



The  
CENTER for  
VICTIMS of  
TORTURE

## **The Center for Victims of Torture Opposes the Laken Riley Act Because it Will Harm Torture Survivors and Impact Healing**

**ST. PAUL, Minn.** — The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) today issued this statement as part of a joint event organized by Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty together with organizations opposed to the Laken Riley Act. This bill would allow asylum seekers to be detained without due process for petty offenses and allow them to be subject to indefinite detention.

“The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) joins Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty and the agencies present here today who provide services every day to vulnerable individuals living in Minnesota. We extend care to asylum seekers and refugees who are victims of torture, and we hear every day about the difficulties they face while trying to rebuild their lives and begin healing from the trauma they have endured. We oppose the Laken Riley Bill because it would harm torture survivors and their communities in ways that will directly impact their healing.

“At CVT we have spent 40 years providing rehabilitative care to people who were tortured by governments where due process doesn’t exist. People are detained for inconsequential – or sometimes entirely made-up reasons – because they spoke out against autocratic governments and then were subjected to indefinite detention. We see every day the profound harms that indefinite detention causes, both psychologically and physically. This bill threatens to impose those harms on people accused of, but not convicted of, a petty crime.

“Our clients are afraid; when they hear news about this kind of legislation, the memory of past torture is awakened and parlays into current fear and halts healing. We are further concerned this bill will empower racial profiling and that abusers could use it as a threat to keep victims from reporting domestic violence. For example, an abuser could threaten to falsely report that their spouse has committed a theft.

“Victims deserve legislation that empowers them to heal, rebuild their lives and seek justice without fear of further trauma or retribution. The Laken Riley Bill, however, would do the opposite. It forces survivors into a position where they would have to navigate an even more complex and harmful legal system, where their voices are silenced, and their rights are diminished.” -Emily Hutchinson, vice president of global programs

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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.*

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