

A Continuum of Torture

Written by Stephen Roberts

When we hear about torture these days it is usually painful physical torture: Water-boarding, stress positions, cattle prods applied to the genitals and similar techniques. We also hear of psychological torture methods: The victim is blindfolded with a hood over their head and German Shepard dogs made to bark and growl in close proximity to their bodies, verbal threats to hurt their families, and other methods of a similar nature. But, there is a light weight version of torture practised by most governments around the world. An example from the UK: someone is arrested, they are told that they have 2 choices. They can make a false confession and get a caution, walk out of the police station right now and get on with their lives. Or, they can insist on their innocence, go to magistrates court, refused bail, and be remanded into the prison system for at least 12 weeks waiting for their substantive case to be heard. They will share a cell with at least one other inmate, have to use the toilet in front of their cell mate, feel physically sick while their cell mates use the toilet in a confined unventilated space causing a foul stench that lasts for hours. During these 3 months they will lose their job on the outside, their rent/mortgage will not be paid, they may be evicted from their home, and all their possessions lost or destroyed. This technique gets a lot of false confessions. It is used many times everyday in the United Kingdom. The system has no interest in truth or justice, only in optimizing OBTJ statistics. Is this torture? I say it is.