

## BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010

#### **Front Matter:**

Pursuant to the Advancing Democratic Values Act of 2007, the Department of State has prepared this report on U.S. efforts to support democracy and human rights in nondemocratic countries and countries undergoing democratic transitions worldwide.

As Secretary of State Clinton said, “our human rights agenda for the 21st century is to make human rights a human reality. Democracy has proven the best political system for making human rights a human reality over the long term.”

The United States is deeply committed to building a world in which every person has the opportunity to live up to his or her potential. Our commitment derives from the values that are embedded in our founding documents and enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We support democratic development around the globe because we believe that all people should be able to enjoy the rights that are naturally theirs and because the exercise of personal and political freedoms is key to sustained prosperity and lasting security within and among states.

Our efforts to advance freedom and democracy across the globe vary from country to country, but there are common elements to our approach: demonstrating our own commitment to human rights by practicing what we preach; principled engagement with other governments aimed not just at making a point, but at making a difference; outreach to civil society groups and individuals working for positive change within their own countries; support for a broad array of accountability and transparency mechanisms in political and economic spheres; and engaging multilateral institutions at both the global and regional levels.

On every continent, our diplomatic and programmatic support helps amplify the voices of courageous human rights defenders whom repressive governments attempt to silence. We are working to build the capacity of new and fragile democracies so that they can better

respond to the needs and hopes of their people. Our assistance is bolstering institutions of democratic accountability such as free and fair electoral processes, strong legislatures, independent judiciaries, responsible law enforcement, and effective anti-corruption mechanisms.

We are working to empower the key elements of civil society such as NGOs and a free media, and helping them extend their reach through new connective technologies. We are partnering with governments, the private sector and civil society groups to promote respect for workers' and women's rights, combat intolerance against religious, racial, and ethnic minorities, and protect other vulnerable populations. At the multilateral level, we are collaborating with likeminded governments to strengthen key international institutions such as the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Organization of American States.

The specific activities we highlight in this report are not exhaustive; rather they illustrate examples of the full range of U.S. undertakings to advance freedom and democracy worldwide.

The United States stands with all those who champion human dignity and liberty. The advancement of human rights and democracy is not just the policy of the United States; it is the epitome of who we are as a nation. In that spirit, we hereby submit the Advancing Freedom and Democracy Report for May 2010.

The Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports were drafted at U.S. missions abroad. They were edited by the editorial staff within the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor with input from other Department of State and USAID offices. The editorial staff consisted of: Editor in Chief – Stephen Eisenbraun; Office Deputy Directors – Edward G. Grulich, Kari Johnstone, and Catherine Kuchta-Helbling; Editors – Cory Andrews, Sarah M. Buckley-Moore, Laura Carey, Elise Carlson-Rainer, Casey Clark, Sharon C. Cooke, Susan Corke, Stuart Crampton, Kathleen Crowley, Mollie Davis, Huseyin Dogan, Amy Feagles, Lauren Gandillot, Karen Gilbride, Jeff Glassman, Laura Gault, Patrick Harvey, Jill Hutchings, Alicia Juskewycz, Simone Joseph, Jessica Lieberman, Gregory Maggio, Stephanie Martone, John McKane, Steve Moody, Daniel L.

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## **AFRICA:**

### **Angola:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Angola to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Angola's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part I: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government has three primary democracy objectives. First, the United States provides support for Angolan efforts to build and reinforce its electoral systems. Angola held parliamentary elections for the first time in 16 years in 2008, with significant assistance from the United States. Although Angola adopted a new constitution in 2010 that calls for presidential and parliamentary elections in 2012, it is unclear how the new constitutional structure will be applied in practice. In its post-independence history, Angola has never completed presidential elections, and ensuring transparent and credible elections is therefore a priority. Second, the United States seeks to promote a vibrant, independent media. Angolans who live outside the capital are largely dependent upon state-owned media for information and news. The United States works closely with independent voices to widen their reach. Finally, the United States supports long term efforts to promote an activist civil society and to increase decentralization of power. In addition to these three central objectives, a variety of U.S. programs focus on improving respect for human rights or otherwise laying the foundation for a democratic Angolan society. The United States has a comprehensive plan for promoting transparency

and good governance and is an advocate for measures to eliminate trafficking in persons and to aid its victims. A variety of U.S. programs teach respect for international human rights norms to military and police officials, government servants, and Angolan society generally.

## Part II: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

Supporting Angola's electoral systems, reinforcing civil society, and encouraging responsive, local government are key elements of our bilateral assistance. The U.S. Government budget for democracy and governance programs in FY 2010 totaled approximately \$9 million dollars. These funds supported shorter-term electoral objectives, such as assisting civil society to prepare for 2012 elections, and building the longer-term basis for a democratic society. The United States organized a series of VIP visits, International Visitor Leadership Program nominations, roundtable discussions with opinion makers, conferences, speaker programs, and workshops in the capital, as well as in the provinces of Bié, Malanje, Uíge, and Zaire. In addition, the United States placed op-ed pieces on the themes of democratization, transparency, and human rights in the local media.

Support for an independent media is a high priority for the United States, which worked with Voice of America to increase its coverage of Angola issues and to allow independents and opposition figures greater access to the airwaves outside of the capital as Angola approaches its electoral period. U.S. assistance programs complemented these efforts through preparations to create a media center for independent journalists and other programs supporting the independent media. Two new programs are being created: a weekly call-in show and a roundtable discussion with experts. The programs will include breaking political news, analysis, information about voting, political parties, the rule of law, and the general election process. The United States regularly reached out to the non-government press and advocated for modification of Angola's press law, which effectively restricts the operation of the independent media outside the capital.

Many U.S. programs focused on the issue of transparency, including organizing a video conference roundtable on the topic. Government, civil society, and media attendees praised the event, and the video conference made a substantive contribution to internal Angolan government debates about how to address corruption and promote transparency.

U.S. assistance programs worked with local governments to increase public participation in local governance. The United States focused on programs to counter trafficking in persons. The State Department funded successful training activities with International Organization for Migration for the Ministry of Interior and other security forces. Some 40 Angolan police officers attended human rights and other training at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Botswana in 2009. A similar number of attendees is planned for 2010.

## **Burkina Faso:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Burkina Faso to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Burkina Faso's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. strategy for promoting democracy and human rights in the country focuses on improving democratic processes in advance of the next round of presidential, municipal, and parliamentary elections in 2010, 2011, and 2012, with a long-term view to the 2015 presidential election and possible political transition. This includes building the capacity of political parties in general and female political leadership in particular. Strengthening and professionalizing the media and increasing press freedom are also priority areas. A U.S. NGO was awarded a U.S. Assistance program grant to conduct capacity building programs with a dozen political parties. The specific objectives were: to enhance communication skills, improve strategic planning, and strengthen the capacity of political parties to participate effectively in local governance. Additional areas of concentration include combating corruption, maintaining religious freedom and ethnic tolerance, and rehabilitating victims of and eliminating trafficking in persons and exploitive child labor, particularly in the mining sector.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government encourages the strengthening of democratic processes in advance of the 2010, 2011 and 2012 elections, using a variety of diplomatic and programmatic tools. For example, U.S. officials speak regularly with the leaders of both political opposition and ruling CDP parties throughout the country to encourage democratic participation, interparty dialogue, and peaceful democratic processes. The U.S. Government funded one youth association to build the capacity of young people to participate effectively in the democratic process. The United States also provided funding to increase the capacity of women to be leaders in their political organizations and to strengthen political parties. The U.S. funds a regional project to eliminate exploitive child labor in the mining sector.

To promote freedom of speech and of the media, the U.S. Government created fora where media professionals and academics can exchange ideas and discuss issues of freedom. In FY 2009 the U.S. Government hosted educational programs for young Burkinabe lawyers centered on civil and political rights in America and also examined the role of young intellectuals in African democracies. Discussions with university students about the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the vision of President Barack Obama were also organized. The American Center sponsored a program on the Harlem Renaissance, highlighting the contribution of African-Americans to civil liberties in the United States. A lecture/discussion program examined anticorruption measures in America. The U.S. Government also promoted American culture through music and movies, highlighting the role of the arts in a peaceful democracy. Women political leaders, national assembly staff, and government officials attended events that examined women's rights, tolerance and fair elections issues.

The U.S. Government works to expand respect for the rule of law by encouraging professionalism in the country's armed forces. 129 individuals received military training and education opportunities through programs such as Africa Endeavor, the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS), the Counter Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP), International Military Education and Training (IMET), Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) and the Center Of Excellence for Stability Police Unit (COESPU). The

participants were trained in the following countries: United States, Uganda, Gabon, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Morocco, Germany, Senegal, Nigeria, Italia and Zambia. The U.S. Government currently is training and equipping a Burkinabe Formed Police Unit (FPU) for future deployment in Darfur and is conducting refresher ACOTA training for the Burkinabe UNDPKO/UNAMID Laafi battalion. These training and education programs focused on military intelligence, peacekeeping, counter terrorism, piloting courses, rule of law, humanitarian law, and security. The country continues to participate in U.S.-supported military cooperation conferences, exercises, and seminars on topics such as the role of the military in a democracy and building a regional capacity to respond to crisis.

**Burundi:**

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**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Burundi to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Burundi's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government encourages fair and equitable treatment for all citizens of Burundi without regard to race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, marital status, or sexual orientation. Through partnership with the local government, parliament, civil society, other donors, and regional organizations, the United States works to combat corruption, abusive government, and human rights violations and to encourage the development of an independent judiciary, strong legislative bodies, robust civil society, and strong and independent electoral institutions. The United States also supports Burundi's participation in the East Africa Legislative Assembly (EALA) and other such African regional organizations that serve as vehicles to build capacity and to strengthen commitment to human rights and democratization. The United States encourages increased transparency, participation in government processes by civil society, and civic education for political leaders and the general public. Fostering

a climate where respect for human rights and due process can flourish is an integral and pervasive part of the U.S. Government's goals.

In preparation for the country's 2010 elections, the United States seeks to foster an election environment in which multiple parties participate in a free, fair, transparent, and peaceful electoral process, with an outcome that is credible to citizens of the country and the international community. Free and fair elections leading to an orderly succession are a critical element in helping ensure that the country does not return to violence.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States continues to maintain its support for good governance and democracy by working to strengthen the government's executive, legislative, and judicial branches as well as civil society. The United States supports ongoing land reform programs, women's inheritance rights, and advocacy for the adoption of a new land code, an important step in addressing land tenure issues and reducing escalating land-related conflicts, particularly those involving returned refugees. The U.S. Government continues to fund a local NGO that educates and advocates for the rights of people with HIV/AIDs, combating stigmatization and social and economic exclusion. The United States continues to fund programs that focus on economic and social empowerment of women and youth in refugee returnee communities in order to assist returnees in becoming fully integrated and active participants in a democratic society.

The United States supports workshops that strengthen corruption monitoring by civil society and government officials. The U.S. Government continues to help reinforce awareness of and support for transparency following high-profile government corruption scandals. The United States continues active engagement with the government in reintegrating former child soldiers into society, particularly in addressing their psychological needs as well as supporting programs to assist in identifying and preventing trafficking activities among demobilized child soldiers. In addition, the U.S. Government maintains programs to help professionalize the army and the police. These efforts include human rights trainings for the military and funding to build police command posts and armories, thereby reducing the number of arms circulating in the population.

The United States supports programs to assist in the combating of human trafficking. This includes the provision of technical assistance in the drafting of comprehensive antitrafficking national legislation, as well as providing training to justice and civil society officials on investigation and prosecution of trafficking offenses and the procedures for identifying victims.

The United States supports efforts to promote a successful 2010 election and peaceful post-election process in the country. For example, the U.S. Government funds a U.S. NGO's dynamic country-wide civic education program to ensure that citizens — including youth, women, and rural inhabitants — are aware of their election rights and responsibilities, are able to register, and are knowledgeable about how and where to cast their secret ballots. The United States continues to support development of a free, objective, and independent media that provides legitimate and fair discussion of ideas and candidates. In 2009, the U.S. Government advocated for a balanced revision of the Electoral Code governing the 2010 elections and funded a roundtable of civil society and political party leaders who developed the first draft.

### **Cameroon:**

#### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. government priorities and activities of the U.S. Mission in Cameroon to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Cameroon's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Report* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's policy priorities are to promote democratic principles and practices, strengthen democratic institutions, and increase respect for human rights. The United States implements a broad-based approach covering media and civil society to develop those institutions' capacity to support the democratic process in the country. This includes maintaining the fight against corruption as a high priority. The United States

targets several key population groups, ranging from high-level government officials to school-age children, to help promote better human rights practices. In addition, the United States maintains as a priority the fight against exploitative labor practices, particularly child trafficking.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

In 2010 the United States continues to focus its activities toward strengthening democratic institutions and respect for democratic practices, including human rights and press freedom. In December 2008 the president of Cameroon created the electoral commission, Elections Cameroon (ELECAM), although most of the 12 members were senior officials belonging to the ruling party. The United States publicly criticized the partisan composition of ELECAM, noting its low credibility among the public, and urging the government to ensure that ELECAM function as an independent election commission. The Embassy is engaging ELECAM and the government to encourage reforms to the institution, while at the same time continuing to stress publicly the importance of making ELECAM an independent, effective electoral institution.

In addition, the U.S. Government continues to strengthen democratic institutions and respect for human rights by engaging members of civil society and the media, officials from all levels of government, and local and international NGOs. For example, the U.S. Ambassador hosted a roundtable on women's rights and a parliamentary lunch to encourage legislative reforms and dialogue. On April 15, the U.S. Embassy publicly launched the Department's annual *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, addressing a group of local NGOs on the role that organizations like theirs can play in promoting human rights in their communities.

The United States also continues to combat corruption in the country. Through the Democracy and Human Rights Funds (DHRF), the U.S. Government supports a local NGO that conducted a series of seminars and conferences to raise awareness among civil servants and the general public in six of the 10 regions of the country about the ills of corruption. Embassy officers gave public remarks about combating corruption. The

embassy will be hosting a regional anticorruption conference and is producing an anticorruption film to be shown in the consular waiting room.

In addition, DHRF also supports sensitization programs on the rights of the child as set forth in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the problem of worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking. The U.S. Government continues to support a program to enhance national capacity in child labor data collection, analysis and dissemination. The embassy also supports a Human Rights Education project in 10 secondary schools in Yaounde. The embassy launched a U.S. Department of Agriculture-supported Food for Education program highlighting the importance of education, especially for girls.

The U.S. Embassy continues to support media freedom through local capacity building and by publicly expressing concerns about reports of restrictions on press freedom and the closure of media outlets.

The U.S. Government continues to press high-level government officials, including the president, about the imperative to respect human rights and punish human rights offenders. To prevent human rights abuses and augment the rule of law in the country, the U.S. Government remains committed to law enforcement and security training for police and gendarmes. The embassy will continue e-IMET programs on civil-military relations and human rights in the military.

### **Central African Republic:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in the Central African Republic (CAR) to promote democracy and human rights. For background on the Central African Republic's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

## Part I: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Governance in the Central African Republic (CAR) is extremely weak due to numerous political upheavals dating back to the 1980s. Instability endures as a result of the presence of multiple insurgent groups, bands of highway robbers active throughout the north, an extremely weak and often ineffective military, and limited state presence outside of Bangui. While the CAR Government has shown improvement in its financial management, it remains deeply underfunded and relies heavily on donor support.

To promote democratic principles and effective governance in a secure environment, the priorities of the U.S. Government include reducing corruption and human rights abuses, strengthening government institutions, training for media professionals and improving financial management. These policy goals require increased U.S. engagement with the Central African government, the media, the military, support for elections, and civil society. The U.S. Government is attempting, through democratic reforms and institution building, to promote a stronger Central African Government at the nexus of Chad/Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Uganda.

## Part II: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. held numerous meetings in 2009 with government officials and leaders from civil society representing unions, human rights organizations, and journalism associations in an effort to forge a shared understanding of human rights, press freedom, trafficking in persons, religious freedom, and transparency. In 2009-2010, the U.S. launched two significant democracy projects on elections and strengthening civil society, and in 2010 the U.S. plans to observe the country's national elections to help increase transparency and assess any elements of the electoral system that might need and could potentially benefit from future U.S. assistance. Also, through the International Visitor Leadership Program, the U.S. Government also continued to send members of Central Africa's civil society to training seminars in the United States.

In 2009-2010, the U.S. made financial resources available to assist a local private radio station to extend its previous broadcast range, effectively doubling it. The station broadcasts news programs in both Sango and French, providing crucial information for citizens regarding the need to respect human rights, develop civic pride, and foster good governance. To minimize corruption and promote civic education and responsible media practices, the U.S. undertook public diplomacy activities featuring a series of events at the Martin Luther King Jr. Cultural Center, and sponsored the visit of a U.S. speaker to Bangui to train a selected group of Bangui University students in journalistic best practices. To promote transparency in the extractive industries, the U.S. Government has continued developing a partnership with the Ministry of Mines to facilitate the implementation of the Kimberley Process through a multi-year property rights promotion project in the southwest of the country.

To increase security forces' respect for human rights, the U.S. facilitated engineering and disaster preparedness training for the Central African Army. The U.S. fostered the training to endow the force with an increased ability to react to disasters in the civil and military realm. The United States also sent military personnel to English language instruction, as well as seminars for the new generation of African military leaders.

Recognizing the difficulties faced by human rights defenders, the U.S. continues to explore ways to provide urgent assistance to defenders who are under threat, including by providing legal assistance to journalists or NGO activists who may have been arbitrarily arrested for politically motivated reasons, or by providing security measures to defenders being harassed or receiving threats. In addition, in 2010 the United States plans to create a mechanism to improve life-threatening conditions in prisons and detention facilities; prevent torture, starvation, and other forms of inhuman or cruel treatment common to the country's penal system; and provide legal assistance to vulnerable persons--including women accused of the crime of witchcraft--who have been detained arbitrarily and endured lengthy pretrial detention.

**Chad:**

## BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010

#### Introduction:

The following information reports U.S. government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Chad to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Chad's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part I: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

A key U.S. priority for promoting democracy in the country is to encourage a credible electoral process and political transition in accordance with procedures set forth in the country's 1996 constitution and subsequent electoral laws, as well as with the agreement signed in August 2007 by the Government of Chad, the ruling party coalition, and most opposition parties. The European Union brokered the August 2007 agreement, with support from the United States and other international electoral financing partners; the agreement provides a roadmap for electoral reform. An elections timetable calls for legislative elections in November 2010, followed by municipal and presidential elections by April 2011.

The United States continues to place emphasis on addressing the ongoing humanitarian crisis in eastern Chad and on reinforcing efforts that contribute to its resolution. In addition, strengthening civil society, good governance, and the media, especially radio broadcasting, will remain a major focus. Protection of women and children, and professionalization of security forces, figure prominently in meeting U.S. good governance objectives.

#### Part II: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States continues to work with bilateral and multilateral partners to support the country's democratic processes and press the country's leadership, using all available diplomatic tools and assistance resources, to proceed along the path toward elections. U.S. officials meet regularly with political opposition members and with high-level officials in an effort to maintain and advance political dialogue. U.S. officials also

participate in electoral coordination meetings with the international community and as an observer to the electoral reform committee created to ensure that the August 2007 Accord is implemented. Efforts to strengthen civil society and the media, as well as to promote good governance, will be funded through U.S. assistance programs. A multiyear regional project places considerable emphasis on improving community governance and widening access to information in less-governed areas of the country. Other U.S. programs are helping women and youth gain access to community radio stations and relevant radio programming. In order to facilitate the implementation of recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry to examine disappeared persons and other abuses that occurred from January 28 to February 8, 2008, the United States has urged the government to move forward with its justice commission to investigate the disappearances.

The United States is the major donor for humanitarian relief efforts in the region. This includes programs for refugee protection, psychosocial services, and other vital assistance addressing the needs of vulnerable populations in the east, while also contributing to regional security efforts. The United States has supported the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), whose mandate includes helping to protect vulnerable civilians, improving governance and capacity building for the judicial system and facilitating the provision of humanitarian assistance. MINURCAT's mandate will end on May 26 but the U.S. expects portions of the mandate will be extended. U.S. diplomatic efforts in support of a reduction of tensions between Chad and Sudan and improving security in the border region include promoting the implementation of peace accords, the most recent of which was signed by Chad and Sudan in January 2010 committing both sides to cease assistance to rebel proxies.

The professionalization of security forces is a key component of the U.S. strategy for improving the country's human rights record. The country's security force personnel participate in U.S. sponsored trainings. During high-level consultations the U.S. also brings to the attention of the government the need to take concrete measures to discontinue the recruitment and use of child soldiers and combat trafficking in persons, including urging the passage of relevant legislation, identifying and prosecuting violators, and providing assistance to victims. These diplomatic efforts will be accompanied in 2010 with bilateral projects to support antitrafficking efforts and to provide women with

the legal tools to protect their rights. Bilateral and multilateral efforts to address the issue of child soldiers will continue.

**Comoros:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Madagascar to promote democracy and human rights in Comoros. For background on Comoros's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at <http://www.state.gov>.

Part 1: U.S Government Democracy Objectives

Following a history of multiple coups, coup attempts, and secession efforts, the 2006 election and subsequent democratic transfer of power brought hope for a more stable political future for the country. Recent events, however, raise serious cause for concern. A thus-far successful attempt by President Sambu in March to extend his term in office by 18 months (beyond his original four-year mandate set to expire in May) has led to popular discontent and renewed outbreaks of civil unrest. This is particularly true on the island of Moheli, whose turn at the Union presidency is supposed to start after Sambu leaves office. The U.S. Government's top priority is to encourage the consolidation of democratic gains by advocating continued reconciliation and consensus-building.

Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government from the mission in Madagascar is engaged actively in promoting democracy in the Comoros. A team from Embassy Antananarivo observed both rounds of the December 2009 legislative elections. National and international observers agreed that the elections were generally free and fair. The U.S. Government continues to work with members of the international community to encourage dialogue and consensus building

among political stakeholders in the country.

In a country often cut off from the world by its isolated geographic location, many of the U.S. Government's human rights activities focus on enhancing press freedom by developing journalists' professionalism and increasing their access to information. The United States operates an American Corner in Moroni which serves as a small cultural center and library, offering American books and periodicals, Internet service for research purposes, and a forum for discussion about a wide range of topics. Hundreds of local citizens use the facility each week. A dedicated Comoros officer from the U.S. Government spent extended time in country, facilitating public diplomacy events on topics such as U.S. politics, Islam in America, foreign policy, culture, and education. U.S. officials sent a number of International Visitors to the United States, including several who have been active in human rights issues.

The U.S. Government actively promotes the rights of children through the funding of education projects and by meeting regularly with local authorities to discuss the implementation of their new five-year plan to combat the problem of child labor. The plan proposes specific actions to be taken, identifies responsible agencies or departments, includes indicators to measure progress, and has a timeline for the achievement of objectives. A microfinance project will seek to empower women entrepreneurs by providing much-needed credit assistance and training. The U.S. ambassador convenes "influential women" meetings to listen to and encourage female leaders. These gatherings afford Comoran women unique networking opportunities and allow them to develop concrete solutions to their most pressing problems, including underrepresentation in government and lack of access to credit. A number of these women presented themselves as candidates in the December 2009 legislative elections. U.S. programs that encourage civilian control of the military and military professionalism also work to enhance the rule of law.

### **Democratic Republic of the Congo:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

## Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to promote democracy and human rights. For background on DRC's human rights conditions, please see the *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Mission priorities will focus on reinforcing Congolese political will and capacity for robust and effective leadership and oversight at all levels of government. Together with Washington and other diplomatic missions, Embassy Kinshasa will identify and engage key decision-makers and implement results-oriented initiatives to support transparent governance, legislative accountability, judicial independence and effectiveness, political pluralism, and provincial and local autonomy. U.S. democracy promotion priorities will facilitate eventual assumption of the UN Peacekeeping Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (MONUC) functions by Congolese institutions and will support the government's financial, technical and logistical preparations for 2011 elections. Public outreach will emphasize the legitimacy of elections, and human and civil rights, including civilian protection and the rule of law. With the help of Congolese and international partners, the U.S. will develop programs to increase citizens' influence on public policy and expand the legal framework of governance and the rule of law.

The U.S. Government supports justice sector development to combat impunity and increase access to legal services with assistance to both military and civilian courts, legal aid, and legislative reform.

U.S. assistance targets national and provincial legislatures, courts in pilot jurisdictions, and provincial and municipal authorities. A free and responsible press is an important component of democratic society; various U.S. programs support journalistic ethics, media capacity building and local efforts to increase press freedom and public access to

information. In addition, in light of the role that exploitation of natural resources and corruption play in prolonging the conflict and contributing to human rights abuses in the eastern regions of the country, the U.S. Government is increasing support for efforts to increase transparency in the management of natural resources and stability in mineral-rich areas.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States continues to provide training and other support to key government institutions, such as the National Assembly, provincial assemblies, provincial ministries and courts, the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), and new judicial structures, as well as to journalists and NGO activists. U.S. funding also assists initiatives to improve draft legislation on decentralization, elections management, and the national budget. Funding also goes to local efforts to facilitate dialogue between civil society, students, and elected officials. A new U.S.-funded program focuses on civic and voter education to increase public awareness and turnout, promote women's participation, and help the CEI prepare for the upcoming national and local elections.

U.S.-sponsored public diplomacy efforts have continued to support democracy promotion. U.S. Government International Visitor Leadership programs have sent legislators, judges, journalists, human rights activists, and local government officials to the United States to meet with American counterparts. Participants learned about key aspects of U.S. democracy, such as federalism, the legislative process and judicial system, and the relationship between elected officials, constituents, and civil society. Working closely with the U.S. Government, the association of Congolese alumni of U.S.-funded exchange and education programs organized a seminar on the Freedom of Information Law that resulted in draft legislation being debated in parliament. The U.S. Government supports press freedom NGOs in their efforts to build freer and more responsible local media. The U.S. Embassy works in partnership with other foreign embassies, and local and international NGOs, to encourage the government to improve press freedom, decriminalize press offenses, and collaborate on multilateral projects such

as journalist workshops and seminars aimed at building local media capacity.

Reform of the justice sector and promotion of accountability for human rights abuses remain major challenges. For this reason the United States continues to support the establishment of mobile courts to bring essential judicial services to remote areas of the provinces of Katanga, Maniema, South Kivu, and Bandundu. U.S. programs continue to promote judicial independence and accountability by helping the High Council of Magistrates adopt and implement its internal operating procedures and organizational structures, as well as appropriate disciplinary procedures for sitting judges. Assistance also supports the drafting and adoption of a magistrates' code of ethics and ethics training. To strengthen civil society and further support the establishment of the rule of law, the U.S. Government trained local associations in court monitoring and human rights and facilitated dialogue between the judiciary and public stakeholders to increase understanding of the justice process and to introduce new reforms. To complement these efforts, the U.S. Government will increase our broad-based media programs this year to improve the quality of journalism, strengthen the institutional capacity and financial viability of select media outlets, and increase the flow of information on key policy areas.

The U.S provides training to security force unit commanders on rule of law in a disciplined military including command responsibility for prevention of human rights violations, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), international humanitarian law and ethics. In cooperation with military magistrates, the U.S. has compiled and printed a book of international humanitarian and human rights laws for distribution to military officers attending these trainings.

Recognizing the difficulties faced by human rights defenders, the U.S. continues to explore ways to provide urgent assistance to defenders who are under threat, including by providing legal assistance to journalists or NGO activists who may have been arrested arbitrarily for politically motivated reasons, or by providing security measures to defenders receiving death threats.

The U.S. diplomatic presence in North Kivu Province, in addition to several high-level visits to the region by senior U.S. diplomats including the Secretary of State, facilitated increased monitoring of the human rights situation in the country. Following the Secretary's visit, five U.S. Government interagency teams assessed anticorruption efforts, food security, economic governance, sexual and gender-based violence, and security sector reform and provided recommendations to the government. In addition, the U.S. Government innovation specialists undertook a mission to North Kivu to explore ways in which new technologies could be leveraged to fight impunity, prevent sexual and SGBV, and increase transparency in the mineral trade.

The U.S. Government trained local government officials in North Kivu and Maniema on good governance principles and their role in decentralization, including the officials' obligations to constituencies, resource management, and public spending. Another U.S.-funded program utilized community-based radio theater to mediate conflict and encourage dialogue in vulnerable communities in the DRC's eastern provinces. Assistance from the United States strengthened the capacity of civil society organizations in South Kivu to raise awareness of the SGBV law, identify issues related to its application, and encourage increased use of the justice system to combat SGBV. U.S. funding continued to provide care for victims of SGBV. For example a U.S.-funded local NGO in Orientale Province provides victims transport to a medical center, physical and psychological aid services, and legal assistance. In North Kivu Province, U.S. funding provides free legal assistance and psychological counseling to victims of sex crimes and trains justice sector professionals in applying the SGBV law, which directly has resulted in dozens of rape convictions and many more cases that were still under consideration. In addition a new program develops the capacity of justice sector actors and local community leaders to employ forensics techniques to preserve evidence and conduct investigations of mass violence and SGBV in North Kivu. The United States continues to fund a program to prevent the worst forms of child labor and to reintegrate war-affected children, including child soldiers.

The U.S. plans to increase efforts to foster transparency in the mineral trade in the eastern provinces, in part by building the capacity of government regulatory agencies and civil

society to ensure that the mineral trade is not supporting illicit activities and human rights abuses by armed groups or certain military units.

## **Republic of the Congo:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in the Republic of the Congo to promote democracy and human rights. For background on the Republic of the Congo's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The United States remains committed to promoting democratic principles, practices, values, and human rights in the country. One key U.S. priority is to promote better comprehension of democratic principles and the need for civic participation. The U.S. Government encourages the government to conduct free and fair elections and has received funding in Economic Support Funds to assist Congolese electoral systems for the 2012 parliamentary elections. These funds will be implemented in partnership with UN assistance to train civil society groups, educate voters, and provide media opportunities for civil society groups for voter education. The U.S. Government also seeks to improve transparency in accounting for oil revenues and other public funds through the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) process. Another important area of focus is children's rights. The U.S. Government has strongly supported the creation of a children's rights law, which was passed by parliament in 2009 and signed into law in April 2010 by President Sassou Nguesso.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

Public diplomacy remains a key component of the United States' efforts to promote democratic principles and civic participation in the country. An American cultural facility hosts approximately 1,000 Congolese visitors each month and provides English classes and weekly English club meetings, which provide a platform for promoting U.S. objectives. The Embassy Information Resource Center hosts approximately 1,000 visitors each month and provides English and French reading materials, educational advising, and computer access for research activities. Before it was closed, an American Corner in Pointe Noire was similarly successful. The U.S. Government plans to reopen the American Corner in 2011. The number of applicants for programs to visit the United States, as well as other educational programs, increased during 2009-2010. The number of Fulbright recipients for the ROC increased from three to five from 2009-2010. The U.S. Government's allocation of International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) participants also increased from two to three from 2009-2010. Participation in these programs exposes persons to American culture and understanding of American democratic values. The United States also hosted workshops on women's rights, new media in journalism, and trafficking in persons. In 2010 the U.S. Government hosted a women's day event promoting women's rights in which over 1,000 Congolese youth participated. The U.S. Government also hosted a workshop on new media for Congolese journalists in which 25 individuals were trained. The U.S. Government is slated to hold a Digital Video Conference (DVC) on press freedom in May 2010.

In communications with the government, and in cooperation with the international community, the United States continues to stress the need for the government to conduct free and fair elections and to improve governance, particularly in the area of transparency in accounting for oil revenues and other public funds. The United States supported local NGOs in presenting informational workshops on combating trafficking in persons; human rights and the rights of individuals detained or arrested; and the rights of women and persons with disabilities. Greater military discipline, professionalism, and respect for human rights are core objectives of U.S. interactions in civil-military dialogue and military training exchanges. The U.S. Government has developed a military relationship between the autonomous port in Point Noire and Coast Guard in order to improve port security. The U.S. Government is also providing two West Point cadets in 2010 to train military and civilians in English.

The United States works with local NGOs and UN assistance to promote children's rights. In 2009 the parliament passed a law that outlaws trafficking in children and imposes penalties for such actions. This legislation was signed into law by President Sassou in April 2010. A magistrate who benefited from a program to visit the United States has become an important ally in promoting children's issues and rights, and the U.S. Government partnered with this individual's NGO in order to conduct a workshop on combating trafficking in persons. The United States also supported poverty reduction campaigns in the form of housing projects and food security, with 140,000 school children receiving school lunches.

### **Cote d'Ivoire:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Côte d'Ivoire to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Côte d'Ivoire's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's strategy to promote freedom and democracy has focused on urging the signatories of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (OPA) to implement the terms of the accord as soon as possible. This includes issuing identity documents and voter cards to citizens of the country who were previously disenfranchised, establishing a new national army, and holding free and fair elections. The U.S. ambassador is actively engaged in efforts to prod the president, the prime minister, and the independent electoral commission to move forward on the OPA. International and local NGOs agree that addressing the issue of identification (documenting all those who are Ivoirian citizens) is fundamental to achieving greater freedom and democracy in the country. In addition to promoting implementation of the OPA, the United States has established three themes as cornerstones of its democracy strategy: the importance of free speech, open political

debate, and a free and independent professional press; an appreciation for tolerance and diversity; and an insistence on the accountability of public officials. The United States also focuses on women's rights and the need to combat the worst forms of child labor, particularly in the cocoa sector. Persuading the government to be more proactive with regard to exploitative labor practices, including trafficking in persons, is a priority.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States has suspended most non-humanitarian aid to the country due to sanctions imposed as a result of the absence of credible elections following a military-led coup in 1999. However, the United States supports several important programs designed to further democratic principles. The U.S. Government funds the only international NGO observation mission of the OPA-mandated identification and voter registration process. The U.S. Government also promotes public participation in the democratic process through programs that advocate leadership skills and individual responsibility. For example, the U.S. Embassy in Abidjan hosted discussions on leadership with student leaders from different political parties.

The United States provides small grants to several Ivorian NGOs engaged in promoting human rights. U.S. funds supported organizations providing legal assistance to impoverished and underserved groups and educating young people about their civic rights. U.S.-funded exchange programs bring Ivorian journalists, grassroots democracy and human rights activists, and government officials to the United States to learn from the American experience about issues such as freedom of speech, tolerance, and civic leadership.

Students, NGO activists, community and religious leaders, journalists and other professionals participate in a variety of U.S. outreach programs on civic education, transparency and good governance, tolerance, and women and development. Numerous programs to promote democratic principles focus on youth, civil society, and the next generation of leaders. To promote freedom of speech, the United States co-sponsors video conferences, book discussions, and roundtables for reporters and editors on the responsibilities of a free press. The United States distributes articles and materials on human rights, democracy, and good governance to key contacts and target audiences throughout the country.

The United States supports activities promoting women's rights and religious pluralism. To address women's rights, the U.S. Government finances a coalition of local NGOs working on combating gender-based violence in schools. To promote religious pluralism, U.S. officials continue to organize programs, including Iftar dinners for Muslim civil society leaders, a discussion with religious leaders on their role in effecting social change, and discussions to support interfaith dialogue. Religious leaders are included in programs promoting freedom of speech and women's rights. Several Muslim youth and civic leaders will participate in international exchange programs emphasizing tolerance. The U.S. Government continues to fund efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor by providing oversight for the establishment of a child labor monitoring system. The U.S. Government funds a 40-month West Africa regional project that includes direct action in the country to reduce child labor in the cocoa and coffee sectors and child domestic labor. The project will expand child labor monitoring systems and improve the Ivoirian government's capacity to fight the worst forms of child labor. The U.S. Government continues to fund cocoa-farmer training that encourages the elimination of exploitative labor practices in cocoa production. Additionally, in conversations with government authorities, U.S. officials speak out against the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking, and U.S. officials support public-private partnerships to end hazardous child labor in the cocoa industry.

## **Djibouti:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Djibouti to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Djibouti's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Supporting the country's nascent democratic institutions to improve transparency and broader political participation is a top U.S. Government priority. As the country prepares

for key 2011 presidential and regional elections, the U.S. Government will assist by strengthening electoral institutions and processes, increasing voter participation, promoting voter education, and ensuring vigorous and diverse democratic debate. The U.S. Government also plans to support election-related programs that provide technical assistance and training for election commission officials; civil society members who are part of the Electoral Commissions and serve a role as domestic observers; political parties; party polling agents; and the media. The goal is to support a pluralistic, fair, broad-based, and representative environment. Support for international observers through the entire electoral process will allow the observers to impact quickly, directly and positively the success of the elections. Recognizing that the country's ongoing decentralization is a crucial step towards giving greater democratic voice to ordinary citizens, the United States seeks to encourage support for the country's fledgling regional governments as they take on increasing responsibility. The United States also supports a more vocal role for civil society.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government uses programming to strengthen political and electoral processes. Current election assistance is built on an ongoing program of U.S. support for strengthened electoral processes, productive political competition, and consensus-building. Looking ahead to the 2011 elections, the United States provides programming that ensures credible election administration and effective oversight, encourages political party development, and promotes voter education. The U.S. Government works with a broad range of government and civil society actors, including civil servants, elected officials, political parties, community associations, and the media.

The U.S. Government continues to support local civic groups, parent-teacher associations, and local health committees that help oversee rural health clinics. These actions underscore the goal of helping civil society to become a more active participant at the community level, a stronger partner in the country's development, and a more robust source of oversight and support to social institutions. The U.S. Government is also enhancing public sector executive functions in the Ministry of Health in order to enable

the ministry to operate more efficiently and to strengthen governance structures in the delivery of health care.

To ensure that core messages on democracy and human rights reach the widest possible audiences in the country, the U.S. Government works with Radio/Television Djibouti to air radio programming that addresses the themes of democratic values, good governance, equal opportunity, and human rights.

## **Equatorial Guinea:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Equatorial Guinea to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Equatorial Guinea's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.State.gov](http://www.State.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Key U.S. priorities for furthering democracy and human rights in the country are: strengthening government and civil institutions, including opposition parties and the nascent civil society; enhancing security forces' respect for human rights; supporting anticorruption efforts, including promoting greater transparency in the management of oil revenues and fiscal transparency in government ministries; continuing to promote greater political pluralism, good governance in the protection of natural resources and the environment; and improving the government's performance in key social sectors such as health and education.

##### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

In the aftermath of the November 2009 presidential elections, Embassy Malabo delivered a diplomatic note with a compilation of observed election irregularities to the government. Upon the U.S. ambassador's arrival in early 2010, he underlined the U.S.

Government's support for democratic governance in each of his introductory meetings with cabinet ministers and the president. The ambassador continues to meet with security ministers on an array of issues, including the importance of good governance and democracy. The ambassador has also met with opposition party leaders and encouraged them to continue to work towards democracy after the presidential elections of 2009.

The U.S. Government directly engages top government officials, including the president, on the country's human rights record. To highlight reforms needed to address the country's human rights problems, U.S. officials have conducted occasional site visits to detention facilities and advocated for political prisoner releases. U.S. officials continue to urge the government to address serious problems in the penal and judicial systems highlighted in November 2008 by the UN rapporteur on torture, and to allow unfettered monitoring of all its detention facilities. The government has begun to address some of these problems and has restarted a productive dialogue with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to address related concerns. The United States has pressed senior officials, including the president, to conclude a formal agreement with ICRC, including a human rights training component, in 2010. In addition, the United States continues to advocate for the establishment of formal mechanisms to support victims of trafficking in persons and to encourage active measures against traffickers.

To further the development of independent media and press freedom, the United States continues to encourage networking with international journalists' associations, distributes supporting materials, hosts workshops, and utilizes public speaking opportunities to convey the importance of the media's role in building a democratic society. Members of the press are regularly invited to U.S.-sponsored events that stress the democratic process. To foster greater transparency, good governance, and the development of civil society, the United States continues to urge the government to adhere to the principles of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), a multinational civil society initiative designed to foster accountability in extractive industries and promote the freedom and development of civil society organizations. In April 2010, following a two-year implementation period, the EITI Board denied the country an extension to meet compliance requirements; however, the country can reapply to regain candidate status once the government addresses obstacles to effective implementation of EITI principles.

In addition, to assist the government's efforts to improve its performance in key social sectors, the United States continues to provide technical assistance to the government to benefit a bilateral effort (funded by the government) to improve delivery of social services in sectors such as education, health, and women's affairs.

The United States continues to promote democracy and human rights through public diplomacy. For example, in March 2010, the United States sponsored a film festival in honor of the U.S. civil rights movement highlighting the universal struggle for human dignity. The United States will continue to utilize event-driven opportunities such as press interviews, Martin Luther King Day, and the United States' Independence Day to underline the importance of and foster greater understanding of human rights and democracy.

## **Eritrea:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Eritrea to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Eritrea's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Among the U.S. Government's primary foreign policy objectives in the country is the promotion of human rights and civil liberties. The United States aims to help citizens realize a country that allows for a pluralistic and democratic political process, religious freedom, the rule of law, an independent judiciary, and a robust civil society.

##### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

Despite the government's numerous restrictions on U.S. governance and human rights programs, the closure of two U.S. outreach centers, and limitations on in-country travel, the United States held events focused on human rights, including discussion groups, literature distribution, and public lectures. The United States participated in the annual Eritrean Bookfair and distributed 6,000 publications on democracy, good governance, rule of law, and human rights. The United States continued to sponsor a series of workshops in Asmara on strengthening Sudanese civil society in preparation for that country's elections in 2010.

The United States sponsored monthly lectures, weekly films, exhibitions, reading clubs, and community service events. For example, U.S. funds supported four public information service centers, one in the capital of Asmara and three in other cities, that provide free Internet and library resources. Such programming has enabled the dissemination of information on a wide range of issues inclusive of human rights, such as democratic processes, women's rights, and the rights of persons with disabilities. The United States hosted a digital video conference on the first year of the Obama Administration.

In an effort to promote dialogue on ethnic discrimination, a U.S.-sponsored monthly lecture series included a panel presentation on the experience of African Americans in the United States. Another lecture focused on civil disobedience and the story of Rosa Parks. The book club read and discussed the racial issues in Harper Lee's novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

To introduce the Eritrean medical community to what can be done to promote tolerance of persons living with HIV/AIDS, the United States sent a physician on an international visitor program on the subject to the United States. In recognition of World AIDS Day, the United States hosted a lecture by another physician on the social and medical dimension of HIV/AIDS and its impact on Eritrea, including issues of tolerance. The United States also hosted a discussion of the book *Ana's Story* by Jenna Bush, which chronicles the discrimination and abuse faced by a young woman with HIV in Latin America. The book prompted discussion of Eritrean society's lack of tolerance for

persons with HIV/AIDS. The participants acknowledged more needs to be done to fight discrimination and offered concrete solutions to how HIV persons could be supported.

To promote women's rights, the United States sponsored a children's essay contest on women who have inspired them and hosted a panel discussion on women's education and opportunities in the United States, featuring the experiences of three women in the Embassy community. In addition, U.S. programming focused on female genital mutilation (FGM) by holding a World FGM Day event in conjunction with the national women's union, where hundreds of anti-FGM materials were displayed and distributed. Also, the United States held a women's roundtable on the social and medical implications of FGM. The United States continued support to a hospital where women undergo surgery to correct fistula, a condition that leads to stigmatization in Eritrean communities. In order to raise awareness among government officials of the needs of persons with disabilities, U.S. programming sponsored computer classes and library science workshops to allow dialogue between the hearing-impaired community and relevant government officials.

The United States showed the film *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* that told the story of the personal courage of a group of Muslim and Christian Liberian women who staged protests to stop the civil war and its atrocities.

## **Ethiopia:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Ethiopia to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Ethiopia's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at <http://www.state.gov>.

## Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government is committed to helping Ethiopia progress in its transition to a multiparty democracy. U.S. priorities in the country are to support democratic political development; promote respect for human rights and the rule of law; strengthen key governmental and civil institutions, including the NGO community; and expand press freedom.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

A number of restrictive laws passed in 2008 and 2009 restrict U.S. ability to promote human rights and democratic governance through foreign assistance. The United States continues to advocate in support of both human rights and democratic governance. For example, in an effort to avoid election-related political conflict in the months before the 2010 national elections, the U.S. Government continued dialogue with the government to expand political space and allow the opposition to operate more freely. Similarly, the U.S. Government has played an active role in encouraging greater participation by opposition political parties in the federal parliament, negotiation of the electoral Code of Conduct, encouraging opposition political party participation in the Joint Council of Political Parties, and in advancing political reforms through dialogue. In the period prior to the 2010 national elections, the U.S. mission sponsored a series of Digital Video Conferences on election-related themes with U.S. experts that brought together senior ruling and opposition party members for discussion and dialogue. A speaker on multi-ethnic democracy in Africa addressed student and faculty groups at universities. The United States continues to support the Constructive Dialogue Forum of Political Parties, although the forum was scaled back during the year due to the closure of political space. The United States continues to provide capacity building support to the House of Peoples' Representatives, the House of Federation, and the nine regional state councils. The United States also continues to encourage the government to roll out programs to improve legal education, training for judges, improved service delivery and economic growth, and respect for human rights legislation and regulations by the police, military, and the courts.

The U.S. Government works with the government and opposition parties to encourage positive and productive engagement to advance the country's democratic transition. For example, in support of the rule of law, the United States continues to encourage a group of local elders to engage in talks with the government to obtain the pardon and release of opposition leaders imprisoned during the aftermath of the 2005 elections: 181 members of the All Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP) have been released, although the AEUP claims 120 remain in prison. At the end of 2008 the government revoked opposition politician Birtukan Midekssa's pardon on grounds that she violated the terms of her pardon; she remains in detention. The United States continues privately to urge the government to cease the harassment and detention of opposition party candidates and supporters countrywide. The Pardon Board chaired by the President of the Republic has now made it an annual practice on Ethiopian New Year to review the cases of and pardon thousands of prisoners.

The United States continues to engage the government diplomatically on human rights issues; provide training in respect for human rights for law enforcement, local administration officials, and the military; and strengthen civil society organizations in human rights advocacy and monitoring through programming. By presenting open source allegations of abuse by government and ruling party officials against civilians to the foreign ministry, the United States has sought to encourage the government to investigate credible reports of abuse and hold accountable those responsible. The United States seeks to strengthen civil society's capacity to engage local government institutions to improve the planning, implementation, transparency, and accountability of development projects and service delivery. For example, recognizing the role of competition over scarce resources in fueling conflict, the United States supported conflict resolution programs with local groups to identify gaps in service delivery and to engage local governments to respond equitably to mitigate potential intercommunal tensions. The U.S. Government coordinates closely with other donors to try to maximize impact on reform efforts. U.S. programs also provide financial support to small-scale projects initiated by local NGOs, community and faith groups, and civic associations that support short-term activities designed to bring about tangible improvements in citizens' lives.

The U.S. Government utilizes a wide range of diplomatic and programmatic activities to promote freedom of the media and speech. The U.S. Government sponsored stakeholder

discussions, roundtables, and other public diplomacy outreach activities to encourage better relations between government and private media and develop the capacity of the media in the country. U.S. officials continue to deliver guest lectures at Addis Ababa University to stress transparency in government-media relations and journalism ethics and techniques, and to foster partnerships between American professors and journalism schools. The United States also sponsored spokesperson training for officials from a wide range of political parties in advance of the elections. The training emphasized strategic messaging, openness, accuracy of information, and quick responses to media queries. The United States supported conflict resolution programs such as the Joro comic book, (which had 20,000 print runs in Amharic, and will have 20,000 print runs in Somali and 10,000 runs in Oromo languages); the “Unity through the Arts program” which produced a banner in front of the U.S. embassy with art from school children; the "Story tellers gift series" in Addis Ababa schools which was a play to promote ethnic and religious tolerance in youth; and a sports series to promote unity through teamwork in Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa.. All of these programs brought together communities in at-risk areas to address disputes before they erupted into broader conflict. The United States supported conflict mitigation and reconciliation activities in Gambella, Southern Nationalities and Peoples Region, Oromiya, Somali Regional States and at the national level with the Ministry of Federal Affairs. U.S. efforts focus on improving conflict management policies, practices, and government-civil society partnerships; institutionalizing inclusive conflict-sensitive humanitarian response and development planning; improving local service delivery, and reducing intercommunal tensions and violence. The U.S. Government supports programming to decrease the incidence of trafficking in persons and improve protection for victims. Efforts include assistance to Ethiopia's National Anti-trafficking Task Force in developing guidelines and protocols, as well as training for ministry of justice employees. The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom with the government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. Presentations throughout the country on interfaith communication, cooperation, and tolerance by a prominent American Imam emphasized these messages to Ethiopian youth.

**Gabon:**

## BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Gabon to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Gabon's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

U.S. priorities for the advancement of democracy and human rights in the country include the strengthening of democratic institutions, good governance, and transparency. Gabon experienced a constitutional transition of power in 2009, after the death of President Omar Bongo Ondimba, Africa's longest-serving head of state. The U.S. Government continues to work closely with government officials, political parties, and civil society to support accountable and transparent democratic institutions, laws, and political processes. The U.S. Government participates in efforts to coordinate democracy and governance initiatives with other international donors. The U.S. ambassador meets with both government and opposition leaders and with representatives from Gabonese society to stress the importance of political participation and ensures that other U.S. officials do the same.

The ambassador and U.S. Government representatives spoke publicly on behalf of women's rights, democratic reform, security force professionalization, and a free press. The mission is dedicated to combating trafficking in persons, restrictions on the press, corruption, and violence against women.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government's support for democratic institutions, good governance, and transparency occurs on many levels. The U.S. Government fielded unofficial monitors throughout the country during the August 2009 presidential election. Respect for human rights is an important component of U.S.-funded training for military and police officials. The United States also supports the development of a more vibrant civil society through support for community associations and other groups, including environmental

organizations, farmer collectives, and activists advocating minorities' and women's rights. The U.S. Government sponsored civil society initiatives to promote awareness and enfranchisement of isolated communities and marginalized populations.

The United States continues to implement a public diplomacy program in the country, including frequent appearances by the U.S. ambassador in the local media. In events ranging from a self-help project signing ceremony to the opening of an American Corner in a municipal library, the ambassador has consistently emphasized the importance of women's rights, democratic reform, and freedom of the press. The mission also reached out to Muslim communities and held a well-attended Iftar dinner during Ramadan to bring together a broad spectrum of Gabonese political and religious leaders.

The U.S. Government regularly held events with members of government and civil society, including journalists and trade union representatives, to discuss and underscore the importance of worker rights, press freedom, and political participation. The United States continues to promote press freedom and good journalistic ethics. The United States has been successful in identifying journalists, politicians, and civil society leaders with a wide range of backgrounds and political perspectives to participate in exchange programs to the United States.

To address the problem of trafficking in persons, the United States works directly with key government officials on strengthening its legal regime against trafficking. The United States pressed the government to carry out legislative and bureaucratic reforms and engaged the government, at all levels, in a continuing dialogue to encourage a stronger law enforcement response to the problem. The U.S. Government coordinated training for law enforcement, immigration, government ministries, and nongovernmental organizations on identifying and protecting victims of human trafficking.

## **Gambia:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in the Gambia to promote democracy and human rights. For background on The

Gambia's human rights conditions, please see the *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. objectives for furthering democracy and human rights in the country focus on improving respect for democratic freedoms and the rule of law. This includes an emphasis on free and fair elections, building democratic institutions, and improving respect for human rights by security forces. The United States also focuses on strengthening civil society, including the media and NGOs, in order to increase respect for civil liberties such as freedom of the press. Supporting efforts to eliminate trafficking in persons is also an important U.S. priority.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

To promote the democratic political process, U.S. officials maintain an active dialogue with government officials, all political parties, and civil society representatives. This includes stressing the importance of free and fair elections and the development of democratic institutions. When the campaign manager of an opposition party, accused of holding a rally in a public place without permission, was convicted and sentenced to one year imprisonment in March 2010, the Embassy issued a public statement expressing grave concern over the verdict and harsh punishment. The Embassy has held workshops with members of parliament and conducted a week-long speakers series on democracy and human rights. The U.S. Government actively encourages regular dialogue and meetings among the donor community to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure effective allocation of resources in election support. The U.S. Government works with the military to conduct workshops on democracy and human rights.

To encourage freedom of the press in a restrictive media environment, U.S. officials stress that free speech and a free press are essential parts of a democratic society. The U.S. Ambassador emphasized the importance of freedom of the press in several newspaper interviews, including one that became the lead story. During the 2009 trial of seven journalists and newspaper publishers accused of sedition, U.S. officials attended the court proceedings to raise the profile of the case and highlight concern of the issue of a free press. Less than two weeks following meetings between government contacts and Embassy officials, the president pardoned the journalists.

The United States uses grants and a visitors program to support independent media. The United States provided a grant to a press union that subsidizes the cost of newsprint to allow local media to print daily. Additionally, the United States provided another NGO grant to establish a central database and establish a regulatory body for human rights concerns in the country. Both grants are still being implemented in 2010. U.S. officials maintain close relationships with journalists, and all media representatives, regardless of political affiliation, have access to U.S. officials for interviews and are invited to cover U.S. events. New U.S.-supported radio programming in the country has included broadcasts related to democracy and human rights. The United States has co-sponsored two seminars for local journalists on coverage of human rights cases and will continue to do so in 2010.

The United States continues to stress the importance of the rule of law and adherence to due process. The United States raises questions related to allegations of torture, disappearances, and other human rights abuses with members of the government, military, civil society, and other partners. The Ambassador discussed several human rights and press freedom issues with the government, including the arrest and trial of a journalist and newspaper publisher and the disappearance of another journalist. The United States continues to stress to government officials the importance of an independent judiciary in a democratic society. When a U.S.-based Gambian journalist and political activist was arrested and tried for sedition, the U.S. Ambassador raised the case with senior government officials and attended a number of the trial sessions. To support greater professionalism in the security forces and prevent human rights abuses by the military, the U.S. Government funds training for officers and civilian officials. For example, a seminar on human rights and international humanitarian law for naval officers was conducted in April 2009 and another is planned for 2010.

The United States actively supports civil society groups through grants, a visitors program, and representational events. U.S. officials also attend events hosted by NGOs and civil society organizations. The United States encourages the government to ensure greater respect for women's rights and to maintain harmony between the various ethnic groups. The United States provides support and guidance to the government to improve its record in combating human trafficking and to promote labor rights. The United States

sponsored a seminar and hosted a visit by a Washington-based official on trafficking, and similar activities are planned for 2010. Additionally, the United States is funding the efforts of a local children's rights NGO to raise awareness of child trafficking through a media campaign. U.S. officials also have discussions with the government and local partners on child labor issues.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom with the government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. To demonstrate respect for religious pluralism, the U.S. Government hosts annual Iftar dinners that are attended by many Muslim leaders, members of the minority Christian clergy, and government officials. U.S. officials investigate any reports of religious tensions on the rare occasions such incidents arise. The Embassy has held several meetings and speaker discussions with Muslim leaders on democracy and human rights, using these forums to solicit their views on U.S. engagement with the Muslim world.

## **Guinea:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Guinea to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Guinea's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's primary objective in the country is to promote a strong representative democracy that is led by a vibrant and informed civil society capable of peacefully advocating for necessary political and economic reforms. Currently, the U.S. Government is focused on encouraging a restoration of civilian rule through free, fair, and transparent presidential and legislative elections. The U.S. Government also is committed firmly to improving respect for human rights and strengthening the press.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

While the U.S. Government has suspended much of its bilateral foreign assistance to the country in response to a 2008 coup d'état, certain U.S.-sponsored democracy programs continue as part of efforts to assist the country to prepare for free and fair elections scheduled for later this year. U.S. programs reinforced electoral institutions, supported improved political processes, increased awareness of civic responsibilities, encouraged NGOs to provide civic education and advocacy for citizen interests, and encouraged citizen participation in local governance. The U.S. Government helped strengthen the country's national electoral commission through a variety of training programs and technical assistance. The U.S. Government trained 2,808 election officials in the National Independent Election Commission and the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Political Affairs in order to better equip the groups in properly preparing for national elections. In addition, the U.S. Government trained 1,325 political party representatives on their role in the political transition, the value of including women in the political process, and on strategies to improve fundraising and expand communication. U.S. Government programs helped to improve voter registration systems by retraining 400 registration agents and conducting 38 field missions to increase voter turn-out. The voter registration campaign reached approximately two million persons, and over 4.3 million Guineans were registered to vote. The U. S. Government also facilitated several conferences for locally elected government representatives and civil society leaders to provide a mechanism for constructive dialogue on key issues.

Through speeches and frequent meetings with government officials, political parties, trade unions, businesspeople, the press, and other actors, U.S. officials advocate for stronger democratic institutions, reduced corruption, and improved electoral processes. Through outreach to youth, women, and other politically marginalized sectors, the U.S. Government encourages peaceful civic participation and a broader understanding of democratic principles. For example, in May, the U.S. mission will host a speaker on "Strengthening Democratic Institutions," focusing on the role of civil society, political parties and the media in advocating for and monitoring elections, as well as supporting the post-election transition to democracy.

U.S. public diplomacy programs also focused on strengthening the press, especially private radio, which has expanded greatly since the liberalization of the airwaves in 2006. In anticipation of the country's June elections, the U.S. Government supported a week-long training program for 20 journalists on how most effectively to cover an election. The United States provided transmitters to a private radio station and the government-owned Rural Radio to enhance their ability to provide election coverage and civic education. Other U.S. Government programs include numerous video conferences and speaker programs on elections, as well as democracy programs at U.S.-sponsored libraries in Conakry and Kankan. In addition a U.S.-funded NGO project seeks to provide media campaigns and increased civic awareness through community radio. Another U.S.-funded project offers journalism training to journalists in preparation for upcoming elections.

The U.S. Government strongly condemned gross human rights violations perpetrated by the junta government in 2009 and worked closely with the UN Commission of Inquiry in its investigation of a September 2009 massacre of prodemocracy protestors by government forces. A U.S. Government-hosted human rights working group, launched in 2008, has grown into a potent forum for political discussion and networking with over 100 representatives from local NGOs, the private sector, and the government. It meets once a month to discuss a wide range of human rights topics, including trafficking in persons, violence against women, respect for individual rights during elections, and rights for disabled persons. During 2009 the United States also funded several projects focused on reducing female genital mutilation (FGM). One such project in the Forest Region provided livelihood training to dozens of FGM practitioners so that they could afford to abandon the practice for another occupation. Another U.S. project supported outreach efforts to hundreds of communities in order to encourage entire villages to abandon FGM as well as the practice of early and forced marriages. The U.S. Government continues to support programs to combat the worst forms of child labor through education, as well as a program to enhance national capacity in child labor data collection, analysis and dissemination. The U.S. also supported an antitrafficking project, which focused on monitoring and assisting trafficking victims along the country's border with Mali. While this project closed in November 2009, reporting indicates that the project succeeded in

raising awareness on the issue and left in place a functioning network of local NGOs that continue to address the human trafficking problem.

## **Guinea-Bissau**

### BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

#### [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Guinea-Bissau to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Guinea-Bissau's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Report* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's priorities in the country are to support democratic and good governance in the three branches of government; encourage political dialogue, cooperation, and reconciliation; and address drug-related corruption. Strengthening civil society is also an important area of focus. In addition, supporting efforts to eliminate trafficking in persons is a priority.

##### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Embassy in Bissau closed at the start of the 1998 civil war. Therefore, U.S. diplomatic and programmatic efforts are managed primarily by the U.S. Embassy in Senegal. The United States works with the government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), political parties, civil society, international institutions, and the private sector to encourage national reconciliation and democracy building. Specific challenges in the National Assembly include internal conflicts, poor leadership, lack of organization, lack of resources, no experience with budgetary oversight, insufficient research material, and poor communication with constituents and civil society. A democracy-building program

provided training on research, organizational techniques, and foundations of democracy. In the coming years, the U.S. Government will continue to train select members of the armed forces and civil servants in the Ministry of Defense on civilian control of the military, respect for human rights, and professionalism. The U.S. Government has joined also with other donors to seek ways to support the government's comprehensive security sector reform plan, although the status of reform efforts will need to be championed more strongly by the country's donors and neighbors in the wake of the April 1 illegal arrests and detentions of the prime minister and the chief of defense by the military. The U.S. Government works with the government, NGOs, political parties, civil society, international institutions, and the private sector to encourage national reconciliation. Through diplomatic efforts and technical and material support, the U.S. Government encourages government efforts to address drug-related corruption. Embassy Dakar, in concert with European donors, has formed a working relationship with the most reliable host government partners in this fight and to formalize a set of programs that will deny drug traffickers easy access to the country's territory and facilities. The embassy is building antitrafficking technical capacity among the most credible Guinea-Bissau individuals and institutions. The U.S. Embassy in Dakar continues to work in concert with other U.S. embassies in West Africa, the UN Office for Drugs and Crime, and with Economic Community of West African States to develop a coordinated approach to thwart drug traffickers' attempts to shift operations among countries in response to counter-narcotics efforts.

The United States funded a program to restore books, periodicals, and Internet access to the country's premier research institute, which was heavily damaged during the country's civil war. The United States also supports efforts to raise awareness of human rights issues with journalists and promote free and open media coverage. Embassy Dakar significantly increased its public diplomacy activities in the country in 2009. The Embassy has opened an American Information Center with American library resource materials and Internet service at the country's research center. The Embassy provided journalism training and International Visitor Leadership Program opportunities to key future leaders. At a radio station that transmits Voice of America news shows, an embassy officer broadcasts to a wide audience a radio program that addresses democracy,

human rights and counternarcotics; the broadcasts feature the occasional inclusion of songs that also address these themes. The U.S. Government will continue such activities, and increase our outreach.

The U.S. Government is investing in the Bissau-Guinean people. The United States encourages the government to pass antitrafficking legislation and improve efforts at fighting child trafficking. U.S. officials have spoken on national and regional radio programs to raise awareness of the problem of child trafficking. The United States also supports a school feeding program and the creation of parent-teacher associations that increase parents' participation in the education system.

A number of antipersonnel mines still litter the countryside. The United States has trained local NGOs in the removal and destruction of landmines and unexploded ordnance. The U.S. Government has made important investments to train and build capacity for demining, and removing and destroying unexploded ordnance. Now, after years of building local capacity, the country is poised to become impact-free of Explosive Remnants of War within four years. The U.S. also provides small community development projects and limited assistance to support training to media professionals on human rights issues and restoring the library that houses the country's only research institute and national archives, which were heavily damaged during the 1998-1999 civil war.

## **Kenya:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Kenya to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Kenya's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part I: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

U.S. priorities are focused on promoting implementation of the reform agenda agreed to by the coalition government following the election crisis in 2008. The United States is working closely with civil society, the private sector, religious groups, and the media to press the coalition government to follow through on its commitment to conclude a successful constitutional review process; reform of the police, security services, and judiciary; and electoral and land reform. The United States is also working to strengthen parliament's legislative oversight of the executive branch; improve the watchdog capacity of civil society and the media; promote ethnic reconciliation; mitigate and manage ongoing and potential conflict; combat corruption; and support good governance. Additional areas of U.S. Government focus include promoting gender equity, encouraging emerging youth leadership and addressing the needs of disaffected youth, and strengthening respect for labor rights.

## Part II: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States continues to support ethnic reconciliation efforts and to press the coalition government to implement fully the reform agenda. U.S. officials are urging government leaders to support a peaceful referendum on Kenya's draft constitution. The United States is also asking the government to address human rights issues and to end the culture of impunity, particularly through investigation of allegations of human rights abuses by security forces, protection of human rights defenders and witnesses to the post-election violence, and prosecution of senior officials implicated in corruption. The United States funds speakers on democracy-related issues who reach leading members of civil society and university students.

The United States funds programs to promote reconciliation in areas affected by post-election violence. These programs work with community leaders – including those from different political, religious and ethnic groups – to promote unity, peace, and reform. A U.S. program assists districts affected by post-election violence to create peace committees and supports the development and implementation of a gender-sensitive national policy on conflict management and peace building. Work also continues with local media and journalists to ensure that news stories and programs are reported in a professional manner, particularly on controversial topics that could ignite conflict. The

United States supports a new youth initiative to increase inter-ethnic ties, mobilize youth to call for reforms, and reduce youth unemployment.

U.S. programs continue to assist parliament in becoming a more effective and independent counterweight to the executive branch. U.S. support was instrumental in the drafting and adoption of new parliamentary rules of procedure that increased transparency and allowed for greater public participation in parliamentary deliberations. The United States supports live media coverage of parliament in order to strengthen accountability. The United States funds programs assisting oversight committees that shadow government ministries and play a watchdog role. For example, U.S. support strengthens the ability of a network of civil society organizations to lobby parliament to impact policy.

The United States provides support for Kenya's constitutional reform process as well as support to Kenya's Independent Interim Electoral Commission. For example, support includes designing and implementing a new system to transmit election results electronically in real time to eliminate the possibility of vote tampering. The U.S. also worked to strengthen the oversight and advocacy role of NGOs, such as Transparency International - Kenya. To further support anti-corruption activities, the United States is working to assist government officials in the implementation of anticorruption pledges. U.S. programs are strengthening enforcement and oversight units of government institutions such as the Department of Public Prosecutions.

A U.S. expert trained police, prosecutors, and medical personnel in the investigation and prosecution of gender-based violence through a U.S.-funded initiative. The United States funds a gender-based violence and victim support unit in a hospital in Nairobi. The U.S. supports organizations that combat gender-based violence and female genital mutilation, in refugee camps and among pastoralist communities. The United States provided for the training and equipping of community police and security teams in the Dadaab refugee camp and worked to strengthen the capacity of the local police to respond more effectively to the abuse, exploitation, and violence against refugee children in Dadaab. The United States promotes internationally recognized core labor standards and efforts to eliminate exploitive child labor. This includes U.S. funding of an American labor rights organization that works to strengthen independence and good governance of trade unions, national and regional democracy and anticorruption efforts, industrial relations,

HIV/AIDS workplace programs, and implementation of labor standards in the country. A U.S.-supported multiyear project to reduce the incidence of the worst forms of child labor concluded in 2009. The United States works to combat trafficking in persons and coordinates the international donors' working group in the country. The United States continues to support work to strengthen a network of collaborative anti-trafficking efforts by the government and civil society. In addition, the United States participates with Kenya's Trafficking in Persons Task Force to draft a national trafficking action plan. The U.S. Government funds a program aimed at reducing child trafficking in the agricultural and fishing sectors.

**Lesotho:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Lesotho to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Lesotho's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's engagement with the government seeks to achieve the following goal: the development of a stable, democratic, and prosperous country that continues to improve its record as a voice for positive change in international fora, both regionally and globally. Specifically, the U.S. Government is focusing its efforts in these areas: advancing democracy and respect for the rule of law; combating trafficking in persons; reversing the devastating HIV/AIDS pandemic; mitigating the threats of international crime and terrorism; encouraging sustainable economic growth; and promoting awareness and support for these efforts through public diplomacy.

Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government takes full advantage of speaker and International Visitor Leadership programs to address issues of democracy and trafficking in persons. In 2010 the U.S. mission is bringing strategic speakers on elections and trafficking in persons to the country. The embassy also maintains an active dialogue with all political parties and civil society representatives, stressing the importance of free and fair elections, as well as the need for the country to implement a plan of action for combating trafficking, including the passage of a comprehensive antitrafficking law. In the past year the U.S. Government hosted the third in a series of three workshops on trafficking in persons, targeting prosecution, immigration, and law enforcement, and providing more detailed information about how to recognize traffickers. The U.S. Government has become an active part of the country's Multi-Sectoral Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The mission recently participated as part of a six-member group that drafted terms of reference for a national action plan on trafficking.

In the health and economic development arena, the U.S. Government works with partners such as the International Labor Organization (ILO) and International Finance Corporation (IFC). The U.S. Government focuses on HIV/AIDS, particularly in the area of prevention. At present, U.S.-funded partners are working to refurbish over 130 health clinics and hospitals around the country; increase the supply of water for domestic and commercial use; and strengthen the private sector through initiatives like creating a commercial court. U.S. Peace Corps volunteers advance freedom and democracy by teaching in secondary schools and building the capacity of host country nationals, service providers, and organizations through training and technical assistance in areas such as management, life skills, food security, and income generation. In addition, all Peace Corps volunteers in the country are expected to integrate HIV prevention and care activities into their assignment. The U.S. Government continues to support the ILO and IFC's collaborative work to strengthen the capacity of workers' and employers' organizations to engage in social dialogue and improve enterprise compliance with labor standards and economic performance.

In 2010 the U.S. mission created a Facebook page to deliver messages about democracy to an audience of more than 100 Basotho "fans." A recent posting about trafficking in persons garnered comments from the community. The embassy also recently posted updates from the local papers about the ongoing political mediation process in the

country. The U.S. Government seeks to improve public diplomacy capabilities, design improved strategic public diplomacy plans, and increase the effectiveness of existing programs in the country over the next year.

**Liberia:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Liberia to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Liberia's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Liberia has made significant progress in the transition to peace and stability following the end of its 14-year civil war in 2003, including holding its first free and fair national elections in over 20 years. However, the country remains a fragile democracy that relies on the United States, the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), and other international partners for assistance in maintaining stability and building the foundations for sustainable peace and development. The U.S. Government's priorities in the country are to promote peace and security, improve the quality of and access to justice, and strengthen democratic institutions.

To meet these objectives, the U.S. Government focuses on expanding its rule of law program outside of the capital city of Monrovia; continuing work with the government to address prison overcrowding; supporting programs to combat gender-based violence; and supporting local efforts to deter trafficking in persons. Consistent with the country's goal of fighting corruption and the entrenched culture of impunity, U.S. assistance includes efforts to combat corruption and develop a functioning judicial system. To foster a stronger independent press in advance of the 2011 national elections, U.S. efforts focus on strengthening the viability and capacity of the press to help create an atmosphere for free, fair, and credible elections, and a capacity building project for community radio stations and civil society.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government continues efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and the political process. In her August 2009 visit, the U.S. Secretary of State addressed the National Legislature about good governance and expressed similar sentiments in a joint press briefing held with President Sirleaf. Specific programs strengthened the electoral process through increased assistance to civil society and the National Elections Commission. To assist the legislature implement its Five Year Strategic Development Plan, the U.S. Government sponsored training sessions to increase knowledge of committee operations, ethics, and bill tracking, as well as sessions on how to improve standing rules and procedures and establish a legislative budget office. In addition, the U.S. Government is rehabilitating the legislature's library, archives, and research service to support better lawmaking. Candidates for legislative by-elections participated in training and a public debate organized by U.S.-funded NGOs, which also supported civic education outreach and voter education efforts. The U.S. Government also will send observers to an upcoming by-election in River Gee County.

The Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) helps the country more effectively control and manage its public finances. The GEMAP program, funded by the United States and other partners, placed internationally recruited financial controllers and management experts in key ministries, agencies, and state-owned enterprises to encourage transparency and accountability. The U.S. Government conducted an evaluation of the GEMAP program that focuses on the effectiveness of U.S. Government investments and provides recommendations on future U.S. government support to assist the country improve its economic governance. A follow-on program will focus on training and institution building across government. U.S. support for key government institutions also continued through the Senior Executive Service program that attracts qualified local citizens to fill critical government posts. U.S. officials publicly highlighted the need for transparency and accountability in all branches of government and worked privately with officials, NGOs, and international organizations to identify areas of concern and encourage systemic reforms.

U.S. efforts to strengthen the judicial sector and expand access to justice include training for judicial personnel, supporting legal aid clinics, providing law student scholarships, offering specialized legal skills training and internship programs, supporting university law programs, promoting alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and conducting public legal education. U.S. assistance supports several American justice sector advisors who work closely with the minister of justice, the chief justice, investigators, prosecutors, public defenders, and other court officials. U.S. programs provide training for NGOs to assist victims of gender-based violence in navigating the justice system and support a pro bono mediation specialist to develop training materials and conduct mediation training and law workshops. The U.S. Government provided a resident legal advisor to assist the government on anticorruption issues. In addition, the United States funded a university project that assisted the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission to store and index their archives electronically.

The United States promotes freedom of speech and press in the country. U.S. Government assistance will contribute to greater access to information through supporting the professionalism and broadcast reach of community radio stations in seven targeted counties. This five-year effort will begin during the year and include training of reporters, program managers and producers to operate more professionally; procuring more powerful transmitters and other essential equipment upgrades; promoting the concept of more interactive public interest programming; increasing access to news and information; and specialized subject matter training in government budgeting, transparency, and corruption. The program will also support media and civil society efforts to advocate for the passage of freedom of information legislation. U.S. officials promoted human rights and democracy messages through taped or live UN radio programming and interviews on anticorruption and human rights. Two reporters traveled to the U.S. for training. The U.S. Government partnered with a Liberian university and the Press Union of Liberia to organize a symposium on "Peace Journalism." The U.S. Government also organized a roundtable with an American expert on the business challenges facing media. In addition, the United States funded a program through an American university to strengthen media institution management and business planning.

### **Madagascar:**

## BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Madagascar to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Madagascar's human rights conditions, please see the *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The top U.S. priority in country is promoting a return to a democratic government. The United States will focus on promoting credible, consensual elections in the shortest practical time frame, and will continue strengthening civil society and media freedom in order to increase voter participation, foster democratic debate, and promote good governance. In addition, the United States will continue to place a priority on other human rights issues including prison conditions, child labor, and trafficking in persons.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. efforts to promote the return to a democratic government in the wake of the March 2009 coup include the suspension of all non-humanitarian assistance, and also a suspension of assistance that directly benefits the government, public statements and advocacy for an immediate return to democracy, and coordinated diplomatic efforts with other governments and multilateral entities. The United States continues efforts to promote good governance by lending support to civil society organizations working on food security and health in key areas of capacity building, advocacy, networking, dissemination of information and strategy development. The U.S. Government advances the goal of good governance at the grassroots level by promoting civil society involvement in planning and implementing development initiatives in communities, which is done in dialogue and consultation with local authorities.

U.S. efforts also promote media freedom and freedom of speech, particularly by broadening journalists' access to information and strengthening their professionalism. The United States continued to organize a regular discussion group for English-speaking journalists. Video conferences and Internet chats are used to provide journalists with information on a full range of democracy-related topics, including U.S. politics. The U.S.-run American Press Center in Antananarivo provides a platform for Malagasy journalists to improve their professionalism by providing access to media resources, the Internet, journals, periodicals, and other sources of information. In the last year, the Press Center has hosted U.S. speakers on topics including women's issues and civil rights and continues to host such events in 2010.

In order to promote public dialogue on human rights, the United States coordinates and chairs the monthly Madagascar Human Rights Working Group, which remains an important public forum for the diplomatic community and civil society to discuss a broad range of issues including trafficking in persons, child labor, religious freedom, women's rights, the rights of the disabled, the right to choose one's government, media freedom, and reproductive rights. The United States continues to pursue a number of actions specifically to address the deplorable prison conditions in the country. The U.S. ambassador made strategic interventions regarding prisoners' rights with the president's governance team and Ministry of Justice prior to the 2009 coup, after which time U.S. officials have refrained from public meetings with the de facto regime to avoid bestowing recognition upon the illegitimate government. The U.S. ambassador has, however, frequently called on all political actors involved in the crisis to refrain from violence and intimidation. Local leaders participate in U.S.-funded programs to visit the United States to study issues such as grassroots and multi-party democracy, good governance, and the challenges for emerging Muslim leaders.

The United States continues efforts to improve respect for women and children's rights through raising awareness, advocacy, and protection activities.

**Malawi:**

## BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Malawi to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Malawi's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Freedom of Religion Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government strongly advocates for human rights and democracy at multiple levels of Malawian society and actively engages with senior officials on key issues such as media independence and sexual orientation/gender identity rights.

A primary objective in 2010 will be supporting Malawi's democracy in the wake of the presidential and parliamentary elections Malawi held last year. The ruling party's electoral victory ended an impasse in parliament, but the party's overwhelming majority poses challenges to the nation's developing democratic institutions. Further strengthening Malawi's independent media, civil society organizations, and judiciary will be essential to establishing a stronger foundation for democracy. U.S. Government strategies focus on building capacity in these areas.

In 2010 the U.S. Government is focusing democracy and governance funding on:

1) improving Malawi's legislative framework by strengthening the process by which new laws are drafted, debated, and passed; 2) developing the capacity and independence of the judiciary; and 3) supporting civil society participation in elections and other democratic processes. Improving respect for human rights among the security forces remains a priority. In addition, the U.S. Government continues to support a professional, independent media and encourage efforts to combat exploitative child labor and human trafficking problems.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government engages in advocacy with the president of the country, members of the National Assembly (both government and opposition), senior officials, and civil society in support of principles and institutions of democracy. The U.S. Government is

committed to supporting free, fair, and credible local government elections in 2010 and is participating in a multilateral election task force to coordinate its efforts with other diplomatic missions in Malawi. The United States plans to provide financial support targeting voter and civic education activities during the lead-up to election day as well as activities to encourage intra-party democracy and transparency. We will also begin a Legislative Strengthening Program designed to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency of parliament, as well as to enhance civil society and media capacity to provide oversight.

The mission supports anticorruption efforts through continued engagement with the Reserve Bank of Malawi, the country's police service, and the business community. The embassy also promotes political rights, judicial independence, independent media, and anticorruption efforts through the International Visitor Leadership Program, which exposes local decision-makers to U.S. culture, as well as and political and legal systems. The U.S. Government supports better civil-military relations through military training programs that encourage professionalism and respect for human rights. Officers of Malawi's Police Service are receiving training to promote a heightened awareness of citizens' rights and greater professionalism. The United States is promoting access to legal services for the poor by purchasing equipment and books for the Legal Aid Department of the Ministry of Justice.

The United States is promoting independent media by sponsoring a public debate in commemoration of World Press Freedom Day. The embassy is performing outreach to the Muslim community by supporting a project with local broadcaster Radio Islam to produce and broadcast weekly educational programs that promote religious and political tolerance. The ambassador will host a United States-sponsored Interfaith Dialogue Conference with representatives from Malawi's religious communities.

Through participation with government and NGOs in the Malawi Child Trafficking Network and Child Protection Working Group, the U.S. Government encourages the combating of human rights violations and trafficking in persons. The Embassy is hosting a speaker program on eliminating gender-based violence as well as regular Web chats on human rights programs to address exploitative labor, particularly child labor.

### **Mauritania:**

## BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Mauritania to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Mauritania's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part I: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Mauritania's July 2009 elections have allowed for more robust engagement on key U.S. objectives including sustaining the country's fragile democracy, building capacity to deter terrorist and extremist threats, supporting democratic development based on rule of law and respect for human rights, and encouraging political dialogue between the government and opposition groups.

#### Part II: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. Government foreign assistance to Mauritania was suspended after the August 2008 military coup. Sanctions were lifted officially in September 2009 following the June 2009 Dakar Accord and Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz's election in July 2009. The United States works in close collaboration with the government in the design and implementation of counter-extremism programs. Counter-extremism initiatives include the Peace Through Development as well as youth outreach through sports tournaments in partnership with local mayors and imams to stress the importance of tolerance. Public diplomacy events showcase President Obama's Cairo initiative and the Muslim experience in the U.S. through round tables and visits by Muslim-American speakers. The State Department's Special Representative to Muslim Communities visited the country in April 2010 to engage in dialogue with the government and civil society and to explore ideas and potential partnerships to reach out to youth. Four Mauritians participated in the President's Entrepreneurial Summit in Washington D.C. in April 2010. The U.S.

Government engaged in youth programming through English training for students, cultural events, American Corners, and an Information Resource Center offering computer access and mentoring sessions for students. Finally, the U.S. contributed to the preservation of ancient Islamic manuscripts and key heritage sites through the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation.

The United States supported democratization by playing an active role in encouraging Mauritania's return to constitutional order through the June 2009 Dakar Accord. The U.S. funded voter education programs during the period leading to the July 2009 election. It also funded a joint government-UNHCR effort to repatriate Afro-Mauritanians expelled to Senegal during the 1989 ethnic unrest. It has invested in civic education programs targeting youth and will fund a civic education program for vulnerable populations in conjunction with mayors and political parties. The U.S. will launch an initiative to fight slavery through programs targeting women and children. U.S. programs also contribute to the establishment of a viable press through trainings for journalists and cyber journalists.

In the development field, the United States remains one of the largest bilateral donors of food and humanitarian assistance. A significant PL-480 program supports maternal and child health programs in southern Mauritania, while other programs are focused on HIV/AIDS and family planning. The Africa Development Foundation works with small to medium organizations to stimulate economic growth.

## **Mozambique:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities in Mozambique to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Mozambique's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's top priority in Mozambique is strengthening democratic governance. Weak governance threatens its stability, regional influence and future. Mozambique must put in place checks and balances to prevent the abuse of power and to strengthen pluralism in order to ensure a dynamic debate about policies and development options. The United States dedicates significant resources to strengthening democracy and governance and supports improvements in national institutions. More specifically, U.S. programming continues to focus on supporting electoral reforms, reducing corruption, professionalizing the police and border security forces, nurturing emerging leaders, improving the status of women, and strengthening the media and civil society.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

To strengthen democracy and good governance, the United States Government continues to emphasize anticorruption programs including activities with government, civil society and media. Programs enabling GRM officials, civil society leaders and journalists to meet their counterparts in the United States have proven especially successful in developing long-term partnerships to encourage sustained democracy in Mozambique. In February 2010, the United States sent law enforcement advisors to consult with the Office of the Attorney General, the Central Bank, Customs officials and others involved in the criminal justice process. This allowed the United States to take a fresh look at Mozambique's needs for training and assistance programs in the areas of criminal justice, border security, and quicker promulgation of regulations for new legislation. The U.S. official sent to provide information to the Central Office to Combat Corruption (GCCC) in the Office of the Attorney General expects to continue training programs in the GCCC. The group's visit evaluated the progress of the criminal justice assistance program and provided recommendations regarding the development of greater capabilities to investigate complex crimes; amending the law to include all corruption-related crimes (only an estimated 20 percent may currently be prosecuted under the law); encouraging the inclusion of more modern investigation techniques; and working to ensure that the GCCC is not only allowed to investigate, but also to charge and prosecute corruption crimes. Separately, the United States worked to improve the performance of the GCCC by providing funding to train prosecutors. In addition, U.S. assistance allowed a member of parliament, an official from the Interior Ministry, and a provincial governor to travel to

the United States and participate in programs related to good governance, accountability, and democracy.

U.S. officials continue to meet with local NGOs that monitor media freedom, prison conditions, allegations of torture, allegations of summary executions, and other human rights abuses. A particularly successful partnership with one NGO combating violence against women, unlawful killings, torture, and harsh prison conditions resulted in an increased observance of human rights by GRM officials, including law enforcement and prison authorities, and in a significant increase in public awareness of the state of human rights in Mozambique. The United States provides support to radio and print organizations to enhance media independence by sending U.S. experts to Mozambique and funding travel for qualified Mozambicans to train in the United States. Past U.S. visitors include an experienced media practitioner and consultant to train local investigative journalists in the cities of Maputo, Beira, and Nampula. During the current fiscal year the United States expects Mozambicans will benefit from U.S. training designed to strengthen civil society by acquiring expertise in media technology and to sharpen broadcast and investigative journalistic skills.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom with the government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. The United States also conducts activities to promote religious freedom and tolerance, particularly with respect to the Muslim community, including direct video conferences with leading international Muslim leaders and programs designed to highlight President Obama's Cairo Initiative.

The United States supports the strengthening of democratic processes and rule of law. In the period prior to Mozambique's October 2009 presidential, provincial and legislative elections, U.S. funding enabled a local network to broadcast a series of unprecedented debates in multiple cities across the country. The United States provided the largest contingent of foreign electoral observers to monitor the October 2009 triple elections. U.S. officials meet regularly with opposition and civil society groups to review human rights and democratic processes. The United States supports professionalization of police and border security personnel through training courses.

The United States works to oppose trafficking in persons, child labor, and the abuse of orphans and vulnerable children by deploying targeted financial and health care assistance. The United States continues to work with a children's rights NGO to promote a nationwide child safety hotline for abused children and to combat trafficking in persons. The United States also supports the country's only shelter for victims of trafficking. Through U.S. funding, a private media group was able to produce a highly popular soap opera dealing with health issues, including the stigma of HIV/AIDS. The United States has, for more than 25 years, supported a broad range of health programs designed to help improve the rights of women, as well as orphans and vulnerable children.

## **Niger:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Niger to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Niger's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's immediate priority for promoting democratic principles and human rights in the country emphasizes restoring democracy, supporting transparency and rule of law, and bolstering human rights. Promoting efforts to strengthen media capacity, including community radio, is also a priority. Conflict mitigation and anticorruption efforts are also areas of U.S. focus. In addition to advancing democracy and good governance, the United States continues to focus on issues such as trafficking in persons, discrimination against women, religious tolerance, servitude and slavery, forced labor, and child labor.

The U.S. Government ceased nonhumanitarian assistance to the country and suspended its Millennium Challenge Account Threshold Program in response to numerous undemocratic actions taken by then president Tandja in 2009. On February 18, 2010, a group of military officers, the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy (CSRD), forcibly seized power in a relatively bloodless coup, detaining the cabinet, prime minister, and president. Pledging to restore democracy, root out corruption and abuse of privilege in the socio-political environment, and forge national reconciliation, the CSRD named a transitional government, which established the National Consultative Council to make policy recommendations to the CSRD, including on the duration of the transition; a Transitional Constitutional Council, tasked with determining the upcoming schedule of elections; and the Committee for Fundamental Texts, charged with reviewing and redrafting the constitution, charter of political parties, charter of the opposition, policy on public access to information, and electoral code.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government stresses the importance of free and fair elections that are inclusive and broadly participative in order to anchor the country's efforts to reestablish democracy. The United States supports a freer media environment in the country and strengthened media reporting through its diplomatic and assistance efforts. U.S. officials continued to discuss with government officials, the media, and NGOs regarding travel and media restrictions in relation to the conflict in the north and other reported government restrictions on their ability to operate. The government lifted the state of alert for the north in November 2009; press freedoms expanded dramatically following the February 18, 2010, coup by the CSRD.

The U.S. ambassador and other U.S. officials have participated in a wide range of public diplomacy activities, including speaking about media capacity and press freedom, as well as fostering journalistic professionalism. With the Nigerien Network of Journalists for Human Rights, the U.S. embassy in November 2009 cosponsored a series of workshops in regional capitals to promote the free and professional investigation and reporting of human rights abuses. The U.S. Government supports community radio stations and other

activities designed to reach targeted audiences, such as youth and ethnic minorities.

To address corruption, the U.S. Government funded activities prior to the end of 2009 to strengthen the legal framework, improve public procurement systems, enhance efficiency of revenue collections, and support civil society and media anticorruption efforts. The U.S. Government works to reduce corruption by improving governance. For example, one program--suspended in late December 2009 due to then president Tandja's undemocratic actions--worked with tax authorities to identify and reduce fraud and noncompliance in revenue collection. Another included training local officials to improve the business climate. Additionally, a U.S.-sponsored youth-oriented activity brought live musical performances to each of the nation's regional capitals to promote peace, tolerance, and anticorruption.

Efforts to eliminate exploitative labor practices, including human trafficking, as well as to address religious freedom, continue to be areas of focus for the United States. The U.S. Government supported training law enforcement officers on combating human trafficking, workshops on ending the practice of slavery, the provision of shelter and reintegration services to trafficking victims, and efforts to eliminate exploitative child labor. The United States continues to lobby for the passage of an antitrafficking law and the promulgation of a list of the worst forms of child labor by the government. U.S.-sponsored program supports civil society efforts to strengthen implementation and oversight of existing child protection and labor laws. U.S. public diplomacy programs continue to address issues including religious tolerance among Muslim and non-Muslims and the role of women in Islam.

## **Nigeria:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Nigeria to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Nigeria's

human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government prioritizes just and democratic governance as key to strengthening Nigeria's institutions and moving its democratic process forward. Although progress has been made with the recommendations of the Electoral Reform Committee report to the National Assembly, the country still faces significant political challenges and uncertainty in the period prior to the presidential and National Assembly elections within the next year. The U.S. Government will continue to work with the Nigerian government toward achieving just and democratic governance through strong and transparent institutions based on credible, free, and fair elections, which will lead to a government that is more accountable to its people. In addition, the U.S. Government is engaged in efforts to help build the capacity of the National Assembly, train political parties on internal democracy, particularly advocating for the inclusion of women and other marginalized groups.

A complementary U.S. Government objective seeks to strengthen the rule of law to address endemic corruption, violent and financial crime on a massive scale, and bring perpetrators to justice. Corruption undermines the country's ability to develop economically, impacts U.S. citizens and companies directly, and provides an environment conducive to international criminal activity. The country's prominent role in transnational crimes ranging from drug and human trafficking to piracy, money laundering, and financial fraud highlights the negative impact of weak legal and law enforcement institutions on the country's progress. Its institutions lack the human capacity and financial resources necessary to fight these crimes effectively.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

To promote the objective of just and democratic governance, the U.S. Government will advocate for electoral reform in advance of the 2011 national elections. Election assistance will help develop a transparent and accurate national voter registration list and train civil society organizations in election monitoring. Technical assistance will promote growth of grassroots democracy through public outreach, speakers, exchange programs, and scholarships, and encourage federal and state levels to implement fiscal responsibility and public procurement legislation through the Pilot Engagement with States (PES)

program. Internal efforts, such as the PES program and the Jos Task Force, target the Niger Delta and Jos regions.

On efforts to strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights, U.S. programs train the Nigeria Police Force on community policing techniques, leadership, management, accountability, human rights, and ethics. The U.S. Government trains civil society groups in conflict mitigation, nonviolent advocacy, and religious and ethnic tolerance. To strengthen civil society and promote human rights, the U.S. Government regularly distributes information on topics such as workers' rights, religious freedom, prison conditions, and women's, children's, and minorities' rights to a variety of groups and individuals through U.S. information resource centers in Abuja and Lagos and American Corners across the country. The U.S. Government works with local and international partners to strengthen respect for labor rights, including funding skills training programs for labor unions and workers' associations, as well as speaking out in policy fora against trafficking in persons, child labor, and other exploitative labor practices. Antitrafficking efforts include disseminating materials through public media, holding press briefings, funding skills training programs, and building law enforcement capacity to detect, investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate trafficking-in-persons cases. To protect the rights of persons with disabilities, the U.S. Government supports passage in the National Assembly of the Prohibition of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities Bill, the Disability Rights Commission Bill, and the Nigerians with Disability Bill, which includes the establishment of a trust fund for persons with physical disabilities.

To protect freedom of speech and the press, the U.S. Government supports building the capacity of journalists to report effectively and objectively on governance issues. U.S. information resource center specialists provide training for journalists on using the Internet and assist them in conducting research on issues of bilateral concern, and American Corners serve as venues to train and inform journalists. U.S. Government officials regularly conduct lectures and roundtable discussions on the rule of law, religious freedom, and democratic governance at major universities, think tanks, and American Corners in cities outside the capital. Exchange program alumni who have visited the United States participate in programs on human rights, democracy, religious tolerance, the rule of law, and investigative journalism. U.S. Government programs and other efforts promote domestic and international conflict mitigation and peacekeeping,

including human rights training to police and military forces. The U.S. Government also engages with state governments in the volatile Niger Delta region on programs to promote early warning of conflict, conflict prevention, vocational skills training for vulnerable youth, civic education, and good governance. U.S. officials work with state officials and Muslim and Christian leaders to promote peace and tolerance. The conflict mitigation programs strengthen the capacity of community and opinion leaders, youth groups, and faith-based organizations to increase public awareness of the benefits of peaceful coexistence. These programs promote the use of best practices to mitigate and manage conflicts, including resolving disputes before they erupt into full-blown violence.

## **Rwanda:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Rwanda to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Rwanda's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part I: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Improving governance, strengthening democratic institutions, ensuring full respect for the rule of law and human rights, promoting reconciliation and conflict resolution, and increasing long-term domestic and regional stability around the Great Lakes are U.S. priorities. These priorities include building a free, credible, and transparent electoral process; advocating the expression of peaceful criticism and dissent; and enhancing freedom of the press. The United States works also to promote increased social cohesion so that all citizens feel they have a vested interest in the development and governance of their country.

The United States supports Rwanda's efforts to protect the human rights of its citizens, to professionalize its military and security forces, and to decentralize government functions

so that local government institutions are more responsive to citizens. The United States advocates enhancing the role of civil society and broadening political participation. Additionally, the United States is working to improve both the formal and informal judicial process, as well as access to justice through provision of legal aid services to the poor. The United States seeks to achieve these objectives in partnership with the Rwandan government. These efforts complement other donor programs and are linked to related areas of bilateral cooperation including health, education, and economic growth.

## Part II: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States is an advocate in support of human rights and democracy and raised concerns about human rights issues with high-level government officials, NGOs, and international agencies using various diplomatic tools including close monitoring and reporting of human rights abuses and programs to strengthen institutions, NGOs, and civil society. In 2009, the United States began a three-year program to address civil liberties, voice and accountability, and political rights. The program focuses on strengthening local and national civil society organizations; building the capacity of local officials to enable civic participation; increasing the professionalism of the media; strengthening the judicial sector through professional development and enhancing judicial independence; facilitating legislative reforms; and supporting the police to effectively conduct internal investigations and be more accountable to citizens. In 2008, the United States supported a one-year political party strengthening program to improve the capacity of political parties to establish and articulate platforms, resolve internal conflicts, and develop and respond to party constituencies; the United States extended the program for an additional year in 2009. Between June and December 2009 the United States provided training and development to five journalists and local officials through the International Visitor Leadership program (IVLP) on topics such as television broadcast journalism, the U.S. judiciary system, conflict resolution, the U.S. political process, and transparency and good governance. In 2010, the United States supported seven Rwandans through the IVLP, including a program on women and justice. In 2010, the United States plans to observe the country's national elections to help increase transparency. Recognizing the difficulties faced by human rights defenders, the United

States continues to explore ways to provide rapid assistance to defenders, if and when their rights are threatened.

The United States also sponsored public outreach programs including lectures and workshops for political parties, journalists, civil society, and university students that focused on democratic institutions and effective political communication. The United States supported a library and an "American Corner" in a national university that provided students with access to current and reliable information on democracy and human rights, conflict management, economic growth and development, and health and HIV/AIDS. These materials were available via the Internet, print, and electronic media. U.S.-funded programs, which ended in December 2009, supported decentralization efforts by working with local governments to build capacity and to support anti-corruption, accountability, budgeting, and financial management efforts. The United States supported judicial sector reform and provided technical assistance to improve draft legislation, particularly draft laws on religious communities, local and international NGOs, and the media. A U.S.-funded project targeted children involved in or at risk of becoming involved in exploitative child labor, providing them with vocational training, legal support, income-generating activities, and increased access to education.

To promote stability and reconciliation, the United States provided funding to peace and security projects emphasizing conflict resolution, including an effort to determine public opinion on the progress of reconciliation after the 1994 genocide, a program to train community mediators to more effectively mediate land disputes, and a live, call-in radio program on stereotypes, authority, communication, and youth contributions to community peace and reconciliation efforts. U.S. security assistance programs continued, including military education and training programs in the United States and elsewhere focused on human rights, rules of engagement, and rule of law. Those who received training included troops who served as peacekeepers in Sudan's Darfur region.

In 2010 the United States plans to increase efforts to foster transparency in the mineral trade involving the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighboring countries, including Rwanda.

**Senegal:**

## BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Senegal to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Senegal's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The United States remains committed to promoting democratic principles, practices, values, and human rights in Senegal. Strengthening democratic institutions and good governance and promoting national reconciliation are essential to Senegal's political and economic development. The United States will play a crucial role in preparing for and monitoring the 2012 presidential elections. Encouraging the government to fight a sustained campaign against corruption and uphold the rights of children are also U.S. priorities.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

By mid-2010 a new U.S. Government program with the goal of enhancing democracy, good governance, and national reconciliation will be operational. The program will support four distinct and interrelated priority areas: (1) greater transparency and accountability; (2) support to strengthen fiscal decentralization; (3) support to free and credible 2010 elections; and (4) support to conclude the Casamance peace process. Greater transparency and accountability are essential for improving governance in Senegal. U.S. Government programs include strengthening local governments to operate in a more transparent manner, including an improved system of checks and balances. The program will strengthen the functions of state organizations like the PNBG (National Good Governance Program) and the CNLCC (Commission Against Non-Transparency, Corruption and Embezzlement) to diagnose and propose improvements so that they can audit, publish findings, and initiate sanctions when there are violations. A third feature is to identify and empower officials who are interested in improving systems that encourage

transparency and accountability. The fourth element is to build interest and momentum within civil society to advocate for and demand improved transparency and accountability. The U.S. Government will work with the Government of Senegal and other Senegalese partners to implement this program. The United States will point to Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact projects as examples of how government funds can be spent transparently.

Strengthened decentralization is needed to operationalize good governance approaches across the country. Because a U.S. assistance program is already working on decentralization in other sectors (health, education, natural resources management and water), the program will focus on ensuring that resources intended for decentralization make it to local governments and contribute to building their capacity.

The U.S. Government will support the Government of Senegal to strengthen the autonomous electoral body (la CENA) to perform its functions in a credible, independent, and transparent manner, by training its field office personnel, supporting a review and audit of the voter registry, and reviewing its electoral data base and working with la CENA officials to bring it up to date. Another activity will include strengthening civil society's capacity to advocate for a fair, transparent, and credible electoral process. A third intervention will be strengthening political parties. This will include training them to utilize democratic internal procedures, including implementing more independent and transparent candidate selection processes, improving financial transparency and disclosure, developing participatory policy platforms, increasing women's participation in the political process, developing long term strategic plans, and implementing voter-oriented effective campaigns. The U.S. Government will work with U.S. assistance programs that have experience in elections and political process support, and will partner with Senegalese government bodies and civil society groups to implement this activity. The Casamance Peace Process has been concluded. The ultimate goal of this part of the program was to support and work towards achieving a Casamance peace accord so that the peace process may reach a successful conclusion. The peace process program will build a coalition for peace and will include a sub-grant mechanism to support groups working with community and civil society organizations to engage in dialogue and advocacy directed toward achieving a peaceful solution to the conflict. The process will include training workshops, facilitated dialogues, technical assistance, and efforts to re-

build relationships between the belligerent parties. USAID will work with ANRAC (the National Organization for the Reconstruction of the Casamance), civil society organizations, groups within the MDFC (Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance) rebel organization, and other community groups to achieve the ultimate goal of a concluded peace agreement.

With U.S. Government encouragement and participation, the cabinet drafted a new press code, which strengthens protection for journalists and attempts to professionalize the media. The draft law is currently under review by the National Assembly.

## **Seychelles:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Seychelles to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Seychelles' human rights conditions, please see the *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government places priority on advancing the development and strengthening of existing democratic institutions and processes. The United States also seeks to capitalize on recent cooperation between the government and the opposition by supporting efforts to strengthen civil society through such actions as increasing freedom of speech and press and building the capacity of local human rights organizations.

##### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government seeks to maintain and expand its positive working relationship with the government of Seychelles, the political opposition, and civil society in an effort to facilitate further dialogue among key actors. The United States continues regular discussions with government officials and advocates for the further legitimization of the

multiparty political system by meeting with both opposition parties to discuss economic and human rights issues. The United States also conducts public outreach and awareness campaigns that address human rights and freedom of speech and press. In October 2009 the U.S. Government carried out a series of workshops and meetings on press freedom and journalism ethics for reporters and chief editors. The United States discusses with the government the importance of media and press freedoms. In an effort to address concerns about freedom of press, the local government retained two independent media consultants to research and analyze media. The consultants issued a report that recommended the creation of a media commission and a media association. The latter was set up in August 2009.

The U.S. Government's dialogue with opposition party reporters has resulted in a greater awareness of and reporting on human rights, particularly concerning reports of alleged abuses of prison detainees. In addition to these efforts, in March 2010 the U.S. Government held a two-day workshop on human rights for junior military and police officers.

In order to ensure that civil society provides input on policy formulation and implementation, the United States encourages the government to expand its policy consultation process. The U.S. Government has maintained diplomatic efforts to encourage the parliament to work in closer collaboration with NGOs and to establish an effective working relationship with civil society groups. The United States underlined the need for an independent human rights commission to investigate abuse cases involving detainees and civilians during regular meetings with GOS officials, and in March 2009 a human rights commission was established to investigate human rights violations committed by security force members. The commission carried out a high-profile investigation into the reported March 2009 human rights abuse cases in the Montagne Posée prison. This investigation was followed closely by the Seychelles' media, both opposition and government-controlled, and resulted in changes at the prison to address the problems cited in the commission's report.

**Sierra Leone:**

## BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Sierra Leone to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Sierra Leone's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. strategy to promote democracy and freedom in the country emphasizes building a strong foundation of democratic principles, fostering government transparency, and upholding human rights. In pursuit of those goals, the U.S. Government is implementing programs that promote good governance and the development of a stable political process by supporting local and international organizations that work to expand and strengthen civil society. The United States seeks to achieve results through targeted diplomacy and assistance in several key areas including the development and implementation of fair, transparent, and sustainable democratic processes; the empowerment of women in political, economic, and social life; support for the final activities of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL); devolution of power from the central government to regional governments; media training to encourage accurate reporting; and support for anticorruption initiatives. In addition, increasing informed civic participation of all citizens is a primary goal for the U.S. Government.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States promotes and supports continuing government efforts to decentralize and become more accountable. One area of focus is the reconstitution of local government institutions, which were abolished in the 1970s but reinstated in 2004. Over the next five years, approximately 70 local ward development committees should be better equipped to engage their local District Council in an informed dialogue, thereby creating the conditions for citizens' participation in local governance and fostering the enabling environment for sustainable economic growth. U.S. funding will continue to

integrate governance interventions into livelihood, food security, and natural resource management activities. U.S. programs will strengthen local government to enact policies that support activities to increase income for farmers and other inhabitants of rural areas. Local councils will be encouraged to adopt and implement the forestry policy and the conservation and wildlife policy, being developed at the national level, to promote co-forest management and provide alternative livelihoods. The U.S. Government also promotes policies that will link farmers to regional and international markets.

The U.S. embassy uses multiple outlets to address human rights-related issues and the need for good governance, including speeches to the parliament and public, radio interviews, and development assistance programs. Such fora provide opportunities to discuss the need for engagement on women's issues, the rule of law, anticorruption, and labor exploitation. Public diplomacy efforts support nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society through programs that include films, lectures, and discussion on an array of topical subjects, including civil rights, women's rights, and politics in democracy. Through the U.S. International Visitor Leadership Program, the United States provides opportunities for participants to study topics such as trafficking in persons, accountability in governance, and responsible political reporting. The program provides opportunities for free discussion and exchange of ideas by students, journalists, civil society organizations, academics, and civil servants.

The United States is the largest contributor to the SCSL, which is charged with bringing to justice those persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights in the country since 1996. U.S. officials communicate regularly with senior SCSL officials to determine how the United States can most effectively support SCSL efforts as the court completes the last phase of its operations--the trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor.

The United States provides assistance to government ministries and senior officials to promote the effective management and monitoring of industries, including the extractive industries and fisheries. The United States supports efforts to reduce opportunities for criminal activity, including smuggling and trafficking of people and illicit goods. U.S. programs promote efforts to expand educational opportunities for nearly 10,000 children either employed in, or at risk of being employed in, the worst forms of child labor. The U.S. Government also supports the expansion of educational opportunities for young

women and programs that address gender-based violence. Through the U.S. ambassador's Girls' Scholarship Program, the United States provides educational scholarships that enable thousands of girls and young women to attend primary and secondary school. Furthermore, the U.S. government assists a local radio station in its efforts to raise awareness on issues including domestic violence, gender-based violence, child abuse, and education for children.

## **Somalia:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission to Kenya to promote democracy and human rights in Somalia. For background on Somalia's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at <http://www.state.gov>.

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The overall U.S. human rights and democracy strategy in the country centered on promoting inclusive political dialogue, and building the capacity of local authorities, particularly the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFI), to respond to local needs. To that end the United States targeted building the capacity of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to increase security, govern more effectively, deliver services, and take the lead on tasks to ensure a stable political transition. Promoting and strengthening good governance and political competition and consensus-building remains a key objective for the United States to help the country become a more inclusive democratic state. Continued engagement with Somaliland, Puntland, and other regional authorities remains important to consolidate their democratic achievements. U.S. priorities in Somaliland are to support stability, democracy, and a transparent presidential and local electoral process in 2010. The United States also considers a free, professional, and robust media and civil society essential to Somalia's democratic progress. To support

greater representation, the United States' strategy to promote democratic ideals targets the better incorporation of women and minorities into the process.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States provided equipment, training, and capacity building assistance to a wide range of TFI that included the Office of the President, Prime Minister, Central Bank, Office of the Auditor General and Accountant General, independent commissions, and 18 ministries. The United States provided training and equipment to the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) to enable it to focus on the critical tasks of accomplishing the transitional legislative agenda and contributing to reconciliation and the peace process. The United States strengthened the capacity of the TFP by providing training to members of parliament (MPs) on conflict mitigation, public hearings, freedom of speech, freedom of expression and the Media Law, and committee planning and procedure. As a result of U.S. support and technical assistance, the TFP undertook specific activities to build a legislative agenda and trained groups in inclusive consensus building techniques. This included working with a women's caucus in the TFP; improving MP-constituent relations; developing issue-based coalitions comprising MPs, civil society organizations, and the private sector; creating working groups connecting TFP committees with government ministries; and forging coalitions to support the development of the constitution.

U.S. support to the Ministry of Constitutional and Federal Affairs enabled the TFG to reconstitute the Independent Federal Constitution Commission, with the inclusion of new members from the opposition, and launch a civic education, media and public consultation strategy. U.S. diplomatic engagement continued to be central in strengthening the TFG to further political dialogue and reconciliation with opposition groups and to undertake the drafting of a new constitution.

To address corruption, U.S. diplomatic engagement facilitated an agreement between the TFG and an internationally recognized audit firm to provide oversight and accountability. The U.S. provided technical expertise and basic equipment to the Central Bank and

loaned four of its senior staff to the Central Bank of Kenya for on-the-job training. In Puntland and Somaliland, the United States supported the creation of Economic Management Units, which provide technical support to the Ministries of Finance and Planning, and to the cabinet on the formulation of fiscal policy, as well as to the Budget Department of the Ministry of Finance on budget preparation. The United States continues to provide technical and financial assistance to key federal institutions to better administer and manage core government functions.

In Somaliland, the United States significantly contributed to mediation efforts to broker an agreement on the presidential electoral process. The United States funded an external assessment of the voter registration list during the registration exercise. The United States funded the production and printing of a training manual for thousands of Somaliland political party agents and domestic observers and a series of public dialogues and TV debates to encourage participation and promote citizen advocacy. In Puntland, the United States supported Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to construct two halls that will be used by peace and conflict resolution committees, traditional elders, and government agencies in resolving conflicts in the Nugal and Mudug areas.

Public diplomacy efforts focused on engaging with Somalis living in the country and overseas. The mission sponsored press events, including interviews, Web chats, press releases, and cultural programs in the country and in the Somali areas of Kenya, to include the Dadaab refugee camps, engaging the media about U.S. policy on democratic principles and human rights issues. The mission maintains a Virtual Presence Post (VPP) Web site, which is used to highlight U.S. human rights policy. The mission directly engaged with Somalis in Eastleigh, Nairobi's Somali enclave, as well as with Somalis in northeast Kenya, including the majority-Somali Dadaab refugee camps. The public diplomacy unit offers small grants to local partners within the country to conduct programs focused on the themes of peace and reconciliation and renunciation of violence. To promote media freedom, the mission engaged with the TFG and regional authorities, journalist organizations, and media outlets to address incidents threatening freedom of the press. The mission played a direct role in gaining the release of a journalist detained by regional authorities in Puntland. The mission publicly condemned the deaths and arrests of journalists. It also expressed concern to the TFG, authorities in Puntland, and

Somaliland when journalists were arrested, threatened, or otherwise harassed. The United States supported radio programs that addressed political topics and expanded the reach and quality of radio programs in the country through developing the capacity of media houses, journalist associations, and journalists.

Through training, the United States strengthened the professionalism and financial management of media outlets and media associations. The provision of equipment such as video cameras, desktop computers, still digital cameras, video mixers, printers, and printing materials, as well as training for capacity building of employee journalists, enhanced the production capacity of media outlets. The financial sustainability of the news outlets was enhanced through financial assistance and training on transparent and accountable financial, procurement, and operations procedures and policies. The United States provided direct assistance to the TFG's Ministry of Information, ensuring that the TFG was able to broadcast messages of anti-extremism and respect for a free media.

The United States contributed to the instrumental role played by civil society in promoting peace, social and economic development, and democratic governance. The United States strengthened CSOs and media groups. Activities included quick impact projects to strengthen CSOs' ability to advocate for peace and good governance; support media sector development; engage the Somali diaspora; and support advocacy for improving the operating environment for media and civil society in the country. The organizations designed and implemented advocacy campaigns that addressed women's rights and participation in decision making, media freedom, good governance, and conflict mitigation. Many CSOs identified cases of human rights abuses and engaged local authorities to address the abuses. Other U.S.-sponsored CSO advocacy campaigns promoted peaceful coexistence among the clan groups living along the contested border between Somaliland and Puntland; improved transparency, accountability, and organizational management systems in a local municipality in Somaliland; and the right of Somaliland squatters to be permitted access to basic necessities such as schools, water, and sanitation.

The United States provided almost 2,000 men and women from minority groups with conflict management training in order to enable them to manage relations with their more powerful neighbors. The United States supported women's political participation in the TFP, resulting in an official women's caucus and the development of civil society

advocacy campaigns that addressed women's rights. In partnership with advocates for women's rights, the mission hosted programs to highlight human rights and women's political empowerment. In Somaliland, the United States funded workshops on constituency outreach and collaboration with civil society and marginalized groups for 64 national legislators. A constituency outreach manual was compiled and distributed to every parliamentarian and parliamentary staff member.

## **Sudan:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Sudan to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Sudan's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

U.S. priorities for promoting democratic principles and human rights in the country include leading international efforts to resolve the conflict in Darfur and working to ensure the robust and credible implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Responding to humanitarian needs is also a major U.S. priority. The United States is the largest humanitarian donor to the country.

Other democracy and human rights issues that are important to the United States include efforts to combat violence against women in Darfur, the passage of reformed legislation on press and national security, facilitating the conduct of elections and referenda, improvements to governance capacity in the south, including rule of law, and civil society capacity building.

##### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States continues to respond to the genocide and on-going conflict in Darfur by providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations, enabling the deployment of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), and working toward

a lasting political settlement. The United States pays more than one-fourth of the total cost of UNAMID through UN assessed contributions. U.S. assistance promotes the rights of vulnerable civilians affected by the conflict, particularly women. This assistance includes capacity building for Darfuri women activists, programs that address gender-based violence, and the provision of food aid. In support of peacekeeping operations in the region, the United States assists peacekeeping forces with substantial financial and technical support, including airlifting, training, housing, and equipping troops. The United States continues to support efforts by the international community to promote a comprehensive political settlement for Darfur through peace negotiations. Efforts by the U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan to unify Darfur's rebel movements have given impetus to peace talks in Doha, Qatar. The U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan has visited Darfur on numerous occasions, as has the U.S. Charge d'Affaires. Other U.S. officials visit Darfur regularly to meet with internally displaced persons, civil society, rebel movements, UN officials, NGO staff, and other contacts to observe conditions on the ground first-hand. The U.S. democracy assistance strategy to support the implementation of the CPA focuses on power sharing, wealth sharing, implementation of Popular Consultations for Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, and security arrangements, including in Abyei. The United States continued to lead international efforts to refocus attention on the CPA, building on its June 2009 Forum for Supporters of the CPA in Washington, D.C. The United States provided robust nationwide support for preparation for national elections, as called for in the CPA, including technical assistance to the National Election Commission, training for political parties, and civic and voter education, as well as domestic and international observation. The U.S. Government dispatched nearly fifty observers to 17 states during the polling period. The United States supports capacity building for key Government of Southern Sudan ministries; promotes independent media through support to short-wave radio programming, community radio stations, and through journalism education; provides support for the development of a professional and responsive criminal justice system that promotes the rule of law; and provides long-term capacity building to nascent civil society organizations across Southern Sudan and in the Three Areas (Abyei, Blue Nile, and Southern Kordofan). The United States facilitates the transformation of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) to a more professional and accountable military force that respects human rights. This includes providing technical

advisors to work with the SPLA to improve transparency and the division of labor between the SPLA and Southern Sudan Police Services. U.S. assistance also includes programs for the Three Areas to increase state and local government capacity to provide essential public services and to engage marginalized communities in participatory planning and budgeting. In addition, CPA implementation is being supported through U.S. programs to teach community members to monitor implementation of the agreement, advocate for their rights, and learn about free and fair election practices.

U.S. diplomatic efforts support civil society efforts to promote human rights and democracy. U.S. officials meet regularly with civil society members. The United States supports the inclusion of independent civil society groups in the Darfur peace negotiations. U.S. public diplomacy efforts include International Visitor Leadership Programs on a range of topics including: principles of transparency in government, women as political leaders, promoting the rule of law and judicial reform, and responsible journalism. Specifically, to develop the media, the U.S. Government supported numerous video conferences and workshops and presented a speaker on journalism education in both Khartoum and Juba. U.S. efforts to increase dialogue about human rights included panel discussions on women's rights and visitor exchange programs focused on developing educational curriculum on tackling corruption in a post-conflict environment.

U.S. officials, including the Charge d'Affaires, regularly raise rule of law issues with government officials and stress the need to follow the human rights guarantees provided by the Interim National Constitution. We continue to call on the Government of Sudan and all other parties to the conflict to cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court and its prosecutor as required by Security Council resolution 1593 (2005). The U.S. Government issued numerous statements condemning Sudan's human rights violations, including the detention of prominent opposition political party leaders, the use of force to disperse peaceful political demonstrations, press censorship, and the expulsion of international NGOs. The U.S. Government continued to track unlawful detentions committed after the 2008 Justice and Equality Movement attack on Omdurman, and to address the subject of human rights violations with Sudan. The United States also continues to emphasize the importance of ending the use of child soldiers. U.S. officials

engage with the government on religious freedom issues, and commissioners from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom visited the country in January.

## **Swaziland:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Swaziland to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Swaziland's human rights conditions, please see the *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. strategy for advancing democracy in Swaziland is three-fold: strengthen key government institutions to create and uphold democratic values; strengthen and support civil society, media, and other institutions that hold the government accountable; and assist in developing a platform for civil society and the government to negotiate political space. To achieve these goals, the United States continues to encourage the government to implement concrete measures of democratic progress, such as the full legalization of political parties, consistent enforcement of the constitution, and other reforms that foster a more responsive, inclusive, and democratic government. Anticorruption efforts, legal reform pertaining to freedom of information, and increased promotion and protection of human rights, including a functioning and capable human rights commission, also are important if Swaziland is to start transitioning toward democracy.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States uses a variety of means, including support for public dialogue and civil society and government capacity building, to promote political reform. For example, the U.S. Government utilized public diplomacy and representational events to bring together local NGOs, labor union leaders, and political activists for dialogue. To prepare for the 2013 national elections, U.S.-sponsored programs continued working with government

and civil society to strengthen institutions, educate the citizenry, and expand political dialogue. U.S. funding supported a local NGO to carry out civic education activities to inform citizens on their constitutional rights, and a U.S. foundation facilitated dialogue between advocates of reform and government officials. The United States provided financial assistance for a youth conference, including young men and women from all regions of the country, to discuss human rights, the constitution, HIV/AIDS, and personal discipline. The United States hosted multiple digital video conferences and panel discussions on the Obama Administration, the peaceful transition of power, empowerment of women, and consensus building in a multi-party democracy. The United States continued to sponsor training and international exchanges for emerging civil society and political leaders and members of the security forces that promote human rights, democracy, separation of powers, and the contributions of civil society. During diplomatic and programmatic outreach activities, U.S. officials advocated for measures to combat corruption and increase transparency. The United States provided information to the new Anti-Corruption Commission on issues such as conflict of interest legislation and the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, and participated with the United Nations Development Program and other multi-lateral organizations on a planning committee to coordinate assistance to the Commission. The United States continues to encourage respect for freedom of information. In one program, a speaker conducted workshops on independent media and how to discuss sensitive political topics in an environment of censorship.

In support of the rights of children, the United States paid the school fees for orphaned and vulnerable children and for children at risk for exploitative labor, as well as provided life skills training for at-risk youth. The U.S. government continued to provide consultation and small grants in support of the implementation of recently enacted legislation on antitrafficking. Embassy Mbabane's Regional Security Office worked with the Royal Swazi Police Headquarters on developing a use-of-force policy and using non-lethal means of stopping criminals, seeking to reduce extrajudicial killings by security officers. In addition, the United States funded workplace-based HIV/AIDS education and antidiscrimination programs.

**Tanzania:**

## BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

#### Introduction:

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Tanzania to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Tanzania's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at <http://www.state.gov>.

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The United Republic of Tanzania consists of the mainland and the Zanzibar archipelago, whose main islands are Unguja and Pemba. Building on the mainland's solid democratic foundation, the United States prioritizes promoting democracy through improving governance in the country by strengthening key institutions that support public accountability and civic engagement. This includes enhancing the capacity of civil society, the press, the judiciary, and the legislature to hold government accountable to its citizens. Further, U.S. Government efforts focus on electoral and civic participation in support of responsive government. The United States also focuses on addressing human rights issues, including trafficking in persons, child labor, and women's empowerment.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States promotes democracy through public outreach, programmatic support, and diplomatic engagement. U.S. officials emphasize publicly, including through media appearances and articles in the press, that respect for human rights, press freedom, and public sector accountability are cornerstones of the country's democratic consolidation. Further, U.S. officials encourage efforts to combat corruption and empower women. In Zanzibar, the United States engages with government and civil society leaders to promote reconciliation in advance of the upcoming elections.

The U.S. Government is providing vital support for the upcoming national elections with the aim of increasing voter participation, improving transparency, and ensuring free and fair elections. On both the mainland and Zanzibar, the U.S. Government is funding voter education programs as well as training for election observers. Before the national election in October, voters will benefit from U.S. Government support for voter education. In Zanzibar, a U.S.-funded team is observing voter registration and other election related processes. They will also monitor the elections in October. To improve access to justice, the United States supports efforts to strengthen the network of legal aid providers through training programs. Continuing its efforts to partner with civil society organizations, the United States is implementing additional public expenditure tracking systems in districts throughout the country. These tracking systems enable citizens to engage in the discussion of budget priorities and hold their government accountable for the delivery of public services. Further, the U.S. Government is helping civil society organizations to improve their internal organizational capacity so that they more effectively engage constituents and government. In a six-year program that concluded in 2010, the United States provided technical assistance to the mainland parliament to strengthen the legislature's oversight capacity and improve accountability.

The U.S. Government supports a number of efforts designed to spotlight the importance of women's rights. The ambassador honored the chairperson of a Tanzanian medical NGO with the embassy's annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Drum Major for Justice Award, for her efforts to improve women's access to health care. The U.S. Embassy awarded its annual Tanzanian Woman of Courage Award to the Executive Director of a women's media NGO for her tireless activism in pursuit of justice for women and girls. As one of three focus countries for U.S. Government efforts to combat gender-based violence, Tanzania will receive support to promote gender equality and reduce the incidence of gender-based violence. The U.S. Government also provided leadership training to women in Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, and Arusha in support of their work to promote Tanzania's development.

The U.S. Government helps to ensure that the rights of marginalized groups are respected through an initiative to build the capacity of the Commission on Human Rights and Good Governance and other government offices to implement national laws that protect the

human rights of the disabled, persons with albinism, persons with HIV/AIDS, and women. Over the past year, the government prosecuted crimes committed against persons with albinism and made strong public statements in support of that community.

The United States also works with government officials and international and local NGOs to raise awareness about trafficking in persons, to provide assistance to victims of trafficking, and to encourage prosecution of traffickers. The U.S. Government funds initiatives to address the worst forms of child labor and promote formal and transitional education to prevent such labor, particularly in rural areas. The U.S. Government also sponsors local citizens for visit and exchange programs in the United States in several fields related to human rights and good governance, including investigative journalism, youth leadership, and accountability in government.

**Togo:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Togo to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Togo's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at <http://www.state.gov>.

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's main priorities are to promote democracy, good governance, and human rights in Togo. The U.S. Government encourages free and fair municipal elections in 2010, legislative elections in 2012, and a free and fair presidential election in 2015 through support for the development of functional, responsible, democratic political parties and better collaboration among the parties, especially regarding dispute resolution and compromise. Additional important U.S. priorities are the development of an

independent civil society, a reduction in official corruption, building the capacity of the National Assembly, and combating child labor.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government continues to play an influential role in efforts to promote free and fair elections. The U.S. Ambassador collaborates closely with other diplomatic missions in the country to deliver a unified message on the importance of organizing peaceful and credible elections. In support of the 2010 presidential election, the U.S. Government provided grants to train national election observers and build the capacity of the political parties, and held a series of book debates on election-related issues. The mission designed and funded locally produced radio and television ads and developed a brochure explaining the voting process.

The U.S. Ambassador and other U.S. officials meet regularly with members of the government, opposition, and civil society to advocate for democracy and human rights goals. They also attend events organized by NGOs to support local initiatives on a wide range of topics including press freedom, women's rights, trafficking in persons, government reforms, corruption, and transparency.

The United States has provided extensive training to local journalists including seminars on the role of a free press in a democracy, the fundamentals of journalism, and ethics and professionalism. Programs on election reporting were conducted prior to the 2010 presidential election.

The United States maintains an American Corner at the University of Lomé. Programs at the American Corner promote democratic values and an understanding of U.S. society and culture to university students and faculty, the media, and members of civil society organizations. Guest speaker programs, book debates, video conferences, and seminars focus on topics such as women's rights, transparency and good governance, media freedom, the role of the military in a democracy, and the rights of minority groups. Book debates have discussed topics such as negotiation and compromise in a political context.

The United States promotes human rights and democratic civic participation. Efforts include work with various segments of civil society on projects ranging from the efficiency and independence of the judicial system to promoting civic education and women's rights, particularly in rural areas. An on-going U.S.-funded project promotes the rights of persons with disabilities. The U.S. Government also supports a program to combat the worst forms of child labor. U.S. officials meet regularly with the program's local administrator and attend meetings of NGOs, who are working to develop a common strategy to combat child trafficking and labor.

The U.S. Government engages with the Togolese military to ensure it remains uninvolved in the political process and respects human rights. The embassy encourages and supports the participation of the Togolese military in regional peacekeeping efforts, supports the transfer of military oversight to civilian authorities, and advocates a shift from military to civilian control of other government institutions. This is done through training opportunities using International Military Education and Training funds and peacekeeping training through the Africa Contingency Operations and Training Assistance program.

## **Uganda:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Uganda to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Uganda's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at <http://www.state.gov>.

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government seeks to strengthen democratic institutions, enhance political competition, reduce corruption, and increase respect for human rights. To advance these

goals, the United States continues to support programs to strengthen parliament, create more effective linkages between elected officials and their constituents, improve government service delivery, build anticorruption capacity, and prepare political parties, the electoral system, and voters for the February 2011 presidential and parliamentary elections. U.S. efforts engage a wide spectrum of political and civil society leaders to promote active, responsible, and peaceful participation in democratic and development processes.

Peace and security in the country is also a top U.S. government priority. The United States supports efforts to improve the lives of conflict-affected persons in the north. Respect for human rights by the security forces and their ability to address violations are also priorities.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States encourages respect for constitutional checks and balances by strengthening the legislature, government accountability institutions, and public participation in the policymaking process. U.S. assistance programs provide support to strengthen parliament's oversight committees, assist political parties with internal organization and constituency responsiveness, and bolster links between parliament, local government, and civil society. The United States will help the Uganda Electoral Commission (EC) develop an online searchable Web-based voter registry in advance of the 2011 elections. In addition, the ambassador and other U.S. officials made a number of public statements stressing the importance of good governance, including combating corruption. U.S. officials regularly attended court proceedings on key cases involving constitutional protections, human rights, due process, media freedom, and corruption. Senior U.S. officials, including the President, the Secretary of State, and Members of Congress, expressed concern with the draft “anti-homosexuality” bill which, if passed, would target individuals based on sexual orientation or gender identity and impose penalties of life imprisonment or death, extradition from other countries, and imprisonment for unreported knowledge of suspected relationships.

U.S. public diplomacy efforts include the International Visitor Leadership Program that exposes government officials, parliamentarians, and members of civil society to U.S. democratic institutions and electoral processes. Through digital video conferences,

multimedia public outreach activities, and guest speaker programs, the U.S. Government plans to encourage dialogue on issues related to women in politics, press freedom, voter education and participation, journalism training, and the peaceful transition of power. In the Lord's Resistance Army-affected north, the U.S. Government is providing transition and development assistance. This assistance targets the 1.8 million persons returning from Internally Displaced Persons camps and seeks to improve the infrastructure, services, and government capacity in conflict-affected northern Uganda. Programs focus on peace building and conflict mitigation, health, education, agriculture productivity, access to water, infrastructure, local government support, and biodiversity and global climate change. The United States sponsored civil-military relations seminars to promote human rights awareness among the security forces and facilitated discussion with civil society leaders.

U.S. Government support advanced the country's efforts to further develop community policing and justice centers, which aim to increase society's confidence in the justice system and increase the capacity of the government to enforce laws and prosecute cases. The U.S. Government funded programs to withdraw children from the most hazardous forms of labor, provide educational alternatives, and strengthen the ability of the government to address child labor.

## **Zambia:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Zambia to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Zambia's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The highest U.S. priorities for advancing democracy and good governance in the country are ensuring that elections are free and fair and supporting continued progress in the government's campaign against corruption. The United States coordinates its efforts with

bilateral and multilateral partners as well as civil society organizations. During meetings with local officials, U.S. diplomats stress the importance of holding transparent, credible elections and taking concrete steps to fight corruption. Additional priorities for improving respect for democracy and human rights include the promotion of freedom of expression, civic participation, government transparency, and rule of law, as well as eliminating human trafficking, gender-based violence, and the worst forms of child labor.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. programs and diplomatic efforts focus on helping the government increase voter registration and participation, conduct free and fair elections, and appropriately engage civil society, political actors, and the media to support informed dialogue essential to a sustainable democracy. These efforts are intended to help increase the government's capacity to govern transparently, fight institutional corruption, improve service delivery, and protect its citizens.

The U.S. Government provides technical assistance to the government to help it improve voter registration capacity. The United States also encourages the government to continue measurable efforts against corruption, such as implementing a national anticorruption plan; adopting new anticorruption legislation; strengthening institutional capacity; establishing an internationally compliant anti-money laundering framework; expanding freedom of expression and access to information; and improving efficiency, transparency, and accountability. The United States is working with the government to ensure that proposals for related future international cooperation efforts incorporate input from civil society.

The United States leveraged public affairs and public diplomacy to introduce and support transparent electoral and political processes, an independent judiciary, an independent and professional media, and a vibrant civil society. The U.S. Government employed cultural and educational exchanges, speaker programs, sports diplomacy, and media training to cultivate respect for freedom and democratic values. Leadership and study exchange programs addressed governance issues related to freedoms of speech and expression, media regulation, human rights, and political accountability. These programs encouraged open debate of ideas via many channels, from interpersonal outreach and electronic broadcasts to mobile phone technology.

A U.S.-sponsored initiative offered support to survivors of gender-based violence, including through coordinated response centers that provide medical, legal, psycho-social counseling, referrals to safe houses, and other assistance. Through this initiative, which ends in 2010, the U.S. Government provided training to police and public prosecutors on the prosecution of gender-based violence cases and support for a local legal institute focused on these issues. In addition, the U.S. Government supported the development of guidelines for support to victims of gender-based violence, and provided training to health officers, social workers and counselors. U.S. assistance funded information campaigns on gender-based violence by several local NGOs and sponsored a group of judges and prosecutors to study the U.S. legal system with a focus on gender-based violence. The United States also sponsored trainings for security forces with a strong component on respecting human rights.

The United States continues to fund activities aimed at building the government's capacity to design, implement, and monitor initiatives to address the worst forms of child labor. In addition, U.S. assistance programs continue to raise awareness of trafficking in persons, highlighting the issue at all levels of government. For example, the United States provided funds to train police and other security personnel in trafficking detection and to assist the government in implementing the country's antitrafficking law.

## **Zimbabwe:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Zimbabwe to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Zimbabwe's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The goal of U.S. policy is to support the citizens of Zimbabwe in their efforts to bring peace, stability, prosperity, and democracy to their country. The United States focuses on

promoting Zimbabwe's transformation from an authoritarian government to one that promotes and protects its citizens' freedoms and seeks to meet their needs. Crucial to the realization of this objective will be for the transitional government to hold free and fair elections and to draft, pass, and implement a new constitution. The chief of mission and other U.S. officials continue to press publicly and privately for political and economic reform by making clear that expanding broad-based developmental assistance will be dependent upon the transitional government demonstrating its commitment to full implementation of the September 2008 Global Political Agreement, equal access to humanitarian assistance, macroeconomic stabilization, rule of law, democratic processes, human rights, and timely and internationally supervised elections.

To achieve these objectives within the context of the transition government, U.S. priorities include developing the capacity and independence of civil society and reformist elements of the transitional government. Specific areas of focus include strengthening civil society's ability to advocate for political reform and to hold government accountable; assistance to the parliament to enable it to fulfill its role in holding the executive accountable; strengthening media independence; and support to build the capacity of local government to enhance service delivery.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States encourages a transition in the country to a government that respects democratic process and human rights through a variety of means, including assistance programs, diplomacy, and dialogue. U.S. officials continue to raise the country's poor human rights record in international fora and bilaterally with other governments, emphasize with government and party officials the importance of ending human rights abuses, and convey concerns regarding politically motivated arrests, prosecutions, and violence. To encourage greater public debate on the restoration of good governance and economic growth, the United States sponsors public events that highlight how transparent democratic systems can empower citizens by leveling the political playing field, restoring the rule of law, and creating a market environment conducive to economic recovery. Publicly and privately, the United States encourages the government to implement the agreement that led to the transitional government, including efforts to draft a new constitution, and to prepare for free and fair elections.

U.S. programs strengthen the capacity of nongovernmental actors, including the media, to enhance civic participation, consensus-building, and accountability. The United States sponsors programs to assist civil society groups in improving organizational capacity, strategic thinking, leadership, and internal governance. The United States supports civil society organizations that document human rights abuses and provide critical assistance to the thousands of political party members and human rights defenders who have been victims of state-sponsored violence. Programs and organizations that provide citizens with unbiased information about government policies and the right to petition their government for change also are supported by the United States. A U.S.-sponsored radio program broadcasts uncensored news throughout the country. Despite government efforts to jam the transmission and seize radios from listening groups, this program is the principal source of independent news in the country. Citizens also have access to independent information through a U.S.-sponsored information resource center and other programs.

In support of religious freedom, the U.S. Government disseminates relevant reports on religious rights and promotes the benefits of religious pluralism. U.S. officials privately and publicly emphasize concerns regarding intimidation and harassment of religious leaders who criticize the government, condemn human rights abuses and flawed economic policies, and who seek to sustain a dialogue to improve the country's political situation. To encourage the protection of worker rights, U.S. officials publicly condemn the government's repressive restrictions on freedom of assembly. The United States also supports programs on labor issues, including activities to promote international labor standards and build capacity within labor unions. Labor leaders have participated in U.S.-sponsored professional exchange programs on civic activism, organized labor, and conflict resolution. Additionally, the United States shares best practices and promotes cooperation to combat trafficking in persons and supports programs providing assistance to trafficking victims.

The United States remains the single largest contributor of humanitarian assistance in the country. These programs provide food aid, HIV/AIDS services, medication and prevention for malaria and tuberculosis, and livelihood assistance to persons who are left vulnerable by the political and economic crisis, regardless of their political affiliation;

and more recently assistance in support of the crumbling education and agriculture sectors.

## **EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC:**

### **Brunei Darussalam:**

#### BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Brunei to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Brunei's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government seeks to promote the development of a more accountable and transparent government institutional framework in the country that ultimately allows popular participation in an open political process. To encourage such participation, U.S. officials share the benefits of the U.S. democratic system and political openness with government officials, military officers, private citizens, civil society representatives, NGOs, political groups, and student groups. This includes expansion of person-to-person exchanges and increasing the number of Bruneians visiting or studying in the United States.

##### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

To help foster development of a well-informed and involved civil society, the United States continues to promote freedom of expression, improve local journalism skills, and expand public debate through outreach and educational exchange programs. These programs also serve to widen the range and improve the quality of information about the United States available in the country. U.S. officials use these programs to introduce rule

of law and human rights values consistent with international best practices to professionals, public employees, and law enforcement officers.

The United States encourages the government to progress on the path toward an effective and more representative legislative council through advocacy for the principles of transparent governance, the direct popular election of some council members, the formation of more independent political parties, and the termination of the longstanding state of emergency. The United States supports the only independent registered political party through exchange programs, public interaction, and advocacy. The United States also encourages the government to make efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

The United States targets its exchange programs to support these priorities. Each year the U.S. Government provides funding to send exchange participants to the United States--one Fulbright scholar, two International Visitor Leadership Program participants, one Edward R. Murrow journalism fellow, and at least five Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies fellows. The United States also provides support to security forces to build their understanding of international human rights standards. U.S. officials routinely meet with senior government officials as well as local political and religious leaders to discuss opportunities to promote interfaith dialogue. In addition, the embassy sponsored a leading political party development expert from the United States to conduct a workshop with the country's only registered political party.

In addition, the U.S. Government has increased public diplomacy efforts in support of democracy promotion. Government officials, journalists, and business leaders have attended U.S.-sponsored trainings and conferences on elections, governmental accountability, and human rights. The U.S. ambassador writes a weekly newspaper column in which he discusses themes of human rights and democracy. Via the embassy Web site, blogs, and other Internet media, the U.S. Government delivers extensive information about the United States, including its democratic system, the free media, and civil society, targeting the younger generation. The use of digital video conferences provides for more direct discussions with U.S. speakers and policy makers. U.S. officials interact directly with varied audiences ranging from high-school to college-age students, military officers, leading business leaders, civil society, and government officials. The embassy established a new outreach program that makes available books, magazines, and interactive media on democracy, human and civil rights, and U.S. and world history.

## **Burma:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. Mission in Burma to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Burma's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. goal is to support the movement of Burma from an authoritarian regime to one that is open and representative, that respects human rights and the rule of law, and that plays a positive, responsible role in the region. U.S. Government human rights and democracy objectives include the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, advocating for the rights of political prisoners such as Aung San Suu Kyi, an end to the government's repression of ethnic minorities, and unrestricted access to all parts of the country for humanitarian organizations and diplomats. The United States undertook a policy review in 2009 resulting in a decision to raise the level of interactions with the regime as an additional means to achieve these core human rights and democracy objectives.

In the interim, senior U.S. Government officials have engaged senior levels of the regime on human rights and democracy. The U.S. Government has stressed that in order to improve relations with the United States and the international community, the government must make progress on core concerns, including: releasing political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi; easing restrictions on individuals, organizations, religious groups, and political parties so that they may assemble, speak, and operate freely; entering into a meaningful dialogue with democratic and ethnic groups on national reconciliation and political transition; and respecting the human rights of all citizens.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States continues to support courageous Burmese who strive for democracy and human rights. U.S. officials meet frequently with a variety of opposition leaders, ethnic leaders, religious leaders, and civil society actors to ensure that they are aware of U.S. support for their cause. The U.S. Government is expanding interaction with government officials, including career bureaucrats and the military, in order to increase understanding of U.S. perspectives on political reform and provide opportunities to identify and cultivate those who might support reform or play useful roles in a future democratic government. U.S. officials have spoken out forcefully on the failure of Burma's electoral law and procedures to meet minimum democratic standards for free and fair elections. The U.S. Government also continues to advocate for improvements in economic governance in response to the military regime's mismanagement of the economy and exploitation of Burma's natural resources for its own enrichment, to the detriment of Burma's population. The United States maintains targeted sanctions against the regime as leverage to press for democratic reform and human rights. The U.S. Government actively works to identify individuals and companies that support or receive benefits from the regime and impede the country's transition to democracy, implementing sanctions against these targets to discourage them from cooperating with the regime. The United States actively supports the work of UN agencies in the country, especially labor agencies, which seek to bring the regime into compliance with international labor obligations and end the use of forced labor and the recruitment of child soldiers. The United States actively supports the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, which advocates for the stateless, predominantly Muslim Rohingya minority. U.S. officials frequently visit the Thai-Burma border to monitor living conditions of Burmese refugees in the Thai refugee camps. To combat the serious problem of trafficking in persons, the United States funds antitrafficking programs of international NGOs operating in the country. The United States encourages the regime to improve enforcement of its antitrafficking laws, strengthen protections offered to trafficking victims, and cooperate with NGOs and UN agencies.

The U.S. Government has a vigorous public diplomacy program which engages in democracy and human rights-oriented capacity-building efforts at the American Center in Rangoon and in other venues. Many citizens see these centers as havens and beacons of openness in this restrictive environment. The United States has expanded its budget to include public diplomacy-related scholarships, visitor and speaker programs, English language classes, and community empowerment training. The United States continues to make use of Fulbright scholarships, Humphrey fellowships, International Visitor Leadership Program grants, and other exchanges to identify the country's future leaders and develop their understanding of democratic values. In order to provide the country's inhabitants with accurate, unbiased news and information, the United States provides assistance to external media organizations. Given the regime's resilience, the United States also focuses efforts on laying the groundwork for future change -- strengthening civil society; improving and expanding private education; assisting grassroots livelihood development; and helping meet public health needs. In doing so, the United States intends to create a better-educated, skills-based, and informed populace that is able to think critically and act independently, especially in the political realm. The U.S. Government also funds, through a small grants program, activities that encourage creative village-level activities such as libraries, community centers, and grassroots development projects.

**Cambodia:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Cambodia to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Cambodia's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Building the capacity of both government and civil society in human rights, rule of law, democracy, and accountability are key priorities of the United States. U.S. officials

continue to promote greater transparency in government, action to fight corruption, and citizen participation in the political process. The U.S. Government encourages the local governments to be more responsive and accountable to the citizenry in implementing public policy. The U.S. Government encourages openness in public political discourse, political pluralism, and civic participation and responsibility. The U.S. Government seeks to strengthen NGOs that monitor and investigate human rights abuses and that advocate, support, and monitor legal and political rights. In addition, U.S. officials and U.S.-supported NGOs address the issues of land reform, use of restraint during legal evictions, and efforts to fight corruption. The United States supports the government's goal of combating trafficking in persons. The U.S. Government works to protect worker rights and combat the worst forms of child labor. U.S.-sponsored programs promote freedom of the press and civil rights and encourage equal access to educational and employment opportunities for the country's Muslim community.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. officials use public fora and press events to deliver remarks on a range of topics related to good governance, including the conduct of free and fair elections; implementation of the recently passed Anti-Corruption Law; the need for judicial reform and independence; government transparency; and respect for a free press. U.S. officials continue to discuss good governance and human rights concerns with numerous ministers and government officials, including senior officials.

Good governance programs funded by the U.S. Government focus on improving accountability, transparency, and responsiveness of elected officials in the national legislature and local commune councils. This includes 24 constituency dialogues in 12 provinces involving 62 National Assembly members and working with 356 commune councils in eight provinces. These dialogues provide citizens with the opportunity to interact with their elected representatives to express their concerns. U.S. Government support for the implementation of the new Anti-Corruption Law includes the provision of training and technical assistance to the government's new anticorruption investigation and enforcement agency.

U.S. officials continue to press for strengthening the rule of law and ensuring judicial independence while reducing corruption in the administration of the courts. One U.S.-

funded program helped the Ministry of Justice to increase transparency by developing an automated central case management system to track case resolutions, as well as to facilitate internal court communication through e-mail, a relative rarity within the country's government ministries. The program also provides a course on alternative dispute resolution to law students. Under a new memorandum of understanding with the Bar Association of the Kingdom of Cambodia, a legal aid internship program, funded by the U.S. Government, provides lawyer trainees with training and supervision. This program will be expanded to other areas of cooperation with the Bar Association, including legal education and reform. The U.S. Government announced an additional contribution to the UN side of the hybrid Khmer Rouge Tribunal and supported the resolution of corruption allegations in the court administration. In addition, the United States continues to support the country's only independent NGO devoted to documenting the crimes against humanity committed by the Pol Pot regime. U.S. efforts to promote media freedom centered on programs to educate journalists on their role in a democratic society and to improve the quality of reporting, particularly on economic issues.

The U.S. Government sponsored training of government spokespersons in an effort to increase transparency and the flow of information between the government and its constituency. The U.S. Government continued to distribute copies of *An Effective Press Office*, a publication that emphasizes the importance of a free press in democracies and the role that government officials play in media relations.

U.S. officials promote the opening of political space by supporting human rights groups that focus on access to civil, political, and legal rights. The United States provides funding for, engages with, and promotes local NGOs that provide investigative, legal, or other assistance related to alleged human rights abuses. U.S. assistance helped train communities in advocacy techniques such as building grassroots networks, leading to the filing of coordinated public complaints against concessions and land grabbers.

U.S.-funded local legal defense NGOs continue to provide legal aid services for the poor. U.S. Government funding helped to launch a new public interest law firm, a model for provision of legal representation to indigent clients in public interest related cases. In addition, the United States funds programs to educate workers about their rights under the Labor Code and Constitution, and provides technical support in negotiating collective-bargaining agreements with employers and combating the worst forms of child labor.

Combating trafficking in persons is a vital component of the U.S. strategy to promote human rights. In partnership with NGOs, government ministries and law enforcement agencies, the U.S. Government supports government efforts to combat trafficking in persons and prosecute trafficking offenders.

### **China (Includes Tibet):**

#### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in China to promote democracy and human rights. For background on China's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The United States will continue to urge China to adhere to its international obligations, to international human rights standards, and to protect its citizens' constitutional rights by advocating for reform, promoting universal norms of civil liberties and raising individual cases of concern. Key programmatic elements aim to promote the rule of law and protect civil and minority rights, strengthen the judicial system, improve public participation and transparency in governance, bolster civil society, expand religious freedom, and preserve minority communities and culture.

The United States employs multiple diplomatic and public diplomacy strategies to promote human rights and democracy in China, all of which emphasize that progress in these areas is in China's interest. U.S. officials publicly and privately urge the government to bring its human rights practices into compliance with international standards, to make systemic reforms, and to release political prisoners and prisoners of conscience. The United States encourages the government to strengthen China's judicial system and judicial independence, and strengthen the rule of law; encourage democratic political reform; promote freedom of religion and the press; protect human rights,

including the rights of workers, women, and ethnic and religious minority groups; improve transparency in governance; and strengthen civil society.

The United States publicly and privately urges the government to distinguish carefully between those seeking to express peaceful political dissent and those engaged in terrorism. The U.S. has expressed to the Chinese government its concern over the treatment of Uighur Muslims forcibly returned from Cambodia where they were seeking asylum. U.S. officials also press the government not to repatriate forcibly North Korean refugees, and to allow UNHCR officials access to this vulnerable population. The United States urges the government to put an end to coercive elements of its birth limitation program.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

In May 2010 the United States and China held a formal bilateral Human Rights Dialogue. Among other topics, U.S. officials emphasized how the impartial application of an objective body of law, without political interference, could help the country address the challenges it faces in creating a more just and stable society.

As part of its efforts to promote legal reform, promote progress on the rule of law, and encourage judicial independence, the United States funds projects designed to provide legal technical assistance, assist efforts to reform China's criminal code, strengthen legal education, support judicial independence, improve access to legal representation, and enable average citizens to find the information necessary to seek protection under the law. For example, a U.S.-supported project provides training for prosecutors to bring trial skills up to international standards, and complementary projects focus on techniques for defense attorneys. Another program has facilitated engagement by a U.S. federal prosecutor with China's legal academic community and government in order to encourage criminal justice reform. This U.S. official lectures at government training institutions and universities, as well as directly at courts and prosecutors' offices, on issues ranging from search and seizure to compelling witness testimony at trial, and participates in international and domestic anticorruption conferences.

U.S. officials coordinate programs for federal and state judges and other legal experts to discuss trial and criminal procedure reform, discovery and evidence rules, prison reform,

and other rule of law issues with judges, lawyers, officials, and academics. The U.S. Government also supports a partnership between U.S. and Chinese universities to help promote legal and justice system reform; to enhance the rule of law; and to improve access to legal representation for disenfranchised populations. The U.S. Speakers Program supports these efforts by sponsoring U.S. speakers to discuss rule of law issues throughout China. Approximately one-third of all Chinese citizens who participated in U.S. government-sponsored professional exchange programs worked in democracy and rights-related fields or in areas related to religion. U.S. sponsored rule of law programs include opportunities for legal scholars to undertake independent, advanced research at U.S. universities, and for U.S. professors to teach at top law schools and lecture at leading legal training institutions in the country.

The United States supports programs to increase popular participation in government and foster the development of local elections. U.S. programs support grassroots democratization efforts through training elected village officials and deputies to local legislatures. The U.S. government supports projects that increase the capacity of independent nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to address civil society and governance issues, expand access for marginalized citizens to legal services, and enable citizens to provide input individually and collectively into public decisions. U.S. officials frequently raise concerns with the Chinese government over restrictions on NGOs, emphasizing the important contributions NGOs can make in developing a vibrant civil society.

The U.S. government supports seminars and training on international standards of free expression, reaching out to journalists, lawyers, judges, and lawmakers. Visiting U.S. officials regularly discuss the need for greater Internet and press freedom with Chinese counterparts. U.S. officials also repeatedly raise the cases of detained journalists and citizens in public remarks and in private meetings with senior government officials. U.S. officials work with Internet portals and media organizations to expand the nature and quality of discussion on many topics including trade, clean energy development, and the U.S. electoral process.

The United States promotes compliance with internationally recognized labor standards.

U.S. officials also monitor compliance with the 1992 U.S.-China Memorandum of Understanding and 1994 Statement of Cooperation that prohibits the importation of products of prison labor, but they receive very limited cooperation from the government. U.S. officials also investigate allegations of forced and child labor. The Chinese government, through the All China Women's Federation, works with the International Labor Organization to prevent trafficking of women and children for labor exploitation. The United States supports programs to combat human trafficking and promote HIV/AIDS education. The United States and the Chinese government conduct exchanges on coal mine safety and occupational safety pursuant to a Letter of Understanding, and exchanges on wage and hour administration, law enforcement, and pension security. The United States funds programs that support technical cooperation on dispute resolution and help develop the capacity of local organizations involved in rights protection and legal aid for workers.

#### **TIBET**

Within the framework of our recognition that Tibet is part of China, the United States has urged the Chinese government to enter into substantive dialogue with the representatives of the Dalai Lama to address issues concerning religious freedom and protection of Tibetan culture and to advocate vigorously for improvements in the human rights and religious freedom conditions in the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas of China. The United States consistently presses for unfettered access to the region by journalists, diplomats, and other international observers, and calls for the release of all prisoners of conscience, and for the proper treatment of all detainees. U.S. officials continue publicly to urge China to end repressive policies that played a role in triggering the recent unrest. U.S. government officials at all levels continue to raise individual human rights cases involving Tibetans, including the status of Gendun Choekyi Nyima, the boy recognized by the Dalai Lama as the Panchen Lama. The U.S. Government seeks to expand exchanges with Tibetans resident in China, including government officials and religious leaders, through the International Visitor Leadership Program and other exchange opportunities.

#### **Fiji:**

## BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Fiji to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Fiji's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The protection and promotion of democratic institutions and human rights are among the U.S. Government's top priorities. All U.S. Government efforts and programs related to democratic values or human rights are harmonized with these key objectives. Immediate priorities are to encourage the country's return to democratic rule via free and fair elections, to strengthen human rights protections, and to promote respect for internationally recognized labor rights and a free and robust media.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government has joined with representatives of like-minded foreign missions and multilateral organizations to expedite restoration of the rule of law, strengthen civil society, and rebuild democratic institutions. The United States has encouraged the interim government to take credible steps toward free and fair elections. The U.S. Government maintains regular dialogue with pro-democracy NGOs and consistently presses military-appointed leaders to hasten the country's return to democracy.

In response to ongoing human rights violations including unreasonable limits on freedom of expression, the U.S. Government continues its outreach to, and gives public support for, human rights NGOs. The U.S. Government also has made small grants to civil society organizations to build their capacity and support their activities. The U.S. Government uses the Secretary of State's annual "Women of Courage" awards and other such opportunities to raise public awareness of the country's human rights champions.

Reporters, human rights activists, and even government auditors--whose job is to underpin good governance and anti-corruption efforts--participate in the International Visitor Leadership Program. The U.S. Government meets with human rights activists to underscore U.S. support and facilitate NGO outreach. Similarly, U.S. senior-level meetings with members of the interim government reinforce the United States' deep displeasure with human rights violations since the coup. The U.S. Government reaches out to local journalists and media organizations, emphasizing U.S. support for human rights, media freedom, good governance, due process, and rule of law, as well as provides professional training to journalists covering these issues. U.S. statements publicly condemn the coup, express support for a rapid return to a democratically elected government, and call on the military to withdraw from all political involvement.

The coup constrains traditional U.S. engagement with the military. The U.S. Government continues to make clear its position on the military's proper role in a democracy and the damage that the coup has inflicted on the military's once-proud reputation in the world's peacekeeping-operations community. Since the 2006 coup, the UN, the United States, and other major allies have stated that they would not support the country's involvement in new international peacekeeping operations.

In its annual engagement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on UN General Assembly voting, the United States has underscored its appreciation for the country's high incidence of votes in support of human rights and democratic values in a broad, international context. The U.S. Government maintains its outreach to women's and children's rights organizations concerning child prostitution and other forms of human trafficking in order to better assess the extent of the problem and discuss ways to address it.

## **Korea, Democratic People's Republic of**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities to promote democracy and human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). For background on the DPRK's human rights conditions, please see the *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Report* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The United States consistently works to raise international awareness about the DPRK's human rights abuses and to identify concrete ways to improve human rights conditions. The United States seeks to improve citizens' access to independent sources of information and to provide opportunities to increase their engagement with, and exposure to, the outside world.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

In 2010 the U.S. Government continued to implement the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 and its 2008 reauthorization. During the year the U.S. special envoy for North Korea human rights issues has continued to raise international awareness of the country's human rights abuses. U.S. programs provide funding to NGOs that raise international awareness about the country's human rights record, document abuses, and promote the development of civil society. In addition, the U.S. Government continues to support efforts to increase the flow of independent information, primarily through radio broadcasts, into the country.

U.S. officials raise awareness of the country's human rights abuses with the international community in both bilateral and multilateral fora. At the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the DPRK, the United States provided specific recommendations to the government to improve its human rights record. The United States also takes a leading role in urging other countries to undertake efforts to address the country's abuses, including cosponsoring resolutions on the country's human rights situation at the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council, supporting the mandate of the UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK and his requests for access to the country, and coordinating with other countries to encourage

the government to accept UPR recommendations. U.S. officials also urge other governments to call for improvements in the DPRK's respect for human rights. During the year the U.S. Government recognized a North Korean defector with an International Women of Courage Award, honoring her life and her work to improve conditions for North Koreans living outside the country.

**Laos:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Laos to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Laos' human rights conditions, please see the *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Report* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Through diplomatic engagement, public diplomacy efforts, and assistance programs, the U.S. Government urges the Lao government to promote rule of law and good governance, including the protection of rights of all ethnic and religious groups in the country.

Specifically, this includes pressing the government to put in place a process, consistent with international norms and transparent to the international community, for the safe resettlement in Laos of Hmong who left for Thailand in the hope of resettlement as refugees in a third country; visiting resettled Hmong villagers to assess their well-being; traveling to provinces in order to assess conditions on the ground, including the human rights situation; and meeting regularly with other members of the international community to discuss human rights issues in the country.

The United States also seeks to strengthen the emerging but very fragile civil society and continues to encourage the formation and development of locally run and staffed organizations. The country's poorly developed system of governance, dire shortage of trained personnel, and prevalence of corruption are all major challenges, which the United States addresses by sending government officials to international training to better

understand international norms; presenting U.S. speakers to government audiences to address issues such as more effective and representative governance, rule of law, and multicultural education; and having U.S. officials meet regularly with Lao officials to promote better governance.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government supports 20 libraries and institutions in the country with periodicals and books, giving citizens free access to international news and Western media. The U.S. embassy provides information on international human rights and democracy practices and norms to university students and the general public through its Information Resource Center and two American Corners.

The U.S. embassy uses the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) to promote human rights, sponsoring government officials and other rising professionals to travel to the United States to study NGO management, ways to combat human trafficking, and monitoring and protecting ASEAN human rights, among other topics. The U.S. embassy places a priority on IVLP candidates for programs in U.S. foreign policy, human rights issues, and antitrafficking programs. In 2010 the embassy plans to send participants to four specialized IVLP focusing on issues related to the Lower Mekong Initiative. One of the four topics includes women's roles in sustainable development.

Promoting good governance is an important element of the U.S. Government's efforts to support democracy and human rights. To this end, the U.S. Embassy plans for two speaker programs in 2010. A Journalist in Residence at an American college will address members of the media, government officials, and journalism students at a series of lectures in May on the important topic of media ethics and behavior. In July an American professor of government and politics will address members of the National Assembly, the Lao Bar Association, law students, and government officials on issues pertaining to corruption, trust, and the rule of law. Building on a successful 2009 program, the embassy will host a specialist in women's health issues to present several lectures and workshops on strengthening women's health.

The U.S. embassy arranged for the first U.S. Government-sponsored English Language Fellow (ELF) in at least a decade to work at the Faculty of Education, National University of Laos. The ELF teaches improved teaching methods to students in the

process of becoming the country's next generation of English teachers. Upgraded English language skills should open doors to new sources of information, allow for greater contact with international business, and improve communication capabilities, helping the next generation of leaders to interact more effectively with the international community. In addition to hosting an ELF, the embassy sponsors the largest annual training for English teachers in Laos.

## **Malaysia:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Malaysia to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Malaysia's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

A more open and democratic Malaysia that protects human rights will be a more stable and effective partner in security and economic arenas. The U.S. Government's democracy strategy supports the country's long-term stability, including judicial independence and rule of law. The U.S. Government seeks to help bring the country into the international human rights mainstream by supporting Malaysia's full implementation of its antitrafficking law; encouraging Malaysia to recognize refugees' status while cooperating with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and sustaining the large U.S. resettlement program; and urging adoption of international migrant worker standards.

The U.S. Government advocates for the country's ratification of outstanding fundamental human rights instruments related to human rights, refugees, and labor, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The U.S. Government also focuses on fostering a more vibrant civil society and a freer media, while promoting strong and accountable democratic institutions. Long-term success depends on improvement in the diffusion of checks and balances in society.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. officials use bilateral meetings, speeches, and interviews to highlight the importance of enhanced democratic institutions. The United States supports civil society activities related to democracy, including the role of the media in the democratic process. Other democracy programming includes nonpartisan projects that promote citizen participation in the political process and guest speaker programs that promote democratic values and traditions. The U.S. Government has facilitated several small grants to foster freedom of speech and to bolster civil society institutions. One such grant supports community groups in East Malaysia as they develop skills in "Citizen Journalism" to express their needs and issues. Through the International Visitor Leadership Program, the U.S. Government sent 30 individuals to the United States, including three to participate in programs on government accountability, two to programs promoting journalistic standards in a democracy, eight to programs on combating trafficking in persons, and five to programs on the rule of law at the state and local levels.

U.S. efforts to promote media freedom center on the availability and free flow of public information. In 2009 three full-day seminars were held, led by a visiting journalism professor from an American university, on feature reporting and journalism ethics for approximately 45 local journalists. In 2010 U.S. officials delivered public presentations on "Gov 2.0" and related topics, explaining to Malaysian audiences how U.S. government agencies are utilizing new technology to make information more available and accessible to the public. The U.S. Government has planned a number of programs that address democracy and human rights issues, including the U.S. Speaker programs on topics such as trafficking in persons and on U.S. midterm elections. Ongoing English enrichment programs, such as the ACCESS Microscholarship program, offer lessons to over 120 youths that deal with topics such as democracy and civic responsibilities. Lastly, there are seven and soon to be eight Lincoln Corners (dedicated library areas within a variety of host institutions that provide access to current information about the United States via book collections, periodicals, the Internet, multimedia, and local programming for the general public) offering information on topics such as freedom of information and freedom of the press.

U.S. officials use bilateral meetings and speeches to promote greater respect for human rights. Through meetings with the government, civil society, and international organizations, U.S. officials advocate for an increase in protection of vulnerable groups such as refugees, migrant workers, and trafficking victims. After substantial efforts, the U.S. Government experienced notable improvement in its coordination with the government on trafficking in persons issues. U.S. officials in the country also work with NGOs and international organizations to assist with the health and education needs of refugees. The United States supports international NGOs and civil society efforts to combat trafficking in persons for sexual and labor exploitation and encourages the government to address trafficking in persons. The U.S. Government regularly shares information on international best practices with local government agencies responsible for combating trafficking and assisting trafficking victims.

### **Papua New Guinea:**

#### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Papua New Guinea to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Papua New Guinea's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

In cooperation with the federal and local governments and NGOs, the U.S. Government seeks to promote democratic principles, practices, values, and human rights in its engagement in the country.

##### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. officials continue to work through the International Visitor Leadership Program to expose journalists and future leaders to democratic systems and values. Journalists

participated in programs on election reporting and state and local governance. The U.S. Government is focusing its efforts in advancing democracy and respect for the rule of law, including an emerging focus on combating trafficking in persons. The U.S. Government actively advocates for the rights of, and political participation of, women through the International Women of Courage Award Program and the International Visitor Leadership Program. Recognizing women leaders provides women with strong role models and allows them to envision a future that includes women in high-level positions in their country. The United States continues to provide training in human rights practices for defense personnel.

The U.S. Government also focuses significant attention on a wide range of human and civil rights, including the rights of women, the rule of law, and the importance of a free and fair political process. U.S. officials have teamed with local universities, non-governmental organizations, and think tanks to make presentations throughout the nation on these issues. In May 2010 the United States is funding an election observation mission to Papua New Guinea.

**Philippines:**

## BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in the Philippines to promote democracy and human rights. For background on the Philippines' human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Advancing democratic values and strengthening democratic institutions are top priorities for the United States. U.S. democracy and human rights promotion efforts in the Philippines support free and fair elections; assist the government and civil society groups to improve adherence to the rule of law and respect for human rights; and strengthen good governance while combating corruption with transparent and accountable institutions. The U.S. Government addresses these issues by providing development assistance programs for government and civil society partners to develop the policies and tools necessary for a freer, fairer, and more democratic system set within the framework of the rule of law and respect for human rights. In addition, the U.S. Government works to promote respect for internationally recognized worker rights and combat the worst forms of child labor.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S.-funded programs currently support civil society initiatives that monitor election tabulation; allow non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to monitor election violence, campaign finance in selected electoral contests, and media reporting; and assist electoral automation efforts in preparation for local and national elections. The U.S. embassy sent a team of U.S. officials to observe the August 2008 regional elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and plans to dispatch embassy officials throughout the nation to observe the May 2010 general elections. Through NGOs and their Philippine partners, the U.S. Government-funded efforts focused on election observation, voter education, and dispute resolution in the May 2010 elections. These initiatives, as well as

public statements by the Ambassador and other senior U.S. officials, clearly demonstrate to the electorate, elections officials, and local politicians the U.S. Government's strong support for a free and fair democratic process. U.S. officials frequently convey the message that extrajudicial killings and disappearances must cease and encourage the government to investigate and prosecute cases thoroughly. U.S. assistance programs build the capacity of journalists to report credibly, accurately, and professionally on human rights violations; strengthen the judicial sector's effectiveness in prosecuting cases of extrajudicial killings and disappearances; and professionalize the security forces. The U.S. Government provides direct and indirect assistance to Philippine law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and the courts to investigate, prosecute, and convict human traffickers, and funds NGOs in efforts to assist trafficking victims and prevent trafficking.

The United States continues to provide computer software support and training to the Philippine Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and several human rights NGOs to improve efficiency and security in documenting, storing, and reporting of human rights abuses. The CHR distributed to its regional offices a U.S.-funded secure information management system that allows the CHR and NGOs to track human rights cases while protecting sensitive information and shielding the identity of victims or witnesses who provide testimony on human rights abuses. The U.S. Government has sponsored conferences, forums, and consultations with interested government agencies and NGOs on human rights, including extrajudicial killings and the "writ of amparo," a legal remedy that requires a Philippine government agency to produce a given missing person, provide information on the person's whereabouts, or demonstrate that the agency is taking steps to locate the person. U.S. officials, working with the Philippine Supreme Court, developed materials to increase awareness about the writ of amparo that have been distributed to academia, churches, government institutions, international development organizations, civil society organizations, and the public.

To encourage respect for due process among members of the armed forces, U.S. military assistance programs train thousands of soldiers to strengthen their professionalism, commitment to human rights, and discipline. Graduates of these programs populate top ranks of the armed forces, helping to ensure that the principle of command responsibility is understood at all levels of leadership.

During 2009, the United States trained Philippine National Police personnel, many of whom were women, in courses relating to the Model Police Station project, the Special Boat Unit project, and the Southern Philippines Law Enforcement Development project. Each course included a block of instruction on respect for human rights, and the proper role of police in society. All course workbooks and other materials likewise underscore the crucial role of respect for human rights in police work.

The U.S. Government continues to support efforts to strengthen good governance, prosecute corrupt officials, and institute anticorruption measures. U.S. programs seek to improve the anticorruption capacities of the Ombudsman's Office and the Finance Department through the provision of training, equipment, and technical support. U.S. programs support corruption prevention assessments of select government agencies, including the Supreme Court, enabling the deployment of targeted anticorruption measures. The United States continues to provide the Antigrift Court and other courts with tools for improving case management and expanding the use of continuous trials.

## **Singapore:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Singapore to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Singapore's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The United States supports liberalizing trends in the country by engaging key audiences, including politicians from all parties, civil society activists, journalists, youth, and the Malay-Muslim community. The U.S. Government's priorities are to cultivate, primarily through public diplomacy efforts, support for greater democratization, liberalization of political debate, and a more independent media, as well as increased respect for political freedoms and human rights.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States conducts a comprehensive outreach program to local and regional audiences through speeches, media appearances, cultural events, the Internet, and other programming in cooperation with "American Connections" partners, think tanks, local arts institutions, and NGOs. These programs help government officials and key local audiences gain an enhanced understanding of the democratic process and the value of human rights. For example, U.S. officials and a U.S. Government-funded speaker worked to foster support for democratic principles by speaking about the United States' transition to the new administration following the 2008 presidential election. Hearing about the peaceful and orderly transfer of power between parties allowed audiences to draw comparisons to the country's experience, where the ruling party has been in power continuously since 1959.

The United States conducts a range of programs and activities to heighten government and popular sensitivity to human rights. U.S. officials maintain active communications with the government, political parties, human rights organizations, and civil society representatives. U.S. officials continue to urge the country to work within the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) to ensure that the newly created ASEAN human rights commission develops into a meaningful institution for promoting and protecting human rights in the region. U.S. officials have established a working relationship with the country's appointed representative to this institution.

Through the U.S.-funded International Visitor Leadership Program, the U.S. Government continues to reach out directly to potential leaders in journalism, civil society, and politics. The embassy continues to expand its speaker program to inform a broader and younger audience about U.S. society and foreign policy. The program encourages liberalizing trends through discussion of fundamental freedoms.

The U.S. Government makes it a priority to engage extensively with the country's Malay-Muslim community and other religious communities. In early 2010 the U.S. Government brought together a U.S. official who focuses on religious freedom and representatives of the umbrella organization for the 10 major religions of the country.

**Soloman Islands:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in the Solomon Islands to promote democracy and human rights. For background on the Solomon Islands' human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government supports multilateral programs to rebuild failed police and government institutions, with a particular emphasis on supporting the process of peace and reconciliation.

Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government supports multilateral programs to rebuild failed police and government institutions. The U.S. Government actively advocates for the rights and political participation of women through the International Women of Courage Award Program and International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). Recognizing women leaders provides women with strong role models and allows them to envision a future that includes women in high-level positions.

The U.S. Government also focuses significant attention on promoting human and civil rights, including the rights of women and minorities, and encourages a free and fair political process. U.S. officials collaborated with local universities, NGOs, and think tanks to make topical presentations throughout the nation on these issues. In July 2010 the United States is funding an election observation mission to the Solomon Islands.

**Thailand:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

## Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Thailand to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Thailand's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Support for democracy is the U.S. Government's top priority in the country. The U.S. Government seeks to strengthen civil society, the media, and the judiciary, as well as independent government agencies that provide oversight, encourage constructive policy dialogue, and advance a political culture of checks, balances, and accountability. The U.S. Government continues to provide training and support to judicial, law enforcement, and civil society groups to encourage legal transparency, good governance, and civic participation. The U.S. Government focuses its assistance efforts on rule of law, abatement of violence in the southern provinces, combating trafficking in persons, and promoting the rights of ethnic minority groups, refugees, and asylum seekers. The U.S. Government also focuses on the promotion of labor rights through educating migrant laborers, studying the practices of labor brokers who transport workers overseas, and developing activities for migrant children to decrease their vulnerability to labor exploitation. The U.S. Government encourages military professionalism, competent law enforcement capacity, and a bureaucracy that respects and protects individuals, human rights, the rule of law, and the need to investigate allegations of corruption.

The United States continues to work with the country to build and maintain a criminal justice system that is worthy of public trust and provides ballast to the country during current and anticipated political uncertainty. The U.S. Government uses law enforcement and judicial assistance programs to help the justice system achieve higher levels of public respect and professionalism.

### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

Since April 2009, the U.S. Government has called for a peaceful, constitutional, and democratic resolution to the continuing political uncertainty and occasional violence. The United States Government supports programs that strengthen democratic processes and independent institutions, assisting organizations and groups that promote respect for the

civil and political rights of ethnic and religious minorities and migrant workers. The recently launched Thailand Citizen Engagement and Reconciliation Program seeks to foster constructive civil society engagement with the government as a means to building consensus for democratic political processes and mitigation of social and political extremism. The United States supports freedom of expression and the press through cooperative outreach and capacity-building programs with media organizations and community radio networks, encouraging local organizations to help the media professionalize and develop investigative reporting skills. The United States cooperates with national broadcast networks to develop staff and news production systems, increasing the quality and regional diversity of news reporting. The U.S. Government helped facilitate the travel of several local journalists to the United States to gain a deeper understanding of U.S. policy, culture, and society through domestic reporting tours and citizen exchange programs.

The United States supports a civic education program aimed at increasing civic and political participation and strengthening tolerance among students and seeks to address the southern conflict by facilitating exchange experiences for individuals living in societies divided by religious and ethnic conflict. The United States supports a forensic science program that combats impunity and intolerance in the south and continues to facilitate speaker programs to address civic engagement, political reconciliation through democratic processes, local government responsiveness, constitutional systems, and conflict mitigation. The U.S. Government sponsors capacity building for the criminal justice system that includes human rights training for police and consultations with the U.S. judiciary. The long-term goals of a U.S. Government-funded human rights program in the south are to increase respect for due process and judicial accountability in legal proceedings, promote restorative justice, build the capacity of human rights lawyers, engage in a comprehensive public outreach campaign, and advocate for adherence to international human rights standards.

To support democratic institution building among a diverse audience, the U.S. Government sends local citizens, including Muslims and women, to the United States to learn about democracy, multiculturalism, human trafficking countermeasures, and religious freedom and tolerance. U.S. officials deliver speeches on these and other themes such as the importance of worker rights and collective bargaining during visits to

universities and other public venues. The United States administers a small grants program to promote the development of civil society, supporting projects that help protect the rights of trafficked persons, develop youth leadership, promote civic engagement, and support conflict mitigation in the south.

The United States, in conjunction with the UN and other international organizations, maintains close contacts with Burmese refugees, political activists, and NGOs in the country. U.S. officials also work closely with the government to advocate for and monitor the conditions of Burmese refugees and other vulnerable groups within the country's borders. U.S. officials frequently visit the Thai-Burma border to monitor living conditions in the refugee camps. The United States strives to place the refugee situation on more sustainable footing by urging reform of camp regulations and the streamlining of health and education systems. The United States advocates for the humanitarian treatment of ethnic Hmong from Laos who seek refugee status and encourages the government to grant the UN access to Hmong in the country to determine the validity of their refugee claims. The U.S. Government works closely with various government agencies, local NGOs, and international organizations to support efforts to combat all forms of labor exploitation and trafficking in persons, including funding projects and advocating policy change. This support enhances the prevention of trafficking crimes through assistance to at-risk populations and trafficking; it also advances law enforcement and prosecution efforts.

U.S. officials developed and participated in seminars dealing with witness protection, plea bargaining, modernizing the judiciary, public corruption, and obstruction of justice issues. The United States supports the development of rule of law by funding a grant that sponsors workshops and seminars with U.S. officials and judicial experts aimed at improving ethics codes for lawyers, prosecutors, and judges, and combating judicial corruption. The United States and the government continue to fund and manage jointly a regional training center for police, immigration, customs, and other law enforcement officials that includes respect for human rights as part of its curriculum. The U.S. Government funds and receives law enforcement officers for advanced training, and professional conferences and career development, which includes material on U.S. and international standards for human rights as related to law enforcement. International Military Education and Training courses promote the value of maintaining civilian

control of the military and are indispensable tools for ensuring the military respects democratic institutions and values.

## **Timor-Leste:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Timor-Leste to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Timor-Leste's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's strategy in the country is to support democracy by fostering a more transparent and accountable government. U.S. programs seek to strengthen the justice system, foster the independence and professionalism of the media and civil society, promote free and fair elections, and improve the responsiveness of government to citizens.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. assistance in 2010 supports the development of the formal justice system by strengthening personnel management systems for judges and prosecutors and improving basic management and administration of justice sector institutions, including the offices of the independent ombudsman and the vice prime minister, who has a mandate to combat corruption. In addition, U.S. assistance targets increasing and expanding access to legal services and information to all citizens, with particular emphases on women and

other marginalized groups. U.S. programs are the only donor-sponsored activities currently supporting the Superior Councils of the Magistracy and Prosecution to oversee the appointment and evaluation of newly entering Timorese judges and lawyers, an activity that will be replicated in the nascent Superior Council of the Public Defender in 2010. U.S. justice system programs also provide critical and comprehensive monitoring of the country's four district courts and Court of Appeals to ensure judicial fairness and equity. In 2010 U.S. assistance will provide executive financial management training to Justice Institution agency directors, authorizing officers, and other staff supervisors with the broad objective of increasing the managerial skills of senior staff in the areas of operational planning, budget planning, and execution, financial reporting and analysis, human resource management, and asset management.

In addition, the U.S. Government's assistance provides citizens, particularly rural women, with access to justice and dispute resolution through support to legal aid and mediation centers. Legal aid centers also raise public awareness of laws and citizens' rights and responsibilities. The U.S. Government has spearheaded several key seminars that resulted in the collaboration between the U.S.-funded implementing partner, the Ministry of Justice, and the Timorese legal aid community on drafting a law regulating and providing for state-subsidized legal aid.

U.S. programs to develop civil society emphasize the importance of promoting government accountability and transparency and target two main groups: civil society organizations including elected suco-(village) level community leaders, and the media. The U.S. Government provides technical assistance to print, radio, and Internet news outlets. The United States will open a sixth media house in the country that will provide professional and logistical support to district-based media outlets and journalists. Notably, U.S. assistance resulted in the launch of the country's first-ever online news agency.

Programming to orient and train newly elected suco council representatives is ongoing in 2010. To support the government's decentralization initiative, the U.S. Government provides support to review the draft municipal government laws.

## **Tonga:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities in Tonga to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Tonga's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The protection of human rights and the fostering of democratic institutions in the country are top priorities of the U.S. Government. The United States maintains dialogue with all political factions, including the prodemocracy movement, with the goal of encouraging progress on political and electoral reforms launched by the government. The United States also focuses on building the capacity of prodemocracy NGOs and nascent political parties to ensure the successful implementation of these reforms. The United States is working to promote political reconciliation and dialogue between prodemocracy and conservative forces. The United States engages with the government and civil society to develop programs that promote free and fair elections, the rule of law, good governance, and judicial independence. The United States promotes transparency, accountability, and a commitment to representative government.

##### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. officials frequently engage senior officials, journalists, media organizations, and other civil society activists to underscore the importance of democratic reforms, human rights, rule of law, and good governance. The United States has funded local NGOs to hold voter education workshops. Through the International Visitor Leadership Program, media representatives and democracy and human rights activists travel to the United States to learn about grassroots democracy, the media's role in a democracy, and the U.S. electoral system. In 2008 a civil servant traveled to the United States to study legislative drafting, and a civil society activist visited the United States to study public policy.

Through education, training programs, and joint exercises, U.S. officials engage with the military to reinforce proper civil-military relations and advance overall respect for human rights.

**Vietnam:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Vietnam to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Vietnam's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Persuading the country to adopt internationally accepted norms in respecting human rights and religious freedom is at the top of the U.S. Embassy's agenda. The U.S. Government regularly urges the Government of Vietnam to eliminate restrictions on fundamental freedoms, encourages meaningful political reform, and raises specific cases where the government has infringed on the human rights of individuals. The U.S. Government focuses on five main areas of human rights: promotion and protection of individual human rights as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including immediately releasing political prisoners; freedom of all religious denominations to practice their faith; growth of civil society, including promoting a free press, viable and independent legal institutions, and a vibrant NGO sector; and promoting respect for internationally recognized worker rights, particularly freedom of association and countering trafficking in persons. The U.S. Government uses: diplomatic influence; targeted dialogue with government officials on the benefits to the country of expanded freedoms and an improved human rights environment; public diplomacy efforts aimed at educating key decision makers, future leaders, and the general public; capacity building programs in a variety of fields that strengthen civil society organizations; and formal dialogues with the government on human rights and labor issues. The U.S. Government

works closely with like-minded diplomatic missions in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to coordinate efforts to promote human rights.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

In meetings with leading government officials and in statements to the local and international media, the U.S. Government continues to promote human rights as a top U.S. priority. The U.S. Government regularly calls for the government to improve the human rights situation, to release prisoners of conscience, and to enhance religious freedom. The U.S. Government has reiterated that a strengthened bilateral relationship and increasing socioeconomic development hinge on progress with respect to human rights and internationally recognized core labor rights. Specifically, the U.S. Government meets regularly with top officials of the ministries of public security and foreign affairs to press for the release of prisoners of conscience and calls for Embassy access to individual prisoners of concern to ascertain their conditions, urge that prisoners be treated according to international standards, and express U.S. interest in their cases. In addition, the U.S. Government meets with other officials, including the ministers of justice and information and communication as well as leaders of the national assembly, to press for reforms to institute the rule of law and allow for greater Internet and press freedoms. Discussions continue regularly at the working level as well. These include calls to reform the criminal code, rescind recent restrictions on press freedom, and allow foreign news bureaus greater operating rights. The U.S. Government also meets with political dissidents and civil society leaders to encourage their efforts to exercise their universal right to freedom of speech and expression.

In meetings with the Vietnamese community in the United States as well as with a wide range of U.S.-based democracy and human rights groups, the U.S. Government listens to specific human rights concerns and seeks input on how best to promote human rights in Vietnam. The U.S. Government also meets with top religious leaders in Vietnam to assess respect for religious freedom. U.S. officials regularly meet with the government's Committee on Religious Affairs and other senior officials, including provincial leaders in areas where specific problems exist, and urge them to bring their laws and practices in line with international standards and to implement fully Vietnam's Religion Law. The United States continues to hold an annual Human Rights Dialogue, in which U.S.

officials raise a wide range of issues and concerns. A Human Rights Dialogue took place in Washington, D.C., in November 2009.

The U.S. Government continued on-going labor cooperation in such areas as improving freedom of association and collective bargaining, labor inspection and enforcement, and preventing and eliminating exploitative child labor and trafficking in persons. The U.S. Government frequently encourages the Government of Vietnam to reform its labor laws to meet international labor standards, including the completion of the comprehensive revision of the Labor Code and the Trade Union law on which the Department of Labor (DOL), the U.S. Trade Representative, and the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor provided input. The Embassy is working with: the Ministries of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA); Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor to promote industrial relations and more effective dispute resolution mechanisms. The Embassy continues to support two major U.S. Government-funded labor reform projects promoting sustainable labor compliance in the apparel and footwear sectors and improved industrial relations. Human resource development, social insurance, expanded labor rights, occupational health and safety, and labor export issues are other important areas of the Embassy's ongoing labor dialogue. Labor issues were on the agenda in the 2009 Trade and Investment Framework Agreement talks in Washington, D.C., and a DOL-MOLISA Labor Dialogue is planned for Fall 2010.

The Embassy participates in an international donor dialogue, sponsored by the Central Steering Committee on Anti-Corruption, on the issue of government corruption. On press freedom, the Embassy supports the professionalization of the media by bringing local journalists to the United States for training through the International Visitor Leadership Program and conducting training in Vietnam and the region. The United States facilitates the capacity building of civil institutions and NGOs, including through programs to train lawyers and to limit the spread of HIV/AIDS. The U.S. Government engages the government's National Steering Committee on its anti-trafficking National Program of Action and the role of civil society. The Embassy also continues to engage the government on many women's issues through active grant programs on the prevention of domestic violence and the promotion of women's political participation.

## **EUROPE AND EURASIA:**

### **Albania:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Albania to promote democracy and human rights. For background on the country's human rights conditions, please see the *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Strengthening the rule of law and fighting corruption are the top objectives for the United States in the country. Effective and independent democratic institutions are also central U.S. democracy objectives. Key areas of U.S. focus include reducing opportunities for bribery; building oversight and audit capabilities among state institutions; increasing capacity to investigate and prosecute corruption and financial crimes; and reforming the judicial system by increasing accountability, transparency, and independence. The United States considers combating trafficking in persons one of its highest priorities, as well as encouraging democratic participation. The United States encourages the democratic process by supporting NGOs that advocate policy initiatives ranging from women's rights and judicial reform to environmental issues. U.S. priorities are in line with the goals of the European Union (EU), in keeping with the country's EU integration process.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

Promoting the rule of law in the country is a primary U.S. concern. U.S.-sponsored rule of law programs aim to increase accountability and transparency in ten district and

appellate courts through the implementation of a computerized trial record system, audio recording system, the creation of public information offices, court monitoring, and improvements in archiving and file management. Improving the criminal justice system's ability to prosecute organized crime, corruption, and human and narcotics trafficking is another area of emphasis for the United States. U.S.-funded programs support efforts to propose and review criminal law-related legislation; train judges, police, and prosecutors; and offer expert assistance in establishing more effective law enforcement structures. The United States gears its assistance toward building the skills and establishing the procedures necessary to improve investigation and prosecution of complex financial crimes, money laundering, and corruption. A U.S.-supported international consortium of 35 organizations facilitates U.S. coordination with a wider range of organizations involved in criminal justice work. In addition, the United States makes public statements promoting democratic reform and support for human rights and encourages others to do the same, as well as engages frequently with government officials on these issues.

U.S. assistance continues to support additional anticorruption and accountability efforts. In October 2008 the government signed an agreement to participate in the second phase of a U.S. assistance program focused on reducing corruption. This program aims to reduce corruption through more effective criminal investigations and preventive reforms in tax administration, business licensing, and building permit services. An ongoing priority is the establishment and training of specialized anticorruption units in major cities. The units comprise prosecutors, police officers, customs officials, and tax investigators that investigate and prosecute economic crime and corruption, and have a number of significant arrests and convictions to their credit. In order to promote accountability, the United States funds a governance program that promotes effective city-level tax collection, public asset management, and public-private partnerships on local economic development plans.

Fostering participation in democratic life is crucial to U.S. efforts in the country and is a centerpiece of U.S. programming. The United States assists with decentralization programs at both the local and national level. The United States engages with civic groups and media organizations to enable them to work more effectively. Fighting human trafficking is a key priority for the United States; for example, in 2009 the United States

completed two of the largest and most comprehensive anti-trafficking programs to combat trafficking for sexual exploitation and child trafficking. The United States is continuing a program begun in the fall of 2009 that supports an existing coalition of shelters for victims of trafficking as well as another program that seeks to increase the capacity of local, regional, and national actors to identify and refer victims and expand victim protection systems at the community level.

## **Armenia:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Armenia to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Armenia's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. democracy, human rights, good governance, and rule of law strategy in Armenia focuses on promoting democratic institutions and processes, political pluralism, citizens' engagement in political processes, the rule of law, government transparency and accountability, a vibrant civil society, respect for human rights, and freedom of religion. U.S. assistance also aims to improve Armenia's electoral systems, promote an independent judiciary, promote free and diverse media, strengthen parliament's institutional capacity, reduce corruption, and improve the capacity of government agencies and NGOs to combat trafficking in persons. Future implementation of the country's Compact with the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) that entered into force in September 2006 depends on progress in democratic practices and on its policy performance on MCC's "Ruling Justly" indicators. This reinforces the importance of promoting democratic and human rights reforms to underpin the broader bilateral relationship.

In response to the flawed 2008 presidential elections, the democratic backsliding that followed, and the lingering political tensions caused by these events, the United States has intensified work with civil society, independent media, local government, women and youth activists, and reformers within the government to respond to the public's demand for reform and democratization. Promoting the engagement of informed citizens in political processes and encouraging a more representative political culture are particularly critical in reversing anti-democratic trends. Through a wide array of assistance programs, the United States seeks to support government watchdogs and human rights organizations to increase accountability and transparency in the government, and to support anticorruption efforts that foster a culture of lawfulness among both the government and the governed. The United States also continues pursuing its key objective of combating trafficking in persons from, to, and within the country.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. officials use diplomatic engagement to promote democracy and human rights-related goals with government officials, political parties, civil society, and media representatives at all levels. These messages are conveyed through local media. Key activities included pressing for due process rights for jailed political figures, activists, and citizens jailed or charged for exposing election fraud or public sector abuses, and urging greater respect for freedoms of assembly, association, and the media. The United States continues to implement its three-year democracy promotion strategy, part of which focuses on improving the integrity of the country's electoral processes leading up to parliamentary elections slated for early 2012. This includes programs to improve the accuracy of the country's national voter list and to strengthen election administration. Work with political parties has shifted to address weak party structures and platform development at the local level and greater engagement with youth and women in political and electoral processes, with the aim of getting the successor generation more engaged in grass-roots political activity and addressing the under-representation of women in elected government.

The United States continues to conduct training programs for judges, prosecutors, attorneys, and police with the aim of bringing law enforcement and judicial practices into line with international standards. These training programs have focused on a defendant's

right to confront witnesses, the right to an impartial tribunal, and the use of case law. U.S. efforts in support of the Armenian criminal justice system include training for judges, prosecutors, police investigators, and defense attorneys on case law supporting the European Convention on Human Rights. Training has taken the form of a series of seminars, translation and publication of Court decisions, and development of a web page on such decisions. U.S. efforts also focused on advancing reform of the Armenian Criminal Procedure Code and Law on Advocates, supporting the adversarial use of forensic evidence, improving of sentencing legislation and practices and helping the government plan for an expanded Public Defender system that provides legal services in civil as well as criminal matters.

Given the success of long-term journalist training programs and assistance on better business practices and commercial viability, the United States shifted the emphasis of its media activities to focus on the development of alternative sources of information as well as smaller, regional media. The shift also aimed at raising awareness of the law on freedom of information among government officials, journalists, lawyers, judges, NGOs, members of parliament, and political party members. Additionally, U.S. assistance has trained journalists in international journalism standards. The United States further supports freedom of information with four American Corners that provide information about U.S. democratic institutions. To promote the rule of law and fight corruption, the United States advocates for improved anticorruption legislation that limits judicial discretion in sentencing and increases penalties for perjury, bribery, and related crimes. Senior U.S. officials also advocate for greater press freedom.

The United States provides funding to civil society groups to investigate and expose corruption in schools and the court system. U.S. assistance programs work to reduce corruption by establishing and supporting Advocacy and Action Centers in all regions of Armenia. These centers provide support to citizens to help resolve corruption-related problems, offer legal assistance, and provide a mechanism for reporting corruption and directing complaints to government agencies. In addition, the program strengthens anticorruption institutions, including the government's Human Rights Defender (ombudsman). Separately, a U.S.-funded legal socialization project has been implemented in over 150 secondary schools and is aimed at teaching students about their

rights and responsibilities under the law, and radio series have been sponsored to raise awareness on human rights and combating corruption.

U.S. officials promote civil society through the funding of local advocacy NGOs that pursue initiatives to promote democratic development, fair and transparent electoral processes, and political party development. To promote respect for human rights, U.S. officials maintain collaborative relations with government officials, local human rights defenders, and human rights NGOs. U.S. funding for some of these NGOs has helped to improve independent reporting of human rights abuses. Other funding has allowed for the trial monitoring of court cases of opposition members arrested for their role in protests related to the presidential elections. U.S. funding has provided training to youth on the themes of tolerance, mutual understanding, human rights, and democratic values. Additional funding has supported public awareness campaigns, training programs, and shelters for victims of domestic violence.

U.S. officials frequently discuss religious freedom problems with government and religious leaders as part of the overall policy to promote human rights. To combat human trafficking, U.S. officials meet regularly with government interlocutors and members of the international antitrafficking working group to support their efforts. U.S. officials monitor trafficking trials and propose recommendations on antitrafficking policy and funding objectives to the government, and U.S. antitrafficking assistance provides annual funding to a shelter that offers safe haven, medical, social, and legal services for trafficking victims. U.S. assistance continues to provide training for Border Guards and police on human trafficking prevention and detection efforts. Other funding supports the raising of public awareness about the forms and dangers of trafficking.

### **Azerbaijan:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Azerbaijan to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Azerbaijan's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

In 2010 and beyond, the U.S. faces an uphill effort to promote Azerbaijan's democratic transition. The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy focuses on promoting five key sectors of democratic development: democratic political processes; the rule of law, including an independent judiciary and the fight against corruption; respect for media freedom; respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and an engaged, empowered, and educated citizenry.

In order to foster the development of these five sectors, the United States continues to support the development of key democratic institutions of government and civil society, with a focus on improving transparency and accountability. Programs to assist nongovernmental organizations, political parties, and the media continue to increase their capacity to advocate for public interests and serve as a check on state authority. U.S. programs support the development of an independent judiciary, fair trials, and an adversarial justice system, as well as strengthen the legislature and build capacity to combat corruption, money laundering, terror financing, and trafficking in persons. Finally, the U.S. Government continues to provide small grants to promote civil society and democratic development, and to support people-to-people ties through educational, professional, and cultural exchanges.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

Bilateral engagement forms a core part of the U.S. strategy to achieve these objectives. U.S. officials at all levels regularly meet with government officials, representatives of political parties, a range of human rights and democracy activists, media representatives, and religious leaders. High-level U.S. officials visiting the country reinforce the U.S.

promotion of democracy and human rights. Promoting democracy and protecting human rights remain the primary objectives of U.S. public diplomacy programming activities, and U.S. officials regularly focus on democracy and human rights in public remarks. In addition, the United States utilizes small grants and a variety of other programs to foster greater understanding of democracy and human rights. The United States places particular emphasis on gender and youth issues in all programs.

Many U.S. diplomatic and programmatic efforts attempt to promote democratic political processes. In 2010 these efforts focus on aiding Azerbaijan to hold November parliamentary elections that meet international standards, including respect for political pluralism and fundamental freedoms. The United States reinforces its advocacy with government officials through assistance aimed at strengthening the ability of political parties to develop platforms and strategies that are responsive to citizen concerns, supporting domestic and international observation efforts, and stimulating public interest in and understanding of election-related issues. The United States also continues to support the development of a transparent and accountable parliament. To facilitate the development of a responsive legislature, the United States works with parliament to open constituency offices, trains members of parliament to respond to constituency requests and issues, provides greater citizen access to official and draft legislation, and promotes civil society interaction with the legislature. In advance of the March 2009 constitutional referendum on the elimination of presidential term limits, the United States highlighted the importance of conditions for an unfettered and open debate and a free and fair vote.

To promote an independent judiciary, the United States supplements its diplomatic efforts with assistance in training new judges about their role as neutral arbiters in adversarial court proceedings, strategies for effectively handling complex criminal cases, and European Convention on Human Rights standards. In addition to promoting judicial independence, the United States funds programs to increase the professionalism and skills of prosecutors, the defense bar, young lawyers, and female lawyers. U.S. programs emphasize development of adversarial processes consistent with international norms, including balancing the interests of the state with the rights of detainees and defendants. The United States continues to work with law schools on curriculum development and new teaching methodologies. The United States provides technical assistance that

supports civil society's anticorruption efforts, enhances the capacity of government agencies and officials to fight and prevent corruption, and advances legislative reforms consistent with the country's international obligations to prevent, investigate, and prosecute corruption.

U.S. officials at all levels regularly engage the government on the importance of media freedom, including the need to decriminalize defamation. Senior U.S. officials raise concerns regarding the unjust imprisonment of journalists. In cases of government action to restrict freedom of expression, including the government's decision to remove Radio Liberty, Voice of America, and BBC from FM radio as of January 1, 2009, and the imprisonment of two youth activists and bloggers, senior U.S. officials continue to raise their concerns with the government, and the United States has issued public statements regarding these events. Senior U.S. officials urge the government to investigate and bring to justice individuals--whether members of the security forces or others--responsible for physical attacks on journalists, including those responsible for the unsolved 2005 murder of prominent independent journalist Elmar Huseynov. U.S. assistance continues to support the professionalization of media. For example, the United States provided technical assistance to strengthen the business management, broadcasting operations, and program development of independent outlets, and supported free Internet access and training to the public. U.S. assistance also funded training for journalists on mixing new technologies with traditional media approaches by promoting the development of news/information Web sites and Web blogging. Through long-term academic exchanges, U.S. programs supported the educational development of journalists. In other programs, the United States continues to support initiatives to increase the independence of the media and to improve advocacy on behalf of media rights and freedom of information. The United States seeks to assist reformers in effectively monitoring government harassment and interference in this area.

The United States promotes respect for the rule of law and human rights diplomatically and programmatically. U.S. officials often monitor high-profile court proceedings. For example, in 2009-2010, U.S. officials monitored the court case of two prominent youth activists/bloggers physically attacked in a restaurant and later convicted and imprisoned for hooliganism. U.S. officials urge their counterparts to respect the right of freedom of

assembly and to authorize peaceful demonstrations. To emphasize the importance of this freedom, U.S. officials monitor police conduct at political rallies. When attempts to hold such rallies are prevented, the United States voices its concerns to all levels of the government regarding the right of citizens to organize and demonstrate peacefully. The United States also promotes freedom of association and encourages respect for religious freedom, including the right to practice religion without interference or restriction. U.S. officials stress the importance of respecting religious freedom in meetings with government officials and highlight the presence of religious tolerance and Islam in America. To address human rights abuses by law enforcement officers, U.S. officials urge the government to ensure that police comply with international human rights standards and to hold police officials accountable for torture, abuse, or misconduct. To combat human trafficking, the United States supports training on anti-trafficking in persons legislation and victim identification strategies. U.S. officials also promote anti-trafficking measures and preventive mechanisms in meetings with government officials. U.S. officials regularly coordinate anti-trafficking efforts with the international community.

The United States supports the development of civil society diplomatically and programmatically. U.S. officials engage in dialogue with NGOs supporting democratic reform. The United States provides technical assistance, grants, and exchange programs to: support the activities of local NGOs; encourage dialogue between the government and civil society; educate the government and public about democratic practices; and improve local government accountability to citizens. The United States provides small grants to local NGOs that promote human rights, a free and professional media, democratic governance and the rule of law, free and fair elections, community activism, and civic responsibility.

**Belarus:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Belarus to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Belarus' human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government's Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's principal foreign policy objective in the country is to promote the emergence of a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous government that respects human rights and the rule of law. Belarus' political and economic policies effectively limit most of its citizens from traveling to the west, while ever-tightening restrictions on media and the Internet restrict the flow of information into the country. Broadening knowledge of the outside world will contribute to key U.S. Government policy objectives to promote openness, discussion of alternative approaches on governance and economics, and domestic pressures for change. Importantly, our views of the problems in Belarus are shared by the EU, and policy coordination with the EU has been close and effective throughout. The United States also cooperates closely with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and neighboring countries to promote democracy and human rights through the coordinated release of press statements and other actions on specific human rights abuses.

Although the United States and Belarus have diplomatic relations, the United States selectively engages with government officials at the assistant secretary level and below, and places a priority on empowering the country's people to determine their future and reform their state. Through Embassy Minsk, which has been limited by the government of Belarus since May 2008 to five diplomats, the U.S. Government asserted its policy interests and concerns to government authorities at senior levels, while simultaneously reaching out to the country's people with educational and professional exchanges for citizens and other programs to develop a cadre of prodemocracy professionals. Despite restricted bilateral relations with Belarus, the United States continues to support engagement with the Belarusian authorities in areas of mutual benefit, such as nonproliferation, counterterrorism, and combating trafficking in persons.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States continues its policy of promoting democracy by: denying direct, non-humanitarian assistance to government entities; monitoring, reporting, and speaking out on governmental abuses; supporting democracy and human rights programs; and facilitating educational and professional exchanges. These efforts take place despite Embassy Minsk's limited staffing.

A new U.S. assistance strategy was formally adopted in December 2009. The new strategy expands the portfolio into previously under-resourced areas of assistance and engages the government on issues of tangible benefit to a broad cross-section of the population in order to achieve U.S. strategic objectives. The new multi-year strategy lays out the following three priority areas: a continued focus on democracy and governance to open participation in public life, expanding the informed voter base, fostering a broad-based civil society capable of public advocacy, training a new generation of leadership, strengthening independent media outlets and media support structures, and expanding the constituency of Belarusian political parties; support for health programs that promote engagement of civil society and communities in their advocacy for improved service by enhancing the rights and responsibilities of patients, while demonstrating that NGOs can facilitate reforms for average citizens; and a re-engagement to expand the private sector, in particular small and medium size enterprises, to help reduce those dependent on the state for employment and strengthen the private business sector.

The United States also supports efforts to reduce trafficking in persons, with a particular focus on the sexual and labor exploitation of women between the ages of 16 and 35 and, increasingly, men recruited for labor exploitation. The United States funded programs to increase awareness of trafficking among risk groups and the general public, to help prevent human trafficking by improving job searching skills and vocational training, to facilitate trafficking victim reintegration into society, and to build the capacity of NGOs to improve victim identification and protection. The antitrafficking NGO network is the first foreign-funded NGO sector the government has accepted as a partner. The United

States facilitates direct humanitarian aid through funding the transport of supplies donated by private Americans and U.S. companies.

The United States closely monitors and publicly condemns the government's persistent, calculated attacks on rallies and demonstrations, opposition political parties, civil society organizations, religious groups, and independent media outlets. U.S. officials demonstrate support for prodemocracy forces by attending or monitoring politically motivated trials of opposition members, independent journalists, and civil society activists, as well as holding regular meetings with opposition and civil society leaders. A Helsinki Commission delegation led by senior U.S. officials met a group of opposition and civil society leaders in Minsk in June 2009. The Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs also met a group of opposition leaders in Minsk in August 2009.

In 2007 and 2008 the United States increased existing sanctions on the regime and imposed new sanctions targeting government entities, as well as officials responsible for human rights abuses and repression. Following the release of the last political prisoners in 2008, the United States suspended sanctions against two subsidiaries of state-owned petrochemical conglomerate Belneftekhim. The suspension was extended in November 2009. At every opportunity, the United States stresses to Belarusian government officials that further action on sanctions depend on additional positive human rights steps taken by the government.

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina to promote democracy and human rights. For background on the country's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and *The International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

## Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's highest priority in the country is to facilitate the country's full integration into the Euro-Atlantic community, ensuring that its future will be stable, democratic, and prosperous. Fifteen years after the Dayton Peace Accords ended the 1992-1995 war, the country remains deeply divided along ethnic lines, undermining basic governance. To address these issues, the United States prioritized the promoting of reform within the defense, law enforcement, judicial and parliamentary sectors, as well as overall constitutional reform. The United States also targeted key nongovernmental institutions -- such as a free, vibrant, and independent media, and a thriving civil society -- as critical to maximizing the country's democratic gains.

The U.S. priorities stemming from the country's 1992-1995 war include fostering truth and reconciliation, prosecuting war criminals, and identifying the remains of those missing in the war, both as a humanitarian gesture and to facilitate war crimes prosecutions and documentation. The United States also targets improving government accountability at all levels. The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy aims to strengthen law enforcement, judicial, and political institutions to protect vulnerable populations, including ethnic minorities and victims of trafficking in persons, from discrimination and violence while also ensuring transparency in the judicial process and combating corruption.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

A U.S.-funded justice sector development program improves the efficiency, transparency, and fairness of the justice system by strengthening the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, and by building the Ministry of Justice's ability to manage strategic planning and policy making, budgeting, donor coordination, and European integration. The United States also works with the parliament to strengthen political processes and decision-making on key issues. One U.S.-supported governance accountability project bolsters local governments' ability to respond efficiently to the needs of its citizens while also streamlining processes that might otherwise be prone to corruption or discrimination against ethnic minorities. Media freedom in the country is deteriorating, with the level of threats against journalists increasing in the past year. The polarized political situation

influences the media, as the media reinforce ideological and ethnic divisions, often compromising media professionalism. With many members of the local media influenced by sources of political and economic power, the United States directs available funding to support alternative media sources that promote multi-ethnic programming. The United States also supports associations that promote professional standards and media freedom. The United States continues a civic advocacy partnership program with NGOs to strengthen their advocacy, coalition building, and watch-dog capabilities, and to address citizen needs through education, advocacy, and provision of services.

The United States funds local NGO projects to increase civic participation in decision-making processes through various public advocacy campaigns. These campaigns focus on issues such as transparency in government, political and economic empowerment of women in society, constitutional reforms, corruption, abuse of human rights (including violence against women, children, and minorities), reconciliation and tolerance, sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons, development of diversity, and tolerance in the media. The United States supports a wide range of public diplomacy programs: student information sessions, American Corners outreach, English language teaching support, media training, educational and cultural exchanges, and International Visitor Leadership Programs designed to expose potential leaders to U.S. institutions and values and strengthen confidence in state-level institutions. U.S. civic education programs reach students from kindergarten through secondary school, teacher training programs, and madrassas (Muslim secondary schools) throughout the country. The United States uses diplomatic engagement with interlocutors from the Office of the High Representative (OHR), the foreign diplomatic corps, international organizations, local NGOs, and government agencies in coordinated efforts to implement decisions made by the Peace Implementation Council as well as to monitor and, when necessary, to counter actions that limit democratic freedoms and human rights. To counter nationalism and promote the truth and reconciliation necessary for a sustainable and sovereign future, the United States supports efforts to overcome the legacy of war. Public diplomacy programs solidify public support for necessary government reforms while also promoting civic education, participation, and advocacy. The United States has contributed financial, technical, and political support to develop the country's capacity to investigate and try war crimes cases, as well as cases involving official corruption, tax evasion, and money

laundering. This is mainly achieved through the assignment of U.S.-funded prosecutors, judges, and advisors to the Office of the State Prosecutor and the State Court. The United States supports intensive training programs for police, prosecutors, and judges to increase investigative and other skills, and police-prosecutor cooperation. The United States advocated police reforms that enabled the country to meet EU conditions for the signing of a Stabilization and Association Agreement in June 2008.

The United States remains committed to supporting post-conflict efforts to confront nationalism, promote reconciliation, and restore a culture of tolerance. Through U.S. funding, the International Commission on Missing Persons continues to collect blood samples to help identify persons reported missing during the 1992-1995 conflict. More than 16,000 persons have been identified with the aid of the United States, including 6,414 from the Srebrenica genocide. The funding also has trained staff of the Missing Persons Institute, supported victims' associations, and provided forensic evidence for war crimes proceedings. U.S.-funded initiatives also promote respect for the rights of marginalized groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and minority groups. The United States continues to facilitate the return of refugees and persons displaced by the 1992-1995 conflict, the majority of whom are ethnic minorities in those areas, working with the police to create safe neighborhood environments and ensuring prompt, appropriate response when returnees are threatened. The United States supported an advocacy program to develop the public media capacities of 15 Roma Associations, including the establishment of a Roma Information Center and publication of a Roma Magazine, in an effort to break down stereotypes and combat discrimination against the Roma. U.S. assistance also supports antitrafficking efforts, which includes providing the national-level antitrafficking strike force with technical advice and training. In 2009 the United States continued funding a major country-wide trafficking education effort, the SUSTAIN program.

**Georgia:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

## [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities in Georgia to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Georgia's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. goal is to support Georgia's transition to a sustainable democratic state that fully respects human rights and fundamental freedoms. This includes helping Georgia develop a system of democratic governance, checks and balances, and a climate in which civic engagement and political competition thrive. Over the intermediate term, this includes helping support increased institutionalization of democratic reforms and processes, including a free, fair, and competitive election in 2013 that, for the first time in Georgia's history, may result in a peaceful, constitutional and democratic presidential succession.

To achieve this, the U.S. Government focuses on fostering: (1) rule of law, including judicial independence; (2) media independence and public access to information; (3) a vibrant civil society; (4) democratic governance supported by strong links between government and the governed; and (5) political pluralism and competition based upon a level playing field and free and fair electoral processes.

### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government uses an array of diplomatic and development tools to advance our goals in this sector. Diplomatically, Department of State officials at all levels, in Washington and Tbilisi, regularly discuss democratic governance and human rights concerns with their Georgian government counterparts, members of parliament, and stakeholders including NGOs, political parties, and independent media representatives. This includes the most senior levels of the Georgian government. The United States and

Georgia established a joint Commission for Strategic Partnership including four working groups, notably one on democracy that met twice in 2009, and will meet again in 2010. The Democracy Working Group helps identify appropriate benchmarks and areas of cooperation and, thereby, encourages and measures Georgia's progress in each of the five areas of focus. In meetings with Georgian officials, all U.S. agencies emphasize the importance of further democratic reforms to achieving shared objectives in other sectors. U.S. officials also promote democratic development objectives through the use of public diplomacy, including speeches and press interviews by senior officials in Washington and at the Embassy. Local initiatives have included an extensive roll-out for the Department of State's annual Human Rights Report for 2009, which included press interviews, civil society roundtable discussions, a podcast, and talks on human rights at American Corners located in different regional libraries.

U.S.-funded democratic development programs include technical assistance, training, professional exchanges, and small grants. The Ambassador engages actively on foreign assistance matters and fosters assistance coordination. At the Embassy, sector-specific U.S. interagency working groups, including a Democracy and Governance Working Group, meet regularly to ensure that U.S. programs are effectively coordinated, have distinct roles, and receive necessary diplomatic support. U.S. Government officials also meet with representatives of other embassies and multilateral organizations to coordinate democratic reform assistance.

U.S. programs strengthen political party institutions, including in the regions. The Embassy helped create negotiation mechanisms between the ruling and opposition parties on democratic reforms. In the past year, the Embassy helped broker, including through these mechanisms, agreements to reform the electoral code reform and to establish a new C-SPAN-like political channel from the Public Broadcaster. The Ambassador participates in a working group of foreign ambassadors focused on improving electoral reforms and strengthening democratic institutions, including by improving election administration ahead of the May 2010 municipal elections. U.S.-funded implementers worked with the Central Election Commission on improving the complaints process, increasing staff professionalism, and reducing errors in the voter lists. The United States supported

indigenous monitoring efforts, including media monitoring and monitoring of use of administrative resources. The U.S. Government also supported get-out-the-vote and other voter education campaigns, including televised candidate debates. In addition, after the May local elections, the United States will launch a new, long-term project to help improve the electoral environment and election administration.

The United States continues to promote the rule of law and an independent judiciary diplomatically and programmatically. The U.S. Government recently completed a program that increased public awareness of legal rights and assisted in reform of the legal system, including: strengthening the Bar association, workshops on judicial ethics, and support for law clinics, including one for victims of domestic violence. In 2010, the U.S. Government is supporting the installation of recording devices to enable courts to record proceedings for publication. U.S.-funded implementers also provided training on the use of electronic court filing databases to encourage the use of e-filing, with the goal of increasing the court system's transparency. By year's end, the United States will launch a new program to strengthen the institutional independence of the judiciary, improve the capacity of legal rights NGOs and advocates, and improve the legal education system.

The United States provided technical assistance to support the development of a new Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) that was adopted into law on October 9, 2009. Scheduled to take effect October 1, 2010, this groundbreaking code provides for enhanced human rights protections and introduces trial and pretrial processes in which the judge will act as a neutral arbiter rather than investigator. The United States is working to prepare all parties for the advent of the new CPC and the adversarial system of criminal justice it introduces. Specifically, U.S. assistance provides training to prosecutors, judges, defense lawyers and the police, including: mock jury trial exercises and related trial skills training, substantive training on the due process protections and other requirements of the criminal procedure code, professional exchanges, training on proper procedures for collection, storage and processing of evidence, and training on both how to prepare expert reports on forensic examinations and how to testify as an expert witness for the court.

To promote the rule of law, the U.S. Government will continue to support ongoing efforts to battle corruption. The civil society, media, and rule of law programs include "watch dog" activities. The good governance program includes aspects that will increase transparency and create an environment in which citizens have more information about government activities. The United States will continue to fund professional skills training to raise police standards to a level consistent with international standards. To foster evidence-based prosecutions, the United States will fund and equip a forensic pathology facility for processing evidence gathered in homicide and physical and sexual assault cases. In addition, the U.S. Government funded the renovation and construction of two mock courtrooms for training police and prosecutors.

By late 2010, the United States will launch a new program to increase the professionalism and independence of the media. To promote independent media and the free flow of information, speaker programs are planned on convergence journalism (i.e., new media), traditional media employing new media, and social media. The U.S. Government has demonstrated support for independent media through frequent meetings with independent journalists throughout the country. The Ambassador has met extensively with independent media and repeatedly raised with government officials cases of intimidation against journalists. In February, the U.S. Government sent a Georgian journalist on a press tour to the United States, organized by the Foreign Press Center in Washington, focusing on social media.

In 2010, the United States will launch a program to support democratic local governance and a national government more responsive to the needs of the public, with the goal of increasing transparency and public input into policy formulation. In addition, the U.S. Government is conducting professional exchange programs on governance themes.

The United States will launch three new programs to improve civic awareness and civil society interaction in 2010. These programs will include civic education to increase student awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a democracy. The United States will initiate a program to increase support to civil society organizations, improving their ability to provide quality public policy options, advocate for issues, and monitor

institutions. The United States will support a new program to create resource centers throughout the country that will enable political parties, civil society organizations, and media to meet with constituents/audiences, discuss policy issues, and access the internet.

The United States continues to promote dialogue between the government and minority communities and their integration into the social fabric of the country. U.S. Government officials, including the Ambassador, regularly meet religious and community leaders and groups and local government leaders in regions with large ethnic minorities. To support development of civil society within minority regions, the U.S. Government works with NGOs to organize capacity building seminars, social outreach programs, networking opportunities with domestic and international NGOs, and tolerance in the schools projects. In 2010, the United States is supporting small grants to local NGOs working on minority issues and monitoring the government's implementation of the National Integration and Tolerance program.

U.S. assistance continued to raise public awareness of trafficking dangers, using a variety of printed and visual materials with anti-trafficking messages. The United States is funding a comprehensive study of border crossing trends and migration patterns, and interviewing returning deportees to update information from a 2001 study on human trafficking in Georgia. Results of the 2010 study will be shared with the government and will inform anti-trafficking programs. U.S. assistance will also enhance the capacity of police working at state borders, mobile teams, and consular officials stationed in Turkey and Greece to properly and proactively identify trafficking victims.

The United States continues to work with the European Union Monitoring Mission, other multilateral mechanisms, and the government to find a peaceful solution to the conflicts with the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia without compromising Georgia's sovereignty or territorial integrity, and to promote human rights and democracy in these regions. Such rights include the right of internally displaced persons to return safely and voluntarily to their homes.

**Kosovo:**

## BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. Mission in Kosovo to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Kosovo's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The key U.S. priority in the promotion of human rights and democracy in the country is strengthening the institutions of the government and society required for a robust multi-ethnic democracy. U.S. Government assistance programs have as a priority improving governance in municipalities, which are integral to Kosovo's decentralization process. The new Serb-majority municipalities require institutional development in order to deliver services to their constituents. Additional U.S. programs work to ensure that society and the government are firmly grounded in the rule of law and democratic values. In an effort to improve judicial and law enforcement institutions, U.S. programs work with police, prosecutors, and judges to provide access to justice, as well as to develop respect for justice and demand for justice. U.S. Government assistance programs also support minority rights, assist the progress of political parties, strengthen independent media, create conditions for free and fair elections, and support efforts to combat corruption.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. assistance programs encourage the devolution of authority to municipalities and the allocation of resources needed to fulfill their responsibilities. Priority is given to strengthening the Kosovo Serb-majority municipalities, most of which are newly created or expanded. U.S.-funded activities assist these municipalities through a capital investment fund for small projects and assistance to help organize and train the new municipal structures. The purpose is to increase their capacity to provide municipal services to constituents and to manage municipal resources in a transparent and

participatory manner. Additionally, the U.S. Government is organizing an International Visitor Leadership Program for municipal leaders to allow them to study first-hand the workings of federalism in the United States. U.S. programs work closely with the national and municipal assemblies to build capacity for deputies and staff, assist in developing procedures, and provide expertise in the specific areas of legislation and oversight. The U.S. Government assists the Ministry of Local Government Administration in crafting decentralization policies, refining legislation, and developing performance standards for municipalities. U.S. programs are designed to increase the ability of citizens, civil society organizations, and media to participate in, advocate for, and monitor the performance of municipal governments.

U.S. goals for justice institutions are focused on increasing citizens' access to and respect for justice. Achieving the first two goals will lead to the third: increasing demand for justice. Access to justice is improved by several initiatives that incorporate financial and program assistance. The U.S. sponsored Legal Professional Development Initiative increases the professionalism of the legal community by developing a Bar that regulates the practice of law to ensure competence and ethical standards, and strengthens the ability of the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates to provide continuing legal education. To increase respect for justice, U.S. personnel and implementing partners focus on strengthening the country's law enforcement institutions (police, prosecutors, and judges) through mentorship and technical support. In conjunction with European multilateral institutions and the government, the United States is working to reform the court structure in Kosovo and to establish administrative and management practices to promote more effective and professional police/prosecutor relationships. U.S. funds support the continued presence of American civilian police officers, rule of law specialists, and policy advisors in the EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX). These advisors bolster internal security and the capacity of the local police and judiciary through mentoring, monitoring, and advising. U.S. programs also assist in combating trafficking in persons through improved law enforcement and support shelters for victims of trafficking as well as the expansion of residential reintegration services. As judicial, prosecutorial, and law enforcement institutions demonstrate their ability to combat more effectively organized crime, corruption, human trafficking, and other criminal activities, citizen's expectations and demand for justice will increase.

The Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement (the Ahtisaari Plan) negotiated prior to Kosovo's independence, calls for comprehensive support and protection for the rights of Kosovo Serbs and other minority communities. The U.S. supports the government's commitment to implementing Ahtisaari principles through minority-focused programs promoting tolerance, unity, and community. U.S. assistance supports television cooperative projects that bring Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb television journalists together to work on investigative news documentaries for local broadcast in Albanian and Serbian languages. U.S. programs also focus on Serb and minority media, providing advice and financial backing to ensure that all communities have access to Kosovo-specific content in their local languages. With U.S. assistance, four Serbian-language television stations collaborated to form a new network, TV Mreza. The network helps provide a Kosovo Serb perspective on news with the aim of breaking the isolation of Kosovo Serb enclaves.

The United States also funds several scholarships to the American University of Kosovo for minority students and facilitates a variety of conflict mitigation activities aimed at spurring dialogue between government leaders and the country's minority communities. A U.S. program providing small grants to nongovernmental organizations and independent media supports projects that promote democratic institutions, rule of law, civic education and civil society, human rights, and ethnic and political harmony. Other U.S. programs support minority and majority community civil society organizations to address issues of concern to their communities, including freedom of movement, religious freedom, local government cooperation, free and objective media reporting, and cultural exchange through infrastructure projects. The United States, together with the European Commission Liaison Office, provides program and logistical support for the sustainable resettlement of the 140 families of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian internally displaced persons living in the lead-contaminated Cesmin Lug and Osterode camps in the northern part of Kosovo. The goal of this joint effort is to return the families to uncontaminated land near their pre-1999 homes where they will have improved access to healthcare, education, social services, and employment.

The U.S. Government funds the Political Processes and Party Support (PPPS) Program to assist political party caucuses, internal party democracy, and minority parties. The Party

Training Academy, a U.S.-funded program, provides political parties with trained individuals who can serve as party staff, organizers, current and future candidates, and assist recently elected officials dealing with the realities of governing in a newly independent state. The U.S. supports a wide range of public affairs assistance programs designed to promote an independent media, including training visits to the U.S. for Serbian television managers, and train-the-trainer programs for teachers at the Kosovo Media Institute. The U.S.-funded Strengthening Election Administration in Kosovo program continues to support free and fair elections, providing technical assistance to Kosovo's Central Election Commission, updating voter lists, and advocating for election law reform. The PPPS program also assists in conducting free and fair elections. An independent media and free and fair elections, like effective law enforcement, are critical to successfully combating corruption. To further U.S. Government priorities of reducing corruption and improving public policy at the national and municipal levels, U.S. programs are assisting local NGOs in carrying out citizen oversight activities, research and advocacy campaigns designed to influence public policy. Other programs work to strengthen the national and municipal assemblies to allow them to properly execute their supervisory responsibilities.

## **Macedonia:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. Mission to the Republic of Macedonia to promote democracy and human rights. For background on the country's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The top U.S. priorities include helping the government and its citizens to continue reforms needed to build and consolidate strong, stable political institutions that promote

democratic values, human rights, and the rule of law. These reforms are key conditions for the country's continued progress toward integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. The United States seeks to increase public confidence in the judiciary by supporting programs to strengthen its independence, accountability, and transparency. The United States promotes improved responsiveness of elected representatives to the needs of citizens at both the local and national level and advocates for government institutions to be more professional and free of arbitrary staff changes based on political or other affiliations. The United States promotes further implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, including continued decentralization and more equitable representation of minorities in the public sector, through public diplomacy efforts and programs to build capacity of local governments.

The United States continues its focus on strengthening the ability of prosecutors and law enforcement to combat organized crime and corruption. The United States targets good governance and seeks to strengthen democratic systems, goals that complement efforts to bolster the rule of law. In addition, the United States focuses on the development of professional, objective, responsible, and economically viable media outlets, helping to promote the free exchange of ideas and information that are fundamental in a democracy. Building on the improved municipal and presidential elections of 2009, which met most international standards, to support free and fair elections in the future is a priority. The United States maintains as a key priority strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations to represent citizen interests and monitor government decisions and activities.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human

### Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. programs provide technical expertise, training, and material assistance to the judiciary to promote independence, effectiveness, and transparency. A U.S. - funded program installed an automated case management system that will allow the judiciary to better monitor the performance of judges and establish time standards for case management. Additionally, the United States provides expertise and training for the

implementation of a new criminal procedure code. U.S. funded training programs build the capacity of police and other law enforcement elements. The United States uses e-governance programming in its anticorruption efforts, targeting local government capacity building and the development and implementation of the government's comprehensive Anticorruption Strategy and Action Plan. U.S. programs provide technical assistance, training, and systems support to local governments on subjects including fiscal and budget management, local revenue raising, community participation and planning, and support to the association of mayors. The United States works with municipalities to establish creditworthiness and access to low interest loans for municipal development. This assistance improves the financial position of local governments, as well as transparency and accountability to citizens.

The United States seeks to improve government accountability at all levels. To enhance democratic governance, the United States works closely with the parliament and other government institutions. U.S. programs provide operational support to the parliament to introduce and improve practices such as public hearings, legislative review, and research. The United States supports programs that provide professional development and capacity building for employees of key ministries. The United States provided financial support for a conference and public debate on the electoral system and possible changes to improve accountability of elected officials to constituents. The United States is building the capacity of the country's numerous NGOs to represent citizen interests, advocate for public reform, build partnerships with public and private sectors, and promote a multiethnic society. With financial and technical assistance, the United States supports NGO advocacy and service provision activities, anticorruption initiatives, monitoring and watchdog functions, and human rights awareness activities. The United States supports reforms in the legal framework for NGOs, has introduced new operating models for NGOs to generate resources and promote philanthropy, and promotes volunteerism among citizens.

The United States supports development of a professional and independent media. While press freedom is not formally restricted, it nevertheless suffers from pressure from political and business interests, and a lack of professionalism. To address these issues, the United States provides training for journalists to sharpen their investigative reporting

skills, improve their English language proficiency, and share views and experience on new and social media. In addition, a U.S. sponsored program sends journalists for a year of professional development at a U.S. university journalism program to strengthen their skills and broaden their contacts. Participants return from this program with increased motivation and skills to improve the quality of journalism in the media outlets where they are employed. The United States also worked with the largest local association of journalists so that they were better able to respond to legal and verbal attacks or pressure.

## **Moldova:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Moldova to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Moldova's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. government's highest priorities are to achieve peace and security, resolve the frozen conflict in the breakaway region of Transnistria; promote democratic institutions and governance; assist broad-based and sustainable economic growth; and promote the rule of law by reforming law enforcement and judicial institutions. The U.S. goal is to promote the rule of law by assisting all law enforcement and judicial bodies of the government in order to modernize operations and equipment, safeguard the human rights of suspects, and bring them up to European standards, particularly in forensics.

##### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

To resolve the frozen conflict in Transnistria, the United States engages Transnistrian authorities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and academics to encourage civic activism to prevent trafficking and build networks and cooperation among NGOs on both sides of the river and to sponsor projects that deliver information on American culture to Transnistrians. Continued efforts on the part of the U.S. Government work to include Transnistrian participants in exchange programs (including the International Visitors Leadership Program, Cochran, educational exchange, and Summer Work and Travel programs), to open American Corners in Transnistrian libraries for cultural and informational outreach, and continue public diplomacy activities such as concerts and film festivals.

To promote democratic institutions and governance, the U.S. Government promotes transparent political processes and encourages citizen and political party participation in campaigns and elections. During the 2009 elections, the United States promoted democracy and Moldova's realignment to European values by training parties and electoral administration bodies, improving voter lists, targeting minority voters and others through voter education campaigns and improving the performance of election monitors. In the next rounds of elections (repeat parliamentary at a time to be determined, and local council and mayoral elections in the spring of 2011), the United States will coordinate with international bodies and local NGOs to support "Get out the Vote" and voter education campaigns; train all political parties on campaigns, organization and publicity techniques; improve the quality and integrity of voter registration lists; improve the training, administrative and management capacity of Moldovan electoral administration bodies; and assist grassroots campaigns targeting women, minorities, young voters, and rural residents. In addition to electoral programming, U.S. Government civil society programming aims to further strengthen Moldova's representative democracy through support for a constituent-driven, financially viable civil society sector. Activities aim to enhance the skills of civil society organizations to represent citizen interests, improve the governance and management of civil society organizations, strengthen the legal and fiscal framework for civil society, and promote the diversification of financial resources available to civil society. The U.S. government supports independent media development by networking and building the professional journalism, business and management skills

capacity of regional media outlets. Support is also provided to journalists' rights and freedom of information advocacy organizations.

To promote the rule of law, the United States continues to work closely with government entities that play a key role in combating crime, such as the Center for Combating Trafficking in Persons (CCTIP), the Center for Combating Economic Crime and Corruption, the Prosecutor General's Office, and ministries of interior, justice, and related entities. Changes in the government have led to greater opportunities for more in-depth engagement. The U.S. strategy seeks to capitalize on the local government's growing receptiveness to enacting liberalizing reforms. Within the interior ministry, the focus will be put on Public Order/Riot Control, the Canine Center, the Forensics Unit, the Department of Operative Services and the Police Academy. The U.S. Government will fund the placement of an on-site advisor with the CCTIP to provide mentoring for prosecutors with responsibility for overseeing human trafficking cases. To bolster the government's ability to combat corruption, U.S. programs will build on past projects, strengthening whistle-blower protection, and implementing civilian review boards to investigate police and other official misconduct. The U.S. Government will also work with other criminal justice sector institutions to improve their capacity to investigate and prosecute other serious crime, including public corruption, organized crime and other transnational crime, while adhering to standards of integrity and transparency and international standards of due process. U.S. Government efforts will also encourage law enforcement bodies to cooperate more effectively with their counterparts in neighboring and other countries, and to ensure there is an adequate system to protect endangered witnesses and whistle-blowers. To ensure future sustainability, the embassy will assist criminal justice training institutes in developing a growing cadre of competent trainers within their institutions.

## **Montenegro**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Part 1: Political and Human Rights Conditions

Montenegro is a mixed parliamentary and presidential republic with a population of approximately 630,000. Filip Vujanovic was elected president on April 6, 2008. On March 29, 2009, Montenegro held parliamentary elections. According to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe, both elections met almost all international commitments and standards for democratic elections. The government generally respects the human rights of its citizens and continues efforts to address human rights violations; however, numerous problems persist to various degrees, including a not fully independent judiciary; abusive and arbitrary arrests; police mistreatment of suspects in detention; lengthy pretrial detention and trials; police impunity; harassment of journalists; substandard prison and detention conditions; widespread corruption in law enforcement and judiciary; trafficking in persons; discrimination against ethnic minorities, particularly Roma, internally displaced persons, and women; and a lack of adequate legislation on freedom of religion and against discrimination.

## Part 2: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's main democracy objectives are to accelerate the country's path toward democracy and full integration into NATO and the European Union. With this in mind, the United States has focused on strengthening parliament's legislative and oversight capacities, promoting the rule of law, and reinforcing the criminal justice system's ability to combat corruption and to advance war crimes prosecutions. The United States has also promoted a free, active and professional media; sought to strengthen the capacity of civil society; promoted religious freedom and minority rights; and advanced measures to combat trafficking in persons.

## Part 3: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States is working with the parliament to strengthen its ability to serve as an effective check and balance on the executive branch. The United States supports efforts to improve the legislative drafting and oversight capacities of parliament and to facilitate a greater role for the political opposition in committee work. U.S.-funded technical

assistance and training promotes more efficient and ethical legislative operations, including through improved administrative structures and rules of procedure. To promote free and fair elections, the embassy has been supporting local monitoring organizations. This assistance includes volunteer recruitment and training, voter education, monitoring of the electoral process, parallel vote tabulations, and observation and analysis of election results. To promote judicial independence, the United States is building the capacity of the judiciary through training on aspects of criminal law and procedure; this is essential if judges are to become more independent and reasoned in their decision-making. The United States supports efforts to advance the rule of law by providing technical assistance to the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Organized Crime, Corruption, and War Crimes, particularly to strengthen its witness protection unit. This assistance focuses on enhancing the office's cooperation with peers in other southeastern European countries and on improving investigation techniques, including those relating to money laundering and trafficking-in-persons cases. U.S.-supported programs also provide training for judges, lawyers, and law students on a variety of criminal law and procedure topics, including ethics, corporate liability, and plea bargaining. Finally, the United States actively supports legislative reforms in the area of criminal procedure with a view toward instituting an investigative role for prosecutors, plea bargaining, more workable search and seizure provisions, and guarantees for basic human rights for the accused.

To advance media freedom and enhance the media's watchdog role, U.S. programs have awarded prizes for investigative journalism and provided a combination of specialized training, analytical information-sharing software, and legal and technical support to independent media outlets to improve their ability to report on corruption. The U.S. Government's anticorruption efforts also include helping citizens' organizations press for more government accountability and action to root out corruption and to spark greater public debate about corruption.

The United States continues to support the development of NGOs dedicated to advocacy of human rights and democracy. U.S. programs continue to support NGOs dedicated to ensuring free and fair elections. U.S.-funded programs work with civil society to improve respect for the rule of law and transparent governance at both the local and national level. A U.S.-supported NGO trained judges from the administrative and supreme courts. With

U.S. support, local watchdog NGOs have increased the effectiveness of government implementation of legislation in key areas, such as urban planning, conflict of interest, labor rights, and environmental protection. Small grants support civil society institutions that engage on a variety of challenges facing the country, including civic education and youth development, promotion of a free and independent media, rule of law reforms, and Euro-Atlantic integration. U.S.-funded exchange programs for high school and college students continue to play a key role in exposing youth to broad democratic values.

U.S. officials maintain close relations with leaders of religious and ethnic minority communities and representatives of human rights NGOs, as well as with government officials. The embassy engages in regular outreach to various religious communities, including through the ambassador's annual Iftar and the ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, which has supported projects to renovate both a monastery and mosque. U.S. assistance empowers ethnic minorities, such as the Roma community. U.S. diplomacy and assistance have resulted in greater government attention to antitrafficking initiatives within the country and regionwide. The United States has highlighted deficiencies in the prosecution of traffickers and the identification of trafficking victims. U.S. officials have repeatedly met with the government antitrafficking coordinator and other high-level officials to discuss the importance of combating trafficking and the need for concrete results. A newly appointed coordinator has reintroduced regular meetings of a working group in which embassy officials participate. Recently, seven persons were convicted of trafficking in persons.

**Russia:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Russia to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Russia's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The overall U.S. objective is to support Russia in becoming a more democratic and open partner that increasingly moves toward a free-market democratic system built on checks and balances, and acts as a strong and effective partner in areas of common interest, while protecting and promoting universal human rights principles, within the international community. Thus, the United States supports democratic values, principles, and practices within the country. The United States seeks to strengthen and encourage the Russian government and society's own support for the development of civil society and respect for the rule of law. The United States will continue to support democratic reformers and human rights defenders, while also seeking opportunities to advance democratic practices and culture by working in cooperation, where U.S. goals are aligned, with national, regional, and local government authorities on areas of common interest.

There are challenges to this agenda: fear that democracy will cause instability ; political activism remains relatively low; public demand for government accountability is generally weak, although with the growth of Internet usage in Russia, there are some modest, detectable changes for the better; and the government's restrictions on and harassment of the activities of some civil society groups and some independent media create a difficult operational atmosphere for democracy-supporting programs.

U.S. priorities for promoting human rights and democracy in the country include encouragement of accountable, participatory democratic political institutions, an active civil society, independent media, and the rule of law. The United States engages government officials, NGOs, and the media in supporting the government's compliance with its constitution and its international commitments on human rights to guarantee that citizens have the freedom to develop democracy. The United States also supports the promotion of a strong and independent judiciary; the continued professional development of a broad array of justice system actors; and initiatives to address and bolster the country's ongoing efforts to combat corruption. To strengthen the country's governance

and rule of law, U.S. strategy includes broad-based support for capacity building in the legal sector, strengthening independent regional media and networks of professional journalists, and responsive local government.

The United States encourages the active participation of an informed citizenry by developing the capacity of NGOs to become better advocates for citizens' interests, more effective interlocutors with the government, and stronger sources of expertise for the public and authorities, as well as the development of an active and independent media. In addition, the United States prioritizes a robust public diplomacy campaign, including academic exchanges, public messaging and speaking engagements, and promotes the use of new electronic media such as social networks, blogs, and electronic journals as essential components to the U.S. efforts to promote democracy and human rights. A new generation of activists is starting to use 21<sup>st</sup>-century methods to raise awareness of the role that civic activism can play in improving living conditions for average people; during the year, the United States sent a delegation of leaders in the technology industry to Russia to explore how technological advances can help enhance civil society in Russia. In addition, the United States seeks more rights and better treatment for the country's workers, and improvement of minority rights.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States promotes human rights and democracy through sustained dialogue; U.S. officials meet regularly with representatives of the Russian government, media outlets, the religious community, academics, and civil society. In these meetings, the U.S. Government promotes universal values, human rights and democratic norms, and attempts to understand better how the motivations, actions, and results of government policy and societal developments affect the observance of human rights and the strengthening of democratic institutions, as well as address obstacles where they exist. The United States engages senior Russian officials regularly on issues affecting its civil society. The Embassy raises concerns about media freedom issues and violence committed against journalists. The United States also consistently urges authorities to pursue all those responsible for past unresolved murders and bring them to justice. The United States will continue to rely on well-coordinated efforts to promote Russian

support of its developing civil society, and to dissuade or discourage the government from enacting legislative or administrative restrictions on civil institutions or internationally recognized human rights.

In 2009, Presidents Obama and Medvedev jointly authorized the creation of the Bilateral Presidential Commission (BPC) in order to build stronger ties and improve understanding between the two governments and between our respective societies. The BPC established 16 working groups, which seek to develop a sustained effort among the American and Russian people to identify mutual interests, and expand dialogue and cooperation that can pave the way to progress. One of the BPC working groups, the Civil Society Working Group (CSWG), is a mechanism for the U.S.-Russian engagement on issues affecting civil society in areas of mutual interest and concern. The first CSWG meeting, held in January 2010, focused on ways to combat corruption, protect children, and break down stereotypes. It included participation by senior government officials from both countries as well as members of the NGO community. Future sessions are currently being scheduled, including with discussion topics on the role that civil society plays in addressing issues arising in prisons and from migration.

While domestic financial support for many NGOs remains limited, the United States in close partnership with leading Russian NGOs continues to support human rights monitoring, advocacy, and public awareness initiatives to strengthen fundamental civil liberties, and to help citizens better understand and become more involved in the protection of their rights. U.S.-sponsored cooperation and exchange programs are long-term efforts to build trust and promote understanding of modern, independent, and accountable political and judicial institutions, as well as to support democratic civic voices. Thorough organized support to the spectrum of NGOs, associations, and coalitions – particularly those concerned with human rights and governance issues at a grassroots and regional level – in the longer term could foster participatory governance, promote civic responsibility, and help civil society effectively engage with government. Civil society organizations must have the responsibility and the space to become more professional, improve their expertise, expand their capacity for public outreach, and broaden their appeal in order to have a greater impact on society. Direct outreach to Russians is an important aspect of U.S. activities to promote human rights and democracy. This is accomplished through public affairs programming and visitor and

exchange programs. The United States publicizes information about the American system of democracy through the Embassy Web page, press releases, interviews with the mass media, and in special invitational events. Academic exchange and visitor programs are part of a long-term effort to ensure that young, well-educated individuals have first-hand knowledge of the United States and its open society and democratic institutions. The United States continues to support such exchanges, which, according to representatives in the government and in the human rights community, are a crucial way to increase democratic and liberal thinking in the younger generation.

The United States continues to work, on a non-partisan basis, to strengthen the professionalism and responsiveness of political institutions, including parties. The United States also promotes pluralism and electoral fairness through support of election monitoring and advocacy in our bilateral discussions. In particular, U.S. programs encourage free and fair elections. During Federal-level campaigns that took place in 2007-2008, and in lower level regional and municipal elections occurring on an on-going basis, the United States provided non-partisan assistance to monitor the campaign environment and the conduct of elections, and to strengthen elections-related institutions and the elections environment. These programs included support for civil society efforts to monitor the abuse of administrative resources and fraud; for the monitoring of media coverage of the campaign period; for a voter hotline for citizen reporting of election law violations; and for long-term and election day domestic election observation. The United States works to strengthen independent media's capacity to cover elections-related issues, to increase voter access to information and the debate of issues, and, before the campaign period began, to strengthen political parties' capacity to build constituencies. The United States supports numerous programs designed to promote the rule of law and judicial independence, working with federal and local government partners in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, along with national and local bar associations and NGOs. These include legislative assistance projects in the areas of criminal procedure, trafficking in persons and victims' rights, as well as judicial exchange programs and training programs for prosecutors, defense lawyers and law enforcement agents. The Embassy also has worked with the Public Chamber and a coalition of legal reform NGOs to develop proposals for cooperation between the judiciary and NGOs. Central themes in these programs include encouraging respect for judicial independence, adjudication of

cases on the merits, supporting the jury system, rendering the legal system more transparent, and expanding access to justice by helping citizens and NGOs to seek effective redress in the court system, including in justice of the peace courts. In addition, the United States continues to support human rights organizations and citizen watchdog groups, and to strengthen independent media. U.S. efforts to foster training and support for networks of independent journalists is geared towards improving professionalism and skills (in areas such as investigative journalism and in online modes, such as blogging), providing education on rights and journalism ethics, reducing the isolation of regional reporters and media outlets, and promoting public debate and coverage of important social and political issues. The United States is currently considering expanding into areas such as new media technologies to expand audience outreach while at the same time improving free and open access to democratic content. The United States supports Russia's integration in multilateral organizations, such as the WTO and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which will promote rule of law, enhanced corporate good governance and transparency, and the push for greater adherence to international norms of democratic governance. The United States supported several anti-corruption and corporate civil responsibility programs during the year, including programs to foster greater understanding and receptivity for good governance and of an environment for the better protection of human rights. President Medvedev has made anti-corruption efforts one of the priorities for his administration. President Medvedev has declared that Russia cannot compete with other countries on the world stage unless it stems and reverses the tide of corruption in Russian society, from the top governmental level to ordinary societal interactions.

U.S. assistance is an important part of enabling NGOs, often together with local authorities, to engage citizens on key issues. Cooperation on projects of joint interest may, over time, induce the country to address weaknesses in governance and the rule of law. The United States helps NGOs to build effective relationships with government bodies and to advocate for improved government accountability and responsiveness to citizens' needs. The United States also engages in efforts to educate the public about their rights and to ensure that independent voices are heard, as well as sponsoring initiatives to devise common solutions to local problems. The United States supports human rights and citizen watchdog groups, as well as the development of domestic philanthropy, to

encourage the indigenous, long-term realization of these goals. Given some attempts by government officials or groups connected to the government to damage the public image of the NGO community and cast suspicion that foreign-funded NGOs allegedly are engaged in espionage, domestic philanthropy is particularly important, and during the year the United States has continued to work with umbrella human rights organizations devoted to expanding locally funded civil society activities. Another U.S. program supports positive change in the easing of legal regulation of NGOs so that it facilitates rather than hinders their work. In addition to these programs, U.S. funding provides 30-40 small grants annually to local NGOs working throughout the country to strengthen civil society and encourage ordinary citizens to take an active role in their communities, including support for women's leadership and HIV prevention activities. Other recent examples of such grants include support for a network of Internet communities that work to promote human rights and hold local authorities accountable in a previously underserved area of Siberia; and funding for a series of seminars in Karelia designed to raise awareness of the problem of trafficking in persons, including police complicity. Another program aims to popularize the idea of human rights and methods to support rights among a broad sector of the public in targeted regions.

The United States worked closely with the Public Chamber and the Guild of Court Journalists to support the formation of a jurors' association, which provided a mechanism for judges and experts to obtain feedback from former jurors in formulating legislative recommendations to improve the jury trial system. The United States also worked with a business association founded by a victim of fraudulent "raiding" from corrupt bureaucrats, to promote reforms in Russian legislation on economic crimes. These reforms amend the laws on money laundering to make them less susceptible to abuse and manipulation for corrupt ends and also provide expanded opportunities for bail and release pending trial in white collar cases. The United States supports programs designed to enhance the capacity among Russia's law enforcement community to investigate and prosecute, in compliance with applicable international human rights standards, human trafficking and child pornography cases, as well as other high-profile crimes. U.S.-Russian judicial and legal partnerships also foster needed modernization, continued professionalism and legal reforms in the justice system. U.S. programs promote greater respect for and protection of human rights by supporting public awareness campaigns,

advocacy initiatives, and legal aid to the victims of human rights abuses; facilitating collaboration between the government, NGOs, religious and other civic leaders, and the public on tolerance and human rights issues; and strengthening human rights NGOs through training in areas such as strategic communications, network building, and youth outreach. One program, in the remote Republic of Adygeya, organized a series of seminars to help NGO leaders improve their ability to raise funds and to establish relationships with local businesses. The program also conducted joint seminars for NGOs and mass media to provide more publicity for NGO activities, and it supported a contest for socially meaningful projects within the NGO community. The program was supported by equal contributions from a local NGO resource center, businesses, and the administration of the Republic.

The number of instances continued to increase in which NGOs have provided advice that the government (usually at the local or regional level) has taken into account, as well as the number of cases in which citizens or NGOs have successfully taken local authorities to court to account for abuse of power. Additional U.S. efforts to support democracy and human rights goals include engaging with civic organizations that represent both the majority of the country's population and those that protect marginalized groups, such as ethnic and religious minorities, migrant communities, and persons with disabilities. Projects currently underway include enabling a prominent NGO to distribute its own annual report on the state of civil society and human rights in the country to regional authorities and NGOs, members of the State Duma, Federation Council, and Public Chamber, the Ombudsman, and international bodies. Other U.S.-funded projects include an initiative for a domestic NGO to build public trust in NGOs through education and outreach, and projects for organizations that provide legal assistance to labor union representatives and increase the professional skills of labor lawyers, and provision of legal services to refugees and internally displaced persons from the North Caucasus and other troubled areas of the country.

**Turkey:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

## Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Turkey to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Turkey's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Through dialogue with the government, domestic human rights NGOs, human rights activists, civil society, and the EU, the U.S. Government has developed priorities to support U.S. policy concerning democratic principles, practices, and values, as well as human rights. The primary U.S. goals are to encourage Turkey to move toward a more democratic government with a deeper respect for human rights and rule of law, and to support legal reforms that lead to more democratic, transparent, and accountable government institutions, including a more independent, objective judiciary. The United States also supports efforts for an independent, responsible, professional press. Public diplomacy efforts form a core part of the general U.S. strategy to advance freedom and democracy and to protect the universal rights of freedom of expression and religion. In addition, the United States seeks to build respect for individual human rights, civil society, and ethnic diversity. The United States continues work with Turkey on the eradication of trafficking in persons in the country.

The United States encourages the government to: continue to reduce restrictions on the use of non-Turkish languages in the public realm and expand freedom of expression; protect freedom of religion and allow the free functioning of religious institutions such as the Greek Orthodox Halki Seminary and ensure the continuity of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul; and take concrete steps to address concerns of the ethnic Kurdish and other non-Turkish ethnic communities.

### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

To support the rule of law and a modern, impartial judiciary, the United States has reached out to numerous national legislators, local political leaders, judges, justice officials, journalists, academics, and NGO officials via public diplomacy programs, and has increased training to help develop an independent judiciary. During the first part of 2010 more than 100 persons traveled to the United States for extended periods on a

variety of programs to meet their American counterparts, become more familiar with the structure and functions of U.S. political, judicial, and social systems, and observe U.S. human rights and democracy promotion efforts. Public diplomacy showcasing American systems is essential to promoting values that can underscore needed legal reforms in the country. These activities include U.S. speaker programs, exchanges, and disseminating accurate information through public speaking by U.S. officials and at American Corners around the country. The United States funds International Visitors Leadership Program exchanges on topics including accountability in government, civic education, and citizen participation in a democracy. U.S. officials travel throughout the country to discuss human rights issues, hear new viewpoints, and seek partners beyond the large urban areas. U.S. officials participate in conferences, seminars, and programs to explain U.S. policies and American values, and also to highlight Turkish-American shared interests. U.S. officials meet often with members of the EU and other colleagues from foreign missions to discuss human rights and, when appropriate, deliver a unified call for increased freedom of expression and religion and greater tolerance for diversity. The United States works in support of a vibrant free press that demonstrates objectivity and high professional standards as critical to helping cultivate more democratic, transparent, and accountable government institutions that respect all viewpoints. To foster press freedom and responsibility, journalists from all forms of media participated in visitor programs focused on investigative journalism, the elements of responsible reporting, the U.S. political system, U.S. foreign policy, and human rights issues. Projects for the year included numerous speakers and programs on freedom of expression, the foreign policy formulation process in a democratic society, civil and minority rights, and information literacy.

To encourage further growth of civil society and an understanding of its role, the United States sponsors visitor programs related to religion and the community, the role of civil society in a democracy, managing diversity in a multi-ethnic society, and promoting tolerance through the arts. Visitor programs for NGO activists, religious leaders, and education officials also play an important role in promoting the value of stable, reliable political processes and the benefits of a pluralistic, religiously and ethnically diverse society. Subjects include U.S. legislative, judicial, and social systems, the rule of law in the United States, and the roles of religion and religious institutions in American life. For

the fourth consecutive year, a summer student leader exchange program complemented these projects by introducing the next generation of local leaders to these same U.S. institutions, traditions, and processes. During regular meetings with members of the legislative and executive branches as well as with the judiciary, U.S. officials encourage continued broad reforms, such as increased protection for free speech, respect for religious rights, and tolerance for minorities and minority viewpoints.

To expand efforts to promote legal reforms in the country, the U.S. government hosted a conference for prosecutors and judges on criminal pretrial resolutions. The United States co-hosted with the Ministry of Justice a conference on terrorist extradition to promote greater legal collaboration between Turkey, other European countries, and Iraq, and to strengthen professional judicial standards and enforcement of the rule of law. The United States also hosted a regional conference to foster multi-lateral cooperation in matters of terrorism and border security, further promoting Turkey's efforts to reach Western standards in law enforcement matters. The Embassy organized study tours to the United States for prosecutors, judges, and law enforcement officers to share best practices on terrorism legislation, children's issues, witness protection, judicial reform, and other legal topics. Helping the country eliminate trafficking in persons continued to be a U.S. priority. U.S. officials remained in close contact with the Turkish government's lead agencies, international organizations, and NGOs engaged in anti-trafficking efforts. Public diplomacy programming in this area included visitor programs on women and justice and cooperative efforts in combating trafficking in persons, as well as speaker programs on various aspects of international human rights law.

## **Ukraine:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Ukraine to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Ukraine's human rights conditions, please see the *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

## Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's strategy for promoting human rights and supporting democratic gains focuses on democratic practice and human rights compliant with European and Euro-Atlantic standards including governmental effectiveness, accountability, and transparency; strengthened civil society; greater adherence to the rule of law; an independent judiciary; strengthened anticorruption efforts; greater integrity in the electoral process; and independent media.

The United States commended the open and competitive election process during the January and February rounds of presidential elections, which received a positive assessment by international observers, including the U.S. Helsinki Commission's delegation. A resolution approved by the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 4 acknowledged that major reforms undertaken in recent years, including “the development of a pluralistic and independent press and the establishment of public institutions that respect human rights and the rule of law, have enhanced Ukraine’s progress toward democracy and prosperity.”

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

Robust U.S. assistance strengthens democratic governance by contributing to a more professional, transparent, and accountable judiciary. More than 2,500 justice sector personnel benefit from rule of law and human rights training and technical assistance. The United States is supporting the development of a new Council of Europe-compliant draft Criminal Procedure Code and is focused on working with partners to introduce that draft legislation into parliament. Other U.S. assistance is strengthening the rule of law by increasing judicial transparency and effectiveness by improving judicial operations, developing key judicial reforms, and widening access to justice. A new U.S.-funded program will expand access to the courts for marginalized and under-represented communities through work with legal clinics, advocacy organizations, and pro-bono lawyers. The United States emphasizes capacity building for the country's border security services as a means of strengthening respect for and protection of human rights. The

United States continues to assist the State Border Guard Service to reform its training system to meet European Union standards, including those on human rights.

U.S. assistance for political processes is strengthening internal party governance, educating young political leaders, and building stronger links between parliamentarians and their constituencies. In each of the two rounds of the 2010 presidential elections, U.S. funding supported approximately 1,000 domestic and 450 international observers across the country. U.S. assistance provided legal training for political party and civil society lawyers and administrative court judges and helped implement the parallel vote tabulation. In addition, media programs are improving journalism quality via investigative reporting, media literacy training, and organizational capacity building, as well as stimulating vanguard civil society efforts employing social media and other innovative networking techniques. U.S. antitrafficking programs also engage both civil service organizations and governmental institutions: civil society advocacy campaigns encourage government action to combat and prevent trafficking via technical training assistance, improved enforcement, and victim protection practices. U.S. programs support freedom of association and labor rights by urging reforms in the labor sector in line with European principles, opposing exclusionary social dialogue legislation that did not meet international standards and publicizing violations of worker rights. U.S. assistance supported the development of independent and democratic trade unions, greater participation of women in labor leadership roles, and adoption of amendments to the new labor code.

The United States significantly increased its democratization assistance in Crimea by expanding existing programs in civil society, media, and governance to target regional issues. For example, U.S. governance projects are partnering with the Crimean regional parliament to strengthen ties with the national parliament and build local capacity. Examples of other successful grants include funding the exit poll for the 2010 presidential elections; supporting the monitoring of rights of persons with disabilities and HIV-positive persons; contributing to anti-xenophobia initiatives; and supporting a public awareness campaign by Green Wave ecological club focused on the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. The United States makes use of professional exchange programs, such as the International Visitors Leadership Program and the Open World Program, to facilitate the

participation of government decision-makers at all levels and NGO activists in good governance and human rights practice study visits. About 100 individuals from Ukraine are visiting the United States in the 2009-2010 academic year on U.S.-sponsored academic exchange programs. In addition, approximately 300 high school students are participating in the Future Leaders Exchange Program to gain understanding of the United States and its democratic values.

## **NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA:**

### **Algeria:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Algeria to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Algeria's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's human rights and democracy priority in the country is to assist in strengthening key government institutions and democratic values throughout society. The country is a major U.S. partner in combating extremism and terrorist networks such as al-Qa'ida and one of our largest trading partners in the Arab world. The country faces significant challenges in modernizing its political system, completing its transition to a market economy, and addressing the needs of a growing young population.

To help meet these challenges, the United States focuses specifically on strengthening the country's government institutions and civil society organizations. Technical assistance aims to improve the capacity of legislative and judicial institutions and to promote the rule of law. Through small grants the U.S. Government supports NGOs working in a number of sectors including human rights, health care, and women's entrepreneurship. Other programs address youth and education reform, strengthening legislative

institutions, combating trafficking in persons, and increasing women's roles in society and politics.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

To strengthen the legislative process, the U.S. Government provides training to members of national and regional legislatures on budgetary processes, drafting legislation, information technology, and constituent and media relations. The training program provides parliamentarians new perspectives on oversight and government accountability to citizens. The U.S. Government funds U.S. experts to partner with the parliamentary training institute, sponsors seminars by expert speakers, and sends members of parliament to the United States to study U.S. legislative practices. To assist the country's efforts to modernize its legal framework and promote greater judicial independence, the U.S. Government supports programs to train judges, prosecutors, and lawyers. The April signing of a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty with Algeria created a framework for increased cooperation with judicial and law enforcement institutions. The U.S. Government seeks to promote the rule of law and to increase the capacity of the country's criminal justice system through specialized investigative skills training for judges and prosecutors to combat transnational crimes (including terrorism), organized crime, and trafficking in persons. Another U.S.-funded program provides legal skills training to lawyers and regional bar associations. U.S. officials also engage the government bilaterally to raise concerns about restrictions on freedom of religion, including that of religious minorities.

The U.S. Government utilizes public diplomacy resources to support the development of young civic and political leaders through English language education, exchange programs that expose local students to democratic principles and values, and civic education programs. The U.S. Government funds English language programs for at-risk youth and an Internet-based mathematics curriculum for third-grade classrooms. Public diplomacy efforts also establish partnerships between Algerian and American universities. The U.S. Government sponsors local leaders to visit the United States to study subjects such as democracy, press freedom, and women's rights.

The U.S. Government also conducts outreach and programmatic activities to support civil society and freedom of the press. U.S. officials hold frequent meetings with civil society

organizations representing labor unions, persons with disabilities, journalists, human rights advocates, and religious and women's groups, as well as representatives of the country's religious minorities, to discuss human rights issues and disseminate information on programming opportunities. An ongoing program provides business training to independent newspapers to make them more financially stable and qualified to participate in political discussion. The U.S. Government assists some NGOs through small grants. One grant helps a small NGO near the capital develop training materials and launch advocacy campaigns concerning women's rights and youth issues. Another grant enables a group in the east to engage the public and the media in discussions about human rights. A third grant encourages youth civic participation.

**Bahrain:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Bahrain to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Bahrain's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government works toward broadening political participation and strengthening the rule of law to achieve greater trust and cooperation among citizens, civil society, and the government. The U.S. Government considers parliament a critical element in the ongoing political reform process and an important voice for the country's citizen population. The U.S. Government espouses the holding of free and fair elections, and supports initiatives by the government and civil society to bolster citizens' confidence in the country's electoral processes. U.S. officials maintain regular contact with political societies and candidates, enabling them to assess the views of multiple stakeholders, including advocates of reform, when establishing objectives for advancing democracy and human rights.

The U.S. Government supports the development of a dynamic and robust civil society, including the provision of assistance to NGOs and other civil society groups. Emphasis includes bolstering the role of women and youth in governance, elections, and other political processes. The U.S. Government advances human rights, with a particular emphasis on combating the scourge of human trafficking, as well as labor abuses affecting the country's sizeable foreign workforce.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States supports a number of activities that reinforce the country's ten-year old political reform process. The U.S. chief of mission and other U.S. officials maintain constant engagement with government officials, opposition political leaders, representatives of political societies and non-governmental organizations, and journalists and editors. U.S. officials routinely attend sessions of the national legislature. U.S. officials also attend the open meetings that some members of parliament hold for constituents. During these events, embassy officers encourage continued participation in the political process and listen to citizens' concerns regarding the status of local reforms. The U.S. Government funds programs that promote political participation by historically under-represented and disenfranchised segments of society such as women and youth. Such programs include capacity building of youth and women's NGOs and training of female candidates for elected office. The United States has expanded its public affairs outreach and education programming in order to help prepare the next generation of leaders to continue the country's reform efforts.

The United States supports the country's efforts to develop durable democratic processes and institutions. A U.S.-funded NGO conducts training programs for parliamentarians, their staff, and members of other political societies. The same NGO has provided capacity building to municipal council members and staff. The U.S. Government will again provide support to a civil society-based elections monitoring initiative, led by two local NGOs. The United States supports programs designed to aid political societies in political campaigning, including voter identification and outreach.

As part of a U.S.-funded program for judicial reform, an experienced American attorney works as a consultant in the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of the judicial system. The government

regularly lauds the program for its impact and has requested additional support to modernize further its judicial system. To respond to the government's efforts in this area, the U.S. embassy works with the Ministry of Justice's Judicial and Legal Studies Institute (JLSI) to conduct specialized training for judges, lawyers, law schools, and the bar association. The U.S. Government uses a range of resources to address the problems of trafficking in persons and labor abuses in the country. The United States seeks to enhance the abilities of the government, domestic and foreign worker groups, and the NGO sector to enforce worker rights and combat trafficking in persons through grants for capacity building, training, and awareness campaigns. U.S. officials continually stress to government officials at all levels the country's responsibilities for combating trafficking in persons. The U.S. Government is funding programs that enable targeted training and capacity building of police officers, prosecutors, and other government officials. The United States will also sponsor government officials to undertake trafficking-in-persons-related training in the U.S.

## **Egypt:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in the Republic of Egypt to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Egypt's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Through programming and advocacy, the U.S. Government supports efforts to improve electoral processes at the national and local levels, build a more robust civil society, address human rights problems, promote the rule of law, enhance democratic local governance, and encourage the growth of democratic institutions, including legitimate political parties, as well as an independent media and judiciary. The United States

supports activities that improve the skills of police, lawyers, judges, and court administrators to strengthen the administration of justice. The United States funds election monitoring efforts and local organizations' work on human rights, religious tolerance, civic participation, and women's and children's issues.

Within the country's constrained political and civic environment, the United States works to strengthen civil society and promote key democratic reforms, including termination of the longstanding State of Emergency. U.S. assistance simultaneously strengthens the management capacity and sustainability of civil society organizations and directly supports programs in diverse areas such as political reform, political party development, election monitoring, women's rights, civic education, anti-corruption, local governance, new media, and human rights. However, in some cases, the government presented obstacles to U.S. support for these activities. The United States remains persistent in engaging the government on the full range of human rights concerns, including religious freedom and trafficking in persons. The United States has indicated its opposition to any law that would further restrict the operations of nongovernmental organizations.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States promotes democratic, open, and participatory political processes and political reform through diplomacy, technical assistance, and training. Prior to the 2010 parliamentary elections, the United States is funding programs seeking to foster a more transparent and inclusive electoral process. With U.S. assistance, civil society groups continue to advocate for improvement of electoral processes in anticipation of parliamentary and presidential elections in 2010 and 2011 respectively. The United States is using a series of films, speakers, and Digital Video Conferences to encourage analytical thought about the role of government and to stimulate a cadre of voters interested in and prepared to think about political reform issues. The United States supports governmental institutions and local NGOs in initiating reform of the country's highly centralized and closed political system. With U.S. assistance, in 2009 the government expanded its pilot decentralization program nationwide. This effort aims to devolve specific fiscal and administrative authorities from the central to the regional and/or local level for the first time in the country's modern history. However, the

government's commitment to the devolution of political authority (through an enhanced role for locally elected bodies or through elections at the regional level) remains in question.

U.S. programs support the efforts of U.S. NGOs and local civil society groups to strengthen civil institutions and increase civic awareness and political participation, with a particular focus on women and youth. Programs aim to help citizens call for accountability from elected and appointed government officials at the national and local levels. For example, the United States supports a model U.S. Congress program for Cairo University students, after which as many as 12 participants travel to the United States and shadow congressional staffers. The United States funds workshops on civic education for public school teachers and summer camps teaching democratic values and leadership for high school students. The United States also funds an exchange program through which 12 young American political leaders visit the country and interact with a multiparty group of local counterparts, and then travel to the United States. Through the International Visitor Leadership Programs and reporting tours, the United States sponsors electronic journalists, civic activists, and human rights advocates to travel to the United States and experience American democracy firsthand. The United States also continues its efforts to promote greater financial and editorial independence and professionalism in the media by assisting both state-owned and independent local print and electronic media. Through U.S. grants, several local NGOs document and counter instances of intolerance and hate speech in the print media and provide legal awareness training to journalists, as well as training on Internet, SMS messaging, and other forms of news media to raise awareness and promote civic participation.

Through U.S. technical assistance and training, the Ministry of Family and Population and the National Council for Women are strengthening legislation and regulations that protect the rights of women and children. The United States also provides funding for local NGOs to identify and respond to acts of violence against women and children, including actively campaigning against the entrenched practice of female genital mutilation. Through U.S. grants, local NGOs are producing human rights books for children, educating young people on their civic and political rights, and integrating human rights education into university programs. The United States also promotes religious freedom and raises specific concerns about government discrimination against

the country's Christians, Baha'is, and other religious minorities. U.S. officials maintain strong relations with representatives of the country's various religious communities. The United States also supports local organizations' programs to increase religious tolerance and dialogue.

In the justice sector, the U.S. Government supports the Ministry of Justice and the Prosecutor General in improving the criminal justice system. This includes automating case management systems, providing the accused earlier access to effective defense counsel, educating prosecutors on human rights, and establishing information desks to help track case status. Working with the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Family and Population, and civil society organizations, the United States continues to strengthen the family courts' nationwide mediation and legal aid system. With U.S. support, local NGOs implement community-based activities focused on counseling services for families, community awareness on family law, and the rights of children. The United States has greatly expanded anti-corruption activities to promote a broader and deeper understanding among citizens of their rights and responsibilities in identifying and combating corruption. In partnership with international and local NGOs, the United States initiated a series of training programs to increase awareness of corruption at national and local levels and the impact of corruption on the economy and business climate.

## **Iran:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities to promote democracy and human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. For background on Iran's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The United States has not maintained diplomatic relations with Iran for the past three decades. In multilateral fora and through public statements, the United States urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to respect the human rights of its citizens, draws attention to the country's human rights abuses, and encourages the government to uphold its human rights obligations in law and in practice, including its obligations under the international human rights conventions to which it is a party.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States communicates human rights concerns about individual political prisoners to the government via the Swiss Protecting Power in Tehran and releases press statements highlighting the abuses of individuals or groups by the government. The United States supports access to information and adherence to human rights standards via Voice of America radio and television broadcasts. The Persian-language version of the Department's America.gov Web site also supports free access to information, posts articles about American society and values, and carries translations of U.S. reports about Iran that focus on human rights abuses, international religious freedom, and trafficking in persons. U.S. government-supported Persian-language bloggers engage Iranians online and answer their questions about U.S. policy and society. The United States also funds Radio Farda, a Persian-language radio station broadcasting to Iran from offices in Prague and Washington, D.C.

For the seventh year in a row, the United States co-sponsored and actively supported a UN General Assembly Third Committee resolution addressing the Iranian human rights situation. The United States regularly raises concerns about the government's poor human rights record in consultations with other governments, urging them to raise these concerns during any formal human rights dialogue or other bilateral contact with the Iranian government. At the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review in February 2010, the United States called attention to the lack of due process, arbitrary arrests and detentions, use of torture and closure of newspapers in the country.

Since 2004 the United States has obligated funds for a wide range of programs, similar in scope to those in other countries around the world, to support civil society, human rights,

and the rule of law in Iran. We are implementing programming, consistent with the VOICE Act, to support Internet freedom, independent media, and the free flow of information in Iran. Our programming includes support for new media tools that increase the availability of objective information on Iranian politics and current events and for online courses and podcasts that support journalists, bloggers, NGOs, and academics. The U.S. Government does not fund Iranian political parties or factions.

Finally, U.S. officials regularly meet with Iranians who have suffered abuse or with their representatives outside the country. We document these incidents for dissemination to other governments and for inclusion in the annual U.S. reports on human rights practices and on religious freedom. Every year since 1999 the U.S. Secretary of State has designated Iran a “Country of Particular Concern” for severe violations of religious freedom.

Since 2006 the Secretary of State has designated Iran a Tier 3 country in the Department of State's annual Trafficking in Persons Report, indicating that it does not comply with minimum standards for elimination of trafficking, nor is it making significant efforts to do so.

## **Iraq:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Iraq to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Iraq's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The United States seeks to assist Iraq to develop just, representative, and accountable government institutions that secure the country's inhabitants and their national infrastructure, deliver essential services, and govern in an equitable, nonsectarian manner. Toward this goal, the United States uses a variety of diplomatic tools and assistance

programs in support of: political and economic reform; political party development; respect for the rule of law and human rights; increased government capacity at the national, provincial, and local levels; and an engaged civil society and citizenry, including workers, women, minorities, and youth.

The United States, working with international and local organizations, provides assistance to further develop transparent and credible elections, accountable and responsive government institutions, active civil society, and independent media. The United States supports efforts to advance reconciliation at both the national and local levels. The United States coordinates with other donor governments, NGOs, and the UN to support the passage and enactment of key laws that contribute to national reconciliation, credible elections, good governance, and an independent media.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

On the national level, the United States pursues actions in support of political and economic reform, reconciliation, good governance, institutional capacity building, and political party development. The United States provides support for transparent and credible elections, including capacity building of the election commission in coordination with the UN, voter education, and training for political parties, journalists, and domestic monitoring organizations. The United States also funds programs to strengthen cross-sectarian linkages among leaders of civic and political institutions, support mediation and dialogue, promote tolerance, and strengthen civil society's capacity to engage effectively in the democratic process and play a key role in reducing violence. These programs, which bring together leaders from different groups, specifically target mixed neighborhoods that have had a history of sectarian violence. At the grassroots level, U.S. programs help community groups identify, articulate, and prioritize their collective needs, and then identify their own resources to meet those needs. The United States, along with international organizations and NGOs, focuses on moving political parties from sectarian-based to issues-based platforms through training in a range of topics including party development, coalition building, campaign management, platform development, and media consulting.

U.S.-funded programs train government officials across a range of ranks and agencies to promote accountability and management within government institutions. The United

States supports local government capacity-building projects in major cities and 15 governorates with expansion into the other three planned for later this year. At the national level, the United States builds the capacity of the country's key service ministries and central executive offices in core areas of public administration. These include fiscal management, project management, human resources management, information technology, leadership and communication, and strategic planning. U.S.-funded advisors assist the ministries to prepare and implement their capacity development plans, improve their basic management systems and processes, and upgrade the skill levels of a critical mass of their management-level employees and leaders. The United States is the leading international donor in civil service reform, promoting principles of equal opportunity, merit-based evaluation, and transparent grading.

The United States supports efforts to develop the country's judicial, detention and correction, and policing capabilities. The United States funds programs to professionalize civilian security forces, including the police, and instill a culture of transparency and accountability. The United States also provides technical expertise to enhance the capacity of the judiciary and improve the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, and the Higher Judicial Council. The United States funds measures to improve the government's ability to protect judges and their families from violence or intimidation. The United States is assisting the Ministry of Justice to achieve and maintain corrections conditions at international standards by establishing the staff, expertise, and facilities to hold prisoners securely and humanely.

The United States works with government institutions to fight corruption and hone the skills of individuals working in and with the ministries. Such efforts focus on training officials, increasing transparency, and improving core public sector functions, including effective public budgeting, financial management, and procurement. U.S.-funded programs provide support for the enforcement of constitutional provisions and development of new legislation to ensure that all citizens — including women and minorities — are able to make maximum use of the protection and rights outlined in the constitution. The United States focuses significant resources on supporting anticorruption efforts through training and support to the Commission of Integrity and to the inspectors general and their staffs. The U.S. effort includes maintaining close ties with the Board of Supreme Audit and promoting the government's compliance with its obligations under

the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), which it ratified in March 2008. The government's new anti-corruption strategy, issued in March 2010, is focused on achieving compliance with UNCAC. The United States also provides support to the Commission for the Resolution of Real Property Disputes, which has issued more than 75,000 decisions since it was established in 2006.

The United States promotes human rights and rule of law through education and training programs that reach all levels of society. Along with international partners, the United States works with the government to harmonize domestic laws and policies with international human rights standards. U.S.-funded programs help build management capacity in the country's human rights institutions, including the Ministry of Human Rights and the Independent High Commission for Human Rights. The United States: supports systems to prevent and address human rights violations through early warning, monitoring, investigating, and reporting; conducts advocacy training for NGOs and civil society organizations that are working to protect the rights of women, children, and religious and ethnic minorities; and provides funding to NGOs to foster treatment and reintegration of victims of torture, spur collection and documentation of human rights abuses committed by the former regime, and enhance awareness of human rights standards throughout society. U.S. programs also provide human rights training to government officials and incorporate a strong human rights and rule of law component in the training of police forces. Additionally, with U.S. support, the country's Ministries of Interior and Defense have continued to implement measures designed to prevent and correct human rights violations, including the investigation, indictment, and dismissal of officers implicated in human rights abuses.

The United States consistently promotes freedoms of the press and association in the country and uses diplomatic and programmatic means to support the rights of women and minorities, including religious minorities. The United States funds development programs to promote independent media and enhance media professionalism. Activities include training journalists, monitoring public broadcasters, and supporting improvements to the legal, regulatory, and policy environments in which the media operates. U.S. programs provide technical assistance to the government and civil society organizations on drafting legislation to ensure media freedom. The United States supports the growth of civil society in a variety of ways, including Provincial Reconstruction Team outreach. U.S.

programs assist civil society organizations and individuals with advocacy, management, and media training. The United States also supports their participation in the political process and sharpen their skills in conflict resolution. The United States facilitates broad participation in public dialogues, promotes responsive and accountable local government, and provides resources and training to strengthen the institutional capacity of grassroots organizations. The United States funds programs to combat violence against women, assist victims of trafficking, support political empowerment, help women in need of legal and other support, and provide women with capacity-building training and education to foster the skills and practices of democratic public life. One U.S.-funded program provides leadership training to women who are, or aspire to be, government and community leaders. The United States holds workshops for female political leaders and sponsors numerous meetings across the country related to women's rights. The United States also works to advance economic empowerment of women through training in financial skills and managing a small business. Finally, the United States continues to target assistance to the country's NGOs and civil society organizations for humanitarian, training, and community development projects that benefit all Iraqis, including religious minority communities.

## **Jordan:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Jordan to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Jordan's human rights conditions, please see the *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's priorities relating to democracy promotion and human rights in Jordan are to develop institutional capacity, improve the operating environment for NGOs and the press to participate more fully in critical inquiry and open debate,

strengthen election administration in accordance with international standards, improve religious freedom, support civil society, raise labor standards, and promote the rights of women and persons with disabilities. Ongoing U.S.-funded programs focus on election administration and political party development, press freedom, judicial sector reform, women's rights, and labor. Reducing the prevalence of honor crimes, trafficking in persons, child labor, and domestic violence are also U.S. Government priorities in the country. Program objectives are based on consultations with local organizations and take into consideration the government of Jordan's 2006 National Agenda, a 10-year blueprint for reform.

In September 2008 the United States and Jordan signed a five-year, non-binding MOU on assistance level requests for 2010-2014. The MOU reinforced a bilateral commitment to cooperate on issues including security, economic policy, and political reform, as well as performance in line with the country's National Agenda.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. support for electoral reform focuses on building governmental capacity for election administration, empowering civil society efforts to monitor elections for the expected 2010 parliamentary elections, and building voter awareness and participation, especially among women and youth. Embassy officers interact regularly with government officials, civil society members, and political officials to ensure a steady flow of information about these reform initiatives and support efforts to conduct free, fair, and transparent elections.

U.S. support for media freedom and independence aims to: increase professionalism, objectivity, and reporting skills among emerging and professional journalists and editors; develop community and news media, with special emphasis on citizen journalism such as blogging and community radio; and improve the environment for independent media. The U.S. Government also funds study tours and other exchange programs for journalists to visit the United States to increase their understanding of the role of a free press in a democratic system.

U.S. support for judicial sector reform includes automating the judiciary's case management system and revamping the judicial training process, both of which significantly have improved judicial standards. Future support will focus on

strengthening judicial accountability while promoting administrative and financial independence. The U.S. Government also aims to improve the judiciary's handling of human rights cases, especially those involving honor killings, trafficking in persons, forced labor, and domestic violence, through targeted training of judges and prosecutors, relevant judicial education programs and exchanges, and diplomatic engagement. As a number of changes to the country's laws and regulations governing NGO operations take effect, the U.S. Government continues to implement an assistance program designed to strengthen civil society. The U.S. Government is helping to streamline the registration process for civil society organizations, create forums for dialogue between the government and NGOs, and provide technical assistance in formulating transparent regulations. The U.S. Government also assists civil society organizations in building their management and strategic planning capacity, as well as in developing internal governance and accountability mechanisms that will increase their ability to advocate effectively for greater civic space.

The U.S. Government prioritizes a range of human rights issues in its engagement and assistance programs, including but not limited to legal discrimination against women, gender-based violence, increased equality in political rights, freedom of religion, and trafficking-in-persons. U.S. assistance programs also focus on the role of women and persons with disabilities in civil society to enhance their voice in the decision-making process and to help them build support for expanded rights for women and persons with disabilities. Through exchange programs and diplomatic engagement, the U.S. Government also helps to expand the organizational capacity of religious groups involved in interfaith dialogue and religious tolerance.

**Kuwait:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Kuwait to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Kuwait's

human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

## Part 1

The U.S. Government has four main democracy objectives in the country: to increase democratic stability and the accountability of democratic institutions, to improve treatment of foreign laborers, to expand empowerment of women, and to increase press freedom. The United States supports the government's efforts to strengthen its democratic practices to ensure long-term stability, reduce governmental cronyism, and counter the appeal of extremists who advocate the use of violence to achieve political goals. The United States seeks to highlight the treatment of foreign laborers in public discourse and encourages stronger legislation and enforcement of internationally accepted standards to combat trafficking in persons. The United States supports the country's efforts to enhance further the role of women in the political process. Finally, the United States seeks to strengthen understanding in the country about the key role a free press plays in a democracy.

## Part 2

The U.S. Government uses a variety of tools to promote democracy in the country, including diplomatic efforts, speaking events, election-related programs, and educational programs. Embassy officials regularly address democratization in meetings with a range of government officials. The ambassador and embassy staff visit the country's numerous "diwaniyas" (evening political salons) to voice support for the democratic system. In May 2009 the U.S. Government funded a local NGO to run a "Get Out the Vote" campaign for the March parliamentary election. Other recent efforts include presentations on the U.S. political system by the U.S. ambassador and other U.S. embassy officials to students at the Gulf University for Science and Technology, Kuwait University, and others; an embassy-conceived course on different cultural approaches to terrorism, culminating in a "moot court" terrorism trial attended by the ambassador; a five-week training program at various U.S. universities for four Kuwaiti student leaders to learn about democratic

principles; several internship programs for Kuwaiti students to work in Washington, DC, to better understand the U.S. political process and the role NGOs play; a training program encouraging political activism among Kuwaiti youth; and a series of leadership workshops for young people. In addition, each year, the United States awards English-language microscholarships to approximately 75 high school students as part of an effort to help instill the values of democracy and civic participation through in-class elections and community service projects. In advance of the 2008 and 2009 parliamentary elections, a U.S. Government partner organization provided campaign development and planning assistance to candidates.

The U.S. Government publicly calls for the government to address the problem of foreign worker rights. U.S. officials work closely with the Kuwaiti government and diplomatic missions of labor-sending countries to increase awareness about the plight of the expatriate labor community, including conditions of human trafficking. Embassy officials meet with their counterparts to advocate for more shelters, legislation, and convictions of trafficking violators. In November 2009 the U.S. ambassador-at-large for combating trafficking in persons joined the embassy's quarterly worker rights meeting with diplomats from labor-sending countries and NGO representatives and delivered a speech on the need for the country to pass comprehensive antitrafficking legislation. These quarterly meetings also spawned the 2008 publishing of multilingual brochures, which embassies distribute, informing foreign workers of their rights and instructing them how to seek help in an emergency.

To promote women's rights and freedom of speech, the embassy holds discussions with members of the government, women's rights activists, and journalists; hosts speakers and roundtables; and publicly calls for the end of discrimination in housing rights. In March as part of her ongoing public speaking on the importance of women's participation in economic spheres, the U.S. ambassador participated in the First Woman Forum, a conference on women's rights in the country. In April embassy officials consulted with a local lawyer and activist to discuss her efforts to represent in court another female lawyer hoping to become the country's first female prosecutor. Four Kuwaiti women, nominated by the U.S. embassy, participated in a February technology conference in the United

Arab Emirates for female leaders in the Middle East. Additionally, the U.S. Government's Women in Law Program provided legal skills training for several female law students and new lawyers. As part of the U.S. Government's ongoing program to promote press freedom, the embassy funded a visit by a U.S. journalism professor who delivered lectures on journalism ethics at a number of universities in March. Also during that month, the U.S. Government funded the Kuwait Journalist Association's program to improve the performance of newspaper editors and managers; as a part of the program, the ambassador spoke on the critical role that journalists play in a democracy. Other U.S. officials regularly speak on the importance of press and Internet freedom. The U.S. Government works to boost citizens' access to information. In May 2009 U.S. officials delivered presentations to Kuwait University faculty and students about how to access information from U.S. libraries.

**Lebanon:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Lebanon to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Lebanon's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Following nearly three decades of foreign occupation and civil conflict in Lebanon, the U.S. Government seeks to support Lebanon's sovereignty and independence by increasing the government's capacity to provide for the security and socioeconomic needs of its citizens, while also upholding respect for human rights and democratic principles, practices, and values. United States assistance to Lebanon strengthens the institutions of the Lebanese state, to enable the Lebanese government to exert its sovereign authority

throughout Lebanese territory and implement all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. In its assistance programs, the United States emphasizes strengthening the capacity of municipalities throughout the country, assisting them to improve transparency practices and citizen services. The United States Government also supports national-level programs promoting economic, fiscal, political, and judicial transparency and reform.

The United States Government supports the Government of Lebanon as it seeks electoral reform, and the U.S. mission provides assistance to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working to improve electoral processes and increase citizen participation among traditionally marginalized groups. U.S. technical assistance will support local efforts to ensure the 2010 municipal elections are free and fair, avoid violence or intimidation, and reflect the independent will of the people. Finally, the United States seeks to strengthen civil society organizations to develop leaders adept at advocating for their communities' needs. Because the country's constitution provides for a confessional system of government that distributes power among religious communities, the United States supports civil society organizations promoting cross-confessional activities, conflict resolution, and programs to provide alternatives to extremism.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. programs are supporting Lebanon's government institutions to promote the rule of law. Through capacity building of the security and judicial authorities, U.S. assistance is strengthening the criminal justice system. For example, the U.S. Government provides significant funds for training and equipment to the Internal Security Forces and the Lebanese Armed Forces to enhance the professionalism of these national institutions. Programs to improve the capacity of the security forces are based on Western democratic principles and designed to enhance the understanding and implementation of international norms and concepts to protect individual human rights. Training on human rights practices for the security forces is focused on civil and political rights, in addition to an emphasis on fighting corruption through training on ethics and values. Similarly, U.S.

Government programming is addressing basic needs in the justice sector to increase the independence of the judiciary and to improve the efficacy with which laws are applied in the courts.

The United States supports programs that seek to empower civil society, extend fair labor practices to all segments of the population, and address the plight of trafficking victims. U.S. funding for civil society organizations contributes to just and democratic governance, strengthens citizen advocacy campaigns, and increases civic participation. U.S. officials also encourage Lebanese leaders to extend labor law protections to foreign workers, to improve employment rights for refugees, and to end arbitrary detentions in forced labor and trafficking cases. To this end, U.S. funds support NGOs and social workers who interview trafficking victims in order to screen and refer trafficking cases to the country's judiciary for prosecution of traffickers. U.S. programs are training judges, prosecutors, and lawyers on trafficking victim identification and protection, and these programs support the only safe house for trafficking and forced labor victims.

U.S. programs are supporting religious freedom, encouraging cross-sectarian dialogues, and promoting freedom of the press. To promote religious freedom, U.S. officials meet regularly with religious leaders and members of the Islamic Christian Dialogue Committee. U.S. officials emphasize the importance of protecting the freedoms of speech and the press and note the critical role of journalists in advancing democracy and human rights. The United States Government also supports programs seeking to improve independent media, including application of new social media tools and journalist training. Engaging and empowering women and youth with new media tools is a focus of these efforts, which in turn enhance transparency and citizen advocacy.

**Libya:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Libya to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Libya's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

To promote democratic principles and human rights, the United States focuses on fostering a multifaceted relationship with the government. The U.S. Government aims to empower citizens to play a more active role in governance and to secure basic civil liberties for all citizens, consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Top U.S. priorities include implementing an action-oriented, high-level human rights dialogue; strengthening working relationships with key government officials to address human rights and democracy concerns; and promoting greater public participation in political life through cultural and educational exchanges that provide exposure to alternative political models, ideas, and principles. The U.S. Government also believes that cooperating with the government for commercial law reform can help to promote respect for rule of law. While deep suspicions engendered by more than 30 years of estrangement and hostility, restrictive laws, and an absence of independent NGOs impede the U.S. Government's efforts to coordinate its democracy promotion strategy with independent organizations, U.S. officials work to identify, build, and support nascent civil society organizations and individuals and to facilitate interactions between local groups and international NGOs.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government engages in regular diplomatic outreach aimed at promoting greater understanding of political processes, judicial independence, rule of law, and independent media in the country. In 2009 high-level U.S. officials met with Libyan counterparts to discuss human rights principles and practices, and the ambassador and other U.S. officials regularly raise human rights concerns bilaterally with officials, as well as in public and press statements. Consistent U.S. outreach to the government and to semiofficial civil society groups has slowly expanded the bilateral relationship to include a political component. U.S. officials, including the ambassador, also meet regularly with representatives of local semiofficial organizations, including nongovernmental human

rights organizations, to discuss political processes and press freedom. In addition, U.S. officials meet with representatives of minority religions, including the Anglican, Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Protestant communities operating in the country, to monitor the country's adherence to the principle of religious freedom.

The U.S. Government directs several public diplomacy projects to promote democracy and human rights in the country. It sponsors participants to travel to the United States as part of the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) to explore issues such as student leadership and civic responsibility, judicial independence and reform, women's rights, and investigative journalism. In 2009 the embassy facilitated 14 IVLP participants, as well as nine Fulbright students and more than two dozen participants in other U.S.-sponsored exchange programs. The embassy runs a monthly "Conversation with America" series, open to the public, in which Libyan citizens explore topics such as civil rights and gender equality with embassy officers. The embassy also sponsored 26 youth to participate in NASA Space Camp. Their trip led to a documentary that aired on Libyan television emphasizing values such as gender equality and ethics in scientific fields. In 2010 the embassy will sponsor an equally large group of students to participate in the Space Camp program.

The U.S. Government's foreign assistance plan for the country focuses on training judges in international arbitration and legal norms to foster a rule-of-law society, promoting human rights principles and combating human trafficking through workshops with migration officials, empowering female entrepreneurs to compete in the emerging domestic marketplace, and supporting fair and transparent privatization efforts underway in the country. Additional funding is directed to prepare university-level students for leadership roles in the country. U.S. officials regularly exchange "best practices" with counterparts in reforming the country's commercial law, migration management, and antitrafficking legislation. U.S. assistance also has supported training and professional exchange opportunities for judges specializing in commercial law. As a result of the cooperation, the Libyan Ministry of Justice has advanced commercial law reforms that promote a more transparent economic environment, based on free market principles.

## **Morocco:**

## BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Morocco to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Morocco's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government continues to pursue in Morocco a democracy strategy that integrates advocacy for reform with foreign assistance, training, and public diplomacy outreach. Public diplomacy efforts promote the expression of democratic concepts and values through the media and in face-to-face interactions, using speakers, video conferences, print and electronic publications, theater productions, and grants for media training. The United States focuses its efforts on strengthening democratic institutions, including local governments, political parties, and parliament, with a particular focus on youth and women's involvement in political processes; increasing civil society effectiveness at local and national levels; promoting anticorruption efforts and judicial reform; protecting and expanding freedoms of expression, religion, association, and the press; supporting and training marginalized youth; combating corruption, narcotics, and human trafficking; and enhancing the professionalism of security forces. The U.S. strategy is designed to support the government's commitment in all these areas.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government engages the Moroccan government and civil society at all levels to encourage continued progress in the areas of human rights and democratic reform.

Through the annual Human Rights Dialogue, launched in 2007, U.S. officials engage counterparts from three ministries in constructive and open discussions on the entire range of human rights issues, including human trafficking. U.S. officials meet with government officials and leaders of religious communities to promote religious freedom and tolerance. For example, during Ramadan, the U.S. mission organized several events to promote religious dialogue and emphasize religious tolerance. In addition, when the

government recently expelled U.S. citizens from the country for allegedly violating antiproselytizing laws, U.S. officials urged tolerance and pressed for due process. The United States continues to promote media freedom through journalist training programs that emphasize journalistic ethics and professionalism. Through the International Visitor Leadership Program, the U.S. Government will send more than 30 Moroccans in fields related to democracy, government, human rights, grassroots activism, and the law to the United States for various training opportunities in 2010. The U.S. Government is also expanding capacity-building programs for local governments and political parties, with a particular focus on female politicians elected in the 2009 local elections (13 percent of all municipal council positions nationwide, up from fewer than 1 percent). To support this watershed event, the U.S. Government provides management and leadership training to the first-time female officeholders to ensure they have the skills to govern and participate in the political process effectively. The United States also supports, through advocacy and programming, activists within political parties who aim to increase their own parties' internal democratic processes, improve the effectiveness of the party system, and reach out to women, youth, and economically disadvantaged elements of society.

On the judicial front, the U.S. Government supports the government's efforts to develop and promote the use of alternative sentencing for young offenders, as well as to improve conditions in prisons. The United States will provide technical assistance to the government and will increase outreach to, and constructive engagement with, youth and other at-risk segments of society to lessen their vulnerability to extremism and help integrate them into broader democratic processes. The U.S. Government is currently funding a two-way exchange focused on combating violence against women through offender-targeted programs. Four Moroccans from the government and NGO sector will study U.S. models of counseling victims of domestic violence and the role of police in enforcing the law. Combating corruption is a priority, reflecting the government's own commitment in this area. The U.S. Government promotes court system improvements through judicial training and other governmental and civil society actors and increased civil society advocacy to promote accountability and transparency. A U.S.-funded educational drama takes anticorruption messages nationwide. The United States is also funding the design of an anticorruption charter for judges and court clerks. As a result of U.S. support, legal associations continue a constructive dialogue with the government on

judicial reform, and the government developed a national anticorruption strategy and procedures, a public awareness campaign, and an anticorruption hotline. The United States also funded the creation of three pilot public anticorruption assistance centers.

Resolution of the longstanding Western Sahara dispute is essential to improving the country's overall human rights situation and permitting greater democratic reform. Extensive diplomacy with government and security officials helps to improve the situation in the territory, including advances in freedom of movement and reductions in human rights violations. UN-sponsored negotiations under a newly appointed personal envoy of the UN Secretary-General aim to find an equitable and lasting solution acceptable to all parties. Since last year's report, two rounds of informal talks between Morocco and the POLISARIO (with Algeria and Mauritania attending as observers) have taken place under UN auspices. The United States continues to support UN efforts through advocacy and reporting on human rights. U.S. officials continue to engage directly with human rights activists, victims, and government officials in the Western Sahara.

**Oman:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Oman to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Oman's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The advancement of democratic principles, practices, and values is a top U.S. priority in the country. U.S. officials regularly discuss human rights and democracy-related topics with government officials, including at senior levels. In planning and implementing programs designed to increase public participation in governance and strengthen civil society, the U.S. Government consults regularly with NGOs and local activists. In the

absence of political parties and opposition groups, the ambassador often invites local proponents of reform and human rights to embassy events to display U.S. support for their activities and publicly associates himself with such efforts.

The United States remains particularly focused on the following key areas: developing the capacity of the Majlis al-Shura to help it prepare for expanded legislative functions; assisting the judiciary in its role to protect citizen rights and provide oversight of government; supporting the development of labor unions and their ability to promote democratic principles with civil society; working with women's groups, including the network of local women's associations, to help increase female participation in all aspects of society; and providing resources to NGOs to strengthen their role as public advocates. The U.S. Government also seeks to encourage and support the country's efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government uses a variety of programs, the full range of public diplomacy tools, and other resources to partner with local stakeholders as the country transitions toward greater public participation in governance and a more active civil society. Reflecting focus areas, U.S.-funded training programs are helping to improve the capabilities of the Majlis al-Shura (both members and staff), as well as imparting new skills and knowledge to judges, prosecutors, and lawyers to enhance the rule of law. The United States is also helping to teach democratic principles and student leadership skills in educational institutions. U.S. grants to local NGOs and professional associations assist in the development of civil society. These grants cover a wide range of activities, such as a workshop on women's legal rights and a project for public engagement with members of the Majlis al-Shura on environmental issues.

Public diplomacy assets, including exchanges and in-country programming activities at the six American Corners (housed in universities), and cooperative projects with local partners, seek to complement program activities and the embassy's ongoing dialogue with the government on topics related to democracy and human rights. Special strengths include a growing and active program alumni network; solid relationships with local women's groups, as women make up at least 50 percent of most public diplomacy

exchange programs; and close ties with private colleges and universities, which are active in developing student leadership. As print and electronic media in Oman are becoming more privately owned, the United States will engage extensively in activities aimed at professionalizing the media and developing reporting capacity.

The U.S. Government is engaged actively in efforts to support the government to combat trafficking in persons. U.S. dialogue with government officials has raised the level of awareness of this subject within the government and, consequently, has led to greater actions by the government to address this global problem, including the passage of a comprehensive antitrafficking law in 2008. A U.S.-funded consultant provided expert advice and guidance on the drafting of the antitrafficking law. U.S. assistance also supported training for labor inspectors on how to detect signs of trafficking in the workplace and identify possible trafficking victims.

U.S.-funded programs assist the country's fledgling labor unions, which serve as grassroots examples of democracy while protecting citizen and migrant worker rights. One program component trains union leaders in international best practices for organizing and holding elections. U.S. assistance to women's groups and female leaders is longstanding. One ongoing U.S.-funded program has achieved notable success in expanding women's awareness of their rights, employment opportunities, and networking ability through technology training.

## **Qatar:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Qatar to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Qatar's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government seeks windows of opportunity to promote democratic reform and

provides U.S. technical and programmatic assistance wherever possible. Major U.S. efforts focus on increasing awareness of the benefits of reform and broadening the political participation of citizens within the government. The U.S. Government uses a combination of programmatic and diplomatic means to assist the government and citizens in their efforts to build and sustain democratic institutions. The U.S. Government's democracy promotion objectives include: promoting democratic elections, the rule of law, and legislative reform; supporting the engagement of citizens, particularly youth, in the process of civil society development; promoting freedom of expression and the development of independent media; and addressing the poor working and living conditions of the large expatriate workforce.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

To promote the rule of law and legislative reform, the U.S. Government works with implementing partners to target specific sectors and populations. To enhance the quality of legal education, the United States provides technical assistance to the Qatar University College of Law in the area of curriculum reform. Another implementing partner provides technical assistance to the Advisory Council and the Central Municipal Council and their administrative staffs on parliamentary and legislative procedures. In advance of parliamentary elections, the United States is engaging with the Permanent Election Committee to increase voter awareness and identify and train prospective candidates. Through targeted workshops, roundtable discussions, exchange programs, and training sessions, the United States engages women on increasing their traditionally limited participation in the democratic process. Other ongoing programs focus on training in investigative techniques, forensic studies, and legal procedures for security personnel. The U.S. Government actively supports civic engagement through the development of civil society. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) do not formally exist in the country, and the law effectively discourages their establishment; however, the United States continues to identify and build the capacity of potential NGOs and associations. U.S. officials consistently encourage the government to reform its restrictive laws prohibiting freedom of association and the legal formation of NGOs. In 2009 one U.S.-based NGO concluded a memorandum of understanding with the National Human Rights Committee. The U.S. Government funds exchange programs and management training

opportunities for civil activists and leaders of potential NGOs, as well as for youth to teach them the importance of civic engagement. Since half of the country's population is younger than 20, U.S. officials target youth in their democratic promotion efforts. The United States sponsors visiting speakers to lead discussions with local audiences on civic activism and Muslim involvement in the United States, and a U.S. grant enables local children to produce videos on the importance of civic engagement. A U.S. implementing partner also provides technical assistance to the Supreme Education Council in developing curriculum and implementing a legal and civic education program for middle schools.

The U.S. Government continues to address severe restrictions on freedoms of expression and the press. The chief of mission and other U.S. officials regularly engage the media and government stakeholders on internationally accepted standards of expression, professionalism, and objectivity. In 2009 the U.S. Government sponsored an influential editorial opinion writer to participate in media training. The United States also sponsored a local youth organization to lead a training program for amateur film directors to express their views on democracy and universal values such as social justice and human rights to help strengthen their role as leaders in society.

One of the most important U.S. priorities is to address the working and living conditions of the large expatriate workforce. This vulnerable population, made up primarily of male unskilled and semiskilled laborers and male and female domestic workers, is often subjected to inadequate accommodations, miserable work conditions, forced labor, and trafficking in persons. The chief of mission and other U.S. officials regularly engage government stakeholders and foreign diplomats from labor-sending countries on ameliorating the situation. The U.S. Government also funds an implementing partner to create awareness and provide advocacy services to the many expatriate community support groups by facilitating communication and coordination between these groups and NGOs in the sending countries.

### **Saudi Arabia:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

## Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Saudi Arabia's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The United States works with the government and civil society leaders to encourage reforms that counter extremism and facilitate the development of a stable, responsive, transparent, and accountable state that embodies international human rights standards and welcomes civic participation in the political process. The U.S. Government continues to engage actively with the government to encourage wider public involvement in decision-making processes, support open political and civil society institutions, increase government accountability, strengthen religious freedom, and ensure rights for ethnic and religious minorities, women, and foreign workers.

### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States urges the government to promote political participation, transparency, and official accountability as part of our overall bilateral dialogue. U.S. officials meet regularly with the Human Rights Commission (HRC) and the National Society for Human Rights (NSHR), as well as with other civic organizations, to encourage political discussion on topics such as the increasing importance of the Consultative Council (Majlis al-Shura), municipal councils, and the rights of women and minority groups. In 2009 and 2010 U.S. officials engaged the HRC and the NSHR on child marriage, combating trafficking in persons, freedom of religion, and due process issues. The U.S. Government works with human rights organizations to encourage the government to reexamine the cases of individuals who appear to be victims of serious human rights violations.

The U.S. Government continues to utilize its programs to build respect for democratic values. Through the International Visitor Leadership Program and the Middle East Partnership Initiative, the United States has sponsored government officials and civil society members to participate in seminars and workshops on topics such as the rule of law in judicial reform, human rights advocacy and awareness, religious and public education in the United States, U.S. elections, NGO administration, participatory democracy, civil liberties, youth leadership, and volunteerism. The United States provides exchanges and training to promote progress toward an independent judiciary, community involvement in government decision-making, investigative journalism, grassroots democracy, and women's health. The United States continues to encourage civil society development through U.S. speaker programs co-hosted by local civil society organizations as well as local and regional workshops. In March 2008 the United States initiated a media exchange program with radio and television talk show hosts to sharpen professional skills, encourage moderation, promote democratic values, and counter extremist ideas. In October 2008 to complement the government's judicial reform efforts, the United States organized a two-week program on court administration, specialized courts, and courtroom technology for a visiting Saudi judicial delegation. The United States also promoted civic participation by sponsoring election-training programs for women. To help strengthen institutional capacity, the United States funds programs that provide training and technical assistance for members of the Consultative Council and the 178 municipal councils.

The United States advocates consistently for religious freedom in the country. In January 2009 the United States re-designated Saudi Arabia as a Country of Particular Concern for severe violations of religious freedom. U.S. officials regularly raise with government officials the issue of religious freedom and call on them to protect private religious worship by non-Muslims, eliminate discrimination against religious minorities, and promote tolerance towards non-Muslims. The United States supports the Kingdom's interfaith dialogue initiative to promote religious dialogue and tolerance. The United States continues to encourage the government to revise its school textbooks to remove intolerant passages advocating violence, disparaging or promoting hatred toward other

religions, or encouraging hostility toward other Islamic sects. Several exchange programs and U.S. speaker programs have promoted religious tolerance.

The United States encourages the government to raise public awareness of abuse of foreign workers, particularly household workers, and to extend labor protections to these workers. The United States advocates for long-term improvements in the status and legal rights of foreign laborers under Saudi labor law and for the enforcement of existing protections. In coordination with source-country governments, the United States works to promote improved legal protections for foreign workers, prevent forced labor and trafficking in persons, protect trafficking victims, and investigate and prosecute traffickers. In 2009 the government passed a new law to combat Trafficking in Persons. In 2009 the United States delivered a government-hosted three-day anti-trafficking training course for law enforcement officials, judges, and civil servants to help begin implementation of the country's new law. U.S. education and training objectives for the country's military include increasing awareness of international norms of human rights and fostering greater respect for the principles of civilian control over the military and the rule of law.

### **Syria:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Syria to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Syria's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

To encourage an environment where there is respect for human rights, the development of civil society, freedom of expression and religion, and the rule of law, U.S. officials work to urge the government to end its repression of dissidents and minorities and to support the efforts of the population to broaden real political participation and reassert their right to fundamental freedoms. The U.S. Government draws domestic and

international attention to human rights abuses in Syria; supports individuals and NGOs seeking peaceful, democratic change; endeavors to foster a more vibrant media and mass communications environment; funds programs to provide training and resources that encourage the development of civil society; and encourages the professional development of the next generation of leaders.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States regularly raises concerns about the government's poor human rights record and urges other democratic actors to do the same. In 2009 the White House issued a statement condemning the government for continued harassment and detention of civil society activist Haitham al-Maleh and other political prisoners and encouraged other like-minded governments to follow suit. At the UN, the United States condemned the government's human rights record and publicly highlighted the abuse of its citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms.

The United States uses public diplomacy and reporting to highlight human rights abuses and urges the government to improve its practices. U.S. officials maintain contact with a variety of NGOs and civil society activists throughout the year, documenting incidents for dissemination to other governments and inclusion in the annual *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, and *Report on International Religious Freedom*. Through these contacts and others, the United States monitors the government's repression of organizations and arrest of democratic activists seeking to assemble or associate peacefully. U.S. officials participate in a diplomatic monitoring group that exchanges information on the human rights situation, coordinates representation at the trials of civil society activists, and endeavors to synchronize diplomatic responses and related assistance programs. The United States closely monitors trafficking in persons in the country and cooperates and shares information with international organizations and other governments to increase awareness of and combat the problem. In 2009 U.S. officials met twice with Syrian government officials to discuss strategies for strengthening Syria's efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

The United States supports the development of an independent media and an independent judiciary through various State Department-funded training programs and workshops.

The U.S. Embassy in Damascus supports the professionalization of the Syrian media and

provides additional training to journalists in areas such as ethics in reporting, investigative journalism, networking, and organizing press events. The United States funds workshops for lawyers on topics such as human rights and trafficking in persons.

The U.S. Government has sponsored professionals and students to participate in development and leadership programs in the United States focused on issues of human rights, civil society, journalism, and good governance. Through these programs the United States endeavors to develop a free and independent Syrian media; raise awareness of issues related to civic responsibility; foster the development of civil society; and provide training in leadership, management, and policy advocacy for promising young leaders.

**Tunisia:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Tunisia to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Tunisia's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

A key U.S. Government objective in Tunisia is to promote democratic reform, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. To support the enactment of genuine democratic and human rights reforms, especially freedom of expression and freedom of association, the United States sustains a broad dialogue with the government, diplomatic interlocutors, and civil society. This dialogue encompasses the continued promotion of good governance and participatory democracy, with the goal of improving the functioning of the country's political parties and civil society organizations. The United States encourages the government to increase the pace and substance of critical political and human rights reforms and to allow civil society, including independent media, to address these issues freely. The U.S. Secretary of State highlighted Tunisia as a country of

concern for Internet freedom, and on World Press Freedom Day the White House recognized Tunisia as a place where journalists are imprisoned.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States makes full use of exchange, cultural, and professional programs as well as dialogue to promote democratic values. The ambassador and other high-level U.S. officials consistently raise human rights, democracy, and good governance with the government. U.S. officials meet regularly with governing party and opposition party officials, prominent intellectuals, students, lawyers, journalists, and other civil society leaders to promote freedom of expression, cooperation, and the free exchange of ideas. They meet regularly with religious leaders to stress the importance of dialogue and religious tolerance. U.S. officials, including the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, recently visited the oldest and largest Jewish community in Tunisia to highlight the successful and long-standing example of Jews and Muslims living and working together peacefully. The United States has funded a series of workshops and an international conference that discussed democracy and Islam.

In 2009 the U.S. Government also sponsored the participation of 17 individuals in the International Visitor Leadership Program in the fields of government, rule of law, judicial reform, democracy, women's affairs, and the media. One local educator studied the potential role of women in political leadership and another, grassroots civic engagement. The embassy implements its civic values agenda for youth most effectively through the ACCESS micro-scholarship program by organizing two five-day retreats per year at remote sites in which high school students participate in workshops that focus on volunteerism for the community, among other subjects. Other supplemental activities for ACCESS and YES student participants and alumni also emphasize the same themes. The embassy sponsors fora for civil society, including roundtables with journalists focused on freedom of the press. It brings speakers to the country to discuss freedom and democracy with officials at think tanks, within government, and with journalists and university groups. In speeches, media interviews, publications, and events, U.S. officials highlight U.S. commitments to human rights, freedom of expression, and government transparency. For example, U.S. officials met several times with groups of independent journalists and bloggers to discuss freedom of the press, association and freedom to

access the Internet. The U.S. Government promotes media independence and professionalism through special programs for journalists and bloggers, exchange programs, and regular interaction with media professionals. U.S. projects in this area also focus on increasing opportunities for women, including trainings of counselors for domestic abuse victims, and business and entrepreneurship training programs. To increase understanding of U.S. objectives and international human rights norms, the embassy distributes materials in Arabic, French, and English, including U.S. Government reports on human rights, religious freedom, labor, and trafficking in persons; NGO reports on regional human rights issues; and electronic journals and articles on rule of law and transparency in government. For example, the embassy distributed copies of President Obama's Cairo address during engagements with government officials, civil society, and students as an opportunity to expand on the themes of democracy, freedom of speech and religious tolerance. The embassy also publishes a monthly newsletter, whose theme is often related to democracy. The newsletter is sent to approximately 1,500 people, including host government officials and the alumni of U.S. Government sponsored programs.

The United States conducts a variety of activities in the country to support good governance, judicial independence, independent media, and anticorruption efforts. During the 2009 presidential and parliamentary elections, the United States encouraged the invitation of an independent elections monitoring group and also the creation of elections observation group comprised of varied members from civil society; however, in the end, the Tunisian government did not allow credible independent observers to monitor the elections. The embassy conducted informal election observation and coordinated observation with other diplomatic interlocutors. The U.S. Government also includes rule of law issues in training and education it provides to the military. In 2009, 30 military personnel took part in U.S. training that included components on respect for human rights and rule of law.

The United States works to strengthen civil society and its ability to influence and communicate with the government, and urges the government to remove onerous NGO registration and funding restrictions. U.S. officials monitor political trials and encourage the government to respect freedom of assembly and association at every opportunity. They also meet with activists and NGOs that experience government harassment and

restrictions, attend events such activists and NGOs host, and raise specific cases of concern with the government. The Secretary of State expressed the hope that the government will do more to promote independent media access, freedom of the Internet, and access to television for the opposition.

The United States works to strengthen civil society organizations by supporting media and political reform through small grants. In 2009-2010, humanitarian assistance programs supported the creation of an AIDS Prevention and Confidential Testing Center for the Tunisian Association for the Prevention of AIDS. This assistance is helping Tunisian civil society assume an important role in promoting AIDS awareness among youth and encouraging testing among high risk groups. During this period the embassy also continued its decade-long humanitarian assistance initiative to raise awareness of the rights of people with disabilities by supporting the Tunisian Association for Assistance to the Blind in the creation of an integration center for blind youth.

**UAE:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to promote democracy and human rights. For background on the UAE's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The United States promotes democracy and human rights in the country by working to broaden political participation, develop a vibrant civil society and NGO community equipped to protect civil liberties and monitor human rights conditions, promote women's empowerment, encourage government transparency, support the rule of law and legal accountability for crimes, and pursue greater judicial independence. The U.S.

Government seeks to contribute to the development of a free press and to bolster the media's professionalism and ability to pursue independent stories, rather than relying on wire services or officially sanctioned government sources. The U.S. Government strives to combat trafficking in persons and to improve the human rights situation for the more than 80 percent of the population who are noncitizens, many of whom are unskilled laborers.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States supports democracy objectives by working bilaterally with the government on numerous issues. The U.S. Government seeks to advance the development of responsible democracy by promoting better understanding of democratic governance, free enterprise, and individual responsibility in a free society. The United States encourages the government to build on its measured progress toward more representative governance, including fulfilling its commitment to expand the electorate (which currently selects 20 of the 40 members of the Federal National Council (FNC)) to include all citizens and transforming the Federal National Council into a more independent legislative body. The United States continually urges the government to provide a greater role for civil society and makes use of various assistance programs to strengthen the role of civil society and the empowerment of women and youth. U.S. officials engage their government counterparts on the values of freedom of assembly and association to support the rights of the large and vulnerable foreign labor force, as well as to expand awareness of trafficking in persons, encourage prosecution of violators of the antitrafficking law, and assist victims of trafficking in persons. The embassy works with government contacts, other diplomatic missions, private activists, and international NGOs in combating trafficking in persons; the embassy also funds training programs for judges and law enforcement officials to assist them in applying relevant laws and in treating domestic violence victims to raise public awareness of this issue. U.S. officials engage with democratic allies and encourage them to raise human rights and democracy concerns with the government.

The United States discusses human rights with the government, both in general terms and in specific cases. U.S. officials engage organizations and individuals with nonofficial views and information to shed light on the human rights situation in the country, including lack of civil liberties. The U.S. Government offers resources and access to expertise and training through U.S.-funded programs, which foster greater public awareness of the value of a viable NGO community and public monitoring of human rights, an area of increasing importance for the government. The U.S. Government directs concrete assistance through local partners to cultivate conditions favorable to democratic reform. Ongoing U.S.-funded programs expand the role of youth in decision-making by facilitating student council elections at local universities, help journalists strengthen independent reporting skills and overcome self-censorship through training, and assist editors in building investigative capabilities and professionalism. Since 2006 the U.S. Government has facilitated local journalists' engagement with U.S. media law experts, who helped support their efforts to propose draft amendments to a press law that remains under government review. U.S. civil society programs also focus on women's empowerment in a society that has made great strides toward promoting women into senior positions yet continues to suffer from a lack of broad female participation in public policy decision-making. Other civil society programs have focused on increasing women's legal awareness and assisting in their professionalization in the legal sector. U.S. officials engage and assist female leaders on a wide range of topics with a focus on developing their leadership skills and social responsibility.

From university student discussion groups to formal educator training programs, U.S. officials work directly with the country's citizens and residents, especially through secondary schools and universities, to promote skills and ideas necessary to pursue and sustain transparent governance. This effort includes "microscholarships" for English language instruction, virtual clubs, educational advising, and two American Corners (community-based information and outreach centers). The United States encourages a broader discussion of political freedoms through student exchanges, dialogue on ethnic and religious tolerance, and energetic promotion of the pursuit of higher education at U.S. institutions or U.S.-affiliated institutions in the country. In addition, the United States seeks to encourage a trend towards participatory governance in the future by promoting a

more vigorous discussion of democracy in updated civics curricula and facilitating student polling of citizens' views regarding democracy and civic activism.

**Yemen:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. Mission in Yemen to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Yemen's human rights conditions, please see the *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Improving democracy and governance in Yemen is a key foreign policy priority for the United States. Recognizing that Yemen is a sovereign nation responsible for its own development and security, Administration officials are implementing a two-pronged strategy. First, the U.S. seeks to strengthen the Government of Yemen's ability to promote security and deal with the threat posed by violent extremists within its borders. Second, we seek to mitigate Yemen's economic crisis and deficiencies in government capacity, provision of services, and transparency. As Yemen's security challenges and its social, political and economic challenges are interrelated and reinforcing, U.S. policy must be holistic and flexible in order to be effective both in the short and long terms. Improving governance and helping Yemenis meet socio-economic challenges is an important goal of U.S. policies and development assistance in Yemen. Priorities include political and fiscal reforms and initiatives to address internal grievances; better governance through decentralization; health and education service delivery; and economic diversification to generate employment, enhance livelihoods and strengthen natural-resource management.

The recently launched Friends of Yemen process promotes multilateral engagement and donor coordination to encourage genuine political and economic reforms. The Friends of Yemen process, which includes the Government of Yemen, seeks to identify immediate and long-term actions for the Yemeni government to take and ways for the international

community to support Yemen in undertaking them, through two working groups, one focused on economy and governance, and the other on justice and the rule of law.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States employs numerous programs to support good governance, democratic practices, human development and dignity, and human rights.

USAID, through its Community Livelihoods Project, is working to improve livelihoods through greater food security, clean water, health care, and education. Further, USAID is pursuing opportunities to expand engagement with local civic and religious leaders on traditional practices and customs that can reinforce environmental sustainability, food security, and social cohesion to bring vulnerable communities together and protect Yemen's natural environment, unique traditions, and cultural heritage.

USAID's Responsive Governance Project works to strengthen Yemeni institutions, to increase the government's capacity to absorb bilateral and international assistance, and to coordinate service delivery. USAID's strategy includes efforts to promote better interaction between Yemenis and their local governments. USAID programs in Yemen's rural areas focus on the development of strong, independent local councils as a means to generate the Yemeni people's ownership of their nation's democratic institutions.

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) works with Yemeni civil society to strengthen good governance and the rule of law, improve internal stability, and empower Yemenis to build a more peaceful and prosperous future. MEPI has 26 active projects in Yemen, including a number of grant programs to local nongovernmental organizations that propose and implement their own civil-society projects. MEPI programs include training for Yemeni government ministries and advocacy and capacity-building for civil society and nongovernmental organizations. Work with Yemeni organizations enables assistance programs to be particularly flexible and far-reaching in an often difficult operating environment.

Women's empowerment is a primary focus of MEPI programs, which promote women's political participation and entrepreneurship. Women in Technology (WIT) is a representative example. WIT strives to empower women and expand their participation in the workforce by providing them with cutting-edge curricula and training opportunities in business planning, professional development, and information technology. The program

also aims to train local women's organizations to become financially sustainable, support current work force demands, and empower women to play an integral role in shaping their country's future. WIT Yemen was launched in October 2005 and has trained more than 2,000 women — more than 60 of whom are now employed in banks, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutes. It works directly with five local Yemeni partners, most of whom are located outside of Sana'a.

The U.S. Government recently concluded a grant program to increase public awareness and understanding of religious freedom and tolerance with a particular focus on youth. This program aims to cut the roots of radicalization by helping to counter extremism in its early stages and supports a culture of tolerance through a combination of youth chat radio series, youth leadership trainings, journalist trainings, and public roundtables. Activities such as these help Yemeni youth, civil society, religious leaders, journalists, and government officials understand the importance of tolerance, pluralism, and the compatibility of Islam with human rights and good governance. Other recent programs support independent media and access to information, which will help strengthen transparent and accountable governance.

More broadly, the U.S. Government supports programs to improve the functioning of the country's political parties, parliament, and electoral processes and institutions. The ambassador meets regularly with senior government officials, including the president and leaders of opposition parties, and other U.S. embassy officials meet with government officials, political party members and members of parliament, to advocate for needed electoral reforms. In light of a two-year delay in parliamentary elections, now slated for 2011, the United States will urge the ruling party and opposition parties to enact the agreed-upon electoral agreement in a timely manner.

The United States' electoral assistance program focuses on enhancing political parties' electoral competitiveness, and improving campaign finance regulations. The program includes a voter education campaign and promotes women's political participation. The ambassador and other embassy officials will continue a dialogue with political parties to push for a meaningful political reconciliation prior to the parliamentary elections. The U.S. Government provides technical support to parliamentarians via a program to enhance their ability to fight corruption, legislate more effectively, and establish and adhere to sound administrative procedures.

The United States and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation developed activities to increase the credibility and institutional capacity of key government agencies and select private organizations, including implementing reforms to strengthen the capacity of the High Tender Board, Supreme National Authority to Combat Corruption, and the Central Organization for Control and Auditing. The United States also supports anticorruption systems within these agencies. Separate programs help develop media expertise in investigating and reporting on corruption. The United States is also working with the Ministry of Finance to increase efficiency and transparency of disbursement of multilateral and bilateral loans and grants.

The U.S. Government supports freedom of the press, freedom of association, and civic engagement through a number of related programs and diplomatic initiatives. U.S. officials speak out against violations of press freedom and meet with journalists who experience harassment.

The U.S. government supports domestic NGOs, especially in the areas of electoral, judicial, and political reform, women's political empowerment, and human rights. One program trains imams on the values of democracy and human rights. Through a small grants program, the United States empowers civil society organizations to become more active in the political process. A multi-year education project teaches critical thinking skills and civic responsibility to underprivileged high school students through the study of English. Another program supports the formation and operation of parents' councils in schools in the northern governorates.

The United States employs a strategy of outreach and engagement with the country's tribes, including programs focused on dispute resolution and promotion of development activities. To counter extremism and intolerance, the United States supports youth programs aimed at reducing religious radicalism and unemployment. The programs engage youth in community development, provide platforms for discussion, and encourage young people to participate in the political and civic arenas.

The United States supports efforts to combat trafficking in persons, forced labor, and child labor by funding awareness and education programs. U.S. funds help run two rehabilitation centers for trafficked children. The U.S. Government works with the

Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, and an international organization to provide care for at-risk children and assistance to their families. The embassy is continuing efforts to support the passage of legislation mandating a minimum age for marriage, rendered more difficult by prevailing cultural attitudes that make early marriage and the resulting loss in girls' education and productivity an accepted practice. USAID is working through its Basic Health Services project to educate local communities on the dangers of early marriage in Yemen. Since August 2008, the project has raised awareness about the consequences of early marriage and has worked directly with the Yemeni Women's Union to provide valuable health-education materials to community members in Amran governorate in an effort to delay the marriage of young women there. The project aims to improve community knowledge of the social and health consequences of child marriage and encourage community attitudes that favor marriage at a later age; to strengthen community support for alternatives to child marriage, especially keeping girls in school; and to increase nurse midwives' and community stakeholders' endorsement of delayed marriage.

## **SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA:**

### **Afghanistan:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Afghanistan's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

U.S. policy in the country is guided by the principle that a functioning, responsive, and sustainable democratic system in a secure environment, that provides basic services, applies justice fairly, and respects the human rights of its citizens is essential for the government to maintain the support of the people and to offer a clear alternative to

extremist ideology and practice. U.S. priorities include good governance; capacity development at all levels of government; free and fair elections; strengthened rule of law (including increased accountability and anticorruption measures); religious freedom; media freedom; and the protection of the rights of all persons, including women and children. The United States maintains a continuing dialogue with local civil society and tribal and religious groups to help ensure that initiatives will resonate with citizens.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States sponsors training programs with government institutions to improve their administrative capacity, transparency, and accountability; this is particularly important with newly formed institutions such as the Civil Service Commission, Independent Election Commission, National Assembly, and the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG). Training includes mentoring and imparting skills and knowledge of best and international practices. Parliamentary programs include support for elected Members of Parliament (MPs) who represent minority and under-privileged members of the population, including women; training and technical support for parliamentary *administration*, committees, budget analysis; and development courses at the parliamentary training institute. The assistance for Parliament pays special attention to female and Kuchi MPs, making sure they are included in all development events. The female MPs consistently demonstrate greater participation in parliament and involvement in development events. Recently 11 women started their fellowships with parliament. The parliament assistance efforts include awareness lessons targeted against gender bias of male MPs, parliament officers, and staff. One recent U.S. program supported the political development of women by providing training to 35 female parliamentarians and 165 of their staff. A training program for Afghan female diplomats focused on enhancing their professional abilities, thus furthering gender equality in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The training included sessions on human rights policy and human rights law. Another U.S. program supports the participation of local female judges in the International Association of Women Judges, funding training conferences in Washington and attendance of Afghan women judges at the last two bi-annual IAWJ conferences, in Panama and Seoul respectively.

The United States works closely with the IDLG to improve quality of representation, delivery of services, and accountability at provincial, district, and municipal levels. Provincial Reconstruction Teams play a critical role in the local governance effort as the direct interlocutors in support of sub-national officials. The Public Diplomacy Small Grants program funds provincial and district-level projects with a focus on cultural programming, promotion of civil society, government and NGO capacity development and freedom of the press. Embassy Kabul uses the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), Voluntary Visitors (VolVis) program, and other exchanges to bring hundreds of Afghans from the capital and the provinces to the United States for cultural exchanges. Single-country IVLP projects focus on issues as diverse as conflict resolution and community problem solving, women's issues, local governance, combating corruption, democracy and human rights awareness, higher education alternatives, and the role of religion in America.

The U.S. sponsors human rights programming in the country's eight Lincoln Learning Centers (LLC), using educational events to commemorate Human Rights Day and International Women's Day and utilizing open forums to discuss democracy and human rights in Afghanistan. Most of these events are organized and run by the Afghan LLC Coordinators for their local audiences. As a result, the context and discussion is truly Afghan, enabled by the United States. Embassy Kabul also promoted the Department of State's Democracy Video Challenge and has three Afghan entries in the 2010 regional semi-finals.

The U.S. Government is a primary supporter of several national rule of law programs designed to strengthen the legal and corrections systems and help it meet international human rights standards. Assistance involves training and equipping judges, attorneys, administrators, and corrections personnel to build the sector's limited capacity and enhance performance. The embassy continues to contribute materials to the country's first law library, established by the U.S. Government in 2008, and helps educate the public about the legal system by widely distributing pocket constitutions as well as multi-lingual picture-books and other publications on basic legal rights. In 2010 the U.S. Government began working more closely with Afghanistan's informal justice sector, which in the

absence of formal district courts has been the primary vehicle for rule of law in most provinces.

The United States trains police in community-based policing and protecting human rights, especially women's and children's rights. The U.S. Government is continuing to support the recently established Major Crimes Task Force to gather evidence and act against corruption, kidnapping, and organized crime. The Attorney General and Supreme Court have established the Anticorruption unit of prosecutors and the Anticorruption Tribunal that has started processing cases. The United States is supporting efforts of the Afghanistan government to strengthen the High Office of Oversight and to develop anticorruption plans in each ministry.

The U.S. Government funds the activities of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), charged with investigating claims of human rights violations and judicial corruption and monitoring prisons and detention facilities. The U.S. Government is working with AIHRC to identify and release prisoners who have been detained past the expiration of their sentences. AIHRC's public outreach department also receives support from the U.S. Government.

The United States promotes an independent press and electronic media by investing in personnel training and business plan development for media companies and by facilitating the development of community-based radio stations. The U.S. Government supports the production of an original radio series that promotes principles of respect, human rights, and democracy as they relate to rights under Islamic law. The U.S. Government also supports a popular national television series that promotes respect for the rights of women and girls, ethnic and religious tolerance, democratic behavior, and national cohesion. The U.S. Ambassador and other officials engage with lawmakers publicly and privately to underscore the importance of media freedom in a democratic society and raise specific cases of concern with their government counterparts. In addition, U.S. officials work with media to identify journalists who might benefit from professional training or exchange programs.

The United States continues to integrate the advancement of Afghan women and girls into all programmatic areas of effort as a key objective of U.S. strategy in Afghanistan, with particular focus on expanding economic opportunities, especially in the agricultural

sector; improving access to justice, improving basic service delivery in education and health, and increasing women's participation in the political process. One of the mullahs who participated in the training now has a regular one-hour program on Sharq Television, in which he has spoken about the rights of women, children and families. Additionally, the Ambassador's Small Grants Program was created to strengthen Afghan women's role in civil society. These small grants are already supporting the work of Afghan-led women NGOs at the grassroots level to engage in advocacy efforts for the enforcement of women's rights laws, including the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) law, as well as to support women's equal participation in the peace-building process. The Afghan Women's Empowerment (AWE) Grants Program supports initiatives to increase women's participation in political life, to include activities such as civic/voter education, candidate training, and leadership/advocacy training, among others. An AWE grant supported a pre-Peace Jirga preparatory conference to mobilize female participants for active participation in the Peace Jirga.

U.S. grants for protection of women and girls will focus on programs promoting gender justice, building the capacity of local defense lawyers, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers to prevent and respond to crimes of violence against women and girls by providing specialized training to these officials. In addition, funds will also enable advisor support for mentoring programs across the country to build linkages between police, prosecutors, and courts to prosecute cases successfully involving violence against women. Funds will support capacity building assistance to the Ministry of Women's Affairs Legal Department as well as the ministry as a whole. The legal department is responsible for case management and referrals for female victims of violence nationwide. Assistance to that office is to improve its capacity to process cases and ensure security and privacy for employees and victims. Funding will also continue and expand preventative mediation, legal assistance and awareness, shelter, and social work services for Afghans at risk for or victimized by gender-based violence. Another part of the U.S. grant program will focus on women and children in prisons, helping to implement a comprehensive support plan for women (and their children) in Afghan prisons, including, training and support for female corrections officers and those officers dealing with women in Afghan prisons. Funds also will support NGOs, Afghan government agencies,

and/or international organizations that provide humanitarian, education and rehabilitation programs in women's corrections facilities.

The United States assisted the government in developing an antitrafficking law, enacted in July 2008, and continues to work to assist its implementation. The U.S. Government provides grants to NGOs to facilitate the provision of shelter, services, education, health care, and livelihood opportunities to refugees who continue to return to the country from Pakistan, Iran, and other neighboring countries. The U.S. is currently funding women's shelters in Kabul, Faryab and Badghis provinces.

### **Bangladesh:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in the People's Republic of Bangladesh to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Bangladesh's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

U.S. human rights and democracy goals in the country include continued and constructive participation by all parties in the political process, improved governance, and greater protection of human rights, including labor rights and freedom of the press and of religion. The United States promotes democracy and human rights by supporting democratic institutions and practices, encouraging transparency and accountability, endorsing respect for the rule of law, supporting a constructive civil-military relationship, and seeking justice against the perpetrators of human rights abuses and political and extremist violence.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. officials emphasize the importance of constructive participation in the political process through discussions with government officials, members of civil society, and the press. The United States raises concerns about human rights abuses with the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and urges the government to conduct transparent investigations and take appropriate actions against human rights violators. In 2009 the United States continued human rights training for the Rapid Action Battalion, Bangladesh's primary counterterrorism unit. A U.S. Government sponsored investigative journalism center works with local journalists to strengthen their investigative reporting skills. In addition, the journalists are trained in reporting on transparency and accountability issues. U.S. officials meet with victims of human rights abuses and intercede with the government on specific cases. U.S. officials implement programs to enhance the rule of law by improving the capability of law enforcement officers to investigate properly and prosecute complex financial and organized crimes and develop prosecutorial and judicial skills.

The United States supports numerous projects to promote democracy in the country and lay the foundation for constructive political engagement with the government. The U.S. Government continues to enhance the capability of political parties and civil society leaders to participate fully in various aspects of the political process. For example, the U.S. Government is expanding initiatives in political party development, electoral assistance, and legislative strengthening that will help consolidate the country's democratic gains in political governance. In addition, U.S. assistance programs promote tolerance and diversity through civil society. One such program acquaints local religious and community leaders with fundamental development issues to engage them in the promotion of democratic values and practices. More than 6,000 leaders who have participated in the program over the last year now disseminate messages of tolerance to their local communities.

The U.S. government supports efforts to enable local governments to become more democratic, effective, and responsive institutions. For example, the U.S. Government helps local governments develop strategic plans that address the needs of constituents

through participatory planning measures on issues such as local infrastructure, public service, disaster-relief, and mitigation planning. In order to combat endemic corruption, the U.S. government funds a program to increase transparency and accountability in government institutions such as the Parliament and Comptroller General. In addition, the USG supports anticorruption monitoring, advocacy, and the investigative capabilities of various civil society organizations and the media.

The GOB continued to allow workers the right to associate freely, although in practice employers often curtailed this right. The United States continues to speak to workers, employers, and government officials about the importance of educating workers inside and outside export processing zones (EPZs) and employers about the need for compliance with internationally recognized labor rights and domestic labor laws. The United States provides technical assistance to enhance the capacity of EPZ and non-EPZ workers to form unions or associations and works with employers and workers to improve adherence to labor standards and bargain together constructively. This year the U.S. Government began a technical assistance program to the shrimp industry aiming to institutionalize an industry culture of resolving disputes and workplace issues through the legal system and encourage adherence to labor laws and international standards.

The United States works with the government to develop and implement a strategy to combat trafficking in persons. U.S. officials meet with the government to monitor the progress of the police unit addressing sex trafficking and works with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to improve the ability of Bangladeshi consular officials to aid trafficking victims stranded abroad. The United States conducts training programs on trafficking investigations for prosecutors and police officers. U.S.-supported training helps officials to better manage trafficking cases through improved victim and witness interviewing techniques and better evidence collection. In addition, the United States supports services providing shelter, health care, psychological counseling, and legal aid to victims of sex and labor trafficking.

The U.S. Government provides support to international partners for activities that assist several hundred thousand Rohingya refugees from Burma and encourages the government to cooperate in improving living conditions in both official and unofficial refugee camps. In addition, the U.S. Government participates in a multilateral steering

group working to persuade the government to address constructively the issue of un-registered Rohingya living in Bangladesh. The U.S. Government plans to launch a new human rights program in 2010 with the aim of reducing the high prevalence of domestic violence in Bangladesh and other related human rights violations such as sexual harassment, child marriage, and other root causes of domestic abuse.

**Bhutan:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in the Kingdom of Bhutan to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Bhutan's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the 2009 *Report on International Religious Freedom* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

Bhutan has transitioned from a hereditary monarchy to a constitutional monarchy with a parliament over the last three years. The U.S. government strongly supported this transition, and is now focused on helping to strengthen Bhutan's fledgling democratic institutions and finding a durable solution to the issue of the 83,000 Bhutanese refugees currently residing in camps in Nepal. The U.S. government is expanding its informal relations with the country even though Bhutan has chosen not to open formal diplomatic relations with any of the permanent members of the UN Security Council at this time.

Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. officials encourage Bhutan to improve respect for civil liberties, including freedom of assembly, and protection for minority populations. U.S. officials reiterate the importance of finding a lasting solution--including repatriation, local integration, and resettlement--for the refugees in Nepal.

The U.S. Government promotes democratic values, political processes, freedom of the press, educational reforms, and judicial independence by sponsoring several citizens to

travel to the United States under the Fulbright, Humphrey, and International Visitor Leadership Programs. The U.S. Government sends candidates from Bhutan to participate in military and non-military training courses in the United States.

Through its South Asia Regional Initiative for Energy program, the USAID provided the Bhutanese government with the only official U.S. Government assistance Bhutan receives.

U.S. officials discuss human rights issues, including religious freedom, during their meetings with Bhutanese officials, including those based in Bhutan's Embassy in New Delhi. The United States sent an observer delegation to April's South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Summit hosted for the first time by Bhutan.

## **Kazakhstan:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. Mission in the Republic of Kazakhstan to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Kazakhstan's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The strategic aim of the U.S. Government in the country is a stable, secure, democratic, and prosperous society. The U.S. Government supports the development of democratic systems and practices in the country and urges the government to bring the country's laws into compliance with international standards and its public commitments as the acting chairman of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The U.S. Government strongly encourages the government to respect and support the civil and

religious rights of its citizens, political and religious pluralism, and freedom of speech and the press. The United States promotes these goals through public and private advocacy, targeted assistance and programming efforts, and coordination with civil society actors.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human

### Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government works with the government to bring its laws and procedures into compliance with its OSCE commitments and other international standards. The U.S. Government provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Justice, the Supreme Court, and various government agencies through implementing partners. U.S. officials work with counterparts at the Ministry of Justice and other government agencies to implement the country's 10-year legal strategy and the Human Rights Action Plan. U.S. officials monitor the implementation of recently amended media, political party, and election legislation, and encourage the country to take further steps toward political liberalization, such as adoption of legislation providing access to government information and permitting freedom of assembly. The U.S. Government and its partners were instrumental in developing new legislation to provide gender equality and assistance to victims of violence, including trafficking victims. Kazakhstan passed the laws on domestic violence and gender equality in December 2009. The U.S. Government assists in implementation by providing training programs for law enforcement and judicial officials, and victim assistance programs. The U.S. Government supports women's leadership through a number of exchange programs as well as encouraging gender balance in U.S. programs. Five female parliamentarians are slated to travel to the United States for the Open World program. Kazakhstani women have been invited to participate in the proposed 2011 Women's Empowerment Conference in Bishkek.

The U.S. Government uses a variety of diplomatic and assistance tools to support democratic institutions in the country, including the judiciary. For example, to encourage judicial accountability, the United States continues to partner with the Supreme Court, the

Union of Judges, and the Institute of Justice to strengthen Kazakhstan's ability to adjudicate commercial and economic law cases. In March 2010, the U.S. Government sent 16 economic court judges and four coordinators, including 15 women, on an international commercial law study tour to the Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative Institute in Prague.

The U.S. Government is working to strengthen the legal framework for local self-governance, and improve the capacity of local government bodies to deliver services to their constituents. Assistance programs are promoting good governance at the local level and training local government and local council officials and members of citizen initiative groups. Following the training courses, the groups worked to identify and resolve local issues, such as repeal of electricity rate hikes, expansion of public transportation to outlying areas of the city, and improvements to water distribution.

The United States is heavily engaged in the development of civil society and promotion of political and religious pluralism. One U.S. partner worked with the government to garner civil society input into the development of the 10-year legal policy strategy, the Human Rights Action Plan, and the current draft law on lobbying. Other U.S. programs focus on the provision of effective financial incentives for private-sector contributions to NGOs and the development of advanced lobbying and communication skills among NGOs as they become more active partners with the government. The U.S. Government continues to network with democracy information centers in four cities across the country. The United States engages with local political parties and provides assistance with internal party rules and procedures, outreach and communication strategies, policy development, ethics, and coalition building.

Through an ongoing small grants program, the U.S. Government funds a variety of civil society projects, including projects to protect children's rights, prevent violence and discrimination against women, train and develop NGOs, monitor human-rights observance by local police, and conduct seminars on religious extremism, religious freedom, and tolerance. The United States also uses exchange programs to train local political and human rights activists to promote religious diversity and advocate for human rights.

The U.S. Government directly supports independent media through a regional satellite television broadcasting program to increase access to objective reporting on the region. The U.S. Government funds professional, legal, and technical support and training programs for media outlets, journalists, and media-related organizations on a variety of issues, including libel, advertising, language requirements, and licensing. The U.S. Government actively promotes the participation of local journalists in exchange programs, including the International Visitors Leadership Program. The U.S. Government actively reaches out to the media community and engages with professional organizations, such as the Editor-in-Chief Club. At the request of the Club, the U.S. Government arranged for a U.S. media professional to advise media outlets in the country about electronic journalism.

### **Kyrgyz Republic:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in the Kyrgyz Republic to promote democracy and human rights. For background on the country's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

On April 7, 2010, a sudden and violent change in government occurred in the country. The U.S. Government is working with the new provisional government to renew the country's democratic path. The provisional government plans to hold a referendum on a new constitution in June 2010, to be followed by presidential and parliamentary elections in October 2010. To support this goal, the U.S. Government will provide technical and advisory assistance in the form of training for local officials and capacity-building for the Central Election Commission. U.S. officials will stress the importance of an open, free,

and fair electoral process, as well as effective and transparent communication with the Kyrgyz people. The U.S. Government will also support civil society and media to monitor government actions, and to inform the public of important developments. The U.S. Government's priorities for promoting human rights and democratic principles, practices, and values in the country include: reinforcing democratic institutions; promoting the protection of basic freedoms and human rights; and strengthening the rule of law as a means to combat corruption, particularly in the criminal justice system. The U.S. Government also seeks to provide practical assistance related to freedom of speech and independent media, freedom of assembly, religious freedom and pluralism, and the protection of human rights.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

Following the April 2010 change of government, the U.S. Government dispatched teams of assistance experts to the country to assess immediate needs and how best to allocate available assistance funds. U.S. officials are providing immediate support to sustain free media, including working with the state television and radio company, and the U.S. officials will also provide financial support, through coordination with other international donors, for the planned June 2010 referendum on the new constitution and expected presidential and parliamentary elections in October 2010.

The U.S. Government will also support activities to promote: diversification of private media; increased citizen access to objective, relevant information; empowerment of civil society, including youth; and encouragement of issue-based dialogue to mitigate social tension. U.S. Government actions will encourage transparency and government accountability, and also increase local access to justice and dispute mitigation and resolution mechanisms. U.S. Government activities will also support civil service reform, including recruitment and training of competent young professionals, and assistance to provide better government services.

Prior to the change in government, the U.S. Government promoted free and fair elections through training of election officials at all levels, support for an NGO coalition to observe local elections, and political party development projects implemented by civil society organizations. The U.S. Government supported information centers throughout the country that offered citizens a reliable source of independent information for learning

about local government functions and the elections process, while promoting community discussions and citizen engagement aimed at addressing local problems. U.S. officials advocated for increased religious freedom through contacts with the State Agency for Religious Affairs and representatives of various religious communities and through U.S. exchange visits for Muslim religious leaders to learn about religious freedom and pluralism.

U.S. officials encouraged the government to bring its media laws into compliance with international standards, in particular by rescinding criminal penalties for libel. The U.S. Government funded assistance programs to train journalists on professional standards and the legal framework for media operation, improving production technology, and raising journalism quality. U.S. officials advocated for thorough and transparent investigations of violent attacks against journalists. The U.S. Government continued support for a local institute that provides legal defense and alternative dispute resolution for journalists, as well as for the only independent printing press in the country, the independent Central Asian news syndicate, and media resource centers in the populous Ferghana Valley. U.S.-funded projects contributed to honing the professionalism of female journalists and improving coverage of women's issues and human rights. U.S.-supported satellite programming provides citizens with alternative sources of news and information. The U.S. Government supported open, public Internet access and training programs that increased citizen access to information, including through U.S.-funded resource centers. The U.S. Government financed assistance and exchange programs to promote judicial reform, transparency, and rule of law, and provided diplomatic support to anticorruption efforts. One program brought judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and members of civil society to learn about the judicial system in the United States. The U.S. Government sponsored judicial training for commercial, criminal, and noncommercial civil judges and conducts anticorruption workshops for prosecutors, law enforcement, and law students. The U.S. Government also provided grants to student and teacher groups to combat corruption within the educational system.

The U.S. Government supported programs designed to strengthen fundamental freedoms, bolster civil society, protect human rights, and combat human trafficking. An ongoing regional project helped more than 300 local NGOs conform to national legislation governing NGOs, to include registration and accounting practices. The U.S. Government

also strengthened the capacity of local civil society coalitions through training and assistance in conducting national advocacy campaigns for governance reforms. A U.S.-supported human rights network monitored prisons and pretrial detention facilities for detainee abuse. The U.S. Government funded a legal education program that taught high school and undergraduate students in both secular and religious schools about the law and individual rights. The U.S. Embassy provided small grants to local NGOs to protect human rights, provide civic education, and foster the rule of law. The U.S. Government continued to support antitrafficking efforts by the government and civil society actors, building on a recently completed U.S.-funded antitrafficking project that assisted in repatriation of victims, supported hotlines and shelters for victims, and sponsored information campaigns.

## **Maldives:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Sri Lanka to promote democracy and human rights in Maldives. For background on Maldives' human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

U.S. priorities for advancing freedom and democracy in the country are to encourage continued democratic progress through the holding of free and fair local elections in 2010, promote full independence of the judiciary as mandated by the new constitution, and strengthen newly created government bodies such as the Elections Commission, the Civil Service Commission, and the Supreme Court. The United States seeks to promote awareness of, and respect for, human rights (including religious freedom, labor rights, and combating trafficking in persons) and democratic institutions through bilateral discussions, public statements, exchange programs, and training for the security forces.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States uses a variety of diplomatic efforts to encourage the consolidation of democracy. The ambassador, other mission personnel, and visiting Washington officials consistently urge the Maldivian government and opposition to cooperate responsibly for genuine democratic reform through increased dialogue and consensus building. The U.S. Government closely coordinated with others at a March 2010 donor conference, which yielded considerable results with bilateral and multilateral organizations committing support in a number of areas including those related to achieving rule of law. In addition, the United States will fund technical assistance to the Ministry of Education to incorporate civic education and social studies in the school curriculum.

The United States promotes a robust civil society by speaking frequently with civil society organizations and calling for respect for freedom of peaceful assembly, a right protected in the new constitution. The United States also supports greater protections for journalists, and it funds a variety of programs to further boost journalists' skills. In May a Fulbright specialist will conduct training sessions for government public relations practitioners and private print, broadcast, and online journalists with the goal of improving the free flow of information to the public in an emerging democracy. The Fulbright specialist will also assist in the implementation of a journalism curriculum. In September a U.S. speaker will conduct workshops on democracy and ethics in journalism for local journalists. The United States continues to support the full implementation of the recently enacted law decriminalizing defamation and of the labor law to enforce workers' rights. In March the United States conducted a fact-finding mission in the country to improve understanding of recent labor and employment reforms and to optimize future assistance programs. To combat rising drug abuse, a destabilizing factor in the country, the U.S. mission sponsored an aftercare treatment initiative launched by several NGOs and government partners. In August 2009 the mission organized a project in which recovering addicts at the national Drug Rehabilitation Center made short films highlighting their challenges; the films were showcased on local television. This successful program will be repeated in 2010.

Through exchange programs, speakers, and educational opportunities, the United States promotes democratic values and seeks to mitigate extremist influences in the country. U.S. officials also regularly engage the government on the need to eliminate continued barriers to women's political and economic equality. In July 2009 the U.S. mission hosted a speaker program in which an American civil society leader talked about women's participation in U.S. politics. The United States also awards small grants to NGOs to support projects that promote expression and counter extremism. To counter religious extremism, the mission has planned several programs in 2010, including visits from a U.S.-based imam to speak on social issues and Sharia law and a foreign policy expert to speak on irregular threats and U.S. foreign policy in South Asia; a religious extremism survey; a "Living Values" educational program to develop religious tolerance among children; and a month-long religious training program for 500 local imams by other local religious scholars. U.S. officials constantly seek out promising young leaders of civil society, journalists, and politicians who may benefit from a closer look at U.S. democracy to travel to the United States under the International Visitor (IV) Leadership Program (IVLP). In April a Maldivian IV visited the United States to learn about the U.S. judicial system. Finally, the U.S. Department of Defense conducts joint exercises and training with the Maldives National Defence Force and sponsors its officers and noncommissioned officers to participate in conferences, training programs, and senior service schools in the United States, with the goal of developing future military leaders who adhere to professional norms and values, including respect for human rights.

**Nepal:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Nepal to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Nepal's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

## Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The United States pursues three priorities to assist in building and sustaining a democratic, well-governed state: consolidation of gains in the peace process, promotion of security sector reform and the rule of law, and strengthening democratic institutions. As part of these priorities, the U.S. Government encourages the Nepali government to undertake necessary reforms to democratize its security forces, create a judicial system with adequate oversight and accountability, and include traditionally marginalized populations in the political process. The United States works with the government of Nepal and its security forces, other members of the international community, the media, civil society, trade unions, and political parties to urge all actors to remain engaged and committed to the peace process. The United States also interacts with key leaders of the Madhesis and other disadvantaged groups.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. officials talk regularly with the country's political leaders, government officials, and civil society leaders to reiterate the importance of the continuing peace process and political transition. Senior U.S. officials, including the ambassador, urge the government to maintain its commitment to democratic transition, a civilian-controlled military, and holding past and present human rights abusers accountable. In the past year the United States issued statements calling for the continued consolidation of democracy and promulgation of a new constitution, criticizing arrests of refugees, and condemning assaults on the press. U.S. officials consistently voice concern about the continued use of violence by the Maoists and other groups, condemn violent clashes by ethnic minority groups, urge the government to enforce law and order, and advocate for treatment of Tibetans and other refugees consistent with international humanitarian standards. U.S. officials speak to students regularly at local schools and universities about issues such as discrimination, democracy, and freedom of the press. Through the International Visitors Leadership Program, promising leaders travel to the United States to learn about human rights, grassroots democracy, the U.S. election process and judicial system, the role of the media, and combating trafficking in persons. The U.S. Government encourages participation in university-level studies in the United States. The American Library,

which averages 80 to 100 visitors per day, provides information for all age groups about democracy, rule of law, and minority rights.

In 2010 the United States provided technical assistance to the Election Commission in areas of electoral legal reform and voter registration, two important priorities in the Commission's strategic plan. The U.S. Government trained 82 district election officers on electoral administration and voter registration, and 63 Constituent Assembly (CA) members, political party leaders, and opinion leaders on electoral systems and quotas. Additionally, the U.S. Government helped the Commission launch a major overhaul of the current voter registration system, making it more sustainable and accurate. The United States provides legal and technical assistance as well as in-kind support for the constitution-drafting process, supports training of female political party and civil society leaders to hone their leadership and representation skills, and encourages youth engagement in the political process at both the grassroots and national levels. U.S. assistance to the CA includes creation of a media resource center, a press conference hall, and an internal broadcasting system; the U.S. Government also helped radio stations across the country produce call-in programs for CA members to interact with the public. U.S.-supported programs also assist the government, political parties, and civil society to form local peace committees to discuss the peace process and diffuse conflicts. Other U.S.-supported grassroots civil society programs provide training to individuals on good governance, livelihood improvement, and policy advocacy. One such program empowers women by teaching them to read, assisting them to start small businesses, and helping them to increase their household incomes. In 2010 the U.S. Government sent nine influential local journalists to the United States for academic training in the principles and practices of journalism.

The United States helps to build the capacity of the judiciary by improving the transparency and credibility of the Supreme Court and selected appellate and district courts. U.S.-funded court-referred centers promote mediation as an alternative means of dispute resolution. U.S. assistance contributes to training judges in case management, training attorneys in court mediation, and in some districts providing legal aid for women, children, and the disadvantaged. To promote security sector reform and human rights, the United States organizes and funds workshops on democratic control of the

security forces, national security strategy development, and security sector legal reforms. Participants from different sectors of government, security forces, and civil society attend these workshops. The United States sponsors soldiers to attend military education and training programs, many of which include instruction on respect for human rights. Other programming targets traditionally vulnerable populations. For example, the U.S. Government works with partners to combat human trafficking and gender-based violence, and it sponsors programs to raise awareness of these issues. U.S.-funded programs reach out to survivors and potential victims of trafficking with informal education, vocational training, and information about safe migration. The United States continues to support programs to combat exploitive child labor, with a particular emphasis on eliminating the worst forms of child labor. Through contributions to implementing partners, the United States helps remove children from exploitive child labor, and prevents others from being recruited, by providing educational opportunities. Through contributions to the UNHCR and other partners, the United States assists approximately 80,000 Bhutanese refugees in the country. Working with the UNHCR and other governments, the United States continues large-scale third-country resettlement for the Bhutanese refugees who have been living in camps in the southeastern part of the country for almost two decades; approximately 12,500 will travel to the United States in 2010.

**Pakistan:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. Mission in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Pakistan's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom*

Report at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The United States supports the democratically elected, civilian government as it seeks to overcome political and economic crises and roll back an increasingly violent insurgency. Specifically, the United States aims to foster a stable constitutional and democratic government; strengthen good governance through transparent and accountable civilian institutions; build capacity and encourage professionalism of the media and foster a vibrant civil society. The U.S. Government pursues these goals through assistance programs and interaction with Pakistani officials at the national, provincial and local levels, civil society, and the public. Improving effective, transparent, accountable, and representative governance in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPk) is a high priority, as is targeting USAID assistance to the poorest, most vulnerable geographical areas where the nexus of poverty and despair breeds extremism that undermines democratic institutions.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States conducts diplomatic and assistance efforts in Pakistan to support democratic processes and practices and to promote greater respect for human rights. In October 2009, President Obama signed into law the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act, authorizing \$7.5 billion in civilian assistance programs over the next five years (2010-2014). One of the main goals of this assistance is strengthening democracy and the rule of law in Pakistan. Specifically, this assistance will support the consolidation of democratic institutions, support the expansion of rule of law, build the capacity of government institutions, and promote respect for internationally recognized human rights.

In order to strengthen the independence of the legislature, in 2009, the U.S. Government provided funds to build a new parliamentary training and research facility that would train new members and staff of the senate and national and provincial assemblies to draft, review, monitor, and pass legislation. One U.S. program aims to improve civilian control

over the armed forces by enabling members of the parliamentary defense committees to travel to the United States to study U.S. congressional oversight of the military. Embassy officers at all levels meet with local officials charged with electoral processes and government reforms. The U.S. Government works with Pakistan to increase voter registration and improve election management by building capacity of the country's Election Commission, to assess and more effectively adjudicate the complaints process, and to upgrade and computerize the electoral rolls. The United States also funds programs that enable civil society groups to conduct civic and voter education and advocacy throughout the country. The U.S. Government empowers women in the democratic process by through the development of national and provincial parliamentary women's caucuses and provides female parliamentarians exchange opportunities for professional development.

The United States continues efforts to develop professional law enforcement and security forces to protect citizens against militant attacks and to help curtail human rights violations and civilian casualties. Embassy officers regularly meet with civil society activists who monitor human rights in the country. U.S.-funded police training programs emphasize human rights, appropriate application of use of force, and police ethics. Other U.S.-funded programs train members and staff of the Public Accounts Committee of the National Assembly to provide adequate oversight and review of the national budget. The United States also works with local governments to build their capacity to deliver essential services efficiently and transparently.

Promoting and strengthening a free, open, and responsible media is a central feature of the U.S.–Pakistan Strategic Dialogue's “Communications and Public Diplomacy” working group, begun in March, 2010. Through advocacy and training programs, the United States promotes independent media and professional journalism. The United States funds training for radio and print journalists and supports radio development in key regions such as KP and the adjoining FATA. Since 2009, the United States has supported the participation of 19 journalists in International Visitor Leadership Programs and funded eight journalists for Citizen Exchange programs focused on health reporting and visual storytelling.

The United States regularly lobbies the government to combat child labor, sexual exploitation, and trafficking in persons, with an emphasis on prevention, prosecution of offenders, and protection of victims. It also supports a civil society organization that assists survivors of gender-based violence.

U.S. assistance helps worker organizations promote freedom of association and collective bargaining rights in Balochistan and KPk.

The United States works to promote religious freedom and combat religious discrimination and victimization of religious communities, particularly religious minorities and vulnerable Muslims through a continuing dialogue between government and religious representatives. During this dialogue, the United States raises issues of sectarian violence, mistreatment of minorities, and discriminatory legislation, including blasphemy and anti-Ahmadiyya laws.

### **Sri Lanka:**

#### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Sri Lanka to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Sri Lanka's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

U.S. Government efforts to promote human rights and democracy focus on the resolution of the ethnic conflict and the protection of human rights, human rights defenders, and civil society organizations. The United States' major priorities are to persuade the government to pursue national and ethnic reconciliation following the end of the 26-year separatist war against the terrorist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE); encourage it to engage in a meaningful political dialogue with Tamils and Muslims; stabilize and

develop former conflict regions; assist recovery; and promote conditions by strengthening the rule of law, under which reconciliation can take place, individuals can be held accountable, and justice may be carried out. The U.S. Government also presses the government to explore scenarios for power sharing and aims to strengthen governance to ensure accountability and transparency. Finally, the United States works to defend freedom of speech and the rights of those vulnerable to abuses, especially internally displaced persons (IDPs), minorities, workers, women, and children.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. programs to advance democracy and help resolve ethnic conflict include providing technical assistance and training for national and subnational initiatives to promote political participation, especially for minority groups. This includes support for minority-led civil society initiatives that engage marginalized communities in a process of reconciliation and those that expand citizen human rights monitoring and other related programs. The United States also provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils to enhance its capacity to support national reconciliation by providing Sinhala and Tamil language training for local government officials in the Eastern province. In 2010, 456 officials will be trained in Sinhala or Tamil. Thirty-eight municipality governments in the Eastern Province are receiving technical assistance and training to promote transparent and accountable government through increased citizen-community partnerships efforts such as participatory planning and budgeting. In 2010 the U.S. Government will support the training of district-based government officials in procurement policy and regulations. The U.S. Government is also rehabilitating a police training college to assist the National Police to diversify and professionalize its ranks.

U.S. officials engage civil society actors to support the protection of human rights, citizen participation to promote reconciliation, and improved citizen oversight of government. Some specific initiatives in 2010 include International Visitor Leadership programs on interreligious cooperation and conflict resolution; a "Leaders of Influence Program" to introduce civil society religious leaders to modern practices of development and democracy and promote tolerance; several youth-oriented programs focused on

celebrating diversity; and a visit from a moderate U.S. imam to speak on social issues and Shari'a. The U.S. Government also provided funding and some short-term technical assistance for the January presidential election and the April parliamentary election. Support primarily focused on domestic election monitoring, monitoring of election-related violence, and voter outreach, especially to IDPs.

U.S. efforts to promote freedom of speech and the media include diplomacy and technical assistance programs. U.S. officials regularly meet influential media personalities from a wide range of outlets to hear their views about pressure on the media, and they raise with the government their concerns about particular cases. In interviews with the media and in public speeches, U.S. officials speak about the need for the government to improve observance of human rights, support free media, and put forward a plan for national reconciliation that addresses the legitimate aspirations of all local citizens. The United States continues to fund a regional media program that provides training and production support to journalists and community organization staff members. A U.S.-funded implementing partner broadcasts current affairs programs in both vernacular languages on three regional radio stations in the Southern, Eastern, and Central provinces.

U.S. officials consistently urge the government to halt all human rights abuses; establish effective human rights monitoring mechanisms; hold perpetrators accountable, including for any violations of international human rights or humanitarian law committed during the war; and provide access and due process to the persons detained on counterterrorism grounds. The United States will continue to provide financial support for civil society organizations to document human rights violations and to improve case sharing and coordination among human rights advocates and providers of legal aid and other services. The U.S. Government is supporting a national database to track human rights violations. The U.S. Government also provides security training to staff such organizations to help protect human rights defenders. The U.S. Government works to prevent trafficking in persons, assist IDPs and women, promote religious freedom, and defend the rights of workers, including migrant laborers.

In cooperation with the government, the United States aims to improve efforts against human trafficking, and it reminds the government to maintain vigilance against revival of the child soldier problem. Through support to UN agencies and NGOs, the U.S.

Government assists IDPs (the LTTE expelled approximately 300,000 from their homes at the end of the war) by providing transitional shelter, humanitarian demining, livelihood restoration, emergency food assistance, and access to clean water and sanitation. A representative women's rights project supports and assists female community leaders to advocate for community development and promote the role of women in the political process.

The U.S. Government regularly expresses concern to the government about attacks against religious minorities and the negative impact that an anticonversion law could have on religious freedom. U.S. officials also reach out to clerics of all faiths, encouraging tolerance and reconciliation.

The United States currently is funding a project to promote fundamental labor principles and rights in export processing zone workplaces, and a survey to provide timely information on child labor in the country. Finally, the U.S. Government provides training to the military to improve respect for human rights, rule of law, and civil-military relations; however, most military assistance is suspended as a result of human rights concerns.

## **Tajikistan:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in the Republic of Tajikistan to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Tajikistan's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

U.S. Government efforts to advance freedom and democracy face significant obstacles. The country is an authoritarian republic that obstructs pluralism and has widespread corruption, a deteriorating education system, and an ineffective civil service. Law enforcement and security services often act with impunity. To encourage a more responsive government, the U.S. Government promotes democracy by increasing citizen participation in local government, vigorously engaging political parties, supporting civil society, advocating human rights and press and religious freedom, and exposing young people to democratic ideas and practices.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States recognizes that promoting democracy in the country is difficult due to its isolation and other environmental challenges, citizens' lack of exposure to democratic principles, and government resistance to meaningful democratic reforms. Therefore, although short-term successes are possible, the U.S. strategy focuses on the long-term. The U.S. Government works closely with local and international NGOs, international organizations with field presences in the country, and other bilateral missions to develop and implement this strategy. U.S. technical assistance aims to improve the institutional capacity of government agencies to function more fairly and competently. U.S. exchange and training programs focus on engaging key individuals who have the ability to advance democratic principles from within government structures or civil society in order to improve long-term prospects for democratic change. The United States uses both diplomacy and programming to assist the country in making much-needed legislative reforms. Finally, the United States uses outreach and civil society development programs to engage the public and promote democratic values.

The U.S. government police reform program includes an embedded training manager at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the introduction of community policing concepts. The U.S.-supported local governance program is assisting the country to decentralize and improve public administration by developing local governments' competencies in budgeting and finance, resource management, and public service delivery.

A key element is developing mutual accountability between local governments and indigenous civil society through joint training and project development. In 2009 this program helped develop a law that devolved power to local governments and established a framework for elections to local offices. A U.S.-supported community development program brings local governments and communities together to expand local incomes and decrease the risk of conflict. The U.S. Government funded a land reform project that provides legal assistance for hundreds of farmers who are seeking to claim their property rights. The U.S.-supported water-user's association program empowers farmers to manage their irrigation and drainage infrastructure, teaches techniques for community problem solving, and helps farmers advocate for their fair share of government resources and services.

The United States helps fund legal support to NGOs that must navigate the highly technical registration regime implemented by the government. U.S. programs have improved local capacity to prevent and combat trafficking in persons. The embassy also supports victim protection. The United States funds the only two shelters for trafficking victims in the country. To assist in antitrafficking, the United States has funded the installation of two scanning devices at border posts and is currently funding the building of two additional border posts.

The U.S. Embassy manages a steadily expanding group of exchange programs that send media professionals, judges, law enforcement officials, parliamentarians, other government officials, students, and civil society activists to the United States to give them exposure to democracy and accountable, transparent governance.

The Embassy funded senior leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Academy to travel to New York and Washington to receive training on methods used by U.S. law enforcement academies. The U.S. Government sends mid- and senior-level military officers and government officials involved in defense issues to conferences on defense reform, civilian control of the military, good governance, and human rights. U.S. military mobile training teams travel to Tajikistan to provide training to the National Guard, border guards, and counter-narcotics forces. The U.S. Government also sends professionals from government and the private sector to the United States to enhance

their capacity to promote community development.

U.S. legislative reform projects focus on five key areas of local law: criminal justice, land use, irrigation policy, basic freedoms, and the business environment. The United States advocates for substantial revisions to criminal justice legislation to bring it in line with internationally recognized standards. U.S. programs provide technical assistance to those seeking to liberalize agricultural legislation, focusing especially on property rights for agricultural workers who make up 70 percent of the country's working population.

U.S. officials urge the government to remove unduly restrictive provisions on NGOs and religious organizations and to reform its electoral laws. U.S. assistance programs aim to reform business registration and licensing requirements, which have limited the ability of entrepreneurs to start and effectively run businesses of all sizes.

U.S. outreach and civil society development programs are meant to engage the public. The U.S. Embassy issued small grants to local NGOs for projects that included providing information to students about human rights; engaging youth in political advocacy and civil society development; teaching female high school dropouts about women's rights; raising public awareness about election procedures prior to the parliamentary elections; promoting gender equality; and improving journalists' reporting skills. Embassy officials discuss democracy and human rights issues with a wide spectrum of society at U.S.-funded American Corners, in schools and universities, and in other venues throughout the country.

## **Turkmenistan:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Turkmenistan to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Turkmenistan's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the 2009 *International Religious Freedom Report* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

## Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's democracy and human rights efforts focus on persuading the government to honor its international human rights commitments and strengthening the rule of law. The United States seeks to assist the government in establishing a more transparent system of administration and to identify legislative areas in need of reform. The United States also emphasizes the critical importance of internal and external freedom of movement and respect for freedoms of the press, speech, assembly, and religion. The U.S. Government seeks to open a dialogue directed towards identifying potential areas for bilateral cooperation, including providing training to build government and private sector capacity, strengthening civil society and access to information, and promoting transparency and accountability in the law-enforcement community and judicial system. The United States regularly advocates on behalf of individual human rights cases and coordinates its activities closely with NGOs, other diplomatic missions, and international organizations. .

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States stresses the importance of freedom of information, media, and speech through public statements, Internet, legislation and professional development projects, and visiting speakers. The U.S. Government sponsored eight speaking events to a range of audiences, addressing U.S. elections and campaigns, HIV/AIDS prevention, environmental protection, and journalism. The U.S. Government sends local professionals, government officials, and students to the United States and other countries for short- and long-term study or training that exposes them to an open, democratic society, American institutions, and a free-market economy. Participants study subjects including the organization and administration of scientific programs, U.S. foreign policy, human rights, broadcast journalism, mass media development, civil disaster response, and the rule of law.

The U.S. Government funds projects proposed and implemented by local civil society organizations to promote civil society and democratic development. Projects include conducting youth civic education and leadership camps and seminars; integrating women

into society by providing education in marketable skills; establishing information resource centers with free access to the Internet and American media; fostering a market-based economy through entrepreneurial training workshops, legal consultation services, and promotion of networking among small businesses; and educating persons with disabilities in new skills such as computer literacy, job search skills, and entrepreneurship. The United States funds a gender advocacy program that raises awareness of domestic violence and trains a cadre of social advocates around the country to advise and assist women on issues related to domestic violence and to press for reform. Building on past U.S. Government support to civil society capacity-building programs, U.S. implementing partners are introducing international models and best practices on local governance, to simplify the process for citizens to obtain information and to request documents and information from their local government structures.

The U.S. Government supports greater access to information to create a network of well-informed citizens with access to local, regional, and international resources. The United States continued to fund a project to provide free Internet access for the general public at the National Library. The U.S. Government maintains five centers throughout the country providing Internet, computer, and web design services to 22,000 users including NGOs, youth groups, students, teachers, researchers, and others.

The chief of mission and other U.S. officials engage government counterparts on a variety of issues related to human rights and democracy promotion. The United States continues to offer to assist the government to meet a wide range of international human rights commitments, including by revising its laws on religion, public organizations and mass media. U.S. officials maintain regular contact with representatives of various citizens' groups and local NGOs, victims of alleged human rights violations and their family members, and the few independent journalists. The United States advocates on behalf of individuals and groups, pressing for the release of prisoners of concern and encouraging the legal registration of NGOs and minority religious groups and accreditation for independent journalists. The United States also continues to promote religious freedom in the country by meeting with representatives of religious groups and encouraging the government to ease pressure and harassment of minority religious groups.

## **Uzbekistan:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Uzbekistan to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Uzbekistan's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's priorities in the country are to advance democracy, human rights, adherence to the rule of law, and good governance, as these will contribute to the country's long-term stability and development. The U.S. Government's democracy and human rights objectives include: promoting human rights (particularly eradicating the use of torture in the investigative process and abuse in prisons); ending the government mobilization of forced and child labor during the annual cotton harvest; building political pluralism and a strong civil society sector; promoting freedom of religion and freedom of the press; encouraging transparent and accountable governance mechanisms at the local level; ensuring legal reform and accountability; and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and refugees. U.S. officials advocate with government counterparts in favor of democratic reform, human rights, religious freedom, and adherence to the rule of law.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The United States regularly engages the government on issues related to human rights and democracy, and it supports a number of human rights and democracy programs. High-level U.S. civilian and military officials convey to their counterparts that respect for human rights is a crucial element of the bilateral relationship. The U.S. strategy focuses on encouraging reform, while reminding officials that progress in other areas of the relationship must coincide with progress on human rights. The United States, in cooperation with other diplomatic missions, international organizations, and human rights groups, urges the government to end the harassment of independent activists and NGOs,

to release certain prisoners whose cases have aroused particular domestic and international concern, and to end the government mobilization of forced and child labor during the annual cotton harvest. The U.S. Government awards small grants to NGOs and media outlets to develop and facilitate cooperation between civil society institutions and mass media. The United States consistently encourages respect for religious freedom, tolerance, and pluralism. U.S. public diplomacy employs exchanges, communication with religious leaders and institutions, and distribution of informational materials. U.S. officials monitor elections as well as individual human rights cases; maintain contact with educators, journalists, and leaders of religious groups; host discussions; and raise these issues with government counterparts, emphasizing that religious freedom and political security are complementary goals.

Increasingly, the U.S. government is focusing on mainstreaming good governance techniques into development activities to ensure the long-term sustainability of the tenets of democracy and the growth of civic participation by all citizens. A new initiative targeting local government aims to improve communication between government and citizens, while targeting community development through block grants. The U.S. government is advancing a rule of law program in coordination with the EU that will target judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys. The U.S. government monitors court cases and presses the government to hold trials that meet international standards and also to end torture and abuse of defendants and prisoners. The U.S. government supports forensics programs, providing training and equipment to improve methods used in criminal investigations, and improving the quality of evidence used in trials. The United States supports a free press through a variety of activities, including hosting monthly discussions with local media and inviting local journalists to participate in training and exchange programs focused on media freedom. The U.S. mission awards grants to support the development of independent media organizations through training and highlighting the role of political parties in the local media. The United States also encourages the government to accredit independent journalists and to cease harassment of independent media.

The United States actively promotes the rights of vulnerable groups, including children, women, persons with disabilities, trafficking victims, and refugees. In coordination with domestic actors, U.S. officials press for the independent monitoring of the use of forced

and child labor during the annual fall cotton harvest and urge the government to improve cooperation with international organizations to find alternatives to forced and child labor. Other small grants provide funding for vocational training for youth with disabilities and women and the expansion of youth center activities. The United States continues to support programs to prevent trafficking in persons, promoting public awareness, providing assistance for victims and training for law enforcement officials, and facilitating cross-border collaboration. A U.S.-funded nationwide NGO network provides counseling and information through 10 public hotlines, as well as through local seminars and discussions. U.S. funds also help two shelters to provide medical, psychological, legal, and educational assistance to trafficking victims. The U.S. Government is expanding its victim's assistance activities by implementing an innovative reintegration program, which will introduce case management, on-the-job training, and halfway houses into the protection regime.

## **WESTERN HEMISPHERE:**

### **Bolivia:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Bolivia to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Bolivia's human rights conditions, please see the *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's human rights and democracy objectives include fostering democratic stability and transparency and countering international crime and drug activity. The United States prioritizes engaging the Bolivian government to affirm the importance of judicial independence; freedom of the press; a healthy civil society; adherence to internationally recognized labor standards; respect for due process and international legal and human rights principles; effective governance and balance between the branches of government; free and fair elections; protection of women's and

indigenous persons' rights; continued integration of human rights doctrine in the security forces; and the fight against corruption.

The United States will follow closely the government's efforts to implement its new constitution and engage officials to ensure adherence to international human rights principles as it coordinates indigenous and "ordinary" justice systems and other reforms. To achieve these objectives, U.S. officials consult and collaborate with members of the diplomatic corps, the UN, government institutions, NGOs, indigenous movements, labor unions, and other organizations, working with them to encourage reforms and discuss problems related to human rights and democracy.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. officials routinely highlight the importance of democracy, human rights, and social inclusion during senior-level visits and discussions with government officials, civil society, and the media. The United States will continue its dialogue with the government to establish a bilateral framework agreement, which will establish modalities for constructive engagement. U.S. engagement through foreign assistance programs has been cut back sharply at the initiative of the country's government. In July 2009 the U.S. Government terminated most U.S. democracy and public administration programs at the request of government officials. Nonetheless, the United States, with its partners, continues to engage the government on issues of judicial independence and maintenance of due process during the implementation of the country's new constitution. Successful conclusion of a bilateral dialogue could allow some democracy and governance programming to return, including municipal strengthening, justice center projects, and local capacity building, especially in judicial administration.

The United States supports civil society and the media as key facilitators in democracy promotion. The United States, with its partners, organizes workshops on journalistic ethics, practicing sound journalism in challenging political environments, and the role of the media in a democracy. The U.S. Government also currently funds two separate programs to combat the worst forms of child labor in the country.

U.S. programs send underprivileged and indigenous university and high school students

to colleges and high schools throughout the United States to study U.S. society, civics, and democracy. The U.S. Government sponsors awareness-raising seminars for the public regarding the prevalence of violence against women and children, using speakers from the legislature, the public prosecutor's office, the police family protection brigade, and civil society representatives. The United States helped establish a women's leadership network, led by female parliamentarians, that represents one of the few successful forums for multiparty debate and legislative development in the country.

U.S. security assistance programs routinely underscore the importance of human rights through training for police and military personnel on topics such as internationally accepted principles of nonlethal crowd control and criminal investigation. The United States has provided technical assistance and financial support to four police trafficking-in-persons units operating in El Alto, La Paz, Santa Cruz, and Cochabamba, and is working with the government to open six additional units along the borders with Brazil, Peru, and Argentina this year. U.S. assistance also supports a nationwide program, sponsored by the country's legislature, to address women's rights in the national police force.

## **Cuba:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Cuba to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Cuba's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

U.S. priorities are to promote a more inclusive and participatory society in Cuba, and to support an independent civil society, including a free media and respect for freedom of expression. The United States also supports increased communications between the

United States and those residing in the country, including promoting the free flow of information to, from, and within the country.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

To increase the free flow of information, the U.S. Government uses substantial public diplomacy and targeted assistance to independent journalists and libraries. The United States also operates the largest free and uncensored Internet facilities in the country, and provides free software to those interested. In addition, the U.S. continues to broadcast prodemocracy programming into Cuba via Radio and TV Martí, although the Government of Cuba actively works to block these signals.

To support independent civil society, the United States supports programs that promote awareness, acceptance, and respect of human rights. In support of greater communication and exchange of ideas, the United States reaches out to the local community through activities such as the annual Fourth of July reception, events commemorating Human Rights Day and African-American History Month, and training programs conducted by digital video conference. The United States also supports efforts to assist civil society groups, including faith-based organizations, to hold courses in computer skills, English language learning, critical thinking, and other topics.

The United States also works with the international community to support the peaceful activities of human rights activists and to raise awareness about abuses of basic rights in the country. The United States, together with other members of the international community, regularly observes peaceful demonstrations by groups like the Damas de Blanco ("Ladies in White"), who advocate for the release of their relatives who are recognized internationally as political prisoners. The U.S. also meets regularly with independent organizations that monitor the conditions in Cuba's prisons, with a particular focus on the approximately 200 political prisoners.

In keeping with U.S. policy goals in the region, long-standing initiatives focused on youth have been expanded to include programs in the country. These include educational scholarships in cooperation with U.S. and third country universities, and online distance learning programs offered through the U.S. Interests Section. Cuba has resisted the implementation of these programs, however, by discouraging participation in the programs and refusing exit visas for students who intended to participate.

With bilateral diplomacy, U.S. officials raise a range of human rights concerns with the government, including persons we consider to be unjustly detained and the circumstances and conditions under which they are held. Also discussed are the restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, and refusal to issue exit visas to persons eligible for our educational exchange, refugee, or immigrant programs.

**Ecuador:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Ecuador to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Ecuador's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's strategy for advancing democracy and human rights aims to strengthen democratic checks and balances and the effective distribution of power among federal, provincial, and municipal authorities by supporting strong local governments, an effective and independent judicial sector, increased National Assembly outreach to citizens, and greater citizen participation in government decision-making. In developing strategic priorities, U.S. officials work closely with government institutions, NGOs, labor unions, and other civil society groups to encourage and implement reforms, develop better monitoring and information systems, and discuss human rights and democracy topics. The United States uses diplomatic engagement, public outreach, foreign assistance programs, exchange programs, and related initiatives to advance strategic objectives. In its public outreach programs, the United States underscores democratic themes, the importance of strong government institutions, adherence to internationally recognized labor standards, and the protection of vulnerable groups. U.S. officials actively respond to government requests for training and technical assistance regarding judicial reform, combating corruption, enforcing labor laws, and other governance topics.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

The U.S. Government implements programs that target strengthening financial management capacity, facilitating citizen participation in local government decision-making, and developing and sustaining mechanisms that promote accountability. The U.S. Government is providing technical assistance and training to the country's Electoral Disputes Tribunal and supports the National Electoral Council's efforts to foster voting rights accessibility for persons with disabilities. The United States supports NGOs that have worked with the National Assembly in drafting the separation of functions within the electoral tribunal and other legal reforms. To support an independent media, U.S. officials in the country host presentations on freedom of the press and annual seminars on journalistic professionalism. The United States funds six radio programs, transmitted by 10 Kichwa-speaking stations, on citizen rights and responsibilities.

To strengthen the capacity of justice sector institutions, U.S. programs reinforce criminal justice professionals' knowledge and skills regarding the accusatorial trial system by providing nationwide trial advocacy workshops, mock trials, advanced courses on special crimes, and visits to U.S. courts and judicial institutions. U.S. assistance programs train judicial police in criminal investigation techniques through the creation and dissemination of training videos and other materials, streamlining case resolution in the capital, promoting effectiveness of the judicial disciplinary system, and supporting the development of automated criminal case registries and tracking systems. U.S. assistance also supports public defender programs with the government as well as NGOs for indigent persons, and provides legal services for prisoners awaiting sentencing. The United States provides training, technical assistance, and equipment to the customs authority and other government agencies to combat money laundering and corruption. To support government antitrafficking efforts, U.S. assistance focuses on: helping the central government and NGOs implement the National Anti-trafficking Plan; enhancing selected shelter services for victims; promoting reintegration of victims in society; raising awareness; and strengthening prosecutions.

To reinforce respect for human rights within the armed forces, the U.S. Government partners with the country's military to send participants to the United States for training that includes components on respect for the rule of law. The United States is providing human rights training to the Defense Ministry's General Directorate of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Rights. The U.S. Government is pursuing fast track vetting for the members of the country's military to participate in U.S. training. To foster increased respect for the rights of indigenous people, the United States is assisting lowland indigenous federations in strengthening their capacity to secure land rights, manage natural resources, and develop alternative conflict resolution techniques. The U.S. Government is supporting programs for combating child labor, including innovative projects that engage indigenous communities in participatory planning, budgeting, and monitoring to remove children from exploitive labor and place them in education programs. To improve emergency service responses for persons with disabilities, the United States has funded training and technical assistance for emergency responders in 11 municipalities in four high-risk provinces. U.S. programs for persons with disabilities have supported job placement services, the establishment of Internet centers, and the training of 270 persons with disabilities.

## **Guatemala:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Guatemala to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Guatemala's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. strategy for promoting democracy and human rights focuses on: reforming the security and justice sectors; improving governance, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including worker rights; fostering the development of professional military and police forces; and targeting assistance to vulnerable communities. This strategy, developed in consultation with civil society and indigenous community leaders, includes crime prevention efforts that expand community-based policing activities, reduces the vulnerability of communities to crime groups, and improves vocational and recreational opportunities for at-risk youth.

To advance its strategic objectives, the United States supports programs that encourage decentralization of government functions and the creation of stronger, more effective local government institutions to increase citizen participation in decision-making. The United States uses diplomatic engagement, public outreach, foreign assistance programs, and related initiatives to advance its objectives.

#### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. officials regularly meet with local congressional representatives, political party leaders, government officials, and NGO representatives to advance democratic principles, justice reform, the rule of law, and to assist vulnerable communities. U.S. programs provide substantial capacity building assistance to expand the government's 24-hour criminal court system, improve case management and pretrial oral hearings, and strengthen the capacity of the police inspector general unit and office of professional responsibility to combat police corruption. All U.S.-funded military training includes a human rights component, and U.S. officials meet regularly with government and military authorities to encourage cooperation in legal proceedings involving human rights abuses committed during the internal armed conflict. U.S. assistance continues to fund a local forensic anthropology foundation to exhume and identify through DNA, and other analysis techniques, the remains of victims of forced disappearance and other human rights abuses during the country's 1960-1996 internal armed conflict. To combat impunity the United States has committed significant political and financial resources to the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), and works closely with CICIG to ensure fulfillment of its mandate to assist government institutions in law

reform, in prosecution, and in dismantling of criminal organizations. The United States is working closely with government officials to encourage the selection of the best-qualified candidate as the new attorney general and on developing new anti-corruption and anti-drug trafficking legislation. In addition, U.S. crime prevention programs focus on at-risk communities. These programs include youth outreach centers, tattoo removal services for former gang members, and vocational and recreational opportunities for residents in marginalized areas.

U.S. officials meet regularly with journalists, human rights defenders, labor leaders, and indigenous activists to support these groups' activities. The U.S. Government has supported numerous exchange programs for print, broadcast, and online journalists to provide training, particularly in new media, and highlights rule of law and freedom of the press. The U.S. Government also undertakes substantial outreach and assistance promoting social inclusion and political participation of the country's large indigenous population, while raising awareness for indigenous rights. U.S. programs have provided journalism training for over 70 indigenous reporters, editors, and news directors from rural communities in the highlands and eastern departments of the country.

The United States continues to engage the government to advocate for the effective enforcement of labor laws and to provide substantial support for promoting the protection of labor rights and combating trafficking in persons. Working closely with local NGOs, U.S. officials monitor U.S.-funded labor capacity building projects, and collaborate with the Ministry of Labor, the private sector, and worker organizations to strengthen institutional capacity, raise awareness of labor rights, and cultivate a culture of compliance with labor laws. U.S. officials continue to express concern regarding reports that violations of labor rights continue with impunity. U.S. officials regularly encourage the investigation of killings of threats made against trade unionists and human rights activists and urge the government to provide protection for threatened members of these groups. U.S.-funded assistance also strengthens government and civil society efforts to advocate for legislative reform, improve protective services for trafficking victims, and strengthen investigation and prosecution of traffickers.

## **Haiti:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### [Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Haiti to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Haiti's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

In the aftermath of the January 12 earthquake, the U.S. Government's democracy and human rights priorities have gained greater urgency. Over the next 18 months U.S. efforts will focus on supporting the rebuilding of a stronger Haiti that contributes to regional and hemispheric stability and security and is characterized by sustained democratic governance, reduces vulnerability to natural disasters, and creates new economically vibrant metropolitan centers .U.S. Government assistance will be delivered in a manner that: strengthens the government's authority, makes local governments more effective, builds the capacity of local and national institutions, promotes and protects human rights and gender equality, strengthens respect for internationally recognized worker and children's rights, and creates an enabling environment for the private sector and civil society to thrive. Improvement in all of these areas is critical for Haiti's long-term stability and prosperity .

In addition to securing the above objectives, the U.S. Government is committed to continue to support reform of the justice sector, implement transparent financial management systems to enhance transparency, contribute to free and fair elections, promote citizen participation in governance and help ensure the Government of Haiti accountability to its citizens. These priorities respond to the substantial challenges the government faces, including weakened institutions at the national and local levels,

limited integration of civil society into the policy making process, lengthy pretrial detention of prisoners, and limited transparency into the affairs and finances of public and private institutions. In developing these strategic priorities, the United States has consulted with government institutions, international partners, NGOs, trade unions, and other organizations. Going forward, the United States will work closely with these groups to encourage reforms and discuss problems related to human rights and democracy.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

With the approval of the FY 2010 Emergency Supplemental request for Haiti, the U.S. Government will provide funds to continue helping to address the country's critical recovery and reconstruction needs. Activities include increasing the capacity of the national and local governments, rebuilding physical infrastructure; enhancing citizen participation in relief and recovery by assisting the government with disseminating information through public engagement efforts; and strengthening public institutions and civil society to help provide essential government services in the short-term and building operational capacity in the long-term. The United States will also support justice reform human rights protection programs, preparations for upcoming elections, and the restoration of the capacity of the civil service. With the introduction of the Interim Haitian Recovery Commission (IHRC)--the Haitian and international commission charged with prioritizing, coordinating, and facilitating all recovery and reconstruction activities-- it will be necessary for the Commission to require all stakeholders to act in accordance with increased accountability and transparency requirements, including public tracking of investments on the Internet .

The loss of life and infrastructure caused by the earthquake forced the postponement of scheduled parliamentary elections. President Preval has announced his wish to hold the elections by the end of the year and has asked the Provisional Electoral Council to prepare an electoral calendar and assess what is needed to carry out free and fair elections. The United States and international partners are working with the government to determine the best way to update voter rolls, replace lost identification documents,

register displaced voters, and best facilitate mechanisms to hold elections at year's end.

As a result of the earthquake, a number of children were separated from their families, and became at risk of exploitation, abuse, and malnutrition. With many Haitians displaced and living in tight spontaneous communities, the risk of gender-based violence has also increased. To address these critical issues, the United States continues to fund public advocacy campaigns to raise awareness and work to stop gender-based violence and the trafficking of children (known as "*restaveks*") into domestic servitude. The U.S. continues to help coordinate efforts for legislative reform, and support the government's efforts to combat the exploitation of *restaveks*. In addition to working on issues related to *restaveks*, the U.S. Government has been and continues to work to protect children and adolescents from child labor, especially its worst forms.

## **Honduras:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Honduras to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Honduras's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

#### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. strategy for promoting human rights and democracy focuses on improving governance, increasing transparency and accountability, and ensuring a credible electoral system. The coup d'état against former President Jose Manuel "Mel" Zelaya on June 28, 2009 was preceded by an attempt by President Zelaya to hold a poll, determined illegal by a court, to canvass support for a referendum on convening a constituent assembly to reform the constitution. The coup interfered with decades of democratic advances in the country.

The U.S. Government encouraged the country's return to democratic order through its condemnation of the coup and support for a negotiated resolution, the full protection of human rights, and the right of Honduran citizens to elect their future leaders. On November 29, 2009, Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo was elected president in free and fair elections. The U.S. Government is encouraging and supporting the work of the government to promote the protection of human rights and improved transparency and accountability by strengthening the management capacity of local governments, increasing citizen involvement in local decision-making, strengthening government and civil society oversight of public funds, and implementing the terms of the Truth Commission agreed to as part of the Tegucigalpa-San Jose Accord. The United States is focusing on establishing strong links with civil society and other partners to help improve the capacity of government institutions to respond more effectively to citizens needs.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

In response to the coup d'état, a broad range of assistance to the government was suspended immediately and later terminated on September 3, 2009. The U.S. Government continued assistance for free and fair electoral processes; the U.S. Government provided technical assistance to a domestic election-monitoring program for the November 2009 general elections. This support contributed substantially to the holding of free and fair elections and the subsequent recognition of the results by the international community. With the assistance maintained in the wake of the June coup, the United States continued targeted assistance to strengthen local government capacity to improve accountability to citizen demands, fostered citizen engagement with government representatives to combat corruption, and provided anticorruption training for public officials and persons from civil society groups. On March 4, 2010, the U.S. Secretary of State announced the resumption of suspended assistance to the country.

U.S. officials will work with NGO coalitions and legal professional associations to further rule of law and anticorruption reforms, such as the civil procedure code. These

activities are designed to complement other U.S. programs that will focus on combating gang violence and narcotics trafficking, such as those that will be resumed through the Central American Regional Security Initiative. The U.S. will also support public expenditure auditing projects for government agencies and civil society partners.

The U.S. is reviewing closely its military assistance programs to ensure they support the country's path toward continued national reconciliation and respect for human rights. This engagement strategy with security forces is directed at helping the military focus on combating non-state-centered threats to national security, such as transnational organized crime that threatens the country's sovereignty, while at the same time ensuring respect for human rights and civilian rule.

The United States actively uses diplomatic outreach to promote its human rights and democracy strategy. Such public diplomacy includes the U.S. Ambassador hosting meetings with members of civil society, the media, and government officials regarding the Department of State 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* (HRR). U.S. officials have used these opportunities to urge the Secretariat of State for Security and the Office of the Prosecutor to investigate and prosecute specific cases included in the HRRs.

Following the June 2009 coup there was a marked deterioration in the protection of human rights. During the coup and in the following period under the de facto regime, U.S. officials were at the forefront in calling for the full investigation of the many reported human rights abuses, including: substantial restrictions on freedom of expression for media outlets, journalists, and other members of civil society, assembly, and movement; arbitrary arrests and disproportionate use of force against demonstrators and others based on political beliefs and activities; and erosion of protection of the human rights of members of vulnerable communities, especially women, ethnic minorities, and gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual persons. U.S. officials have continued to remain in close contact with representatives of these vulnerable groups and other members of civil society and have worked with them to document accurately the erosion relating to respect for their rights following the coup. U.S. pressure substantially contributed to the de facto regime's repeal of decrees and other substantial restrictions on freedom of the press. The

U.S. Government works closely with government institutions, NGOs, labor unions, and other civil society organizations to encourage reforms, increase citizen participation, and foster respect for human rights and democracy. The U.S. Government uses diplomatic engagement, public outreach, foreign assistance, and related tools to advance human rights and democracy promotion. U.S. officials are working closely to assist the new presidential advisor for human rights in developing a national human rights plan.

Integral to the United States' support for labor rights is regular outreach to tripartite labor organizations, worker rights advocacy groups, the government, and other important stakeholders. The U.S. Government continues to support important labor rights projects to improve the effectiveness of inspections, resolve worker-management conflicts, strengthen the capacity of worker organizations, conduct occupational health and safety training, and combat worst forms of child labor. The U.S. Government supports trade union capacity building efforts on behalf of the right of workers to form unions. This facilitated the resolution of a controversial labor dispute in 2009. In supporting initiatives to combat trafficking in persons, the United States has provided training and funding for government and NGO capacity building to enable officials to recognize and prevent trafficking, assist trafficking victims, and strengthen prosecutions. An antitrafficking program funded by the U.S. Government is establishing the first ever support network in the country for trafficking victims.

## **Nicaragua:**

**BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

#### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Nicaragua to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Nicaragua's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

In developing strategic priorities to support human rights and democratic principles, U.S. officials consult and work closely with government institutions, political parties, NGOs, labor unions, and other civil society organizations to encourage reforms and promote respect for human rights and democracy. The U.S. Government uses diplomatic engagement, public outreach, foreign assistance, and related activities to advance its human rights and democracy promotion objectives.

The United States' principal strategic priorities are helping the country's citizens preserve democratic processes and practices, including strengthening democratic groups working to achieve a free, fair, and transparent electoral system, and promoting respect for human rights, including worker rights, and fundamental freedoms. U.S. assistance is supporting important democratic processes and practices that promote rule of law, democratic political parties, transparent elections, an open civil society, media freedom and an independent judiciary. The United States supports civil society advocacy for transparent and just governance, and efforts to improve local governance through greater community engagement in municipal decision-making. These priorities reflect the needs of civil society, which remains concerned about restrictions on democratic freedoms and civil rights.

## Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

To support a free, fair, and transparent electoral system, in 2009 the U.S. Government provided small grants to 14 civil society groups and eight media outlets for projects focusing on citizen participation in January municipal elections and promoting pluralistic citizen participation. Grants to media included broadcasting equipment and training for hundreds of journalists on improving the quality and content of their news coverage and accessing public information. The United States, through implementing partners, offered elections reporting workshops for journalists, supported local election observers, facilitated municipal candidate debates led by local civic groups, promoted campaign finance reform, and provided technical assistance to political parties.

To support the continued functioning of democratic processes, the United States is strengthening NGO capacity to monitor government spending and operations; encouraging public awareness and greater civic participation in public decision-making;

training and providing other support to strengthen media capacity to promote accountability and expose corruption; working with legislators to depoliticize the judiciary and electoral tribunal; and training and fostering dialogue among current and emerging democratic political leaders. U.S. assistance promotes municipal development committees and NGOs throughout the country. The U.S. Government is providing financial and technical capacity building assistance to civil society organizations that have formed advocacy coalitions for respecting the rule of law and government accountability. U.S. foreign assistance is focusing on legislators, civil society, and election experts to promote meaningful electoral and political reform with the aim of increasing public confidence in government institutions and democratic processes. The U.S. Ambassador continues his public diplomacy efforts through delivering speeches, giving media interviews, authoring newspaper articles, and participating in public events to highlight the United States' commitment to democracy and human rights and underscore civil society's fundamental role in a democracy. U.S. officials also make presentations on democratic governance to universities, business associations, and other civil society groups. The United States continues to provide speakers who discuss strengthening and developing media professionalism and democracy. These efforts have included experts who discussed new media and social networking tools in promoting democracy and the significance of the 20-year anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Through U.S.-funded exchange programs, citizens, including youth and new mayors, visit the United States to learn about civil society, community engagement, grassroots democracy, and youth participation in democratic processes

U.S. assistance programs to combat trafficking in persons include funding to support prevention, prosecution, and victims' assistance to both government institutions and civil society. To promote the elimination of the worst forms of child labor on coffee plantations, U.S. assistance continues to fund projects in the northern part of the country that seeks to withdraw and/or prevent 10,000 children from exploitive child labor by providing alternative educational and training opportunities and by promoting corporate social responsibility. The U.S. Government supports respect for labor rights through programs to improve the quality of government inspections, train law students in labor law jurisprudence, operate worker rights information and assistance centers, strengthen

the capacity of worker organizations, and cultivate a culture of compliance with labor laws.

**Paraguay:**

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

**[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Paraguay to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Paraguay's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. strategy to promote democratic principles, practices, values, and human rights prioritizes institution building, anticorruption efforts, law enforcement training, and reform in the political, judicial, and economic sectors. The United States supports programs for just governance that encourage accountability, transparency, and lawfulness. The United States also undertakes activities that increase the knowledge of decision-makers, future leaders, and the general population about the United States and its commitment to the country's emergence as a prosperous, democratic partner. In developing strategic priorities, the United States consults with government institutions, international organizations, NGOs, labor unions, and other members of civil society and works closely with these groups to encourage reforms and discuss problems related to human rights and democracy.

Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

In August 2009 Stage II of the Millennium Challenge Corporation Threshold Country Program initiated activities that will continue into 2011. This program leads the U.S. government's efforts to reduce corruption and impunity, and to improve the rule of law in Paraguay. The program is targeted at strengthening and improving: prosecutors' investigative capacity; judicial disciplinary and internal control systems; internal control mechanisms in public administration, including in the health sector; control over foreign

trade and smuggling; intellectual property rights protection; and anticorruption controls in the National Police. These initiatives are designed to improve transparency and democratic governance, and to encourage further consolidation of democratic processes. To strengthen democratic institutions, the United States provided technical assistance to enhance transparency and accountability by implementing civil service reform in the area of human resource management. This U.S. program supports the development of a performance measurement tool and management system that allows ten public entities to measure and improve key components of their human resource systems. The United States supported a successful anticorruption initiative launched by local civil society organizations, the Ministry of Education, and the Controller General's Office. This initiative expanded awareness among citizens and public officials of the negative impact that corruption has on the public education system. Other U.S. programs give particular emphasis to increasing awareness of the negative impact of widespread problems involving sexual harassment and bribery in the workplace. For a second year in a row, a local NGO and a U.S. organization publicly presented the "Paraguayan Judge of the Year Award" to an outstanding judge. The United States works closely with the government and civil society organizations to fight trafficking in persons and raise public awareness of this issue. The United States funds projects to combat trafficking in persons and prevent child labor, including assistance and awareness campaigns in the tri-border area of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil and in the brick and lime manufacturing region around Tobati. The United States also provides extensive training opportunities to Paraguayan government officials on law enforcement and human rights issues. The U.S. Government uses public diplomacy to advance awareness about the importance of democracy and human rights through press conferences with journalists, meetings with political leaders, and exchange programs. These include Fulbright academic exchanges, Youth Ambassadors and International Visitor Leadership programs, indigenous leadership training, and English language professional development programs, as well as book donations to schools. The U.S. Government sponsored attendance of the Grassroots Democracy and Youth Activism International Visitor program and brought several speakers to Paraguay in 2009, including an investigative journalist and expert on the use of new social media web 2.0 technologies, such as Facebook and YouTube, to promote journalistic freedom.

## **Venezuela:**

### **BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR**

#### **[Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports, May 2010](#)**

##### Introduction

The following information reports U.S. Government priorities and activities of the U.S. mission in Venezuela to promote democracy and human rights. For background on Venezuela's human rights conditions, please see the 2009 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* and the *International Religious Freedom Reports* at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

##### Part 1: U.S. Government Democracy Objectives

The U.S. Government's human rights and democracy strategy focuses on advancing democratic principles and practices, and human rights, by supporting non-partisan citizen efforts to strengthen independent civil society, particularly groups working on political pluralism and press freedom. The U.S. Government also encourages support for local government and citizen participation and efforts to strengthen democratic political parties. U.S. officials develop strategy priorities by working with international organizations, NGOs, labor unions, and other groups to discuss problems related to human rights and democracy. The U.S. Government also uses public diplomacy, thematically focused foreign assistance directed largely to local and international NGOs for civil society organizations, and cooperation with other governments and multilateral organizations to advance strategic objectives.

##### Part 2: Supporting Top Priorities and Other Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Governance

U.S. assistance supports democracy by funding nonpartisan projects to train interested political groups in organizational development and public outreach to help them participate more effectively in the democratic political process. The U.S. Government also supports efforts to inform, register, and mobilize voters.

U.S. programs use public diplomacy to express concerns about government restrictions on freedom of speech and the press, laws governing libel and broadcast media content, media licensing requirements, harassment, detention, and prosecution of journalists and media figures. U.S. officials invite media experts to the country to discuss the state of

press freedom in Latin America and to provide grants for seminars on press freedom, human rights reporting, and investigative journalism. The United States government also provides funding for Venezuelan journalists to attend professional seminars in the United States. In connection with Daniel Pearl World Music Day, U.S. officials join with the national professional journalism association to sponsor an annual concert featuring well-known Venezuelan journalists and musicians to underscore the importance of freedom of expression in a democracy.

U.S. support to NGO and civil society groups working to build responsible governance institutions helps foster a culture of democratic participation and tolerance through civic education and active citizen engagement. U.S. programs support strengthening human rights NGOs operating in an environment of government pressure and harassment by sharing information on strategies successfully employed by human rights defenders in other countries. This expertise enables NGOs to serve as effective human rights defenders in an increasingly difficult political environment.

The United States meets regularly with independent civil society groups and international organizations that monitor human rights, democracy, and press freedom issues. In addition, the United States hosts discussions involving Venezuelan human rights advocates and members of the international diplomatic community to raise awareness of government actions that restrict freedom of the press, such as the closure of independent radio stations critical of the government and the persecution of political opponents.

The United States works with civil society groups that address labor rights, trafficking in persons, and women's issues; this includes sponsoring Digital Video Conferences between antitrafficking organizations in Venezuela and counterpart advocacy groups in the United States. U.S. exchange visits raise awareness about eliminating violence against women and preventing trafficking in persons. The United States supports efforts to strengthen the ability of labor unions to protect and advocate for worker rights and educate the public on the importance of worker rights.

