

Center for the Victims of Torture

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

<https://www.cvt.org/what-we-do/survivor-stories/adams-story>

Campaign and Advocacy

Adam waited four years for an asylum hearing. Then it was delayed again.

Adam* fled his home country in central Africa, leaving behind his home and family after he was repeatedly arrested and tortured. Adam was targeted because of his work for human rights. I was politically involved with opposition parties to the government. I also worked for many years as an organizer for trade unions demanding better working conditions for workers, Adam said. The longest detention was for seven years. I was never formally charged with a crime or had opportunity to hear why I was being detained.

Adam knew he had to flee. He made his way to the United States, and came to Minnesota where he found CVT and began recovering from numerous past incidents of trauma. A very thoughtful and effortful person, Adam is in his mid-50s, and initially saw enormous improvements with the symptoms he had been experiencing since being tortured. He was beginning to rebuild his life.

However, the asylum seeking process has dragged on for years, with repeated delays for hearings. During these years, he was able to obtain a work permit, but the renewal process became backlogged, and he had to leave a stable job without any way to work until the renewal came in.

Adam said the process deeply has affected him. It is painful, stressful, he said. I have been denied in every way. I have had suicidal thoughts at times, living a life without my family, not knowing how long that will be. At the same time, I continue to worry for the safety of my family back home. No guarantee for their safety. My absence puts them at risk. I can't plan for my future.

When Adam first went in for his initial asylum interview years ago, he was hopeful, motivated and future oriented. Since that time, however, he has become progressively worse. The long delays have interrupted a course of healing and rehabilitation that had been very promising.

**Name and some details have been changed for confidentiality and security purposes.*

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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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