

The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

THE storycloth

NOVEMBER 2018

VOLUME 29, ISSUE 1 • WWW.CVT.ORG

A Milestone in Healing—CVT’s Tenth Year Caring for Survivors in Jordan

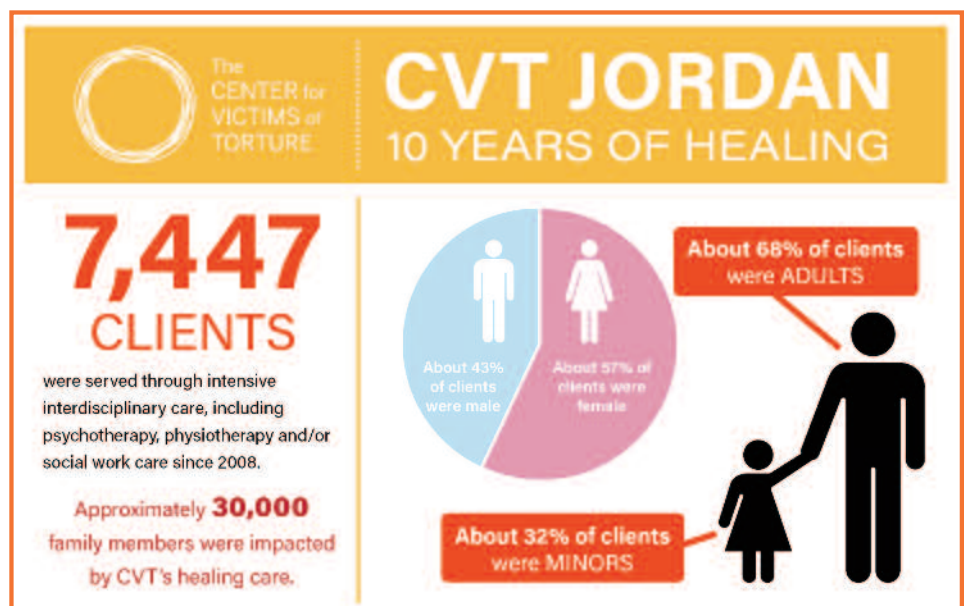
This year marks the tenth year the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) has extended rehabilitative care to thousands of refugee survivors of torture and war in Jordan. Established in 2008 to help severely traumatized Iraqi refugees reclaim their lives, the program expanded over the years as conflicts and crises emerged in the region, especially as the Syrian conflict began and continues to devastate communities today.

CVT Jordan has steadily worked over the last decade to meet increasing demand for holistic, rehabilitative care for refugee torture survivors, while also training local mental health, physiotherapy and social service providers to serve survivors of torture and other gross human rights violations. Since CVT’s doors first opened in Jordan, we’ve rebuilt the lives and restored the hope of nearly 7,500 survivors and 30,000 family members.

From its locations in Jordan today, CVT’s healing centers are

helping individual survivors and families from seven countries facing crises, including Eritrea, Iraq, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Our staff are also partnering with and providing training for other organizations to increase understanding of the effects of torture and war trauma and the benefits of holistic rehabilitative care.

“CVT’s work over the past 10 years in Jordan has had an incredible impact on the lives of so many people, including my own,” said Simone van der Kaaden, longtime country director for CVT Jordan. “To see the profound changes in the lives of our clients, how CVT Jordan team members have grown professionally and how CVT has *(see page 3)*



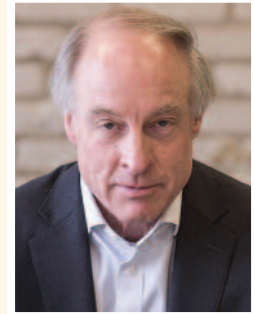
Infographic by Amanda Scheid

Restoring
the Dignity of
the Human Spirit

INSIDE

- 2 Letter from the Executive Director
- 3 Remembering a Young Torture Survivor
- 4 At Every Border, #Families Belong Together

Letter from the Executive Director



Curt Goering

Dear Friends,

With this final newsletter of 2018, I'm pleased to report positive news in the fight to prevent psychologists from participating in torture and coercive interrogations. Several months ago, CVT and our partners at Physicians for Human Rights mobilized the human rights community in support of concerned members of the American Psychological Association (APA), to defeat a proposal to roll back APA rules that protect psychologists from complicity in torture and unethical medical care. The proposal was soundly defeated.

There is also some positive news on the appropriations front. Congress has approved an increase in the domestic appropriation for torture survivor rehabilitation centers from \$10.73 million to \$14 million—the first funding increase for U.S. programs since the early 2000s. It's still far too low, but it's progress.

Of course there is negative news, as President Trump continues to eviscerate the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. The President will limit refugee admissions to only 30,000 this year—down from 110,000 in the year before he took office. And the 30,000 figure is a ceiling; last fiscal year, despite a ceiling of 45,000, less than 23,000 refugees were actually admitted. We'll continue to work with coalition partners for a much more robust refugee admissions program.

The Administration is also continuing its assault on the political asylum system. The majority of torture survivors at our domestic centers and programs are asylum seekers, and we know that just as is the case with refugees, the prevalence of torture among asylum seekers is extremely high. We're hiring a new position in our Washington office to lead advocacy on asylum related issues and help to put an end to family separation and other cruel policies.

The need for CVT's voice in Washington has never been greater. And the demand for our healing care in the U.S. and around the world remains extraordinary. Our Board of Directors recently approved the largest budget in CVT's history. At \$23 million, it will continue expanding our global impact—but it will require a continuing commitment by our generous community of supporters. I'm hopeful we'll hit the \$1.75 million target for contributions by year's end that will make possible our ambitious agenda.

Please know that I'm deeply grateful for your partnership, your generosity and your compassion. I'll keep you up to date on our work in these most uncertain times. And as always, if you have questions or want additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Curt Goering". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Curt Goering
Executive Director

Remembering a Young Torture Survivor

By Darlene Lynch, head of external relations, CVT Atlanta

In 1993, I met a young man I will call Ahmed. He had escaped to the United States after being imprisoned and tortured in not one, but two, countries in the Middle East. I remember he told me he came to the U.S. because “this is the only place where I can live as a free person, where people have rights.”

Ahmed had been tortured on account of his perceived political beliefs, and as a result he had a metal plate and four screws in his arm where the bones had been shattered. He had scars on his wrists and toenails that hadn’t grown back properly. He couldn’t sleep and worried constantly that there was something wrong with him

internally because of the dirty water and rotten food he had been made to eat.

I met Ahmed when I was doing pro bono asylum cases while working as a litigator in Atlanta. I helped him get medical attention, find work and pursue his legal case, but back then, before I began working with CVT, I didn’t appreciate the psychological wounds that he had suffered or know how to get him the help he needed. Although I understand that Ahmed is doing well now, I regret that he never received the mental health care that could have eased his pain.

Today, as head of external relations for CVT Atlanta, I

understand the great benefits of psychological care and counselling for torture survivors like Ahmed. This care provides survivors with the tools they need to combat the nightmares, anxiety, depression and other hardships that torture leaves behind, and I’ve personally witnessed the way survivors rebuild their lives after accessing rehabilitative care. And, knowing that as high as 44 percent of refugees living in the U.S. have survived torture, I’m grateful that care is available.



Darlene Lynch

A Milestone in Healing

(from page 1)

been part of building a local cadre of trauma rehabilitation specialists in Jordan and beyond is incredible. CVT’s work and partner network continue to expand in the Middle East, and that growth is a strong motivator to continue to strengthen the network of professionals, create opportunities to share experiences and increase access to rehabilitation services in Jordan and the region.”

“The occasion of this milestone is the right time to remind the world that we continue to bear witness to the immense suffering and scale of human rights atrocities still committed today in Syria and parts of Iraq,” said Neal Porter, CVT director of international services. “CVT will continue to do what we can to restore hope, trust, dignity and purpose to our clients in Jordan, for as long as we can, because we know healing is possible for survivors even under the worst of circumstances.”

Original article by Sabrina Crews, marketing communications specialist.

Funding for CVT’s work in Jordan is provided by the United States Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

10 Years of Healing, 10 Years of Firsts for CVT

The history of the CVT Jordan program also marks several notable firsts for the organization as a whole.

- It was CVT’s first international direct services program outside of Africa.
- CVT Jordan was the first international program to integrate physiotherapy with counseling and social services.
- CVT Jordan was the first international program to work in an urban setting (as opposed to refugee camps).
- CVT Jordan was the first international project to help such a large number of children—In 2016-17, nearly 30 percent of the survivors in our care were children.

At its inception, the CVT Jordan team included a small team of expatriates and national Jordanian staff on-site, in addition to staff based at CVT’s Minnesota headquarters. Today, under the leadership of our Jordanian colleagues, CVT Jordan employs about 70 staff members on-site, with an emphasis on professional development and growth opportunities for all members of the Jordan team.

At Every Border, #Families Belong Together

The pain of family separation affects children across the globe. Jana, a 10-year-old Syrian girl, endured forced separation from her family and imprisonment before crossing the Syrian-Jordanian border for safety. She'd been detained in a dark dungeon, underground, with other children for nearly a month so her father would turn himself in. He did, and he was murdered.

Separating children like Jana from their families is a violation of human rights. Article 9 of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of a Child declares that states in power "shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will."

Tyrannical governments understand the power of family. CVT regularly hears from survivors about corrupt regimes coercing their families. Despots use the love between family members to get what they want, threatening to throw mothers and wives into prison or to use violence against other loved ones.

Outrageously, forced family separation has also been happening here, in the United States, as a cruel form of coercion against asylum seekers seeking safe haven at our southern border.

CVT continues to champion sensible, humane options for addressing the plight of the

According to survivors in CVT's care, separation is rarely voluntary. At our St. Paul Healing Center, where we see survivors from around the world, 67% have been separated from their families.

world's most vulnerable people. And we continue to push for family reunification. We know it's possible. We've seen it happen and the impact it has. After receiving rehabilitative care from CVT, a survivor named David told us, "Today, my life is different—CVT stood by me until I was reunited with my family."

And just like with David, CVT will continue to stand with every survivor, across every border, because #FamiliesBelongTogether.



Illustration by Amanda Scheid

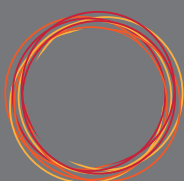
Make a Difference in the Life of a Survivor

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.



The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

2356 University Avenue W, Suite 430
St. Paul, MN 55114
www.cvt.org



© 2018 Center for Victims of Torture All rights reserved.

Please contact CVT for permission to reproduce this newsletter or any part of it.