



The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

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CONTACT: Jenni Bowring-McDonough
612.436.4886
jbowring@cvt.org

CVT Baseline Study Reveals Mental Health Needs of Refugees and Host Community in Northern Kenya

ST. PAUL, Minn. — A mental health [survey](#) of refugee and host communities in and around the Kakuma refugee camps of northern Kenya reveals similarities and differences between the two groups and establishes baseline data to aid in meeting trauma rehabilitation needs, the Center for Victims of Torture™ (CVT) today announced. These results informed CVT's plans for beginning to extend care in the region, with a center to be opened early in 2018.

CVT's representative survey, conducted over several weeks in November 2016, collected information from 239 recently-arrived refugees and 84 members of the host community in and around the Kalobeyei settlement of the Kakuma refugee camps. CVT will readminister the survey annually as the settlement grows, launching the second survey in January 2018.

“The findings of this and subsequent surveys are invaluable for identifying areas where critical needs are going unmet and how that is making an impact on daily life,” said Shannon Golden, Ph.D., CVT research associate. “When the effects of trauma are neglected, attempts to improve other areas such as livelihood and education may be unsuccessful. Gathering rigorous data on an annual basis is built into our work in Kakuma to keep services responsive to needs and make adjustments as necessary.”

This study marks the first time CVT has carried out baseline data collection with a representative sample of people. Two key innovations in this methodology are the gathering of data about mental health in a humanitarian setting and the inclusion of both the refugee and host communities in one survey. Findings include:

- 48% of refugee respondents and 43% of host community respondents report that mental health problems interfere with their daily functioning and activities.
- 32% of refugees and 23% of host community report recent suicidal thoughts.
- 33% of host community report that illness, health or disability issues cause the greatest amount of stress, while 22% of refugees report that hopelessness or uncertainty about the future is their greatest stressor.

On September 1, CVT began to set up its new healing center in the Kalobeyei settlement, and hiring is underway as the center gets established. In the coming months, members of the refugee and host communities in the region will have access to holistic rehabilitative care including counseling and physiotherapy, and, more immediately, psychological first aid.

In 2016, CVT extended rehabilitative care to 1,526 survivors of torture and war trauma in the Dadaab refugee camps and Nairobi, where CVT also works with survivors.

The project is funded by a grant from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

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The Center for Victims of Torture is a nonprofit organization headquartered in St. Paul, MN, with offices in Atlanta, GA, and Washington, D.C.; and healing initiatives in Africa and the Middle East. Visit www.cvt.org