

Center for the Victims of Torture

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

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

Campaign and Advocacy

After six years waiting for an asylum hearing, Jon feels hes not fully alive.

I was arrested and tortured. My work helped the less fortunate farmers of the country, but my opinion against the government led them to arrest and torture me. I had to leave because I could not work and faced more threat to my life back home after I was let go. Jon* escaped his home country in central Africa as soon as he was released from prison. A young man in his 40s, fear for his life forced Jon to make the excruciating decision to leave his wife and four children behind. He found his way to the United States.

Jon came to CVT for help with the symptoms that resulted from torture. He had constant nightmares about his torture, along with ongoing daytime, intrusive recollections of what he had suffered. CVT helped him with his post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and as his symptoms faded, Jon began to do well.

However, years have passed while he waits for his asylum case to be heard. He has experienced repeated delays and postponements. This has been a disaster on me, Jon said. A disaster on my family, my wife and kids. My family suffers because of my absence. My family suffers because of pressure on them and the threat that might come to them from the government. The separation is so difficult and painful for us.

Jon holds advanced academic degrees and learned English easily. He initially struggled with trusting new people, but as he continued to improve, he began to build great relationships with the community. His warmth and sense of humor made it easy to connect with others.

However, as the years have slowly passed while he waits for asylum, Jon has seen a worsening of his depression. The extensive delays and separation from loved ones make complete recovery difficult. He describes leading a life not fully alive, with little expression of joy as he has no options but to remain far from loved ones. He continues to meet his responsibilities both in the U.S. and back home, but struggles profoundly because of this prolonged separation.

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

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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