



A Biannual Publication of the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT)

Spring/Summer 2005

Accredited member of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)



First Light, which is published semi-annually, is intended to inform the interested reader about torture, its effects and what we can do in aiding survivors to overcome their experience of torture and war. 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.

We chose to call this publication **First Light** because as the first light before true dawn, it symbolizes the first ray of hope for survivors of torture.

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Subscriptions

2 issues per year

Canada: Individuals 1 year (plus GST or HST) — CAD \$15

United States and International: Individuals 1 year — CAD \$25

Payment may be made by VISA, MasterCard, certified cheque or money order

Mandate

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

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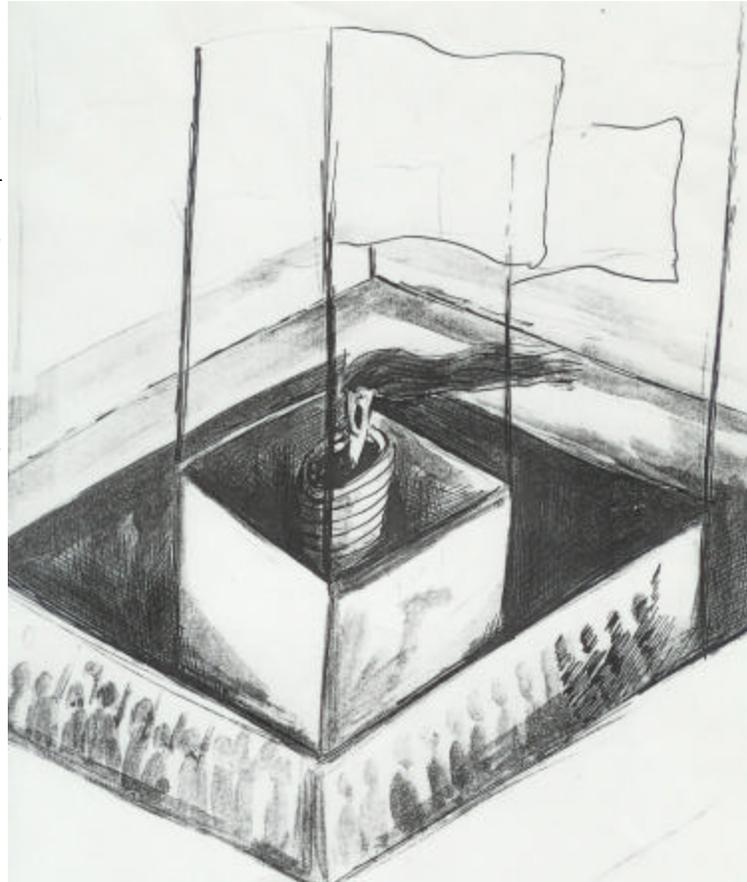
Torture of Iraqi Prisoners

By Sarah Wayland

American troops purportedly went to Iraq to restore human rights and promote democracy there. With the release of disturbing photos depicting American soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners, any vestiges of the moral authority imbued in such a mission has been decimated. In the very prison known for its brutality under Saddam Hussein's rule, American men and women engaged in severe beatings, rape, and other acts of violation against Iraqi citizens. Ironically, the very photographs that are causing an outcry were allegedly taken as part of an effort to dehumanize prisoners during interrogation.

As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. We see that even a nice young girl from West Virginia can become a torturer under the right circumstances. Torture is about power. It is meant to instill a sense of powerlessness and terror in individuals as well as in the societies in which they live. In the case of Iraq, this behavior seems to me an attempt to assert control over a situation in which American troops are under-staffed, under-trained, under attack and unpopular.

Torture in Iraq and elsewhere may seem far-removed from our own lives. But it touches us as well. Many torture survivors have made their way to Canada as refugees. In addition to the normal difficulties of establishing themselves in a new country, these persons may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and other anxieties



related to their past experiences. Sometimes these individuals are severely damaged both physically and psychologically.

A fraction of torture survivors have been lucky enough to access the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) in Toronto. The CCVT provides the link between survivors of torture and a network of professional services which includes doctors, lawyers, social service workers and volunteers as well as crisis intervention, counseling, the Children's Program and Art Therapy. Since

its inception in the late 1970s, the CCVT has assisted approximately 12,000 torture survivors from 99 different countries. Canadians should be proud to be home to such an organization. Sadly, the need for such services seems unlikely to decline.

I worked as a volunteer at the CCVT

from 1995 until 1998. I learned about the after-effects of torture from attending several seminars held at the CCVT, and also by editing the "Train the Trainer" manual that was used to help educate service providers about working with survivors. Twice I served as a translator for francophone refugee claimants who had medical appointments. But my most memorable experience at the CCVT was becoming a befriender. I was matched up with Maria, then only 17 or 18 years old and living on her own. She and I cooked for each other, went to the movies, and attended CCVT social events together. I thought we got along well. I was surprised that she never spoke of her past. A counsellor at the CCVT told me that some survivors open up and wish to discuss their experiences with you, but that many never do. I tried to be there for her, but not to pressure her in any way. Sadly, I lost touch with Maria. When money got tight, she had to give up her phone service. By the time I went by her rented room to check up on her, she was no longer living there.

I always hoped that I would run into her, but I never did. Then I moved myself, away from Toronto. I still feel a great sadness when I think of Maria. I think of her from time to



time, and I pray that she is safe and doing okay.

Being a survivor is a life-long identity, even if it is an identity that remains undisclosed to those in contact with the survivor. In this case, I knew she was a survivor, and I hope that made our relationship special. On the hand, perhaps my very limited knowledge of her past made her embarrassed or

ashamed. I hope not. I am richer for having known Maria, and I hope that she is glad to have known me as well.

A shorter version of this article was published in The Hamilton Spectator on May 15, 2004.

***I watched a woman burn;
and in her agony:
The mother came upon her –
a child was born
And, sir, they hurl'd it back
into the fire,
That, being but baptised in
fire, the babe
Might be in fire forever. Ah,
good neighbour,
There should be something
fierier that fire
To yield them their deserts.
– TENNYSON. Queen Mary***

UNHCR

UP DATE

Ottawa, 23 June 2004

United
Nations
High
Commissioner
for
Refugees



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UNHCR Pays Tribute to Survivors of Torture and Canadian Agencies that Help

The UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture on 26 June is an important occasion to express solidarity with survivors of torture and their families who remain in refugee camps and other places of temporary refuge. Here, in Canada the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will also pay tribute to Canadian agencies who work to relieve the suffering and assist the recovery of torture victims, many of whom come to Canada as refugees and asylum seekers.

"Their valuable efforts to treat and rehabilitate survivors of torture and to provide medical reports documenting evidence of torture for those in the process of applying for asylum deserve our gratitude," said Jahanshah Assadi, the UNHCR Representative in Canada.

Canadian agencies that work on the issue of torture have developed a profound knowledge of torture methods, the effects of torture and how to diagnose and rehabilitate torture victims. Over 2,000 survivors are treated annually. The Toronto-based Canadian Center for Victims of Torture (CCVT) estimates that it has assisted 14,000 people from 136 countries since its inception in 1977. Several of the organizations report that they treat equal numbers of women and men, as well as a small number of children.

The activities of these organizations are hardly limited to "front-line" work. Each one invests heavily in training other service providers to work effectively with clients who have experienced torture. The Network in Ottawa has developed an awareness workshop entitled "Unspoken Pain" that has been offered to over 30 groups of interested professionals.

RIVO and others have worked with Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) on drafting guidelines for IRB decision-makers to follow when hearing the claims of survivors of torture.

Canadian agencies from coast to coast that work with survivors of torture include:

- Victoria Coalition for Survivors of Torture (VCST)
- Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST)
- Edmonton Centre for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (ECSTT)
- Host Support Program for Survivors of Torture (SOT) in Calgary
- Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) in Toronto
- Network Committee to Assist Survivors of War Trauma and Torture in Ottawa
- Réseau d'intervention auprès des personnes ayant subi la violence organisée (RIVO) in Montreal.

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CCVT Commemorates the United Nations International Day

in Support of Victims of Torture

The Absolute Prohibition of Torture in the Face of Security Concerns

transcribed by Laura Jenner, CCVT Volunteer,

edited by Michele Millard, Volunteer Coordinator

On Wednesday June 23, 2004, CCVT commemorated the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture by presenting a panel discussion on the Absolute Prohibition of Torture in the Face of Security Concerns. Facilitated by **Dr. Lisa Andermann**, Psychiatrist and CCVT Board member, our guest panelists were: **Audrey Jamal**, Executive Director, Canadian Arab Federation, **Ron Levi**, Assistant Professor of Criminology, University of Toronto, **Ron Poulton**, Lawyer, Toronto, and **Prof. Mariana Valverde**, Institute of Criminology, University of Toronto.

Dr. Andermann began by thanking the audience of approximately 60 people (clients, staff, community members) and saying a few words about CCVT. In December 1997, the United Nations General Assembly voted to commemorate June 26th as the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, and CCVT has held An Evening of Solidarity with Survivors of Torture annually since 1998. These evenings have consisted of a cultural event commemorating the spirit of survivors and have included speeches, music, dance and a chance to experience community cohesion. Last year for the first time, in addition to the evening reception, a panel discussion was added at Metro Hall in the morning on the theme of war, terrorism and torture which was a big success and well attended, and which contributes to CCVT's mandate of public education around these important issues.

Over 50 years ago the United Nations recognized the need to call an end to the widespread use of torture. In article 5 of the Declaration of Human Rights it is stated that "no one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment

or punishment." In 1966, it was restated in article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that "freedom from torture is regarded as one of the basic human rights." In 1984, the General Assembly of the UN adopted the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and Punishment, and in 1987, enacted the International Convention Against Torture.

Despite these international declarations and conventions, torture remains a major problem in many parts of the world. For example, since its inception, the CCVT has helped over 14,000 clients who have experienced torture from 136 countries around the world.

As a psychiatrist and clinician working in the area of psychological trauma and cross-cultural psychiatry, I am more familiar with the clinical literature than the legal or political spheres. However, as this quote from Metin Basolgu, a psychiatrist at the Institute of Psychiatry in London, UK, who edited an excellent volume on *Torture and Its Consequences* points out, in the treatment of victims of torture, these may be inseparable: He asks: "Why study torture? Study of torture and care of tortured individuals is not merely a humanitarian concern; it is also an effective political statement against the most abhorrent form of human rights violation. Such political statements are essential in preserving hard earned human rights in democratic societies. Torture is thus not a problem confined to a remote dictatorship or a totalitarian regime but one that concerns the very moral fabric of the democratic societies in which we live."

The times in which we live have changed a great deal in recent years, particularly since September 11,

2001 when security issues previously taken for granted or thought to belong to “other regions” of the world were suddenly thrust onto the front pages of our consciousness.

Dr. Andermann then introduced the four panelists. Audrey Jamal is the executive director of the Canadian Arab Federation, a national umbrella organization representing Canadians of Arab origin. In this role, Audrey works to mitigate the erosion of human rights and civil liberties that is taking place in post 9/11 Canada. She provides analysis and lectures to community, government and media. Audrey holds a B.A. in women’s studies and an M.A. in Conflict Analysis and Management. In 2002, she won the governor general’s Gold Medal for a paper entitled “Arab-Canadians: The ‘other’ within”, an action research project that identified a strategy for Canadian Arab community development. Audrey sits on the Board of Directors of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants and on the Steering Committee for the National Anti-Discrimination Council of Canada.

Ron Levi is an Assistant Professor of Criminology at the University of Toronto, and a graduate of the law schools at McGill University and the University of Toronto. While in graduate school, Ron wrote his doctoral theses on the legal issues raised by community crime prevention efforts. More recently, Ron has turned his attention to international criminal law, and his most recent work focuses on the rebirth of this area of law through international criminal tribunals and the International Criminal Court.

Ron Poulton has worked as a refugee lawyer for UNHCR in Hong Kong, and as a UN human rights investigator in Cambodia, as well as a legal advisor to UN peacekeeping in Tajikistan. He has testified before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights investigating Canada’s treatment of non-citizens, and before a Parliamentary committee on immigration. He has acted as counsel in a number of immigration and constitutional cases before the federal court and court of appeal and has appeared in the Supreme Court of Canada. He has taught classes at University of Toronto and University of Ottawa and presently teaches an immigration course at Seneca. He is a practicing private practice lawyer advocating for the rights of non-citizens in the firm of Mamann and Associates.

Mariana Valverde is a Professor of Criminology at the University of Toronto and specializes in the sociology of law. In the 1970’s and 1980’s she worked in Latin American solidarity networks, often as a translator for Spanish-speaking refugee claimants who had been victims of torture, and she has also been active in feminist and other social movements.

Audrey Jamal

The Canadian Arab Federation has been thrust into the discussion around civil liberties and most recently into the discussion around torture in the past couple of years in light of the post 9/11 world that we’re finding our self in that has changed things dramatically for members of the Arab and Muslim and indeed of all racialised and immigrant communities in Canada.

Prior to September 11 our work focused around a lot of immigrant settlement, issues of racial discrimination and trying to mitigate some of the stereotypes that some people hold of Arabs in Canada. After Sept 11 we immediately saw the criminalization in many capacities of Arabs and Muslims in Canada. It started out with things like attacks on the streets, comments in schools, systemic discrimination in the workplace. But as the months progressed, we saw the intensification of a security agenda adopted by our Canadian government in the form of Bill C36. It’s a piece of legislation that’s now commonly referred to as Canada’s Anti-Terrorism Act; it’s been around since around about December 2001. I often describe it as entrenching the backlash that we see against our communities. Where we were just seeing these small instances on the streets and in communities, and they did have an impact, when this legislation was passed it served to formalize the backlash against our communities.

It has this trickle down effect where our legislators, our media, where people in other Canadian institutions have a broad sweeping piece of legislation that has the ability to conduct things like preventative arrests, investigative hearings and has also become a broad network of security and intelligence sharing with Canadian and international officials. Mr. Maher Arar’s case is significant because it shows the systemic problem of this kind of security legislation. CAF achieved intervenor status into the Arar inquiry, and we have a broad concern in ensuring that this doesn’t happen to any other Canadian or anybody else in light of the new sweeping security measures that have been adopted in Canada.

Ron Poulton

I'm going to talk to you about the rights of non citizens in relation to the prohibition against torture and what our courts have done with that and where we stand today.

Where we stand today is that there is no absolute prohibition against torture for non-citizens in the immigration processes, that's thanks to a Supreme Court of Canada decision a number of years ago that came shortly after the 9/11 disaster. The Court was asked point blank to deal with this issue in the context of non-citizens. The court was asked to declare that the absolute prohibition against torture is part of our domestic protections for people facing removal and when arguments were made to the court, which were done in May 2001, there was little doubt in anyone's mind that that is exactly what the court was going to order; that under Section 7 of the Charter there would be an absolute prohibition against return to torture for anybody.

That case (Suresh Case) raised some very complex issues of balancing national security, in that case someone the government alleged was a terrorist against this ultimate harm of torture. Before the Court issued its reasons for the decision, 9/11 happened, and everything changed. The decision came out in January 2002 and in reading it you can see that when they drafted the decision the court was prepared virtually up to the last sentence to say that there was an absolute prohibition and then it blinked, and they couldn't do it. So they left open the possibility of returning someone to face torture in what they called "extraordinary circumstances." What are extraordinary circumstances are left to be defined but the government of Canada is working actively to try and find those circumstances, whether they have to invent them or not.

The purpose is to cleanse the country of unwanted people, whether they be criminals, whether they be persons labeled terrorists, security threats, or otherwise, but, there is an active effort going on to get rid of these people and try and avoid those extraordinary circumstances provisions the court has worked in.

So how are they doing that? In lots of different ways. People who are labeled terrorists usually come from areas of conflict and are usually opponents to regimes in various forms or other, so what the government tries to do is either wait until

there's a bit of a calming period in a turmoil, for example, Sri Lanka's case, or tries to say that the situation *is* extraordinary. So in the courts right now, every day, we're battling over that definition. Sri Lanka is the best example because that's the case Suresh is based upon. The situation is a lot more stable that it was when Suresh was argued and the government is waiting for the stability to become a little more entrenched and they're going to try to move Suresh again probably, which we all fear.

To experiment with that, they try with people who are, as they call, lesser fish than Suresh is, someone who wasn't as high profile in the political organization, to see how the courts are dealing with that, to see how strongly they feel about prohibitions against torture. And as they test those waters, they're getting a little more confident in returning someone to face that possibility. So, entrenched in the immigration act and processes there are protections against sending people back to torture (PRAA process which looks at whether there is a possibility of someone facing torture, Charter protections that have come through Suresh, etc), but with those in mind there is a diminished power of all those protections, and that diminished power of the protections comes, from my view of things, from the powerlessness of the people who are seeking those protections. I think the best definition of torture I've ever seen came from someone from the CCVT: (quote from an article in the Globe And Mail):

"The ultimate purpose of torture, however, is always the same. It is not the extraction of information, which is notoriously unreliable under such circumstances.

It is, rather, the destruction of one's voice and identity, the transformation of a human into an object (thus the hood over the face), like the Orwellian deconstruction of thousands of former lives into "collateral damage," or the "rendering" of individuals to another country for so-called interrogation."

What we have for a non-citizen right off the bat is somebody who starts off in an imbalance of power vis-à-vis the government and state; they don't have as much money, they're not as entrenched in society. So they're looked at a little bit differently. I don't think any Canadian criminal court would agree that a police officer can torture a detainee - that's just not possible. But the Federal Court of Canada

has agreed that a non citizen can be returned to face torture. Now, they agreed on that in 1998, in first a number of cases that went up to the court when the new terrorism provisions in the immigration act were implemented, and one federal court judge said in response to the argument that there was a prohibition against torture was that the terrorist made his terrorist bed and he has to sleep in that terrorist bed. Then Suresh came to the federal court. And the federal court judge basically said the same thing. Saying that “I just don’t see that there’s a serious issue to stop this removal. This principle that there’s a prohibition against torture in my view is not so entrenched within the constitution.”

The fact that we have protections today exists in my view because of one judge. A judge from the Ontario court had the courage in 1999 to say in Suresh - the same case - we walked across the street after we lost in the federal court, went to an Ontario Court Judge who sits every day seeing police abuse, seeing real rights being entrenched for accused who understood the constitution, who wasn’t in the government’s court. The federal court is the government’s court. Interestingly that’s why they’re letting them police the antiterrorism legislation. The Ontario Court is not, it is far more independent, far more used to saying to the government “you’re wrong about this and I don’t accept this kind of behaviour.” An Ontario Court Judge, Mr. Justice Lane said in Suresh that the Charter of Rights, constitutional rights, are due not just of the good. They’re also owing to people we say are bad. An obvious principle, a great principle, brand new, for non-immigrants. Brand new.

From that, we went to the Supreme Court of Canada and finally won the case. But there’s a constant battle in the courts over the protection of rights for non-citizens and even though Suresh has some limitations to it and even though it did protect Suresh from removal, there has been from that day a whittling and an erosion still, of that principle. Partly because of a decision in 1992 by the Supreme Court of Canada in a case called *Chiarelli*. In that case it was a case of a long-term permanent resident convicted of organized criminality, so a big bad guy. The court took the opportunity to say in that case that the constitutional rights that we talked about in *Singh*, which is a refugee case, are really the same rights we’re talking about here for a non-citizen.

The basis for the rights foundation for non citizens is that they’re non-citizens, that’s where we start our examination of their rights. So right away, you’re a lesser person than you would have been. There’s a diminished view of the person and their rights. There’s a recognition that they’re more powerless, therefore we can get away with more. So that is an on-going struggle that we see today. It’s an ongoing struggle in the courts and it’s an issue we have to be constantly diligent on and strong advocates against.

Ron Levi

I just want to pick up on some of the points made by Lisa, Audrey and Ron. What I want to talk about today are really three of the core tensions or ideas or struggles between how you can have, at least as pointed out in the formal documents, strong prohibitions against torture, and you can have in the light of terror, and in the light of security concerns over terror, three frictions that then come about. I want to bring these out, and maybe we can have a conversation about them as we go on today.

The first is this recognition that’s happening in US law journals mostly, that torture, according to these commentators, *is* going to happen, and it is going to happen, if not routinely, at the very least, in moments where security officials think they’re in face of another situation of mass destruction, or of a 9-11 type of situation. In line of that kind of statement, this suggestion that yes, it’s going to happen whether we have prohibitions against it or not, the idea has been to create what are now being called “torture warrants.” The idea of a torture warrant, according to the commentators, what they want to do with this is to limit the number of times and the circumstances in which it will happen. To be fair to the commentators - what they’re *not* trying to say is we ought to torture more people to information out of them, but in fact we should take the fact that we *think* it’s going to happen, if police officers and security forces have their way regardless, and we should have some kind of monitoring, oversight, bringing to light of the process.

So this is the kind of the debate that’s happening in US law journals that’s mostly being pushed by Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz, and with some support from others and some resistance from other high-profile professors. What I kind of want to bring out today is, well, we can have a debate, and I think

I'd like to, over whether or not having something like oversight over practices that may or may not happen regardless, is a good idea; but I think it also brings into light a next problem, which I think is what we're seeing in the newspapers yesterday, and over the Abu Ghraib tortures. It's that once you start saying, "Well, we're going to have a torture warrant," what does that mean for every kind of interrogation practice that isn't as bad as one for which you'd need a warrant? What you start getting is kind of a jurisprudence of violence, right? You start getting pushing, you don't want to have to get a warrant, because maybe a judge won't give it to you, so what do you do? You push them a little further, you see just how far this will go, situations in which you don't need warrants, and so what you start having, I think, is a kind of legalized brutality for everything that is outside the narrow definition of, however we decide to define it, of torture in individual cases.

This idea from the Abu Ghraib tortures - if you look at the memo that has been circulating, even though it says confidential, and no foreign distribution on it, if you look at the memo that was supposedly, and now confirmed, written by department of justice officials in the US to justify - the idea was, the use of torture in both Abu Ghraib and in Guantanamo, what you find is exactly this; you find a redefinition of what is and isn't torture, that then allows individual cases to say, well hold on, torture is this very high standard. And that is the thrust of that memo, without having to read it, is exactly that, the creation of a very high standard for what torture is, over and above what we've often thought of from blanket readings of the texts of the laws themselves. If you do that, if you increase the scope of what is torture, if you raise the standard, then you say, well, hold on, anything below that is justifiable. And so I think, if you tie that together with the idea of torture warrants, the idea of creating laws about torture often has the unfortunate other effect of saying anything below that must be okay, must be fine.

So, that is, I think, part of it. And I think the third part that I want to bring out, before turning to international criminal law, for a minute, is this idea that torture is something we don't do. And if you just look at the newspaper, and I think this is picking up on Ron's points, if you look at the paper yesterday, well yes, perhaps it's not what we do, precisely because we have other people do it at times for us. And so this is

a practice that is now being called extraordinary rendition in the US, and this is the practice of, (a quote from US officials), "the temptation is to have folks in other hands because they, the other hands, have different standards, someone might be able to get information we can't from detainees." Now we find out yesterday that the former head of CSIS has confirmed that CSIS has involvement with foreign agencies that are in fact known to torture detainees.

I was reading the Ahani Case, which I think Ron was involved in, a recent decision of the UN Human Rights Committee, two weeks ago... the point I want to bring out of the Ahani Case, is that when it went to the Supreme Court of Canada (before the UN Decision), and when the Supreme Court of Canada decided whether or not, its position was quite clear. It was that the decision to send Ahani, to extradite Ahani, to send Ahani back, was in fact a foreign relations decision, and one not reviewable, not in the expertise of law and legal officials, right? This was a decision for foreign affairs, it was a political decision.

So what you have, is when torture happens elsewhere, we're now told, that's not a legal question for us, that it's a political question, for example, for executive officials. So again, torture falls outside of what we can do with the law.

I'll come back to international criminal law in the questions, but I think what is happening at the same time, is the undercutting of any kind of powerful jurisdiction for the International Criminal Court, and this is happening in a couple of ways. The international Criminal Court can hear cases of torture, either as a war crime, or a crime against humanity. At the same time, US support for the court, especially since the Bush administration, has failed.

What you have is two things happening. The first is non-surrender agreements between the US and about 90 other States now, which agreed not to in fact turn over US citizens to the ICC, and so you have an undercutting of the ICC's jurisdiction, not just for the US, but also for the general credibility of the International Criminal Court. I think I want to stress that, right, if the US is our major powerbroker, if it's just the new Rome, and it's out there saying our nationals aren't going to be subject to the

jurisdiction of the ICC, that does something to the legitimacy/authority of the ICC to do its work.

The second thing that's going on is that the International Criminal Court itself is limited in its jurisdiction to only prosecute cases and situations where the state itself, so again if it's a US national for instance, where the US would be unwilling and unable to go on and do the investigation themselves. So, for instance, in the Abu Ghraib inquiry, even if the US were subject to the jurisdiction of the court, the fact that there is an investigation would likely block any type of ICC prosecution. So I just want to leave all those comments out there, and we'll return to all that, I'm sure, during the questions.

Mariana Valverde

Okay, first of all I just wanted to open my remarks by expressing my solidarity with victims of torture, past and present, those who survived, perhaps to make refugee claims in Canada or other places, and those who didn't. Now, even though I'm an academic, I'm not here to give you detailed information because I don't do research in this area particularly.

I thought it might not be wholly inappropriate, before we turn to a discussion of the more crucial or important policy and legal questions, before we turn to that, to just spend a few minutes on a reflection, a more philosophical reflection, if you will, about what is it that we really want when we fight against, and we denounce, torture and other human rights violations? There's a lot of people, and I think it's a particularly Canadian trait, to find people who are very devoted to work like what Ron and Audrey are doing and other people are doing, and yet for people to be very reticent to ever think more positively about, well, we're not just against torture we're for some things. But what are we for? Canadians are very bad, in my experience, at saying what we're for, so I just thought five minutes on what we're for might be useful before we talk about how to support the work you're doing to try to get an absolute prohibition on torture.

Now, you know, people who have been victimized either individually or collectively as a people face a choice (and this is a simplistic way of putting it), but in general, I think you can either turn and pur-

sue revenge, which we often see unfortunately in the context of ordinary Canadian criminal justice, in which people who have suffered some kind of victimization are all too prone to say, "bring back hanging, capital punishment," and so on. There's a sort of, I don't even want to call it an ethics, but an ethics of revenge, if you will. And when that happens, of course, you have to sympathize with the fact that when one is victimized, one often has feelings that you know revenge would be a sweet pleasure.

On the other hand, anybody who knows anything about history knows what terrible things can go on to happen when people take up the standpoint of revenge. One of the things that I've been impressed with over the years, in the small amount of work that I've done as a volunteer, as a translator and so on, in human rights issues, one of the things I've been really impressed by is how many people I have seen, both individuals who actually suffered torture and other things, but also peoples, who refused to go with the easy path of revenge, who made a decision to pursue justice, rather than revenge.

Shortly after the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, I had the opportunity to travel there a few times as a translator for several Canadian groups that were going to see what was going on, and certainly not just me but every Canadian that went there at that time was so impressed by the way in which people who had been as victimized, certainly one of the global examples of horrible abuse and torture, and yet people refused to take up this standpoint of revenge, and they said, no, we're going to abolish capital punishment, they never executed anybody, and they tried to sort of work on a different ethic. And I think the same thing we can see happening in post-Apartheid South Africa, where we really could have had one of the worst bloodbaths of history, and yet it didn't happen.

So, one of the things I'd like us to think about is why is it that the Canadian media is so concerned only with the bloodbaths going on around the world, why is there so little time spent analyzing the situations in which the bloodbaths *didn't* happen, because some people had the courage to say, well, justice is not revenge, justice is something else. And in thinking about justice, I think there

are some philosophical sources that are helpful, and I think they are helpful not just intellectually, they are helpful at the sort of emotional, ethical level at which, again, Canadians are not often very good at, but which is important if you're dealing with horrible situations.

One of the things that I think philosophers generally agree about justice, is that justice is not something you can actually have. Nobody can claim to own justice, to have, it. The idea that there is somebody up there called the Minister of Justice is ridiculous, you might as well say, there's a Minister of Wisdom. Well, excuse me, but like, no! Justice is not something you can have, justice is something you can aspire to, but you can't actually have it. I think we can learn a lot, those of us who have not been personally victimized, except in perhaps smaller ways, can learn a lot from those people who continue to pursue justice, even as against the temptations of revenge that a certain kind of right-wing populism is always putting in our view.

And when we think about justice, I think it is always important to remember the link between interpersonal, ethical relations of justice, the sort of thing that I saw in Nicaragua, when we would go to all of these meetings with the mothers of very young men and women who had been tortured to death by the security forces. These mothers, in their personal relations with us, with other people, with people who had been implicated in the regime, showed that kind of practice of justice, in a way that was just so completely impressive. They always said that for them, that kind of personal ethical practice of justice was linked to, and supported by, a political regime that at least tried to promote justice in a more structural way, in a collective way. So, structural relations of justice are always important, and they're always linked to personal, ethical relations of justice. And in thinking about the link between our personal ethical search for justice, and the ever-receding search for global international relations, structural relations of justice, or relations of structural justice.

One philosopher that I have always found inspiring, and I just want to end by quoting from him, is Walter Benjamin. For those of you who don't know his name, Walter Benjamin was a very eccentric German intellectual who in the 1930s had

to flee Germany. He was a very odd sort of communist, a non-Marxist communist, he was a Jew, so on both counts he had to get out. He went to France, and when the Nazis occupied France he left for Spain, and he died under somewhat mysterious circumstances right on the border between France and Spain.

Walter Benjamin thought a great deal about justice, and about the idea that justice starts with our ethical duty to those who went before us, particularly to those who were victims of injustice. I think Walter Benjamin could be the philosopher for victims of torture. He had this to say about our duty to the past, our duty to those who went before us, as a sort of practice of justice. I quote: "To articulate the past historically (and historically he doesn't mean academic history, he means ordinary people, people who have come to Canada as refugees, for example, thinking about their history, and thinking about what to do with that history) does not mean to recognize it the way it really was (so it's not just a matter of accuracy in reporting), it means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger (so the past has to be made alive by us every day, and we're failing in our duty to the past if we don't do that work of remembering, that work of memory, which I think is crucial to justice), only that historian (and again he means the conscious activist, not the academic historian) will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past, who is firmly convinced that even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins."

I really like that idea that hope is not just in the future, which is how we think of hope - hope is what lies ahead. He thinks, well, you have to have hope in the past, in order to have a just future. "Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past, who is firmly convinced that even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins". And then, unfortunately, he ends on a sad note, which is perhaps suitable to our own time, and he says "and this enemy (the enemy from whom even the dead will not be safe) has not ceased to be victorious".

Stowaways

By Emad Abbas



Assur Mousa was the eldest son of a family living in a big house in Chemchemal, Northeastern Iraq. It was 1995. Assur wasn't very happy. His father was a very nervous man and bossed him around a lot, so Assur decided to leave his family and look for work in the Iranian port city of Bander Abbas.

When he arrived there he had trouble finding a job. The only way he could make a little money was by selling cigarettes on the street. However, this created a problem for Assur because the area was crawling with police due to marijuana and drug dealing. The police arrested him and accused him of dealing drugs. In the police station they beat him up and they took him across the border into Kurdistan.

Assur decided to risk crossing the border back to Bander Abbas, but this time he didn't sell cigarettes. He sold cups of tea that he made in a big teapot. He carried chocolates, sunflower seeds and chewing gum and a stove, matches and tea leaves to brew the tea in a popular park near his home. He worked from dawn to dusk.

Soon, however, Assur became bored. He decided to call his friend Ryad in Baghdad. They

ended up meeting in a park in Bander Abbas and drank tea and talked for many hours. Ryad said that they would have better luck if they got out of Iran and headed for Australia.

"Why Australia?" Assur asked.

"Because my brother lives there and he says there's lots of work/"

They started off with a little research, visiting the harbor to watch ships coming and going. They noted where the Australian ships docked.

But Ryad said there might be a problem.

"Australia is very far away from Iran.

We will need a lot of food."

Assur said, "You are right, it's a long trip."

Ryad thought for a minute. He took a sip of tea. "The best food to take is bread."

"We will take figs too," Assur suggested.

"You are a genius."

A week later they decided to hide in a spot on the pier close to where they thought the ship from Australia would tie up. They took up their position in the afternoon. They watched as the ship docked. They split up and Ryad watched from one side and Assur from the other side of the ship. They knew the Australian freighter was due to leave on the



Emad Abbas

following morning. They didn't see any security guards.

After dark they met and climbed on board the ship via an anchor rope. They hid in the space where the anchor rope was stored.

Ryad was nervous. "What if the rope moves?"

Assur said, "We will find a better place to hide."

"Where?" Ryad asked.

"Follow me. We will go to the top of the ship."

"Where?"

"Up there," Assur pointed to the crow's-nest at the top of the mainmast.

"What if it gets cold," Ryad said. "And if the sun is shining, it will be too hot."

Assur said, "God will take care of us."

They climbed up the mast and settled on the small lookout platform. It was a beautiful place, very high, where nobody could bother them. They felt happy and safe. Just after dawn they heard voices of the crew, the rumble of the engine, and the ship began moving slowly away from the pier and out of the port of Bander Abbas and into the Persian Gulf.

"Next stop Australia," said Ryad

Assur asked, "What's the weather like there?"

"My brother says it's sunny and the beach is full of beautiful girls sunning themselves."

Assur smiled at the thought.

On the second day at sea it became windy and cold.

Assur said, "Why didn't you remind me to bring a blanket?"

"How could we carry it and climb up the rope?" Ryad replied

"You're right."

But in the afternoon the weather changed. It became very warm. They were still in the Persian Gulf. Ryad became uncomfortable. "I can't stay here any more," he said. "It's too hot and I'm sweating too much."

Assur said, "Take off your jacket"

Ryad said, "If I take off my jacket, the wind will be too strong for me."

Assur looked out to sea. "Wait a minute, I think there are two places where they

store the rope." "So what?"

"Because," Assur said, "any ship has spare storage rope, and probably only one of those spaces is in use."

Around midnight they descended and easily found the storage space. They settled in but soon found the heat and stuffiness unbearable. They climbed back up to the crow's nest before dawn.

Later that morning Assur asked, "Why did you want to leave Iraq?"

"Because Saddam is very bad," Ryad said. "Do you know that when I was in high school they told me that I had to join the Baath regime? My marks were very good - more than enough to get me into university. But because I refused to join the Baath party, they failed me and said I had to go to join the army. What about you?"

"My father was a very nervous man," Assur said. "He yelled at me a lot and told me I was stupid. Sometimes he beat me, even though I helped him dig a well and make a pulley to draw the water. I also helped him make a fence around the farm so the neighbor's sheep wouldn't eat the vegetables we were cultivating for the market. My younger brothers went to school but I had to stay and work on the farm. In the end my father kicked me out of the house because the neighbor told him he saw me talking with his daughter."

"How old was she?" Ryad asked.

"About nineteen - maybe twenty. We grew up together. I had been at school with her since I was a little boy. My father told me I couldn't see her any more. When I objected, my father said I could no longer live there."

"Don't worry," Ryad said. "When we get to Australia, we will make a lot of money and you will find many beautiful girls there."

Your father will have to apologize for what he has done."

Assur said, "You are right." He dug some bread out of his bag and broke off a piece to share with his friend.

"What do you think will happen in Iraq?" Ryad asked.

Assur said, "I don't think that Saddam will last forever. One day Iraq will become a democracy and everyone will have the right to do what they want without anybody pushing them"

"God willing," Ryad said

On the fourth day at sea the temperature dropped and the wind became very heavy. The waves were metres high. The boat lurched left and right. Assur and Ryad became frightened. They were afraid the ship might sink and then they would die. The storm lasted until late at night. Finally they fell asleep.

The next morning Assur woke up Ryad. The storm had ended. They laughed and gave thanks to God for surviving.

Ryad asked, "Is there any food left?"

"No, don't you remember, we ate everything."

"What are we going to eat now?"

"Don't worry," Assur said, "God won't forget us." But by evening Assur told Ryad he was starving. Ryad was silent for a while and then said, "I'm going to go to the kitchen, but we have to wait until night when everybody is asleep."

By one o'clock in the morning the boat was very quiet. Ryad said, "It's time."

Assur said, "OK, but you stay here. If they catch me, they will catch me alone and I'll tell them I'm alone."

"I don't care," Ryad said. "What will happen will happen. I'm going with you."

"Alright, if you want to come, come!"

"We will make sure they're all sleeping"

The moon was full. Ryad said, "They must be all asleep now." They slowly climbed down onto the deck and eventually found the ship's galley. Then they started eating everything they could get their hands on - fish and rice, vegetables, even hotdogs in the refrigerator.

Assur said, "Let's take some of the food with us back to the lookout."

"Good idea," Ryad said.

"Wait," Assur said. "I think I heard something. I hear a voice." Then they realized the sound was somebody snoring in the dining room. They climbed back to the crow's nest. Assur dropped some vegetables on the way up.

They had been at sea seven days. It was late at night. Assur was gazing out to sea and thinking about his family.

Ryad was eating fruit and admiring the stars and the moon. He noticed a shooting star. "Did you see that?" he said.

"What's that?"

"It was a shooting star."

"Don't count the stars," Assur warned. "It's bad luck."

"Do you really think so?" Ryad said. "I'm hungry again. We should go back to the kitchen today."

Assur said, "I heard somebody snoring when we were there last time. Maybe they will catch us. And you were very noisy and you made a mess."

"Me? Do you remember when you were leaving the kitchen and you dropped the vegetables?"

"You too," Assur replied. "You spilled some milk you took from the cooler."

Ryad said, "Come on, don't be scared."

They descended the ladder again and quickly found the galley. They were looking around in the dark on tiptoe when the kitchen was suddenly flooded with light.

"Surprise!" someone said. Ryad and Assur saw fifteen seamen had made a circle around them.

"Well, well, so you are the cats that ate our food." The seamen searched their pockets and pushed them roughly into two chairs and tied their hands.

Assur said, "Wait a minute, we are not thieves, we just want to go to Australia on your boat."

Ryad pleaded, "Please don't kill us."

After questioning, the seamen began to believe in Assur and Ryad's story.

Assur said, "We would like to become refugees."

The captain replied, "What is your proof. You still look like thieves to me."

"We have documents we can show you," Assur said.

The captain said, "Not for me, but for Denmark."

"Denmark!" Ryad exclaimed. "We are going to Denmark? We thought we were going to Australia!"

Assur gave Ryad a stern look and said in Arabic, "Shut-up. Anywhere is better than Iraq."

The seamen laughed. One of them shook his head and said, "We are not going to Australia, we are going to Denmark."

Ryad said without thinking, "Oh, we were going to ask for refugee status in Denmark. We just don't want to go back to Iraq or Iran, or any or anywhere in the Middle East."

The Captain said, "Alright, I am going to

send a fax to my government." Lyon, one of the seamen, took their information and left to send the fax. The kitchen chef said to the visitors, "You need to eat?"

Assur said, "Of course, thank you." The chef asked the captain if they could unbind their hands so they could eat. The captain said of course and he and his men left. The chef was a big man with huge arms and hands, took out some oysters and tomatoes and some cold rice and said, "Eat." The two ate greedily. Ryad was still nervous and looked to Assur for reassurance

The chef said, "You will work as part of the crew until we get a reply to the fax." Assur said, "Yes, of course, we accept."

"What kind of work?" Ryad whispered to Assur.

"We will see. You don't have to ask," Assur said.

The chef said, "I am going to show you your room now." He took them down below to a small room and locked the door.

Assur and Ryad were washing the deck on their tenth day on the ship when the ship's captain invited them to lunch with some of the other seamen. One of them, in a joking mood, asked, "Who was the dumb guy who told you about the pier where the Australian boat was supposed to be docked?"

Assur said, "I asked an old guy. He always sleeps on the beach near the pier. He said he would give us the information in exchange for fifty Tuman"

"Tuman," The captain said, "That's Iranian money."

"Yes," said Assur.

The seamen started laughing. They were all drinking beer. Everybody was laughing except Assur and Ryad, who felt very stupid. One of the seaman slapped Assur on the back and said not to get upset because they were only joking.

The seamen left and Assur and Ryad stayed in the kitchen by themselves eating. Ryad said, "We shouldn't have told them about that old guy."

Assur said, "What the hell, it's only a joke. The seamen were very funny." Assur kicked the door shut with his foot because they wanted to eat by themselves. They were speaking in Arabic.

At that same moment one of the seamen approached the captain on the bridge and said he

had received a fax from Copenhagen. The captain took the fax and went looking for his two stow-aways and heard them laughing and talking in the kitchen. He walked in and told them, "I have very good news."

"What's the news?" asked Assur.

"Welcome to Denmark," the captain smiled. "You've been accepted by our government as refugees."

Ryad jumped up in the air and kissed the captain because he was very happy. He said thank you about half a dozen times.

Assur broke out into a big smile and said, "Thanks to God. *Shukren Lillahh.*"

When the captain left, Ryad gave Assur a high five and said, "Finish your food."

The captain came back and invited them to a party to celebrate their good fortune.

"Don't forget - come at seven o'clock."

"We'll be there," Ryad promised.

It was six forty-five. Ryad and Assur rushed to get ready. Assur pulled on his socks.

He said, "We're going to be late." His left toe was sticking out of his sock.

Ryad only had a towel on. He said, "Look at your toe."

Assur said, "I know, I know. Just close the door, I can see your ass."

At seven-o-five Ryad and Assur walked up to the kitchen where they were holding the party. When they entered, they were greeted with applause. The seamen were standing in two lines, with a table in between. It had a lot of food and bottles as well as a large cake with candles on it. The men shook hands with Assur and Ryad. Everybody took a glass of wine and the captain led a toast and they all said, "Cheers."

The captain told them to sit down and handed each of them an envelope. "Here is a gift - it's to pay you for the work you did on the ship."

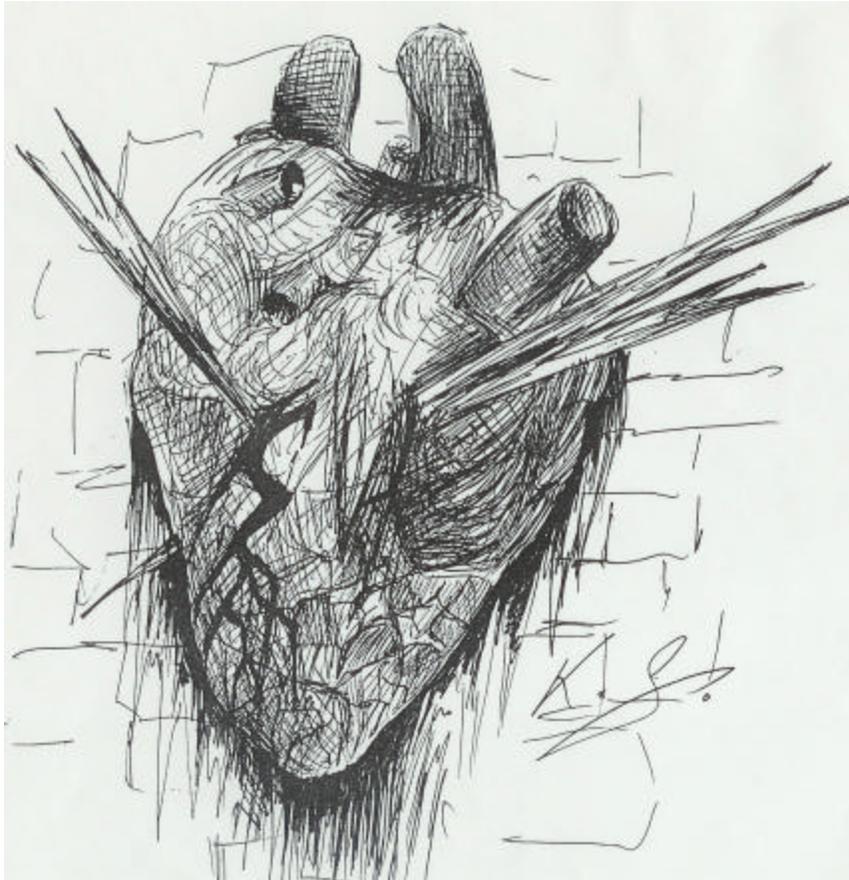
Ryad opened his envelope and saw the money. He raised his arms and said "Thanks be to God."

**War is about Profits and Losses
What else could warrant the expense
War fills the coffers of the rich,
War fills the coffins of the poor.**

-An old Quaker woman

Torture & Its Effects on Families

By Mulugeta Abai



Torture is a state organized violence that is used to destroy the will, personality and autonomy of victims. It is used to punish and intimidate opponents, as well as to create a wider sense of fear and mistrust in the community. In fact, reverberations from the torture experience spread out in time to affect the children and grandchildren of victims, and in space to shatter the survivors, their families and the society. Thus, the political goal of torture to fragment a nation and destroy any deeds of opposition to the perpetrators is achieved.

ment clearly shows the role of states in the fight against Torture.

The Universal Declaration of Human rights was followed by the adoption of the international Covenant on Civil and political rights, under whose Article 7 torture and ill treatment are prohibited. Every state on becoming party to the Covenant is legally bound to respect the prohibition and to ensure to all individuals under its jurisdiction the right not to be subjected to torture or ill treatment. There are similar regional human rights treaties adopted by the European Convention for the Pro-

Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the UN General Assembly in 1948 signified a consensus among states that everyone has a right not to be tortured or ill treated. Under the International covenant on Civil and Political rights adopted in 1966, this right must never be curtailed, even "in time of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation"(Article 4). International humanitarian law, commonly referred to as the laws of war, also absolutely prohibits torture and ill treatment. The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punish-

tection of Human rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950) The American Convention on Human Rights (1969); the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981), and the Arab Charter on Human Rights (1964)

The fight against torture involves establishing the rule of law-the principle, which holds that the actions of public officials must be carried out strictly according to the law, and that public officials are not above the law. At the international level, the fight against torture can be seen as involving the development of international rule of law- entailing the capacity to deal on an international basis with breaches by all states without distinction, of their obligation to respect and ensure the prohibition of torture and ill treatment.

The Universal Declaration not only addresses governments but also calls upon every citizen of the world and every organ of society to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and to secure their observance.

However, despite the covenants, conventions, regional treaties and development in international law, torture is practiced in almost every country in the world This 20th Century epidemic, has destroyed families, communities, nations and created a culture of fear.

The effect of torture on survivors and on the family unit is complex and differs according to the culture to which they belong, as well as the experience of the family before, during, and after torture. When a family member is taken away and tortured, the life of the family is changed forever. The resulting stress, fear and trauma create a severe disruption to the physical, psychological, social and spiritual well being of all the members. Close emotional relationships become difficult. Even if all other members are relatively well, the dynamic equilibrium of the family will be seriously affected by the presence of a person who has been tortured

The problems that families of torture victims experience are not restricted to the difficulties of coping with the victim's behavior or poor health. Relatives, particularly children often develop their own symptoms of posttraumatic stress rising from their contact with violence and their sense of powerless-

ness. It is common for all family members to be depressed, irritable, lack energy, have poor appetite and sleep poorly; They may have problems with concentration, memory, logical thinking and orientation for time and place. As a result, children may be labeled learning disabled. However, given the proper treatment and care, they can regain their self-confidence and ability to achieve.

The psychological and emotional stress caused by torture puts a tremendous strain on family relationships. Studies of children of Holocaust survivors have shown that parents who carry an unresolved burden of fear, guilt, depression or anger cannot easily establish balanced or adequate relationships with their children.

Before a family member was tortured, most families functioned within an extended network of relatives and friends who provided a source of practical, personal and social support, especially in times of crisis. The family loses this supportive network when torture forces them to resettle in a new country. The family is thrown almost completely on its own resources at a time when those resources are at least temporarily at an all-time low. Everything has changed health, roles, and relationships. The family is isolated as members struggle to establish their identity and cope with a new country, culture, and language.

Survivors of torture and their families also lose some of the values and beliefs that may have sustained them before they went through trauma. They are unable to trust people and become disillusioned. This is just one more of the pervasive and long-lasting effects of torture, which haunt not only the survivor, but also the members of his or her family.

Hear my heart's prayer,
O Humankind!
Life is the only treasure.
We are the custodians of it.
It is our sacred trust.
Life is wondrous, awesome, and holy.
Life is burning glory
And its price is simply this: Courage
We must be brave enough to love.
-Chief Medicine Story,
Wampanoag Nation

With my Child in Jail

By Saeideh Ciabigarjan, a CCVT Client

I come from the relatively small city of Azerbaijan in Iran. My family was very poor but culturally and politically rich. My father was an old man, but extremely wise and knowledgeable. He was illiterate but well aware of what was happening in the world. From childhood I became socially aware, particularly about women's oppression, specifically when I looked into the lives of my elder sisters, who were suffering from unsuccessful marriages.

In the course of growing up, I developed an aspiration to work for the emancipation of humankind, especially from poverty and patriarchal oppression. Soon I found myself in a circle of likeminded women. We used to go to visit different groups of women and young girls, to discuss with them their lives and the state of their society and we tried our best to enlighten them.

Iranian society went through political turmoil and a fully fledged revolutionary movement in 1978. We intensified our activities and soon in our small city we became a small active group well known to everybody. When the oppression came it not only affected me but it affected my whole family. Many of my family members escaped and lived underground while the rest were harassed on a continuous basis. During these years I married a gentleman who was politically active and well respected in the community. We loved each other and cherished the hope that we would blossom and by furthering human rights activities we would establishing a fruitful and affectionate family life. All together we lived together for only sixteen months and the fruit of this intimate relationship was a baby boy. Everything was more or less all right; we had a warm house, a handsome baby, and hope for a bright future.



Saeideh Ciabigarjan and Child

Our house was invaded in a cold, dark, and winter night on December 22nd, 1982. The guards arrested all three of us. We were separated in jail; they threw me in a small dirty cell with no blanket and no heating system. I was alone with my four month old baby and did not know what they did to my husband. They put me through all sorts of torture and degrading treatment and punishment including sexual abuse to extract information about my husband and his activities. My worst experience was the time when they tortured my husband in the neighboring cell in a way that I could hear his screams. They mentioned my name and insulted me, threatening that they would rape and kill me if he didn't confess. They took him to the point that during his screams he sounded like a dying beast. I was ready to be tortured ten times more to stop my husband's torture by the butchers of human kind.

Living with the baby in jail, and resisting against torture was not an easy task. I had no diapers to clean the baby. I had only two old ragged pieces of cloth. My cell was drenched in stench, and I could only go to the bathroom three times a day for the duration of twenty minutes. I had to very quickly wash my baby's cloth, the baby and myself in order to return to the cell on time. The food was poor and very soon as a result of torture and poor nutrition, my breast milk dried up. I begged the guards for milk or powdered milk; they answered me with insults and beating. They told me that there was one ration of food for one prisoner and that baby was not considered a prisoner. My child was starving and I was left with no choice but to chew the poor food I received and put it in the mouth of my baby. In that way I helped my poor baby to survive. Once when my child was about six months old I noticed some sores on his head; he had

long hair and I didn't notice it earlier. When I looked carefully I found many infected sores and worms coming out of the wounds. This was because of the lack of sanitation and the fact that we had not been allowed to wash for more than two months.

After six months they allowed me to see my husband behind the glass for only a few minutes. This was the first and last visit. Sixteen months after the initial arrest they executed my husband without permitting me to see him before his death. He was twenty-eight years of age. He was a human rights activist, a man of letters, a poet, a writer and a master of arts. He had great passion for life and hope for the ultimate salvation of humankind. I still hold twelve letters he wrote to me in prison, each full of love, hope, and passion for life.

I came to know about my husband's execution two months after his death. When I met the Shariah judge (of Islamic Jurisprudence) who was the hanging judge I asked him why they killed my husband? Neither one of us believed in violence; nor had we been involved in any kind of violent activities. He smiled and told me that he ordered the execution of my husband because he was intelligent, resisted all torture, refused to give them any information and his spirit could not be broken.

Those of us who were imprisoned with our babies had an especially difficult life. My child had no idea of the outside world; his world was limited to a small cell and the most vivid events in his life were when I was brought back to the cell, my body covered in wounds.

I remained in jail with frequent torture, harassment and threats for four years. When they released us my child had no idea about all the things that are taken for granted in every day life. He had never seen a car, a tree, a man with a mustache, amongst many other things. He was scared of any kind of sound; it took me a long time to adapt his new environment to his needs. My father had put up his property and his life as a guarantee for my release. I had to report to the prison authorities every month. One year later, on one of these occasions, they re-arrested me because they didn't like the 'fast paced manner' with which I was climbing the stairs, and the apparent 'aggressive' way in which I signed my name in the reporting book. They did not allow me to take my child with me; he was left with very little protection. When they released me after six months, I found my

child in a desperate situation. He had been passed through different hands, sometimes taken care of by my relatives, sometimes by neighbors and at other times with no protection. He was not ready to accept me as his mother because of the tremendous hardship he had gone through as a child.

Living outside of jail was not much better. I had been left with no job, no money, and no accommodations. A shadow was following me all the time. My father-in-law blamed me for everything and began harassing me. I was left with no choice but to accept a traditional arranged marriage in an attempt to protect my child and myself. A year later I became pregnant and delivered another baby boy. Unfortunately, my second marriage turned out to be an abusive one; it was a kind of slavery. At home I was constantly abused and harassed by my husband and outside of my home I was harassed by security forces who were suspicious of me. Life was becoming harder and harder every day. At this point I was left with no other option but to leave my eldest son from my first beloved husband in Iran and come to Canada with my youngest son. I was so sad to have to leave my son and face an unknown destiny.

I have been in Canada for around four and a half years, I am very thankful to all of the people in Canada who understood my torture and trauma and helped me with my refugee claim. That includes my lawyers, physicians, psychiatrists, nurses, befriender and counsellor from the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture and many other people. I'm presently a permanent resident of Canada and cherish the hope that one day I will become a citizen of this great country. Unfortunately, I am still separated from my eldest son who is now twenty-two years old and has suffered such trauma in his childhood. I'm a single mother and a divorced woman. I cherish the hope that Immigration Canada would accelerate the process of unification of my family. My youngest child also shares my aspiration and is looking forward to the day that he will be re-united with his older brother.

I'm sure one day we will live as a happy family and I will do my best to encourage my children to be useful, to pay back their debt to Canadian society, to work for a better life, for members of the human family, and to be good to themselves. As a woman, I work to fight against the discrimination faced by women and their oppression. One day I hope we will all embrace freedom and become equal members of the human family.

Gender Specific Persecution & Identity

By Teresa Dremetsikas, MD

Abstract: When women are targeted by the state torture takes a special shape and often we hear the term "gender specific torture." This includes sexual abuse in all its forms (verbal degradation, nudity, rape, molestation, etcetera) as well as witnessing violations against other women.. Such methods of torture are tailored specifically to destroy the identity of women and with it the sense of self worth is also lost. During conflict (specially armed conflict or war) such practices become systematic and a part of a government or a military strategy to oppress and gain control of a group The effects then are larger and the destruction achieved goes beyond the identity of a female individual or the identity of a group of females. Gender persecution is used in combination with standard methods of torture and organized violence and the results then are often devastating for entire nations. This paper will address the issues that women victims of torture face, its impact in exile in the resettlement process and on their identity.



Important definitions to have in mind:

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT AND PUNISHMENT

PART I, ARTICLE I

- For the purposes of this Convention, the term "torture" means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as
 - -obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession,
 - -punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed,
 - -or intimidating or coercing him or a third person,
 - -or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.
- It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.
- This article is without prejudice to any international instrument or national legislation, which does not or may not contain provisions of wider application.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1979 (CEDAW)

...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field

The Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women 1993 (DEVAW)

....any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

“The Declaration defines violence broadly to include physical, sexual, and psychological violence. It is categorized according to whether it occurs in the family, in the community, or by the state.” (3)

Rape as a Gender specific tactic during armed conflict:

The devastating power of rape as a weapon of war has been described by many professionals:

Dr. Gill Hinshelwood (London Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture)

“Rape is extremely effective as an instrument of war. It destroys the family. It can have a longer lasting more searing effect than many other forms of torture” (4)

Dr. Jane Ward (Reproductive Health for Refugees consortium in New York City)

“Rape destabilizes the entire community through the body of one woman” (4)

Dr. Lynn Amowitz (Physician for Human Rights):

“Rape is a way of breaking the bonds of family and community. You make a community less co-

hesive by going after the woman.” (4)

Mulugeta Abai (Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture Executive Director) (1):

“Each time a woman is raped, it saps the collective spirit of all women and of the nation.” (4)

Moreover, it is important to remember that this kind of tactic is refined and used as military strategies to enhance ethnic cleansing and or to devastate the enemy during conflicts: women are kept in camps, repeatedly raped until they get pregnant and then kept in captivity until the pregnancy is so advanced that no physician would agree to perform an abortion (Well documented fact during the Bosnian crisis) the new child is now one of the perpetrators by virtue of the father and the woman now is considered trash that does not belong to anybody nor to any place.

All of the above mentioned implications are well known and often used by military strategists.

Identity

The concept of identity involves individual characteristics and behaviors, as well as other people’s perceptions about a person:

“The confidence that others see us the way we see ourselves” (Erickson)

Other major points about identity involve:

1. The set of behavioral or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group.
2. The quality or condition of being the same as something else.
3. The distinct personality of an individual regarded as a persisting entity; individuality.

If someone is constantly being insulted and humiliated and hurt enough then eventually the perception of such an individual about him/herself changes and it is damaged too. Coping behaviors ensue (PTSD) and therefore change the distinct individual characteristics and behaviors, a sense of insecurity and little or no self esteem become part of the new self. Thus one may speak of a change in identity. “The question becomes not who is she but who is she perceived to be” (2)

The experience of torture is certainly a fact that can shake and destroy the identity of a person especially in the case of a woman whose gender is usually identified (by men and women themselves)



dren.

There is also a long standing and well known condition of “ownership by” and “submission to”

males considered inherent to being female. Somehow these beliefs exist across cultures and unfortunately across genders at some level to a greater or lesser degree within different societies.

Some Implications of Violence against Women

When the “mandatory attributes” are damaged then the man is injured through the harm done to his property whereas the woman becomes totally worthless both in his view and in her own self view. Hence the lack of self esteem and feelings of “being dirty” that women develop after experiences that involve: rape with or without its consequences of unwanted pregnancies, gang rape, rape by trained animals, or with different objects, forced nudity, forced subjection to fellatio, sodomy and other sexual abuses. To elaborate just on

with all kinds of demands that she “must have noble attributes”:

- prototypes of purity
- capacity and duty to procreate
- nurturing qualities and so on....

Women are then very vulnerable to attack by men since these characteristics are mainly determined with relation to men:

- purity must be linked to fidelity
- procreation should be within marriage or with (often for) only one man
- nurturing qualities should include services to men (feeding, care for their health hygiene and well being etc.) not only to chil-

- some:
1. Rape which is seen not only as vandalism to a man’s property but as rupture to the sacred vow of fidelity (according to him he has been hurt because of her and she is at fault, according to her she is not only guilty but guilty and dirty). Rape is a very effective method that forms part of Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) (3) during war and it is a very effective weapon to weaken and defeat the enemy.
 2. Unwanted pregnancy a product of rape is seen as an unspeakable profane act that dismantles one of the most intimate links between men and women. Since the child created does not belong to the partner, and since she is the one conceiving, she is at fault again. Furthermore, since such abomination is taboo, abandonment

is often the choice. Other choices in the picture when a woman faces such an ordeal are also full of complexities and extreme pain:

- having the child and giving it in adoption,
- going through an abortion (when possible),
- having the child and raising it,
- keeping the rape as a secret and raising the child as if it were a legitimate child of the partner .

3. Any aggression can affect the nurturing qualities of a human being but when one looks into the values attached to these qualities as they apply to women (for children and one man) it is very easy to understand how acts of humiliation may wound a woman's capacity to care for men or anybody else including herself: women subjected to forced fellatio, gang rape, fondling, physical aggression such as beatings, burns and bites during rape and other acts of violence.. Physical contact ordinarily used to express love (intercourse, touching, kissing) is now associated with pain and shame and therefore unwanted.

Background and foreground

If we add to this experience the surrounding circumstances to typical abuses during war:

- the killing of beloved ones (friends , relatives, other members of the community that give a sense of belonging and identity)
- dictatorships which impose oppressive measures on individuals and communities, (arbitrary detentions, banning from jobs, torture and disappearances of many people etc.)



- deprivation of basic needs of food and health care which are prevalent during armed conflicts.

we understand that violence against women under these circumstances acquires a special character since any avenue of access to justice made is not only unavailable but is part of a systematic strategy that is sponsored and implemented by the state.

If we also consider the logical subsequent phenomena of migration and exile with all their known implications and hardships we see the following:

- exposure to other kind of abuses during the journey into exile (extortion of money or demand for sexual favors in exchange for "safety");
- applying for refugee status (whether forcibly thrown in exile or escaping to save ones life leaving many family members and friends behind)
- arriving to a country of a different culture
- finding shelter and a job to provide for

herself and sometimes what is left of the family or whatever members of the family if any are around

- coping with new stressors: learning a language, new kinds of discrimination such as “racism” xenophobia and so on.

These experiences prove that there are more than enough reasons for refugee women to have their identity damaged. We can now speak of many more layers of suffering and describe them as Dr. A. Barrenechea did saying that **refugee women are “under many fires” (1).**

Re building Identity

Identity in this context has been crushed and if any attempt is made to re-assemble it, such an attempt will have to:

- rebuild the sense of self worth
- undertake the restoration of the immediate elements of connection that are linked to the identity (for women it is usually defined in terms of family)
- address the perception of the people surrounding her,

The aim should be that eventually she will have a reassurance of being perceived by others as she perceives herself or at least will have the confidence and strength to assert herself when relating to others as she wishes to be perceived. Identity is “re-negotiated” in the new context (2).

To assist women in achieving the above the CCVT has developed programs that address the needs of the individuals, the families (when present) and the needs of the host community to be informed and sensitized about recently arriving groups.

Each program at CCVT is designed bearing in mind the needs of traumatized populations for rebuilding identity through participation within a safe environment.

Lessons from survivors; Principles of best practices : (9)

- Re-empowerment - survivors are agents of their own recovery. Authority remains with the survivor.
- Integrated holistic approach that includes

awareness of political, religious and cultural dimensions

- Flexibility
- Holistic approach
- Trust, Confidentiality and Respect
- Awareness of re-traumatizing factors. Care with interview and assessment questions
- Active listening and Creative silences

CCVT has assisted survivors since 1977 and alerts the community constantly about the importance to remember that:

- Torture is a wider social issue not just a medical legal concern
- Universal core values of human rights are a strong pillar of support for survivors
- Team work is fundamental

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Female Genital Mutilation

By Ezat Mossallanejad

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a kind of religiously consecrated torture inflicted upon young girls. Proponents of FGM refer to it as female circumcision and compare it with male circumcision. This comparison, however, is misleading. While both practices include the removal of parts of the genitalia, there are major differences between them. Male circumcision does not virtually affect the sexual functioning of males and the injuries normally heal within a week. Female circumcision, on the contrary, causes life-long damages on the sexual functioning of the victim and is usually combined with serious, sometimes, incurable infections. Unlike male circumcision, it is usually done in private.

FGM is usually practiced by elderly women who act as midwives. They consider themselves professional and run highly lucrative businesses. They use no anesthetic and perform FGM by using instruments like razor blades, scissors blunt kitchen knives or the broken neck of a bottle. They do it with hardly any attention for the health and safety of the girl. They use the same instruments repeatedly on different girls without sterilization, which causes incurable bacterial or viral diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

The complexity and deep-rooted nature of this gender-related torture should be judged by the fact that even mothers who have gone through the same ordeal urge that FGM is necessary for the protection of their daughters. A woman, who explained her experience of this horrible atrocity to the author, quoted her mother as saying, "If we don't do that girls become sexually mad, desert the family and go after men." More often than not mothers themselves perform the sordid operation.

It should be admitted that the scene for conducting FGM, in cases of rich families in some countries has moved from a wooden hut in a remote jungle to the fancy room of a modern surgeon. This has,

however, hardly reduced the negative complications of FGM.

There is no standard for the age of the victim. FGM happens at different ages in different regions. It may happen a few weeks after birth and until the girl reaches the age of 15.

There are different methods of performance. In some areas, performers use a sharp needle to pass thread through the top of clitoris. They tie the thread there and pull it down and cut off as far as it shoots forward. In other regions, they cut only the exposed tip of the clitoris. There are, however, places where radical performance is a tradition: they cut off the labia minora, and even the labia majora. Another method is making the clitoris swell with the help of some indigenous herbs and then charring it off with glowing coals. (1) All these have led physicians, psychiatrists and human rights activists to call the practice Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Drastic forms of FGM stop erotic stimulation in the genital area and deprive the victim of orgasm for the rest of her life. This is for the good of women according to a Sudanese fanatic: "Circumcision of women releases them from their bondage of sex, and enables them to fulfill their real destiny, as mothers." (2) Bleeding and pain may continue for a long time, or even the whole life, along with irregular menstruations. There are other consequences like death due to initial shock, hemorrhage, blood poisoning, genital malformation, chronic pelvic complications, recurrent urinary retention, infection, etc. (3) FGM is sometimes combined with infibulation, the fastening of fore-skins of labia minora by chains to prevent copulation. In some countries, the device is called a chastity belt.

Survivors have to endure perpetual physical and mental pains. The atrocity does not end with the initial performance. According to the celebrated

feminist, Mary Daly, the victim has to live “a life of repeated encounters with ‘the little knife’--the instrument of her perpetual torture, because women who are infibulated have to be cut open – either by the husband or by another woman – to permit intercourse. They have to be cut open further for delivery of a child. Often they are sewn up again after delivery, upon the decision of the husband. The cutting (defibulation) and resewing goes on throughout a woman’s living death of productive ‘life.’” (4)

The psychological impact is terrible. Mary Daly has called it mental castration of women: “This describes precisely what is done to women’s bodies/minds/spirits under patriarchy: they are divided and fragmented into disconnected pieces.” (5) Marriage that should be a source of pleasure for every human person turns into a nightmare for a mutilated woman. The physical and mental consequences of FGM have resulted in the premature death of hundreds of poor women. (6)

According to the estimates by UN bodies including the World Health Organization (WHO) around 130 million women and girls have experienced some forms of FGM. There are around 10 million girls who are at of risk this gender related consecrated torture.

FGM should not be approached as a torture native to a particular region or religion. It is prevalent in Islamic and non-Islamic world, from India to Morocco and among certain immigrant families in the West. It is also recorded among indigenous Australians and Latin Americans. The practice of clitoridectomy (removal of clitoris) was encouraged in the United States and Britain during the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is also a cross-cultural and cross-religious tradition practiced by Coptic Christians, native groups, Protestants, and Catholics. (7)

There are different justifications for this ghoulish practice. It is said that FGM acts as an ordeal to prepare young girls for tolerating pain in their womanhood. It is a tragic irony that a girl’s excision is considered a sign of her womanhood: she becomes a woman by losing her specifically feminine organ which is unnecessary for a male’s sexual pleasure or reproductive purposes.

Hypocritical obsession with cleanness has also acted as means of justification: the clitoris is considered dirty and is compared to a male organ in females. The clitoris is dangerous and redundant; therefore it should be removed. It is claimed that incision is necessary on moral grounds for the protection of women’s fidelity. The real motive is, however, to safeguard the structure of a patriarchal society and the perpetuation of women’s enslavement. According to Mary Daly, “these women are 100 percent pure because 100 percent enslaved.” (8)

Traditional rural communities that practice FGM consider this gender-related torture as sign of their tribal or cultural identity. So much so, that there are few men willing to marry women who have not gone through excision. There is an unbelievable silence on the parts of victims due to fear, faith, or acceptance of the tradition or the combination of all.

Certain circles are also surprisingly silent. For a long time the UN bodies did not take an effective position by justifying the atrocity on “socio-cultural grounds.” It is promising that in recent years agencies like the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and UNICEF have condemned FGM as an “unsafe and unjustifiable traditional practice” and have called upon the family of nations to eradicate it.

Contrary to what some believe, FGM did not originate from Islam. According to the Greek historian, Herodotus, circumcision was practiced in ancient Egypt as a means of keeping clean. Even in today’s Egypt the practice is called *tahara* (to make clean) as against the term of *Khitan* (circumcision) in other Arab countries. The act of female circumcision was practiced by ancient Egyptians and Jews alike. (9)

Although there is no Quranic sanction for male or female circumcision (the Arabic term *khitān* for boys and *khāfd* for girls), it is considered in many areas as a sign of being a Muslim. It seems that before the advent of Islam Arabs had taken male circumcision from other peoples. Prophet Mohammad permitted it to continue. There is, however, no authentic proof about the practice of female circumcision during the times of the Prophet Mohammad and his immediate successors.

Islam is basically a sex positive religion and the practice is contrary to the fundamental teaching of Islam that has repeatedly advised husbands to do their best for the sexual satisfaction of their wives: *“It is lawful for you to lie with your wives on the night of the fast. They are a comfort to you as you are to them (Quran 2:187)...and He gave you wives from among yourself, that you might live in joy with them, and planted love and kindness in your hearts (30:21)*

Muslim proponents of FGM rely on the following hadith (narrative from Prophet Mohammad):

“Um Atiyyat al-Ansariyyah said: A woman used to perform circumcision in Medina. The Prophet said to her: Do not cut too severely as that is better for a woman and more desirable for a husband.” (10)

It is hard to substantiate the authenticity of *ahahith* in general. The above narration is specifically "weak", as, according to the Islamic criteria of authenticity, it misses a link in the successive chain of narrators and it is not found in any of the six undisputed hadith collections, except one. According to Sayyid Sabiq, renowned scholar and author of *Fiqh-us-Sunnah*, all hadiths concerning female circumcision are non-authentic. (11)

FGM, more than anything else, is a component of the universal atrocities against women. In a patriarchal society where woman is reduced to man's property, she does not own her sexuality. It is under the strict control of the dominant males of her family and is subjected to the patriarchal rules of the community. The patriarchal nature of Islam and other world religions has, however, contributed towards legitimization of the practice and, therefore, has allowed for its perpetuation. In this case religion has easily adapted itself to non-religious abhorrent traditions. The concepts of righteousness and purity have helped religious leaders who have supported this practice.

Legal abolition of FGM has always been a challenge in countries ruled by tradition. The late Kenyan president Jomo Kenyatta justified FGM as a prerequisite “for the whole teaching of tribal law, religion and morality.” (12) In Egypt, Jamal Abdul Nasser encouraged an unsuccessful public debate in an attempt to outlaw FGM. Egypt went through many ups and down until it finally outlawed the practice. FGM is today illegal in the USA, most of Europe (Britain, France, Sweden, and Switzerland) and some African countries (Egypt, Kenya, Senegal). It is, however, difficult to monitor FGM due to the secrecy around it. Further, governments often don't have

access to the remote areas where it is practiced, which also makes it tough to observe.

It is not adequate to campaign against FGM merely on legal terms. The existence of a strong and unbinding tribal and cultural element in performing FGM makes it difficult to abolish this gender related torture. The proponents of FGM have gone too far to call it a “way of life” distinct from that of the “decadent” western cultures. This leads us to the need for community education as the pre-requisite for the abolition of FGM.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that the campaign against FGM will be futile if it is not combined with an overall campaign for emancipation of women on the one hand and changing the patriarchal mentality on the other.

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6. Hanny Lightfoot-Klein in her most recent book, *Secret Wounds* (published by Authorhouse, New York, on February 1, 2003), has shared her 24 years of research on FGM. She has illustrated the psychological and health hazards resulting from this practice specifically against minors. Her two earlier books, [Prisoners of Ritual](#) and [A Woman's Odyssey Into Africa](#), published in 1989 and 1992, on the subject are still relevant today.
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Book Review: A Masterpiece of Uprootedness

By Ezat Mossallanejad

Book Review: A Masterpiece of Uprootedness

The Book of Embraces, Images and text by [Eduardo Galeano](#); translated by Cedric Belfrage with Mark Schafer
Published by W. W. Norton & Company, 1992.
Paperback, 272 pages
ISBN: 0393308553

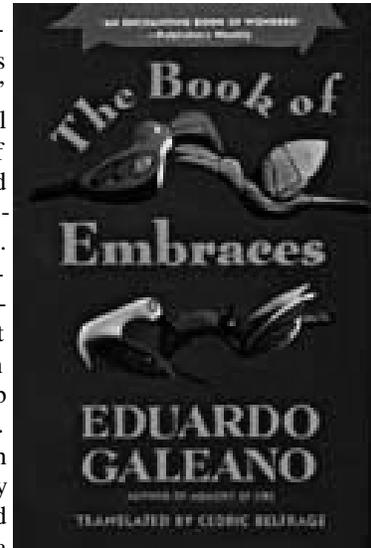
Eduardo Galeano is one of the most popular writers in Latin America. He was born in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1940. He started his work as a political cartoonist and a journalist. He then turned to writing about “nobodies” (marginalized and oppressed people). Since 1967, he has published more than twenty books; over half of them are translated into English. Galeano’s most popular books include 1971’s *The Open Veins of Latin America*, *Days and Nights of Love and War* (winner of 1987 *Casa de las Americas Prize*), *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*, *We Say No*, *Walking Words*, and a trilogy, *Memory of Fire*, that got the American Book Award in 1989. He continues writing articles in Spanish journals. His most recent book, *Upside Down*, has been described as an agitating, propagandist, electric and alarming work.

The Book of Embraces is an anthology of around 190 bits and pieces ranging from one line to at most one page. The texts are accompanied by Galeano’s own fanciful, abstract, and surrealistic illustrations. The book takes the reader to a long exploratory journey to the width and depth of life, its wonders and stupidities. In a very short and telegraphic form, Galeano speaks about many things: his personal experiences, dreams of his wife (Helena), theology, arts, media, bureaucracy, myths, folklores, poetry, war, tyranny, torture, love, beauty, sex, identity, alienation, vices, human faculty, steadfastness, etc. The book is reminiscent of the famous dictum of a great philosopher: “nothing human is alien to me.”

The Book of Embraces speaks from its readers’ hearts. You feel some pieces as if they had happened to you or the closest of your kin. *The Book of Embraces* “is a mosaic.” Its apparent fragmentation does not disturb its integrity. While the truth speaks in a variety of voices, and sometimes in a contradictory manner, all pieces are connected as a coherent whole.

Although the book’s focus is on Latin America (Uruguay, Argentina, Venezuela, Cuba, Ecuador, etc), the author does not, however, recognize any geographical frontier. He takes his readers to Spain, Italy, Algeria, England, France and other corners of the globe.

The Book of Embraces could, among other things, be considered as a literature of uprootedness. The bitterness and achievements of uprootedness are both reflected in this magnum opus. Based on personal experiences, *Eduardo Galeano* speaks about poverty and deprivation with the strongest satirical language. “I write for those who cannot read me: the downtrodden,” he says. He belongs to those brave Latin American and world writers who are using their talents to address the root causes of people’s uprootedness. He has spared no time to defy repressive Latin American regimes.





In 1973, as a result of a military coup in his country, Galeano was forced to exile, initially in Argentina, then in Spain. He returned to Uruguay in 1985. In almost all his writings, specifically in *The Book of Embraces*, he reflects his experience of uprootedness. He speaks about his nostalgia and shares the nostalgia of others. He says, "I'm a curious man, always devouring other people, their voices, their secrets, their stories, their colours. I'm stealing their words; maybe I should be arrested." John Leonard, literary critique of the *New York Review Book*, calls him "a dangerous radical storyteller."

The Following are some samples from this Galeano masterpiece:

Nobodies

*"We are not, could be
We don't speak languages, but dialects.
We don't have religions, but superstitions
We don't create art, but handicrafts
We don't have a culture, but folklore
We are not human being, but human re-
sources
We do not have faces, but arms
We do not have names, but numbers
We do not appear in the history of the
world,
But in the police blotter of the local paper
The nobodies, who are not worth
The bullets that kill them."*

Dreams at the End of Exile

1. "Helena dreamed she was trying to close her suitcase and couldn't, and she pushed down on it with both hands and knelt on it and sat on top

of it and stood on top of it, and it wouldn't budge. Mysteries and belongings gushed from the suitcase that wouldn't close."

2. "Helena was returning to Buenos Aires, but didn't know what language to speak or what currency to use. Standing on the corner of Pueyrredon and Las Heras, she waited for the number 60, which didn't arrive – which never would arrive."
3. "Her glasses were smashed and her keys were missing. She scoured the city for her keys, groping on hands and knees, and when at last she found them, the keys told her that they didn't open any doors."

In conclusion, I would like to present *The Book of Embraces* as a liberal, leftist, anti-capitalistic, and secular humanistic gospel. The author should be commended for his unshakeable faith in the ultimate triumph of human voice: "When it is genuine, when it is born of the need to speak, no one can stop the human voice."

**Hangman, I charge you to pay particular attention to this lady.
Scourge her soundly, man; scourge her till her blood runs down!
It is Christmas, a cold time for Madam to strip. See that you warm her shoulders thoroughly!**

**Judge Jeffreyes
From the Book of Torture
By John Swain**

Popular Theatre

By Ezat Mossallanejad

At the May 2004 conference of the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), the first plenary was opened by two skits and three images based on Augusto Boal's model of popular theatre. Nine actors and actresses as well as two instructors were involved in the performance that illustrated problems faced by refugees and uprooted people in Canada. The level of participation by members of audience was unbelievable.

Popular theatre was initially introduced in Brazil by Dr. Augusto Boal. He introduced a new type of community theatre that is different from the traditional practice.

Prior to his experimentation, audiences were encouraged to discuss a play at the end of the performance. In the 1960's Boal developed a process whereby audience members could stop a performance and suggest different actions for the actors. During one of the performances as such a woman in the audience went onto the stage and by acting showed her intension. This helped Boal to transform his theatre into what he called spect-actor (not spectator) theatre. He began inviting audience members with suggestions for change onto the stage to demonstrate their ideas. In so doing, audience members empowered to the point that they became agents of change. In this way, theatre became tool for grass-roots activities.

Dr. Boal shared his experiences in a book , *The Theatre of the Oppressed*, that he published in 1971. He was imprisoned and was later exiled to Argentina, then to Europe. He continued his activities in exile and wrote more

books and articles.

In 1986, he returned to Brazil and established a Center for the Theatre of the Oppressed with focus on community-based performances. He called his new stype *Forum Theatre* and *Image Theatre*. Forum Theatre relies upon presentation of short scenes (between 3



Augusto Boal

to 7 minutes) that represent problems of a given community. Audience members interact by replacing characters in scenes. They can bring new dialogue and new ideas and hereby new solutions to the problems. There is no need for a specific director or writer for Image theatre. Skits, acts and ideas develop collectively. Everybody can act even if the most amateur one.

All is needed is interest in change and work hard with others.

Based on the example of the CCR, the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) organized a theatre group in summer 2004. This group has so far performed skits and images on issues related to refugee protection and protection of torture survivors in Canada. The first performance was on Monday October 4th at site of the CCVT and second one, on Oct. 17th with the assistance of the ARC Festival at at Workman Theatre in Toronto. The third one was at the CCVT Christmas celebration on December 19, 2004.

We do hope that this useful tool will be used vastly by refugee and human rights workers in Canada.

CCVT Awards

The CCVT award began in 2002 and has been continuing since then. Four personalities have so far been awarded by the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture.

Purpose of the Awards:

To recognize the valuable contributions individuals make to build an equitable and just society, and those who have made a sustained and innovative contribution in the community, demonstrating leadership, initiative, perseverance and originality.

The Trevor Bartram Award

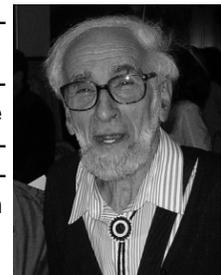
Trevor Bartram was a founding member of the Centre and remained an integral part of its life throughout the years. As the founding member and legal advisor, Trevor undertook the tedious and unglamorous tasks that developing organization require. He wrote (and rewrote) the agency's bylaws, negotiated leases, contracts and other related agreements. He served as the secretary, Chair of International Committee and member of Fundraising Committee. He was a jack-of-all-trades.

Over the years, Trevor contributed much to the organization and befriended newcomers and included his many new friends into his active social life. He traveled to Africa, Latin America & Europe attending international conferences on behalf of CCVT.

The Trevor Bartram Award is given to individuals who have made a significant achievement in organizational development, particularly in setting up new community based organizations, consistent with the human rights mandate of CCVT. Experience in developing programs and policies, structures and success with funding initiatives.

2004 Award Recipient—Fred Franklin

Fred is an Engineer from Germany who immigrated to Canada in 1948. For a number of years Fred was the Quaker representative on Committees of the Canadian Council of Churches, he also became a board member of three Inter-Church Coalitions. He was a member of the working group on human rights in Chile in 1973. He was one of the first volunteers of CCVT. Fred was actively involved in the formation of the Quaker Committee on jails and justice. His work involved visits and regular Quaker programs in several jails in the greater Toronto area. He established an effective working relationship with the prison staff and chaplains.



Fred Franklin

Fred is an executive member of Toronto Refugee Affairs Council (TRAC) and the coordinator of its Detention Program. His home base remains the Quaker Committee for Refugees. In addition he participates in a weekly Quaker program at the West Detention Centre.

Amina Malko Award

Amina was one of the first CCVT staff to be hired and was Office Manager for over 5 years until she moved to OCASI. Amina was an extremely hard working, tireless and committed staff member. Her particular interest was in improving the lives of refugee women and she did indeed have a positive impact through her dedication and perseverance. She advocated on behalf of women refugees, worked for policy changes at the local, national and international level and was a key member in organizing Refugee Rights Day.

Amina undertook to organize a conference "African Women in the Community" with CCVT funding and support, in an effort to have women's voices expressed directly.

The Amina Malko Award will be given to a woman with refugee experience who has significant experience in policy, advocacy and settlement service for newcomers.

2004 Recipient—Madina Wasuge

Madina is a physician from Somalia who immigrated to Canada in 1989. She has dedicated her time and energy to the elimination of racial discrimination. She has been involved in the development and empowerment of the immigrant community in Hamilton Wentworth Region. Her service to recent immigrants from Africa and visible minorities is remarkable. She has been involved with a variety of community initiatives shaping policies, making decisions and advocating for the many newcomers to the community. She has particularly been a strong advocate for the rights of refugees in particular women. She is a member of the Refugee Women's Mental Health in Canada Committee and the Regional Advisory Committee for Immigrant and Visible Minority Communities. She has been a strong public educator on the issues of racism, discrimination and xenophobia and their harmful effects on the society. Presently Madina works as a Program Manager at Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO) in Hamilton.



Madina Wasuge

Participation in Human Rights Consultations

The Canadian Center for Victims of Torture (CCVT) participated in the 16th annual consultation between the Department of Foreign Affairs and Non-Governmental Organizations. Consultations took place for three days (February 1st to 3rd, 2005) in the Lester B. Pearson building in Ottawa.

The first day was dedicated to discussions about thematic issues; on the second day NGOs and governmental experts participated in thematic workshops and on the last day

discussions focused around human rights situations of different countries. During these three days, the CCVT made frequent interventions on the basis of its expertise on documentation of torture and serving survivors. We added to the contributions of several other NGOs that raised various human right concerns. Based on its particular expertise, the CCVT called upon the government of Canada to pay special attention to the following matters:

1. Torture should be absolutely prohibited un-

der all circumstances including war, emergency situations, curfew, terrorism etc. (Article 2 of the Convention against Torture).

2. Canada should focus on the principle of *non-refoulement* to countries and circumstances likely to lead to torture (Article 3)

3. Canada should collaborate with other countries and persuade the UN to work on Article 16 of the Convention Against Torture (CAT).

There is an urgent need to define what constitutes "other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment"

4. It is expected that Canada encourages other countries to ratify the UN Convention Against Torture and to accept the jurisdiction of the UN Committee against Torture to receive complaints (communications) about breaches of the CAT (article 22 of the CAT).

5. Canada has adopted the UN Optional Protocol to the CAT; there is a need for ratification of this important legal instrument by Canada as an attempt to strengthen its global leadership against torture. The Federal government should initiate negotiations with provincial governments to remove barriers against ratification of this protocol.

6. The 1982 Principles of Medical Ethics is an important international document that deals with the involvement of medical science and medical personnel in torture. It emphasizes that medical science is for healing not for killing. This instrument is unfortunately an orphaned one. Canada should work with other countries to develop and adopt this instrument so that, in future, it will be recognized at the level of an international convention. The UN should also establish an institution monitoring its implementation.

7. Canada should seriously and consistently address the global and domestic problem of impunity. It is expected that the government encourages other countries to accede to the Rome Statue for the International Criminal Court.

8. Canada should provide financial contribution to the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

9. Canada is expected to help other countries reform their legal and judicial systems so that there will be no place for torture as a means of extracting information and confessions. The

Canadian adversarial system in the courts can be used as a model for other countries to use.

10. Canada should encourage the UN Commission of Human Rights to show particular consideration to the exposure, prevention and eradication of state and religiously sanctioned torture such as stoning, suttee and female genital mutilation.

11. Canada can utilize its positive experiences and try to persuade other countries to abolish the death penalty, which is in most cases a form of torture.

12. There is a need for increased awareness to the exposure, prevention and eradication of torture against vulnerable populations such as women and children.

13. We expect Canada to strengthen the work of the UN Special Rapporteur against Torture through the regular renewal of his mandate. There is also a need for the UN Human Rights Commission to designate country-specific special rapporteurs.

During the geographical workshops, the CCVT representative shared the experiences of CCVT clients in various countries including the Middle East, the Great Lake region and Sudan. We requested the government to pay special attention to the immediate needs of survivors of torture and war.

Raoul Wallenberg's symposium

CCVT was invited to participate in a two-day symposium in commemoration of Raoul Wallenberg. The symposium was held at York University and CCVT was represented by Ezat Mossallanejad. In this well organized symposium experts from different parts of the world spoke about torture, impunity, war crimes and crimes against humanity. CCVT contributed to the symposium



by sharing the experiences of its clients. The symposium offered an important opportunity to reflect on the life and accomplishments of Raoul Wallenberg. Raoul belonged to one of the most famous families in Sweden, the large Wallenberg family. Through his uncle's good contacts in the business world, Raoul was eventually brought together with Koloman Lauer, a Hungarian Jew. Lauer was a director of a Swedish based import and export company, and quickly hired Raoul as a business partner due to his excellent language skills and freedom of movement in Europe. In the spring of 1944, the USA initiated the War Refugee Board (WRB) an organization with the purpose of saving Jews from Nazi persecution. Through Lauer's reference Raoul was appointed to lead the

WRB mission in Budapest.

One of Wallenberg's many initiatives included the creation of "protective" passports for 4,500 Hungarian Jews. Operating from a special department within the Swedish Legation with the assistance of more than 300 volunteers, Wallenberg's relief work also involved the establishment of thirty-two "safe houses" also under the protection of the Swedish Legation, 15-20,000 Jews are said to have been rescued in this way. It is estimated that Raoul Wallenberg's tireless efforts in collaboration with other organizations saved as many as 100,000 Hungarian Jews from Nazi persecution.

Before the end of the war, Raoul Wallenberg was arrested by the Soviet troops, never to be seen alive again. He will be remembered for his exceptional human courage.

Congratulations to Tom Clark



It is with great happiness that we announce that our colleague, Tom Clark, a life-long supporter of refugees and human rights has recently published a book entitled *The Global Refugee Regime: Charity, Management and Human Rights*. Apart from his refugee and human rights activities, Tom is a staunch champion of the struggle against torture. He has worked hard for policy change at both the national and international levels. Tom Clark is the recipient of the 2002 CCVT Trevor Bartram Award. The following is an excerpt from the back cover of the book giving a synopsis of the issues covered by Tom Clark.:

"The *Global Refugee Regime* assembles the often fragmented world of refugee affairs into a whole picture by means of the integrating themes of charity, management and human rights. Serving as an overview text book of the world of refugee affairs, it integrates important topics like refugee statistics, refugee law, and basic camp needs – topics that are normally dealt with in isolation by practitioners or by academics in different disciplines. The book focuses on the important topics areas of populations and responses; the UN world; camps and emergencies; dispersed refugees and asylum seekers; the roles of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees; supporting agencies; the 1951 Convention; the role of the human rights system"

We look forward to following Tom's future accomplishments in the field of refugee and human rights for the years to come.

Walking for Human Rights in Iran

On Friday March 11th 2005, Mr. Kourosh Shahabi stopped at the Canadian Center for Victims of Torture (CCVT) in the course of his long walk for human rights. He was ac-

such as mock executions and rape - which according to our records is being used as a form of political torture. Women are raped in Iran due to their own political activities and as a punishment or a degrading measure against third parties, especially husbands. We have documented cases of rape against males and even against children in that country. One of our clients suffered four mock executions in Iran, an experience that made him dysfunctional. Another client told us how his torturers murdered his mother in front of his eyes while in prison.



companied by Minoos Homily, a client of the CCVT. He met with Mr. Mulugeta Abai, Executive Director of the Center, submitted his statement and asked CCVT to help publicize his endeavor.

We at CCVT are deeply concerned about human rights violations in the countries of origin of our clients. We also seek the prevention and eradication of torture on a global level, an outcome that will have a direct impact on our clients' mental health and on their successful integration in Canada. Last year, we accepted 798 survivors of torture from 82 different countries. Out of 76 new clients we received from Iran, 26 were children (11 of them girls).

We have documented massacres of entire families in Iranian jails. In one case the entire staff of CCVT was mobilized in order to rehabilitate the sole survivor of a family that was massacred, a task that lasted five years until the client was able to function on his own. Furthermore, we have assisted women who have escaped stoning in Iran.

Iran is one of the seven countries in the world that still applies the death penalty to children. It is unfortunate that at the beginning of the 21st century, Iran is condoning and practicing torture and allowing this international crime to be part of a number of its anachronistic legislations.

We do hope that Mr. Kourosh Shahabi's initiative will sensitize the Canadian people and government to address torture in general and its savage perpetration in Iran in particular.

What follows is the statement of Mr. Shahabi, presented to CCVT:

KOUROSH SHAHABI WALKING TO OTTAWA FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

I am walking to Ottawa from Kitchener to ask Prime Minister Paul Martin to use Canada's influence before the United Nations Human Rights Commission to draw the attention of the international community to the continuing abysmal human rights record of the government of Iran.

My name is Kourosh Shahabi, I am a Canadian citizen and a Kitchener resident who was forced to flee my native Iran as a

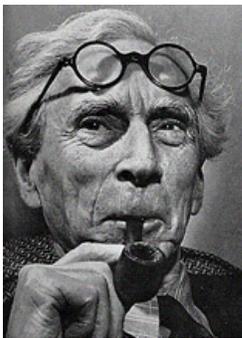
refugee twelve years ago. Since the 1979 Islamic revolution that overthrew the Shah of Iran, an estimated 100,000 political dissidents have been killed, including journalists, academics, writers, political party members, women's rights advocates and affiliates of religious and national minority groups continue to be repressed. Many Iranian journalists have experienced the fate of Canadian-Iranian journalist Zahra Kazemi, murdered by the Iranian state police for photographing a prison. I am urging Ottawa to take the opportunity presented by the upcoming Iranian New Year (March 21st) to renew its pressure on Teheran at the forthcoming UNHRC meeting. I do not, however, support any possible US assault on Iran. I am asking supporters to contact their MPs to help me get this message to the Prime Minister.

Contact: Peter Eglin or Debbie Chapman
peglin@wlu.ca debchapman@golden.net

The Russell Legacy

A major challenge in the area of international justice is how to prosecute criminals who are at the highest levels of power. Bertrand Russell proposed an innovative answer to this question with the establishment of the International War Crimes Tribunal in 1966 to assess the growing body of evidence on war crimes perpetrated by the US troops in Vietnam. With no formal legal recourse at his disposal, Russell assembled an international panel of distinguished intellectuals, from French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre to Yugoslav writer Vladimir Dedijer, whose mandate was to assess American culpability in Vietnam. In addition to examining written documentation, the Tribunal heard first hand evidence from Vietnamese witnesses as well as professional investigating teams who traveled to the region to collect primary data.

Since then the idea of a people's court to pass judgment on crimes systematically denied by those in power has continued to serve as an effective tool for granting voice to survivors and raising awareness in the international public. One among many important initiatives, the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal broke the silence surrounding the wartime sexual slavery of Asian "comfort women" and in 2000 found Emperor Hirohito of Japan guilty of crimes against humanity.



Russell's legacy continues to hold great relevance in the contemporary international context, where there still exists no legal mechanism to bring to justice a current head of state considered responsible for crimes against humanity. A popular tribunal such as that proposed by Russell offers an opportunity to declare once again that the true meaning of the law is to affirm the will of the people to uphold justice and truth, regardless of the power or profile of the offender. There is a growing anxiety about the continued occupation of Iraq by the U.S. This global concern might well echo words written forty years ago to explain the objective's of Russell's International War Crimes Tribunal: "Our purpose is to establish, without fear or favour, the full truth about this war. We sincerely hope that our efforts will contribute to the world's justice, to the re-establishment of peace and the liberation of the oppressed peoples."

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, recreational and empowerment activities that incorporate conflict resolution, mentoring, peer support and story -telling
4. **Volunteer Program**
 - **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!

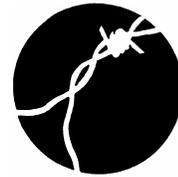
Just mail your comments to:
CCVT
194 Jarvis St. 2nd Floor,
Toronto, Ontario, M5B 2B7
Canada

Or email them to: The Editorial Committee c/o 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.



Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture

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