

Strengthening Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance

THE
CARTER CENTER



For nearly four decades, The Carter Center has worked around the world to strengthen democracy, advance human rights, and improve governance and the rule of law. A pioneer in the field of election observation, the Center has observed more than 110 elections in 39 countries. It has helped protect and promote human rights defenders, with a special focus on the rights of women and girls. And it has worked with numerous

governments and civil society partners to improve access to information and justice and to increase government transparency and accountability.

Because of its multifaceted approach and track record of success, The Carter Center is able to leverage partnerships and develop programming that addresses both a country's longstanding challenges and its emerging needs.

Democracy

The Democracy Program works globally to advance credible, transparent, and inclusive democratic elections; participatory rights; and democratic governance and accountability consistent with universal human rights. Its activities focus on:

- (1) building consensus and developing **standards for democratic elections**;
- (2) developing **new techniques** and approaches to strengthen democracy and elections;
- (3) implementing **nongovernmental observation missions** to assess elections and political transitions against international standards; and
- (4)

supporting **civil society partners** as they observe elections, advance participatory rights, and monitor political transitions.

The Center's **international election observation missions** focus on emerging democracies in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, and aim to shape perceptions about the quality and legitimacy of electoral processes through public reporting. The Center observed elections in Bolivia, Myanmar, and Côte d'Ivoire in 2020 and in Zambia in 2021, and it is currently assessing the possibility of sending election missions to Honduras, Venezuela, Nepal, Mali, Kenya, the Philippines, and others in the coming months.

The **digital threats project** develops new tools and methods to assess the scope and scale of the impact of social media and online misinformation, propaganda, hate speech, and harassment on democracy and human rights. Since 2018, the digital threats team has undertaken projects in South Africa, Ethiopia, the United States, Honduras, Bolivia, Ecuador, Palestine, Myanmar, Tunisia, and Liberia.

Between 2015 and 2017, the Center worked with the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner on Human Rights on a



A Guyanese voter holds up his identification card. The Carter Center has observed elections in the country five times, including early 2020.



Carter Center observer Donna Jones (center) watches a hand recount of presidential election ballots in Clayton County, Georgia. The Carter Center is focused on increasing transparency and building trust in U.S. elections.

conference series with election assistance practitioners and the international human rights community. This resulted in the Human Rights and Election Standards Plan of Action and led to the Center's **participatory rights project** in Zambia, which builds bridges between the human rights and election communities to advance core rights related to political participation with a special focus on the participation of women and youth.

Citizen observation initiatives support civil society organizations' efforts to strengthen electoral processes and inclusive governance and have been implemented in Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tunisia, and Honduras.

In 2020, the Center launched a **U.S. elections project** focused on increasing transparency and building trust and confidence in U.S. elections, with a focus on Georgia. The Georgia Secretary of State welcomed the Center's efforts, including nonpartisan observation of the 2020 post-election audit process. The Center is exploring a range of activities on electoral reform, partisan and nonpartisan observation, and continued support for transparent elections in Georgia and other states.

Rule of Law

The Rule of Law Program advances government accountability, transparency, and inclusive access to information and justice. Partnering with government and civil society, the program works

at international, national, and local levels, with a focus on reaching the most marginalized populations, to improve good governance, increase citizen trust, and transform lives.

Since 2006, the Center has **worked in Liberia to improve access to justice** by



In Liberia, a Carter Center community justice advisor helped Boimah Dorley (above) reach a repayment agreement with his lender without involving the police. Advisors work in 470 Liberian communities, helping resolve disputes for marginalized citizens.

partnering with traditional and community leaders to provide marginalized citizens with knowledge and tools to protect their rights, peacefully manage their communities, and better engage with the informal and formal justice systems. The Center's network of **community justice advisors** works in 470 communities in eight counties, helping resolve disputes for people who would otherwise not have access to justice.

In 2018, the Center began working to build public confidence in Liberia's formal criminal justice system by increasing citizens' awareness of their rights, enhancing their understanding of how the system works, and assisting them in accessing that system. In this way, it has reached over 19,000 citizens to date. The Center also has begun developing plans for the improvement of the administration of justice; for example, through establishing more effective and transparent systems.

Lessons learned from work in Liberia are now being applied in Sierra Leone

to support implementation of a justice information platform that increases women's access to information relating to sexual and gender-based violence.

Since 1999, the Center has worked to **advance the fundamental right of access to information (ATI)** including through its Implementation Assessment Tool, which diagnoses the extent and quality of a public agency's implementation of ATI laws and provides a road map for improvement.

In 2014, based on findings from its unique study, the Center began working on **women and access to information**, developing creative solutions for overcoming gendered obstacles. In Bangladesh, Guatemala, and Liberia, it has raised ATI awareness among 15,000 women, helped women file more than 2,300 information requests, and trained over 4,500 government officials on how to improve equitable information flows. This year, the Center introduced the Inform Women, Transform Lives campaign in 13 cities around the world and has plans to launch a second cohort of cities in March 2022.



A Carter Center study found that women in Guatemala cannot access government information – to which they have a right – as easily as men. Guatemala City is one of 13 cities The Carter Center is helping reach more women about beneficial services.

In 2017, the Center began **helping the Liberian National Police develop and implement complaints and commendations mechanisms** to improve agency accountability. A recent national survey of 3,220 citizens found a 15% increase in public trust in the agency, which the inspector general of police attributed to this work. The Center will expand these efforts to other Liberian security agencies in 2022. Additionally, it has begun working to **improve gender equality in the Costa**

Rican police forces through development of policies and practices to improve equitable hiring, retention, and promotion.

Human Rights

The Human Rights Program regularly convenes human rights activists, experts, and policymakers in Atlanta to reinforce human rights norms and the protection of human rights defenders. Crucially, these events provide defenders an opportunity



In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, The Carter Center works for economic justice in the lucrative mining and extractive industries sector.

in the extractive sector by building the capacity of local organizations to advocate for reforms that strengthen information disclosure, revenue transparency, and community protection. Because of this work, the DRC's revised 2018 mining code included several critical reforms. A 2017 Center report investigated mismanagement and opacity at the DRC's largest state-owned mining company, Gécamines, leading to improvements in its financial management and contracting practices. The Center also has supported constructive engagement between companies, local governments, and affected communities to negotiate local development agreements that meet communities' needs.

Most recently, The Carter Center has begun supporting **racial justice truth-telling work in the U.S.**, with a specific focus on the role of Christian churches in slavery and in maintaining systemic racism. It also is producing a series of online events with artists working to advance human rights and social justice through their art.

for solidarity and a chance to exchange knowledge on advancing human rights. The Center also engages in other efforts to **mitigate risks to human rights defenders** and is currently exploring the possibility of establishing a global repository on threats against them. It also has begun a project designed to educate U.S. policymakers, opinion leaders, and tech company executives on the current threats to democracy and human rights in India.

The **Forum on Human Rights website** offers a safe digital space for human rights defenders to convene and advance human rights issues through discussion threads and live, virtual roundtable conversations. Additionally, the forum provides a library of resources to educate and inform those interested in human rights.

The **Human Rights House** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) partners with Congolese civil society organizations to build their capacity to intervene in human rights concerns.

The Human Rights House established **protection networks for human rights defenders** in six provinces and strengthened the ability of youth to serve as leaders within their communities and participate in public life. Currently, the Center is providing training, funding, and mentoring to increase civil society organizations' ability to address longstanding and newly emerging threats to women's rights.

The Center also works in the DRC to **advance economic justice**



The Carter Center regularly convenes human rights activists, experts, and policymakers to reinforce the protection of human rights defenders, such as Nigerian Halimat Jibril (above) of the Federation of Muslim Women's Association.