

# Center for the Victims of Torture

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

<https://www.cvt.org/where-we-work/past-projects/sierra-leone>

### Campaign and Advocacy

In 2001, as the civil war in Sierra Leone subsided, CVT moved with returning refugees to provide mental health services in that country. Initially located in Kenema district camps serving internally displaced persons, our services evolved to include community-based projects in the blood diamond areas most severely affected by the war.

Using a framework similar to the one developed in [Guinea](#), CVT provided small group and individual counseling to 6,400 men, women, girls and boys who survived torture and war-related trauma. We trained over 100 Sierra Leonean paraprofessional mental health counselors, 57 of whom received a diploma or certificate in counseling from Milton Margai College of Education and Technology in Freetown.

In 2005, CVT-trained paraprofessional mental health counselors formed [CAPS, Community Association for Psychosocial Services](#). CAPS is an independent, nonprofit organization based in Kono. It is dedicated to continue providing for the mental health needs of their community, including survivors of torture and war trauma. A CVT organizational coordinator worked with CAPS throughout 2007 to help this new organization develop into a stable, sustainable community-based mental health service provider.



In 2007, CVT launched a new initiative in Freetown, the capitol of Sierra Leone. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons project provided direct mental health care to survivors of severe trauma, including trafficking crimes, and continued to train Sierra Leonean paraprofessional mental health counselors. In addition, CVT provided training for government, health and NGO staff working with survivors of torture, war and trafficking to improve their ability to provide effective and sensitive care.

*CVT worked in Sierra Leone from 2001 until 2010. Our work was funded by the U.S. State Departments Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration and Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, and also made possible through the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development and the American peoples support.*

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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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