

**PREAMBLE:** Some of our language has changed since we wrote this letter. We learned in 2004 that the human rights language refers to state and non-state actor torture versus political or non-political torture therefore the language we used in this letter has transformed in our later writings.

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P.O. Box 861  
Truro, NS  
Canada  
B2N 5G6

Phone: 902-895-6659  
Fax: 902-895-6659  
e-mail:  
twin@auracom.com

January 19, 2000

Amnesty International  
1 Easton Street  
London WC1X 0DW  
United Kingdom

**Re: In response to, *Hidden scandal, secret shame***

Amnesty International Canada referred us to you when we inquired about how we could submit a response to your very important report, *Hidden scandal, secret shame*. Piece by piece the reality of the acts of violence which are being perpetrated against The Child becomes clearer and clearer. Each piece is important. That is way we decided to forward a copy of a presentation document we developed and have/are delivering to various groups in our efforts to educate others about violence against The Child--specifically child torture, in all its forms. We believe our presentation provides concrete lived examples of non-political torture experienced by children in various countries of the world--the United Kingdom and Canada included. We ask that you read this presentation document. It will take you approximately 15 minutes. This presentation is representative of some of our goals, which are:

1. To have the definition of child torture expanded to include acts of torture which The Child is most likely to experience within the confines of their "private or domestic space" (AI document, p. 12) within relationships with those on whom The Child depends, should be able to trust, and with whom they ought to be safe.

2. To start a dialogue by providing global examples of children's experiences which, in our opinion, demonstrate relationships involving many forms of child torture. We have defined CHILD TORTURE to include:

- ⊗ **POLITICAL TORTURE** - as state sanctioned and/or committed by an official representative whose authority has been granted by the state or whose authority is recognized by the state. In Canada our contact with a child with this experience would most likely be an immigrant child who may have experienced torture directly or indirectly by being exposed to the torture of others.
- ⊗ **EVERYDAY TORTURE** - child torture which occurs within the context of the adult-child relationship, i.e. parental or guardian, caregivers, institutional, acquaintance, or acts of torture perpetrated by a stranger.
- ⊗ **RITUAL ABUSE-TORTURE** - organized family/group acts involving extensive physical, mind-spirit and sexualized pedophilic torture. In Canada ritual abuse[-torture] was identified as requiring urgent recognition by the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women in their Final Report entitled, *Changing the landscape: Ending violence~Achieving equality*, which was submitted to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in 1993 (p. 45-47)
- ⊗ **CHILD EXPLOITATION** - which uses methods of torture--physical torture, sexualized torture, and/or mind-spirit torture--as a means of achieving power, control and creating a state of life-threatening terrorism in The Child which keeps The Child in a state of captivity and enslaved.

3. To have The Child who is victimized by perpetrators who commit acts of child torture-in any or all its forms-recognized as **a child in need of special care and protection.**

4. To have child torture-in all the above forms-placed on the agenda of the *United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children*, September 19-21, 2001.

We have lobbied UNICEF Canada, Secretariat of the September 19-21, 2001, *United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children*;

lobbied the Special Session delegates from the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children and other local groups requesting they place child torture in all its forms on the Canadian agenda. In our on-going correspondence with Senator Landon Pearson, Advisor on Children's Rights to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, we have yet to succeed in securing a commitment to have child torture, in all its forms, placed on the Canadian agenda.

Because AI Canada referred us to the London office we assume your voice circulates to many AI offices globally and the weight of, *Hidden scandal, secret shame*, will impact on the discussions at the Special Session. As you continue in these efforts there may be an opportunity to consider and share our goals with others who may be working for an expanded definition and understanding of torture against The Child--expanded to include the acts of torture used in child exploitation, in ritual abuse-torture, and torture which can occur within everyday relationships. For example, Anna Climbie's story is in our presentation. She lived in London and last week we heard that her perpetrators were found guilty of her death. We assume her perpetrators were not charged with child torture. Is this a correct assumption?

From what we have read and heard on TV news reports, Anna's suffering, before she died, ought to be **recognized, named, understood, and identified** as having resulted from cruel, inhuman and degrading acts intentionally and wantonly inflicted unto her--acts which ought to be understood as having extended far beyond the "accepted" definition and boundaries of child abuse, crossing into the arena of child torture! In our opinion Anna's life and death shows concretely, as stated in, *Hidden scandal, secret shame*, that ". . . the most dangerous place for children can be their home, where they should be safest." (p 13).

ON BEHALF OF THE CHILD we thank you for, *Hidden scandal, secret shame* which will help promote the protection of The Child and which will contribute to the prevention of all forms of child torture. Please contact us if you have questions, feedback to give, or ideas to share.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Sarson, R.N., B.Sc.N., M.Ed., & Linda MacDonald, R.N., B.N., M.Ed.