

## **The Story of Mary**

Mary is a 29-year-old woman from Cameroon. She is from the Anglophone region of Cameroon and English is her preferred language. Mary taught elementary school and was active in the Southern Cameroonian National Council (SCNC), distributing SCNC fliers, attending meetings, and helping to organize SCNC events. In 2006, Mary was detained for three months after the gendarmes broke up a SCNC meeting she was attending in her village. While in detention, she was beaten, repeatedly raped, and was interrogated about other members of her group. She was released from prison only after signing a paper stating that she would no longer participate in SCNC activities.

After her release from prison, Mary went into hiding for several months but soon began participating in SCNC meetings again. The gendarmes visited her home on several occasions and threatened that if she did not end her SCNC activities, further harm would come to her. In 2007, Mary was arrested after leaving a SCNC meeting. She was detained and tortured for two months and released only after becoming very ill in prison. Mary's church helped to hide her and provide medical care to her for several months while arrangements were made for her to travel to the United States on a visitor visa. Mary arrived in the United States in November of 2007 and with a six-month visitor visa.

Mary is married and has two young children, ages 2 and 5, that remain in Cameroon with her husband. Mary is currently living with a childhood friend of her husband who she had only met on a few occasions in Cameroon before coming to the U.S. They live in a small one-bedroom apartment and he is helping to provide for Mary's basic needs of food and clothing. Mary has not received any medical care since arriving in the U.S. and complains of severe headaches, abdominal pain and digestive problems, as well as pain in her left arm which was broken during her first detainment and never properly treated. Mary is also very fearful that she may have contracted a sexually-transmitted infection during her sexual assaults. Mary fears leaving the apartment, cries often, has nightmares and difficulty sleeping, has flashbacks to her detention and torture, has little appetite, and fears for the safety of her husband and children. Mary plans to apply for asylum and has been referred to your torture treatment program by the pro-bono legal organization in your community.