

# Our Last and Only Resort

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN DEVELOPMENT GOES WRONG IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA



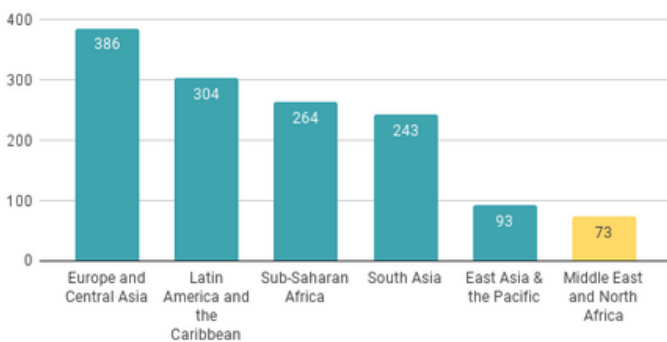
## BACKGROUND

When development projects cause harm to people or their environments, independent accountability mechanisms (IAMs) tied to international financial institutions (IFIs) receive and respond to complaints from communities.

## THE PROBLEM

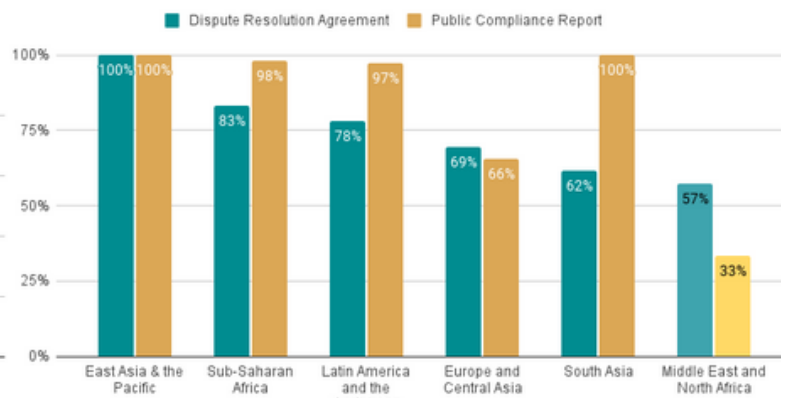
The Middle East and North Africa region (the MENA) has the **fewest complaints to IAMs** than any other region, as well as the **lowest rates of their complaints being addressed** than any other region.

Number of Complaints to IAMs by Region



**Figure 1** - The MENA has the fewest absolute number of complaints out of any region. 73 complaints have been filed in MENA countries, significantly less than the global average of 195 complaints per region.

Rate of Outputs of Substantive Stages of Complaints



**Figure 2** - The rate of outputs from substantive stages in the MENA remains disproportionately low. Only 57% of complaints that reach a dispute resolution stage produce a public agreement, and only 33% of compliance reviews produce a report.

## FINDINGS

There are **significant limitations of IAM processes** that we have observed, which appear to be impacting both the **number of complaints filed** and the **types of outputs** complaints reach from IAM processes in the MENA region. Our report details the experiences of CSOs and individuals who have filed complaints in the MENA region.

While many of the limitations of IAM processes that we found are also experienced by communities and advocates across the globe, the **socio-political contexts in the MENA have amplified the extent and magnitude of many of these issues.**



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## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



### Reprisal Protocols & Policies:

IAMs and IFIs should adopt zero tolerance policies and specific protocols on reprisals, and provide regular staff training on responding to reprisals in order to address and mitigate reprisal risks.



### Direct Funding:

IAMs should provide direct funding to complainants and their advocates to engage in IAM complaint processes to ensure that these processes are effective and equitable.



### Translate Materials:

IAMs and IFIs should translate written and audio-visual materials, engage high quality translators, and hire local consultants to address knowledge gaps and language barriers.



### Meaningful Consultation:

IAMs and IFIs should adopt meaningful consultation practices early on that involve communities in decision-making processes.



### Remedy Mandate:

IAMs should adopt mandates that allow them to recommend and enforce remedy.



### Withholding Payment:

IFIs should condition new funding on providing remedy for prior harm, as verified by communities, and should withhold project payment during ongoing complaints.



## COMMUNITY VOICES



"People are expecting results and some kind of redress. I wouldn't go again to a community that is hurting and say, let's go make a complaint that will take 7 years."

Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, Egypt

"The participation of civil society is very important, not only for transparency and rights, but also enhancing the outputs of development. Civil society organizations have connections to communities and know the needs of communities."

Yemen Observatory for Human Rights, Yemen

"There needs to be support given to these groups to sustain themselves, especially because these cases take years."

Center for Development in the Region of Tensift, Morocco