



Arab Reform Initiative

The public freedoms laws enacted soon after Morocco's independence in the second half of the 1950s, regulated association, assembly and the press. There were seen as a victory and a step towards laying down the foundation of a pluralistic democratic system. Although restrictive amendments were made to these laws especially during the political conflicts of the 1960s and the 1970s, the political openness of the late 1990s, as a result of the political reform and concession made by the dominating palace and the increasing activities of civil society and democratic forces, led to a political transformation in the country.

Various successive initiatives and reports undertaken in the context of the reform and reconciliation process that Morocco underwent since the late 1990s¹ emphasized the importance of liberating and empowering Moroccan citizens, strengthening the rule of law and the legal institutions and cementing trust between state institutions and the different components of society, as well as preserving and developing national unity and social cohesion. They also stressed the centrality of civil society and the importance of citizens' engagement in public affairs to foster democratic and developmental reforms.

The transformations in North Africa, as a result of popular waves of massive protests since 2010 in what became known as "Arab Spring", derived their slogans largely from the visions and approach of civil society organizations that have long rejected despotism and corruption and worked for people's right to bread, freedom and dignity.

The recent movements in the region highlighted the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) as political and social initiatives that made up for the state's failure to adequately manage economic, social and cultural policies and services. The communal networks and CSOs were strengthened by new communication technologies which multiplied the impact of voluntary associations and individuals through the use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter as well as personal blogs among other communication channels. These technologies created new virtual citizen networks with strong symbolic power.²

The 2011 Constitution,³ enacted in the midst of the democratic uprisings in Morocco and the region, enhanced the role of civil society and met some of its demands to strengthen participatory democracy and enshrine universally



recognized human rights. This was clear in the preamble of the constitution, its general provisions and in the provisions on fundamental rights and freedoms.⁴

This paper provides a tentative analysis of the governance of human rights organizations through a review of existing literature, published testimonies and interviews with relevant actors. It concludes with some preliminary findings related to internal governance, transparency, national and foreign funding and the conflicting views of the states and human rights actors regarding these issues.

1. How Do CSOs Perceive Themselves?

(organizational and professional approaches)

The number and goals of CSOs and the complexity of their activities have risen since the late 1990s and especially after 2005 when the National Initiative for Human Development was launched. The number of CSOs increased from around 4,000 in the early 1980s to around 118,000 according to the latest available data in 2014.⁵ A total of 5,150 of these CSOs are active in the field of human rights in general or advocate for women's rights, child rights, rights of immigrants or rights of persons with disabilities.

This paper focuses on two organizations; the Moroccan League for the Defence of Human Rights (LMDDH), *Ligue Marocaine pour la Défense des Droits Humains*, and the Human Rights Forum of Northern Morocco (FDH-NORMA), *Forum des Droits de L'Homme au Nord du Maroc*. It compares the context in which they emerged, the geographical scope of their work, and how they operated to realize their common goal of defending human rights.

The LMDDH was the first CSO dedicated to defending fundamental rights and freedoms. Established in May 1972, when such an activity called for great courage, it took 40 years of struggle for the organization to obtain the “public benefit” status in 2012.⁶ The LMDDH built its strategy and focussed its work on:

- Disseminating and deepening awareness about human rights;
- Defending victims of human rights violations;
- Working on eliminating the legislative and regulatory provisions infringing



on public and individual freedoms;

- Advocating for a stronger judiciary
- Advocating of the rule of law as a necessary condition for effective guarantees for rights.
- Harmonization of national laws with international human rights conventions.⁷

As to the FDH-NORM, it was established in April 2011 amid growing awareness of issues of comparative regional approaches in addressing rights issues. This was an entry point to integrating previously silenced sensitive human rights issues related to cultural, social and historical rights as well as the collective rights of the north (the historical countryside) and to highlighting relevant particularities as a dynamic and unique domain. The FDH-NORM, by addressing and highlighting rights issues and the particularities of the Rif in northern Morocco, avoided a centric view of human rights issues and emphasized, instead, the dialectic relationship between the universality and comprehensiveness of human rights while retaining regional specificities. The FDH-NORM's goals can be summarized as follows:

- Protecting the universality and comprehensiveness of human rights;
- Disseminating and promoting the culture of human rights and citizenship and including it in pedagogy;
- Defending human rights and supporting victims;
- Preserving cultural, historical and social particularities in the Rif/northern Morocco;
- Consolidating the values of cultural pluralism in Moroccan identity;
- Deepening research on human rights issues.⁸

2. The Internal Systems and Hierarchies in Rights-Based Associations

The 1958 Law on public freedoms (reviewed in 1973 and 2000), which has long regulated the work of associations and other CSOs, suffers from loopholes and ambiguities, thereby enabling governmental manipulation under the pretext of



security prerogatives, good conduct, or public order to obstruct CSOs' work.⁹

The law allows CSOs to organize and create internal systems and structures provided that they respect democratic principles of governance. The LMDDH has branches that are spread all over Morocco. Its national Congress, held every four years, is its highest governance authority. A number of intermediary structures exist between the leadership body and the branches including the National Council, which meets twice a year, and the Central Office that regulates and facilitates the daily League operations and programme implementation. The league has elected provincial and local bodies.

On the other hand, the FDH-NORM's highest governing body is the Congress, which should be held every three years and exceptionally when necessary as determined by at least two thirds of the members of the Coordinating Council. This Council, which meets quarterly, elects a General Coordinator and a General Coordination Body from amongst its members and holds both accountable.¹⁰ The Coordination Body consists of 11 to 19 members and serves for a three-year period. The FDH-NORM has branches with its own local coordinating committees in the North of Morocco, or among the Rif diaspora overseas.

These two organizations present two models of governance and scope of work and how to organize vertically. The former is a national organization, with the headquarter in Rabat, which can work everywhere in Morocco though provincial and local branches. The latter is focussed on one part of the country, the Rif, that has for long felt abandoned and occasionally repressed by the centre, in addition to chapters among the diaspora from this region overseas.

3. Main Systems of Governance, Effectiveness and Operationalization

The internal structures and systems of rights CSOs determine their approaches and priorities. Several CSOs are still defending their right to exist and operate independently. Moreover, they lack capacities and technical skills needed to enhance and broaden their impact and effectiveness within the currently relatively open political system in Morocco. Many CSOs lack a strategic vision necessary to



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lay out operational priorities, goals and work plans. CSOS are generally better at providing services and raising capacity compared to their relatively weaker work on advocacy, documentation, collaborating together and networking with social movements.¹¹

Many CSOs, including rights organizations, lack effective internal democratic governance mechanisms. Some suffer from bureaucratization and the absence of effective internal representation systems (which leads to conflicts and divisions), lack of renewed leadership, nepotism and the personalization. The lack of transparency and democratic practices within CSOs make them appear less credible, and hence less capable of pushing for reforms or social change or of advocating with the state for different policies and practices.¹²

A research project by the High Commission for Planning in Morocco¹³ on governance and management of CSOs in Morocco revealed that 95.9% of associations are run by only an executive bureau, 1.1% by an administrative board, and 3% by both an executive bureau and an administrative board. Women make up 12.7% of CSO executive leadership. In leadership positions, about 16.9% were executive or professionals, 14.8% were mid-level professionals and 14.6% wageworkers. About 9.6% were elected members of legislative bodies or government officials and 8.2% are technicians/craftsmen and workers qualified in traditional occupations.

A comparative study of the Maghreb countries showed the difficulties and weaknesses facing rights CSOs.¹⁴ They include a lack of a transparent relationship between CSOs and the government. Government officials and institutions do not consider CSOS to be interlocutors and partners. The allocation of public funds to CSOs is non-transparent and takes place without any institutionalization or formalization of the relationship between the state and civil society. CSOs and individual civil society actors did not appear to have the freedom, even under reasonable restrictions, to accept donations or funds from abroad.

It became evident by studying the LMDDH administrative and financial regulations and structures that it has a complex system for accountability and monitoring. For example, the LMDDH basic law requires a National Congress to convene every four years¹⁵ to discuss and approve the organization's narrative and financial reports. A



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National Council, which meets twice a year (April and October), discusses and approves reports submitted by a Central Bureau on the work of the organization during the period between meetings and a work plan for the upcoming period. It also discusses and approves the financial report submitted by the Central Bureau including expenditure and income during the period between meetings. The Central Bureau oversees the day-to-day operations. Article 18 of the internal bylaws stipulates that the Bureau takes decisions by a simple majority of attendees where a presidential vote determines the result in the case of a tie.

In reality, however, these systems are not fully in effect. During the 45 years since it was established, the LMDDH had only four presidents of its Central Bureau. Mohamed Bin Abdelhadi al-Qabab served the longest from 1980 to 2006. Mounir Abdelkader el Alami and Mohamed Zhari took over between 2006 and 2015. During the seventh LMDDH Congress on 24-25 October 2015, Abdelrazak Ghanbour was voted as the fourth president. The Conference was never regularly held, hence the delays in rotating senior positions leading to holders of senior and leadership positions to stay in their posts for far too long. The National Congress, which should meet twice a year, met only once a year in the past five years. The Central Bureau never met with a reasonable regularity thus dropping the ultimate executive authority and decision making into the hands of the president who takes decisions after separate consultations with some Bureau members.¹⁶

The FDH-NORM basic laws provide for several governance levels, at the top of which is a Congress, which considers and approves narrative and financial reports presented by a General Coordination Body. The Congress takes decisions through a majority vote of half-plus-one. Between Congresses, the executive authority over the FDH-NORM rests with a Coordinating Council, which monitors the work of the General Coordination Body.

However, as was the case with the LMDDH, the FDH-NORM Congress had not met regularly. After the founding Congress on 24 April 2011, it took more than four years to hold the second Congress on 19 May 2015. Additionally, the rate of member turnover after the second Congress concluded its elections did not exceed 5% of the members of the founding Congress. Moreover, the organization did not submit to record the proceedings of its other governing bodies as stipulated in its basic law.¹⁷

4. Financial Stability, Control and Donors

Legal Regulations of CSOs Funding:

International Legal Regulations for CSO Funding:

The sixth principle of the International Principles Protecting Civil Society affirms the right of associations to seek and secure funding from legal sources including individuals, companies, civil society, international and governmental organizations in addition to local, national and foreign governments.¹⁸

International law limits the scope of state actions because unnecessary restrictions could be an infringement on the right to association. Unjustifiable state restrictions that undermine the ability of CSOs to achieve their objectives could thus constitute an unwarranted infringement on freedom of association.¹⁹ Public domestic donors should not exclusively fund CSOs that support their policies. This is why the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association stressed governments should not control CSOs access to public funding as this prevents an important block from establishing democracy and plurality. The Rapporteur also emphasized the importance of authorities undertaking the appropriate measures when necessary to support associations that face unwarranted restrictions. Moreover, the Rapporteur insisted that governmental regulation for reporting foreign funding should not undermine the independence of associations or place discriminatory restrictions on potential funding sources.²⁰

National Legal Frameworks for CSO Funding:

Article 29 of the Moroccan Constitution protects the “freedoms of meeting, assembly, peaceful demonstrations, establishing associations and joining trade unions and political parties.” The constitution requires the state “to comply with the international conventions duly ratified ... within the framework of constitutional provisions, the laws of the Kingdom ... [and] once these conventions are published they take precedence over national legislations ... [the government] must work to amend relevant domestic legislations to be



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harmonized” with ratified international conventions. Hence, Morocco’s commitment to CSOs right to obtain funding as stated in international conventions specially the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is guaranteed and is a commitment that supersedes all pertinent national legislations.

Article 6 of Dahir (royal decree) No. 1-58-376 issued on 15 November 1958 states that each legally established association has the right to acquire and administer funds from both public and private sources, from domestic and foreign parties as well as from international organizations. Chapters 32, 32 *bis* and 32 *ter* include posterior measures to regulate the receipt of such funds or subsidies.

Moroccan laws guarantee the right of associations to funding from local and foreign sources and the posterior measures do not restrict this right, but the first paragraph of Article 6 of the relevant royal decree requires that associations be properly established, i.e. legally registered, to benefit from these resources. This could be seen as an infringement on the first principle of the International Principles Protecting Civil Society since the right of association should not be constrained by a government approval or registration.

Though the law in general, and the constitution in particular, empower associations to seek funding and mobilize members domestically or overseas, most CSOs rely on local funds (ranging between 10,000 and 20,000 USD) obtained from local communities, the National Initiative for Human Development, ministries, the Social Development Agency, and other public institutions.

Non-governmental organizations do not benefit from tax exemptions without securing a registration as a public interest non-profit entity with the state. This is a long and complicated legal procedure, successfully engaged by a small number of CSOs, thus leaving the burden of taxation (income, VAT, municipal and registration fees) to be borne by most CSOs. These obligations place a heavy financial burden on CSOs and affect their ability to hire skilled employees on a full-time basis.²¹

Sources of Funding of Human Rights Organizations



Financial Sources and Expenses of Rights Associations

In 2015, Moroccan CSOs raised about 8.8 billion Dirhams (USD880 million) for about 45,000 CSOs. This means that each CSO on average received USD20,000. However, the distribution is very skewed according to available government data.²² One in five CSOs had an annual budget under USD500 while one in three CSOs had an annual budget below USD1000. On the other hand, only 5.4% of registered CSOs had a budget over USD50,000 while 2.5% of them had a budget exceeding USD100,000. This means that 2.5% of all CSOs received about 63% of the total funds for the sector. In contrast, CSOs that had an annual budget less than USD10,000 (about 80% of all CSOs) together received 10% of all funds available to the total number of associations.

About 32% of CSO funding came from grants or transfers made by individuals (12.7 %), the state (6.1 %), contractors (5.7 %), from abroad (5%) or from other CSOs (2.5 %). Membership fees remained the main source of income for CSOs whose annual expenditure did not exceed USD1,000, representing almost half of their total income. The higher the expenditure of a CSO the lower was the proportion of proceeds from membership fees into its total income. For example, membership fees represent only 4.3% of the funds received by CSOs whose budgets exceeded USD1million.

From 2011 to 2016, the LMDDH entered into partnerships with governmental sectors led by the Ministry of Justice and Freedoms which funded the organization's programme to disseminate and advocate for human rights culture. The organization also benefited, as part of the Moroccan Coalition of Human Rights Organizations, from EU funding of certain activities.²³

The FDH-NORM did not receive domestic public funding and relied on its own resources. The organization's basic law (Article 25, Chapter 3) stipulates that its funding comes from annual membership fees, subsidies, grants, revenue from own activities and from legally admissible donors.²⁴

Public Funding as the Main Source of Funding

With regards to the capacity of associations for practical mobilization of financial resources, the Moroccan Treasury, according to the Ministry of Relations with



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Parliament and Civil Society, reported that 1,214 CSOs, or around 1.35% of the total registered CSOs, received around 650 million Dirhams/USD65 million in domestic public funds in 2011 while 352 CSOs, less than 1% of licensed associations, received about USD14.5 million in foreign funds. Government reports that only 2.5% of all CSOs accounted for around 63% of all CSO funding while 94.6% of all CSOs do not exceed an annual budget of 500,000 Dirham/50,000 USD and do not conduct their accounting according to established standards.²⁵ Financial contributions from local communities and associations have doubled from 330 million Dirhams/33 million USD in 2008 to 670 million Dirhams/67 million USD in 2014.²⁶

Government statistics indicate that 534 CSOs benefitted from public funding from government ministries in 2013. It is difficult to reasonably assess the timeframe, trends, and various programmatic expenditures of these funds over a period of time because of gaps in available data and base information. Funds are allocated to CSOs which are registered as public interest organizations either through direct allocation or after applying in a tender process. These specific CSOs (only a small proportion when compared to all CSOs) also get tax exemptions or tax breaks and partial or comprehensive discounts.²⁷

Foreign Funding: Conflicting Positions

A combination of political and economic factors led to the expansion of CSOs and in size and roles in the past few decades as a majority of states increasingly withdraw from service provision and either entrusted some of it to the private sector or relied on CSOs to step up to a good part of the job.

International non-governmental organizations also developed fast with some of them working with budgets exceeding those of the counterpart governmental sector in developing countries. International NGOs often work with national CSOs on development, aid, and rights issues.

External funding is subject to a negotiation processes, and conditions agreed by donors and grantees, dependent on the kind of project and duration. Donors can be governmental or non-governmental, national or multinational, or a mix thereof. The EU is a regional governmental donor while the UN is a governmental multilateral donor. Donors have programmatic priorities and they vary but can



include human rights in general, women rights, children rights, freedom of belief, cultural rights, and minority rights.

According to the General Government Secretariat, 96 CSOs foreign funds totalling 145 million Dirhams/USD14.5 million in 2011 (55 local, 23 regional, and 21 national CSOs). In 2012, a total of 154 associations declared foreign funding (30 local, 38 regional, and 37 national) amounting to 244 million Dirham/USD24 million. In 2013, only 149 CSOs applied for permits to receive foreign funds (51 local, 26 regional and 70 national) for a total amount of 222 million Dirhams/USD22 million. The number fell to 128 CSOs in 2014 (until October) (30 local, 16 regional, and 82 national) for 158 million Dirhams/USD15 million.²⁸

Human Rights Actors and Foreign Funding:

A variety of actors working within human rights CSOs in Morocco assert that the financial support they receive from foreign foundations or governments fund projects that these organizations were already engaged in implementing. In other words, they do not receive core or generic funding but rather funding for project partnerships with foundations and/or governments to promote and defend human rights in specific ways.²⁹ Therefore, they view this funding as partnership projects implemented with donor institution.³⁰

- ***The German Experience***

Germany is considered one of the most important donor countries for Moroccan civil society, especially human rights organizations. German diplomacy views civil society support as an integral part of its approach.³¹ This support is provided through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) or through foundations affiliated with political parties that receive funding from the state budget through a parliamentary budget allocation. Though the bulk of the financial resources of these foundations come from German state allocations through the parliamentary annual budget decisions, the state of the Foreign Ministry do not intervene directly in the programmatic



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allocations by these foundations overseas. Despite this autonomy, several studies analyse the complex relationship between them and the state, especially the foreign policy institution to determine how they influence each other and in what way. These foundations include Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, which we will use as an example in this paper.³²

Friedrich Naumann supported several projects. For example, it supported the Citizenship forum to help enhance the influence of CSOs through trainings on petitions and lobbying in local communities and Parliament. A budget of 60,000 Euros was allocated to the project over a two-year period (2013/2014). Another project in the field of media and human rights was funded to support freedom of the press in a partnership with Ibn Rushd Center for Studies and Communication. The project was allocated a budget of 60,000 Euros disbursed in two instalments of 30,000 Euros each in 2013 and 2014.

The GIZ funded a project by the Centre for People's Rights (*Centre des Droits des Gens*) in Fez in 2014. The funds were used to organize training courses for teachers, parents' associations and students, to form human rights clubs in their educational institutions. The allocated budget was 120 million Dirham/USD12 million.

Friedrich Naumann funding to Moroccan CSOs is not provided in advance but rather disbursed against invoices of actual expenditure. Sometimes the Foundation settles activities cost directly to third party vendors and service providers.

Like all other big donor foundations, Friedrich Nauman transfers or payments are paid directly or deposited through established Moroccan banks with legal accounts for local organizations or service providers. Consequently, all funding coming from these foundations pass through the Bank of Morocco - thus ensuring transparency and state monitoring.

5. Financial Integrity Standards

Government figures show that less than 10% of CSOs receive more than 80% of public funding allocated to all associations, which raises suspicions regarding



transparency and equal access to funding opportunities. Less than 45% of CSOs submit detailed and accurate records of their accounts to explain how they disbursed the funds they had received. This raises questions about the actual use of these funds that were allocated for specific projects or programmes. More than 97% of CSOs that received public funding failed to comply and present all required financial statements. Additionally, many CSOs lack a clear evaluation system that links resources to specific outputs and outcomes. There is also a need for a simplified accounting system for non-profit organizations.³³

A national research conducted on non-profit organizations in 2011 revealed that the majority of associations (94.7%) do not conduct their accounting in line with the set standards.³⁴ Many of these CSOs lack an evaluation system linking inputs with expected outputs and possible impact that all can be reasonably measured. These figures and findings pose serious questions regarding minimum governance standards inside Moroccan CSOs. They illustrate two interrelated issues:

- First: The allocation of public funds to CSOs did not follow clear standards which raises suspicions about the independence of these CSOs and whether they are indirectly part of state institutions;
- Second: Failure to present detailed narrative and financial reports about the implemented programmes indicate a shocking lack of professionalism and, more important, of any monitoring and evaluation. This turns the public funds that these CSOs received into private funds to be spent as individuals running these organizations deem fit. Thus, not a small number of what should be non-governmental organizations could be in fact governmental tools or GNGOs, as have been labelled in critical literature, run by notables and influential individuals who work without accountability.³⁵ The available data does not distinguish between aid, development and rights organizations, but the GNGOization of CSOs is arguably more present in the first two organizations whose budgets and programmes are much vaster and could be more easily measured in terms of inputs, outputs and impact.

6. Challenges of Financial Governance of



Rights Based Associations

Civil society in Morocco faces several challenges that include poor levels of funding and limited sources of funding, interference in the independence of its organizations whether by state, political parties or by other influential groups.

Given the strong link between funding and independence, rights CSOs face the risk of deviating from their goals and principles in favour of what donors dictate (especially domestic governmental donors). This challenge is made more palpable by growing doubts about the credibility of CSOs' work and their integrity in defending human rights and values of citizenship especially when these clash with specific interests of national or foreign donors. This challenge was far less observed with rights groups which more often than not had relatively more effective systems of governance even if not systematically applied.

Another main challenge was an inadequate legal framework lacking efficient but uncomplicated measures and procedures to allow CSOs to operate effectively and still comply with tax, disclosure and other measures that can instil good governance and transparency. Additionally, Moroccan financial legislation ignores the role of civil society in the management. A clear and precise legal framework that specifies the mechanisms and ways to benefit from public funds (such as financial support or a programmatic partnerships) remains absent, while the current fiscal framework governing taxes, customs, and local taxes remains unsuitable to non-profit CSOs. The current system lacks clarity and effectiveness to enable good monitoring of public funds allocated to CSOs (domestically or from foreign sources) and how to hold them accountable for their expenditure. Thus, the current situation perpetuates negative practices that limit the social impact and penetration of CSOs that ultimately rely on voluntarism and public support. The negative results of the existing legal frameworks include:

- Public funding for associations is subject to non-objective considerations unrelated to open competition while influenced by political, electoral, and ideological issues.
- The allocation of funds takes place in the absence of specific programmes or projects thus creating a situation where financial support to CSOs is



treated as unconditional revenues.

- The absence of clear standards for financial reporting due to the lack of a commonly agreed accounting system for CSOs.
- Associations can barely cope with the complexity of fiscal and customs regulations.

Therefore, for the sake of good governance, Moroccan CSOs need unconventional but balanced financial, tax, and accounting systems that take into consideration the way CSOs work and their limitations but lay deep roots for transparency and accountability. At the same time, these improved systems should motivate and energize CSOs rather than become additional restrictive hurdles to cope with.³⁶

Conclusion

The goal of building a more equitable, participatory, representative and just society is a strategic ambition for many people and groups in contemporary Arab societies. In this context, CSOs in general and rights organizations in particular can play a significant role in helping enhance democratic practices as a foundation for these ambitions. Their starting point, however, is internal, since they need to guard and foster their independence and enhance their ability to mobilize social forces and frame their struggle for participation, equity and justice as indispensable pillars for development, democracy and the consolidation of human rights.

Moroccan CSOs represent the richness and diversity of their society and communities in a balanced way. They provide a site for enhancing the freedoms, rights and responsibilities of citizens. They are an actor in sustainable development, and partners on the road to addressing social, environmental and rights challenges. They have the power to lobby for good democratic governance.

On the other hand, rights CSOs suffer from a number of gaps and obstacles related to the inadequate legislative, political and organizational environment in which they operate, and the nature of their relationship with the state. Moreover, a number of practices on the part of the executive and legislative authorities impede the freedom of action for CSOs and undermine their autonomy. CSOs in general



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suffer weak resources and poor governance systems and lack institutional capacity.

To improve governance in CSOs, there is a need to bring the legislative and institutional frameworks in which they operate in line with existing constitutional guarantees and international treaty commitments in the field of human rights in general and freedom of association in particular. There is also a need to take various political and institutional measures and strengthen human, administrative and financial resources to improve the transparency and accountability of CSOs.



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About Arab Reform Initiative

The Arab Reform Initiative is the leading independent Arab think tank working with expert partners in the Middle East and North Africa and beyond to articulate a home-grown agenda for democratic change. It conducts research and policy analysis and provides a platform for inspirational voices based on the principles of diversity, impartiality and social justice.

- We produce original research informed by local experiences and partner with institutions to achieve impact across the Arab world and globally
- We empower individuals and institutions to develop their own concept of policy solutions
- We mobilize stakeholders to build coalitions for positive change

Our aim is to see vibrant democratic societies emerge and grow in the region.

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