

IMPACT REPORT 2022



**FREEDOM
FROM
TORTURE**
EMPOWERING
SURVIVORS,
REBUILDING
LIVES

2023 THE CHARITY AWARDS
OVERALL WINNER

OUR BEST YEAR YET

2022 was a year of incredible impact. Our therapists and doctors directly supported more survivors to secure safety and rebuild their lives. Our campaigning reached new heights, harnessing people power and affecting real, tangible change to policies impacting survivors of torture. And survivor voices have never been more central to the international fight to put an end to torture worldwide.

Thank you - this is only possible thanks to your incredible commitment and support for a more compassionate world. Please join us in 2023 with your time, energy and financial support - together we can meet our goal of doubling the number of torture survivors we directly support by 2025.

“People we did it! You know together we have the power. **Together we’re a force.**”

KOLBASSIA HAOUSSOU MBE, DIRECTOR OF SURVIVOR EMPOWERMENT

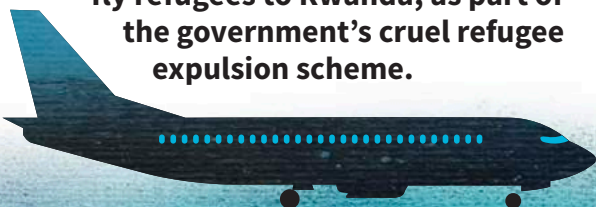


We helped
18% MORE
survivors to heal, feel
safe and strong again via
our direct therapy services,
compared to 2021.



We helped
25% MORE
survivors with clinical
evidence of torture to
secure the right to remain in
the UK compared to 2021.

Direct action by survivors of torture and solidarity actions taken by more than 100,000 caring people **forced airline Privilege Style to back out of a plan to fly refugees to Rwanda, as part of the government’s cruel refugee expulsion scheme.**



Our Stop Torture Impunity campaign was named **Campaign of the Year** at the Sheila McKechnie Foundation Awards. The hard-hitting coalition campaign forced the government to abort its plan to give de facto impunity to British troops that commit torture and other war crimes abroad.



“It is a brilliant example of a campaign that really delivered against its objectives through a comprehensive, brave and ambitious approach. The breadth of the work was incredible.”

AWARDS JUDGE BEN HYMAN.

Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) champions **Nadine Tunasi** and **Kolbassia Haoussou MBE** successfully convinced the **Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office** to launch a **global network of survivors** as part of the UK's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative. **Eighty-one countries attended the global PSVI summit and fifty-three countries signed a political declaration committing to amplifying the voices of survivors.**



Our fierce and strategic litigation meant that the **estimated 45,000 people who crossed the Channel in 2022 were not exposed to the heartless 'pushbacks' policy**, which may have cost many their lives.

73,000 people signed our open letter defending the Human Rights Act, putting the government on the back foot with its regressive Bill of Rights agenda.

Our explainer videos around cruel government anti-refugee bill proposals reached more than 500,000 people, **empowering our growing movement of supporters to defend the rights of torture survivors seeking sanctuary in the UK.**

We brought **survivor voices to the forefront of the mainstream media with powerful, first-hand stories of hope and compassion.**

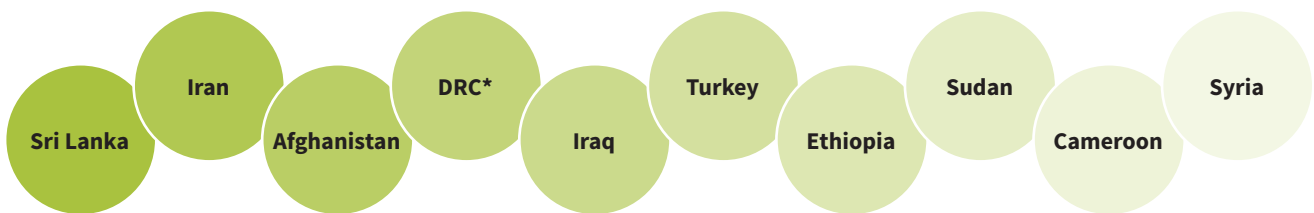


CHANGING LIVES

Our clinical services went from strength to strength – providing life-changing support for hundreds of men, women and children who have survived physical and psychological torture.

Therapy and support

In 2022, the top 10 countries of origin of our clients were:



*Democratic Republic of the Congo

Torture survivors have experienced some of the worst forms of human rights violations. Our therapists help them to rebuild their physical and mental health and feel safe again.

This year, we helped more survivors to heal, feel safe and strong again. Our therapists, lawyers and welfare advisors offered a lifeline to people who crucially needed compassion, support and rehabilitation to recover and rebuild their lives in the UK.

Through our treatment service, we helped 18% more clients to recover from psychological and physical pain linked to torture.

This essential trauma therapy has helped survivors like Ibrahim to ‘feel safe and secure’ again.



Ibrahim’s story: “Freedom from Torture has changed my life”

A terrifying visit from police at his home in Guinea turned Ibrahim’s world upside down. After days of torture due to his father’s political allegiances, he was told he would be killed if he stayed in the country. Fearing for his life, Ibrahim took a dangerous journey to the UK, where he ended up alone on the streets. Today, he is slowly recovering from his traumatic experience thanks to one of our expert therapists. “My therapist is always encouraging me not to give up on my life,” explains Ibrahim. “Right now, I feel secure and safe. Freedom from Torture has changed my life.”



We helped **18% MORE** survivors to heal, feel safe and strong again via our direct therapy services, compared to 2021.

Despite this growth, we were not able to meet demand for referrals to our clinical services in 2022. Our strategic goal to increase income by 30% by 2025 will enable us to double the number of survivors who benefit from our treatment services and clinical evidence service.



We helped **25% MORE** survivors with clinical evidence of torture to secure the right to remain in the UK compared to 2021.



Providing evidence to rebuild lives

Our world-renowned medico-legal report service helps survivors to prove they were tortured and provides vital evidence for their asylum claims.

Our detailed clinical evidence ensured that more survivors were granted the right to remain in the UK. Without our medico-legal reports and clinical letters, many survivors may not have been granted asylum with a risk of being sent back to their torturers.

*“This was one of the most extreme cases of physical torture I have come across, The client was very lucky to have survived, and yet his claim was refused all the way up the courts. **I don’t think he would have obtained refugee status without the evidence from Freedom From Torture.**”*

THE JOINT COUNCIL FOR THE WELFARE OF IMMIGRANTS (JCWI), 2023 (FOR 2022 CLINICAL RESPONSE LETTER FOLLOWING PREVIOUS MLR)

Stabilisation support from fellow survivors

“The presence of a survivor was like a light at the end of the tunnel.” **CLIENT, FOUNDING OUR GROUND**

In 2022, we helped survivors at the beginning of their therapy journeys to feel understood, supported and in safe hands via a new approach to stabilisation therapy that is led collaboratively by a survivor and a therapist.

The support of survivors who have completed treatment with us has helped clients to understand the effects of trauma and to learn initial coping mechanisms. The power of having survivor support from the outset has had a real impact on their recovery.

“The survivor sets the example that I can get through this. I can create a foundation for my life”

CLIENT, FOUNDING OUR GROUND

“Being new to the United Kingdom, survivors found the Founding Our Ground group the first place they connected with supportive people. Fellow survivors and clinicians reassured them and demonstrated how their journey with Freedom from Torture could help to heal their trauma.”

JEREMIE DIATAPAKOLA, SERVICE USER ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR, FREEDOM FROM TORTURE.



DRIVING POSITIVE CHANGE

In 2022, we proved that people power really works. By standing up to decision-makers, backed by thousands of our supporters, we transformed government policies and put a stop to activities linked to torture.

We made the UK rethink police contracts with China

Our *Dangerous Liaisons* report exposed UK government links to the brutal and systematic persecution of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, China. We discovered that UK aid money was being used to fund a partnership between a private UK police college and Chinese police trainers. When we shared our findings, the police college declared an end to all its relationships in China.



20,000 supporters signed our petition on the issue, and parliamentarians from all major political parties voiced their support for our concerns. Following this intense pressure, both the UK police and government committed to strengthening scrutiny of human rights risks before engaging with foreign police forces.

We helped stop refugee flights to Rwanda

In October, we forced Privilege Style airline to withdraw from the UK government's scheme to send refugees to Rwanda – making it more difficult for the government to deliver its cruel 'cash for humans' scheme.

Survivors and our supporters put huge pressure on the airline – sending more than 16,000 emails, posting thousands of tweets and making hundreds of phone calls. Thirty thousand people also signed an open letter to sports teams telling them not to use the company. The news of our success made headlines around the world, with stories in *The Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*.

"This is a victory for torture survivors, a victory for human rights, and a triumph for the thousands of people who spoke out against the government's scheme. We've already forced Titan and Airtanker airlines to say they won't fly the planes. We can make sure no plane ever takes off to Rwanda."

KOLBASSIA HAOUSSOU, DIRECTOR OF SURVIVOR EMPOWERMENT, FREEDOM FROM TORTURE.



We prevented the inhumane pushback policy

Following our legal challenge, the government abandoned its life-threatening policy of turning back migrant boats in the English Channel. This meant that the estimated 45,000 people who crossed the Channel in 2022 were not exposed to this heartless policy, which may have cost many their lives.



“When you are fleeing something as abhorrent as torture, persecution or war, there is absolutely nothing that can stop you. You are on autopilot. It’s like being in a burning house and finding an escape window. You jump through it and run for your life with no delay, no second thought. Nothing can deter a human being when they are fleeing torture, when they are fleeing for their life.”

FLEEING A BURNING HOUSE, 2022

We made our voices heard

In our *Fleeing a Burning House* report, our clinicians powerfully explained why survivors take such dangerous journeys to seek asylum in the UK. We presented the report and our policy recommendations to parliamentarians, and raised the issues in several broadcast interviews, helping to counter the government’s misinformation about why people are putting their lives at risk in small boats.



We brought survivor voices to the forefront of the mainstream media with powerful, first-hand stories of hope, compassion and resilience.

Iran’s protests are not an angry outburst,
but the result of generations of trauma

Nasrin Parvaz

**The
Guardian**



THE TIMES
Channel pushback policy sunk
before court hearing

The New York Times

*Airline Quits British Plan to Deport
Asylum Seekers to Rwanda*



INDEPENDENT

*As a Holocaust survivor, Britain gave
me a home - would today’s
government?* Steven Frank

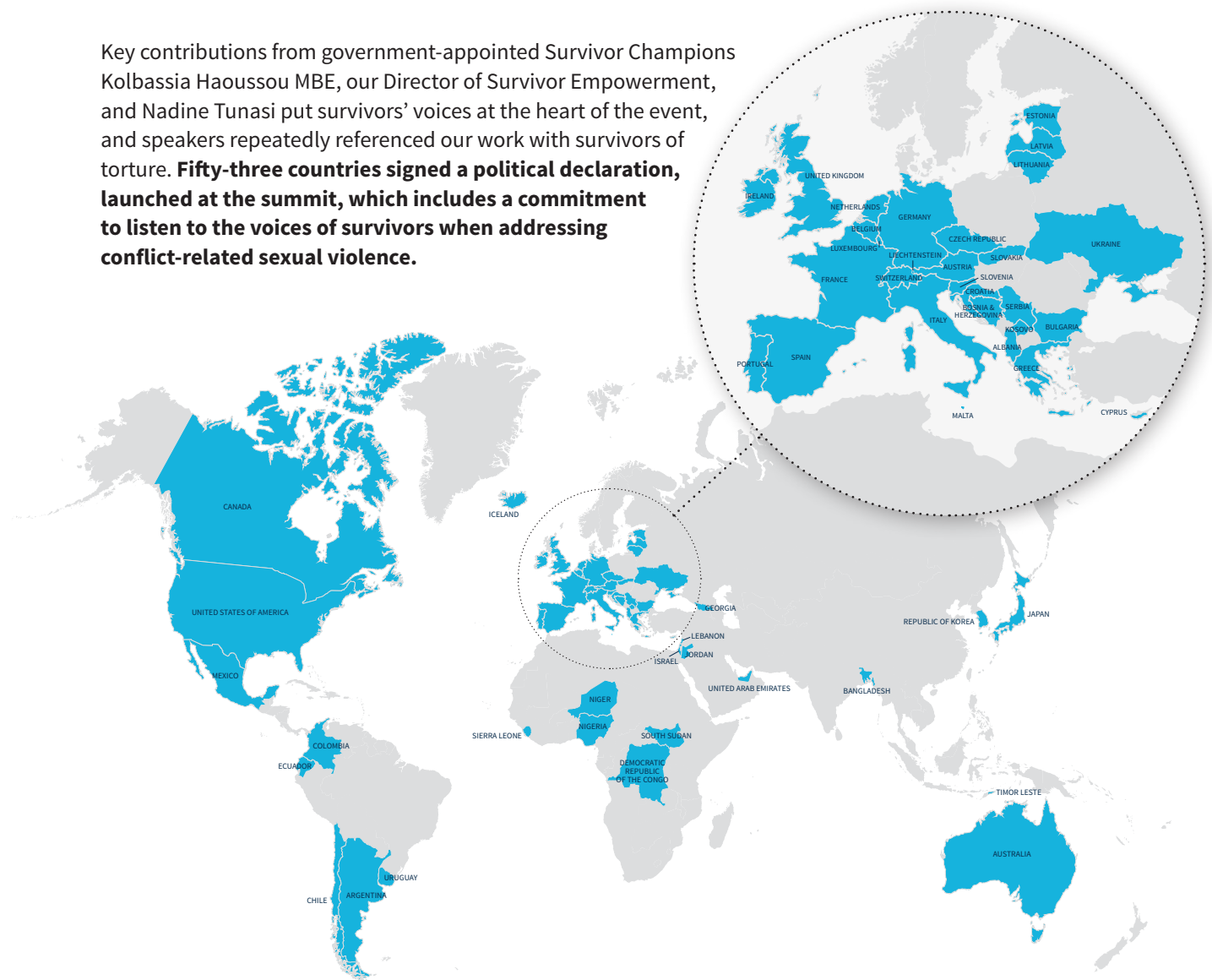
EMPOWERING SURVIVORS TO SPEAK OUT

Throughout the year, we worked with survivors to build active networks. And it proved that amplifying survivor voices can bring about real change.

Torture survivors take centre stage at government summit

Representatives from 81 countries attended the global summit of the government-led Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict (PSVI) initiative in November.

Key contributions from government-appointed Survivor Champions Kolbassia Haoussou MBE, our Director of Survivor Empowerment, and Nadine Tunasi put survivors' voices at the heart of the event, and speakers repeatedly referenced our work with survivors of torture. **Fifty-three countries signed a political declaration, launched at the summit, which includes a commitment to listen to the voices of survivors when addressing conflict-related sexual violence.**



“Our message about the importance of survivors’ voices meant the PSVI team worked closely with survivors from the initial concept right through to finalising the conference programme. One important suggestion was to include at least one survivor in every session. Building on the momentum of the event, a survivor group was set up to advise the PSVI, and we held a survivor retreat to discuss how to strengthen the voices of survivors in global efforts to tackle conflict-related sexual violence.” **NADINE TUNASI, SURVIVORS SPEAK OUT MANAGER AND PSVI SURVIVOR CHAMPION**



Survivors Speak OUT partnership: stronger together

In June, we established a formal memorandum of understanding with Survivors Speak OUT - the network of torture survivors nested at Freedom from Torture that works to raise awareness about the impact of torture and advocate for policy change. This is a powerful foundation for our collaboration with survivors to build a world free from torture.

Based on this work, a wide range of organisations came to Freedom from Torture and Survivors Speak OUT for advice about how to strengthen empowerment models in their work generally with people on the move. We have influenced the following organisations, among others, on empowerment models this year:

SWEDISH RED CROSS • WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION • MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES • DOCTORS OF THE WORLD

Nasrin's story: "People need to know what's going on"

Nasrin fled her home in Iran after eight years of imprisonment and torture. She now campaigns with Survivors Speak OUT "We have to tell people what happened to us," she says. "People need to know what's going on in countries like Iran." As well as communicating vital information, Nasrin's work with SSO has helped her to campaign against the UK government's laws that prevent refugees seeking safety in the UK. "I feel my life has meaning," she says. "If I hadn't come to Freedom from Torture, my life would be empty."



Survivors "bring the whole world" to Glasgow

In September, a group of torture survivors in Glasgow organised an inspirational harvest festival that broke down barriers and raised awareness of the impact of torture. Four hundred people attended - sharing food, dancing and showing solidarity with survivors. The organisers were able to use their skills and feel part of the community. "Freedom from Torture made me feel I'm an important person," said one while another said: "It's just amazing being here, I forgot my problems."

"I cannot tell you how happy and proud they were," said Ahlam Souidi, Freedom from Torture's Senior Community Development Worker in Glasgow. "They had so much passion to make this event happen. People from Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Cameroon and more came together - we brought the whole world in one place."



SUPPORTERS: THE POWER BEHIND OUR SUCCESS

Our tens of thousands of compassionate supporters were the driving force behind making a very real difference to the lives of torture survivors in 2022. From signing petitions and taking campaign actions to donating vital funds to those who are in need of therapy and support, your compassion and dedication has been inspiring. We are lucky to work in partnership with trusts and foundations who support our work in a planned way over several years, and the regular monthly giving of our supporters is crucial to enable us to plan ahead and respond flexibly as need arises.

Funds for emergency support

This year, our Emergency Relief Fund provided torture survivors the help they needed, when they needed it most.

These small grants given to our clients, entirely funded by our generous supporters, were a lifeline to hundreds of survivors suffering from poverty and the cost of living crisis.



For Maysa, a survivor of torture from Iraq, the grant meant she was able to feed her family and pay for WiFi so her sons could continue their education.

For Shakil, a human rights campaigner from Kuwait, the money from the fund helped him buy food and pay for bus fares to attend medical appointments. This was only made possible thanks to the generosity of our supporters.

A New Chapter

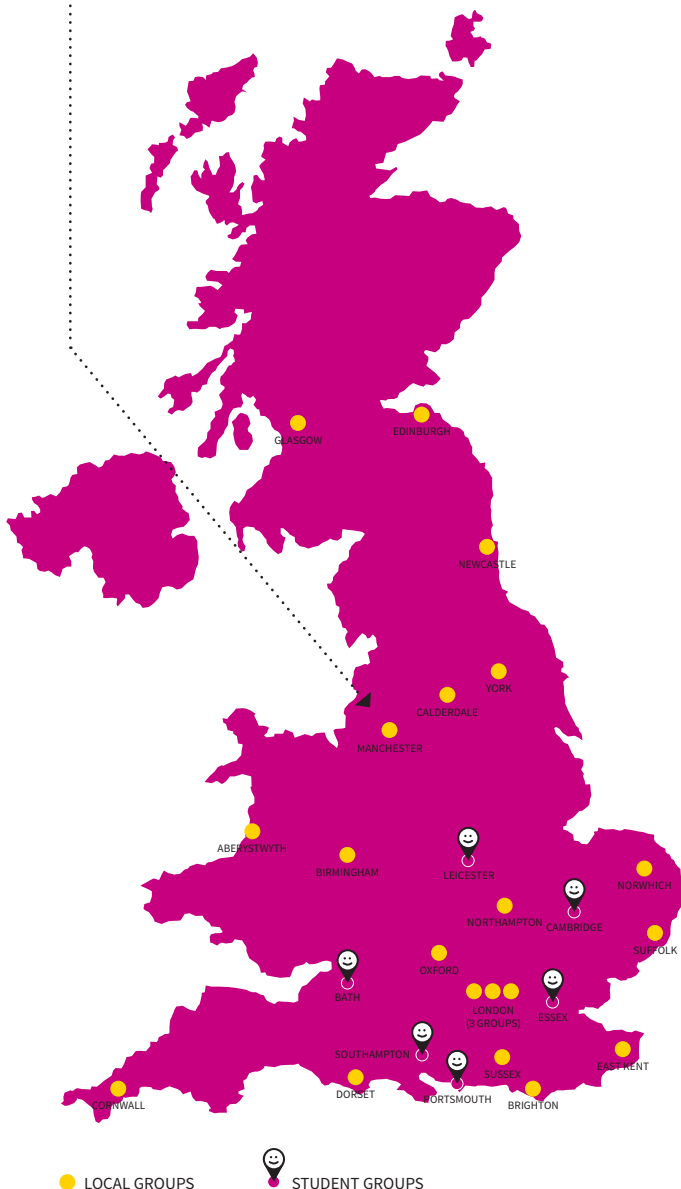
Our star-studded flagship literary fundraising event A New Chapter explored how it feels to start from scratch – celebrating the strength of refugees building a new life in the UK. Hosted by Alexei Sayle, the evening featured readings from bestselling authors Julian Barnes, Elif Shafak and Inua Ellams alongside members of our creative writing group for torture survivors. We also showcased *The Hospitable Environment*, a short film created by our survivor activism group Young Outspoken Survivors about their experiences of coming to the UK as young refugees.



INUA ELLAMS, PERFORMING AT A NEW CHAPTER

Local supporter groups

Our magnificent Manchester supporters group organised the seventh Chorlton Open Gardens event – raising more money than ever for torture survivors. The money we received will help fund life-changing therapy and the event itself drew focus to some of the most pressing issues facing our clients right now. “As there is so much negative press around refugees we felt it was important to raise awareness and raise funds which are sorely needed,” said co-organiser Merryn Cooke.



This year, we welcomed six new Freedom from Torture student campaigning groups. Students at Cambridge, Bath, De Montfort, Southampton, Portsmouth and Essex universities have joined our fight for a world free from torture and a fair system for survivors seeking safety in the UK.

Thank you

Freedom from Torture’s specialist therapy and legal services are supported by a movement of individuals, trusts, foundations and companies who believe in our vision of a world without torture and support our calls for survivor-led change.

We would like to thank each and every supporter who makes our work possible. We are delighted to share those funders below, who are happy for their support to be acknowledged.

- BBC Children in Need
- British Medical Association
- Bryan and Sirkka Sanderson Foundation
- Cecil and Hilda Lewis Charitable Trust
- Craps Charitable Trust
- CRH Charitable Trust
- Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector
- Henocq Law Trust
- Highway One Trust
- International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)
- Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
- Justice Collaborations
- London Catalyst
- Manchester City Council
- Ministry of Justice
- Mirianog Trust
- Newcastle City Council
- Oak Philanthropy Ltd
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- S E Franklin’s Charitable Trust No 3
- Scottish Government Equalities and Social Cohesion Fund
- Smilg Family Charitable Trust
- Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation
- The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
- The Beatrice Laing Trust
- The Bertha Foundation
- The Brook Trust
- The Chillag Family Trust
- The D’Oyly Carte Charitable Trust
- The Elizabeth Bennett Charitable Trust
- The Eveson Trust
- The Finnis Scott Foundation
- The Hadrian Trust
- The Health Foundation
- The Hospital Saturday Fund
- The Manchester Guardian Society Charitable Trust
- The Patricia Routledge Foundation
- The R S Macdonald Charitable Trust
- The Rachel and Anthony Williams Charitable Trust
- The Ratcliff Foundation
- The Rayne Foundation
- The Sheila Truman Trust
- The Sigrid Rausing Trust
- The Souter Charitable Trust
- The St Christopher’s Trust
- The Swire Charitable Trust
- Tinsley Charitable Trust
- Victoria Wood Foundation
- William A Cadbury Charitable Trust

NONE OF OUR WORK WOULD BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT YOU. IT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER TO EXTEND OUR COMPASSION TO THOSE WHO ARRIVE HERE TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES IN SAFETY AFTER TORTURE. IF YOU TOO BELIEVE IN A KINDER, MORE HUMANE APPROACH TO SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF TORTURE THEN PLEASE VISIT WWW.FREEDOMFROMTORTURE.ORG/WHAT-YOU-CAN-DO TO TAKE ACTION, OR CALL US ON 0207 679 7788

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Registered charity number: England 1000340, Scotland SC039632

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