

# **MEDICO-LEGAL ASPECTS OF TORTURE**



# Method used to control masses over the centuries



The prohibition against torture is a bedrock principle of international law. Torture, as well as cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, is banned at all times, in all places, including in times of war. No national emergency, however dire, ever justifies its use.

Human Rights Watch

# **United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**

**Adopted and opened for signature,  
ratification and accession by General  
Assembly resolution 39/46 of 10  
December 1984**

**entry into force 26 June 1987, in  
accordance with article 27 (1)**

# WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION DECLARATION OF TOKYO – GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICIANS CONCERNING TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT IN RELATION TO DETENTION AND IMPRISONMENT

*Adopted by the 29th World Medical Assembly, Tokyo, Japan, October 1975*

*Editorially revised by the 170th WMA Council Session, Divonne-les-Bains, France, May 2005*

*and the 173rd WMA Council Session, Divonne-les-Bains, France, May 2006*

*Revised by the 67th WMA General Assembly, Taipei, Taiwan, October 2016*

# BY WHOM ?

- Law Enforcement Authorities
- Other groups with assistance of official authorities
- Mafia groups
- Separatist rebels
- Anti-separatist movements
- Cases of individual nature



# WHY ?

- Use of excessive force while overpowering
- To obtain (valuable) information
- To make others scared
- To take revenge
- To suppress political opposition
- To obtain false statements
- For satisfaction of psychopaths



# OUTCOME OF TORTURE

- Injury
- Permanent disability
- Psychological trauma
- Social impact
- Death including extra-judicial execution











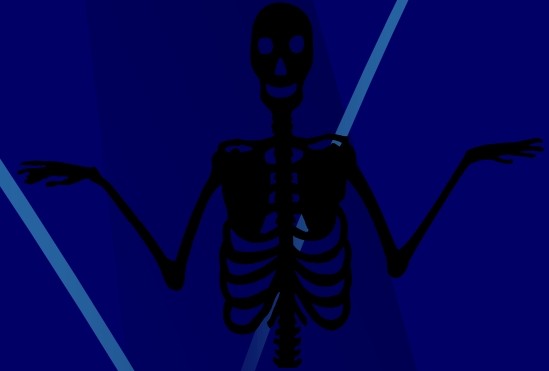
Sooriyakanda grave site





# METHODS OF TORTURE

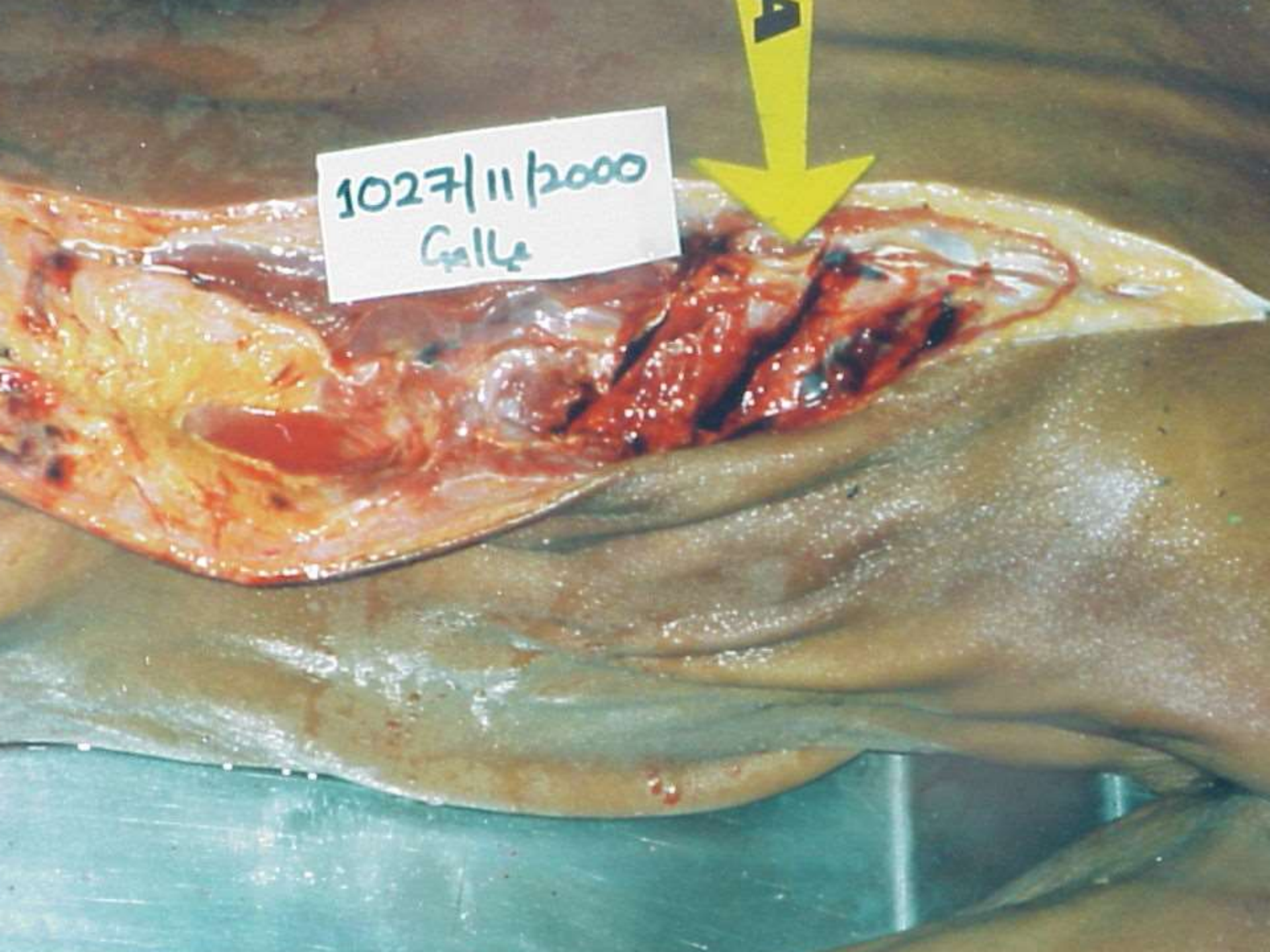
- Beating clubbing
- Cutting and stabbing
- Pricking
- Burning including cigarette burns
- Inhalation of toxic fumes
- Suffocation and ‘submarining’
- Electrical torture
- Suspension – normal and inverted and “dharmachakra”







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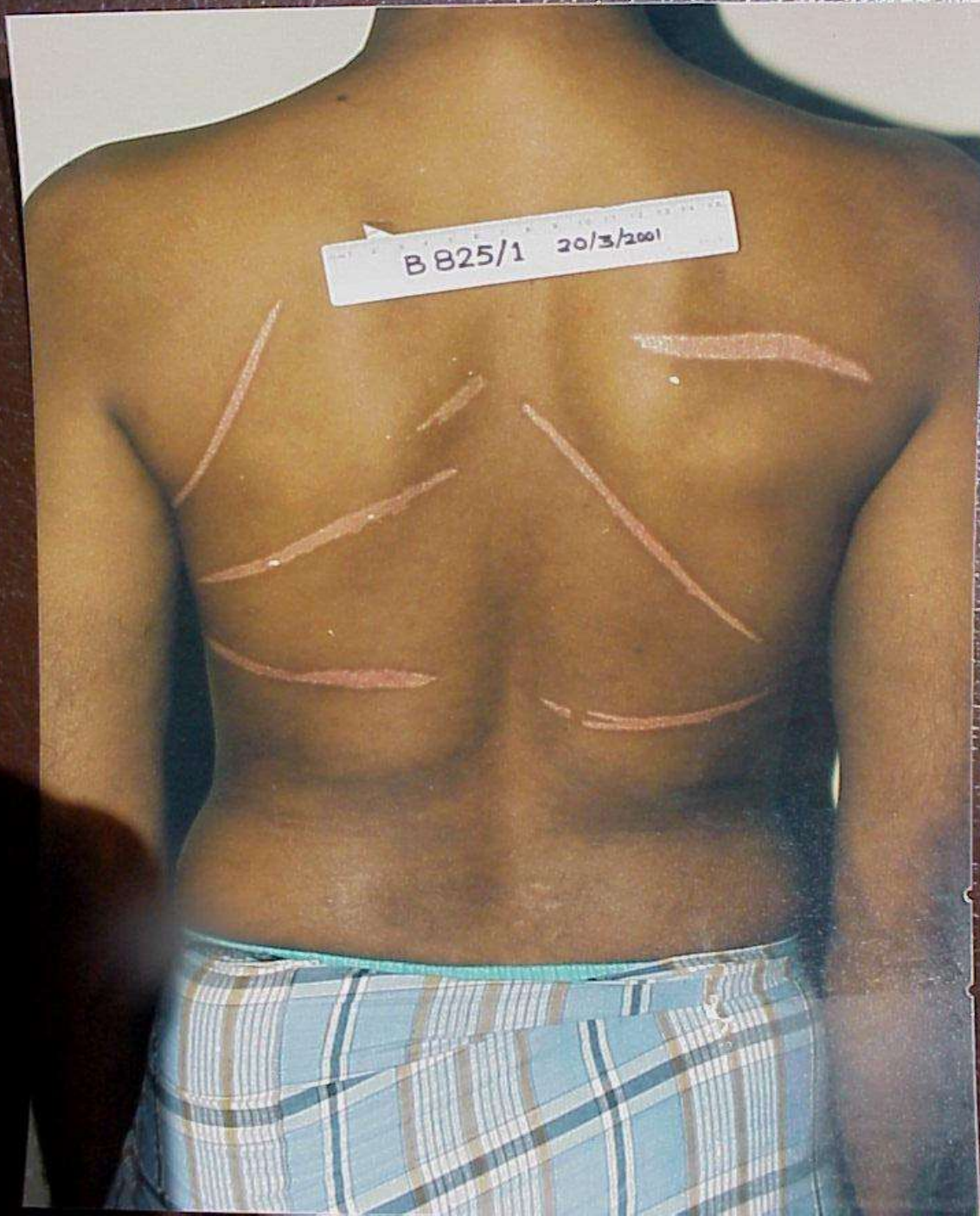




# **DIFFICULTIES FACED BY DOCTORS**

- Unco-operative or hostile attitude of authorities
- Doctor may be partially depend upon the authorities
- Datainee was in the custody of different organizations
- He may be reluctant to reveal proper details





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- Deliberately misleading information given by the detainee
- Forensic knowledge of the torturer
- Prolonged interval between the incident and medical examination
- Difficult exhumations in secret disposal of dead bodies
- Cases of sexual abuse with no physical evidence



**THANK YOU**