

Center for the Victims of Torture

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

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

Campaign and Advocacy

While in custody, Esme was repeatedly raped and beaten.

Esme* had been detained for one month because of false accusations of political involvement. A family member was able to help her get to the U.S. on a visa, and several months after she arrived, she applied for asylum.

When she came to CVT, Esme was separated from seven of her children. She was not able to talk during her therapy sessions; she could only cry and was barely able to function.

For months, Esme and her therapist sat in silence; there were no words for the pain she was experiencing. The pain of being separated from her children was even more intense than the memories of her torture.

As Esme developed more trust with her CVT clinicians, she was able to process more of her experiences. She began to display a wider range of emotions on her face, and was more relaxed and engaged in her sessions. She obtained asylum, and was finally, after five years, reunited with her children.

When Esme found CVT she was deeply depressed, rarely eating and sleeping only two or three hours each night. The torturers had broken her body, mind and spirit.

With the help of CVT, Esme reclaimed these pieces of her person. Today, Esme still works with her clinicians toward achieving more of her goals. She now arrives at CVT with her eldest daughter and a beaming smile, a reminder of how profoundly far she's come.

**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 **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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