



The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

THE
storycloth

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A CIA Torture Program Survivor Finally Tells His Story

“I have a story that I have waited almost two decades to tell, so I want to thank you for taking the time to listen to my statement.”

That was how Majid Khan—who was held captive for three years in secret CIA prisons and has spent the last 16 at Guantanamo—began his statement to a panel of jurors, all senior military officers, convened to sentence him following his plea agreement with the United States government. It was followed by two hours of wrenching testimony about the brutality he endured at the hands of the CIA, including a medical professional he called the “torture doctor.”

Since this was the first time that a CIA torture program survivor has been permitted to describe openly, in any forum, what he endured, CVT was present to witness the powerful testimony. Although Mr. Khan has apologized to the victims of the attack in which he acknowledges playing a role, the CIA perpetrators who brutalized

him—including the medics who raped him with a garden hose, the doctor who sharpened the feeding tubes and smeared them with hot sauce before forcing them into Mr. Khan’s nose and down his throat, and others—have never been held accountable. Indeed, the government has never apologized to him. Mr. Khan, in contrast, included a message in his testimony: “To those who tortured me, I forgive you—all of you.”

The entire hearing was a stark reminder of the impunity that perpetrators have enjoyed, and the lack of accountability for U.S. torture more broadly. Even regarding basic transparency, Mr. Khan was allowed to tell his story only because he cooperated with the government and bargained for the ability to provide this testimony.

The gravity of Mr. Khan’s firsthand testimony was evidenced by the extraordinary step that seven of the eight jurors took after listening to him: they drafted and signed a

handwritten letter urging he receive clemency.

Their letter forcefully and powerfully condemned U.S. torture and indefinite detention. They wrote that Mr. Khan “has been held without the basic due process under the Constitution” and in “complete disregard for the foundational concepts upon which the Constitution was founded,” a situation they described as “an affront to American values and concept of justice.”

(see page 3)



Restoring
the Dignity of
the Human Spirit

INSIDE

- 2 Letter from CVT President and CEO Dr. Simon Adams
- 3 Bringing Mental Health Care to Clients in Tigray
- 4 Ways You Can Help More Survivors Rediscover Hope

Letter from the President and CEO



Dr. Simon Adams

Dear Friend,

As the new President/CEO of the Center for Victims of Torture, I need to acknowledge something at the outset.

I wouldn't be here without you. And CVT wouldn't be here without you.

The lifeblood of this organization has always been the community of supporters joining together to heal the wounds of torture and bring us closer to a world where human rights are universally respected and protected.

Thank you for being part of that community. As someone whose own life has been shaped by the bitter conflict in Northern Ireland—a period now commonly referred to as “the Troubles”—I understand how powerful it is for those who have experienced violence to know that compassion still exists in the hearts of people like you. I still remember when I was a child and my aunt and cousins were burnt out of their home in Belfast by a sectarian paramilitary gang. And I also remember the kindness and support they were given when they left Ireland and started to build a new life in a new country.

I understand that only together will we be able to realize our bold vision of CVT's lifesaving, and expanding, role in 2022 and beyond.

That starts, as it always does at CVT, with giving more survivors the help they desperately need to recover from their wounds and rediscover hope. As the world continues to face the worst refugee and asylum seeker crisis since the Second World War, the need for our care has never been higher—from Africa to the Middle East to the U.S. southern border.

With instability and insecurity in so much of the world, we need to increase our ability to rapidly respond to emerging crises. As we have seen too often in recent years, sudden eruptions of conflict can drive hundreds of thousands of families from their homes. CVT wants to be there to help those who need us the most.

A third important goal this year is to dramatically increase our healing capacity by expanding our programs aimed at training, providing technical assistance and forging partnerships with colleague organizations. CVT already partners with 42 organizations that extend our healing reach around the globe, and we are looking to add new partnerships in 2022.

And finally, we are exposing torture and holding perpetrators accountable, including, as the article on Page 1 vividly shows, in our own backyard. When it comes to torture, silence is complicity.

Thank you for making all of this work possible ... and for sharing our vision of a world without torture.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. Adams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Dr. Simon Adams
President and CEO

Bringing Mental Health Care to Clients in Tigray

Of all the places where CVT works, few pose as many challenges as the Tigray region of Ethiopia—where an intense civil war has resulted in atrocities, mass displacement and a famine that now threatens over two million people.

But through it all, CVT’s dedicated staff have continued to provide healing care, both to Eritrean refugees and displaced Ethiopians, focusing on the care of their clients after the difficult and traumatizing situations they have endured.

One important example came on World Mental Health Day in October, when our CVT Ethiopia staff commemorated the occasion with a theme—“Mental Health in an Unequal World.” Through interactive events at different displacement camps throughout the region, the theme was also used to open discussions on ways

to act together to help people access good mental health care, even in the midst of a crisis.

Before a large gathering in Mai-Tsebri, CVT staff talked about the stigma of mental health, presented detailed self-care tips and outlined CVT services. After observing glimpses of smiles and

laughter, and long applause from the audience, our staff said that it was a pleasure to share some moments of happiness with so many people who have been displaced.

At the event, a representative of internally displaced persons stood up and made a short statement
(see page 4)



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(from page 1)

The members wrote further that “Mr. Khan was subjected to physical and psychological abuse well-beyond approved enhanced interrogation techniques, instead being closer to torture performed by the most abusive regimes in modern history.” That conduct “is a stain on the moral fiber of America. ... [T]he treatment of Mr. Khan in the hands of U.S. personnel should be a source of shame for the U.S. government.”

That is the power of torture survivors telling their stories directly. Secondhand accounts, movies and the like simply cannot match what it felt like to listen to Mr. Khan’s

own words—to watch him explain how he was tortured, demonstrating how guards held him down in his cell and spread his legs so that the “torture doctor” could rape him. He paused to take deep breaths in an effort to continue calmly amidst a flood of memory and emotion that most of us cannot begin to fathom.

That is also why government officials have fought so hard to silence these survivors. If more people were exposed to their powerful testimony, it would be much harder to defend refusing to hold perpetrators accountable, and to justify the snail’s pace at which

steps toward closing Guantanamo are proceeding.

And that is why, with the support of caring people like you, the Center for Victims of Torture will continue to fight for greater transparency and accountability, for closing Guantanamo and for helping survivors heal. Our mission is a world without torture. The United States has the power to drive the international community toward such a world, but only if it owns these crimes and reckons meaningfully with the profound harm it caused. We, like you, stand for accountability for the perpetrators and justice for the survivors.

Bringing Mental Health Care to Clients in Tigray

(from page 3)
to the audience:

CVT is one of the strongest organizations, an organization that stands for us, gives us hope and dignity and helps us to be strong psychologically. We are proud of you [pointing to CVT staff members]. I know this

year is extremely difficult to all of us including for CVT workers; however, they use the energy they have left to support our people from the very beginning.

Our staff could not have asked for a better affirmation of their work's value. Helping to heal others gives our staff a feeling of agency in

helping to correct some of the wrongs they have observed all too closely over the last months. We will continue to build on the capacity that we have invested in over the last eight years, supporting our staff's resilience so that they, in turn, can build resilience in the communities we serve.

Ways You Can Help More Survivors Rediscover Hope

Your compassion and generosity helps CVT give torture survivors the care they need to recover from their wounds, rebuild their lives and rediscover hope and joy. Here are some ways you can magnify your impact and help even more survivors.

Employer-Matching. Many employers will match charitable giving from their employees, doubling or even tripling their contributions. Contact your employer's human resources department to find out whether this is a way you can leverage your impact.

Monthly Giving. Rather than donating once a year, many of our supporters choose to join the CVT *Circle of Hope* by having a smaller gift charged every month to a credit card or transferred electronically from a checking account. As a *Circle of Hope* member, you will help provide a stable source of reliable funding, reduce our administrative costs and ensure that even more of your donation supports life-changing rehabilitative care. You will receive an annual statement in January with all of your donations for the previous year. And, of course, you can change, suspend or cancel your giving at any time. To join the *Circle of Hope*, contact us at (612) 436-4808 or giving@cvt.org.

Legacy Giving. Many donors who do not have the resources to make substantial gifts during their lifetimes find it possible to be extraordinarily generous through their estate planning. A gift of this kind will extend your legacy of hope to torture survivors while also offering potential financial benefits to you and

your loved ones, including sparing them complex probate procedures and costly taxes.

- **Bequest** — Making a bequest to CVT through your will or living trust is one of the simplest ways to create a legacy gift to CVT. A bequest can be modified or canceled at any time, and it can be for a specified amount or percentage of your estate.
- **Life Insurance or Retirement Plan Beneficiary** — Another simple way to leave a lasting impact to survivors of torture is by naming CVT a beneficiary of your life insurance, IRA or other retirement account.
- **Qualified Charitable Distribution from an IRA** — If you are 70½ years of age, you can make a qualified charitable distribution to CVT from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA).

FOR MORE INFORMATION on any of these options or other ways to make a legacy gift to the Center for Victims of Torture, please contact Laura Kuhlmann at Lkuhlmann@cvt.org. Of course, you should always consult with your attorney, accountant or financial planner to ensure that your gift fits your personal situation.

To make an immediate gift, visit us online at www.cvt.org, send a check to 2356 University Avenue W, Suite 430, St. Paul, MN 55114, or call (612) 436-4808. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to healing the wounds of torture.



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