solidarnost *je naša snaga*

Visit to refugees from the Middle East
at the border crossing Berkasovo-Bapska at Sid

October 18, 2015.

Activist of Women in Black, Ljiljana Radovanovic, Violeta Djikanovic and Ruzica Karalic were at the commemoration of 24 years of suffering of civilians in Lovas. After the end of the commemoration, and guided by curiosity, together with Jelena Baketa we went to a nearby refugee reception center, which is located in the village of Opatovac. We couldn't enter the camp because we need the necessary permits, but from the outside we could see that the conditions in the camp are humane. There we saw about fifty buses that after the registration and medical aid and help with food and clothes, are taking people to Osijek where they go by train to Slovenia.

We took with our self the humanitarian aid in food, hygiene and clothes and we headed towards closure of the border crossing Berkasovo-Bapska to see what is the situation with the refugees from our side. As we drove up to the pass we met a large number of buses and police who stood next to the road and kindly gave us information that the border crossing is closed again and that a large number of people are located in Berkasovo.

Coming to Berkasovo, as well as the crossing was a shock for us. Expecting camp, we found our self in the middle of vast fields, in mud up to our knees. There were several tents, and a pair of field toilets. People did not have a place to sit and rest after the long journey from Presevo. There were a lot of women with children and mostly men with entire families. Most of them were from Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. They were all exhausted, with wounded legs, wet and hungry. In addition to their tiredness, people were willing to talk and take pictures with us.

A lot of volunteers from the Czech Republic were engaged with refugees as well as the volunteers of the UNHCR and the Red Cross. Their requirements consist of the following: water, food, shoes, socks, raincoats, hygienic supplies as well as blankets and sleeping bags.

Reported by: Violeta and Ljiljana