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Hello Bill,

Re: The Criminal Code and Torture by Non-State Actors

A brief note to follow-up with the meeting and plan-of-action discussion Linda and I had with you in July, in Truro. We are forwarding copies of the letters we are sending to each provincial Minister of Justice or Attorney General; as well, we also are sending a copy of this letter to Loretta O’Conner, Executive Director, to the Council of the Federation. We realize these are “simply” introductory letters to the reality of torture by non-state actors but hope the premiers and ministers will be open to providing support for such an amendment to the Criminal Code.

Bill, Linda and I were very pleased to know that you presented our one-page, two-sided fact sheet to the Justice Minister and to learn that there has already been some discussion at the federal level about non-state actor torture. However, we also note that the “existing provisions” discourse was raised—this is disconcerting as it invalidates the human rights atrocities that perpetrators of non-state actor torture commit. However, we must say the existing provisions discourse is not a new argument; it is a familiar theme that is used to stalemate changes to the Criminal Code thus, as you will read, we have raised, albeit briefly, a discussion of the existing provisions discourse in our letter to the provincial Justice Ministers and to the Council of the Federation. Bill, I hope this provides you with some insight into our thoughts about the exiting provisions position being used as an argument for not moving forward with amending the Criminal Code to include non-state actor torture.

Are there others persons you think we should also send this letter to?

Bill, Linda and I look forward to hearing from you and meeting with you on your next time in the Truro office to do further planning. We need to discuss how we must proceed in order to have a bill brought forth requesting the necessary amendment to the Criminal Code.

Respectfully,

Jeanne Sarson