

ONE ROOF

Rain does not fall on one roof alone.
Cameroonian Proverb



Winter 2011 Advocates for Survivors of Torture and Trauma

Vol. 12, No. 1

The mission of ASTT is to alleviate the suffering of those who have experienced the trauma of torture, to educate the local, national, and world community about the needs of torture survivors, and to end torture worldwide. ASTT was founded in 1994.

Compassion and Collaboration across Borders

In November 2010, ASTT welcomed Sana Hamze of Lebanon's RESTART Torture Treatment Center. As members of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims, treatment centers around the world are able to send staff members to centers in other regions to learn new treatment techniques and to facilitate collaboration on eradicating torture. Additionally, centers share knowledge and skills of client registration, recording and evaluating statistics, fundraising, financial management, and legal assistance.

Sana spent nearly two weeks at ASTT, sitting in on therapy sessions, attending staff meetings, and discussing social services with case managers.

Though the RESTART



Sana Hamze and Karen Hanscom

center in Lebanon is larger than ASTT in terms of staff and client numbers as well as organizational size, many similarities can be found.

Both ASTT and RESTART have two locations, and both have an extremely dedicated staff that

works passionately with survivors to ease mental and emotional distress while educating the wider community about the existence of torture and the needs of torture survivors.

Sana conveyed a feeling of belonging in the ASTT offices. She delighted in the fact that she felt so welcome, and that the synergy of the staff was noticeable in several ways. The warmth of the office was important as well as the ostensible teamwork the therapists, case management, administrative and development staff engaged in.

Expressing the challenges to increasing skills in such settings, Sana felt that partnerships and exchanges of experiences across cultures could enhance abilities and increase capacity to treat survivors and eliminate torture.

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Support ASTT's services to survivors

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Become a monthly donor: Join ASTT's Circle of Strength

PARTICIPATE

Run the SunTrust National Marathon with the Team of Strength

Visit our website at www.astt.org

Youth Donates Bar Mitzvah Money to ASTT

This past winter, ASTT received a donation from 15-year-old Ari Ness. Two years after celebrating his bar mitzvah and researching organizations, Ari chose to give \$800 to support torture survivors in our community and ASTT's work with them.

After seeing the movie "Blood Diamond," Ari began looking for organizations that supported child soldiers and worked to end human trafficking. The movie depicts Sierra Leone's civil war, which has been prolonged due to its production of conflict diamonds and noted for its brutal use of child soldiers.

Throughout his research, Ari encountered difficulties in finding places to donate where



his money would be certain to go to those who needed it most. Worries of organizational and governmental corruption made the research process long and arduous.

Last summer Ari's mother Donna was listening to the radio when she heard a story about ASTT on NPR in which Executive

Director Karen Hanscom talked about the process of recovering from the wounds of torture and experiences of war crimes. Mother and son investigated, and both were pleased with ASTT. Ari's mother notes that Ari has always had an understanding of and sensitivity to history and politics, and that he wanted to reach out to those who had had such experience of atrocity.

We are so grateful for Ari's generous and meaningful gift to ASTT. The money he donated will help provide mental health and social services to torture survivors in our community. There is hope and light for torture survivors because of people like Ari.

DONATE NOW! visit www.astt.org to make a secure donation online.

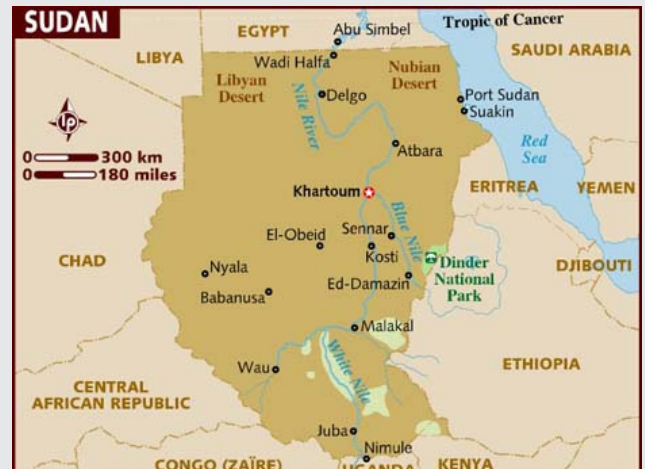
Country Profile: Sudan

Sudan gained independence in 1956 after centuries of joint rule by Egypt and Britain. Since that point there have been internal tensions that erupted into full-scale civil war.

Southern Sudan was given autonomy in 1972, but violence returned and independence was compromised until quite recently, when the South voted overwhelmingly to secede. Sudan's president Omar al-Bashir has said that he will accept the result of the vote. A formal declaration of independence is set to take place on July 9, 2011.

Additionally, Sudan is home to one of the worst humanitarian disasters in history. The Darfur region has been embroiled in conflict that reached its peak in 2003. Death tolls have been suggested to be as high as 480,000 people, and 2.8 million people have been internally displaced. A Darfur Peace Agreement was proposed in 2006, but signed by only one of several rebel groups.

In 2010, the Sudanese government and an organization of ten rebel groups took part in peace talks in neighboring Qatar. Though no peace agreement was signed, an agreement of principles was arranged. The Sudanese government and the rebel groups have decided to return to Qatar with the hopes of proposing a full peace agreement by the end of February 2011.



THOUGHTS FROM OUR GARDEN

While the garden is covered in snow for the winter, ASTT has kept up with activities that invite our staff, clients, and volunteers to share and reflect with one another.

We had a very special event at the ASTT office in Baltimore when several clients recently conducted a traditional Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony. The ceremony is an important Ethiopian custom that occurs at most family and social gatherings. It involves many steps from washing, roasting and grinding the coffee beans to sipping the coffee in small delicate cups while munching on popcorn.

Our "hostess" wore the traditional ceremonial attire of a white dress with a embroidered border. The coffee cups, saucers and cooking utensils were arranged on a mat designed to look like the woven grasses originally used in the Ethiopian ceremony. While the meal was prepared, we were serenaded by the screech of the fire alarm reacting to the thick smoke of the coffee beans roasting in a skillet and the incense burning in a small ceramic pot. We were enveloped in an exotic medley of scents.

Before tasting the rich, dark coffee, we indulged in elaborately cooked Ethiopian dishes of chicken, beef, injera, dubo and spiced cheeses. All enthusiastically agreed that it was a lovely afternoon of home-cooked delicacies and a shared ritual that created a wonderful sense of community.

The Team of Strength Keeps Running

Often when I tell someone I work for Advocates for Survivors of Torture and Trauma they get a shocked look on their face and say, "I don't want to hear anymore." Of course, I don't stop but I do tell them one of the many stories of hope and strength that our clients carry with them everyday.

The Team of Strength is one of those stories. Last October the Team of Strength began its journey with the Baltimore Marathon Relay. It was an exciting day for the runners, volunteers and staff. We all left feeling totally energized by the Team's great accomplishment and all of the support they received.

Fast forward four months and here we are again preparing for our second race. This time the Team of Strength has grown to more than 10 torture survivors and a cadre of "support" runners who will join us on March 26th at the National Marathon in Washington, DC. The Team of Strength and ASTT was chosen as a Run for A Cause Charity by the SunTrust National Marathon. We were honored to be selected and be amongst other respected charities like the American Cancer Society and Back on My Feet.

This is such an exciting opportunity for ASTT and the Team of Strength. We hope you will become part of the Team of Strength! You can run in the race with us on March 26th – get two friends and run the half-marathon relay, visit our booth at the Health and Fitness Expo on Friday, March 25th or come out and help us hand out water at Mile 11. There are so many ways for you to show your support to the torture survivors living in our community. Together we make a stronger team.

For more information, please call Lindsey at 410-464-9006.

Welcome!

Atsede Shiferaw started working at ASTT's Washington, DC office this February after being a volunteer interpreter since 2009.

We are excited to have her with us!

**TEAM OF
STRENGTH**

Advocates for Survivors
OF TORTURE AND TRAUMA

Join our Circle of Strength! Becoming an ASTT monthly donor is quick and easy and can be done online. Best of all, regular monthly donations help us spend less on fundraising and more on client services. To join, please visit our website or contact Molly at development@astt.org.

PARTICIPATE

Message from the Executive Director



Over the last few weeks, I am sure that all of you have been watching the recent fight for democracy in several Arab nations. Survivors at ASTT report an increase in nightmares and flashbacks as they view on television scenes that replicate their own fight for democracy in their own countries.

In the last week alone, reports have come from around the world regarding the current use of torture by governments to suppress the people. Egyptians who were fleeing Libya suffered beatings and torture after being falsely accused of supporting an uprising in Libya. Torture resurfaced in Liberia at the hands of government Special Security Services. In Southern Sudan, torture is being used as part of the training of young police cadets. Reports this week describe cadets being sexually abused, forced to stare at the sun, standing for hours at a time, and being caned. Guantanamo had passed its 9th anniversary. The torture of indigenous Papuan persons by the Indonesian military and the torture of a 16 year old girl and her father in Venezuela reflect the fact that torture continues in the world.

As organizations around the world work to prevent the use of torture by any country for any reason, ASTT continues to heal the psychological and physical wounds of the individuals who have experienced the horror of torture. Individuals in their late teenage years through men and women in their mid-sixties come to ASTT where they can feel safe and regain trust. They rebuild their lives using the same courage and strength that lead them to fight for justice and live through punishment for doing so.

ASTT survivors, staff, board and donors commend those who are fighting against oppressive governments and torture today.



Karen Hanscom, PhD.
ASTT Executive Director