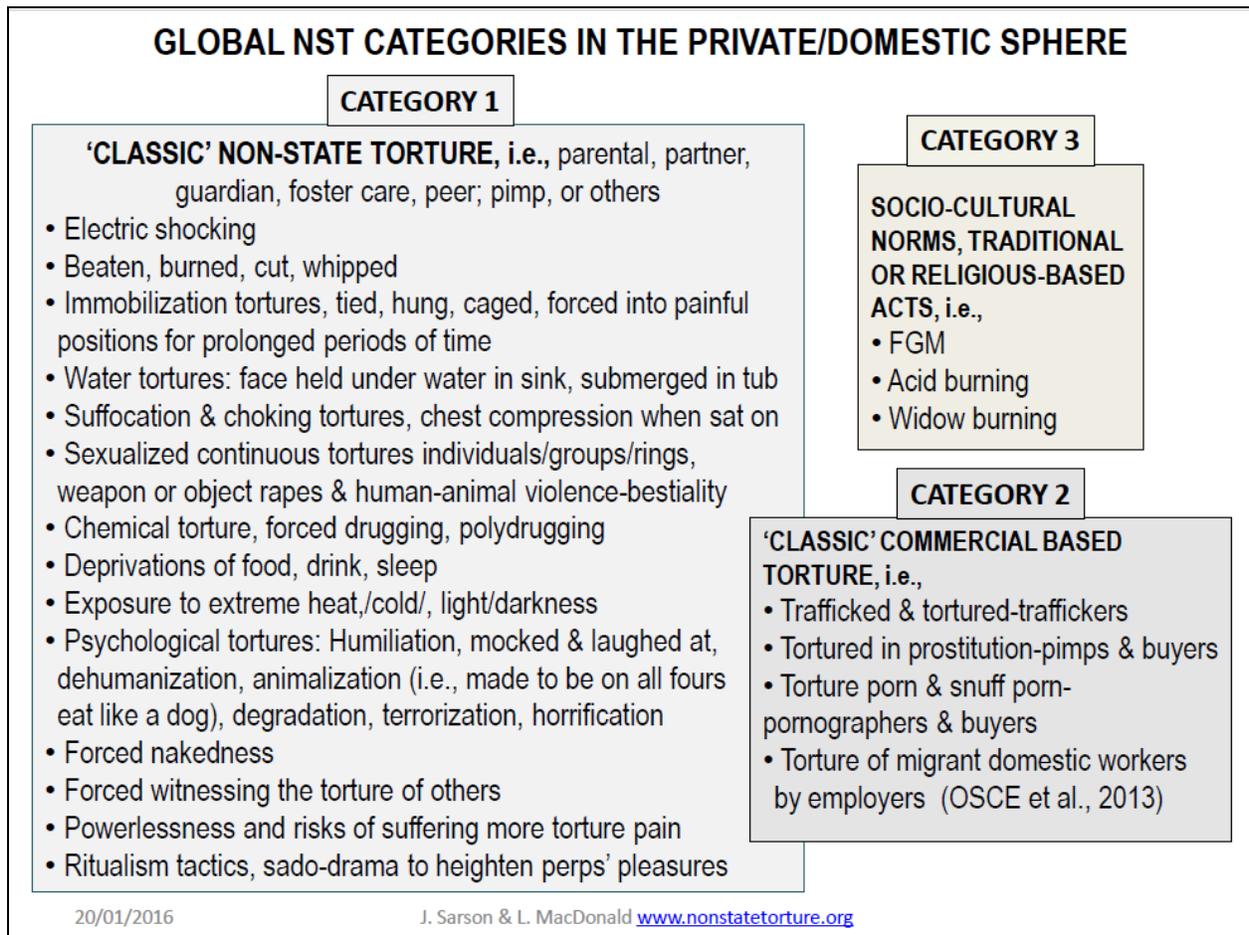


# Fact Sheet: Torture in the Private Sphere

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**CAN CATEGORIES OF GENDER-BASED NON-STATE TORTURE BE DEFINED?** Yes, these can. We visibilize three emerging categories of gender-based non-state tortures in the following diagram. The perpetration of FGM, and widow and acid burning, as listed in the third category are acts that have been declared torture by Special Rapporteurs against Torture. These forms of torture have for centuries been absorbed into a socio-cultural context, considered traditional, or had religious applications applied thereby disguising atrocities suffered by millions of women and girls. Categories No. 1 and 2 involve acts of classic torturing which is the focus of this fact sheet.



**WHAT IS AND WHO COMMITS ACTS OF CLASSIC NON-STATE TORTURE?** The term *classic* torture has generally referred to torture perpetrated by State actors such as government representatives, police forces, or the military. However, these same horrific acts are also perpetrated in the private sphere by parents, other family members, spouses, guardians, like-minded others including human traffickers, buyers, exploiters, pornographers, pedophilic rings, gangs, and 'client-perpetrators' who also derive brutal and cruel pleasures from torturing girls and women who have been 'prostituted'. Women have been identified as perpetrators; however, based on our professional experiences men are the dominate perpetrators. Non-state actors hold jobs in mainstream society. They can be politicians, pilots, nurses, social workers, care givers of the elderly, professors, lawyers, doctors, fishers, farmers, work in the media, be military personnel, police, clergy, nuns, therapists, psychologists; in other words, there are no social or class limitations as to who a perpetrator of non-state torture might be. 'Expert' manipulators

who blend into the mainstream, they may appear to be the perfect community volunteer, attached to good causes as a cover. Or, as stated, they can be ‘client-perpetrators’ or affiliated to gangs, pedophilic rings, human traffickers, exploiters, and pornographers who manufacture torture porn and snuff images. This next figure illustrates how physical tortures become sexualized tortures and the harms caused.

Torture acts translate →→	Into sexualized torture →→	Harmful consequences
<b>1. Physical torture: electric shocking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Electric cattle prod inserted into her vagina, her anus, her mouth</li> <li>◆ Electric wires inserted into her vagina, placed to her nipples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Psychological torture as women &amp; girls blame &amp; hate their body</li> <li>◆ Terrorized</li> <li>◆ Torture pain and suffering</li> </ul>
<b>2. Physical torture: water torture and pseudo-necrophilic torture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Submerged underwater in a tub, or her head held under water in a bucket until she is unconsciousness then her inert body raped for pseudo-necrophilic pleasures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Terrorized</li> <li>◆ Near-death ordeals</li> <li>◆ Powerlessness when rendered unconsciousness</li> <li>◆ Torture pain and suffering</li> </ul>
<b>3. Physical torture: cutting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Knife inserted into her vagina, her vagina cut and her vaginal blood smeared on her body</li> <li>◆ Knife used to cut her breast tissue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Terrorized</li> <li>◆ Horrified at seeing her blood and fear of bleeding to death</li> <li>◆ Torture pain and suffering</li> </ul>

**PRIVATE SPACES.** This includes, for example, homes, cabins, warehouses, studios, on farms, outdoors, in hotels, in business establishment used as fronts, in vehicles, anywhere secured by the torturers. Classic non-state torturing examples are listed in the sidebar (Figure 2). These acts are generally inflicted simultaneously, over a limited period of time or even repeatedly over years of victimization.

#### WHAT CAN BE DONE?

1. **Torture is not sex.** Patriarchal discriminatory attitudes and behaviours contribute to gender-based torture therefore discourse must include how patriarchy has sexualized, commercialized, and prostituted the torture victimization of babies, girls, and women.
2. **Eliminate impunity.** A definite law that criminalizes torture including that perpetrated by non-state actors is needed in efforts to eliminate its ongoingness. When there is no specific law this crime can be deemed not to exist, no data is then available, and reparation specifically attuned to the impact of non-state torture victimization is not available and will not develop.
3. **Torture is a specific and distinct criminal human rights violation.** Classic torture victimization is not abuse nor is it an assault—it is torture. It is a distinct human rights crime. It must not be minimized, trivialized, invisibilized, or misnamed as another crime as presently occurs in many countries including Canada. Classic non-State torture is life-threatening inhuman, cruel, and degrading causing severe physical and mental pain and suffering, that is intentionally and purposefully inflicted. Many human rights instruments specifically state that “no one shall be subjected to torture.” These are the:
  - UN *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), article 5;
  - *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR), article 7;
  - *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), General Recommendation 19, 7(b);
  - *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, article 3(h); and
  - *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* (CAT).

This fact sheet is written to visibilize the human right of women, girls, and babies not to be subjected to acts of non-state torture. Those so tortured must be supported. Their victimization must be specifically legally recognized. They have the right to speak their truth, to be believed, and to seek justice for the non-state torture victimization they suffered.