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# Rapid Response

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International Media Support's Rapid Response mechanism is the organisation's ability to provide urgent support to local media caught in emergencies and conflict. The RR mechanism is global and flexible; it entails interventions which are context-specific, targeted, and limited in scope as well as duration.

The aim is to enable media to continue to operate and do so safely while producing reliable, accurate, and conflict-sensitive information for the public.



Hosts at Cambodian women's community radio station  
Photo: Andreas Sugar/IMS.

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## Why media support is vital in emergencies

- Good journalism can help promote dialogue and reconciliation during conflict. But media can also reinforce tensions, incite violence and disrupt peace efforts through one-sided and inaccurate coverage.
- Access to credible and reliable information is often more limited during crises. In certain contexts, ensuring that media are able to provide information may help save lives.
- Media are often targeted physically or politically, or face logistical, financial and other challenges.
- Unrest frequently leads to censorship and self-censorship.
- Media support should be an integral part of all stages of emergency response – be it prevention, mitigation, disaster relief, recovery, or reconstruction. New technologies have only made the role of media in such situations more relevant.

## Types of interventions

IMS divides its RR interventions into the following contextual categories:

- Emergencies, e.g. conflict or natural disaster.
- Drastic change in political context (positive or negative), e.g. a peace agreement, end of a repressive regime, sudden political tension or polarization.
- Rapidly closing space and/or media under threat.
- Early warning – either worrying trends, e.g. tension between media and security forces, poor coverage of certain issues such as radicalization; or preventive action, e.g. preparing media for potentially divisive elections.

## Recent interventions

- *Cambodia*: Acting in response to a rapidly closing space, IMS has helped strengthen the capacity one of the only remaining independent media organizations and bring together like-minded local actors.
- *Indonesia*: Following the earthquake that hit Sulawesi island in September 2018, IMS launched an initiative offering trauma counselling for journalists affected by the natural disaster.
- *Mali*: In this politically fragile country, IMS helped organize a series of activities aimed at preparing media for the presidential elections in 2018, including safety training and dialogue meetings between journalists and security forces.
- *Myanmar*: Reacting to the crisis in Rakhine state, IMS supported safety measures for journalists and the production of balanced and professional coverage of the situation.
- *Venezuela*: In a country marred by social unrest, economic meltdown and extreme polarization, IMS supported a series of dialogue meetings for journalists from both sides of the political spectrum to discuss issues related to freedom of expression, roles and responsibilities of professional media, "fake news", etc.
- Desk studies and missions aimed at assessing the needs of media facing conflict, emergency, or political transition. Recent work has covered Bangladesh, Cuba, Guinea-Bissau, Nicaragua, Philippines, and Tanzania.



paving the way for good journalism

IMS is a non-profit organisation working to support local media in countries affected by armed conflict, human insecurity and political transition. [www.mediasupport.org](http://www.mediasupport.org)

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