



TALL ROOTS



**MEDIA  
DEFENCE**

**Finance &  
Operations Director**

**Candidate Pack**

**June 2022**

# Welcome

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in becoming our next Finance & Operations Director.

Media Defence is an international human rights organisation, founded in 2008 from a programme of work by the Open Society Initiative (OSI), which provides legal defence to journalists, citizen journalists and independent media around the world who are under threat for their reporting.

Last year presented us with unprecedented challenges. In response to their work, journalists faced abusive lawsuits, smear campaigns and an increasingly unsafe environment, both online and off. Over the last couple of years, autocratic regimes around the world have used the COVID-19 pandemic as a cover to stifle critical reporting. As a result, journalists have faced increasingly difficult and dangerous circumstances around the world. In 2021, we did more to protect journalists than ever before, and you can read more about our impact later in this document. Earlier this year, we mobilised once more following the Russian invasion of Ukraine by working to protect the human rights of journalists in Ukraine by ensuring they have access to pro bono legal support.

Due to a challenging fundraising climate largely due to global uncertainties caused by the pandemic, many international charities such as ours were impacted financially. Our income from trusts and foundations remained stable, but we saw a reduction of 25% in our income in 2021 when compared to the previous year due to a lower level of pro bono legal support. Going into 2022, we were pleased to receive renewed commitment from our donors, who continue to be keen supporters of our work and impact-driven approach, and we are in a strong position moving forward, which has enabled us to explore a number of opportunities to grow and further expand our reach.

The role of the Finance & Operations Director is a key part of our organisation and of our leadership team. As a strategic advisor to me as CEO, our Board and our staff, you will lead a team of four and provide sound financial assurance and insight to enable decision making and support our future ambitions, while ensuring we continue to be financially sustainable through maintaining robust controls. You will also oversee our central functions of HR, IT and office management to ensure we have the right people, processes and systems in place to deliver our work and empower our staff to be the best that they can be.

We are looking for a talented, fully-qualified finance professional who brings strong strategic and operational experience across all areas of budgeting, financial reporting, governance and risk. You will likely have worked in an international charity previously, and will ideally have gained exposure to international donor requirements and/or grant management. Previous experience of managing non-finance areas is not essential, although you will be able to demonstrate an ability to oversee a multi-faceted directorate and develop an agile operations strategy that meets the future needs of our organisation. Whether you are operating as a director currently, or looking to make your first step into a number one role, you will demonstrate excellent communication and leadership skills, with the ability to work in a diverse and multi-cultural environment. Working knowledge of French and/or Spanish would also be advantageous.

We are open minded to backgrounds and are just as interested in candidates' potential as we are in previous achievements. I hope, having read more, that you are excited by the opportunity to join us at this important time in our journey and choose to apply.

**Alinda Vermeer**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## About us

Media Defence is a charity that helps media to defend their rights. We support independent media, journalists and citizen journalists who are under legal threat by making sure that lawyers are available to defend them. We engage in strategic litigation to improve the regulatory environment for media freedom, make grants to organisations in various countries to run media defence programmes, and build the capacity of the lawyers and organisations we work with on issues of media law.

Media Defence was set up in 2008 and has established itself as a leader in the field. To date, we have supported over 1,000 cases, helping hundreds of journalists in over 110 countries. Our work has helped prevent over 300 years of detention for media workers and avoided £500m in damages. We have supported 40 partners and have trained 144 lawyers.

We provide legal help to journalists, citizen journalists and independent media across the world. The law can be used against journalists to stop them reporting. Journalists and media outlets facing legal action often cannot afford a lawyer, and there is a shortage of local legal centres and lawyers able to defend journalists free of charge.

## 2021 in numbers

**466**

Total number of cases supported

**124**

New cases in 2021

**71**

New emergency defence cases

**53**

New strategic cases

**24**

Pro bono cases

**57%**

Case success rate

**15**

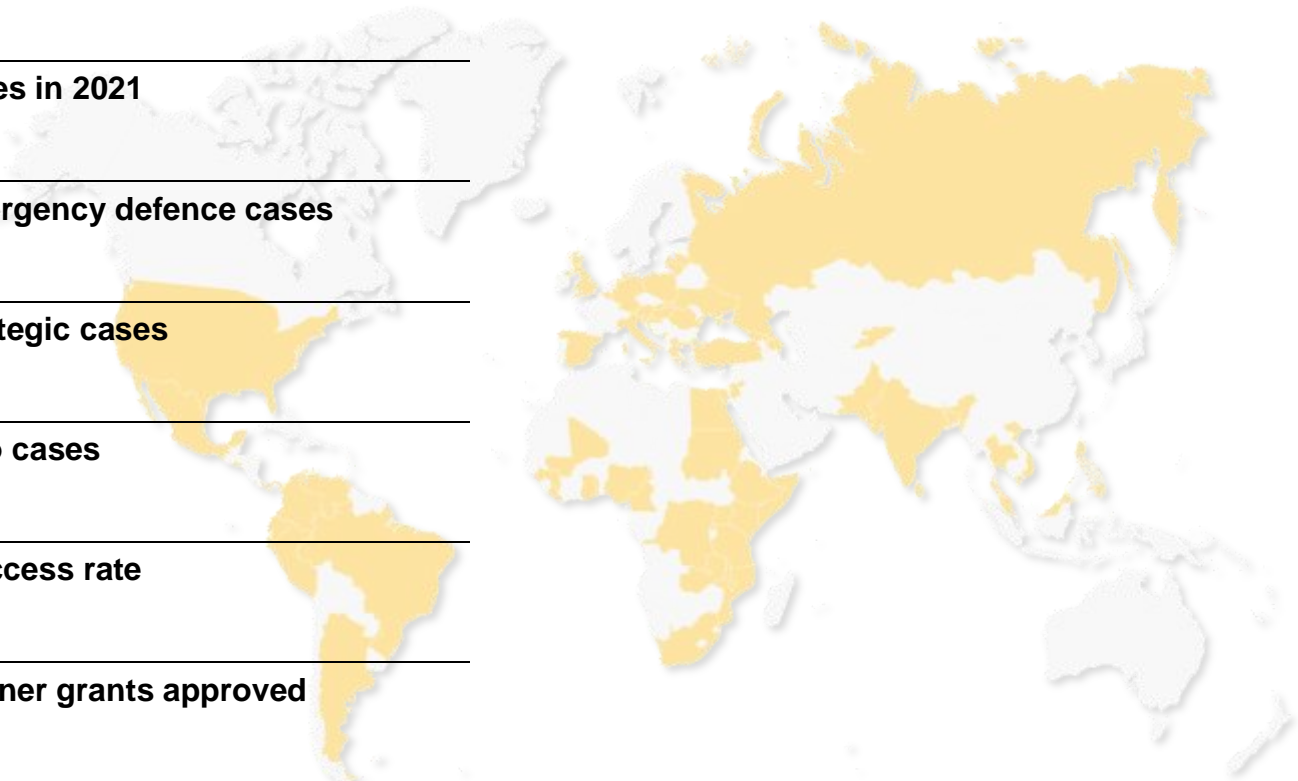
New partner grants approved

**39**

Sponsored participants at virtual international networking events

**207**

Lawyers trained



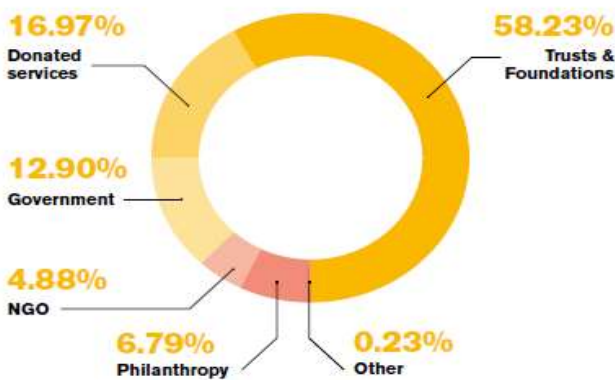
# Our finances

In 2021, we received total incoming resources of **£2 million**, of which **£355k** were donated services, i.e. legal support from law firms with whom we partner in some areas of our work and who dedicate their time for free. Not all cases we support are suitable for pro bono support, so we saw a decrease in donated services compared to 2020. Due to the lower level of donated services and unrestricted funds, our **overall income decreased by 25%**, but **financial donations increased by 5%**.

Even though pro bono legal support continues to play an important part in enabling the delivery of activities, financial donations form a high portion of incoming resources in **2021**, with Trusts and Foundations continuing to be the main source of our funding. We continue to diversify our funding sources, however.

The decrease in donated services contributed to the decrease in our expenditure. Overall, there is an almost equitable spend between Emergency Defence, Strategic Litigation and Grants to partner organisations.

## Income



## Expenditure



## Overall Picture



# Our 2020-2024 Strategy

In 2020-2024, we will increase and deepen the support we offer to our partners, enhancing the availability of quality legal defence for journalists around the world as well as the coordination of strategic litigation on press freedom and freedom of expression.

Our current and future partnerships include funded partner organisations, experienced and emerging lawyers who provide or intend to provide quality legal defence to journalists and independent media outlets in their respective countries or regions.

We will also continue to provide emergency legal defence to journalists and media organisations globally, in countries where we do not yet have partners and where we are the only realistic avenue to provide this much needed assistance.

We will continue to pursue high-impact strategic litigation to win landmark cases, clarifying or changing laws, bringing them in-line with international standards on freedom of expression.

You can read our full strategy [here](#).



# Journalist Impact Survey 2021

In 2021, we carried out our fifth annual Journalist Impact Survey to look at the longer-term impact of our support on our primary beneficiaries: journalists. We designed our Journalist Impact Survey to understand the quality of our legal and financial support to journalists. In addition, it allows us to gain a greater appreciation of the role of legal defence in ensuring journalists can continue to report. Finally, the survey allows us to test our theory of change: access to legal defence enables journalists to continue reporting and holding governments and authorities to account for the public. As a result, these findings inform our future casework.

## The Results

In 2021, we received 31 responses from journalists whose cases we have supported, and which ended in 2021. This is up from 21 responses in 2020, and is much more geographically-spread than in previous years, where 90% respondents came from the EU.

Key findings include:

- 68% of respondents reported feeling satisfied with the outcome of their case
- 100% of respondents would recommend our support to other journalists facing legal action; and
- 84% of respondents reported feeling satisfied or extremely satisfied with the lawyer who handled their case.

The survey found that our support and that of our partners was incredibly effective. For over 80% of respondents, this support enabled them to continue reporting on public interest issues. For some journalists, this need for support was acute. As one respondent expressed, “[without Media Defence’s support] I would have been in prison by now.”

You can read the full report [here](#).



# Job Description

## About the role

The Finance and Operations Director has responsibility for Media Defence's financial and administrative functions including finance, risk management, compliance, human resources and office management. Working closely with the Chief Executive Officer, senior management and Board of Trustees, the Finance and Operations Director plays a crucial role in the strategic development and continuing success of the charity.

**Responsible to** Chief Executive Officer

**Key Relationships** Chief Executive Officer, Legal Director, Development Director, Finance and Operations team

## Main responsibilities

### Strategy and Leadership

- Work with the Chief Executive Officer and the senior management team to ensure the organization's strategic goals are met and the organization is financially sustainable. This includes developing and overseeing the implementation of the long-term financial strategy.
- Serve as liaison to the Finance Committee, effectively communicating and presenting critical financial matters at committee meetings.
- Oversee, lead, motivate and develop the finance and operations functions.
- Deputise for the Chief Executive Officer, when required.

### Finance and Compliance

- Oversee Media Defence's financial management. This includes the development of annual budgets, mid-year revised budgets, financial plans and forecasts, preparing annual accounts, maintaining an effective control environment as well as efficient finance systems and processes.
- Ensure compliance with legal, statutory accounting and regulatory requirements, including signing off on all statutory filings as required by the Charity Commission, Companies House, and the Pension Regulator, as well as compliance with donor terms.
- Work with the Chief Executive Officer to manage organizational risk, including maintaining the risk register.
- Liaise with external auditors in relation to annual audits and project audits (where applicable).
- Oversee the financial reporting to donors and preparation of fundraising budgets.

### HR and Operations

- Overall responsibility for Media Defence's office management, IT and HR.
- Perform other duties commensurate with the post

# Person Specification

## Essential

- A relevant accounting qualification (ACCA, CIMA or equivalent) or demonstrable qualification by experience.
- Significant all-round accounting, financial management, full grants cycle management, compliance, risk and financial sustainability experience, likely gained in an international charity, with working knowledge of the SORP.
- Strong leadership experience, including around strategic decisions and financial planning, and team development.
- Experience of management of grants to beneficiary NGOs and grant reviews or audits.
- Strong IT management skills and expertise including knowledge of various systems such as Sage 50 and Sage payroll, as well as CRM/ERPs and system migration.
- Strong strategic thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Strong people and communication skills, with the ability to adapt management style to collaborate and achieve the best outcomes.
- High level of personal integrity and commitment to the values of the organisation.
- Ability to work in a multi-cultural environment.
- Ability to manage a varied and pressured workload.
- Excellent written and spoken English.
- Right to work in the UK.

## Desirable

- Experience of leading operations and HR functions, including overseeing the development of organisational policies, procedures and systems.
- Understanding of human rights and/or international media environment.
- Good working knowledge (spoken and written) of French or Spanish.

Equality and diversity are fundamental to our mission. We are committed to the recruitment and retention of individuals from diverse backgrounds and who reflect the diverse communities in which we operate.

# Terms of Appointment

<b>Contract</b>	Permanent, full-time (37.5 hours, occasional evening and weekend work)
<b>Salary</b>	£53,164 - £68,000 per annum, dependent on experience.
<b>Location</b>	We combine home working and office-based working to suit individual and organisational needs. While there is scope for working from home, this role will require a regular presence in our central London office at 5 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1LG.
<b>Pension</b>	Contributory pension scheme (employer matched contribution up to max. 8%)
<b>Annual leave</b>	25 days annual leave plus bank holidays, plus up to 10 days additional leave (paid and/or unpaid) per year after probation.
<b>Additional</b>	<p>On joining Media Defence, all employees are automatically able to access professional support through our professional Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provided by Health Assured Limited.</p> <p>We offer an enhanced maternity and paternity leave package.</p> <p>We provide a range of training and development tools to offer support our employees to improve or develop skills and knowledge for the benefit of both the individual and the organisation.</p>





## How to Apply

Tall Roots is acting as an employment agency partner to Media Defence. Applications should be made online at <https://www.tallroots.co.uk/mediadefence-fod> and include:

- a CV
- covering letter (no more than two pages), explaining your motivation for applying for the role, along with how you meet the criteria in the Person Specification.

The closing date for applications is **Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022**.

Preliminary interviews with Tall Roots will be held virtually during **w/c 25<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

Final panel interviews with Media Defence will be held during **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August (TBC)**

If you have any questions relating to the role or the process, or would like any adjustments made to accommodate your needs, please contact Mark Crowley at Tall Roots by email at [mark.crowley@tallroots.co.uk](mailto:mark.crowley@tallroots.co.uk).



*“Thanks to the support, I never felt alone or intimidated during the last three years. It’s fundamental for freelance journalists who are not backed by a media company to get this free legal assistance.”*

**Raffaella Cosentino,  
Journalist**

**MEDIA  
DEFENCE**



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