

Center for the Victims of Torture

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

<http://www.cvt.org/blog/healing-and-human-rights/things-consider-confirmation-hearings-begin>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

As confirmation hearings for presidential appointees begin tomorrow, January 10, CVT will be monitoring statements and positions taken by nominees on issues of importance to our clients and our work to end torture.

Since the election, CVT has been involved in discussions and actions to ensure our top policy priorities continue to move forward as the new administration takes office. The following are among the issues we are watching closely, along with key information about the reality of these issues as experienced by our clients, who are survivors of torture from around the world.

Torture is a crime under both international and domestic law. There are no exceptions or justifications for the use of torture. Its not allowed in a time of war, national emergency, or in the name of national security. Torture is explicitly banned, without exception, by [the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#), [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), and [Article 3](#) Common to the Four Geneva Conventions to which the U.S. is a party.

Read the truths about torture [here](#).

Waterboarding is a form of slow, controlled drowning. When tortured through waterboarding, a victim is strapped down and immobilized as water is poured over his face and into his throat, asphyxiating him and leading him to believe he will die.

Read details about the torture form known as waterboarding [here](#).

At CVT's Healing Center in St. Paul, our clients have experienced profound fear in response to political rhetoric calling for bans on Muslim refugees, to calls for onerous resettlement restrictions, and to [repeated disrespect, intimidation and harassment](#) of members of immigrant populations. Threats to individuals rights always create anxiety, but for survivors of torture, the ramifications are particularly intense. CVT's [research](#) shows that as many as 44% of refugees living in the United States have survived torture. We must stand with refugees and ensure their rights are protected.

Read this [opinion piece](#) about the impact of political rhetoric on torture survivors by Curt Goering, CVT executive director, in the Star Tribune.

Refugees are the most closely scrutinized people who travel to the U.S. Under the [U.S. Refugee Act of 1980](#) and as a state party to the [Refugee Protocol](#), the U.S. must continue to do our part to help address the global refugee crisis with compassion, with the effective and rigorous security screenings in place, and with greater focus on providing access to mental health care for individuals who have survived atrocities.

Here is a summary of the [rigorous refugee vetting process](#).

Confirmation hearings of note: *(Note: all times are EST)*

Jan. 10

9:30 a.m.

Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL)

Attorney General

3:30 p.m.

General John F. Kelly

Secretary of Homeland Security

Jan. 11

9 a.m.

Rex Tillerson

Secretary of State

Jan. 12

9:30 a.m.

General James Mattis

Secretary of Defense

10 a.m.

Congressman Mike Pompeo (R-KS)

CIA Director

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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