



July 27, 2009

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Torture survivors are us. They are our history and our future...

A. was only eighteen when he was arrested in his West African country. "I was tortured, you know. Sometimes they make you stand for hours. Beatings...I went through all that. They tried to get information that I don't even know. It's like telling somebody to find a nail in the ocean, because you don't know what they are talking about. Do I have to lie? Sometimes, yes, you have to lie, just for them to stop the pain."



Kitty Kelley and client

"People behave as though political violence and oppression are things that only happen to poverty-stricken people in the Third World, but the reality is that many of us have profound personal connections to such crimes against humanity. My own ancestors fled famine and repression in Ireland and England, and many families have similar histories.

***"Torture survivors are us. They are our history and our future.** I believe that people would help if they knew one survivor. **The Refuge Media Project's** documentary will introduce them to some of our clients, as well as to the compassionate and dedicated staff who work with them."*

**— Kitty Kelley, former Director,
Center for Torture and Trauma Survivors**



Although A. survived imprisonment, his father, a community leader who was also jailed, wasn't so lucky. "If I talk about it today, it's like it happened to me yesterday," A. says. "That's how I feel, because if I was not involved in those political things I would not be here. So the guilt was just too much for me. I just wanted to get it over, like just take my life. If I did not have CTTS, I would not be here, to be honest with you. Life had no meaning for me anymore. I was completely lost."

CTTS, the **Center for Torture and Trauma Survivors**, is Georgia's treatment and support center for immigrant survivors of torture. It's just one of the many programs whose work we are profiling in our documentary **Refuge: Caring for Survivors of Torture**.

Staff and volunteers at CTTS helped this young man – as they have helped so many others – to deal with his losses, both through individual counseling and through involvement with a group of other survivors. They also helped him to file his claim for political asylum, which was ultimately successful, and to cope with a serious medical condition that is a probable consequence of his torture. "At CTTS, I never felt like a stranger. It's kind of like a trust, you know – they are my family, that's how I feel."

"Whatever they have been tortured for – because they belong to this community, to this religion, to this political party – whatever the things that they believe in, that they have been tortured for, these are the things that make them strong."

— **Ibrahim Kira, PhD, current Director,**
Center for Torture and Trauma Survivors



Ibrahim Kira, CTTS

We Need Your Support!

The issue of torture may have disappeared from the daily news, but that doesn't mean it's not still happening every day! Over a hundred countries still practice torture, and thousands of their victims arrive in the United States each year. We are creating powerful media tools that support the work of the dedicated professionals who are helping survivors of torture create new lives for themselves and their families.

We know that these are tough economic times for everyone, and we're grateful to all of you who have supported us over the past year or so. Our donors are our lifeline. Please continue to support the Refuge Media Project and help us spread the word. **Share this message** with friends, family, and colleagues, and encourage them to sign-up for our email **newsletter** and make a tax-deductible **donation**.

*"It has been my calling and my honor to walk with these people through their despair, to a new life here in the United States — but we often feel very isolated. **Refuge: Caring for Survivors of Torture** is an important effort to help us spread the word, attract and train new staff, and generate both moral and financial support in the community. **Please help this project!**"*

— **Kitty Kelley, former Director**
Center for Torture and Trauma Survivors

Who We Are:

Through the creation and distribution of video and other educational resources, **The Refuge Media Project** will educate, inspire, and empower professionals and students to better meet the needs of torture survivors living in the United States . We are completing production and will soon be in post-production of our video documentary, **Refuge: Caring for Survivors of Torture**. Upon its completion, we will carry out an extensive media-based educational campaign in partnership with survivor treatment centers and many other organizations who work with immigrants. The project will generate increased awareness, concern, and support for the work of such groups in communities throughout the United States . **Learn more...**

Follow the progress of the film through our **Project Updates**
Learn more about organizations serving torture survivors
Locate recent **publications** and **DVDs** dealing with Torture
Check out new additions to our **Image Galleries**

Thanks for your help!

Ben Achtenberg, Producer / Project Director
www.refugemediaproject.org

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