

A Preamble: OUR PARTICIPATION IN

“HELP WRITE THE STORY” PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS, the CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

Linda and I participated in the public round table discussion as well as participated in a private interview and video interview with Canadian Museum Board members and consultants on September 23-24, 2009. We presented the issue of torture that is inflicted by non-state actors in the private sphere and that this is a human rights violation and a crime. We are asking that the human rights museum include information and educational material about the reality about the continuum of torture that exists from State inflicted torture to torture that happens in the home and other private places as is inflicted by some parent(s), other family members, guardians, spouses, human traffickers and other like-minded persons. We answered the following question very briefly and plan to submit various written materials.

We thank all staff who made this event possible and for this opportunity to express a horrific reality that lies so invisible in Canadian society and in other industrialized countries.

Linda MacDonald & Jeanne Sarson



CONTENT AND STORY-GATHERING ACROSS CANADA

If you would like further information on the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, please go to our website at www.humanrightsmuseum.ca

QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

The following questions have been developed to guide your input to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Please note these are guidelines only, we welcome your contribution in the format of your choice.

1. What historical and contemporary human rights issues and debates should the Museum address?

- 1927-1929 The Person's Case
- 1993 The Woman's conference in Vienna when it was declared that "women's rights are human rights"
- Presently, discussion of the 'patriarchal divide' whereby State and non-state actor torturing is treated differently as a human rights violation in that State torture is considered a distinct and specific human rights violation and crime and non-state actor torture of women and children in the private sphere is socio-legally minimized or misnamed

2. What stories do you think need to be in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights?

- The evolution of women's human rights – stories of survivors of non-state actor torture of women that occur in Canada. See shadow report:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/VOWCanada42.pdf>

3. What have been your human rights experiences?

- As human rights defenders working to expose non-state actor torture of women and children in the private domain via:
 - Communication with Canadian politicians since mid-90s
 - Submission of a petition in the House of Commons for the criminalization of non-state actor torture – Feb. 2009
 - Participation in panels and caucus at the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York – 2004, 2006, 2007
 - Attendance at the 42 session on the committee on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, October 2008
 - See some of our human rights activities at our website:
<http://www.ritualabusetorture.org/humanrights.htm>

4. Are there specific events that you or your group see as a human rights success or failure?

- The failure we see in Canada is the failure of the Canadian government to *respect, protect, fulfil* their due diligence responsibilities for persons who have survived or are enduring non-state actor torture; this includes the failure of the political-legal system to recognize non-state actor torture as a distinct criminal offence in the Canadian criminal Code therefore other systems such as the police fail to protect and the healthcare system fails to provide the appropriately informed care, for example. (See reference and more detail: <http://www.ccvr.org/pdfs/firstlighwinter2009.pdf>, pp. 29-33, Defining torture by non-state actors in the Canadian private sphere).

5. What would you be disappointed about if it were missing from the Canadian Museum for Human Rights?

- If there is nothing mentioned about the actions of human evil that are perpetrated in acts of torturing both State and non-state.

6. What do you see as our human rights challenges of the future?

- Open and reality-based conversations and interventions to eliminate all forms of violence against women and children including torture in the private sphere. This would promote the knowledge that such acts of torture happen in developed countries such as Canada.

7. What would make this museum a memorable and fulfilling experience for you?

- We would be upset if we were to visit this museum and there were no educational displays about the evolution of women's on-going struggle to gain human rights and equality and if there was nothing about the on-going struggle to combat violence against women and children in all its forms.

8. How can this museum help to meet the goals and aspirations of your group?

- To do any of the above

9. Do you have suggestions for

- **Who we should interview for personal stories?** Contact us and we could ask women who have survived various forms of non-state actor torture to ask if they would speak to you. Email: flight@ns.sympatico.ca or Phone/fax: 902-895-6658
- **Objects or images that are iconic of particular human rights stories and that trigger a particular emotional response?** We have drawings and photos that we could if the women would share with you. Consideration might be to make a testimonial video.
- **Specific 'things' we should feature in the museum- such as objects, documents, photographs, film and video, diaries, journals, memoirs, music, art etc? Do you know where we can find these?** Both forms of torture use torture tools that are easily made therefore there could be a torture tool display ... i.e., a wire clothes hanger was used for whipping, cattle prods and car batteries and wires used for electric shocking, homemade torture racks, bathtubs used for water torturing ... etc., etc., etc., ...

****We will not be collecting artefacts at this time, nor doing oral history interviews, but would appreciate knowing where and how to find the people you suggest and the 'things' you find important.*

10. Other ... non-state actor torture involves human trafficking based on our work and research.

Thank you for your input. If you would like further information on the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, please go to our website at www.humanrightsmuseum.ca