

Voting Undeterred



IFES works to promote resolution strategies to reduce electoral violence in every region of the world.

IFES defines electoral violence as any harm or threat of harm to any person or property involved in the election process, or the process itself, during the election period.

The risk of violence is present in nearly every election. In the last 25 years, IFES has developed context-specific electoral assistance strategies to enable hundreds of electoral management bodies, civil society organizations, political parties, community leaders and security agencies to better manage that risk.

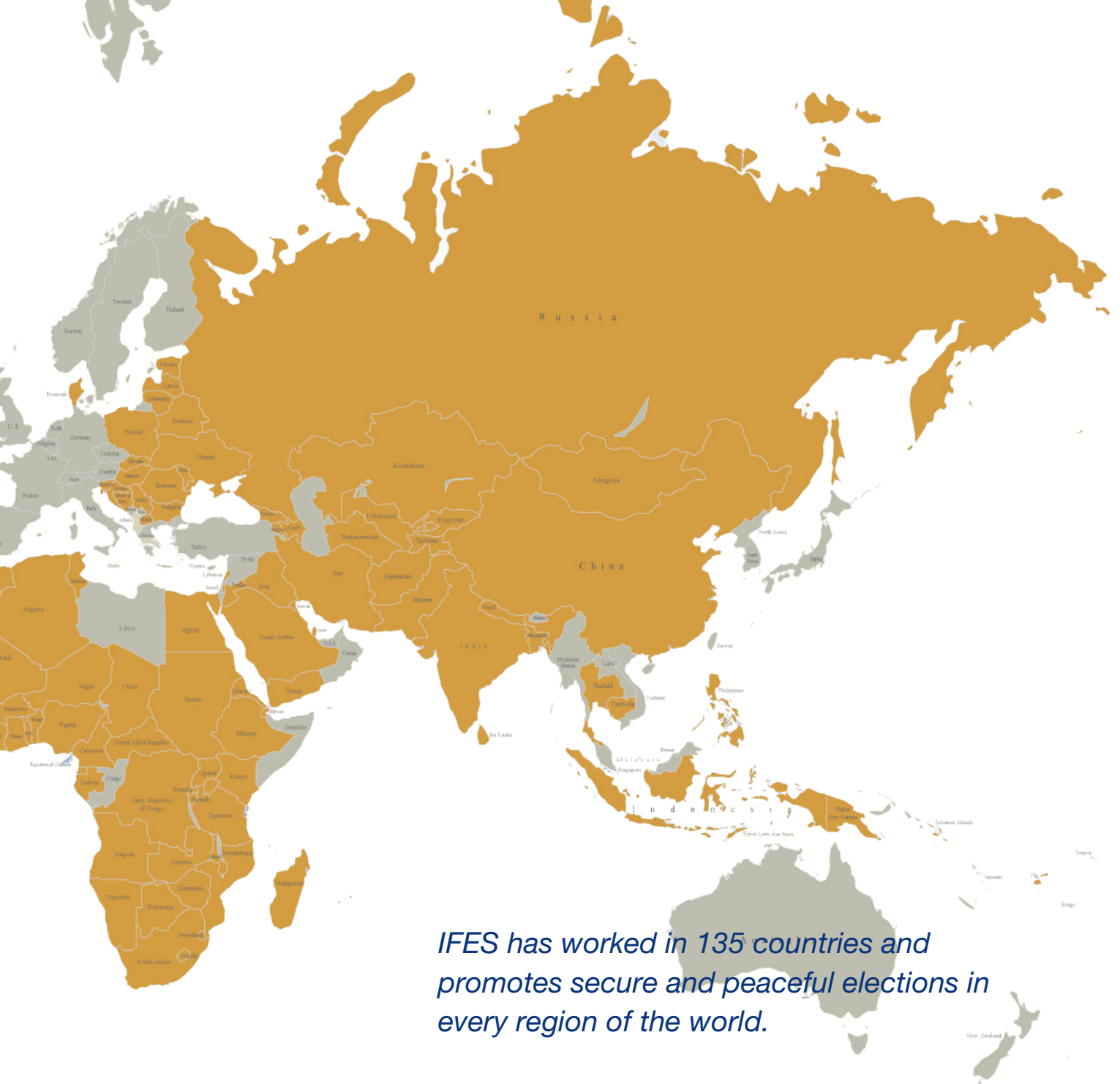
The dynamics of electoral conflict vary. Electoral violence can flare up in response to specific events or allegations, or it may be an escalation of ongoing conflicts, whether socio-economic, religious, ethnic or gender-based. It can be physical or psychological; it can be intimate or public.

While different electoral conflicts require different responses, there are core strategies that can empower communities to achieve more peaceful elections. IFES includes analysis, prevention, mitigation and resolution methods throughout the electoral cycle to reduce violence.

Analysis reveals causes and patterns of electoral conflict that inform security strategies and political negotiations. Prevention strategies like advocacy, security coordination and conflict monitoring can deter violence or reduce conflict. Mitigation ensures that electoral, political, civil society and security sectors have the skills to manage escalating conflicts. Resolution includes both long-term and short-term measures, from political reform to improvements in formal and informal dispute resolution mechanisms.

Understanding and managing the threat of electoral violence is essential for a credible electoral process.





IFES has worked in 135 countries and promotes secure and peaceful elections in every region of the world.

Analysis

Lebanon has a history of political, social and religious violence. Improving the ability of election security agencies to manage the risk of violence ahead of the 2009 elections prompted a novel approach to risk mapping.

The Lebanon Election Violence Risk Assessment (LEVRA) Project was designed in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities to be an integrated part of the ministry's election management tools. The project drew upon expert assessments of three types of violence: political, confessional and electoral.

Each district was identified to be of high, medium or low risk for each type of violence and data was continually collected to update the rating. The ministry used the information as it worked with other political and security stakeholders in the preparation of an election security plan and an election operations center during the election process.

“Overall, there was a highly positive reception to the project's capacity to provide an accurate and credible assessment on the risk of electoral violence.”

— **Richard Chambers**
IFES Chief of Party, Lebanon
Background on the Lebanon Election
Violence Risk Assessment Project

There was a distinct decrease in the number of violent incidents recorded by the LEVRA Project following the adoption of the security plan. The LEVRA data was essential in identifying key hotspots for appropriate deployment of security personnel and ensuring additional security for managing campaign events, the conduct of polling and increased risks during the results and polling period.



Prevention

In 2009, the last rebel group in Burundi disarmed, bringing an end to the protracted peace process following a long and painful civil war. The 2010 elections in Burundi were held at a pivotal moment in the country's struggle toward peace, and the polls held high expectations – and high stakes – for the people, parties and candidates. The potential for conflict rested on cleavages of the past and political competition in the present.

IFES supported the Burundian National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) and Burundian civil society groups to minimize violence through innovative conflict prevention programming, including: conflict monitoring, civic education campaigns, theater skits, community festivals, a powerful documentary film and election mediation teams.

The conflict monitoring program, *Amatora Mu Mahoro* (Elections in Peace), drew upon IFES' Election Violence Education and Resolution (EVER) methodology, and published findings on

an interactive website (www.burundi.usshahidi.com) and in several analytical reports. Mobilizing a coalition of international and local groups in support of over 400 community-based monitors, the effort was unprecedented in Burundi and one of the largest such endeavors supported by IFES. The information gathered by monitors fueled advocacy and action in response to identified potential conflicts and provided the foundation to help local and national leaders promote peace.

“Amatora Mu Mahoro is designed to... address any potential violence comprehensively and swiftly. This system is strengthening civil society capacity to promote peace and prevent violence in their communities.”

— **Samia Mahgoub**
IFES Country Director, Burundi



Mitigation

Guatemala has some of the highest violence rates in Latin America. Recently, this violence has been increasingly politicized and, in turn, election-related.

In an effort to prevent and mitigate violence in the 2011 process, IFES conducted an election conflict mapping exercise to identify risks and develop a range of conflict mitigation strategies for the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE). Through the development of the conflict map and technical advice provided by IFES, the TSE was able to apply new skills and risk analysis. This meant that, for the first time, the TSE had a proactive role in electoral security coordination.

As a result, the TSE, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense established an Inter-institutional Monitoring and Coordination Center (IMCC) and a Security Coordination Table that met regularly to plan election security, and ensured that these meetings were replicated at all levels of management. This meant that the national police gained a greater voice and that ideas did not stall at higher levels.

“The inter-institutional electoral security coordination was crucial for the strengthening of the security forces in areas of greater risk of electoral violence; and the IMCC vital for immediate actions in times of crisis such as the prompt release of the TSE staff held hostage by the local community in Nahualá.”

— **Marizza Herrera**
IFES Electoral Violence and
Conflict Resolution Expert, Guatemala

Implementation of security plans on the ground were more successful.

The IMCC was created to respond to security incidents and threats on Election Day. This body successfully mediated issues as they arose, including one hostage situation in Nahualá, Sololá, in which TSE staff were held by voters fearing fraud.



Resolution

Pakistan's political and electoral history is rife with violent conflict. Achieving a fair and timely resolution of electoral disputes is critical for any democratic process, and particularly so in transitional democracies. As the 2008 general elections approached, Pakistan's system of resolving election disputes faced many challenges that put the credibility of the election process in jeopardy. Pakistan suffers from a lack of fair access to and a creditable formal justice system. This makes informal arbitration mechanisms like tribal and kinship-based systems attractive to the general population.

In partnership with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), IFES supported an analysis of the electoral dispute resolution (EDR) system and strategies for bringing it closer to meeting international standards. After an initial analysis and support for the resolution of pre-election complaints, IFES and the ECP developed a post-

election informal community-based mediation and adjudication program.

This strengthened EDR processes and mitigated the potential for election violence. The program also streamlined the election dispute resolution process, enhanced capacity of EDR bodies to address electoral disputes and engaged in political party, media and public education about the EDR system. IFES also supported Pakistani legal experts to monitor cases proceeding through EDR bodies to track improvements and identify areas for enhancement.



About IFES

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is the global leader in election assistance and democracy promotion.

IFES promotes democratic stability by providing technical assistance and applying field-based research to the electoral cycle in countries around the world to enhance citizen participation and strengthen civil societies, governance and transparency.

Every IFES project is staffed by national and international personnel while partnering with local election management bodies and civil society organizations. This homegrown approach ensures that the expertise offered by IFES fits the needs of the country or context and the benefit of assistance outlasts the life of the project. Our work is nonpartisan and also includes projects that:

- Help citizens participate in their democracies
- Increase politicians' accountability to the electorate
- Strengthen government institutions

Since its founding in 1987, IFES has worked in 135 countries — from developing to mature democracies.

For more information, visit www.IFES.org.



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