

## WHAT CAN A PERSON DO?

Send this pamphlet/message to:

- Federal and provincial party leaders
- Federal/Provincial Ministers of Justice
- Opposition party critics
- Your Member of Parliament
- The media and discuss stories that minimize torture as abuse or assault

Become aware:

- Torture is violence beyond abuse
- Include information about torture in relationship, sexuality, and prenatal classes, and in school, university and professional development programs
- Remember children and adults of all ages, nationalities, and from all walks of life can be victims of torture; they can be co-workers, hospital clients, runaways, or neighborhood parents
- Be respectful to persons who have survived torture and horror
- Do not turn away when they try to tell you what they have suffered
- Tell them you are sorry they suffered
- Do not blame the victimized person – it is not their fault
- Organize presentations/discussion groups inviting knowledgeable people to speak

Torture is the most horrific violence a human being can suffer and survive, so

**LET'S DEMAND THAT  
TORTURE IN THE  
PRIVATE SPHERE BE  
MADE ILLEGAL IN  
CANADA**

**AND**

**CANADA BECOME A  
TORTURE FREE ZONE**

We are speaking the unspeakable; because, without reality there is no truth, and without truth how can there be healing?

Jeanne Sarson, MEd, BScN, RN &  
Linda MacDonald, MEd, BN, RN

Human Rights Defenders

E-mail: [contact@nonstatetorture.org](mailto:contact@nonstatetorture.org)

Website: [www.nonstatetorture.org](http://www.nonstatetorture.org)

Mail: 361 Prince St, Truro, NS  
Canada, B2N 1E4

Dated: November 2007©

**?**  
**IS**  
**CANADA**  
**A**  
**TORTURE FREE**  
**ZONE?**

## FACTS ABOUT TORTURE

Globally, human rights language identifies torture as:

1. State actor torture or
2. Non-state actor torture

### State-actor torture

Refers to torture committed by a state- for example government officials or designates such as police, military personnel, or prison guards. It is generally referred to as torture that happens in the **public sphere**.

### Non-state actor torture

Refers to torture committed by parents, spouses, other kin, guardians, neighbors, trusted adults, or strangers, for example. It is generally referred to as torture that happens in the **private sphere**.

### Public sphere

In Canada this refers to places such as prisons, police lock up cells, military bases or posting in or outside Canada, or government institutions.

### Private sphere

In Canada this refers to homes, cabins, cottages, private buildings, rented spaces, warehouses, barns, or private out door spaces on farms, for example.

### Why do torturers torture?

For: ■ pleasure ■ power/domination  
■ devaluation/discriminatory reasons  
■ profit/other material gains ■ beliefs of justification ■ learned attitude/behavior

## CRIMINALIZING TORTURE IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE

Although state-actor torture is a specific crime under section 269.1 of the Canadian *Criminal Code*, non-state actor torture is not named or listed as a specific crime in the *Criminal Code*.

Legally it is made invisible by using an “existing provisions” argument, meaning such acts of torture are misnamed and tried under other existing laws such as assaults or assaults with a weapon, for example. The results are: 1. The severity of harm a victim suffers is minimized and misunderstood 2. Effective care is not provided 3. A torturer is not held accurately accountable, and 4. Specific investigative, preventive and protective interventions remain undeveloped.

SO ...

**THIS PAMPHLET IS ABOUT  
TAKING ACTION IN  
CANADA, TO MAKE A LAW  
THAT ENSURES THE  
PRIVATE SPHERE OF  
HOME AND COMMUNITY  
WITHIN OUR NATION  
STATE  
IS A TORTURE FREE ZONE**

## TORTURE IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE

### Who are the victimized?

- Children from infancy to youth
- Spouses and other exploited women

### Examples of what torturers do

**Physical tortures:** Torturers kick, beat, cut, whip and burn victims with candles, cigarettes, hot poker and hot light bulbs  
■ electric shock them ■ beat the soles of their feet ■ tie them down ■ hang them by their limbs ■ cage them ■ hold guns to their head ■ choke them unconscious ■ suffocate them with plastic bags ■ hold them underwater ■ withhold food and liquids ■ put pepper in their eyes

**Sexualized tortures:** Torturers inflict individual/family/group rapes ■ rape with their fingers/objects-guns, knives, tree branches, broom handles, and kitchen items ■ force swallowing or smearing with animal/human body fluids ■ traffic children to pedophiles or women to “client-perpetrators” ■ force them into pornography/snuff films ■ bestiality ■ force pregnancies/abortions

**Mind-spirit tortures:** ■ Torturers attempt to destroy their chosen victim’s sense of being a human person ■ treat them “like garbage”-dehumanizing them ■ enforce witnessing cruelty/killing of pets or the torture of others ■ laugh as they humiliate and degrade them ■ force victims to self cut/bleed ■ force mind-altering drugs into them to distort reality