



# DOMINICAN REPUBLIC CIVIL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING ACTIVITY

## OBJECTIVE

To promote an enabling environment that is more responsive to the security needs of all citizens, thereby contributing towards the goal of increasing the ability of targeted at-risk communities to prevent crime and violence.

## COUNTRY CONTEXT

Despite progress in monitoring the transparency and fairness of democracy and national-level governance processes, including the election of supreme court judges for the period of 2016 and 2020 and implementation of the National Citizen Security Strategy, electoral processes, and revised Criminal Code, the effectiveness of Dominican civil society advocacy on citizen security and crime prevention has been limited. For example, in conversations with USAID personnel, beneficiaries of USAID's Civil Society Action for Accountable Justice and Security Activity claim that weak civil society and media oversight of the Dominican National Police has been cited as an important factor in a disturbing trend of violence and abuse by the police, which undermines public confidence in the justice and citizen security sectors. Additionally, based on observations made during the implementation of the Civil Society Action for Accountable Justice and Security Activity, there are persistent weaknesses at the sub-national level, where municipalities lack the resources to identify, plan and react to local crime and violence. Dominican civil society and media organizations focusing on the municipal level are fragmented and disorganized, unable to convene citizenry effectively or counter abuse by political and economic elites. The inability of sub-national civil society organizations and local media outlets to effectively identify and address risk factors of crime and violence at the individual, relational, and community levels is a fundamental problem that weakens demands made to Dominican Government institutions for improved deterrents to, and prosecution of, crime and violence.

## OUR WORK

USAID aims to make progress towards this objective by supporting efforts to improve civil society advocacy related to citizens' security interests; increase media focus, including investigative studies, on citizen security issues; and strengthen legal and policy frameworks that support crime and violence prevention. The activity will strengthen the enabling environment to support citizen engagement on security issues. Progress towards this objective will in turn contribute towards the long-term goal of increasing the ability of targeted at-risk communities to prevent crime and violence. The activity is directly aligned with USAID's goal of supporting the consolidation of inclusive and accountable democracies, by promoting participatory, representative, and inclusive political processes and government institutions, and fostering greater accountability of institutions and leaders to citizens and to the law. USAID will empower citizens to engage government institutions, as well as enhance independent monitoring and oversight of government performance. The activity is also aligned with the Government of the Dominican Republic's National Citizen Security Strategy to improve active civic engagement and provide oversight of crime and violence prevention efforts. To accomplish this, USAID will work with all involved stakeholders such as national and sub-national governments, the Dominican National Police, the Ministry of Interior and Police, communities, youth, and vulnerable groups.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- Improved civil society advocacy related to citizens' security interests.
- Increased organizational and advocacy capacity of civil society and media organizations.
- Strengthened champions' ability to advocate for better democratic governance.
- Increased media focus, including investigative studies, on citizen security issues.
- Strengthen media outlets and journalists' ability to function independently and increase the production of fact-based reporting.
- Strengthen legal and policy frameworks that support crime and violence prevention.
- Strengthen key stakeholders' ability to advocate for citizen security legislation at the national level, and to actively identify opportunities for advancing citizen security policies at the sub-national level.

**Duration:** April 2023 - April 2028

**Budget:** US \$12.5 million

**Implementing Partner:** Pact Inc.

## CONTACT

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