



# communiqué

N°:  
No.: 246

December 9, 1987.

## CANADIAN ELECTED TO THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, announced today that a Canadian has been elected to the newly constituted United Nations Committee Against Torture. This Committee functions under the provisions of the International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which entered into force in June of this year. This Convention defines torture, requires that states make it a punishable offence, and provides for states to prosecute or extradite alleged torturers. Canada ratified the Convention on 24 June 1987, and elections to the Committee were held in Geneva on 26 November 1987. The first meeting will be held in Geneva in April of 1988.

The Canadian elected to the Committee is Professor Peter Burns, Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of British Columbia. He will serve on the Committee in an independent, expert capacity. Also elected to the ten person Committee are experts for the following states which have also ratified the Convention: Argentina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Denmark, France, Mexico, Philippines, Switzerland, and USSR.

In announcing Professor Burns' election, Mr. Clark emphasized Canada's commitment to human rights as an integral part of Canadian foreign policy. He stressed the importance which Canadians attached to all measures aimed at preventing and eliminating torture, and he expressed the hope that the Committee would rapidly become an effective implementation mechanism to help end the despicable and unjustifiable practice of torture. Mr. Clark called on states which have not yet ratified the Convention to consider the possibility of doing so at an early date.