



Annual Report 2022



Nardi (Italy) - Cartooning for Peace

The NGO Cartooning for Peace was created in 2006 at the initiative of press cartoonist Plantu and Nobel Peace Prize winner and former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Now chaired by the French press cartoonist Kak, Cartooning for Peace is an international network of 280 cartoonists from 74 countries committed to the promotion of freedom of expression, human rights and mutual respect among people upholding different cultures and beliefs, using the universal language of press cartoons. It promotes and educates the public on press cartoons and defends threatened cartoonists around the world.
www.cartooningforpeace.org

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*“I felt strong and confident because there are those that defend
our rights and our freedom”*

Anonymous journalist, 2022

From our Chair: Sarah Bull

"We continue to witness a worrying decline in press freedoms, as part of a wider trend of shrinking civic space."

Sarah Bull
Chair



This year we celebrate our 15th anniversary as an organisation. Back in 2008, Media Defence was founded in the context of a sharply deteriorating environment for freedom of expression. Unfortunately, the situation has only worsened in that time.

We continue to witness a worrying decline in press freedoms, as part of a wider trend of shrinking civic space. Journalists are still routinely subjected to violence, with UNESCO recording that over 80 journalists were killed in 2022, almost all with impunity. Due in part to the war in Ukraine and a worsening press freedom climate in Latin America, the death toll is nearly double what we saw in 2021. According to CPJ, 363 journalists were imprisoned in 2022 - a 20% rise on last year. These restrictions on freedoms are not limited to journalists alone: from Russia to Sudan, Iran to Sierra Leone, protests against the authorities were met with force and the disproportionate threat of cyberterrorism or sedition laws. Governments further undermined demonstrations through orchestrated internet shutdowns, limiting coverage of events on the ground.

This decline is reflected in Media Defence's work. In 2022, the team supported more cases than in any previous year. To meet the mounting need for legal help, Media Defence is growing, welcoming new members of staff in the Finance and Legal Teams. We continue to work in collaboration with other organisations in the sector, launching the Legal Network for Journalists at Risk with Thomson Reuters Foundation and the Committee to Protect Journalists. This network will help to coordinate support, ensuring that we make the best possible use of limited resources and avoid duplication in order to provide holistic support in even more cases.

The types of cases the team is supporting also mirror global trends, with a disturbing number of journalists targeted with spyware, silenced through Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs), and attacked for reporting on protests, corruption or crime. Last year we continued our body of work on accountability for war reporting. The team is representing one journalist, as well as the family of another journalist who was killed, in two strategic cases that emerged from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as occupying forces targeted local and international media covering the war.

Though the situation for press freedoms is distressing, I am heartened by the bravery and resilience demonstrated by the journalists and media outlets we support. They work tirelessly to expose corruption and human rights abuses, despite great personal risk. It is thanks to their determination and sacrifice that communities around the world have any access to independent information. We will continue to do all we can to protect them.

From our CEO: Carlos Gaio

"We have come a long way, but a chilling effect still hovers over independent journalists, bloggers, and media outlets. Inasmuch as we celebrate being able to help a greater number of journalists and media outlets, we cannot ignore the fact that journalism is facing more legal threats and violence than ever before."

Carlos Gaio
CEO

In recent years we have seen vivid examples of journalism's critical role in holding power to account. Democracy depends on a free press to remain a relevant and positive force for citizens. However, too many journalists around the world continue to face legal harassment, intimidation, and other forms of persecution by those seeking to silence them. This was originally the reason why Media Defence was established 15 years ago. What was perhaps a visionary concept at the time could not be more necessary today.

In our first year, 2008, we supported journalists in 11 cases. Today, as we enter the year of our 15th anniversary, we can look back at the year 2022 and observe that we directly supported the legal defence or intervened in a record number of 188 individual cases. We were involved in over 500 additional cases through the funding and value-added support that we provide to our 18 national partner organisations.

We have come a long way, but a chilling effect still hovers over independent journalists, bloggers, and media outlets. Inasmuch as we celebrate being able to help a greater number of journalists and media outlets, we cannot ignore the fact that journalism is facing more legal threats and violence than ever before.

As our Journalist Impact Survey shows, journalists continue to be targeted in a range of ways, from criminal charges to tax fraud allegations, from content blocking to violence or imprisonment. What these phenomena have in common is the intention of silencing public interest reporting, on the one hand, and an impoverished public discourse, on the other. Journalists targeted by legal threats, and the individuals and institutions who target them, know that these actions are costly and time-consuming. These legal threats can thus deter the media from investigating crucial stories and reporting on issues that affect the public.

At Media Defence we provide a range of services to journalists and independent media outlets confronting legal harassment. These services include legal representation, advice, and training, as well as strategic litigation to challenge laws and practices that restrict freedom of expression.

We are unique in the type and quality of legal services we provide. Oftentimes we are a lifeline for journalists who may otherwise have no way to defend themselves against legal attacks.

The need for organisations like Media Defence has become increasingly urgent. The COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges for journalists, including restrictions on movement and access to information. If our daily experiences offline are not enough, studies have shown that online harassment and threats against journalists have become commonplace, with a huge number of reporters receiving such threats or abuse daily.

Over the past year we are proud to have represented new clients before regional courts or international mechanisms in every continent. We filed several third-party interventions before regional and apex courts to challenge abuses of the law. These interventions will strengthen the protection of freedom of expression around the world.

In 2022, we also increased our funding, onboarded new national partners, ran legal trainings in new regions of the world, and reduced the duration of the approval process for individual emergency defence grants. This was only possible due to my outstanding and dedicated colleagues who spared no effort. In my career I have rarely worked with a more committed group of people.

It would be remiss of me if I did not credit the leadership of my predecessor, Alinda Vermeer, who left Media Defence in February 2023, in achieving such record-breaking results. She left a very high standard of work, which will be difficult to match.

I am honoured to introduce Media Defence's 2022 Annual Report as a testament of our continued, unwavering commitment to defending press freedom and providing legal support to journalists who are threatened due to their public interest work. By defending the rights of journalists and supporting the free flow of information, Media Defence is helping to build more just and democratic societies and thwart the creep of authoritarianism.

About Media Defence

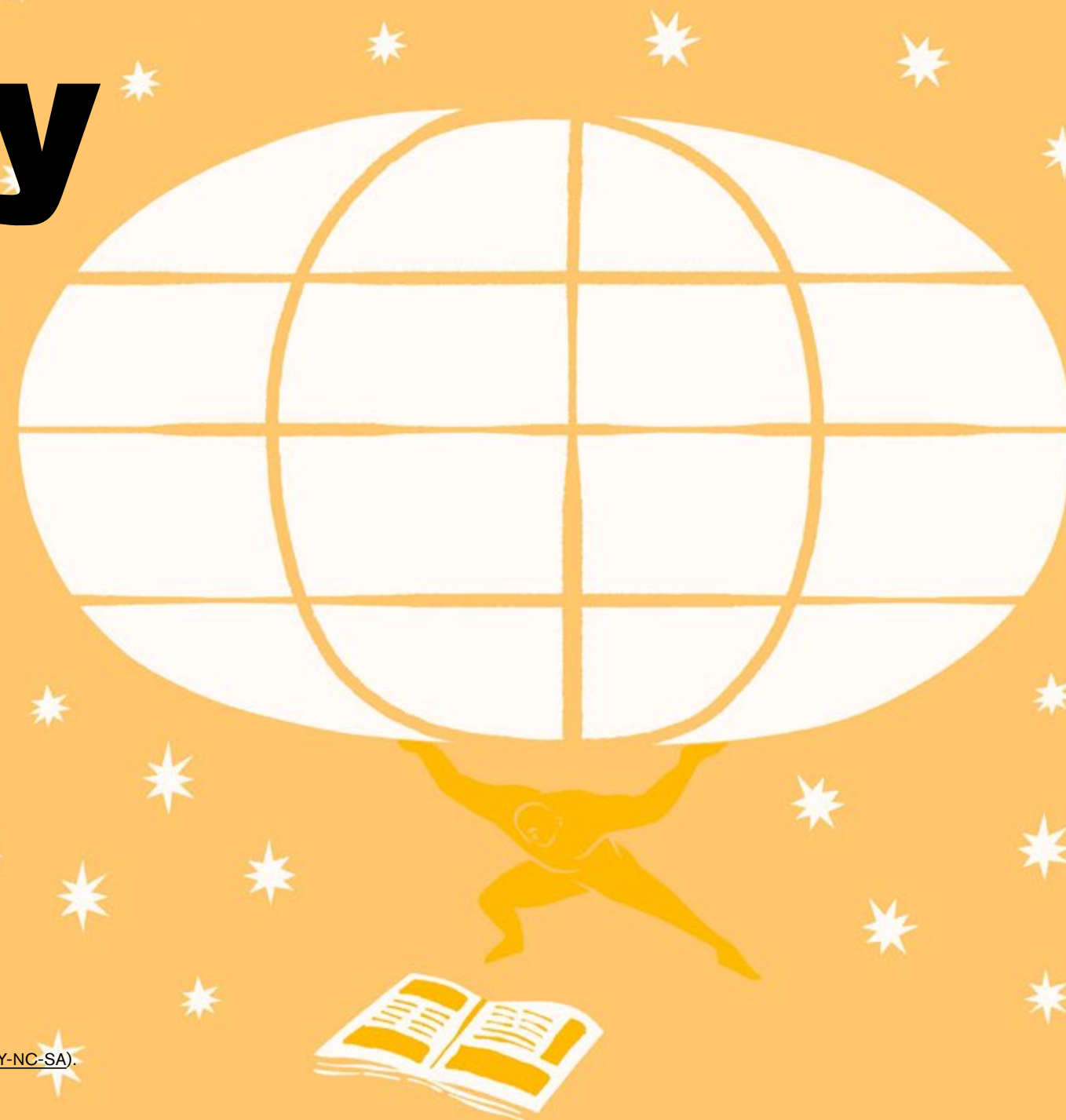
We provide legal help to journalists, citizen journalists and independent media across the world, in the belief that a free press is essential in realising the right to freedom of expression.

We support journalists who hold power to account by working to ensure the legal protection and defence of journalists and independent media so they can report on issues of public interest.

We do this by providing legal assistance to journalists, citizen journalists and independent media through an emergency defence fund, by taking strategic cases to challenge unjust laws and protect freedom of expression, and through developing a worldwide network of partners and specialists to provide legal defence, which we support through grantmaking, training and information sharing.

We are unique in what we do. To date, we are the only organisation in the world solely focused on providing this crucial help to journalists.

Our 2020 – 2024 Strategy



Teo Georgiev for Fine Acts: The Greats — Great Artists Give
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Press freedom has seen a sharp decline over the past few years and the context in which we operate is only forecast to worsen as insecurity and populism spread, while governments copy restrictive and abusive practices from others. Increasingly, journalists face legal threats alone, without the protection of resourced media houses or effective legal representation. The COVID-19 pandemic has only accelerated this downward spiral. Journalists will not be able to continue their critical work of informing the public without access to effective legal representation. That is why we are scaling up our support and ensuring that our work has a wider impact.

Our overall goal is to enable independent media to hold power to account by reporting on matters of public interest, free from abusive legal action. Five key strategic and enabling goals drive our work.

Strategic goals

- Journalists in need have access to free emergency legal assistance.
- The legal climate for press freedom worldwide is improved.
- Specialist, free legal defence for media is available globally from well informed legal practitioners and partners, able to defend individual journalists and take strategic cases to protect and extend freedom of expression.

Enabling goals

- Strengthened internal capacity to meet the global legal challenge to journalists' ability to work on issues of public interest.
- Through the strategic communication of our work and that of our partners, Media Defence is recognised globally as a centre of expertise in legal defence of press freedom.

We have made strong progress towards achieving our goals in 2022. The total number of cases we are supporting continues to grow and we are on track to support at least 100 new emergency defence cases per year by 2024. We are already exceeding our 2024 target of undertaking 40 strategic cases per year, supporting 59 new strategic cases in 2022. We have deepened our support to our partners and have facilitated cross-partner learning, sharing best practices and strengthening legal advocacy across the world.

This has been underpinned by organisational growth, leveraging relationships with new and existing funders to grow our income. We have broadened our communications, reaching more journalists, media and human rights lawyers and potential partners through our growing social media channels, as well as through a new quarterly newsletter and regular webinars. Finally, we improved our Resource Hub in 2022 by launching modules for lawyers in Latin America and South and Southeast Asia, making our online legal resources more accessible to media lawyers defending digital rights globally.

On reaching the halfway point in our strategy, we undertook a review of the progress so far. We looked at key challenges and lessons learnt, implementing changes to ensure that we holistically assess our impact. We found that the operating environment has become much more challenging: court closures during the pandemic, the rise in SLAPPs, and the introduction of regulations complicating international money transfers to certain high need countries all affect how we offer support. Despite this, in 2022 we exceeded our targets for both emergency defence and strategic cases, and the cases won have the potential to impact the freedom of expression landscape. We have had internal discussions around how we understand success in our work and how to offer the best support to our partners. Throughout the 2020-2024 strategy period we have grown our team from 13 members to 19, and maintained a steady income despite the pandemic. Moving forwards, we will be focussing on how to strengthen relationships with our partners, communicating the support we offer in more languages, and continuing to receive - and learn from - feedback from journalists and lawyers.

World Overview

In 2022, we supported a total of 543 active cases in 82 countries.

Throughout the year we also worked with 18 partner organisations in 17 countries where the need for legal support is the highest. Our support enabled them to litigate 509 cases.

Our capacity building programme trained 47 lawyers in-person from 23 countries, expanding our training programme into Latin America and South Asia.



Highlights of the Year

Journalists faced increasingly challenging and dangerous circumstances around the world, and the need for legal support to the media continued to grow in 2022.

543

Number of active cases in 2022

188

New cases in 2022

129

New emergency defence cases

59

New strategic cases

84%

Case success rate at international mechanisms

18

Number of active partners

59

Lawyers trained

LNJAR

Launched

We supported journalists and media outlets in 188 new cases in 2022. 59 of these cases were strategic, which means they can generate impact beyond the individual case, with the potential to improve the environment in which the media operates. As litigation can be enduring, these new cases only form a small part of our overall caseload. In total, our team worked on 543 cases during the year across 82 countries. This represents an increase from 2021 when we worked on 466 cases during the year in 62 countries. Thus, we have already met our 2024 target.

We identified a number of trends and new developments that hamper journalists’ ability to gather information or report, and we sought to counter these at national, regional, and international courts.

Over the past few years, the environment in which we are working has continued to worsen and this is reflected in our work. Cases that came to an end in 2022 had an overall success rate of 58%, which is lower than we have seen in previous years. As before, a large proportion of the cases supported in 2022 were not expected to receive a successful outcome at a national level, due to a lack of judicial independence or



other challenges in the operating environment. In the majority of instances, however, we must exhaust domestic remedies before we can bring these cases to regional or international courts. It is through international mechanisms that we hope to achieve successful outcomes, and where our success rate is higher.

We worked with 18 funded partners throughout the year, enabling them to provide high quality legal support to journalists and independent media outlets in countries where the need is the highest. A record number of 59 lawyers were trained to provide better legal support to the media. We improved our Resource Hub, where lawyers can access all our training materials and resources on one easy-to-use site. We did this by tailoring the content to our audiences, ensuring that all content is up to date, and launching Spanish modules for lawyers in Latin America. We also published modules for South and Southeast Asia, and updated our existing modules for sub-Saharan Africa.

We improved our ability to meet the growing need for our support in 2022 by welcoming six new members of staff. We also increased our income significantly, raising more funds than in any previous year.

In September 2022, Media Defence and partners Committee to Protect Journalists and Thomson Reuters Foundation launched the Legal Network for Journalists at Risk (LNJAR). LNJAR is a network of expert member organisations who have come together to create a single access-point to an ecosystem of legal support. Media Defence manages the day-to-day operations of LNJAR.

Legal cases can be complex and prolonged and LNJAR members work together to coordinate and combine the different support available. This ensures that member organisations make the best possible use of limited resources and avoid duplication when providing legal support. It also takes the onus off journalists facing legal threats to navigate different organisational mandates, case criteria and review procedures. To strengthen the legal environment for media freedom, member organisations also collaborate and share information on activities aimed at building legal capacity to defend journalists.

Highlights of the Year

LNJAR

acos
ALLIANCE



Coalition
Against
Online
Violence

(JiD)
Journalists in
Distress Network



Networks & Coalitions

In addition to LNJAR, we are member of a number of networks, including A Culture of Safety Alliance (ACOS Alliance), Coalition Against SLAPPs in Europe (CASE), Coalition Against Online Violence (COAV), Digital Rights Litigation Network (DRLN), Journalists in Distress Network (JiD Network) and Vuka! Coalition for Civic Action.

The ACOS Alliance is an unprecedented coalition of 130 news organisations, freelance journalist associations and press freedom NGOs with whom we work to champion safe and responsible journalistic practices. CASE is a coalition of non-governmental organisations from across Europe united in recognition of the threat posed to public watchdogs by SLAPPs. We are on the steering committee of CASE and work with the coalition to counter legal harassment and push for protective legal measures and reform. COAV is a collection of organisations working to find better solutions for women journalists facing online abuse, harassment and other forms of digital attack. It offers collective support to bolster digital security and provides resources on combating online violence against women journalists.

We continue to work with partner organisations who are part of DRLN, litigating cases relating to digital rights and identifying opportunities to provide support cases in domestic courts. JiD is a network of media freedom organisations which provide direct assistance to journalists and media workers who are at risk because of their work. The network is an informal forum for sharing information on journalists in distress and developing joint initiatives for emergency response. Until 2022 we were also a steering committee member of the Vuka! Coalition, through which we collaborate with other organisations on amicus curiae interventions and communications tactics. The coalition's allies and steering group members work together to provide support to civil society groups facing threats, harassment and restrictions.

Emergency Defence

We provide emergency defence to journalists and media outlets facing complex and costly lawsuits and other forms of legal intimidation as a result of their reporting. Through grants and pro bono legal support, we ensure that journalists are able to fight back against efforts to silence them.

In 2022, our caseload reflected that the large majority of legal action taken against the press has been against individual journalists, who work without the representation of resourced media outlets. This includes freelance journalists, citizen journalists and bloggers.

A large majority of the individual journalists that we supported in 2022 were under legal threat for their reporting on topics such as transparency, corruption, and politics. A smaller group amongst these independent journalists were reporting on crime, justice, demonstrations, protests, religion, gender and sexuality, armed conflict, and environmental issues.

These statistics show that there is great need to support cases where journalists face costly and complex litigation. In an attempt to silence them, authorities and powerful individuals use multiple lawsuits to threaten critical reporting and harass journalists without the resources to protect themselves.

129

Number of new emergency defence cases

245

Total active emergency cases

Most cases by type:

Civil defamation	42
Criminal defamation	25
Other criminal	20
Physical reporting restrictions	8
Endangering national security	6
Other civil	4
Arbitrary detention	3
False news	3
Administrative measures/sanctions	3
Violence and bodily harm	3
Electronic crimes	3
Web blocking / internet shutdowns	2
Closure of outlet	2
Protection of sources	1
Sedition	1
Torture	1

Most represented countries:

Brazil	49
Azerbaijan	23
Yemen	6
Ethiopia	4
Latvia	3
Kyrgyzstan	3

Emergency Defence: Case studies

Case Study: Re:Baltica

In 2022, we supported the appeal proceedings in a civil defamation lawsuit against the Latvian non-profit investigative news outlet Re:Baltica. The outlet publishes online and print content, and is one of the only independent media houses focusing on issues of social importance - including corruption, crime, finance, human rights and disinformation - in the Baltic region.

In March 2019, Re:Baltica published a story - based on leaked bank data - exposing money laundering activities by a prominent business person and political figure in Latvia. Several months later, the business person in question filed a civil defamation suit against Re:Baltica, seeking a large sum of damages. We supported Re:Baltica when they filed their defence submissions. Unfortunately, the Court of First Instance ruled in favour of the plaintiff, ordering Re:Baltica to pay moral damages.

We supported the subsequent appeal proceedings. In November 2021, the Court of Appeal ruled in Re:Baltica's favour. However, the business person appealed this decision to the Supreme Court. At the end of 2022, the Supreme Court upheld the Court of Appeal's decision and ordered the plaintiff to pay compensation to Re:Baltica. Due to legal restrictions however, the plaintiff was only ordered to pay partial compensation. Re:Baltica stated that without Media Defence's financial support, they would have still had to pay a substantial amount of legal fees.

Although Latvia is ranked quite highly on the World Press Freedom Index, government offices, courts, and business people sometimes try to interfere with media outlets' and reporters' work. Re:Baltica had previously been subject to harassment by powerful individuals who used the courts as a tool for intimidation, in an effort to suppress its journalistic work. The judgment before the Supreme Court in the latest lawsuit is important because a negative ruling would have generated a dangerous precedent to public interest reporting and generated a chilling effect on other independent media outlets in the region.



Case Study: Chutima Sidasathian

Thai reporter Chutima Sidasathian has dedicated herself to reporting on corruption, abuse of power and the plights of rural communities and refugees despite repeated attempts to silence her through intimidation and legal attacks. She was a producer of the award-winning documentary Ghost Fleet. The documentary detailed the recovery of fishermen kidnapped from remote islands.

In 2015, Ms Sidasathian was charged with defamation under Thailand's Computer Crime Act, along with her editor Alan Morison, an Australian citizen. The charges were brought by naval officers in connection to news reports that the English-language news site Phuketwan quoted alleging their involvement in the trafficking of stateless Rohingya migrants.

Human rights groups widely condemned Ms Sidasathian's 2015 case. Although she and Mr Morison were eventually acquitted, Ms Sidasathian continues to face criminal charges aimed at silencing her reporting on corruption and power abuse. In early 2021, Ms Sidasathian posted on her Facebook page about farmers in the province of Nakhorn Ratchasima, commonly referred to as Korat. The farmers were indebted to the local government after receiving money through a lending scheme. She had found evidence that the scheme was used to divert funds illegally. Ms Sidasathian's Facebook posts document and criticise the local government's involvement in the banking crisis. The mayor of the district filed an application against Ms Sidasathian for criminal defamation in relation to three Facebook posts in which she criticised the mayor's administration, his involvement in the banking scandal, and the effects on local villagers from 16 communities.

Media Defence supported Ms Sidasathian's legal defence in both the 2015 case and the most recent one. We see it as emblematic of the potential abuse of criminal defamation laws by those in positions of power, in this case a local mayor, to intimidate and silence independent journalists exposing corruption and investigating public interest stories in the country. The threat of a potential criminal conviction and sentence against Ms Sidasathian, who could face six years in prison, will inevitably create a chilling effect. It could also promote self-censorship by other media outlets and journalists when it comes to reporting on matters of public importance. The trial date has been set for February 2024.



Emergency Defence: Trends

Journalists increasingly find themselves without the protection of resourced media houses, and are unable to cover the costs of complex and enduring cases themselves.

Without organisations such as Media Defence, journalists under threat for their reporting would end up self-censoring, thus depriving citizens around the world of crucial public interest reporting.

As the first line of defence for journalists and small media outlets, we are in a strong position to identify the kinds of threats they face.

SLAPPs

Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) continue to pose a significant threat to journalists who report on the wealthy and powerful. SLAPP claimants are not typically concerned with whether their case is successful or not. Instead, the aim of such lawsuits is to shut down critical speech by intimidating the defendant and draining them of time, money and resources that would otherwise have been used for further reporting. In 2022, we supported 56 emergency defence cases and took 11 strategic cases relating to SLAPPs in 23 countries. Though SLAPPs continue to rise, accounting for 41% of our caseload in 2022, there were a number of external and internal developments last year that could potentially limit their use.

In April 2022, the European Commission adopted measures to protect people engaged in public participation from SLAPPs. This is a welcome development but, even if these measures are adopted, the proposed directive only covers SLAPPs in civil matters with cross-border implications. If we take as a sample the European SLAPPs that we have supported over the past two years, this directive would only limit or prevent 36% of relevant cases. Journalists will still need support to defend themselves against vexatious lawsuits and we will need to continue challenging the systems that allow for such abuses.

In May 2022, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights addressed the phenomenon of SLAPPs for the first time in a judgment issued in the case of *Moya Chacon v Costa Rica*. The defendants wrote an article about alleged wrongdoing during border checks after sources informed them that police officers were under investigation. Despite the clear public interest in the subject and the fact that one of the sources was the then-Minister of Security, one of the named police officers filed a criminal complaint against the two journalists for defamation. Alongside partners FLIP and El Veinte, we intervened in the case to highlight the chilling effect of such legal threats on public interest reporting. The IA Court referenced our amicus curiae brief in their judgment and highlighted the psychological, emotional, economic and professional impact that judicial harassment has on journalists.

In June 2022, we intervened in *Malkiewicz v United Kingdom* before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). The applicants, Grzegorz and Teresa Malkiewicz, are the owners and editors of Polish-language monthly magazine, *Czas* Publishers Ltd. They were sued for libel in London by a claimant who was funded under a conditional fee arrangement (CFA). The applicants were ordered to pay 60% of the claimant's costs in both the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court proceedings.

In our intervention, we highlight that the UK continues to be the most expensive jurisdiction in which to be sued, making it a hub for libel tourism. The UK's costs regime facilitates an inequality of arms between parties. As a result, the outcome of the proceedings can depend, to a significant degree, on a party's financial circumstances. The consequences of this regime lead to gross and serious interferences with freedom of expression, especially for small publishers and individual journalists for whom the costs are rarely proportionate.

We anticipate that SLAPPs will continue to account for a large proportion of our caseload in 2023.

Strategic Litigation

We litigate strategic cases in courts around the world to challenge unjust laws and defend freedom of expression and press freedom.

We undertake strategic litigation to improve the legal environment in which the media operates. We focus on cases that have the potential to have a meaningful impact, covering a range of issues including online speech, privacy and surveillance, the misuse of criminal laws, arbitrary detention, and violence and impunity.



59

Number of new strategic cases

We took the most strategic cases in:

Azerbaijan	14
Colombia	6
Nigeria	5
Hungary	4
Russia	3

216

Total active strategic cases

Most cases related to:

Electronic crimes	14
Web blocking / internet shutdowns	7
Constitutional challenge	7
Criminal defamation	5
Other criminal	4
Other civil	3
Access to information	2
Civil defamation / libel	2
Closure of outlet	2
Counter-terrorism	2
Religious-based legislation	2
Torture	2
Threats and harassment	1
Administrative measures / sanctions	1
Violence and bodily harm	1

84%

Success rate for strategic cases at international mechanisms

Strategic Litigation

Conflict Reporting in Ukraine

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, numerous journalists covering the war have been killed. Many more have been injured and systematically attacked by Russia. In 2022, we filed two cases at the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of Ukrainian journalists Oleksandra Sasha Kuvshynova and Oleh Baturin.

Ms Kuvshynova was killed in Ukraine by an artillery attack by the Russian armed forces soon after the start of the war. Only age 24, Ms Kuvshynova was on journalistic assignment with a Fox News team reporting outside Kyiv shortly after the start of the war. Fox News cameraman Pierre Zakrzewski was also killed in the attack. Ms Kuvshynova was a documentary film producer and journalist who played a prominent role in Kyiv's creative community. She also worked to support free media and artistic expression in Ukraine and beyond.

Ms Kuvshynova was one of five women journalists killed in 2022. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, all of these women were working in conflict areas. Four of the women journalists killed, including Kuvshynova, worked in Ukraine. In total, 86 journalists and media workers were killed in 2022, as reported by UNESCO.

Despite the rights and protections journalists are entitled to while reporting on armed conflicts, attacks against journalists in the context of war are often met with impunity. To challenge this trend, in 2022, Media Defence filed an application before the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of Ms Kuvshynova's family. In our application, we argue that the fatal attack was a violation of Article 2 (the right to life), Article 5 (the right to liberty and security of person), Article 8 (the right to respect for private and family life), Article 10 (the right to freedom of expression), Article 13 (the right to an effective remedy) and Article 17 (the prohibition of the abuse of rights) of the European Convention on Human Rights.



Article 17 prohibits states from performing acts aimed at destroying the rights and freedoms protected by the ECHR. The Court has considered claims of violations of Article 17 by states in only very few cases, so it is a novel argument to use in a case like this. In the circumstances of the war in Ukraine, we contend that the Court should examine Russia's actions aimed at the destruction of the rights and freedoms of Ms Kuyshynova. We argue that the totalitarian situation that has been created in Ukraine, alongside the actions of the Russian state resulting in the destruction of Ms Kuyshynova's rights to life and freedom of expression, constitute a violation of Article 17.

We are also representing journalist Oleh Baturin in an application to the European Court of Human Rights. Mr Baturin is a Ukrainian journalist and human rights defender. Since 2014, he has reported extensively on Russian aggression against Ukraine. He is the editor-in-chief of the regional newspaper Novy Den. In March 2022, he was kidnapped by Russian state agents. While in detention, Russian state agents tortured Mr Baturin. He was interrogated about his journalistic activities, and questioned about the names and addresses of activists. He was also threatened with execution. He was released after nine days.

In our application to the European Court of Human Rights, we argue that the abduction of Mr Baturin by Russian state agents and subsequent events amount to a violation of Article 3 (the prohibition of torture), Article 5 (the right to liberty and security of person), Article 8 (the right to private and family life), Article 10 (the right to freedom of expression), Article 13 (the right to an effective remedy) and Article 17 (the prohibition of the abuse of rights) of the ECHR.

These cases are important because they concern the rights and protections journalists are entitled to while reporting on armed conflicts. These types of attacks prevent journalists from carrying out their work and are just two examples of a number of attacks on the media in Ukraine during the conflict. It is crucial that we continue to litigate cases of violence against journalists before domestic and regional courts during conflict. We must do so in order to challenge the culture of impunity in which state and non-state actors commit attacks against freedom of expression in times of war.

Strategic Litigation



Spyware

In recent years, journalists around the world have experienced increased digital surveillance. In particular, investigative journalists uncovering corruption, abuse of power, and human rights violations are victims of rampant surveillance and often illegal collection and abuse of personal data. Governments and private actors are using spyware to penetrate encrypted, confidential information.

Sophisticated spyware like Pegasus, designed by the Israeli surveillance firm NSO Group, is marketed to governments as a digital tool that enables security forces to fight crime. Some governments have introduced legislation expressly authorising the use of spyware under the guise of protecting national security and public safety. The use of spyware against journalists has the potential to violate a wide array of human rights, and impacts journalists personally and puts sources, relatives and friends at great risk.

Importantly, the use of spyware has a deleterious impact on the protection of journalistic sources. Journalists who have been targeted by spyware are being forced to take drastic measures to keep their sources anonymous. For example, when speaking on the phone they might do so in coded language. Journalists don't mention people's names and are wary of saving people's numbers on their phones. They might avoid writing emails or text messages about where or what time they will meet their sources. Some journalists have also reported that they no longer go to the places they used to visit before they were victims of spyware. Others have said they are losing contact with their sources altogether, as the sources are unwilling to come forward for fear of their identity being revealed. In such cases, journalists no longer have access to crucial public interest information.

Hungary

In 2022, we supported our partner HCLU, who have engaged in both national and international proceedings on behalf of several Hungarian journalists targeted by Pegasus. The deterioration of Hungary's media landscape has been well documented by human rights organisations in recent years. Hungary's laws around surveillance are extremely broad: they enable the state to spy on almost anyone on grounds of national security.

Journalist Szabolcs Panyi, who works for the non-profit investigative journalism centre Direkt36, is one of the Pegasus victims we supported in domestic proceedings in Hungary, through our partner HCLU. After it was confirmed by Forbidden Stories that Mr Panyi was on the list of journalists targeted by Pegasus software, he has stated that he was particularly worried about the infringement of his source protection rights.

HCLU filed two requests for investigation on behalf of the journalist - both were rejected. At the beginning of 2022, HCLU filed two lawsuits as well as a complaint with the Hungarian National Security Council (NSC) to disclose any information held on Mr Panyi. The NSC found that there had not been a breach of his rights. One of the lawsuits is currently still ongoing.

We are providing support to HCLU and Mr Panyi in these cases, where the aim is to develop litigation that compels authorities to investigate serious cyber attacks against journalists in Hungary, and to expose the failure of the authorities to investigate such attacks. HCLU is supporting several other journalists - with our support - before Hungarian domestic courts to request investigations into their targeting by Pegasus spyware. Due to the nature of these cases, it is likely that they will eventually be brought before the European Court of Human Rights.

Azerbaijan

Media Defence, alongside Azeri lawyers Zibeyda Sadigova and Elchin Sadigov, is also representing four Azeri journalists who were victims of Pegasus spyware. After being denied accountability and redress in Azerbaijan, we filed four applications to the European Court of Human Rights in September 2022. The applicants, Sevinj Abbasova, Aynur Ganbarova, Natig Javadli, and Gular Mehdizade, are all Azeri journalists who have faced state harassment and intimidation for a number of years. The journalists' phone numbers were included in a list of individuals whose mobile devices were selected for targeting with the Pegasus spyware.

When the journalists complained to the authorities and asked that they investigate their claims, the authorities refused to do so. Azerbaijan's courts also refused to order that an investigation take place and dismissed the journalists' complaints.

We argue that by failing to carry out an investigation into their claims, Azerbaijan has violated their rights to privacy and freedom of expression. The applicants also claim that the Azerbaijan government hacked their mobile devices using the spyware and that as a consequence every aspect of their private life, and the private lives of their family, friends, colleagues and others, including journalistic sources, was compromised. We allege violations of their rights under Articles 6, 8, 10, 13, 17 and 18 of the ECHR.

Strategic Litigation

Social media blocking

We have seen a number of states - including Nigeria and The Republic of Guinea - engaging in social media blocking. Social media blocking has become an increasingly popular method of suppressing dissent and critical reporting on governments.

The Nigerian government decided to ban access to Twitter in June 2021. The decision to block the social media platform followed Twitter's decision to delete a tweet posted by President Buhari. According to Twitter, the tweet contravened the platform's 'abusive behaviour' rules.

Together with Nigerian lawyer Mojirayo Ogunlana Nkanga, we filed an application to the Economic Community of West African States Court of Justice (ECOWAS) on behalf of five NGOs and four journalists who challenged the social media blocking. The plaintiffs argued that the Twitter blocking affected their professional lives, as well as the public's access to vital information.

In July 2022, the ECOWAS Court found that Nigeria had violated the rights of the plaintiffs by blocking access to Twitter. The Court ordered Nigeria to put in place a legal framework that is consistent with international human rights law standards, including the right to freedom of expression.

Moreover, the ECOWAS Court ordered Nigeria not to block the social media platform again. This judgment represents an important step in pushing back against the phenomenon of social media blocking.

We additionally filed an application to the ECOWAS Court to challenge Guinea's decision to block social media platforms in the lead up to and during the period of parliamentary elections and a constitutional referendum in the country in 2020. This application was filed on behalf of four NGOs that carry out activities in relation to the protection of freedom of expression in Guinea, as well as one Guinean journalist.

Protests and demonstrations took place in Guinea in the run up to the election and referendum. During this time period, the government of Guinea blocked access to social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter. Journalists and NGOs were unable to report on the elections and participate in public discussions on constitutional reform taking place, thus violating their right to freedom of expression. Given the political situation in Guinea following the 2021 military coup, the case was suspended. The suspension was lifted in 2022, and the case is ongoing.

Local Legal Capacity Building

We build local legal capacity to defend journalists through training lawyers and by supporting local legal centres. With our funding and practical support, our partners can help journalists more quickly and with the benefit of local expertise in countries where the need for our support is very high.

18

New partner grants approved

5

New partners funded

509

Cases litigated by partners

5

Litigation surgeries

14

Women lawyers participating in our peer support programme

59

Lawyers trained

Working with Partners

In 2022, we worked in partnership with 18 organisations operating in Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia. Our support enabled our partners to litigate 509 cases across a range of freedom of expression issues, nationally and internationally. In addition to financial support, we provided legal support in a number of cases taken by partner organisations.

In Europe, we have supported organisations working on pressing media freedom issues, including the use of SLAPPs to censor journalists, as well as the targeted abuse of Pegasus spyware against journalists. Our partners the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights in Poland (HFHR), Ossigeno per l'Informazione in Italy, and the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU) in Hungary worked on several cases relating to SLAPPs and spyware. We also supported the efforts of

Human Rights Platform (HRP) in Ukraine to continue providing journalists with appropriate legal defence. This area of work has proved to be crucial in the context of the ongoing war. Additionally, we supported the work of the Mass Media Defence Centre in Russia. In Turkey, the Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA) and the Foundation for Society and Legal Studies (TOHAV) continued to defend journalists accused of incitement to terrorism or criminal defamation for their reporting critical of the government.

In Latin America, we worked with the Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP) in Colombia to support journalists who have been physically abused as a result of their work, and to fight legal challenges to rectify or remove online content. We also worked with the Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism (Abraji) in Brazil.

As part of our Empowering Women in Digital Rights Advocacy Programme (EWDRA) project in sub-Saharan Africa, we started working with Le Collectif des Associations Contre l'Impunité au Togo (CACIT) in Togo, Volunteers for Sustainable Development in Africa (VOSIEDA) in Liberia, Campaign for Free Expression (CFE) in South Africa and the Network of Public Interest Lawyers (NETPIL) in Uganda to protect the voices of journalists online. These four organisations work to ensure enhanced legal protection of freedom of expression through providing judicial assistance to journalists and undertaking strategic and precedent-setting legal action.

Finally, we strengthened our work in Asia. In 2022 we worked with the Media Policy Institute (Kyrgyzstan), Legal Aid for Cambodia (Cambodia), and two additional partners in South Asia. We also support one partner organisation in the Middle East and North Africa.

Local Legal Capacity Building



Training of Lawyers

In 2022, we were able to restart our in-person events which we previously had moved online due to the pandemic. We hosted 4 in-person litigation surgeries in sub-Saharan Africa (1), Asia-Pacific (1) and Latin America (2). With these training sessions we welcomed 47 new lawyers to our network. Additionally, we hosted events for our existing network: one online advanced litigation surgery, quarterly know-how events and launched a peer to peer programme.

Over the course of the year, we aimed to strengthen the community of women lawyers in our network, a major focus of our project in sub-Saharan Africa. As part of this project, we hosted our first women-only litigation surgery in East Africa, during which 12 lawyers discussed various topics around freedom of expression with experts from the region. We also invited the alumni of this training and other women from the

network to take part in our peer to peer programme. This is our first one-year mentoring programme and it aims to bring together lawyers with different backgrounds and experiences to support each other, share knowledge about their work, and establish cross-regional collaboration. The participants of the programme are based in Burundi, Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia.

In 2022, we expanded our litigation surgery programme into South Asia and Latin America. In Latin America, we hosted two litigation surgeries in Spanish with a total of 23 participants from 13 countries. We also held a litigation surgery in Kathmandu for 12 lawyers from South Asia as part of our project with the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL). These litigation surgeries are vital to develop a network of highly-knowledgeable lawyers who can provide high quality legal support to journalists, with Media Defence able to provide funding and added value where needed.

With the growth of our litigation surgeries, we have also updated and expanded our Resource Hub. The Resource Hub is not only the basis for our training programme, but it also entails useful information for a wider group of lawyers who require information around freedom of expression and digital rights. In this context, we focused on tailoring our resources to our audience and ensuring that all content is up to date. We launched modules for Latin America in Spanish. We also published modules for South and Southeast Asia, and updated our modules for sub-Saharan Africa. In 2022, our Resource Hub was accessed 136,948 times. Throughout the year, we have also worked on additional resources to reflect emerging trends around digital rights in our resources. These will be added to our Resource Hub in the coming year.

Working with Partners: The Case of Human Rights Platform (HRP), Ukraine

Human Rights Platform (HRP) is a Ukrainian NGO whose key priority is the protection of freedom of speech.

The NGO has a pan-Ukrainian network of media lawyers, covering all regions of Ukraine to provide efficient legal assistance.

HRP gives legal advice and recommendations, and represents the interests of journalists in both national courts and the European Court of Human Rights.

Each year, HRP works on around 20 defamation cases and no less than 10 cases concerning access to public information. Additionally, HRP holds training sessions, webinars, seminars, and workshops for media actors in the country. HRP is also involved in legislative activity: throughout 2019 – 2022 they helped draft media legislation, the introduction of which became one of the conditions for Ukraine's entry into the EU. The law was adopted in December of 2022.

Furthermore, HRP monitors digital rights and changes to legislation, and how these affect human rights in Ukraine - with the aim of preventing online human rights violations as well as the introduction of harmful laws.

Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the focus of HRP has not changed: as before the war, the protection of freedom of expression



is a priority concern. However, the content has changed. Before the war, the organisation mostly defended journalists in courts in lawsuits brought against them by Ukrainian politicians and oligarchs. Currently however, HRP represents journalists at the European Court of Human Rights in cases concerning Russia's violation of human rights guaranteed under the ECHR. Moreover, HRP has continued to provide journalists with legal advice, which now mostly consists of advising journalists how to work under the legal regime of martial law.

According to HRP, Russian aggression against Ukraine and its consequences are considered the greatest problem facing freedom of expression in Ukraine. Journalists are forced to risk their lives in order to report to the world about the crimes committed by Russia. Journalists are kidnapped, tortured and killed. They are also facing problems accessing official information and locations of importance - for example where war crimes have been committed. The war has also made it increasingly difficult for journalists to communicate with the Ukrainian authorities.

Another pressing problem is the lack of financial resources for journalists. Media outlets are frequently unable to secure appropriate salaries for their staff, including career development. There is a lack of funding for journalistic investigations which, according to HRP, have decreased in Ukraine as a result of the war.

HRP CEO Oleksandra Stepanova will be joining Media Defence's fellowship programme in 2023. Under the programme, we invite lawyers from our funded partner organisations to work with us as part of a funded placement for two to three months. We are looking forward to working with Ms Stepanova. When commenting on our collaboration with HRP, Ms Stepanova stated:

“Due to the support of Media Defence, we are able to continue providing legal assistance to journalists and media. Moreover, we are able to offer help to Media Defence in lodging applications before the European Court of Human Rights. This is extremely important as journalists are working in the occupied territories, where the risk of being harmed is high. Legal assistance is one of the mechanisms that instils hope in journalists. The impact of Media Defence is colossal.”

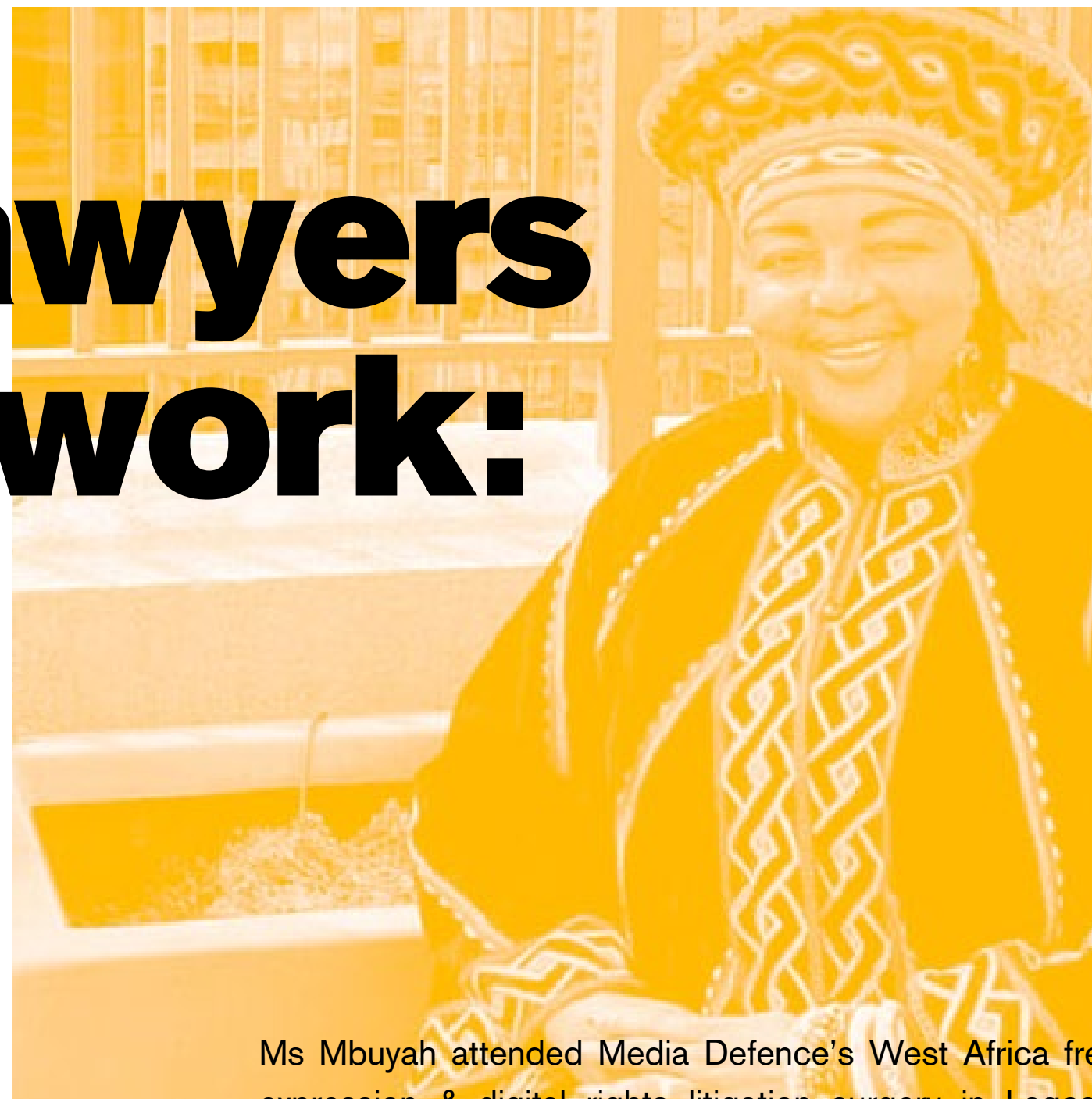
Women lawyers in our Network: Gladys Mbuyah

Gladys Mbuyah is a barrister, peace advocate and renowned human rights activist working in Cameroon. She has been part of Media Defence's network for several years, having attended our digital rights litigation surgeries.

She is currently part of our peer support programme for women lawyers in sub-Saharan Africa. She is also the President of the Cameroon Bar Association Social Affairs Commission.

Ms Mbuyah splits her professional time between litigation and advocacy for the promotion and defence of women's rights. Ms Mbuyah is also president of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Cameroon. In this role, she uses law and advocacy to protect the rights of women before courts and tribunals.

Ms Mbuyah is one of the founding members of the "Global Voices for Women" radio show on Radio Beau in Cameroon, which has run for over 20 years. The programme discusses women's and girls' rights and touches on topics such as violence against women and girls, and the protection of women human rights defenders.



Ms Mbuyah attended Media Defence's West Africa freedom of expression & digital rights litigation surgery in Lagos, Nigeria in 2018. More recently, she took part in our online West Africa advanced digital rights & online freedom of expression litigation surgery. She notes the following when describing her experience in attending the surgeries:

"Thanks to Media Defence, I am now connected to many digital rights lawyers in various countries. The litigation surgeries have enhanced my knowledge on digital rights and strategic litigation. As a result, I have worked on digital rights capacity building and organised digital rights awareness-raising activities. Furthermore, I am now looking to file a public interest case requesting for unconstitutional laws and limits to the right to freedom of expression to be reviewed."

Ms Mbuyah is also part of our peer support programme for women lawyers in sub-Saharan Africa. The programme is designed for women lawyers with an interest in digital rights. It is the first initiative within our new project: Empowering Women in Digital Rights Advocacy (EWDRA). The one-year programme aims to provide a platform for newly trained women lawyers to build their expertise in collaboration with other more experienced practitioners.

"I find the peer support programme very exciting and important. It has created an opportunity to network with colleagues, as well as the opportunity to share my experiences and learn from others' experiences. I am learning about areas of work in which lawyers can collaborate internationally."

Ms Mbuyah's work is inspiring and crucial in Cameroon, where freedom of expression is being stifled by draconian laws applied arbitrarily. In 2014, the Cameroonian government introduced a repressive anti-terrorism law that curtails free speech both online and offline. While the government enacted the legislation under the guise of protecting national security and upholding public order, it has had a chilling effect on journalism and media freedom. The law has been used to suppress dissent and to arrest activists, opposition party members, and journalists.

Cameroon dropped to 118 out of 180 in RSF's World Press Freedom Index in 2022. The barometer reflects the increasingly hostile environment journalists in the country are forced to operate in. In particular, journalists from Anglophone regions in the west of Cameroon are frequently subject to state harassment. Additionally, they are often accused of complicity with a secessionist movement. This has resulted in journalists who report on issues in Anglophone regions to be exposed to threats, arrests, legal harassment, and even murder.

"When I speak about women's rights, most people are receptive to the message. However, sometimes I worry about my safety when speaking out about freedom of expression. There are many examples of people being locked up and even killed for freely expressing themselves."

"The list of things to do is long", she says, when we ask her whether she is hopeful for the future. However, this does not stop Ms Mbuyah from continuing her fight for freedom of expression, digital rights, and women's rights. She has given pro bono representation to hundreds of vulnerable women and prominent journalists before courts. Given the hostile environment for freedom of expression in Cameroon, it is even more encouraging that lawyers like Ms Mbuyah do this fundamental work. We are honoured to have her as part of our network.

Flora, Matheus & Mangabeira:

The law firm tackling fake news and the judicial harassment of journalists in Brazil

Lucas Mourão is a partner in Brazilian law firm Flora, Matheus & Mangabeira.

The law firm specialises in defending fundamental rights of journalists and media workers.

Its three main areas of expertise are defending the right to freedom of expression and a free press, fighting against fake news, and defending those who are the victims of judicial harassment.

Since 2020 Media Defence has worked with Flora, Matheus & Mangabeira to defend journalists' rights in Brazil. When interviewing Mr Mourão, he tells us that **“Brazil has been going through years of profound trauma caused by dissemination of fake news on an industrial scale”**. Due to this, **“the courts have become more receptive to allegations of damage to honour caused by journalistic reporting and even by social media posts”**. It has incentivised powerful individuals to judicially harass opponents and curtail freedom of expression through the use of SLAPPs. The biggest challenge in Brazil today, according to Mr Mourão, is to balance the fight against fraudulent news with the protection of the right to freedom of expression.

In the last three years the law firm has litigated around 250 cases, with a success rate of almost 90%. Current cases frequently involve politically and economically powerful individuals. For example, several billionaire businessmen have sued journalists

simply because they did not like what they were reading. One businessman seems to have adopted a targeted strategy, suing numerous journalists in extortionate compensation claims. Although he has lost most cases, this type of behaviour intimidates critics. It has a chilling effect on press freedom, as it results in journalists self-censoring their work, particularly when it comes to reporting on powerful business persons.

In another case, the Universal Church pastors in Brazil mobilised to file 144 lawsuits against journalist João Paulo Cuenca. This was in response to a satirical tweet published by Cuenca in 2020. This legal campaign is yet another example of the legal harassment faced by journalists in Brazil and globally. The cases against Cuenca generated a recommendation by Brazil's National Justice Council, guiding the courts to adopt measures to redress the power imbalance in these SLAPP cases. This is a welcome development to counter the chilling effect of the growing abuse of the courts in Brazil. Together with Flora, Matheus & Mangabeira, we have been supporting the legal defence of Cuenca. 126 cases have been successfully closed thus far. None have been lost.

Since the start of Flora, Matheus & Mangabeira's work on freedom of expression, it seems that the Brazilian courts have developed a better understanding of the importance of public debate and freedom of expression. **“Nevertheless”**, Mr Mourão comments, **“there is a long way ahead”**.

Mr Mourão also states that:

“the presence of Media Defence in Brazil made a huge difference for the legal protection of journalists and media workers who are being sued for doing their job. It is very difficult for a small newspaper or an independent media worker to defend themselves in a lawsuit. There are procedural costs and lawyers' fees, not to mention the time that is lost to carry out journalistic activities, and the sleepless nights. Today, thanks to Media Defence's support, these journalists are no longer alone. We are able to offer effective legal defence and renew the courage of these journalists to continue investigating and publishing without fear of prison or bankruptcy.”



Impact Monitoring 2022 Journalist Impact Survey

- **100% of respondents would recommend our support to other journalists facing legal action; and**
- **95% of respondents reported feeling satisfied or extremely satisfied with the lawyer who handled their case.**
- **95% of respondents found that our support and that of our partners enabled them to continue reporting on public interest issues**
- **64% of respondents reported feeling satisfied with the outcome of their case;**

Journalists continue to be highly satisfied with Media Defence's support. Many journalists felt that Media Defence's support was critical for helping them defend their rights. Importantly, despite confidence in the support received from Media Defence, over the previous three years, more and more journalists believe their work will result in legal charges in the future. Respondents highlighted continuing judicial harassment and a declining situation for freedom of expression, which is in line with other research demonstrating a global decline in press freedom. Unlike in previous years, a few journalists have given up work, reduced their online presence or changed the stories they address due to pressure. The importance of Media Defence's support in this context is clear, along with ensuring that journalists are aware of a network of support.

Most journalists frequently found themselves facing criminal and civil defamation lawsuits. As in previous years, crime and justice and political corruption were the topics covered by journalists which ended in legal action against them. Unsurprisingly, business corruption has been rising as a reason for cases over the previous few years, matching the rise of SLAPP suits.

[The full report can be read here.](#)

Impact Monitoring 2021 Lawyer Impact Survey

We found that:

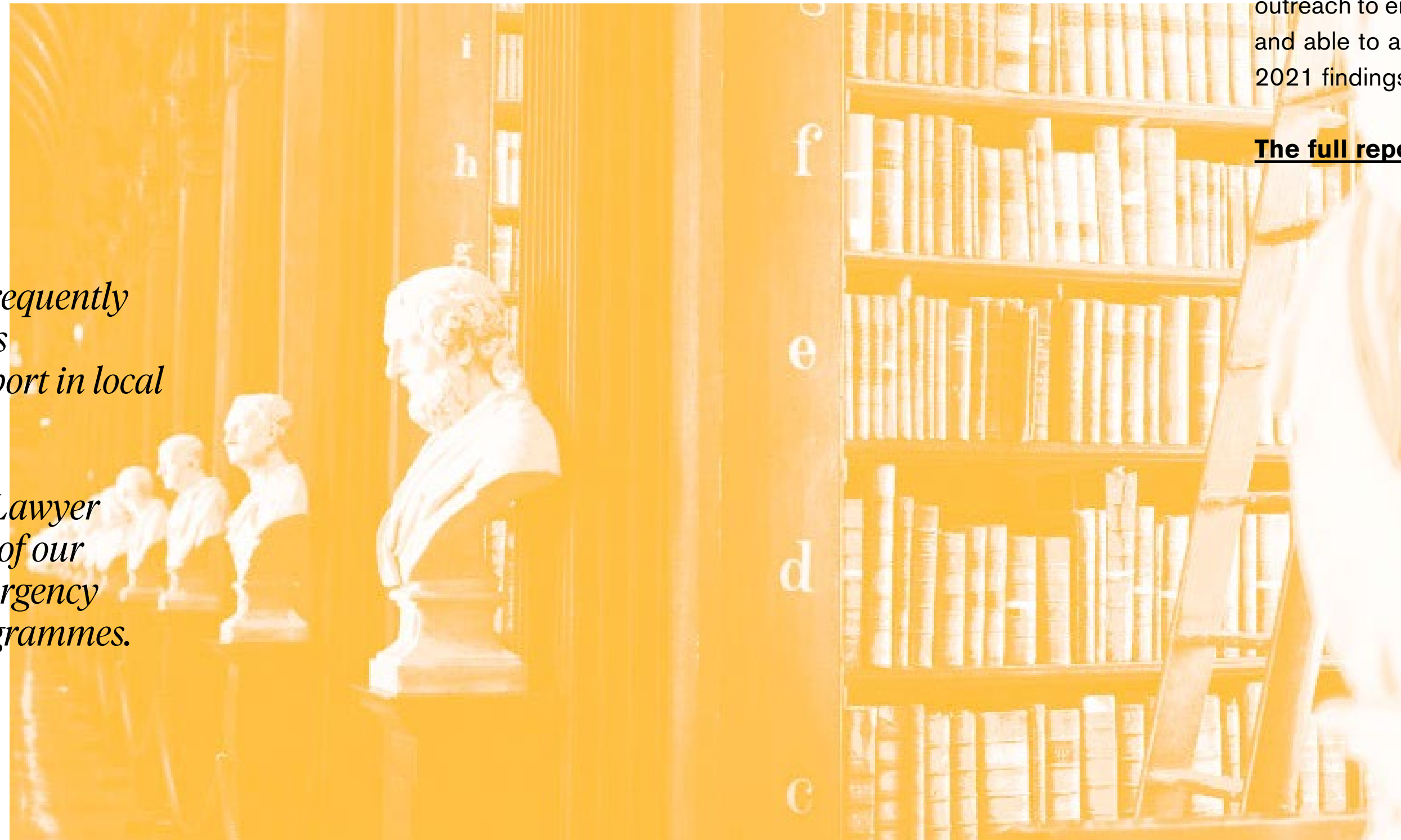
- **100%** of respondents recognised that Media Defence added value to their case
- **92%** of respondents would recommend our legal support to other lawyers;
- **90%** of respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the quality of legal support;
- **85%** of respondents felt more confident in their skills and ability in litigating freedom of expression cases; and
- **92%** felt more likely to take on cases relating to the defence of journalism and media.

We will continue sharing the survey with the lawyers we work with on a monthly basis, as well as carrying out additional in-depth qualitative interviews. We will also carry out specific outreach to ensure that women lawyers are aware of our support and able to access it, alongside more peer to peer events. The 2021 findings were published on our website.

[The full report can be read here.](#)

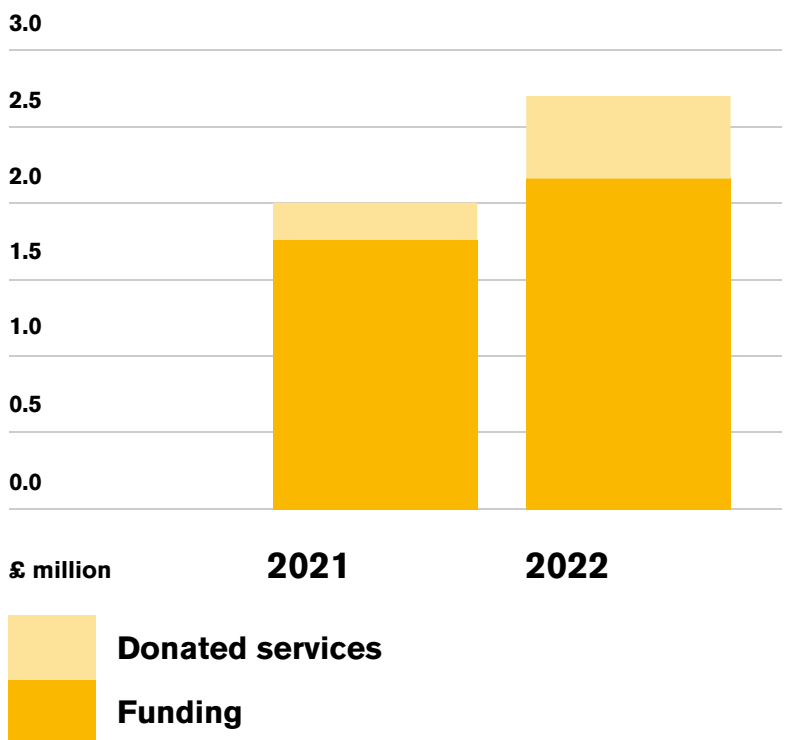
Media Defence's in-house lawyers frequently provide pro bono support to lawyers representing the journalists we support in local courts.

In 2021, we carried out our second Lawyer Impact Survey to assess the impact of our support to lawyers through our emergency defence and strategic litigation programmes.



Our Spending

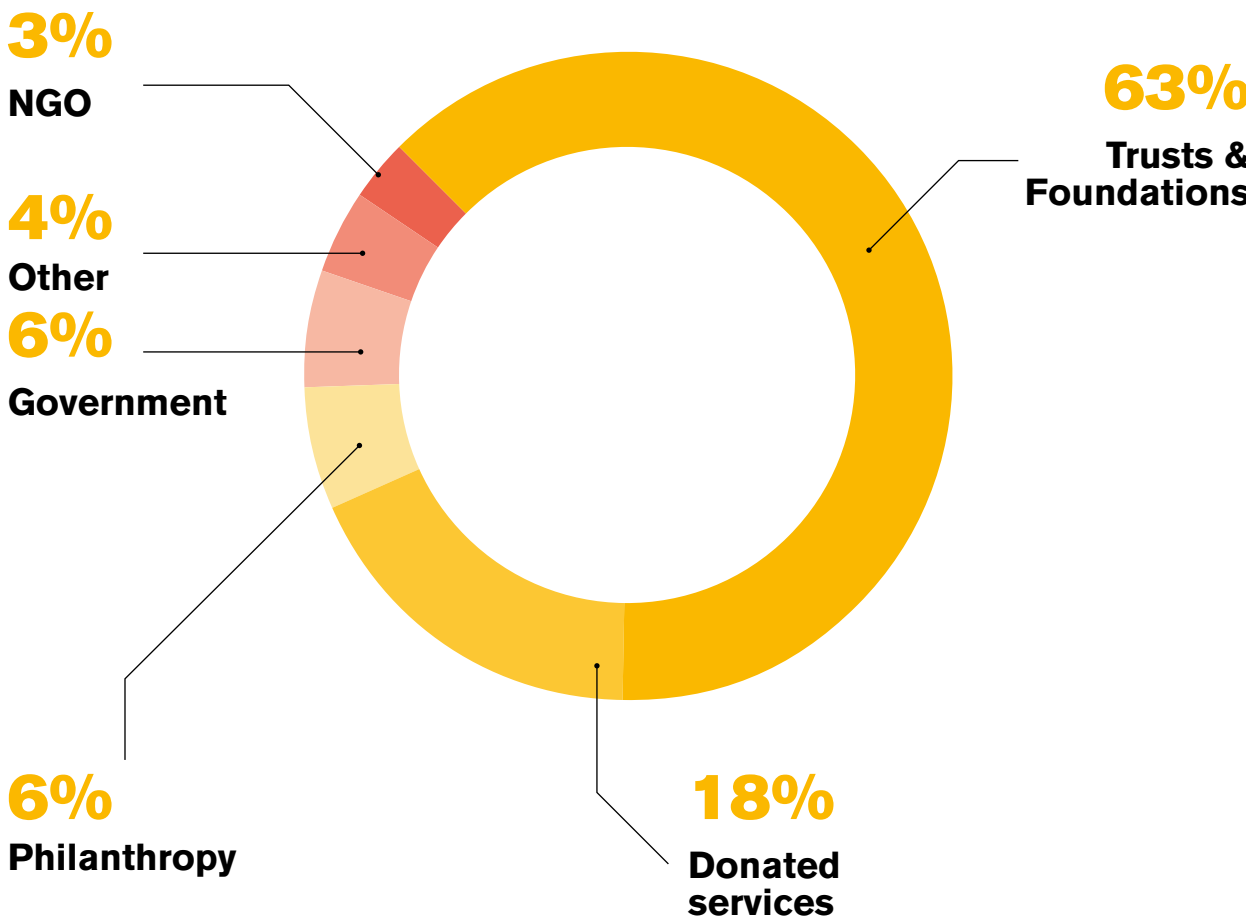
Income



Even though pro bono legal support continues to play an important part in enabling the delivery of activities, financial donations form a higher portion of incoming resources in 2022, with Trusts and Foundations continuing to be the main source of our funding.

In **2022**, we received total incoming resources of **£2.642 million**, of which **£483,727** were donated services. Due to increased work by our fundraising team, **our overall income from donations increased by 22%**, and **financial donations increased by 19%**

49% of incoming resources from donations were restricted to either a region or a theme. **51%** of funding was unrestricted. Donated services constituted **39%** of the restricted donations, **compared to 26% in 2021**.



Expenditure

15%

Increase in expenditure compared to 2021

18

Grants to NGOs in support of legal justice approved in 2022

15

Grants to NGOs in support of legal justice approved in 2021

Overall Picture

£0.76m

Total funds carried forward at the end of 2022

£2.29m

2022

£1.99m

2021

2022 saw a **15% increase in expenditure** from **£1.99 million in 2021**, to **£2.29 million in 2022**. This year, one third of the expenditure was on strategic litigation, with 25% on emergency defence, 23% on support to NGOs, 15% was for capacity building and legal training and 4% on fundraising.

The below shows the split during **2022** of expenditure between each of our charitable activities.

Our total support and governance costs in 2022 were **£305,890**, compared to **£308,486** in **2021**, representing **13%** of our total expenditure (compared to **15%** in **2021**). **4%** of our total expenditure was spent on raising funds, which reflects that **2022** was the second year in which we had a fully staffed development team in place and a subsequent increase in fundraising activity, including donor reporting.

£0.17m

Restricted funds

£1.12m

Unrestricted funds

We closed the year with a net surplus of £352,106 and maintained an improved liquidity ratio of 3.3 compared to **2021**, when it was 2.4. At the end of **2022**, we carried forward **£1.29 million**, of which **£0.17 million** were restricted funds (funding with a thematic and/or regional restriction) and **£1.12 million** were unrestricted funds (**£0.37 million** of designated reserves and **£0.76 million** of funds carried forward for ongoing activities).

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Our Funders

We would like to thank our funders and donors for their contribution to our work in 2022:



Craig Newmark Philanthropies



Our Funded Partners

We would like to thank our partners for their contribution to our work in 2022:



[Please note: some partners are not named for security reasons]

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Together, we can defend independent media across the world. If you would like to make a donation to our work, please do so [here](#).