



Democracy and Governance in the Middle East and North Africa

Testimony of Zeinab Elnour Abdelkarim
Regional Director, Middle East and North Africa,
International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)

House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa

November 7, 2017

Testimony of Zeinab Elnour Abdelkarim
Regional Director, Middle East and North Africa, International Foundation for Electoral Systems

“Democracy and Governance in the Middle East and North Africa”

House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa

November 7, 2017

Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Deutch, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to share the work of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and to discuss challenges to democracy and governance (D&G) in the region.

As a global leader in democracy promotion, IFES advances good governance and democratic rights by providing technical assistance to election officials; empowering the underrepresented to participate in the political process; and applying field-based research to improve the electoral cycle. For 30 years, IFES has worked in over 145 countries worldwide to ensure there is a vote for every voice.

With support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); the U.S. Department of State’s (DOS) Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL); and numerous international donors – including the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development and its Foreign Commonwealth Office; the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; Global Affairs Canada; the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; and the United Nations – IFES has supported decades of credible electoral processes in over a dozen countries across the MENA region. In many countries, IFES works as part of the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) with the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute, under USAID’s Elections and Political Transitions mechanism to deliver comprehensive democracy, human rights, and governance programming.

Unfortunately, with shrinking foreign aid budgets; an unstable security environment; and a shift of resources to humanitarian, economic and counterterrorism assistance, we have witnessed a decline in direct United States Government (USG) D&G assistance to such areas in the region as Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Yemen. Support to credible, competitive and inclusive elections and political processes in the MENA region is more critical than ever, particularly given the simmering conflicts that have plagued parts of the region for decades, as well as the slow pace of political, economic and social reforms.

With political extremism and armed conflict continuing to pose serious challenges for democratization, stability and security of the region, it is critical that the U.S. and its allies support citizens as they strive to attain such democratic ideals as civil liberties, justice and prosperity. Diplomatic disengagement and a decline in D&G assistance will only exacerbate the current situation; the U.S. and its allies must be prepared to implement a long-term strategy to capitalize on even the smallest gains in the democratic space. Although the growth of extremist movements, escalating geopolitical competition, ongoing violence and ruthless repression have swept aside the initial enthusiasm for the democratic uprisings that

took place across the region over the last decade, these challenges should not discourage the promotion of good governance. Indeed, the popular uprisings, which started in 2009 with Iran, have demonstrated the broad appeal to basic democratic ideals among the people of the MENA region.

Small Investments in Electoral Assistance Advance American Interests

Stable democracies make for better trading partners, provide new market opportunities, improve global health outcomes, and promote economic freedom and regional security. To give just one example, Tunisia has held two credible elections to date with USAID-supported IFES technical assistance, and continues to welcome IFES support as it prepares for municipal elections. With USG assistance, Tunisia has resisted authoritarianism and failed statehood, and is a reliable partner in the fight against *Daesh* (the Islamic State group) and violent extremism.

In addition to the tangible benefits, D&G assistance promotes American values. For example, electoral assistance helps such traditionally marginalized groups as youth, women, and persons with disabilities gain equal access to public institutions, win economic and political self-determination, and fully realize their individual rights. Inclusion and empowerment activities also help strengthen the credibility and stability of democracies more broadly, as democratic institutions flourish when all groups of society are represented.

Electoral assistance is also a sound investment that pays long-term, tangible dividends – in its FY18 State and Foreign Operations bill, the House mandated that the administration spend no less than \$2.3 billion on democracy programs. This is less than .05 percent of the House-passed International Affairs Budget, which represents less than one percent of the overall budget. Electoral assistance programs themselves are a drop in the foreign assistance budget. For example, Syria, one of our flagship MENA programs, operates at a budget of \$2.5 million over three years.

IFES in the MENA Region: An Overview

With over two decades of support to election management bodies (EMBs) in the MENA region, IFES has:

- Assisted institutions in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Tunisia, Palestine and Yemen to plan and responsibly implement operational tasks across the electoral cycle, from boundary delimitation to support to the voter registration process, the procurement of election materials, voter education, Election Day operations, counting and results transmission and out-of-country voting.
- In Lebanon, Yemen, Morocco and elsewhere, IFES has assisted local partners by providing in-depth analyses of legal and regulatory frameworks, as well as targeted and actionable recommendations for reform or development of electoral laws.
- In Libya and Tunisia, IFES has supported the development of the legal framework for adjudicating election-related complaints, and built the institutional capacity of the judiciary and election commission to effectively manage and resolve electoral disputes. IFES has supported efforts to strengthen legislation to align with international best practice; define the roles and responsibilities of the judiciary; and develop collaborative and consultative relationships between institutions during the electoral process.

Over the years, IFES has also supported civil society and traditionally marginalized populations to advocate for greater access to electoral and political processes. For example:

- Through our work with local organizations on advocacy best practices and women’s leadership as part of our Status of Women in the Middle East and North Africa (SWMENA) programming in Lebanon, Morocco, Yemen and Libya.
- Our work with disabled persons organizations to raise public awareness on the need for greater access to the political process for persons with disabilities in countries like Egypt, Morocco and Lebanon.
- IFES training programs for civil society organizations that focus on campaign finance reform and monitoring in Jordan, Yemen and Tunisia.
- IFES engagement with youth leaders to increase civic engagement in countries like Syria and Libya.

Challenges and Recommendations: Democracy and Governance Assistance in the MENA Region

More than six years after the popular uprisings that swept most of the region, the crisis of legitimacy that led to widespread unrest largely remains and citizens remain dissatisfied with their governments’ response to the difficulties they face. Trends that played a major role in the uprising – struggling economies, unemployment, demographics, inadequate access to justice, and ineffective governance – are still insufficiently addressed; the breakdown in security and rising volatility caused by ongoing civil wars, increased sectarianism, terrorism, extremism, authoritarianism, corruption and foreign interventions are daunting factors that do not promise stabilization or democratic development in the short term. Indeed, if unaddressed, they will continue to lead to further insecurity.

The near and long-term political situation in the MENA region has become increasingly uncertain, and some of the assumptions that underpin our work – such as an open political environment, sufficient security and ongoing donor support – are under threat. Nonetheless, IFES’ long presence in the region has allowed it to build deep relationships with local stakeholders and positioned it as a trusted partner and honest broker, able to not only efficiently support electoral processes in these challenging environments, but also pilot innovative, country-specific approaches to resolving challenges in the early stages of the political and electoral processes. We understand that democracy building is highly political and not only a technical exercise, and intervention can easily lose credibility if perceived by the local population as ineffective or tainted by other countries’ political self-interest. Therefore, IFES always strives to ensure that its programs are guided by a strong understanding of the local context and norms, promotion of local ownership, and a deep respect for the viewpoints and experiences of the targeted population.

To remain effective, the U.S. and its implementing partners must re-evaluate the ways in which democratization is supported and sustained. The following trends and challenges will continue to impact the viability and growth of political pluralism across the region; these trends may, in turn, limit the impact of D&G programming in the short term:

- **Challenge: Electoral democracy does not necessarily guarantee a transparent and accountable democratic transition.** In many countries across the region, governments have used the legitimacy conferred by elections to push reactionary agendas, which often include repressive laws on human rights, civil society, press freedom, and political party formation. These laws are frequently justified under the banner of state sovereignty as “counterterrorism” or “state emergency” legislation. Therefore, we cannot ignore the doubt that will continue to be cast over elections, legal reforms, and constitution-making as legitimate tools of democratization.
 - **Recommendation:** The human security challenges facing the region today demand that democracy supporters in the USG and Congress continue to denounce efforts to erode

democratic norms embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international law; and pressure governing elites to be responsive to their citizens, accountable to their demands and genuinely seek to invoke democratic freedoms, access to justice and the rule of law, regardless of the governing system they choose to implement.

- **Challenge: Fragmentation of states' authority and legitimacy.** Non-state actors continue to seek the establishment of alternative political realities that are antagonistic to the basic construct of the state. For example, paramilitary organizations and non-state actors have fractured normal political spheres in Libya, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt and Yemen and have devolved authority to localities. The popular demand for change has mushroomed far beyond the immediate stakeholders involved in each nation into proxy wars which have underlying religious, ethnic, geopolitical, and economic undertones and are far from over. The inflow of military support and cash to proxies will only widen the gap, prolong the divide and defer political transitions. This will prolong economic and political stagnation, and will challenge the precept of a peaceful transfer of power through elections as the primary means to voice political dissent. Without political will and a strategy to integrate these destabilizing players into the society and makeup of the state, we should expect non-state actors and other member states to continue using alliances, targeted political/financial/security support, and networks to exert significant influence on events in their sphere. Their actions will not necessarily conform to any shared set of norms, principles, or standards that will guarantee acceptable outcomes, leading to lengthy conflicts across multiple states, a high number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and slow or delayed political transitions.
 - **Recommendation:** The U.S. government should aim for a long-term democracy assistance strategy that is linked to and coordinated with – but not eclipsed by – counterterrorism and military deterrence. The promotion of a broader notion of democratic governance that includes tolerance, consensus and peace-building, accountability, human rights protection, capacity-building for social and economic development, promotion of public involvement and consultation and improvement of political and electoral processes will further American security.

- **Challenge: The increasing number of IDPs and refugees from regional conflicts is creating new political dynamics.** The ongoing conflicts across multiple countries have disrupted agricultural production, markets, and critical infrastructure, causing billions of dollars in damage that will take decades to reverse. These countries will continue to be at risk for, and suffer from, food insecurity and energy and clean water shortages, and are likely to continue suffering political unrest and costly humanitarian crises because of their inability to reach peaceful settlements or meet their populations' basic food demands. The humanitarian situation inside Syria, Yemen and parts of Iraq and Libya remains dire and conditions are not in place for IDPs or refugees living in neighboring countries to return home. By 2017, there were approximately five million Syrian refugees in the MENA region and over 15.1 million IDPs and returnees.¹ Iraq has 3.2 million displaced persons and Libya has 217,000 displaced due to insecurity in those countries.² And while

¹ <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/syria-emergency.html>; <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/fundraising/593e4c3e7/unhcr-global-report-2016-middle-east-north-africa-mena-regional-summary.html>.

² <http://www.refworld.org/country,,UNHCR,,IRQ,,59e88c354,0.html>; <http://www.unhcr.org/libya.html>.

Yemen has over 1.98 million IDPs, it is also hosting 280,539 refugees.³ Conversely, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Jordan is hosting over 736,000 refugees, Lebanon has over one million refugees (not including Palestinians who have been there for decades), and Turkey is hosting over 3.2 million refugees.⁴

The high number of IDPs and refugees across multiple countries will have far reaching implications for not only the nations from which these populations are fleeing but also those countries bearing the social and economic brunt of the inflow of refugees. Host countries have shared their resources and provided access to their schools, hospitals and other services on a scale rarely seen before. However, they are struggling to contain growing internal intolerance.

- **Recommendation:** The international community has a responsibility to spare no effort in bringing peace and stability to the MENA region so that conditions for voluntary, sustainable returns can be created. Meanwhile, it is critical that the international community stay the course and support host governments by continuing to invest in refugee and host community programs, as well as sharing the financial responsibilities with those countries on the front-line. Organizations like IFES must be supported as they learn to navigate the enfranchisement of IDPs and refugees.
- **Challenge: A decline in the status of women, ethnic and religious minorities.** In the majority of MENA countries, the political arena remains largely dominated by men from certain ruling parties or groups. Many fear the new political order of the region will impact universal human rights negatively, especially the already-sparse legal rights and protections in place for women and ethnic minorities. For example, in countries like Lebanon and Egypt, recent electoral laws have removed or failed to integrate quotas for women. Women have also not been sufficiently represented on transitional bodies; nor have they been part of negotiation processes, as is the case in Syria.
 - **Recommendation:** IFES applauds the passage of the Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017 and encourages Congress to uphold its tenets, particularly in the MENA region. Additionally, we ask you to support sustained measures to encourage and enhance the promotion of women's political participation and leadership, particularly the elimination of violence against women in politics.
- **Challenge: USG funding for D&G in the MENA region remains limited and selective.** Congress' continued support of D&G in even the current challenging budget environment is greatly appreciated. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of both 2016 and 2017, as well as the FY18 State and Foreign Operations bill passed by the House in September, mandated that the administration spend no less than \$2.3 billion on democracy programs. However, since 2011, these funds have not been adequately directed toward the MENA region.
 - **Recommendation:** We ask the U.S. Congress to continue its support for robust levels of democracy assistance, and to pressure the administration to direct more D&G resources to the MENA region. The fluidity of the present crises necessitates a better and more balanced foreign assistance strategy.

³ <http://www.refworld.org/country,,UNHCR,,YEM,,59e88b944,0.html>.

⁴ <http://www.refworld.org/country,,UNHCR,,JOR,,59b7fae44,0.html>;

<http://www.refworld.org/country,,UNHCR,,LBN,,596df29b4,0.html>; <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224>.

- **Challenge: Parts of the region are facing unprecedented political developments.** These developments have far reaching implications that can potentially lead to the disintegration of countries like Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen. In some cases, citizens within these countries are calling for self-determination and autonomy for their regions, causing further destabilization. We continue to see a decline in the legitimacy of democratic systems in many parts of the MENA region, the loss of trust in political parties and national legislatures, and severe dissatisfaction among young people, minorities and other disfranchised groups.
 - **Recommendation:** The history of colonial and imperial rule, as well as state domination of the economy and society, has shaped a culture of authoritarian political traditions that require time, effort and holistic, thoughtfully developed, locally driven efforts to overcome. Patience and steadfastness must be at the core of USG assistance to the MENA region.
- **Challenge: The U.S. government and international community frequently invest in short-term, event-based electoral assistance.**
 - **Recommendation:** USAID and DOS should consider more strategic ongoing support that spans several years in advance of an election date and continues into the period after the elections, with a focus on “lessons learned” that will improve future electoral cycles. Our experience has shown that consistent, long-term support throughout the electoral cycle enhances stability during uncertain democracy-building processes. Furthermore, long-term capacity building of EMBs and other stakeholders strengthens broader governance goals such as inclusive representation, gender equality, access to justice, and greater transparency and accountability of government institutions to their citizens.

Effective Electoral Assistance in the MENA Region

Despite the numerous challenges facing the MENA region, IFES remains engaged in many countries – including Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia – to support democratic institutions that will form the backbone of emerging democratic societies. Credible elections, independent judiciaries, engaged civil society, moderate political parties, independent media, and responsive government and parliamentarians are all critical institutions for the future of political pluralism. At the same time, we continue to develop the capacity of governmental and regional organizations emerging as lead institutions on elections and political transitions in their home countries and elsewhere, by promoting best practices and facilitating sharing of experiences among countries.

The following three country programs provide an example of where consistent, long-term technical assistance provided by IFES has led to enhanced results and sustainable solutions.

Egypt

The political environment in Egypt is challenging and often constrained in opportunities for political contestation. Within this landscape, elections have remained one of the few vehicles for the expression of political and social opinion in Egypt. Despite this challenging operating environment, IFES’ work in Egypt – particularly since 2011 – has had a significant positive impact on improving the effectiveness of, and citizens’ access to, the electoral process. IFES has carried this out in two key ways: one, the improvement

of electoral processes and decision-makers access to information on elections, and two, creating opportunities for greater citizen-government engagement.

To help improve electoral processes, IFES has supported training for election management staff and judges on how to conduct elections in compliance with international best practices. This type of training is vital for ensuring that citizens can trust the electoral process. In preparation for the 2015 parliamentary elections, for instance, IFES worked with the High Election Commission (HEC) on steps to enhance electoral integrity through an integrated approach that included targeted procurement of election materials, revision of relevant electoral procedures and training of staff on the use of the procured materials and newly developed procedures.

In the past, the secure storage of ballots has been a critical issue raised by domestic and international monitors. For the 2015 elections, IFES supported the training of approximately 1,050 judges and over 700 civil servants in charge of the intake and archiving of sensitive election materials. We provided training on specially procured products and newly developed procedures to store election materials, thereby making future access to these materials easier. After the first phase of the 2015 parliamentary elections, the HEC received 67 complaints about violations of electoral policy. According to the HEC chairman, “the proper archiving of material helped in the courts' rejection of most appeals.” The IFES-provided procurement and training was a step toward a sounder election process.

Other international entities have acknowledged Egypt’s progress in this area. For instance, in a House of Representatives Foreign Affairs MENA Subcommittee hearing on the 2015 elections, [Democracy International provided testimony](#) that both acknowledged the challenges of the environment, but also stated: “To the credit of the High Election Commission, and those who provided technical assistance to it, such as the International Foundation for Elections Systems (IFES), the administration of these elections over the past two years has been generally satisfactory...”

Most recently, electoral reform in Egypt took a significant step forward with the establishment of the permanent, independent National Electoral Authority (NEA). This is a critical step in line with both Egypt’s own commitments, as it was mandated in the 2014 constitution, and international best practice. For several years, IFES has invested in bringing election officials in Egypt to other countries to learn about best practices and international standards in electoral management, such as the independence of the EMB, secure use of election technology, and ensuring that elections are accessible to all voters. In December 2016, Egypt’s Local Administration Committee within its House of Representatives, invited members of the cabinet to discuss the proposed local administration bill regulating future local elections. One invitee, General Mohamed Refaat Komsan, had previously traveled with IFES to other countries to learn about international best practices in election management. He stated that the cabinet’s proposed NEA bill was drafted while considering the international standards and best practices that he observed while participating in a number of international technical exchanges. These exchanges, which expose public officials to best practices and experiences outside their own country, play a key role in helping ensure local practice aligns with international standards.

Finally, IFES is supporting more participatory governance by connecting civil society and government, even in a highly restrictive environment. IFES is one of the few international NGOs that can operate and connect civil society and government. Our program in Egypt has consistently delivered a greater focus on the electoral rights of persons with disabilities, women and other marginalized groups. We regularly conduct

workshops that bring together government officials, political parties, civil society, and the National Councils for Human Rights, Disability Affairs, and Women to discuss issues related to electoral reform and improving electoral processes. Without international implementers like IFES, marginalized populations will have fewer channels to engage government, and vice versa. However, through expanding its engagement with these national councils that are largely responsible for policies promoting the rights of women and persons with disabilities, IFES can complement these policies to promote greater political and civic engagement, and also support these councils to engage with civil society in Egypt.

Tunisia

Tunisia has been a model of solid transitional democracy. The country held two rounds of elections in 2011 and 2014 and enacted one of the most progressive constitutions in the region. The next electoral event will be municipal elections, which will be the first in the country's modern history.

Despite Tunisia's achievements, the country continues to face enduring challenges related to coalition building within the government, lack of security due to geopolitical issues with borders with both Libya and Algeria, and an internal crisis within the High Independent Election Commission (ISIE) that has affected the election timeline.

IFES' programs have focused on a variety of approaches, one of which is the provision of technical assistance to the election administration. IFES trained ISIE staff members on enhancing their professional skills, addressed critical needs ahead of the municipal elections and has been developing online electoral courses for ISIE employees and other relevant stakeholders. IFES has strengthened local partners' outreach campaigns through the creation and distribution of voter and civic education materials and organization of street marketing campaigns. Additionally, to create targeted voter information campaigns for illiterate voters ahead of the municipal elections, IFES conducted the first-ever study on the political participation of illiterate Tunisians and completed a follow up study on the relationship between illiteracy and vote-buying at the request of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

One of the most innovative activities conducted under our Tunisia program has been the organization of six Hack for Democracy (H4D) camps, which consist of hackathons with a democracy and governance theme. The aim is to increase young Tunisians' participation in public life by encouraging them to develop innovative technological solutions, build their business skills and knowledge of democracy and transform ideas into startup initiatives.

IFES has also tried to address journalists' lack of skills in providing rigorous, impartial and analytical reporting, particularly on critical events that impact the whole country, like elections. IFES organized a series of trainings on governance topics for journalists from community radio stations. The trainings covered the basics of elections and decentralization, the legal framework for elections and media coverage of elections. IFES also provides remote support and individual coaching sessions to the journalists who participate in the trainings. In addition, IFES has supported these radio stations in airing a weekly radio program called "Eye on Municipalities," which raises awareness about voter registration.

Syria

The Syria conflict continues to dramatically shape the region, with narrowing options for a negotiated settlement. An estimated 11 million Syrians have fled their homes since March 2011, with almost five million seeking refuge in neighboring countries. A tenuous legal status and distinct lack of economic and educational opportunities have driven many even further, to Europe and beyond. Syrian refugees are increasingly turning away from the conflict and the prospect of a future Syria, disillusioned by the fact that their voices seem unheard and their concerns forgotten. In such a difficult environment, IFES has designed an innovative, impactful program that has succeeded in empowering a wide range of Syrian stakeholders, including opposition leaders, civil society organizations, and activists, to foster a population that can advocate for peaceful, democratic change and combat extremist influence.

Since 2012, IFES has supported Syrian opposition groups and individuals involved in negotiations over a transition. IFES is closing substantial gaps in knowledge and improving understanding of critical issues that must be addressed during the negotiations for any transition process to be successful. Focusing on four key issues – proposed systems of representation; voter eligibility and registration; election administration under United Nations supervision; and out-of-country voting – IFES works closely with leaders from the wide network of the High Negotiations Committee and the Syrian opposition to empower officials to engage on these topics.

Support for a vision of a democratic Syria cannot only be top-down. Accordingly, IFES has established a civic engagement platform in Gaziantep, Turkey focused on community-level dialogue on the transition and other governance issues for Syrians in Turkey. Since its inception in May 2016, the *Musharaka* (Participation) Forum has directly engaged 6,875 Syrian participants, 54 percent of them women, and has had over 285,000 visitors to its digital platform.

The Forum's "Building Leaders" program works with adolescents to cultivate the next generation of democratic-minded activists and citizens; its Women's Forum targets underserved populations seeking ways for their voices to be heard and opportunities for empowerment. Over 118 civil society organizations are now part of its network. Six new civil society organizations working on peacebuilding initiatives have been created through the Forum. To restore the fractured trust and communication between Syrians and the opposition leadership, *Musharaka* elected representatives to interact with the High Negotiations Committee and *Etilaf*, the Syrian opposition coalition. Through this work, IFES is actively re-engaging Syrians in their country's future, and offering a viable alternative to extremist ideologies or a return to the conflict for vulnerable populations that have not traditionally received such support.

Additionally, IFES' Civic Education Center located in Syria has brought 422 Syrians together for training, dialogue, and civic awareness initiatives. Interfaith, collaborative proposals for social services and public activism have been drafted under the Center's banner, teaching Syrian activists the critical importance of community-based engagement and helping them understand the crucial role they will play in a future democratic Syria through peacebuilding and advocacy.

Taken together, IFES' interventions in Syria are integrated to ensure that Syrians across the conflict's landscape – grassroots actors inside Syria and Turkey, civil society organizations working toward a stable and prosperous Syria, and key opposition and transitional figures – are actively engaged in Syria's future. Through this important program, IFES has established a beacon of hope and optimism.

Conclusion: Renewing Our Commitment to Democracy in the MENA Region

The time is now to stop the decline and reinvest in D&G funding in the MENA region. Many areas in the region will likely see national and local elections take place in 2018, including Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, and Tunisia, and possibly Libya and Palestine. Strengthening institutions such as EMBs, regulatory bodies, the judiciary, parliament and civil society is paramount and will help to make these events more legitimate and responsive, rather than destabilizing and a flashpoint for violence.

Let us not forget that the transition to democratic governance is never fast nor easy, and competing interests such as national security, geopolitical and economic interests should be entwined with the promotion of basic human rights. A renewed commitment to supporting the citizens of the MENA region in their pursuit of credible, inclusive, transparent, and responsive democracies will in turn support American interests at home and abroad.

Madam Chairman, thank you again for this opportunity to testify. On behalf of IFES, we are honored to partner with the U.S. Government and Congress, international aid organizations, our CEPPS partners, and of course, the people of the Middle East and North Africa in support of a more democratic and prosperous region.



Global Expertise. Local Solutions.
Sustainable Democracy.