PORTUGAL: THE ALLEGED ILL-TREATMENT OF ROGERIO CAMOESAS BY A REPUBLICAN NATIONAL GUARD OFFICER IN PENAFIEL

Amnesty International is concerned about the complaint of ill-treatment made by **Rogério Alexandre de Almeida Camoesas** about an officer of   the paramilitary police force called the Republican National Guard (*Guarda Nacional Republicana* - GNR) in Penafiel on the night of 30 August 1995. The organization is seeking to establish whether the Portuguese authorities have opened an inquiry into the allegations of ill-treatment made by Rogério Camoesas against the officer. He was able to name the officer because he had read the name plate on the officer's uniform.

The following information is based on a report made to Amnesty International by Rogério Camoesas and on the report of a medical clinic.

Rogério Camoesas was born in Evora (Alentejo) in 1978. He is a student and lives with his parents in the small town of Penafiel, about 35 kms from Oporto.

On 30 August 1995, at about 23.15pm, he was walking with his girlfriend through a park known as the Jardim do Sameiro, in the center of town. He had left his motor bike at one of the entrances to the garden, where he had arranged to join two of his friends. As they walked along to meet them, occasionally stopping to kiss, Rogério Camoesas heard someone shouting behind him and looked back to see two GNR officers. One of the two was reported as saying '*Andam para aqui estes badalhocas a fazer badalhoquices!*'   (This can roughly be translated as 'All this scum going around doing dirty things!') Rogério Camoesas asked if the policeman was speaking to him. The officer replied that he was, adding, 'If you want to do these things, go and do them in your mother's bed.'

Rogério Camoesas and his girlfriend continued to walk along the path and again stopped to kiss, at which point the GNR officer came up and pushed them, saying to the young man, '*Vê lá se queres levar no focinho!*' ('Look here, do you want to be punched in the face?'[1])   When Rogério Camoesas objected that this was verbal abuse, the GNR officer continued to call him names.

The couple reached the entrance to the park where they gave one another a farewell kiss. Rogério Camoesas then walked over to join his two friends, one of whom passed him his motor bike helmet. They heard the GNR officer shout, 'Are you playing with me?' Rogério Camoesas looked back to see the officer approach, truncheon in hand. He was hit in the back with such force that he fell to the ground. While on the ground he was again hit with the truncheon.

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[1]He used a slang word, *focinho*, which refers to an animal's face.

One of his friends tried to intervene with the second GNR officer, but the latter replied that it was not his problem and it was his colleague who was in command.

Rogério Camoesas was helped to his feet by his girlfriend, who had witnessed the incident. The officer then asked for his documents and, noting he had been born in Evora, made a derogatory remark about *alentejos* (people from Alentejo, a southern region of Portugal). He then fined him for not wearing his helmet, although he had not apparently touched his motor bike up to that point.

The two police officers then departed. After Rogério Camoesas had returned home his parents took him to the emergency medical clinic. In his report the clinic director, Dr Pereira Magalhaes, stated that he had suffered 'traumatic injuries' as a result of being beaten, and had contusions on the back and left arm, but no fractures. Rogério Camoesas and his parents then went to GNR headquarters to make a complaint, but were refused entry to the building on the grounds that no one was available to see them. Later that day, 31 August, the young man's father, José Alberto de Oliveira Camoesas, contacted a lawyer, who has filed a complaint against the two officers in the name of his son.

Subsequently one of the friends of Rogério Camoesas was reportedly approached by the same GNR officer who had beaten Rogério Camoesas and was abusively threatened not to appear as a witness at any inquiry.