



The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

Supporting Survivors and Their Communities on 26 June

By Dr. Simon Adams, president and CEO
Center for Victims of Torture (CVT)
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Today, 26 June, is the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. Each year at CVT, we pause to express our support for, and solidarity with, all torture survivors, their families and their communities throughout the world. We celebrate that on this day in 1987, the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment came into effect, recognizing that torture is a crime against all of humanity and is illegal everywhere and at all times.

Despite this global prohibition, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees reported last year that there are more than 110 million people in the world who have been forcibly displaced from their homes, many as a result of torture, armed conflict and persecution.

CVT is on the frontlines of this global crisis, and we continue to support survivors as they rebuild their lives. For example, in Arizona near the U.S. Southern border, we support those who have fled their home countries to seek asylum in the United States. We have also recently opened two new specialized projects in Atlanta, Georgia and St. Paul, Minnesota, dedicated to supporting refugees from Afghanistan who have escaped from the Taliban's repressive rule.

In Kenya, refugees and asylum seekers – many of them LGBTQ+ individuals who fled deadly persecution and the rise of legalized homophobia in the region – come to us for rehabilitative care. In Ethiopia, we extend care to refugees from Eritrea and South Sudan, as well as to internally displaced people whose lives were shattered by the recent armed conflict in Tigray. And at our offices in Iraq and Uganda, CVT staff are helping to develop the skills of other humanitarian professionals who work alongside us in the struggle for healing and justice.

In Jordan, these past eight months have been deeply painful as the Israel-Hamas war has resulted in tens of thousands of civilian deaths and unimaginable suffering. Our extraordinary staff, who have played such an important role in providing healing services to refugees from Syria and elsewhere for more than a decade, emphasized to me that lasting peace will require families and communities to address collective trauma. We stand ready to assist.

Most of all, today we extend our respect and recognition to all survivors and their families. On this International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, we stand with them. They know that the future does not belong to the dictators, war criminals and torturers. It belongs to those who are prepared to stand up for dignity, justice and human rights.