



# communiqué

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CANADA RATIFIES 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 that Canada has ratified the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The instrument of ratification was deposited this morning at the United Nations headquarters in New York by Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Stephen Lewis.

The Convention, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1984, was signed by Canada on August 23, 1985.

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 a Committee for monitoring the application of the Convention.

Following extensive consultations with the provinces conducted by the Department of Justice, amendments to the Canadian Criminal Code that will make the offence of torture as defined in the Convention a crime under Canadian law were passed by Parliament in April 1987 and entered into force on June 1, 1987.

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Because many of the provisions of the Convention fall under provincial jurisdiction extensive consultations were undertaken with provincial authorities.

The governments of all ten provinces have informed the Federal Government that they support the ratification by Canada of the Convention.

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 the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. In depositing its instrument of ratification, Canada becomes the twenty-first state party to the Convention which will enter into force on June 26, 1987. The twenty other states to have ratified or acceded to date are Sweden, Mexico, Belize, France, Philippines, Egypt, Norway, Senegal, Argentina, Uruguay, Uganda, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Cameroon, the Ukraine, Byelorussia, U.S.S.R., Afghanistan, Hungary, and Denmark.