



The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

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Center for Victims of Torture Opens Doors in Kakuma Refugee Camps

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Both refugee survivors of torture and members of the host community in and around the Kakuma refugee camps can now access rehabilitative care from the Center for Victims of Torture™ (CVT), which opened its doors in the region this month. On-site care includes counseling and, now offered by CVT for the first time in a refugee camp setting, physiotherapy.

“The need for rehabilitative care here is enormous,” said Pablo Traspas, country director for CVT Kenya. “The hard reality is that this region is now home to more than 180,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, thousands of whom have survived torture and the horrors of war, and our dedicated staff is already joining clients on their healing journeys. Our doors are also open to our neighbors in the host community, who are struggling with different issues but who may benefit from holistic care, making our healing center unique among CVT’s other initiatives. CVT has made it possible to cover the existing gap in mental health and physiotherapy services in the Kakuma refugee camps.” See photos of CVT’s Kakuma site [here](#).

Psychological first aid is already available in this location, delivered by CVT counselors stationed at various locations around the camps. Counselors provide immediate psychological intervention for those struggling with trauma and other mental health crises upon arrival at the camps. CVT expects to see as many as 175 clients through the rest of 2018, and more than 400 in 2019.

“During my recent visit to our Kakuma site and the adjacent Kalobeyei settlement, I was once again inspired by the passion of our colleagues who have begun meeting with survivors while building of the site continues around them, a testament to the dedication at the heart of humanitarian work,” said Curt Goering, CVT’s executive director. Even as healing work is underway, final infrastructure is being put into place. Modified shipping containers which can withstand the region’s windy conditions act as temporary staff housing and office space while construction continues for more permanent structures.

A 2016 mental health [survey](#) of refugee and host communities in Northern Kenya informed CVT’s plans for extending care in the region, and [established baseline data](#) to aid in meeting

trauma rehabilitation needs. The results of a second study conducted in 2018 will be released in the coming months.

Both refugees and Kenyan nationals make up the vast majority of the staff, and include psychosocial counselors, physiotherapists, rehabilitation assistants and administrative staff.

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