

# the storycloth

March/April 2011, Volume 21, Issue 2 • A Publication of the Center for Victims of Torture • [www.cvt.org](http://www.cvt.org)

## Building a Foundation for Healing in Northern Uganda

In the late 1980s, a group of rebels began a reign of terror in northern Uganda. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) initially targeted government troops but soon began tormenting civilians to intimidate the community. Throughout this aggression, the LRA murdered, mutilated and tortured individuals. Children, in particular, were at risk of being abducted from their homes and schools and forced into sexual servitude or to join the rebel forces. More than 2,000,000 Ugandans were internally displaced from their homes.

The region is now calmer, yet many individuals suffer deep

emotional and psychological wounds as a result of the LRA's horrific violence against children, women and men. A number of organizations provide economic, medical and basic needs assistance. But few offer the therapeutic care needed to overcome the debilitating effects of torture, like depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder.

"The need for mental health services is enormous in Uganda," said CVT psychologist and trainer, Gabriele Marini, who has been working in the region for over a year. But through CVT's training project, local Ugandans are learning the counseling skills needed to provide

mental health care to survivors of the LRA's torturous activities.

### Understanding Trauma

Ugandans and staff from the local partner organizations initially expressed doubts that survivors could benefit from counseling. But as community members began to see others change during and after counseling, they have come to acknowledge that mental health services are necessary so individuals and communities can heal from torture and violence. "The local counselors were surprised and amazed to see how the clients can benefit without receiving any

*See page 3*



PHOTO © EDIE LEWISON

*AVSI staff members Agnes Lanyero and Joyce Laker at a training workshop in November 2009.*

**As part of CVT's training project in northern Uganda, AVSI counselors are learning new skills and techniques to provide mental health services to survivors of torture inflicted by the Lord's Resistance Army. The project is funded by the International Criminal Court's Trust Fund for Victims.**



*Our mission: To heal the wounds of torture on individuals, their families and their communities, and to stop torture worldwide.*

### INSIDE

- 2 Letter from the Executive Director
- 4 A New Look for CVT
- 4 Join the Circle of Hope!

## *Letter from the Executive Director*

The start of the 112th Congress presents both opportunities and challenges for CVT.

The new Congress includes many first-term members who have not yet made public statements or taken a position on issues such as funding for torture survivor rehabilitation programs and stopping torture worldwide.

CVT's Washington Office is scheduling meetings to acquaint these new members with our work and the issues. Our nonpartisan approach is an asset during these meetings as we share our knowledge about the effects of torture with them and seek common ground.

The recovering-but-still-slow economy poses a challenge for funding the authorized and appropriated Torture Victims Relief Act. Many new members of Congress pledged to spend less, making budget cuts inevitable. Any cuts to torture survivor rehabilitation will make it harder to extend care to refugees and asylum seekers struggling to rebuild their lives in the U.S. How far those cuts go and what programs might be spared is still unknown, but we will keep you informed in the coming months.

In our efforts to end torture, CVT, along with our colleagues at Human Rights First and other human rights institutions, is working with respected policy advisors to develop a national climate in which torture is never considered acceptable, even in the face of national security concerns. Developing a durable national consensus against torture is a focus of our work with retired leaders from the military, national security and foreign policy sectors.

President Obama has indicated the nation should look forward and not backward. However, we continue to press Congress and the administration for greater transparency for our government's detention and interrogation policies post-9/11.

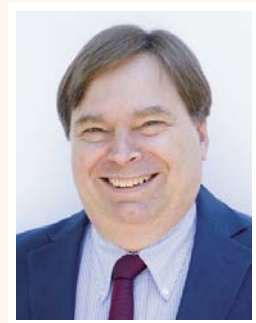
Getting to the facts can help us better understand what went wrong so we can work for safeguards to prevent future use of torture and cruel treatment by U.S. personnel.

Our work in Washington is made possible by the generous contributions of people like you. Thank you for your support—you are helping us give voice to survivors purposefully silenced by torture.

Sincerely,



Douglas A. Johnson  
Executive Director



**Douglas A. Johnson**



PHOTO © JAY PREMACK / [www.jaypremack.com](http://www.jaypremack.com)

*Our work in Washington, D.C., gives voice to people who were purposefully silenced by the perpetrators of torture and supports funding for healing services to survivors in the United States and abroad.*

# Building a Foundation for Healing in Northern Uganda

*From page 1*

practical items, but only by talking. They didn't know it was possible," explained Gabriele.

Community members now also understand that organizations provide unique services and are referring traumatized people to those with psychological counseling. One director of a partner organization said, "We are getting many referrals from health centers, AIDS organizations and former clients—not the land disputes and domestic cases we used to get, but now they are [sending us] trauma-related cases."

## Strengthening Local Organizations

In November 2009, CVT began working with partner organizations of the International Criminal Court's (ICC) Trust Fund for Victims (TFV) in northern Uganda. Gabriele regularly traveled from Nairobi, Kenya, to Uganda to train, mentor and supervise the counselors. With the unique roles of implementing both Court-ordered reparations and general rehabilitation assistance to victims of crimes under the ICC's jurisdiction, the Trust Fund for Victims offers key

advantages for promoting lasting peace, reconciliation, and well-being in war-torn societies. Additional funding from TFV allows us to expand this training project.

Gabriele recently relocated to northern Uganda to provide more intensive training to local counselors from seven organizations. He is now conducting side-by-side co-therapy with the counselors so they can learn new techniques first-hand. This regular contact gives the counselors the feedback and mentoring they need to provide more effective care. "Some of the counselors started [their work] with very little training," explained Gabriele. "Some others who had experience had to change from giving advice to a new approach that empowers the client."

"The counselors have found it valuable to learn new skills, different approaches and new techniques which enable them to have greater impact in counseling," said Gabriele. "They are learning to adapt theoretical information to the Ugandan reality and to the existing economic and social resources."

In addition to training individual mental health counselors, Gabriele is training Kizito Wamala, a psychologist with the African Centre for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims to become a trainer and counseling supervisor. "Any contribution [to providing mental health services] by anyone, in any form, especially training some interested local people to empower them to help their own communities, is very appropriate," said Kizito. "Many agencies have ended their activities here with few



PHOTO © C.C. STROM

*Psychologist and trainer Gabriele Marini is based in northern Uganda. He is rotating between three Ugandan communities to provide training, clinical supervision and co-counseling with local counselors.*

footmarks left behind them. This project is the best way to go at this time to ensure sustainability."

After Gabriele's work in northern Uganda ends, counselors like Kizito will be able to continue to strengthen the mental health resources and help individuals and communities heal.

The United States and international community have recognized the atrocities and torture caused by the LRA and are beginning to provide support to northern Uganda. The U.S. Congress unanimously passed the *Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act* to support humanitarian relief and reconstruction in the country, and the International Criminal Court has issued warrants against leaders of the LRA.

While political policies and legal cases are built, we are strengthening Ugandans and their communities by fostering local mental health services that will be available now and in the future.

For more information, visit [www.trustfundforvictims.org](http://www.trustfundforvictims.org).



**Fonds au Profit des Victimes**  
**The Trust Fund for Victims**



*CVT is working with local organizations in Lira, Kitgum and Gulu, Uganda to strengthen local counselors' skills and develop the region's mental health resources.*

# A New Look for CVT

After 25 years, most things need refreshing. That includes the CVT logo. During the next few months we'll be rolling out a fresh, new look on our print materials and Web site.

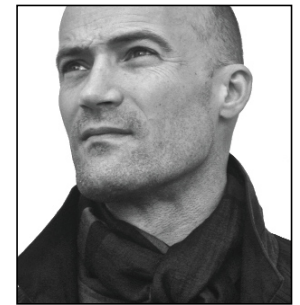
Over time, as CVT grew into an international organization, we

recognized the limitations of the current eclipse logo. The image of the eclipse has different meanings in different cultures. The new logo acknowledges our past, while moving forward with hope.

Craig Johnson, graphic designer and owner of Agency F, designed the new logo based on images of a full eclipse in which the sun continues to radiate light even when the moon is blocking it from view.

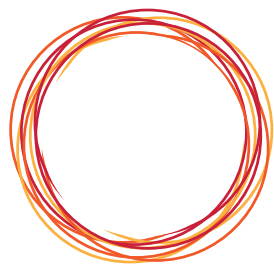
"The circles are meant to suggest the healing that CVT brings to torture survivors," said Craig. "The three colors signify hope, dignity

and respect that are essential to rebuilding the lives of torture survivors while advocating against the use of torture."



Craig Johnson

PHOTO © STEVE WARTH



The  
CENTER for  
VICTIMS of  
TORTURE  
Restoring the Dignity of  
the Human Spirit

## Join the Circle of Hope!

You have made a real difference in the lives of torture survivors, their families, and their communities—and we are deeply grateful for your generosity and your compassion.

Many of us have cut back on our spending over the past several years, and we're hearing from many donors who are looking for new and creative ways to continue bringing hope and healing to thousands of torture survivors around the world.

We invite you to join with our 300 dedicated supporters who, through their monthly sustaining gifts, make up CVT's *Circle of Hope*. These faithful donors provide a consistent stream of support while also helping us reduce paper and

administrative costs.

Your monthly gift of \$10, \$15 or \$25 will have a big impact on the lives of torture survivors worldwide. For the same cost as a few cups of coffee a month, you can help change a life. Monthly gifts can be made with automatic credit card charges or via electronic fund transfers.

To join the *Circle of Hope*, please contact Ashley at 1-877-265-8775 or [agotreau@cvt.org](mailto:agotreau@cvt.org), or set up your credit card gift online at [www.cvt.org](http://www.cvt.org). It's easy and convenient, and you may change or stop your monthly contributions at any time. Thank you for your continued commitment to CVT's mission of hope and healing.

## 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](http://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.



Restoring the dignity of the human spirit

649 DAYTON AVENUE  
ST. PAUL, MN 55104  
Toll Free 1-877-265-8775

[www.cvt.org](http://www.cvt.org)  
[cvt@cvt.org](mailto:cvt@cvt.org)

© 2011 Center for Victims of Torture  
All rights reserved. Please contact CVT for permission to reproduce this newsletter or any part of it.