

The Central America Regional Security Initiative: Citizen Security, Human Rights, and the Rule of Law



"We will undertake long-term, sustained efforts to... promote regional security and respect for human rights and the rule of law. We will also continue to strengthen the administrative and oversight capability of civilian security sector institutions, and the effectiveness of criminal justice."

– U.S. National Security Strategy

CARSI – An Integrated, Collaborative Approach to Regional Security and Rule of Law

The Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) is a comprehensive and integrated approach through which the United States partners with Central America to improve citizen security. CARSI complements the strategies and programs that Central American nations implement on their own and in cooperation with other countries. The United States aligns its assistance with the Central American Integration System (SICA) Regional Security Strategy and also draws upon the expertise and efforts of other nations, international financial institutions, the private sector, and civil society.

Threats to Human Rights and the Rule of Law Endanger Central American Communities

Crime is a pervasive concern across Central America. Violence is tragically commonplace, and crime routinely goes unreported, uninvestigated, or unprosecuted. The resulting impunity affects all citizens, but some groups tend to suffer disproportionately, such as community leaders and advocates for human rights and justice, youth, women, and other vulnerable populations. Public officials who ignore human rights violations perpetuate a culture of impunity, undermining the rule of law and robbing citizens of their trust in government institutions. To reduce insecurity and fulfill the state's obligation to protect all citizens, Central American nations must prevent, investigate, and prosecute crime in a manner that respects human rights.

U.S. Assistance – Promoting Human Rights and Rule of Law as the Bedrock of Citizen Security

The United States, through CARSI and complementary U.S. assistance, supports respect for human rights, protection of the region's vulnerable populations, overcoming impunity, and strengthening access to justice and the rule of law. We empower civil society to shape the development of crime prevention strategies and to hold governments accountable. U.S.-supported violence prevention programs steer at-risk youth away from gangs and violence, and strengthen educational opportunities. We help Central American governments develop professional and trustworthy civilian police forces, investigative and prosecutorial capacity, a fair and effective judiciary, and a secure and humane penal system. The United States incorporates human rights training into its programs with police and the armed forces, and assists with institutional reforms to eradicate corruption. In accordance with U.S. law and policy, we undertake stringent vetting procedures for those who receive U.S. assistance. Our assistance often involves U.S. advisors who transfer knowledge and best practices to highly trained units of local law enforcement, investigative personnel, and prosecutors. Our overarching objective is to help Central American nations increase security and prosperity for their citizens and to create more accountable institutions that advance human rights and the rule of law.

For more information related to the Central America Regional Security Initiative, please visit our website at :
<http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rt/carsi/index.htm>

The Five Goals of CARSI in Central America:

1. Create safe streets for the citizens of the region;
2. Disrupt the movement of criminals and contraband to, within, and between the nations of Central America;
3. Support the development of strong, capable, and accountable Central American governments;
4. Re-establish effective state presence, services and security in communities at risk; and
5. Foster enhanced levels of coordination and cooperation between the nations of the region, other international partners, and donors to combat regional security threats.