

APRIL 2022

# BALKAN REGION



## ILLEGAL PUSHBACKS AND BORDER MONITORING VIOLENCE REPORTS



**Border Violence  
Monitoring Network**

**BLIND  
SPOTS**



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kolpe**

**MOBILE  
INFO TEAM**

**CMS**  
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# GENERAL

## REPORTING NETWORK

BVMN is a collaborative project between multiple grassroots organisations and NGOs working along the Western Balkan Route and Greece, documenting violations at borders directed towards people-on-the-move. The partners have a common [website](#) database, used as a platform to collate testimonies of illegal pushbacks which are gathered through interviews.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodological process for these interviews leverages the close social contact that we have as independent volunteers with refugees and migrants to monitor pushbacks at multiple borders. When individuals return with significant injuries or stories of abuse, one of our violence reporting volunteers will sit down with them to collect their testimony. Although the testimony collection itself is typically with a group no larger than five persons, the pushback groups which they represent can exceed 50 persons. We have a standardised framework for our interview structure which blends the collection of hard data (dates, geo-locations, officer descriptions, photos of injuries/medical reports, etc.) with open narratives of the abuse.

## TERMINOLOGY

The term pushback is a key component of the situation that unfolded along the EU borders (Hungary and Croatia) with Serbia in 2016, after the closure of the Balkan Route. Pushback describes the informal expulsion (without due process) of an individual or group to another country. This lies in contrast to the term “deportation”, which is conducted in a legal framework. Pushbacks have become an important, if unofficial, part of the migration regime of EU countries and elsewhere.

## ABBREVIATIONS

BiH – Bosnia and Herzegovina  
HRV – Croatia  
SRB – Serbia  
SLO – Slovenia  
ROM – Romania  
HUN – Hungary

AUT – Austria  
MNK – North Macedonia  
GRC – Greece  
BGR – Bulgaria  
TUR – Turkey  
EU – European Union

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April, the Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN)<sup>1</sup> shared 30 testimonies of pushbacks impacting 832 people-on-the-move across the Balkans and Greece. This report brings together first-hand testimonies from a range of countries in the region to look at the way European Union states and other actors are affecting systemic violence towards people crossing borders. In terms of trends in pushbacks observed in the last month, this report analyses systematic pushbacks perpetrated against people-on-the-move in Greece.

The report then delves into developments regarding pushbacks and border violence, both on the European level, as well as in the various BVMN field bases throughout the region. It commences by analysing a [statement](#) issued on April 7, Dunja Mijatović, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights urging EU member states to stop pushbacks at their borders. The call for action comes along with four recommendations for action but also highlights “the widespread occurrence of pushbacks and related human rights violations at land and sea borders across Europe.” Also in the month of April, two crucial court cases, one at the European Court of Human Rights, and one in the Dutch District Court (NL) recognized that the Croatian state has perpetrated pushbacks against people-on-the-move, violating rights to access asylum, and violating the prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment.

In updates from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the report analyses the eviction and closure of TRC Miral camp in Bihac, as well as squat eviction and forced relocation to a camp in Presevo. Regarding other developments in Serbia, it considers the normalisation of violence against people-on-the-move in the context of pushbacks.

In Greece this month, police operations to arrest undocumented people enmass continued in Thessaloniki, and two people-on-the-move died as a direct result of systematic pushbacks in the Evros region. Analysis is shared regarding the “Samos 2” case, and ongoing difficulties in the Samos CCAC.

The final sections of the report highlight an increase in people-on-the-move transiting through Piazza Libertà in Trieste, and continuing border closures in the Spanish enclave of Ceuta.



Border Violence  
Monitoring Network

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<sup>1</sup> \*BVMN is a network of watchdog organisations active in Greece and the Western Balkans including No Name Kitchen, Rigardu, AreYouSyrious, MobileInfoTeam, Push-back Alarm Austria Josoor, InfoKolpa, Centre for Peace Studies, BlindSpots, Mare Liberum, Collective Aid, and Fresh Response.



# TRENDS IN BORDER VIOLENCE

## GREECE

### SYSTEMATIC PUSHBACKS IN GREECE, NO ACCOUNTABILITY

Since 2019, [BVMN has recorded](#) 174 testimonies of illegal pushbacks from Greece to Turkey. An alarming majority of them, particularly in the Evros region, follow a remarkably similar pattern: people-on-the-move are apprehended in the border region or deep into the interior of the territory, they are taken to police stations or detention sites where they are denied access to legal counsel, food, water, medical support, and their personal belongings are confiscated. From there, once a sufficiently large group has been detained (40–200), the people are brought to the banks of the Evros River and pushed back into Turkey. In the various detention sites, as well as at the point of apprehension and pushback, people-on-the-move may experience extreme physical, psychological, and sexual violence at the hands of the authorities. Testimonies mention the potential involvement, awareness, and complicity of multiple different units of police, as well as military and civilian actors.



In April, BVMN recorded nine pushbacks that follow this pattern, impacting over 640 people. The consistency in the description of these incidents across the last 3 years suggests the systematic nature of pushbacks in Greece, and impunity with which the authorities continue to perpetrate these violations of both domestic and international law. Despite heavy criticism from the [European Commission](#), [Commissioner for Human Rights](#), [the European Court of Human Rights](#) intervention in dozens of cases of potential pushbacks, and advocacy work by both [INGOs](#) and [grassroots actors](#), the Greek State continues to refuse to acknowledge that these practices are occurring, and their illegality. This blatant lack of accountability and respect for fundamental human rights must not be allowed to continue unanswered, to ensure access to legal procedures and safe passage for those seeking asylum in Greece.

# UPDATE ON THE SITUATION

## E.U.

### COMMISSIONER OF HUMAN RIGHTS URGES EU MEMBER STATES TO STOP PUSHBACKS

***"The war in Ukraine has caused death and destruction and has forced more than 4 million people to leave the country in search of safety elsewhere in Europe. The immediate response of European countries shows that it is possible to put the protection of human dignity and the observance of international obligations at the centre of state action."***

In a [statement](#) issued on April 7, Dunja Mijatović, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights urges EU member states to stop pushbacks at their borders. The call for action comes along with four recommendations for action but also highlights "the widespread occurrence of pushbacks and related human rights violations at land and sea borders across Europe." Mijatović warns about the normalisation of pushbacks.

For those following the work of the HR Commissioner the statement is no surprise, as the Mijatović has been outspoken about the normalisation of pushbacks and HR violations at European borders for several years. In the past she also [addressed](#) individual member states asking them to stop the illegal activities. Nonetheless, it is encouraging to find official reaffirmation of a message that NGOs have been voicing since the outbreak of the Ukraine war: the hypocrisy of the EU when it comes to their migration policy.

A country in which this [hypocrisy](#) and the racism of the border controls has been quite obvious is Poland: Whilst the borders remained closed for a few thousands from the Middle East in winter, causing at least [19 deaths](#), the same borders stood wide open for [over 3 Million people](#) fleeing Ukraine.

While we would have liked to see such a campaign 6 years ago, we certainly hope that it can eventually lead to an end of the pushbacks. So that finally all people, regardless of their skin colour and origin, can have access to the same – basic – human rights.

# CROATIA

## THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS REJECTED THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA'S REQUEST FOR A REFERRAL IN THE CASE OF THE FAMILY OF LITTLE MADINA

The European Court of Justice upheld the case against Croatia in the case of little Madina Hussiny. Last year, [Madina Hussiny and her family were recognised by the European Court of Human Rights as victims of illegal pushback by the Republic of Croatia](#). Croatia's request for a reconsideration of the case of little Madina's family was rejected by the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights rendering the final verdict finding Croatia guilty of violating the provisions of the International Convention on Human Rights, including the right to life of little Madina, the prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment.

On 5th of April, in a statement,

the [Centre for Peace Studies in Zagreb](#) said that the Government of the Republic of Croatia and Prime Minister Andrej Plenković must urgently dismiss those responsible, led by Interior Minister Davor Božinović, and take concrete measures to allow investigations and sanctions against those responsible, in this case Police Chief Nikola Milina and Border Police Chief Zorana Ničeno.

With this decision, the European Court of Justice upheld the verdict and also concluded that the Croatian authorities had failed to conduct an effective investigation into the case and denied the family access to lawyers.

## COURT RULING IN NETHERLANDS TO STOP DEPORTATIONS TO CROATIA

This month, an important court-ruling was taken in the Netherlands. The Administrative Jurisdiction Division of the Council of State decided that Dublin transfer of people that applied for asylum in the Netherlands to Croatia should be re-considered in light of the risks of deportation contrary to Article 4 Charter of Fundamental Rights and Article 3 ECHR.

The Council of State, after first setting out the principle of the protection of legitimate expectations according to which a Member State presumes that the treatment of an asylum seeker in the Member State responsible is in conformity with the EU Charter and the ECHR, made reference to [Article 3\(2\) of the Dublin Regulation](#) by

referring to cases where it is impossible to transfer an asylum seeker to a state if there are serious grounds for believing that there are systemic deficiencies in the asylum procedure and reception conditions entailing a risk of inhuman and degrading treatment within the meaning of [Art. 4 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#).

[The Council of State ruled](#) that in order to assess whether the Secretary of State can no longer invoke the principle of legitimate expectations, it is necessary to examine whether summary returns are a systemic deficiency in the asylum procedure and asylum law in the Member State of responsibility, and whether this



irregularity is relevant for the transfer of asylum seekers under the Dublin III Regulation. Emphasizing that the right to apply for asylum must be guaranteed in a swift and effective manner, the Court stated that the returns to Croatia constitute a fundamental error in its asylum procedure, especially considering that Croatia does not respect within its territory this right to apply for asylum by pushing-back people on the move to third countries – Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

In the specific case of the return of asylum seekers from Egypt and Algeria, the Court decided that the Dutch Secretary of State Eric van der Burg cannot simply assume that Croatia respects [the European](#)

[Convention on Human Rights](#) and therefore cannot readmit the two asylum seekers back to Croatia without a preliminary investigation. The Council of State ruled that, in this case, Van der Burg should have investigated current facts and circumstances. The State Secretary has to examine whether asylum seekers from Egypt and Algeria will be able to undergo the asylum procedure upon return to Croatia. This is an important ruling, as many asylum seekers throughout Europe fear a Dublin deportation to a country in which they encountered high levels of violence during pushbacks. We hope that this investigation can provoke a coming to halt of Dublin deportations to Croatia.

## AUSTRIA

### PUSHBACK ALARM AUSTRIA COMMEMORATES ALGERIAN WORKERS KILLED ON THE RAILWAY TRACKS FOR FEAR OF PUSHBACK



Ilyes and Hussein, two neighbours who grew up together in the western Algerian city of Tlemsan, left their homes to become entrapped in the cycle of violence and pushbacks that characterises the so-called 'Balkan route'. They travelled in winter, sleeping outdoors in the snow, crossing from Turkey and Greece, Macedonia and Serbia, into Slovakia and finally Austria. Ilyes was a hairdresser, Hussein a skilled craftsman. At each stop they accepted any work they could find that would help them to continue on their journey into Europe, where they hoped to find brighter prospects.

On a Thursday afternoon shortly before Christmas, they were almost there: Vienna was only 50 km away. In the last voicenote sent to the family at home, their voices sound happy, saying: 'We are just 5 kilometres from the border.'

Commemorations took place in Austria for two Algerian nationals killed close to the border in a train accident on Dec 2nd 2021. Source : Pushback Alarm Austria

Fearing a pushback in the Austrian



Relatives of the victims took part via video-link at commemorations in Austria  
Source: Pushback Alarm Austria

border area, they avoided paths and roads and instead followed the train tracks. Two Moroccan men, who had joined them in the forest just hours before, stated that Ilyes and Hussein shared their last items of food with them because they were hungry. These two were able to jump off the rails at the last second when the lights of the modern noise-reducing train suddenly flashed behind the curve. The modern train was approaching in deadly silence and, as a result, Ilyes and Hussein were fatally hit.

The news reached the BVMN through friends of Ilyes and Hussein who were still in Greece, having suffered the same cycle of violence and pushbacks at Europe's borders. They came with rumours of a train accident in Austria that had travelled back across the so-called 'Balkan Route', and BVMN partners on the ground in Greece reached out to BVMN partners in Austria which facilitated the process of repatriation that followed.

The bereaved families were unable to travel to Austria themselves and were uncertain about Ilyes' and

Hussein's fate for more than a month, Pushback Alarm Austria supported them in finding the exact location the bodies were kept, reaching out to Austrian authorities and establishing facts about the accident. It was to be more than two months before their mothers were able to bury them on February 7, 2022, in Algeria with hundreds attending the funeral.

On April 3rd Pushback Alarm Austria held a commemoration at the scene of the accident. Relatives in Algeria were present via videolink when activists brought wreaths, flowers and candles to the train tracks in

Wolfsthal, reconstructed the course of the accident together and commemorated Ilyes and Hussein with [live music](#) under the watchful eyes of a majestic red kite.

With this commemoration, Pushback Alarm Austria, and BVMN more broadly, wants to remember Ilyes and Hussein, two courageous people who never lost their sense of humanity, always shared the little they had, and who persevered through the harsh winter to reach safety.

Unfortunately, on the 1st March 2022 [another fatal accident](#) occurred at the Austrian-Hungarian border as a result of the very same noise-reduced modern trains. This time the victim was a 28 year old Moroccan national. We remember all those who have lost their lives at Europe's borders, both on land and in the sea, as a result of the violent policy of closed borders and deterrence strategies; so many that it is impossible to have an accurate record of them all. We stand in solidarity with all people-on-the-move, working towards the goal of ending all forms of violence and injustice deriving from the current European migration regime and the politics of criminalization of movement and interconnected solidarity. We envision accountable institutions respective to human rights and human dignity.



# BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

## REDUCING THE PUBLIC VISIBILITY OF PEOPLE-ON-THE-MOVE: BOSNIAN AUTHORITIES RELOCATE HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



Closure of TRC Miral

Source: No Name Kitchen (NNK) and Blindspots

On the 28th of April, at 8 a.m., the Miral Temporary Reception Centre in Velika Kladuša was closed by local authorities with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). According to rumours, the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina has decided to transfer the people-on-the-move (POM) to the Lipa camp, as its capacity is not fully utilised. Another concern is to reduce the presence of the people-on-the-move in the city centre and thus to exclude a "danger" to the citizens.

Thus, on the above-mentioned day, the residents of Miral camp were forced to board one of the four buses, while special police officers in black, fenced VW buses evicted several squats occupied by POM in the neighbourhood. Referring to information of affected POM, they were abruptly awakened by the officers in the early morning hours and had to pack up their belongings

within five minutes. In addition, the police officers destroyed parts of the squats' interior furnishings during the eviction.

The day before the eviction of Miral camp, the unaccompanied minors and families present in the Lipa camp were transferred to the Borici camp as for the time being the Lipa camp will only accommodate single men.

Also on 28th April, the day of the clouserd of the TRC Miral, the Bosnian police officers – wearing blue uniforms – patrolled the city centre of Bihac and, in the area of the main park together with the SFA, they picked up about forty people-on-the-move and forced them to sit down and after about an hour a bus arrived that transported the people who were outside the transit camps to the Lipa camp.



Source:  
Anonymous



## THE TRC LIPA

The Lipa camp burned down completely in December 2020 and was finally reopened at the end of last year in a solemn ceremony. Lipa offers "shelter" to over 1,500 people, but in reality, European Union funding for the construction and use of this place mainly facilitate the isolation of people in the middle of nowhere, as the camp is about 20 km away from the nearest town, Bihać. The newly established camp is run by the "Service for Foreigners' Affairs" (SFA), an independent administrative unit within the Ministry of Security in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the advisory assistance of the IOM. It is divided into three protected residential zones (minors, family, single men) and the containers are designed to house up to six POM. Three selectable meals per day are provided in the camp and people can prepare their own food in an outdoor kitchen.

Although camp structures do seem to have improved since the last fire, their mere existence exposes the existing problems in European asylum policies once again. The camp somewhat mitigates the symptoms of this structural failure, but without addressing its causes in any way. Moreover, the European Union's basic approach of setting up camps in non-European countries to keep people away from its own territory is to be strongly condemned. The IOM, as an UN-affiliated organisation, is largely funded by the U.S. and EU member states. And so the question arises whether, despite or precisely because of its humanitarian work, the visibility of POM is shrinking more and more. The impression arises that the living conditions of the POM are to be upgraded by the state aid projects just slightly

enough to reach minimum standards that make it easier for broad sections of the population to turn away from this humanitarian trouble spot.

On the ground, this inhumane treatment leads to an extreme strain on both the psychological and time resources of the POM: As we have seen in the past, many POM will escape from Lipa at the next possible opportunity to regain a certain degree of autonomy and, for example, not to be tied to the exit regulations in the camps. In addition, we were told in conversations with POM that the mood among the camp residents was extremely heated due to the inhumane situation and that they were under constant fear of violent confrontations. Thus, the many who cannot afford the expensive bus tickets for the return trip to the squats in Velika Kladuša or are excluded from the transport due to racist hostility – the transit community in that camp reported that the price of the taxi from Lipa to Bihac is above 50 KM – have to walk dozens of kilometres through the woods of Una Sana to get there.

# SERBIA

## EVICION IN THE NORTH OF SEVERAL SQUATS



A squat evicted the 29th April in the North of Serbia at the Hungarian and Romanian border. Source: NNK

In April, No Name Kitchen teams observed an increasing number of people arriving in northern Serbia and subsequently an increasing number of illegal pushbacks, violence and forced relocations. But it remains difficult to estimate the actual frequency of these events. Talking to the people on the ground, it becomes obvious that in many cases they avoid giving testimonies as they do not want to relive their experience, and a lot of the violence has become normalised. The normalisation of the violence in northern Serbia is symptomatic of how systematic the mistreatment of people-on-the-move is by authorities at the borders.

The violence people encounter in Serbia is not limited to the pushbacks. Living conditions inside

Serbia are dire as well, ongoing evictions of squats where people-on-the-move are living, is part of the reality that people in Serbia face. On the 29th April, a few days before Ramadan ended, hundreds of people were forcibly relocated to Presevo, a closed camp on the Macadonian border. 4 informal camps and squats, along the Hungary and Romania borders, were evicted, which amounted to around 500 people, including men, women and children. The police arrived early in the morning, with batons and guns, and forced people onto buses. In some of these informal settlements, tents were destroyed and personal belongings were stolen by the police. There are also some reports of police brutality in response to people asking about their rights.

Presevo is around 550 kilometres away from the northern border. The Serbian government opened this camp in late 2015 when the initial Humanitarian Corridor on Balkan Route was still “open”, but after March 2016, the camp operated as a closed camp. Usually overcrowded and in unsanitary conditions, Presevo camp, as described by people-on-the-move, feels like a jail. The management of the camp controls the movement of the people, going out from the camp or walking in the city is forbidden and a fence surrounds the camp. KlikAktive, a Serbian NGO, states in a report (Border Fence at the Serbian – Macedonian border, August 2021. Read the report [here](#)) on the situation at the border with Macedonia, that the only way for

people leave Presevo camp are: doing some chores for the camp, so submit themselves to forced jobs; or escaping, which involves jumping the fence and taking a taxi that brings them out from the border area. The patrolling of this area is managed by Serbian and Hungarian police, and, as KlikAktive reported, there are testimonies of local people that confirm the presence of German and Austrian police officers in the area.

Overall, this type of treatment is likely to continue in the coming months, as more people arrive and frequency of crossings increase. As the authorities attempt to manage this, they will likely increase the use of violence in different ways.

## GREECE

### NO MORE DEATHS ON THE EVROS BORDER!

In April 2021, at least two POM lost their lives as a direct result of border enforcement policies in the Evros region of the Greek/Turkish Border. On the 17th of April, a woman from the horn of Africa was shot and killed while attempting to cross the Evros river when shots were fired from both banks of the river. Only a few days later, a group of 40 Syrians were stranded on an islet in the Evros river by Greek authorities during a pushback. They remained there for more than four days, despite the authorities being notified of the danger they were in and the presence of children and people with severe vulnerabilities and health issues. On the second day, one woman from the group with severe pre-existing health issues died of kidney failure.

Already in February, the [IOM warned](#) of concerns over high numbers of deaths at Greek borders

in comparison to past years. In March, [Frontex released a statement](#) claiming that border crossings had increased already 61% in 2022 as compared to the last year, with a 138% increase in the Eastern Mediterranean. Since 1994, more than 4,000 people (that we know of) have died while trying to cross borders into Greece. Considering the systematic nature of pushbacks at Greek-Turkish borders, increases in border securitization in the last year, and endemic police violence against people-on-the-move, BVMN is highly concerned that if state responses to migration and asylum do not change, there may be many more deaths in the next months. [Mobilizations have already occurred](#) in major cities in Greece in response to these tragic events, and it is clear that greater accountability and adherence to fundamental human rights is needed, and with this structural changes to state management of migration and asylum issues in Greece.



## BROOM OPERATIONS IN THESSALONIKI



Red van used to transport apprehended people-on-the-move in Thessaloniki.

Source: [Room39](#)

On the 29th of April, 2022, the Greek police carried out a series of operations that targeted people-on-the-move in the city of Thessaloniki. In a [press release](#), BVMN reported that the police were actively targeting a food distribution site and homeless shelters, and had arrested at least three people between 8 and 9.30 PM EET. The Directorate of Foreigners of Thessaloniki [announced](#) that these operations were carried out in the context of “dealing with crime and locating foreign nationals residing illegally in Greece” and would continue until the 30th of April. According to the announcement, 9 persons were arrested that weekend for “illegal stay in the country”. Room39, a refugee and homeless support initiative, [reported](#) how people-on-the-move were arrested by the police and taken in unmarked red vans (see below). The use of similar red vans was also reported in three testimonies collected by the BVMN of pushbacks in the Evros

region in March ([here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). These “broom operations” have further continued in the first week of May where a total of 12 people were reportedly arrested for “illegal stay” ([here](#) and [here](#)), and several more people were arrested for “illegal transportation” of people who did not have any documents to legally reside in Greece ([here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). Most [recently](#), at least three people-on-the-move were apprehended and, again, put in a red van in the public market of Xirokrini. This is a neighbourhood where locals and people-on-the-move are known to reside, sell goods, and work to build “social bonds of solidarity”. In response to the broom operations, Room39 carried out a solidarity [campaign](#) against the evictions of people-on-the-move, and called for “Papers, housing, freedom of movement for all” and to “Stop the evictions of migrants”.

As highlighted in the [BVMN March Monthly Report](#), these developments can be considered as connected to the structural lack of access to asylum for many people-on-the-move, and the increased use of migrant detention. The combined situation of broom operations, and increased detention and lack of access to asylum leaves people-on-the-move in a precarious position where there is no way for them to regularise their stay and they are forced to stay undocumented, while subsequently having an increased risk of incarceration and deportation. This has created a seemingly impossible-to-break cycle of systematic inequality and violence, which currently has no prospect of ending anytime soon.

## SAMOS 2 TRIAL

The 18th of April marked exactly 1 month until the trial of the Samos 2. The two defendants face heavy charges: while N. is accused of 'endangerment of his child' and faces up to 10 years in prison, Hasan is risking a ridiculous 230 years of imprisonment. Both arrived in November 2020 on Samos and have been part of yet another tragic event and were deliberately delayed with help by competent authorities

in the Aegean, which ultimately cost N.'s child's life.

While the incident dates back to November 2020, the trial will be held on Samos on the 18th May. Their trial follows the one of the Paros 3, which were sentenced to a combined total of [439 years in prison](#) at the beginning of May.

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SAMOS CCAC AND SITUATIONAL REPORT

On the 28th of April 2022, the Samos Closed and Controlled Access Centre (CCAC) of Samos started a new practice of not permitting new arrivals to leave the camp until they receive their asylum applicant card. Until this point, camp practice was that people without an asylum seeker ID could ask for permission to leave the camp the day before having an appointment with a doctor or a lawyer.

At the time of writing, many of the new arrivals have been on Samos for a month and still do not have a card, thus leaving them detained for extended periods. The authorities of the CACC have commented that the delays are due to the "high" volume of 175 new arrivals in April, a concerning claim

for a centre with capacity of 3,000 people and funded with millions of euros of EU money.

Actors on the island are not only concerned that this practice of detention will be extended to other groups of people without ID cards on Samos but also that this may be applied to other CCACs in Greece.

This latest development comes shortly after Europe Must Act and the Samos Advocacy Collective published [a situational report](#), the difficulties in accessing adequate healthcare on the island and the week-long absence of any doctor in the Samos CCAC. Recurring topics like movement restrictions, access to services and the admissibility criteria for seeking asylum are also highlighted in the report.



# ITALY

In April 2022, field teams witnessed the arrival of 287 people in Piazza Libertà (Trieste), 233 of whom were men, 39 unaccompanied minors, 3 women and 3 families (12 people). People coming from Afghanistan and Pakistan still represent the overwhelming majority, with 125 and 104 individuals respectively. Other main countries of origin are Bangladesh and Nepal.

These numbers might showcase an increase of people who successfully attempt to cross borders, as last month's toll was 218. This steady increase has been

building up since late winter / early spring, however it might not be representative of general shifts in the route, as many people decide not to stop in Trieste at all. Of the 287 people who arrived in Piazza Libertà, only 33 decided to apply for asylum in Trieste. The real number of people who passed through Trieste last month could be higher.

On another note, regarding the criminalisation of solidarity, Andrea Costa, president of Baobab Experience, has been acquitted of charges of aiding clandestine immigration in relation to a 2016 incident, referring to the purchase of train tickets for nine POM directed to Ventimiglia.

# SPAIN

## CEUTA – BORDER WITH MOROCCO REMAINS CLOSED

During the first days of April, Moroccan media began to spread the news that the border between the Spanish enclave Ceuta and Morocco would be reopened on the night between April 13 and 14. The borders have been closed since the outbreak of the pandemic in March 2020 and this was [not the first time](#) that news of an imminent reopening had begun to spread.

However, when the news of the reopening on the 13th of April spread, the situation seemed to have changed, as the political relations between Spain and Morocco had improved and the possibility of a reopening finally seemed more realistic than in all the months before. For this reason, on the morning of April 14, [a hundred people](#) walked to the El Tarajal border crossing demonstrating under the slogan "Open the

(No Name Kitchen)





border!". The border, however, remained closed once again.

At the end of April, history repeated itself: the Spanish media assured that the border would open in the first days of May, for the end of Ramadan. Again, this did not happen, instead the opening was [postponed again to May 15](#). They talked about a gradual opening, where the first ones who will be able to cross will be the cross-border workers, those who have been trapped in Ceuta and those who remained in Morocco. Both of whom have been waiting for months to return to their jobs and/or families that are on the other side of the border.

Once again the two governments have not kept their words, as it turns out that [the opening was postponed](#) yet another time.

This climate of constant uncertainty causes a lot of anxiety among people-on-the-move. For the majority of the young Moroccans trapped in Ceuta for months, it feels more urgent than ever to reach the Spanish peninsula. If the border is reopened while they are still in Ceuta, they risk being returned to Morocco against their will.

For this reason, in recent weeks, "risky" – as the attempts to reach the peninsula are called – have increased. Usually "doing risky" includes trying to board ships that cross the Strait of Gibraltar to finally reach the Spanish mainland. As the word suggests, doing "risky" is very dangerous, not only because of the risks emerging when sneaking onto a ship or trucks, but also because of the violent repercussions set in motion by the port police. Volunteers regularly witness the use of violence against people-on-the-move. Recently for example one of the Moroccan minors currently living on the streets was beaten by the police officers while climbing the fence to access the port. As a result he fell and seriously injured his shoulder.

What remains certain in all the uncertainty is that the situation remains tense, for those that find themselves in the limbo of border policies – waiting for months without the possibility to plan their lives.



Border fence between  
Morocco and Ceuta  
(No Name Kitchen)

Link	Incident Date	Recorded Date	Demographic	Group Size
<b>Croatia to Serbia</b>				
1.1	29th March	15th April	Afghanistan	1
<a href="#">1.2</a>	15th April	25th April	Afghanistan	15
<b>Croatia to Bosnia-Herzegovina</b>				
<a href="#">2.1</a>	2nd April	13th April	Turkey	11
<a href="#">2.2</a>	8th April	14th April	Afghanistan	4
<a href="#">2.4</a>	8th April	16th April	Afghanistan, Cuba	14
<a href="#">2.3</a>	13th April	16th April	Cameroon, Guinea, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal	10
<a href="#">2.4</a>	18th April	18th April	Pakistan	8
<a href="#">2.5</a>	20th April	22nd April	Afghanistan, Iran	3
<a href="#">2.6</a>	23rd April	15th April	Bangladesh, Pakistan	30
<a href="#">2.7</a>	24th April	26th April	Afghanistan	8
<a href="#">2.8</a>	24th April	26th April	Afghanistan, Pakistan	20
<a href="#">2.9</a>	25th April	27th April	Afghanistan	3
<a href="#">2.10</a>	26th April	18th April	Afghanistan	2
<a href="#">2.11</a>	26th April	27th April	Afghanistan	3
<a href="#">2.12</a>	27th April	30th April	Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkey	4
<a href="#">2.13</a>	28th April	29th April	Afghanistan	4
<b>North Macedonia to Greece</b>				
<a href="#">3.1</a>	19th April	20th April	Morocco	9
<a href="#">3.2</a>	23rd April	25th April	Tunisia	3
<a href="#">3.3</a>	24th April	25th April	Tunisia	3
<b>Greece to Turkey</b>				
<a href="#">4.1</a>	1st April	4th April	Afghanistan, Syria, Morocco, Algeria, Turkey	80
<a href="#">4.2</a>	3rd April	6th April	Syria, Morocco, Yemen	60
<a href="#">4.3</a>	3rd April	7th April	Afghanistan, Syria, Morocco, Egypt	50
<a href="#">4.4</a>	6th April	7th April	Afghanistan, Syria, Morocco, Algeria, Sudan	70
<a href="#">4.5</a>	9th April	10th April	Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Morocco	80
<a href="#">4.6</a>	11th April	14th April	Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Morocco, Algeria, Iran, Yemen, African countries	76
<a href="#">4.7</a>	11th April	12th April	Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Morocco, Algeria	76
<a href="#">4.8</a>	21st April	20th April	Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Iraq, Morocco, Kurdistan	80
<a href="#">4.9</a>	26th April	27th April	Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Morocco, Algeria, South Sudan	70
<b>Bulgaria to Turkey</b>				
<a href="#">5.1</a>	7th April	7th April	Morocco	

# NETWORK STRUCTURE AND CONTACT

B	O	R	D	E	R
V	I	O	L	E	N
M	O	N	I	T	O
N	E	T	W	O	R
K					
<p>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.</p> <p>To follow more from the Border Violence Monitoring Network, check out our <a href="#">website</a> for the entire testimony archive, previous monthly reports and regular news pieces. To follow us on social media, find us on Twitter handle <a href="#">@Border Violence</a> and on <a href="#">Facebook</a>. For further information regarding this report or more on how to become involved please email us at <a href="mailto:mail@borderviolence.eu">mail@borderviolence.eu</a>. For press and media requests please contact: <a href="mailto:press@borderviolence.eu">press@borderviolence.eu</a></p>					



**Border Violence  
Monitoring Network**