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VICTIMS of
TORTURE

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Healing in Uganda: From Capacity Building to Direct Care

In remote, rural areas of northern Uganda, torture survivors often suffer alone — alienated from their communities because of what they've endured. Beginning in the late 1980s, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) battled government troops before targeting civilians in local communities. The rebels murdered, mutilated and tortured individuals. Close to 2 million people moved to camps for internally displaced persons for security. Children were particularly at risk of abduction from their homes and

schools. To avoid abduction, some children would walk several miles in the afternoon to sleep in the relative safety of cities, only to walk back home in the morning. If captured, they would be forced to join the LRA forces and ordered to beat or kill others. Girls could be given to commanders as wives or forced into sexual servitude.

“Many girls or young women who were abducted came back home carrying children,” said Gabriele Marini, psychotherapist/field representative. “In these communities,

status is given by the father so these children have no status. They are victims of the war. They are not welcomed in the community and can have trouble receiving educational or medical support. Once you've been abducted and returned from the bush, you are not eligible for marriage like other girls. These survivors are suffering from their current situation as well as the trauma.”

Since 2009, CVT has worked in Uganda to help survivors of the LRA conflict through a capacity-building and training approach. While a number of organizations were providing economic, medical and basic needs assistance, few provided mental health care to address the debilitating and lingering effects of torture.

Gabriele Marini joined CVT to train and support local counselors who were helping Ugandans rebuild their lives. For five years, Gabriele has conducted formal trainings and side-by-side co-therapy to help the

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**Psychosocial Counselors
Grace and Ketty, and
Gabriele Marini,
psychotherapist/field
representative,
traveling to a Ugandan
community for a
counseling group.**

PHOTO © CVT STAFF

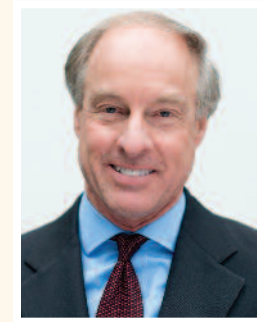
Restoring
the Dignity of
the Human Spirit

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Letter from the Executive Director

We've all seen the news reports and photos of refugee families risking everything in hopes of finding safety and security. The images and stories of desperate men, women and children taking to the sea and, if lucky, landing on beaches or running for trains are heartbreaking. While Syrians are most prevalent in these stories, there are others around the world who do not make that journey but still seek safety and healing.



Curt Goering

Our programs in Kenya and Ethiopia are stretched caring for these men and women. In Ethiopia, we care for Eritreans who have fled a notoriously repressive and authoritarian government. The Eritrean government is responsible for systematic human rights abuses, including arbitrary detention, torture and severe restrictions on freedom of movement and expression.

In Dadaab, Kenya, we extend care to African refugees — primarily Somalis, but others including South Sudanese and Congolese. And in Nairobi, we provide counseling and physical therapy to refugees who fled conflicts or torture in several central African countries.

President Obama has committed to accepting 100,000 refugees in 2017 to help some of those who are in such desperate situations. We applaud his efforts, but because refugees are also frequently torture survivors, we have called on the U.S. to welcome 200,000 refugees in 2016, including 100,000 Syrians.

In fact, we recently conducted a meta-analysis of existing studies and challenged the decades-old estimate that 400,000–500,000 refugee torture survivors reside in the United States. We now believe that the number of refugee torture survivors in this country could be as high as 1.3 million.

Based on the new number, we've called on Congress to increase support for the Office of Refugee Resettlement which funds torture rehabilitation centers like CVT. Survivors have the right to rehabilitation. It's our responsibility — both legally and morally — to provide this care. And without adequate funding, access to rehabilitative care is limited.

We rely on supporters like you to help fund this critical, life-changing work. Your support by December 31 allows us to more effectively plan and allocate our resources for 2016 so that more survivors can rebuild their lives. Thank you for your ongoing generosity and commitment to helping torture survivors around the world.

Sincerely,

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

Curt Goering
Executive Director

This year's annual Restoring Hope fundraising breakfast marked our 30 years of healing. Psychotherapist/trainer Reem Abbasi shared the healing story of one Syrian girl seeking refuge in Jordan.



PHOTO © TODD DONERY

Healing in Uganda

From page 1

counselors learn new techniques first-hand. Now, CVT has begun providing direct counseling care to broaden the range of healing services for survivors. “We realized that some survivors needed more consistent care than was currently available,” said Suzanne Pearl, CVT program manager. “With our experience in other areas in Africa and strong relationships in the country, we were able to easily transition our work to include counseling groups in the most affected communities.”

Based in Gulu, the commercial and administrative center of the region, Gabriele and three local counselors travel to rural communities to provide 10-week counseling groups for torture survivors. Before starting the commute, CVT staff connects with a community facilitator to ensure that the survivors are still available to meet. Community events such as funerals or critical times in the farming cycle can prevent survivors from attending groups. After traveling in a large SUV an hour or more to the designated community, the counselors set up a space for the group in a

school or church.

While local economies have begun to rebuild, survivors generally live in remote, agrarian communities, relying on subsistence farming for their income. More than 80 percent of the survivors we’ve cared for in Uganda never or rarely have enough money for necessities. For survivors, this daily stress is compounded by the memories and ongoing effects of their torture and trauma.

During the first year of our direct counseling work, survivors told stories dominated by abductions, rapes and forced servitude. More than two-thirds of the survivors in our counseling groups are women. Now, following their torture, the women are marginalized and often experience domestic violence in their home communities. “While we cannot change their life conditions, the counseling gives the women internal strength to better cope with the overwhelming stressors,” said Gabriele.

In our capacity-building work in Uganda, we’ve established a close relationship with Makerere University in Kampala. To build the skills of upcoming therapists, we provide internships to masters-level



CVT staff, Ketty and Pons, prepared to lead a counseling group in a Ugandan community.

PHOTO © CVT STAFF

psychology students. Gabriele is also continuing to train and support Ugandan counselors in their professional development so that survivors can receive the counseling and healing care needed to rebuild their lives. Through these training experiences, we’re working with Ugandans to broaden the fields of psychology and counseling within the country.

“Initially, the survivors we see think they can’t get better by ‘only’ talking,” said Gabriele. “But then they experience the CVT counseling method and are amazed that they can feel a real change in their lives without receiving any material support. Some survivors say they feel they’ve had a ‘re-birth’ from the group counseling. And others who have had suicidal thoughts for a long time have started to think about the future with determination and initiative.”

CVT’s work in Uganda is supported by the Trust Fund for Victims (TFV) at the International Criminal Court (ICC).



Counselors from local Ugandan organizations participated in trainings to support their professional development.

PHOTO © CVT STAFF

Laura Sivert: Befriender, Curator and Speaker

When Laura Sivert moved back to the Minneapolis-St. Paul area in 2014, she was eager to begin volunteering to get reacquainted with the local community. Thinking she might be able to use her fluent French skills translating materials, she contacted CVT. Instead, with so many volunteer opportunities, she's taken on several different roles, first helping set up at small special events and Expanding Circles, the young professionals group. Then, in May, she became a befriender to a survivor. Together, they have explored local neighborhoods, lakes and museums.

Earlier this year, Laura's PhD in art history became particularly valuable to CVT. To mark CVT's 30 years of work, Laura curated a gallery of items to display at the

annual Restoring Hope breakfast. With historical items such as blueprints, articles and photos, and art representing the cultures of survivors, the gallery allowed supporters to learn about CVT's evolving history.

"What surprised me about the project is how much art CVT has. The headquarters and the St. Paul Healing Center are filled with beautiful works," said Laura. "It shows how important art is to healing — particularly how the clinical aspects of a space needed to become non-clinical to be welcoming to the survivors."

Through her volunteering, Laura is also learning about a wide range of topics. "I love how many opportunities there are for volunteers to become more knowledgeable about amnesty, legal status, psychology and other

topics. It's really fascinating and I've learned so much," she said.

With the gallery project complete, Laura plans to join the Speakers Bureau, telling CVT's story at churches, schools and community groups. "I'm really happy to be working with CVT, and that I've had the opportunity to meet and get to know the supportive and dedicated staff," Laura said. "It's a wonderful experience."



Laura Sivert

Ensuring Hope and Healing for Future Torture Survivors

A compassionate group of donors has stepped forward to be sure CVT has future funds to heal torture survivors and end torture worldwide — by naming the Center for Victims of Torture as a beneficiary in their wills.

These generous donors who have left such a legacy bequest belong to the Douglas A. Johnson Circle. This legacy society was named for CVT's longstanding former Executive Director, Douglas A. Johnson, as a tribute to his 24-year commitment to stopping torture in the world and to healing torture survivors.

Please consider joining the Douglas A. Johnson Circle. Your kind bequest will send a powerful message of hope and healing to

survivors of torture and their families — people who are rebuilding their lives after the inhumanity of torture. You will help CVT maintain its advocacy work to bring an end to torture across the globe.

The language to use to leave a bequest is: *I give, devise and bequeath to the Center for Victims of Torture, 649 Dayton Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota, 55104, tax ID 36-3383933 \$_____ (state sum of money or otherwise describe security or property) to be used for its general uses and purposes.*

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Michelle Woster at 612-436-4859 or by email at mwoster@cvt.org. Thank you for your caring legacy commitment.

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.



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