CVT Mourns the Death of Legendary Civil Rights Leader John Lewis

ST. PAUL, Minn. and ATLANTA — The Center for Victims of Torture™ (CVT) today issued this statement after the death of Congressman John Lewis of Georgia.

“Today we are grieving. With the loss of Congressman John Lewis, the world has lost a towering, inspiring leader in the realms of civil rights, human rights, immigrant rights, our rights. A man whose history of action in the face of grave danger, whose history of words spoken with strength and passion to the very heart of power, whose history of results in changing structures in order to protect the rights of the people, is a man we needed. A man we need in the days to come. We are deeply saddened to lose his strength, his courage, and his humanity.

“John Lewis’s Congressional office staff were among the first to welcome CVT to Atlanta as we opened our doors to survivors of torture among the refugee population there. His staff in Washington, D.C., and in Atlanta were incredibly kind and receptive to us, and were committed to helping those most vulnerable. We quickly noted that his team was open to speak with anyone working on these issues, whether constituents or non-constituents. In fact, Congressman Lewis’s staff reached out recently to see how nonprofits were doing during the COVID crisis and to share resources.

“In addition to his work on civil rights, Congressman Lewis took action to support refugees and asylum seekers, among whom are many survivors of torture. As part of his support for Georgia’s refugees and immigrants, he sent a representative to the annual New Americans Day at the Georgia Capitol and agreed to co-sponsor to the GRACE Act, HR 2146, to protect our resettlement infrastructure and restore refugee admissions to the historic average of 98,000.

“In addition, he condemned the Trump administration’s cruel immigration enforcement and detention policies, with a focus on Georgia detention facilities, and spoke out against the family separation executive order as evil and immoral.

“Recently, he co-sponsored the Asylum Protection Act, HR 2662, which would defund the Remain in Mexico program and FIRST Act, HR 6537, which would make ICE release medically-vulnerable detainees from Stewart Detention and other facilities during the pandemic.

“John Lewis’s example will continue to inspire civil and human rights activists for generations to come. We will miss his vision, his strength and his leadership. We will carry on this work in his memory.” –Curt Goering, executive director

-###-