

Center for the Victims of Torture

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

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

Campaign and Advocacy

The torturers words do not limit me anymore.

My name is David*. I was born in a metropolitan town in a country in Africa and grew up in a family of four: my parents and a sibling. Life was good and most importantly, very simple.

I was well situated with a job and a wife in my early twenties; life was good. I knew things had become rough politically in my country, and during my second year in the university studying law, I knew I should participate in the struggle. However, when I spoke out against the government, it led to arrests, lockups and torture; it affected my job and my very own existence.

I fled first to Belgium, but I still was not safe. I quickly took steps to get to the United States. Upon arrival, I felt like a five year old who is lost in New York. I made it to Minnesota. Thankfully, there I met a torture survivor who had been a client of CVT. With his advice, I went to CVT.

Torture is a crime of the mind; it took me a while to realize the river of negativity that flowed out from me. And it wasn't only that because of the torture, I fully believed I would never amount to anything. That seed was planted in me after my torture experience.

When I went to CVT, then I understood that I do not have the capacity to carry the weight of the past. Little did I realize the magnitude of help I needed. The whole concept of rehabilitative care was new to me, but it worked. I saw the true meaning of listening is loving. There is something about being genuine; it is the medicine of the heart.

CVT stood by me until I was reunited with my family. Today, my life is different: I have a change in perspective, my trust level is high, and I enjoy safety and calm. I graduated with a Masters degree and have a challenging job in a high tech field.

**Name and some details have been changed for safety and to protect confidentiality.*

Photo credit: Dreamstime.

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

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

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