

THE
CARTER CENTER



CARTER CENTER NEWS

FALL 2025

**Guyana's
Elections Occur
at Pivotal Time**

**Days Numbered
for Ethiopian
Guinea Worms**



WAGING PEACE.
FIGHTING DISEASE.
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FALL 2025

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ON THE COVER

A Guyanese voter and his son prepare to enter a polling station in Georgetown. The Carter Center monitored the Sept. 1 election, sending observers to more than 230 polling stations, including many in remote areas.



From the CEO, Paige Alexander

Democracy Depends on Courage

In my role as CEO of the Carter Center, I am frequently asked about the rise of authoritarianism worldwide and the state of democracy in the United States. In fact, I spoke on those closely related topics in July at the Chautauqua Institution, a nonprofit center in upstate New York that serves as a hub for dialogue on current events and issues.



In a recent lecture at the Chautauqua Institution, Carter Center CEO Paige Alexander discussed the rise of authoritarianism.

In one part of my lecture, I delineated the seven tactics that leaders employ to move toward authoritarianism. That video received hundreds of thousands of views and comments on the institution's TikTok account, and it's gratifying to know people are interested in this subject.

It's important to remember that our nation has been through versions of the current situation before. President Carter was born into a time following World War I, when dissident U.S. citizens were being persecuted for criticizing government policy. That era was ugly, but it didn't last. Americans also endured threats to freedom of speech and assembly during the Red Scare of the 1950s, but cooler heads and democratic principles eventually prevailed.

I'm not suggesting that believers in democracy should just sit back and wait for events to unfold. On the contrary, the only appropriate response to authoritarianism and democratic backsliding is to peacefully resist through small-d democratic actions. Indeed, in recent decades, we have watched "people power" bring about breathtaking turns from dictatorship to democracy in Chile, the Balkans, South Korea, and elsewhere.

History is replete with stories of brave individuals who have stood against the odds, defied tyranny, and defended the rights of all people.

To President Carter, justice and democracy weren't just ideals; they were daily acts of courage and faith. He never got lost in despair because his faith in people's desire for peace and freedom was stronger than his doubts.

That's a faith we at The Carter Center share. If we are brave, democracy can thrive.



Paige Alexander is the chief executive officer of The Carter Center.

New Film Chronicles President Carter's Guinea Worm Fight

The President and the Dragon," a powerful new documentary detailing former U.S. President Jimmy Carter's decades-long fight to eradicate an ancient parasite, was released Oct. 1, coinciding with what would have been President Carter's 101st birthday. The film can be streamed on Amazon, Hoopla, and Verizon Fios, with additional platforms to follow. Georgia Public Broadcasting will air the documentary this fall.

President Carter championed the global effort to eradicate Guinea worm disease from 1986 until his death in December 2024. "The President and the Dragon" tells how President Carter and an eclectic group of public health professionals, local volunteers, and ex-child soldiers braved treacherous terrain and armed conflicts to reduce Guinea worm cases from 3.5 million each year in 1986 to just 15 last year.

"My grandfather desperately wanted to outlive Guinea worm, and he came remarkably close to doing it," said Jason Carter, Carter Center board chair. "He witnessed firsthand what freeing a community from this terrible disease meant to people's daily lives, and The Carter Center will keep working until there are zero cases."



Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter tries to comfort a 6-year-old Ghanaian girl with a Guinea worm in her ankle. A new documentary showcases his efforts to eradicate the parasite, which once incapacitated entire communities.

Proceeds from each rental of the film will support the Carter Center's work around the world. Check the Carter Center website for the most up-to-date information on where to watch: www.cartercenter.org/PresidentAndDragon.

Survey: Chinese Public Divided About Seeking Global Dominance

Results from a recent survey show that Chinese citizens overwhelmingly support their country's active participation in world affairs and do not view the United States as a friend to China. Polling was conducted by The Carter Center and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs from April through June this year.

While 90% of survey respondents endorsed China's participation on the world stage, they were less clear cut on the country's role. Some 48% of respondents said that China should share in world leadership, while 40% thought the country should take a dominant role.

Most respondents did not have a favorable view of the United States: Only 17% thought the U.S. was a friend to China. This finding is consistent with other recent polls. In dealing with Washington, China should take a balanced approach, says the Chinese public—a mix of cooperation and containment.

In addition, despite pessimistic predic-

tions outside China, 84% of Chinese citizens believe their economy is doing well overall.

With the rise of Chinese economic advancement, the country's public appears to understand China's international clout. A report on the survey results can be found at www.cartercenter.org.

10 Journalists Named as Mental Health Fellows

The Carter Center has selected nine U.S. recipients of the 2025–2026 Rosalynn Carter Fellowships for Mental Health Journalism, and one international fellow focused on climate change and mental health. The fellows will receive training and mentorship to responsibly report on topics related to mental health and substance use disorders along with a stipend to support their work over the next year.

The journalists and their topics are as follows:

Gray Chapman, Freelance Reporter
Intersection of incarceration, opioid use disorder, and motherhood

Kristiania Clark, Freelance Reporter
Mental health effects of government regulation of gender identity

Oliver Egger, Freelance Reporter
Remembering people who were housed in U.S. asylums and state schools

Joe Garcia, CalMatters
Incarceration, rehabilitation, and transformation within California's prison system

Julia Hotz, Solutions Journalism Network
Potential of social prescriptions for antidepressants and stimulants

Lottie Joiner, Freelance Reporter
Link between response to stress and childhood trauma, particularly among Black women

Marisa Kendall, CalMatters
Mental health and homelessness in California

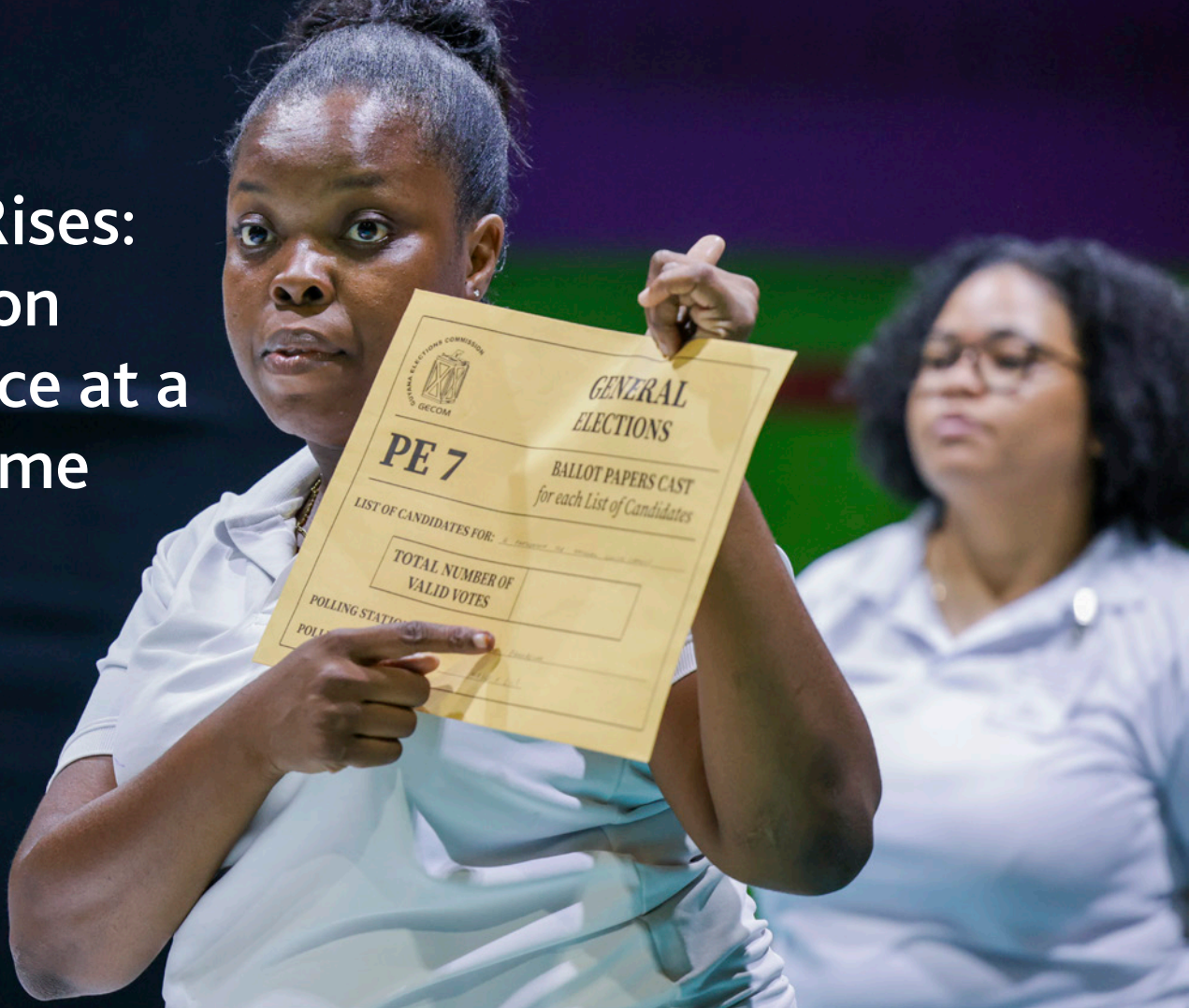
Jess Mador, WABE
Effects of government cuts on the mental health of veterans and their families

Corinne Purtill, Los Angeles Times
High prevalence of suicide and suicidal ideation among autistic children, teens, and adults

Hammad Sarfraz, Express Tribune, Pakistan
Ways that climate change is causing economic paralysis in Pakistan, triggering a silent mental health crisis

Guyana Rises: An Election Takes Place at a Pivotal Time

During Guyana's September election, an official shows observers each step of vote tabulation.



Guyanese citizens line up to vote at a Georgetown polling station.

Carlene Gill-Kerr walked through a city park, reflecting on her voting plan and urging others to do the same. The next day, the Guyanese poet would cast a ballot with hopes for a fair process and results that would serve everyone well—not just those who look like her.

“Go out there and choose,” she said. “Guyana is at a point where we can go left or right.... I really want to see Guyana rise.”

She wasn’t alone in wanting a peaceful and democratic process.

The Carter Center dispatched a team of nearly 50 international observers to monitor the Sept. 1 election in the multiethnic—and often ethnically divided—country. They came from places as diverse as Mali, Sri Lanka, and Colombia before deploying by car, airplane, and boat to more than 230 polling stations, even in the most remote areas of Guyana.

“Observers play a critical role in measuring electoral credibility, acting as the eyes and ears around key parts of the process. They report on preelection conditions and also assess the quality of election day processes at polling stations and tabulation centers,” said



An election worker explains the voting process at a polling station to Jason Carter, leader of the Carter Center's observation mission.

David Carroll, director of the Center's Democracy Program. "The work of individual observers is critical to the Carter Center's mission."

Elections in Guyana have been marked by tension, and this one came at a pivotal time in the country's history. The South American nation has experienced newfound wealth, development, and global attention since the discovery of offshore oil in 2015. It's also seen amplified territorial claims and aggression from Venezuela over their shared border. The last election, in 2020, was marked by an alleged attempt to undermine tabulation of votes, which took more than five months to resolve. The stakes this time felt especially high for voters, observers, and democracy alike.

"Elections are a steppingstone toward democratization," said Sasha Pajevic, of Montenegro, an election observer who's also joined the Center for missions in Libya, Nepal, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. "Voters trust the transparency and validity of elections more when international organizations are present."

The 2025 election was the Center's sixth in Guyana, the first being in 1992. And while concerns remain about campaign finance rules, state media bias, and mishandling of state resources for campaigning, the election itself was the smoothest yet.

The incumbent party won, with President Mohamed Irfaan Ali securing reelection. A new opposition party—established just three months before the election and headed by a young U.S.-sanctioned businessman—emerged in second place, a development that may change the landscape moving forward.

The Center has made, and will continue to make, recommendations for how Guyana can improve future elections to ensure every voice is heard.

"This democracy in Guyana is hard won and, therefore, more valuable," said Jason Carter, President Carter's grandson, chair of the Center's board of trustees, and leader of the 2025 Guyana mission. "Guyana has a real opportunity to be a world leader and an example for the world of a vibrant democracy that is built on freedom and that is based on equal and wide access to political power."

And poet Gill-Kerr, determined to see her country rise, would like to see that Guyana on the horizon, too.

Reflections From Election Observers

The nearly 50 Carter Center observers who traveled to Guyana for the 2025 election came from 21 countries and included first-time international observers and decades-long veterans. Hear perspectives from four below.

Fadoua El Ouni, Tunisia

The Tunisian revolution of the early 2010s proved an awakening for Fadoua El Ouni. She began helping others navigate the country's new democratic electoral process.



"That started the journey that led me here," said El Ouni, who's been steeped in Tunisian elections ever since, worked for three years as a Tunisia program officer for The Carter Center, and served on the core team for the Center's 2022 Tunisian election mission.

Guyana 2025 was her first observation mission outside her home country.

"No matter where you go," she said, "there are bits and pieces that are similar.... It's nice to see the similarities between nations, even thousands of miles apart."



Paolo Maligaya, Philippines

Paolo Maligaya mainly focuses on elections in the Philippines, but he's no stranger to international missions, where he often reunites with old friends. His first experience with the Center was as a long-term observer in Indonesia in 2004.

"We stand to learn a lot of things from the experiences of other countries, and it's very fulfilling," he said.

Aleksandra "Sasha" Pajevic, Montenegro

"People don't trust each other in my country or in any country in transition. They are very suspicious of everything.... International organizations and observations help because people trust more someone from abroad. They trust the elections more, which is important because we all want our voices heard."



Jon Johnson, United States



"I really like seeing the way things operate in other places and then comparing that to what we do in the United States. There are a lot of similarities, on a lower-tech basis, but it's basically the same process of trying to get everybody a fair vote in every election. That is the goal."

Ethiopia's Guinea Worms Live on Borrowed Time



Chiel Otong (left) leads a crew that cleans out local ponds and then applies a mild larvicide every 28 days to help stop transmission of Guinea worm disease.

By Soya Ellison

Omod Ogebo peeled the bandages from his patient's thigh, took hold of a small, twisted piece of gauze resting beneath them, and began carefully unwinding the creature wrapped inside it.

And there it was.

After nearly 11 years at The Carter Center, I had come face to face with my first living Guinea worm.

There aren't that many chances to meet one these days; the world saw just 15 human cases of Guinea worm last year, down from roughly 3.5 million a year when we started working on the disease in 1986.



Soya Ellison is the Carter Center's director of storytelling.

This worm—the one inching its way out of the thigh of a 32-year-old farmer and forager named Ojot—is the first to torment an Ethiopian in nearly three years.

Its existence is deeply disappointing to the hundreds

of Carter Center staff in Ethiopia, who had reason to believe they'd seen their last human case. I share their disappointment. But as a relative newcomer to the ins and outs of our Guinea worm work, I came away from my encounter with the worm more encouraged than disheartened.

So many things went right.

Caught in Time

Carter Center staff and volunteers have done such a good job of educating residents about signs and symptoms that Ojot suspected there was a Guinea worm beneath the painful bump on his thigh and reported his case before the worm poked through his skin.

That's critically important, because only after it emerges can it release its microscopic larvae into water sources.

There will be no children or grandchildren for this worm.

And thanks to the Carter Center team's extensive network and effective protocols, they were able to determine when and where Ojot likely came in contact with the Guinea worm larvae—and who was with him at that time.

They're keeping close watch on the 15

men who accompanied Ojot on a trip into the bush to hunt for wild honey and yams. The leading theory is that someone in the group didn't properly filter water that he collected for himself and others on that trip.

Every day, someone from the team checks in via call or text with each member of the foraging party. And if they can't reach them by phone, they get on their motorbikes and go out to find them in person.

They'll keep checking on them until about 14 months after the trip, when they know the Guinea worm's incubation period has passed.

Ogebo—the nurse responsible for slowly pulling the worm from Ojot's leg—is spearheading the tracking of these men. He also runs the case containment center, a clean and cheerful compound where anyone in the district of Gog with a suspected case stays while the team treats their wounds.

Four people besides Ojot were staying there when I visited. The Carter Center provides free room, board, and wound care until the staff determines it's safe for them to return to their homes.

"I like this job," said Ogebo, who has been

with the Center for 15 years. “This disease has been a long time in this country, and our families and brothers and sisters have been suffering. We want to eradicate it.”

A Dedicated Trio

So many others I met shared his passion and dedication.

Abang Akway, a 22-year-old volunteer, visits each household in her village of Umaha three times a week, carrying a fabric flipbook featuring colorful drawings that depict Guinea worm transmission and symptoms to make sure her neighbors remain vigilant.

Akway had a Guinea worm when she was a child. She told me she still recalls the Carter Center staffer who took her to the nearest case containment center on his bicycle—a ride that took two hours—and she doesn’t want anyone else to suffer as she did.

I also met Chiel Otong, who is responsible for applying a mild larvicide in ponds in his community every 28 days. He’s been at the job for five years, working with community members in punishing heat or torrential rain.

And then there was Joseph Okello, a field officer whose duties include working on the proactive dog tethering program in the village of Athete. He doesn’t need to consult his notes to tell

you that Athete is home to 53 dogs and 43 dog owners. The Carter Center helps build and maintain “tukuls”—the local word for dog-houses—plus dog food, veterinary services, and fencing for a dog park where the animals can play safely off leash.

All this ensures that the dogs don’t run free, drinking potentially contaminated water and a year later re-contaminating it when they seek relief from the pain of a Guinea worm by soaking a paw beneath its cool surface.

‘Carter Center Staff Are There’

And these are only a few of the vast network of staff and volunteers working in just two



(Top) Abang Akway visits all households in her Ethiopian village to conduct Guinea worm surveillance and education. (Left) Dogs can spread Guinea worm disease, so owners must keep them tethered or take them to an enclosed dog park. (Above) A health worker painstakingly removes a Guinea worm from farmer Ojot’s thigh.

districts in western Ethiopia. There are more in other districts in other parts of the country—and more still in the capital of Addis Ababa, where they work hand in hand with staff in Ethiopia’s Ministry of Health.

All equally dedicated. All using innovative yet simple tactics to fight a disease that can’t be wiped out by a pill or vaccine.

Yeshitila Mulugeta, a behavioral change communications officer now based in Addis Ababa, is tasked with helping ensure people do the things that keep them safe—like drinking through properly cleaned pipe filters and keeping infected people and animals away from water sources.

Guinea worm work is hard, he said, but rewarding. And it has been successful because of the relationships the Carter Center team has built in communities. They show up when and where they’re needed, no matter the difficulty.

“Carter Center staff will not say, ‘It is raining.’ They will not say, ‘The road is not okay.’ They will not say, ‘I have to have a vehicle to go somewhere,’” Mulugeta told me. “If the people are there, Carter Center staff are there.”

That’s why I came away feeling uplifted rather than discouraged. With commitment like that, how can the Guinea worm’s days not be numbered?

Mental Health Care Helps Liberian Turn Life Around

At his lowest point, Archie Pitah wanted to give up.

He had lived for years with a substance abuse disorder and was estranged from his family. Then the 28-year-old Liberian contracted tuberculosis, an airborne scourge spread through close contact with people infected with the disease.

Aches and pains wracked his body, and he lost weight.

"I broke down, thinking that with TB, you're already dead," Pitah said.

When Pitah received a positive TB test, the hospital had run out of medication, worsening his sense of despair.

That's when everything started to turn around.

Caroline Sonwabe is a TB nurse in Monrovia. She met Pitah when he came to her clinic for the medication the hospital couldn't provide. Luckily for him, Sonwabe is one of dozens of TB nurses who received training in mental health care basics as part of the Carter Center's longtime efforts to help improve Liberia's mental health care system.

Pitah realized he wasn't alone in his struggle—many TB patients often experience depression.

"Liberia is a high-burden tuberculosis country, which makes it a perfect country for integration of TB and mental health services," said Dr. Kashef Ijaz, vice president for health programs at The Carter Center. "That means once someone gets diagnosed in a clinic, their related mental health needs can also be addressed."

Sonwabe helped keep Pitah's spirits up, inspiring him to remain positive, even when things looked bleak. She also made sure he never forgot to take his medicine.

"With TB patients, they are already depressed. They say, 'I don't think I will live,'" Sonwabe said. "After the training, I got to know that you need to talk to your patient on every visit. Each time they come, I tell them TB can be cured."

As Pitah beat his addiction and moved back with family, Sonwabe called to connect him with resources or simply offer encouragement.

One day, she called with an opportunity: The Carter Center needed a spokesperson to help raise awareness about resources available to combat tuberculosis. She thought Pitah would be perfect for the job.

Working with the Center, he appeared on radio shows and traveled to rural villages. Pitah took pride in the opportunity to help others.

"If people are out there listening to my story, they can get the courage to do the same," he said. "Because if it can happen for me, it can happen for other people."

With the small stipend he received from that work, Pitah was able to complete an introductory computer course. He dreams of attending college and pursuing a career in information technology.

Sonwabe has stayed in touch with Pitah even after his recovery. He has been able to return the kindness by helping her when she has computer issues.

It's a positive health outcome that started with care and blossomed into friendship. By seeing Pitah as more than just his disease, Sonwabe helped change his life.

"She didn't treat me like a patient," he said, "but like her own son."



With the steadfast support of nurse Caroline Sonwabe, Archie Pitah moved from depression to optimism following his tuberculosis diagnosis. Sonwabe received mental health training through a Carter Center program.



Cuts Force Bangladesh Women's Program to 'Reimagine'

Champa was already struggling when she gave birth and was slapped with a health clinic bill she couldn't afford. Then she found out delivery services are supposed to be free. She filed a complaint, fought for reimbursement, and helped change the clinic's policy to protect other women.

Nurjahan came across a driver's training program but lacked the required ID card to register. She got one and is poised to be one of the few female professional drivers in her region.

Siriya discovered untapped government funds for people with disabilities. She set out to secure that money for neighbors, undeterred by officials who tried to stop her.

"Information is what changed these women's lives," said Shammi Laila Islam, the Carter Center's acting country representative in Bangladesh. "It empowered them to achieve more for themselves and the people around them."

But the project that made these wins possible is a shell of itself since it lost U.S. Agency for International Development funding.

Getting What They Deserved

The Advancing Women's Right of Access to Information project in Bangladesh began in 2016 but expanded in 2023, thanks to a USAID grant. It supported individuals in remote areas who had no education or

A courtyard meeting in January 2025 in Bangladesh's Rangamati District brings together community members eager to improve their lives through access to government information. The following month, cuts to USAID funding forced the Carter Center project to stop services in this district and others.

experience with government officials.

With assistance from partners, Carter Center staff hosted courtyard meetings and information "booth camps" for hundreds of women's groups to inform people of their rights and help them access resources.

They accompanied women to offices so they could get what they deserved. They assisted thousands of people and built trust with local governments, which became more responsive to citizens.

The USAID cuts in February 2025 stopped this progress, severing relationships and killing activities that were lifelines.

'Left in Limbo'

Instead of serving 10 districts, the project now operates in two. A Carter Center team of 15 became four. Another two dozen individuals, appointed by partners to help, also lost their jobs.

The result is "silencing voices and stopping the development of communities," said Nazmun Nahar, the Center's program officer in Bangladesh.

Leaders of partner organizations say their credibility has been hurt.

The people they served "are now left in

limbo, feeling abandoned and demotivated," said Abdus Sabur Biswas, executive director of Agrogoti Sangstha, which implemented activities in the southwestern coastal region.

Hoping for 'Something Magical'

The Carter Center's reliance on USAID funding, overall, was much less than that of many other international nonprofit organizations. But that's of little solace to Champa.

"Now that the project has ended, we don't get any updates," she said. "We don't know how things are working, and no one listens to us."

The Center has the tools, partnerships, knowledge, and data to do more, and it hopes to revive the program through fundraising before momentum is completely lost.

Leanne Webster, director of the Center's Rule of Law Program, which runs the project, sees an opportunity to reimagine what's possible without the U.S. government and USAID working as an intermediary.

"We've seen what a difference these efforts make in women's lives, and there's more potential than ever for impactful work," Webster said. With the right funding partners, "we can do something magical."

Craig Withers

After 37 Years, Guinea Worm Warrior Retires

Since the 1980s, Craig Withers has hunted Guinea worms in tens of thousands of African villages, represented former President Jimmy Carter in tense negotiations, and strived to keep more than 3,000 Carter Center staffers safe. Now, after 37 years, 35 countries, and over 3 million Delta miles, Withers is retiring.

"I came to The Carter Center as a Guinea worm warrior, and in my heart of hearts, I'm still a Guinea worm warrior," he said. "I don't want to leave without finishing Guinea worm, but the time has come."

In 1987, the Center's Dr. Donald Hopkins recruited Withers from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help map Guinea worm disease in Nigeria's 95,000 villages. By the following year, Withers was a Carter Center employee living in Nigeria.

While there, Withers was asked to write a speech about Guinea worm to be delivered by head of state Gen. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida at a Guinea worm donors conference. While writing, inspiration struck. "It was a Saturday afternoon, and I was drinking a Heineken," he said. "An unvetted idea broke through," and he added a rogue line to the speech that he was sure would be thrown out later.

At the conference, Withers recalls Gen. Babangida starting the speech, and he appeared to follow Withers' original text, word for word. Nervously wondering if his rogue line would indeed be delivered,



Craig Withers retires from The Carter Center as vice president of overseas operations.

Withers began pacing in the back of the room. Then it happened: "The government of Nigeria will give 7.7 million naira to Guinea worm eradication," announced Gen. Babangida to the crowd. Withers couldn't believe it. In his draft, he wrote that Nigeria would donate \$1 million. "They changed that to 7.7 million naira, which meant it was a conscious decision," Withers said. Add fundraiser to the list of Withers' roles at The Carter Center.

Over time, Withers took on more responsibilities, including many outside the health arena. President Carter trusted him to speak on his behalf, even sending him to negotiate with the notoriously violent Ugandan rebel leader Joseph Kony. One of the three objectives of that meeting was for Withers and a colleague to come back alive.

Withers said he learned from President Carter how to deal with powerful people.

"First of all, he treats everyone with dignity," Withers said, still speaking of the late former president in the present tense. "He listens to

everybody, and then he responds, but he's direct. And that's the way I would conduct my negotiations.... I was always respectful, and we usually found some compromise to solve whatever the issue was."

Withers exits as vice president of overseas operations, a portfolio that includes everything from purchasing supplies for country offices to hiring security for staff in dangerous conflict zones.

Now he gets to relax and wait for the coming victory over Guinea worm. At press time, just four human cases of the parasitic disease had been reported in the world this year.

"What I have come to understand is that victory is achieved through a war of increments," he said in a 2009 interview. "A little progress each day is how a battle is won."



Early in his career, Withers lived in Nigeria, helping the country eliminate Guinea worm disease. Here, he checks a water filter designed to keep drinking water safe from the early stage of the parasite.

Discussion Series Examines Pressing Issues of the Day

The Carter Center recently restarted a public discussion series about the Center's peace and health work, providing a public platform for dialogue on global issues.

Designed to keep the Atlanta community informed, the Conversations at The Carter Center series features experts, policymakers, leaders, and special guests who address pressing challenges in the U.S. and abroad. The series honors the founders of The Carter Center, former President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalynn Carter, who inspired the Conversations events and were often featured speakers.

For the first three installments, thanks to the sponsorship of LifeStraw, Truist, and the Georgia Health Initiative, experts gathered in Atlanta to discuss human rights, mental health, and Guinea worm eradication—three programs of great importance to The Carter Center.

In March, Mary Robinson, the first female president of Ireland, offered insight on her remarkable life following a screening of “Mrs. Robinson,” a biographical documentary. Robinson blazed trails not only in politics but also in human rights, women's rights, and climate advocacy.

Robinson has several ties with The Carter Center, including a long friendship with President and Mrs. Carter. But perhaps her strongest connection to the Center is a shared commitment to bolstering human rights around the world. “The universal values of human rights are indispensable,” Robinson said.

In June, a panel of mental health experts discussed how the arts can be used as a tool for healing, especially among youth. According to the

panelists, creative expression through music, comedy, and performance can help youth process emotions, build resilience, reduce loneliness, and feel like they belong. The conversation highlighted the importance of normalizing mental health discussions and using the arts to foster safe environments for vulnerability and self-expression.

Finally, in September, The Carter Center hosted the Atlanta premiere of “The President and the Dragon,” a new documentary highlighting former President Jimmy Carter's decades-long leadership in the quest to eradicate Guinea worm disease. Following the film, a panel of experts, including the CEO of LifeStraw, Alison Hill, discussed the tools and innovation required to finish the job. (See page 3 for additional details about “The President and the Dragon.”)

Keep an eye out for more information about new installments of Conversations at The Carter Center in the coming months.

Carter Center Weekend Raises \$2.8 Million

The 2025 Carter Center Weekend raised more than \$2.8 million in donations and auction sales to support the Center's peace and health programs around the world. The annual fundraiser, held June 26–29 in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, featured updates from Carter Center leadership, briefings on the Center's initiatives, local excursions, and live and silent auctions.

“This year was the first time we gathered for a Carter Center Weekend since President Carter's passing,” said the Carter Center's CEO, Paige Alexander. “We are so grateful for our supporters' continued generosity, which enables us to carry forward the Carters' enduring legacy.”

The top bid in the auction was \$400,000 for a former auctioneer's cowboy hat, a coveted collectible. A signed cartoon by Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Mike Luckovich featuring President and Mrs. Carter, originally published in *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, sold for \$100,000.

A guitar featuring the signatures of rock 'n' roll icons Eddie Van Halen, Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, Carlos Santana, Slash, Neil Young, The Edge, and Pete Townshend sold for \$185,000.

A supporter bid \$75,000 on an original painting of irises by Jerome Lawrence, a perennial auction favorite.



In June, a panel of mental health experts shared ways that the arts can be used for healing, particularly among young people.

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WAGING PEACE. FIGHTING DISEASE. BUILDING HOPE.



Dr. Sara Lavinia Brair is the Carter Center's senior country representative for Sudan.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Every Success Counts in War-Torn Sudan

By Dr. Sara Lavinia Brair

Civil war has devastated my home country of Sudan, and many colleagues and I have had to flee with our families.

The conflict has also caused significant disruptions in the Carter Center's work to fight trachoma and lymphatic filariasis.

But it has only delayed our efforts, not deterred them, as we have been able to make progress while facing incredible challenges.

This summer, working with our federal and state ministry of health partners, we completed two mass drug administrations, one for each disease, in Gedaref state. In total, we delivered nearly 750,000 doses of vital medicines to vulnerable people, including Ethiopian refugees.

When the conflict erupted two-and-a-half years ago, hundreds of thousands of doses of drugs were stolen. Most of our team was forced to evacuate. Once we regrouped, we began to make alternate plans, but new obstacles appeared daily.

The airport in Khartoum, where we received medication and supplies, was destroyed. After identifying a substitute facility in the city of Port Sudan, we conducted test shipments to show our international partners that we could safely accept and disburse the donated medications. Thankfully, the airport in Port Sudan proved usable, and we were able to receive the necessary drugs.

Yet more roadblocks appeared.

The war slowed coordination with our ministries of health partners, who were themselves displaced by the conflict. The Ramadan holidays and onset of rainy season further hampered our plans.

What's more, once delivery vehicles were ready to depart from Port Sudan for Gedaref, drones attacked local gas stations, making fuel scarce.

But we persevered, thanks to our dedicated staff and committed partners. The team still found a way to improve the health of hundreds of thousands of people. Operations today are far from normal, but this is nothing new for The Carter Center—we're used to working under difficult circumstances. Not even war can stop us.



In this file photo from Sudan, a health worker measures a child to determine the proper dose of the medication that helps prevent trachoma, a bacterial eye disease. Since 2023, Sudan's civil war has made drug distribution nearly impossible.