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SNAPSHOT

Civil society organizations all over the country are participating in informed dialogues on the constitution-drafting process in order to stay educated on how to safeguard their rights.



USAID/Libya

Supporting a rapid response fund to provide technical assistance in developing detailed strategies for information dissemination and facilitated dialogue, OTI is striving to enhance inclusivity in Libya's constitutional drafting process.

"We have never, before this, seen these students with origins in the Qadhafi tribe engage in an activity related to the transition process."

-- Faculty in University of Sabha, where a follow-up facilitated dialogue was conducted by a beneficiary of an OTI-funded workshop on constitutional processes

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Engaging the Constitutional Process

September 2013 – Less than a year after liberation on July 7, 2012, nearly 2 million Libyans participated in the country's first free elections in over 40 years. Voters of all ages celebrated the event, showing off their electoral stain, which quickly became known as "patriotic henna". While the road to electing a General National Congress was relatively smooth, the upcoming step of forming a commission to draft a new constitution is an impending challenge in the transition.

To add to its many struggles, the Libyan government is faced with the challenge of balancing the political power among the many groups that participated in the revolution and/or that have been marginalized in the former or current political systems. Raising awareness on the constitution-drafting process and the right to engage in the process is essential to the success of the commission's formation, and the ultimate legitimacy of the constitution itself.

Government entities, civil society and media outlets want their voices to be heard in Libya's transition; USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) is rapidly responding by providing support for workshops, information campaigns, and other outreach activities that address key issues in the lead-up to the constitutional referendum. OTI has provided technical assistance through a constitutional advisor who has helped to build the capacity of civil society to engage in inclusive debate and to conduct information awareness campaigns about core constitutional issues. In this process, OTI continuously engaged with government officials, active civil society leaders, public sector workers, former revolutionaries and citizens across the country.

OTI's advisor empowered civil society to conduct the outreach and information dissemination activities in their own communities. For example, civil society groups in remote southern towns like Murzuq, Awbari, and Ghat received training on how to conduct facilitated dialogues. These small-group community discussions aim to broaden and stimulate grassroots conversations on the constitution and other transition-related topics such as human rights, governance, state structures, and women's and minority rights. A total of 12 activities were conducted in approximately 20 districts across the country, training women and men on basic constitutional principles and conducting outreach campaigns. Nearly 9,000 information products on constitution and human rights have been distributed in the implementation of these and other OTI supported activities.

Follow-on activities resulting from the workshops included facilitated dialogues in Bani Walid, and Sabha, two towns that have felt most disconnected from the country's transition processes. OTI supports the growth of public dialogue on key issues related to the transition in Libya in order to ensure every voice, no matter how small, has the chance to speak.

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