



The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

Honoring Survivors of Torture on 26 June

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At CVT, each year we honor the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, June 26. We take a moment to recognize victims and express our solidarity with all survivors around the world, as well as with their families and communities.

The UN General Assembly set aside June 26 in 1998 as a day to acknowledge that torture is a crime against humanity, prohibited under international law. It is a day when the global community must recommit to ending torture forever but also to supporting those whose lives have been so deeply impacted by this crime.

While 2026 is my first year at CVT, I am no stranger to the devastation caused by the use of torture. In my more than two decades working in global development and humanitarian response, I've worked with countless survivors and their family members who've told me about how they were intimidated and silenced by torture and by the threat of torture. They told me how they no longer felt safe to speak out about the way officials and governments – those in positions of power – were impacting their everyday lives: their ability to earn a living, to take care of their children, to get an education, to find shelter and food. Torture controls communities, not just individuals.

So as we commemorate June 26 in 2026, we reflect on the discouraging fact that torture is still perpetrated around the world. In fact, last year CVT extended care to survivors who had been tortured in 68 different countries. However, we also reflect on the extraordinary courage demonstrated by survivors and their families every day. The people who walk through our doors have taken steps to reclaim and rebuild their lives in the face of pure, intentional cruelty.

This year we also must acknowledge the enormous challenges we face in the humanitarian and human rights sector. The foreign aid cuts by the United States government that devastated so much of our work last year have been worsened as additional global funders too cut back their support. These cuts have cost lives. In addition, violent conflict, authoritarianism and inhumanity continue unchecked around the world. The United Nations reports that nearly 118 million people have been forcibly displaced, most as a result of persecution and violent conflict; at CVT, we know that many of them have endured torture. As we honor victims of torture today, we also pledge our support for universal human rights.

We face difficult days, but we take inspiration from the thousands of survivors who have sought healing and justice. On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, we honor all victims, survivors and their families; we stand with all who dare to speak for justice, who persevere and find hope.