



Citizens in Ubari, Libya celebrate a local peace agreement signed on September 21, 2019, the International Day of Peace. USIP's



**On-the-Ground  
Engagement: USIP's  
Regional Office**

USIP's regional office in Tunis oversees the implementation of programs, convenes experts, conducts trainings, and facilitates USIP's regional efforts. The office works with local, national, and international partners to reduce and prevent violent conflict in the Middle East and North Africa, including on-the-ground in Libya with local staff.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

Eight years after the fall of Muammar Qaddafi, Libya continues to struggle to end its violent conflict and build state institutions. External actors have exacerbated Libya's problems by funneling money and weapons to proxies that have put personal interests above those of the Libyan people. U.N. efforts to broker a lasting peace have failed and been overshadowed by competing peace conferences sponsored by various foreign governments. Meanwhile, Libya's borders remain porous, particularly in the southern Fezzan, facilitating an increase in trafficking and smuggling of illicit materials, including weapons.

At the subnational level, many local conflicts reflect long-standing feuds between various factions, tribes, and ethnic groups. In the shadow of the ongoing conflict around Tripoli, the prospects for a political solution are dimmed by the country's deep political and tribal divides.

**USIP'S WORK**

Since 2011, USIP's approach in Libya has focused on building a strong local infrastructure for peace, strengthening the capacity of key constituencies like youth and women, and facilitating local dialogues between groups in conflict. These local institutions will be crucial to the success of any eventual transitional justice effort, creating a constructive platform to address grievances and reduce polarization and violence. USIP's work is meant to empower Libyans with the tools necessary to contribute to a sustainable peace.



Recent projects include:

**Convening Community Dialogues in Three Conflict-Affected Locations.** USIP partnered with key community actors and civic leaders from Sebha, Ubari, and Nalut-Siyaan from 2018-2020 to convene local dialogues on transitional justice and conflict resolution. In 2020, USIP will support these individuals, in partnership with international organizations like the World Food Programme, as they implement post-dialogue activities intended to build community trust and to strengthen social cohesion.

**Strengthening the Security Sector and Rule of Law.** The increasing presence of nonstate armed groups and their cooptation of traditional security services has resulted in inconsistent—and sometimes inhumane—law enforcement practices and treatment of inmates in correctional facilities. Libya’s dilapidated prisons are incubators for radicalization and extremist recruitment and also allow nonstate armed groups to engage in self-interested and predatory practices.

USIP’s projects promote the rule of law and the constructive involvement of local communities in security issues. These projects evaluate the criminal justice sector, strengthen capacities of justice officials, and develop collaborative problem-solving. USIP conducts workshops with the Ministry of Justice and other officials to improve the conditions for juvenile offenders and support women advocating for reconciliation in Misrata and Tawergha.

**Improving Youth Conflict Management Skills.** USIP is improving the conflict analysis and prevention skills of youth across the country through youth-led projects intended to prevent recruitment by extremist groups. In Ubari, USIP seeded an organization called “I Am a Volunteer,” focused on reconciliation and collaboration between tribes. In Brak Al-Shati, a youth leader, with the support of USIP, successfully advocated for the addition of a youth representative on the municipal council. Alwaan, a Facebook page with almost 50,000 followers, chronicles these success stories and inspires other Libyan youth. In 2020, USIP will convene decision-makers and youth in dialogue around pressing issues in eastern Libya.

**Informing Policy Through Groundbreaking Research.** USIP works with local partners to produce unique, timely, and policy-relevant research. Previously, USIP partnered with UNDP to ensure their Stabilization Facility for Libya project in Sebha was sensitive to local dynamics. To date, USIP has produced reports covering: the state of prisons and detention, the significance of tribal authorities and their role in justice and security, the prospects of elections, and the secure release of sensitive detainees. Future research will focus on drug trafficking, juvenile detention, conflict dynamics around Libya’s borders, and issues facing youth in southern Libya.