



The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

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Letter from the Executive Director

CVT Stands with Refugees

President Trump's recent Executive Order on refugee resettlement suspends the *entire* U.S. refugee resettlement program for 120 days, bans the arrival of Syrian refugees and slashes the number of refugees admitted from 110,000 to 50,000.

This is not who we are as a country.

CVT will continue to stand with refugees—for whom resettlement is often the only, and last, chance to reach safe haven after surviving the horrors of torture, war and displacement.

We know from our research that as many as 44 percent of refugees living in the U.S. have survived torture. CVT's expertise in torture rehabilitation is needed more than ever, and the U.S. must not shut its doors to refugees.

Another Executive Order under consideration could: clear the way for the CIA to reopen “black site” prisons like those post-9/11 where detainees were held and tortured; call for a review of the Army Field Manual that could potentially lead to the inclusion of so-called “enhanced interrogation techniques,” a euphemism for torture; and, keep the prison at Guantanamo Bay open, as the president has previously pledged to “load it up.”

All of these orders go against who we are as a nation. We must fiercely resist the erosion of our human rights values and continue the country's proud tradition of being a leader in refugee protection and a beacon of hope to refugees around the world.

In the days ahead, as refugee survivors make their way to us in profound need of healing, I am truly grateful for your partnership and generous support. For thousands of survivors who will rebuild their lives and reclaim a capacity for hope and joy again, thank you.

Warm regards,

Curt Goering, Executive Director



Restoring
the Dignity of
the Human Spirit

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President Obama's Last Actions on Torture

One of CVT's top priorities before President Obama left office was to ensure the preservation of the Senate Intelligence Committee's full report on the CIA's torture program in the aftermath of 9/11.

With a coalition of human rights advocacy groups, CVT worked diligently to ensure the preservation of the 6,700-page CIA Torture Report in President Obama's presidential archive so it cannot be destroyed. Its destruction was a real danger with the change in administrations. Survivors of torture deserve accountability. They deserve to know the truth behind the United States' torture program, and this action is an essential step down

the path to justice and healing for survivors. As citizens, we, too, have a right to know about the torture that was carried out by our government.

President Obama also spoke out strongly against torture in December in his speech to U.S. service members and their families at the MacDill Airforce Base in Tampa, Florida.

"A country that rejects torture is a country that demonstrates respect for the rule of law and for the very concepts of human rights and respect for human dignity," the President said, and the audience applauded. He emphasized that "the rule of law is not a weakness; in the long term, it is our greatest strength." He reminded Americans

that the United States' prohibition of torture is a great strength and a powerful validation of our country's integrity. The audience applauded again as he remarked that lawful interrogations have resulted in our obtaining good intelligence from suspects while allowing our country to remain true to our values.

In a statement about the President's speech, CVT Executive Director Curt Goering said, "Those values broadcast who we are to the world. The U.S. must be a leader in rejecting the use of all forms of torture, especially in times when we fear violent acts by extremists. The U.S. Government must never be driven by fear to

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"A country that rejects torture is a country that demonstrates respect for the rule of law and for the very concepts of human rights and respect for human dignity."

— President Obama



PHOTO © BETSY BROWN

“I just want to go where my children will be safest.”

Regime forces stormed Bushra* and her family’s home in the middle of the night while she and her family were sleeping. They arrested her husband and sons and took them along with other children from the neighborhood, some as young as 13 years old. None of them had participated in protests or the revolution in Syria—they were just taken.

After four months, Bushra’s husband and sons were finally released when she paid a bribe. Her husband returned home with his teeth broken and thumbs fractured. Today he suffers from knee problems because he was forced to kneel in a small, crowded

room for extended periods of time.

Together, the family fled to Jordan where they live today as refugees. After living through the unimaginable, Bushra came to CVT Jordan in order to begin rebuilding her life. As part of her healing journey, Bushra wants to speak out about what was done to her family. She said that regardless of what she’s lost, she just wants to go where her children will be safest.

Your support of CVT helps torture survivors like Bushra and her family heal, regain hope and rebuild their lives. We remain deeply grateful.



PHOTO © DREAMSTIME

CVT’s activities in Jordan are funded by the United States Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

*** Name and some details have been changed for safety and to protect confidentiality.**

President Obama’s Last Actions on Torture

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take actions that compromise our ideals and allow adversaries to leverage resulting weaknesses in our international reputation. As President Obama said, ‘Terrorists want us to turn on one another.’ At CVT, we applaud the prohibitions against torture set during President Obama’s time in office, including the strong bi-partisan steps taken by Congress last year when it passed the McCain-Feinstein anti-torture amendment.”

Under President Trump, the progress we made with President

Obama is at risk. With your continued support, CVT will be unyielding in aggressively resisting proposals to re-establish a torture program, prevent funding cuts for

torture survivor rehabilitation, and stop plans to limit the ability of refugees fleeing prosecution, war and torture to find safety in the United States.

“Those values broadcast who we are to the world. The U.S. must be a leader in rejecting the use of all forms of torture, especially in times when we fear violent acts by extremists.”

— CVT Executive Director Curt Goering

Notes from the Field on Balance and Healing for Survivors

From Haftay Hindeya Reda, a counselor at CVT Ethiopia, Mai Tsebri

Early in our 10-week counseling cycle, we ask clients to remember and share a moment of joy with the group. We ask them for a simple story from the past, perhaps a memory from childhood, maybe something playful that happened on the playground. For survivors of torture and traumatic experiences, this type of speaking is not always comfortable. Some clients cannot participate. When that happens, we meet individually. I explain that this is one technique for processing trauma. It is a beginning for healing.

In working with clients through the rehabilitative process, we help them understand their strength,

identify the resources around them and process their trauma, and we work to create balance. We incorporate the moment of joy early in the cycle because it would be overwhelming for people to jump into speaking about the difficult moments they have survived. We start with this positive memory to help bring balance and help people practice regulating their emotions.

During the 4th session, we do an exercise called the “river of life.” This exercise gives clients a chance to put both difficult and joyful moments in chronological order, noting the time they occurred in their lives. Showing the positive



Haftay Hindeya Reda

moments along with the difficult times gives people who have been suffering from trauma the understanding and reminder that they were happy people. They get to see a more complete picture of their life.

CVT is supporting people, survivors of trauma and torture. This is a good thing in the camp. If we try to heal people, we are bringing a bright thing, a hopeful thing in this refugee camp.

The Circle of Hope

The easiest, most cost-effective way to help survivors all year long!

Every gift to CVT makes a tremendous difference in helping survivors of torture find hope and rebuild their lives. With monthly gifts, *Circle of Hope* members help decrease CVT’s administrative costs and ensure more funding helps torture survivors directly.

Monthly contributions are automatically charged to a credit card or debited from a checking account, ensuring ongoing,

dependable support for CVT and hassle-free giving for Circle of Hope members—but best of all they bring continuous hope and healing to thousands of torture survivors worldwide.

Circle of Hope members are free to change, suspend or cancel their giving at any time with a phone call or email. To join the *Circle of Hope*, please contact CVT at giving@cvt.org or 612.436.4808.



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