

DCAF Geneva Centre
for Security Sector
Governance
20TH ANNIVERSARY



Middle East & North Africa

Overview

Contributing to human security by advancing democratic governance, the rule of law, and respect for human rights remains at the forefront of DCAF's work in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA).

Operating in the region since 2005, DCAF supports democratic transitions and promotes security sector governance (SSG), with a focus on improved service delivery, as well as accountability and legitimacy of security providers.

DCAF's programmes also support emerging security needs and threats, including peace building efforts, through inclusive dialogue on security sector reform (SSR); the prevention of violent extremism; and the special security needs and inclusion of women, youth, local communities, and vulnerable groups.

Common challenges inform DCAF's support to national partners across the region. DCAF's activities focus on jointly-designed engagements to:

- » Reinforce accountability through enhanced oversight and internal control mechanisms;
- » Build the capacities of parliaments, independent oversight bodies, and civil society organizations;
- » Strengthen SSG through improved strategy design, policy making, and structural reforms;
- » Improve service delivery by ensuring reforms include the effective adoption and use of tools to protect human rights, prevent torture and ill treatment, and respect the rule of law;

- » Contribute towards conflict resolution and peace building through locally-owned processes that are inclusive of women, youth and vulnerable groups.

DCAF's approach is anchored in our guiding principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence, and is characterized by a strong emphasis on local ownership and gender equality.

For the implementation of its programmes in the MENA region, DCAF works directly with national partners, including ministries of defense, interior and justice, and other executive bodies. We also work with parliaments, independent oversight institutions, civil society organizations, the media, and other stakeholders.

Project funding for DCAF's activities is provided by a number of donors which recently included Canada, the European Union, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and Switzerland. The Trust Fund for North Africa (TFNA), which is a pool funding mechanism established in 2012, is currently funded by Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Switzerland.

DCAF's programmes in the region are managed by country offices located in Tunisia (Tunisia & Libya), Palestine, and Lebanon. DCAF also implements programmes in other countries including Morocco and Yemen.

A team of over 50 national and international experts from 15 different nationalities is responsible for the implementation of programmes, with an annual average budget of CHF 5 million.



Highlights

› TUNISIA

Since 2011, DCAF has worked with key ministries, parliament, oversight institutions, and many other partners. Tunisia joined as a member state of DCAF's Foundation Council in the same year. DCAF's programs include assisting the Ministry of Interior to implement its action plan on good governance and integrity building, together with the national anti-corruption agency (INLUCC); contributing to criminal justice reform; and addressing security needs of women and youth, including the prevention of violent extremism.

› MOROCCO

Since 2006 DCAF has contributed to bringing the concept of good SSG to the forefront of the political agenda. As a result, SSG has become a key component of the National Action Plan for Democracy and Human Rights, adopted in 2008. DCAF also provided an important contribution to the implementation of anti-torture conventions (OPCAT) among many other activities.

› LIBYA

Constrained by the ongoing conflict, DCAF's Libya programme has been focused on establishing favourable conditions for future security sector reform and peacebuilding. In addition to supporting international actors and Libyan institutions, DCAF operates a number of online resources and platforms, including the Security Sector Legislation Database, and the Libyan Criminal Justice System website.

› EGYPT/LIBYA/PALESTINE/TUNISIA

DCAF operates security sector observatories for these four countries under the name of "Marsad". These online platforms provide access to SSR/G news and analysis that can otherwise be difficult to obtain.

› OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

DCAF's support to strengthening the capacities of security providers and enhancing public oversight of security institutions in the occupied Palestinian territory started in 2005. DCAF is engaged in developing a complaints system to ensure its alignment with international standards and good practice. DCAF also supports the implementation of anti-torture conventions and the establishment of the Palestinian National Preventive Mechanism (NPM).

› LEBANON

Lebanon has been a member state of DCAF's Foundation Council since 2007. DCAF is working with its Parliament to strengthen oversight of the security sector. In partnership with the relevant government ministries, DCAF is helping to foster a comprehensive reform of the detention system and implement new security sector legislation. DCAF also supports the Lebanese Armed Forces to develop a locally-owned approach to civil-military cooperation.

› YEMEN

In 2019 DCAF launched the "Building Peace Through SSR" initiative to support parties to the ongoing conflict by conducting a series of dialogues on security concerns, arrangements, and possible solutions. The aim is to frame short-term solutions within a shared understanding of longer term SSG/R needs and options.



Context

Countries in the MENA region share common social and economic challenges, while facing their own unique gaps and deficits in the governance of their security sectors. From a demographic perspective, the MENA region is among the fastest growing worldwide, and many MENA economies remain largely dependent on the production of oil and gas. During the last five years, the GDP of most “Arab Spring” countries has stalled or regressed, often due to armed conflict.

This dire economic situation, combined with the conflicts in Libya, Syria, and Yemen, has fueled large migration flows in the region. Against this backdrop, MENA countries are characterised by disproportionately large defense and security sectors, which create an outsized burden on national budgets. In addition, civilian oversight of the armed and security forces, especially budgetary reviews and control, face serious resistance from within the sector.

Perceived as a key element of oppressive political systems for many years, armies and security providers need to address important legitimacy issues to overcome the challenges they face. These include the lack of accountability, weak service delivery and related capacities, as well as a lack of integrity, respect for human rights and the rule of law. Altogether these deficits contribute to the fragility of the state and create opportunities for extremist movements to undermine peace and stability.

In addition to being an integral part in the process of transition towards more democratically-governed societies, reforming the security sector is key to addressing fragility and maintaining stability. These in turn are essential for creating the necessary conditions to foster development, prevent violent extremism, and ensure that the underlying causes of instability are effectively addressed. This requires a good understanding of context, a comprehensive approach to accompany change and reform processes, and the design of activities that are anchored in the principles of inclusivity and local ownership. Special emphasis in the MENA region on addressing the needs of women, youth, and vulnerable or traditionally excluded groups, remains a priority.

DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance is committed to making people more secure through accountable and effective security and justice. We help national and international entities to deliver security that respects human rights, upholds the rule of law, and is democratically controlled by:



Helping to improve the way national security sectors are governed



Guiding the development of sound, sustainable security governance policy



Promoting locally owned reforms that are inclusive, participatory, and gender responsive

DCAF pursues five main activities:



Providing technical expertise to nationally led SSG/R processes



Capacity building for state and non-state actors



Publishing research and knowledge products



Promoting internationally recommended good governance practices



Advising on security sector-related legal and policy questions

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