



JOURNALISM FELLOWSHIP WEST AFRICA ‘SUPPORTING JOURNALISTS TO INVESTIGATE ILLICIT ECONOMIES AND INSTABILITY’

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Deadline: 20 August 2024

About the Journalism Fellowship

The Resilience Fund (see below) is calling for proposals from journalists to investigate intersections between illicit economies and instability in West Africa. We invite journalists to submit proposals for in-depth investigative pieces, specifically from Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Benin and Nigeria.

This Fellowship is part of a programme titled ‘Support to the Mitigation of Destabilizing Effects of Transnational Organised Crime (M-TOC)’, which combines traditional security responses with community-driven resilience measures, informed by cutting-edge research and investigative journalism on the intersection of illicit economies and instability. M-TOC is an ECOWAS project commissioned by the German Federal Foreign Office, implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, and the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GITOC), from 2024 to 2025.

The security situation in much of West Africa and the Sahel has deteriorated. The region has seen a surge in *coups d'états* and the growing influence of non-state armed groups (NSAGs), including criminal networks, violent extremists and insurgents. These groups are consolidating territorial influence and expanding their areas of operation. Illicit economies, such as illegal gold mining, cattle rustling, arms trafficking and kidnapping, particularly in the borderlands, play a critical role in this dynamic. These activities finance NSAGs, fuel conflict, engender grievances between local populations and the state, lead to recruitment into NSAGs and undermine conflict resolution.

Journalists play an essential role in communities’ and policymakers’ understanding of the dynamics that underpin these illicit economies by reporting on the relationship between illicit economies and conflict, which is crucial to developing crime-sensitive conflict responses.

The fellowship grants are aimed at supporting local journalists – in print and broadcast media – to cover the local dynamics of illicit economies, conflict and instability in the northern areas of the targeted countries. Fellows will be encouraged to use a range of audio-visual media to enhance the impact of their investigations and diversify their outputs. During the year-long fellowship, the Resilience Fund will provide support in the form of trainings,

Implemented by



mentorship and a liaison system to address their needs. They will engage with experts on illicit economies and instability, and be given opportunities to disseminate their publications.

We will select and support seven proposals in total to investigate different contexts of illicit economies and instability through the following mechanisms:

- **Grants:** This fellowship aims to address lack of financial support by providing grants for each successful applicant of €8 000 to journalists who submit successful proposals that link organized crime to instability issues.
- **Capacity building:** The grantees will have access to specially tailored capacity-building sessions. The Resilience Fund will provide each fellow with a mentor to support them in navigating their specific challenges and help them with opportunities to raise the profile of their work. The Resilience Fund's liaisons will support the fellows by providing one-on-one project management technical assistance when needed.
- **Networking and collaboration:** The fellows will have opportunities to meet virtually at workshops, trainings and dialogues facilitated by the Resilience Fund, the GITOC West African Observatory of Illicit Economies and our partners. They will be invited to join the Resilience Fund Community Platform, which will give them access to funding opportunities, global dialogues and multilateral engagement after the Fellowship ends. There may be opportunities for in-person engagement.

Who should apply?

This fellowship is designed for journalists from Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Benin and Nigeria. Applicants must therefore be based in, and a national of, one of these countries. Preference may be given to those based in or reporting on the northern areas of these countries.

Proposals should demonstrate a clear understanding of illicit economies within a conflict ecosystem, and show knowledge of local socio-political landscapes. Applicants must also exhibit awareness of security risks associated with reporting on these topics.

Selection criteria

The Resilience Fund invites applications from all ethnic backgrounds, ages, religions or other defining characteristics. Applicants must have full or professional working proficiency in English or French.

Applicants will be shortlisted for interviews based on the following four criteria:

Criterion 1: Contextual relevance

- The applicant has worked and proposes to work in the geographic areas stated above.
- The applicant can articulate how illicit economies contribute to instability in these areas.
- The applicant has demonstrated experience in covering illicit economies and instability.

Criterion 2: Narrative development

- The extent to which the applicant's narrative aligns with the call for applications on the relationship between illicit economies and instability.
- The extent to which the theme of the story covers the targeted geographic areas and focuses on affected communities.



- The applicant has clearly stated the main subject(s) of the story.
- The applicant clearly explains why the story matters to illicit economies and instability.

Criterion 3: Solution feasibility

- The clarity and feasibility of the investigative process, including identifying and engaging with sources.
- The description of publication’s format: how the story will be presented and the proposed outputs.
- The description of a realistic dissemination plan.
- The description of a budget plan, showing how funds will be used to investigate and publish the research.

Criterion 4: Capacity to build community resilience

- The applicant has demonstrated experience working closely with communities working in the country, and preferably areas, of interest.
- 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 (4 points): Lacks depth, specificity or relevance.
- Partial alignment (5–8 points): Lacks comprehensive understanding or detailed planning.
- Satisfactory alignment (9–12 points): Demonstrates clear understanding and thoughtful planning.
- Strong alignment (13–16 points): Demonstrates deep understanding, detailed planning and an innovative approach.

Fellowship structure and benefits

Each grantee will be awarded a total of €8 000, payable in two instalments of €4 000. 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; comply with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement; and be used to engage in collaborative activities with other grantees.

The following timeline outlines the structure of the fellowship, which is designed to ensure that grantees are engaged, supported and able to contribute effectively through the programme and beyond.

Initial phase: September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fellows formalize their involvement by signing an agreement with the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime and meeting their designated Resilience Fund liaison to develop their project. ▪ Begin project work, using the Resilience Fund’s communication tools for regular updates, aligned with a predetermined reporting schedule.
Ongoing phase: September 2024– July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in tailored mentorship sessions, as identified in collaboration with the liaison. ▪ Attend targeted workshops aimed at fostering skill development and expertise on the theme. ▪ Submit interim progress reports and financial documentation covering 100% of the budget. ▪ Incorporate feedback from liaison and mentors to refine and amplify project outcomes.
Final phase:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A workshop for fellows to share and discuss their preliminary findings



July–August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Submit final drafts of stories. ▪ Publication of stories in media outlets.
Post-fellowship engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 [online form](#).

If you experience technical difficulties in 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 July 2024	Call for applications for the journalist fellowship opens, inviting candidates to apply.
20 August 2024	Call for applications closes, and the Resilience Fund team begins reviewing applications.
29 August 2024	Shortlisted candidates are invited to online interviews.
29 August 2024	Final applications are reviewed by a committee and the status of applications is communicated to applicants.
11 September 2024	Selected candidates are informed of the next steps involved in the process. Unsuccessful candidates are notified by email.

About the Resilience Fund

The Resilience Fellowship is part of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime's flagship [Resilience Fund](#), which provides grants and support to civil society individuals and organizations working to counter the effects of criminal governance and violence around the world. Established with a grant from the Government of Norway, the Resilience Fund is also supported by the governments of Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States and New Zealand, and works in partnership with international organizations and NGOs worldwide.