

THE BUDAPEST APPEAL

A Call for Digital Peace

We are speaking not as citizens of any nation, but as human beings whose daily lives now depend on digital systems we cannot see, do not control, and increasingly cannot trust.

In the past year alone, over 420 million cyberattacks struck critical infrastructure worldwide—hospitals, power grids, water systems, schools. That is 13 attacks every second. One hundred million people lost access to healthcare in a single breach. Surgeries were cancelled. Emergency services went dark. Children's medical records were held for ransom.

This is not a future threat. This is now.

The systems that sustain modern life—that pump our water, power our homes, connect us to emergency care—have become battlefields. States attack states. Criminals attack hospitals. The distinction between war and peace has dissolved in cyberspace, and civilians bear the cost.

No treaty protects them. No ceasefire covers digital attacks. When physical hostilities end, cyber operations continue. The world has laws governing the conduct of war on land, at sea, and in the air. In cyberspace, there are none that are enforced.

We find this unacceptable.

We therefore call upon governments, institutions, and technology leaders to recognize the following principles:

- I.** Civilian digital infrastructure—hospitals, schools, power systems, water treatment, emergency services—must be protected from attack in peace and in war.
- II.** Cyberattacks targeting civilians must be recognized as violations of human dignity, subject to the same moral weight as physical attacks on non-combatants.
- III.** Any ceasefire, peace agreement, or humanitarian corridor must explicitly include digital systems. A peace that ignores cyberspace is not peace.
- IV.** Independent international mechanisms must be established to monitor, verify, and hold accountable those who attack civilian infrastructure through digital means.

V. The development of AI-enabled autonomous cyber weapons targeting civilian systems must be subject to immediate international scrutiny and restraint.

This is the first international appeal dedicated to establishing these protections.

We do not pretend this will be simple. We know the obstacles. But we also know that every protection civilians now enjoy—from the Geneva Conventions to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—began with a decision to act before it was too late.

That moment is now.

The choice before us is not between perfect security and vulnerability. It is between establishing norms while we still can, or accepting a world where attacks on hospitals and power grids become permanent features of human conflict.

We choose to act.

We invite you to join us.

Domus Communis Foundation