

solidarnost je naša snaga

Visit to refugees / migrants, Pljevlja, Montenegro

February 2019

Since February 2018, Pljevlja is one of the important places on the "Balkan Route". Due to police terror on the borders between Serbia and Croatia and Hungary, part of the refugees / migrants is deciding to go from Greece, through Albania and Montenegro to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There are two refugee camps in Montenegro, both near Podgorica, Spuž and Konik. These camps are of low capacity, and the conditions in them are minimal.

The attitude of the Montenegrin police is satisfactory and no significant cases of ill-treatment towards refugees / migrants have been recorded.

After the registration in Podgorica, the largest number of refugees / migrants goes to the north-west of Montenegro and Pljevlja. Pljevlja is located about 40km from the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. The terrain is mountainous, which presents a danger during the winter months, the mountain climate is very sharp, during our stay, the temperature dropped to - 12C.

Activists from Bonafide are active in Pljevlja. All their capacities, including, their working space, are completely subordinate to assisting refugees / migrants. In a year, around 2,000 refugees / migrants passed through this facility. In this place, they can get food, clothing and shoes, and a large number remains to sleep, while some stay for a longer period of time. When needs exceed the capacity of the facility, refugees / migrants sometimes sleep for free in one hostel in the city, and these costs are partly paid by the Municipality of Pljevlja.

During our stay we witnessed how much this assistance means, a group of refugees / migrants, including very young children, appeared at the Bonafide office in the middle of the night, froze and in a very bad state.

Please note that all assistance provided to refugees / migrants in Pljevlja is based solely on the volunteer work of activists of Bonafide and voluntary contributions by citizens.

While refugees / migrants in Montenegro are safe, problems arise when they move to Bosnia and Herzegovina. After entering Bosnia and Herzegovina, refugees / migrants are heading towards Gorazde, from where they can take public bus to Sarajevo and further to Bihać. After crossing the border, it takes several hours of walk to reach Gorazde through the territory belonging to the Republic of Srpska. Republika Srpska police are terrorizing refugees / migrants, in the same way as the Croatian police. They are beaten, robbed, and then returned to the territory of Montenegro.

The situation is better when they reach territory of the Federation, but also there are problems, because police often seek bribes and sometimes those who do not have to pay, are returned to Montenegro.

The refugees / migrants we met during our stay, were mostly from Iraq, but also from Syria, Libya and Algeria.



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