



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## FACT SHEET

### USAID ACTIVITIES PROMOTE AND PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS

USAID promotes and protects human rights throughout the world by supporting both government actors and NGOs. Highlights include:

- *Support for human rights defenders and NGOs.* USAID programs in Kazakhstan, Russia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and other countries strengthen the skills of human rights defenders by training NGOs to monitor and report on human rights abuses. In Uzbekistan, USAID assists human rights defenders to respond rapidly in cases of threatened death or torture to those in custody. USAID also supports regional human rights networks to promote better human rights policy awareness and advocacy, and to encourage closer cooperation between governmental institutions and human rights groups in Colombia, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka.
- *Support and institution building for governmental bodies to promote human rights.* USAID assists Commissions of Human Rights in four Mexican states; human rights offices in Colombia; and police, prosecutors, and other governmental entities in Guatemala and El Salvador tasked with protecting human rights. In Kazakhstan and the DRC, USAID has helped legislative efforts to improve legal frameworks.
- *Increase access to justice and promoting rights to liberty and fair trials.* USAID's programs help develop the rule of law, support independent judiciaries, improve court administration, and aid public defenders. USAID supports NGOs providing legal assistance in Cambodia, help desks at family courts in India, legal advocacy centers for victims of human rights violations in Azerbaijan, and several "Justice Houses" across Latin America to provide legal access for victims of violence. Programs in Nicaragua and Bolivia strengthen civil society coalitions to work for judicial independence and make justice more accessible to ethnic minorities. USAID is addressing lengthy pretrial detention in Haiti and in Guatemala, where new 24-hour courts provide for faster processing of criminal defendants.
- *Anti-trafficking activities.* USAID helped Cambodia launch its first anti-trafficking national task force, bringing together government, international organizations, and civil society. Haiti's anti-trafficking program focuses on improving rehabilitation services for trafficking and violence victims, protective legislation, and better monitoring and support services, including shelters for children abused by the "restavek" system where children are sent away by their families for domestic servitude purposes.

*USAID's anti-trafficking education project in Nepal helped young girls recognize the overtures of a trafficker, who was subsequently arrested. Several young girls being held and exploited by the trafficker were later rescued.*

- *Support for women, children, and other vulnerable groups.* A USAID-funded program in Egypt works with the National Council for Women and other organizations to promote awareness of women's and children's rights. In India, USAID is engaged with government and community leaders to end sex discrimination by changing mindsets, for example through activities that celebrate the birth of baby girls. USAID also supports women in their quest to end female genital cutting. USAID programs have been in place for over a decade using a community-centered approach that respects cultural sensitivity by supporting NGOs and health workers to educate the public about the harms of this practice. Several communities have signed pledges to end FGC, and laws banning the practice are now in place in several countries in South and East Africa.

- *Support for victims of violence.* In Guatemala, USAID works with police and prosecutors to help reduce the high number of "femicides" (murders of women) in that country. In Haiti, Colombia and Zimbabwe, USAID provides psycho-social assistance for victims of violence and torture.

- *Reducing ethnic conflicts.* In Russia, USAID funds a program to promote more tolerant attitudes among individuals of different races. In Colombia, USAID's "Communities at Risk" program brought together members of different ethnicities displaced by the armed conflict to develop a better mutual understanding of their cultures and resolve their disagreements through negotiation. In western Sudan, a USAID-funded workshop engaged grassroots leaders in promoting and protecting human rights. As a result, village youth recently formed a human rights club, with members from diverse ethnic groups working on raising awareness of human rights abuses.

*USAID Zimbabwe's Zim seed project provided target seed packs to households in areas of the country hard hit by inter-election repression and political violence. Contrary to past practices that had politicized food aid, this assistance was not targeted to particular political party supporters, but rather benefited the whole community.*

- *Support for labor unions.* USAID supports democratic trade unions in their work to promote ILO core labor standards in over 20 countries. In Asia, USAID programming empowered a network of labor unions and NGOs to better ensure that worker safety and core labor standards are incorporated into internationally funded projects. Programs in Moscow provide legal aid to labor unions and immigrants and fund the development of a national association of labor lawyers.

- *Independent Media.* USAID helps to train Burmese journalists and public information workers to improve the quality and availability of news and information for Burmese citizens, refugees, and exiles on the situation within Burma. Reporters and editors are trained to give accurate, unbiased accounts of issues affecting the nation.