentioned medical certificate)

11 days ago they tried to cross the border with Croatia, police ~~was~~ (not border) caught them near the city of Umovar. They didn't do anything they just put them in a vehicle and drove them to the Croatian border police. They kept them in a vehicle for 2 hours, they took them. They were kicking them with sticks, 7 people threw with sticks, and hit them with wood. They were laughing and made a circle. Police were sure no one escapes. If anyone tries they would beat them again and put them in a creek. One of the guys were hit on the head with his head.

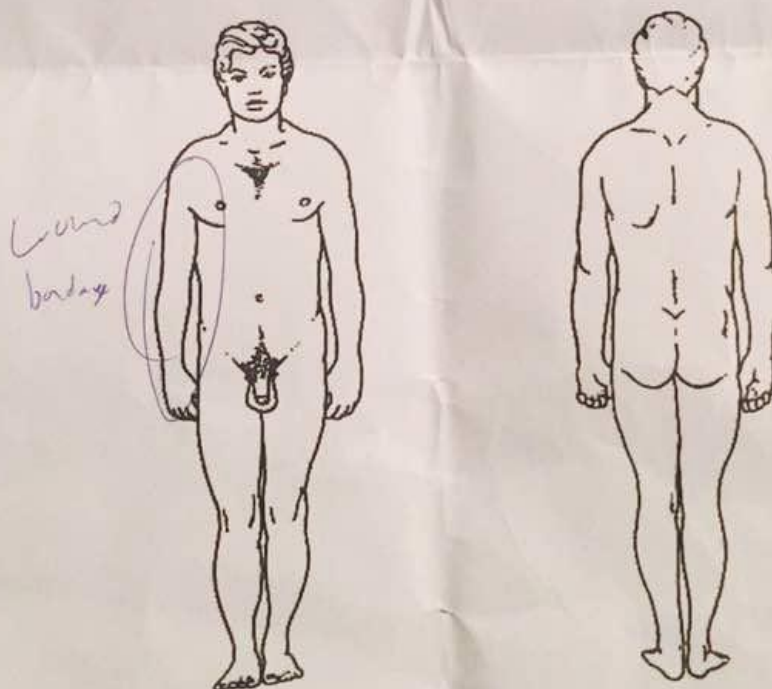
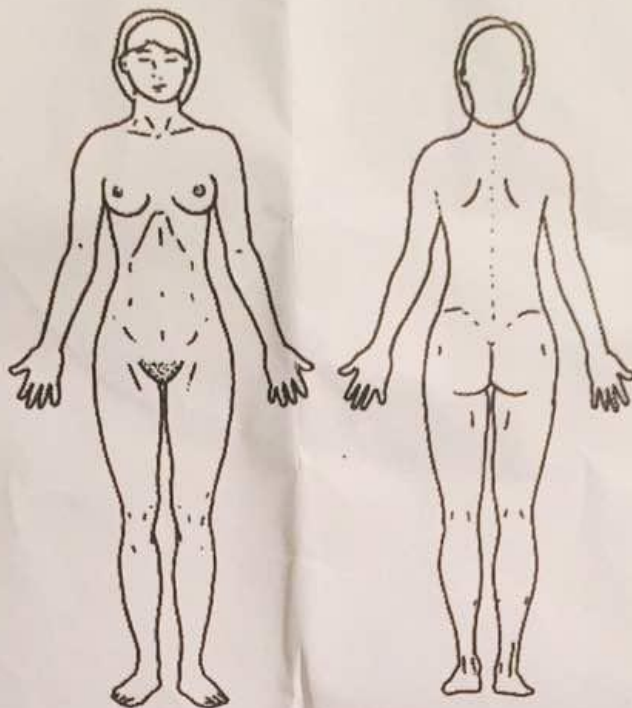
Certificate drawn up on 16.05.17 in duplicate for the attention of whom it may concern.

Signature of MSF medical staff



Done in 2 copies (1 for the patient or patient's accompanying person, 1 for MSF to be kept in the patient's medical file)
Contact: MSF Legal Department: oripka@msf.org

Use arrows to indicate the parts of the body and specify your conclusions in writing



Date

Signature of MSF medical staff

MSF stamp

Enclosure 2













Enclosure 3









