



The  
CENTER for  
VICTIMS of  
TORTURE

## **26 June, A Day to Honor Survivors of Torture**

By Dr. Simon Adams, president and CEO  
Center for Victims of Torture (CVT)  
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On 26 June, the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, we recognize and honor victims, and convey our support and solidarity with all survivors, their families and their communities, around the world.

Beginning in 1998, the UN General Assembly set aside the 26<sup>th</sup> of June as the day when the global community acknowledges that torture is a crime against humanity that is prohibited under international law. In 2025 we are reflecting on the courage we see every day in the survivors who come to the Center for Victims of Torture for care.

In a year of creeping authoritarianism and conflict in so many parts of the world – with some governments undermining universal human rights and attacking humanitarian workers – we are heartened by the bravery of our clients who were tortured because they stood up for their rights. Their actions inspire us at a time when the UN High Commissioner for Refugees reports that a record 123 million people are currently displaced by persecution, conflict and atrocities.

They also inspire us as we confront the devastating cuts to foreign aid imposed by the U.S. government. Since January, CVT has been forced to close the doors of our clinics in Jordan and Ethiopia. We know that these cuts and closures not only undermine the United States' reputation in the world, they deny some of the world's most vulnerable populations access to life-saving care. These cuts have cost lives.

As we commemorate this day and celebrate CVT's fortieth anniversary, we acknowledge that this is an extremely challenging time for us, for our clients and for all humanitarian workers and human rights defenders. Yet, even amidst such turmoil, CVT is still able to help thousands of survivors.

I am proud of how our teams quickly pivoted to find alternative funding for expanded work with Syrian survivors, as well as for a new program in Tigray, Ethiopia, with traumatized survivors of that country's recent civil war. In addition, for the first time our team in Arizona has begun work with abandoned asylum seekers on the Mexican side of the U.S.-Mexico border. We also continue to support refugees in Kenya who have fled persecution because of their LGBTQ+ identity and survivors of the LRA's atrocities in Uganda. Our clinics in the U.S. continue to provide healing to people who arrived in the country as part of its previous proud commitment to refugee resettlement.

On this International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, we recognize that the future belongs to those with the courage to hope. Presidents, war criminals and governments come and go, but we will continue to work towards healing and hope.