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FIRST LIGHT

Children and Youth



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First Light

First Light, which is published semi-annually, is intended to inform the interested readers about torture, its effects and what we can do in aiding survivors to overcome their experience of torture and war. The CCVT views itself as part of a larger global community and is committed to the struggle for human rights, justice and the end of the practice of torture, war, genocide, and crimes against humanity.

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Mandate: The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) aids survivors of torture, war, genocide and crimes against humanity to overcome the lasting effects of torture and war. Working 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.**

Editor’s Note: The information provided in this publication is not controlled by the CCVT and therefore may not reflect the Centre’s views.

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A Worker's Reflection: The challenges of Our Support for Child and Youth Survivors of War and Torture

By Nadia Umadat



My name is Nadia and I am one of the Child and Youth Counselors at the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) in our Scarborough location. My role primarily entails mental health and settlement support for survivors of war, torture, crimes against humanity and genocide, as per the

Centre's mandate. Our services are offered through individual case management and counseling sessions and group activities. My target population are children and youth between the ages of 7 to 29 years of age. The young newcomers that I have met throughout the years have been dynamic people. They have inspiring stories, and often share a smile or a laugh with me. They adapt quickly. They learn English with relative ease and forge meaningful connections with others. They often display a sense of self and belonging that I find admirable.

However, behind the complexities and strengths of my clients lies the dark memories of the horrific events that they have witnessed in their home countries. It is the primary reason why they would be referred my way. Many of the stories they share in my office are unspeakable. In their short lives they have already seen the worst that humanity has to offer. I often find myself reflecting on the peculiarities of these experiences. That myself, as their counsellor can never really fully understand their emotions or pain. As one part of my role, I would encourage my clients and their families to embrace the school curriculum and become active in the local community. These referrals are made under the premise of fostering integration in the new culture and improving support systems and mental health outcomes. For the most part, kids, teenagers and their families are very open to these suggestions.

Early on in my career, I began to observe the challenges this group had in terms of navigation -

not of a particular system per se, but rather of navigating Canadian adolescence as a whole. I was also a young person in this city, just trying to have fun with my friends. I vividly remember things that happened over the years that I accepted as normal milestones of urban Canadian life. However, in my work at CCVT, I have learned that normal is only a

themselves? Essentially, how can we expect the unexpected?

Let me share the first incident in a series of examples. I run an academic support group three days a week, after school. In my first year, a 10-year-old boy began to attend my programming. I will call him Joe. He was in the first year of his



Youth Summer Quest Picture

relative concept. For my clients the most mundane events, people and places can all serve as a reminders of past horrors at the most inopportune moments. I fervently aim to prepare my young clients for their new world in Canada as a child or youth survivors of war or torture. But, how do I prepare them if I cannot recognize their unique set of challenges? Or if they are not yet aware of it for

arrival to Canada and already spoke proficient English. He was a car enthusiast and drew me endless pictures of the beautiful sports vehicles he hoped to own. One day, he finished his school work very quickly and wanted to play a computer game. Since it wasn't play time as yet, I tried to engage him in another activity. I started to have him learn his emergency contact infor-

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mation. When I was little, my parents and teachers were constantly preparing us for worst case scenarios such as what to do if you are ever separated from our caregiver and have to find help. Joe wasn't interested in this quasi-game and just wanted to play a racing game on the PC. To hold his attention, my questions progressed from light and friendly to stern and rapid. I wanted Joe to engage in our activity. Instead of responding to our game, Joe started to dis

Through my work at CCVT, I have come to acknowledge that the experiences of survivors of war and torture can never be completely forgotten. Rather, we support them with finding tools that will allow them to productively work through these intrusive thoughts and emotions in meaningful ways. One such strategy is making individuals aware of their personal triggers: any sight, sound or smell that can cause an individual psychological or emotional distress.



engage. His answers became terse and then he stopped speaking altogether. He put his head down and refused to look to me. I could not figure what he found so upsetting about learning his address. When he finally did speak to me, his words were puzzling. "Nadia, why are talking to me like the police?" Later, I would learn that he witnessed an aggressive interrogation of his mother by local officials prior to her arrest. She was detained for more than a week.

Through knowledge exchanges, I am beginning to understand that many people are not aware of what these triggers may be until after an episode. For children and youth survivors this was especially disconcerting; for me, as in Canada, they are being exposed to potential triggers on a daily basis under the guise of integration, however age-appropriate. While Canada is comparatively safe physically, succeeding at adolescence in a Canadian context has its unique and nuanced challenges for this par-

ticular group.

I regularly meet with a young adult we will refer to as Jassy. She can be identified as a female in her early 20s. She has been in Canada now less than 5 months and is perhaps one of the most dynamic individuals I

she was ecstatic. She was singing and dancing along; in that moment she felt so carefree. But, a new song started to play. In its' introduction, four simulated gunshots rang out in the venue. Jassy knew that the gunshot simulation was coming; she knew the song. But, in that instant, that noise took



Children's Meeting

have had the pleasure of meeting. Jassy is fluent in three languages and had just gotten a scholarship to a prestigious university. She was very excited about attending her first major concert by her favorite pop star at a reputable venue in downtown Toronto. Concerts are a vital part of adolescent life. Prior to the show, she called the venue to inquire about their security measures. She wanted to make sure that every individual would go through a metal detector and have their bags searched to ensure no weapons could enter the premises. She did her best mentally prepare herself for the event, as she had concerns about being in such a large crowd. On night of the show,

her back to her experiences in the war zone and images of all the lost lives that she had witnessed. She immediately started to cry and panic. She ran out of the concert. In the lobby, someone noticed her distress and called a medic to de-escalate the situation. Growing up is a daunting phase in any young person's life. Regardless of their social location young people are working through issues of identity, belonging, generational and cultural conflicts. They face peer pressure, self-esteem troubles and hormonal imbalances. They are attempting to make sense of the relationships in their lives. These layers of stressors could affect the functioning of any given individual. For

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our young survivors, they have additionally witnessed scenes of brutality and carnage that replay themselves in their dreams or sneak into the corner of their minds when they are alone. They are trying to navigate all of these intricacies in order to be like

exact scenario had happened in her high school back home, except armed men occupied the school and opened fire among the students. For a moment, Remi thought she was back in her country. She started to



everyone else around them in order to feel safe, happy and included.

One day, a 16-year-old youth we will call Remi came to volunteer with the younger children, after school. I noticed she was tearful as she put away their supplies and we subsequently went into my office to talk. While we were alone, she shared with me that in the last week a shooting occurred at her school and the entire building was put on a 'lock down.' No one was allowed in or out of the building until the police had finished the investigation. This is a traumatic situation, but unfortunately a common occurrence in Toronto schools. For Remi, it was especially difficult. This

scream. Once she was able to calm down, she went home and refused to go back to school that week. She was inconsolable. While her school understood her initial distress, they were unwilling to make ongoing accommodations for the situation.

My experiences continue in the same vein. Parents having to ask for Halloween decorations to be taken down because the skeletons remind their children of corpses. Finding myself calling schools to ask if students can be exempted from Remembrance Day celebrations as the kids find the war imagery jarring. I have watched small kids cower and hide at the sight of the local community liaison officers during their



Youth Training

school assemblies or community center. I have heard stories of fire drills that caused young people to collapse and cry; I listened as they recanted their memories and of how they made frantic linkages to air raid sirens. In closing, it is my desire that my young

clients get to experience everything this world class city has to offer. That they look forward to school, recreation, and celebrations. That everyday life is safe. I do believe my experiences with our young clients will inform my practice going forward. That I can reflect on my own perspective and



Youth Entertainment

11/03/2018

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Youth At Bata Shoe

challenge the social norms that have shaped me. Are there ways we can ensure better emotional safety to survivors? I hope so. With the rise of refugees all over the world, this is an issue that will only continue to escalate. We will always meet young people that will need very specialized support not just from agencies like CCVT. More public education and training is needed by front line workers and first responders for our young survivors to safely and inclusively navigate adolescence in Canada.

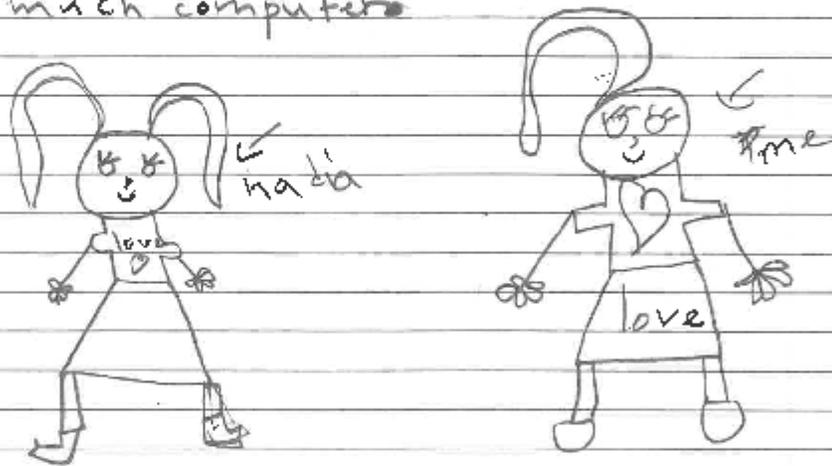
Nadia Umadat is a graduate of York University. She has been working as a Child and Youth Counsellor since 2016 with CCVT. Prior to that, she was both a CCVT student placement and volunteer. She works in the realms of case management, counselling and group facilitation in the CCVT Scarborough location.

“Meaning of the “White House” to the war victim children of Syria or Palestine is nothing but just a white-painted house. Perhaps, they imagine Casper lives there...or maybe some dead people. They really don't have time to think about it. Because they are busy discovering their own bloody limbs along with their parents' dead bodies from the ashes of their burnt homes.”

— **Munia Khan**

Tala

Dear Nadia, my name is Tala I am 8 years old and I have 2 Brothers The small one is named mohamad and The Big one is called ali my Birthday is on Decamber 24 2008 on homework club I would like new computers Because when people are Done ther homeworks some people DOES not get to play and I would like more snakes Because like some of The snakes I Dont like I like chips, popcorn and drinks these are my fav foods and drinks. I would like more games Because we have a little game. I would like to play games if ther is not that much computers



Nadia

Canada and Unaccompanied Minors

BY: Mbalu Lumor



Introduction

Unaccompanied minors, experiencing refugee-producing conditions in their home countries, are forced to migrate to host countries seeking protection (Montgomery et al., 2001). The number of unaccompanied minors has increased in recent years (OCASI, 2012) and this has placed many host countries, such as Canada, in a challenging position of balancing “national security” and child protection. It has also placed the provincial child welfare systems under scrutiny for not providing enough support for this population. This article will highlight that despite Canada’s responsibility to protect its borders, these interests cannot overshadow the country’s interna-

tional humanitarian obligations, especially as they relate to unaccompanied minors who are survivors of torture and war. Unaccompanied minors have unique settlement, mental health needs and require specialized support to settle and integrate into the Canadian society.

Who are Unaccompanied Minors?

Canada does not have a standard definition of who is an unaccompanied minor. This leaves it to the discretion of provincial child welfare system to determine who is a “minor” (OCASI, 2012). The system recognizes the specialized needs and vulnerabilities of refugee youth living alone in Canada and has defined unaccompanied minors as those who are under the age of 18 years old and live without parents in the host country. Differently, according to the Child Services Act in Ontario, the province’s child welfare system only provides guardianship to unaccompanied minors under the age of 16. This limited definition of “minor” is also inconsistent with the “Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, and other provincial and federal legislation” (Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies, p.21). This comparison analysis demonstrates that Ontario’s child welfare system’s restrictive definition of who qualifies as an unaccompanied minor determines whether youth will receive protection upon arrival in Ontario, or access to comprehensive services which would enhance their settlement. It also points to the systemic barriers that older youth may face in accessing support to assist in their integration into the Canadian life.

Policies and Debate

Canada has committed to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child since 13th of December 1991, agreeing that the best interest of children should be a priority “in all actions concerning chil-

dren” (CCR, 2000). Unfortunately, in practice, unaccompanied minors have not all benefitted from this commitment, because of opposing policy positions. Ali et al. (2003) explains that on the one side, unaccompanied minors are seen as “illegal immigrants who have violated state immigration controls”, however on the other side, it is recognized by “child welfare protection issues that children have the right to be supported and protected by the state” (Ali et al., 2003). Derogatory language such as “illegal” which is often used south of our boarder not only demonizes minors, but also perpetuates the idea of “others” and as “criminals breaking the law”. These conflicting frameworks influence and determine how unaccompanied minors are treated in Canada, and how readily they can access services, which will affect their settlement outcomes.

Child Detention

Immediately upon arrival in Canada, unaccompanied minors experience the challenge of going through an immigration process with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), where their identity is determined and a decision is made as to whether the minor can stay in Canada to make a refugee claim and seek protection. This process is usually difficult, and can sometimes lead to detention. This has led many to question what is the “best interest of a child” and if detention should be imposed upon minors. According to Ayotte (2001), despite the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) which states that children should only be detained “as a measure of last resort”, many children, including unaccompanied minors, are detained in Canada (Ayotte, 2001).

The detention of children has led to the expression of differing views. For the supporters of detention, unaccompanied minors are perceived as “bullet children” whose parents have sent them to Canada to facili-

tate their own later migration to the country (OCASI, 2012). However, those who are against detention argue that this stereotyping creates a preconceived mistrust of minors, and that this is rarely the case, since minor’s are not able to include their parents or siblings in their own applications for permanent residency in Canada once their refugee claims are accepted (OCASI, 2012). Supporters of detention have also used the 1999-2000 incident, where a mass migration of separated minors arrived in unseaworthy vessels in British Columbia and later tried to transit to the USA (Field, 2006), as evidence of the need to detain children.

Advocates against the detention of children argue that detention not only violates the rights of children and makes them more vulnerable to traffickers, but also has a damaging effect on their mental and social wellness (Ali, 2006). In particular, the detention of children who have experienced trauma due to war and torture may cause additional mental health complications. In his research, Souranders (1998) demonstrates that “detaining 10 year old minors for a month in isolation while waiting for their refugee claim decision may be both distressing and anxiety provoking”.

Furthermore, McKenzie points to a shortcoming in research and in understanding the mental health of survivors of war and torture, noting that “fewer studies consider how experiences of persecution, torture, confinement in refugee camps and family dislocation can result in super-heightened sensitivity to discrimination and injustice, resulting in the “re-traumatization of migrant groups” (Across Boundaries Report KJM). It is therefore important to be mindful that systemic barriers such as a lack of early trauma assessment/treatment upon arrival, lack of culturally competent immigration officers, limited or no access to health care services, and detention rather than protecting the best interest of a child, may all produce or exacerbate mental health problems

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and lead to the further marginalization of unaccompanied minors, particularly if they are survivors of torture and war (Across Boundaries Report KJM Summary).

Designated Representative and Housing

Other significant systemic challenges experienced by unaccompanied minors is the Designation of a Representative for their refugee hearings and the search for safe and affordable housing for unaccompanied minors aged 16-17, as the Ontario's child welfare legislation states that these minors may live independently, without legal guardianship. Ali (2006) notes that unlike other countries such as Finland, which appoints a legal counsel and a designated representative to minors, Canada does not enforce a designated representative but rather describes the duties of designated representatives. As a result of not being appointed this support upon arrival, unaccompanied minors' protection is placed at risk, at the mercy of potential traffickers, or family members who might not have the financial resources or capacity to nurture them (Ibid) to becoming healthy adults. Furthermore, since Ontario's child welfare system does not provide guardianship for minors over 16, and therefore does not refer them to a safely house, many of these youth find themselves in precarious housing situations. This lack of systemic protection offered by Canada's federal and provincial governments raises the question whether the state is in fact creating policies that are in the "best interest of the child".

Recommendation

Both provincial and federal governments' legislations have shortcomings as they relate to the protection of unaccompanied minors, which jeopardizes their full participation and settlement integration into the Canadian society. In order to rectify these issues, Canada must collaboratively conduct research with countries such as Den-

mark and Finland, who do not detain children (Ali, 2006), in order to create policies and programs, which recognize unaccompanied minors' unique needs. Important areas of research investigation could include the mental health wellbeing of minors and whether there are alternatives to detention that ensure compliance and are cost effective (Fields, 2006). Furthermore, alternatives to detention such as group homes, shelters or foster homes should be made effective by the appointment of guardians who are trained in culturally competency, anti-oppression, and about the settlement and mental health needs of minors (Ali, 2006). Canada should also reassess the provincial child welfare systems' guidelines so that they are created and implemented in the best interest of all unaccompanied minors in Canada. Also, looking at the intersectionality of unaccompanied minors' experiences are important in meaningful settlement service delivery.

Conclusion

In conclusion, unaccompanied minors should always be protected according to international legal instruments as well as the national childcare standards, and their refugee status should only be a secondary matter (Sourander, 1998). As Ali (2006) advocates, Canada should explore alternatives to detention, "develop a more principled position towards unaccompanied minors" rather than a focus on whether "the children need to be protected from adults or punished because of them". Finally, if Canada would like to continue its international humanitarian obligations in protecting refugees, it is imperative to not ignore the unique needs of trauma survived unaccompanied minors.

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*I am a Palestinian child. I am a Palestinian child
 People think, I am meek and mild.
 I aspire for peace, have love for all,
 I want to demolish the religion's wall;
 When the world is weeping on my fall,
 I must also try to rise high and tall.*

Dr. Mustafa Kamal Sherwani

CHILDREN AND SELF-CONTROL

By Rosy Bossoke



Do our children require self-control? The answer to this question is: Definitely, self-control is an important aspect of our personality and that of our children. In the long run, self-control influences children and lack of it may leave devastating impacts on them. Self-control, is all about regulation: be it regulating our emotions, our behaviours, or even our desires to receive some rewards. But, unfortunately for many of us, self-

control is something that we fail to develop, let alone maintain. We often follow our impulses when it comes to making certain life decisions. By learning self-control during our pre-school period, we may be able to set ourselves up for success in the future.

Let us examine the significance of self-control and answer the question of why we need to develop it during our childhood stages. According to a research conducted by the social psychologists Roy Baumeister and John Tierney, self-control is significantly correlated to success in life, it is - “the surest way to a better life”, such as financial success, happiness, a long lasting relationship etc. According to the above scholars, most of our major life crises, be it personal or social, are centred around self-control - such as drug abuse, underachievement, compulsive spending and borrowing and impulsive violence.

In my opinion, school shootings in the USA has its roots in impulsive violence. According to a study by June Tangney and colleagues, individuals that obtained high scores on self-control were the ones with higher scores in Grade Point Average (GPA) scale, better adjustment (meaning that they had fewer reports of psychopathology), had secure attachments and better relationship and interpersonal skills. But it was the opposite for those who scored lower on the self-control scale. Most of the shooters, like the Parkland, Florida man, usually have a troubled history that involves lack of self-control. They do things impulsively without bothering about their consequences to others.

There is a personal virtue that plays a huge role in determining whether children lead a rewarding and prosperous life, enabling them to contribute to their neighbourhoods or their countries, or whether they wind up stumbling into a

series of misfortunes, disappointments and even crimes. A wave of research suggests that instilling this basic virtue, formally known as temperance, from the early stages of childhood, could transform our schools and our society for the better.

In the Marshmallow Test, Prof. Walter Mischel and his colleagues, from the Columbia University, studied how children learned to resist immediate gratification.



They chose a group of four-year-old pre-schoolers, took them into a room, one at a time, and showed them a marshmallow (in other versions, cookies). The children were then offered a deal: they could either eat their marshmallow whenever they wanted to or they could wait for 15 minutes to eat it that required quite a significant stretch from four-year-old children. If they could wait through the 15 minutes until the experimenter returned, the children would be rewarded with a second marshmallow. While a few were able to hold back and found strategies to distract themselves, others could not wait. It was all too tempting. The result: only about a third of the children were able to delay gratification. Decades later, a follow up study of the same cohort of four-year-olds was conducted and it was discovered that those children who were able to defer gratification fared better. They had lower Body Mass Index (BMI), were healthier, less likely to get into substance abuse or become convicted criminals. Thus, resistance from temptation was relatively stable in those individuals who waited. There is no doubt that self-control has numerous benefits, as it helps one in making good choices; it has a pervasive and powerful effects in a child's life. As there are many like myself who support the fact that self-control is definitely a necessity in our lives, especially for our children, there are equally

many who think otherwise. There are researchers who argue that those with low self-control are prone to be pro-social and less unforgiving. According to some scholars, having a high level of self-control may occasionally get one in trouble. There is hardly any doubt that self-control is a necessity for our children, as there are a multitude of evidence all around us. To safe-guard their future, parents are encouraged to help their children with self-control, the earlier the better. But it is never too late to practice the various strategies available to us. To be true, any option we use has its own shortfalls. Not all those who lack a high level of self-control do badly in life or necessarily get into substance abuse, but self-control is definitely more beneficial.

Rosy Bossoke is a Child and Youth Counsellor at the CCVT.



The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto (CCAS) has been protecting children from physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect for more than 110 years. CCAS is mandated under the Child and Family Services Act and funded by the Government of Ontario. It employs around 580 full-time staff, including more than 350 child protection workers. CCAS benefits from the supports of local parishes, Catholic schools, Catholic service agencies and community organizations. CCAS recognizes "the importance of Catholic values and linkages with the larger Catholic community." You can call CCAS 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (416) 395 1500. For more information see the website: <https://torontoccas.ca>

Don't give up

By Mario Benedetti

Translated by Gabriela Beltran



Don't give up

Mario Benedetti (1920-2009) a Uruguayan poet, novelist and journalist. He was persecuted during the military dictatorship in his country and had to spend more than ten years in exile (1973-1983). He has marvelously depicted military tyranny and suppression through his writings and wonderful poems. He has skillfully linked the past to the future. He is among the most celebrated writers of Latin America who has published more than 80 books in Spanish. His works has been translated into more than twenty languages. He is remembered in Uruguay for leading a progressive literary movement named The Generation '45 (*Generación del 45*). As a progressive, romantic and a committed writer, he chose to write about love, anger, resistance, revitalisation, power and engagement directly and passionately. The following poem of Benedetti is translated from Spanish by our colleague Gabriela Beltran.

By Mario Benedetti, translated by Gabriela Beltran

Don't give up, you still have time
To reach up and start again,
To accept your shadows, to bury your fears
To free your burdens, to fly again.

Don't give up, that's what life is,
To continue the journey,
To follow your dreams,
To unstuck time,
To move the rubble and uncover the sky.

Don't give up, please don't give way,

Even if the cold burns,
 Even if the fear bites,
 Even if the sun hides and the wind gets quiet,
 There is still fire in your soul,
 There is still life in your dreams,
 Because life is yours and yours is also the will,
 Because you have loved life and because I love you.

Because wine and love exist, it's true
 Because there are no wounds that time doesn't cure,
 To open doors, to take away locks,
 To abandon the walls that protected you.

To live life and accept the challenge,
 To recover the laugh, to sing a song,
 To let your guard down and extend your hands,
 To open your wings and try one more time,
 To celebrate life and take back the skies.

Don't give up, please don't give way,
 Even if the cold burns,
 Even if the fear bites,
 Even if the sun hides and the wind gets quiet,
 There is still fire in your soul,
 There is still life in your dreams,
 Because every day is a new beginning,
 Because now is the time and the best moment,
 Because you're not alone, because I love you.

Gabriela Beltran is passionate about developing strength-based and culturally sensitive practices to support individuals and communities. She works as a Settlement Counselor at the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture...

We, at the Canadian Centre for Victims of torture (CCVT) accepted Mr. Hossein Ghabrai on April 12, 1999. Following his acceptance as a Convention refugee, he included his wife and two



Children's Aid Societies (CAS) in Ontario is an independent non-governmental agency authorized by the provincial Ministry of Children and Youth Services to "promote the best interests, protection and well being of children".

The main tasks of CAS are:

Investigate reports of child abuse or neglect and taking steps towards protection of abused or neglected children;

Ongoing care for children under its supervision;
 Counselling and support for families on child protection and well being;

Contribute towards child adoption.

Vision: "A city where children are safe, families are strong and communities are supported."

Mission: "Leading with excellence and working in partnership to: Prevent situations that lead to child abuse and neglect by embracing, strengthening and supporting families, and communities; Protect children and youth from abuse, and neglect; Provide safe and nurturing care for children and youth; Advocate to meet the needs of children, youth, families, and communities.

Values: "Placing the needs of children and youth first; Creating an environment that promotes trust, equality, respect, diversity, openness, and honesty; Affirming and valuing our staff, care providers, clients, and volunteers; Promoting enduring relationships for children, and youth; Being accountable and transparent; Demonstrating excellence, leadership, teamwork, and innovation.

There are 49 children's aid societies across Ontario, including 11 Indigenous societies. For more information see the following link <https://www.torontocas.ca/> or if in Toronto, call (416) 924 4646.

My Childhood and Family Separation

By Mina Ghabrai



children, Zarrin, Maryam and Mina, in his application for permanent resident status. Unfortunately, he was caught in a tormenting Immigration limbo for years. As a part of the CCVT limbo project, we helped Mr. Ghabrai with his landing and family unification. During all these years, we shared his anxiety, frustrations, hopes and despairs. After around ten years of waiting, he was finally reunited with his family. It was one of our most pleasant days when he visited us at the CCVT with his wife and children. We continued with our support and we are delighted to see them today as a happy, well-settled and loving family in Canada. They are all Canadian citizens. We feel joyful that Mina has chosen to write an article for our journal, the First Light. She has made a great attempt to revive the memory and make a link between the past and the future. We are proud of this hardworking family and wish them best of luck.

Editor

I was only four years old when my father became a refugee. At that time I did not understand what was happening or why he had left. I was too young for anyone to explain anything to me. I started wetting the bed frequently when he left. For the time being everyone thought it was because I was a child and nothing more. I remember he would call me whenever he could. I remember speaking to him, not knowing why he had left and why he was not with us. I cried a lot and often, I missed my “baba”, who was one of my first and only best friends. I was very close to him, closer than anyone else.

My father is an amazing soul to this day. I fear losing him every second of every day. I think this is the result of a long lasting trauma I suffered as a child due to him having to leave everything behind and escape. I remember getting used to only hearing his voice. I slowly understood that he could not be there with me. Still not exactly understanding why, but realizing that he was away until I could join him as my mother would say. My mom would remind me often that he loved me, that we would see my father surely and soon. She did everything she could to make sure we never forgot my father; she would always make sure to call him every chance she could, to let us know constantly that my father loved us and that he was waiting to meet us. I used to cry a lot and I would dread talking to him on the phone some days because it all hurt too much, hearing his promising joyful voice and not being able to hug him or kiss him or hold him. Now that I think back I understand how strong he had to remain, keeping himself calm and reassuring us, while silently suffering, because realistically he did not know how this was all going to end.

I had lost my best friend and I was angry and I did not know how to express or explain my emotions, especially at such a young age. I lived in Iran with my mother and older sister who is twelve years apart from me in age. Iran is a type of country where you *need* a man in order to get your daily mundane tasks done; it is not like North America where everyone enjoys rights and freedoms. There are lots of assault cases there that you cannot even report because the county does not provide much rights for women, and there we were three women (me being an utter child) living and trying to survive on our own. My mother was under a lot of stress and she barely had time to be there for me emotionally. She was raising a four-year-old child and a sixteen-year-old hormonal teenager on her own.

My sister was even angrier than I ever was. She missed her father and she had lost him at a crucial age when she needed both parents present for support. She spent lots of time being angry with my mother because she missed him and did not know how to cope with her anger. My father was never just our parent, he was a friend, a best friend, a teacher; he kept the whole family together. You see, he is no ordinary man, he is a provider, a rock, the single best bounty that could ever be bestowed to anyone. Without him none of us three would be who we are today; my mother would *not* become the woman that she has become today, neither would I nor my sister.

I remember fights between my mother and sister often. My sister would yell at my mom a lot and my mom was very bad at handling it. I remember my sister being angry and impatient. I do not have very many good memories of her from those times. I just remember my mom telling me to be more understanding of her, that she was upset, hurt, in pain. She always made excuses for my sister, hardly caring how cruel it was of her to let my sister treat the 4-year-old me the way that she did. As I grew up, she continued her abusive behaviour and my mom did not know what to do. She just kept telling me to stay out of her way and to just listen to what she says so that she does

not have to harm me or herself as a result. I was expected to understand this from the age of four, but she was not taught how to respect a child at the age of sixteen.

These were all due to my mother being under so much stress that she did not have the time or patience or energy to parent a hormonal raging teenager who really did in fact need to be parented. This was not due to her carelessness; this was not a result of her being negligent either; this was due to her having to live in a country where living without a man was very difficult. It meant having to put food on the table, tutoring in all her free time to try and make some extra money to pay for things and also having to raise two kids who were clearly both traumatised.

We did not just lose time with a parent, we lost time with the best thing that we have ever had. To this day, I hate every second, every minute, every hour, every day, every week, every month and every year I spent away from him. I feel like I lost a lifetime with my father and it hurts. I remember having nightmares where I would be waiting and waiting and he would not be able to reach me, only hearing his voice. After all, that was all I had had at the time. I was in pain and no one could help, *no one*. And I would always wet the bed, every night. Always. I remember getting my bladder checked by multiple different doctors. My mother was sick of having to deal with my bed wetting night after night. The doctors would run tests like ultrasounds and getting me to pee in cups and they would always say the same thing: "we did not find anything wrong with Mina's bladder and there were no irregularities in her urine samples".

I now realize that my childhood was stolen from me; I now feel that what happened to me was not normal nor was it ideal in any way. I compare my fears and wants to other people of my age now and I see why I am considered "different" or "weird". My upbringing has cost me trust issues, anxiety disorders, countless panic attacks, and trauma.

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I was separated from my father for nearly ten years, during the ten years we were away from each other we were not sure how long exactly it was going to take to meet again. What we had thought and hoped for was a few months of separation but all together it took almost 10 years to be reunited. We finally got our visa in 2007 and rushed to buy our plane tickets and leave as soon as we could. I remember it had taken so long to get the visa that even when we were on our way to the airport to leave I could not believe it. I kept thinking everything was somehow going to go wrong and I would not get to see him. When I met him I was numb, in a way I did not know how to react; I think I spent a long time feeling shocked before I could get used to the idea of having a father present in my daily life again. I was so used to only hearing his voice that seeing him almost made me feel like none of it was real.

Despite all these ordeals, seeing my father after many years has restored so much of what I was missing out. He is my best friend; he is always there for me, I now am stronger than I ever could be, because I was reunited with my best friend again. I have his blood running through my veins and I have his voice in my head and now I can hold his beautiful hand and feel his warmth. I feel safe when he is with me, and I feel loved when he teaches me things every day and he helps me stay strong and work hard. I have had many good days with him stolen from me, but the fact that I can now see him and hug him and learn from him means the world to me.

I was often neglected as a child, because I think when you really look at it, when something is on fire you focus on the parts that are burning the most and the hardest. I think my mother spent the majority of her time trying to put out my sister's fires and I was left burning. She was 16 and could voice what she felt; I was 4 and did not have the language to voice my concerns and pains. I was often reminded of my mother's agony and my sister's pain; no one ever thought to talk about what I was feeling or going through; I was easy to ignore and

so I was.

I am writing this to bring light to the psychological effects of family separation on the children who are in the picture; they are the most ignored, because it is easy to silence them. As an adult, I have had to struggle hard every single day to learn and heal; my father has been a huge help in my healing process and to this day I do not know how I lived without him for so long; he is my father, my best friend and the most hardworking person I have ever known, I love him, and I finally know why I was wetting the bed every night for so long; it was because I lost him when I needed him the most, because I lost him and I did not know why. I was not wetting the bed because of acting out or being a child; I did it because I was traumatized; the moment I was old enough to realize I would meet him again the bedwetting stopped.

Since arriving in Canada I have always made sure to get good marks, to go to school every day and try my hardest to have excellent performance and learn as much as I possibly could. School was different in Canada and it took me lots of time and effort of getting used to. I quickly learned that things were changed and I had to learn to adapt. This process of adaptation helped me realize I am interested in Philosophy, from a young age. I started to read and learn lots about perspectives and having the ability to view things from many aspects; this was my way of survival. As a young adult this ability came in very handy, and due to having this quality I successfully pursued an undergrad degree in philosophy and am still nowhere close to finishing with school and I enthusiastically intend on pursuing higher education.

Also, since moving to Canada my relationship with my sister became a lot healthier as well. She helps me every time I need her; she has been there for me more than I can count; she has helped me with school, with relationships; she has spoiled me with gifts and shown me more love than I can fathom. I think once she was able to find peace within herself she com-

pletely changed her behaviour towards me. I have also watched my mother blossom into who she is now. She has received not one but two degrees here. She has worked so hard every day since our arrival and she has shown me how easily one can attain success as long as one does not give up or back down from challenges. She suffered a lot while being away from my dad and I am so happy to be able to see her thriving and working so hard to provide a good life for herself and the whole family. Both my parents have done their best to raise my sister and me and they gave up a lot of opportunities for us. I will forever be in debt to them and I will try my hardest to make them proud.

I wish no child has to endure what I had to endure, because it was the hardest thing I have ever had to deal with. I am thankful to have him in my life every second. Thank you for taking the time to read this; please continue to shed light on this matter and help those you can.

Mina Ghabrai is a specialized BA in philosophy, former client of CCVT, an Animal Right's Advocate and a passionate Vegan.

Lament for Syria *By Amineh Abou Kerech*



Syrian doves croon above my head
their call cries in my eyes.
I'm trying to design a country
that will go with my poetry
and not get in the way when I'm thinking,
where soldiers don't walk over my face.
I'm trying to design a country
which will be worthy of me if I'm ever a poet
and make allowances if I burst into tears.
I'm trying to design a City
of Love, Peace, Concord and Virtue,
free of mess, war, wreckage and misery.
Oh Syria, my love
I hear your moaning
in the cries of the doves.
I hear your screaming cry.
I left your land and merciful soil
And your fragrance of jasmine
My wing is broken like your wing.
I am from Syria
From a land where people pick up a discarded
piece of bread
So that it does not get trampled on
From a place where a mother teaches her son not
to step on an ant at the end of the day.
From a place where a teenager hides his cigarette
from his old brother out of respect.
From a place where old ladies would water jas-
mine trees at dawn.
From the neighbours' coffee in the morning
From: after you, aunt; as you wish, uncle; with
pleasure, sister...
From a place which endured, which waited,
which is still waiting for relief.
Amineh Abou Kerech is 15-year-old Syrian child and
the winner of Betjeman Poetry Prize. Along with her
family members, she escaped Syria to Egypt. See:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ib03Ef58YMA>

Chickpeas: The Saga of Love and Avoidance

By Kubra Zaiifi



The story goes back to twenty years ago in the city of Herat, Afghanistan, under the rule of Taliban. My daughter, Naazi, was eleven and she loved chickpeas more than any other snack. Time and again, she insisted that I take her out to the only place where chickpeas were sold by professional cook vendor. I did not pay much attention to her request, as I was extremely cautious not to go out, due to my fear of Taliban who preferred that women stay home all the time and take care of the household. The little lovely Naazi was not going to



give up. She repeated her request many times a day. One night when I heard Naazi pleading for chickpeas in her dreams, I surrendered. I gave her my word of honor to take her to the Taraghi Park and buy her chickpeas: "Don't worry my darling child, we will go and spend a good time in the

pleasant park early in the afternoon on the first day of spring. There are plenty of vendors, I'll buy you chickpeas."

The news made Naazi so excited that she went out in our neighbourhood door

buds in greeneries. Vendors had chickpeas in their carts, offering their thus-called delicious food loudly. We went to an old man and purchased ten plates of chickpeas, as we were ten. Naazi was so delightful that she whispered to me:



to door, shared it with her aunts and cousins, inviting them to join our feast. In a charming Friday, everyone rallied together in our house. To avert Taliban's persecution, we wore our veils, scarfs and burkas carefully; even our eyes were covered by the burka screen. I had no choice but to take my one-year-old son, Said Hossein, with me, as his father was out. It was a sunny day of spring. We enjoyed seeing sprouts in trees and

"Thank you mom! I am so happy that I want to fly with no wings." Suddenly a big car stopped. A huge wild-like man with long beard got off. He was armed with a dreadful gun and had a long whip in his hand. He proceeded straight towards my daughter. All women and girls ran away in horror. I held the baby tightly in my bosom and instinctually buffered myself between the threatening Taliban man and my darling

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daughter. Naazi turned pale and panicky; she was shaking out of fear.

“Shame on you! You have no burqa; your stupid face is not covered,” roared the monstrous man.

I collected all my courage and told him: “My dear brother; she is only eleven. I carefully dressed her with veil and scarf.”

“No! No! No! She is a tall woman like you. How dare to come out like this? This is unforgiveable sin.”

It was critical moment. A simple mistake could impose a heavy cost on us. I responded with a trembling voice:

“I am terribly sorry....”

“She deserves death in this world and the severest God’s punishment in the hell after-life,” he shouted angrily. This made my baby shivering and my daughter numb.

There was no choice but to calm him down. I put my head down and told him:

“I sincerely apologize my dearest brother; please beat on my head and kill me if you wish.”

He stared at me from head to the toes and said:

“I am not going to kill you, stupid woman; you’ve dressed properly, but this rude infidel girl....”

I stopped him and responded pleadingly:

“Please don’t harm my daughter. She will die out of fear. Kill me, but leave her alone.”

I burst into tears and continued after a short pause:

“My dear brother, she is innocent; I plead guilty; I made a serious mistake not to dress her properly. It will never be repeated. Please forgive me.”

I felt that my self-sacrifice had put the roach man into the same. He nodded calmly and said:

“I forgive you this time; but if I see you like this next time, I’ll kill both of you.”

He went back to his car and drove away. We stood silently in the same spot and heaved a sigh of relief. Fearful vendors began coming to us empathetically. A minute later, our escaped family members, hidden themselves behind the trees, joined us one by one. The exchange of hugs was wonderful. We rushed home together. The next day, I purchased a burqa for my eleven-year-old daughter and made her wear even at home.

Years have passed since this dreadful experience. Throughout these years, we have both avoided chickpeas. Any time we someone has talked about chickpeas or we have seen the food somewhere, we have exchanged glances with a deep silence.

Impacts of Long Processing time for Family Reunification

By Rahel Hailemichael



Separation from family members has a huge effect on integration of families in the Canadian society. Parents are worried about the safety and wellbeing of their loved ones. A mother separated from her children stated, “I couldn’t focus on learning English in ESL classes as I am constantly worried about my children who are living in a refugee camp.”

Family separation creates a financial constraint on the family member living in Canada to support other members living overseas under difficult and unsafe situations. Most families send money to cover the cost of basic needs such as shelter, food, clothing, medication and transportation, despite their meagre income in Canada.

Family separation leads to loss of economic opportunities for the affected families and for Canada as a whole (CCR 2017). As a result, families will be forced to stay on social assistance for a longer period of time, depending on community agencies’ supports in terms of settlement and other services. The long processing time for family reunification exhausts families financially, emotionally and socially and in turn affects the health, family relationship and the quality of life for both family members living in Canada and overseas.

In one of our support group information sessions on HIV/AIDS/STD awareness and prevention at CCVT, one participant depicted family/spousal separation and delay of family reunification as one of the factors for people engaging in undesirable behavior and relationship, increasing the chances of permanent family separation and probability of HIV/STD infection/transmission. Therefore, expediting family reunification plays a vital role in keeping families together and healthier.

Family separation may lead to change of family composition, and unexpected roles for separated parents and children. Separation of children from one or both parents threatens the attachment bond, forming an additional root of fear and lack of safety. Separation causes immediate and long term general and mental health problems. It affects the level of support children get from their parents; it affects children’s social skills in school and at home with direct impact on their academic performances and achievements. I believe this kind of long-term trauma is avoidable and the government of Canada should take actions.

Recommendations to the Government of Canada:

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- Expedite family reunification by using different approaches whereby government of Canada prioritizing the reunification of children who are unaccompanied by one or both parents. It is possible for the government of Canada to open a pathway in partnership and collaboration with professional lawyers, Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) and community agencies. One of the practical ways is for the IRB panel members to bring the case to the attention of Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for expedited family reunification upon identification of family separation after making a positive decision on the claim.
- Set a guideline to define and expedite family reunification for vulnerable families at risk due to age, gender, sexual orientation and for unaccompanied minors in unsafe environments.
- Provide fair processing time to reduce the negative impacts of separation. Respect and implement UNHCR'S slogan "One Family Torn Apart is Too Many".
- Open Consulates and Embassies in countries where there is a high number of family reunification applications made by families residing in Canada.
- I strongly believe that shortage of immigration officials is one of the main factors in delaying family reunification. Therefore, I strongly recommend that the Government of Canada takes urgent actions in hiring more staff to facilitate and expedite family reunification.

Rahel Hailemichael is a Settlement Counselor working with the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture.



"No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are not more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind. Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. But its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, or Black, or Western, or Oriental. Yet just as human beings make their own history, they also make their cultures and ethnic identities. No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages, and cultural geographies, but there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life was about. Survival in fact is about the connections between things; in Eliot's phrase, reality cannot be deprived of the "other echoes [that] inhabit the garden." It is more rewarding - and more difficult - to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about "us." But this also means not trying to rule others, not trying to classify them or put them in hierarchies, above all, not constantly reiterating how "our" culture or country is number one (or not number one, for that matter)."

Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

Medical Genocide in China

Presentation by Dr. Norman Epstein



We, at the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT), hosted a public education event about Forced Organ Harvesting and Medical Genocide in China on Wednesday May 22, 2019 in our downtown branch. In this event, Dr. Norman Epstein made a

presentation on the subject and showed a documentary video. Members of the audience engaged themselves on this important issue by their questions and comments during the second half of the session.

The video was a vivid documentary about the crime of human harvesting in China with the testimony of experts and Chinese survivors about the policy of killing people and selling their organs for transplantation. The video is entitled "Hard to Believe: how doctors become murderers and why we turned a blind eye." Quite a few CCVT staff, volunteers, supporter as well as many professionals and community activists attended Dr. Epstein's presentation. They found his remarks and the video to be an instrumental document for human rights workers, healthcare professionals, lawyers and community activist in Canada and across the world.

Dr. Epstein is an Emergency Physician & Human Rights Activist as well as the Chair of the Student Action Committee,

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International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China. He discussed about the way China's organ transplant industry has emerged as a huge and fast growing business with hardly any respect for human rights and medical ethics. Among the victims are members of the Falun Gong. It is upsetting that the Chinese society suffers from a closed criminal justice system with shocking secrecy and total lack of accountability about the system and methods of executions. There is no independent oversight and monitoring system of the Chinese transplant industry.

In 2009, the Chinese practice of "killing for organs" received global attention through the publication of a detailed book by two Canadian authors: the human rights lawyer and senior counsel to the B'nai Brith Canada, David Matas, and the Canadian politician and a Senior Fellow to the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, David Kilgour. David Matas made a further attempt and published another book along with Dr. Torsten Trey, the founding member and Executive Director of Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting - DAFOH. In 2014, Mr. Ethan Gutmann, the US author and human rights activists, published a book to that effect. In July 2018, Dr. Arthur Caplan, Professor of Bioethics and head of the division of medical ethics at New York University's School of Medicine, released his comprehensive report on transplant abuse in China. <https://www.chinaorganharvest.org/app/uploads/2018/06/COHRC-2018-Report.pdf>

In his presentation, Dr. Epstein discussed about activities towards the establishment of the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China (ETAC) began in 2014, as a web platform. In October 2016, the authors Kilgour, Matas, Gutmann, along with filmmakers Normann Bjorvand and Susie Hughes participated in the *Coalition Roundtable Series*, in Stockholm, Sweden. At this time, they decided to co-found an international civil society network to bring together experts and volunteers for research, analysis and further advocacy about the issue. In 2017, the ETAC was registered in Australia as an independent

non-profit agency. While the ETAC's headquarters is in Australia, its National Committees are in the UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand with its representatives in Japan, Korea, Benelux and Israel. It was through the initiative of ETAC that the China's Tribunal was organized to analyze the available proofs and decide if international crimes have been, and continue to be, committed in China with regards to its practice of organ transplantation.

Since Dr. Epstein's presentation, the CCVT has monitored the crime of human harvesting and medical genocide in China and the activities of the Independent Tribunal Into Forced Organ Harvesting from Prisoners Of Con-

It is upsetting that the Chinese society suffers from a closed criminal justice system with shocking secrecy and total lack of accountability about the system and methods of executions.

science in China (the China Tribunal). On June 17, 2019, the tribunal was convened in London (UK) and confirmed its interim judgement of December 10, 2018. (See <https://chinatribunal.com/interim-judgement/>) The Tribunal's chair, Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, announced the unanimous ruling of the tribunal at the end of the hearings and made the following remarks: "The conclusion shows that very many people have died indescribably hideous deaths for no reason, that more may suffer in similar ways There is no evidence of the practice having been stopped and the tribunal is satisfied that it is continuing." (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/17/china-is-harvesting-organs-from-detainees-uk-tribunal-concludes>)

Eddie Nemati: A Poet of Love and Resistance

By Ezat Mossallanejad

The Iranian poet, writer and community activist, Mr. Eddie Nemati (1954-2019) was accepted as a client of the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) on August 28, 2006. He struggled against cancer for years and lost his life on June 07, 2019. He was a survivor of torture and war in his country of origin, Iran. He had languished for five years in Iranian political prisons as a result of his political as well as humanitarian activities under the both regimes of the Shah and Khomeini. While in jail, his torturers used notorious techniques of torture against him. He was flogged frequently and was subjected to various abuses by his victimizers. His experiences of torture, war, trauma and exile had left deep impacts on the physical and psychological wellbeing of Eddie.

Eddie was born in the oil producing city of Aghajari, in the Iranian southern province of Khuzestan to a working class family. He was arrested in 1975, under the Shah of Iran, due to his political and human rights activities. After languishing in jail for more than three years, he was released by people during the Iranian popular uprising of 1978-1979. Eddie continued with his struggle for freedom after his release. Eddie's close collaborations with the Syndicate of Temporary Workers in

the oil producing city of Abadan led to his arrest under the Islamic Republican regime of Khomeini. He experienced torture and other cruel and inhuman treatment with more intensity this time. After his release, a shadow was following him everywhere. He was left with no option but to escape Iran. With tremendous difficulties he ended up in Canada as a political refugee.

Eddie was a progressive and dedicated poet and a member of the Iranian Writers Association in Exile. He was also active with the Organization of the Iranian Revolutionary Workers as a member.

Eddie has received extensive counselling from CCVT and continued with his endeavour to cope with his trauma. During the counselling sessions, I found Eddie highly apprehensive about gross injustices at the global levels on the one hand and tranny and exploitation in his country of origin, Iran. Eddie has also shared with me his experience of tremendous hardship in Canada.

Following are Eddie's reflections about his life and approach to arts and literature:

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“In an atmosphere that one could feel the smell of camomile and petroleum, I opened my eyes to this world and in an attempt to understand the meaning of life, I found a refuge in books. As under tyrannical regimes, there is no demarcation line between arts and literature on the one hand and politics on the other, I engaged myself in politics. The result was having nightmares that continue up to the present time. For few years also, according to the late Behazin (the Iranian writer), I languished as a guest in their facilities. I returned to the safety coast of life on the waves of people’s uproars. But, before my sweats get dried, I had to escape and join the refugee population of the world. During all these years, in the criss-crossing spiral route of life, poetry has always been my lovely friend and companion. In order to reflect the events, history keeps a distance from them. Arts and literature, on the contrary, are intrinsically relate to the human life and existence. Poetry is the closest and the most internal narrator of humanity.” (1)

I have had the opportunity to read almost all Eddie’s 5 books: Wind, How Many

Holes Are There in This Wall? The Last Pomegranate of the Autumn, Stolen Intimacies, Your Eyes: A Window as Vast as the Life. The oppressed poet suffers from the agony of exile. He still carries the memory of his dangerous escape:

We became uprooted
Without binding our loads
With no preparation
During the autumn
The roads were muddy
A heavy smoke was ascending
From the heart of the forest
We were fleeing from the flames
Four directions had lost their meaning
We were running in a great hurry
To hide from the sharp eyes of the death
In the vastness of the globe
At the mercy of the sheer fate.
More than thirty years have passed
Since we have escaped your paradise.
(Eddie, N, 2019, Your Eyes: A Window as Vast as the Life, p. 37)

He still suffers from the trauma of exile and the absurdity of human life, despite his passion for love:

Blistering feet
After a long road
I am still dancing
On this fire
Your eyes’ lyrics
Aflame
The folly of existence. (p. 54)

As a survivor of war, Eddie is well aware of this most cruel absurdity of human history and its devastative consequences:

The meadows are burned
Houses destroyed
Roads
Corpses
The war broke the mirrors

Destroyed homes
 And displaced all of us
 I mourn with your roots
 Oh my homeland
 The whirlwind took all your children away.
 (Eddie, N, The Last Pomegranate of the
 Autumn, 2017, p. 16)

Eddie feels pain and shares it by linking
 the past with the future. His deep-rooted
 agony comes from the omnipotence of tyr-
 anny in his country and its impacts on the
 life and civilization. He, however, does not
 lose hope vis-à-vis the devastating effects
 of tyranny:

We come from the year of untold stories
 The destructive winds blew times and
 again
 Countless flowers were nipped in the bud
 The burning smell filled everywhere
 The tender boughs in the orchard trails of
 love
 Were turned into piles of ashes
 The autumn fell in autumn
 We are coming from the year of untold sto-
 ries
 With a heavy load of aspiration on our
 shoulders. (Eddie, N, Your Eyes: A Win-
 dow as Vast as the Life, pp. 29-30)

Like many uprooted people, who have lost
 their homeland due to tyranny and war, he
 is still astonishing why all unbelievable
 tragedies happened to his people:

What happened?
 Where in the history
 We slumbered?
 Why checkmate
 In the chess game of the life? (p. 61)

In spite of his astonishment, Eddie never
 loses his faith for freedom and emancipa-
 tion:

You are the aspiration of all the times
 I put my feet on the highest peak
 To embrace you
 O, freedom. (p. 68)

Eddie is a highly romantic poet cherishing
 love as the free manifestation of the
 depths of human nature. Love has be-
 stowed him with an intellectual ecstasy
 surpassing his personal suffering and bit-
 ter experiences:

How deep it penetrates
 Humans' souls
 This four letter world: LOVE. (p. 66)

Sing, sing!
 Take us to top-most peak of live
 Make us dance
 La la la la la la. (p. 46)

Until the autumn passes through
 The broken twigs
 From the trails of wind
 A glass of wine
 And your eyes
 A Window as widespread as the life. (p.
 53)

Similar to other uprooted poets, Eddie's
 love is mixed with the feeling of loss. His
 happiness is fleeting and his love hymns
 are mixed with lamentation. With his artis-
 tic talents, Eddie has skillfully utilized sym-
 bols in the Iranian culture to reflect on the
 mass extermination of the Iranian youth
 during 1981-88:

Ships loaded with mirrors and tulips
 Are arriving from the years of love (p. 20)

The use of sarcasm and analogy in the
 above poem is amazing. The word "ship"
 is use in a plural form. In my opinion, this
 speaks to the frequency and the massive
 nature of the collective trauma. Ships

First Light

comes from the ocean that is used as a pun for vastness and depth of love. While “mirror” reflects the tragic events of the past, tulip is a symbol of innocent lives of the youth that were taken from them brutally. “Years of love” refer to those years when thousands of young people lived among family members and enjoyed family love.

I always enjoyed Eddie’s poetic conversations. He was a unique person whom I have seen throughout my life thinking in a poetic manner. Eddie will remain alive in my heart as long as I am alive.

Notes

- Retrieved from the following Farsi website on 11 November 2019; the English translation of the Farsi text is mine: <https://www.radiozamaneh.com/449353>
- Eddie, N. (2017). *Your Eyes: A Window as Vast as the Life*. Toronto: Zagros Editions.
- Eddie, N. (2017). *The Last Pomegranate of the Autumn*. Toronto: Zagros Editions.

From a Child Survivor to a Working Mother

By Zohreh Rostami

This is your humble subject, Zohreh Rostami, with long story of hopelessness and hope that I want to share with you today. Please be kind and listen to me. I am a married girl, proud of my husband, Alaa. We have two children Mohamad Ali 6 and Yusuf 2.



My beautiful and pleasant childhood

I was a happy child, born into an educated family. My mother was a midwife in a hospital and my father was a journalist and human rights supporter. I



lived with my parents and my brother in Afghanistan happily.



My darling mom, you suffered beyond imagination

My mom, tried her best to save my father's life after she was arrested, tortured and released by Taliban. But alas! While we were in a bus to escape Afghanistan, war-mongering Taliban, took my lovely dad out and killed him brutally before our eyes. They took my brother away. My mom was helpless and as a child I could do nothing. I was only 7 and everything was unknown

to me. Taliban murdered my dad because of his human right activities.

War: The Cruellest Human Absurdity

War is the most vicious of all monsters
It destroys human life, culture, civilization & fine values

It is the most cruel absurdity in human life

It replaces love with hate & peace with violence

I hope a day will come when weapons will convert to ploughshares and together we make a paradise on earth.

Hazardous Border Crossing



With tremendous difficulties, we reached a village in the border. We crossed the border with the help of a donkey that we rented in the village. We fell down frequently, but the great donkey was generous enough to take us to the bus station in Peshawar, Pakistan.

First Light

Pakistan: Our First Country of Asylum



Despite our confusion, we took a rickshaw in Peshawar and went to an address that a kind woman had given us in the border



village. The affectionate family accepted us wholeheartedly. They shared their food and small accommodation with us despite their abject poverty. A sorrow hearted knows sorrow.

Refugee Life in Iran

After one and half months of extremely hard life in Pakistan, we escaped to Iran, crossing the border by bus. We went to a remote relative in *Mash-had*. We were accepted by this extended family of six kids, parents and grandma who lived in a little house. I never forget the hospitality of this

poor refugee family. For the first time after escaping Afghanistan, I enjoyed playing with other kids.

Let's Play Together

I learned about the vital role of playing in the emotional and intellectual developments of children. It provides an informal, warm and affectionate atmosphere for communication, exercise, entertainment, learning and teaching. I love the mock songs children sing together.

In Canada & a Client of the CCVT

After 2 years of waiting in Iran, we were resettled in Canada as government assisted refugees. I came to CCVT at the age of



10 along with my mother. I found a new home and new family at the Centre. We had still no news of Ahmad, my brother. We were terribly concerned for him. It was through the CCVT that we began a thorough search to find him. Weeks and months passed and we continued to live in a tormenting Limbo: the condition of uncertainty, instability, hope and despair. Parting, cruel parting!



A Ray of Hope

Finally, we got the good news that my brother, Ahmad, had escaped Taliban and was living as an asylum-seeker in Russia. We sought the CCVT's help to bring him to Canada.

Family Reunification



In

2004, Ahmad arrived in Canada as a government assisted refugee. Seeing a beloved one after a long time is like refreshing water in a desert for a parched. Oh my darling dad, we miss you among us.

A journey in the Realm of Learning

Inspired by my dad, I chose to concentrate on learning. I knew that one can achieve nothing by doing nothing.

I finished high school at the age of 17 and was admitted to Universi-



ty of Toronto.

In 2013, I received my Bachelor of Science in Biology and Pharmaceutical Science.

Knowledge Is Power

By learning something new, you explore for yourself; you then become a new human being. You create and recreate yourself. You are in the process of permanent change. You find yourself in the circle of wise friends. Nothing is more marvelous than this.

Marriage is like a lottery. I got a lucky

First Light

draw

In 2008, while still a student, I got engaged with Alaa who lived overseas.



With the help of the CCVT, I sponsored him. I waited for weeks and months for him to arrive. I was thrilled when he joined me in 2010.

My Pleasant journey towards motherhood

I have plenty of identities; but my first

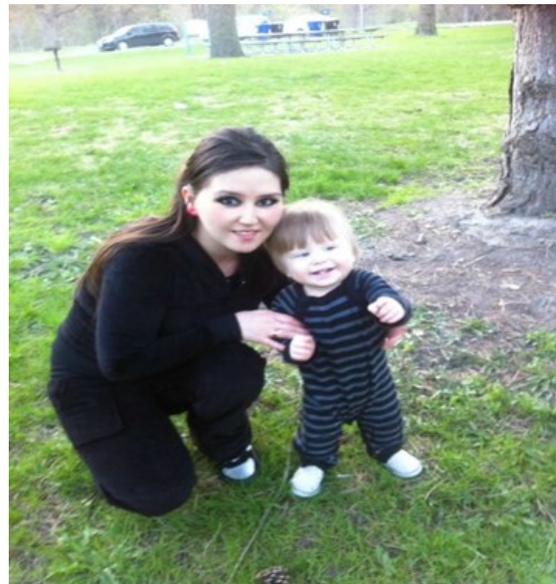


and foremost identity is being a mother. Our first child, Mohammad Ali, was born on March 11, 2013.

Welcome My Darling son Yusuf

“When a child is born, it brings with it a message that God is not yet disappointed with human being.”

By the Indian poet Tagore
I gave birth to our second child, Yusuf



on July 21st, 2016.

Back to School



My passion for learning does not know any boundary. In September 2018, I went back to school to complete with



my education on Pharmacy.



Looking into the future

I am a dedicated wife, a mother, a daughter, a sister and your humble friend. Inspired by the memory of my darling dad and encouraged by the constant support of my mom, my hus-



band, my brother and the CCVT, I am dreaming to reach the bright horizons of life in the future. I love you all.



Collective Trauma/Secondary Trauma

By Alexandre Rutayisire



It all happened before I ever took my first breath. April 1994... the history of my home country had changed forever. In less than a 3-months time, hundreds of thousands of people were erased from the existence, all in the name of propaganda and irrational hate. These 100 days took the lives of families, friends, coworkers and everything in between; and went on to affect millions more outside of the country. It mutated the future and left extreme sadness in all our hearts. 25 years later, here is my take on it.

I've come a long way since the 90's. Raised in Windsor Ontario, I learned 2 languages, excelled in sports and got accepted to a great university in the nation's capital. I have many things to be proud of in my life. However, there has always been a sense of mourning for what I've never gotten. The Tutsi Genocide was simply a part of my life and left a dark tone on the past of where my parents called home. I never really understood the harshness of what happened in that 1994 summer, just that there were countless people I'd never get to meet because of what happened.

Grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins and all the other familiar faces that my parents grew to know, gone in the blink of an eye. I could only imagine what they were going through, and soon learned how different our reality was from those around us. When friends would speak of visiting their grandparents or taking trips to their relatives' homes, I'd often take a minute to hold my emotions back, knowing that I'd never get to experience that. I still remember when my mom told me the story of how she found out her parents had been killed, and it still haunts me to this day. This story plus the collection of others spoken during our yearly commemoration have left a heavy weight on my shoulders, filled with confusion and anger. Why did they do this? How could they do this? WHO let them do this? No matter what answers I was given, it never fully filled these holes.

In effect, this crisis left a bitter taste of what Rwanda represented to me in my youth. When asked where I'm from, my answer would often yield responses such as: "Oh that's the place with the genocide,

I've witnessed the difference between those who could accept and forgive, and those who have held on to the suffering to this day.

right?" I couldn't help but not want to discuss my heritage, as it left feelings of shame and grief for what should have been a source of pride for my home country. I wondered if we would ever move past this and be known for the amazing things that Rwanda offers, instead of this massive stain in our history. No matter how much time passed, there was lingering sorrow every April in my community that brought recurring pain on our nation's past. It was never easy remembering all that was lost, and all that would never be experienced again.

However, throughout the years I've learned countless lessons on life and human nature that I would not have gotten without this catastrophe. I've witnessed the difference between those who could accept and forgive, and those who have held on to the suffering to this day. What they don't realize is that that nega-

tive energy they refuse to let go of is the same energy that fueled the killings all those years ago. Anger, frustration and vengeance will never lead to positive results, so the only way through is to fix these feelings in your own heart first. I've had to learn to observe the negativity in others and ask: "What is *my* version of that?" "Is there anything for me to change to avoid becoming that way myself?" This awareness has allowed me to look within as to what kind of person I want to be and realized that if I don't watch the state of my mind, there's nothing stopping me from becoming like those same people who caused all that damage 25 years ago. I truly see the value in my life and those around me, and how I should value every day I get through. I've learned that spreading hatred or holding on to it inside is never worth it, as it only leads to more pain and doesn't serve anybody. Finally, I've learned that no matter how difficult forgiveness can be, it is done for you and not the perpetrator.

Anger, frustration and vengeance will never lead to positive results, so the only way through is to fix these feelings in your own heart first.

By forgiving (but not forgetting) I can now enjoy life and live it to the fullest with an open heart, just like those who lost their lives would have wanted to do themselves. My mother set a great example of this with how she raised me and taught me to be, and this allowed me to take this awful circumstance and turn it into crucial life lessons. Thanks mom, I'll have no problem paying it forward.

Alexandre Rutayisire was born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He is a recent graduate of the University of Ottawa in Health Science. Alexandre is bilingual and speaks English and French fluently. He is the son of Domine Rutayisire, a Mental Health Counselor at Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture. He is currently living in Ottawa and is employed fulltime.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is the most celebrated inter-governmental humanitarian body for children. It was established by the UN General Assembly on December 11, 1946. It offers its services in 190 countries and territories working towards fulfilment of the long-term needs of children including children's rights, protection, health and education. UNICEF Canada was founded in 1955, and is one of 33 National Committees



around the world. Following the mandate of the agency:

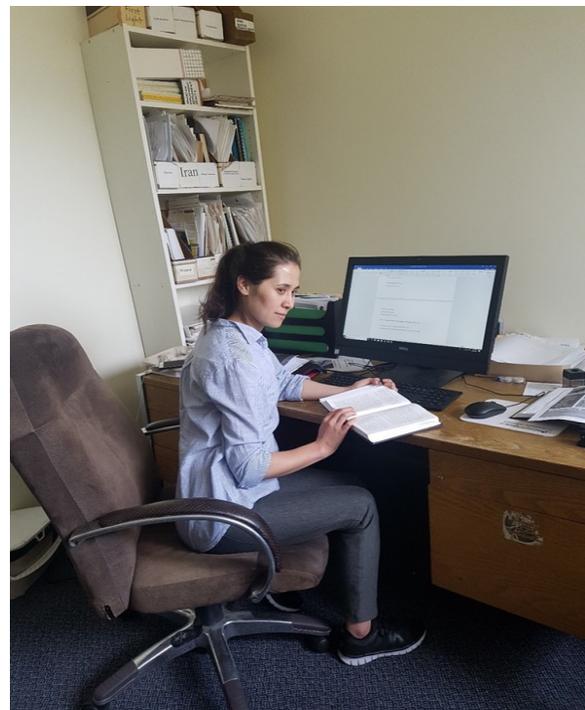
“UNICEF stands for every child, every-where. We are guided by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, advocating for the protection of children's rights, helping to meet their basic needs, and giving them a fair chance to reach their full potential. Undaunted by war, disaster, disease or distance, UNICEF staff work day in and day out to reach the world's most disadvantaged children with healthcare and vaccines, nutrition, clean water and sanitation, protection, quality education, emergency relief and more.... As part of the UN family, our ability to work neutrally with governments, the private sector and civil society generates results for children on a scale that is unparalleled. UNICEF even has the influence to pause hostilities in conflict zones – ceasefires known as 'Days of Tranquility' – so that children can receive medical care. Donor support helps reach 45% of the world's children under age 5 with vaccines, and create long-term solutions that address maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health; child marriage; girls' access to education; HIV prevention; ending violence against children; child trafficking and exploitation.” For more information please see the following link:

https://secure.unicef.ca/page/31858/donate/1?ea.tracking.id=19DIAQ02OTE&gclid=EAlaIqobChMlucf406PW5QIVT_DACH1cKgnCEAAAYASAAEgJv0vD_BwE

*The Saga of a Child
Survivor of War*



The following interview with the CCVT client, Ms. Saira Ahmadi, was performed during June 26th event in commemoration of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The interview was conducted by the CCVT staff member, Adriana Lilic with the involvement of our Settlement Counsellor, Ms. Kubra Zaifi and the CCVT LINC



teacher, Mr. David Burt.

Introduction

Adriana: Do you remember the sweet time?
When you enjoyed a homeland?
You had a family, a town, a village, a pasture and a huge mountain.
From the Afghan poet Khalilollah Khalili

My lovely Saira, would you please come forward and introduce yourself.

Saira: My name is Saira Ahmadi. I am 27 years old. I was born in Afghanistan, in a warzone, into a large, religious, family in a rural village of Ghazni province.

Unhappy Among Family Members

Adriana: Can you continue with the story, dear Saira?

Saira: There was a war, but I lived in a beautiful house with my family. Can you imagine? Under the Taliban, I used to go to school. But, I was not happy. At the age of 4 my father told me that he had engaged me for someone I didn't



even know. This was the worst experience of my childhood.

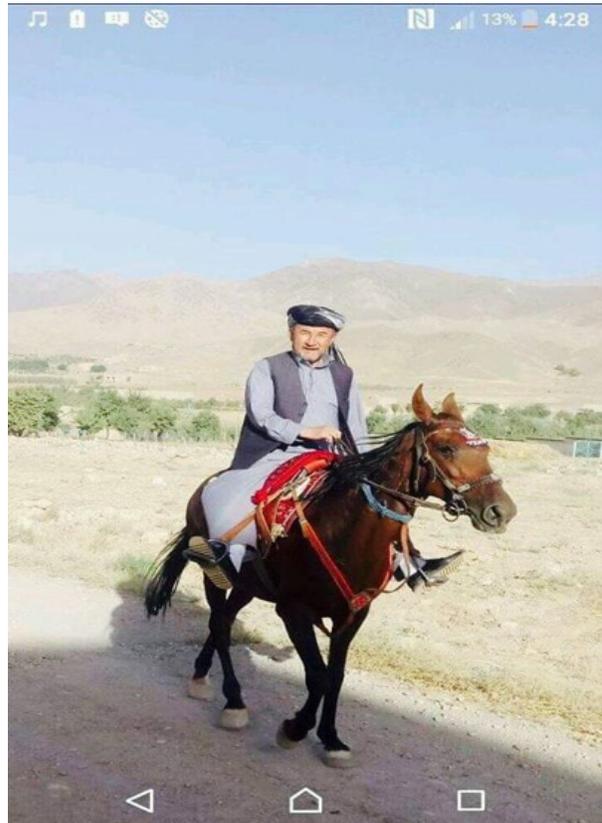
Child Slave

Adriana: O' you helpless child slave
Your master is your dad
Supported by the tradition
Decided about your fate
Feeding and protecting you as a future

asset.

A School Child in the War Zone

Adriana: You were a child going to school



in a war-ravaged village, party controlled by the savage Taliban. How did you manage?

Saira: The fighting, bloody fighting, was going on everywhere and every day. The Taliban would come in my school, and we, the girls, used to escape to the hills risking our lives. It was then that I began to dream of becoming a lawyer, to defend the rights of poor and helpless women. But very soon, my dreams turned into nightmares.

First Light

I love you my darling mom and my little brother

Saira: It was in the spring of 2007, I was 15. In a dark gloomy night, our house was attacked by the Taliban. They threw bombs in our house. My dad went



to the roof and called people for help. Their bombs killed my darling mom and 13-year-old brother. I came face to face



with death; I saw its bare face from behind the wall that swallowed a hundred bullets. I wish I had been killed that night instead of my mother and my little brother. I survived that Taliban attack, only to see even worse.

A Child Mother

Adriana: Who did take care of you and your siblings after your mom's passing away?

Saira: I practiced motherhood for my 7 siblings, the youngest of whom was 2 months old. After that, every single night was a nightmare for me. I cried all the remaining nights of 2007.

Love is of universal power

Adriana: In those dark days, when you acted as a mother of 7 and bereaved your loss, did you find any ray of hope in your gloomy life?

Saira: Yes, "at the end of the darkest

Adriana:
Oh my darling mom, O' my sweet brother
I received love and passion from my mom
I learned the cult of love and dedication from her
Her bosom was always open for me
The forces of war and darkness murdered her brutally
The warmth of her hugs and the beauty of her kisses are lost for ever
How can I live with my dreadful sorrow?
My young brother was killed along with my mother.
We ate together
We played together
We cried and laughed together
I miss him forever
His memory is with me till I die.

tunnel there is light". In 2009, I fell in love in a religious conservative village, where the word "love", was a taboo. On a tree near my house, we drew a line to live together forever. Both of us were determined that I would follow my dream of becoming a lawyer. Our secret love continued for 5 years. I was beaten and forbidden to go out alone. But nothing stopped me.

**My darling, you are the most beautiful flower with no thorn
Oneness**



Adriana: Did your passionate love end in marriage?

Saira: Yes, finally, my father granted my wish. By the time we got married, he had moved to Canada and immediately

sponsored me. After two years, the Canadian embassy in New Delhi invited us for



Adriana:

I fell in love with you
Like a bird entangled
in an escapeless net.
I found love a bottomless ocean
hard to swim.
I tried vainly to come out of it.
It took me deep down
by its sinking power.

A Love lyric by the Afghan woman
Rabea Balkhi



First Light

an interview. He came from Toronto, and I from Kabul, and we both met at the airport. I vividly remember each day of the 14 days we spent happily together.

Our Wedding Photos



My Dreadful Sorrow

Oh Beloved; take me.
Liberate my soul.
Fill me with your love
Take away what I need.
Take away everything
that takes me from you.

Jalal-al-din Balkhi



Adriana: Did you come to Toronto together?

Saira: Never! He went to Afghanistan and I came to Toronto alone in the hope that he would join me within a short period of time. But alas! I lost him forever. He was killed on the way to our village. I never thought I would survive the news of his death, but I did. I remained in a state of shock and confusion for a month. Then the nightmares started again. My dark days were back; this time even darker.

Without Thee
Thank you Canada! Thank you Toron-

to!

Adriana:

Without you my hope is barren
Without you my tears are run
Without you in my own corner
Deserted lonely one
I sit until life is done

Form the Farsi folkloric poet Baba Tahir



Adriana: How did you deal with your terrible loneliness in Toronto?

Saira: I found people nice in Canada. If I am lost, people help me to reach home safely. If I am sad, they offer me a smile. I found friends who encouraged me to build a new beginning; they helped me to dream again: “your grief has ended; you will soon enjoy a happy life.” But, alas!

Another Shock

Adriana: What happened, my lovely Saira? Don't tell me that you faced another tragedy. It's too much.

Saira: On November 7, 2018 I woke up to another ordeal of my life: The Taliban had invaded my village, and had murdered my father and three of my brothers. This unexpected shock was so fatal that I ended up in Humber River Hospital. I lost track of time and place. I felt disoriented; my whole life turned into a nightmare again.

Farewell my lovely dad and my darling brothers!



Home, Sweet Home

Adriana:

First Light

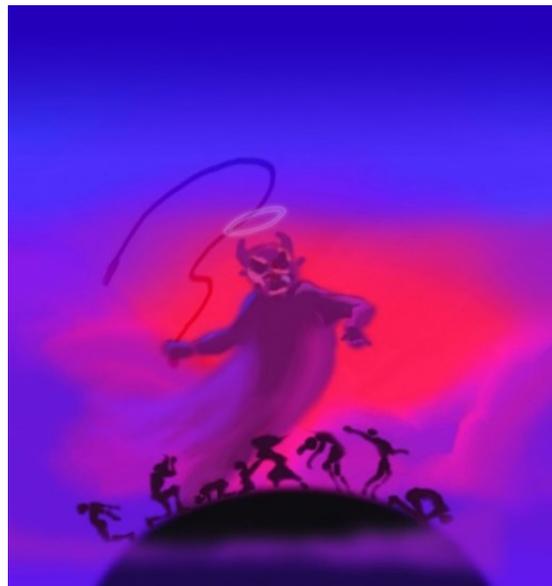
What happened to your home and to the rest of your family?

Saira: My family was displaced and only ashes remains of my family home.

**And I had a house
Damn with War**



A client of the Canadian Centre for Victims of torture (CCVT)



Adriana:

And I had a house. And I had

....

And here you are

**Without a heart without a
voice**

Waiting, and here you are

Why are we in exile? We die.

We die in silence

Why are we not crying?

On fire, on thorns we walked.

And my people walked

**Why are we Lord? Without a
country, without love.**

We die. We die in terror

**From the celebrated Iraqi poet
Al-Bayati**

Adriana: War intensifies the circle of violence and leads to the destruction of our system of values. According to the Irish writer, William Butler Yeats:
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
the blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction,
while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Adriana: When did you come to the CCVT and what services did you receive?

Saira: I came to CCVT on March 14, 2019. I have received the Centre's holistic services from Kubra, David and Elena

Adriana: Ms. Kubra Zaifi is the CCVT Settlement Counsellor. I request her to come forward and share with us the impacts of multiple traumas on our darling



Saira and the CCVT support.

Kubra: Saira was referred to CCVT by her family doctor. She was in a serious crisis when she came to me. We had to overcome the following problems: lack of trust, internalization, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (avoidance, intrusion & hyperarousal) and depression at the very initial state. In our second session, I found her completely different. She accepted to continue with her counselling and attend our support group and information sessions plus English and computer classes. In the course of time, I was happy to see smile on her face in every session of ours. She did very well in all areas and showed unbelievable resiliency. I strongly feel that she will have a bright future. She loves to bring her surviving family members to Canada. She wants to promote her education with the goal of helping vulnerable girls and women like herself.

First Light

Adriana: Now I call upon our great teacher, Mr. David Burt, to tell us about Saira's language progress



David: Saira is a determined individual who has a goal to become involved in legal services and to work for human rights at a global level, particularly women's rights. She is determined and motivated to reach her goal, which has in turn been an accelerating factor in her progress. She is what teachers would call an autonomous learner.

Sources of my inspiration

Adriana: My lovely Saira, you have gone through a trauma that is beyond the capacity of a normal human being to bear. How did you manage to continue with your life?

so Saira: I have had three main incentives for living:
First, for those beloved whom I have lost. I live for them and I live on their be-

half.
Second, I live for my surviving family members.
Third, I live for all of you. You love me and I love you.

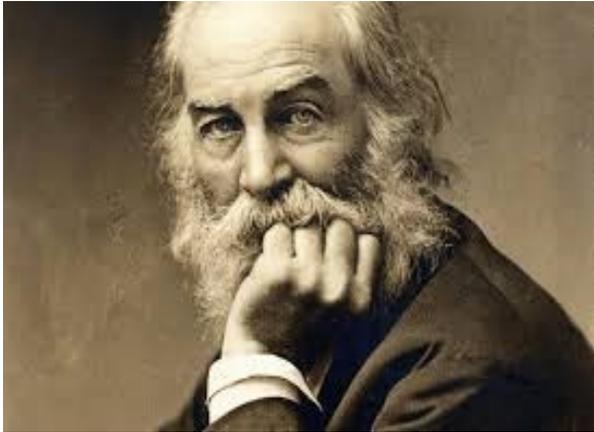
Saira's Message



Saira: Sometimes life has left me devastated, but I'm not going to accept defeat, am going to fight back. Afghanistan is one of the worst countries for women, and I am an Afghan woman who has survived the worst ordeals of life. I have lost my mother, my love, my father and my brothers... but my story is not over here; my story will go further to inspire not only people around me, but all new generations of my village, my country, my Canada and the entire world.

On the Beach at Night

As you prepare your breakfast, think of others



Adriana:

Weep not, child, Weep not, my darling,
 With these kisses let me remove your tears;
 The ravening clouds shall not long be victorious,
 They shall not long possess the sky - shall devour the stars only in apparition:
 Jupiter shall emerge - be patient - watch again another night - the Pleiades shall emerge,
 They are immortal - all those stars, both silvery and golden, Shall shine out again,
 The great stars and the little ones shall shine out again - they endure;
 The vast immortal suns, and the long-enduring pensive moons, shall again shine.

By the American poet Walt Wit-

Think of Others

By Mahmoud Darwish



(do not forget the pigeon's food).
 As you wage your wars, think of others (do not forget those who seek peace).
 As you pay your water bill, think of others (those who are nursed by clouds).
 As you return home, to your home, think of others (do not forget the people of the camps).
 As you sleep and count the stars, think of others (those who have nowhere to sleep).
 As you express yourself in metaphor, think of others (those who have lost the right to speak).
 As you think of others far away, think of yourself (say: If only I were a candle in the dark).

Mahmoud Darwish (1941-2008) is celebrated as the Palestinian national poet. He has won many awards for his works on peace and non-violence as well as the birth and reappearance and the trauma of exile. Darwish lived for many years in exile in Beirut and Paris. He is the author of over 30 books of poetry and eight books of prose. He has served and edited the newspaper *Al-Ahram* in Cairo, *Palestinian Affairs*, the journal *Al-Karmel* plus several literary magazines in Israel.

Virtues and Journeys

By Ari Barbalat



Who constitutes a true “hero” in international affairs? As Canadian Remembrance Day approaches on November 11th, what comes to mind is the popular presumption that the primary “heroes” in world affairs are *military personnel*. Sadly, asylum seekers and refugees, who place themselves in just as much danger as soldiers do, who display just as much courage and bravery as troops in battle do, and who have been exposed to just as much if not more physical terror and emotional trauma as veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder possess. What if contemporary society showed the same deference, honour and respect to asylum seekers and refugees as it does to soldiers?

Below, I will compare and contrast the depiction of virtue ethics as espoused by the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz with the very different virtue ethics that are demonstrated on refugee journeys. Drawing on accounts of Ethiopian Jews’ journey to Israel as recounted by the Israeli anthropologist Gadi Ben-Ezer, I will suggest that soldiers, statesmen and generals are not the only “heroes” of international history; actual heroes are families on journeys for asylum. They demonstrate all the virtues that characterize genuine soldiers in a just war.

In contemplating the nature of persecution in international relations, it is helpful to, as a point of departure, understand the thought of Clausewitz and, from this starting point, appreciate where and why the character of persecution is ontologically different from the character of armed conflict as expressed in *On War*.

Arguably, the well-known book by Clausewitz, *On War*, was in its time the most important work of International Relations theory probing the essence of “strategy”; it is arguably the most important book of International Relations theory in the field’s “canon.” The character of *persecution* requires not a revision or critique of the thinking of Clausewitz, but rather an exploration of how to shift one’s thinking to grasp an equally important mainstay of international history.

For Clausewitz, war is just another “tactic” employed by political decision-makers, just like negotiations. Clausewitz, though, does not consider the experience of *displacement*. In presenting the virtue ethics of war in his masterpiece *On War*, he does not mention the virtue ethics of refugee journeys.

Although each example of Jewish persecution to be presented below is distinct in character, context and circumstance, I will highlight how thinking about security in the case of the plight of Ethiopian Jews is different than thinking about security in the straightforward ways that foreign policy scholarship commonly thinks about it. While parallels will be pointed out in subsequent sections below that treat other theatres of Jewish oppression, I begin with the reality of Jews being mistreated in Ethiopia and Sudan to highlight the different nature of contemplating *persecution* in international history in contrast to *war* in international history. Insights below are derived from the compilation of testimonies by Israeli anthropologist Gadi Ben-Ezer, who collected oral narratives of Ethiopian Jews’ experiences in Ethiopia and Sudan between 1977 and 1985.

Obstinacy and Family Separation

Clausewitz is not immoral. He is very concerned with the moral character of combatants. In this spirit, he describes the psychology of obstinacy as follows:

Strength of character
can degenerate into *obstinacy*.
The line between these is of-

ten hard to draw in a specific case; but surely it is easy to distinguish them in theory.

Obstinacy is not an intellectual defect; it comes from reluctance to admit that one is wrong. To impute this to the mind would be illogical, for the mind is the seat of judgment. Obstinacy is a fault of temperament. Stubbornness and intolerance of contradiction result from a special kind of egotism, which elevates above everything else the pleasure of its autonomous intellect, to which others must bow. It might also be called vanity, if it were not something superior: vanity is content with appearance alone; obstinacy demands the material reality. (1)

The exclamation of screaming exemplifies obstinacy as a cry of horror. Yossi narrates:

They [the operators] used to arrange it so that old people would go separately from the young people. I felt 'Not again! They are going to leave me here for the third time.' I started crying. At the end they decided to open the trucks for young people as well. They opened them, but then the old could not climb aboard fast enough. We would run and the old ones, when they finally reached the trucks, those of us who were already up there would give them a hand and pull them up. Only then, when they were already on the truck, would they realize that the whole family was not on it, that half of them were here and half were there, that a son was on this truck while his mother was on another. No one could actually know where everyone was, let alone control it... There were many people.... And the young children.... Well, everyone ran quickly in the dark towards the vehicles, one couldn't see a thing or know where anyone was. Some children were killed [remains quiet for some time].... I remember what happened in our

vehicle.

"There was a mother who was shouting, 'My son! My son!' It didn't help. Her boy was stepped on. People were climbing up into the lorry forcibly in the dark. The child was crying, 'Mummy, Mummy!' but no one could actually lift him up... so when we arrived at the place where we were supposed to wait for the aeroplane we climbed down from the truck and then they found this child. They asked: 'Whose is this child?' And one woman said softly: 'He is mine.' They took him, probably [in order] to bury him on their way back. Or maybe they just had to throw him somewhere, I don't know."

I felt that this was horrible: for a mother not to be able to protect her child, to control what happened to him. Her son! This was really awful... And he was not so big! But at that time we did not pay attention to each other, everyone cared only for himself. Each of us wanted to save himself, not thinking of others... not even being able to save his or her child. This was very grievous indeed. (2)

The linguistics of silence, of hesitating and of fearing are also testaments to benevolent obstinacy. The testimony of Tena thus states:

We were sitting in that place [refugee camp] when an Ethiopian man came along with two other men, one Sudanese and one Arab. The Ethiopian was translating: 'Who wants to work?' All of us said that we wanted to work, but that the place was still new to us so we meant to go around a bit, see the place and then get some work. So later, from among twenty students, he calls our names, me and my [woman] friend. He took us, and I had a wonderful feeling...yet I was trembling, so he told me that everything was all right; I did not even believe that he was Ethiopian. He took us into a big house;

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there were many Arabs, big and fat, and he was translating: 'You want to work to "serve" at a certain house?' My friend did not speak at all. She was in shock. I spoke a bit and said: 'I...I have a husband; it is hard for me to be separated from my husband. If I found a place [to work together] with my husband, then I could work, if not...I can't work.' Then they asked the translator: 'Does she have a husband?' He said, 'Yes.' So then they said they did not want me, they wanted only unmarried girls, and I said that my girlfriend also had a husband. So we came back. It was good that I said I had a husband. I was really terrified. I feared that I would not arrive in Israel. If they had taken us, we wouldn't have been able to go out of the house, and they would have done [to us] whatever they wanted. (3)

Winning versus Reporting

Clausewitz assumes that victory is the only value in life and in conflict. In contemplating persecution, however, the experience of those deemed "enemy" is beyond the scope of *On War's* conscience. Clausewitz, thus, writes:

There are only two sources for this [military] spirit, and they must interact in order to create it. The first is a series of victorious wars: the second, frequent exertions of the army to the utmost limits of its strength. Nothing else will show a soldier the full extent of his capacities. The more a general is accustomed to place heavy demands on his soldiers, the more he can depend on their response. A soldier is just as proud of the hardships he has overcome as of the dangers he has faced. In short, the seed will grow only in the soil of constant activity and exertion, warmed by the sun of

victory. Once it has grown into a strong tree, it will survive the wildest storms of misfortune and defeat, and even the indolent inertia of peace, at least for a little while. Thus, this spirit can be *created* only in war and by great generals, though admittedly it may endure, for several generations at least, even under generals of average ability and through long periods of peace.(4)

Ben-Ezer, by contrast, emphasizes the importance of contemplating trauma as manifest in narrative signals. Ben-Ezer emphasizes the virtues of *confessing*. One form of confession is *self-report*: the conveyance by the sufferer of a horrifying event significant in its special painfulness and its extreme distress. Two, a 'hidden' event- an event which was not narrated in the main story but comes up during the phase of probing. Three: *A long silence*. A pause either before or after the narration of a certain event which seems to have a distinctly tormenting quality for the individual. Four: *Loss of emotional control*. A sudden losing of control over emotions relating to an event which is being narrated -- such as rage or crying -- which is uncharacteristic of the person's recounting. *Emotional detachment or numbness*. Reporting a singular event or sequence of events of horror but with no emotions involved in the narration. Its report seems detached from the emotional life of the individual, not engaging their feelings in this act whatsoever. Six: Repetitive reporting. This entails retelling a distressing experience in its entirety, time and again, as if the narrator is unable to move on. In contrast to the individual's style of narration in the rest of the account, the individual demonstrates an extraordinary reiteration of its minute details. Seven: This entails 'disappearing' from the reality of the interview while narrating the horrifying event, as if 'falling into oneself', being overwhelmed and submerged by the event while in the process of recounting it. This is often expressed as an extraordinarily prolonged period of silence. It is as if they are trying to climb out of a "mental hole" they fell into because of the difficulty of recounting the trauma. There are clear signs that the person "is not here," "not with this current self" or completely immersed in the trauma of the event. Eight: Intrusive images. This pertains to

images of a traumatic event which occur involuntarily during the narration process as a kind of quick “flash,” clearly distracting the person’s train of thought and interrupting the intended flow of the narrative. The person might “apologize” or verbally express uneasiness while admitting that image’s recurrence. Nine: *Forceful argumentation of conduct within an event*. This entails presenting the reasons for the behaviour within a situation instead of telling the facts, as if the traumatic quality of the event is connected to the person’s conduct in that situation that he or she feels he should justify. The individual argues because he or she wishes to “prevent” an independent conclusion by the interviewer about what happened.

Geography: Ally or Enemy?

When Clausewitz contemplates geography, he emphasizes that geography is what one’s imagination makes of it. “A poet or painter may be shocked to find that this Muse dominates these activities as well: to him it might seem odd to say that a young gamekeeper needs an unusually powerful imagination in order to be competent.” In his words, it is the skill at “quickly and accurately grasping the topography of any area which enables a man to find his way at any time.”

In persecution, contrastingly, *geography is the setting of existential danger*. The human person does not have the luxury of the general’s “bird’s eye view” which is able to construct the whole topography, in as Clausewitz puts it, “vividly present to the mind, imprinted like a picture, like a map, upon the brain, without fading or blurring in detail, it can only be achieved by the mental gift that we call imagination.” This is not to create a dichotomy whereby persecution is the “opposite” of war; it is to say that suppliants from persecution demonstrate just as much imagination and ingenuity as the ideal soldier and general in *On War* do, but they do so in a context where geography is *enemy*, not “ally.”

Amos, for example, as presented in Ben-Ezer’s book, describes what happened when he encountered the river at the border between Ethiopia and Sudan:

After three months we ran away... There a place called Hamdite which is on the Sudanese side of the border. Only the river separates

[Ethiopia from Sudan] there, and this is called Takaze... So then, well [hesitates for a moment], at that time we were only three. Three of us... one was my cousin, one was my brother. His wife... of course we were afraid that the river would take her. The river was flowing rapidly. The river was rushing, was something [pause] what shall I tell you? -- was whirling powerfully, and we left her with her parents. She was supposed to go with us, but we said: ‘Only us three shall go. If we take her, she will remain in the river.’ So the three of us went out and... We realized that the soldiers were on guard there [in a low voice]. They were watching the area. All of a sudden, ‘What’s that?! What’s th-a-t?!’ The soldiers shouted: ‘Komo!’ It means ‘Stop!’ in Amharic. We did not want to stop. If we stopped they would kill us. But my cousin, where did he run? Towards where they shouted ‘Komo!’ And my brother went into the sea [river]. He ... completely drowned. He was drowning indeed! He was drinking water, I saw him, oh [in pain], only his head I saw. Where shall I go then? My cousin went where the soldiers are and my brother is drowning! [Looking from one direction to another]... so I went into the river to save my brother. What shall I tell you? I went to save him and got drowned myself. But later, because of my clothes, the river took me up, it lifted me upwards. I floated. And then I succeeded in grabbing my brother, pulling him, heaving him.... And he crossed the river, I mean to the Suanese side of the border. He passed and then the river took me. It took me some distance away. I know

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how to swim but it took me far away. Very far. Because, as you know, when there are big clouds the river fills up. So at the end God helped me. I shall not boast that I am a hero and that I went out by myself. It was God that helped me so that I came out of the river.

Yet I couldn't see!

Where was my brother? I thought: 'Where am I going to find him? Almighty Ruler of the World, where am I going to find my brother!' It was better that I stayed in the river [than lose my brother], that is how I decided [felt] then. At the end I climbed up like that [shows how, on all fours], up the bank of the river. Up, up I climbed. I then returned to where I heaved him out from the river. Then I saw something [whispers]...black. Very black. Because he was in the river all his clothes were black. I thought that I might be a soldier. Maybe he would kill me if I got near him. So I called him [whispers]: 'Who is it? Is it you, David?' He was called *Desta* in Ethiopia. *Desta* means joy. So, 'Yes,' he answers me and--do you know how joyful I was? All my body trembled out of joy. Really! Then we rested there a bit. ...

They lit the *Bauza*.

'What's that? What's th-a-t?' Do you know how he ran?! What a run by both of us! I gave him one shoe. His shoes were gone in the river. So each of us had one shoe. And there were thorns there. These thorns got into our legs. We ran, ran and ran. Without any idea where the place was [the right direction]. We didn't know... If we headed towards the Sudanese border guards we would be killed. So we were escaping. And the darkness of the night was absolute. And, do you know, it was hills. But all of it is full of thorn

bushes. So all our body was [covered with our] blood. You know, all was blood! If the thorn caught us we pulled it out by force, and half of it was left in our legs or part of our flesh was left here on the tree [bush]. And we--what a run! Do you know what a run!

And then, there are those who are called *Lehawi*. The *Lehawi* -- they kill people. If they find people, they have a knife, what shall I tell you, it can be one metre long. So if they find you, that's what they do to you [shows me a throat-cutting gesture]. It's your end. You are turned into pieces. And we got there. All that running -- yet at the end we arrived where the *Lehawi* were. Then I heard: 'Oh-oh!' So I said to my brother: 'What's that?' Now, he fell down at the area where the *Lehawi* were. And I couldn't hear him because of his throat, we didn't have water so his throat got hoarse. It was night. We were running all night, you know, so his throat was completely dry and I couldn't hear what he was saying. I told him: 'I am OK, I am fine. I shall seize you by your hand and run. I shall pull you. I shall run forward.' And I grabbed his hand and--what a run! You know, I made him fall as I dragged him. We were running and running. We wanted to move from where we were, to get away from there. Nothing else mattered. Then he said to me: 'Our cousin, they probably killed him. We shall die here too. Why do you think that we shall get out of here alive?' And I said: 'We shall live! With God's help we shall live! I shall just grab you and run.' Then he started telling me again: 'Our cousin, for sure they killed him. We heard the shots. We heard it. Certainly he was killed. So we shall die too.' I shouted at him:

'Come! Let's go! I shall pull you.' What a run, you know, once I made him fall, I didn't care. I just ran forward. Where shall arrive... I didn't know. I just continued running. What a run it was! (5)

In thinking about refugee journeys, we can scarcely speak in terms of general theories, the way Clausewitz does. What counts is the distinctive evidence and unique perspective derived from irreplaceable individual human stories.

Victory versus Trauma

For Clausewitz, the ultimate ethic is the ethos of offense. "Victory can be made more complete if we encounter the enemy before he was reached that objective, cutting him off from it and getting there first. If for instance the main objective of the attack is the enemy's capital and the defender has not taken up a position between it and the attacker, the latter would be making a mistake if he advanced straight on the city. He would do better to strike at the communications between the enemy army and its capital and there seek the victory which bring him to the city." Clausewitz makes no mention of collateral damage, of civilian suffering, or of the likelihood of his doctrines being used not in the practice of war but in the practice of surveillance, policing, infiltration or torture.

Thinking of war in light of Ethiopian Jews' experience, "offense" becomes synonymous with unnecessary cruelty. Clausewitz writes: "But one should not forget that the object of the attack usually gains significance only with victory; victory must always be conceived in conjunction with it. So the attacker is not interested simply in reaching the objective: he must get there as victor. Consequently, his blow must be aimed not just at the objective but at the road that the enemy will have to take to reach it." (6)

Contrastingly, Ethiopian Jews were travelling along just such roads while being assaulted by the Sudanese apparatuses. Their experience exemplifies what happens when such proverbs and doctrines fall into those without the conscience to act with decency.

Marito recounts thusly in her testimony:

For example, I had a friend, the Sudanese kidnapped

her. They then transported her to Saudi Arabia... they abducted many children like that. Not as many from ours as from the (non-Jews)... But us too. My friend was kidnapped around Gedaref... We tried not to walk alone as it was dangerous. If someone was walking alone, that's it! She would be taken. My friend walked alone only once but it was enough for the Sudanese to abduct her. She was a good girl. She had completed her studies in Ethiopia. She would be 20 years old by now... Her parents heard about what happened to her. They are still in Ethiopia. They can do nothing about it.. I have another friend here [in Israel], and last Saturday we thought again of our friend, how miserable she must be, and how beautiful she was, and... I don't know, maybe because of that they had taken her... 'The best people,' we say, 'why are the best people taken?' And we also say: 'Why do the good people die first?'

So we were discussing all kinds of things, and how hard it was, and how unfortunate she was. No one will ever find her... she will be like that all her life! Many girl students went like that. (7)



Leadership and Truth

At stake is a re-evaluation of the importance of "aggressiveness" and "offense" in international conduct. Clausewitz stresses that more can be accomplished "with an army drawn from people known for their boldness, and army in which a daring spirit has always been nurtured, than with

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an army that lacks this quality.” He adds that boldness “can lend wings to intellect and insight; the stronger the wings then, the greater the heights, the wider the view and the better the results; though a greater prize, of course, involves greater risks.” He contrasts the virtue of boldness with the “average man, not to speak of a hesitant or weak one, [who] may in an imaginary situation, in the peace of his room far removed from danger and responsibility, arrive at the right answer—that is, insofar as this is possible without exposure to reality. But beset on every side with danger and responsibility he will lose perspective. Even if this is provided by others, he will lose his powers of decision, for here no one else can help him.” In a circumstance of persecution, one encounters different kinds of personal qualities in play. Contrastingly, one is dealing, in persecution, with the question of *truth* rather than leadership.

One form of truth is *historical truth*: the ‘objective reality’ of the situation or what “really happened”, consisting of many contextual facts such as the details of the camps, the existence of the described routes, and certain conditions at particular periods.

Psychological Truth, however, is different. There is a difference between perceived reality and the contextual facts of historical truth. For instance, many Ethiopian Jews recalled that pieces of metal and poison were inserted into their pills by medical staff in the refugee camps in Sudan. This reality is just as much a fact as other contextual facts. These details enable one to understand the emotional condition of the person at the time of the event. The perception of the sabotaged medication reveals the terror and anxiety that Jews in Sudan lived under; they internalized their knowledge of Sudan’s hatred for the Jews and Sudan’s opposition to their passage through and inferred facts in the camp from this lived experience of Sudan’s hostile orientation. These psychological facts explain the Jews’ behaviour no less than other facts did. They avoided medical treatment, thereby exacerbating their condition, causing the death toll among them to rise. “Objective” external reality and “subjective” inner reality thus complete one another. The Sudanese hostility provoked severe anxiety and terror, which, in turn, provoked avoidance behavior and led to adverse consequences.

Besides, *narrative truth* is the

dialogical experience occurring between an interviewer and interviewee as it takes place in a specific moment. Appreciating narrative truth requires apprehending that verbal communica-



tion can be interpreted as a “text.” In one form, it can be conveyed in non-verbal cues accompanying the narration: aspects of body language, facial expressions, crying or laughing, manifestations of flat emotions in certain narrated circumstances but not in others, and therefore lends itself to analysis and interpretation. But there are many other forms it can take.

For instance, one can interpret what the person chooses to narrate, whether this is a lifetime history, an event which transpired over a long period of time, and other dimensions of what the interviewee chooses to share. This is the *chosen content*.

Furthermore, a different component to contemplate is the *silenced content*. This encompasses what the interviewee opts not to tell and keeps silent. Some people keep silent about those facts which hurt their self-image; other times, it can be revealed only intermittently and in passing. The silenced content is “the other side” of the person’s choices of what to tell. Thus, it is in its own right also part of the “text.”

Moreover, one can also take note of the way that content is organized in the story. For instance, the way the individual opens the interview, the first thing the individual relates, his way of opening the story, the sequence of the episodes, what is told in an abbreviated manner, whether the narration is disjointed or flowing, when the individual uses argumentation rather than narration, and where the person ends the story. These are all

components of *narrative truth*. These modes of communication, coupled with the courage to unload and share trauma, constitute notably different virtues to those espoused by Clausewitz. Persecution is just as important to international relations as war is, yet over-valuing Clausewitz has obscured the attention that persecution deserves.

States versus Individuals

Contemplating persecution requires bearing in mind the difference between threats to states and threats to individual human beings. One Ethiopian Jew, Yoav, explained: "That evening they [the Sudanese] took my brother. He was younger but looked bigger than me. And they took my elder brother, and my brother-in-law, and many cousins of mine and others whom I did not know very well, but they were neighbors and friends. They took the whole population of the neighborhood, sparing only the old people." The severe fear of revealing Jewish identity to the Sudanese put the Ethiopian Jews in a position where they needed to conceal who they were and where they were going. In Yoav's words: "Once something was discovered and the whole process was stopped. The Sudanese caught some people who were acting as links between people [the 'operators']. They put them in jail and beat them to the point where they were almost dead." As a result, Yoav explains, they disassembled and "told the Sudanese that we had come to work in Sudan, because of the problems in Ethiopia. The Sudanese insisted that they should tell them the truth, but did they did not want to tell them...so they continued to beat them." (8)

The difference between a threat to states and a threat to persons is that threats to persons occur when identity is *hidden*; a state and its targets cannot be concealed; conventional security as understood by grand strategy manifests in threats against *open targets*. In the case of the Ethiopian Jews in Sudan, they were tortured *even in disguise*. Jonathan, a different interviewee, testified: "Those who were indeed discovered to be Jews, the Sudanese used to take and beat and sometimes kill them and dispose of their bodies thereafter wherever they wanted to. They would say: "You Jews want to go there [to Israel]: We know what Israel does!"

Ben-Ezer relates the testimony of Esther, a girl of 11 years old, who explains how, while in Sudan *en route* to Israel, Ethiopian Jews were humiliated and abused simply for being Jewish. She describes how Sudanese military "would bring us their food and we could not eat it. They would bring us a cooked chicken, and we were 'dying' to eat it, but it was not our thing [it was not prepared according to Jewish law, not kosher]. So we did not eat it." What happened was so traumatic that the Sudanese would "check if we ate [non-Kosher food] (my dear Ari explain Kosher) or not since we had told them that we were Gentiles. Until one day the toilet clogged up, and they opened it and found all the bones and stuff...They said, 'You are Jews!' Well, it meant trouble." (9)

A different account, from Marito, related that the Sudanese "used to come on purpose to our house on Shabbat and tell us 'Let's eat!' They did it in order to find out whether we were Jews. The things they did in order to know [whether we were Jews]! So the elders used to leave the house on Shabbat. All the grown-ups used to disappear from home... while we, the young ones, went to play somewhere." (10) For states, there is *something* they can do to respond and evade the threats they are faced with externally; for persons, there is *nothing* they can do.

Policies versus Persons

A further difference is that threats to states are responses to *policies* undertaken by states; these policies can be changed, reversed, rescinded and modified. Contrastingly, abuses against individuals are undertaken due to circumstances beyond their control. Elazar, for instance, recounted, "whenever there was a search for Jews, we would light a fire on a Shabbat in order not to be identified. We would light it but not cook on it. In addition, we were not able to observe the purity ritual, the *niddah*. We couldn't do it for fear of being discovered as Jews. We felt very bad about it, but what could we do?" The context for this hiding was explained as follows: "There were many who died and we buried them according to the Christian custom, mentioning Mariam [Mary] and so on when burying them so that others around us would not suspect that we were Jews..."

Foreign policy contemplates dangers

that are *seen* and that can be *foreseen*. Persecution encompasses dangers that are *unseen*.

Choice versus No Choice

Choices in foreign policy strategy *can* be controlled by the government making specific choices and by decision-making apparatuses making changes to their operations. Victims of genocide do not have a choice in what has befallen them.

The conditions facing the Jews of Ethiopia under the totalitarian regime of the Marxist Mengistu regime were as follows, as Ben-Ezer explains. First, the Mengistu regime's land reforms gave land rights to Ethiopian Jews for the first time in centuries but there was the simultaneous consequence that landlords expelled many of them from the land they were cultivating and turning them into refugees. Moreover, Ethiopian Jews were targeted by the opposition militia known as the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) which consisted of pro-Haile-Selassie monarchists opposing the Mengistu government. Since Ethiopian Jews were beneficiaries of the regime's land reforms, the EDU's resistance attacks against the regime included targeting of Ethiopian Jews.

Additionally, the Mengistu regime's policies of forced secularization provoked attacks on religious institutions within the country, both Christian and Jewish. The Jews of Ethiopia, lacking the resources of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, could not resist and complied. A fourth factor befalling Ethiopian Jews was the reality of forced conscription. Youngsters were rounded up in village centers, markets and wherever they could be spotted, and taken right away. They were sent to the Somali border or sent to fight in the Ethiopian civil war against the nascent Eritrea. Many underground militias also practiced conscription. Resultingly, many Jews fled to forests and remote areas to hide. *Hiding*, therefore, is a reality for situations of *persecution* in a manner irrelevant to considerations of security policy by states. (11)

Indeed, in the Ethiopian Jewish situation, Sudan would employ Ethiopian agents to expose the Jews; these Ethiopians would disguise as Jews and try to make others trust that they were also Jewish. Because of such infiltration, one could only trust the identity of fellow Jews who one knew personally, yet due to the penetration and persecution, the

fellow Jew would be most likely to deny his or her identity. This had implications for immigration to Israel; someone would not be placed "in the queue" to be taken to Israel until a member of the community confirmed that they were part of the Jewish fold. Sometimes achieving this was based on sheer luck. To bring this about, Takaleh, for example, went around photo shops in the town of Gedaref hoping that Jews would visit these shops or get the passports they needed in order to get out of Sudan; after a few months he succeeded in locating a family he knew from Ethiopia, but they were already connected to the Israeli system and through them he was able to get the help he needed. (12)

Even absent the "Jewish" aspect to the danger posed to the Ethiopian Jews in light of their implicit relationship to Israel and in light of the Christian character of South Sudan, but in light of their also being *Ethiopians* and thus perceived as *Ethiopians* in Sudanese territory. The individual Elie narrated: "There was a conflict and the Sudanese person leaned down and picked up some sand off the ground, held it in his hands, and said to me: 'Smell this sand! Do you recognise the smell? No! This is not your land! You do not belong here!'" (13)

Bravery versus Taking Girls Away

Clausewitz affirms the importance of bravery. But in relation to rape, which is a *side-show* to battlefield conduct, this bravery is *sadistic*.

Clausewitz thus speaks praisingly of "aggression."

Politically, only one can be the aggressor: there can be no war if both parties seek to defend themselves. The aggressor has a positive aim, while the defender's aim is merely negative. Positive action is therefore proper to the former, since it is the only means by which he can achieve his ends. Consequently when conditions are equal for both parties the attacker ought to act, since his is the positive aim. *Seen in this light, suspension of action in war is a contradiction in terms. Like two incompatible elements, armies must continually destroy one another. Like fire and water they never find themselves*

in a state of equilibrium, but must keep on interacting until one of them has completely disappeared. Imagine a pair of wrestlers deadlocked and inert for hours on end! In other words, military action ought to run its course steadily like a wound-up clock. But no matter how savage the nature of war, it is fettered by human weaknesses; and no one will be surprised at the contradiction that man seeks and creates the very danger that he fears. (14)

In refugee journeys, however, “aggression” means something very different: violation. Ruth tells how frightened she became when the Sudanese soldiers came to select the girls they wished to take. She narrates:

It was on the Sudanese border. We were gathered there, a group of seventy-two young people. About half of this group were Gentiles. Then there were the soldiers [pause] who wanted to take the girls. They talked with the Gentiles who were with us... so we knew that at night they would come to get us... So during the day there were many soldiers around us... We were sitting as a group. It was not a large place anyway, just a big tree, and we were sitting underneath it. So then we slept there. We talked, sat and said that all of us would



sleep close together. I was with my brother... Then, as

we had thought, they came. At night. With a torch. They wanted to take only those girls among us whom they had chosen during the day. That is why they were parting... [the clothes covering our faces]. We were sleeping, and my brother suddenly said to me: ‘They are coming! They are coming!’ He whispered... and then: ‘Why, are you afraid?’ Because when he told me that they had come, I started to tremble, like that. So because when he told me that they had come, I started to tremble, like that. So because I was trembling so much my brother said to me: ‘I was lying to you. They have not come.’ When he told me that, I started shouting at him. All that time they were down there, and people were trying to escape up the hill. It took them five minutes more to arrive. At that time I was shouting at him: ‘Why did you say that they are coming? Why did you say so?’ And then they came. They came and saw me... I was shouting as well as trembling greatly. Then everyone was shouting. We were wearing our clothes over our heads [faces] so they [the soldiers] were parting them and looking, and wanting to take away the girls that they desired... I was very frightened. (15)

Decision-Making versus Resourcefulness

Clausewitz describes the phenomenology of courage in these words, below. He identifies courage as a consequence of *intuition*: “When we realize that he must hit upon all this and much more by means of his discreet judgment, as a marksman hit a target, we must admit that such an accomplishment of the human mind is no small achievement. Thousands of wrong turns running in all directions tempt his perception; and if the range, confusion and com-

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plexity of the issues are not enough to overwhelm him, the dangers and responsibilities may.”

Courage, for Clausewitz, is intellectual in character. It derives from *conjecture*:

In reviewing the whole array of factors a general must weigh before making his decision, we must remember that he can gauge the direction and value of the most important ones only by considering numerous other possibilities-- some immediate, some remote. He must *guess*, so to speak: guess whether the first shock of battle will steel the enemy's resolve and stiffen his resistance, or whether, like a Bologna flask, it will shatter as soon as its surface is scratched; guess the extent of debilitation and paralysis that the drying up of particular sources of supply and the severing of certain lines of communication will cause in the enemy; guess whether the burning pain of the injury he has been dealt will make the enemy collapse with exhaustion or, like a wounded bull, arouse his rage; guess whether the other powers will be frightened or indignant, and whether and which political alliances will be dissolved or formed. (16)

In the reality of trauma, however, the virtue ethics of *resourcefulness* take precedence over those of contemplation.

According to Ben-Ezer:

Takaleh, for example, tells how, after a long time without success, he finally thought of going around photo shops in Gedaref in the hope that some of the Jews would visit these shops. He hoped that Jews would come into these shops either to send their photos to relatives back in Ethiopia to show that they had arrived safely, or to get the passports they needed in order to get out of

Sudan (through the Khartoum route). After a few months he indeed succeeded in locating a family he had known from Ethiopia as they were coming out of such a photo shop. Fortunately, they were already connected to the Israeli system, and through them he was able to get the support he needed.

(17)

Ben-Ezer points out how the Sudanese often employed Ethiopian agents to expose the Jews and their messengers. These Ethiopians disguised themselves as Jews in their attempts to convince others that they were authentic and enable them to admit that they were also Jewish. Consequently, knowing that they were penetrated by these agents, the Jews could only trust someone whom they knew personally, such as a neighbour from a village in Ethiopia or a relative. Hence, whether someone was the first of his village to arrive in Sudan or a youngster who had joined a youth group and knew nobody in Sudan, one needed to be quite creative to find the messengers in order to communicate with other Ethiopian Jews.

Ben-Ezer states further that a unique form of virtue manifested when messengers were caught and tortured by the Sudanese and yet did not reveal the details of the secret and escape network. “Hence, the captured operators would try to hold their secrets as long as they could, sometimes even for months, enduring the stupefying torture.” (18)

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In the essay above, I have attempted to compare and contrast two different understandings of virtue ethics: that which pertains to soldiers and generals, and that which pertains to refugees and asylum-seekers. Virtually every character trait which Clausewitz admires in the military context is either a vice or a threat in the lived experiences of refugees on their journeys, or, seen differently, is exceeded and surpassed in the resourcefulness and courage experienced by refugees on their personal journeys to safety. I have attempted to demonstrate this with

respect to Ethiopian Jews' journeys through Sudan to Israel as documented by the Israeli anthropologist Gadi Ben-Ezer. Refugees' lived experiences constitute the conceptual "obverse" of the virtue ethics Clausewitz describes in regard to military conduct.

Notes:

1. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, ed. and trans. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 108
2. Gadi Ben-Ezer, *The Ethiopian Jewish Exodus: Narratives of the Migration Journey to Israel, 1977-1985*. London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 117-18
3. Ben-Ezer, *Ethiopian Jewish Exodus*, p. 115
4. Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 189
5. Ben-Ezer, *Ethiopian Jewish Exodus*, pp. 135-36
6. Clausewitz, *On War*, pp. 545-47
7. Ben-Ezer, *Ethiopian Jewish Exodus*, pp. 114-15
8. Ben-Ezer, *Ethiopian Jewish Exodus*, p. 81
9. Ben-Ezer, *Ethiopian Jewish Exodus*, p. 83
10. Ben-Ezer, *Ethiopian Jewish Exodus*, p. 83
11. Ben-Ezer, *Ethiopian Jewish Exodus*, p. 29
12. Ben-Ezer, *Ethiopian Jewish Exodus*, p. 148
13. Ben-Ezer, *Ethiopian Jewish Exodus*, p. 106
14. Clausewitz, *On War*, pp. 216
15. Ben-Ezer, *Ethiopian Jewish Exodus*, p. 114.
16. Clausewitz, *On War*, pp. 572-73
17. Ben-Ezer, *Ethiopian Jewish Exodus*, p. 143.
18. Ben-Ezer, *Ethiopian Jewish Exodus*, pp. 147-48.

Ari Barbalat is a PhD candidate in International Relations at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is a volunteer with the CCVT and Project Abraham, a Toronto-based organization assisting Yazidi refugees and ISIS survivors in the GTA.

Convention on the Rights of the Child: 30 Years After

By Ezat Mossallanejad



On November 20, 1989, after ten years of negotiations, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC), creating a comprehensive treaty for protection of children. This marvelous international instrument was referred by human rights workers as the Magna Carta of Children. It reached the stage of enforcement on the 2nd day of September 1990, after the required number of states acceded to it. Central to the Convention are the best interests of the child. A United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child monitors the implementation of the CRC. It is supplemented by three optional protocols:

- Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;
- Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and,
- Optional Protocol on a communications procedure (individuals' rights to bring violations of Children's rights to the attention of the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child).

Optional Protocols are import in international law, as they supplement the original treaty, fill up the gaps and expand states obligations. When ratified by a state party, the Optional Protocol obtains the status of international law.

The CRC's main goal is the healthy development of children through the state parties' legal and practical interventions. Governments must take concrete and practical measures for the implementation of children's fundamental rights such as right to survival, right to be protected from such evils as torture, degrading treatment, corporal punishment, abuse, neglect, and exploitation as well as the right to enjoy family, cultural, and social life. The CRC is quite categorical about the basic rights of children to have a name and nationality, to enjoy education, appropriate health care and a good standard of living. Children must not suffer economic poverty, stigmatization, discriminations, sexual abuses and humiliation. The CRC has paid special attention to the rights of disabled and separated children as well as those children who are in conflict with the law.

The CRC has been ratified by all countries except Somalia, South Sudan and the USA. This is understandable in the cases of Somalia and South Sudan due to their lack of functional governments. In spite of his promise for the ratification of this marvelous piece of international law, the then US President Barak Obama did not come up with any solution. Following is an excerpt of the CCVT letter of to President Obama dated December 12, 2014:

“The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* is an internationally recognized agreement that establishes a comprehensive set of goals for individual nations to achieve on behalf of children. The *Convention* is the most widely adopted human rights treaty in history with 191 States Parties. Unfortunately, only the United States of America and Somalia have not ratified this celebrated agreement. The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 20 November 1989 and its enforcement on the 2 September 1990 was a major development in addressing the crime of torture against children. The United States of America signed the CRC on February 16, 1995, but it has not yet ratified it.

“Delay in ratification of this important document seems to be related to problems of implementation. The primary focus of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is the protection and well-being of vulnerable children. It seems that it is not possible for the federal government of the USA to ratify the protocol without the approval of all states. Negotiations between the federal and state governments can result in a most positive outcome. There exists an urgent need to break this deadlock. The USA can play a more effective global leadership role in the prevention of torture and other atrocities against children with the ratification of this crucial legal instrument.”

The real reason behind the US reluctance in ratification of the CRC is the predomi-

nance of the conservative elements within the Foreign Affairs Committee of the US senate. They have always held the issue with the Committee without letting it to be discussed at the Senate’s floor. They argue that the CRC would diminish the American sovereignty through the UN interventions. Another excuse is the focus on the “parent-rights”, specifically “father’s rights” on utilizing authority on religious and sexual education of children.

It is upsetting that 30 years after the adoption of the CRC, there has been little improvement in the global condition of children. Children in general, and uprooted children in particular, are suffering from

The CRC has been ratified by all countries except Somalia, South Sudan and the USA.

bject poverty, inadequate education, lack of shelter, slavery, AIDS, prostitution, detention, torture, organized violence and systemic abuses. Torture is being perpetrated against children in 50 countries of the world and death penalty against children is legal in 7 countries (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Nigeria, USA, Democratic Republic of Congo and Pakistan). This is against article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has absolutely prohibited torture and death penalty against children: “No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age”

According to United Nations estimates 40,000 children die every day as a result of war and deprivation. More than 100 mil-

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lion children are estimated to be abandoned in the streets of the world's big cities. There are 300,000 child soldiers, 250 million child laborers, and millions of refugees, internally displaced and stateless children. In more than 75% of the countries of the world, childhood is combined with utmost suffering. Children never enjoy the pleasure of childhood. Seven million children languish in jails across the world, among them 330,000 for immigration matters. The highest number belongs to the USA, detaining 100,000 children in its immigration detention centres. The Trump administration blatantly violated the fundamental provisions of the Convention on the Right of the Child by separation children from their parents at the Mexican-US border. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/world-highest-rate-children-detention-study-191118175923071.html>

It is unfortunate that the world has so far been shortsighted in not giving priority to its children. This unjustifiable negligence will lead to the irreparable destruction of the future of humanity on earth. According to the United Nations Children Fund, only \$2.5 billion is adequate to solve children's health problem. This is not even a quarter percent of the world's military budget.

There will be no solution for the plight of disadvantaged children - uprooted or others - until and unless the world overcomes its present fatal apathy. An individual may get disappointed vis-à-vis a merciless Frankensteinian global system that is not accountable to anybody and sets its own rules. One may be left with the feeling that "after all, nothing tangible is possible." It is true that, as human rights workers, we are surrounded by scores of evils and enemies here and there. The worst of them, in my opinion, is cynicism. Let us not forget that we have sincere friends as well. The policy of the governments has also both negative and positive sides and it could be changed, in the course of time, as a result of pressures

from cross-section of population.

Finally, I would like to mention that change usually comes from the grass-roots. Therefore, public education plays a vital role in the introduction of progressive policies. Let us cherish hope and educate the Canadian public and the government about the preciousness and uniqueness of the lives of children, including the disadvantaged ones among them. Let us reiterate to ourselves and others that disfranchised children are not faceless figures, they could

Torture is being perpetrated against children in 50 countries of the world and death penalty against children is legal in 7 countries.

be our daughters, sons, nieces and nephews and we must all respond to their cries. Let us acknowledge that we have the capacity of making a vital difference. The least we can do is to help individual disadvantaged children, to cooperate with people and organizations working with them and to spread love as well as good faith and ideas.

Against the Use of Show Actors for the CBSA's Border Guards

The honorable Ralph Goodale
 Minister of Public Safety and Security Preparedness
 269 Laurier Avenue West
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0P8

July 26, 2019

Dear honourable Goodale,

On behalf of the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT), I would like to take this opportunity to greet you very sincerely and bring it to your respected attention that we were shocked and distressed by the media reports about the recent attempt of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) searching a company to supply it with show actors to be thrown down, handcuffed, searched and beaten to help train new CBSA's border guards. According to the report, the stunt actors are expected to act out up to 15 situations a day, using "pain compliance techniques" and hit by trainees' fists, feet or batons.

Based on our experience as an organization involved in the rehabilitation of torture survivors for the last 42 years, we strongly oppose to this move that is not warranted in the time of war, let alone in the time of peace:

Pain compliance method via painful stimulus (whip, electric shock, piercing a sharp object on the wounds, etc.) is used by the most tyrannical regimes in an attempt to control or direct a

detained suspect or a disobedient adversary. It is a component of their use of force policy and their strategy of torture. In civilized societies, a moderate pain compliance method may be used, with lots of precautions, in the area of animal training.

Stunt actor will be paid to be beaten severely and frequently (15 times a day). This is a brand of both physical and psychological torture. Whether one likes it or not, this practice is combined with humiliation and degrading treatment that is outlawed under Article 16 of the UN Convention Against Torture (CAT) that Canada is party to it. Those who beat, even if it is for training purposes, also receive the implicit role of torturers. They are at risk of developing a personality as such. This is contrary to the national and international instruments against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Using stunt actor as human shields for enforcement training creates a torture mentality and a culture of violence among CBSA staff members who may approach force as a short-cut in achieving their goals.

The move as such is nothing but normalization of the crime of torture and warranting those types of violent actions against suspected

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offenders. I attract your respected attention to the Article 2 of the CAT: "Each State Party shall take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction. No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture."

This move may lead to the propagation of violence at the public level and the creation of a culture of apathy and violence.

Looking for a company to recruit show actors can be considered as encouraging business in Canada in the area of violence and inhuman practice.

We, at the CCVT, strongly believe that training should be conducted as a package that includes antiracism, anti-harassment, standards of enforcement and human rights codes. Article 10 of the UN Convention Against Torture is quite categorical in this respect: "Each State Party shall ensure that education and information regarding the prohibition against torture are fully included in the training of law enforcement personnel, civil or military, medical personnel, public officials and other persons who may be involved in the custody, interrogation or treatment of any individual subjected to any form of ar-

rest, detention or imprisonment. Each State Party shall include this prohibition in the rules or instructions issued in regard to the duties and functions of any such person."

I urge you, the honorable Minister, to take all necessary measures to intervene in stopping the above move which, in our opinion, is a sort of gladiatorization of services. We are facing a great historical challenge. Canada has accepted long term commitments against violence, torture and the death penalty. While we endorse government's involvement in the struggle against terrorism as well as smuggling and human trafficking, we believe that it should not undermine its commitments towards the protection of its vulnerable citizens or its fulfillment of national and international human rights obligations. I ensure you, the honorable Minister, that the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) and hundreds of human rights organizations in and outside Canada will support you.

If there are any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. We would welcome an opportunity to discuss the issue further with you or with your respected representatives. With warm regards and in the hope of hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,
Mulugeta Abai
Executive Director

Torture and Corporal Punishments against Children in Nigerian Reli-



His Excellency Mr. Muhammadu Buhari
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
Nigerian Presidential Complex,
Rock Presidential Villa,
Abuja, Nigeria

October 15, 2019

His Excellency President Buhari,
On behalf of the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT), I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you for your open and courageous position in condemning torture and corporal punishment against children and adults at religious schools in Kaduna and similar institutions in your country. We admire your suggestion

that religious and traditional leaders collaborate with the authorities to "expose and stop all types of abuse that are widely known but ignored for many years by our communities".

Mr. President, let me bring it to your respected attention that we, at the CCVT, have been monitoring developments in Nigeria with great enthusiasm. In the year 1998, during the Nigerian transitional period under General Abdulsalami Abubakar, the CCVT attended the National Conference on Torture, Prison Health and Rehabilitation of Torture Survivors in Lagos, Nigeria. Along with World Medical Association (WMA), International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) and other Nigerian colleagues, we contributed towards strict prohibition of torture in Nigeria on

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the one hand and effective rehabilitation of survivors on the other.

We are happy for the positive developments of human rights in Nigeria during all these years. In particular, we congratulate you on the democratization process that has taken great impetus since your election as the president of this great country. Your government's commitment to democracy and fundamental rights of humankind encourages me to write to you and request your Excellency to continue with your personal intervention and save the life, health and well being of other children who may live under similar awkward conditions.

As is well known to you, in September 2019, more than 300 male students, among them 5-year-old children, were saved from a boarding school in Kaduna state. Recently, another 67 students, who had been found chained, were freed

by police. The most shocking tech-



niques of torture were perpetrated in these traditional schools as a form of discipline - to reform children and correct their supposedly wicked conducts. The measures that have been taken so far are definitely necessary, but not ad-

equate. According to some reports boarding schools, are widespread all over Nigeria, specifically in the northern region.

On the basis of police reports, children and adults were both subjected to human slavery, starvation, sexual abuse, and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatments or punishments. Some had experienced a notorious technique of torture known as "Tarkila", in which hands were tied up and the victim was left hanging from the ceiling. In other cases, the students were forced to beg on the roads due to the lack of nutritional support in boarding schools. It is reported that some traditional schools resembled jails surrounded by high walls and barbed wires. In some schools parents had been prevented from visiting their children. In some cases children had not seen the outside world for years.

We have received information that some families in Muslim part of Nigeria, cannot afford sending their children to secular schools, specifically those with difficult children who need rehabilitation services. Therefore, parents are left with hardly any choice but to enroll them in traditional Islamic schools that also act as correctional facilities.

I would like to draw your attention to Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 7 of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, articles 37, 39 and 40 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and articles 1, 2, 6 and 16 of the UN Convention Against Torture or other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. All these instruments prohibit the use of torture and other cruel, degrading or inhuman treatment or punishment against anybody (specifically chil-

dren) under any condition. Nigeria has acceded to the UN Convention Against Torture or other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It has also supported other UN human rights instruments on many past occasions. As the President, Your Excellency is left with the great responsibility of ensuring that no such punishments take place during your term in office.

Our scholars have gone deeply through the various verses of the Holy Koran and have found plenty of verses about the need for merciful behavior and humanitarian and compassionate approached to life, in general, and education, in particular. We strongly believe that committing the crime of torture and corporal punishment against children has nothing to do with the eloquent principle of all religions, including and specially Islam. Such violence could potentially damage the reputation of the people of Nigeria who have contributed for decades towards international peace and security.

Mr. President, I urgently appeal to you to use your official capacity and moral authority among your people for the fulfillment of the urgent following demands:

Immediate measures are needed to be taken for the rehabilitation of survivors of torture and corporal punishments. There are students who have been left with physical and psychological wounds and they need urgent treatment. We recommend a holistic approach to their rehabilitation process with the involvement of physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, nurses, and social workers supported by the community.

Please make sure that those who

were responsible for the heinous crime of torture against children will be brought to appropriate justice.

There is a need for the close supervises of schools, in general, and boarding schools, in particular, by the government as well as the independent human rights agencies in Nigeria. An effective monitoring system is a guarantee for prevention.

We appeal to you, Mr. President, to pay a very special attention to children's education by allocation of adequate resources in your national budget for this purpose.

I further request you to encourage Islamic scholars to publicly condemn torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. I reiterate our strong belief that Islam is a religion of compassion and forgiveness. Every section of the Koran begins with the name of God who is the Most Merciful and the Most Compassionate. Mr. President, in the name of Christian and Islamic compassion and in the name of human dignity, please intervene before it is too late.

Please accept my fondest regards. I have the honour to remain,
Yours sincerely,

Mulugeta Abai
Executive Director

The Turkish Military Aggression against Northeast Syria

The Right honorable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.

Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
Langevin Block, 80 Wellington Street,
Ottawa, ON. K1A 0A2

July 26, 2019

Dear Right Honourable Trudeau,

We at the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) are highly concerned about the military aggression of the government of Turkey against northeast Syria with the proclaimed goal of expelling the Kurdish population from the area by penetrating 32 kilome-

ters into the Syrian territory along a border line of 480 Kilometers. As is well known to you, this military invasion happened following the announcement of the US president, Mr. Donald Trump, in early October 2019 that he would withdraw 1000 US troops from Syria.

The Turkish aggression has created a deep humanitarian crisis with the gloomy prospect of more destabilization of the entire region and the possibility of genocide against Kurdish people who have already suffered decades of atrocities and displacement. According to the authentic reports, the aggression has so far resulted in scores of civilian casualties, including killing of war captives in cold blood by the pro-Turkish militia. The invasion has made 160,000 people homeless and it seems that there will be more displacements if the it does not stop immediately. The great danger is the release of the forces of defeated terrorist group of Islamic State of Syria and Iraq (ISIS) that is notorious for outright murder, extermination and torture of innocent people. The invasion has already disrupted the United Nations relief support to 700,000 people in northeast Syria, with the population of around 1.7 million people.



In an attempt to justify its aggressiveness, the Turkish government has used its propaganda machine to mastermind a nationalistic hysteria in Turkey, depicting war as a necessary measure to protect the Turkish interest and that of the Syrian refugees there. The Turkish intellectuals who disapprove their government's aggressive policies are intimidated by the government's use of anti-terrorism laws, strict censorship of social media and unscrupulous detention of journalist and dissidents.

We strongly believe that Canada must take a position about the Turkish aggression against northeast region of Syria and its violation of the international law including the four Geneva Conventions (the International Humanitarian Law) and the Rome State for International Criminal Court. We urgently appeal to you to rely on the moral authority of the Canadian society and utilize all unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral means to stop the aggression and terminate the multiple violations of the fundamental rights of humankind.

We at the CCVT would like to see Canada continue to stand against genocide, ethnic cleansing, and aggression on the one hand and for peace, human rights, humanitarian support and peaceful engagement on the other. The continuation of the war will produce more destruction, more poverty, more deprivation and all sorts of epidemic diseases. We specifically demand the following measures by your esteemed government:

Utilize your bilateral relationship with the government of Turkey and pressure it to stop its aggression and choose a peaceful solution to the problem. Turkey must respect international law and take all necessary measures to protect civilians fleeing the war zones by allowing them to cross the border

into Turkey and seek refugee protection. No obstacle should be made in the way of delivering humanitarian relief to the civilian population in the affected areas.

Ask the US administration to provide a buffer zone between Turkey and Syria in protection of the civilian population in the interim and work towards a permanent peaceful solution in the long run.

Work towards a multilateral solution by mobilizing the United Nations Organization specifically the UN Security Council.

Use the Canada reputation as a global human right pioneer to mobilize European, Asian, African, Latin American, Australian and other Canadian allies to intervene for immediate stop of the Turkish invasion.

Canada has a history of accepting the greatest challenges in global human rights leadership. We expect your government to protect Canadian values and play a leading role in putting an immediate halt to the Turkish aggression against the civilian population of northeastern region of Syria. Please help us to continue adhering to these basic principles that make Canada admired and respected.

With best wishes and in the hope of more co-operations in the future,

Yours sincerely,
Mulugeta Abai
Executive Director

Against the Suppression of People's Demonstrations in Iran

The Hon. Lawrence Cannon
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Lester B. Pearson Building, Tower B
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

18 February 2009

Dear Hon. Cannon,

We are writing this letter to you with the utmost urgency and concern. At the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) we provide survivors of torture with holistic and medical services as well as settlement provisions. On a daily basis we accept new clients who have suffered grave atrocities in their lives and have been the victims of brutal violations of human rights. Last year alone we accepted 1030 new and 459 previous clients. This letter is specifically for your esteemed awareness of a particular issue of concern on our behalf.

I am sure, Honorable Lawrence Cannon, that you are aware of Iran's human rights records and the tragic murder of the Canadian photo-journalist Ms. Zahra Kazemi, in Iranian torture chambers. As an organization helping survivors of genocide, we are con-

cerned about the systemic destruction of the Baha'i community in Iran. We have served Baha'i clients in the past and will continue to do so in future.

The Iranian Bahá'is, constitute the largest religious minority in Iran with about 300,000 members. They have suffered execution, imprisonment, loss of jobs, harassment and confiscation of homes and property under the present fanatical government of Iran. The Iranian government has recently intensified its efforts for systemic removal of Baha'is in this country.



We are particularly concerned about seven Iranian "leaders", members of the ad hoc coordinating group that used to manage the affairs of the Bahá'í community in Iran. They are accused of "espionage for Israel and insulting religious sanctities". They have been incarcerated in the Iranian notorious

Evin Prison (Section 209) for the past 8 months without formal charges or access to legal counsel. Their prison conditions have been deteriorated recently. Five men are put together in a cell of 10 square metres with no bed; two women are incarcerated in separate cells. The Iranian authorities have recently referred their case to the revolutionary courts infamous for denial of justice.

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Incarceration of Baha'i activists has come with the most recent escalation of the Iranian government's overall and systemic attacks against the Baha'i community. We have been shocked by reports about the circulation of lists of Baha'is with instructions that their activities be secretly monitored; dawn raids on Baha'i homes; an increase in the number of Baha'is arrested; incitement to hatred of the Baha'is in government-sponsored media; the holding of anti-Baha'i seminars organized by clerics followed by attacks on Baha'i homes; destruction of Baha'i cemeteries; demolition of Baha'i Holy Places; acts of arson against Baha'i properties; denying Baha'is access to higher education and vilification of Baha'i children in their classrooms; the designation of numerous occupations and businesses from which Baha'is are debarred; refusal to extend bank loans to Baha'is; the sealing of Baha'i shops; refusal to issue business licenses to Baha'is; and threats against Muslims who associate with Baha'is.

I appeal to you, Hon. Lawrence Cannon, to use all bilateral and multilateral means in pressuring the Iranian government to release seven Baha'i activists immediately and provide fundamental human rights protection for Baha'i community in Iran.

Thank you for your consideration and I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Mulugeta Abai
Executive Director

Suppression of Popular Demonstrations in Chile

His Excellency Mr. Sebastian Piñera Echeniqu

President of the Republic of Chile
Palacio De La Moneda (Presidential Palace)
Santiago, Chile

25 October 2019

Dear President Piñera

On behalf of the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT), I would like to echo the voices of the Amnesty International, the Human Rights Watch and scores of our sister agencies across the globe and raise our deepest concerns about the state of emergency in Chile that provides free hands to the Chief of National Defence (Jefatura de la Defensa Nacional, JDN) to suppress peaceful demonstrations of people and impose a curfew in Santiago and other parts Chile.

We are extremely concerned about the use of force by the military and your statement of 20 October 2019, in which you declared war against the peaceful demonstrations of your own people: “we are at war with a powerful enemy who is willing to use violence without limits”. Based on our experiences as a Centre working against global torture, war, genocide and crimes against humanity, state-

ments as such are misused by the most tyrannical regimes to resort to state violence as short-cut in suppressing any semblance of dissent. Furthermore, we are highly concerned about your presidential decrees that violate such fundamental rights as right to physical integrity, liberty and life.

According the National Human Rights Institute, so far, more than 1,333 people, including children, have been arrested; 37 people have been seriously wounded by the military, 9 women have experienced sexual violence and the death toll has risen to 11 civilians. These acts of state violence have been permitted contrary to the Chilean human rights obligations and despite 200 years of the Chilean tradition of the peaceful solution of internal problems, with the exception of the dark years of the Pinochet’s regime.

We, at the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) have been monitoring human rights developments in Chile since our inception in 1977. The raison d’être of the establishment of the CCVT was providing all-embracing supports to the survivors of Pinochet’s torture and extermination policies who had fled to Canada seeking protection in this country. In its press release of the 2nd day of March 2000, the CCVT objected against the decision of the British Home Ministry to send General Augustin Pinochet back to Chile with total impunity. We found that as a blatant violation of the fundamental human rights instruments including Articles 6, 8 and 9 of the Convention Against Torture, stipulating the prosecution of torturers and to the undertaking to make torture a extraditable offense.

We reiterated our position that sending Pinochet back to Chile was a travesty to the memory his numerous victims and a mockery of all human rights instruments and institutions as well as the NGOs, working indefatigably towards the rehabilitation of torture survivors. Mr. President, we have shared the traumas of the Chilean survivors of torture and their horrible sufferings in silence. We do not want to see repetition of their past horrendous experiences.

Mr. President, I would like to attract your respected attention to the efforts of your great



people in linking their gloomy past with the aspiration of having a bright future. A manifestation of this effort is the Museum of Memory and Human Rights (*Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos*) in Santiago, a monument in commemoration of the victims of Pinochet regime (1973-1990). The then president of Chile Michelle Bachelet, herself a victim of Pinochet's torture, inaugurated the museum on January 11, 2010.

As is well known to you, Mr. President, the museum accommodates torture instruments used under Pinochet: prisoners' letters and testimonies as well as the full text of the 1948 UN Declaration of Human rights hanging from the wall. 160 locations of torture are shown in map of Chile. Visitors can read the last poem of the Chilean poet and singer Victor Jara in the entrance plus a collage with plenty of picture showing human rights abuses across the world. Chile has been praise all over the globe for using the museum as a venue for exhibitions meetings, conferences and film festivals against torture and for human rights promotion in Latin America and other countries. We do believe that this wonderful commitment of Chilean people deserve a better treatment. Mr. President,

please do not let their hopes and aspirations turn into an ominous despair.

Mr. President, please be noted that human rights violations begin in a small scale and develop into a state of generalized violence and ghoulish violations of the basic rights of the populace. We understand that problems in Chile began with economic difficulties that acted as triggers sending people out in public demonstrations with the demand of the government's favorable interventions. Instead of using unwarranted force, we expected you, Mr. President, to respect your people's peaceful demonstrations and address their demands.

We appeal to you, Mr. President, to act before it is too late. We demand for your immediate interventions in putting an end to the military operations and releasing all political prisoner. We warn you against the perpetration of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. We further request that you work towards a peaceful solution of the present crisis by addressing the legitimate demands of your people. We also demand an immediate end to the practice of impunity of enforcement officials in Chile.

Mr. President! Your government and your great country will not lose anything by respecting the elevated standards of fundamental human rights in dealing with public demonstrations of civilians. You will gain due global respect by being sensitive to the most vulnerable and disenfranchised citizens of your country. Please, Mr. President, give faith to organizations such as the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) through your urgent intervention in favor of human rights of the your great people. Please accept my warm regards and deep respect. I have the honour to remain,

Yours faithfully,

Mulugeta Abai
Executive Director

CCVT Programs and Services

1. **Mental Health**
 - **Counselling**
 - **Individual and Group Therapy, Mutual Support Groups**
 - **Crisis Intervention:** suicide attempts, breakdowns, family problems, etc.
 - **Art Therapy**
 - **Coordinated Professional Services:** doctors, lawyers, social service workers provide treatment, documentation and legal support.
2. **Settlement Services**
 - Includes information/orientation, interpretation/translation, counselling, employment-related issues, and referrals to resources relating to the economic, social, cultural, educational and recreational facilities that could contribute to the initial settlement of the client.
3. **Children/Youth Program:**
 - Intake/assessment, settlement services, mental health services and recreational and empowerment activities that incorporate conflict resolution, mentoring, peer support and story-telling.
4. **Community Engagement**
 - **Befriending** to assist survivors in rebuilding their connections to others as well as to the greater community.
 - **ESL Tutoring and Conversation Circles** to help students learn and practice their English.
- **Escorting and Interpreting** for survivors at different appointments (medical, legal, social).
5. **Public Education**
 - responds to numerous requests for information, assistance and consultations on torture and the effects of torture as well as regularly producing resource materials
6. **Refugees in Limbo**
 - Providing services to refugees in limbo that include counselling, assisting in sponsorships, family reunification and other immigration-related issues.
7. **Language Instruction and Training**
 - LINC/ESL classes specially designed to address the needs and realities of the survivor of torture (concentration, memory, depression, triggers)
 - Computer training: basic and intermediate levels
8. **International Projects:** CCVT is associated with a coalition of Centres which support victims of violence, repression and torture, in exile or in their own countries

Any comments or thoughts about *First Light*?
We warmly welcome letters to the editor!

Just mail your comments to:
CCVT
194 Jarvis St. 2nd Floor,
Toronto, Ontario, M5B 2B7
Canada

Or email them to: The Editorial Committee c/o ezat@ccvt.org or mabai@ccvt.org

and we'll do our best to publish them in the next issue. We reserve the right to shorten any letters due to space requirements.

YES!

I want to help CCVT respond to the needs of survivors of violent oppression who have sought refuge here in Canada.



- \$20
 \$40
 \$50
 \$150
 \$250
 Other

Name _____

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Telephone _____

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2nd Floor, Toronto, ON M5B 2B7, Tel: (416) 363-1066; Fax: (416) 363-2122

Scarborough Office:
2401 Eglinton Ave. E. # 310
Scarborough ON M1K 5G8
Tel: (416) 750 3945
Fax: (416) 750 4990

The Hub: 1527 Victoria Park Ave., Scarborough ON M1L 2T3; Tel: (416) 750 9600
Fax: (416) 750 9200

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Yes I'd like to join the CCVT Monthly Giving Plan by making a monthly donation of:

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First Light

“Children at once accept joy and happiness with quick familiarity, being themselves naturally all happiness and joy.”

Victor Hugo

