**Press Release: KPAC24**

From 19 to 21 November 2024, the Knowledge Platform Annual Conference (KPAC24), in partnership with Institute Gorée and REPAOC, convened 150 researchers, policy makers and practitioners in Dakar, Senegal under the theme of ‘*Building Trust, Connecting Realities & Pacifying Power*’. Signed by 61 individuals and 46 organisations, the following reflects key messages emerging from discussions on the field of security and rule of law in the region and beyond.

The world is changing at a rapid speed. Relationships between the Global North and South are transforming, multilateral structures are questioned, and information is hard to disentangle from misinformation. **Although this change can be uncomfortable and creates tensions, it also offers opportunities for different countries and communities to exercise agency and leadership in addressing their needs for peace and security.** It offers opportunities to rethink who we call ‘civil society’. It forces us to try new approaches to restore trust and implement new types of governance – two elements which are at the heart of the current challenges.

However, for reforms (global and national) to be sustainable and to avoid repeating the same mistakes as past security and governance efforts, people should be at the center of this change; their needs and their rights. It requires their civic space. **Peace and security are the business of all, not just the state or elites.** It requires synergies between citizens and (local) governments, between the Alliance of Sahel States and ECOWAS, and between formal and customary justice, among other stakeholders.

In the process of breaking down and transforming old systems, results on justice, security and inclusive governance will not all come at once and not everyone will agree with the direction taken. **Efforts at the country and international level should ensure safe pathways to express discontent and to co-create alternative solutions.** Societal change is complex, and responses cannot be based on simplified solutions. Building and rebuilding trust must be the aim to sustain positive change.