

Healing for Eritreans

Bereket lives in a refugee camp in the northern part of Ethiopia. He is one of 45,000 Eritrean refugees living in this camp outside of Shire, a city of 50,000.

While serving in the Eritrean military, officials claimed Bereket was a traitor because of how he acted during a skirmish with the Ethiopian military. As a result, he was tortured in an underground cell for years. Only when he became sick and a doctor prescribed sunlight was he allowed out of his cell. After five years, Bereket returned to his unit stationed near the Eritrean-Ethiopian border. Soon after, he fled his post on foot and made his way to the refugee camp in Ethiopia.

Fleeing an Oppressive Regime

Since gaining independence from Ethiopia in 1993, the government of Eritrea has carried out systematic human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, forced labor and military conscription, severe restrictions on freedom of movement and expres-

sion, and religious persecution. Torture at the hands of the Eritrean government includes beatings, burnings, detention, rape and lack of food, water or medical care.

About 70 percent of the refugees in the camps are men like Bereket who are trying to escape a life of indefinite military service. The men who flee face incredible risks: capture, imprisonment, torture and death are all real threats. Or, they might fall into the hands of human traffickers. After collecting their fee, the traffickers may return the men to Eritrea where they are again at the mercy of the government.

Life in the Shire refugee camps is challenging. The camps lack basic education and employment services offered in many other larger refugee camps. The refugees themselves are living without a community. While women may have a few children with them, the young men are socially isolated. Without family or friends, and having fled an oppressive government that encourages informants, the refugee survivors have a difficult time developing trust with each other. This lack of trust and community leads many refugees to



CVT counselor, Abeba, performed a traditional coffee ceremony at the opening event for our counseling huts (tukuls) in the Mai-Aini camp in January.

PHOTO © SARA FELDMAN

leave the camps, resulting in a high rate of transiency. Some people move between camps. Others attempt to find their way to Libya, Egypt or Israel, with hopes of ultimately landing in Europe.

Finding Hope in the Camps

Despite these challenges, survivors are beginning to experience healing.

See page 3

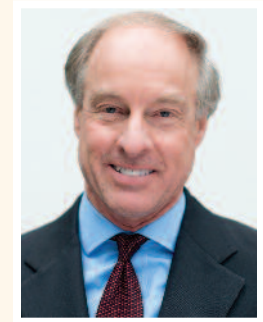
● Client's name has been changed to protect his identity.

Restoring
the Dignity of
the Human Spirit

INSIDE

- 2 Letter from the Executive Director, Curt Goering
- 4 Sarah's ... an Oasis for Women
- 4 A Creative Way to Help Heal Torture Survivors

Letter from the Executive Director



Curt Goering

Each year in conjunction with International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, we present the Eclipse Award to an individual or organization for extraordinary efforts to prevent torture or support care for torture survivors. This year, at a special event in Washington, D.C., I was honored to name Professor David Crane as the 2014 recipient of the Center for Victims of Torture's Eclipse Award.

Professor Crane, who teaches at Syracuse University College of Law, is the founding Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. He is also founder of Impunity Watch, an interactive website that operates as both a law review and a news reporting site on impunity issues.

In 2011, he founded the Syracuse University College of Law Syrian Accountability Project, a cooperative effort between activists, nongovernmental organizations, students, and others to document war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Syrian crisis.

Professor Crane co-authored the Chautauqua Blueprint, also known as the "discussion draft" of a Statute for a Syrian Extraordinary Tribunal to Prosecute Atrocity Crimes. The blueprint was signed last year during a meeting attended by several chief prosecutors of various international criminal tribunals.

Earlier this year, he served on a panel of experts who reviewed and verified the accuracy of the 55,000 photographs documenting systematic torture, starvation and murder that were smuggled out of Syria. The panel's report is consistent with what CVT is documenting at our healing initiative in Jordan.

Throughout Professor Crane's remarkable career, he has made ending impunity a centerpiece of his efforts, and in doing so, distinguished himself as a global leader seeking accountability and justice for crimes against humanity.

You can read an interview with Professor Crane on our blog, *Healing & Human Rights*, at www.blog.cvt.org (posted on June 23). And be sure to read the hopeful and heartfelt messages to torture survivors at www.cvt.org/June26. We gathered messages from supporters like you and shared these with survivors at our healing sites in Minnesota, Africa and the Middle East.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our work to stop torture and to rebuild the lives of all survivors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Curt Goering". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Curt Goering
Executive Director

For June 26, supporters sent us messages of hope to share with survivors. Rose wrote: "Do not despair. You are remembered by thousands and loved for your sacrifices. Rebuild yourself with this knowledge and grow into the person that you were meant to be." Read more messages at www.cvt.org/June26.

Healing for Eritreans

From page 1

Earlier this spring, we completed our first cycle of counseling groups. In the counseling groups, survivors learn about the effects of torture and have an opportunity to process their experiences. Together, group members learn new ways of managing their overwhelming feelings and traumatic situations.

Developing trust between group members is particularly challenging in Ethiopia. Psychotherapist and trainer Sara Feldman, who worked with CVT in the Democratic Republic of Congo, had each group member pledge “I agree to preserve the confidentiality of this group” to emphasize the importance of privacy and trust. “It helped those individuals struggling with trust to move forward and develop relationships within the group,” said Sara.

Many of the women living in the camp have small children with them. To ensure that these mothers receive the care they need while the young children are sheltered from the emotional tension that arises during counseling, we provide childcare for toddlers during the group meetings. The children are able to play safely in sight of their mothers, yet not be affected by the stories and emotional state of the group.

As we have with other international projects, we are building capacity within the Eritrean refugee community by training refugees to work as psychosocial counselors. They have completed extensive training and are currently observing experienced psychotherapists lead the counseling groups as part of their ongoing, experiential training.

CVT staff are also launching



These tukuls in the Adi Harush camp provide shelter and privacy for the counseling groups.

PHOTO © SARA FELDMAN

workshops to reach survivors who are unable to commit to a ten-week group. For a few hours each week, refugees learn basic coping skills to help them manage the effects of torture and similar traumatic experiences.

We’re also continuing to lead community sensitization events in the camps to promote CVT’s work. These events are often with community and religious leaders, as well as more publicly within the camp zones. For those who are homebound, counselors go door-to-door to identify survivors most

in need of counseling.

“Our work is beginning to get noticed within the camps and is making a difference,” said Sara. “The survivors shared that they benefitted from telling their stories and the support system within the group. One group of men plans to continue meeting monthly. And during the final session, one woman said, ‘I am in love with this group!’”

CVT’s activities in Ethiopia are financed by the United States Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

For a few hours each week, refugees learn basic coping skills to help them manage the effects of torture and similar traumatic experiences.

Sarah's ... an Oasis for Women

Just a few miles from our St. Paul Healing Center is Sarah's ... an Oasis for Women. Sarah's is home to a diverse community of women who are restarting their lives.

For nearly 20 years CVT and Sarah's have worked together to support women escaping danger and seeking safety. Today, one third of Sarah's residents are receiving care at CVT. On average, women live at Sarah's for 18 months. They each have a fully furnished private room, with access to common spaces, including a dining room, kitchen, community room, outdoor gardens and chapel.

"For our clients who are asylum

seekers, there are few resources in the community to meet their basic needs, including housing," said Casie Iwata, CVT social worker and case manager. "Sarah's provides a unique opportunity for women to live in a community where they can build lasting relationships and have peer support. Many women who have lived at Sarah's say that it feels like home to them because they are surrounded by people who care for them."

Because Sarah's is a home, residents connect with off-site service providers such as CVT. This ensures the women receive the help and care they need. Together, we



are jointly helping women move towards whole, healthy, confident and fulfilling lives.

● *Sarah's is a privately funded organization, funded in part by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (CSJ), St. Paul Province, and CSJ Ministry Foundation. Visit www.sarahsoasis.org for more information.*

A Creative Way to Help Heal Torture Survivors

Your support has already made a huge impact in helping the Center for Victims of Torture heal the wounds of torture — including bringing hope and healing to Syrians who have survived unimaginable war-related atrocities — and who continue to stream into our healing center in Jordan.

We are grateful for your compassion and your commitment.

We want to share with you a creative way that some of our donors are supporting our mission of healing survivors and helping to underwrite CVT's critical work of stopping torture worldwide.

An increasing number of donors are establishing a Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) for CVT — a

planned gift that has advantages for both the donor and the organization. In return for a transfer of cash, marketable securities or other assets to CVT, donors receive a guaranteed lifetime income. CGAs can be set up for immediate income or for deferred payments until a certain age.

The income is based on the donor's age and is especially favorable to older individuals. For example, the annual annuity rate for an individual age 70 is about 7%; for individuals age 80, it can be as high as 10%.

If you'd like to learn more about Charitable Gift Annuities or other planned giving options, please contact Michelle Woster at 1-877-265-8775 or mwoster@cvt.org.

Make a Difference in the Life of a Survivor

Your generous support brings healing to torture survivors worldwide. CVT welcomes all types of donations.

- **Monthly Sustainers** allow for ongoing planning and delivery of healing services.
- **Planned Giving** continues your legacy of support.
- **Gifts of Stock** support survivors while offering tax benefits to donors.
- **In-Kind Donations** of specific items improve the lives of survivors.
- **Tribute Gifts** celebrate events or memorialize loved ones.

Donate online at www.cvt.org, send a check to 649 Dayton Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104, or call 1-877-265-8775 for other ways to give. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to healing the wounds of torture.



The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

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