

Professor Nils Melzer  
Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel,  
Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment  
Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights  
52 rue des Pâquis  
CH-1201 Geneva, Switzerland

21 June 2020

**Re.: Response to RFI for Report on Psychosocial Dynamics Conducive to Torture**

[submitted 21-Jun-2020 at 11:30 pm local time (east coast USA); 2,000 words total]

Dear Professor Melzer,

I am submitting this response to your request for information on behalf of a grassroots human rights organization known as FFTI. This is a joint response from me and Mrs. Ella Free. She and I are the co-founders of FFTI and serve as FFTI's president and vice president, respectively.

We are stakeholders in the psychosocial dynamics conducive to torture, as well as recommended measures to prevent and mitigate torture, for the following reasons. Our organization engages with and advocates for approximately 15,000 people in the USA and other countries who allege being victims of organized stalking and harassment, remotely delivered directed-energy assaults, and related forms of persecution and ill treatment. A sizable proportion of the victims we engage with have shared and documented accounts of abuse ranging from psychological harassment to bona fide psychological and physical torture with directional energy-emitting devices. In addition, Mrs. Free and I have firsthand experience as torture victims, which is what motivated us to engage in victim support and advocacy work. I was tortured by technology-assisted harassment and energy-weapon assaults from 1-Oct-2013 to 28-Jan-2016 in Vancouver, Canada, presumably because I witnessed criminal activity in a non-residential building next to my apartment. Mrs. Free is an ongoing victim of these forms of abuse, apparently because she rejected the advances of a wealthy, would-be paramour with connections to the high-tech industry. Consequently, we have firsthand expertise in these matters and a wealth of expertise garnered from the thousands of alleged victims with whom we engage regularly. We and our organization also represent civil society, as we are law-abiding, non-violent members of our communities.

***Relevant Background***

There is ample scientific literature and other documentation showing that directed, pulsed radio-frequency/microwave energy is capable of causing pain sensations, impairment of muscle function including that of the heart, capillary damage and bruising, inflammation and burns, eye damage, potentially concussion without blunt force trauma (called "the immaculate concussion" by some medical experts), and various induced sensory phenomena like the Frey Hearing Effect — all in a remotely delivered fashion and even through walls, ceilings, and concrete floor slabs that are not well shielded against radio-frequency/microwave energy. Pulsed radio-frequency/microwave energy of sufficiently high power, which is lower than one might expect, can induce perceived buzzing sounds, high-pitched ringing, or complex naturalistic sounds, by slightly heating the brain with each pulse of energy. The standing pressure waves induced by pulsed heating of the brain propagate to the inner ear, producing privately perceived sounds via this effect.

The prominence of this phenomenon among certain US and Canadian government personnel stationed in Cuba, who reported directional energy assaults starting in late 2016, prompted government agencies and the media to report those incidents as assaults with "sonic weapons". Two medical studies found evidence of neurological damage and brain tissue changes in those victims due to this incident:

- Swanson et al., 2018. JAMA 319: 1125-1133, [doi: 10.1001/jama.2018.1742](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2018.1742).
- Verma et al., 2019. JAMA 322: 336-347, [doi: 10.1001/jama.2019.9269](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2019.9269).

Given the distinctive symptoms experienced by those victims, a UC San Diego MD-PhD scientist, who has extensive expertise in bio-effects of non-ionizing radiation, recognized manifestations in the government personnel as being caused by radio-frequency/microwave energy:

- Golomb, B.A., 2018. Neural Computation 30: 2882-2985, [doi: 10.1162/neco\\_a\\_01133](https://doi.org/10.1162/neco_a_01133).

Over many years, militaries around the world have been developing directed-energy weapons for crowd control. Similarly, through-the-wall (TTW) radar devices (known as “radiolocators” and “intentional radiators” by the US Federal Communications Commission) are under active development for use by emergency services. Development of such technologies continues to progress in terms of increasing stand-off distance and decreasing size.

### ***Dangers of Assuming That Only Militaries and Intelligence Agencies Are Capable of Deploying Harmful Energy-Emitting Devices for the Purpose of Torture and Ill Treatment***

The assaults on the US and Canadian government personnel in Cuba were actually covered by the mainstream press — though with much controversy and confusion due to the difficulty of collecting residual forensic evidence — because those assaults were carried out simultaneously against a cluster of prominent and credible individuals. Taken together, the military development of directed-energy weapons and the assaults on the diplomats in Cuba lead most people to conclude that only militaries and intelligence agencies of wealthy nations are capable of carrying out such assaults. Yet, according to thousands of victims from ordinary walks of life, similar assaults are reported as being carried out by organized criminal groups within communities. Although this “backyard terrorism” is now reported as occurring in numerous communities across many nations, ordinary victims universally fail to get media coverage, medical documentation of assaults, or police assistance, or their allegations are regarded as manifestations of conspiracy theory “echo chambers” or mental illness.

*While militaries, intelligence agencies, and certain sectors of law enforcement are certainly capable of deploying directed-energy weapons against targeted persons — with little or no accountability — it is dangerous to assume these capabilities are limited to such entities.* The problem of torture and ill treatment with directed-energy devices is much more widespread than the Cuba incident. The manufacturers of high-power microwave generators, antennas, waveguides, and associated radio-frequency hardware, which supply components to military contractors, the telecommunications industry, and the medical devices sector, produce a massive catalog of commercial off-the-shelf technology. Components of that technology can be assembled or adapted into harmful devices, including devices to facilitate stalking, invasion of privacy, abuse, physical assault, and torture. The resulting directed-energy devices are increasingly available to criminals through various marketplaces.

*Assuming that torture by means of directed energy is only a capability of state actors poses a danger to civil society. This assumption facilitates inaction by law enforcement, in turn facilitating the unfettered growth of a new mode of within-community torture and “backyard terrorism”, which are already being carried out with impunity by lone-wolf criminals and organized criminal groups.* With this background in mind, we comment on the relevant psychosocial dynamics conducive to torture and ill treatment via directed-energy assaults and organized stalking. We also make recommendations concerning the prevention and mitigation of these activities.

### ***Relevant Psychosocial Dynamics Conducive to Torture and Ill Treatment***

Directed-energy assaults are highly invasive and deeply violating, because they can be remotely and covertly delivered to targeted victims going about their daily lives in community settings (e.g., via devices covertly mounted on automobiles) or while victims are at home (e.g., via equipment deployed in neighboring homes). This leaves victims feeling there is nowhere to escape the abuse. Moreover, organized stalking typically involves the participation of a large number of networked offenders. Isolated instances of harassment are distributed among many offenders, such that each offender may feel a sense of little or no culpability. In contrast, victims suffers the entire onslaught of abuse during protracted harassment campaigns. Both organized stalking and directed-energy abuse are facilitated by advancements in commercially available technology. In regards to the specific examples of organized stalking and directed-energy assaults, we identify the following psychosocial factors associated with torture and ill treatment:

1. The ability to deliver abuse and torture remotely and anonymously seems to dampen many offenders' feelings of empathy and shame, which would otherwise inhibit more proximate and public acts of torture and ill treatment. So pronounced are these psychosocial drivers that many victims report their harassment and abuse as appearing to have no discernible motive other than antisocial entertainment on the part of the offenders.
2. Torture and ill treatment within communities is facilitated by methodologies that allow multiple offenders to make small piecemeal contributions to a much larger campaign of abuse directed against targeted victims. Psychologically, this shared culpability allows each offender to feel that their contribution to the torture is not immoral or criminal.
3. When technology and/or criminal methodology allow torture to be carried out within seemingly civil society — in everyday contexts and in a difficult-to-document manner — law enforcement, medical care practitioners, and even victims' families and friends are unmotivated to provide services or support. "Institutional betrayal" of victims, including forced psychiatric examination and forced medication in extreme cases, magnify the trauma and harm experienced by the victims.
4. Unwitting bystanders find it extremely difficult to accept that such disturbing criminal activity may be occurring in an invisible manner in their midsts. Accepting this possibility would destroy their feeling of safety and wellbeing. Owing to society's deeply enculturated responses to allegations of covert harassment and torture by means of futuristic weaponry, we should actually expect the criminals to adapt their methodologies and technologies to exploit these very same reflexive responses by the bystander audience.

### ***Recommended Measures of Prevention and Mitigation***

The core issue underpinning the psychosocial dynamics conducive to torture by covert methods and technologies which leave little trace is the difficulty of convincingly documenting such torture for the wider audience of civil society. Surely, the vast majority of society would never want such atrocities to pose risks to their families, friends, and fellow citizens. With this in mind, we make the following recommendations to prevent and mitigate novel technology-assisted forms of torture and ill treatment:

1. *Establish policies that encourage member nations to comprehensively investigate allegations of torture and ill treatment by non-state actors, criminal groups, or rogue state actors, whenever a threshold number of citizens make such claims.* Given the rapid development of technology, and recognizing that harm can be delivered in ways that leave little or no trace, the motivation behind such investigations should not hinge on victims producing physical evidence. Recognizing there are technologies that can be used to torture in ways that are unfamiliar or intangible — or produce bizarre effects on victims'

senses, perceptions, or minds — investigations into allegations of torture and ill treatment should not be discouraged by victims' difficulties in describing their experiences as recipients of torture and ill treatment. The burden of fact finding and evidence gathering must fall on law enforcement and the state whenever a sizable population of citizens alleges torture or ill treatment, even if their allegations are difficult to make sense of.

2. Establish policies to encourage member nations to invest in forecasting the possible applications of novel and existing technologies to the torture and ill treatment of citizens and residents by non-state actors, criminal groups, or rogue state actors. When potential modes of torture are predicted, the same policies should encourage investment in the development of practical and affordable measures to assist ordinary individuals in documenting their torture or ill treatment in ways that have evidentiary value in jurisprudence. This recommendation should be motivated by the facts that criminals are often among the first to adopt new technologies for illicit gain and that forensic science typically lags advancements in criminal tactics.

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

Sincerely,



Matthew E. Arnegard, Ph.D.  
Vice President of FFTI

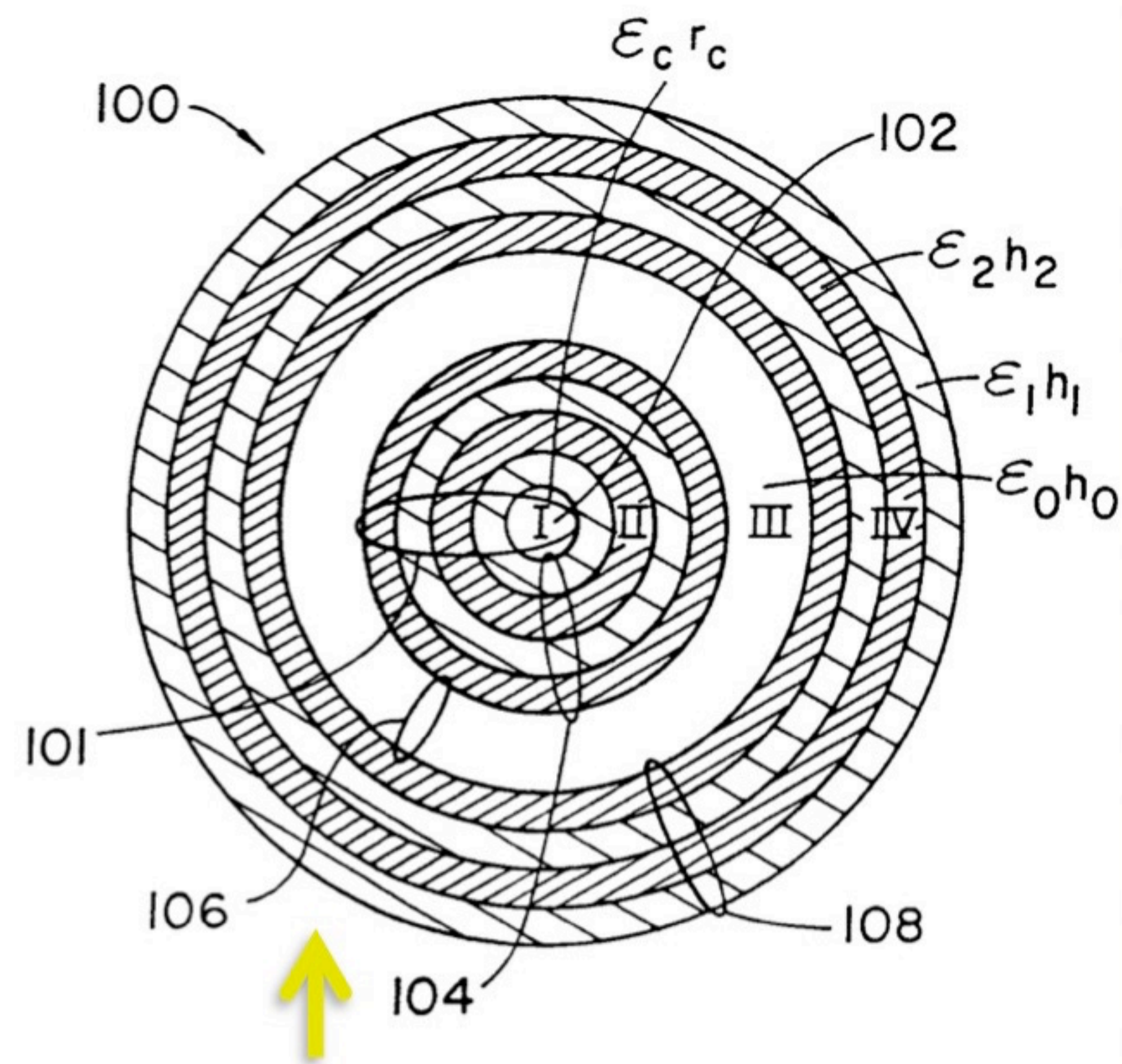
on behalf of Mrs. Ella Free,  
President of FFTI, and our organization:  
[www.freedomfortargetedindividuals.org](http://www.freedomfortargetedindividuals.org)

**Attachments** (3 photos):

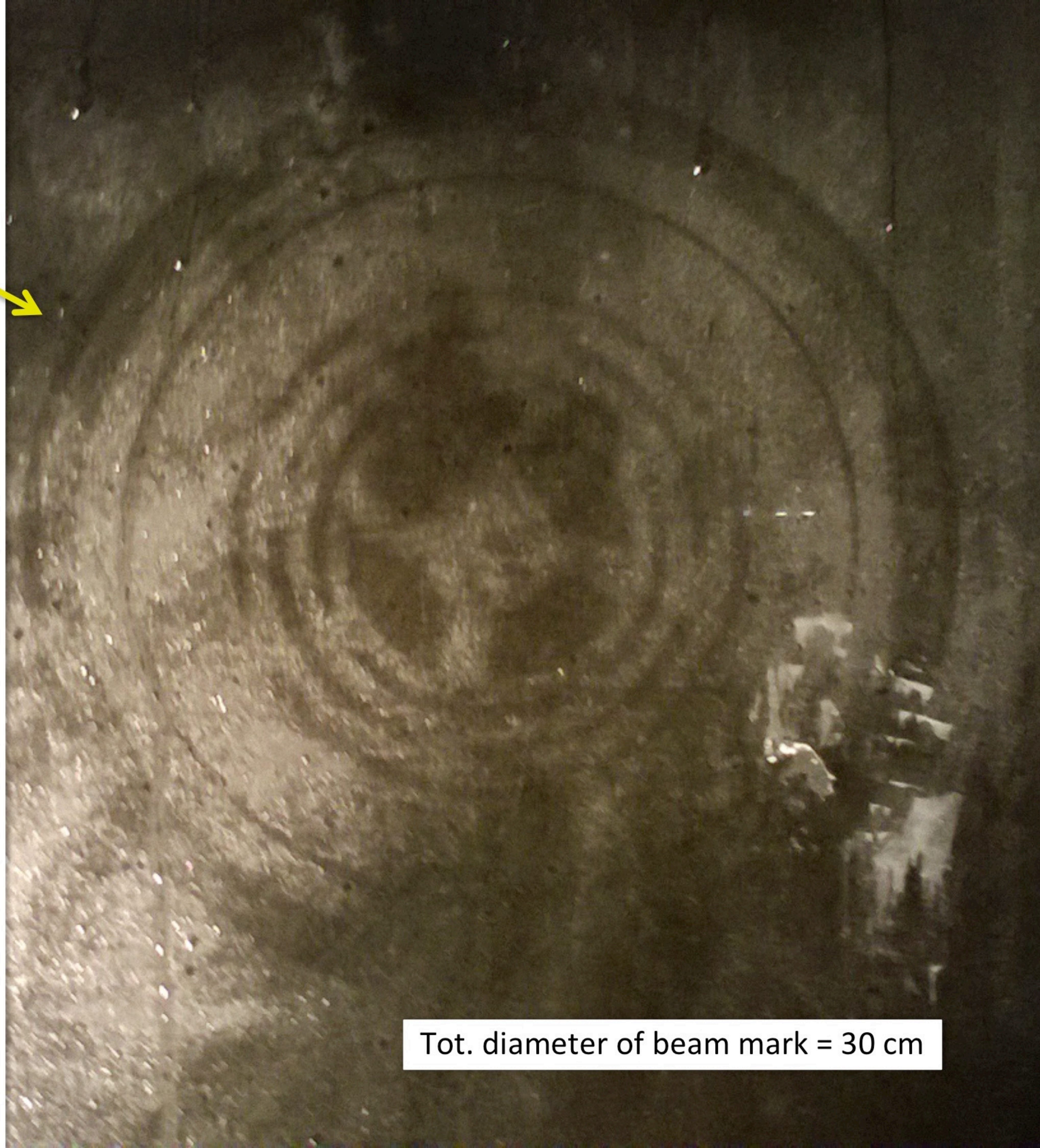
1. Concentric ring resonator waveguide impression in window of Arnegard's apartment in Vancouver, Canada from directed-energy assault with witnessed high-power microwave generator (20-Dec-2015; video also available).
2. Waveguide impressions in window of an FFTI volunteer in Arlington, VA, USA, from directed-energy assaults in February 2018 (markings also witnessed and verified by Arnegard in 2019 and again in 2020).
3. Military vehicle with millimeter wave crowd control weapon at 17th and L St. NW, Washington DC, during "Black Lives Matter" protest on 6-Jun-2020 (photo by M.E. Arnegard).



Waveguide impression (i.e., beam cross-section) flash-burned and frozen (i.e., dielectrically engraved) in window of Apt. 1501 at 1189 Howe St. (Vancouver, BC) from directed-energy assault (w/witnessed beam weapon) at approx. 10:00 pm, 20-Dec-2015. Photo by M.E. Arnegard at 3:04 am on 21-Dec-2015.



Example of concentric ring resonator waveguide (Fig. 1 from patent US 6573813 B1)



Tot. diameter of beam mark = 30 cm



