

NYU | CENTER ON  
INTERNATIONAL  
CIC | COOPERATION

# Annual Report

## 2022-2023





**Top left:** Public forum organized by CRG on the intersection of soccer and politics in the DRC (Kinshasa, DRC, February 2023); **Top right:** Open Government Partnership Africa and the Middle East Regional Meeting session on community-based paralegals (Marrakech, Morocco, November 2022); **Middle right:** CIC Executive Director Sarah Cliffe delivering remarks at the SDG16+ coalition event during the 2023 UN General Assembly (New York, USA, September 2023); **Middle right:** Rescuing SDG10 event (New York, USA, September 2023). Left to right: Sarah Cliffe; H.E. Mr. Joel Hernández García, Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, Mexico; H.E. Ms. Sylvia Masebo, Minister of Health, Zambia; H.E. Dr. David Moinina Sengeh, Chief Minister, Sierra Leone; H.E. Mr. Hage Geingob, President, Namibia; H.E. Ms. Maropene Ramokgopa, Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, South Africa; Ms. Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director, UNAIDS; Mr. Amitabh Behar, Interim Executive Director, Oxfam International; **Bottom:** Participants in the Peace in Our Cities convening (Medellín, Colombia, June 2023).

# Letter from the Executive Director

When I wrote to you a year ago, the world was grappling with a multifaceted polycrisis characterized by the convergence of health, climate, economic, social, security, and political upheavals, sowing seeds of uncertainty and discord on a global scale. We witnessed growing tensions over the [invasion of Ukraine](#) and the continued legacy of double standards displayed in the response to COVID-19.

As I write this message, the tragic conflict between Israel and Hamas continues to escalate, further deepening those divides.

Reflecting on the tumultuous events of the past year, it is evident that CIC has made significant contributions to effectively addressing critical global challenges. Our work helped advance justice outcomes for Syrians, playing a pivotal part in the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of a resolution to establish an independent institution to address the issue of missing persons in Syria. CIC also conducted comprehensive analyses of [the secondary impacts of the invasion of Ukraine](#), and more recently, we delved into the conflict between Israel and Hamas, providing insights into the intricate dynamics at play in this tragic situation.

Earlier this year, there seemed to be a glimmer of hope. At COP, the United Nations, the G7 and G20 Summits, we saw some relief from the grip of COVID-19. Leaders collectively made commitments to address economic and developmental disparities and bridge the North-South divide.

Unfortunately, the implementation of these commitments has lagged, leaving our world more fractured than ever. Growing polarization and inequality, evident in contested elections across all regions and income levels, pose a threat to social cohesion, political stability, and the collective response to urgent issues such as climate change. At the same time, [a surge in coup d'etats has intensified the plight of "forgotten" political and humanitarian crises](#), Gabon and Niger joining an expanding list of nations subjected to extra-constitutional military regimes.

We must advocate for solutions to these crises, including those that too often evade the global spotlight. As CIC has consistently emphasized, keeping humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actors engaged in such settings is crucial. We delved into this subject in a report

published this year on [strategies for donor involvement in politically estranged situations](#). Our research and advocacy found strong resonance among numerous government leaders at the 78th UN General Assembly. Their shared emphasis on the imperative for commitment and decisive action within the multilateral system, particularly on development financing and addressing forgotten crises, underscored the influence and impact of our work in key arenas.

The recent meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Marrakesh also initiated ambitious reforms within the World Bank and the broader international financial architecture to tackle urgent global challenges head-on. Yet, for multilateral development banks to adequately address today's pressing crises, additional funding is imperative. Without it, we risk remaining grounded, like a state-of-the-art aircraft with no fuel, yearning for the means to power our ambitions. The 2024 Summit of the Future presents an opportunity to discuss broader reform at the UN, fostering concertation among diplomatic and financial efforts to stem the multiple and escalating crises we see today.

Over the past year, CIC has been steadfast in our mission to prevent crises and foster peace, justice, equality, and inclusion. Our work has encompassed extensive research across diverse topics, such as people-centered justice, gender-based violence, violence prevention, contemporary peace operations, rising inequalities, and geopolitical tensions. Through our efforts, we have contributed to the development of tangible tools and initiatives aimed at addressing global issues.

In this constantly evolving global landscape, CIC's support for bridging North-South and regional divisions and our consistent focus on evidence-based solutions to the pressing challenges of our time continue to play an essential role. We are profoundly grateful to our dedicated partners who stand with us in this vital mission.



**Sarah Cliffe**  
Executive Director, CIC



# Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies program

This year, the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies welcomed three new member states—the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Italy, and Slovakia—bringing total membership to 46 countries. In the face of escalating geopolitical challenges, CIC maintained its unwavering commitment to SDG16+, globally and in national discussions.

Engagement with member states and partners deepened, evident through their shared positions and actions—particularly through four high-level meetings focused on exchanging insights regarding SDG16+ and its intersection with global issues and multilateral processes. These gatherings featured informative briefings from the SDG Summit co-facilitators, the Presidents of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and the UN General Assembly.

The program produced evidence-based research on the cost of violence and policy guidance to bolster political support for people-centered justice. Further endeavors yielded the Inequality Solutions Portal, an online repository of practical policies for reducing inequality and exclusion on a global scale. Additionally, Pathfinders published the “Rising to the Challenge: Building Peaceful, Just, Equal, and Inclusive Societies in a Divided World” report, which analyzes the global status of SDG16+ while identifying tangible solutions to advance peace, justice, equality, and inclusion. Set against a context of setbacks in SDG implementation and a polycrisis, the report delineates six strategic pathways through which SDG16+ can and has been advanced, drawing upon regional, national, and subnational examples.

Lastly, as a steering committee member of the Global SDG16+ Coalition, CIC remained actively engaged, underscoring the pivotal role of SDG16+ within the 2030 Agenda and rallying the SDG16+ community.

## Justice program

This year, through its Justice program, CIC maintained its role as a thought leader, fostering international collaboration and strengthening political support for people-centered justice. Alongside partners, the team facilitated and engaged in approximately 36 events, directly involving nearly 200 government representatives and over 1,000 civil society and multilateral organizations representatives.

This included expert-level discussions on legal needs surveys with Colombia’s National Planning Department and South Africa’s Statistics Office; and event participation such as the Global Citizens Global Town Hall and the High-Level Anniversary Event for the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law in 2022, and the Open Government Partnership Summit in 2023.

The Justice program also played a significant role in the second Summit for Democracy, co-leading the Rule of Law and People-Centered Justice cohort. This collaboration resulted in a Joint Statement and Call to Action on People-Centered Justice and Democracy, aligned with SDG16 and endorsing the principles of people-centered justice.

In partnership with the Netherlands’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the g7+ Secretariat, the Justice program team organized a ministerial meeting in mid-2023, where 13 countries exchanged best practices in people-centered justice and established the permanent structure of the



*Swati Mehta, CIC Program Director, Justice for All, Pathfinders, speaking at the 10th anniversary of the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law (New York, USA, November 2022)*

Justice Action Coalition (JAC). Serving as the JAC secretariat, the Justice program team supported multilateral dialogues on people-centered justice and prepared draft joint statements on behalf of JAC members for discussions at the UN, including contributions to the UN 77th General Assembly 6th committee meeting, the UN General Assembly high-level debate on Equal Access to Justice for All, and the 2023 High-Level Political Forum.

Lastly, the Justice program continued to prioritize the needs of women, children, and displaced or conflict-affected populations, highlighting people-centered justice solutions through publications and public events that showcased best practices for addressing justice challenges faced by vulnerable groups.

### **Inequality and Exclusion program**

In the past year, the Inequality and Exclusion program made significant progress in addressing global disparities, which began with a meeting

of member states at the World Bank and IMF Annual Meetings—setting the stage for a year filled with impactful initiatives. Notable among these was the “An Age of Crisis” research conducted by the program, shedding light on the intricate interplay between inequality, exclusion, and climate-driven global crises. Throughout the year, the Inequality and Exclusion program led meaningful discussions on post-conflict financing and confronted the growing global divisions, underscoring the urgency of these issues at events such as the Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group and the IMF.

This endeavor also deepened relationships with existing partner countries, most notably Sierra Leone and Indonesia, while simultaneously forging new partnerships. As part of this effort, the team visited Senegal to gain insights into the nation’s efforts to combat inequality. Additionally, the year saw the launch of the Inequality Solutions Portal, a new repository of practical policy solutions to counter inequality and exclusion. The



*Roshni Menon, CIC Senior Program Officer, Inequality and Exclusion, Pathfinders, presenting the Inequality Solutions Portal during the Arab Equality Forum hosted by UN ESCWA (Beirut, Lebanon, June 2023)*

program jointly led this initiative with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA) and the London School of Economics.

The year culminated with a significant campaign dedicated to reinforcing Sustainable Development Goal 10 on reduced inequality, aiming to promote practical measurement tools and highlight the global commitment to combatting inequality. This collective effort, with new research and resources, fruitful dialogues, and on-the-ground initiatives, underlined the program’s unwavering commitment to creating a more equitable world.

### **Halving Global Violence program**

Over the past year, through its Halving Global Violence (HGV) program, CIC focused on deepening Pathfinders’ national and subnational relationships, in addition to developing research inputs into a forthcoming HGV Task Force flagship report, slated for release in early 2024.

In November 2022, the HGV team partnered with the Korea International Cooperation Agency

(KOICA) to assess Timor-Leste’s frameworks and initiatives to reduce and prevent gender-based violence (GBV), culminating in a local workshop to discuss findings and implementation. In 2023, the HGV program focused on a business case for violence prevention, conducting cost-of-violence case studies in Costa Rica, South Africa, and Switzerland. These studies were presented at a UN General Assembly side event attended by minister-level representatives from all three countries, emphasizing global societal costs.

### *Peace in Our Cities network*

In October 2022, the Peace in Our Cities network (PiOC) introduced “Guiding Principles and Inspiring Actions,” a guide showcasing effective urban violence reduction methods. PiOC’s reach expanded by welcoming new cities in Latin America and global community-based organizations.

In June 2023, more than 60 mayors, officials, academics, and civil society leaders convened in Medellín, Colombia, to discuss innovative urban violence reduction methods.

They also visited Palmira, a PiOC member city that achieved a 60 percent violence reduction through its work with the Network. PiOC and its secretariat also played an essential role in shaping global policy agendas, participating in events like the first-ever Cities Summit of the Americas, the United Cities and Local Governments' Fourth Cities and Territories of Peace Forum, and the Bloomberg CityLab conference.

Through strategic partnerships with organizations like the Strong Cities Network, City Hub, the Network for Gender Equality and the Carter Center's "Inform Women, Transform Lives" initiative, PiOC spotlighted community-based prevention and successful city-based GBV reduction solutions. It also secured the first-ever dedicated funds from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to help reimagine multilateralism by advancing the influence of city leaders in international peace and security matters.

### *Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control*

In May 2023, the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control (GENSAC) relaunched, gaining recognition in key international arms control forums. GENSAC representatives took part in the final session of the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ammunition, advocating for a gender-inclusive arms control approach and the inclusion of women in these processes. GENSAC also ensured representation from women in civil society at arms control discussions at the Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, the SGD16+ Rome Conference, and ECOWAS, and convened Latin American elected leaders to address legislation aimed at combating femicide by restricting gun ownership for convicted domestic violence offenders.



*Participants in the Peace in Our Cities convening exploring successful urban violence reduction initiatives (Palmira, Colombia, June 2023)*

# Key Events at CIC







*Eugene Chen, CIC Director, Prevention, Peacebuilding and Protracted Crises, presenting at a panel discussion on adaptive peacebuilding approaches hosted by the Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN (New York, USA, June 2023)*

**Prevention, Peacebuilding, and Protracted Crises program** co-hosts launch event with Permanent Mission of Norway featuring a report on global engagement with Afghanistan.

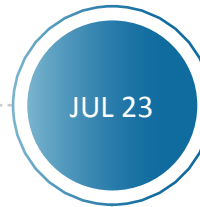
**Congo Research Group** and Ebuteli lead consultations with young people across the DRC to gather insights on their Voting Advice Application, “Keba!”

**Pathfinders program:**

- Convenes 60+ mayors, officials, experts, and civil society leaders in Colombia for strategy session.
- Co-organizes Justice Action Coalition ministerial meeting with Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Participates in food insecurity and inequality session at UNESCWA Arab Equality Forum in Beirut, Lebanon.

**Pathfinders program**

launches “Cost of Violence Study: Switzerland” at UN General Assembly side event, co-hosted with Costa Rica, South Africa, and Switzerland.



**Multilateralism program** moderates high-level session at Financing for Development Forum.

**Middle East and North Africa program:** UN General Assembly resolution establishes independent institution on the missing in Syria.

**Multilateralism program** hosts high-level side event at Brussels Conference VII on the aid dilemma in Syria.

**Pathfinders program** launches “Rising to the Challenge” report at High-level Political Forum.



*The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing an independent institution on the missing in Syria (New York, USA, June 2023. Photo Credit: UN Photo/Manuel Elias)*

# Defending and Promoting Multilateralism program

In the past year, global political divisions have continued to escalate, particularly in the Global South, driven by mounting frustration with an unresponsive multilateral system that seems to downplay their unique challenges. Meanwhile, calls for a multilateral development banks (MDB) reform gained traction, spurred by the G20-commissioned independent evaluation report on the Capital Adequacy Framework.

CIC's focus has centered on urging action within the multilateral system, including advocating for commitments to development financing, generating political urgency within the UN General Assembly, fostering engagement in forgotten crises, and leveraging opportunities within the New Agenda for Peace. Cross-regional dialogues with UN Permanent Representatives and the Executive Directors of Bretton Woods Institutions further complemented these endeavors.

Within the Defending and Promoting Multilateralism program, CIC published a groundbreaking report outlining strategies for donor involvement in politically estranged situations. The relevance of this report has grown significantly, particularly in light of two additional coups in Niger and Gabon, bringing the number of affected countries to twenty and impacting a collective population exceeding 500 million. CIC's message found resonance among numerous government leaders during the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly, as well as with international financial institutions (IFI) and has continued to echo in pivotal arenas. Notably, politically estranged situations was a central theme at the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) High-Level Meeting in November 2023. Furthermore, the Swedish and Spanish Presidencies of the EU have shown commitment to advancing this agenda.

In the past year, CIC regularly published expert insights to foster cooperation among national governments, international organizations, and the broader policy community. One year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we examined the geopolitical struggle and discussed its multifaceted consequences. Our analysis extended to navigating opportunities and challenges in the evolving global landscape, including insights from the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings. Additionally, we explored effective donor engagement strategies worldwide. The UN General Assembly was also a key focus, emphasizing the importance of compromise in development financing. More recently, we provided insights into the Israel-Hamas conflict, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of this tragic situation.



*CIC and Chatham House co-hosted a high-level roundtable with the World Bank Executive Director's Office of the Nordic and Baltic Countries on aid delivery in estranged situations on the sidelines of the Annual Fall Meetings of the World Bank and IMF (Washington D.C., USA, October 2022)*

# Prevention, Peacebuilding, and Protracted Crises program

Since its inception in 2017, the program has been committed to translating the UN prevention agenda from rhetoric to tangible actions.



*Céline Monnier, CIC Senior Program Officer, Prevention, Peacebuilding and Protracted Crises, meeting with government representatives to discuss parameters for effective national prevention strategies (Ecuador, April 2023)*

Over the past year, the Prevention, Peacebuilding, and Protracted Crises program remained actively engaged in its mission to support the UN and its member states in the development and execution of nationally-led violence prevention strategies.

The significance of prevention has become increasingly evident, even in societies considered peaceful. The global landscape has witnessed social, political, and economic upheaval, particularly in the aftermath of the Russian

invasion of Ukraine. In response to these challenges, the team focused on ensuring that nationally-led prevention strategies took center stage in the UN policy brief on A New Agenda for Peace, released in July 2023. The program team also issued a series of policy briefs and organized numerous discussions and workshops to inform diplomats and UN personnel about the essence of these strategies and the essential conditions required for their success.

The Prevention, Peacebuilding, and Protracted Crises program also examined the challenges affecting contemporary peace operations, with particular emphasis on advising member states on the operational and technical aspects related to the support and financing of African-led operations. This advisory work became especially crucial in the lead-up to the Security Council meeting on May 25, 2023.

Additionally, the team provided valuable insights through written commentaries and active participation in panels concerning the reconfiguration of UN missions during transitions in Mali and the DRC. Finally, the team engaged in discussions surrounding the planned deployment of a multinational force in Haiti, contributing to the ongoing discourse on international peace and security.

# Congo Research Group program

This year, the Congo Research Group (CRG) program celebrated Ebuteli's first anniversary, a Congolese non-governmental organization and CRG's key research partner in DRC.

Ebuteli specializes in politics, governance, and violence analysis and is led by Fred Bauma, CRG's former Research Director, now Ebuteli's Executive Secretary. Ebuteli has expanded with a new office in Goma in addition to its Kinshasa location.

In addition, CRG's "Mukalenga wa Bantu" program on political accountability made a significant impact, holding 22 focus groups in all 11 DRC provinces to understand local priorities. This work is vital for CRG's upcoming Voting Advice Application, "Keba!" ("Attention!" in Lingala), designed for the Congolese context and set to launch before the elections in late 2023. "Keba!" includes a WhatsApp extension for voters to compare their views with candidates and organizations on crucial political issues at the national and provincial levels.

CRG also published a series of reports:

- "The Catholic Church in the DRC: A Neutral Arbiter or Catalyst for Protests?" examined political mobilization in the Congo, with a focus on the political activism within the Congolese Catholic Church and its internal democratic challenges.
- The second report in the series, "Elections in Tshisekedi's Era: A Rocky Beginning?" (from the original French title: "Les élections à l'ère de Tshisekedi: un mauvais départ?"), evaluated the preparations for the forthcoming national elections.
- Two reports on the DRC's major political parties over the past decade, "Born to Power: 20 Years of the People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy (2002-2022)" and "UDPS, yoka base! – Building a grassroots-led party" chronicle these parties' histories and assess their accountability mechanisms, highlighting structural weaknesses.



*CRG and Ebuteli hosted a discussion on "Gender Equality in the DRC: Priorities for 2023" to highlight women's participation in politics (Kinshasa, DRC, February 2023)*

- The last report in the series, "Power Games, Game of Power: Soccer and Politics in the DRC" (from the original French title: "Jeux de pouvoir, pouvoir du jeu: football et politique en RDC"), revealed how political figures leading Congolese soccer clubs leverage their positions to enhance their image and gain electoral benefits.

Finally, CRG's two ongoing podcasts: "Masolo Ya Kati," featuring notable guests discussing key Congolese public issues, and "Po na GEC," offering analyses of current events in DRC, remained popular. In 2023, CRG also introduced "Lolaka Ya Uélé," a new series addressing regional challenges and potential solutions.

# Middle East and North Africa program

Since 2017, under the leadership of Hanny Megally, CIC's Deputy Director, Lead on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) program, and Commissioner of the Independent Commission of Inquiry on Syria (CoI), the MENA program has focused on providing analysis on how to improve justice outcomes for Syrians.

Reporting and advocacy involving Hanny Megally's work at CIC, the CoI, and with the International Center for Transitional Justice have focused on a range of critical issues—arbitrary detention and the missing/disappeared in Syria; the challenges related to the humanitarian situation and aid modalities; the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable groups; internment and repatriation of families of suspected ISIL fighters; and preventing the re-emergence of violent extremism in North-East Syria.

Through a collective effort, a UN General Assembly resolution adopted in June 2023 established an independent institution to address on the missing/disappeared in Syria. This was made possible through collaboration with Syrian civil society, international partners—including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights—and member states. Hanny Megally, representing CIC, has since

been involved in advising on the development of the new Institution's terms of reference, emphasizing mental health and psychosocial support.

Hanny Megally also participated in high-level briefings at the UN Human Rights Council, the UN General Assembly, and the Syria conference, contributing to policy papers on justice outcomes for victims and survivors. Notably, the CoI paper "No End in Sight" provided crucial information on torture and ill-treatment in Syria, instrumental in cases brought against Syria at the International Court of Justice by the Netherlands and Canada.

Finally, through its MENA program, CIC and partners helped raise concerns about the inadequate international response to the February 2023 earthquake in Turkey and Syria, prompting a call to the UN secretary-general to initiate an inquiry, subsequently leading to an internal review.



*Families, survivors, and activists came together to advocate for the rights of victims, aiming to end enforced disappearances in Syria (The Hague, Netherlands, November 2023. Photo credit: Tareem Kammouc)*

# CIC in the Media

CIC's expertise has garnered growing recognition in both international and national media. Our staff and fellows provided commentary across more than twenty media outlets, covering topics such as strategies for donor engagement in Lebanon and Myanmar, political economy and conflict in the DRC, and the UN General Assembly, shedding light on pressing local and international issues throughout the 2022–2023 period.





*Pathfinders team photo at the SDG16+ Coalition event on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly (New York, USA, September 2023). Photo credit: Joel Sheakoski*

## Donor Acknowledgments

We extend our sincere thanks to the following institutions that generously supported our work during the period from October 2022 to September 2023.

Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)

European Union

German Federal Foreign Office

Interpeace

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)

Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Open Society Foundations

Robert Bosch Stiftung

Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

Schmidt Family Foundation

Swedish International Development Cooperation (SIDA)

Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

NYU | CENTER ON  
INTERNATIONAL  
CIC | COOPERATION



**Cover photo:** Participants in the Peace in Our Cities convening exploring successful urban violence reduction initiatives (Palmira, Colombia, June 2023)