

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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January 15, 2001

Barbara Strang  
UNICEF Canada,  
443 Mount Pleasant Road,  
Toronto, Ontario  
M45 2L8

Dear Barbara Strang;

As Secretariat of the September 19-21, 2001, *United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children*, which will include addressing the issue of  
**VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

**we ask that you place CHILD TORTURE on this agenda.**

**CHILD TORTURE** in all its forms, includes:

- ⊗ **POLITICAL TORTURE** - i.e. state sanctioned and/or official representative
- ⊗ **EVERYDAY TORTURE** - i.e. parental/caregiver, institutional, acquaintance, or stranger
- ⊗ **RITUAL ABUSE-TORTURE** - organized family/group with extensive physical, mind-spirit and sexualized pedophilic torture
- ⊗ **CHILD EXPLOITATION** - using methods of torture--physical torture, sexualized torture, and/or mind-spirit torture

**WE ASK ON BEHALF OF THE CHILD:**

1. That you read the enclosed document about Child torture which is a revised copy of a presentation we delivered to the Nova Scotia provincial affiliate of

the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children. It explains the reality that Child torture happens outside the arena of political or state sanctioned torture. It places the experience of The Child as a victim of torture squarely within other types of adult-child relationships. It sheds another light onto the reality of child exploitation, as well as addresses, albeit briefly, the potential globalized risks associated with the exportation of the modus operandi of perpetrators of ritual abuse-torture. Reading this presentation document will take you approximately 15 minutes.

2. That you use the power and privilege of your position as a delegate and your concern for the rights and protection of The Child to address the reality that The Child who is victimized by perpetrators who commit acts of child torture--in any or all its forms---is **a Child in need of special protection;** and,
3. Contact us if you have questions. We welcome both the opportunity to be of further assistance and the opportunity of receiving feedback which could be essential to developing solutions which will promote the protection of The Child and lead to the prevention of child torture.

Sincerely,

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

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

We are forwarding the enclosed copy of a presentation document we developed and delivered to various groups in our efforts to educate others about violence against The Child--including 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. We are in hopes AI may, from the other side of the ocean, be able to act to support our quest to have **CHILD TORTURE--in all its forms--placed on the agenda of the *United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children***, September 19-21, 2001.

You will see Anna Climbie's story in the presentation. She lived in London and we heard last week that her perpetrators were found guilty of her death. We assume her perpetrators were not charged with child torture. Is this a correct assumption?

Anna's suffering before she died ought, in our opinion, be defined as a result of cruel, inhuman and degrading acts intentionally and wantonly inflicted unto her--acts which ought to be understood as having extended far beyond the "exceptional" definition of everyday child abuse! In our opinion Anna's suffering needs to be viewed from the stance which acknowledges the existence of child torture--child torture which can occur within the everyday adult-child relationship. 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).

We concur with AI's positions that it is the state's responsibility to take effective steps to protect children and part of that state's responsibility is recognizing the torturer's authority over The Child even if the torturer is not acting on behalf of the state, i.e. carrying out state sanctioned torture. In Canada the government appears to acknowledge this concept in print as they acknowledge our society as a whole has a responsibility to children as stated in a public report entitled "*National Children's Agenda Developing a Shared Vision*. (p. 2) However, 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 achieving a commitment to have child torture, in all its forms, placed on the Canadian agenda.

We have also 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 agenda.

As a means of starting such an essential dialogue we have provided global examples of The Child's experiences in our presentation which we are of the opinion demonstrate child torture. We have defined CHILD TORTURE--in all its forms--to include:

- ⊗ **POLITICAL TORTURE** - as state sanctioned and/or committed by an official representative, which immigrant children to Canada or other countries may have experienced 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, caregiver, institutional, acquaintance, or the criminal acts of torture perpetrated by a stranger.
- ⊗ **RITUAL ABUSE-TORTURE** - organized family/group with extensive physical, mind-spirit and sexualized pedophilic torture. In Canada ritual abuse[-torture] was identified as requiring urgent recognition in 1993 in the Final Report of The Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women entitled,

*Changing the landscape: Ending violence~Achieving equality*, which was submitted to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. (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 leaves The Child captive and enslaved.

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