

2024 RESILIENCE FELLOWSHIP ‘FRAGILITY AND RESILIENCE’

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Deadline: 25 May 2024

About the Fellowship

The Resilience Fellowship (henceforth, the Fellowship) was launched in 2020 to heighten the impact of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC)’s Resilience Fund by identifying, incubating and amplifying responses to organized crime that strengthen community resilience in places affected by conflict, violence and criminal governance.

Each year, the programme selects a theme that reflects the different ways in which organized crime undermines the security and stability of communities, such as through [disappearances](#) (2020), [extortion](#) (2021), [environmental crime](#) (2022) and [threats to human rights](#) (2023). For the 2024 Fellowship, we are looking for civil society actors who support communities in contexts of fragility, particularly communities facing conflict.

The results of the 2023 [Global Organized Crime Index](#) show that conflict zones are particularly vulnerable to organized crime. High levels of conflict in a country not only affect its resilience to organized crime, but also allow illicit economies to flourish and create space for the involvement of domestic and foreign criminal actors. States that have been embroiled in conflict and instability, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar, Ethiopia and Ukraine, rank high under the Index in terms of their criminality levels.

In fragile contexts, where state institutions are weak or lack legitimacy, civil society organizations play a critical role in countering the effects of criminality. Civil society actors often fill the gap left by the state by assisting victims of crime, implementing prevention programmes and initiating investigations. Civil society becomes a lifeline in fragile communities, as evidenced by ongoing armed conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, Yemen and Sudan.

Ten fellows will be selected from different contexts and supported through the following mechanisms:

- **Grants:** In fragile environments, the scarcity of financial resources is a pressing issue. Due to ongoing conflict, weak governance and socio-economic disparities, traditional sources of support are often underdeveloped or unavailable. The 2024 Resilience Fellowship will directly address this gap by providing grants of US\$15 000 to individuals in such environments for community projects that build resilience. By focusing on fragile contexts, the Fellowship will ensure that resources reach those who are typically overlooked, making a tangible difference in communities that are most in need.

- **Capacity building:** Through the Fellowship's training and mentoring programme, Fellows will receive guidance on navigating the unique challenges presented by their environments, such as cyber threats, physical security risks and the complexities of criminal economies. This approach begins with an understanding of fragility: identifying the local manifestations of organized crime and developing strategies to counter them.
- **Networking and collaboration:** The Fellowship will provide networking and collaboration opportunities through its Resilience Dialogues and the Resilience Fund Community Platform to influence global policy and strengthen Fellows' initiatives. By fostering an interdisciplinary, global and cross-sectoral network, the Fellowship aims to support a diverse range of solutions, share resources and best practices, and strengthen community resilience to organized crime in fragile contexts.

Defining fragility and resilience

A fragile context or region refers to areas characterized by weak governance, social fragmentation, security threats, and vulnerability to multiple shocks and stressors, including economic, social and environmental challenges. These regions often struggle with violence, conflict and the inability to provide basic services, making them susceptible to the spread of organized crime. This includes drug trafficking, cybercrime, human smuggling and trafficking, and the corruption that often accompanies such activities. Current global vulnerabilities such as the climate emergency, financial instability, geopolitical tensions and existential risks exacerbate resource scarcity and undermine economies and governance, creating a cyclical relationship between fragility and criminality.

Key characteristics of a fragile context include:

			
<p>Weak governance and institutions</p> <p>Limited capacity to make effective decisions, enforce laws, provide public services and ensure security.</p>	<p>Economic instability</p> <p>High levels of poverty, unemployment, inflation and dependence on external aid, with poor infrastructure and limited access to markets and financial services.</p>	<p>Social fragmentation</p> <p>Deep divisions within society based on ethnicity, religion or social class, leading to discrimination, inequality and lack of social cohesion.</p>	<p>External shocks and stressors</p> <p>Susceptibility to global economic fluctuations, geopolitical tensions and other external pressures that exacerbate domestic challenges.</p>
			
<p>Violence and security threats</p> <p>Prevalence of conflict, violence and crime, including organized crime, which can be both a cause and consequence of fragility.</p>	<p>Environmental and health vulnerabilities</p> <p>Exposure to natural disasters, climate change and health crises, with insufficient capacity to manage and mitigate risks.</p>	<p>Human rights abuses</p> <p>Widespread violations of human rights and limited mechanisms for justice and accountability.</p>	<p>Lack of legitimacy and public trust</p> <p>Citizens' lack of confidence in the state's ability or willingness to act in the public interest, leading to alienation and non-cooperation with authorities.</p>

Pathways out of fragility include fostering resilience by supporting the development of local governance and social structures that can resist criminal influence. The GI-TOC defines resilience, particularly in the context of communities affected by organized crime, as the ability of individuals, families and communities to withstand, adapt to and recover from adversities and threats.

The three forms of capacities of community resilience to organized crime are:

- **Absorptive:** These capacities refer to how the community manages and resists immediate threats and adversities through resources that are directly available. For example, developing mechanisms for rapid response to crises, such as emergency relief services, to protect communities with weak governance and institutions.
- **Adaptive:** These capacities are identified in the community's preventive measures against the threat and/or stressors by adjusting or modifying the present system from their experience and perception of the threats. For example, training community members in conflict resolution and mediation in communities facing violence and security threats.
- **Transformative:** These apply when the community movement is able to influence changes in external structures or identity, or create new ones. For example, advocating for and implementing policy changes that address the root causes of human rights abuses.

Grass-roots efforts can directly address the root causes of criminality by promoting livelihoods, education and community development. Examples of successful grass-roots initiatives include community-based policing, youth empowerment programmes and women's economic cooperatives that provide alternatives to illicit activities while challenging traditional norms.

Who should apply?

The 2024 Fellowship aims to support civil society actors working on community responses to organized crime that strengthen resilience in fragile regions affected by conflict, violence and criminal governance.

Applicants should have a background in any of the following fields: journalism and media; activism; advocacy and community mobilization; the creative arts (artists, writers, filmmakers and others); community leaders (religious, cultural and youth leaders); academia (researchers, consultants, scholars and policymakers); and human rights practitioners working directly with affected communities. Individuals from other disciplines will be considered if their work is relevant to the Fellowship's objectives and the annual theme.

The following examples illustrate the dynamics between fragility and organized crime, and how civil society actors from different sectors are actively responding to these challenges. This list is not exhaustive and we will give priority to innovative strategies that go beyond these examples.

- Activists and social workers providing victim-support services and legal aid to counter arms trafficking by militias, thereby increasing the community's absorptive capacity to deal with the immediate impacts of organized crime.
- Grass-roots leaders distributing basic necessities and providing vocational training to mitigate the effects of economic collapse and illegal oil siphoning, thereby increasing the community's adaptive capacity by providing alternative livelihoods and reducing economic dependency.
- Community leaders mediating peace talks and pushing for inclusive policies to address ethnic divisions exploited by drug cartels, building transformative capacity by promoting social cohesion and unity.



- Local leaders developing community-led security initiatives to address ongoing conflict and the illicit opium trade, building both the community's absorptive capacity by preventing crime and its adaptive capacity by creating sustainable safety networks.
- Environmental activists organizing health camps to address poor waste management from illegal dumping, building the community's absorptive and adaptive capacities to health and environmental risks exacerbated by organized crime.
- Social workers and activists providing covert human rights education to empower communities against widespread abuses by drug cartels, building transformative capacity by educating and mobilizing citizens for rights protection.
- Grass-roots campaigns and journalist investigations for accountability and reform to tackle illegal mining and corruption, building the community's transformative capacity by increasing transparency and trust in institutions.

Selection criteria

The Fellowship invites applications from individuals of all genders, ethnic backgrounds, ages, religions or other defining characteristics who are active in communities affected by organized crime. Applicants must have full or professional working proficiency in at least one of the following three languages: Spanish, English or French.

Applicants will be shortlisted for interviews on the basis of the following four criteria.

Criterion 1: Contextual relevance

- The connection of the applicant's background to a fragile, conflict-affected context.
- The applicant's ability to articulate how the characteristics of fragility in their community contribute to vulnerability to organized crime.
- The applicant's work and experience in addressing the challenges of organized crime in fragile communities.

Criterion 2: Problem identification

- The extent to which the applicant's problem statement aligns with the Fellowship's focus on supporting communities in fragile contexts, particularly those affected by conflict.
- The applicant's understanding of how fragility increases community susceptibility to organized crime in relation to the problem.

Criterion 3: Solution feasibility

- The clarity and feasibility of the strategic activities and intended outcomes to improve community resilience and address the identified problem.
- The engagement plan with other community members, highlighting collaborative approaches and partnerships.
- The description of a realistic budget plan, showing how funds will be used to achieve tangible improvements in community resilience.

Criterion 4: Capacity to build community resilience

- The impact of the applicant's previous projects on building community resilience in contexts of organized crime.
- The applicant's ability to reflect on the challenges faced in previous initiatives and how these experiences inform the proposed project's approach and objectives.



Scoring scale

Applicants will be scored on a scale of 1 to 4 against the four criteria above. The overall score will help determine the suitability of candidates to advance the goals of the Resilience Fellowship, as follows:

- Minimal alignment (1–4 points): Minimal alignment with the criterion; lacks depth, specificity or relevance.
- Partial alignment (5–8 points): Partial alignment with the criterion but lacks comprehensive understanding or detailed planning.
- Satisfactory alignment (9–12 points): Satisfactory alignment with the criterion, demonstrating clear understanding and thoughtful planning.
- Strong alignment (13–16 points): Strong alignment with the criterion, demonstrating deep understanding, detailed planning and innovative approaches.

In addition to the criteria, the selection of the ten Fellows will ensure geographical representation and gender balance.

Fellowship structure and benefits

The Fellowship is not designed as a standalone grant application process to develop individual projects, but as a support mechanism for collaborative processes with other committed individuals who are already developing creative perspectives on community resilience and organized crime through dialogue, commitment and action.

Each Fellow will be awarded a total of US\$15 000, payable in three instalments of US\$5 000 each. The use of these funds should adhere strictly to the principles of professionalism, integrity and transparency, be consistent with the plan proposed in the application form, comply with the terms and conditions of the Fellowship agreement, and used to engage in collaborative activities with other Fellows.

The following timeline structures the fellowship experience, ensuring that Fellows are engaged, supported and able to contribute effectively throughout the programme and beyond.

Initial phase: July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Onboarding and commitment: Fellows formalize their involvement by signing an agreement with the GI-TOC and meet their designated Resilience Fund liaison to develop their project.▪ Project launch: Begin project work, using the Resilience Fund's communication tools for regular updates, aligned with a predetermined reporting schedule.
Ongoing phase: August 2024– April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Training: Complete a minimum of six self-paced e-learning sessions covering key topics such as cyber and physical security, criminal economies, advocacy and strategic communication.▪ Mentorship: Participate in mentorship sessions tailored to Fellows' specific needs, as identified in collaboration with liaison.▪ Resilience Dialogues: Participate in Resilience Dialogues to share ideas and experiences with peers, and explore collaboration opportunities related to the annual theme.▪ Workshops and peer learning: Attend targeted workshops aimed at fostering skill development and enhancing collaborative efforts among Fellows.▪ Monitoring and feedback: Submit interim progress reports and financial documentation covering 50% of the budget; incorporate feedback from your liaison and mentors to refine and amplify project outcomes.
Final phase: May–June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Project conclusion: Finalize projects, preparing comprehensive reports and financial statements for the remaining budget allocation.▪ Presentation and reflection: Share projects, outcomes and learnings in a culminating meeting or public forum, contributing to the collective knowledge and impact.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation and feedback: Receive feedback on overall performance and contributions to the Fellowship's objectives.
Post-Fellowship engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community and advocacy: Join the Resilience Fund Community Platform for ongoing peer support, mentorship and engagement opportunities. Continue to advocate for the principles and goals in combating organized crime, leveraging the network and experiences gained through the Fellowship.

How to apply

Candidates should submit an application through the following [online form](#).

If you experience technical difficulties uploading your application or if you have any questions, please contact: fellowship@globalinitiative.net. Applications received by email will be redirected to the online form.

Key dates

30 April 2024	Call for applications for the Resilience Fellowship opens, inviting candidates to apply.
25 May 2024	Call for applications closes. Following this date, the Resilience Fund Grants Committee will begin the process of reviewing all submitted applications
19 June 2024	Decisions on the status of applications will be communicated to applicants. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email. Shortlisted applicants will be contacted to request further information and/or interview.
26 June 2024	Selected candidates will be informed of the next steps involved in the process. Unsuccessful candidates will be notified by email.

About the Resilience Fund

The Resilience Fellowship is part of the GI-TOC's flagship Resilience Fund, which provides grants and support to civil society individuals and organizations working to counter the impacts of criminal governance and violence across the world. Established with a grant from the government of Norway, the Resilience Fund is also supported by the governments of Germany, the Netherlands and New Zealand, and works in partnership with international organizations and NGOs worldwide (more information can be found [here](#)).

