



INTERNATIONAL MEDIA SUPPORT (IMS)

Annual report 2014

ims

INTERNATIONAL
MEDIA SUPPORT

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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.

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Cover photo: A photographer walks among ruined buildings in Aleppo, Syria. Photo: Jacob Simkin

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MEDIA DEVELOPMENT IN CLOSING SPACES

The pushback against democratic development is gathering pace. Dozens of governments in the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, Latin America, Asia and Africa have shown growing hostility against democracy, against the human rights and freedom of expression community by introducing restrictive laws and other repressive measures.¹ In 2014, the work of our partners to safeguard independent media and free speech in countries like Azerbaijan, Egypt, Libya and South Sudan became increasingly difficult due to crackdowns by authorities on media and the arrival of new groups such as Islamic State. In fact, the level of press freedom was at its lowest in a decade, with only one in seven people living in a country with fully free media.²

Fortunately, it is not all doom and gloom. There are pockets of encouraging development — areas where democratic progress and societies based on the rule of law are gradually evolving and creating some space for freedom of expression. In Tunisia, we saw peaceful elections and continued work to push forward on media law reform. Myanmar continued to take positive strides in its democratic reform process, albeit also with some worrying steps backwards.

IMS' tried-and-tested approach to media development has, over the past 14 years, contributed to a widening of the democratic space in some of the most democracy-hostile places in the world. Coupled with long-term, close partnerships it has helped us adjust our priorities and manoeuvre in rapidly changing political and social contexts.

With the clampdown on civil society as one of the most noticeable downward trends in many developing countries in 2014, we faced having to choose whether or not to fund unregistered media associations in countries where onerous requirements for independent civil society organisations make formal registration almost impossible. In countries where external funding to civil society is prohibited, we have had to evaluate whether it was possible to continue operating while conforming to national laws and whether IMS could still make a difference

and add value to marginalised independent media communities within these restrictive political environments. We also had to carefully consider when and where to work with governments with conciliatory approaches, but authoritarian pasts. IMS' ability to be flexible and adjust our approach to these challenges has also required us to be closer to our partners and interventions on the ground. In 2014, IMS thus strengthened our presence in countries including Kenya, Iraq, Tunisia and Pakistan.

What has not changed, is our broad media sector approach that allows us to refocus when priorities shift on account of the shrinking space. Our areas of strategic focus have remained on three key aspects that make up a democratic media system: the legal and working environments for media, the main institutions that make up that system and the content produced by media and journalists. Reinforcing these efforts is our aim to work in collaborative partnerships with local and international media and media development organisations to ensure that media development is owned by and driven by national media partners.

Our partners' and our ability to impact on the legal frameworks in regions such as the Middle East and North Africa in 2014 was challenged by political and social instability. While some of the media law reform processes initiated in the wake of the 2011 uprisings could not move forward in 2014, IMS focused increasingly on strengthening the safety and protection of journalists in the region. Media law reform to protect the safety and rights of journalists is a long-term process. Our multi-year involvement in the drafting of new media laws during periods of political transition and violent conflict in Ukraine, Myanmar and South Sudan, are a testament to this.

IMS' focus on the safety of journalists in regions such as the Middle East and North Africa and South Asia expanded in 2014. Our support to a network of safety committees that oversee the safety of journalists throughout Afghanistan has provided a model for similar initiatives in Pakistan and the Philippines. The establishment in Colombia and Mexico of government bodies with powers to investigate

¹ Carothers, Thomas & Brechenmacher, Saskia, 2014. *Closing space: Democracy and human rights support under fire*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
² Freedom House, 2015. *Freedom of the Press 2015*



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

and prosecute attacks against journalists serve as a blueprint for similar initiatives now being supported in Pakistan and Nepal. Dialogue between the media and the security forces in South Sudan have since been emulated by IMS partners in Colombia, Pakistan and Kenya.

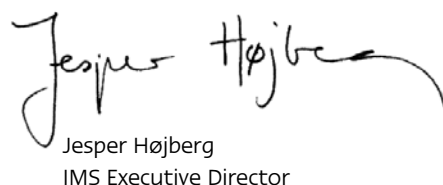
Despite difficult conditions, institutions that form the backbone of media sectors have continued to play important roles for media in the regions we work. Through a mixture of human, technical and financial capacity building, we have worked with unions and media associations in South Sudan, Somalia, Myanmar, Tunisia and Yemen to address barriers to media freedom faced by their members in their respective countries. Notwithstanding the political instability that has characterised Libya, the Libya Media Institute in Tripoli was established in cooperation with our local partners as an independent national learning and working center for media professionals. Building on this experience, IMS was party to establishing Myanmar's first private, independent journalism school, the Myanmar Journalism Institute in July 2014.

Our focus on strengthening and diversifying media content by working with independent media has also been a priority in the shrinking spaces for media freedom. In Egypt, Mada Masr, one of the most progressive independent online news and opinion portals in Egypt continued operations under heavy pressure. The Syrian Radio Rozana is one of the most reliable Syrian media today, broadcasting to Syrian audiences inside and outside Syria from Paris and from 2014, also Gaziantep in Turkey. In Myanmar and Tajikistan, IMS has supported research on gender equity in the two media environments and the representation of women in media content to inform further work in this area.

In IMS, we are heightening our efforts to address gender equity in the media environments in which we work. In 2014 we welcomed a Gender Advisor who will work closely with IMS staff and partners to strengthen our focus on this issue.

As the challenges intensify, we need to redouble our efforts to work in partnership with both local and international organisations to harmonise our approach, coordinate our efforts and align them to national priorities and international human rights standards. In this respect, the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and Issue of Impunity represents an impressive effort amongst international and national media organisations, the UN, civil society and governments to address the safety of journalists.

The backward drift in space to exercise freedom of expression is not showing signs of slowing down. In 2014, 61 journalists were killed, regretfully including close partners of IMS. The situation is serious and makes support for independent media more essential than ever. We need to persist and continue to identify new opportunities, find room to manoeuvre in support of independent media within these closing spaces for media freedom and help open doors from within.


Jesper Højberg
IMS Executive Director



One of the media's fundamental roles is its coverage of elections. During Afghanistan's presidential elections in 2014, the IMS-supported Afghan Journalists' Safety Committee provided advice and assistance on the safety situation for journalists. Photo: Queuing at a polling station in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan, 2014. Photo by: Lars Schmidt



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

WHERE WE WORK 2014

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	8 Azerbaijan	13 Colombia	14 Algeria
2 Somalia	5 China	9 Belarus		15 Bahrain
3 Zimbabwe	6 Myanmar	10 Kyrgyzstan		16 Egypt
	7 Pakistan	11 Tajikistan		17 Iran
		12 Ukraine		18 Iraq
				19 Jordan
				20 Lebanon
				21 Libya
				22 Morocco
				23 Palestine
				24 Syria
				25 Tunisia
				26 Yemen

Original map: Mettra 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:

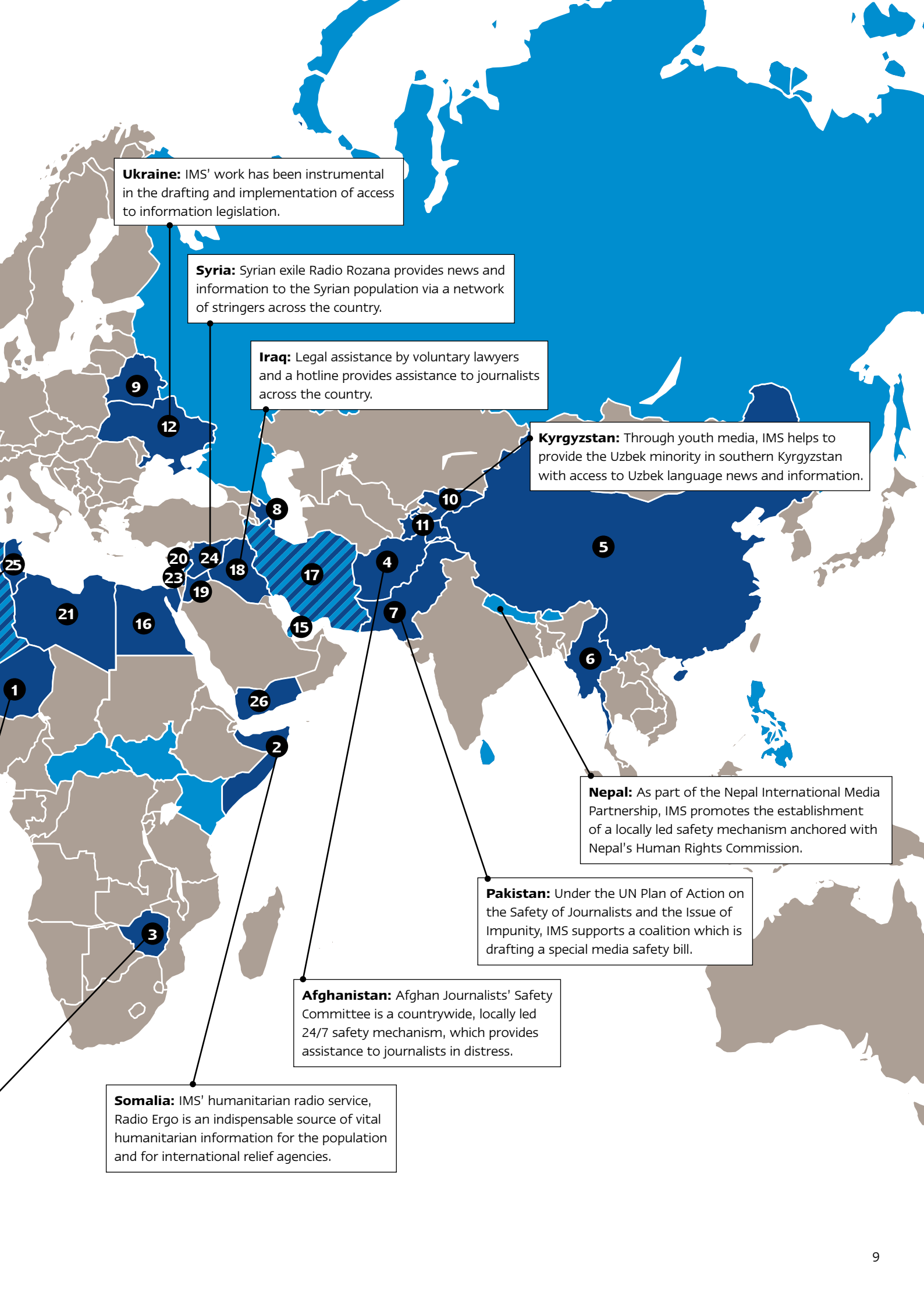
Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Kenya, Nepal, Philippines, Russia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka

Colombia: We promote dialogue between media and security forces and journalists in conflict affected areas are trained in conflict sensitive journalism.

Tunisia: IMS' work on media freedom has contributed towards positive stipulations in the constitution on freedom of expression.

Niger: We work with community radios to expand their reach and strengthen media ethics and the professional skills of journalists.

Zimbabwe: A locally led, national media strategy supported by IMS provides a solid framework for the media's development.



Ukraine: IMS' work has been instrumental in the drafting and implementation of access to information legislation.

Syria: Syrian exile Radio Rozana provides news and information to the Syrian population via a network of stringers across the country.

Iraq: Legal assistance by voluntary lawyers and a hotline provides assistance to journalists across the country.

Kyrgyzstan: Through youth media, IMS helps to provide the Uzbek minority in southern Kyrgyzstan with access to Uzbek language news and information.

Nepal: As part of the Nepal International Media Partnership, IMS promotes the establishment of a locally led safety mechanism anchored with Nepal's Human Rights Commission.

Pakistan: Under the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, IMS supports a coalition which is drafting a special media safety bill.

Afghanistan: Afghan Journalists' Safety Committee is a countrywide, locally led 24/7 safety mechanism, which provides assistance to journalists in distress.

Somalia: IMS' humanitarian radio service, Radio Ergo is an indispensable source of vital humanitarian information for the population and for international relief agencies.

AFRICA

**REFORM
MEDIA
LAWS
NOW**

A protester calls for media law reform in Zimbabwe on World Press Freedom Day.
Photo: Victor Sibanda

Media houses and journalists in our partner countries in Africa faced severe challenges throughout 2014. In Somalia, the extremely hostile environment stabilised ever so slightly and our partners and we began new broad initiatives to enable the media to support the country's fragile path forward. In the Central African Republic, a cycle of self-perpetuating violence continued for much of the year, leaving large parts of the population in an information void. In neighbouring South Sudan, an internal armed conflict sustained the immense pressure on the country's already beleaguered media. There were also relative bright spots though. An uprising in Burkina Faso brought about a fragile transitional process towards a new government and in Niger, a similarly fragile political transition evolved and our partners and we introduced a host of new initiatives to support the country's media.

IMS' work in Africa aims to enable media to influence how crises evolve by giving them the resources to survive and operate. In this way, they may contribute positively to bringing an end to hostilities and healing the wounds that follow. Our partners and the journalists they work with are arguably some of the most courageous and committed people on the planet as they continue to share news and information under extremely strenuous conditions. Their crucial contribution to society very often comes at the highest cost. We saw this in Somalia, where a freelance stringer for IMS' humanitarian radio service Radio Ergo was killed in direct retaliation for his reporting.

The unifying trait of the very diverse media landscapes in our partner countries in Africa is that their journalists are all faced with the immense responsibility to act a reliable source of information as their populations face social upheavals, armed conflict, humanitarian disaster, political tension and power abuse — to act a driver of peace and reconciliation and to foster transparency in government as fragile transitions unfold toward better times.

BURKINA FASO

Burkina Faso was marked by a series of demonstrations and riots in late 2014 that came in response to President Blaise Compaoré attempting to amend the constitution to allow him to run again and extend his 27 years in office. The President resigned following intense pressure and violent riots where several government buildings, the presidential palace and state TV premises were set ablaze by protesters. With an interim unity government in charge, presidential elections were set for October 2015.

An IMS assessment of the media's role up to and during the revolt found that the Burkinabé media was widely commended inside the country for providing well-balanced analyses of the proposed amendment of the constitution and good coverage of the riots as well as the political crisis unfolding as a result. Carried out to give international media development and press freedom groups an overview of the situation of the Burkinabé media, the IMS assessment also found that in the absence of a well-functioning national assembly and with a corrupt justice system, the media had essentially stepped into the roles of both. As Burkina Faso continues on its fragile transitional path toward a new government later in 2015, the media will need to perform an extremely careful balancing act as political tension and the risk of confrontation are likely to return.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The Central African Republic plunged into a cycle of violence in 2013 which continued in 2014 with retaliatory attacks between the predominantly Muslim Séléka rebels and the mostly Christian anti-balaka militias. By the end of 2014, thousands of civilians had been killed by both sides and over 800,000 people had been displaced.

Although the situation improved slightly in some areas in 2014, the media still faced massive security problems, fear resulting in self-censorship, and damaged infrastructure. This left the country's often-inexperienced journalists with the almost insurmountable challenge of covering the situation as it evolved. Informing the wider humanitarian and media development community responding to the crisis, IMS issued two key reports on the developments and carried out an in-country assessment of the media situation. We also provided training and produced a special handbook in conflict sensitive journalism to give journalists concrete examples and guidelines on how to ensure media coverage seeking to ease the conflict rather than exacerbate it.

NIGER

One of the poorest and least developed countries in the world, Niger wrestled in 2014 with a fragile security situation as violence in neighbouring Mali and Nigeria led to a swelling refugee population and armed groups carried out a series of terrorism attacks in the country. After long periods of military rule, Niger saw a return to a civilian government in 2011, but democratic reforms have had a dif-



A stringer from the IMS-supported Radio Ergo interviews a woman in Somalia's south-central city of Baidoa. Photo: Radio Ergo

difficult time taking root with the political situation remaining fragile and tense. Press freedom in the country has improved considerably, but major challenges persist when it comes to low professional skill levels and poor ethics, which could, at worst, lead to the media contributing to social tension and the promotion of violence.

To enable the media to support the democratic reform process in the country, IMS in partnership with the press freedom group ARTICLE 19 and Panos Institute West Africa, initiated a three-year programme in late 2014. Working with five local organisations, the programme supports reinforcement of professional and community media including media regulation. This includes building the skills and capacity of professional media organisations to improve access to information, strengthening of community radios and regulation of media by government and media organisations. The programme also looks to improve the representation of women in media institutions and in media content.

SOMALIA

Although 2014 did bring signs of progress in terms of political stability and security, Somalia remained one of the most dangerous countries in the world to be a journalist. At least four media workers were killed including Yusuf Ahmed Abukar, editor with the Mogadishu-based Mustaqbal Radio and freelance stringer with IMS' humanitarian radio service Radio Ergo. He was survived by his wife and two children who received financial assistance from IMS' journalist safety fund to cover immediate expenses following his death.

In the hostile and volatile environment that Somalia still offers, IMS and the Swedish Fojo Media Institute initiated in August a new four-year joint programme to address some of the vast challenges facing the media to enable it to become a driver of peace, reconciliation, accountability and citizen participation.

Fundamental to our approach when initiating new country programmes, Fojo and IMS spent 2014 consulting closely with Somali media and civil society organisations and carried out a series of comprehensive studies of the media environment. This included research on gender which found that only between 15-30 per cent of journalists in the country are female and that a majority of them face harassment and sexist attitudes in the workplace.

Gender equity and women's participation in the media is a key priority in the new programme. Gender issues are often wide-ranging and deeply ingrained into cultural practice and social norms. Therefore the programme will address gender composition of media councils, editorial policies on the portrayal of women and on coverage of gender issues, strategies to advance women into leadership roles in media houses, as well as gender equality awareness and the fair portrayal of women and men through professional skills training.

The programme will also look to improve the safety of journalists, strengthen the economic sustainability of media houses, enhance editorial independence and bolster professional journalism skills. The broad media sector approach of the programme is a key aspect of our way of doing media development.

SOUTH SUDAN

Since the beginning of South Sudan's internal armed conflict in December 2013, authorities have clamped down on the media, creating an atmosphere of fear. In 2014, officials banned journalists from interviewing opposition leaders and state security services confiscated newspapers, sealed off radio stations and violated the rights of journalists and human rights defenders. Bills on public service broadcasting, media regulation and access to information were signed into law by the President after years of advocacy and legal input from IMS' local partner, the Association for Media Development in South Sudan (AMDISS), but were not implemented in any meaningful sense.

As part of our work under the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, IMS together with AMDISS and the Union of Journalists of South Sudan (UJOSS) brought together journalists and security forces with the aim of enhancing the safety of the media and enabling constructive collaboration between the two groups. An indirect, but very positive outcome of these meetings was the release of several detained media workers following negotiations made possible by relations established between AMDISS, UJOSS and high-ranking security personnel. IMS also worked with UJOSS to set up a local safety fund for journalists in urgent need of financial assistance to be able to relocate or seek legal counsel.

ZIMBABWE

A major achievement of Zimbabwe's media and civil society groups in recent years is the country's new constitution from 2013, which in terms of media freedom is a major leap forward. Many civil society actors in the country had hoped that 2014 would bring the implementation of its new media freedom guarantees, but no meaningful changes took place. IMS continued its support to the locally led national media strategy, which provides a solid framework for the country's numerous civil society and media support groups.

Long-running efforts to harmonise international media development work and anchor it with local organisations also continued with a stakeholder meeting convening a broad representation of national and international partners. The annual meeting identifies needs and strategic priorities of Zimbabwe's media, and works to provide coordination and a sense of shared direction for its development.



The Taban Taabo Centre in Somalia's northwestern city of Burao. Photo: Radio Ergo

Somali radio helps orphan girls

Sahra Abokor Nur, 58, opened the Taban Taabo Centre in July 2010 to give a home and education to the growing number of girls abandoned in the streets of Burao in north-western Somalia. The IMS-supported Radio Ergo's coverage of the centre prompted listeners to contact the radio's local reporter in Burao, pledging support.

"I ran the centre for four years with my own meagre funds and rare support from Somalis in the diaspora. In 2014, the centre's survival was at stake as we faced financial difficulties," said Sahra Abokor Nur.

"Radio Ergo's Burao reporter Siddiq Yusuf Khalaf visited us at the centre and interviewed me. I told him about the difficulties we faced, and how important it was for the community to provide care and education for orphaned girls."

The story aired on Radio Ergo in August 2014 and was published on the Radio Ergo website. Numerous well-wishers got in touch with Radio Ergo, Siddiq Yusuf, and Sahra herself, offering money. Some \$5,000 were handed over to the centre from contributions sent by money transfer to Siddiq Yusuf. The centre received enough donations of clothes, bedding and foodstuff to last a whole year. The town council of Burao donated a piece of land for the centre and around three tonnes of food items.

"If Radio Ergo had not highlighted the plight of this centre, it would not be open today, and the girls who depend on us would have been exposed to so many problems and a very bleak future," said Sahra Abokor Nur.



ASIA

A Buddhist monk reads a journal at a roadside shop in Yangon, Myanmar. Photo: AP/POLFOTO

Few regions in the world have more diverse conditions for its media than South and Southeast Asia. In 2014, the region spanned from vibrant free media markets to state monopolies, the media environments often mirroring the fluid political contexts. The countries grappled with common issues undermining development, such as marginalised populations, armed ethnic and political conflicts and a rise in religious fundamentalism. Most of the countries in the region experienced a downward trend in media freedom in 2014 brought on by new laws infringing on media freedom, lack of media independence, control of and violence against journalists by groups in power, and impunity for the perpetrators.

With a shrinking space for media freedom in 2014, we focused our efforts on the windows of opportunity where the space for supporting independent media remained accessible. Our focus in the region was on strengthening media environments by addressing media law reform processes and the safety of journalists; ensuring the growth of healthy institutions that are key pillars of the media sector; and the professionalisation of journalists and media content.

AFGHANISTAN

The Afghan Journalists' Safety Committee (AJSC) set up with IMS support, continued to play a vital role in a year where the withdrawal of international troops and elections elicited a barrage of new attacks on journalists. Violence against journalists soared to 69 per cent above that in 2013. The safety mechanism for journalists run by AJSC, a country-wide network of Afghan journalists, press unions and civil society organisations, boasts of safety coordinators in 32 out of 34 Afghan provinces monitoring the situation for journalists, a 24/7 hotline for journalists in peril, and the provision of legal and psycho-social support to threatened journalists.

Before and during the presidential elections, the AJSC safety mechanism worked to provide advice and practical assistance to journalists on the safety situation, through amongst other things a mobile texting service. When tensions erupted following the elections, and in an effort to prevent Afghan media from fueling public clashes, the AJSC secured commitment to guidelines on how to report on elections from more than 50 media outlets and stakeholders. The Afghan government, the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan and representatives of both presidential candidates also approved the resolution. This was a major achievement that came about as a result of pre-election

meetings organised by AJSC between the same parties to further their understanding of roles and responsibilities of media during elections.

PAKISTAN

In neighbouring Pakistan, authorities backed a renewed focus to strengthen the safety of journalists by endorsing a large two-year IMS media development programme launched in 2015. The country's media landscape has expanded markedly over the past decade from one TV channel in 2001 to over 100 channels by the end of 2014. This has taken place alongside a dramatic escalation of violence and extremism in the country.

IMS' two-year media development programme in Pakistan, supported by the Danish government, aims to improve the skills of journalists across the country while improving the legal conditions and frameworks that surround professional, independent journalism. The programme will develop professionalism and a common code of conduct for the Pakistani media sector.



A journalist interviews a woman who just cast her vote in Afghanistan's presidential election in June 2014. Photo: AJSC

MYANMAR

Four years into its democratic reform process, the media in Myanmar has taken significant strides. A professional and sustainable media environment is slowly emerging, but it is coupled with setbacks such as arrests of journalists and closures of media outlets by the authorities. IMS' broad media sector approach in Myanmar addresses an enabling environment for media through legal reform and the safety of journalists; through institution building and the professionalisation of journalists together with a broad array of partners from media, civil society and

Spotlight on gender equity in Myanmar media

Media that promotes gender equity can contribute greatly to a country's transition. This is the message that underlies the first ever study of the state of gender equity in Myanmar's media environment, Gender in the Myanmar Media Landscape.

Although female media practitioners make up over 50 per cent of staff on average in the Myanmar media industry, men dominate manager roles. Women face a lack of opportunity to advance their careers and amongst the mainly Yangon-based 148 respondents of which half were women, there was overwhelming support for the introduction of a national gender policy and institutionalised gender practices.

"To change the existing gender roles, the media itself must mirror gender equity within the media institutions, both in policy and practice," said Lars Tallert, Director of FOJO Media Institute in the report.



Tang Nyeng, Kachin News, Moe Myit Kyaw, Myit Ma Kha News Agency and Esther from Kachin News.
Photo: Petra Quiding

At the Irrawaddy magazine, more than half of the Burmese language team are women. The Irrawaddy has its own women's section and according to editor Kyaw Zwa Moe there is an avid interest in this section from readers. The Irrawaddy also dedicates space to mainstreaming gender and LGBT issues, topics that are considered controversial and culturally inappropriate in conservative Myanmar.

The data gathered through this survey will be used at the Myanmar Journalism Institute, as well as to inform the media industry at large. The study was conducted by FOJO Media Institute with the support of IMS and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.



the government. This has enabled us to contribute significantly to the positive changes that have taken place and to respond effectively to the challenges that remain. A nationwide Code of Conduct for media, was launched by the Interim Press Council (IPC) in 2014 as a result of close collaboration with IMS and following extensive consultations by IPC with media communities in eight different regions in the country.

"In Myanmar, many highly sensitive issues relating to the country's ongoing conflicts are being covered by inexperienced journalists. In this situation, every journalist must know about ethics. We believe that knowledge of ethical journalism works like a bullet proof vest for the journalist," said Myint Kyaw, Secretary General of Myanmar Journalist Network, underlining the necessity of high ethical standards in improving the safety of journalists.

Since the beginning of the country's democratic reforms, there has been a pressing need to provide basic skills training to the somewhat inexperienced corps of journalists. Since the opening in mid 2014 of Myanmar's first independent, locally owned journalism school, Myanmar Journalism Institute, 29 journalists from Yangon and Mandalay had received journalism diplomas and 75 journalists have been



After the recording of a performance by the Miao people in Chuxiong by a local TV station in China's Yunnan Province. Photo: UNESCO

trained in how to cover elections. IMS has played a pivotal role in setting up the organisational structure and board of the Institute.

"It is great to have an internationally accredited journalism institute like this. It's like a window for us to learn about what's happening in the international media industry," said Moe Myint, student, to MITV News.

In response to the increasing number of arrests of journalists in Myanmar, IMS set up a network of lawyers across the country trained to provide legal aid to journalists in precarious situations. In another measure to enhance safety, the Myanmar version of IMS' Conflict Sensitive Journalism handbook, a guide to sensitising journalists to cover conflict in a safe and responsible manner, was released and distributed countrywide, to be supplemented with a broader IMS safety programme in 2015.

BHUTAN

Bhutan remained a so-called "opening space" for media freedom in 2014. The Kingdom's interest in modernising and diversifying its media sector continues on a positive track although it is highly challenged by

weak professional standards and low economic viability of private media outlets. In 2014, a media capacity assessment and a media sustainability assessment carried out by IMS for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, to inform the government's further steps to reform its media sector.

CHINA

In China, media continued to operate in a severely restrictive environment facing a highly sophisticated censorship apparatus, and the development of free and independent media continued to face obstacles. There is, however, recognition that there is a need to strengthen the capacity of journalists in China to cover serious issues such as climate change in order to contribute to finding solutions.

Anchoring new learning in existing academic institutions has therefore been a priority for IMS. In collaboration with IMS, the Communication University of China in Beijing and Nanjing in 2014 offered students and working journalists courses in visual journalism — telling stories through photos. The courses equip the students with investigative storytelling techniques, multimedia know-how and analytical thinking, and has resulted in stories on issues such as migrant workers and the environment.

A group of Chinese environment journalist students from the Communication University of China also visited Denmark in mid 2014 to study climate change and environmental solutions. IMS paired the journalists with 16 students from the Danish School of Media and Journalism to enhance professional understanding between the two groups and to study different traditions of journalism in Denmark and China.

PHILIPPINES

Although the Philippines has laws that protect press freedom, the biggest affront to independent media in the country is the lack of political will to solve the murders of journalists. Together with the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines (NUJP) and family members of the deceased, IMS marked the five year anniversary of the massacre of 32 journalists on the island of Mindanao, a crime for which not a single person has been convicted to date. Together with NUJP, IMS provided support to survivors in the shape of safety training, medical assistance and safehouses: "The Union plays an important role in providing moral support and supporting our campaigning for justice," said Mary Grace Morales, whose husband and sister, both journalists, were killed in the massacre.

MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA



A photographer takes a photo of Egypt's security forces extinguishing a fire set by supporters of ousted President Mohammed Morsi during clashes in Cairo on 3 July 2014.
Photo: AP/Polfoto

Despite turmoil, insecurity, mass protests, sectarian violence and armed conflict, IMS managed in 2014 to continue much of its work to strengthen media environments in the Middle East and North Africa. In Egypt, the political roadmap was only partly implemented. A new constitution saw the light of day, while a planned parliamentary election was postponed. Egypt was furthermore engaged in a battle against radical Islamists, and at the same time actively targeting secular civil society actors. Libya saw strong signs of disintegration with the emergence of two rival governments and serious outbreaks of hostilities. Syria's devastating civil war showed no sign of ending, becoming even more complex with the emergence of Islamic State. Yemen faced a severe political crisis with the Houthi takeover of Sana'a, and a looming collapse of the transition process. Jordan avoided the political storm of its neighbours, but was challenged by spillover effects from the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. Only in Tunisia did the political process show signs of continuing on a positive path.

The developments had a major impact on the media in the region and led us to adjust our media development priorities to match the new political contexts and challenges facing media. In a number of countries including Yemen, political instability prevented progress on media law reform, while full-blown conflict resulted in limitations and threats to the daily work of journalists in countries like Syria, Iraq and Libya.

While still guided by our strategic areas of focus — working to create enabling media environments through legal reform and the safety of journalists, strengthening institutions key to the media sector and professionalising media content — we remained flexible, were able to change course and respond to new needs as they arose. Through our regional approach which facilitates the sharing of ideas across borders between media professionals, builds investigative journalism networks and supports documentary filmmaking, we strove to provide new avenues for media in this shattered region.

EGYPT

Events unfolding on Egypt's political scene naturally had implications for the media sector. Efforts to push forward on media law reform process initiated shortly after the uprising in 2011 could not be pursued further, due to the absence of a parliament with which civil society actors could engage.

Despite obstacles facing media and civil society in 2014, several media outlets continued to shine.

Safahet Welad el Balad, a unique network of hyper-local newspapers, and Mada Masr, one of the most progressive online news and opinion portals in Egypt, continued operations and developed their business plans, but also their organisational and professional capacity. Mada Masr, which started operating in June 2013 continues to run stories and opinion pieces that are perceptive and challenging.

“We took the decision to exist in a very contentious and dangerous environment ... If we take a step that courageous, we have to go on.”

— Reporter from Egypt's Mada Masr in an interview with *The Guardian*, January 2015

TUNISIA

A critical phase of the transition in Tunisia was completed with parliamentary and presidential elections in 2014, following the adoption of a new constitution. However, substantial challenges for the media sector remained. Although impunity following attacks on journalists were still a major concern, the environment enabled key institutions protecting and advocating the rights of media and freedom of speech to grow and make a difference. The Civil Coalition for the Defence of Freedom of Expression established by Tunisian civil society organisations with IMS support contributed to the inclusion of important freedom of expression and media freedom guarantees in the constitution. It notably acted in support of an independent and transparent regulation of the broadcast media sector, against vested political and economic interests.

The Tunisian Journalists' Syndicate (SNJT) elected a new board in April 2014, laying the foundation for internal reforms. A study visit organised by the Danish Union of Journalists for new members of the board brought clarity around roles and responsibilities, placing SNJT in a better position to represent media workers. Steps were also taken in regional areas through training of the organisation's local representatives.

Despite a lack of political will to grant the public mid-career training institution African Centre for Training of Journalists and Communicators a reformed legal status, the Centre was able to carry out an ambitious six month training programme, “Media Innovateurs” conducted by UPDATE, a Danish mid-

career training centre for journalists with IMS support. The programme was geared towards obtaining the core skills it takes to become frontrunners within journalism, and involved 20 leading Tunisian media professionals.

"Media Innovateurs has enabled me to introduce a culture of constructive feedback in my newsroom, where confrontation used to prevail," said Chadia Khedir, Director of the television channel Watania2.

YEMEN

The situation in Yemen at the end of 2014 was arguably at its most critical level since the turbulent months of 2011. While Yemeni media have long suffered from a lack of objectivity, they played a particularly negative role during the escalating conflict in 2014, exacerbating disputes through heavily politicised coverage. Political developments and the Houthi takeover of Sana'a in September also impeded the adoption of an important media law that IMS through partners has taken part in drafting.

A bright spot against this bleak backdrop was the perseverance of IMS' media partners in Yemen. Despite the difficult circumstances — not least the constantly evolving political and security situations — they remained committed to pushing for an increase in moderate voices in the media sector. As the Yemeni journalist, Jamila Raja, put it:

"Most media are very biased and unprofessional. As an ordinary citizen, it is hard to know the truth. This leads to rumours and creates more conflict."

In Yemen, IMS focused on increasing the availability of balanced media content. The first community radio in Southern Yemen, Radio Lana ("Our Radio"), a sister radio of Yemen Times Radio in Sana'a, was launched with IMS support in late 2014. Radio Lana aims to give a voice to young people, facilitating local and national dialogue, bridging the gap between authorities and citizens, and promoting gender equality, religious tolerance and democratic values. Using phone-ins, events and news to engage with listeners, Radio Lana provides information relevant to the local population caught in conflict. By De-



Behind the scenes at the IMS-supported Yemen Times Radio in Sana'a. Photo: Andreas Sugar/IMS

September 2014, the radio broadcast 12 hours of original content per day. In addition, it organised community projects, such as "Aden Deserves Better," a campaign involving local citizens and companies in an effort to clean up the area's coastline.

SYRIA

One of the most important and encouraging developments in the Syrian media sector in 2014 was the emergence of collaborative networks amongst prominent Syrian radio stations and newspapers, respectively. IMS was closely involved in both. Through an organic process, IMS helped nurture the nascent and fragile development of the Syrian Network for Print Media's joint print and distribution mechanism in Syria and in Turkey. The aim is to reach as many marginalised people as possible inside Syria with information alternative to that of state media. By the end of 2014, the network of five newspapers was jointly distributing a total of 150,000 newspapers a month in northwestern Syria, including in camps for internally displaced people, and to Syrian communities in Turkey. This unique mechanism has provided Syrians with access to a plurality of views and information. The establishment of ABRAJ, a network of six independent Syrian radio stations that agreed to join efforts and share resources and expertise, is another milestone in the troubled Syrian landscape.

"Today, joint projects are a necessity, especially when it comes to organising campaigns and developing solidarity mechanisms towards journalists in emergency situations," one of the six members of the network, a representative from Alwan FM, told the website Syria Untold.

Two of the radio network's IMS-supported members have focused particularly on women. Radio Nasaem Souria's radio show and print magazine cover women's and family issues in light of the war. ARTA FM, a community radio in the Kurdish areas of al-Hassakah ran a training academy for young female radio journalists. Eight of the ten graduated women are now working as journalists.

Independent Syrian media were also provided with vital support to produce and disseminate a wide variety of quality media content. The Syrian Radio Rozana is one of the most reliable Syrian media today, broadcasting to audiences outside the country from France and Turkey. The radio station has attracted a team of 60 Syrian correspondents and 20 editorial staff and has a new studio in Gaziantep that opened in May 2014. Rozana broadcasts 24/7 online, eight hours daily on satellite and four hours



Palestinians search through the rubble of their destroyed homes hit by Israeli strikes in the northern Gaza Strip. Photo: Shareef Sarhan

Uncovering the human stories of Gaza's crisis

More than 2000 Palestinians were killed when Israel in July 2014 launched a six-week military attack on the Gaza Strip. Homes, schools and hospitals were destroyed, at least four journalists were killed and eight media outlets were shelled. The dead became mere numbers and the main focus of most media coverage during the crisis.

In response to the lack of in-depth media coverage, the Ramallah-based Palestinian Wattan TV channel launched Voices from Gaza in October 2014 with IMS support. Voices from Gaza is a series of short portraits of Gaza citizens broadcast on Wattan and several other Palestinian and Arab news outlets.

"We wanted to show the story behind the war. What happened to a mother who lost her three kids and house. How a six-year-old child deals with a new life as the only survivor of his family. How a professional football player attempts to rebuild his life after losing his leg and career. We wanted also to focus on the most marginalised groups in the community, women and children, and we did not want to show blood. It became about the daily life and people's story," said Sai'da Hamad, the Chief Editor of Wattan TV.

Eighteen journalists and photographers, many of whom are women, from Wattan TV's offices in Ramallah and Gaza were involved in the project. The female reporters and photographers have eased the team's access to especially women in Gaza.

Voices from Gaza is aimed at Palestinians in occupied Palestine, in the diaspora and the rest of the Arab world. An estimated two million people in Palestine and in other parts of the Arab world have seen the stories of Voices from Gaza.



Video editing at Jordan's Women's Network of journalists at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University in the conservative Ma'an Governorate. Photo: Henrik Keith Hansen/IMS

on FM with news, programmes, and documentaries produced by correspondents inside Syria. The radio reaches 15 per cent of Syria's territory through FM transmitters.

IRAQ

The arrival of Islamic State in Iraq had a detrimental effect on an already fragile media environment in both Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan. Well over a million internally displaced Iraqis fled Islamic State to Kurdish areas of Iraq in 2014, pushing the economy to its brink. The changing media context led IMS to adjust our priorities in Iraq to the opening of an IMS office in Sulaymaniyah in late 2014 to strengthen our presence on the ground in Iraqi Kurdistan. Additional focus was given to the legal protection and safety of journalists.

As many independent media outlets lost their sources of income, they also relinquished their political independence to survive. It therefore became a priority to support four independent newspapers in Kurdistan which were able to retain their independence and continue publishing much-needed professional content to the Iraqi people. In addition, IMS worked closely with 150 journalists from independent media who fled to Kurdistan from Arab-speaking parts of Iraq. From this grew a network of independent Iraqi Arab journalists in Kurdistan who now work together to ensure that the many Arab-

speaking refugees in Iraqi Kurdistan have access to media in their own language.

IMS' safety mechanism in Iraq was in high demand. IMS facilitated coordination and agreements with Iraqi and Kurdish authorities on how best to secure safety and legal protection for journalists and the Iraqi Network of Lawyers for Freedom of Expression, a voluntary network of lawyers defending journalists, received training in media law and on how to use international conventions and treaties signed by Iraq. The lawyers won nine cases on behalf of journalists in 2014, with 18 still in court. IMS-established telephone hotlines in Baghdad and Erbil manned by the voluntary lawyers received 2080 calls from journalists in peril in 2014.

JORDAN

In Jordan, where media enjoyed a year of relative calm compared to neighbouring countries, the IMS-supported multimedia outlet 7iber, known for its coverage of controversial issues and its journalistic philosophy of exploring taboos and dogmas, is now generally acknowledged as one of the most professional online media outlets in the country.

The Women's Network of journalists in the very conservative southern Ma'an Governorate broke the mold of traditional gender roles and gave local women a public voice. The network of female jour-

nalists produces news reports from Ma'an, as well as a TV debate show focusing on sensitive topics such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, and education for women for local as well as national TV.

Via journalistic productions at a number of Jordanian universities and through the independent broadcaster Roya TV's growing number of regional offices in Jordan, Jordanians now have better access to news from all parts of the country. Roya is now the third most viewed TV channel in Jordan.

TWINNING: CONNECTING MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

IMS brought together more than 70 peers within the MENA region and Denmark who shared common interests within the areas of TV, radio, photography, print and online media in 2014. The twinning of a female journalist from the Jordanian multimedia production company 7iber with Denmark's daily tabloid Ekstra Bladet, resulted in a number of joint articles in the newspaper about life in Jordanian towns rattled by the arrival of thousands of Syrian refugees.

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING

Linked to Denmark's strong tradition of documentary filmmaking as an alternative platform for storytelling, IMS continued to support co-productions between Danish and Arab filmmakers. Amongst these was "On Screen, Off Screen" by the Syrian filmmaker Rami Farah and the Danish company Final Cut for Real which was screened at major film festivals around the world. IMS also arranged an exchange and collaboration of film students involving the National Film School of Denmark and young film talents from Iran, Lebanon, Tunisia and Denmark in 2014.

"The exchange programme allowed me to widen my horizon and has set me on a new track. Both the method and the opportunity to share it with directors from different countries were very liberating," said Stéphanie Ghazal, Lebanon

Another film student from Iran was equally positive: "A great chance to be able to be free in my work. I learned not to fear. I learned the only important thing in making film is to trust myself."

The exchange led to the production of fifteen documentary films which were screened in Copenhagen for a public audience and subsequently at a film festival in Tunisia.



Photo shoot for the IMS-supported Iraqi Kurdish women's magazine, Zhin. Photo: Zhin

Iraqi Kurdish women's magazine breaks with tradition

Iraqi Kurdistan's first mainstream magazine for women, Zhin, with an online version in Arabic titled Iraqiyat was a highlight in an otherwise difficult year for Iraqi media. The magazines employ an all-female staff who produce courageous stories ranging from female fighters who battle Islamic State to the latest trends in fashion.

Emerging from the drawing board at the end of 2014 for an early 2015 launch, the two magazines were ready to make a difference. Their aim is 'to make women aware of their choices and offer them opportunities in order for them to play a stronger position in the political and economic sectors in Iraqi Kurdistan.'

"It is an effort to support journalism for women in Kurdistan, and a signal to end the abusive stance taken by many political parties on women issues," said Zhin editor Ala Latiff. "Gender inequality and violence against women are deeply entrenched in Iraqi society. "

"Those things are all part of the reason why this magazine is so important," said IMS' Brigitte Sins. She followed the process of establishing the magazine from the very beginning, working closely with its Iraqi Kurdish staff members. The magazine relies on a business model that should enable the magazine to become financially sustainable after initial support from IMS, and where profits made in the future will be utilised for further development of the magazine. The staff have received training in marketing, advertisement sales and business strategy planning. The hope is that this should aid the magazine's sustainability within a year's time.



LATIN AMERICA

A photographer stands close by as tear gas spreads to disperse protesters on 1 May in Bogotá, Colombia.
Photo: Andrés Monroy Gómez



A photographer takes a photo of police in riot gear on 1 May in Bogotá, Colombia. Photo: Andrés Monroy Gómez

Killings, violence and threats against journalists and media workers remained widespread in several Latin American countries throughout 2014. In Honduras, a climate of deadly attacks and intimidation persisted while the justice system faced increasing exposure for its inability to break down the country's prevailing culture of impunity. The toxic mix of attacks and persecution led by both organised crime groups and corrupt authorities left the country's media sector in disarray, forcing journalists to seek refuge in the last safety resort of self-censorship.

Journalists and media workers in Colombia remained under constant threat with both parliamentary and presidential elections providing plenty of political tension that added to the generally insecure working environment. Of particular concern were Colombia's conflict-ridden border regions where journalists continued to face some of the most dangerous working conditions in the world. The peace talks between Colombia's government and FARC which continued throughout the year, may improve the security situation and the country's stability if they are successful, but in the short term the environment is likely to remain hostile.

COLOMBIA

Throughout the year, IMS worked with Colombian civil society organisations to improve the safety of journalists in some of the country's worst conflict-affected regions. Through safety training, support to media houses in developing safety protocols and by strengthening dialogue between media and the police, journalists and media workers became better able to do their jobs while reducing the risks they face.

Our work in Colombia also sought to strengthen local media in covering issues related to the peace

process through training in conflict sensitive journalism methods which seek to shift the journalistic narrative from the common focus on violence and conflict to one which explains the dynamics and root causes of conflict and outlines progress and ways forward. A key part of the work to support local media's role in the peace process is connecting journalists and editors from five of the country's most conflict-affected regions with larger media houses that cover the whole country so that local and regional issues are brought on to the national news agenda.

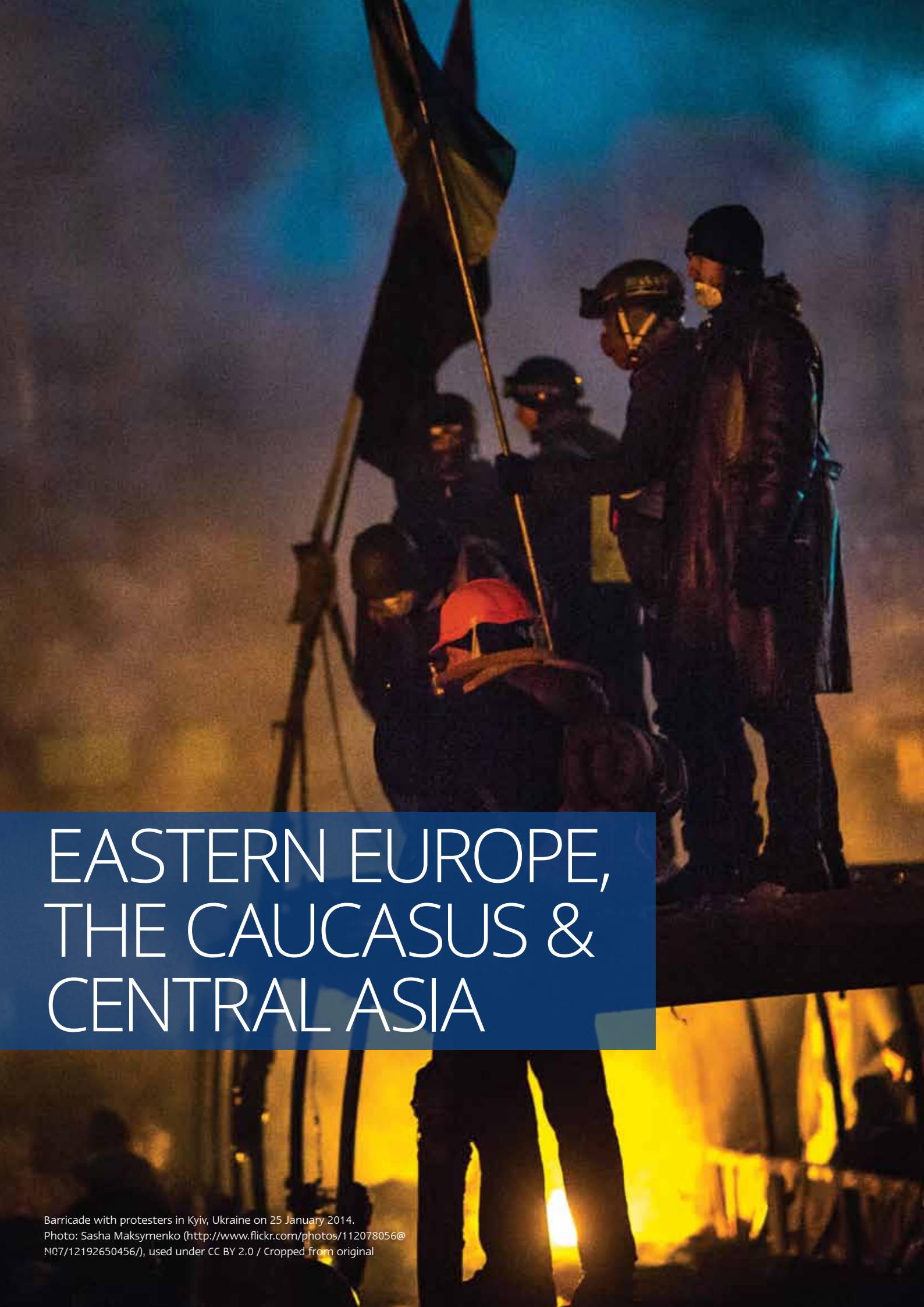
A series of joint investigative reports on the situations and concerns of the populations living in the five conflict-affected regions are to be produced in the course of 2015.

“Telling you about life in our region allows me to share a different vision for our country.”

— One of the journalists who shared stories from a conflict-affected area

HONDURAS

In October 2014, IMS visited Honduras to encourage media outlets and media support groups to work together in developing improved safety measures inside the country's media houses. The mission found that internal journalist safety protocols and risk analyses within media outlets is largely non-existent. Upcoming work to improve the situation will focus on enhancing risk analyses for journalists who report on drug trafficking and organised crime and the establishment of safety protocols in media houses.



EASTERN EUROPE, THE CAUCASUS & CENTRAL ASIA

Barricade with protesters in Kyiv, Ukraine on 25 January 2014.
Photo: Sasha Maksymenko (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/112078056@N07/12192650456/>), used under CC BY 2.0 / Cropped from original

Growing tensions between East and West, Russia's increasing influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus and an overall shrinking space for democracy and human rights, made 2014 another deeply worrying year for the media in this part of the world. Civil society groups and journalists in several of our partner countries felt the noose tighten as laws and regulations limiting the rights to freedom of assembly and expression were introduced. In eastern Ukraine, the conflict with Russia had a detrimental effect on people's access to reliable information and news.

Excessive restrictions and requirements on foreign funding were introduced as part of a broader pushback against democracy and human rights support in several post-Soviet states, significantly weakening the ability of national civil society organisations to operate. Our partners and we felt this pushback first-hand in Azerbaijan where new restrictions on access to external funding for domestic NGOs were introduced and local organisations relying on outside support were vilified as part of a campaign to undermine their domestic legitimacy and limit their influence.

While most of the rest of the world focused on the armed conflict in Ukraine's east which left at least seven journalists dead, the country also faced the challenge of urgently reforming nearly all aspects of governance and public life after the ousting of President Yanukovich, including anti-corruption efforts, reform of the judiciary, liberalisation of the economy, and crucially, reform of the media sector. Despite the conflict's negative implications for the media, Ukraine's civil society groups did manage to push forward the reform of the legal and regulatory environment for media that was ongoing before the conflict began.

However, when working in countries with authoritarian and semi-authoritarian governments, the possibility of initiating media law reforms is very small. Therefore, IMS worked to improve the safety of journalists and strengthen diverse and professional media content that provides an alternative to state media.

AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan stepped up its oppression of critical and independent voices in 2014, making for a sharp deterioration in its already deplorable human rights record. While chairing the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Europe's foremost human rights body, authorities displayed their flagrant disregard for human rights by imprisoning human rights defenders, political and civil activists, journalists and bloggers.

Tightening its grip on civil society, the government introduced requirements mandating all foreign donors to be approved by the government and dictating all civil society projects funded by external donors to be pre-approved by the authorities. Not unlike legislation implemented or suggested in several other countries, both inside and outside the former Soviet Union, these requirements effectively shut down parts of civil society deemed too critical or too independent for the Azerbaijani authorities' liking. In August, police raided and shut down the office of one of the country's leading human rights monitoring groups, IMS' partner, the Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety (IRFS). The director of the Institute, the country's leading free speech advocate, Emin Huseynov, was forced into hiding to avoid arrest.

BELARUS

As conflict and geopolitical shifts evolved around it, Belarus emerged in a bizarre role as peacekeeper in the EU-Ukraine-Russia peace negotiations. Thawing relations with the EU and no longer the only contender for Europe's last dictatorship with Azerbaijan ramping up its authoritarian profile, helped polish the image of Belarus while media reform and improvements to its human rights record remained elusive.

Amendments to Belarus' "Law on Mass Media" in December, tightened government control of the internet, prohibited foreign ownership of more than twenty percent of media outlets and banned dissemination of foreign television programmes without pre-approval. The OSCE's representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatović said the amendments pose a major threat to free speech and free media in the country.

KYRGYZSTAN

The developments in Ukraine influenced the situation in Kyrgyzstan significantly in 2014. To some extent, the crisis divided Kyrgyz society into a pro-European and a pro-Russian camp with the first group mainly comprising people with access to foreign media, and the other predominantly made up of those following pro-Russian outlets.

Kyrgyzstan's heavy dependence on Russian-earned remittances and its recent membership of the Russian-led Eurasian Customs Union were two key components in Russia's growing influence in Kyrgyzstan. In 2014, bills were introduced which could narrow the space for civil society and the media,



A journalist attempts to cover a demonstration in Baku, Azerbaijan. Photo: Aziz Karimov/Demotix

including one on “extremist activity”, which after it was adopted now allows the government to shut down or block websites which are deemed “extremist”. Another bill intended to limit foreign funding to national NGOs was put forward in 2014, but did not pass into law.

Prior to these developments in the years after inter-ethnic violence in 2010, Kyrgyzstan has been widely regarded as one of the few emerging democracies in the region with an increasingly diverse media sector. Over the years, our work in the country has clearly illustrated how working with enterprising, ambitious young journalists has a tendency to sustain growth in new ideas and initiate positive social change. In 2014, our partner Kloop, a young, online multimedia news portal and agency was approached on several occasions by traditional, established news outlets for guidance and advice on online live-streaming. The increasing popularity of Kloop’s high quality online video productions is also generating a growing amount of adver-

tisement revenue from YouTube and other online video platforms, helping them to gradually become self-sustainable.

Another of IMS’ long-term partners, the news agency CA-News saw impressive impact in 2014 from their small-scale reporting on everything from missing manhole covers to violence in Bishkek’s children’s hospital. Several of their reports have led to swift responses from authorities seeking to remedy the very local, but fundamental problems in Kyrgyz society.

TAJIKISTAN

In Tajikistan, a toughened stance on civil society and independent media that followed 2013’s presidential elections continued in 2014 with increased pressure on journalists, activists, human rights defenders and the arbitrary blocking of several independent news websites and social media platforms.

Taking its cue from other post-Soviet states, Tajikistan introduced new amendments to legislation that gives the government broad powers to block websites and online services as long as a "national emergency" is declared.

In response to the increasingly hostile online environment and as an integral part of our work on the safety of journalists, whether online or offline, our partner NANSMIT and we produced a digital security handbook and facilitated a series of training of trainers workshops covering online encryption methods, virtual private networking and equipment security.

Generally, in countries where the space for independent, critical voices is narrowing, we will focus our attention on areas where we can realistically and efficiently expand the room for expression in a meaningful way. In Tajikistan, this calls for a focus on the younger generation of journalists through our partner Dast ba Dast, a multimedia journalism media outlet and training organisation which builds the skills of young people not only in journalism, but also in leadership and in bringing about positive social change in their immediate environments.

"Journalism only has value when it informs the reader through relevant, reliable information. I want to fulfill my personal potential and raise issues of societal concern, such as the discrimination of women and girls," said 16-year-old Rukshona Akramova as she took part in a multimedia journalism workshop held by Dast ba Dast.

The positive real-world influence of Dast ba Dast was obvious when reports by its young students led to a vibrant debate throughout the country on an unregulated tobacco product. The reports, which brought to light the harmful and opaque nature of the product, subsequently led the product to come under regulation and to be put through transparent product quality control.

Tajikistan's media, like media in many other countries, has a problem when it comes to depicting women. With subjugating and discriminatory representations a widespread tendency, IMS supported the Tajik Media Council in a systematic monitoring of eight print media outlets and six news agencies to assess the scale and nature of the problem. After the findings showed that women were most often portrayed as helpless victims if they were portrayed at all, the media, in joint consultation with women's rights groups and government representatives, adopted a series of recommendations on how to improve the coverage of women and women's issues.

UKRAINE

Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its occupation of Crimea and territories in the eastern regions of Luhansk and Donetsk made 2014 a severely trying year for Ukraine and its media. Almost all local, independent media were forced to leave the occupied territories and are now working in exile in other parts of Ukraine. Crimea suffered in particular with all Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar media forced to leave or close, leading to an information vacuum on the peninsula.

While the conflict gradually worsened in Ukraine's east, crucial efforts to reform and strengthen the environment surrounding the media on a national level continued with the launch of the country's first public service broadcasting station. IMS' partner, the Kyiv-based Media Law Institute, were actively involved in the work to reform the media and push forward the implementation of Ukraine's access to information legislation. In 2014, the Institute continued its support to journalists by offering legal protection and advice and also trained media professionals and lawyers in the access to information laws and the new watchdog possibilities it offers to activists and journalists. Since it was passed in 2011 after being drafted with IMS' support, the law has had a profound impact on Ukrainian society.

"Our access to information legislation has proved essential in holding authorities to account and lowering the public's tolerance level for corruption."

— Antonina Cherevko, IMS' Programme Manager for Ukraine

Media Law Institute also achieved open public access to parliament sessions, previously a privilege for journalists and parliament workers only. The Institute and other civil society groups also managed to compel major candidates and parties in the 2014 presidential and parliamentary elections to make available their financial information on election-related funding and expenses before the voting took place. All of it a remarkable success in a country faced with fundamental needs to reform public accountability while struggling to maintain its territorial integrity.

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM: STORIES THAT CHANGE LIVES

The increasingly restrictive conditions for media around the world has only served to highlight the significance of investigative journalism networks and support for investigative journalism productions in the Middle East and North Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. The building of professional journalist networks has proven an important tool in strengthening the knowledge, practice of and support to investigative journalism within countries and for promoting cross-border cooperation.

The **Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ)** network, co-founded by IMS, is now widely considered the leading organisation for investigative reporting in the region, providing a common platform for dialogue and support to journalists in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, Bahrain and Tunisia. More than 1,200 journalists and nearly 100 media professionals have received investigative journalism-related training from ARIJ since its inception in 2005.

In 2014, ARIJ sought to mainstream investigative journalism in video production after having focused mainly on investigations for print media. As part of its new focus on accelerating production of compelling ARIJ investigations for television, YouTube and other platforms, ARIJ planned three multimedia masterclasses in 2014 to build a specialist group, from which 12 productions are expected to materialise in 2015. Major national and international media houses such as Al Jazeera, BBC, Al Arabiya and Vice

“Ten good journalists in each country pushing the envelope is better than 1000 blind editors.”

— Rana Sabbagh, Executive Director of Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism

have already commissioned productions from ARIJ. For the **Network for Iraqi Reporters for Investigative Journalism (NIRIJ)**, 2014 was a year dominated by stories on Islamic State and the issue of corruption in state administration. One investigation documented the then Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's misuse of public money to corrupt voters in his election campaign. The story won an award at the annual ARIJ conference in Amman. NIRIJ also began collaboration with Baghdad University,

which introduced investigative journalism training and finalised a curriculum for teaching investigative journalism in other educational institutions in Iraq.

The first ever **Asia Investigative Journalism Conference** was held in Manila in November 2014 with the participation of journalists from more than 25 countries. The region does not yet have its own investigative journalism network, which can help improve in-country and regional cooperation, but the conference, served as an important first step in connecting people. A working group was established to take on the task of building a regional Asia network for investigative journalists.



Journalist Hoda Zakaria's investigation into the neglect of handicapped people was broadcast on ONTV, Egypt. She is now the Vice President of the Investigative Unit at the newspaper Youm Al Sabae. Photo: ARIJ

“It takes a community of journalists, not just one, to bring about change,” said Sheila Coronel, Professor and Founder of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

As the space to practice independent and investigative journalism in Russia continued to shrink, the **SCOOP Russia** network for investigative journalists continued to support independent journalists that still produce and promote investigative stories and education under difficult circumstances. Throughout 2014, the SCOOP Russia network brought together journalists from the North Western region at venues such as the annual Investigative Journalism Conference in Kyiv and for intensive training in investigative journalism tools, access to information and Russian Media Law. The IMS-supported SCOOP Russia network, a partnership between the Danish and Swedish associations of investigative journalism, Regional Press Institute and Fojo Media Institute, has supported 21 investigations in 2014 covering everything from pollution to health issues.



Behind the camera at the 3rd Conference on Media Development in Myanmar in September. Photo: MMDG

PARTNERSHIPS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT

The flurry of well-intended, but sometimes uncoordinated efforts from especially international organisations can result in duplication and mismatch of local and international priorities for development assistance. Work to better the conditions of local communities may fail when the initiatives that seek improvement are driven more by outsiders than those they intend to benefit.

Fundamental issues like these are what IMS and many other development organisations seek to address by applying the principles of the OECD's Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action to our work and by implementing every one of our activities in partnership with local media or civil society organisations based in the countries we work in. On an international level, we seek to work in partnership with like-minded organisations because it allows us to draw on each other's strengths and gives everyone a better sense of how overlapping work can be avoided so that we may complement each other rather than duplicate efforts.

Throughout 2014, our partners and we initiated and continued a wide range of efforts to coordinate and improve the efficaciousness of our joint work. One of the broadest reaching efforts in this regard is the **UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity**, which IMS alongside Open Society Foundations, UNESCO and a host of other civil society groups, UN agencies and governments are driving forward in order to improve the safety of journalists and drive down the alarming levels of impunity which prevail worldwide. One of the key focus areas of the Plan of Action is to promote the establishment of nationally led safety mechanisms that are anchored with local institutions. Depending on the context, these mechanisms can include everything from the monitoring of violations against journalists, police protection schemes, collaboration between groups like journalist unions and authorities, to reforming or establishing laws that strengthen the safety of journalists.

In **Pakistan**, under the umbrella of the Plan of Action, major strides were taken by the IMS-supported



Politiken's campaign raised funds for the production and distribution of five Syrian newspapers.
Photo: IMS

A show of solidarity

In partnership with Politiken, one of Denmark's largest daily newspapers, IMS worked to support the Syrian Network for Print Media, a unique partnership of five newspapers in Syria.

In a show of solidarity with Syria's hard-pressed independent media, readers of Politiken donated nearly 650,000 Danish kroner (€87,000) when a fundraising campaign was launched in September in support of production and distribution of the five newspapers.

In a clear illustration of the complementarity between our long-term efforts and the IMS-coordinated journalist safety fund — which relies on a partnership with the Danish Union of Journalists — journalists and editors from one of the Syrian papers which would later become part of Syrian Network for Print Media, received urgent financial assistance when they came under threat for doing their job earlier in the year. The support made it possible for the newspaper to stay in business, continuing its distribution of news and information to Syrians inside and outside the country as the devastating conflict continued.

Pakistan Coalition on Media Safety towards introducing a journalist safety law and establishing a special prosecutor. After having been drafted through a broad representative process, the bill is set to go to parliament in 2015. In **South Sudan** and **Iraq**, also under the Plan of Action, we worked in close collaboration with local partners to improve the strained relations between security forces and journalists. In Iraq, this involved setting up a special committee that oversees the implementation

of two IMS-facilitated agreements regulating the relationship between the two groups. In **Nepal**, work to push forward the establishment of a safety mechanism anchored with the country's National Human Rights Commission continued in close partnership with the Federation of Nepali Journalists. The mechanism follows from, amongst other things, years of coordinated work by the Nepal International Media Partnership, an alliance between IMS and over a dozen other media development and freedom of expression groups.

Work to coordinate support to the heavily beleaguered media in **Syria** continued in 2014 in close collaboration with the Global Forum for Media Development. A group of international media development organisations and Syrian media stakeholders met to share and map ongoing efforts inside and outside Syria and identify needs and common priorities. The meetings proved vital in sharing understandings of needs and to develop priorities for next steps in the rapidly developing Syrian media sector and security context.

In **Myanmar**, the cornerstone to future access to information legislation was laid when representatives of 80 different organisations from across Myanmar met in Yangon with IMS and the Centre for Law and Democracy to develop an understanding of the key principles underlying the right to information. Such broad meetings are key to ensure citizen engagement and input into formulating strong laws that in turn ensure government transparency. In September, the third annual conference on media development in Myanmar with media, government and international organisations, resulted in shared recommendations on how to address issues that must be overcome for the media environment to progress as the country's democratic transition unfolds.

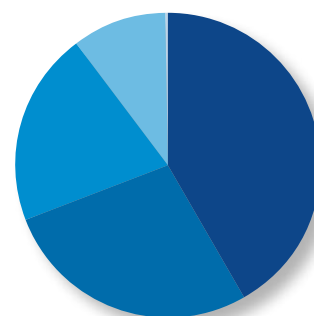
"This is a unique model of collaboration and partnership. Our accomplishments will be an inspiration for governments and civil society around the world," said keynote speaker Yuen Ying Chan of Hongkong University at the third Myanmar Media Development Conference.

On a regional level in the **Middle East and North Africa**, IMS continued its support to what is known as the Casablanca process where experts from Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia share knowledge of media law reform processes and issues related to broadcasting regulation, media associations and independent regulatory bodies. The Casablanca process takes place as part of our commitment to connect local media and civil society organisations with each other to ensure optimal sharing of experiences and best practices.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2014

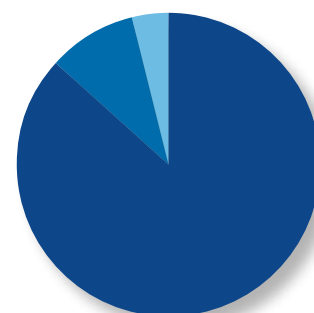
FUNDING

	EUR	%
■ Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and Danida	7,223,530	42%
■ Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and Sida	4,787,965	28%
■ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies and Norad	3,551,232	20%
■ Other donors	1,758,866	10%
■ Other income & funding	5,237	0%
Total	17,326,829	100%



EXPENDITURES

	EUR	%
■ Activities	15,035,130	87%
■ Cost of doing business	1,620,896	9%
■ Development & other activities	670,803	4%
Total	17,326,829	100%





IMS Board members and Executive Director, Jesper Højberg, December 2014. Photo: Rasmus Steen/IMS

IMS BOARD MEMBERS 2014

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(stepped down in December 2014)
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ABBREVIATIONS

AJSC	Afghan Journalists' Safety Committee
ABRAJ	Association of Independent Syrian Radio Stations
AMDISS	Association for Media Development in South Sudan
ARIJ	Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism
CAPJC	African Centre for Training of Journalists and Communicators
FARC	The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
IMS	International Media Support
INSM	Iraqi Network for Social Media
IRFS	Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety
IPC	Interim Press Council (Myanmar)
MLI	Media Law Institute
MJI	Myanmar Journalist Institute
NUJP	National Union of Journalists of the Philippines
OSF	Open Society Foundations
SNJT	Tunisian Journalists' Syndicate
UJOSS	Union of Journalists of South Sudan
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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