



communiqué

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SIGNATURE OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION
AGAINST TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL,
INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, announced today the signature by Canada of the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The signature took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 23 August 1985. Signing for Canada was Canada's Permanent Representative to the United Nations at New York, Ambassador Stephen Lewis.

The Convention was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty ninth session in December 1984 and was opened for signature on February 4, 1985.

Canada has consistently attached great importance to all measures aimed at the prevention and elimination of torture throughout the world. Canada participated actively in all stages of the drafting of the Convention at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and in the final negotiations at the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. The Convention is the result of seven years of negotiations among states from all parts of the world.

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The Convention defines torture and requires that states make it a punishable offence. It provides for states to prosecute or extradite alleged- torturers and sets up machinery for monitoring the application of the Convention.

The Governments of all Canadian provinces have informed the federal government that they accept the basic principles of the Convention. The federal Department of Justice has now initiated a detailed review of the Convention and of its implications for federal legislation in Canada. Detailed consultations will also be conducted with the provinces before ratification.

To date 32 states have signed the Convention. It will enter into force after the deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession.