

WhatsApp from Lipa

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Camp Lipa burned down on 23 December 2020, a few days after I returned from field research in Bihać which I conducted with a team of volunteers from one of the international, humanitarian, grassroots organizations present in the area of the Una-Sana Canton. The hunger strike undertaken by the people on the move who were left at the location of the former camp in Lipa without alternative accommodation began on New Year's Day, 1 January 2021. On January 4, a Swiss volunteer in charge of communication for the humanitarian team in Bihać put me in touch with a young Pakistani from the camp. This person wanted to send his statement about the situation in Lipa to the international media. It was Monday morning and I was in the office. My phone rang – a WhatsApp video call request. I answered it, and the screen immediately showed a live broadcast of a protest – a mass of young people in the burned-down camp were chanting and holding banners written on styrofoam boards. The call was not long and it ended abruptly, the person who initiated it messaged me that he hung up because of a policeman who was watching him suspiciously. He asked me if we could talk again in half an hour. I put my cell phone on the table and prepared my camera. When the phone rang, representatives of the hunger strike group appeared on the screen, ready to make a media statement. The owner of the phone remained behind the camera. The first video is a recording of our conversation. I stayed in touch with the owner of the phone who, in order to remain anonymous, chose the name Eddie.

Eddie subsequently sent me the video materials used in the two videos below. In the first video, we can see the interaction between the interviewed people on the move and journalists taking statements about the strike, and in the second video, scenes from everyday life in the Lipa camp.

There is also a link to a shorter version of the first WhatsApp video, which, accompanied by an additional introductory text, was published by the organization No Name Kitchen on its YouTube channel.

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