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## **The ILF Launches Pilot Project In the West Bank**

*ILF's Executive Director travels to the West Bank to launch new project aimed at providing free criminal defense services for the poor in Palestinian civilian courts*

RAMALLAH, West Bank -- With generous support from the German Foreign Office, the International Legal Foundation has launched a six-month pilot project to provide free representation to indigent Palestinians accused of crimes that fall under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian civilian court system in the West Bank. This month, the International Legal Foundation–West Bank (ILF-West Bank) is opening its first office in Ramallah. ILF's Executive Director Natalie Rea has traveled to the West Bank to launch this important initiative.

During the pilot period, two of the ILF's international lawyers will be working in the ILF-West Bank office with Hani Jahaleen, a Palestinian lawyer, and Muneer Sa'eed, an interpreter and administrator, studying the practices followed, and laws applicable, in the Palestinian civilian courts. At the same time, the ILF-West Bank team will be providing representation to the poor in criminal cases. In January 2011, the ILF will decide whether to expand the project.

The International Legal Foundation has projects in Afghanistan and Nepal, where it has established public defender offices to represent the poor in criminal cases. It is based in New York and receives funding from USAID, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency, the German Foreign Office, the Belgian Foreign Office, the Iceland Crisis Response Unit, the United Kingdom Provincial Reconstruction Team, the Oak Foundation, the Open Society Institute, and private individuals.

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