BUILDING A NEW LIBYA

CITIZEN VIEWS ON LIBYA'S ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS IN LIBYA

Conducted April 10 - 20, 2012

By Megan Doherty

May 2012

National Democratic Institute

455 Massachusetts Ave, NW, 8th Floor

Washington, DC 20001-2621

Telephone: 202-728-5500

Fax: 202-728-5520

Website: www.ndi.org

CONTENTS

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization that responds to the aspirations of people around the world to live in democratic societies that recognize and promote basic human rights. Since its founding in 1983, NDI and its local partners have worked to support and strengthen political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. With staff members and volunteer political practitioners from more than 100 nations, NDI brings together individuals and groups to share ideas, knowledge, experiences and expertise. Partners receive broad exposure to best practices in international democratic development that can be adapted to the needs of their own countries. NDI's multinational approach reinforces the message that while there is no single democratic model, certain core principles are shared by all democracies. The Institute's work upholds the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It also promotes the development of institutionalized channels of communications among citizens, political institutions and elected officials, and strengthens their ability to improve the quality of life for all citizens. For more information about NDI, please visit www.ndi.org.

PREFACE

Inspired by uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, in 2011 Libyan citizens took to the streets in what is popularly referred to as the February 17 Revolution, calling for an end to Muammar Gaddafi's dictatorship and a transition to democratic rule in Libya. On October 23, 2011 Libya's transitional leaders declared the country liberated and launched a political transition, including benchmarks for appointing a new government, developing an electoral framework, holding elections for a 200-member National Public Congress (NPC) and drafting a new constitution[1].

This round of focus group research took place two months before anticipated elections and captures citizen sentiments about the political landscape and expectations for the next phase of Libya's transition. The findings indicate that initial euphoria over the revolution has given way to mounting concerns over security and the future direction of the country.

Purpose. In order to provide political and civic leaders in Libya with timely and objective information about citizens' priorities and perspectives during the political transition, the National Democratic Institute (NDI or the Institute) led a qualitative public opinion study in six cities across Libya from April 10 to 20, 2012. The study comprised 12 focus group discussions throughout the country and examined the following:

- Perceptions about how the electoral process and political transition are unfolding;
- Expectations and concerns about the upcoming elections;
- Attitudes toward the performance of the interim government and political parties; and,
- Expectations and hopes for the future.

The findings of this study were used to inform Libyan decision-makers—in political parties, civil society organizations and the transitional government—about citizens' attitudes and opinions. The Institute commissioned International Advisory Services (IAS) to organize the study in six cities across the country. IAS is an international research and advisory company with regional offices in Tripoli. This study marks the second national round of qualitative research on political issues in Libya's history, as independent public opinion research was not permitted under the Gaddafi regime. For NDI, the study represents the second in a series of public opinion research to provide analysis on Libyan citizen attitudes toward the evolving political transition.

---

[1] The August 2011 interim constitution referred to the election of a 'National Public Conference', whereas recent election-related legislation refers to a 'National Public Congress.'

Focus Group Research: Focus groups are open-ended group interviews directed by a moderator and following a pre-set guideline. The purpose of focus group research is to understand the attitudes, opinions and experiences of participants who are recruited for the exercise. Focus groups are particularly useful in gaining a deeper appreciation of the motivations, feelings and values behind participants' reactions. In addition, the group format enables respondents to participate in an exchange of ideas – thus revealing a more in-depth understanding of why opinions are held – that may not emerge in individual in-depth interviews or quantitative surveys. Focus group discussions comprise a small number of participants, typically eight-12 per group. Through facilitated, open-ended discussion, focus groups allow decision-makers to understand the motivations, feelings and values behind participant opinions. Further, focus group findings are only a snapshot of opinions at the moment the research is undertaken. Given the dynamism of the Libyan transition, public opinion is in constant flux as citizens respond to unfolding events. The conclusions of this report therefore only represent opinions when research was conducted in mid- to late April 2012.
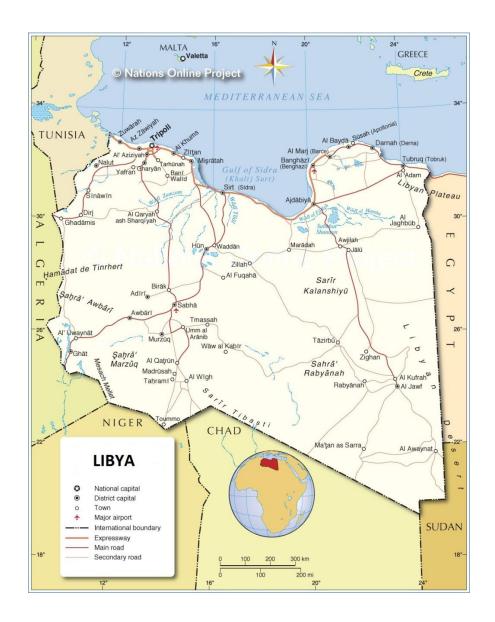
Method. From April 10 to 20, 2012, NDI held 12 focus groups in six cities across Libya with a widespread geographical representation: Benghazi, Derna, Misrata, Sabha, Tripoli and Zintan. Target cities were selected based on their population size and geographic location. To capture the perspectives of a broad cross-section of Libyan society, NDI divided the groups by gender, education level (secondary education or less and those with a more than secondary education) and age (18-35 and over 35). Each group comprised between seven and 11 participants. Participants were selected and re-screened to ensure gender parity and a diverse representation of neighborhoods, socioeconomic backgrounds, education levels and professions.

Staffing and Logistics: The moderators conducting all focus groups were Libyan citizens trained in moderator techniques by IAS. All groups were conducted in Libyan Arabic and transcripts were prepared in Arabic and English.

Group Locations: The 12 focus groups outlined in this report were conducted in six locations throughout Libya – Benghazi, Derna, Misrata, Sabha, Tripoli and Zintan (see the map in this section). Despite Libya's lack of exposure to independent qualitative research, NDI and IAS succeeded in conducting sessions with all groups as scheduled. Locations selected for the study were urban or semi-urban areas. In all cases, appropriate venues for focus group discussions were identified to ensure participant privacy and sufficient space for indirect observation by NDI and IAS staff.

Outside Influence: In all cases, every effort was made to ensure there was no undue influence exerted on the participants in the groups. The focus group guideline was not shared with local authorities prior to the groups. In this study, there was no case in which the findings from one or more groups differed radically from findings in the groups overall, which suggests that any local influence that may have occurred did not impact the research.

MAP OF LIBYA

One World Nations Online. November, 2011.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report explores public opinion in Libya in the spring of 2012. Based on 12 focus group discussions with more than 110 participants, the report examines attitudes, perceptions and concerns of Libyan citizens about the upcoming National Public Congress (NPC) elections and the unfolding political transition. Participants were asked about their views on the direction of the country, expectations and concerns related to the NPC elections, priorities for the constitutional drafting process and thoughts and impressions of political parties and transitional governing institutions. A summary of the main findings can be found below. The full results, along with selected quotations from participants, can be found in the Principal Findings section of this report.

I. National Direction

Revolutionary euphoria is increasingly eclipsed by mounting concerns over security and the future direction of the country. Many participants claim that the transition has yet to deliver true change, both in terms of political transformation and in terms of improvements to daily life that were promised by the revolution.

Despite these frustrations some Libyans believe the country is still headed in the right direction. They generally cite the fall of the Gaddafi regime, flourishing civil society, new freedoms and small improvements in local security as indications that the country is on the right track.

Many participants – even those who enthusiastically claim the country is headed in the right direction – complain that progress is too slow. There is frustration that the transition is disorganized and consistently plagued by new challenges, particularly those related to security.

Despite the measured optimism and hope for the future expressed by some participants, many other respondents from throughout the country believe Libya is headed in the wrong direction. They see the lack of visible progress, deteriorating security conditions, and an opaque and confused political landscape as threats to Libya's future.

Some participants feel that Libya is recovering not only from a violent revolution, but also from 42 years of systemic mismanagement and neglect. Some participants feel the current transition is a learning opportunity to straighten the country's future course. They want their fellow citizens to be patient and recognize that transitions take time.

II. Security, Rule of Law, and Other Challenges

Libya's volatile security landscape is the most significant reason for pessimism, and is most often cited as evidence that the country is headed in the wrong direction. The number of weapons in circulation, unrestrained militias and lack of viable police and

army forces are major worries in most cities. Participants claim that the hard-won victories of the revolution are baseless without security to protect their new rights and freedoms.

Beyond security concerns, Libyans express anxiety about their lack of experience with democratic processes and concern that they are not prepared to understand or handle the challenges ahead. Many participants demand that the government and media proactively "raise awareness," both about the specifics of the Libyan transition and more broadly about democratic processes and principles.

III. Islam and Politics

Participant responses reaffirm that Libya is a conservative religious society; most participants want and expect Islam to play a role in political life. Respondents of all backgrounds assert that Libya is an Islamic country and that religion will naturally govern public life to a certain degree.

Libyans overwhelmingly agree that moderate Islamic principles should influence governance, but opinions vary on exactly what that means in terms of the role religion should play in public life. There is consensus on the need to avoid extremism and broad agreement that a government grounded in moderate Islam would effectively curb corruption.

There is some limited support for a separation between religion and politics. Some participants caution against the potential infiltration of extremist ideologies, while others argue that religion will always play an important cultural role, but should have limited influence in the political sphere.

IV. Transitional Governance

Libyans are broadly critical of transitional governing institutions, including the National Transitional Council (NTC) and the transitional national government (TNG). The government is seen as weak, with a fragile, even failing grip on security, and too distracted by internal discord to provide the positive leadership the country needs.

Poor communication by the TNG, along with public confusion over the government's mandate and capacity, leads many participants to assume that the government is responsible for resolving all problems. In the absence of visible progress or proactive communication from the NTC or TNG, participants continue to assume that the government is not fulfilling its obligations to Libyan people.

The presence of former regime members in transitional bodies undermines their credibility. Participants see these figures as actively obstructing the transition and express dismay that the movement that toppled Gaddafi's regime has rewarded known loyalists with power and positions.

Corruption is a key concern for many participants. They express fears over the deliberate mismanagement of funds and other financial missteps by transitional authorities. Opaque decision-making and the lack of information on public spending contribute to skepticism that the NTC is committed to transparency.

Confusion over the responsibilities and authority of local councils translates into mixed opinions on their performance. Regardless of their city, participants complain about not having information on the roles or activities of the local council.

There is a strong desire to move away from solving disputes informally, but little faith in the actual ability of the law to protect citizens. Many participants claim that they solve problems at the neighborhood and community level, preferring to rely on their families, tribes, and local communities.

V. Elections – Expectations and Concerns

Libyans are excited to vote for the first time in their lives. Nearly all participants claim they want to cast their ballots in the upcoming elections, with many explaining that the revolution was fought to provide Libyans with opportunities for political participation. Participants see voting as a fundamental right and a vital act of self-expression. Many describe the anticipated June elections as an important step forward in Libya's political transition that will give future leaders credibility and encourage more responsive, accountable politics.

Despite eagerness to participate, awareness of the upcoming elections is low. While some participants are vaguely aware that elections are supposed to be held in June, many participants have incorrect information or no information at all.

Those aware that elections are scheduled to take place in June have mixed reactions to the possibility of a postponement. Many participants are conflicted on the issue, weighing their desire for the stability and progress they link with elections against their concerns that a swiftly assembled poll may compromise the integrity of the process and allow members of the TNG to reinforce their power rather than enable change.

It is clear that some participants will base their evaluation of the election's success on the extent of voter turnout. Many claim that voting is a civic responsibility for which many Libyans gave their lives, and they believe it is imperative that the largest number of people participate.

Despite widespread eagerness to participate in the election process, there are serious concerns that could limit turnout. Participants identify a number of potential barriers to casting their ballots, including fears that they will not understand the process enough to participate, that the elections will be corrupt and that there will be security disturbances on or after election day.

Women have a number of concerns that may limit their participation. Some women expressed fear that their male relatives would either prevent them from voting or

attempt to control their choice, and that women would have difficulty accessing polling stations.

Libyans want to be informed, confident voters. They want to understand the process and their choices among individual candidates and political parties, and be reassured that their vote is protected and that it will contribute to change.

Participants differ on their standards and interpretations of what would constitute a credible election. Many participants believe that a "fair" election is one that excises former regime members from positions of authority. Others say that while they hope the elections are held to high standards, they expect both unintended mistakes and deliberate manipulations.

Despite concerns over a potentially flawed electoral process, many Libyans have high expectations for governance in the post-election period. Many participants claim that elections – even if they are flawed – will contribute to security, transparent and accountable government, and that economic and political development will accelerate after the elections.

VI. Political Parties, Movements, and Candidates

Compared to findings from focus group research conducted in November 2011, there has been a striking improvement in public perceptions of political parties. Participants who have some understanding of political parties generally see them as positive forces able to move the country forward. Some participants credit outreach efforts by Libya's new political movements with gradually helping erode their negative perceptions of parties.

There is still discomfort with political parties due to the legacy of Gaddafi's propaganda, against them. Some participants are adamant that political parties have no place in Libya's new politics. They see them as untrustworthy, conniving, and motivated by secret agendas and possibly unduly influenced by foreign countries seeking to interfere in Libyan politics.

Despite some increased receptivity, many Libyans still do not understand the roles and functions of political parties and have limited information about Libya's many new political movements.

Participants claim that they need more information about parties – both on their roles and functions and more specifically on their platforms and goals. Beyond the Muslim Brotherhood – which receives mixed opinions – few participants can name other Libyan parties or political movements.

Some participants, especially those with higher education levels, express discomfort with Islamic-oriented political parties. Some respondents express the opinion that religious parties feign piety to attract votes, while others claim they prefer to keep religion and politics separate.

Participants want to vote for qualified candidates and tend to see professional background and education levels as more relevant than personality or charisma. Given that Libyans never had the opportunity to choose or safely judge their leaders, there is great interest in picking the "right" person.

Participants have mixed opinions over whether they would support candidates who spent significant time outside of Libya. Some participants claim that people who lived abroad should not be elected because they did not share in the suffering of the Libyans who stayed behind or that they may be serving foreign rather than Libyan interests. Others claim that Libyans who spent time abroad may have experience and education that can benefit the country.

Participants are broadly supportive of women playing roles in public life, but there is some discomfort – among both men and women – with voting for women candidates. Some participants argue that traditional gender roles in Libyan society should be maintained in the political arena, with men expressing some reservations over the ability of women to represent them effectively. Other participants claim that men and women are equal and should therefore share the same responsibilities and have access to the same opportunities in the transition process.

VII. National Public Congress (NPC) and Constitutional Questions

Participants have high expectations for the NPC. While some of the inflated expectations are due to a misunderstanding of the roles and functions of the NPC, even those participants who correctly understand the NPC's limits expect the NPC to deliver improvements and change on wide-ranging matters including security, infrastructure and health.

Awareness of the constitutional development process is low. While participants generally believe a constitution is important for the future of the country, few acknowledge having any information on the constitution drafting process.

Nevertheless, citizens want and expect to play a key role in the constitutional development process. Most participants agree an inclusive drafting process is necessary to ensure that the constitution has legitimacy and believe that there should be opportunities for input from both technical experts and ordinary citizens.

While nearly all participants agree that the constitution should draw heavily on Islamic Shari'a law, the key debate emerging is whether the constitution will be based exclusively on Shari'a or whether Shari'a will be an important reference among others.

VIII. Media and Information

Most participants rely on television, particularly international channels, as their primary source of information. Participants are frustrated with domestic media and want Libyan

media to help close the information gap and raise awareness about politics and the situation in the country.

IX. Looking Forward

Libyans do not want their leaders governing in isolation. Participants want to be reassured that their country is being led by transparent, honest people who will honor the goals of the revolution. Regardless of age, geography and gender, participants want to know that their leaders are listening to them and that their opinions are valued. They want elected leaders to fully assume their responsibilities, solve the deepening security crisis, protect the goals of the revolution and truly serve the Libyan people.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

This study is both a continuation of previous research from November 2011 that explored citizens' opinions of the political transition following the February 2011 revolution and a first look at attitudes about one of the most important transition milestones, the anticipated June 2012 National Public Congress (NPC) elections that will lay the groundwork for the drafting of a new constitution. On this continuum, citizens' views on the past and their lives today color expectations for the NPC and the new constitution should deliver. The upcoming elections are seen by many as a significant benchmark for progress toward the goals of the 2011 revolution. The stakes could hardly be higher as stability may depend on ordinary citizens' assessment of whether the election has been fair and whether the outcome will benefit or harm Libya's longer-term transition process. To determine what factors will influence citizen views of the upcoming elections, NDI conducted 12 focus groups with more than 110 participants throughout Libya. The findings, drawn from participants' comments, are below.

I. National Direction

While Libyans remain enthusiastic about the February 17 Revolution that overthrew dictator Muammar Gaddafi, **initial euphoria has given way to mounting concerns over security and the future direction of the country.**

> *"At the beginning I was very hopeful, but this has changed over time. I expected the people would be together and get through the problems in an effective manner, for example with issues such as the weapons. I thought we'd get through all that. I hoped that everyone would be united. I was happy that we got rid of Gaddafi, but I have ended up not being happy about what happened after."* Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I think that at the start it was really good, but now it has changed. Now when we need to build, I see nothing."* Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, less than secondary education

Participants who claim that Libya is headed in the right direction generally cite the fall of the Gaddafi regime, new freedoms and small improvements in local security as indications that the country is on the right track. Others describe a new confidence to stand up to tyrants as the most positive development following the revolution. Participants believe that they have set a precedent with the revolution and that future leaders should recognize that they are accountable to the Libyan people.

> *"I think it's going in the right direction. For example the situation is getting better daily. The students are in their schools. The shops are open, everything is available in the shops and the prices are going back to normal."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

"In the old regime we used to stay quiet when you saw something wrong, but it's different now. It's going to be harder to play around with the people." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The most positive thing that has happened after the revolution is freedom - freedom of expression and the removal of suppression. If someone behaves in a bad way, we can protest against it. This was not the case under the old regime." Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

Some participants describe positive developments, including a flourishing civil society and a new interest in understanding and engaging in politics. Participants note with pride that they are making efforts to learn about political parties and to raise their awareness of politics.

"One positive development is the emergence of civil society organizations." Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

"The new civil society organizations in Libya have reached a good level. All this is something new. This shows there is a great motivation coming from the Libyan people to do good for the country." Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

Some participants point to political developments including local elections and preparations for national elections as further evidence that Libya is moving forward.

"There are some defects now, but in general I am satisfied that there has been some good progress. The ministry has even set the dates for the elections in June. The fact that the government is insisting on keeping to the election date is a good thing." Man, Tripoli, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I am hopeful that Libya is going in the right direction. My proof is that we see activity in the new government. It's step-by-step, nothing happens overnight." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"We had local council elections in Misrata and it was a really successful experience, and it shows we are moving in the right direction." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

But many participants – even those who enthusiastically claim the country is headed in the right direction – complain that progress is too slow. There is frustration that the transition is "disorganized" and consistently plagued by new challenges, particularly those related to security.

"There is improvement, but it's slow. However it's better than before. There is freedom now. We can breathe, but it is very slow." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"It is going in the right direction, but it is very slow. To go in the right way we need to plan things. We need both security and a police force. Everyone is scared to go out at night. It feels as though it's every man for himself at times." Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

"It is heading in the right direction but it lacks organization, a timetable and organizational laws." Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I guess the situation is going in the right direction to a certain extent, but I think we should have passed the transitional period." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Libya is going in the right direction but we have problems. I feel that whenever we get over one problem we face another problem – it's very tough. People don't understand the challenges we are going to face, if they did they would work much harder and they would be more motivated." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

Despite the measured optimism and hope for the future expressed by some participants, other respondents from throughout the country believe Libya is headed in the wrong direction. These **participants cite the lack of visible progress, deteriorating security conditions, and an opaque and confused political landscape as dangerous for their country's future.** Many participants claim that the transition has yet to deliver on the promises of the revolution, in terms of both political transformation and improvements to daily life. Other respondents complain that the heightened sense of national unity during the uprising has dissipated and that Libyan citizens are no longer working together to ensure progress.

"I don't think things are going in the right direction. I don't see the future getting better. People don't show love to one another as they used to. They don't love Libya like they did at the time during the revolution." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I can't help but feel that we can do better than this." Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

"We were really happy to win this revolution but we were expecting faster development, especially from the NTC and the government." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"Our problem is slowness - slowness in development, slowness in giving salaries, slowness in implementing decisions." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

Many participants argue that the current Libyan context is too complicated to be cast as moving in the right or wrong direction and that the reality lies somewhere in between.

"It's not very clear to me right now. I can't tell where we are heading." Man, Sabha, 18-35, Secondary education or less

"You cannot tell if it is going in the right direction or not because it is a little bit of both, but we hope for the best. However there are a few things and a few individuals that try to drag it backwards to keep it from improving and progressing in the right direction." Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

Some participants who express mixed sentiments over the country's current direction claim that the current challenges are understandable, given that Libya is recovering from both a revolution and 42 years of mismanagement and neglect under the Gaddafi regime. Some participants feel the current transition is a learning opportunity to straighten the country's future course. They express frustration with those who constantly criticize the government, urging instead that their fellow citizens recognize the monumental challenges facing Libya's new leaders and be patient with the pace of change.

"It's a transitional period right now and from my point of view it's natural to make mistakes right now. We can learn from them and prevent them in the future. It's more like a test. I am optimistic no matter how bad things look." Woman, Derna, above 35, secondary education or less

"It is heading in the right direction but needs some time. We cannot have a perfect government because we are suffering from an accumulation of problems. The government should be given some time - they don't have a magic wand that will transform the country into an ideal place within a month or two. Therefore patience is required." Man, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

II. Security, Rule of Law, and Other Challenges

Beyond the anxieties expressed over slow progress, **security concerns are the most significant indicators cited by participants in all cities as evidence that the country is headed in the wrong direction.** Participants claim that the hard-won victories of the revolution are baseless without security to protect their new rights and freedoms.

"I know we all have freedom of speech and all that, but freedom of speech without safety is nothing." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"How can I say the country is going in the right direction when we have no safety, no law, and no police?" Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

The proliferation of weapons throughout the country is the key cause for concern among most participants. While many participants believe it is the responsibility of the NTC and, to a lesser extent, the Ministry of Interior to collect weapons from the streets

and to disarm militias, there is little faith in the government's competence or political will to stabilize the security situation. Participants see pervasive weapons as an immediate danger to their lives and families, as well as a threat to longer-term stability in Libya. Lacking confidence in the NTC and ministries to resolve this issue, many participants suggest that the media play a role in encouraging freedom fighters and private citizens to surrender their weapons.

> *"Killing has become easy in Libya as anyone can pull the trigger on you if they dislike something."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"There is no security. This is due to the weapons distributed during the war. The police cannot do anything about it because they have nothing to use against them. We need a security force that can handle them."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"People are scared of one another since they all have weapons."* Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

Many participants claim that the problem is not necessarily the widespread presence of weapons in Libyan homes, but rather that weapons are held by roving militias who operate outside the bounds of the law. There are two groups causing concern to participants – former freedom fighters who have yet to be absorbed into any formal security structure and provide ad hoc local security, and armed gangs who emerged after the revolution and often claim to be freedom fighters. Participants, particularly in the eastern city of Derna, describe living in fear of militias that control their cities, undercut the authority of local officials, conduct arbitrary raids and unlawfully seize property. **Participants claim they appreciate the roles freedom fighters played in liberating the country and providing local security, but that they no longer feel safe in their neighborhoods.** Most participants want the militias – both formal brigades of former freedom fighters and the more criminal elements who questionably claim revolutionary credentials – disarmed and disbanded or absorbed into an official, trained army. Ultimately, they want local security to be provided by an empowered, trained local police force.

> *"We have a militia here that people are afraid to talk openly about, fearing they will be captured and tortured."* Woman, Derna, over 35, Secondary education or less

> *"We're not against the freedom fighters, but the local council has no control over them."* Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I am still surprised by those false freedom fighter militias that conduct surprise raids with heavy weapons, and that are building on lands they don't own. I am sure they are supported by a group of people who do not want to see Libya settling down."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

"The Defense Ministry and Interior Ministry should really do a better job. We don't want the Freedom Fighters to be the ones trying to solve the security problems. We need proper police and an army to restore peace to the country." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

While participants are adamant that they need a strong police force to protect their neighborhoods, public confidence in police is very low. Participants see police as untrained, ill-equipped, and in many cases, afraid of the militias. **Many participants believe that Libya's security problem could be solved by the establishment of a well-trained army and viable police force that could control or absorb the militias and stabilize communities.**

"We still don't feel safe - all the militias should join and create the National Army. We should reestablish law and order as soon as possible." Woman, Derna, over 35, Secondary education or less

"If we had formed a proper army and police force we would have sorted out the security issue we have now." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Before you could see policemen or whoever standing with their ID. You knew where they were from, what station they go back to, everything. But now you don't know who they are – security, thieves, gang members?" Man, Sabha, 18-35, secondary education or less

Above all, Libyans sense a growing lawlessness in their communities. **Some participants – especially in Tripoli and Benghazi – claim that the lack of progress in establishing law and order is holding the country back and enabling crime, including increased drug and alcohol use.** They speculate whether corrupt officials or remnants of the old regime are prolonging lawlessness to take advantage of the current chaos. Other participants claim that Libyans, particularly urban youth, have little understanding of the responsibility that comes with freedom and are abusing their new liberties.

"The people now do whatever they want. It's shameful. They have weapons and they do as they please. Before they couldn't do this because they knew there were consequences. But now they know there is no government, no law." Man, Sabha, 18-35, secondary education or less

"Libya's general problem is the lack of law. As long as there is no law, the country will never get organized. Some people are delaying the process of implementing the law until they can use up the country as much as they can, and steal money." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Most of us do not understand what freedom is. A person breaks some rule and then just tells us that he is allowed to break the rule because he is free." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

In keeping with the desire for a strong local police force, many participants wish that there were established legal processes and procedures to resolve grievances, such as local level crime or disputes. **Given the blame and criticism levied at the government, it is unsurprising that few participants feel they can approach the government to resolve a problem.** Many participants claim that they solve problems at the neighborhood and community level, preferring to rely on personal connections and family relationships instead of trying to engage official channels, such as local councils or police.

> *"I personally think the law should help me. But right now my family does."* Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"The people are lying to one another. Some people think they can turn to the police. Don't tell me you feel safe and you can turn to the police. No one can help you apart from your family."* Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"When there is a problem, you go to the best people in the community and they sort things out."* Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

There is a strong desire to move away from solving disputes through informal personal channels, but little faith in the ability of law enforcement and Libya's current judicial system to provide adequate redress. There is a sense that strong local police forces are a feature of modern countries. Many participants, particularly women, describe feeling helpless to solve problems and frustrated that they cannot access official channels. There is little enthusiasm for the local councils or other official institutions, with the consensus being that they are only useful if someone has a personal connection to facilitate action.

> *"There's no one you can go to – no law, council, no one. If I own a car and someone in another car harassed me, how can I get help if there's no law, and not even a license plate on his car? I'd complain to myself, that's all I can do. Not to any leader, not the local council, no one."* Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I would personally go to the police, but the police are limited in their work. I believe once the law is established we can sue and charge all the people who break the law."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"You and your weapon is the best option."* Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

> *"There is nobody you can go to for help. For example if you get threatened with a weapon or you get shot directly or by accident you can't go to the police because the police stations are all closed. The courts are also not working. The local council will tell you they are busy with problems."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

Participants are divided over the role of tribal authorities in local dispute resolution. Some participants, particularly those in the more traditionally tribal southern city of Sabha, claim that tribes are the only entity that can produce results and help their members.

> *"I would turn to my tribe, nowhere else but them. There's no law, no police. Weapons are everywhere. I'm definite that if I faced any problem, the people of my tribe would stand up for me and for any woman like me."* Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I will seek help from my tribal sheikh, especially if it's a fight between two families."* Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

> *"Well there is no law right now, so usually we go to our tribes or family members."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"Our community is tribal. So naturally I'd turn to my tribe for help. They have a way to fix anything."* Man, Sabha, 18-35, Secondary education or less

Some participants who acknowledge that tribal authorities are the most effective mechanism for the resolution of local disputes claim that they hope Libya moves away from reliance on tribes to more modern forms of justice.

> *"Before we used to go to the head of our tribe, and I still follow this. But I am sure in the future we'll have police stations to go to. If there is law and everything is organized I'll go to whoever is in charge or the police."* Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"Well for me I would go to my* family and tribe, and I would try to use the law but I wouldn't count on it much." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"For me I would go to my family and tribe. It is necessary to reestablish the police as fast as possible. If that doesn't happen we will never move forwards."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

In discussing their concerns over current challenges facing their country, **many participants express fears that remnants of the former regime are influencing the course of the transition.** Some participants believe Gaddafi loyalists, either from outside Libya or from protected places of power in the new administration, will continue to intervene and obstruct Libya's development. Others describe fear at not knowing who to trust and who in their neighborhoods, communities, and workplaces may still be loyal to the former regime. There are concerns that regime loyalists could cause problems for the upcoming elections.

> *"Do you really believe that the Gaddafi family with all of their money and gold that they stole when they fled the country are just watching us being successful*

with our revolution? They will want to ruin it for us as much as they can." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

"It is quite impossible to believe that all of Gaddafi's supporters who fought for him until the last moment have truly changed sides." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

"I feel that there is an invisible hand everywhere, playing and corrupting all aspects of the country. I feel this invisible hand consists of the people of Gaddafi." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

Beyond security concerns and fears about the former regime, Libyans express anxiety about their lack of experience with democratic processes and concern that they are not prepared to understand or handle some of the challenges ahead. Many participants demand that the government and media proactively "raise awareness," both about the specifics of the Libyan transition and more broadly about democratic processes and principles. Respondents in all cities are concerned that they do not have enough information or understand democracy well enough to participate effectively in or comprehend the Libyan transition.

"The politicians should make seminars and presentations to raise the level of political awareness among the people, because a lot of us are politically ignorant." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The elections are something positive, but we need to raise awareness. We need to teach people what elections are and show them how important they are." Man, Sabha, 18-35, Secondary education or less

"We need to educate and raise the awareness of the people. Once that happens we will not have other problems - economic and political issues will be resolved." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"I think our problem is the lack of proper awareness about freedom, which is misunderstanding. The government and the national civil organizations should work harder on the media to promote and better understand freedom." Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

III. Islam and Politics

Participants' responses reaffirm that Libya is a conservative religious society; most participants want and expect Islam to play a role in political life. Respondents of all backgrounds assert that Libya is an Islamic country and that religion will naturally govern public life to a certain degree. Participants explain that Islam has rules to keep politics honest and protect citizens' rights. Some participants claim that mosques and imams can positively influence the political sphere and help raise citizen awareness.

"I hope Islam will play a role in politics, just as it plays an important role in our society. The Libyan society has a strong faith in our religion and is conservative." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

"Islam contains everything for us to live our lives to the fullest." Woman, Derna, over 35, Secondary education or less

"Islam is suitable for everything in life, at any time or any place. I believe it should play a role in politics." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"During the time of our Prophet all political activities were conducted in the mosques. The Sheikhs can talk about elections and politics to raise the level of awareness among the people." Man, Misrata, 18-35, some university education

There is limited support for a separation between religion and politics. Some participants caution against the potential infiltration of extremist ideologies, while others argue that religion will always play an important cultural role, but should have limited influence in the political sphere.

"I think Islam should be left alone; it's better to leave politics without Islam. Society should follow the Shari'a thought but politics should be based on politics." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"Religion shouldn't be part of politics I think if that happens Libya will go nowhere. Religion is about your relationship with god, it's your personal matter. Religious political parties will transform us into another Iraq or Afghanistan." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"If you take Turkey's example as a secularist country then yes there are positives to separating religion and politics, because that country has moved forward and become strong." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"The government should rule by law, not religion." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"A positive sign in secularist countries is that no matter what you believe in, it does not affect the society. I like the idea that you are free to live as a Muslim or even as a Buddhist." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

"We don't want Libya to become like Iran, where the President needs to go back to the leading religious figure for everything he wants to do. We should keep religion away from the government." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

Participants raise fears when discussing religion and politics that a secular government would allow corruption to thrive and would contribute to a degradation of Libya's conservative moral fabric.

"I fear that a secular government would not fear God, so they might do anything." Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

"For people with weak faith in their religion secularism might be good. This is not the case with us." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

"Gaddafi didn't use to pray and look at what happened to us." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"I think if we separate religion from political life we will start to fight each other. The economy will fail and we'll have a lack of security." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"A secular government might make decisions that are against our religion, such as banning the veil." Man, Sabha, 18-35, Secondary education or less

"Separating religion and politics is negative, because people will lose their religion and will be too open." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"When you take religion from government you'll be left in a big chaos and there will be corruption. Corruption will spread if religion is split from the government." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

Participants believe that Islam provides the right moral backing and necessary instruction and that the fundamental role Islam plays in the country's cultural identity should translate to the political arena, including influencing the constitution and legislation. **Libyans agree that moderate Islamic principles should influence governance, but opinions vary on exactly what that means in terms of the role religion should play in public life.** There is consensus on the need to avoid extremism.

Although participants overwhelmingly declare their desire to live in a "moderate Islamic country," they struggle with trying to define what moderate means to them. They associate moderate Islam with a course that is neither secular, nor extremist, but that instead practices tolerance and respects rights.

"We want moderate Islam. We are afraid that if religion plays too strong a role we will end up like Afghanistan, and yet again if religion is absent we'll lose our customs and traditions and we'll become too open." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Moderate is religious but not extremist." Woman, Derna, over 35, Secondary education or less

"A non-moderate Islamic country may mean something like Iran." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

"Well I believe that as a moderate Muslim country we will have Islamic Shari'a, but that doesn't mean I have to force people to do things. For example, it is wrong to say that if you don't pray then you can't be in the government. You should be able to be free to do what you want." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"Being moderate is having the ability to forgive and the ability to keep away from being too open or too extreme." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"It's a hard question to answer." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, some university education

IV. Transitional Governance

Libyans are broadly critical of the government, both the NTC and the transitional ministries. Participants describe their governing institutions as opaque and confusing, with unclear lines of responsibility. They see the NTC and TNG as weak, with a fragile and failing grip on security, and too distracted by internal discord to provide the positive leadership the country needs. Participants also claim that the government has chaotic and arbitrary decision-making processes and little ability to implement decisions or concretely move the country forward.

"I think the government and the council is a failure; they don't implement any of their decisions, and they are still stuck with the same problems from the beginning of the revolution such as the wounded, money, spread of weapons, and internal conflict. This is a crisis government and if you can't do your job properly, you should resign and give someone else a chance to maybe do a better job." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"The problem I see is translating decisions into actions. The problem is that the authority right now is not in the government. It is divided between the government and the several militias that are not under the control of either the transitional government or the NTC. So those in office can't force anyone to obey their decision. If they don't have the power to implement their decisions then all plans will fail, even if you have the best government." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The plans do not have a timetable, do not follow any rules and nobody understands them." Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The government is weak, so corrupt people are taking the opportunity to do whatever they want. A lot of the people in charge are not being responsible at their work. When the government gets organized well, the country will become orderly once again." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"The government has a duty to run the country. The government needs to act and not to be scared like they are." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

Participants are concerned by the visible presence of former regime members in the TNG. Participants see these figures as actively undermining the transition and express dismay that the movement that toppled Gaddafi's regime has rewarded known loyalists with power and positions. Participants want the government to demonstrate their commitment to transparency by excising the government of corrupt, former regime figures.

"I see people from the old regime who were with Muammar traveling at the expense of the NTC." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The old regime's followers are still in power. They have a lot of money and might be able to use it to cause problems and disrupt the elections." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"I am afraid of the figures of the old regime and the people who see the revolution as a chance to steal as much as they can get. I keep wondering why these types of people are still in positions and they keep telling me their time will come and we will remove them." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

Participants believe that they need a stronger, more cohesive government to handle the challenges ahead. They are frustrated by the visible infighting both within the NTC and between the NTC and the TNG. Some participants feel as though there are "two governments" and claim they do not know or understand the different roles of either.

"Well I guess our problem is that we have two governments - the National Transitional Council and the Transitional Government. Each one of them blames the other and accuses them of being responsible. The people are confused as to who is the one in charge and leading Libya. Everyone is blaming each other and the Libyan people are stuck in the middle." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"We don't have a clear understanding of the specific roles of members of the NTC and the government. The government should have a set number of responsibilities in which nobody from the NTC can interfere, and vice versa." Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Sometimes they make decisions that contradict each other and we get lost in the confusion, never knowing if anything is confirmed." Woman, Tripoli, above 35, secondary education or less

Participants feel that neither the NTC nor the TNG has been effective in communicating plans, visions, or accomplishments to the public. The lack of information on progress has

led people to criticize both arms of government for not working hard enough or being motivated to move Libya forward. Regardless of age or background, participants in all cities criticize the NTC for not being transparent.

> *"The negative thing I see is the lack of transparency, and transparency is one of the reasons why we started this revolution."* Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"It doesn't make sense that I am a proud Libyan who has survived the revolution and yet I still don't know the members of the council. This is a big problem."* Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"The government should be working 24 hours a day, and yet I am disappointed to see new problems instead of resolution of the problems we are already facing. I stopped watching Libyan TV because of all the problems - from governmental to economic problems. There is a lot of chaos and struggle, which we never expected to happen after the revolution. Instead of having people working hard to serve the country, they are instead fighting each other and spreading rumors against each other."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

Participants are concerned about corruption in the NTC and TNG, both due to deliberate mismanagement of funds and also financial errors caused by an unsophisticated and disorganized administration. Several participants comment that the NTC has admitted problems with spending and corruption, and wonder why such admissions have not resulted in concrete action against known offenders – either from the former regime or the current administration. The lack of transparency on public spending clearly contributes to skepticism over the NTC's commitment to good governance.

> *"The NTC admitted that there was corruption and people have been stealing money, and they said they would look into it, yet nothing has happened or been discussed since."* Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"The most negative point is the wasting of public money, which might cause crises in the country. If the government does not find a solution to this, it will cause a huge problem and a crisis for the country in the future."* Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

When discussing the positive aspects of the transition, **Libyans rarely credit the government and instead claim that all progress since the revolution is attributable to the hard work and strong character of Libyan citizens**. Some participants specifically credit Libyan's religious nature as helping propel the country forward. Other participants take care to note that the Libyan people are succeeding in the absence of national or local leadership and that their families and communities have taken responsibility for local level concerns, such as organizing garbage collection and neighborhood security.

"Any good development is due to the Libyan civilians. The Libyan people have kept to their culture and roots. If the people had had weak faith in their religion you would have found crime all over the place because of all the weapons in the streets." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

"There are a lot of positive things being done by the public. I don't feel as though the NTC has even tried to get the weapons of the street. However the people themselves have stopped carrying them around, which is good." Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

"The government has done nothing to help Derna, its people have done everything for it. The government can't say that they've even helped us pick up rubbish from the street. Derna's people have worked very hard and will continue working just as hard." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

Due to confusion over the mandate and capacity of the TNG, citizens frequently assume that they are responsible for resolving all problems. In the absence of visible progress or proactive communication from the NTC or TNG, participants continue to assume that the government is not fulfilling its obligations to the Libyan people.

"There is nothing positive. It's the NTC's fault. They have no character. They have done nothing. We haven't seen them do anything." Man, Sabha, 18-35, secondary education or less

"The National Transitional Council is responsible because it is the one in control of everything." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

Some participants claim that criticisms of the government are unfair, given its limited resources and the chaotic transition environment. They note that the NTC and NTG are still relatively new and need more time and patience to deliver change to an anxious public. Others argue that Libyan citizens should consider the NTC irrelevant and resolve issues themselves.

"The problem is that everyone is waiting for the NTC to magically fix everything. The people need to take matters in their own hands." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I don't blame the government because it is only 150 days old and a lot of the news is based on lies." Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I feel that the Ministry of the Interior has no control at all. I can't blame them and say they are not doing their job, because they don't have sufficient resources. They don't have proper mechanisms." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

Consistent with findings from focus groups conducted in November, **confusion over the responsibilities and authority of local councils translates into mixed assessments of their**

performance. Regardless of city, participants complain about not having information on the roles or activities of the local council. In Tripoli and Zintan, several participants were completely unfamiliar with their local councils, while those that had some degree of awareness considered them inactive and weak or unable to handle their responsibilities. In Sabha, participants criticize their local councils for being inactive and incompetent, while participants in Derna express frustration with their local council's inability to exercise authority over the competing militias. In Misrata some participants claim that it was too early to judge the local council, which was elected in February 2012. In all groups, citizens express desire for stronger local councils that can advocate for their communities and improve service delivery.

> *"I don't know anything about the council."* Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

> *"[The council] has no power since the freedom fighters are controlling Derna at the moment."* Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"It's not that they don't solve problems, it's that they can't. People have weapons."* Man, Sabha, 18-35, secondary education or less

> *"When you are a part of a local council, you're supposed to make the place safe, right? Make it better, right? We haven't seen any of this being done. We haven't seen them do their jobs at all."* Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"The local council should focus on the infrastructure. The local council should be like an ambassador. It should go to the government and bring the necessary resources needed to fix the infrastructure."* Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

V. Elections – Expectations and Concerns

Electoral Environment

Libyans are enthusiastic about the upcoming National Public Congress (NPC) elections. Many participants describe the anticipated June elections as an important step forward in Libya's political transition that will give future leaders credibility and encourage more responsive, accountable politics.

> *"The elections will be the first step in building Libya in the right way."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"If elections are fair then the revolution, for which a lot of people gave their lives, will have been successful."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"I think the most suitable thing for the Libyan people is to perform the elections so nobody can say 'who elected you in this position?' Everyone will have made their choice." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

Despite the enthusiasm for elections, awareness of the electoral process and timeline is very low. While some participants are vaguely aware that elections were supposed to be held in June, many participants have incorrect information or no information at all.

"I heard about them but I don't have details - I don't know when." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

"I thought it was next year." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

"I only know that there will be elections in May." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"I'm not sure - I think they're in June." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"We know that there are elections, but we don't know how, or where, or what are we supposed to do in them." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

Those participants aware of the electoral calendar are divided on whether they thought it was feasible for elections to be organized by June. **Many participants believe that the security challenges and the lengthy technical preparations would make a June vote difficult.** Others claim that it would be impossible to hold elections on time because Libyans do not yet know about the elections or have the information they need to fully participate.

"I don't think it is enough time. There is a lot to do and I believe it will take them a year to solve the security problem." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"There's not enough time because we don't know what's going on. They need to educate the people through the media." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

"How do we expect to have elections when weapons are still on the street?" Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"If they constantly increase the level of public awareness then maybe it will be enough time." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

Participants have mixed feelings over whether the elections should be postponed beyond June. Those who favor postponement argue that the current conditions and security challenges are not conducive to credible elections. They claim that these elections are so important that they must be done well and that the government needs

more time to prepare for them. They express concern that hasty and poorly planned elections would be vulnerable to manipulation and outright fraud, and that the process could be hijacked by tribes or by members of the current government seeking to reinforce their own authority. Participants are also concerned about holding elections in the current security environment.

> *"With the current situation in Libya you need at least a year to carry out elections. If they do it in June then I guess it will be fake elections and the same faces will be in power again."* Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"We are looking for safety and security. Elections? Get your priorities straight."* Man, Sabha, 18-35, Secondary education or less

> *"I think it should be postponed for another 2 months or so. We have a security issue."* Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I don't think we should be in a hurry as long as the weapons are all over the place. The time is not enough. The spread of weapons among the people might cause a problem during elections. I think we should take our time."* Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"If there is no safety then elections won't be the right thing to do, they'll end up being based on tribes and power."* Man, Sabha, 18-35, secondary education or less

Participants see the overall lack of awareness as another key challenge to holding elections on time. **Even as participants claim that broad, informed participation is necessary for the elections to be considered successful**, they note that this will be the first independent election in over 40 years and that citizen awareness of electoral processes and the specific choices available to them is low.

> *"The time is not enough because we don't even know what a 'constituency' is."* Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"I think we should postpone them because there is no media campaign covering the elections and yet they draw nearer and nearer. It is a first time experience for a lot of people and they don't feel ready yet."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"The time is not enough because we need to understand and learn the election process. We need more time to ensure the elections are transparent and have credibility."* Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

Despite some support for delaying the elections until the security situation improves and citizens have more information on the process and choices available to them, many participants remain adamant that the elections must proceed on schedule. Even those

participants who acknowledge that the elections will likely be flawed claim that it is necessary to hold them on time. Others claim that the elections are an important transition milestone and that the government has to respect its own deadlines. Some participants are concerned that if the elections are delayed, they have no guarantee that they will ever take place.

> *"The elections must be on time. What will happen if we postpone them? Nothing will change - it will always be the same situation."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"If it gets postponed, they will always keep postponing it."* Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I am against postponing it. If government does not meet the deadline they placed that means the government failed."* Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"Postponing the elections will be negative because the government has to respect the deadline they have made."* Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

Many participants dismiss claims by other respondents that elections need to be delayed to allow for improvements in the security environment, claiming that the situation will only deteriorate in the absence of legitimate government and that the elections may, in fact, contribute to security by empowering people who can be more effective than the current government. Some participants are concerned that a potential delay could deepen the rift between Libya's current decision makers and an increasingly impatient, restive public.

> *"We must establish a government under any circumstances. They must be held on time so we can settle down."* Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

> *"I see it's important to get the elections done because they will write the constitution that will organize the country. If it gets delayed or postponed then it will end up generating a lack of trust."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"It will be a great disappointment to the youth and all of the Libyans if they postpone the election."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

> *"We should put all our efforts and hard work into holding them on time. Elections in my opinion are the most important thing right now. After the elections we will have security. People won't dislike the newly elected people because they would have been the ones who chose them. We won't move forward without these elections, so I think we shouldn't postpone them."* Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I think if we postpone the elections our current problems will just increase. I personally think we should push to have the elections on time so we can have a constitution and a proper government as soon as possible to be able to establish law and order and punishment for the ones who break the law. The more time we take in holding the elections and forming a strong permanent government the more chances people get to create trouble." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

Many participants are conflicted over the election timeline, weighing their desire for the stability and progress they link with elections against their concerns that a swiftly assembled poll may compromise the integrity of the process.

"I hope they don't postpone it, but at the same time it's either they do it right or they don't do them at all, because these elections will place the foundations of the country." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, secondary education or less

"Honestly the time is not enough because a lot of people don't know what the elections are. But it is important to carry them out to form the government." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

Citizen Participation

Libyans are excited to vote for the first time in their lives. Nearly all participants claim they want to participate in the elections, with many explaining that the revolution was fought to provide Libyans with opportunities to make their voices heard. Participants see voting as a fundamental right and a vital act of self-expression. Even those participants who are concerned that they do not know the technical aspects of how and where to vote are still determined to cast their ballot.

"We gave our lives for this moment." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"I will vote because it is one of our rights and the reason why we made this revolution." Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Due to the lack of experience, lack of knowledge, and 40 years of ignorance, the upcoming elections might be difficult and might not give a true result. But, personally I will go and vote because it's my right." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The individual will feel he has a voice, he will feel empowered as a citizen of this country. This is a right, so we have to vote." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I will vote because I want my voice to be heard." Man, Sabha, 18-35, secondary education or less

Participants associate voting with the opportunity to choose qualified leaders who will respond to people's concerns. Given the Gaddafi regime's nepotistic system of rewarding unqualified people with influential government positions, it is unsurprising that many participants want to participate in elections to choose "the right" people.

> *"I'll vote for the person who is qualified for the right position."* Woman, Derna, over 35, Secondary education or less

> *"A lot of people are keen to vote for the most qualified person for the job. This will help make the country reach a developed state. I will participate in the elections to give the candidate I like the greatest chance to win the elections."* Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"Anyone that has led us in the past, we used to complain about how he got there, and how we didn't have a say in him getting power. Now it is different, when we elect someone we can say we put him there, we did that. So if the person is good or bad, the people are responsible for the person being there."* Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I want to decide who will be in charge."* Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

It is clear that some participants will link broad participation to their evaluation of the election's success. In addition to wanting to cast their own ballots, participants see this as an election for all Libyans. Many claim that voting is a civic responsibility for which many Libyans gave their lives, and they believe it is imperative that the largest number of people participate. They claim that a large turnout is necessary to ensure the results are representative and to prevent people from complaining about or disputing the results.

> *"It is your job as a Libyan to vote, to have a say."* Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"This is a national duty so everyone should go and vote."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"If everyone doesn't participate, then there was no point in doing this revolution."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

> *"It's very important that Libyans have a vote. If you're Libyan you have to vote."* Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"It is important that every Libyan vote so that we can be satisfied with those who are elected."* Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"It is important and every city, town or village in Libya should participate in the elections."* Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

Despite widespread eagerness to participate in the elections, there are serious concerns that could limit turnout. Participants identify a number of potential barriers to casting their ballots, including fears that they will not understand the process enough to participate and concerns that the elections will be corrupt. Many participants say that if they sense something is "wrong" they will not participate because they do not want to contribute to elections that lack integrity. The fact that participants are rarely able to articulate specific things that would make them uncomfortable and instead point to a general sense of unease underscores the need for broad-based voter education so that participants understand all aspects of the electoral process and are less likely to assume manipulation.

> *"If there is something I don't like about the voting process I will not take part in it*." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"If I doubt the integrity of the elections I will not vote."* Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

Other participants claim they are less likely to vote if they lack information on the candidates or if they do not like the candidates running in their constituency.

> *"I won't vote if there's no one suitable for the job."* Man, Sabha, 18-35, secondary education or less

> *"I will not vote if I see that the candidates are unqualified."* Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

> *"I won't vote if the candidates are bad."* Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"What will help me vote is knowing the right candidate. If there's no one worthy then I won't vote."* Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

> *"I think if you don't know the candidates well - their qualities, positives and negatives – then you shouldn't participate in voting."* Woman, Derna, over 35, Secondary education or less

Many women participants are concerned that their access to the polls will be limited. Women's concerns about participating center on fears that their husbands and fathers would try and force them to vote for a particular candidate or that their families would not let them vote. Some women, particularly those in Sabha and Zintan, are concerned that polling stations would be difficult to access and unaware whether separate polling units would be provided for men and women.

Many women participants express concern than women do not have the information they need to participate. Some respondents claim it was necessary not only to educate women about their rights to vote, but to also target men so they understand the

importance of encouraging their wives and daughters to participate in the elections and to vote their conscience.

> *"A lot of women have a lack of understanding on what voting is and how the elections will be carried out."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

> *"I think women in Zintan lack the proper freedom to go and vote. They are restricted by the customs and traditions. I think the government should make it clear that women in Zintan have the right to vote."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

> *"Men here are still dominant over everything, men will not agree for their wives to go with them and vote."* Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"During the elections in Misrata, a lot of the woman went out to vote not because they should vote but because their husbands told them so."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"Some of our customs and traditions might challenge the process of the voting. They can prevent this by making special voting areas for women and others for men."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"The people here and generally the women have a big lack of understanding of what voting is and can be easily manipulated."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"They should educate the men so that they will not force their women to not take part in the voting."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

Similar to the debate over whether to delay the elections, the two most consistent concerns participants cite as factors that could convince them not to vote are security and the difficulty of obtaining information. Many participants are concerned that people lack the information they need to participate effectively or make the right decisions.

> *"So I think some people will feel too ashamed of their ignorance to go and vote."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"We need to raise awareness so that the people are not cheated; they need to make smart and intelligent decisions."* Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"The people lack political knowledge. A lot of people talk randomly about politics and I am afraid that they don't know what they will be voting on."* Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

Participants are concerned that the polling stations will not be safe and some express fears that there could be violent clashes if certain armed groups are not satisfied with

the results. In Misrata some participants are concerned that they might be voting at the same polling stations as residents of Tawerga, a city that clashed violently with Misrata during the revolution. In Derna some participants are worried that local militias would not accept the results of the vote.

> *"They have now added Tawerga to Misrata and this will cause problem as there is friction between the two cities. The elections are not planned well and they should be planned better."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I want elections but at the same time I'm afraid of the security issues."* Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I think if at the place of voting there is a conflict between two views then problems will arise. We understand that voting allows people to be different in their views but this leaves space for conflict and I think weapons on the street will affect this conflict."* Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I am afraid that there will be a fight between the newly elected government and the militias, especially in Derna."* Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

Voter information is critical to enhance public confidence in the process and encourage broad participation. Many respondents express confusion over the mechanics of voting.

> *"Can any person that can read and write register to vote?"* Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I registered my name and did not go to vote in the Misrata elections because the rules were not clear. I was not able to vote for a person outside of my district, even though I preferred him and was more convinced by him than the candidates of my own district."* Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"Before voting, I will first get advice from an educated person to see if my decision is right or wrong."* Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"If some of my family members do not know who to vote for, I'll tell them my point of view to help them vote."* Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

Libyans want to be informed voters – both about the election process itself and also on the individual candidates and political parties.

> *"A lot of people don't understand the process of voting and what voting is and its outcome."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"There should be a mass advertisement campaign all over the place to explain the voting process." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Once I understand the process and for whom I will be voting then yes I will go and vote." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"If they don't raise my awareness on the elections, I might find myself in front of a voting box without knowing what I am doing." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"For me personally I want to put in all of my effort to go and vote. I think people who do not understand what elections are, where to go and register and what the constitution is, will find it hard." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

"Excuse me? What elections? Does anyone know who the candidates even are?" Man, Sabha, 18-35, secondary education or less

Beyond being informed voters, participants also want to know that their vote is protected and that it will contribute to change.

"It has to be organized well, I have to see that something will come from me voting." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I want to go and vote but I need to make sure my voice counts, I don't want to feel marginalized." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"It has to be safe, transparent and with no hidden agendas. If these conditions are all met then I'll vote." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

Participants differ on their standards and interpretations of what would constitute a credible election. Many participants believe that a "fair" election is one that excises former regime members from positions of authority.

"If they don't get rid of old regime followers then the elections will not be fair." Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Some of the cities in the south were centers for the Gaddafi regime. They lack political systems and national civil organizations so I guess it will be hard to have fair elections there." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

Given Libya's lack of experience with free and fair elections, some participants believe that international organizations such as the United Nations are necessary to help ensure that the elections are technically sound. Some participants believe that the international community, including the United Nations (UN) and more "experienced" democratic countries, should support Libya by overseeing the vote or sharing experiences with election authorities.

"I think we should have the United Nations help us only because this is our first time." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I think elections will be fair and honest if other countries such as the UN, or developed countries, were in charge and watched over them." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"The reason why we need international regulation is because it's a new experience for us. We need support for our first experiment." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

Despite some interest in the international community providing assistance, some participants are uncomfortable with the involvement of non-Libyan actors in the electoral process. They claim that foreign assistance could lead to foreign intervention and that the process should be Libyan-owned.

"I disagree with international involvement. This is a chance for us to learn and develop by ourselves." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"Libyan elections should be run by Libyans." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

Expectations for the conduct of Libya's first democratic elections in over 40 years vary among participants. Many respondents say that they hope the elections go smoothly, but that they expect some degree of difficulty. Many respondents claim that the elections will be flawed and that they anticipate both unintended mistakes and deliberate manipulations.

"I think about how the Libyan people inspired the world with their revolution, and I am sure they will be successful with their elections. I think it's only a matter time but I am sure we'll have moderately successful elections." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

"I have fears that the elections will not give me my rights. I am afraid the elections will not have integrity. If so the elections can harm my city and me." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"From what I saw in other countries on TV there were always problems after elections. So as a new country and as a new experience, I am expecting there will be mistakes." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I think people will bribe others to vote for them." Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

"I don't think the elections will generally be fair." Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Some people will only vote because the candidates are family. Or they will vote because they are family friends. They will not vote because they believe they are sincerely right for the job." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

Despite the broad expectation of flawed elections, many of the same participants who expect flawed elections are quick to say that this will be a learning experience that will inform future elections and lay the groundwork for Libya's democratic development.

"It's all healthy political movement and we learn from our mistakes and prevent falling into the same traps again. Can you name me a country that has 100% free elections?" Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"This is the first time that any of us go through elections and in such a short period of time. So it is fine if we make mistakes because we can learn and make things right in the next elections. Obviously we will not get it 100% right on the first time." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

While expectations for Election Day are relatively low, it is clear that many Libyans have high expectations for what will follow the elections. Many participants claim that elections – even if they are flawed - will contribute to security, transparent and accountable government, and further economic and political development.

"After the elections, everything will improve." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"We'll have a constitution that will satisfy every section of society." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

"There will be law, there will be police, and it will be safer than now." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"We will be an organized country. We will have a government." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"There will be a great change for Libya. We will be better than Dubai." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I think elections will bring an end to tribalism." Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

"I am sure the elections will put the right people in place and I am expecting to see highly educated people voted in." Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

VI. Political Parties, Movements, and Candidates

Although there are few participants who can comprehensively define what a political party is, respondents – generally those with higher educational backgrounds – tend to associate political parties with peaceful competition for political positions and groupings of like-minded people.

"Political parties are a group of people with a similar vision on economy, politics and social issues. They meet together and seek to bring change in society." Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

"It's a group of people with certain ideologies. I like the idea of political parties." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

"The first thing that comes to my mind is freedom of speech." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Parties compete in their thoughts and ideas, and struggle for authority." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

Compared to findings from focus group research conducted in November 2011, there has been a striking improvement in public perceptions of political parties. Whereas participants in the November round saw parties as divisive and threatening national unity, more participants in the current round have some understanding of political parties and generally see them as positive forces to move the country forward. Some participants hope that political parties will offer meaningful choices for Libyan people after decades of Gaddafi's one-man rule.

"We all don't want political parties. One has one opinion, the other another and all they do is fight. It would create a big problem. I don't want people to fight." Woman, Sabha, over 35, secondary education or less, November 2011

"I think they make problems - from the name they sound like a threat. When someone wants to make a political party it's like they are against someone else. I'm not convinced about them." Woman, Zawiyah, over 35, more than secondary education, November 2011

"Political parties are a part of democracy. Every political party's goal is to work for Libya, to make Libya better place." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Yes there will be healthy competition between the political parties to serve the people better so that the people will vote for them." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Every political party has to compete; this is great because they will compete on being better for our country, so we end up with the best." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"I'm not against political parties. I didn't know much about them before but now I'm hearing about it, I like the idea. If they're all helping Libya, I don't see why not?" Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I think the more options the different political parties give the people, the more they will help them select the best for the country. Having different ideas in a country is healthy." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

Despite increased awareness and receptivity to political parties, some participants remain convinced that political parties have no place in Libya's new politics. They see them as untrustworthy, conniving, and motivated by secret and possibly foreign interests.

"I honestly don't support political parties. I don't see them as a good thing. Look at Egypt and Tunis; they had political parties yet they still had problems and needed to do a revolution. I think it is more suitable to have presidential elections without political parties." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"I think political parties are a dictatorship from within." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I'm scared of them. I know there has to be political parties, but I fear what will come of them. We need a political party that was born from this revolution, a political party that suits our needs as Libyans and as Muslims. We have never had political parties before." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I think a lot of the political parties have personal agendas and interests such as gaining money. There will be business going on under the table." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"I will not vote for political parties because I don't feel they will stick to their projects, but rather claim they will do this and that as propaganda." Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

"I think a lot of people in political parties are making a big effort to make themselves appear clean. They make everything seem wonderful. I want to know their agendas and I want to make sure they don't have any hidden agendas." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"I don't like the idea of parties because they will create chaos. Every party wants to implement their own set of rules. They want to be the only survivors and the only ones in control. I think they will cause more problems. I believe Libya should go into democracy without political parties." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

Gaddafi's legacy has damaged the public image of political parties. Political parties were banned under Gaddafi and several participants recall the popular regime slogan

"whoever joins a political party is a traitor." It is clear that these associations translate to some discomfort in discussing political parties.

> *"I still remember what we were forced to learn in the old regime – that whoever joins political parties is a traitor. The first thing that comes to mind is that people in parties abuse the authority that they gain."* Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

> *"I was bought up and taught that whoever joins a political party is a traitor."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

Despite Gaddafi's legacy of opposition to parties, some participants describe a new interest and openness to them. Some participants credit outreach efforts by some of Libya's new political parties and movements with gradually helping erode their negative perceptions of political parties.

> *"A lot of people were forced to hate political parties during the old regime as they were tortured or their families punished if they had any political activities. It's only a matter of educating the people that there is no harm in supporting political parties. Some people are afraid of political parties because it's a new idea."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"We were bought up with the old regime's mentality that whoever joins a political party is a traitor. I am glad that we have left that all behind. Now is the time to establish political parties because we need political parties to build a state based on institutions."* Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

Although there is increased receptivity to political parties, it is important to note that many Libyans still do not understand the roles and functions of political parties in general or – more specifically – the motivations and identities of Libya's many new political movements.

> *"Does anyone know what they are? Because I don't."* Man, Sabha, 18-35, secondary education or less

> *"We don't know anything about all of this because no one goes out and educates us, they should tell us what parties are and what they do."* Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"We don't know if there are political parties here, I know there are some in Egypt."* Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

> *"Well none of us have ever lived through the experience of having political parties so we really can't tell if they are good or bad."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"I think the problem in establishing political parties is the lack of knowledge between people and the lack of clear goals and missions of the political parties. For me personally I have not joined a political party because I am afraid I'll make a mistake and join a party that has different ideas from mine." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

Given the lack of familiarity with political parties and the roles they play in democratic societies, and the skepticism with which some participants view parties, there is some interest – generally among more educated participants – in legal frameworks to regulate parties and ensure that they do not cause harm. Some participants are confused over how political parties are currently operating in Libya without a law to authorize and regulate their activities. Other participants claim that regulatory measures are necessary to limit participation of former regime members.

"There's no law to tell the political parties what to do." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"There should be a law for establishing a political party, so we make sure it's clear and clean of any traitors or people with bad intentions." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

When asked to describe their ideal political party, **most participants claim they want a moderate Islamic-oriented party that is transparent and clear in its goals, has no foreign loyalties and is committed to serving the Libyan people and developing the country.**

"I want a moderate political party that is religious but not extremist." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"Its aims should include democracy and proper transparency." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The first priority of a political party is to serve the people. A party needs to be patriotic. It should aim to become an authority in order to serve the people rather than to sit on a chair." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Political parties should have the country's best interests at heart when they are presenting the reasons why you should vote for them. They will present the group's thoughts and ideas on how to develop and improve the country." Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

"All I want is a political party that will serve Libya and rebuild it as fast as possible." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I want a political party that will transform Libya into a developed modern country." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

Participants are clear that they will not support political parties that they consider "unclean," especially movements that provide refuge or opportunities for former regime officials or known loyalists.

> *"The political party should contain decent people and I wouldn't vote for one that has disciples from Gaddafi's regime."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I don't know much about political parties however if I see someone from the old regime establishing one, I'm not very comforted."* Man, Sabha, 18-35, secondary education or less

Above all, participants want political parties to deliver tangible improvements to their daily lives. Many participants claim that they are tired of political speeches and broken promises and that they want to see concrete actions and improvements to their daily lives.

> *"I need to see actions because any person can talk about what he can do."* Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I want them to reach out to every one of the Libyan people, I want them to really live our problems and help us."* Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

> *"My ideal political party would be the one that takes more action rather than talking. They should ensure freedoms, improve health and education, and any other social and humanitarian problems that Libya faces."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"Well all political parties will claim they will do everything. What matters to me is, how will they implement? What matters to me is their credibility and not just their talk."* Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

Women want political parties to offer information and programs for how they plan to improve conditions for Libyan women and provide women with meaningful opportunities to participate in Libya's new politics.

> *"It's important that women should have a big role to play and a say in what is happening. Political parties are responsible for pushing women to reach positions and should protect women."* Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I want a political party that will defend women's rights in order to give women a chance to develop the country."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

There is a notable increase in political party outreach in recent months. While more evident in Benghazi and Tripoli, some participants in Derna, Misrata, Sabha, and Zintan

claim to have been invited to political party meetings or to have seen leaflets and posters for certain parties.

> "Yes, a party had an advertisement campaign in the newspapers but we have not seen anything practical from them yet." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

> "I attended a political party seminar." Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> "I have been to meetings for three different political parties. I was more of a listener than an active participant." Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

Participants feel political parties need to be more aggressive in their outreach to citizens. Despite the increase in engagement between parties and the public, many of the participants who claim they had been contacted by parties are disappointed with the exchange or frustrated that they did not receive more information and that the parties did not offer specific details on how they will improve the country.

> "I went to a political party meeting and I remember they were talking about topics that were far beyond the reach of the civilians. I was hoping they would talk about how they will improve the standards of living for Libyans." Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

> "Political parties tend to tell you broad ideas but they don't get into details with you. They claim they have the best interests of the civilians at heart but I want to know more details about how they will achieve these interests for the civilians." Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

> "A friend of mine once invited me to a meeting and to become a founding member of a party. I did not agree because they didn't give me enough information. They just wanted me to register with them. They were not clear." Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

Participants want political parties to offer them specific plans and to distinguish themselves from one another. Several participants complain about being unable to differentiate political parties, complaining that they all have the same slogans, names, and platforms.

> "The parties are all saying the exact same thing. They all claim they are moderate but none of them has defined how moderate they are. There isn't enough information." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> "When I go to meetings of political parties I see different people but I hear the same thing all over again from one political party to another." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

"I have attended a few meetings of political parties but I have noticed they all say the same thing." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

Most participants have not had personal interaction with a political party, although some claim to have been approached by civil society organizations. In Derna, women participants were frustrated because they had heard that political parties were holding meetings, but that the meetings were scheduled at inconvenient times.

"I don't have any interactions with political parties." Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

"There are no posters or anything to show who they are." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The problem is the timing; they either do it early in the morning when the women are busy in schools, or late at night when we can't attend. We feel that it is done on purpose so that women cannot attend." Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

Participants are hungry for information on parties. In some cases this translates to frustration with Libya's new political movements for not communicating more proactively about their goals. Participants are also clear that they are not interested in complicated ideologies or lengthy manifestos—they want to learn parties' plans for the future, specifically how they will resolve key security concerns and develop the country.

"They need to speak to the community; in the end we're the ones that are going to vote for them." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Political parties have to get closer to the people and explain to them what they will do." Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"We are yet to learn about the goals of the political parties, we don't know much about them. Even if I give you names I wouldn't be able to tell you their goals." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

"They should increase their advertisement campaigns via programs on TV, seminars, and lectures, especially for women. They should give lectures in schools and mosques to increase our understanding of their thoughts and ideas." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I don't know what the goals are of any of the political parties, so how could I know whether I should support them or not?" Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"I want to see their views for the future, what they would want to do for Libya. Don't tell me vague ideas. What will they give to Libya socially, economically, and politically." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"They should have a clear vision for the future, with clear announced plans." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

Participants are unfamiliar with most of Libya's emerging political parties and entities. **The only political movement with broad name recognition among participants is the Muslim Brotherhood.** Some participants, particularly women, are concerned that the Muslim Brotherhood is an extremist organization opposed to women's rights. Others argue that the Muslim Brotherhood had been defamed and victimized by Gaddafi and that the group could potentially play a positive political role. Some participants criticize the Brotherhood and assert that they are using Islam to gain political power.

"For me the Muslim Brotherhood is an extremist group and I will never consider supporting them." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I'm scared of the Muslim Brotherhood a lot. It's fine that they have freedom of speech, but they shouldn't enforce anything on us. I hate how they look at us women as if we're pathetic to them." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"They will be an Islamic political party and they will implement Islamic Shari'a 100%. I fear they will ban all places that have women and men together, and will ban women from working and being educated. That's one reason I might not vote for them." Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

"I feel fear when I hear their name because I fear extremists. They might ban a lot of women's rights." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"I will not vote for them because I feel they are using religion as a cover to reach authority." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Well we used to have fear of the Muslim Brotherhood due to the old regime but once I got to know them I realized that they are good people." Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

"During Gaddafi's regime, we were told that the Muslim Brotherhood were our enemies and we had to fight them. But I believe not all of them are bad. I don't think they will harm the people." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Yes we do hear about them but I would love to know more about them. Some tell you they are really extremists and they will eliminate the role of women in society, and some say the opposite. I need to know more about them." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

While many participants have heard of and formed opinions about the Muslim Brotherhood, very few respondents are familiar with the new Justice and Development

political party formed by some of its prominent members. Of the few participants that have heard the party's name before, only a handful links the party to the Brotherhood.

> *"Who are they?"* Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I heard about them from the radio, I only know their name."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I think the Muslim Brotherhood changed its name to win votes from the Libyans."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

Parties who emphasize religion are broadly seen as fake and dishonest. Although participants claim they want to vote for a moderate Islamic party, there is considerable discomfort and suspicion of political parties based solely on religion. This unease is due less to secular inclinations and more to the fact that as citizens of a conservative Islamic country, participants assume that all parties are Muslim and that any party that makes extra effort to emphasize their Islamic characteristics is manipulating their faith to attract votes.

> *"I dislike it when they say Islamic or not Islamic because I feel it reflects an extremist mentality. We are all Muslims so logically our political party will be based on Islam."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"I fear parties will use religion as a cover or as an advertisement to gain votes only."* Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"If they use religion to get our vote, then I'll go against them."* Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"Political parties should be based on Islam, but they shouldn't use Islam as a cover to win votes and gain power."* Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

Other participants claim that while political parties should broadly promote moderate Islam, they should focus their political speeches and outreach efforts on sharing their plans for the country and how they intend to solve Libya's security and governance challenges. Even participants who claim that a party's religiosity is an important factor in determining who to vote for generally say they prefer parties to focus on programs and plans and that they can judge if a party is religious based on its actions.

> *"I prefer a political party based on Islam but their priority has to be on building the country and developing it."* Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"If they don't talk about religion you can study their plans and you can tell if they are following Islam or not. If they oppose Islam nobody will vote for them."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"We know our religion, they don't need to talk about it. They should focus more on their work and what they will do." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I'll tell you something - when a person comes to me with his plans for the future and tells me how he'll follow Shari'a, I'll be like 'alright that doesn't matter because I know you will.' Tell me more about the other important stuff." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I am not against Islam in political life, but I think it's best if political parties focus on developing the country and its people. But, they should do it on Islamic foundations." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

Opinions vary over whether participants are more comfortable voting for independent candidates or political parties. Some participants sense that it is easier to know and judge an individual than it is a political party or that Libyan parties are not yet ready to compete. Conversely some participants prefer to support parties claiming that a political party structure makes it more reliable than the whims of an individual.

"I am with the idea of political parties, but I hope the upcoming NPC elections will be based on independent candidates rather than candidates from political parties. It is best to keep political parties for presidential elections because a lot of political parties are not formed yet and need time to organize themselves." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I don't think I will vote for political parties for the NPC. I would rather vote for independent candidates because I know them much better than political parties. From what I am seeing I think it is still early for the NPC to see a mature political party." Man, Tripoli, over 35, secondary education or less

"I'd rather vote for a plan or a political party rather than an individual. An individual might get lazy or stop what they're doing, or even change it. However a political party would be more effective." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

<u>Independent Candidates</u>

Similar to their priorities for political parties, participants want to vote for candidates who are proven patriots motivated by a desire to serve and develop Libya. While participants are more interested in how parties see the future, they are preoccupied with candidates' pasts, wanting to ensure that candidates are "clean" of any regime taint and known to be good people with no hidden agendas or secret pasts.

"The most important thing is nationalism. The candidates have to put themselves forward knowing they will dedicate their time serving the country. Nobody can disagree with this." Man, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The person should be honest and patriotic. They should be working only for Libya and the Libyan people." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"We need to make sure the candidates are 100% clean and worthy." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The history of the candidate will help me vote for him or not. For example, I will not vote for a person who used to work for Gadhafi's regime, especially if he used to work in the inner security, the intelligence, the revolutionary guards, and if his hands are blotted with blood." Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

"Everyone that used to be with Gaddafi should have no part in building up Libya now. When we've built it and done it, then maybe the people that we feel have redeemed themselves can play a small role, but only after we're done building." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

Participants want to vote for qualified candidates and tend to judge qualifications based on CVs and education levels as more important than personality or charisma. **Given that Libyans never had the opportunity to choose or safely judge their leaders, there is great interest in picking the "right" person.**

"I will judge him according to his CV. But yet again I need to make sure his CV is original and is not faking stuff in it." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The most important thing is the person is qualified - his family is not important." Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

"They have to be highly educated with strong qualifications. Their qualifications should be in political science or something related to that." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"I will judge him on his level of education and work experience." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

"I hope that for anyone running for election we will know their CV. We will have their background information and know their strong points and their weak points. In the past, we knew nothing like this." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

Participants have mixed opinions over whether they would support candidates who spent significant time outside of Libya. Many participants prefer to support individuals who shared in the suffering, claiming that not only were they victimized by Gaddafi and shared in the common struggle, but also that they are more likely to understand the current cultural context of the country. They worry that Libyans who spent too much

time abroad are too distanced from their religious and cultural roots to make decisions appropriate to the Libyan context.

> *"I prefer somebody who has only lived here because they have lived the experience of having your freedom taken away from you. So I believe they will be more motivated than people from abroad."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

> *"I want someone who suffered with the Libyan people."* Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"You need to understand the mentality of the Libyan people who lived directly under Gaddafi, under his corrupted education system, and process of brain washing. These Libyans are harder to deal with and it will be difficult for the Libyans who were living abroad to reach an understanding with them."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"He has to be Libyan and be living in Libya. I will not vote for a person who was living abroad because he will not have a proper understanding of what has happened here. He didn't live the struggle of the Libyan street and the youth here. It's not logical for me to vote for a person living abroad that just came back now for positions."* Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

Others claim that Libyans who spent considerable time abroad may have gained valuable experience that can be applied to Libya's new political challenges.

> *"I want to vote for someone educated who lived outside and who knows how to develop Libya."* Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I want a person from abroad who has lived in a developed country and gained proper experience there. What matters are their credentials."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

> *"We should bring educated Libyan people from outside to help us rebuild new Libya. We want to live as developed people. All the educated people are living outside."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

While there is little support for tribal politics, participants evince a range of opinions over whether a candidate's tribal background is important. Some participants, particularly those in Sabha, claim that Libya is still a tribal society and that a candidate's tribe matters. There is, however, reluctance to vote for members of larger tribes for fear it would upset the power balance and that a candidate's future political actions would be dictated by a powerful tribe.

> *"Tribe is also important; I wouldn't want him to be from the Gadhafi tribe. I wouldn't want him to be from the Werfala tribe either because they are a huge tribe."* Man, Sabha, 18-35, Secondary education or less

"He can be from a small tribe, that wouldn't influence his voting." Man, Sabha, 18-35, Secondary education or less

"The candidate I vote for needs to be from a strong tribe because the biggest tribe will ensure his security, and Libya will progress in a stable way." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I hear people talking about how they don't want tribalism and they think it's bad. This is wrong. I don't believe tribalism is bad. The tribes work together - if one does wrong another will correct it. We cannot just forget about tribes in Libya because they are the building blocks of our society." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

Even participants who acknowledge that tribes play important social roles are wary of tribally-based politics. Negative reactions to tribal candidates range from a belief that tribes are less important than qualifications, to the conviction that electing people based on tribal identities will reinforce tribalism and prevent Libya from developing into a modern country.

"Even though we are a tribal society, I would prefer him to be from a good family rather than from a tribe." Man, Sabha, 18-35, Secondary education or less

"If we vote for someone based on his tribe, what is going to guarantee that that tribe will stop continuously winning and holding on to power?" Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"They shouldn't be part of a big tribe because if his tribe voted for him and bribed other people to vote for him, with their influence as a big tribe, then we will just go back to the old days of the old regime. The person will then serve his tribe only instead of serving the civilians. So, no to tribalism." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

Few participants, including young Libyans, state that youth is an important factor in their choice of candidate. The participants who do claim age matters generally argue that a candidate must be over 35 or 40 years. While Libyans value the role of youth in the revolution and believe they should be rewarded for their sacrifices, few participants claim they would vote for a young person, instead choosing to emphasize the value of experience and qualifications over youth.

"He should be middle aged such as 40 – 45 with a high level of education." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I will vote for a person that is above 40 years old. Experience, education and integrity are the three more important qualities than age." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

Participants are broadly supportive of women playing roles in public life, but there is significant discomfort - among both men and women – with voting for women candidates. Some participants claim that women are too emotional and weak to adequately handle the stresses of political life, while others argue that they would not support women candidates because they know women would be too beholden to family responsibilities to be effective in politics.

> *"First of all he has to be a man. It matters that he is a man."* Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"Women's decisions are affected by their feelings, no matter how strong they are. Our people need someone strong and who can bear the stress."* Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I think women are too weak to become President of Libya right now; maybe she can be in ministries. I will vote for her then. In our society men are stronger than women."* Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I think it's a little bit too early for women to enter the political life in Libya. A lot of us still don't understand what politics is, and I think it will complicate stuff if we introduce women into the picture. If I saw an ideal woman candidate and I saw a man with slightly better qualifications I would vote for the man. If they were the same I would still vote for the man. I wouldn't vote for women because she'll struggle with a lot of challenges."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I think it would be very hard. She would have a lot of challenges even if the society does not reject her."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"If the woman and man have the same qualifications I will vote for the man because the woman will have other responsibilities such as raising children, plus she is naturally more emotional."* Woman, Derna, over 35, secondary education or less

Many male participants claim that women do not have a proven track record, nationally or globally, of successful leadership and that this proves they are not capable of navigating the complicated contours of Libya's political transition. Some participants cite examples ranging from Islamic history to the more recent struggles of the current female Libyan Minister of Health as further evidence that women should not be given opportunities to lead.

> *"After any revolution any woman that took over failed."* Man, Benghazi, 18-35, some university education

> *"Well in Islamic history women were able to take charge for a brief transitional period and they failed."* Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"Some people in the streets are blaming the lack of healthcare on the fact that a woman is the Minister of Health." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"A candidate's sex is important to me. Personally I feel throughout history a man has always been stronger to lead." Man, Misrata, 18-35, some university education

"I think it would be hard for a woman to deal with corruption - as what is happening in the Ministry of Health." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

"I am yet to see a woman president in any country so I guess it won't happen in Libya any time soon." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

Many male participants claim that traditional gender roles in Libyan society should translate into the political arena. Others admit that they are uncomfortable with the idea of taking orders from a woman or express disbelief that a woman could represent the needs and concerns of men in the NPC.

"Well in your own house the man is in charge so it's natural that a man will be in charge of the government." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

"I wouldn't like to have a woman to rule over me." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

"In my opinion I currently don't believe a woman would be able to represent me even in the National Assembly. Maybe in the future. I can work with women but I still can't accept them representing me." Man, Misrata, 18-35, some university education

"A woman's place in the house." Man, Sabha, 18-35, Secondary education or less

"I'm with you if you say they're hard working and excellent at what they do. They can lead in a workplace, a shop and all over the place. But to lead a country I don't agree with that." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I am not against women but I believe they are more suitable as managers of schools or hospitals than being President or Minister." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

Many participants, including men and women – claim that Libyan women are not ready and need to be developed further before they can contribute to the country's transition. Some argue that the fault lies with Libyan women themselves, claiming they are not interested or active in politics and that they need to be more proactive.

"I am not against women being elected, but I don't think it's the right time." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, some university education

"I will not vote for a woman right now. I think it's too early, maybe after five or 10 years it could be suitable. I don't think she'll be able to face the challenges and the problems she will face inside and outside of office." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I think it's a little bit too early for women to enter the political life in Libya." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"It will take 20 years to vote for a Libyan woman - we need a new generation." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I think the Libyan women are the ones that are hiding themselves." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I don't agree with the idea of women leading Libya because Libya is in a really difficult situation right now. Maybe in the future it will be possible." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"I don't know but I don't think it's the right time, because I don't know many politically active women." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

Despite an overall reluctance to vote for women candidates and discomfort with women's political engagement, some participants – men and women – do express more general support for women's participation. Those participants who do express a willingness to vote for women candidates claim that they would do so because of the unique strengths and capacities of Libyan women, while others say that they will vote for the most qualified candidate, regardless of gender.

"I will vote for women because women form half of society. The Libyan woman has reached a level where she is capable of doing what the Libyan man can do." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I'd support a woman more, I would like to give her a chance." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I don't mind a man or a woman as long as the person is qualified with proper political knowledge and an adequate background." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

"I will vote for a woman. I know that there are leading women with better qualifications than men." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

"If she convinces me that she is qualified for the seat and will be able to serve the country then why not, I will vote for her." Man, Misrata, 18-35, some university education

"If she has a good clear CV that is much better than a man's CV then yes I will vote for her." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"If I don't give a qualified woman a chance, no women will ever develop to take a position. It doesn't matter if she makes mistakes because other women will learn from her mistakes." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Women should push themselves from now on, because if they wait for a chance, that chance might never come." Woman, Derna, over 35, Secondary education or less

VII. National Public Congress (NPC) and Constitutional Questions

<u>National Public Congress</u>

While participants are looking forward to the NPC and to the drafting of a constitution, **few have any information on the NPC or its mandate.** Some participants are familiar with the NPC's mandate to oversee the drafting of a new constitution for Libya, although only a handful is aware that the NPC was not itself the drafting body. When asked to explain the roles of the NPC, many participants respond that it will take responsibility for security, including formation of the army, while others believe it will improve Libya.

"I am not sure what its role is. I don't know because there's no media or anything explaining it. To pick out a President maybe?" Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I need more information on the National Congress." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"The NPC will fix the infrastructure and health care." Woman, Derna, over 35, Secondary education or less

"The people that we elect will be at the UN representing Libya… they have to be ready for this big job." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The people we will elect are the people that will make a law and improve security and fix the country's problems." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"It is temporary and will place the constitution and a set of rules to establish a new government. They will help move the country to a permanent government." Man, Misrata, 18-35, some university education

"I have no clue." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

Participants have high expectations for the NPC. While some of the inflated expectations are due to a misunderstanding of the roles and functions of the NPC, even those participants who understand the NPC's mandate still say they expected the NPC to deliver improvements and change on wide-ranging matters including security, infrastructure, and health. Priorities for the NPC range from establishing a government and providing order and organization to stabilizing the country's volatile security. Others say they would only consider the NPC successful if they kept to their timelines, produced a constitution acceptable to all Libyan people and dissolved at the end of their mandate.

"They must build the country and organize it." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"The most important thing is to establish the government." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

"Their priority should be to set up the army and bring stability and security." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, some university education

"I will know they are successful when they form a constitution that the Libyan people agree on." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

"If the NPC is not dissolved after a year that means they were not successful at their work." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

Libya's New Constitution

While participants generally believe a constitution is important for the future of the country, few have any information on the constitution development and drafting process.

"I know the constitution is very important, but I am still not sure of how it works." Man, Sabha,18-35, secondary education or less

"The constitution is very important because it will run our lives. Do you know how they will develop it?" Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

Participants are looking forward to a new constitution and believe that it will play an important role in delineating and protecting citizens' rights, providing order and structure to the government and creating a framework and reference for lawmaking. Although participants offer few details on how they expect the constitution to improve their daily lives, it is clear that expectations are high.

"The constitution should set the rules to organize the country." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The constitution should unite all the people. No minorities should be ignored." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

"The constitution should create the army and give us freedom." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The constitution should also set the salaries of Libyans and make sure everyone is treated fairly and in the same manner. For me it's important that it takes care of health and education." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The constitution should make sure the President's term in office is as short as possible." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

"The constitution should get rid of the old regime." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

Citizens want and expect to play a key role in the constitutional development process. While participants disagree over who should be responsible for the technical drafting – some believe a committee of lawyers and experts should prepare a draft, while others want citizens to be surveyed for their input before a draft is prepared – most participants agree that Libyans need to be consulted throughout the drafting process or the constitution will lack legitimacy. Some participants refer favorably to the process of providing feedback on the draft election law, which was released by the NTC for comment in January 2012 and amended after public input.

"If they don't involve us in the process, then there is no difference between them and Gaddafi." Woman, Derna, over 35, Secondary education or less

"They should issue a draft for the civilians to see and judge." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

"[If I can't vote on it] then I won't follow it. I'll be against this Assembly." Man, Benghazi, 18-35, some university education

"The committee should send out teams to collect information on what the people want in the constitution." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The Libyan people should be presented with the first draft constitution, and everyone should vote on whether they agree to it or not. Just like they did with the election rules - the NTC issued them and they were modified after the public assessed them. I think this way satisfied the majority of the Libyan people." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"They should consult all the people because you can't build a country if you marginalize a group of people." Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

There is disagreement over whether the tribes should be formally consulted in the drafting of the constitution. While some participants claim that the tribes have considerable representation and should be engaged by the constitutional drafting committee, others claim that their influence should be limited.

"They should consult the heads of tribes. I think the heads of tribes are important because they are leading groups of people." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Tribes should stay out of it. Libya will be a country run by law and not by tribes." Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Heads of tribes can participate as civilians." Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

As with democracy and elections, participants do not feel knowledgeable about constitutions and want more information.

"I don't know what the constitution is." Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

"I really don't know, I don't know what the constitution is. I need to learn more about it and what importance it has. After that I need to make sure the constitution is compatible with my wishes and that it will serve the country well." Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

While nearly all participants agree that the constitution should draw heavily from Islamic Shari'a, the key debate emerging is whether the constitution will be based exclusively on Shari'a or whether Shari'a will be an important, but not the only, reference. Those participants who believe Islam should be the only source of the constitution claim that such an approach is both natural – because Islam has rules for all aspects of life – and necessary due to the moral instruction inherent in Islam.

"For me personally, I believe that Islam has to be the only source for the constitution. I use Islam to bring my kids to do the right thing, the constitution should use Islam for the same reason." Woman, Benghazi, 18-35, more than secondary education

"The most important thing is that Islamic Shari'a is the only source." Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

"Islam should be the only source for our constitution, because our religion contains everything to rule on every aspect of life. It has anything that any human will face." Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

Other participants believe that Islam should be an important source, but not the sole source for the constitution. **They claim that a constitution inspired by Shari'a, but that draws from other sources, will protect the country from extremism and ensure that Libya is tolerant of minority rights and other religions.** Others argue that Shari'a is not comprehensive enough to encompass all the issues that must be tackled in the new constitution and that they prefer to be inspired by religion rather than tied to a particular interpretation.

> *"I believe religion is a way of living. I think if it's the only source we'll create an extremist environment."* Man, Benghazi, 18-35, some university education

> *"Religion should be separated from the government because it will cause a lot of confusion and arguments. For example, will we perform retribution such as amputate the hands of thieves? I doubt this will happen. I think it's most suitable to have the constitution based on Islamic values rather than totally based on it."* Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

> *"It has to be one of the sources, but not the only sources, so that we respect the minorities and other religions."* Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"Well I think not everything is in the Quran. We need multiple sources of law."* Man, Benghazi, 18-35, some university education

Although opinions vary on the degree to which Shari'a should influence the constitution, there is broad agreement that the future Libyan constitution should contain no provisions that contradict Islam. Some participants advise the NPC to consult religious scholars to ensure there is no conflict.

> *"I think they should have one or two religion people as consultants to make sure the constitution follows Islam."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

> *"It is important to consult religious scholars to make sure the constitution does not oppose our religion."* Man, Sabha, 18-35, Secondary education or less

> *"It is important to consult the religious scholars to make sure we don't oppose Islam."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"If the members of the committee struggle with a point they can seek advice from religious scholars."* Man, Misrata, 18-35, some university education

VIII. Media and Information

Most participants rely on television, particularly international channels, as their primary source of information about current events. Some respondents rely on word of mouth from friends and family, but admit they often fall victim to rumors when they rely on

these sources. More urban residents rely on the internet, particularly Facebook, but are wary of internet rumors. Many participants express frustration with the difficulties they face in verifying news and note that they often check multiple sources.

> *"We trust TV the most and we distrust people's talk because people are full of rumors."* Man, Sabha, 18-35, secondary education or less

> *"I use TV, but you cannot tell if they are broadcasting the truth or not."* Man, Misrata, 18-35, some university education

> *"We have a problem here - nothing is for sure or confirmed."* Man, Benghazi, 18-35, some university education

> *"TV, but not the Libyan channels, because I find international Arabic channels have faster news than the local channels. Also I distrust the local channels as sometimes their news is false."* Man, Misrata, 18-35, some university education

> *"The more I hear about a piece of news the more I trust that it is valid."* Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

Participants want Libyan media to professionalize in order to help close the information gap and raise awareness about politics and the situation in the country. Libyan media is broadly seen as confusing and having low standards, or controlled by the personal and political agendas of station owners.

> *"We are disabled by the media that we have in Libya."* Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"Honestly some channels are broadcasting dissension among the people under the cover that they are following free journalism. They are causing problems inside Libya itself."* Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"Every program, every media source has its own agenda, and they're working for specific people."* Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

IX. Looking Forward

Libyans have high expectations for the future. Participants are frustrated by what they see as the failure of the current authorities to deliver the changes they envisioned after the revolution. They are eager for an improved security environment and want to see visible efforts to develop Libya's economy and infrastructure. They want reassurance that their country is being led by transparent, honest people not motivated by self-interest. Participants want consistent and accurate information on political developments, platforms, and policies, and they want to be included in decision-making. Regardless of age, geography, or gender, **participants want to know that their leaders are listening to them and that their opinions are valued**. They ask their leaders to recognize the responsibilities they have undertaken and to honor the sacrifices of the

revolution by securing and strengthening Libya in the next phase of the transition process.

> *"They should work efficiently and with speed."* Woman, Zintan, 18-35, secondary education or less

> *"They should fear god and care for the Libyan people."* Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"Don't betray the revolution and the martyrs who gave their lives for this cause and us."* Man, Benghazi, 18-35, some university education

> *"They should watch out of for the anger of the Libyan people. They should fear God and remember Gaddafi's fate."* Man, Tripoli, over 35, Secondary education or less

> *"I would send them pictures of Gaddafi's last moments to remind them what happens to dictators. I would also show pictures of martyrs to move their conscience."* Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"Libya is on a volcano, don't let it go active. If you don't satisfy the simplest civilians then they will face the anger of the street. You are on the frontline."* Man, Derna, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"You have a huge task of building a country out of nothing, you can't have personal agendas, and you should only be focused on Libya. Libya comes first before everyone."* Woman, Misrata, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"I want them to feel the responsibility they have. What they will do will go down in Libyan history. The upcoming generations will know that what they are living through is due to the National Congress."* Woman, Sabha, 18-35, more than secondary education

> *"They should fear God and the people because the people will not tolerate more injustice. They should look more to the people and what the people need."* Man, Zintan, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"Try to serve the majority of the people and come up with a constitution that will live with us for a long time instead of constantly editing it."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

> *"I hope that anyone who gets a seat remembers that they reached this position through the blood of our martyrs. Libya is a big responsibility in their hands and history is being written."* Woman, Tripoli, over 35, more than secondary education

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The anticipated June 2012 NPC elections offer opportunities and challenges for Libya's fledgling transition. There is widespread enthusiasm for elections and genuine hunger for democratic governance. Focus group participants are eager to vote for the first time in their lives for political parties and candidates who will be accountable to them. Despite the enthusiasm to vote, however, participants have serious concerns about the legitimacy of the polls and access to the information they need to make informed choices. Given the current dissatisfaction with the slow pace of reform and frustration with the perceived failings of the TNG, disappointment could quickly deepen to disenchantment if the elections and ensuing phases of the transition, including the drafting of a new constitution, do not bring about significant change.

Moving forward, the challenge for those who wish to see peaceful and successful elections will be to promote democratic values within a population largely unfamiliar with them, to manage expectations and ensure that citizens have faith in any fair election outcome. Participants' responses in this study provide some guidance for how best to accomplish these objectives.

Building Support for the Political Process

The upcoming election will be the first genuine multi-party, democratic experience in Libya in over 50 years. Participants are eager to participate in the election, but they know little about the mechanics of voting, and assume there will be mismanagement and fraud. Some participants claim that if they do not understand the process, they will not vote, while the low level of understanding of electoral processes may hinder public confidence in the vote and ensuing results. Widespread civic and voter education efforts will need to be multi-faceted to increase not only knowledge of voting, but also faith in the election process. The High National Election Commission (HNEC) is responsible for managing the polling process, and must play a lead role on voter information and education, particularly on issues surrounding voting, counting procedures and the role of international and domestic observers.

Recommendations to the NTC, TNG and High National Election Commission (HNEC):
- Communicate the purpose and process of the election to eliminate any confusion.
- Engage in a large-scale effort to provide details about the voting process so that voters are less likely to assume manipulation.
- Address concerns about the voting and counting procedures and reassure the population of their ability to cast a ballot in secret.
- Inform the public about voting and counting safeguards and the role of monitors and observers to build confidence in the process and the results.
- Promote the benefits of multi-party competition and the rights of all parties to campaign,

- Instruct the population about appropriate behavior for party/candidate supporters in the election and the dangers of election-related conflict.
- Inform the population of the importance of respecting freedom of speech and the rights of citizens to support any party or candidate of their choosing to reduce the likelihood of violence.
- Involve civil society in voter education to leverage their close connection with communities.
- Explain that winners and losers are a natural part of the democratic process and emphasize that elected officials are to behave objectively and in the interest of all the people.
- Share information that will help citizens develop more realistic expectations of election outcomes.
- Encourage women's participation through broad-based voter education and voter information efforts that raise awareness among both men and women about the value and necessity of women's participation.
- Encourage political parties to campaign and provide citizens with information on their platforms and visions for the country's future.

Setting Expectations for More Representative and Responsive Governance

Libyans are increasingly frustrated with the shortcomings of the NTC and TNG. They broadly perceive the government as unresponsive and unable to effectively solve problems, most notably related to security. Given the heightened expectations of average citizens for what the NPC as an elected body and the constitution will deliver, the patience Libyans have demonstrated thus far is likely to dissipate quickly after the election as they look to a newly elected NPC to deliver political, economic and social improvements and to stabilize the volatile security landscape.

If citizens continue to perceive that government and political leadership are failing to take action on the highest priority issues, public dissatisfaction may further increase and could potentially destabilize the transition.

Recommendations to the NTC, NTG, NPC:
- Demonstrate a strong commitment to anti-corruption efforts through the creation of robust investigative and enforcement mechanisms.
- Increase communication about political decision-making in the forthcoming NPC, including descriptions of how the mandate for the NPC will be determined, and explanations of reasons for any delays.
- Manage expectations on security and other citizen priority issues with communication of realistic timeframes and honest assessments of what can be accomplished.
- Prioritize bringing order to the security situation, creating a structured, national army, and delineating security responsibilities among local and national authorities.

- Place training and deployment of police on a fast track and prioritize deployments to particularly unstable areas.
- Expand efforts to engage in dialogue with citizens including traditional and new media, as well as through regular travel by NPC members to their constituencies.
- Establish regular channels for communication between government and citizens.
- Improve national media as a means to raise awareness and inform people about political developments, the transitional framework and timeline, and other necessary information.

Framing an Inclusive Constitutional Process

While awareness of the constitutional drafting process is low, there is broad desire among citizens for opportunities to participate in the process. In fact, many participants claim that a constitution developed in isolation with no citizen input will lack legitimacy. Further, given the lack of familiarity not only with the role of the NPC, but also – more broadly- with the functions and content of a constitution, widespread civic education efforts will be necessary to help citizens understand the parameters intent and parameters of the process.

Recommendations to the NPC, political parties and civil society:
- Newly elected NPC members should take immediate steps to ensure broad societal representation in the constitution drafting process and set clear timelines for review.
- Early efforts by the NPC will be needed to provide basic education about the constitutional process, followed by regional outreach to gather community priority input.
- The NPC should ensure the representation of civil society in an inclusive, consultative constitutional drafting process, including organizations representing ethnic minorities and women.
- Civil society organizations, political parties and the media should: be held responsible for their interventions in the political process; ensure that they participate positively in the constitutional drafting process; monitor the reform process; and provide civic education to Libyan citizens on the draft constitution in advance of the referendum.

Appendix A: Focus Group Locations

Location	Gender	Age	Education
Benghazi	Male	18-35	Some university education
Benghazi	Female	18-35	More than secondary
Derna	Female	35+	Secondary education or less
Derna	Male	18-35	More than secondary education
Misrata	Male	18-35	Some university education
Misrata	Female	18-35	More than secondary education
Sabha	Female	18-35	More than secondary education
Sabha	Male	18-35	Secondary education or less
Tripoli	Female	35+	More than secondary education
Tripoli	Male	35+	Secondary education or less
Zintan	Female	18-35	Secondary education or less
Zintan	Male	35+	More than secondary education