Letters

To the Editor:

I was pleased that The Honourable Charles Lapointe, Minister of State (External Relations) announced that Canada believes it is important that the international community provide itself with the legal instruments necessary for the effective suppression of the practice of torture in the world. ("Canada Makes Unilateral Declaration Against Torture" Refuge, Volume 2, No. 3, February, 1983) The Minister further announced that Canada has made a unilateral declaration against torture in the United Nations which constitutes a moral commitment entailing no change in present Canadian law or practice.

The United Nations has also created the Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. A General Assembly resolution was passed urging members of the United Nations to contribute generously to the Fund. Canada has voted in favour of this resolution but has not yet contributed any money to the Fund. Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and Cyprus have contributed to date. A moral commitment by the Canadian government against torture is important but a financial commitment is even more important. I would ask the Honourable Minister to use his good offices to encourage the Canadian government to contribute financially to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. Canada's contribution to the Fund might encourage other members of the United Nations to contribute. This would be consistent with the policy against torture of the Government of Canada and with the resolution of the General Assembly calling for financial contributions which the Canadian government supported. The effective suppression of the practice of torture in the world needs more than a moral commitment from the Canadian government.

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