

STATEMENT - XABIER ALEGRIA

«The suffocation sessions with the "plastic bag" broke me down»

(...) On the road to Madrid there was no beating up. They put it clear to me from the beginning that "rights and all that stuff" had no value from that point on, and that it was better for me to declare "as a good fellow". They told me I was in the hands of the Civil Guard, that they were from Intxaurreondo (infamous Civil Guard's HQ in Donostia-San Sebastian), so I had no way out. This one was not going to be like the other times I was arrested. When arriving in Madrid, "tranquility" would be over. The policeman to my right told me again and again that he was going to tear me to shreds in Madrid. Y was blindfolded all the way.

When we arrived, interrogations started at once. Threats had no end: "Nobody can endure torture". They asked if I knew about Unai Romano, and pointed out that they would do that to me if I was not to declare. One of them told me that he was the one that killed Gurutze Iantzi. Sexual violence threats again and again: They would arrest Itziar (Alegria's wife) if I refused to declare, and she was going to be their target. I was blindfolded, against one wall, and had five policemen behind me.

I was utterly terrified and as I did not answer their questions they forced me to do physical exercise, and beat me in my genitalia. Afterwards they ordered me to sit down in a chair. They tied me to it, hands and arms fastened with broad plastic tape. They held plastic bags in their hands, and made noise with them near my ear. They threatened me with using "the bag" (placing plastic bags over the head of a detainee, in order to suffocate him), and finally did it. I underwent two sessions. Y suffocated horribly. It broke me down.

After the first interrogation session, they gave me a break, when I promised to talk later. In the second session Y refused to talk and they used "the bag" again.

Many times I could hear other detainee screaming, as I was in the interrogation cell. My eyes were always covered. In the intervals, when I was taken to the cells, I could hear terrible threats against the others. The detainee asked to be taken before the judge, to be left alone. I heard the policemen talking about someone who have banged his head against the wall or the door.

Second day, maybe Friday. They bade me the chance to declare before the lawyer appointed by the judge. I should rehearse three times my deposition and if done "right", they promised I would be left alone afterwards. When on the way to declare they warned me that I should depose as prepared, otherwise I would pay a high price. I deposed, even if I did not know whether a lawyer was present or not. Y did not ask any identification to be shown, and just signed in the papers they gave me, almost without reading them.

(...) When I was seen by the court's doctor for the first time, he showed me some identity piece, but I was not able to verify it. He was the only doctor to see me. Y told him they had used "the bag" and beaten me in my genitalia. He wrote something down. He asked if I had lost consciousness due to "the bag", if I was nervous, frightened. I said yes, and he tested my blood pressure.

Even if the door was closed, I thought that the policemen outside would be able to read what the judiciary doctor had written. Soon after it was clear to me that they knew all about it. That toughened

the treatment, so in the next visits (on Friday, Saturday and Sunday) I told him the treatment had been "good".(...)