



INDEPENDENT DIPLOMAT

The Diplomatic Advisory Group



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Dear Friends,

As we head into 2024, the world is facing a major inflection point. Time is running out to save us from catastrophic climate change, especially for the most vulnerable populations. And anything other than decisive defeat of Russia in Ukraine will be the nail in the coffin of our rules-based international system.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine was itself a consequence of failed political leadership and missed opportunities to assert international law – in Georgia, Syria and Ukraine in 2014. The ripple effects of this failure of leadership are felt everywhere from Ukraine, to the horrific 7 October attack on Israel and Israel's indiscriminate response, to Azerbaijan's ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh, to the ongoing conflict in Yemen, and the rehabilitation of Syria's Assad in the Arab League, to name but a few.

At Independent Diplomat (ID), we believe that acting to regain respect for our hard-fought-for laws and norms is both essential and, crucially, possible. In 2023, we took the decision to put significant effort into Ukraine. Our aim with our Ukrainian partners has been to bring strategic focus on limiting Russia's capacity to wage war. Through an innovative fusion of research, analysis, diplomacy and engagement with enforcement agencies, we have begun to have tangible impact against Russia's means of military production. Building on this success in 2024 will contribute to bringing Russia's illegal invasion to an end.

But working to restore international law is meaningless if we only allow drivers of conflict to be exacerbated by the relentless abuse of our planet. As 2023 was winding down, ID kicked into high gear at COP28 – the annual UN climate change negotiations, held this year in Dubai. Our team worked with the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and the [High Ambition Coalition](#) to achieve meaningful climate ambition despite major challenges, chief among them opposition from the powerful fossil fuel lobby. As RMI Minister John Silk [told the New York Times](#), "The Republic of the Marshall Islands did not come here to sign our death warrant."

Our partners were at the forefront of several critical outcomes, starting with an agreement to [transition away from fossil fuels](#). The first ever COP decision to directly address fossil fuels was hard-won in the face of significant opposition. The launch and initial funding for the Loss and Damage Fund was another important milestone. While pledges from wealthy polluting countries to-date fall far short of what is needed, capitalizing the Fund is a critical first step to ensure that developing countries can address rapidly accelerating climate destruction.

The establishment of a framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation is a third important outcome, which sets targets for priority areas to guide the world towards adapting to the impacts of climate change. For the most climate vulnerable – including our partners – the outcomes at COP were not sufficient. But strong and sustained advocacy throughout the year by the Marshall Islands and High Ambition Coalition, supported at every stage by ID, was instrumental to important victories in the face of fossil fuel interests that were well-represented at the COP.

While our Climate Team worked tirelessly at COP, our Refugee Team was similarly hard at work supporting those that have been forced to leave their homes as a consequence of climate change or conflict. ID supported the Global Refugee-led Network and affiliated partners at the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva. The pledging Forum is held every four years to increase and coordinate [multi-stakeholder commitments](#) towards implementing the Global Compact on Refugees – the international framework to improve the global response to the needs of refugees.

Thanks to ID's work with our partners, refugee delegates quadrupled at the Forum compared to its previous iteration, representing a major step towards achieving the goal set by ID and partners of normalizing refugee participation. This was an important culmination of four years of work, but there is much more to do, starting with the launch of the ID-supported Coalition on Meaningful Refugee Participation at the Forum. The Coalition will ensure that refugee voices are not tokenized, but rather empowered to make substantive policy recommendations in support of refugee rights and protection needs worldwide.

Our Ukraine effort, climate work and support for refugee-led organizations are three of the issues that we are tackling at ID across three lines of interrelated work: case-by-case **conflict resolution** – in Myanmar, Mali, Ukraine, Yemen and Western Sahara; countering two of the gravest **threats to global peace and security** – climate change and attacks on cyber freedom; and **systems change** to contribute to a fairer international system – our support to a [global network](#) of refugee-led organizations, advice and training to female negotiators across a range of crises, and our Meet the Parties initiative which brings non-state actors from many conflicts face-to-face with the UN Security Council.

Independent Diplomat's work is only possible through generous donations from our supporters. We seek to address the root causes of conflict and crisis – it is challenging work that needs the support of motivated allies more than ever. Our partners need to know that they can rely on our support and assistance over the long term – and, crudely, that takes money. Please consider [donating today](#) to support sustainable solutions to some of the world's most challenging and important problems.

With best wishes,



Reza Afshar OBE  
Executive Director

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Additional information about ID's work with the Mission of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to the United Nations, the Coordination of the Movements of the Azawad, the Southern Transitional Council, the Government of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Mission of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and the Economic Security Council of Ukraine (ESCU) is available at the Department of Justice, Washington DC.

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