

The Center for Victims of Torture Success Stories

Peter's Story

Peter was beaten and stoned by his neighbors because he was gay. They wanted to kill him.

Peter* was living with his husband in a country in Africa. When his family learned he was gay, they rejected him. The neighbors attacked him, calling him an abomination. After the beating, the police arrested Peter instead of taking him to a hospital.

Peter eventually escaped to Nairobi, where he found CVT's LGBTI group counseling program. When he began counseling, he was feeling overwhelmed by his thoughts. He said he felt worthless – like no one cared whether he existed or not. Peter made great progress at CVT, but his life was still very difficult in Kenya. He had no income. He was forced to move house time after time because once his neighbors learned his status, they became hostile.

Peter attempted suicide twice after fleeing to Kenya.

At one point, police forcefully moved him and others to the Kakuma refugee camp in northern Kenya. Because he protested this move, Peter was detained for one month. He was humiliated daily by the police, who even forced him to sleep with a woman in an attempt to change him.

Peter was able to return to Nairobi and came back to CVT for individual counseling as part of CVT's aftercare program for LGBTI clients. Today he says he still fears the police but has started taking walks in his neighborhood and does breathing exercises when he feels overwhelmed.

Peter says CVT made him feel like a person again. He realized not all human beings are out to harm him.

**Name and some details have been changed for safety and to protect confidentiality.*

Bushra's Story

Bushra's teenage sons and her husband were arrested in their home in Damascus one night.

Bushra* and her family were sleeping when regime forces entered their home in the middle of the night. They arrested and took her husband and sons, ages 17 and 19, along with other men and boys from the neighborhood, some as young as 13 years. Bushra said that her husband and sons had not participated in protests or the revolution in Syria.

They were finally released after four months when Bushra paid a bribe for their release. Her husband returned home with his teeth broken and thumbs fractured. Today he suffers from knee problems because he was forced to kneel in a small, crowded room for extended periods of time.

Bushra and her family have gone through their savings and spend most of their money on rent and basic services, living today as refugees in Jordan. She came to CVT in order to begin rebuilding her life with rehabilitative care. As part of her healing journey, it is important to Bushra to speak out about what was done to her family. She said that regardless of what she's lost, she just wants to go where her children will be safest.

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