

The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

THE
storycloth

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Healing from Torment

Peter* was beaten and stoned by his neighbors because he was gay. They wanted to kill him.

Peter was living with his husband in a country in sub-Saharan Africa when his family learned he was gay and rejected him. The neighbors attacked Peter, calling him an abomination. Instead of taking him to a hospital, the police arrested him.

Peter eventually escaped to Nairobi, where he found CVT's LGBTI group counseling program. When he first came, he was feeling overwhelmed by his thoughts. He said he felt worthless, like no one cared whether he existed or not. Peter attempted suicide twice after fleeing to Kenya.

Peter made great progress with CVT's help, but his life was still very difficult. He had no income and was forced to move time after time because his neighbors became hostile when they learned he was gay.

At one point, police forcefully moved Peter and others to the Kakuma refugee camp in northern

Kenya. Because he protested, Peter was detained for one month. He was humiliated daily by the police, who even forced him to sleep with a woman in an attempt to change him.

Peter was able to return to Nairobi and he came back to CVT for individual counseling as part of

CVT Nairobi's aftercare program for LGBTI clients. Today he says he still fears the police but has started taking walks in his neighborhood and does breathing exercises when he feels overwhelmed.

Peter says CVT made him feel like a person again. He realized not all people mean him harm.



He said he felt worthless, like no one cared whether he existed or not.

* Names and some details have been changed for safety and to protect confidentiality.

PHOTO © DREAMSTIME

CVT's work in Nairobi is made possible by a grant from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration; the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture; the S.L. Gimbel Advised Fund at The Community Foundation — Inland Southern California; and Steven Walker.

Restoring
the Dignity of
the Human Spirit

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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

These are deeply unsettling times. The world is gripped by the worst refugee crisis since WWII, and it shows no signs of abating.

More than 65 million people have been displaced, and we know from our own research that millions are survivors of torture and war atrocities. These are not numbers on a spreadsheet. They are real people—families, women, children, fathers and mothers, grandparents, fleeing unimaginable horrors, torture and terror.

What is clear to you and me is not clear to everyone, that this refugee crisis is also a torture crisis. Today's challenges call us to do more, further strengthening our work against torture and rebuilding the lives of more survivors. But CVT must also be a beacon of moral leadership, hope and respect for human rights and human dignity.

Now is a time for vigilance. The president has introduced discriminatory bans on immigrants and refugees, and dramatically cut U.S. refugee resettlement numbers. It is simply unconscionable that, with a refugee crisis of historic proportions, the United States is choosing instead to turn them away.

We must fight back against the policies of cruelty, the policies of discrimination and the collapse of our moral authority. We must continue to expose the truth about torture, and to work for transparency, reform and accountability. We must seek justice for the millions of torture victims around the world, sending a clear message to those who think they can torture with impunity.

And you are integral to this struggle, to fighting back. You represent the best of humanity.

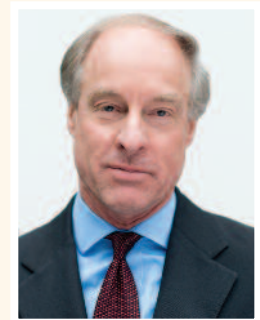
After people have survived the most extreme cruelty the human mind can devise, we are part of their extraordinary journey of healing, and your generosity makes a world of difference in their lives. By working together, we can rise to the challenge of these unsettling, very challenging times. Together, we can rebuild more lives, stop torture and heal its wounds. And we can be—we must be—that moral beacon. Together, we can care about the victims today and preserve humanity tomorrow. We can do no less.

Thank you for being our partners in healing and for your generosity and compassion.

Gratefully,



Curt Goering
Executive Director



Curt Goering

Expanding Healing Care In Kenya

The horrific violence and growing humanitarian crisis in South Sudan is displacing tens of thousands of people who are now fleeing across the border to the Kakuma refugee camps in northwest Kenya. There are approximately 180,000 refugees already in the camps, half of them women and children. Many are survivors of torture.

Sadly, CVT's healing care in Dadaab and Nairobi is not enough to meet the rapidly growing torture crisis spreading through this region of Africa.

The UN refugee agency estimates an additional 10,000 children and youth, many separated from their families and on their own, will have arrived at the Kakuma camp in 2017. They are in urgent need of life-saving, specialized care for the trauma and violence they are

desperately trying to escape. At this moment, survivors in the Kakuma refugee camp have almost nowhere to turn for help as there is very little in the way of mental health or physiological care available.

In advance of expanding to these refugee camps, CVT staff spoke with residents to assess trauma rehabilitation needs. CVT's survey collected information from recently-arrived refugees and members of the host community in and around the Kalobeyei settlement of the Kakuma refugee camps.

"The findings of this and subsequent surveys are invaluable for identifying areas where critical needs are going unmet and how that is making an impact on daily life," said Shannon Golden, Ph.D., CVT research associate. "When the effects of trauma are neglected,

attempts to improve other areas such as livelihood and education may be unsuccessful. Gathering rigorous data on an annual basis is built into our work in Kakuma to keep services responsive to needs and make adjustments as necessary."

"When the effects of trauma are neglected, attempts to improve other areas such as livelihood and education may be unsuccessful."

CVT has already begun to set up its new healing work in the Kalobeyei settlement, and hiring is underway. In the coming months, members of the refugee and host communities in the region will have access to CVT's holistic rehabilitative care including counseling and physiotherapy, and, more immediately, psychological first aid.

These men, women and children will now have access to the in-depth healing care they need to help them recover from their wounds and begin the long road to reclaiming their lives.

The project is funded by a grant from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.



CVT staff are on the ground working hard to start providing healing care in the Kakuma refugee camps. Left to right: CVT staff Joseph Wesonga (physiotherapist/trainer), Samuel Orangi (field coordinator) and Michael Kamau (psychotherapist/trainer).

PHOTO © CVT

Alan Goldfarb: Supporter and CVT Advocate

“CVT inspires me to do more.”

As an immigration lawyer, Alan Goldfarb has a special connection to the Center for Victims of Torture.

He became interested in immigration law through pro-bono asylum work with the Advocates for Human Rights, an organization that helps many CVT clients in St. Paul, Minnesota, navigate the complex process of seeking political asylum in the United States.

“I have seen many clients who have struggled to stay in the United States become permanent residents and then citizens with families.”

— Alan Goldfarb

The majority of the survivors of torture at our St. Paul Healing Center are asylum seekers who have fled unspeakable abuses, leaving children and spouses in danger in order to get out alive. Unfortunately, they face complicated legal processes and delays that can last years, while family

members languish or perish back home. Being separated from their families and experiencing ongoing uncertainty about their status in the United States makes healing from the wounds of torture all the more difficult.

Alan has witnessed firsthand the profound difference being granted asylum makes to a person who has survived terrible trauma.

“I know that people can get stronger after difficult traumatic experiences, but it takes time. I have learned to appreciate the resilience to overcome hardship. I know the importance of CVT in helping refugees and asylum seekers when they need it most,” he reflected. “I have seen many clients who have struggled to stay in the United States become permanent residents and then citizens with families.” Those final moments of the asylum

process and seeing families reunited give Alan hope. These moments inspire him to continue standing with CVT to fight for refugees and asylum seekers on their healing journey.



Alan Goldfarb

Taking his dedication to help refugees and asylum seekers a step further, Alan joined CVT’s Public Policy Committee several years ago. As the world’s largest refugee crisis continues to grow every day, Alan reflects, “The challenges for refugees and asylum seekers are greater now. I am glad that CVT is there to confront torturers and help torture survivors. CVT inspires me to do more.”

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 2356 University Avenue W, Suite 430, St. Paul, MN 55114, or call 612.436.4808 for other ways to give. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to healing the wounds of torture.



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