



THE SURVIVOR

News and Events

SURVIVORS launches statewide advocacy project

For many people hearing about SURVIVORS for the first time, the very subject matter is unfamiliar. Torture survivors in California? Who are they? Are there really that many people who have survived *torture* living in the United States?

Since our start in 1997, we at SURVIVORS have been raising awareness of this hidden and underserved segment of the U.S. population. During the past few years, SURVIVORS has

made considerable progress in education and advocacy thanks to grants from The California Endowment. The most recent grant was used to fund research as well as strategic communications activities targeting state elected officials and their staff members, health professionals, community leaders, and the general public to educate them about the unique barriers to accessing health

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Healing community member profile

Caring and mindful interpreters provide valuable assistance to survivors of torture

This year, we have served a diverse population of new clients but the vast majority have come from East Africa and the Middle East. In terms of nationality, Iraqis have comprised the second-highest number of new clients, next to Somalis.

Because many of our interpreters come from the same countries as our clients, they often have extraordinary

stories of their own. In February, we profiled one of our Somali interpreters, Khadija. Now we would like to introduce you to Eilaf, a young woman from Iraq who began interpreting for our clients this summer.

Eilaf came to the United States in 2008 through the refugee resettlement program. She first lived in Tucson,

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Rally to condemn torture in Iran held in Balboa Park



Read more about the rally and other events on page 3

More than 300 people came to the July 24 rally. The goals were to give voice to the people of Iran in demanding civil and human rights; pressure the Iranian government to stop the abuse of power—the imprisonment, torture and killing of Iranian demonstrators; and announce solidarity with the Iranian people.

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Giving opportunity for government employees

SURVIVORS is a member organization of Human & Civil Rights Organizations of America. HCROA assists charities working in the human rights field to raise funds through workplace giving campaigns, including the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

Government employees can contribute through CFC using #24619 or California State Employees Charitable Campaign (CSECC) with #1845.



To reduce spending, the look and/or frequency of our newsletter may change. Help us cut costs even further by notifying us about address changes and duplicate mailings. Contact Sara Vaz, special initiatives manager, at svaz@notorture.org or (619) 278-2421.

Mission Statement

Survivors of Torture, International:

- Facilitates the healing of torture survivors and their families;
- Educates professionals and the public about torture and its consequences;
- Advocates for the abolition of torture.

Reflections from the leadership

Help SURVIVORS serve the next 1,000 torture survivors who are in urgent need of care

By Jeanette Barrack, board chairperson, and Kathi Anderson, executive director

A human rights group plans to send a delegation to Honduras to investigate alleged abuses during the country's June 28 coup...

For years, warlords have conscripted children to fight in bitter conflicts over money, power and land. The BBC Somali service's Mohamed Mohamed reveals widespread alarm that the practice is now becoming entrenched in Somalia...

A top judiciary official acknowledged Saturday that some detainees arrested after post-election protests had been tortured in Iranian prisons...

Every time we listen to the news, we know that our work is far from over. There are new reports of torture and other human rights abuses each and every day.

Since 1997, we have served almost 1,000 torture survivors from at least 60 countries. Our case load has been fairly steady – about 80 new clients per year, in addition to those who continue to receive care – but we've recently had a significant rise in refer-

als. Since the beginning of 2009, we have had more than 100 new clients— twice as many as we had during the same period in 2008.

The demand is expected to continue to increase as a result of the humanitarian crisis in Iraq. In 2008, 2,356 Iraqi refugees were resettled in San Diego and it is expected that more than 5,000 Iraqi refugees will be resettled in San Diego in 2009.

You may have received a phone call from us during the summer as part of our 2009 giving campaign. We are so appreciative of your past support and we need ongoing financial support to continue to serve all of the people who are in urgent need of our services.

Please use the donation envelope with this newsletter to give what you can so that life-changing services will be available to the next 1,000 torture survivors who come to our office for support and care. •

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care that torture survivors living in California have.

For example, SURVIVORS has led the California Consortium of Torture Treatment Centers in organizing three advocacy days in Sacramento, during which representatives of the centers met with elected officials, held press conferences, and connected with other community leaders who serve similar populations. The advocacy days also generated broad media exposure through op-eds, television segments, and newspaper articles.

It is clear that elected officials and California residents are becoming more informed about the characteristics and needs of torture survivors, but there is still a great deal of work to do. This past year, more than 50% of our new clients were asylum seekers who were being or continue to be held in deten-

tion facilities prior to their immigration hearings. Detained torture survivors are already traumatized; the isolation and uncertainty of detention frequently deepens their trauma, creates additional anxiety, and makes their ultimate recovery that much more difficult. There is limited understanding about the asylum process and detention facilities, even among health professionals and case managers who work in diverse communities.

In addition to educating providers, it is important for SURVIVORS to continue to build and sustain relationships with policy makers in Sacramento. The frequent turnover of elected officials and the complex nature of state administrative departments mean that ongoing

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Survivors of Torture, International's

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Change A Life grants help clients as they begin to heal

Earlier this year, SURVIVORS entered into a new partnership with Change A Life, a foundation that provides support for critical direct services that promote self-sufficiency and improve quality of life for individuals. As a partner organization, SURVIVORS' staff members write grant proposals for clients to meet urgent medical and dental needs.

For example, Change A Life funded dental care for one of our clients who suffered severe beatings to his face and as a result needed thorough dental work to fix his teeth and alleviate his pain. He had no other means of obtaining this care. The foundation also funded a year's worth of bus passes for two of our clients to attend their ongoing medical appointments.

These funds have been truly life-changing for torture survivors, many of whom are just beginning the healing process. We look forward to continuing this partnership. •

Human rights festival to be held at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice this month

From September 24-26, 2009, SURVIVORS will be part of the Bearing Exquisite Witness Arts Festival at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice at the University of San Diego.

The three-day event, held in conjunction with the institute's Women PeaceMakers Program, will highlight the ability of the arts to transform individuals and reconcile communities who have suffered conflict and violence.

The festival showcases playwrights, filmmakers, poets, musicians, visual artists and academics from the fields of theater arts and conflict resolution who are using the creative power of art to raise awareness, prevent violence, help communities recover, change policies of



exclusion and heal trauma.

The arts have always been a component of our healing work with torture survivors. As part of Healing Club activities, our clients have created quilts, drawings, music, and poems together. We have witnessed the extraordinary therapeutic value that the arts can have.

SURVIVORS' staff members will be part of several panels and client art work will be exhibited during the arts festival. Exact times and details will be posted on our web site at www.notorture.org.

Please join us to experience the unique power of art to inform and involve audiences in discourses on conflict and peace, oppression and empowerment. •

Call on the President to create a commission to investigate the torture of detainees

More than a dozen human rights organizations have created an online petition that calls on President Obama to establish an independent, nonpartisan commission to examine and report publicly on torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of detainees in the period since September 11, 2001.

"It is important that we understand how we can, as a country, take measures to prevent the future use of torture," says Kathi Anderson, SURVIVORS' executive director. "Part of our mission is to advocate for the abolition of torture. Signing this petition is one quick action that you can take to help us toward this goal."

Learn more about the effort at www.commissiononaccountability.org. •

July 24 rally focused on torture and other human rights abuses in Iran

SURVIVORS joined Amnesty International, End Violence against Women International, and Iran Peace 2009 in sponsoring a rally in Balboa Park on Friday, July 24.

As part of the Global Days of Action, supporters around the world organized rallies in support of the Iranian people and in condemnation of human rights abuses. The San Diego rally did not promote any political agenda.

The call for action was prompted by the June 12 presidential election, which was marred by accusations of widespread fraud and voting irregularities. In the days that followed, hundreds of thousands of Iranians took to the streets to protest the election results. The Iranian government's brutal response to these protests left at least 20 people dead, hundreds more badly injured, and still hundreds more arrested and at high risk of torture and execution.

Leaders in more than 110 cities organized events for this weekend; photos, videos, and news articles are online at www.united4iran.org. •



The featured speaker at the rally was Farrah Douglas (pictured at left), an Iranian-American woman who lives in San Diego.

"We gathered at Balboa Park to support the Iranian people in their quest for freedom of speech and human rights," she later wrote on her blog at www.farahdouglas.com. "We called on the world to pay attention and to take notes of the mistreatment of the Iranians by the Iranian government."

Conference on trauma to be held in October

The Hopi Foundation is sponsoring a conference on the Treatment of Extreme Trauma to be held October 2-3, 2009, in Flagstaff, Arizona. The conference has been designed to impart specialized knowledge and practical, applied skill sets to service providers, clinicians, counselors, and others working with persons impacted by severe trauma. CEUs, CEs, and CMEs will be provided to conference attendees from accredited institutions. **Register and find event details online at www.barbarachesteraward.org.** •

Client Demographics

49 new clients were served
May 1, 2009 - July 31, 2009

Geographic Origins

Africa	39
Asia	1
Eastern Europe	1
Latin America	3
Middle East	5

Ages	Gender	
0-20	7	Males 37
21-30	28	Females 12
31-40	8	
41-50	4	
51-60	1	
61 +	1	
<hr/>		
Detained	38	
Non-detained	11	

SURVIVORS bids farewell

This summer, we bid farewell to two staff members, Charlene Peña and Steve McCallion, and board member Don Cipriani.

Charlene, who began at SURVIVORS as an Americorps*VISTA volunteer and transitioned into a full-time role as the senior administrative assistant, is beginning a Masters in Social Work program at Columbia University in New York.

Last year, Steve joined SURVIVORS as associate director. We are grateful for the valuable contributions he has made to help SURVIVORS become an even more efficient and organized torture treatment center.

Don Cipriani is leaving the board of directors because he is pursuing projects outside of San Diego. He has just begun a 2.5 month project in Fiji and neighboring countries where he will be working with Unicef and national governments to increase their capacity to implement, monitor, and report on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on treaty implementation. •

SURVIVORS welcomes several new staff members

We are pleased to welcome three new staff members to the San Diego office: Deana Gullo, Tricia Hilliard, and Kaili West. All come with impressive educational backgrounds and enthusiasm for torture treatment work. We also welcomed Timothy Griffiths, who is profiled on page 6 for his Sacramento-based advocacy work.

Deana (DeeDee) Gullo, clinical director, oversees the comprehensive, strength-based, recovery-oriented service program. She leads all ongoing development, expansion, and enhancement of client services. Prior to joining SURVIVORS, DeeDee co-founded a nonprofit organization focused on fostering economic self-sufficiency in Guatemala; supervised and trained mental health services staff serving homeless adults; and provided behavioral health services to low-income families in California.

She holds a Master of Pacific International Affairs degree from the University of California, San Diego's School of International Relations and Pacific Studies and an M.S.W. from Catholic University of America. DeeDee is fluent in Spanish and has been an English instructor and professor in Mexico.

Tricia Hilliard, senior mental health clinician, works with the clinical team to perform, track, and document client services. She also monitors compliance with clinical contracts and ensures highest standards. Prior to joining SURVIVORS, Tricia gained experience training and supervising Native American foster families and children; training, researching and coordinating duties for child welfare programs; managing activities for community service learning programs; and interviewing survivors of human trafficking. She is a co-author of "Globalization and Human Trafficking," an article published in the Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare in June 2007.

Tricia holds an M.S.W. from San Diego State University and a B.S. from Pennsylvania State University. She is a board member of Sun and Moon Vision Productions and serves as a mentor for three foster youth in San Diego County.

Kaili West, senior administrative assistant, has a B.A. in African Studies and an M.A. in International Studies from the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. She brings to SURVIVORS an extensive background in sales administration and a keen interest in international affairs. As a volunteer, she currently serves as council member, liaison and head of advocacy and media for the San Diego Committee of the Friends of the World Food Program.

At SURVIVORS, Kaili is responsible for maintaining the databases for clinical, development, and human resources records, as well as ensuring the smooth daily running of the office. •



Pictured, left to right: DeeDee Gullo, Tricia Hilliard, and Kaili West

Notecards help asylum-seeking torture survivors to feel less alone

SURVIVORS sends hand-written letters to asylum-seeking clients who are held in immigration detention. Through the letters, we try to elevate clients' spirits and, at the very least, let them know that they are not alone. "Your words gave me strength and positivity I was looking for at this intense, negative phase of my life," said one survivor in response to our letters.

If you would like to contribute, please send blank notecards to Survivors of Torture, International, P.O. Box 151240, San Diego, CA 92175-1240. Thank you! •

SURVIVORS faces increased demand for medical services

Authored by Ramsey Salem, MPH, SURVIVORS' medical case manager

During my time here at SURVIVORS, we have had a small budget for the myriad medical needs of our clients. In the 12 years that SURVIVORS has been operating, the entire staff have done an incredible job in terms of securing community contacts and utilizing resources in the greater San Diego area. Not only is the staff at SURVIVORS instrumental in meeting the medical needs of torture survivors who find themselves in San Diego, but many local medical professionals have offered their time and expertise at minimal cost to refugees and asylum seekers who walk through our doors and have no possible alternative for medical care.

As you can imagine, our clients

suffer from a litany of injuries as a result of unfortunate experiences of torture in their home countries. I have personally worked with many clients who required specialty care because of blunt force trauma to the head or other parts of the body.

In the past year, we have seen an exorbitant number of new client referrals, many of whom come with several and severe medical needs. In the past, our medical program utilized a budget of \$10,000 - \$15,000 to meet the direct medical needs of a large number of new clients who were able to make their way to San Diego and SURVIVORS.

With the increase in new clients—both from the refugee community and recently released from the detention center—and the economy in the current condition that it is in,

SURVIVORS' medical program has found itself struggling financially to meet the needs of torture survivors. It has been especially difficult to help all the clients who need urgent medical care, specialty care, or assistance with managing or accessing medications for a chronic illness.

Today, we appeal to members of the greater community who are concerned with the care of people who live amongst us and who have experienced torture that nobody should experience. It is impossible for our clients to function until they have relief from the ongoing physical pain that plagues them. Every client presents with a specific and challenging circumstance related to their care. We are committed to helping survivors of torture with accessing health care so that they can begin a new life. •



New web site offers resources about torture treatment

An excellent new resource is now available online at www.healtorture.org.

The web site features handbooks, webinars, videos, and other resources about torture treatment. Special sections are dedicated to serving specific populations, such as youth and Iraqi refugees. The site includes pages for providers (legal, mental health, medical, social services), students, and the public.

SURVIVORS, along with the Center for Victims of Torture and other treatment centers, participated in the site's development. The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement. •



EILAF, from page 1

Arizona, where she worked and volunteered with the International Rescue Committee as an assistant for a case manager. She then moved to San Diego, began looking for work as an Arabic interpreter, and saw the job posting for SURVIVORS online.

She says that she enjoys the work she does as an interpreter for SURVIVORS because of what "it feels like when you see refugees smiling and start having hope while thinking of their future. It is an amazing job because you feel happy when you see people thanking you for being a helpful person."

Eilaf says that her own transition to the United States hasn't always

been easy. When she thinks of Iraq, she doesn't just think of the war but also the rivers, the lakes, organic food and free universities. But while she misses some aspects of her home country, she says that she has become more accustomed to the culture and environment here.

"I learned how to be confident and can plan for my future and how to continue learning and discovering new things in life," she says.

"I studied three years of architecture engineering and didn't have the chance to finish my

studying because of the bad situations that happened in Iraq, but I will try to make it here in the United States and achieve my goals." •

An estimated 5,000 Iraqi refugees and asylum-seekers will be resettled in San Diego County this year. In 2008, UNHCR classified about 20% of Iraqi refugees in Syria as "victims of torture and/or violence."

Thank you to all of our community supporters who donate their time, skills, and goods

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Companies and Organizations

Big City Bagels, San Diego	Presbyterian Urban Ministries, San Diego
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We are grateful for your generous support. The lists cover support received **May 1, 2009 - July 31, 2009**. We apologize for any errors or omissions and extend our gratitude for support that may not have been recognized. •

Ongoing partnership benefits Easter Seals and SURVIVORS



For the past few years, SURVIVORS' staff have collaborated with the Easter Seals of South San Diego County to bring this newsletter to your mailbox. The Easter Seals operate an adult day camp in National City that offers people with disabilities the opportunity to become active members of the community. Individuals learn work-related skills by engaging in community service projects. For each issue of SURVIVORS' newsletter, the Easter Seals participants help by folding, stamping, and tabbing the newsletters so they can be mailed at bulk mail rate. We are grateful for the group's enthusiasm and dedication to the project. •

Help torture survivors meet their basic needs

As our clients begin to rebuild their lives in the United States, they often need assistance meeting basic needs. This is especially true for asylum-seeking torture survivors who are not allowed to work until they are granted asylum.

Our clients have immediate needs for **personal hygiene items**, specifically shampoo, body cream, razors, shaving cream, soap, deodorant, and feminine hygiene items.

It is also extremely helpful to have donations of **grocery store gift cards**. Although we partner with community organizations to provide food bags for clients, they often need supplemental foods for healthy diets, such as fresh produce and dairy products.

Please send donations to SURVIVORS' office or contact Beatriz Ledezma, case manager, at bledezma@notorture.org or (619) 278-2402. •

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communication is critical.

To facilitate this effort, The California Endowment has funded a statewide awareness campaign. In August, SURVIVORS hired Timothy Griffiths, Esq. to serve as our government affairs director in Sacramento.

Tim has an extensive background in law,



Tim (photo taken during his legal internship in the Dominican Republic)

human rights, and international politics. Prior to joining SURVIVORS, Tim served as a conservation attorney for Resources Law Group in Sacramento and as the legal services director at Centro Legal de la Raza in Oakland.

He has worked on international human rights litigation with Movimiento de Mujeres Dominicano-Haitianas and the Center for Justice and International Law. Tim holds a law degree from U.C. Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law where, as co-coordinator of the California Asylum Representation Clinic, he trained and provided guidance to 60 student volunteers representing 26 asylum seekers. Tim has a B.A. and a Certificate in Latin American Studies from Harvard University. He is fluent in Spanish.

We are excited to welcome Tim to our staff and we look forward to continuing our education efforts to ensure that torture survivors in San Diego, the Central Valley, and throughout California will have access to the care they need. •

Thank you to all of our financial supporters!

Individual Supporters

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Intuit Foundation Donation Matching Gift Program
Qualcomm Incorporated, San Diego
The California Endowment
United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement
Wellpoint Associate Giving Campaign

Restoring the hope of torture survivors in San Diego County is accomplished with the help of our financial supporters. Because of you, survivors are rebuilding their lives. We are grateful. **These lists cover the period of May 1, 2009, through July 31, 2009.** We apologize for any errors or omissions and extend our gratitude for support that may not have been recognized. •

Quote

"We find new solutions which enable us to move forward and live with what happened. It has helped me to talk. **I believe that knowledge of the horrific things going on around the world teaches us to prevent them and find new ways of acting.**" - Hector Rosas, a torture survivor from Chile whose story is profiled online at www.irct.org. •

Support SURVIVORS by searching, shopping, or selling online

We know that not everyone is in the position to give cash donations, but there are several ways to give without spending a dime.

Search using Goodsearch.com

SURVIVORS can earn a penny every time you search the internet. Goodsearch.com is a Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to charities its users designate. Just go to www.goodsearch.com and enter Survivors of Torture, International as the organization you want to support.

Shop using Goodshop.com

Shop online at GoodShop.com and a percentage of each purchase will be donated to Survivors of Torture, International. Stores include Amazon, Apple, Target, Sephora, Staples, Best Buy, and more. As with Goodsearch, be sure to enter Survivors of Torture, International as the organization you want to support.

Sell through eBay Giving Works

Ready for some fall cleaning? Sell items on eBay and donate 10% to 100% of the final sale price with eBay Giving Works to support our work. Find details at www.notorture.org/planned_giving.html.

Update for the Ralphs Contribution Program

Thank you to everyone who has participated in the Ralphs and Food 4 Less contribution programs. Up to 4% of what you spend grocery shopping goes toward our program and we are grateful for this support.

Current participants:

To ensure that we will continue to receive donations from Ralphs, please register for the new contribution term that began on September 1. Our web site has the direct link to the Ralphs page where you can register. There is no need to re-register for Food 4 Less.

New participants: To have up to 4% of your purchases support SURVIVORS' programs, you can go to your local Ralphs and Food 4 Less stores to obtain rewards cards. Once you have the rewards cards, you can register online at www.ralphs.com and www.food4less.com with our NPO #84761. Direct links are online at www.notorture.org/planned_giving.html. •



Contact Information

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About us

Survivors of Torture, International was incorporated in February 1997 in response to a need in our community to bring assistance to the segment of the population that struggles with the wounds of politically motivated torture.

It is estimated that 11,000 survivors of torture live in San Diego County and 400,000 - 500,000 live in the United States. Torture survivors may be left with lifelong physical and mental health problems if not treated by trained professionals.

Since 1997, SURVIVORS has engaged a caring network of professionals — board members, attorneys, interpreters, therapists, physicians,

dentists — and all of you in the community who give support and encouragement in many ways. Your support enables us to help torture survivors rebuild their lives. Treatment helps survivors heal, reconnect with their families, go back to school, and find employment.

Ninety-two cents of every dollar raised goes directly to SURVIVORS' programs. Our Federal Tax ID Number is 33-0743869. Learn more at www.notorture.org.

Volunteer drivers needed

Volunteer drivers allow SURVIVORS' clients to keep essential appointments for counseling, medical care, dental care, and other important services. Most of these appointments last 1-2 hours and occur during weekday work hours.

If you are available to help with driving, please contact Sara Vaz, special initiatives manager, at svaz@notorture.org or (619) 278-2421.

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Change Service Requested