



ICT4Peace 2023 Year End and Outlook 2024 Report

Poised at the beginning of 2024, we at ICT4Peace reflect on 2023 as a year marked by significant geopolitical shifts and ongoing challenges in cyberspace governance and digital diplomacy. The outbreak of war in Israel-Palestine in October 2023 added another layer of complexity to the global security landscape, further emphasizing the critical role of ICTs in both conflict and peacebuilding.

This year also witnessed ICT4Peace's continued commitment to fostering responsible state behavior in cyberspace and advocating for the ethical use of technology, particularly in the realm of private security services, and continued its work to better understand and mitigate the complex challenges posed by the digital landscape in conflict and post-conflict settings. In 2024 ICT4Peace will actively support the [UN in preparing the WSIS plus 20 Review](#) in 2025, and quietly celebrate its own 20 Years Anniversary.

In the wake of the Israel-Palestine and Russian-Ukraine conflicts, our focus on multilateral engagement and dialogue has been more crucial than ever. The conflict underscored the importance of addressing the external costs of disinformation and misinformation in an increasingly interconnected world. Our statement to the [UN in December 2023 highlighting the externality costs of dis/information](#) sought to highlight some of the underlying drivers as well as offer some recommendations for mitigating and recouping some of the costs. As we participated in [high-level discussions at forums like the Paris Peace Forum](#), as part of the Swiss delegation at [Geneva Peace Week Meets New York](#), and the [UN Open-Ended Working Group on Information Communication Technologies](#), we consistently emphasized the need for collaborative efforts to mitigate emerging threats and risks in cyberspace.

Our projects and research in 2023 have been pivotal in advancing our mission. [The toolkit on the "Responsible Use of ICTs in Private Security Services."](#) supported by the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs, is set to establish new benchmarks for the industry. Our collaboration with the Stimson



Center on a policy paper on cyber accountability, scheduled for publication in Spring 2024, promises to offer insightful perspectives on this critical issue.

Following the Summit of Djerba, the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF) – upon proposal by Swiss Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis – created an executive working group responsible for formulating operational proposals to strengthen the action of the Francophonie in the digital field (GTEN). To carry out this mandate, [Switzerland designated ICT4Peace](#), to chair and support the Working Group as rapporteur and main editor of its report and its recommendations. The establishment of an OIF resource center in Geneva, marks a significant stride in our outreach efforts.

The [ICT4Peace Academy](#) has been a cornerstone of our educational initiatives, offering a range of masterclasses and courses throughout the year. Topics have spanned from human rights and cyber through a gender lens to protecting critical national infrastructure from cyberattacks. These courses, tailored for diverse audiences [including representatives from Laos and Cambodia](#), women leaders in [ITU's Her CyberTracks Programme](#), and members of the [Organization of American States](#), reflect our commitment to inclusive and comprehensive cyber education.

Over 2023 the ICT4Peace Foundation continued its work in the field of [digital media and peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts](#). For instance, [Sri Lanka's unprecedented socio-political turmoil called the 'aragalaya'](#) was analysed through the lens of social media. ICT4Peace's expertise has again been instrumental in guiding NGOs on using social media for peacebuilding efforts, in contexts ranging from Afghanistan to Myanmar. In 2024 ICT4Peace will continue its much applauded [Podcast Series focusing on AI, Mis-, Disinformation and Hate Speech](#).

Looking ahead to 2024, we are energized to continue our engagement on the multilateral front, particularly in light of the evolving cyber landscape shaped by conflicts like the one in Israel-Palestine and in Russia-Ukraine. We recognize the urgent need for concerted efforts to address the multifaceted challenges posed by cyber warfare and digital misinformation. Our participation in global



forums will remain focused on advocating for responsible state behavior and promoting international cooperation in cyberspace governance.

ICT4Peace Academy will expand its course offerings, with plans to introduce new modules that address the latest developments in cyber diplomacy and international law. Through these courses, we aim to equip participants with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the complex cyber environment effectively. These educational initiatives are crucial for building a global community of informed and responsible actors in the cyber domain.

A key highlight for 2024 will be the publication of our toolkit on the ["Responsible Use of ICTs in Private Security Services."](#) This comprehensive document, developed through rigorous research and stakeholder consultations, aims to set industry standards for the ethical and responsible use of technology in security services. We anticipate that this guidance will serve as a valuable resource for companies seeking to align their operations with international human rights and humanitarian principles.

As we approach another year, ICT4Peace remains steadfast in its commitment to promoting peace, security, and ethical practices in the digital world. Our efforts in multilateral discussions, educational initiatives, and policy development are geared towards creating a safer, more stable, and equitable cyberspace. We eagerly anticipate the opportunities and challenges that 2024 will bring, and we are prepared to continue our work towards a more peaceful and secure digital future.

Anne-Marie Buzatu, Executive Director, ICT4Peace
Geneva, January 2024