

Center for the Victims of Torture

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://www.cvt.org/End-Indefinite-Detention>

Campaign and Advocacy

Of the 59 detainees still being held at Guantanamo Bay prison, 49 have never been charged with a crime. They have been held here for over a decade, not knowing when, if ever, they will be released. This is indefinite detention, and the serious physical and psychological harm that results from such detention can constitute [cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment](#). And for many of these men who were tortured or abused while in U.S. custody, indefinite detention exacerbates and continues their pain and suffering.

Medical research shows, and CVTs experience working with survivors of torture and war trauma confirms, that indefinite detention can cause severe and chronic anxiety, depression and posttraumatic stress disorder. These severe disorders arise because the indefinitely detained prisoner realizes that nothing he does matters and that there is no way to end, foreshorten or even know the duration of his incarceration. These effects are amplified in detainees who have been tortured or experienced trauma prior to commencement of indefinite detention.

Here are words from Mohammed al-Hamiri, a detainee from Yemen, as documented in his letters and printed in the [Intercept](#). Guantanamo prison has undergone multiple renovations. The worn walls needed repair and the steel structure which has become rusty over time needed to be renovated. Even inanimate materials have weakened over time. If time has caused inanimate walls to tear and their colors to fade, what do you expect it did to a human being? Al-Hamiri was held at the prison for over 13 years and was never charged with a crime. He was finally released to Saudi Arabia in April 2016.

There is no legitimate basis even under the Geneva Conventions that justifies the indefinite detention of individuals without charge or trial. In fact, indefinite detention violates the [UN Convention Against Torture](#). That's why CVT is working to end this inhumane practice. In Washington, D.C., we regularly meet with policy makers to educate them on the serious medical consequences of indefinite detention, advocate against its use and offer recommendations to end this inhumane practice.

At CVT, we're working to end torture. You can, too. Sign up for CVT email alerts to get news updates and information so you can speak out against torture.

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Email Updates

We **heal victims** of torture through unique services and professional care worldwide.

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We **strengthen partners** who heal torture survivors and work to prevent torture.

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We **advocate** for the protection & care of torture survivors and an end to torture.

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877.265.8775 cvt [at] cvt.org

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