

# Electoral Integrity

*IFES programs increase the credibility and legitimacy of electoral processes around the world.*



**The legitimacy of an election depends on the actual or perceived integrity of the electoral process. If citizens and candidates believe the electoral process is defective or dishonest, they may not accept the outcome.**

IFES has developed an electoral integrity portfolio that defines international standards and best practices and builds on 25 years of real-world experience in strengthening the effectiveness of election management bodies (EMBs) and organizing credible elections.

IFES programming increases electoral integrity by working with election administrators and other stakeholders to improve and enforce campaign finance regulations; develop appropriate legal structures and effective election complaint adjudication systems; and strengthen their ability to proactively combat electoral fraud through risk assessments and strategic fraud control plans.

**Recognizing that each environment requires a unique approach, IFES works with key in-country stakeholders - including government institutions, political parties, civil society groups, media and scholars - in a collaborative, holistic manner to support transparency and accountability.**



# Election Administration

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The core of IFES' work is support to the administration of credible, efficient and peaceful elections. IFES works directly with election managers to draft and reform electoral regulations and procedures; develop and implement strategic plans; and train election officials and build capacity of regional and national institutions.

EMB and other governmental partners also work with IFES to improve civil and voter registries; develop mapping and redistricting strategies; and procure election technology and commodities like ballot boxes, electronic voting machines and indelible ink.

IFES also works with local organizations to ensure elections are fair and inclusive. This support includes voter and civic education campaigns and community-based election violence mitigation projects.

A hallmark of IFES' election administration work is support to countries in transition, such as South Sudan. In January 2011, southern Sudanese

cast ballots in the referendum on self-determination. IFES worked closely with the South Sudan Referendum Commission and South Sudan Referendum Bureau (SSRB) over the months prior to the referendum to ensure that the vote would be credible and peaceful.

For example, IFES provided the voter registration materials as well as the necessary facilities, hardware, software and training for the SSRB to set up a data center to process registration information, tabulate votes and announce referendum results. Since South Sudan's independence in July 2011, IFES has provided research and facilitated public discussions on the development of a comprehensive election law and has been supporting the development of long-term institutions for future elections.



# Money and Politics

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Legal and regulatory systems characterized by strong checks and balances are pivotal for credible elections. This is an acute issue for campaign finance, as illegal contributions and improper use of state resources can skew election results.

IFES is the premier organization in this field, with a broad portfolio of projects that focus on strengthening civil society and media monitoring of campaign finance activities. IFES also provides technical assistance directly to EMB professionals responsible for enforcing campaign finance laws and regulations. In 2009, IFES published the authoritative handbook *Political Finance Regulation: The Global Experience*.

IFES has conducted campaign finance programming in a range of countries around the world, including Cambodia, Indonesia, Liberia, Moldova, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan and the Philippines.

A highlight of this portfolio has been IFES' programming in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Recent electoral events in the region have resulted in calls for greater transparency and accountability. Within this framework, campaign finance has emerged as a key issue. In February 2012, IFES and the Arab Region Parliamentarians Against Corruption (ARPAC) hosted the first-ever regional workshop on political finance in the MENA region, representing eight countries (Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen).

This event was part of a larger IFES and ARPAC initiative to increase stakeholders' access to information and awareness on issues relating to the role and transparent regulation of political finance in the region, and to build local stakeholders' capacity to advocate for regulatory reform.



# Electoral Justice

Credible and effective processes for the investigation and resolution of complaints are integral to guaranteeing the integrity and legitimacy of an electoral process.

In one of the first unique efforts to systematize and standardize these processes, IFES identified seven standards for electoral complaint adjudication. These standards, detailed in the IFES publication *Guidelines for Understanding, Adjudicating, and Resolving Disputes in Elections* (GUARDE), stem from the widely recognized fundamental right to participate in government. They also provide a way to protect and enforce this overarching right of participation. To build on this effort, IFES is developing a set of standards and principles for the conduct of electoral investigations that respect essential civil and political rights.

IFES has supported complaints adjudication reforms in many countries across the globe, including Georgia, Indonesia, Liberia, Nigeria, Thailand, Ukraine and Yemen.

During the 2009 Presidential/Provincial Council and 2010 Wolesi Jirga elections in Afghanistan, IFES served as the lead election technical assistance implementer to the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) in complaints adjudication. IFES recruited experienced Afghan lawyers, judges and investigators; drafted operational plans, organizational structures and regulations for transparent complaint processing; trained ECC legal staff in best practices; and designed a public outreach program.

*“The effort made by IFES to provide a set of international standards for election dispute resolution will be met eagerly by academic and electoral officers from around the world.”*

— **Magistrate María del Carmen Alanís Figueroa, Federal Electoral Court of Mexico on GUARDE**



# Combating Fraud

Fraud is arguably the most tangible threat to the integrity of an election, and IFES integrates fraud mitigation into all of its election administration, money and politics and electoral justice support. To raise awareness about these issues, IFES has published three papers in a recent series on electoral fraud. These papers define key terms and provide a framework for countries to develop and operationalize an anti-fraud strategy. This strategy should involve both internal EMB actors and external stakeholders. Proper planning to identify potential fraud risks is essential to managing the process.

To support these efforts, IFES is drawing on its extensive experience with strategic planning to develop the first public methodology and manual for EMBs to effectively combat electoral fraud. This methodology includes several key components:

- Exhaustive electoral risk assessments
- Strong strategic fraud control plans
- Training programs based on a new Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) module on electoral fraud

## Key Terms in Electoral Fraud

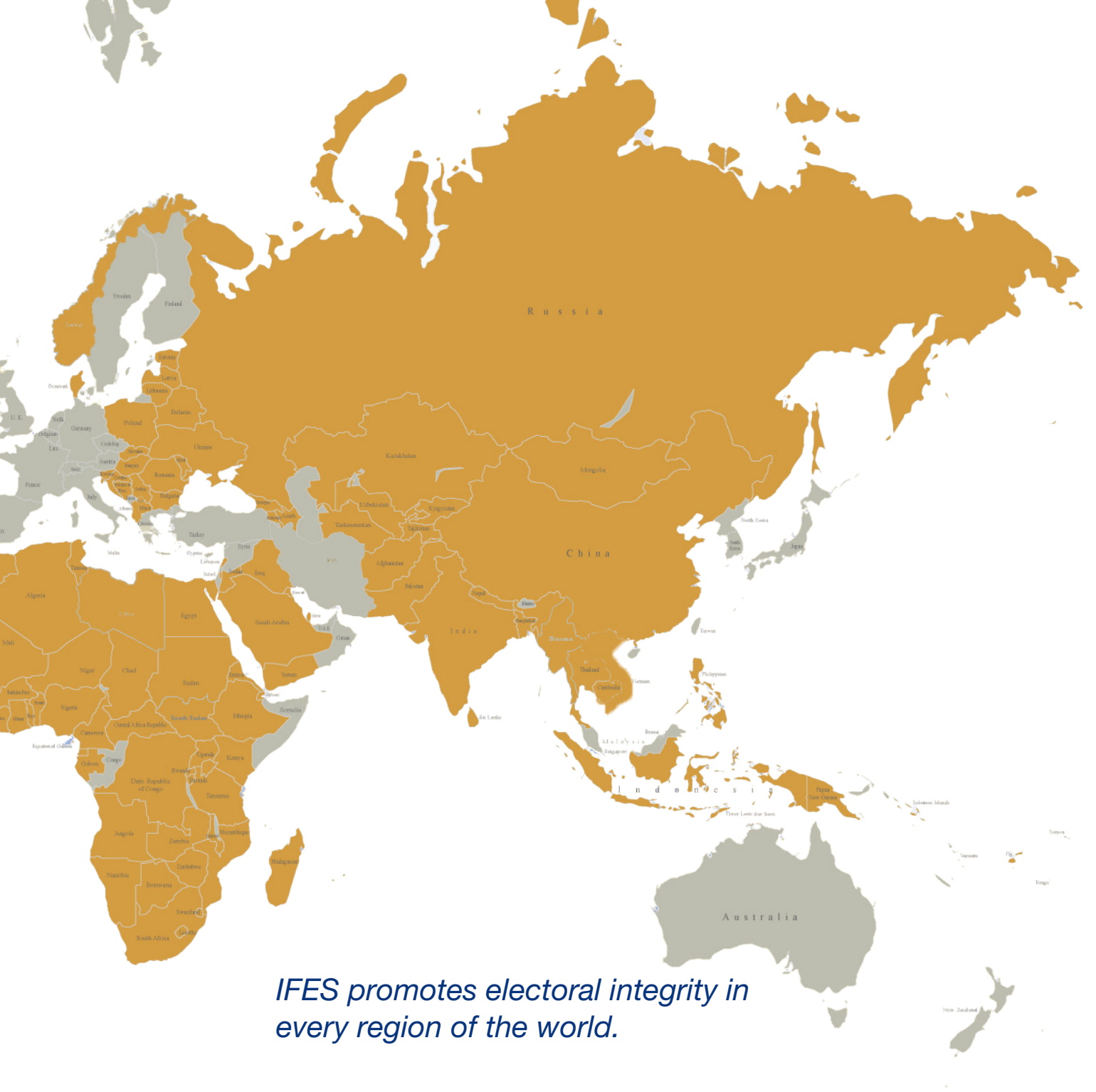
*Electoral fraud: Deliberate wrongdoing by election officials or other electoral stakeholders, which distorts the individual or collective will of the voters.*

*Electoral malpractice: The breach by an election professional of his or her relevant duty of care, resulting from carelessness or neglect.*

*Systemic manipulation: The use of domestic legal provisions and/or electoral rules and procedures that run counter to widely accepted democratic principles and international standards, and that purposefully distort the will of voters.*

— *Assessing Electoral Fraud in New Democracies: Refining the Vocabulary*  
**IFES, 2012**





*IFES promotes electoral integrity in every region of the world.*

# About IFES

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) supports citizens' right to participate in free and fair elections. Our independent expertise strengthens electoral systems and builds local capacity to deliver sustainable solutions.

As the global leader in democracy promotion, we advance good governance and democratic rights by:

- Providing technical assistance to election officials
- Empowering the underrepresented to participate in the political process
- Applying field-based research to improve the electoral cycle

Since 1987, IFES has worked in over 135 countries – from developing democracies, to mature democracies.

For more information, visit [www.IFES.org](http://www.IFES.org).



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