



**HEARTLAND ALLIANCE  
INTERNATIONAL**

# MARJORIE KOVLER CENTER

Marjorie Kovler Center is a program of Heartland Alliance International, a global human rights organization working at the intersection of justice and healing. Kovler Center is one of the first torture treatment centers in the United States. Since 1987, Kovler Center has provided integrated, high-quality mental health, medical, and social services to survivors of politically-sanctioned torture and their families. Kovler Center also trains and educates service providers locally and globally and advocates for the end of torture worldwide.

## MARJORIE KOVLER CENTER:

**SERVES SURVIVORS FROM  
MORE THAN 60 COUNTRIES**  
in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East

**PROVIDES CARE FOR 350-400  
SURVIVORS EACH YEAR,  
75-90 of whom are new to Kovler  
Center**

**RECEIVES MORE THAN 10,000  
HOURS OF PRO BONO SERVICES  
each year from community  
volunteers**

**"I THINK ABOUT WHAT I WAS, HOW I TRANSFORMED MY LIFE, AND HOW I AM TODAY. I HAD LOST MY DIGNITY AS A HUMAN BEING, BUT NOW IT HAS BEEN RESTORED. I [GET] TO WALK PEACEFULLY ON THE STREET, TO FEND FOR MY CHILDREN, AND TO BE WITH THEM. THAT IS ENOUGH FOR ME. IT'S ALL THAT REALLY MATTERS."**

— Kovler Center Survivor

## **ABOUT HEARTLAND ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL:**

**HEARTLAND ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL (HAI)** is the global arm of Heartland Alliance, a family of organizations leading anti-poverty and social justice work for more than 130 years. HAI implements programs in nearly a dozen countries, including in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and in Chicago at the Marjorie Kovler Center for survivors of torture. HAI's technical areas include mental health and psychosocial support, gender equality, access to justice, and stigma-free HIV prevention, care, and treatment. Across all programs, HAI promotes progressive, innovative approaches to human rights protections and gender equality.

## **AT A GLANCE:**



**Services:** Kovler Center's torture treatment approach empowers survivors to use their strengths to regain independence and personal integrity. Participants may receive medical, mental health, and social services, as well as assistance with food, housing, and employment. Kovler Center helps survivors restore trust in others and re-establish a sense of community.



**Program:** Kovler Center Child Trauma Program (KCCTP) is dedicated to providing high quality trauma-informed, culturally, and linguistically responsive treatment and services to immigrant and refugee youth and families who experienced trauma as a result of war, terrorism, forced migration, family separation, state sponsored torture, and resettlement.



**Research and Publications:** Kovler Center's publications have impacted the torture treatment field as well as refugee services with articles about Kovler Center's model of care, working cross-culturally, the importance of building community, and the effectiveness of treatment.

## **BACKGROUND: TORTURE**

Torture is the deliberate infliction of severe physical or psychological pain carried out by anyone acting in an official capacity. Torture exerts control over people and communities to create a cycle of fear, intimidation, and alienation. Torture is a crime under U.S. and international law. Survivors of torture often suffer from a complex post-traumatic stress disorder, which is manifested by anxiety, distrust, depression, flashbacks, intrusive memories related to the traumatic event, memory problems, and often a range of physical symptoms.

## **WHAT'S NEXT**

For more than 30 years, Marjorie Kovler Center has maintained a steadfast commitment to direct services for survivors of torture and their families. With an eye toward the future, we developed an ambitious vision to transform Kovler Center to meet the growing demands for its leadership, expertise, and specialized care and treatment. We strive to eliminate Kovler Center's wait list, so all survivors can begin treatment as soon as they arrive; renovate Kovler Center's physical space to match the facilities with the high-quality care each survivor receives; and elevate issues concerning survivors of torture to a national and international level by utilizing the arts, media, and education.