

The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

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Juan Méndez Receives CVT's Eclipse Award

Each year the Center for Victims of Torture presents the Eclipse Award to an individual or organization to recognize their extraordinary service for the protection and healing of torture survivors, or their work to prevent torture and advocate for its end.

This year's recipient is Juan Méndez, a torture survivor himself who has devoted his life to the protection of human rights and the prevention of torture. A native of Argentina, Juan was tortured because of his work as a human rights lawyer representing political prisoners during the military dictatorship.

In 1975, officers grabbed him off the street, blindfolded him, pushed him into a car and took him to a police station. From there he was handed off for questioning. "At the time I knew full well that all those accused of being 'subversives' were tortured ruthlessly. The first thing that came to my mind when the police took me is that I had to stay strong and not reveal anything that

could lead to the detention and torture of other colleagues," Juan said.

After three days of being tortured, Juan was transferred to a prison and held without charge for 18 months before being released and forced into exile in France.

Juan and his wife reunited there and then in 1977, the Méndez family came to the United States. "I moved to Washington and there I was in constant communication with human rights groups and became specialized in the issue of torture," Juan said. He has served in several human rights roles, including at Human Rights Watch, the International Center for Transitional Justice, and in academia.

In 2010, Juan was appointed UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment. As the UN Special Rapporteur, he is responsible for examining questions of torture and reports to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland.



Juan Méndez, UN Special Rapporteur

Any victim of torture or other ill-treatment may contact the Special Rapporteur, who spends time reviewing and evaluating the concerns. In many cases, Juan then contacts the offending government regarding the concerns—oftentimes with urgent demands for action. The Special Rapporteur conducts

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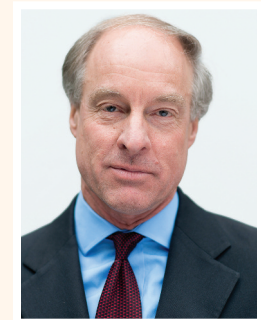
Restoring
the Dignity of
the Human Spirit

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Letter from the Executive Director

The Syrian crisis is now well into its sixth year. We've all seen and read about the huge numbers of Syrians on the move seeking protection and safety. Some seven to eight million people are displaced internally while five million have fled the country and become refugees.



Curt Goering

Syria's neighbors have done much. One in four people in Lebanon today is a Syrian refugee. Europe has helped but could still do much more. Canada has welcomed tens of thousands, and the new Prime Minister went to the airport himself to greet new arrivals. It is past time for the U.S.—a nation of immigrants and refugees—to finally do its part, too.

Refugees are subject to the most rigorous screening of any visitors to the U.S., yet the number of Syrian refugees admitted to the U.S. has been paltry. President Obama has said the U.S. would accept 10,000 Syrian refugees in 2016, but almost halfway through the year, just over 1,700 have been admitted.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has determined that about 10% of Syrian refugees are particularly vulnerable and in urgent need of resettlement outside the region. So far only about 2% have been resettled.

We know so well from our work that refugees are fleeing various forms of terrorism. Refugees are not terrorists. Most Iraqi and Syrian refugees in Jordan have survived traumatic experiences and many have been tortured. They arrive at our center in urgent need of specialized care. A majority are women and girls. Many are children.

Thanks to your generosity, CVT is able to help them heal, and I remain grateful for your support, your compassion, and your partnership. Together, we stand with refugee survivors and the U.S. cannot remain silent in our support any longer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Curt Goering". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Curt Goering
Executive Director

Juan Méndez Receives CVT's Eclipse Award

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fact-finding country visits, reaching out to states for invitations to tour prisons and meet prisoners in facilities around the world. In addition, he compiles reports for the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council annually.

Juan sees many challenges that must be addressed before torture is abolished. "It's still practiced in so many countries and for so many different reasons, that there's still a lot of work to be done before that," he said. Also, he noted that what we define as torture today is more expansive, to include things like solitary confinement, for example.

"Every act of torture has to be

investigated and disclosed to the public, and those responsible should be prosecuted. There are no exceptions to that, and it's a bad setback that a very powerful country like the U.S. thinks it's exempt from that obligation. I don't expect this to happen anytime soon, but that's no reason for not insisting on it. On the contrary, I think the more we insist on it now, the more we create the conditions where it may be possible down the road."

Even though he finds the landscape of torture today very horrifying, Juan is hopeful. "We should draw some optimism from the fact that depending on the country, the history and the historical moment of the place, it is possible

to see what was recently very pervasive torture disappear or be drastically reduced. I think the lesson we should draw from it is that if we pay attention and if we put our minds and our efforts to it, it's not impossible to abolish torture in our lifetime," he said.

"In presenting him with this year's Eclipse Award, CVT commends Juan for his global leadership at the UN and his lifetime of work to prevent torture and advocate for survivors," said Curt Goering, CVT executive director. "As a torture survivor himself, Juan is a powerful voice in the campaign to end torture worldwide and heal its wounds."

Restoring Dignity and Affirming Human Rights

by Susan Wright

When I decided to include the Center for Victims of Torture in my estate plan, I felt that it was the most comforting decision involving money that I had ever made. I knew that the Center's actions were in keeping with its mission, restoring dignity to the human spirit, and I had high confidence in its ability to use its resources to restore dignity to *many, many* human spirits in different circumstances around the world.

For me, powerful comfort exists in the hope that I have a hand in helping people who have been unprotected from the sadism of our times. It is a high honor that I am able to help even in some small way. When a person whose life has been derailed by torture is able to

heal and when the dignity of that spirit really is restored, the triumph belongs solely to that person—but it cheers everyone on earth.

It is likely that the strength of my feelings about the work of the Center reflect my experience as a small child and my parents' understanding of war as we passed through World War II. Although I was born in the Midwest, by 1941 my family had moved to New York, where my father worked for a European company that routed fuel to the Allied forces. My father was proud of his American citizenship that had been bestowed on him because he had served in the Army during World War I, and he was proud to be an immigrant from Germany.

It was only after my father's death when I was nine that I began

to understand the nightmares of his life and it was only after I grew up that I began to realize that my parents and everyone they knew were deeply afraid for their survival. I began to understand how worried they were about the precariousness and frailty of the democratic spirit. My parents' lives were shaped by the sadism of their times and they felt that protecting and restoring dignity to the collective human spirit was the most—maybe the only—important business for us all. For their part, they were engaged with
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Susan Wright,
CVT supporter

Restoring Dignity and Affirming Human Rights

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the ongoing work of gathering up and shipping off basic life necessities to people in war-torn lands, an effort that was conducted in the basement of our family home.

Since that time, I have never relented in my education about the destruction of human dignity due to tyranny and carnage. Eventually,

following schooling at Goddard and Antioch Colleges, Boston University and the University of Washington, I became a mental health counselor 40 years ago.

In the end, my mother and father believed that democracy was for the purpose of protecting human rights and that this is the ongoing business of our lives. They were well aware

of the power plays and glaring cynicism of our government as it is woven into our history and also of the many failures of government and its citizens in regard to human rights. They thought about the fragility of democracy and its laws and the betrayal of human beings to each other—every day. They felt that there was nothing more important. When I imagine their horror at the idea that the United States government would torture political prisoners or ban people from entering the United States because of their religion, I am fortified in my belief that the modest amount of money I am able to offer CVT is for the very best use.

Planning Your Legacy

You might not have previously considered how you can extend your support for the Center for Victims of Torture beyond your lifetime and leave a legacy of hope for torture survivors. You don't have to be wealthy to make a meaningful gift, and there are many ways you can personally benefit from a planned gift, too.

Everyone should have a will, and you can leave money to your heirs as well as organizations like CVT that reflect your values and beliefs. Careful planning now saves your loved ones from complex probate procedures and costly taxes, and a bequest is a gift that costs you nothing now.

If you are in your 30s or 40s	If you are in your 50s or 60s	If you are in your 70s and beyond
After ensuring that your loved ones are cared for, consider making CVT the primary or contingent beneficiary of an IRA or retirement account.	You may need to update your will. Consider leaving a specific dollar amount to CVT, reducing your taxes while putting your resources towards a cause you believe in.	A bequest to CVT's endowment will ensure that your annual support of CVT's life-saving care continues in perpetuity.

These are just a few of the ways you can make a meaningful contribution to our healing work while strategically meeting your financial goals. For more information on making a planned gift to the Center for Victims of Torture, please contact Michelle Woster at (612) 436-4859 or mwoster@cvt.org.

Make a Difference in the Life of a Survivor

Your generous support brings healing to torture survivors worldwide. CVT welcomes all types of donations.

- **Monthly Sustainers** allow for ongoing planning and delivery of healing services.
- **Planned Giving** continues your legacy of support.
- **Gifts of Stock** support survivors while offering tax benefits to donors.
- **In-Kind Donations** of specific items improve the lives of survivors.
- **Tribute Gifts** celebrate events or memorialize loved ones.

Donate online at www.cvt.org, send a check to 649 Dayton Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104, or call 1-877-265-8775 for other ways to give. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to healing the wounds of torture.



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