

The Honourable Vic Toews, PC QC MP  
Minister of Public Safety  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Canada K1A 0A6

Re: Use of Torture-tainted information

6 September 2012

Dear Minister Toews:

We are writing to you today to express our opposition to the government's directives that would allow for the use of information that was likely extracted through torture. These directives are currently in the public spotlight following disclosure through an Access to Information request.

It is important to note that Canada is a signatory to numerous international agreements including the Convention Against Torture, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

All of these conventions emphasize the illegality of the use of torture and, as such, it is imperative that the Canadian government upholds its international obligations by unequivocally denying the right of any state to torture citizens or non-citizens.

To accept/ share information from states where torture is known to occur would be to renege on these international commitments. Furthermore, it would send the wrong signal, implying that there is a 'market' for such information.

As such we urge the Canadian government to direct its various national security agencies including the RCMP, Canada Border Services Agency, and CSIS to discard information likely obtained through the violation of human rights and to refrain from sharing such information.

In 2006, Justice Dennis O'Connor, in his Report of the Events Relating to Maher Arar, recommended policies that now appear to have been ignored. Specifically, recommendation 14 which stated, "Policies should include specific directions aimed at eliminating any possible Canadian complicity in torture, avoiding the risk of other human rights abuses and ensuring accountability."

We, the undersigned, strongly believe that the Canadian government and its institutions are responsible for the safety and well-being of Canadians. However this duty must align itself with international agreements, and with Canada's own Charter obligations.

The Government of Canada must condemn the use of torture, without caveats.

Sincerely,

Ihsaan Gardee  
Executive Director  
CAIR-CAN

Roch Tassé  
National Coordinator  
International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group

Gail Davidson  
Executive Director  
Lawyer's Rights Watch Canada

Brent Patterson  
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Inter Pares