

### Libya Program Summary

The July 2012 Libyan elections were the culmination of a historic series of events signifying the way forward after 42 years of authoritarian rule under the Qaddafi regime, a traumatic civil war and a tumultuous transitional period. Libyans elected a 200-member [General National Congress](#), a legislative body tasked with a mandate including drafting and approving a new constitution, passing new legislation, and preparing the country for a constitutional referendum and subsequent elections. As the country enters the next phase of its political transition, it continues to struggle with endemic security failures and weak political institutions. Despite these challenges, Libyans show an appetite for democracy and have the resources to sustain a successful reconstruction effort.

To support Libya's transition, the International Republican Institute (IRI) launched a program just after the revolution to gauge public sentiment on critical issues. Most recently, IRI expanded its efforts to strengthen democratic governance by working with civil society, local councils and nationally elected officials. IRI's work focuses on two complementary areas of democratic governance: youth engagement in Libya's political transition process and linking local constituencies with their national-level elected leaders to produce policy solutions to address Libya's most pressing issues.

Nearly 65 percent of Libyans are under the age of 30 and many Libyan youth, who provided crucial leadership during the revolution, are now in danger of being marginalized during the political transition process. With funding from the [National Endowment for Democracy](#) (NED), IRI works with young people in mid-size cities outside Tripoli to help them develop skills needed to serve as leaders within their communities. With IRI assistance, young people are establishing youth councils that work with elected local council members on issues facing the local community. Through this effort, participants will produce a series of white papers that present strategies to solve the most pressing problems facing their municipality.

IRI is also working at the local level to connect elected representatives and Libyan citizens in constituencies to promote open and regular engagement through funding from the [United States Agency for International Development](#). Through advocacy and constituent outreach workshops, civil society organizations and elected officials are focused on organizing and participating in public town hall-style meetings. These meetings serve as an opportunity for local and national elected officials to interact with citizens on issues of concern to the community. Town hall meeting will be followed by smaller coordination meetings between local and national elected officials to leverage citizen feedback into policy solutions at the national level.

These efforts are supported by a qualitative survey research project targeting five Libyan municipalities funded by NED. Utilizing focus group methodology, IRI conducted a series of discussions in Benghazi, Misrata, Sabratha, Tripoli and Zawiya on issues of democratic governance. Results of the focus groups are used to develop programming and in consultations with local program partners.