



INTERNATIONAL MEDIA SUPPORT (IMS)

Annual report 2015 2016



INTERNATIONAL
MEDIA SUPPORT

ABBREVIATIONS

ABRAJ	Association of Independent Syrian Radio Stations
AJSC	Afghan Journalists' Safety Committee
AMJI	Association of Moroccan Investigative Journalists
ARIJ	Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism
CSC	High Commissioner of Communication
FARC	The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FOJO	Fojo Media Institute
IMS	International Media Support
INSM	Iraqi Network for Social Media
IPC	Interim Press Council
IRFS	Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MJI	Myanmar Journalism Institute
MLI	Media Law Institute
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NLD	National League for Democracy
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSF	Open Society Foundations
RtI	Right to Information
SNJT	Tunisian Journalists' Syndicate
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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International Media Support (IMS) is a nonprofit organisation that works to support local media in countries affected by armed conflict, human insecurity and political transition. Across four continents IMS helps to strengthen professional journalism and ensure that media can operate in challenging circumstances.

mediasupport.org

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Cover photo: A refugee tries to open the border fence while another films with his phone at the Macedonian border on 6 April 2016. The massive displacement of people in the Middle East and beyond has had a profound impact on the media, with both audiences and journalists affected and on the move. Photo: NurPhoto/Getty Images

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A man listens to the news on the radio in Bujumbura, on 22 July 2015, following the presidential elections of 21 July. Photo: AFP/Phil Moore

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA SUPPORT

FOR FREE AND PROFESSIONAL MEDIA

International Media Support is a non-profit organisation that works to support local media in countries affected by armed conflict, human insecurity and political transition.

We develop safe working environments with sound laws for journalists, we build and support institutions that form the backbone of the media sector and we strengthen the professional skills of journalists. We do this because independent and professional media has the capacity to reduce conflict, strengthen democracy and encourage dialogue.

mediasupport.org

SUSTAINING INDEPENDENT MEDIA IN TIMES OF CONFLICT

In a year where the greatest influx of refugees seen by Europe since World War II dominated headlines and pressured government aid budgets, I have been asked on several occasions why support to media development in conflict zones, humanitarian disasters and countries in the midst of democratic transition should be a priority.

The answer is of course that without access to reliable, relevant information, people are not empowered to rebuild their broken societies or to influence future development efforts. We know from more than a decade of support to independent media in conflict that reliable and trustworthy information is the one thing that people caught in instability, armed conflict or humanitarian disasters need. Their survival and their future livelihoods depend on it. Media often becomes polarised during conflict and may disseminate information that exacerbates rather than reduces tension. This is why access to information and support to ethical and professional journalism is so essential.

A troubled year for independent media

The attack on the French satire magazine Charlie Hebdo in January 2015 was the beginning of a severely challenging year for independent media across the world and those working to safeguard it. Conflict and government crackdowns on media and press freedom advocates in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus illustrate only how clearly critical voices are targeted by those wishing to curtail them.

Particularly in the Middle East, the ongoing conflicts in Syria and Iraq and the massive displacement of people had a major impact on the media, shifting audiences and journalists to surrounding countries. Despite the harsh conditions, our partners persevered. The award-winning Syrian Radio Rozana continued to broadcast to more than 200,000 on-line listeners inside and outside Syria with the help

of 120 correspondents based inside Syria. In Iraqi Kurdistan, the first all-female staffed women's magazine Zhin forged on, counterbalancing the region's entrenched gender inequality through stories on female fighters battling Islamic State and stories on the lives of female refugees.

Encouraging developments

IMS' decade-long presence in the Middle East, Asia and Africa has proven that long-term support and building partnerships pays off. The fact that the IMS-founded Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ) and the investigative journalism network SCOOP Russia continue to carry out high-quality, high-impact, cross-border journalism in two of the world's most difficult regions is a testament to this. As they battle the propaganda machines of some of world's most repressive regimes, our support contributes to keeping alive these pockets of independent and critical journalism. Further down the line, these agents of change will be key to driving forward democratic reform processes when the tide turns in favour of press freedom.

We also saw encouraging developments throughout the past year. The promise of democratically elected governments in Sri Lanka and Myanmar represent two of the most hopeful examples from a media freedom perspective. Our long-term presence in both countries where we have built trusted partnerships with the media has enabled us to contribute substantially to the countries' media law reform processes. In both cases we have provided the new governments and media stakeholders with concrete recommendations for next steps of their respective media development reform processes in cooperation with UNESCO.

Locally anchored safety mechanisms

In Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, working as a journalist became increasingly dangerous with targeted attacks by the Taliban and in the case of



Jesper Højberg, IMS Executive Director. Photo: Rasmus Steen/IMS

Bangladesh, a series of deeply worrying murders of bloggers and writers. Despite years of international attention to the grim situation of journalists, we, the international community, have still not adequately succeeded in developing the appropriate protection and safety mechanisms at a national level together with local stakeholders. 95 per cent of journalists killed are local journalists and for this we need sustainable local setups to address the issue of safety. Nurturing, building and sustaining locally anchored safety mechanisms for journalists – modelled in part by the IMS-founded, country-wide safety mechanism run by the Afghan Journalists' Safety Committee – will therefore continue to be our way forward.

These safety mechanisms rely on the support and cooperation of as many relevant stakeholders as possible in a given country – including authorities and judicial institutions when possible, as our examples from Nepal and Afghanistan show. The UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity also provides a platform on which actors in the field of media can improve information sharing and the coordination of efforts.

“Independent media systems not only provide an effective check on those in power, but can also play a central role in peacebuilding.”

In two of Africa's poorest countries, Somalia and Niger, we are working with local partners to enable the media to become drivers of peace, recon-

ciliation, accountability and citizen participation in the nascent democratic processes taking place. In Somalia, IMS and our Swedish partner, Fojo Media Institute spearheaded a five-year media support strategy for the Somali media sector – the first for the country. In Niger, our programme works to counter the influence of jihadists active in neighbouring countries.

A full section of this year's annual report which spans from January 2015 to June 2016 is dedicated to our partners' efforts to counter gender inequality in the media. The conspicuous absence of female voices in media hampers women's ability to actively influence developments in society and we seek to actively address this issue in all aspects of our work.

Like many other organisations reliant on the support of Nordic governments, IMS was also affected by the decision of Nordic governments to reallocate funds from development aid to cover domestic costs related to the influx of refugees. However, as the achievements in this report show, we are proud of the difference that our determined partners and we continue to make for press freedom and independent media under the most difficult conditions imaginable everywhere in the world.

Jesper Højberg
IMS Executive Director

WHERE WE WORK

Programme countries and countries with smaller regionally linked projects

These are countries with full-scale IMS programmes, as well as countries in which we had small-scale activities that are tied to our regional engagement in the Middle East and North Africa (striped countries).

Africa	Asia	Eastern Europe, the Caucasus & Central Asia	Latin America	Middle East & North Africa
1 Niger	4 Afghanistan	10 Azerbaijan	15 Colombia	16 Algeria
2 Somalia	5 China	11 Belarus		17 Bahrain
3 Zimbabwe	6 Myanmar	12 Kyrgyzstan		18 Egypt
	7 Nepal	13 Tajikistan		19 Iran
	8 Pakistan	14 Ukraine		20 Iraq
	9 Sri Lanka			21 Jordan
				22 Lebanon
				23 Libya
				24 Morocco
				25 Palestine
				26 Syria
				27 Tunisia
				28 Yemen

Original map: Maitra Seehar

Thematic countries and countries with short-term engagements

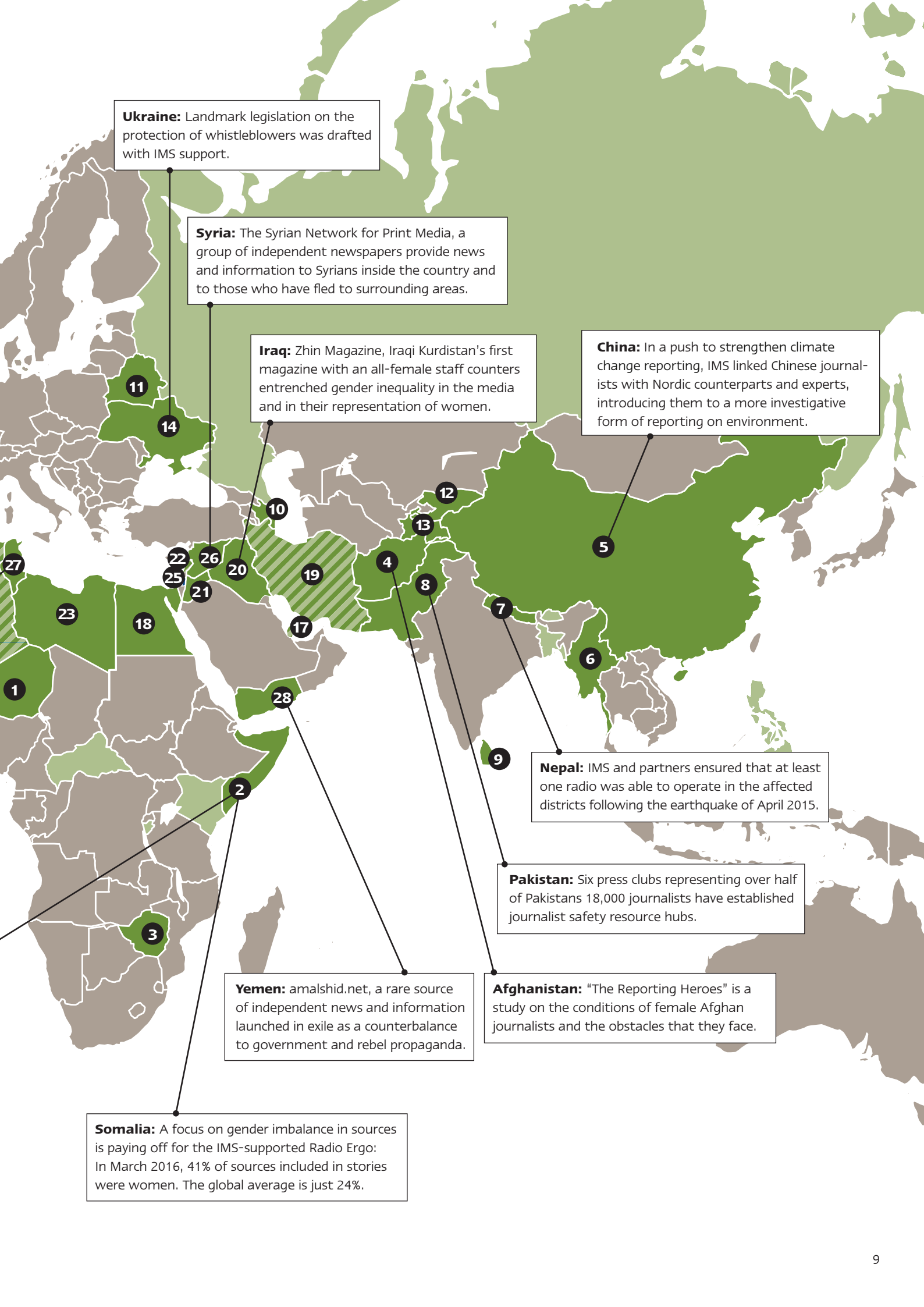
These countries include those in which IMS was engaged primarily with thematic issues such as safety of journalists or investigative journalism, and countries where we have short-term engagements. These countries are:

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Kenya, Philippines, Russia, Venezuela

Tunisia: Improved protection for journalists and their sources in a new counterterrorism bill secured by our partner, the Tunisian National Journalists' Syndicate.

Colombia: Regional journals and news networks developed in-house security protocols and over 60 police officials and journalists/editors engaged in five dialogue sessions – prompting the human rights division of the police to commend the IMS project for opening new and useful channels of communication between patrol police and beat reporters.

Somalia: Support to Somalia's media sector has been formalized in the country's first-ever national media development strategy. Developed together with local media partners and authorities, the five year strategy focuses on professional skills building and safety of journalists.



Ukraine: Landmark legislation on the protection of whistleblowers was drafted with IMS support.

Syria: The Syrian Network for Print Media, a group of independent newspapers provide news and information to Syrians inside the country and to those who have fled to surrounding areas.

Iraq: Zhin Magazine, Iraqi Kurdistan's first magazine with an all-female staff counters entrenched gender inequality in the media and in their representation of women.

China: In a push to strengthen climate change reporting, IMS linked Chinese journalists with Nordic counterparts and experts, introducing them to a more investigative form of reporting on environment.

Nepal: IMS and partners ensured that at least one radio was able to operate in the affected districts following the earthquake of April 2015.

Pakistan: Six press clubs representing over half of Pakistans 18,000 journalists have established journalist safety resource hubs.

Afghanistan: "The Reporting Heroes" is a study on the conditions of female Afghan journalists and the obstacles that they face.

Yemen: amalshid.net, a rare source of independent news and information launched in exile as a counterbalance to government and rebel propaganda.

Somalia: A focus on gender imbalance in sources is paying off for the IMS-supported Radio Ergo: In March 2016, 41% of sources included in stories were women. The global average is just 24%.



ASIA

Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League of Democracy's winning election campaign in 2015. Photo: Kyaw Kyaw

A FOCUS ON SAFETY AS PERILS GROW



Lars H. Bestle
Head of IMS Asia Department

"The Government is doing what it can to enhance media freedom. We will do our part. Are you ready to do yours?"

Those were the words of Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe spoken to local media at an event on World Press Freedom Day co-hosted by IMS in Colombo in May 2016. Sri Lanka has been at the bottom of global press freedom indices for more than a decade, but in 2015 came to represent one of the most encouraging developments in the area of press freedom in South and Southeast Asia – a year which also saw deeply worrying trends. In countries such as Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan, we contributed to progress on media law reforms while the increased targeting of journalists by terrorist groups or authorities in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh demanded a strong focus on improving the safety of journalists.

In **Sri Lanka**, a new government elected in August 2015, embarked on a fresh discourse of democratic reform, showing a will to expand the space for freedom of expression. Our continuous presence in the country since 2003, enabled us to react promptly to this window of opportunity when the new government showed signs of aspiring for change. In May 2016, together with the Secretariat for Media Reforms, a coalition of Sri Lankan organisations, IMS presented the country's new reform-oriented government with a roadmap for the development of an independent and pluralistic media sector based on UNESCO's Media Development Indicators.

The landslide victory of Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party in **Myanmar** provided renewed hope for further change after a marked slowdown in media reform efforts. With support from the Danish, Swedish and Norwegian governments, IMS, together with the interim press council launched the first code of conduct for Myanmar journalists. A 2015 survey of 134

journalists shows that the code of conduct is well-known and used across the country.

Considering that Myanmar's population until 2011 lived in a virtual information blackout for more than 50 years, the establishment of a coalition of civil society organisations and media working to promote Right to Information (RtI) legislation is a milestone in the country's media reform process. RtI is important because it ensures the public's right to request information from public institutions, which in turn minimises the chances of corruption and abuse of power. A draft RtI law has been shared with the new NLD-led government and advocacy efforts together with IMS' partner, the Center for Law and Democracy, will continue in pursuit of government action.

"The code of conduct is the life of people who are in the media and journalism industry. The Code provides protection not only for journalists but also for all stakeholders associated with the news media industry."

— Myanmar journalist quoted in the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Survey

Similar hopes for pushing forward media development efforts are tied to the thorough assessment of Myanmar's media environment published by IMS in June 2016, building on UNESCO's Media Development Indicators. The analysis is emerging as an important advocacy tool by both Myanmar and international stakeholders in their pursuit of change.

In **Nepal**, sustained lobbying by IMS and partners in the Nepal International Media Partnership to improve the safety of journalists is having substantial effect. The organisation with the necessary legal powers to undertake investigations, the National Human Rights Commission, is establishing a national mechanism that addresses the safety of journalists and human rights defenders and the impunity for those who attack them.



Reporters at Radio Sindhu talking about their experiences during the major earthquake that struck Nepal in April 2015. They were both in the studio at the time of the quake. Photo: Andreas Sugar/IMS

While the mechanism is not yet functional, its implementation delayed by the devastating earthquake in April 2015, we have assisted the Commission in preparing the necessary policy frameworks to allow it to become operational.

In **Afghanistan**, the Taliban's renewed hostility towards the media in 2015 posed a severe challenge to which the country's nationwide journalist safety mechanism was quick to react. The IMS-supported Afghan Journalists' Safety Committee (AJSC) evacuated more than 70 journalists, many of them women, during the Taliban's takeover of the northern city of Kunduz in autumn 2015.

A central part of AJSC's effectiveness stems from its community-based approach to setting up safety and emergency response mechanisms. Safety coordinators in eight provinces use risk analyses of local power structures in their communities to tailor safety and emergency strategies for journalists. Where Islamic State or the Taliban may be the main forces to reckon with in one province, it may be warlords or religious leaders in another. Some

provinces have cooperative police forces, in others, journalists must find other avenues of support. In Nangarhar, AJSC has signed the first agreement with the local government to provide support to media in emergencies.

Following a Taliban attack on Tolo TV in January 2016 in Kabul which killed seven media workers, IMS and AJSC provided input to more than 10 media houses on in-house safety strategies for media staff and their families in work-related emergencies. Having safety packages in place is also a means of encouraging journalists to remain in Afghanistan.

In light of the dire situation for journalists, the government of **Pakistan** has shown encouraging signs of considering a legislative framework that protects the rights of media workers and enables speedy, conclusive trials on crimes against journalists. In spring 2016, after years of advocating the government for change, the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, and a number of local media stakeholders provided the Pakistani government with input on a media workers protection law.

In a parallel track under the auspices of a Danish government-supported two year media development programme, some of Pakistan's leading journalists, media managers, human rights activists and civil society members have formed an expert group to draft a national agenda that outlines for the first time ever a priority action plan on effecting broad-ranging media reforms.

In another unique show of solidarity, six press clubs across Pakistan representing over half of Pakistan's community of 18,000 journalists have worked together to establish journalist safety resource hubs at their premises. Pakistan has thereby joined a small club of countries where civil society, with

IMS technical support and advice, has developed local safety mechanisms that assist journalists in distress, which document attacks against journalists and advocate authorities at provincial and national levels to address the safety cases.

The work that goes on across organisations and countries globally to address the safety of journalists also continues under the auspices of the UNESCO-led UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. This global process enables those of us working on media safety to improve cooperation and sharing of best practices so crucial to turning the tide of attacks against media.

STORIES OF CHANGE | AFGHANISTAN'S REPORTING HEROES

Working as a journalist in Afghanistan, one of the world's most dangerous environments is one thing. Working there as a woman, is an added challenge.

Luckily, there are many Afghan women like the 26-year-old Nazira Babouri, whose will to change circumstances not only for women in their country, but also to provide a voice for other minority voices in Afghan society, drives their desire to work as journalists.

"It's about empowerment of women and I became a journalist because I want to be remembered," she explains.

"Women in Afghan society have many problems that men simply do not wish to report on, like sexual harassment. And women subjected to sexual harassment do not want to talk to male reporters about this."

As a safety coordinator in the IMS-founded Afghan Journalists' Safety Committee, a network that implements a country-wide safety mechanism for Afghan journalists in distress, Nazira Babouri and AJSC have organised meetings with editors of media houses to encourage them to address the skewed gender balance amongst their staff and their sources. While their response often pertains to their perception that female journalists lack the necessary educa-



Female journalists trained in conflict sensitive journalism by Afghan Journalists' Safety Committee. Photo: Lars Schmidt

tion to perform the positions in journalism filled by men, AJSC has provided both skills and safety training to female journalists to strengthen their position in the workplace.

"In Kabul University, there are now more female journalists than male," explains Nazira Babouri.

"But they often disappear once they have graduated because their families do not support their wish to work in journalism, which is one of the main challenges faced by women. However, as a working journalist I can be a role model for what other women can do - and

I for one want to help change the minds of people through my work."

Also social media has empowered Afghan women. Things said and written by women that would have been unthinkable and certainly punishable less than ten years ago, now regularly appear on Afghan Facebook timelines.

The Afghan Journalists' Safety Committee, is a countrywide, locally led 24/7 safety mechanism, which provides assistance to journalists in distress, monitors incidents and provides male and female journalists with tailored safety advice and practical safety measures.



Radio Sindhu, a community radio in Chautara, one of the areas most affected by the earthquake. Photo: Andreas Sugar/IMS

STORIES OF CHANGE | REBUILDING COMMUNITY RADIOS IN NEPAL

● The 7.8 magnitude earthquake that hit Nepal 25 April 2015 affected numerous radio stations across the country. But despite lost equipment, destroyed buildings, chaos and personal tragedies, many radio stations managed to get back on air in a matter of hours or days.

These radio stations became crucial in the dissemination of vital information to the affected communities. Authorities and people relied almost entirely on the stations for conveying and receiving information about the situation on the ground, including where to go for food, medicine and other assistance.

An assessment by IMS of the most urgent needs of the radios ensured that at least one radio was operational in each of the earthquake-affected districts and

a radio programme, Jamani (Eye-witness), was conceived, holding the government to account for its recovery efforts. Twenty reporters from ten radio stations were trained to produce and file human interest stories in the months following the earthquake.

Jamani told stories of hope, suffering, coping strategies and effectiveness of recovery support – or the lack of it. Kathmandu-based producers brought forward concerns from people in the rural districts to officials in Kathmandu and asked why things were not working. Then they broadcast their responses. This helped get things done.

A school in one affected district was still closed three months after the quake. After traveling one day by car and one day by foot, a reporter arrived on the scene, interviewed

those affected and involved and aired the story. One week after the segment aired, the school reopened.

In another village, victims had not received their relief allowance because politicians could not agree who should receive it. A reporter went to investigate and the story was aired. Three days later, the list of beneficiaries was finalised and the villagers received their allowance.

Other reports on Jamani led to villagers living on unsafe land being moved to a secure location, and people not affected by the quake returned funds they had received by mistake.

The change brought about by responding rapidly and enabling community radios to broadcast shows the crucial role of a public service watchdog during a period when such a service was desperately needed.

AFRICA



A stringer from the IMS-supported humanitarian radio service Radio Ergo interviews a Somali woman. Photo: Radio Ergo

THE BATTLE FOR THE DOMINANT MESSAGE



Finn Rasmussen

IMS Senior Programme Manager for Somalia

With an increase in targeted violence and political pressure in East and Southern Africa in 2015, we focused our efforts on strengthening the safety of media workers and on the production of diverse and balanced content, bridging information gaps and mitigating political or gender-based bias.

Somalia has the dubious honour of hosting one of Africa's longest running conflicts, with the media under heavy fire in particular. As the country moves ahead, our work seeks to address some of the vast challenges facing the country's media to enable it to become a driver of peace, reconciliation, accountability and citizen participation. In late 2015 IMS and our

Swedish partner organisation, Fojo, along with local media organisations, spearheaded the development of a five-year media support strategy for the Somali media sector – a first for the country. The strategy emphasises the importance of boosting safety for journalists and seeks to address gender related challenges. The latter is much to the credit of IMS' partners stressing the particular risks female journalists face. Together with a network of Somali organisations, Fojo and IMS are working to establish a national protection mechanism for journalists. Here IMS draws on our expertise and best practices from similar setups in Asia.

In **Zimbabwe**, sexual harassment in newsrooms is among the most common forms of gender discrimination. More than 50 per cent of women working in the media have experienced sexual harassment, found a report from IMS partners. A key focus of

STORIES OF CHANGE | LEGAL LANDMARK IN ZIMBABWE

Although press freedom in Zimbabwe retains the classification of 'Not Free' in global rankings, the country took a step in the right direction when a February 2016 ruling by Zimbabwe's Constitutional Court ruled criminal defamation invalid and unconstitutional.

The legal ruling is an important improvement of Zimbabwe's media environment and is a landmark achievement by the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zimbabwe, which filed the court application following years of dedicated lobbying, supported by IMS and other likeminded organisations.

"Such laws have no place in a democratic society. There are alternatives; aggrieved parties can file complaints with bodies such as the Voluntary Media Council of

Zimbabwe and pursue civil actions for defamation in courts of law," says National Director Nhlanhla Ngwenya from MISA Zimbabwe.

Criminal defamation laws intimidate individuals from exposing wrongdoing by public officials. MISA had been fighting to engage with government as well as opposition leaders on the harmful effects of criminal defamation since 2004 but the lobbying did not yield the desired results and MISA decided to re-calibrate. With strategic input and support from IMS, lawyers together with MISA, decided to directly engage with the country's judicial system, with lawyers providing legal assistance and seeking release, whenever journalists got arrested on defamation charges. One of the cases that came from that strategic shift ultimately led to this ruling.

The ruling is a big leap towards alignment of the domestic legal framework with international standards on media freedom and freedom of expression. But with a pervasive culture of fear amongst media practitioners, many may still hesitate to bring their cases to court. Mindful of the many remaining statutes that can still be used to criminalise freedom of expression and hamper independent journalistic enterprises, MISA Zimbabwe will continue their work challenging the laws where necessary, says Nhlanhla Ngwenya.

Prior to the ruling by the Constitutional Court, journalists risked arrest and charges for defamation under Section 96 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act, with fines or prison of up to two years.



Demonstrators in Harare commemorate the international human rights day on 10 December. Photo: AP/Polfoto

IMS' work in 2015, was raising awareness of the effect of gender discrimination in media products, as well as access, participation and portrayal of men and women in the media. All this with a view for partners to develop gender policies, action plans and integrating gender considerations in programmes.

In IMS we recognise that media play an important role in the prevention of extremism. In **Niger** it is imperative that journalists are able to counter the influence of jihadists active in neighbouring countries. Our three-year programme in Niger is funded by Danida and implemented in collaboration with consortium partners Panos Institute West Africa and ARTICLE 19. The programme took off in late 2014, and centers on boosting responsible journalism, including through enhanced regulation. The project manager from the media regulatory body, the High Council for Communication (CSC) recognises the value of the IMS partnership:

"In my view, the partnership has significantly improved the interventions of the CSC. It has built capacity in matters of media regulation in Niger. This particularly through the establishment of our regional offices, and through increased productivity and improved visibility of the CSC."

Our rapid response approach entails assessing and reacting immediately to demands of independent media in countries where they are targets in evolving emergencies. When a political crisis erupted in

Burundi in May 2015, following President Pierre Nkurunziza's refusal to leave office, nearly all independent media outlets were closed or destroyed in only a few weeks – prompting more than 100 journalists to flee the country.

Seeking to counter the state-controlled narrative and provide access to independent information, our rapid response intervention resulted in support to the Burundian online radio Inzamba, produced by exiled media workers in Rwanda. In addition to online streaming, Inzamba reaches hundreds of people daily through WhatsApp and efforts are ongoing to make the broadcasts available via satellite. However, listening to Inzamba's news is not without risk. A listener in the northern Kanyanza province of Burundi told Inzamba's director:

"Yes, I listen to Inzamba, but because of fear of being arrested by the police, you listen to Inzamba when you are in your bedroom and you use earphones."

The importance of Inzamba cannot be underestimated – not only does it provide important news and information to Burundians around the world, it also provides Burundian journalists in exile an outlet through which they can continue to work and serve their communities.

Wherever you look across the African continent, whether in Somalia, Zimbabwe, Niger, or Burundi, there is a lot to be proud of – and surely, a lot more to do.

The IMS-run humanitarian broadcaster Radio Ergo is seeing the results of a new gender policy, which includes efforts to raise gender sensitivity amongst its Somali producers and local correspondents. Photo: Radio Ergo



STORIES OF CHANGE | RADIO ERGO: AMPLIFYING SOMALI WOMEN'S VOICES

When Radio Ergo's team of producers first began registering male and female voices featuring in the radio's daily programme of humanitarian information for the Somali speaking region, it was clear that there was an imbalance needing attention. The number of male voices heard on the radio far outweighed the female voices.

Now, however, the IMS-run Somali humanitarian radio broadcasting across Somalia is starting to see the results of its new gender policy which includes efforts to raise gender sensitivity among its Somali producers and local correspondents.

Since January 2016, Radio Ergo has been monitoring the number of female and male voices included in its programming and analysing the way in which men and women are represented. The idea is to get women more involved in vocalizing their needs and views in public discussions, as well as to move away from the narrow stereotyping of men as leaders, for example, and women as subordinates or even victims.

Somali women's voices now represent an average of 35-40% of

the voices heard on Radio Ergo every month. This compares impressively with the 24% share of female voices in the news globally, according to the 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project. In addition, the radio has made some strides towards demonstrating the value of women's contribution in Somali society through a sustained effort to overturn stereotyping.

"It is hard to change the typical profiling of women in roles of ordinary citizen or mother, but we have seen impressive signs of emphasizing women's positions of social responsibility and decision-making within those traditional and prevalent roles. Our approach rests on ascribing high value to women as often the sole income earners in the family, as keepers of the household, and as primary carers in charge of children's health and education," explains Louise Tunbridge, Radio Ergo's manager.

However, Radio Ergo still struggles to raise more voices of women in certain communities, most notably among pastoralists. Despite the ongoing training of the correspondents in the field and an overall increase in the number of

women reporting for the radio, it is proving difficult to get access to women who will talk in these situations. There are also noticeably few women who use the radio's mobile phone feedback service to leave a message or comment relating to the radio programmes.

The radio is experimenting with ways of overcoming the challenges. One method that is proving to be promising is an ongoing series profiling women who are speaking out and making a difference in their own communities.

"We have achieved notable success in profiling women as role models. The best example was the story of an illiterate displaced pastoralist woman from Puntland who joined literacy classes, opened a business, and became a local councillor in Godobjiran. The story was widely circulated in Somali media and much commented on," says Louise Tunbridge.

Radio Ergo is Somalia's only dedicated humanitarian radio service, providing life saving information to vulnerable communities. It airs for one hour each day on shortwave across the entire country and works in partnership with Somali FM radio stations.

Yemeni women take pictures of the damage following an air-strike carried out by the Saudi-led coalition on a school and a bowling club, in the capital Sanaa, on 12 February 2016. Photo: AFP/Mohammed Huwais



MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

POCKETS OF MEDIA EXCELLENCE



Michael Irving Jensen

Head of IMS MENA Department

Thora Gehl

Head of IMS MENA Department

The silencing of critical voices through the means of despotism and armed conflict left the Middle East and North Africa behind as one of the most dangerous regions in the world to practice journalism. In an environment of killings, threats, imprisonment and stigmatisation, our partners continued to produce high quality news based on ethical and professional standards, illustrating the enormous potential of the region's journalists, civil society representatives, and human rights defenders — future leaders, who despite their surroundings, work tirelessly to offset the seemingly never-ending spiral of calamities.

The region's relative bright spot **Tunisia** battled spill-over insecurity in its border areas, internal threats from jihadist groups, and a pushback against human rights and democratic reform, but media and civil society groups still forged ahead. Our partner, the Tunisian National Journalists' Syndicate succeeded in securing provisions that protect journalists and allow them to shield their sources in a new counterterrorism bill. The Syndicate's ability to intervene came as a direct result of our institutional support, which allowed them to free up resources to focus on substantive matters.

In the region's gloomy setting for independence and innovation, Tunisia's collective blog platform, Nawaat continued to provide a glimmer of hope, providing investigative reports and opening the space for a variety of opinions and debates. Our work with Nawaat enabled them to strengthen



An Egyptian woman waits for an election worker to check her identification card inside a polling center during the second phase of the parliamentary election, in the Maadi district of Cairo, Egypt. Arabic on wall of school reads "Give me more knowledge".
Photo: AP/Nariman El-Mofty/Polfoto

“I always thought camera work needs a moustache and a special magic power that I don’t have. Some of the men who worked behind the cameras and who could smell my vulnerability bullied me. In Arne Bro’s classes, I found the courage to trust my eyes.”

— Rokhsareh Ghaem Maghami, a female Iranian filmmaker who attended an IMS-organised documentary film course with Arne Bro, Principal of the National Film School of Denmark. Rokhsareh won two awards at the 2016 US Sundance Film Festival for her film *Sonita*.

the quality and reach of its video productions by setting up and coaching dedicated editorial and technical teams. A testament to its broad reach, Nawaat’s YouTube channel was watched more than two million times over the course of 2015.

At the other end of the spectrum from Tunisia’s relatively constructive progress, were Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. In **Egypt**, the tightening of state security measures and the threat from violent extremists provided for a severely challenging environment for the country’s independent media and civil society. In the case of **Yemen**, civil war and a vast humanitarian crisis led to an almost complete shutdown of the few independent media available with exile initiatives established elsewhere in the region. One of them, *Almashahid.net*, was launched with the assistance of IMS. It seeks to counterbalance the propagandistic news coming out of media run by Houthi rebels and President Hadi, says the editorial team behind the site:

“No one has any interest in exposing the horrors of this war and meanwhile the Yemeni population continues to suffer and is misled by propaganda. We need to change this.”

Propaganda also filled the information spheres of **Syria** where the despotism of President Assad and the violence of extremist groups rose to unparalleled levels of brutality. The massive displacement of people had a major impact on the media, shifting journalists and their audiences into surrounding countries. With its unrivalled presence of correspondents in Syria and surrounding areas, our partners continued their coverage of the conflict and the consequences for the millions displaced as a result.

Our support to the award-winning Radio Rozana, allowed it to further its position as one of the most

reliable media outlets covering Syria. It developed new relationships with other media and human rights partners such as the Violations Documentation Centre, the investigative journalism network ARIJ, and the website *Syria Untold* as well as international media houses which all benefitted from the radio’s unique network of 120 correspondents inside Syria. We also continued our work with the Syrian Network for Print Media, a group of newspapers seeking to reach similarly inaccessible audiences. The group succeeded in distributing around 30,000 newspapers weekly through more than 600 distribution points in Turkey and in northwestern Syria, successfully providing readers with a diversity of reliable news and information. In 2015, an independent monitoring of the papers’ content found significant improvements across the board with higher ethical standards, innovative angles and improved visual appearance. *Sourietna*, one of the member papers of the Network was awarded the Judge’s Special Recognition at the European Newspaper Awards.

In **Iraq**, the situation evolved from bad to worse, with the already highly fragile media environment under sustained attack from both violent extremists and formal instruments of repression. A counterbalance in the public narrative for those who are most at risk, we supported the women’s magazine, *Zhin*, an unlikely success story in Iraqi Kurdistan where entrenched gender inequality and violence against women are still widespread. The magazine produces stories ranging from the female fighters who battle against Islamic State to the latest trends in fashion.

“People are tired of only hearing about the miserable parts of women’s lives. They want to read about those who succeed,” says Ala Lattif, the editor of *Zhin*.

As threats against journalists continued to grow, so did our work to ensure their safety with legal protec-

tion provided through the Iraqi Network of Lawyers for Freedom of Expression, a voluntary network of lawyers defending journalists. The lawyers won 16 cases and settled another seven out of court in 2015.

Jordan also battled with its own internal tension and challenges, but remained comparatively stable. Our work there continued in the form of journalistic training of a network of female journalists from the journalism faculty of the local university in the conservative southern province of Ma'an. The network secured regular production of TV reports from Ma'an for the national independent broadcaster Roya TV, giving a public voice to local women.

"We tell women about their rights and duties," says Hanifa who also covered campaigns of female candidates for parliament to inspire local women. "We plant the seeds of change through our programmes. We plant respect for women," she says.

Planting the seeds of change is one of the hallmarks of our documentary film work in the region as well as in Iran, where we in 2015 began working with the public Tehran University. Following a film education study trip abroad, the university launched a course

entitled "The Arne Bro Methodology" in a clear reference to the vice-director Arne Bro at the National Film School of Denmark. Supported productions in 2015 included the documentary "Speed Sisters" by the Palestinian SocDoc Studios, a remarkable film that follows four female race drivers in the West Bank. The film premiered at the Hot Docs film festival in Toronto in early 2015 and has won a variety of international prizes.

Whether through documentary film or journalism, our media partners and the civil society and human rights groups we work with across the Middle East and North Africa, have persisted throughout 2015 and into 2016 to bring about real change, informing and expanding the space for expression and debate in some of the most dangerous environments in the world. Whether they are established legacy media, new, emerging media actors, or long-standing civil society groups they represent true pockets of media excellence in the repressive and conflict-affected contexts. Pockets of excellence that seek to transform societies, that seek peaceful development and progress, providing encouragement as they push back against repression.

STORIES OF CHANGE | THE LAST VOICE OF ALEPPO

"We don't have homes," says Kareem, as he explains the setup of the radio station. "Everyone sleeps in the office." He and his colleagues are working around the clock to bring Aleppo's citizens coverage of the incessant attacks on the city.

"Our families are far away and we can't reach them because of attacks and the bad roads."

Kareem's radio station, Aleppo Media Centre is arguably one of the last independent voices left in Aleppo, a city that has nearly ceased to exist after years of sitting at the centre of much of Syria's civil war. Kareem and his colleagues are determined to report on life in the divided city. AMC has a dedicated team of correspondents distributed around the province, he says. They cover areas otherwise impossible to reach for both national and international journalists.

With IMS' assistance the staff of the radio set up a studio and a transmitter, extending their reach and enabling them to target a larger audience. Every morning, the radio broadcasts two hours on FM and satellite. Its content is also re-broadcast on the satellite radio network, Ma3akom together with other Syrian radios, including Radio Rozana.

Their workday is determined by what goes on, he says. But where that might mean a press conference or a political scandal anywhere else, in Aleppo, the daily attacks are of principal concern.

"It is according to when and where the bombings take place," he says. "That's usually the first agenda point of the day." Their coverage is popular, he says, sharing positive feedback from listeners broadcast live with the help of a smartphone app.

The bombings and endless attacks make it nearly impossible to



A man stands in a bombed building in the Syrian town Azaz outside Aleppo. Photo: Christiaan Triebert used under CC BY-NC 2.0

operate a business, let alone a media outlet in the city. But that does not deter Kareem and his team.

"It's our mission and our cause and there is a need for our existence," Kareem says steadfastly. "As long as there is a need we'll keep going."



The IMS-supported documentary *Sonita* is about a determined and animated Afghan teen living in Tehran, who dreams of being a famous rapper. But in Iran, the government doesn't let girls sing solo. And in her Afghan home she is expected to become a teenage bride. Armed with nothing but passion and persistence, she must turn obstacle into opportunity. Photo: Sonita

STORIES OF CHANGE | MEDIA FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

In Jordan, IMS works with media partners who strive for social justice and seek to bring about change on a community level — change that is seen, heard, and felt by local citizens, change that matters.

Illustrating the media's ability to hold those in power to account, *Minna wa Feena*, a TV programme covering local issues in Jordan's remote regions, reported in 2015 on a medical centre in Ma'an that was no longer in operation. Following coverage of the reluctance by the official in charge of the centre to answer critical questions from the journalist behind the report, the Ministry of Health immediately secured all the equipment needed to get the medical center up and running again and start serving its citizens.

Another report by *Minna wa Feena* covered a failed water infrastructure project that stood unfinished two years after its planned completion date. After the report was broadcast, officials from the municipality of Zarqa were publicly shamed for their sluggishness and inaction. They responded quickly by putting extra manpower aside to finish the project.

Finally, coverage of a group of Syrian refugees by *7iber*, one of Jordan's most popular online platforms, illustrated the media's ability to facilitate public debate. With the hundreds of thousands of refugees in Jordan, *7iber* decided to focus parts of its coverage on the entrepreneurial skills of the Syrian refugees who rebuild their lives by setting up small innovative businesses. Contributing to a more nu-



Journalists participating in the Women's Network of Journalists that produce *Minna wa Feena*, a TV programme covering local issues in Jordan's remote regions. Photo: Jon Rytter

anced coverage of the refugee crisis in the region, the story's popularity prompted *7iber* to organize a public debate on the media coverage of the crisis in February 2016 to further a more responsible public understanding of the crisis.

Colombia: A journalist protests on 27 May 2016, calling for the release of two journalists held back by The National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrilla.
Photo: AFP PHOTO / LUIS ROBAYO



LATIN AMERICA

ZOOMING IN ON PEACE EFFORTS



Rob Shaw

IMS Latin America Advisor

Breaking news and opinion reporting rather than in-depth analysis have continued to characterise reporting on Colombia's peace talks during the past year, the focus areas of IMS in the region. The country's media needs an injection of investigative and balanced coverage, in order to give increased visibility to the central players of the peace process living in rural areas.

In order to address these challenges in the context of the peace negotiations between the government and the FARC and the current process of transition in Colombia, IMS and its Colombian partners developed a project to build the capacity of the media and Colombian journalists to play an active, fair and balanced role during this period, shifting the reporting focus to one of reconciliation and construction of scenarios conducive to transition and peaceful coexistence.

The first phase of the project focused on the role of the media in promoting the reduction of conflict and revealing the implementation of the peace process and the path towards transition in five high risk departments in Colombia: Norte de Santander, Arauca, Antioquia, Valle del Cauca and Nariño.

For IMS, the issue of linking and understand quality journalistic content and safety remains at the heart of our approach and focus in Colombia. With over a decade leading global safety efforts and investigative reporting initiatives, IMS continued to support these inter-linked issues by supporting both local media outlets and support groups across the country in 2015.

In August 2015, broadcast journalist Gildardo Arango won an award for his investigation into how local communities protected themselves from criminal gangs by creating so-called safe zones.

Photo: Consejo editorial team

IMS's work shed light on the reach of the peace process in rural zones and used innovative approaches to address the challenges that the transition imposes on local communities. The project also initiated and maintained dialogue between the government security forces and the media and journalists in order to reach an understanding about the role of the media in this specific context.

"We have been working with journalists to shift the reporting focus to one of reconciliation."

The project achieved a good balance of regions, types of media, gender and experience of the journalists, and a prior commitment by the media to facilitate the process with each one of the journalists during the duration of the project.

The collaborative work also increased the number of trainings and high-quality publications. Sixteen investigative reports were completed, which have been published in regional and national media. One of the investigations even won the Alfonso Bonilla Aragon journalism award.





EASTERN EUROPE, THE CAUCASUS & CENTRAL ASIA

Opposition activists hold a rally in Baku, Azerbaijan, demanding an end to freedom of expression violations. Photo: Aziz Karimov

PUSHING BACK AGAINST CONTROL



Gulnara Akhundova

Team Leader, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

From a geopolitical standpoint, the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (ECCA) region remains as important as ever. As events in Ukraine have demonstrated, **Russia** continues to shape the trajectory of political and human rights developments across the former Soviet republics, bringing additional challenges for independent media and civil society in the region.

As the year unfolded, conditions for media in the region deteriorated sharply with journalists and activists struggling with mounting restrictions on the free flow of news and information — in addition to grave threats to their own lives.

In **Azerbaijan**, where our partners and we worked to promote press freedom until 2014, censorship and state control of the media has become deeply entrenched. Those who have dared to challenge government restrictions have done so at great personal risk – potentially facing imprisonment, assault and intimidation.

Over the years, our Azerbaijani journalist and human rights defender colleagues have been thrown in jail on fabricated charges, media outlets have been shut down and civil society groups have been forced into exile. Bringing about any form of change in Azerbaijan seemed near impossible. IMS was one of the few that chose to stay. At a time when Azerbaijan had one of the most restrictive media and civil society environments in the region, "Sport for Rights", an international advocacy campaign for free expression, set sail.

The campaigning alongside a host of other initiatives by international and national actors, along with evidence-based advocacy, contributed to the release of a number of political prisoners, including prominent journalists and human rights defenders.

In **Ukraine**, we launched back in 2008 an ambitious media law reform initiative with support from

Danida. The immediate reaction from some stakeholders was that we were aiming too high. Today, the legal framework for the media in Ukraine is among the most progressive in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. We are incredibly proud to see that years of perseverance and hard work by our partners has resulted in the passage of several groundbreaking pieces of media legislation, including laws on transparency of media ownership, access to information, and the privatisation of state owned print media. Work by IMS and our partners has been instrumental in terms of drafting another landmark piece of legislation – this time on the protection of whistleblowers. The new draft law is important because it raises awareness among public servants that whistleblowing does not constitute a form of betrayal and that they are provided with adequate legal protection in case of whistleblowing.

The reform process in Ukraine and the results of advocacy efforts in Azerbaijan over half a decade serve as a collective reminder that development is often a gradual process. However, IMS' long-term engagement and strategic patience in countries like these proves that we can make a meaningful contribution to fostering change during long-term transitions. Change that enables the media to provide people with independent news and information — news and information that acts a counterbalance in the information spheres that are so heavily dominated by propaganda, rumour, and fabricated stories designed to win the battles of information war that are waged subtly side by side with armed conflict.

In Central Asia, IMS has brought innovation to areas where the mainstream media fails to inform public discourse via robust, issue-led journalism. In Kyrgyzstan, we are excited to follow the rapid growth of Kloop, a long-time partner of ours. What began as a training institution for young people with a website has developed into a fully fledged multi-platform media organisation that produces content not only for web, but also radio, video and live online broadcasts. This has multiplied the skills within the organisation and significantly enhanced Kloop's reputation as the most innovative media organisation in Kyrgyzstan.



"Stop political repression," reads a banner during an opposition rally in Baku, Azerbaijan in April 2015. Photo: Aziz Karimov

STORIES OF CHANGE | SPORT FOR RIGHTS

The Sport for Rights campaign is one of IMS' most successful advocacy projects. Under the leadership of IMS, Sport for Rights has achieved an incredible amount since it began in April 2015. Through the campaign, a dynamic coalition of 30 international NGOs has worked together to draw attention to the unprecedented human rights crackdown in Azerbaijan, and to increase international pressure on the Azerbaijani regime to uphold its human rights obligations.

The campaign initially focused on the inaugural European Games, which took place in Baku in June 2015, calling on European leaders not to attend the games unless political prisoners were released, and on National Olympic Committees to use the games to take a stand for human rights in Azerbaijan. The campaign also achieved a huge impact in the international press and on social media.

The targeted advocacy and public campaigning approach worked. Very few European leaders attended the games and national Olympic Committees increased their atten-

tion to human rights issues in Azerbaijan. Sport for Rights-generated op-eds and news pieces were published internationally and a number of celebrities spoke out, included U2's Bono on stage in Montreal. Members of the European Parliament made repeated calls for the release of political prisoners and a European Parliament resolution in September 2015 called for the use of individual sanctions against Azerbaijani officials responsible for human rights violations, with similar calls following in the U.S. with the introduction of the Azerbaijan Democracy Act.

In the aftermath of the European Games, the coalition behind Sport for Rights exposed the regime's crackdown on media and civil society, which flared up once more around the November 2015 parliamentary elections. In an unprecedented step, following calls by the Sport for Rights campaign, the European Parliament, the OSCE/ODIHR, and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly all cancelled their monitoring missions. The campaign also produced a groundbreaking report

on the eve of the election, detailing two years of repression during President Aliyev's third term in office.

All this intensive work began to yield serious results when a number of political prisoners were released from jail – human rights defenders Leyla and Arif Yunus in November and December 2015, and Intigam Aliyev, Rasul Jafarov, Taleh Khasmammadov, and Anar Mammadli, along with 12 other political prisoners in March 2016. The heavy campaigning by Sport for Rights around these cases as well as a host of other initiatives contributed to the momentum that allowed for their release.

IMS continues to build on the momentum achieved last year, working now with the Sport for Rights coalition in the run-up to Azerbaijan's next mega-event: the Formula One European Grand Prix, which will be held in Baku in June 2016. The campaign continues to press for the release of the country's many remaining political prisoners, and for urgently needed broader human rights reforms.

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM: STORIES WITH IMPACT

Stories of tax evasion and power abuse uncovered through the Panama Papers in spring 2016 has left few in doubt of the value of investigative journalism as a tool to hold those in power to account. In the Arab world, a selected group of investigative journalists supported by the IMS-founded network Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ), dove into the historic data leak to expose the wrongdoings of implicated leaders in the region. Their participation in the Panama Papers exposé is a testament to the work of ARIJ, which has worked tirelessly to ensure the existence of investigative journalism in a region over the last decade with IMS support. The mere presence of investigative journalists in a region with little space for public accountability is a significant achievement in itself.

“Once you have critical thinkers, they will start to question the policies and actions of their leaders.”

– Rana Sabbagh, Director, ARIJ

Since 2005, more than 1600 journalists from nine Middle Eastern countries have gone through training in various investigative journalism techniques, data analysis tools and media platforms. This has led to a massive leap in the quality of stories and collaborations with international media such as the Guardian and BBC. In 2015, Al Jazeera English purchased a documentary produced under the auspices of ARIJ on torture in jails in Tunisia.

While developments for ARIJ have largely been positive when it comes to the production of high-quality content, progress for the Association of Moroccan Investigative Journalists (AMJI) was hampered by a crackdown on the organisation by the authorities, but AMJI did manage to support the production of seven investigative stories before putting its activities and journalistic support on hold.

Despite a deeply challenging environment, three Iraqi universities in spring 2016 inaugurated the country's first university-based investigative journalism units with specialised curricula tailored to



A screenshot from the documentary on torture in jails in Tunisia. Photo: Courtesy of Mariam Nasri, investigative journalist

the difficult Iraqi media context, working towards a new generation of critical thinkers. The establishment of the units is a major milestone where IMS worked for months with the Iraqi Ministry of Education to secure teaching registration for the IMS-supported Network of Iraqi Reporters for Investigative Journalism, which will be doing much of the teaching.

In an increasingly shrinking space for independent media in Russia, 23 national investigations in northwest Russia were carried out with support from SCOOP Russia. The IMS cofounded investigative journalism network SCOOP Russia contributed to supporting the pockets of ethical, independent and critical journalism that still exist. One investigation by journalist Roman Romanovskiy uncovered untreated water at a water treatment facility in

Kaliningrad that had been reported as clean. This led to the authorities examining this and other wastewater facilities, which were subsequently closed for churning out untreated water.

According to Nikita Kuzmin, SCOOP Russia coordinator: "I have been able to combine my work as an investigator with new techniques and knowledge because of SCOOP Russia. I now pass on this knowledge to my staff in my work as an editor."

One of the real wins of the SCOOP Russia network has been cross border investigations carried out between Russian and Ukrainian SCOOP affiliated journalists despite the ongoing hostilities between the two countries as well as enabling journalists to pass on their new-found investigative skills to colleagues.

STORIES OF CHANGE | SIX GROUNDBREAKING STORIES FROM THE ARAB WORLD

In April 2016, investigative journalists from ARIJ and the IMS-supported Syrian Radio Rozana working on the so-called Panama Papers uncovered how Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and his allies were able to skirt international sanctions by registering shell companies in places like the Seychelles.

- Mustafa Marsafawi spent two years investigating suspicious deaths and suicide cases within the Egyptian Central Security Forces (CSF). He revealed how new recruits were exposed to violence from officers. After the report aired on BBC, a CSF officer was convicted of murder.

- An investigation documented 10 deaths as a result of torture in Tunisia's detention centres. After Al Jazeera English aired the report, the Tunisian parliament established a Commission to monitor conditions in detention centres.

- Two Syrian journalists from ARIJ reported on networks that take



Parents of a recruit who died under the authority of the Egyptian Central Security Forces. Photo: ARIJ

over real estate ownership from thousands of Syrians who had fled the country through forged documents. As a result of the investigation, the Ministry of Justice in Syria started archiving 10 million house deeds and land titles.

- An award-winning cooperation between BBC and Al Balad Radio in Jordan uncovered horrendous physical abuse of disabled at care centres in Jordan. This led to the closing of care centres, the pros-

ecution of staff and the establishment of a government investigative commission.

- Dlovan Barwari, a member of the Network for Iraqi Reporters for Investigative Journalism (NIRIJ) uncovered the brutal practice of genital mutilation of girls as young as five in Kurdistan. The investigation led to the parliament adopting legislation criminalising genital mutilation.



“Being introduced to a colleague in Ukraine that I can trust simply made all the difference and brought my reporting to a different level”

— Anastasia Drozdova, Russian journalist

STORIES OF CHANGE | JOINT RUSSIA/UKRAINE INVESTIGATION IN SPITE OF WAR

● In Ukraine reporter Tetiana Rykhtyn noticed how Russian-speaking refugees, who had initially fled to Russia from the contested Donbass region, began returning to Kyiv citing lack of aid and hardship.

In the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad freelance reporter Anastasia Drozdova was on to a story on how Russian authorities failed to keep its promises by not fully assisting the many people fleeing war in Donbas.

“In Russia very few are recognized as refugees. Most end up categorised as ‘compatriots’, lost when the Soviet Union fell apart – now repatriated to their motherland. Therefore, they are not entitled to financial assistance and still have to apply for citizenship in

Russia in order to be legalized and hold a job,” Anastasia Drozdova explains.

Fast forward to November 2015. The two reporters began a joint cross border investigation through the IMS-cofounded SCOOP network, helping each other with interviews and identifying sources, while covering their respective angles with advice and technical input from an experienced investigative reporter appointed through the SCOOP mentorship programme.

“Being introduced to a colleague in Ukraine that I can trust simply made all the difference and brought my reporting to a different level,” Anastasia says.

With help from Anastasia, Tetiana met with refugees returning from Russia after fleeing Donbass

eastward. The refugees are caught between a rock and a hard place.

“People are afraid of Russia, because they have criticised conditions for refugees there. But they also fear Ukraine and being interrogated by the Ukrainian Security Services, who view refugees as potential separatists or spies,” Tetiana explains.

Fearing official retribution, the reporters did not share any information about their co-operation whilst investigating. Now, both are keen to expand the investigation. “I would like to follow the money,” says Anastasia. “Big federal funds are allocated to support the refugees, but very few of them receive support. Where does the money go?”

WOMEN IN MEDIA

– FROM FRONTLINE TO FRONT PAGE



“I dress traditionally, so the soldiers are more comfortable with my presence,”

Sanaa explains. The young Syrian woman is a photojournalist and covers the war in Aleppo. With a nod, Vildana Selimbegovic encourages Sanaa to continue her relay of how she navigates being a war reporter in Syria. For Vildana Selimbegovic and Borka Ruic it has been more than twenty years since they began their career in journalism reporting on the Bosnian conflict in the early 1990s. In December 2015, the two Bosnian veteran war reporters spent five days in Gaziantep, a Turkish town near the Syrian border, sharing their experiences with a group of young female Syrian media workers.

“It was crucial to have our female contributors exposed to best practices on how to avoid sexual abuse while working as war reporters,” explains Reem Aleppo, the Director General from IMS partner Nasaem Syria Radio Station and Jasmine Syria Magazine.

IMS recognises that conflicts might provide both additional obstacles and new opportunities for female media workers. Obstacles because high-risk, largely male-dominated environments are often considered unsuitable for women, and new opportunities because in many contexts, women are not considered a threat in the way men often are, and can therefore gain better access to areas that are normally off-limits to men. However, female reporters covering conflict have specific safety and protection needs and IMS’ work in this area warrants a gender dimension that goes beyond simply ensuring the participation of women in safety and protection activities. The safety and protection needs of both men and women need to be regularly assessed and addressed accordingly, as illustrated in the first-ever study on the safety

needs and working conditions of female journalists in Afghanistan, “The Reporting Heroes”, published by the Afghan Journalists’ Safety Committee in March 2016 with IMS support. The study highlights that in addition to the risks that all media workers face working in conflict-ridden countries, female journalists are often intimidated and threatened simply because of their profession and gender. Extremist religious groups opposed to women working outside the home are those most commonly responsible for these threats and intimidations against female journalists.



A journalist from Zhin Magazine interviews residents in a refugee camp close to Sulaymaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan. Photo. Zhin Magazine

The findings from Afghanistan mirror those of female reporters at a global level. The 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project¹ shows that women are still seriously underrepresented in the media both in the production of news and as news sources. The Monitoring Project found that women make up only 24 per cent of the people covered in newspaper, television and radio news stories.

¹ <http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp/gmmp-reports/gmmp-2015-reports>



"Challenging male dominance in the media" was a weeklong roadtrip organised as part of IMS' crosscutting peer-to-peer programme which fosters exchange of experience and skills between Arab and Danish media professionals. The photo features the visit of seven media workers from Jordan, Yemen, Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq to Denmark. Photo: Rasmus Steen/IMS.

As the glaring lack of parity in the way men and women access, participate in and are portrayed by media becomes increasingly evident, IMS' gender approach – whereby we not only promote gender equality within the media, but also media's contribution to gender equality – comes to the fore.

The two-fold approach is internalised at Zhin Magazine, Iraqi Kurdistan's first mainstream magazine for women.

"Zhin offers an important step towards real equality. Within two years we've managed to increase circulation, profit and advertisement. What we do is appreciated by readers and advertisers alike and our team proves both to society – and certainly also to ourselves – that a magazine produced by and for women can achieve real growth and impact," says Alaa Latif, Senior Editor of Zhin.

Launched in early 2015, Zhin has published stories on sexual harassment and women escaping Islamic

State, which helped put a spotlight on the stigma those women face when they return. Similar efforts have been successful in Jordan, in the conservative region of Ma'an, where The Women's Network – ten female journalism students – produce stories for a local TV station.

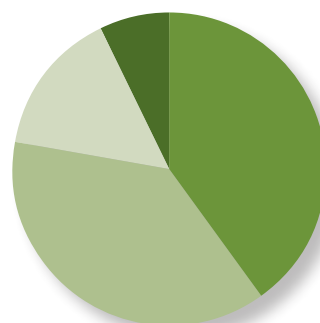
As some of the women from the Women's Network say: "We have gained a lot of confidence thanks to this network. We feel stronger and we can now ask questions about a lot of topics that we did not even dare to think about before like violence against women and our need to get an education. We can talk about this now without guilt."

"It has been a sensation here, a revolution. Now women in Ma'an have a voice, and call us to participate in our programmes," says Mohammad Nasarat, head of the media center in Al Hussein University in Ma'an.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2015

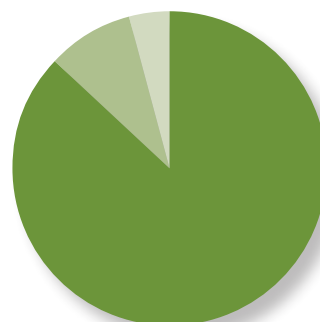
FUNDING

	EUR	%
■ Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and Danida	8,334,430	40%
■ Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and Sida	8,055,166	38%
■ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and Norad	3,049,083	15%
■ Other donors	1,529,911	7%
Total	20,968,590	100%



EXPENDITURES

	EUR	%
■ Activities	18,433,606	88%
■ Cost of doing business	1,791,423	9%
■ Development & other activities	743,560	4%
Total	20,968,590	100%



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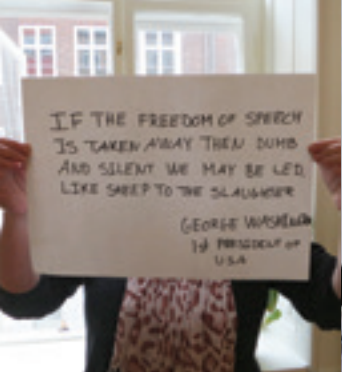
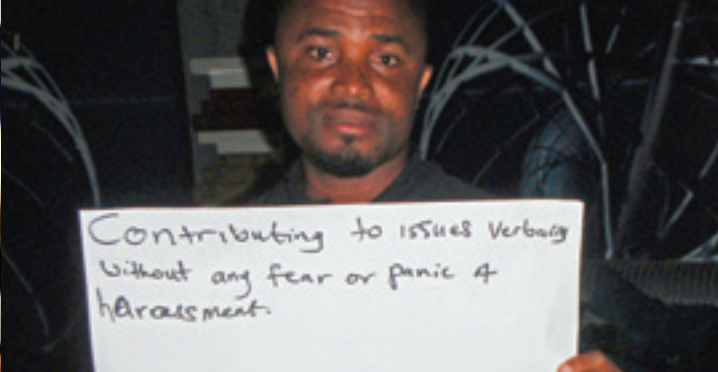
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