Tales of resilience: voices from detention and imprisonment in Russia

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Abstract

As the exposure to state violence could have long-term negative consequences on the survivors, we analyzed which optics and measures could be used regardless of the vulnerabilities of the individual, their social status and institutional context. We examine the ways in which law enforcement system challenges individuals and measures used to practice resilience.

We use the concept of resilience within torturing environment to achieve our goal. Various actors of Russian law enforcement and penitentiary systems – detainees and prisoners, their family members, human rights activists, state agents etc. – participated in semi-structured in-depth interviews, which we coded basing on grounded theory.

Measures employed by survivors to exercise resilience involve regaining bodily control (both by exercise and self-harm), having projections for future (by threats of legal prosecution or publicity), exploiting bureaucracy to one's advantage, controlling information flow (by bluffing), controlling material evidence, employing allies and preserving the meaning of "normal self".

We believe that our findings can have practical applications, e.g. for preventing some of the negative consequences of torture by training vulnerable individuals to employ resilient strategies. Describing the way to interpret the power imbalances inherent to the torture environment might also be helpful for appreciating even the smallest acts, including the choice not to act.

Keywords: resilience, torturing environment, empowerment, Russia

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Introduction

In a sense, the rehabilitation process for those who survived torture begins at the moment when the torture itself starts. The behaviour of different actors during the encounter with torture may either aggravate or alleviate some of its negative aspects. It is therefore essential to study the aspects that transpire instantaneously during such encounters, and positively influence their consequences in order to aid

the rehabilitation process. One way to look at it is to acknowledge that there is a struggle for power between the torturer and the individual being tortured. When torture or violence is executed by the state agents, this struggle resembles a football match on uneven ground: the match can be held, but the parties are not on equal terms from the very beginning.

First of all, the system itself operates in a manner that tends to provoke violence and encourage impunity of those who express loyalty to it. Secondly, exactly those people who are the most likely to struggle to offer resistance are more likely to be caught by the system. It is hence understandable that the sociological research on this topic usually concerns the ways in which the course of events is influenced by the vulnerabilities of those affected (Clair, 2018; Hannah-Mofat & Maurutto, 2012).

However, vulnerability-focused studies, while being indispensable to the large-scale social policy design on torture prevention, struggle to offer strategies for torture survivors and their supporters during the encounter with torture itself. For that reason, while acknowledging the aforementioned power imbalance, as well as cultural, institutional, and situational aspects of this encounter, we focus on *discovering coping strategies that were applied in the encounter with torture by our informants*. It is important to note that the coping strategy might also be understood as a way to merely analyze different perspectives in the torture environment, not the practical act. We aim to show the wide spectrum of the resistance options and points of view.

The structure of this paper is the following. In the opening section on Russian law enforcement system context, we promote a thesis that Russia is severely unsafe. In the Approach and Methodology section, we review the useful concepts in studying torture. We also explain our choice of the theoretical tradition of un-

derstanding resilience for the present research, as well as our other research design choices. The Methods and Data section provides an explanation of methods used for obtaining data. In the Results section, we present our findings on particular strategies that torture survivors may use within such encounters. In the Conclusion section, we highlight the potential implications of those insights for the specialists working in the fields of human rights and torture rehabilitation.

Russian context

In Russia, places of detention, detainees, and prisoners are more numerous per capita compared to other post-soviet countries (World Prison Population List, 2021), and thus it can be considered a high-imprisonment country, even though the numbers had dropped dramatically since 2000. Along with the decrease in public control over the penitentiary institutions in Russia, violence within the penitentiary institutions is expanding. According to the survey among Russian population (Gudkov et al., 2019), 25% of respondents experienced conflicts with police officers, and 10% of respondents experienced torture (definition of conflict or torture was not provided). Recently, after 26 years of membership, the Russian Federation was excluded from the Council of Europe due to the outbreak of the war in Ukraine (Decisions of Council of Europe, 2022).

However, public awareness of violence transpiring inside the police stations, pre-trial detention centers, and prisons is also growing. A notable public discussion topic on torture followed the leak of photo and video recordings of torture in the system of the Federal Penitentiary Service[1] in 2021.

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1   Gulagu.net started publishing the prison torture archive. Retrieved from https://www.asi.

Although prosecutors recognise many of the revealed cases of torture as real and widespread (Kommersant, 2019), voices of people who have faced state violence and those who are willing to discuss this topic are rarely heard. Access to many media covering conflicts with the police and the Federal Penitentiary Service[2] is blocked. People with experience of imprisonment who have been subjected to violence and torture are often regarded with suspicion and distrust, devaluing their experience. As a result, the discussion about torture in Russia remains fragmented.

Most commonly, and individual's penitentiary roadmap begins with being detained, immediately becoming exposed to the risk of physical and emotional violence, and torture. At the police station, the police draw up a report on the arrest and offense. If an administrative offense is imputed, the detainee is released after signing the infringement notice, but they may also be detained until the trial. In case of potential criminal charges, the court decides on detention. For the duration of this decision-making process, subject to sufficient severity of the imputed charge a person can be held in the police department.

Within 48 hours the court usually makes a decision: it is either arrest, written undertaking not to leave town or house arrest. If a court decides to arrest a suspect, the detainee is placed in a pre-trial detention center. From the moment detention is chosen, a person has the status of a suspect or accused and falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal Penitentiary Service.

If the court decides on the guilt of the accused person, their status changes to being convicted. One may appeal this decision after the announcement of the verdict. In the case of a guilty verdict regarding a detained person, their contact with the Federal Penitentiary Service continues: they are either left in a pre-trial detention center or, more commonly, transferred to prison. Prisons differ in the degree of severity of the regime: there are prisons of general, strict and special regimes, as well as colony-settlements (Omelchenko, 2016). Here, contacts of the convicted person with a lawyer and relatives, as a rule, cease. One is left alone with the system.

Everyday life of those in Russian prisons is highly disciplined by a strict schedule and rules of conduct supported by the surveillance system. The extension of surveillance was initially legitimised as a way to provide safety for the prisoners, but, in fact, rarely serves its goals as it's controlled by prison administration.

While a person has the status of a suspect and accused, they can be accompanied by a lawyer — their own or appointed by the state. Those who cannot afford a lawyer are forced to work with given attorneys, provided by the state for free, who usually have closer ties with the prosecution rather than with the client. The lawyer is an important figure in the life of the accused, often being the only bridge between the accused and the outside world (Bocharov, & Moiseyeva, 2017). In prison, an advocate is the only person legally allowed to act on behalf of the incriminated in the outside world.

According to our data, there is a risk of encountering torture throughout the entire time a person has contact with the law enforcement system, both under the both the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Federal Penitentiary Service: at the time of detention, in the police department, in the pre-trial detention center and in the prison (e.g, distanc-

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org.ru/news/2021/10/06/18-gulagu-net-nachal-publikovat-arhiv-s-tyuremnymi-pytkami/

2   News outlets e.g. «Mediazona», «OVD-Info», «Memorial» and some others are blocked online in Russia.

ing and transportation to prison can be viewed as torture (Pallot, 2005; Pallot et al., 2012; Piacentini, & Pallot, 2014), as well as sabotage of medical care (Runova, 2019) etc.). Some of our informants and their close ones were threatened because they filed a complaint of torture. Attempts to hold law enforcement officers accountable for torture can carry risks for everyone, especially for those detained in the police custody, in jail or in prison.

Approach and methodology

As mentioned earlier, the goal of this article is to find possible measures which could be taken when encountering state violence, and to show the analytical optics which make these measures understandable and transferrable. The measures we look for should be applicable regardless of the actor's role in the situation (prisoner or detained, state representative, family member, advocate, bystander, etc), as well as other situational specifics of the encounter, which lie out of control of the actor (institutional, cultural, economical, etc). Instead, they need to operate on the level of perception; more specifically, perception of personal agency, or resilience.

In this chapter, we first outline the specifics of the environment that surrounds torture performed by state agents, as well as review the concept of resilience.

Torture environment

An important argument for concentrating research on the concept of torturing environment is proposed by Koenig et al. (2009). They demonstrate that methods of applying violence can be of secondary importance compared to the fact of applying violence itself, especially when violent acts are numerous. Moreover, the cumulative effect does not equate to the sum of acts in question – it is more damaging.

Pérez-Sales suggests shifting academic research from defining and measuring torture methods, to defining and measuring torturing environments (Pérez-Sales, 2020, p. 451). He describes the torturing environment as "*…made up of a group of contextual elements, conditions and practices that obliterate the will and control of the victim, compromising the self*" (ibid), highlighting that power is challenging the integrity of an individual. The torture environment concept helps to gather "torture methods which attack human functioning" (ibid). In this context, the more general term of struggle for power, which describes interaction between two distinct entities, becomes replaced with a perhaps more relevant concept of resilience of the individual placed in such an environment.

Resilience

Torture environments weaken human functioning. The torture environment can consist of various elements and can influence human functioning in many spheres — social, psychological, economic etc. In order to protect oneself and to return to the same condition as before the state violence, including restoring resources, measures that ensure the self-preservation in an abnormal environment are required. Such quality can be defined as resilience.

It is often noted that resilience is related to the ability to understand what is happening. Victor Frankl (1959), the founder of logotherapy, implied that searching for meaning is typical for human nature. He considered beneficial for a person to practice an approach of recognising the situation[3]. In order to stay

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3   Frankl's philosophy of meaning seems to be a popular home-remedy for self-medication of trauma. A few months after the beginning of Russia's military aggression in 2022, Russian

safe, it is crucial to acknowledge surrounding events and remain aware of aspects, that concern oneself personally. Resilience requires being able to register and process what is happening at every moment.

Processing the situation of confrontation through the terms of the violence used and the resilience can contribute to the empowerment of survivors and help them to become aware of their own resources. People feel stronger and are more motivated to find inner resources after realising that they are capable of overcoming difficulties and uncertainty (Daly, 2020).

One of attributes of resilience is the ability to maintain balance between normal interactions and the uncertainty caused by power relations (for example, parent-child relationship). Social workers note that such quality is found frequently among children who grew up with parents who have mental disorders (Power et al., 2016).

Working with the concept of resilience is a rare case in sociology. This concept is more typical for psychology and management-related disciplines. However, we decided to use this particular term for several reasons. Firstly, in Russia, the situation when a person interacts with the law enforcement system involves high levels of risk and uncertainty. The concept of resilience is deployed to observe phenomena that are regarded as under threat with respect to one's plasticity (Endreß, 2015, p. 542). Secondly, the concept of resilience is related to a philosophy of being "geared towards tried-and-tested elements of the past and constellations worth protecting" (ibid). Such an approach to understanding resil-

ience is common for self-help practices that are focused on protecting available resources.

Work of resilience in torture environment
Individuals who experience the power of the law enforcement system are often marginalised (Keene et al., 2018). The path to their rehabilitation is related to the ability to meaningfully criticise the punishing and disciplining conditions. Thus, we refer to two significant presuppositions.

Firstly, we assume that torturing environment is a feature of the law enforcement system. In order to show the work of resilience - how it becomes seen and acting for the individual, - we pay some attention to the particular physical and material practices that contribute to the power struggle within the torture environment.

Secondly, we believe that an individual who passed through the torturing environment has ways of "winning oneself back." In other words, they preserve or regain resilience by resisting the impact and imposed meaning of the torture.

Methods and Data
All aforementioned considered, the practical task of this research is identifying tools that contribute to the resilience of those who have encountered the law enforcement system. However, we do not intend to describe the 'objective' efficacy of those techniques. On the one hand, it heavily depends on the subjective perception by the actors involved in the situation of torture. On another hand, as we also aim to challenge the way that research and policy makers usually view the torture survivors as merely vulnerable and stripped of power. We must use their own assessment of the usability of different techniques, helping them voice their own opinions and participate in the discussion.

e-commerce platform "Ozon" and a publishing house "Alpina" noted an increase in sales of Frankl's publications. Apparently, such popularity could be viewed as part of the therapeutical turn in society.

In order to achieve this goal, our data should reflect the first-hand experience of people who became involved in situations of state violence in various roles. Questions do not have standard patterns, and conversations are focused on the specific experience of each respondent. As subjective perception of the actors depends on their individual and supra-individual experiences, we used in-depth interviews as our primary method of data collection in order to include these subjective factors.

Interviews were collected during a large-scale project, that explores perceptions of acceptable and unacceptable actions of law enforcement system in general[4]. The project was commissioned by the human rights organisation Crew Against Torture in 2022.

Several dozens of respondents were interviewed in various regions of Russia, among which 33 survivors (people who in the past experienced detention and imprisonment, or their relatives, regardless of whether they were human rights defenders) and 22 experts (human rights defenders and activists, psychologists, lawyers, etc.).

We based our analysis on all materials of the project, which explored, inter alia, possible actions in situations involving state violence. For clarity and to be succinct, we have selected quotations from 13 interviews for this paper, noting that the remaining ones do not contradict the ones presented here. We find those interviews to be the most suitable for the purpose of illustrating our research.

List of respondents, whose interviews are quoted, is presented in table 1.

Respondents who experienced violence by the law enforcement system were found with assistance of the Crew Against Torture, as well as through personal contacts. There are both those who have faced the law enforcement system once and those who have multiple experiences. We talked with the respondents about themselves, their family, their encounters with the law enforcement system in general, and their experience of violence and torture by law enforcement officers, as well as about what happened afterwards.

Law enforcement and prison officers were found through personal connections as well through posts in online communities. They often had work experience in different bodies within the law enforcement system. Their interviews concerned their career trajectory, daily work tasks, opinion on the profession, situations from their practice, in particular, attitude towards detainees and prisoners, and their experience of interacting with them.

Experts, namely lawyers, human rights activists, medical employees, psychologists, and priests working in prison parishes, were recruited through snowball sampling. That is, personal social contacts of the research team, as well as with the help of human rights organisations and through mutual recommendations of colleagues. Interviews with experts were focused on their career trajectories and the field of expertise, the specifics of work in general, as well as work with survivors of torture and violence in Russia.

The field stage took place from May to July 2022. The interviews were conducted via phone calls, "Zoom" conferences, "WhatsApp" and "Telegram" applications. Transcripts were encoded[5] and analyzed. The development of

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4 "Permitted – Prohibited. A study of state violence in Russia and the public's perception of it" (URL: http://tinyurl.com/2vysha4y)

5 Coding is the process of analyzing the semantic parts of unstructured interview data for the

Table 1. List of respondents.

Code* in quotations below	Fictitious name within the "Permitted – Prohibited…" project and special details	Has experience of detention in police department	Has experience of imprisonment	Has law enforcement system work experience	Is chosen as an expert for the project
1S	Ildar	yes			
2S	Seraphim	yes	yes	yes	
3S	Anna, mother of the person killed by law enforcement officers				
1E	Aliya, an activist for rights of imprisoned people	yes	yes		yes
4S	Pyotr	yes	yes		
2E	Vasilisa, a former member of the Public Monitoring Commission for Prisons				yes
5S	Kristina, mother of the detained				
6S	Vasily	yes			
7S	Pavel	yes	yes		
8S	Daniil	yes	yes		
9S	Ruslana	yes			
10S	Evgeny	yes			
11S	Veniamin	yes	yes		

* S - survivor or his close ones, E - expert

codes and interpretation was carried out collectively by all research team members through several iterations. Sessions for coordinating the interpretations of the encoders were held. The

purpose of its subsequent consolidation by meaning, comparison, generalisation, and interpretation of what has been said.

coding process was conducted with the help of Taguette service.

Results: Exercising resilience within a torturing environment

We identified several types of practices that are effective at strengthening the resilience of those being subject to a torture environment. As their efficacy is subjective, and their usage

is versatile (i.e. they could be used by the prisoners opposing their supervisors, by the family members of the victims fighting legal battles, or by the police officer who refuses to participate in torture), we did not attempt to structure the results based on the status of the actor or the institution that is responsible for torture. Instead, we list them according to different aspects of challenges we encountered: physical (with resilience understood as reclaiming control of body), temporal (communicating vision of future as resilience), legal (taming the bureaucratic machine as resilience), informational (controlling information as resilience), material (exercising power over material objects as resilience), social (acting together as resilience), and moral (preserving inherent morale as resilience).

Reclaiming control of one's body
Bodily subjugation can manifest itself not only by means of inflicting physical pain and suffering directly. It also comes in indirect forms: for instance, with exercising control over the detainee's or prisoners' living conditions, or over their posture during escorts. In addition, it may involve bureaucratic procedures which limit the individual's freedom of movement by withholding them in a specific place, waiting for hours, or even days.

As this is arguably the hardest disciplinary measure during which to keep one's integrity, the majority of the strategies the detainees and the prisoners use to regain power over their own bodies may be viewed as extreme. Sometimes they try to use physical force themselves against law enforcement officers, even though more often than not this action exacerbates the situation. Other measures involve self-harming actions, such as hunger strikes, suicide attempts and riots (the latter always leading to brutal suppression in prison, which makes riots a self-harming step too).

One officer started swearing at some prisoner, so the prisoner attacked him. It almost came to blows. That prisoner then entered the cell to cut his wrists. Then he called that officer. The officer opened the window. The cell door has windows, you know. The prisoner splashed his blood out into the hallway. There was a riot following that incident. 1S

On another end of the spectrum, there are practices that are not that direct, but much safer. When the person encounters a torture environment, physical and mental exercise could help reclaim the control over their bodies. Our respondents mentioned doing push-ups and yoga, meditating and resting, and exercising control over one's attention and memory:

"When I got into the temporary detention facility, I took a notebook and started writing all kinds of things, describing the cell and so on. <…>"
"Why?"
"I like making my every single day very busy" 2S

Communicating future vision
Law enforcement officers often use threats in order to force an individual to obey the system's rules and to break their will to resist. For example, they may threaten a detainee with a more serious charge or, in cases when the person is arrested, with having to share a cell with people who carry infectious diseases or struggle to maintain personal hygiene. They can threaten to deprive a prisoner of their rights: the right to parole, the right to receive visitors and items, the right to correspondence. They can also place a prisoner in a punishment cell. In some cases, law enforcement officers force detainees, prisoners, human rights activists, and witnesses to cooperate by threatening their relatives and friends.

Expressing the wish to attract public attention, i.e. threatening with exposure, could also contribute to resilience. In the example below, 3S, whose son was killed by policemen, and who tried to hold the killers accountable, was waiting to get a procedural decision confirming her victim status, which would expand the list of legal options to influence the situation. Law enforcement officers denied her request for three months, seeming to prevent her case from progressing. Eventually, 3S decided to confront them using threats, which disrupted their routine interactions:

There was that guy in the office, an acting head of the local investigative committee. I walk into the office and I see him sitting with his feet on the table, playing video games! I said: "Okay, <…> I give you five days <…> to resolve my issue. Next time… I'll make you a media star. I won't come alone" <…> And it did the trick. 3S, mother of the person killed by law enforcement officers

On the other hand, choosing polite and respectful communication over making threats, and highlighting solutions to problems shared by both detainees and guards (for example, fighting against misconduct of the administration) appears to be another successful strategy using the image of the future.

*I always speak in a friendly manner. I have never framed a single officer of the pre-trial detention facility. When I lodge a complaint, for example, to the prosecutor's office, I write my questions there. Like 'why prison staff are not provided with conditions, which would allow them to comply with the law?'*1E

Combining the technique of setting mental boundaries between oneself and the torturing environment with this communication strategy gives a particularly effective measure for maintaining resilience - the actor stays resourceful, i.e. resilient:

[I would advise] finding courage and strength to survive the moment and minimise the harmful consequences. Avoid escalating the conflict. Don't provoke and don't annoy your opponents. It's easier to discuss the situation and try to resolve the issue through legal instruments, when things, at least partially, normalise. 2S

Taming the bureaucratic machine

The respondents confirmed that during the interactions with the law enforcement system, they feel resilient when they can see some kind of case advancement within bureaucratic work. For example, it happens when they manage to finally obtain a personal appointment with the officer in charge of the investigation, or receive all the necessary documents, or if there are important developments in the course of the investigation. Every new development provides an individual with a feeling of control over the situation and encourages their confidence regarding their right to have their case considered further, a right to complain, etc.

It is hardly surprising that their opponents are interested in slowing the investigation's progress down. To achieve this goal, they often use bureaucratic hurdles; sometimes such hurdles also occur due to the flaws of the system, and not as a result of someone's conscious effort. Regardless of the reason, those exposed to bureaucratic torture environment often struggle to regain control over their own time. For example, law enforcement officers may refuse to provide applicants with required documents, referring to visiting rules, and make them come over and over again.

The investigator couldn't give me the decision confirming my victim status for more than three months. <…> She appointed me for 10 a.m. once again, and I was there exactly at that time. She told me, "Leave my office, I haven't invited you." <…> I hang around every day to avoid being late. 3S, mother of the deceased by law enforcement officers

However, bureaucratic procedures can also become a useful instrument for the victims as well, since officers are likely to leave those who lodge complaints alone.

"I think they [policemen] were afraid. They learned from my criminal record that I was complaining and appealing against my conviction until the very end." 4S

The facilities within the law enforcement system are frequently unavailable for their intended use. Detainees and prisoners occasionally manage to use formal rules to their advantage. For example, knowledge about punishment cells being overcrowded helped imprisoned 1E to realise that the prison staff made empty threats.

Yes, of course, they were threatening me with punishment cells and other stuff. But those cells were full. And they reached the limited capacity of the pre-trial detention facility. In fact, in order to get into the punishment cell you have to wait in line. I figured it out quickly enough. 1E

In some cases, when officers were obeying the law, survivors and their representatives exploited formal rules in order to achieve certain goals.

We said that we don't care about his written refusal, because the law doesn't say that a

person can refuse to communicate with the PMC [Public Monitoring Commission] . When they brought him to us, we saw that his face was indeed mutilated. We were able to record that important information. 2E

Controlling information
Our data shows it is easy for law enforcement officers to deceive an individual who does not have much experience in this system. Individuals get misinformed frequently about their rights and obligations; many respondents mentioned that nobody explained their situation to them, and the officers in charge claimed that they were not obligated to do so. In some cases, policemen explicitly lied about their actions and motivations:

The investigator said, "I'll let you go home." And then it turned out that my daughter will be transferred to a temporary detention facility instead. It was a kind of manipulation. The investigator promised us one thing. Then she claimed she couldn't do it. She was like, "Well, I'm sorry, but I can't." 5S, mother of the detained

Many respondents faced deception in various institutions: in the police office, in prison, in the investigative committee, in court, in the prosecutor's office, in medical institutions reporting to law enforcement, etc. Such direct lies not only mislead those lacking necessary information, but also can demoralise those who understand that they are being lied to. On the other hand, detainees and prisoners can also sometimes use certain rhetorical techniques to confuse their opponents by saying something unexpected and "off script". It could be ridiculous nonsense answers to a formal questionnaire or a bluff to buy some time before being put into a cell.

I think he tried to talk himself out of the situation. They had a long conversation. He claimed that he had high blood pressure. Maybe, his head was spinning too. And his memory deteriourated. Nothing of that was true, actually. He was just stalling. 6S

Exercising power over material objects
Some disciplining practices focus on exercising control over material items and surroundings. Unlike measures for manifesting power over the individual's body, materiality-related measures are not supposed to inflict direct physical suffering. Instead, they bind the fate of the individual to certain objects. Manipulating important documents, e.g. identity papers, is a common example.

Everybody who got released [and stayed in the settlement where prison is] all had invalid passports. <…> They were made <by the local issuing body responsible for the prison> with a violation. 7S

However, in most cases, the items to which power is delegated are those that could be used as material evidence. In court, power is expressed by determining which account of the events is "real": the one produced by the detained, or the one produced by the law enforcement officer. One of the most frequently mentioned objects in this regard are video cameras and voice recorders: not only do they can allow the survivors to hold the torturers accountable, but sometimes their mere existence shifts the ground during the encounter:

The camera was installed in the service car, it was there, I saw it. It reassured me at that moment that nothing would happen to me in that car [at least]. 4S

For their part, officers might refuse to provide recordings or damage them, as well as take and switch off the phones.

We were never allowed to bring video and audio recording equipment to temporary detention facilities, pre-trial detention facilities, and colonies. So we always ended up with only a pen and a piece of paper. At the same time, the officers <…> always had their video recorders turned on and filming. <…> These recordings are stored for a long time. But they're almost impossible to get. 2E

Success stories usually mention independent evaluation initiated by the survivors and their supporters: of the survivors' medical and genetic material, of cigarette stubs, of cellphone billings, etc. Officers try to counteract that by gathering an alternative collection of materials, hoping that even though they might be obviously falsified or irrelevant, their sheer amount would be already sufficient.

*So they gathered some [random] stones, [because] the confession mentioned ten stones. Those stones were later sent for examination, and it showed that there were no fingerprints, nothing .*8S

On a different subject, possessing personal property in prison is another example of how material objects can promote resilience. Those objects help the individual not only to improve living conditions, but to win back some of their integrity, serving as a link to the "free life on the outside", as well as resisting prison-induced identities with the power of privacy. This privacy is so highly and unanimously valued by the prisoners, that they sometimes engage in its' collective defense, which works as additional resilience practice and promotes solidarity.

They found a phone. <…> One guy rushed to get that phone to at least break it. <…> And the whole prison started banging on the doors, making noise to distract the guards from him. 8S

Acting together

Interactions of the detained or imprisoned person with law enforcement officers do not occur in a vacuum. They are surrounded by numerous people. Some of them are initially hostile toward the detained or imprisoned person. The others, on the contrary, might be supportive. Some people are neutral and can either support or take from the victim's resilience to fight back.

Hostility is often shown by those to whom law enforcement officers delegate their power and who act according to the aforementioned scenarios. In most cases, those are law enforcement officers themselves. However, there are cases where those people are "temporary recruits" or don't have official status. Initially neutral social actors can also become hostile. For example, witnesses may contribute to falsifying evidence. Another example is an "accomplice" that agrees to give false testimony.

How can a friend of mine, relatively speaking, look me in the eyes and say "she stole the money"? That's so absurd. Perhaps this was the most shocking thing in the whole situation. 1E

On the other hand, there are also supportive actors. A detainee needs help from their relatives and loved ones, as well as from lawyers and human rights defenders throughout the entire process. Handling such situations might be difficult even for those experienced in interacting with the system. Those providing advice and material or emotional assistance can serve as resources for resilience.

In some cases, a person cannot achieve any results on their own, even if they perform all the necessary steps. However, having a lawyer to accompany them in the investigative committee or the prosecutor's office might increase their chances of success. The connection is particularly noticeable when we compare the complaints lodged by prisoners and the ones lodged by their relatives. The complaints of individuals from outside of law enforcement facilities turn out to be more effective.

Complaining about the pre-trial detention facility from outside is safer. Because you can always intimidate a detainee. You can always take away their complaints. But if complaints are lodged from outside, the facility then has no choice. They have to address the issue and sort things out. 1E

It is often difficult for relatives to find out what kind of support a detainee might need while in a pre-trial detention facility (food, medicines, personal belongings, financial support, phone payment, etc.). If uncensored phone calls and letters are not available, exchanging information through a lawyer appears to be the only way of maintaining communication with a detainee.

Law enforcement officers may attempt to destroy the faith expressed by close ones outside. The enclosed nature of the system contributes greatly to this task. In some cases, relatives mistakenly trust law enforcement representatives, taking their support of resilience away from the detained:

[Father] was like: "you create the mess, you sort it out. Go and explain yourself. Give them answers. Since you promised them that you would come tomorrow, you should be there". 9S

However, resources of support might come not only from the outside. As has been mentioned above, on some occasions, solidarity between detainees and their collective action can contribute to progress even in the most difficult cases.

Imagine six thousand people standing up and saying: "If you don't call the medics, and the boy dies, we all kill ourselves." There is no way out for them. They have to report the issue. The administration has no choice. 7S

Other respondents felt they were responsible for staying resilient, because it is needed for their collective action with fellows sharing the same views on the struggle of power.

I met a man in the pre-trial detention center. He was tortured by the same officers who tortured me. <…> he approached me. <…> everybody there knew that we [both] were writing complaints. He told me, "Don't give up, for God's sake. Go through with it <…>" 1S

Political opinion in a narrow meaning also strengthens feelings of solidarity and one's rightness, which may not correspond to law enforcement representatives' views. One of the respondents who was arrested at a political demonstration recounted his own experience.

[The policeman] asked me, "Why is everyone laughing here [in the police van]? You were arrested. We will take you in for questioning." <…> I said, "You see, everyone here understands why they are here." He said, "Actually it's the first time I see people laughing after the cops arrested them." 6S

Many survivors of torture, who addressed the human rights defenders, emphasised the selflessness of the human rights defenders who help without seeking to profit, show a friendly face and empathy towards them; sometimes they even provide financial support from their personal savings. At those moments, the impact of human rights activists on detainees' resilience extends beyond the scope of mandatory legal support. Their involvement encourages the will to fight for justice.

I wouldn't probably win anything. <…> I'm not quite sure I could have made it without [my lawyer] either <…>. And one most important thing: he's doing it for a good cause, he has no axe to grind." 10S

Preserving inherent self-image, morale and goals
Sometimes attacks on human dignity accompany the ones made on the body; in other cases, they are a stand-alone practice. Survivors of state agents' violence often mention that they were insulted, humiliated, and "badmouthed". Even a single word or a slight push could be the last drop in the process of "losing oneself" or feeling as "nothing":

They call you names, they can poke you, they can smack your head or your bottom, they can pull and push you. … For them, you're nothing. It's like an operator in a factory, he does not treat machines as human beings. Same thing here. 11S

Respondents commonly referred to ethical categories, such as "morals", "truth", "justice". As many of them repeatedly mentioned, believing in their innocence and being confident that justice would eventually prevail helped them to endure the situation immensely:

You shouldn't be afraid. Everything will be fine if you're absolutely sure that you didn't do anything. 10S

Continuing to "feel human" is supported by keeping the sense of one's purpose. For example, 3S, a mother whose son was killed by the police officers, mentioned feeling that she had no right to abandon her mission to find the law enforcement officers who committed the crime because she made a mental promise.

When integrity is challenged, self-understanding and clinging to the previously chosen meaningful values "to the end" empower many.

> First of all, you have to be honest with yourself. <…> "Get into the basket, if you call yourself a mushroom.[6]" If you start something, then you'll have to keep going until the end. No back down. No half-truths. Never stop until you complete your task. Show yourself respect. You respect yourself if you can go the distance. You see, I respect myself very much. 7S

Not only detainees use the optics of dignity to view their situation. Another example can be seen in criminal investigation officers who offer their victims snacks and other small comforts right after the torture as a form of "apology". Such gestures may serve as a way for the torturers to maintain their sense of self as a dignified actor in a just situation. The victim could turn this image around by making a choice to refuse to accept these gestures.

Discussion

We demonstrated that torture environment involves specific practices of challenging one's resilience and measures of exercising it. Measures correspond to the challenge, to the extent that is allowed by the asymmetry of power. Exercising resilience, even though it might bring positive outcomes for the immediate or future situations, is often related to loss and risk for the survivor. Take a prisoner who writes official complaints in order to change the guard's attitude, while he is the only person writing and sending these types of documents. His behaviour is risky because of his complaints: administrative staff might perceive them as a strong weapon.

By exercising resilience individuals acquire a sense of inner freedom that is difficult to control externally when they feel that they constitute something "bigger and better" than just an object of attention of the law enforcement system. Even if the situation remains unchanged and there is no apparent success (e.g., in the form of further developments in the case, improvement of detention conditions, cessation of physical violence, etc.), just seeing the ways of potential resilience without practicing them offers alternative optics.

The list of the situations and measures provided in this article is by no means exhaustive, and not each one of them could be regarded as a "best practice", many of them being more like a last resort (meaning that they are risky and could cause torture escalation). Rather, what this list represents is an invitation for the academic and expert community to broaden our theoretical understanding of resilience and explore practical techniques. On the surface of such work lies the opportunity to offer better help to torture survivors, as well as to provide training. Additionally, dedicating research to this topic may help shift the social perception of torture survivors from someone merely vulnerable, deficient and requiring help, to people who exercise resilience in the most difficult situations; this shift might become empowering in itself.

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6   Russian proverb meaning the same as "In for a penny, in for a pound".

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