



### Informing Criminal Justice Reform in Libya

Libya has struggled to emerge from bouts of conflict since the overthrow of the Qaddafi regime in 2011. Hope for a political settlement was dashed in April 2019, when the Libyan Arab Armed Forces launched an offensive on Tripoli and the U.N.-backed Government of National Accord. Since then, the conflict has become more complex as aspiring regional powers compete inside Libya—and issues such as how to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate the complex mosaic of militias and how to reform security forces loom large.



Libya’s transitional justice process has stalled, and the rule of law has been severely weakened. Creating comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the criminal justice sector for Libyan officials and the international community is vital as a basis to strengthen the rule of law in Libya.

USIP has partnered with the Libyan Ministry of Justice (MOJ) since 2012, working with them and other justice and security actors to strengthen the rule of law—a key component of peacebuilding—in Libya through research, capacity building, and dialogue. USIP also facilitated prison directors and others to create and implement action plans on topics such as secure release of prisoners and juvenile detention. This new project will build on the outcomes of USIP’s previous work, including research on policing in Libya, drug trafficking and use, and assessments of the prison system. USIP’s Informing Criminal Justice Reform in Libya project aims to establish a foundation for effective and evidence-based reform through two complementary research initiatives:

#### **PRISONS AND DETENTION IN LIBYA RESEARCH INITIATIVE**

Libyan correctional facilities, which include detention centers and prisons, are deeply dysfunctional and suffer from problems ranging from human rights abuses to bureaucratic inefficiency. For international actors to partner effectively with the MOJ, the Judicial Police, and the Ministry of Interior to contribute to security sector reform (SSR) and DDR, they require a more thorough understanding of the scope of these problems and their underlying causes, especially in light of changes made post-April 2019 and amid the COVID-19 crisis.

**The Prisons and Detention in Libya Research Initiative** will focus on mapping and analyzing the existing correctional facilities in Libya by updating the “Prisons and Detention in Libya” report that USIP produced with support from the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) in 2015-2016. This research will consist of a mapping and assessment of Libya’s prison system and will also identify critical weaknesses that can be strengthened. The updated assessment will inform stakeholders on how best to support Libyan authorities’ reform efforts.

## FEZZAN CRIMINAL JUSTICE MAPPING RESEARCH INITIATIVE

The country's southern region of Fezzan remains marginalized and politically disenfranchised despite its rich culture and natural resources, including oil. As a result, both Libyan policymakers and international actors frequently underappreciate its role in the stability of the country. The Fezzan region's proximity to the largely ungoverned Sahel has allowed illicit activities such as human trafficking, drug smuggling, and links to transnational organized crime and violent extremists to become widespread. As such, understanding the components of the criminal justice system in the south—including how the formal structures of policing, prisons, and courts mesh or compete with informal, powerful actors—is an essential first step towards improving it.

**The Fezzan Criminal Justice Mapping Research Initiative** will produce a comprehensive mapping of formal and informal criminal justice sector actors and institutions at the community and regional levels in the Fezzan. This research will also assess the impact of new contextual factors on the criminal justice sector, including the escalation of the national-level conflict in 2019 and the worsening COVID-19 crisis. This research will result in actionable recommendations and identification of strong regional partners, which will enable USIP and other stakeholders to design evidence-based interventions to improve the criminal justice system in the Fezzan region in the coming years.

Findings and recommendations from the two research initiatives will be disseminated through public events with partners and stakeholders in Libya and the United States. USIP will work with partners to identify opportunities to address the recommendations and will support officials to publicly communicate positive reforms highlighted in the research to complement its longstanding partnership with the MOJ.