

I'm Still Here

Freedom from torture is among the most fundamental human rights. Torture is categorically prohibited under international law. There is no exception—ever. And survivors have the right to rehabilitation.

“Still Here” is a short film that depicts the journey from trauma toward healing. It is inspired by CVT clients – refugee and asylum-seeking survivors of torture from across the globe – and our many years of work seeking accountability for U.S. torture and to close the Guantánamo Bay prison. The film was commissioned by the Center for Victims of Torture in partnership with award-winning filmmaker, Anya Raza, to depict a composite of survivor stories. The common theme: water.

Water is a basic necessity for all human beings. But for some survivors who have escaped torture and persecution, it can be a reminder of their trauma. Survivors often tell of the perilous journey crossing rivers, seas and oceans, with the hopes of finding safety. Detainees of Guantánamo Bay, a detention camp surrounded by water, have shared stories of water’s use as a tool of torture, most notoriously in cases of waterboarding.

While water can have a common association with trauma, it also carries the connotation of healing, refreshment and *life*.

CVT has extended multidisciplinary rehabilitative care to tens of thousands of survivors of torture, and to many more who are their family members, friends and community members.

Every year thousands of people come to the Center for Victims of Torture for care after fleeing their homes to escape torture and persecution.

Torture takes many forms and can be both physical and psychological. Survivors come from many countries, with diverse backgrounds and stories. All ages and all genders are impacted.

CVT also works to end torture, in particular torture perpetrated by the CIA and U.S. military following the September 11, 2001 attacks. Men still detained at the Guantánamo detention facility, among others, have made extensive reports of torture – including waterboarding and other forms of water torture. Detainees in Guantánamo have been held without charge or fair trial, perpetuating the harm and trauma they endured.

We are at the forefront of efforts to close Guantánamo, to combat secrecy around U.S. torture, and to secure proper care and rehabilitation for its victims.

Our work also includes advocating for lawful, just and humane protection systems for refugees and asylum seekers in the United States. Relatedly, we seek to end immigration detention in the U.S.; a system that exposes non-citizens to violations of the prohibition on torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

44% OF REFUGEES IN THE U.S.
HAVE BEEN TORTURED

“Still Here” is a creative depiction of a journey that is difficult and complex. Ultimately, there is hope. Hope that healing is possible. That survivors can experience rehabilitation. And that we can all work together towards justice.

[Click here to access viewing guide for Still Here.](#)

69% OF CVT'S INTERNATIONAL
CLIENTS ARE WOMEN AND GIRLS