

## Reviewing Canada's National Security Framework

**By: Michael Nesbitt**

This term, the University of Calgary, Faculty of Law offered for the first time a new *Criminal Law & Policy Lab: Terrorism Law & Reform*. The idea behind the course was, in part, to follow along with the Government of Canada's "National Security Framework" public consultations and consider the legal, political and social issues that arose in real-time. (For more background on the Government's public consultations and its relationship to the course, see my earlier [ABlawg post](#)).

Students were split into three groups and asked to negotiate, amongst themselves, three different areas that they thought were of the most importance to Canada's national security framework review. Put another way, the students chose the three topics that they agreed were most ripe for review and consideration by the government. (For an overview of the course and its broader purpose, see [here](#)).

By the end of term, students were asked to produce ABlawg posts on their findings and recommendations on these three topics. The students also submitted research memoranda to the government as part of its public consultations. Today, we release the first of these three posts, [Curtailing Free Expression: A Barbaric Cultural Practice? A Critical Comment on Section 83.221 of the Criminal Code](#).

I would like to stress the importance of the students' hard work. These are topics that our students – young, well-informed, and passionate about the law and policy – thought most meritorious of review by the government. As the next generation of lawyers in Canada, but also just the next generation, it is vital that their voices be heard. For it is these students who will live with the consequences of our national security decisions for years to come, even while they will largely be shut out of the political and bureaucratic processes by which the decisions are made. It is for this reason that the government's public consultations are so important and should be commended, and likewise why it is important to listen to and take seriously the opinions of our students expressed in these posts.

The students and I are pleased that through ABlawg, we can put these important interests out into the ether and contribute to the discussion on national security in Canada – a discussion that is in desperate need of more (and younger) participants. We hope you enjoy and engage!

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