



The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

THE storycloth

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Torture: A Global Crisis

Increased conflict around the world is sending the number of refugees, displaced persons and survivors of torture soaring

According to the United Nations, the world crossed a terrible milestone earlier this year when the number of people forced from their homes by conflict, persecution or atrocities topped 100 million, more than at any other moment in modern history. And as we know from CVT's own research, a shockingly high percentage of them are survivors of torture and other atrocities.

The terrible reality is that despite it being 35 years since the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment went into effect, torture has grown worldwide.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, for example, has produced not only millions of new refugees but far too many credible reports of torture of both civilians and soldiers. Armed groups active in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Central African Republic have massacred and tortured local populations.

Security forces in Syria have built an industrial system of torture that has resulted in more than 14,000 deaths since 2011. Meanwhile, in Myanmar the authorities use torture and sexual violence against women and children as part of the junta's horrific repression of the Rohingya ethnic minority and all those who oppose military rule. In the Americas, criminal gangs use torture to intimidate journalists, activists and members of minority groups, including indigenous populations.

And here in the United States, we are still struggling with our own government's recent history of torture. Despite widespread consensus that the CIA's post-9/11 use of rendition and "enhanced interrogation" amounted to torture, our government is still attempting to convict prisoners at Guantanamo with evidence tainted by torture.

This reality demands two things of us. First, organizations like CVT



Asylum seekers wait to receive services at the Casa Alitas shelter in Tucson, AZ.

and people of goodwill intensify our call for political leaders around the world to do more to stand up for universal human rights and to protect the norms and laws that safeguard humanity.

And second, we boost our efforts to bring the healing care that survivors need to recover from their wounds, rebuild their lives and rediscover hope. With the generosity of compassionate supporters like you, CVT is making strategic investments to expand our reach where it is most urgently needed.

ETHIOPIA

CVT was already delivering care to thousands of Eritrean refugees in northern Ethiopia when federal government forces and the Eritrean military launched an invasion of the
(see page 3)

Restoring the Dignity
of the Human Spirit

INSIDE

- 2 Letter from CVT President and CEO Dr. Simon Adams
- 3 Meet Riyad, Featured Speaker at CVT's Restoring Hope Breakfast
- 4 Important 2022 Tax Information: Qualified Charitable Distribution
- 4 Other Ways to Put Your Compassion to Work

Letter from the President and CEO



Dr. Simon Adams

Dear Friend,

According to the UN, one out of every 78 persons on Earth has now been forced from their home by conflict, persecution or atrocities.

As the lead article in this issue of *The StoryCloth* explains, there are more refugees and displaced persons today than at any previous moment in modern history. It's impossible to say with any precision how many of those 100 million people have survived torture, but we know it is frighteningly high: our own research shows that up to 44 percent of refugees living in the United States are torture survivors.

There are two ways to respond when seeing those numbers. Throw up our hands in despair ... or roll up our sleeves and get to work. All of us at CVT are incredibly grateful for caring supporters like you who join with us in that second course of action.

Together, we are making an impact. In August, our years of hard work to end the "Remain in Mexico" policy paid off when a U.S. federal judge finally gave the go-ahead to shut the reprehensible policy down. This was tremendous news for people fleeing violence and torture who will now be allowed to wait in the U.S., rather than in extremely dangerous areas in Mexico, for their asylum claims to be processed. We still have a long way to go before the United States has an immigration system centered around compassion, but we're a little closer today.

Also, in the United States we are receiving very positive feedback on *Proyecto Mariposa*, our innovative collaboration with the *Casa Alitas* shelter in Tucson, that allows us to provide both in-person and virtual assistance to asylum seekers from around the world. I have visited the project myself and was amazed to not only meet people who had fled from Cuba, Colombia and Venezuela, but also from as far away as Ukraine or Pakistan.

Globally, we are using our expertise to help colleague organizations build capacity. Our New Tactics in Human Rights Program provides training and technical assistance to activists, and a new project—Incubator for Defenders Remaining in Exile to Advance Movements (IDREAM)—meets the unique needs of human rights defenders forced into exile.

Finally, with the National Capacity Development Project, we're strengthening clinical skills, program infrastructure and data management capabilities of the 35 U.S. torture survivor programs funded by the State Department's Office of Refugee Resettlement.

There is one thing above all that gives me hope ... the compassion, generosity and commitment people like you bring to our shared mission. I couldn't possibly be more grateful.

Sincerely,

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

Dr. Simon Adams
President and CEO

Meet Riyadh, Featured Speaker at CVT's Restoring Hope Breakfast



If ever there were a person with reason to abandon hope, it is Riyadh.

After traveling to Syria from his home in Turkey when he was 19, he learned about horrific human rights violations and tried to get word back to the media in Turkey. He was then arrested by Syrian security forces who tortured him brutally, forced him to watch others be tortured, and imprisoned him for 20 years. For two of those

years, he was held alone in an underground cell where he never saw sunlight. His father also died while he remained in prison.

Finally, in 2017, Riyadh was released. He learned about CVT from other former prisoners and participated in our Survivor of Torture Initiative, which enabled him to channel his trauma and grief into a creative outlet. Now, Riyadh finds healing through helping other people who have also been tortured

and detained at the hands of the Syrian dictatorship.

For two decades, Riyadh learned about the very worst things that humans can do to one another—including the capacity for organized cruelty, brutality and depravity. But he refused to lose himself or forfeit his belief in humanity. And with the support of CVT and caring friends like you, he is once again looking to the future with real hope.

Torture: A Global Crisis

(from page 1)

Tigray region nearly two years ago. As atrocities were perpetrated across Tigray and neighboring regions, we increased our capacity to help meet the tremendous need for care for all those displaced by the conflict, regardless of their ethnicity. For several months, in some of the worst-hit areas, CVT was the only international humanitarian organization serving internally displaced persons.

Today, we are actively working in eight camps for internally displaced people in Ethiopia while continuing our in-depth mental health counseling for severely traumatized Eritrean refugees. But as the war continues, the needs of vulnerable populations also continue to grow.

UGANDA

The decades of murder, mutilation and torture committed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) displaced nearly 2 million Ugandans

and left a terrible legacy of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder amongst those exposed to its depredations.

While CVT is providing as much care to survivors as our budget and staffing will allow, the need for rehabilitative services is far beyond the capacity of any one organization. So, in communities ravaged by the LRA in the past, we're training local Ugandan mental health counselors to provide the specialized, compassionate care survivors need to begin their recovery.

KENYA

Over the last decade, CVT's work in Dadaab, Kakuma and Nairobi has been particularly impactful despite the challenges of helping hundreds of thousands of refugees and torture survivors. Additional funding would enable us to bring more torture survivors the assistance they urgently need. One of our unique programs in Nairobi, for example, has a special focus on

LGBTQ+ refugees who have had to flee their home countries because of persecution and violence.

UNITED STATES

Although the Biden administration is making slow progress in reversing the cruel policies of the Trump administration, our asylum and refugee systems remain badly broken. CVT fought for and welcomed the end of the "Remain in Mexico" policy. However, we still need to win fundamental reforms that will replace what is still a punitive enforcement-centered immigration system with one built around compassion and constructive changes to the immigration system.

With increased funding, we will also be able to serve more torture survivors at our Healing Centers in Minnesota and Georgia. CVT is also expanding our partnership with the humanitarian shelter *Casa Alitas* in Tucson, where our *Proyecto Mariposa* project is providing ongoing tele-health case management for families as they move to other parts of the country.

Important 2022 Tax Information: Qualified Charitable Distribution

A gift from your IRA can count toward your Required Minimum Distribution

If you are over the age of 70½, you can make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) of up to \$100,000 directly to the Center for Victims of Torture from your traditional IRA.

For people unlikely to use all their retirement assets during their lifetime, this can be an especially advantageous way to help CVT

bring healing care to survivors and work for a world free of torture:

- If your gift is transferred directly to CVT from your IRA plan administrator, it will **not** be subject to federal taxes, and
- It will count toward any Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) due and may help reduce your adjusted gross income on this year's taxes.

To initiate a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA, contact your IRA plan administrator, and have the distribution sent to CVT, 2356 University Avenue W, Suite 430, St. Paul, MN 55114.

Other Ways to Put Your Compassion to Work

Donor Advised Funds

If you have set up a donor-advised fund (DAF), you can contact its representative to make a grant recommendation for CVT. You will need the following information:

Organization Name: The Center for Victims of Torture
Organization EIN: 36-3383933
Organization Address: 2356 University Ave. W,
Suite 430, St. Paul, MN 55114

If you are interested in learning more about starting a DAF or need assistance in making a gift from an existing DAF, please contact Laura Kuhlmann at Lkuhlmann@cvt.org.

Monthly Giving. Rather than donating once a year, or a few times throughout the year, many of our supporters choose instead to join the CVT *Circle of Hope* by having a smaller gift charged monthly 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 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*, select “monthly giving” when returning your gift by mail or donating online at cvt.org.

Bequest in Your Will

You can make a bequest by naming the Center for Victims of Torture in your will or living trust. Your bequest has no impact on your current cash flow, and you can modify your bequest at any point through a codicil to your will or an amendment to your trust. Your bequest to CVT is entirely free from federal estate taxes, and there is no upper limit on estate tax deductions taken for charitable bequests.

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.

If you wish to make an immediate gift, visit us online at www.cvt.org, please 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.



The
CENTER for
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