

VISUAL ANALYSIS: PUSHBACK FROM ALBANIA

*Analysis and geolocation of visual material captured close to the
Albania/Greece border on in August 2021*

Jack Sapoch
jsapoch@gmail.com

Editor:
Chloe Powers



OVERVIEW OF MATERIALS

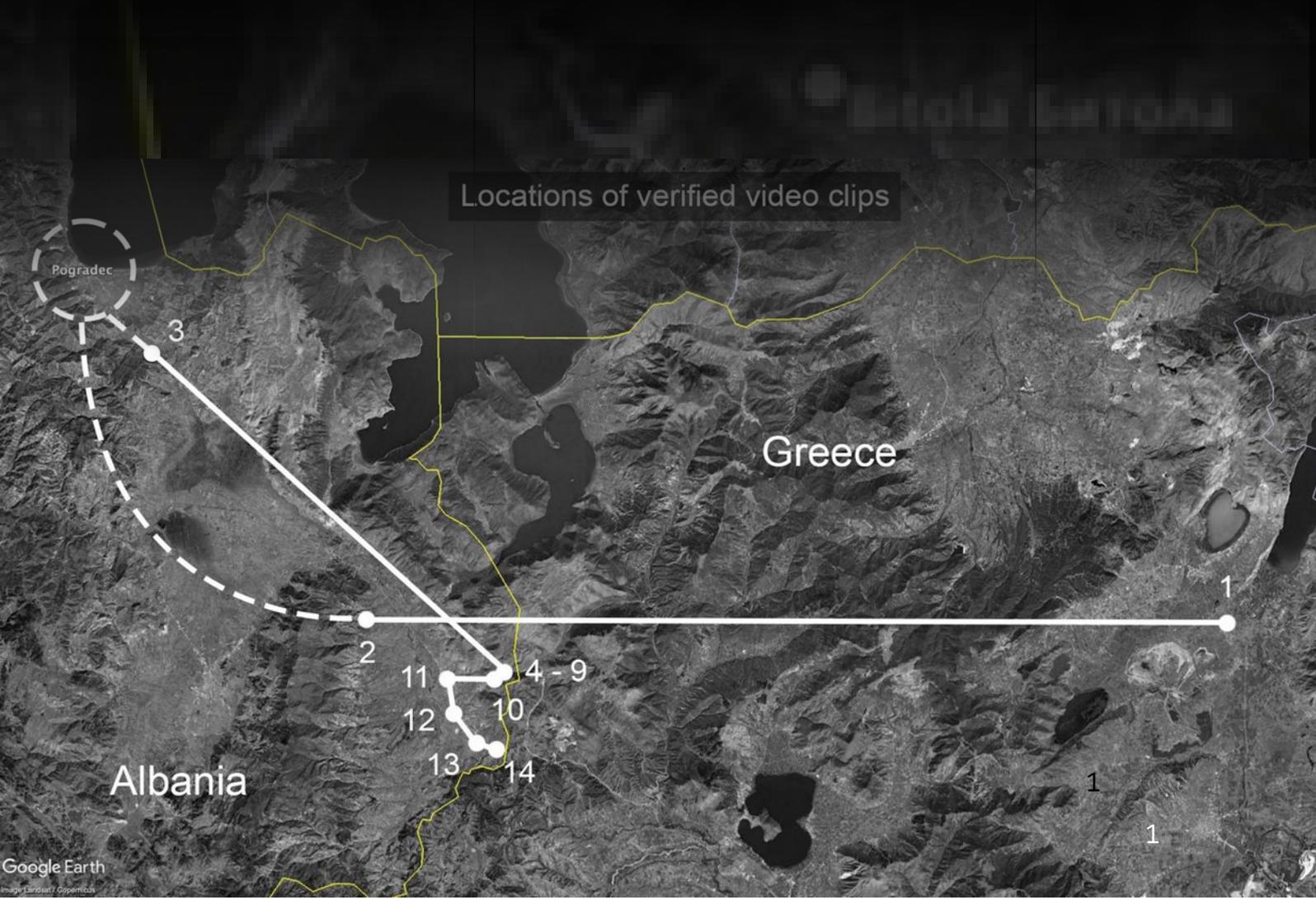


In August 2021, BVMN representatives stayed in touch a member of group during the course of his several pushbacks from Albania to Greece. He was able to recorded a series of visual materials of his first pushback on 11 June, 2021 by taking videos and images. This document provides an objective analysis of these materials with a mind for verification and analysis.

The primary tools that were used in the analysis of the visual material were two different pieces of software which model elevation data. First, we utilized the desktop version of Google Earth Pro's, specifically relying on its Terrain layer which overlays satellite imagery over a topographic elevation model. Second, to obtain more precise references for on the ground imagery, we made use of Google's Streetview feature as well as various open source media files obtained of the area from social media sites like YouTube and Facebook.

Through our analysis of the visual materials, we are able to determine the following trajectory of the group.

The map below is derived from referencing 14 verifiable videos through geolocation or metadata analysis. In addition to location based analysis, we are also able to use the file metadata to provide a timeline of the group's movement through Albania. An overview of the material follows below.



VIDEO 1

Location: E65 highway, north of Levea, Greece

Coordinates: 40.655900, 21.702200

File creation date: Wed Jun 02 2021 12:14:00

File name: VID_20210602_131335

This video is 24 seconds long and shows the group walking along a highway adjacent to a cropping of trees. A road sign is visible along the road. The location of this video was able to be verified through two methods. The file's EXIF data retained location data, providing coordinates which were then verified through matching reference imagery from Google Streetview of the location.

VID_20210602_131335.mp4

File Metadata

File Type: video/mp4
Error: 0
Upload Size: 51309427
exiftool:

Name	Value
ExifTool Version Number	12.25
File Name	phppHajzD
Directory	/tmp
File Size	49 MiB
File Modification Date/Time	2022:09:27 01:37:49+00:00
File Access Date/Time	2022:09:27 01:37:47+00:00
File Inode Change Date/Time	2022:09:27 01:37:49+00:00
File Permissions	-rw-r-----
File Type	MP4
File Type Extension	mp4
MIME Type	video/mp4
Major Brand	MP4 v2 [ISO 14496-14]
Minor Version	0.0.0
Compatible Brands	isom, mp42
Movie Header Version	0
Create Date	2021:06:02 10:14:00
Modify Date	2021:06:02 10:14:00
Time Scale	1000
Duration	23.74 s
Preferred Rate	1
Preferred Volume	100.00%
Preview Time	0 s
Preview Duration	0 s
Poster Time	0 s
Selection Time	0 s
Selection Duration	0 s
Current Time	0 s
Next Track ID	3
GPS Coordinates	40° 39' 21.24" N, 21° 42' 7.92" E
Android Version	9
Track Header Version	0
Track Create Date	2021:06:02 10:14:00
Track Modify Date	2021:06:02 10:14:00



Image Description: A stitch of stills from the video clip compared to Google Streetview imagery of the surrounding terrain and position on satellite imagery

Albania

VIDEO 2

Location: South of Vranisht, Albania
Coordinates: 40.659300, 20.919600
File creation date: Mon Jun 07 2021
17:43:06
File name: VID_20210611_093644

This video is 18 seconds long and shows the group attempting to stay dry under a tree during a rainstorm. A dirt road is. The location of this video was able to be verified through analysis of the file's EXIF data which retained location data, providing coordinates. It was impossible to reference these coordinates to satellite due to the narrow field of view provided in the video.

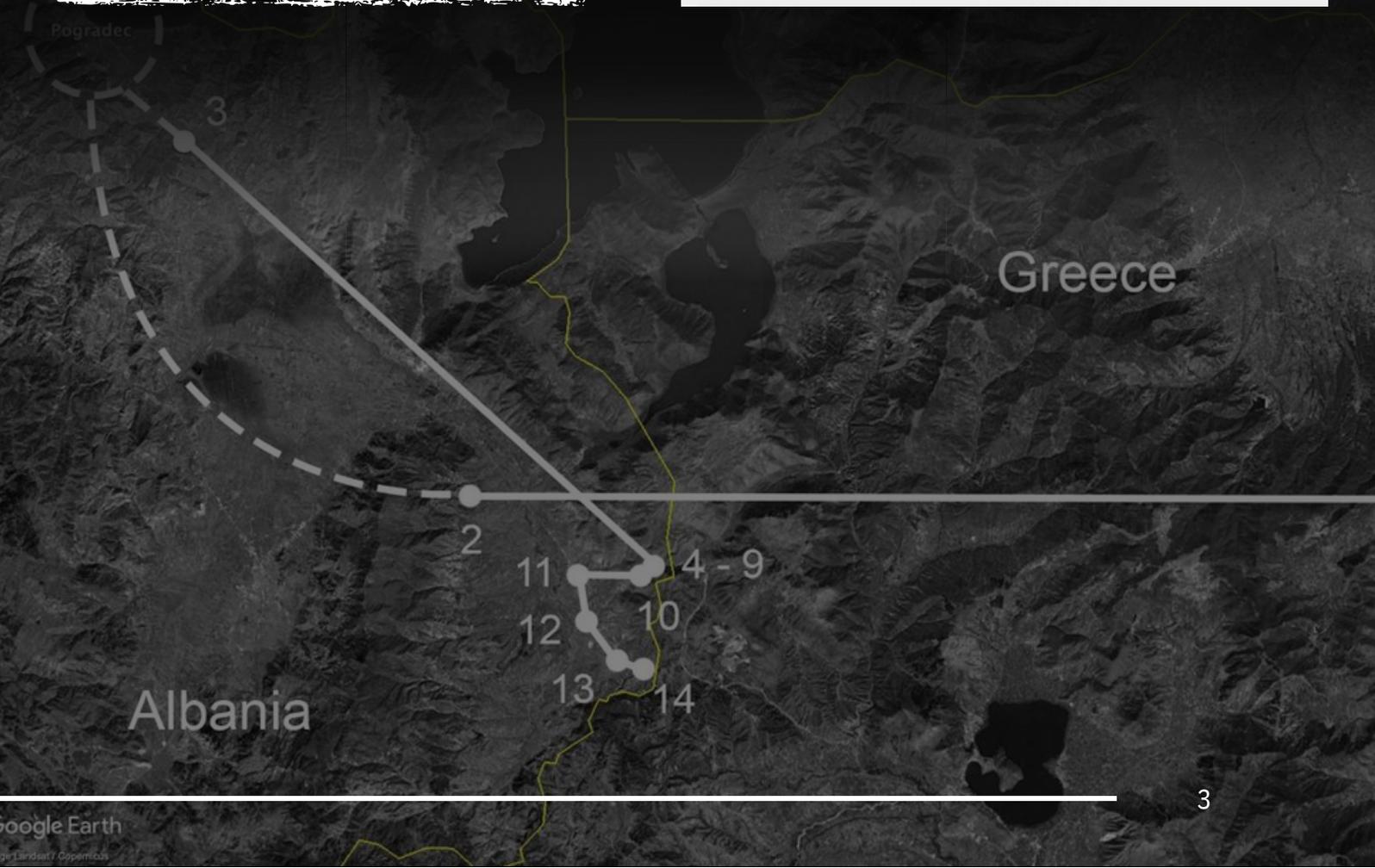
VID_20210607_184247.mp4

File Metadata

File Type: video/mp4
Error: 0
Upload Size: 38655747

exiftool:

Name	Value
ExifTool Version Number	12.25
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Directory	/tmp
File Size	37 MB
File Modification Date/Time	2022:09:27 01:53:42+00:00
File Access Date/Time	2022:09:27 01:53:41+00:00
File Inode Change Date/Time	2022:09:27 01:53:42+00:00
File Permissions	-rw-----
File Type	MP4
File Type Extension	mp4
MIME Type	video/mp4
Major Brand	MP4 v2 [ISO 14496-14]
Minor Version	0.0.0
Compatible Brands	isom, mp42
Movie Header Version	0
Create Date	2021:06:07 15:43:06
Modify Date	2021:06:07 15:43:06
Time Scale	1000
Durations	17.86 s
Preferred Rate	1
Preferred Volume	100.00%
Preview Time	0 s
Preview Durations	0 s
Poster Time	0 s
Selection Times	0 s
Selection Durations	0 s
Current Time	0 s
Next Track ID	3
GPS Coordinates	40° 39' 33.48" N, 20° 55' 10.56" E
Android Version	9
Track Header Version	0
Track Create Date	2021:06:07 15:43:06
Track Modify Date	2021:06:07 15:43:06



VIDEO 3

Location: On the E86 highway, south of Çërravë, Albania

Coordinates: 40.842995, 20.721557

File creation date: Fri Jun 11 2021 8:37:16

File name: VID_20210611_093644

The video in question is 28 seconds long, and was recorded inside a moving vehicle. Through the duration of the video, the author pans to show the view a window on the driver's side of the vehicle.

There are distinct features shown in the background. Between 00:04 – 00:05 seconds, the video captures a set of stairs leading to a long rectangular building with red painting on its base facing the road. Five inset window panels can be seen in the building. Further in the background, a distinct series of build can be observed.

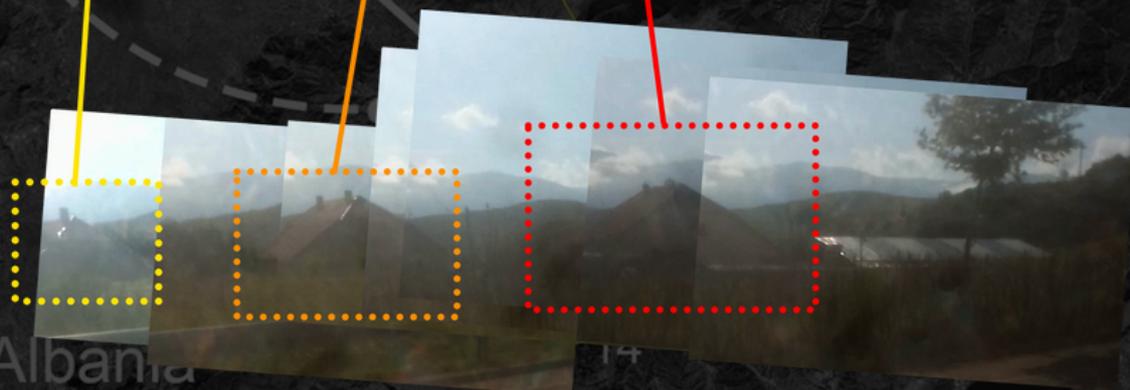
Through comparison of this imagery with Google Streetview images of roads nearby Pogradec, we were able to determine that this scenery was consistent to a stretch of the E86 highway south of the small village of Çërravë.



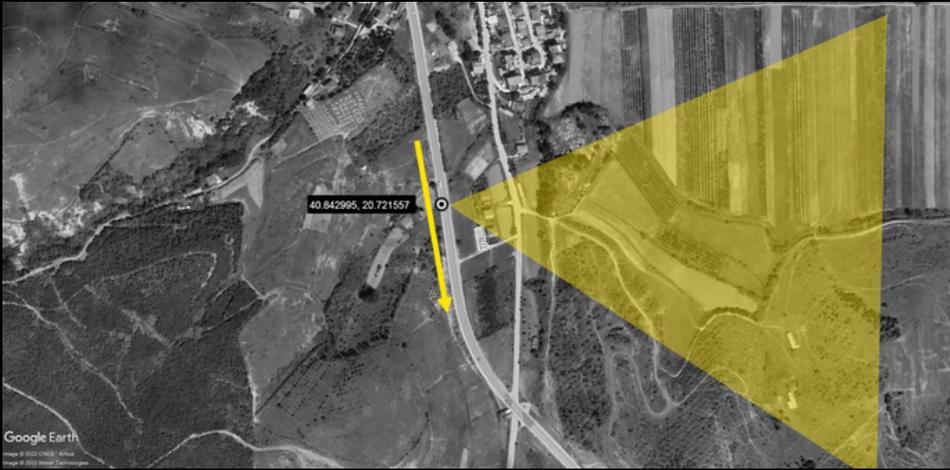
Panorama stitched together from stills taken from VID_20210611_093644.mp4



Greece



Albania



Referencing this video to satellite imagery of the town it is possible to geolocate the clip to the coordinates of 40.595165, 20.997882 in Vishocicë, less than 4 km from the Greek border.

VIDEOS 4-9

Location: *Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre Kapshtice*

Coordinates: *40.623448, 21.043261*

File creation date: *Fri Jun 11 2021 9:25:51 - 11:43:55*

File name:

VID_20210611_102541

VID-20210611-WA0042

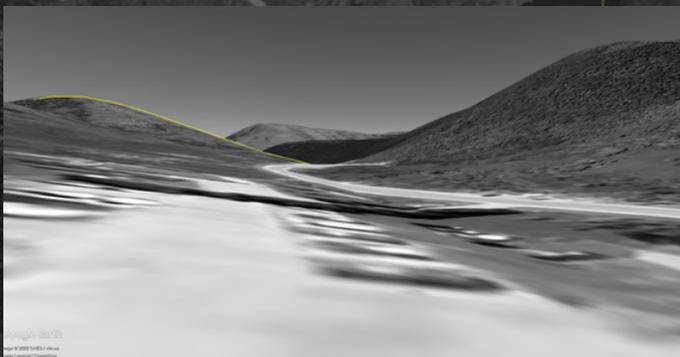
VID-20210611-WA0047

VID_20210611_123147

VID_20210611_123330

VID-20210611-WA0077

Videos #4 – 9 are all recorded in the same location, the IOM-run Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre in Kapshtice. This is possible to determine through comparing the ridgelines and white containers shown in the clip to satellite imagery and terrain topology layers in Google Earth.



Panorama stitched together from stills taken from VID-20210611-WA0077 compared to a Google render of the elevation around the Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre Kapshtice

Albania



Furthermore, comparing signage visible on the sides of the containers, it is possible to make out the logos of the IOM and the Council of Europe Development Bank. The placement of these logos is also visible in promotional materials from the IOM shared online in May, 2021 during the visit of the UN Resident Coordinator to Albania.



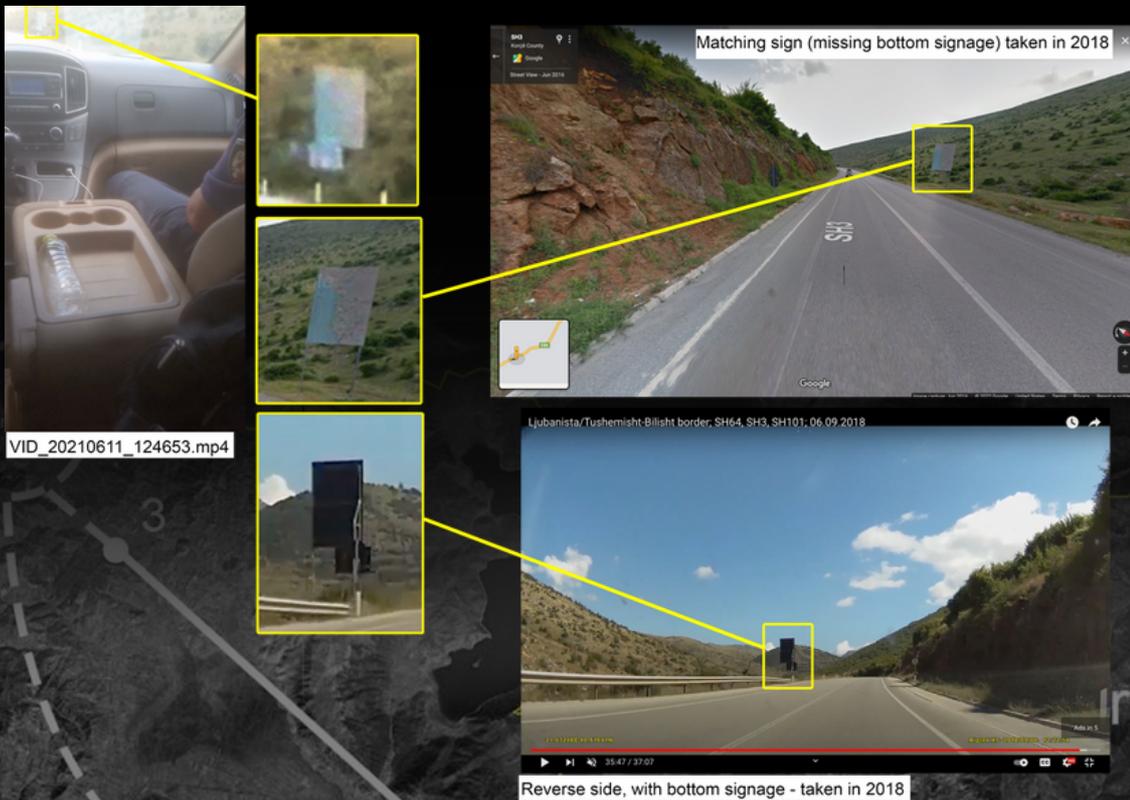
Albania

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VIDEO 10

Location: On the E86 highway south of the Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre Kapshtice
Coordinates: 40.617866, 21.035279
File creation date: Fri Jun 11 2021 11:47:00
Filename: VID_20210611_124653

The video is 11 seconds long and is recorded in the interior of a car, looking towards the road from the front window. Several signs are passed during the short duration of the clip which are possible to reference with Google Streetview imagery and a dashboard camera YouTube video from 2018.



VIDEO 11

Location: On the E86 highway south of Bilisht

Coordinates: 40.617576, 20.992657

File creation date: Fri Jun 11 2021 11:49:53

Filename: VID-20210611-WA0081

The video is 10 seconds long and is filmed shortly after the previous clip, still on a highway road that approaches a crop of buildings. This crop of buildings is possible to reference on Google Streetview.

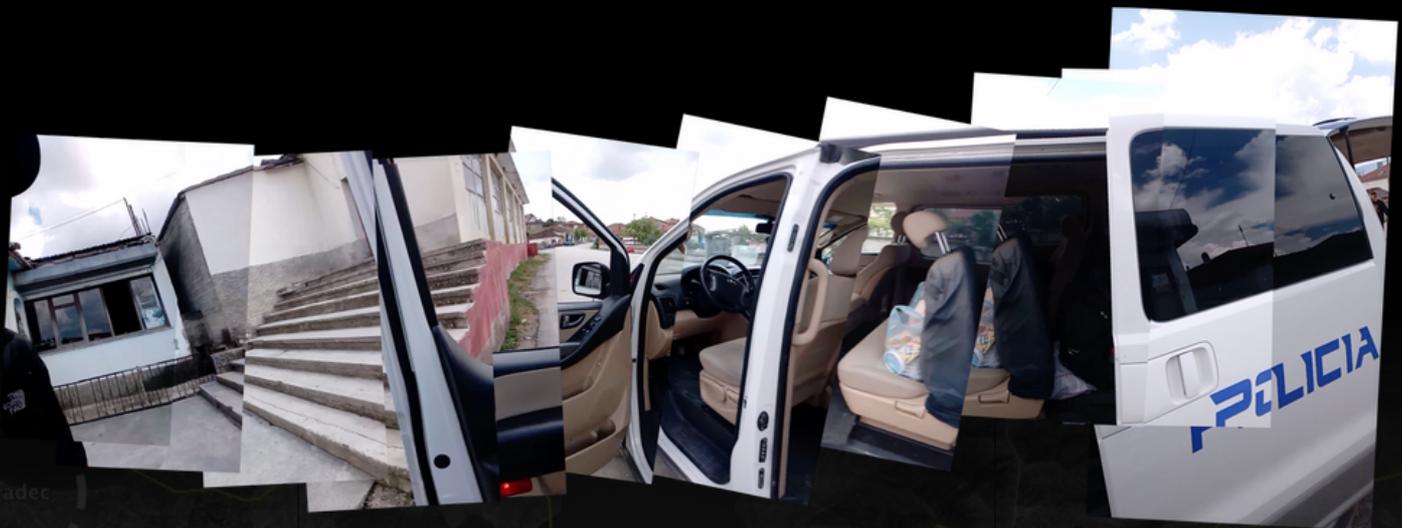


VIDEO 12

Location: Center of Vishocicë
Coordinates: 40.595165, 20.997882
File creation date: Fri Jun 11 2021 12:04:19
Filename: VID-20210611-WA0088.mp4

The video in question is 7 seconds long, and was recorded in a mirrored format. During the duration of the video, the author pans to show a white van with the words POLICIJA written on its side.

There are distinct features shown in the background. Between 00:04 – 00:05 seconds, the video captures a set of stairs leading to a long rectangular building with red painting on its base facing the road. Five inset window panels can be seen in the building. Further in the background, a distinct series of build can be observed.



3 Panorama stitched together from stills taken from VID-20210611-WA0088.mp4

Through comparison of this imagery with open source material of villages surrounding the Albaina-Greek border, we were able to determine that this scenery was consistent to the town center of the Albania village of Vishocicë. A YouTube clip entitled “Vishocicë/Pj2, “E rrëmbeva gruan dhe e mora në krahë “. Ja shprehja e famshme e fshatit me kulturë”, uploaded in January 2021 by user “HABERET E FSHATIT” features a recording of this same building starting from the time stamp of 06:47.



Stitched image of VID-20210611-WA0088.mp4 compared to a still from “Vishocicë/Pj2, “E rrëmbeva gruan dhe e mora në krahë “. Ja shprehja e famshme e fshatit me kulturë”



Referencing this video to satellite imagery of the town it is possible to geolocate the clip to the coordinates of 40.595165, 20.997882 in Vishocicë, less than 4 km from the Greek border.



VIDEO 13

Location: East of Trestenik

Coordinates: 40.573691, 21.020142

File creation date: Fri Jun 11 2021 12:21:30

Filename: VID_20210611_132111

This video is 17 seconds long and mainly shows the interior of a 4x4 vehicle. Short stretches of frames at the beginning and end of the clip give a glimpse out of the

rear window of the vehicle where it is possible to identify a series of buildings along a dirt road. Keeping in mind the short duration elapsed since the previous clip, it is possible to find a match for this set of buildings on satellite imagery east of the small village of Trestenik.



Albania



VIDEO 14

Location: Border area east of Trestenik

Coordinates: (general) 40.569146, 21.037312

File creation date: Fri Jun 11 2021 12:28:16

Filename: VID-20210611-WA0092

The range of visibility of this video is severely restricted, leaving it difficult to provide a precise geolocation of the clip. That being said, there are certain features visible, including forest lines, a nearby tree, and a sloping elevation change.



Keeping this in mind along with our knowledge of the progression toward the border, the short time pass after the previous clip, and witness testimony, it is possible to provide a general area in which this video would have been filmed (shown below). The boxes in yellow indicate tree groupings which are potential matches for that shown in the clip.



Albania

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ANALYSIS OF AUTHORITIES

Plainclothes personnel at the centre

Three individuals appear to be plainclothes personnel at the centre. One wears a lanyard, ostensibly with his identification on it, however from the distance we see him it is difficult to make more conclusive statements about his identity. From the analytical perspective, it is difficult to say more so we should look to the testimony of the group-members to help fill in the blanks here.



Uniformed officers

At least 5 uniformed Albanian police officers are visible in the videos recorded on 11 August 2021. At least one officer is recorded at the reception center, two are recorded in the front seat of the Hyundai driving towards Vishocice, and finally two additional officers are recorded driving the Land Rover Defender in the second leg towards the border.



ANALYSIS OF VEHICLES

Unidentified Transport Vehicle

As shown in Video #3, the group was transported to the Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre Kapshtice in an SUV. The interior of the vehicle is shown, however at this point the make and model of this vehicle remains unidentified.



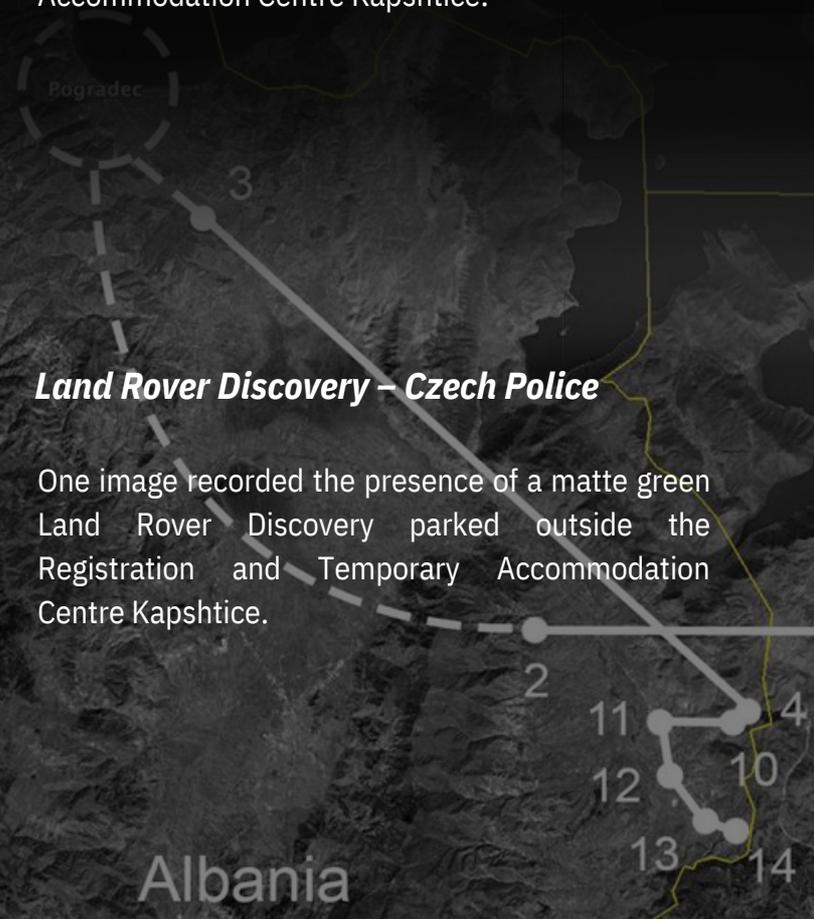
Land Rover Discovery Sport – Frontex

Two clearly marked Frontex operated Land Rover Discovery Sport vehicles were recorded parked outside the Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre Kapshtice.



Land Rover Discovery – Czech Police

One image recorded the presence of a matte green Land Rover Discovery parked outside the Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre Kapshtice.



This vehicle is consistent in color and model to those which Czech authorities maintain and have been documented to have used along the Albanian border in the Kapshtice area in 2019.



It is worth noting that the documentation of these two models of Land Rovers at the center is consistent with press materials released by the IOM in May 2021 (shown below), two months prior to the pushback in question.



Land Rover Defender – Albanian Police

At least one Land Rover Defender, a vehicle used by the Albanian police in the border region, is visible in videos taken by the respondent.



Comparison of interior of transport vehicle driven by Albanian authorities in VID_20210611_132111 (clip 13) and the interior of a vintage Land Rover Defender

Hyundai Starex H-1 TQ – Albanian Police

The group-member was also able to capture a vehicle consistent in design with the Hyundai Starex H-1 TQ parked in the interior of the Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre in Kapshtice.



He and the rest of his group would later on be transported from the center towards the border in this vehicle. We are able to determine this by matching up interior details of the car with stock footage.



In addition, exterior shots of the vehicle taken in Video #13, compared with previous local news reporting (see below) featuring a similar vehicle allow us to further match the vehicle.



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Greece