

The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

THE storycloth

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“CVT was there when I fell down. CVT helps me to stand up.”

My name is Kidane*. I was in the military service in Eritrea and planned to get an education after I served. However, the military had a problem with me and they beat me. They tortured me. My head was badly damaged, and I was severely beaten on my back. I had a lot of pain in my legs and was unable to work because

of the torture.

I escaped to Ethiopia. When I got to the refugee camp, I was living a life of closed doors. I was isolated, always by myself. People noticed this, and they told me about CVT.

I got hope at my first session at CVT. I got to talk about what had happened and about my

feelings. The experts there were very polite, even when I was crying.

CVT gave me a permanent medicine. Doctors can give you tablets to get rid of some problems. But at CVT, it is more. I have overcome the challenges.

Today, I see that tomorrow is another day. I watch for others in the camp who are living behind closed doors or who think that CVT is for the “insane.” Now I reach out to them. I speak LOUDLY and tell them—Get to CVT.

Left: CVT Ethiopia office, Adi Harush refugee camp



CVT's work with Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia is funded by a grant from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.



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

Restoring
the Dignity of
the Human Spirit

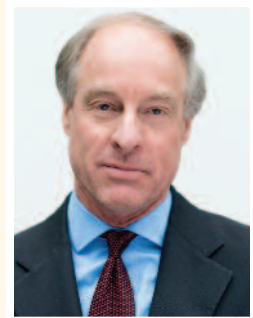
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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

The global refugee crisis isn't slowing down. According to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, there are more than 65 million forcibly displaced people in the world. At CVT, we know that up to 44% of refugees in the U.S. are survivors of torture. Each passing day, more and more survivors are coming to our centers in desperate need of help.



Curt Goering

Never before has demand for CVT's healing services been so high. All of our healing centers have waiting lists, some up to six months. Indeed, the refugee crisis is a torture crisis.

And in the aftermath of the hate speech and anti-refugee and anti-immigrant sentiments that were unleashed during the U.S. presidential election, many of our clients are scared. Our staff in Minnesota and Atlanta tell me this is an issue in virtually every session with survivors as they worry about their own personal safety and the safety of their loved ones. They ask, "Will I be sent to an internment camp?" or "Will the police take my family to jail?" Some clients refused to leave their homes for days following the election, terrified that they would be grabbed off of the street, sent back to their home countries and back to their torturers.

On top of being afraid for their own safety, clients also fear their relatives may never be able to join them in this country because of the attempted refugee bans. Survivors at our international healing projects share those fears as their dreams of joining family members in the U.S. are shattered.

Pablo Traspas, country director, CVT Kenya, reports that some of the survivors of torture at our centers there were in the process of being vetted for resettlement in the U.S. when President Trump passed the ban. They feel like they have been victimized again.

"I think the hope of refugees ... turned into anxiety the moment they received the news of the Executive Order," Pablo said. "This is creating a kind of continuous trauma for our clients. That means the trauma is not healing."

We must continue to rise to meet the growing need for light in these dark global times. With your help, in the last year we've been able to increase our impact to help more survivors than ever before. In 2016, nearly 4,700 individual survivors and more than 16,000 family members found hope with CVT's rehabilitative care.

Thank you for standing with CVT as we rebuild lives and restore hope, while standing up for sensible and humane refugee admission policies that are life-changing for people fleeing from torture, terrorism, and other atrocious human rights violations.

Warm regards,

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

Curt Goering
Executive Director

Helping Refugee Families Resettle with Strong Community Resources

While news reports focus on refugees desperately seeking safety and stability in Europe, other refugees, who have been resettled, are working to integrate into new communities like St. Cloud, Minnesota.

This past winter, the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) facilitated a 10-week parenting class in St. Cloud for Somali-American moms who recently arrived in the U.S.

The region, just an hour northwest of Minneapolis, is now home to a large Somali population that fled war, torture, and persecution. It's a whole new world for them, an unfamiliar culture that can be challenging, especially for parents navigating a strange system while their children also try to acclimate.

Somali parents engaged in a discussion of parenting topics and issues, including unfamiliar societal expectations they're learning to understand and opportunities they might not know about, to

help their families settle into the community and feel comfortable. Parents' misconceptions about not being allowed to discipline their children or exercise parental authority in the U.S. were actively addressed, with a focus on providing tools for communicating effectively with children who are navigating two cultures.

"Parents' rights and empowerment was a big topic in a class where parents routinely express fears of losing their children to Child Protective Services," CVT's director of client services Dr. Andrea Northwood said.

Stress management was also a frequent topic, particularly in terms of its direct effect on parenting. Participants each made a string of relaxation beads to take with them and carry as a reminder to do ten relaxation breaths when they're feeling overwhelmed. Dr. Northwood spoke about the health benefits of taking slow,

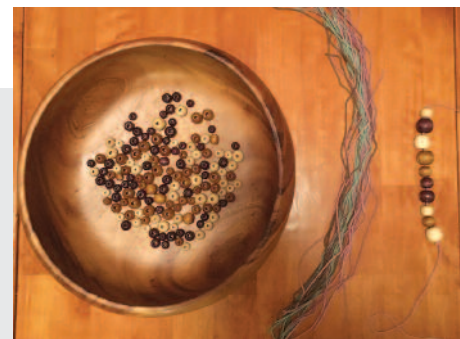
deep breaths. Anxious or fearful breathing—never emptying the lungs completely and using only the top half of the chest to breathe—becomes a habit in traumatized persons and inhibits their ability to relax and restore themselves, she explained.

The class was a big hit with the women and has now been requested in 4 community locations in central Minnesota. One woman remarked, "The highlight of the class for me was to see how open and comfortable we have become with one another." Another participant said, "Since this class started, I see a great improvement in myself. I breathe better and I feel better physically too."

Refugee communities like those in St. Cloud are stronger when resettling families have knowledgeable resources to help them, and CVT was honored to play a part.



Right: Relaxation beads help refugee survivors with deep breathing exercises.



Left: CVT director of client services Andrea Northwood, Ph.D., LP, and Amal Hassan, CVT Somali community liaison, welcomed participants to the event. To ensure the community members could fully engage in the session, an interpreter was present to translate all comments, questions and answers.

Advocacy in Uncertain Times

What will happen next in Washington? This seems to be the question on everybody's mind with the eyes of the world focused on our nation's capital.

This fledgling presidency has been marked by uncertainty, some of which is to be expected with any new administration. But in these stressful, seemingly erratic times, it is encouraging to remember that in addition to CVT's healing work, we have an advocacy presence in Washington, D.C.

CVT's indefatigable team of lawyers works to effect change in

policy concerning torture and related issues. The group focuses their work on four major issue areas:

- ending torture in a post-9/11 world
- advocating for increased funding and access to high-quality trauma rehabilitative programs for survivors of torture
- seeking to ensure that the United States offers safe haven to refugees fleeing persecution (as many as 44% of refugees arriving in the U.S. are torture survivors), and
- advocating for the integration of

mental health and psychosocial support principles into humanitarian assistance, post-conflict development aid and transitional justice efforts to ensure survivor- and victim-centered approaches to healing

During these uncertain times, supporters of CVT can be certain that the team in D.C. is doing everything in their power to preserve the headway made in the human rights field and influence the hearts and minds and votes of politicians in Washington.

A Gift of Stock or Mutual Funds Can Restore Survivors' Dignity and Hope

With securities markets near all-time highs, a gift of stock or mutual funds can be a great way to maximize tax savings while helping rebuild the lives of torture survivors.

If you wish to make contributions of stock to CVT, you're welcome to contact our broker directly:

UBS Financial Services
Attn: Pam Schulte
651 East Lake Street
Wayzata, MN 55391
(952) 249-4793
Account Number: RP 25650
DTC Number: 221

To ensure that you receive appropriate credit for your stock gift, please contact Fawn

Bernhardt-Norvell at fnorvell@cvt.org or 612.436.4888 with your stock gift information (including name and number of shares). Or simply remind your broker to include your name, contact information and any special instructions for use of the gift with your transfer.

The Center for Victims of Torture cannot provide legal or financial advice. You are encouraged to speak with your attorney or financial planner.



The
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