

# IRG Project Profiles



Kabul Provincial Prosecutor female staff members

## WORKING TO REBUILD AFGHANISTAN'S BATTERED JUSTICE SYSTEM

War, conflict, and famine have dominated the past quarter century of Afghanistan's history. The country's legal and judicial systems became victims of the anarchy that prevailed. Throughout this period International Resources Group provided leadership in reconstruction, humanitarian response, and human rights aspects of Afghanistan. IRG's current efforts to help rebuild Afghanistan's justice system began just after the conclusion of the Bonn Agreement in December 2001, which laid the foundation for post-Taliban Afghan governance.

### Activities

IRG and its partners have worked to help Afghanistan build its judicial system through a series of projects. Among these are:

**Rapid and comprehensive assessment.** In February 2002, IRG led a team of representatives

from the International Human Rights Law Group, International Foundation for Elections Systems, and American Bar Association (ABA) to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the status of human rights, governance, and rule of law in Afghanistan. The resulting Consortium for Response to the Afghan Transition (CRAFT) report, *Filling the Vacuum: Prerequisites to Security in Afghanistan*, published in March 2002, identified donor community interventions and recommended initial steps. The report is available at [www.irgltd.com](http://www.irgltd.com).

**Collect and disseminate existing law.** IRG, in partnership with ABA, identified, collected, translated, formatted, and printed Afghanistan's Zahir Shah- and Daoud-era Criminal, Civil, and Commercial Codes and Procedures (as well as the Bonn Agreement and



Kabul: U.S. Chargé Sedney presents Afghan law texts to Justice Minister Karimi

Region: Asia/Near East  
Country: Afghanistan  
Sector: Relief & Reconstruction  
Duration: December 2001–ongoing  
Clients: U.S. Department of State  
United States Institute of Peace  
Partners: American Bar Association  
International Foundation for Election Systems  
International Human Rights Law Group

### Key Accomplishments

- ◆ Conducted assessment of rule of law, governance, and human rights landscape and recommended initial steps
- ◆ Collected, formatted, and delivered more than 1,000 sets of Afghanistan's law codes in Dari, Pashtu, and English to the Afghan interim authority
- ◆ Brought together leading Afghan jurists and international experts to develop a strategy to rebuild Afghanistan's justice system
- ◆ Provided first international criminal justice training to judges, prosecutors, and police since the fall of the Taliban



Bundled law texts ready for distribution

Constitution of 1964) in Dari, Pashtu, and English. One thousand sets of these laws were delivered to the Ministry of Justice in Kabul at the opening of Afghanistan's Emergency Loya Jirga in June 2002.

**Strategic assistance and planning.** IRG provided technical and management assistance to hold the February 2003 Washington Conference on the Rule of Law in Afghanistan, hosted by U.S. Institute of Peace. The Conference brought together leading Afghan jurists from all sectors of the Afghan justice system and international jurists to discuss next steps for Afghan judicial rebuilding. Participants discussed criminal procedure, judicial selection, and international models from Western and Islamic systems.

IRG also provided support for the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's Washington, DC, Conference on Human Rights in Afghanistan, held in January 2003.

**First international training programs on criminal justice.** IRG worked closely with Afghanistan's Judicial Reform Commission and the U.S. Department of State to hold the first face-to-face, working-level, institutional discussions of the criminal justice process since the collapse of the Taliban. One-hundred-fifty Afghan judges, prosecutors, and police participated in practical discussions on Afghan criminal procedure and Western systems, military justice, post-conflict judicial reconstruction, Islamic systems, and international human rights standards and criminal law.

**Looking to the future.** The Judicial Reform Commission has asked IRG to configure the best approach to the review and revision of Afghanistan's criminal procedure code that incorporates Afghan legal traditions, universal standards of human rights and due process, and international legal practice. IRG is currently translating documents, making recommendations on review, and providing expertise to move this critical project forward.



Afghan jurists at July 2003 criminal justice roundtables

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