

The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, November/December 2009

Volunteer Spotlight: Khomeini and Crimes Against Humanity Presented Thursday, October 29th from 6-8 p.m, with speaker: Ezat Mossallanejad (CCVT Researcher and Policy Analyst)



Helping Survivors of Torture Since 1977

The CCVT Connection, which is published monthly, is intended to inform and engage the Centre's volunteers in important events, news, and meetings, and in doing so, to acknowledge the vital role they play in fulfilling the CCVT's mandate.

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Citizenship and
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EDITOR'S NOTE: The information provided in this publication is not controlled by the CCVT, and therefore may not reflect the Centre's views.

Crimes against humanity belong to category of horrible crimes that go beyond national borders. Articles 7 of Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court has specified crimes such as murder, extermination, forced dislocation, unlawful imprisonment, disappearance, torture, rape and sexual violence, apartheid, and discrimination in massive scale as crimes against humanity. In his presentation, the CCVT Researcher, and Policy Analyst, Ezat Mossallanejad, spoke about crimes against humanity with special focus on Iran. Ezat argued that the root cause of crimes against humanity in Iran can be traced back to the founder of the present system, Ayatollah Khomeini, who is referred to as a founder of Islamic Republic of Iran. In his challenging presentation, Ezat spoke about Khomeini's actions such as the extermination of Baha'i in Iran, the extermination of Kurdish people, American hostage taking, Iran – Iraq war, torture and execution of children, etc, as crimes against humanity. He also brought to light traces of such crimes in the present constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran.



Interview with Hodan Yusuf, Volunteer Coordinator (Scarborough Office, CCVT)

By: Marzia Nazarova

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While volunteers provide enormous support to CCVT activities, it is also important that their skills, knowledge and time are used effectively, their concerns are addressed and their achievements are recognized. With hundreds of volunteers working with CCVT, this is quite a challenging task!

Our Center was very lucky to have two new Volunteer Coordinators – Hillary Blumfald and Hodan Yusuf - on board since September this year to support its volunteer's network. Remarkably, both of them have started their work in CCVT as volunteers. And here are some insights and vision on her new job by Hodan Yusuf from Scarborough Office.

Q: Hodan, what does your job as Volunteer Coordinator include?

A: The primary role of the Volunteer Coordinator is to recruit, screen, train and place volunteers. I am involved in the Youth Volunteer Program by identifying places for outreach and creating meaningful partnerships with the community. I screen potential volunteers and explore with them which opportunities they want to get involved in and upon a successful screening, the volunteer coordinators train volunteers through the monthly volunteer orientations we organize at CCVT.

Q: Tell us more about your volunteer experience with CCVT. What do you think the biggest difference between your volunteer work and current job?

A: Initially, I began volunteering with CCVT a couple of years for the interpretation program. I interpreted for CCVT's Somali clients at the Scarborough location whenever there was a need. It was a very rewarding experience because I understand what it feels like to not know English and have the support of Somali speaking people when we immigrated to Canada. For a brief time, I was also involved in the befriending program which in itself was a rewarding opportunity. The biggest difference between my volunteer work and my current position would have to be the level of interaction I have with the

clients; as a volunteer, the clients constantly shared their stories with me whereas as in my current position, I am interacting more with the volunteers.

Q: Were there any moments of feeling of the greatest achievement and greatest failure in your working experience with CCVT?

A: I am still getting acquainted with the position, so there are no specific failures that come to my mind; however, with respect to achievements I would have to say that the daily interactions I have with volunteers are always gratifying. They are constant reminders that there are good people out there; genuine people who are willing to dedicate their time in order to make the lives of others easier.

Q: What would you like to wish current and future volunteers of CCVT?

A: To current volunteers, I commend you for your time and dedication and wish you all the best. For our future volunteers, please visit our website to see the variety of volunteer opportunities available and highly recommend you to get involved. This is a great opportunity to enhance your understanding of various social justice issues, become engaged in the community, expand your network and create meaningful relationships!

News from around the world...

By: Marzia Nazarova

Philippines, 12 November 2009 - President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed historic legislation that makes torture a crime in the Philippines. Her ratification of this important law signals a step forward for eradicating torture in the country.

Geneva, 2-20 November 2009 - 43th Session of the Committee against Torture was held. Committee has concluded observations and recommendation on reports from Slovakia, El Salvador, Spain, Azerbaijan, Columbia, Moldova and Yemen. These countries are among 146 State parties to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and are bound by the terms of the treaty to submit periodic reports on efforts to ensure that such human rights violations do not occur on their territories. The next 44th session will be held in April - May 2010.

Did you know ...

That organizations rendering assistance to victims of torture and members of their families are entitled to receive grants from the *United Nation Fund for Victims of Torture*. The fund was established in 1982 by the General Assembly, and currently provides grants for the total amount of USD 9mln on an annual basis to almost 190 projects in 60 countries. In 2009, the Fund granted assistance to 185 non-governmental organizations and projects around the world to support their initiatives in providing medical, psychological, legal and any other assistance to victims of torture and their families.

Who is doing What and Where...

Kirkuk Center for Victims of Torture is a non-profit organization working in the **Northern Iraq** with the mission to "heal and rehabilitate victims of severe human rights violations". It promotes rehabilitation and social integration of victims of torture and their family members in Iraq. Every year more than 400 victims of torture are being served by 25 dedicated staff of the Center. The Center runs a number of projects to support their clients at different levels, including physical, psychological, social and moral support. As more than 45% of clients are women, the Center has a special programme for traumatized women, who suffer due to the loss of their family members, sexual violence, hardship conditions, and continued domestic oppression. The team of female experts is helping women and girls to "empower them to become agents of change in post-oppression society". The Center also provides support to children and adolescents who have been traumatized as they have witnessed or experienced arrests, kidnapping, torture, deportation of parents and terrorist attacks. It is planned to establish a network of rehabilitation units, which will be helping children through a special integrated programme, including outreach and human rights education. The Center also has an outreach programme conducted through a mobile team, which is able to provide support to the vulnerable population in remote areas. Another initiative of the Kirkuk Center for Victims of Torture is provision of services through its online Virtual Trauma Center, which offers free online psychotherapy for adults from Iraq and the wider Middle East who suffer from post-traumatic stress.

(Sources: www.ohchr.org www.irct.org, www.unog.ch, www.kirkuk-center.org)

Chakha Eggplant

Chakha Eggplant is an Afghan delicacy. Afghanistan is the homeland of several CCVT clients.

Ingredients

- 4 medium Eggplants
- Salt, Oil
- 2 Medium Onions, sliced
- 1 Green Pepper, seeded & sliced
- 2 large ripe Tomatoes, peeled
- 1/4 teaspoon Hot Chile Pepper
- 1/4 cup Water
- 2 cups Chakah Drained Yogurt
- 2 cloves garlic

Directions

Cut the stems from the eggplants but leave peel. Slice into 1 cm pieces. Spread on a tray & sprinkle slices liberally with salt. Let set for 30 minutes, then dry off with paper towels. Pour enough oil into a skillet with a lid, to cover base well.

Fry eggplant until lightly browned on each side. Do not cook completely. Lift onto a plate. Add more oil as required for remaining slices. As oil drains out of eggplant, return this to the pan & add onions.

Fry gently till translucent. Remove to another plate. Place a layer of eggplant back into the pan. Top with some sliced onion, green pepper rings & tomato slices. Repeat using remaining ingredients & adding a little salt & the chili between layers. Pour in any remaining oil from the eggplant. Add onion & water, cover & simmer gently for 10-15 minutes.

Combine chakah ingredients & spread half the sauce into base of serving dish. Top with vegetables, lifting eggplant gently to keep slices intact. Leave some of the juices in the pan. Top vegetables with the rest of the chakah & drizzle the remaining juices over it. Serve with flat bread.





Helping Survivors of Torture Since 1977

WELCOME, NEW VOLUNTEERS!!

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Sadie Wendt-Quibell | Christiana Fizet |
| Megan Webster | Zehra Kizilbash |
| Neville Dewdney | Maria Shafa |
| Aline Kurik | Joan Sullivan |
| Daniel Pancer | Brianna MacGillivray |
| Azin Soltani | Radyah Khan |
| Octavia Davidson | Anna Gyampua |
| Jason Lawrence | Melissa McGrath |
| Martin John | Sehrish Haider |
| Zaid Abdulgader | Mary Hanson |
| Sophy Mao | Saghar Azimi |
| Blessy Precious Pearl | Tonks Chen |
| Naira Badawi | Ranjeev Dhir |
| Nina Naeimi | Farah Hafeez |
| Kora Stephenson | Sean Corrigan |
| Kiran Bala | Geraldine Wong |

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The **Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture** aids survivors in overcoming the lasting effects of torture and war. In partnership with the community, the Centre supports survivors in the process of successful integration into Canadian society, works for their protection and integrity, and raises awareness of the continuing effects of torture and war on survivors and their families. The CCVT gives hope after the horror.

UPCOMING EVENTS for BEFRIENDERS

Cavalcade of Lights

BloorCourt Village

Festive Neighbourhood Lighting, Free

Dec. 1 – Jan.1, Daily 6:00pm

Church-Wellesley Village

Festive Neighbourhood Lighting, Free

Dec. 1 – Jan.1, Daily 6:00pm

DO YOU HAVE a story, a poem, a recipe, a book review, a picture, or anything else you'd like to contribute? We'd love to **PUBLISH** it in the newsletter! Drop us a line at connectCCVT@gmail.com

Are you no longer a volunteer at CCVT and/or no longer want to receive the newsletter? If so, please contact Chizuru Nobe at (416) 363-1066 ext. 222 or cnobe@ccvt.org.