

# RESETTLEMENT

MOST SURVIVORS OF TORTURE COME TO CANADA AS REFUGEES



The United Nations definition of refugees states that a person must have grounds to fear persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political belief in order to be given asylum. For survivors of torture it is not only genuine fear of persecution, but persecution itself that forces the refugee to flee his or her country. The decision to flee one's country does not involve choice; refugees are forced to depart their countries through the experience of persecution. In no case is the decision to become a refugee is the refugee's own resolution, but, rather, it is a decision made by force of circumstance and under conditions of extreme duress.

Resettlement is difficult for all refugees, but even greater for survivors of torture. Adjusting to a new life in a new culture can be extremely challenging, but for those who have been victims of torture, the challenge is even greater and the obstacles numerous.

Many factors affect the process of resettlement, including country of origin, culture, gender, age, worldview, life experiences, type of trauma endured, experience of exile, and existing support systems. Consequently, there is no standard profile of a survivor of torture. However, support systems such as community programs during the process of resettlement are essential for survivors of torture.