

**SPAIN:**  
**THE ALLEGED ILL-TREATMENT OF EMILIO ROMERO  
ARANCIBIA BY POLICE OFFICERS IN BARCELONA**

Amnesty International is concerned about the reported ill-treatment of Emilio Romero Arancibia by police officers at the *Delegación de Gobierno de Extranjería*, a government office dealing with immigration affairs, in Barcelona on 6 March 2000.

In a complaint lodged with the judicial authorities Emilio Romero Arancibia, a journalist of Chilean nationality and his partner, CAJA [name removed at their request], a psychologist, also of Chilean nationality, alleged that two police officers punched and beat Emilio Romero with a baton, kicking him in the ribs. The police were also accused of violating the Chilean's moral integrity<sup>1</sup>. One medical report confirmed the existence of multiple bruises and injuries on various parts of Emilio Romero's body. At the same time Emilio Romero was accused of attacking police officers<sup>2</sup>.

Amnesty International opposes torture and ill-treatment, and seeks clear policies from governments that torture and ill-treatment will not be tolerated. It calls for the initiation of impartial, prompt and effective investigations into all such allegations, including those made by Emilio Romero and CAJA, in the manner required by international standards.

The following account is based on statements made by Emilio Romero and CAJA, and on a medical report, a copy of which is in Amnesty International's possession.

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<sup>1</sup> *integridad moral*

<sup>2</sup> *atentado a la autoridad*

On 6 March Emilio Romero, who had been studying for his master's degree at the *Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona* since January 1999, accompanied CAJA to the government office in Barcelona that deals with immigration, in order to sort out some documents required by CAJA for a job she had been offered. They were standing in a queue when a police officer pushed Emilio Romero's arm and shouted "*Are you going to move or what?*"<sup>3</sup>. Emilio Romero rebuked him by saying "*Please*". The officer then turned round and hit him. He pressed his hands against Emilio Romero's neck and pushed him. When Emilio Romero lifted his hands to defend himself the officer pulled out his truncheon, then ran towards Avenida Colón and returned with five to six more officers. They threw Emilio Romero to the ground, kicking and beating him with a truncheon. CAJA tried to intervene. She was pushed and hit in the chest by the original officer. The other officers continued to hit Emilio Romero, then handcuffed him, lifted him off the floor and dragged him inside the building, where they took him up the stairs to the central hall. He was left in handcuffs in a corner. Another police officer, having asked Emilio Romero what had happened, went to speak to the officer involved, who then returned, grabbed his truncheon, and pushed Emilio Romero against the wall, shouting "*Now you bloody Latin American will see what it means to get involved with the Spanish police*"<sup>4</sup>. Another officer pulled him away. Emilio Romero was again repeatedly assaulted by the same officer. Despite his handcuffs he was slapped, pulled by the hair and pushed so that his head hit the wall. The officer hit him in the stomach with a truncheon and when Emilio Romero fell to the ground he continued hitting his legs. The officer also kicked him several times in the ribs. While the one officer assaulted him three others watched.

Emilio Romero was then taken outside to a patrol car and driven to the police station of Nou de la Rambla, where the handcuffs were removed.

Emilio Romero was held in custody for 27 hours. After his release, in the evening of 7 March, he was examined by a doctor at the Accident and Emergency Department of the Hospital Clinic, Full d'Assistència, Barcelona. The medical report from the hospital referred to multiple bruises on the ribs, both legs and the right forearm, as well as haematomas on the face, injuries to the wrists and headaches. A medical examination on 6 March by a police doctor did not find any evidence of injury and two further examinations on 7 March, carried out at the request of the judge, found the existence of contusions on his right arm.

Emilio Romero Arancibia was charged with "attacking a police officer"<sup>5</sup>. He and CAJA filed a judicial complaint with a court in Barcelona against the two police officers.

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<sup>3</sup>"*Te vas a mover o qué?*"

<sup>4</sup>"*Ahora vas a ver sudaca de mierda lo que es meterse con la policía en España.*"

<sup>5</sup> *atentado a la autoridad*