



The  
CENTER for  
VICTIMS of  
TORTURE

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## **Center for Victims of Torture Denounces Proposed Restrictions on Asylum**

**ST. PAUL, Minn.** — The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) denounces proposals to restrict asylum made by U.S. Senators after months-long, closed-door negotiations responding to President Biden’s [supplemental funding request](#). The proposed changes would have a devastating impact on refugees and asylum-seekers and violate the U.S.’ international human rights obligations.

The proposed provisions would allow the government to shut the border based on an arbitrary and artificially low number of arrivals, tighten the criteria for screening asylum seekers, and accelerate the asylum application process to a degree where many asylum seekers may struggle to obtain legal representation or effectively advocate for themselves.

“Having the right to apply for asylum should not be determined by something as random as what time of day you happen to arrive at the border,” said Alison Beckman, CVT senior clinician for external relations. “If an asylum seeker makes it across the border, the accelerated process means that they will likely not have enough time to obtain counsel or prepare for a process that has an increased burden of proof. Proof, by the way, is often an impossible thing for an asylum seeker to have. Our clients tell us their torture was clandestine and hidden. Often there are no physical scars or wounds; oppressive governments don’t advertise that they torture. Asylum should not be criminalized; this bill increases funding to detain more asylum seekers and, when released, to have them monitored via ankle bracelet.”

There are ways to design a [trauma-informed asylum system](#); CVT has been publicly calling for adoption of sensible processes since the first days of President Biden’s term. In our work with refugees who have fled to the United States, we hear about the oftentimes extremely dangerous and traumatizing situations they have survived in their home countries but also on their journey to the U.S. The system CVT proposes will minimize harm and allow people to find stability.

When people who have survived torture are able to access stable ways to navigate the asylum process and establish a new home, including having access to mental health care, they [begin rebuilding their lives](#) and participating in their new communities. These new proposed laws will hamper that possibility for thousands of people.

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*The Center for Victims of Torture is a nonprofit organization with offices in Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Uganda, United States and additional project sites around the world. Visit [www.cvt.org](http://www.cvt.org)*