

A man wearing a dark military helmet and a black tactical vest with the word "PRESS" in white letters on the chest. He is looking down at the vest. A woman in a floral patterned shirt is adjusting the strap of the vest for him. The background is dark and out of focus.

ANNUAL REPORT

2022

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COVER



Equipping a journalist at the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) Press Freedom Centre in Lviv

Cover photo:
©Alberto Buzzola, Rhythms Magazine, 3 June 2022

THE PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

Pierre Haski
RSF president



© Alexander Klein / AFP

A SOURCE OF GREAT PRIDE

If one were to draw any lesson from 2022, it might be about the unpredictability of international events. The unpredictability of Russia's authoritarian government, which went on the offensive and invaded a neighbouring sovereign country. The unpredictability of the Iranian people who, although throttled by the Mullahs, revolted after the young Mahsa Amini's cruel and unjust death. And the unpredictability of Mali's military junta, which postponed democratic elections and turned on its former allies.

The list is obviously far from exhaustive and the examples are not comparable, as the motives and consequences are vastly different in each case. But, whenever there has been international upheaval of this kind, and whenever journalism has been endangered, RSF has reacted quickly and provided an appropriate response.

It is a source of great pride for me to preside over an organisation that shows such drive and fighting spirit. RSF was able to respond to the crises that marked 2022, to protect and defend journalism when it was threatened by these unexpected circumstances. RSF was also able to adapt its forms of action and intervention in order to address new threats to the right to news and information, including those on social media and through the use of artificial intelligence. The RSF team's efforts were admirable and had an even greater impact in 2022 than in previous years.

| EDITORIAL |

Christophe Deloire
RSF secretary-general



© Joel Saget / AFP

CHANGE OF SCALE

It can be difficult to find something good in the news, and 2022, it must be recognised, was especially replete with violence, crises, and other disastrous events. However, I am tempted to open this activity report with what was positive news for us, and probably for our cause. I want to talk about RSF's change of scale. Since its creation in 1985, our "big little organisation" has had its ups and downs, but it clearly reached a new level of maturity in 2022.

It is not always easy for an organisation of any kind to successfully negotiate a significant stage in its growth. The planets all need to be favourably aligned, including the general context, financial support by donors, operational capacities, stakeholder confidence, governance and (above all!) the commitment and dynamism of the staff. We were lucky enough to have all of this.

In 2022, RSF was more responsive and more effective. It benefitted from more resources and was able to implement even more ambitious projects than in the past. More than just growth, this change of scale has enabled RSF to enhance its impact. Faced with the many challenges that are emerging, particularly in the digital field, we have reason to be thrilled by our new situation. I thank everyone who made it possible.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022

JANUARY

CALL FOR DIPLOMATIC BOYCOTT OF 2022 WINTER OLYMPICS IN CHINA

A week before the 2022 Winter Olympics were due to open in China, RSF and a coalition of 242 other organisations issued a joint call for nations to join the diplomatic boycott of the games in protest against the Chinese government's massive human rights abuses, especially its persecution of journalists.



FEBRUARY

RSF ORGANISES "FAREWELL DRINK" FOR FRENCH BILLIONAIRE VINCENT BOLLORÉ

On the date that French billionaire Vincent Bolloré once said he would retire, RSF organised a symbolic farewell drink in the heart of Paris to celebrate the departure of a businessman who has distinguished himself by his heavy-handed meddling in the media and his harassment of journalists for the past ten years.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022

MARCH

PHOTO OF KIDNAPPED JOURNALIST OLIVIER DUBOIS PROJECTED ON THE PANTHEON

On 7 March, RSF projected Olivier Dubois's photo on the Pantheon in Paris, a monument that symbolises the ideals of freedom and truth shared by this French journalist, who was held hostage in Mali for 11 months.



APRIL

RSF UNBLOCKS FRANCE 24 AND RFI WEBSITES IN MALI

Just as Mali's media regulator confirmed that broadcasting by French public broadcasters France 24 and RFI within Mali had been terminated "for good", RSF used its Operation Collateral Freedom methods to create "mirrors" of their websites, so that their content could be accessed from within the country.

©Ludovic Marin / AFP

©Pierre Haski



MAY

2022 WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX: NEW ERA OF POLARISATION

RSF unveiled its 20th World Press Freedom Index on 3 May, World Press Freedom Day. The 2022 Index highlighted a two-fold polarisation amplified by information chaos – media polarisation fuelling divisions within countries and polarisation between countries at the international level.

JUNE

RSF UNVEILS PORTRAITS OF JOURNALISTS DETAINED IN BELARUS

RSF paid tribute to the journalists arbitrarily detained in Belarus by unveiling their portraits, which have been constantly updated since then in response to new arrests and releases. The Belarusian authorities have been hounding media personnel ever since the disputed elections in August 2020.



JULY

RSF LAUNCHES DIGITAL SECURITY LAB

One year to the day after the revelations about widespread use of the Pegasus spyware, whose targets have included hundreds of journalists, RSF unveiled its Digital Security Lab, a digital forensic laboratory based in Berlin that is intended to help journalists combat the threat of online surveillance.



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022

AUGUST

RSF REPORTS ON PAST YEAR'S WORK IN AFGHANISTAN – 202 EVACUATIONS, 152 SUPPORT MEASURES

Fearing reprisals, many journalists wanted to flee as soon as Kabul fell to the Taliban on 15 August 2021. RSF's international secretariat and its country sections began at once to compile lists of the most vulnerable journalists and to press for their immediate evacuation from Afghanistan, along with their family members.



SEPTEMBER

UNITED STATES JOINS PARTNERSHIP FOR INFORMATION AND DEMOCRACY

During the second Summit for Information and Democracy, held in parallel to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the United States announced that it had joined the International Partnership for Information and Democracy, an initiative launched by RSF in 2019.



OCTOBER

RSF REFERS SITUATION OF JOURNALISTS IN IRAN TO UN

Using nine different UN human rights mechanisms, RSF asked the UN to make every effort to obtain the immediate release of journalists who had been detained arbitrarily in an alarming escalation in attacks on reporters and the freedom to inform since mid-September.

NOVEMBER

"THE 2 NOVEMBER APPEAL"

At RSF's request on the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, observed on 2 November, prosecutors from eight countries made ten specific commitments to ensure that violence against media personnel does not go unpunished. And they urged fellow prosecutors to follow suit.



DECEMBER

AT RSF'S REQUEST, FRENCH REGULATOR TELLS EUTELSAT TO STOP TRANSMITTING THREE RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA TV CHANNELS

In response to a ruling issued by France's Council of State at RSF's request, the French broadcasting regulator ARCOM ordered the French satellite operator Eutelsat to stop transmitting three Russian propaganda TV channels – a measure sought by RSF since September.



2022 IN FIGURES

In response to constantly changing challenges and threats to press freedom around the world, RSF acts with speed and agility, adapting its strategy in order to maintain the active support of as many people as possible and obtain lasting change and results in the defence of journalism, the right to reliable news and information, and freedom of opinion and expression.

RSF'S APPROACH TO INTERVENTION IS TO FOCUS ITS ACTIONS IN FIVE MAJOR AREAS:

- Research and publication
- Communication campaigns
- Advocacy
- Assistance
- Training and support



RSF TRAINS AND SUPPORTS



RSF PROTECTS AND ASSISTS



RSF INVESTIGATES AND INFORMS



RSF ADVOCATES AND DEFENDS



RSF MOBILISES AND ALERTS

RSF TRAINS AND SUPPORTS



In the course of its years of experience, RSF has forged solid and lasting ties with partner organisations, with which it works in close collaboration. Local organisations are also supported in their work in defence of press freedom. The training provided in 2022 helped to strengthen press freedom actors in 17 different countries.

In 2022:

- **61 trainings were provided to 1,727 journalists and media workers worldwide**, 56% of whom were women. The trainings covered such topics as fact-checking, election coverage, and digital, physical or psychological safety. Thanks to its network of local partner organisations and its field knowledge, RSF is able to support the implementation of tailor-made training that meets the needs of local contexts and is free for participants.
- **94.67% of the participants** said they **were satisfied** with the training provided.
- **12 partner organisations** worked jointly with RSF in the defence of press freedom.
- **22 local organisations** were supported by RSF in setting up training activities and activities designed to increase awareness of the right to news and information.

RSF PROTECTS AND ASSISTS



As the threats to freedom have multiplied, especially in the course of the crises of recent years, RSF has acquired significant experience in assisting journalists in danger. This assistance may take the form of financial grants to cover medical costs, evacuation, equipment or reinstallation in a new environment. Administrative assistance is also provided to journalists who are threatened and have to flee their country.

In 2022:

- RSF's Assistance Desk handled a total of **825 cases**, all countries combined.
- **223 individual grants** were issued to assist endangered journalists from **42 different countries**. RSF especially focused on the crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine.
- **73% of the journalists assisted** by RSF had fled their own country.
- **285 administrative support measures** were also provided to journalists from **19 countries**, especially Russian, Iranian and Afghan journalists.
- **39 media outlets** in **8 countries** were assisted. Of the media assisted, 30 were in Ukraine.
- **Around 30 websites** were made accessible by means of Operation Collateral Freedom, including Russian and Belarusian websites. Over the years, this operation has unblocked access to more than **80 media websites** in 24 countries.



RSF is one of the founding members of the **Protect Defenders** consortium, which is funded by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. A total of 12 NGOs are members of this consortium, which aims to protect human rights defenders in danger, including journalists.

RSF ADVOCATES AND DEFENDS



Defending the right to reliable news and information and freedom of opinion and expression involves advocacy activities with governments, international organisations and civil society. RSF aims to defend and obtain justice for journalists whose rights have been violated and for journalists who have been murdered in connection with their work. The fight against impunity for crimes of violence against journalists is one of the mechanisms for protecting access to freely reported and reliable news and information.

In 2022:

- **More than 90 letters** were sent to political or institutional authorities or to multinational corporations.
- **34 litigation actions** were initiated with local, national and international bodies or with regional protection mechanisms.
- **7 complaints** were sent to the International Criminal Court.

RSF INVESTIGATES AND INFORMS



Without information, no one can be mobilised to protect their rights. It is for this reason that RSF is committed to documenting, informing and disseminating the findings of its investigations. RSF's press releases draw attention to the information it has obtained about the state of press freedom. The World Press Freedom Index, in particular, has become an essential tool for analysing access to news and information around the world.

In 2022:







- RSF published **513 press releases** in five languages (some were also translated into Russian and Ukrainian).
- RSF published **6 reports**.
- The World Press Freedom Index was covered by media outlets **more than 5,500 times** and elicited **53 governmental reactions** in 31 countries.

RSF MOBILISES AND ALERTS



RSF also consists of all the members of the public who realise the importance of press freedom and give it their support. Using social media, awareness campaigns and protests designed to attract media coverage, RSF draws attention to press freedom violations throughout the world and heightens awareness of the dangers they pose.

In 2022:

-  **19 campaigns** conducted
-  **a new website** in six languages launched on 3 May 2022
- 10 million visits** to the new website from May 2022 to May 2023
- 19 million page views** from May 2022 to May 2023
-  **270,000 Facebook followers**
-  **210,000 Twitter followers** (RSF international)
-  **24,000 Instagram followers**
-  **more than 100,000 newsletter subscribers**

RSF IN ACTION

2022, A YEAR DISRUPTED BY THE INVASION OF UKRAINE



Paying tribute to French reporter Frédéric Leclerc-Imhoff on 10 June, Place de la République, Paris.

@RSF

AS SOON AS RUSSIA LAUNCHED ITS INVASION OF UKRAINE ON 24 FEBRUARY, MEDIA OUTLETS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD BEGAN DEPLOYING MAJOR RESOURCES TO COVER THE WAR. A TOTAL OF 12,000 UKRAINIAN AND FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WERE ACCREDITED IN 2022.

Deliberately targeted by Russian forces or falling victim to intense bombardment, they risk their lives every day to report the news. While the situation is particularly alarming for journalists in the occupied zones, all Ukrainian media has been hard hit by the war and its repercussions. In response to this emergency, RSF immediately took action to help reporters in the field.



@RSF

8 JOURNALISTS KILLED

Of the eight journalists killed during the first six months of the war, most were killed or mortally wounded by gunfire, such as French journalist Frédéric Leclerc-Imhoff who was in a vehicle that was intentionally targeted by the Russian armed forces. Some, like the Ukrainian photojournalist Maks Levin, were executed in cold blood. In some cases, such as that of Mantas Kvedaravicius, a Lithuanian documentary filmmaker found dead in Mariupol, the circumstances of their death remain unknown.

19 JOURNALISTS INJURED

Of the 19 Ukrainian and foreign journalists who were injured, at least four sustained serious injuries. Most were the victims of Russian shelling and rocket fire, but others sustained gunshot wounds. They include Stefan Weichert and Emil Filtenborg Mikkelsen, two Danish journalists who were targeted by an unidentified gunman in northeastern Ukraine.

16 ATTACKS AGAINST TV TOWERS

Civilian infrastructure used for disseminating news and information were a favourite target for the Russian forces. Almost half of the attacks on TV towers were registered in the first few days of the war, in early March 2022, and they took place throughout Ukraine. In all, in the past year, the Russian armed forces targeted Ukrainian TV towers 16 times.

217 UKRAINIAN MEDIA CLOSED

A total of 217 Ukrainian media outlets were forced to close for a range of reasons including a breakdown in supply chains, loss of subscribers and advertisers, increased costs resulting from destruction caused by the war, and a lack of staff due to employees fleeing the country or enlisting in the Ukrainian armed forces.



IN RESPONSE TO THE URGENCY OF THE SITUATION, RSF DEPLOYED UNPRECEDENTED RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE RIGHT TO NEWS AND INFORMATION

@Robin Grassi RSF

The secretary-general of Reporters Without Borders (RSF) was in Lviv on 11 March for the opening of the Press Freedom Centre, located within the International Media Centre.

700 JOURNALISTS PROVIDED WITH PROTECTIVE GEAR

RSF opened the Press Freedom Centre in Lviv on 11 March 2022, just two weeks after the start of the invasion, and the Kyiv Press Freedom Centre two months later in cooperation with its Ukrainian partner, the Institute of Mass Information (IMI), and other local organisations including the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine (NUJU). These hubs provided some 700 journalists of 32 different nationalities (of whom the majority were Ukrainians) with personal protective equipment including bulletproof vests, helmets and first-aid kits.

96 MEDIA OUTLETS PROVIDED WITH POWER SOURCES

RSF organised the provision of generators and other energy supply sources to 96 media outlets in 14 of Ukraine's regions to help them continue working despite a lack of electricity resulting from Russian military strikes on Ukraine's energy infrastructure. The equipment was delivered in January 2023.

258 JOURNALISTS TRAINED

A safety guide for journalists was translated into Ukrainian and posted online, and 1,000 copies were printed. Training in physical and psychological safety and first aid was provided to 258 journalists. Seven journalists also received individual psychological care.

30 MEDIA OUTLETS SUPPORTED FINANCIALLY

A total of 30 media outlets that had been very badly hit by the war were allocated support funding to help them continue operating. The funding was renewed for several of them in 2023.

134 INDIVIDUAL GRANTS

In cooperation with several local partners, RSF provided individual financial assistance to 128 Ukrainian journalists, 84 of whom were women. RSF took steps to continue assisting Ukrainian journalists in 2023.

19 LITIGATION ACTIONS

In order to help combat impunity for crimes of violence against Ukrainian journalists and media, RSF initiated 19 litigation actions with the Ukrainian state prosecutor's office, the International Criminal Court, French courts and quasi-judicial bodies, including UN bodies and ARCOM (the French broadcasting and digital regulator).



@Robin Grassi RSF

Helmets and bulletproof vests are delivered to the Press Freedom Centre that RSF created in Lviv.



Investigating Maks Levin's death in Ukraine

By Arnaud Froger, Head of RSF's investigation desk

In 2022,

- **9 months** of investigation
- **3 field** visits to Ukraine
- **3 years** of broadcasting on Arte of the documentary on the investigation

We advance carefully through a forest north of Kyiv, one behind the other. Patrick Chauvel, the war photoreporter with whom I am conducting this investigation, takes photos of our slow procession. We are two journalists, a fixer and several Ukrainian soldiers from the territorial forces who have agreed to accompany us along these paths carpeted with lilies of the valley. Amid this spring vegetation sprouting at the end of May 2022, Vladimir Putin's troops have left some less bucolic reminders of their recent presence – the mines and other explosive devices they planted during their withdrawal a few weeks earlier after failing to take the Ukrainian capital.

This forest, in which Russian and Ukrainian soldiers fought fiercely, is also a crime scene. The journalist Maks Levin and a friend, Oleksiy Chernyshov, were killed there on 13 March 2022. They were executed in cold blood. This is what we would discover. After a few days of several fruitless attempts, we find the burned carcass of Levin's Ford Maverick among the pines. We count several bullet holes on the car and find three bullets. One of them was buried deep in the ground, about 15 centimetres below the surface, at the very spot where Levin's body was found. The search continues for hours. We comb every square metre. In a piece of torn and charred trousers, we discover the wallet of Levin's friend and guide. He was most likely burned alive. We also discover items left by the Russian soldiers who were there – food wrappers, cigarette butts, a rocket tube and a Russian-language instruction manual on the use of RPGs.

All this evidence is handed over to the Ukrainian authorities a few days later. On 1 June 2022, I am interviewed by intelligence officers assigned to investigating Levin's murder. The office is cramped. A bulava, a ceremonial spiked mace that is a symbol of power, lies atop a cupboard. The Levin case has not been the subject of any particular interest until now. I am the first person they have interviewed. The evidence and information I provide reenergises them. A few weeks later, the intelligence services tell us they have established that an elite Russian army unit, the Pacific fleet's 155th Brigade, arrived in the forest less than 48 hours before Levin was killed. Its motto is "Victory is where we are." Today, up to 90% of this brigade has been wiped out, the Ukrainian authorities say. Did its members execute Maks Levin and Oleksiy Chernyshov? The investigation continues. Since then, we have identified four other Russian units strongly suspected of having been in this forest on or around 13 March 2022.



Exfiltrating “Evelyne”

By Thibaut Bruttin, RSF deputy director-general

In 2022,

- 14 March: Marina Ovsyannikova brandishes a “No war” sign on Russian TV’s First Channel
- 1 October: She flees Russia eight days before the start of her trial
- She was facing **10 years** in prison

There are tasks that do not appear in the job description. When Marina Ovsyannikova – the “journalist with a placard” who interrupted the news on Russian state TV’s First Channel – let us know via an intermediary of her plan to escape, I told myself that she definitely did not lack courage and that we had to accept the challenge.

Her trial was approaching and, with it, the growing probability that her house arrest would transition into outright imprisonment. At RSF, only a handful of staff members were told about the plan. Marina was given a code name – Evelyne. We followed the preparations from a distance and we made sure that, if she managed to escape, the French authorities would be willing and ready to receive her.

Frankly, the enterprise seemed risky but, though a police state, the Russian Federation is also a sluggish bureaucracy and Marina was well aware of this, counting on the weekend to delay the alarm caused by her escape. Of course, her journey was not without incident. I was informed hour by hour, around the clock, of her progress towards freedom. And Marina succeeded.

Suddenly, at this rented house in the quiet countryside on the other side of the border, she appeared, like an average traveller, pulling her wheeled suitcase. “Thibaut?” she asked when she saw me on the porch. “Marina?” I responded without thinking. I knew only too well who this traveller was, carrying with her the hope of a better life that would leave Putin’s tyranny behind. But I struggled to believe that this act of madness had been achieved.

For the first few weeks, it was out of the question for Marina to appear in public for security reasons. Her presence had to remain secret. But it’s hard to remain incognito when you have been on TV screens all over the world. So, we did her shopping for her, helped her with her moves from one location to another, organised her medical appointments, took care of her most basic needs and, in short, did everything that made her stay in France possible.

And finally, on 10 February 2023, she made a surprise reappearance at RSF headquarters at a press conference announced less than 48 hours prior, where she faced around 100 reporters and the cameras of dozens of TV channels from all over the world. I am proud that RSF was able to help this woman who makes lightning-flash decisions, who has overcome many obstacles and whom no one can confine.



On tour with the RSF bus – #BusRSF

By Chloé Le Goff, RSF head of communications

In 2022,

- **3,300 kilometres** covered
- **20 stops** in towns and villages
- **Encounters** with hundreds of citizens
- **1 white paper** outlining **30 proposals** on the right to news and information

When I first heard about this crazy project – going on a bus tour for 20 days, in 20 cities, with 20 colleagues to seek a better understanding of the French people's relationship to journalism and to identify solutions for the future – I wondered if it was real. And yet there I was, three months later, guiding our RSF bus driver, Manuel, as he executed a hazardous U-turn in downtown Rennes! It ended up being a thrilling and enriching collective experience that I will remember for the rest of my life.

On 23 March, the day the RSF bus set off, as we loaded the equipment for the tour, I was still a long way from imagining what this adventure would hold. And off we went across France to engage in a dialogue on the future of the right to news and information in our country with citizens of different regions, social categories and beliefs, non-journalists and journalists alike. We had decided to stop in large cities (such as Rennes, Marseille and Clermont-Ferrand), medium-sized cities (such as Martigues, Carmaux, Lunel and Thiers) and small towns and even villages (such as Florange, Sarzeau and Carmaux) in order to speak to as many people as possible. And so it was!

Our very visible bus stopped in small squares and large parking lots. Intrigued onlookers would gradually approach to discover the exhibition we set up around the bus. There were also those who knew we were coming and were waiting for us at the spot announced in our programme. Then, our infallible lead-in – “Would you like a coffee?” – would open the way to a discussion around their perception of journalism and the various methods they use to get their news.

These encounters allowed a direct exchange and interaction. For us, it was about leaving our usual Parisian milieu. For them, it was finding someone ready to listen to their wishes and critical observations. We would invite them to come to the public gatherings we organised in the evenings, moments of collective debate and reflection in which fictional scenarios were used to enable participants to project themselves into the future of news and information.

After travelling more than 3,300 kilometres and taking note of the hopes and wishes of hundreds of citizens met on the tour, we returned, stronger and more determined than ever. A white paper summarising the discussions and findings from the field and presenting our recommendations was published a few weeks later. Since then, we have tirelessly pursued our work to defend and promote the right to information in France.



Escaping the Taliban

By Victoria Lavenue, RSF head of the assistance desk

In 2022,

- **68 visa requests** supported
- **101 financial grants** for Afghan journalists in Pakistan or Iran – half of all the financial grants in 2022
- **3 families** settled in Canada, **7 other cases** under consideration
- A total of **60 Afghan journalists** welcomed in France thanks to RSF's support

As soon as the Taliban took Kabul on 15 August 2021, thousands of Afghan journalists stopped working and began trying to leave because they feared major reprisals. At the RSF Assistance Desk that summer, we were inundated with thousands of requests for help from people seeking to flee the country. Painstaking work ensued with the aim of identifying, among all these appeals for help, those that came from journalists and therefore fell within our mandate. The first few days were a race against time. We knew that a few Paris-bound flights would be organised in order to repatriate French citizens and their allies. Everything had to be done so that the journalists could be evacuated at that time. The threat of a complete closure of Kabul airport loomed and we knew that, for those unable to get on these flights, the future would be uncertain.

We managed to submit a list of 72 journalists in danger to the French authorities, who agreed to give them visas. Unfortunately, the evacuation operation was brought to a sudden halt by the bombings at Kabul airport. Journalists were in buses bound for the airport, but the airport's doors were now closed.

This huge setback was followed by a long period in which the crisis continued and we were forced to seek new solutions. The journalists who had been unable to leave Afghanistan before the end of August were evacuated in the following weeks and months to Pakistan, Iran and Qatar. Our collaboration with the French foreign ministry's crisis centre was stepped up in order to help families obtain passports and visas for neighbouring countries, to pay for plane tickets and so on. This work continued throughout 2022 and is still ongoing.

Of the 72 journalists on the initial list, 32 are now in France, 18 were taken by Spain and around ten others were evacuated by other organisations. Thirteen are still stuck in Afghanistan because they have been unable to get a passport, or a visa for Pakistan, or because they were arrested and sent back to Afghanistan when they tried to cross the border.

But, after the initial list of journalists from August 2021, many others contacted us in the following months and continue to write to us. The Assistance Desk has never stopped receiving requests from journalists, for whom we seek solutions. Many of them are in Pakistan or Iran. We support the requests for visas that they submit to the French embassy. We also provide them with financial support to help them cope with the extremely difficult conditions in these transit countries.

The slow pace of evacuations are a source of much frustration and worry for journalists, but perseverance pays off. In 2022, 28 obtained visas for France thanks to our support, which brought the number of Afghan journalists welcomed in France with RSF's help to 60.



A billion requests

By Antoine Bernard, RSF director for advocacy and assistance

In 2022,

- **1 billion** requests sent to Meduza mirror sites
- **80 media sites** unblocked
- Operation deployed in **24 countries**

More than a billion requests have been sent to the various mirror sites that RSF has deployed for the independent Russian media outlet Meduza since February 2022. More than a billion!

Of course, each page needs several requests in order to be displayed, depending on the number of elements on the page (text, photos, videos, links and so on). Nonetheless, the figure is really impressive. And it has set a new record for use of the mirror sites that RSF has created by means of its Operation Collateral Freedom. The Kremlin introduced military censorship on the same day that it launched its invasion of Ukraine, blocking access to all independent media websites throughout Russia, so we are very proud to be able to say it has failed in Meduza's case.

For those who don't know, RSF's Operation Collateral Freedom is designed to combat online media censorship. Launched in 2015, it creates mirrors of local and international media sites that have been subjected to arbitrary blocking. It is currently enabling access to more than 80 media sites in the 24 countries around the world where they were censored. They include Russia, Belarus, China, Myanmar and several African countries such as Togo and Mali. In all these countries, RSF is combatting online censorship and is giving access to independent news coverage back to people who were denied it. As the French proverb says, there are no small victories.



The Africa we want

By Sadibou Marong, Director of RSF's Africa bureau

In 2022,

- **41 correspondents** from sub-Saharan Africa
- **47 countries** covered by the bureau in Dakar

RSF's Dakar-based Africa bureau has developed a great deal since it opened in 2019. It now covers all of sub-Saharan Africa and I have the privilege of heading it. My road map is necessarily ambitious because of the challenges and difficulties that journalists and media workers face on this continent. What with advocating for better legislation, producing press releases and reports, developing local partnerships to enrich our actions in the field and helping to ensure journalists' physical and digital safety – we activate all possible mechanisms and mobilise all possible resources in order to defend press freedom.

Our priority campaign, the defence of journalism in the Sahel, is particularly necessary. This part of Africa is dangerously in the process of becoming a no-news zone where journalism is under attack and reliable reporting is often threatened by disinformation. Every day, we take action with the aim of preventing the Sahel's 110 million citizens from being deprived of their basic right to be informed.

Working in Africa is impossible without partnering with local press freedom organisations, with technical and development partners, and with RSF's network of correspondents, made up of journalists, who are experienced, integrated into a strong network, and independent. We brought them all together for the first time in Africa at the end of 2022 in order to discuss the challenges to press freedom and the right to information in the region. Participants were able to benefit from training, group workshops and forums for discussion. For all of them, it was a unique and enriching experience, from which we emerged stronger and more determined than ever.

TESTIMONIALS



“RSF, you saved my life.”

Marina Ovsyannikova,
dissident Russian journalist

With RSF's help, Marina Ovsyannikova was exfiltrated from Russia to France in October 2022. At a press conference at RSF headquarters in Paris in February 2023, she described how she fled with her daughter from Russia, where she was under house arrest. In a show of opposition to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, she had brandished a “No War” sign on camera during Russian TV's most popular news programme in March 2022.



“And a final word about RSF. I know how I'm going to use my Nobel nomination right. But, as it should be, no one will know about it.”

Dmitry Muratov, editor of the Russian newspaper *Novaya Gazeta* and 2021 Nobel Peace Prize laureate



“Russia launched a massive missile attack last night and many of our cities are completely blacked out. The Nakypilo newspaper in Kharkiv sent us this photo and asked us to thank RSF! They say it's because of your generator that their journalists have been able to keep working. You can see that a press conference was held in their newsroom because they have electricity.”

Oksana Romaniuk, director of the Institute of Mass Information (IMI), RSF's partner in Ukraine

When Russia stepped up its attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure, RSF began organising the provision of energy equipment that would allow news organisations to continue operating through the frequent and prolonged power cuts. A total of 150 external solar batteries have so far been sent to 14 oblasts in Ukraine, as well as generators and charging stations with solar panels. IMI's regional hubs facilitated distribution. In the above message, IMI's director passed on the thanks sent by one of the media outlets that received a generator.



Peghla Farida Saraish Ahmadi and her family on arriving in Toronto on 2 November 2022

“

As I am a woman, my fundamental rights to work and to citizenship disappeared when the Taliban took over. I'd spent several years covering women's rights and human rights in general, which exposed me to serious threats. So, I had to leave everything, including my family, and flee Afghanistan. The conditions in which we [my family and I] are now living in Canada are good and we have started a new life in Toronto. The Canadian government has given us protection and everything we needed. RSF's work has been helpful. I am very grateful to RSF for everything it has done to assist us.”

Peghla Farida Saraish Ahmadi, an Afghan journalist refugee in Canada

The founder and director of Radio Saraish, a local radio station based in Jowzjan province, Peghla Farida Saraish Ahmadi fled to Pakistan in November 2021 and finally reached Canada a year later with her husband and their two children.

“

RSF has played an invaluable role in generating public understanding of the unjust prosecution and imprisonment of Julian Assange. In spite of the many external obstacles imposed on them RSF has persevered where other organisations have not. Through its monitoring of court proceedings and its dealings with the prison and other authorities, RSF has been able to document and show the arbitrary and political nature of the case against Julian. Thanks to their commitment and outspoken campaign, RSF has been uniquely placed to inform the public about what the Assange prosecution means for press freedom everywhere and been a source of great encouragement for Julian and our family.”

Stella Assange



From the left, RSF secretary-general Christophe Deloire, Stella Assange and RSF operations and campaigns director Rebecca Vincent give a press conference outside Belmarsh prison on 4 April 2023, after being banned from visiting Julian Assange (ABC News: Adrian Wilson)

| RSF'S BIG CAMPAIGNS |



DEFEND PRESS FREEDOM HEROES

WHY?

The threats to journalists and press freedom heroes keep on growing. RSF representatives, RSF Press Freedom Prize laureates and other emblematic press freedom defenders have been increasingly targeted in recent years.

HOW?

Through this campaign, RSF sought the release of persons who embody the fight for press freedom in various countries and/or the withdrawal of charges against them. To this end, RSF's staff followed various trials, carried out advocacy visits and deployed communication efforts. RSF also called for an international mobilisation to keep defending press freedom heroes.

- The Hold the Line Coalition, which is co-founded and co-led by RSF and which includes more than 80 member organisations, continued to firmly condemn all the cybercrime charges brought against Maria Ressa, which were upheld on appeal on 8 July 2022. The efforts by the coalition and RSF's staff led to a victory in January 2023, when the Philippine court of tax appeals acquitted her of tax evasion in four of the seven cases brought by the government.
- Saudi blogger Raif Badawi was released on 11 March 2022 after ten years in prison but continued, in effect, to be detained within his country and was prevented from joining his family in Canada by a ten-year ban on international travel following his release. RSF continued to campaign for an end to this journalist's ordeal.
- Erol Onderoglu, RSF's representative in Türkiye, continued to face criminal charges brought against him by the Turkish government for supporting a pro-Kurdish opposition newspaper. RSF attended hearings in the various proceedings against its representative and called for an end to the judicial persecution. These proceedings have elicited the attention of European and US diplomats. This crucial international campaign continued. Erol is still facing the possibility of 14 years in prison.
- RSF continued its campaign for the release of Zhang Zhan, a Chinese journalist detained since May 2020 for covering the Covid-19 pandemic in her country.

FREE
MOROCCAN JOURNALISTS

Morocco  135th/180*



WHY?

The much tougher line taken by the Moroccan government is endangering journalistic freedom, pluralism and independence. There has been an increase in cases of judicial harassment of journalists, especially those involved in investigating sensitive matters of public interest. The legal proceedings against journalists have been marked by the use of non-political charges – embezzlement or sex crimes – and by violations of the right to due process.

HOW?

→ RSF provided information about journalists subjected to judicial harassment, including Maati Monjib, Souleiman Raissouni, Omar Radi and Imad Stitou, and called for an end to their persecution.

→ Omar Radi was awarded the **RSF Prize for Independence for his investigative journalism at the 30th annual RSF Awards** in Paris on 12 December. Jailed since July 2020, Radi has been subjected to judicial harassment because of his investigative reporting on sensitive subjects including sand quarries and land seizures against a backdrop of real estate speculation with links to the government.



→ RSF's alerts about the intimidation and judicial harassment to which Moroccan journalists are subjected, and RSF's advocacy about the press freedom situation in Morocco contributed to **the European Parliament's adoption of an emergency resolution on press freedom** in Morocco on 19 January 2023.

FREE
JOURNALISTS IN MYANMAR

Myanmar  176th/180*



WHY?

Myanmar's armed forces, known as the Tatmadaw, have subjected the country to unrelenting terror since seizing power in a coup in February 2021. In order to cover up its abuses and assert its authority, the military junta arrests, imprisons, tortures and even ruthlessly eliminates journalists who could undermine its control over news and information. In 2022, two journalists were killed, and 40 media workers were jailed.

HOW?

RSF decided to wage a global campaign to save journalism in Myanmar. For obvious reasons, the safety of local actors had to be taken into account when defending journalism, and each intervention's possible consequences on the ground had to be evaluated with care. This is why RSF also worked to cut the junta off from its international support.

→ As part of its international campaign, **RSF carried out intensive monitoring** and issued alerts about the many violations of press freedom in order to thwart the junta's desire to prevent independent coverage of what was taking place. Twenty press releases were published about the military's press freedom violations.

→ In August 2022, RSF **called for an international investigation into news photographer Aye Kyaw's death in detention**. After carefully tracing the sequence of events that led to his death, RSF called on UN representatives to investigate the case and hold the junta to account.

→ RSF **wrote to 15 multinational corporations** in 2021 to ask them to terminate activities that, directly or indirectly, were supporting the junta's crimes. **Five of these multinationals** – Chevron, Ericsson, Voltalia, Telenor and TotalEnergie – **eventually announced that they were pulling out of Myanmar**.



The police prepare to break up a protest against the military coup in Naypyidaw.

©STR AFP, 02/02/2021

EMERGENCY PLAN FOR **AFGHAN JOURNALISM**

Afghanistan

 156th/180*



WHY?

After the Taliban took Kabul on 15 August 2021, thousands of journalists stopped working and tried to flee the country, fearing serious reprisals. In a climate that became increasingly hostile over the following months, with media outlets closing and journalists being arrested, many more journalists were forced to flee. This was why RSF urged the international community to implement an emergency plan for Afghan journalism.

HOW?

Through this campaign, RSF has sought to stem the spiral that was leading to the inevitable disappearance of the Afghan media, and instead to guarantee the conditions for the survival of independent and trustworthy journalism:

ADVOCACY

- In July 2022, **RSF and its local partner, the AJIA, published a survey of the Afghan media** one year after the Taliban takeover. It revealed that **39,59% of the country's media had closed**, that three out of every four media workers had lost their jobs, and that the Taliban takeover had impacted women journalists to the point that there were no longer any women journalists at all in 11 provinces.
- **During a visit to Pakistan in October 2022**, RSF used a meeting with the Pakistani information minister to raise the issue of Afghan journalists who have fled to Pakistan and their visa problems. During this visit, RSF also met with Afghan journalists who have found a temporary refuge in Islamabad and discussed solutions to be developed with local partners. Finally, RSF also undertook advocacy actions at the UN level.

ASSISTANCE

- Afghanistan was the subject for more than half of the Assistance Desk's activities in 2022, and **101 individual financial grants** were approved for Afghan journalists who had fled the country. This was 58% of all the individual grants approved in 2022.
- Most of the Afghan journalists who fled abroad went to Pakistan, Türkiye or Iran, where their economic and psychological situation was precarious. Most were unable to work legally or reside on a lasting basis in these countries. **RSF supported visa applications to the French authorities by 68 Afghan journalists** exiled in other countries.
- As regards journalists still in Afghanistan, RSF staff set about identifying the most vulnerable and asked several countries to organise their evacuation. The French, German and Spanish authorities responded favourably and **RSF's staff helped to relocate 60 journalists to France**, 18 to Spain and 159 to Germany.
- After the journalists arrived in France, **RSF assisted them with administrative procedures**, including the asylum applications they submitted to the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA). Almost all of the Afghan journalists in France have now been granted the French state's protection.

SAVE JOURNALISM IN THE SAHEL

WHY?

Five journalists have been killed in the Sahel in the space of ten years, while two others were recently reported missing. Hundreds of others have been threatened and can no longer work without risking their lives.

The space for media freedom has been drastically reduced, especially as a result of the military coups in Mali (in 2020 and 2021) and Burkina Faso (2022). Mali's High Authority for Communication (HAC) banned local broadcasting by Radio France Internationale and France 24 for good after they covered atrocities blamed on the Malian army and Russian mercenaries. Malian journalists have also been harassed online over their coverage of the Russian paramilitary organisation Wagner's presence in Mali. Some, such as Malick Konaté, have had to flee the country.¹

Finally, journalist Olivier Dubois was still being held by an armed group in Mali in 2022. He was the only French citizen still being held hostage anywhere in the world.

HOW?

- In March 2022, RSF created mirror sites to unblock online access to RFI and France 24 in Mali². RSF has now unblocked access to more than 80 news websites in 24 countries using the same mirror site method.³
- In September 2022, RSF met with journalists in Burkina Faso and Benin to gather information about the difficulties for journalists working in the Sahel. This information was used in the report entitled "What it's like to be a journalist in the Sahel"⁴ that RSF published in April 2023.
- RSF continued to campaign for Olivier Dubois' release throughout 2022. The methods used included five press releases, a poster campaign all over France and projecting his photo on the Pantheon in Paris in March 2022. He was finally released on 20 March 2023.



RSF projects Olivier Dubois' photo on the Pantheon in Paris as part of the #FreeOlivierDubois campaign. Manon Levet / RSF



NATIONAL SECURITY V JOURNALISM

WHY?

In June 2022, UK home secretary Priti Patel signed an order to extradite WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange to the United States, where he faces up to 175 years in prison on charges linked to the publication of information in the public interest. If Assange were extradited, he would become the first publisher to be prosecuted under the Espionage Act, which would be very dangerous for press freedom as it would set an alarming precedent opening the way for future prosecutions of journalists, publishers or sources.

HOW?

- In May 2022, a petition calling on the home secretary to reject the extradition request, which had received nearly 64,000 signatures in the space of barely a month, was delivered by RSF to the Home Office in London and to the British embassies in Washington, DC, Paris, Berlin, Madrid, Rio and Algiers.
- RSF was the only NGO to attend all of the extradition hearings in London from 2020 to 2022. RSF's staff also observed and documented all other aspects of the judicial proceedings concerning Assange.
- RSF participated in events that contributed to its advocacy and its work of raising awareness about the case. They included an event held in parallel to the UN Human Rights Council's 50th regular session in June 2022 and the "Whistleblower Summit" in September 2022.

¹ https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/medias/file/2023/04/What%20it%20is%20like%20to%20be%20a%20journalist%20in%20the%20Sahel_EN.pdf

² <https://rsf.org/en/rsf-creates-mirrors-rfi-and-france-24-websites-users-mali>

³ <https://rsf.org/en/collateral-freedom>

⁴ <https://rsf.org/en/what-it-s-be-journalist-sahel-rsf-report-threats-journalism-african-region>

FOR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION MECHANISMS

WHY?

With more than 1,000 journalists killed in connection with their work in the past ten years, there is a greater need than ever to create effective protection mechanisms to respond to impunity for crimes of violence against journalists. The existing mechanisms suffer from major problems, including a failure to use methods appropriate to the reality on the ground, a lack of human and financial resources, and a low level of involvement of civil society organisations.

HOW?

By means of this campaign, RSF supports the development of new national and international mechanisms capable of establishing effective measures for reducing the risks and threats that journalists face.

RSF's Latin America bureau published a report in February 2022 diagnosing the alarming situation for journalists in four countries: Mexico, Brazil, Honduras and Colombia. On the basis of the data gathered by RSF, key recommendations were formulated for each country. They included:

→ **In Brazil:** the development of procedures and protocols that take into account the diversity of each protected population segment.

→ **In Colombia:** the urgency of reducing the time required to implement protective measures.

→ **In Honduras:** the need for the SNP¹ to determine its operating budget to guarantee effective protective measures and have sufficient personnel with human rights training.

→ **In Mexico:** a better allocation of responsibilities for the protection of journalists between the federal and local levels.

RSF also supported initiatives taken to protect journalists in certain countries, including:

→ **In the United Kingdom:** the creation of the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists in 2020 and the publication of a National Action Plan in March 2021 were encouraging portents of a better security climate for British journalists. RSF supported these two initiatives and was consulted by the Committee several times in 2022.

RSF continued campaigning for such protective mechanisms to be adopted in other countries.



©Yuri Cortez - AFP

No se mata la verdad matando al periodista (You don't kill the truth by killing the journalist).

¹ SNP – Sistema Nacional de Protección para Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos, Periodistas, Comunicadores Sociales y Operadores de Justicia (National System for Protecting Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Citizen-Journalists and Judicial Agents)



Visual published on Vladimir Putin's 70th birthday on 7 October 2022.

SUPPORT RUSSIAN EXILE JOURNALISTS VIA THE JX FUND

WHY?

As soon as the invasion of Ukraine was launched on 24 February 2022, draconian censorship was imposed on Russia's independent journalists and media, and has been steadily reinforced ever since.

Journalists were immediately banned from using the words "war," "attack" or "invasion" to refer to the conflict. Then, an amendment was passed under which journalists publishing "false information" about the Russian armed forces could be sentenced to up to 15 years in prison.

In this hostile environment, many media outlets had no choice but to close and independent journalists fled abroad to escape Moscow's unrelenting persecution and censorship.

In response to this unprecedented exodus, the JX Fund was launched by RSF and the Rudolf Augstein and Schöpflin foundations in April 2022 to help journalists resume their work immediately after fleeing war and conflict zones. It also aims to strengthen independent exile media after the initial phase of international attention and to promote a long-term model for new media entities so that they can continue to reach their audience in their country of origin.

HOW?

- **51 Russian media in exile** were supported in 25 countries
- **1,332 journalists** were thereby able to continue working.
- **4 million euros** were disbursed.
- The **Shpargalka | Exile digital information platform** was created to answer the questions that Russian journalists ask themselves when they consider fleeing abroad.
- An **authoritative survey**, entitled **Rebuilding Russian media in exile, was published.**

RSF's Assistance Desk also awarded **urgent financial grants to 28 Russian journalists** who had fled their country and supported **29 Russian journalists'** applications for visas or residence permits in Europe.

At the same time, RSF combatted Russian propaganda. RSF's victory in its legal battle with the French broadcasting regulator forced the French satellite operator Eutelsat to stop transmitting Russian propaganda TV channels in Russia. And RSF helped Marina Ovsyannikova – the journalist who interrupted a TV news broadcast on Russia's First Channel with an anti-war protest – to flee the country.

The challenge is now to help structure the Russian exile media ecosystem by encouraging synergies, strengthening the existing hubs and ensuring that long-term funding is available. Projects such as the creation of a satellite package of independent radio and TV stations could be decisive steps in this direction.

AGAINST CHINA'S NEW WORLD MEDIA ORDER

China  175th/180*



WHY?

Since taking over the Chinese leadership in 2012, Xi Jinping has placed the media under close control and has reinforced Internet censorship and surveillance to an unprecedented degree. China now has one of the worst press freedom records and is the world's biggest jailer of journalists. Alarming, China has also been extending its information control model to other countries in recent years.

The Zero-Covid policy lockdowns imposed in mainland China and the Hong Kong special administrative region in 2022 limited the possibilities for action on the ground, and increased the importance of RSF's international campaign.



Cover of the report "The Great Leap Backwards of Journalism in China", a groundbreaking RSF investigation published on 7 December 2021.

HOW?

By means of this campaign, RSF tried to use more effective democratic counterbalances to combat China's influence and information control strategy, as well as to remedy press freedom violations.

- RSF promoted its December 2021 report entitled **"The Great Leap Backwards of Journalism in China"** by means of webinars. In 2022, the report was translated and published in 12 languages in order to be able to reach political and civil society decision-makers all over the world. Advocacy meetings were organised in several countries including the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States.
- In 2022, **RSF's Taipei bureau conducted around 20 public and non-public advocacy actions** and meetings about the situation in China. RSF's London bureau stepped up awareness initiatives targeting the British parliament and intervened in several parliamentary events on the situation in China and Hong Kong. Finally, RSF sounded the alarm about the situation of journalists and media, including the case of Apple Daily founder Jimmy Lai, who is facing the possibility of life imprisonment in Hong Kong for alleged crimes against the Chinese state.
- RSF stepped up **assistance and support actions for journalists**. There were more than 200 participants in a programme of 14 trainings in physical and digital safety. The training.rsf.org website, which makes physical, psychological and digital safety resources available to journalists, received 9,157 unique visits in 2022.
- In November 2022, China saw many protests against its Zero-Covid policy and, in the course of cracking down on them, the police attacked many journalists and arrested two. RSF and a coalition of 48 human rights NGOs called on the Chinese authorities to respect human rights including press freedom.



© Leo Ramirez / AFP

DEFEND JOURNALISTIC FREEDOM AGAINST DIGITAL THREATS

WHY?

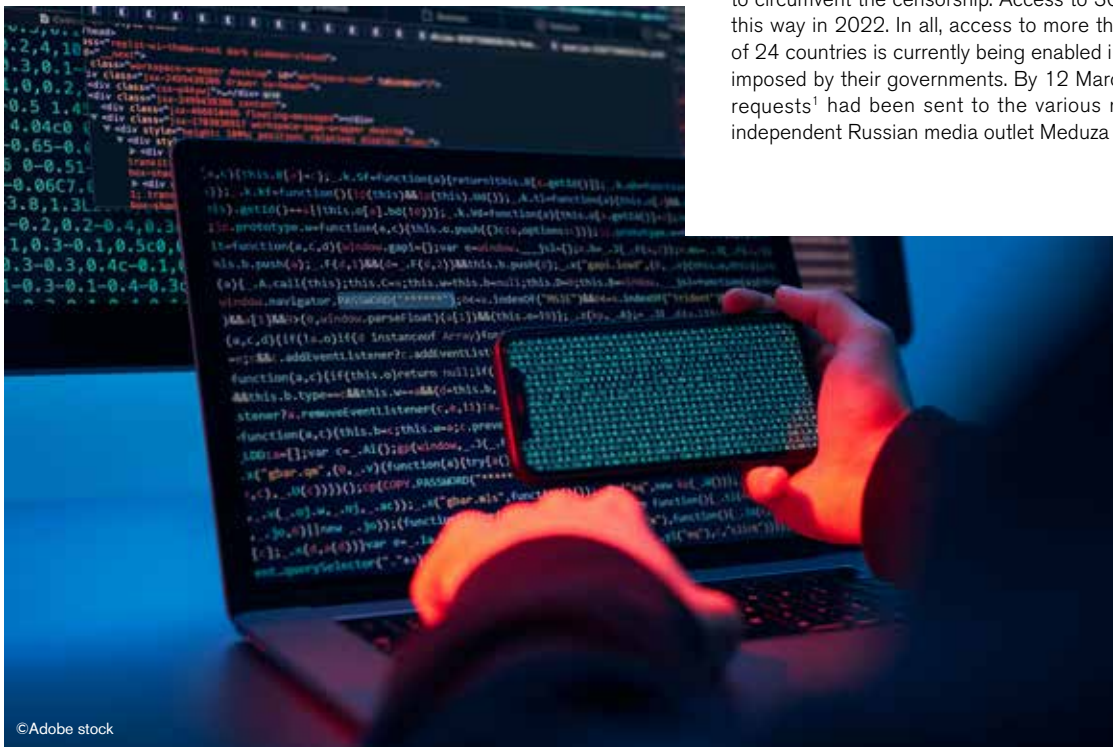
July 2022 was the first anniversary of the revelations about the Pegasus spyware's massive use. Research by an international network of media outlets established that the phones of tens of thousands of politicians, human rights activists and journalists had been earmarked for potential hacking by this powerful spyware developed by the Israeli company NSO Group. The phone numbers of more than 200 journalists were identified on a leaked list of numbers that the company's clients wanted to hack using Pegasus.

Globally, the many digital threats to journalists and press freedom – which include online surveillance and censorship, spyware and hacking – are growing. Major revelations in several countries have heightened awareness of the need for regulation and for a moratorium on dual-use technology.

HOW?

RSF engaged more with the subject of digital threats, working for a political change and judicial progress in this domain:

- Acting jointly **with a total of 25 journalists** from ten countries, RSF filed **four complaints** about Pegasus spying with the Paris prosecutor's office, whose "cyber" section responded by opening a criminal investigation in July 2022. This investigation, which in 2022 was the only one of its kind in the world, could potentially result in persons responsible for spying on journalists being identified, subjected to criminal prosecution, and convicted.
- RSF followed the many cases of surveillance of journalists closely. In Greece, the surveillance cases resulted in the **adoption of a law** to which RSF contributed by means of a memorandum.
- RSF also participated in the European Parliament's commission of enquiry into the Pegasus spyware.
- RSF's **Operation Collateral Freedom**, which was launched in 2015, combats the arbitrary blocking of national and international news sites by creating mirror sites that are hosted on servers located outside the jurisdiction of press freedom predators, thereby allowing the news sites to circumvent the censorship. Access to 30 websites was unblocked in this way in 2022. In all, access to more than 80 media sites in a total of 24 countries is currently being enabled in defiance of the censorship imposed by their governments. By 12 March 2023, more than a billion requests¹ had been sent to the various mirror sites created for the independent Russian media outlet Meduza since February 2022.



© Adobe stock

¹ Each page needs several requests in order to be displayed, depending on the number of elements of which it consists (text, photos, videos, links and so on)

MOBILISE EUROPE FOR JOURNALISM

WHY?

The European Union has seen a return of murders of journalists and an increase in attacks on media independence, while journalism has been critically undermined by the excessive power of online platforms.

The European Commission has embarked on an unprecedented series of legislative initiatives aimed at guaranteeing media freedom and journalists' safety. The Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA) are laying the first milestones for the regulation of platform activity in the European digital public space and beyond.

The proposed European Media Freedom Act (EMFA), which the Commission unveiled in September 2022, offers a unique opportunity to provide the EU with appropriate tools for ensuring respect for press freedom in member countries. It incorporates many of the proposals made by RSF.

However, these initiatives are not enough to establish real democratic counterweights to the growing power of the platforms in the information and communication space.

HOW?

The promotion of journalistic freedom, pluralism and independence and the right to reliable news and information have been at the centre of the actions taken by RSF to mobilise Europe and end the current information chaos that is undermining not only journalism but also democracy itself. RSF is therefore seeking from the EU:

- Democratic guarantees in the European digital space and at the international level;
- Guarantees for journalists' safety and media independence within the EU;
- A legal requirement for platforms to promote reliable journalistic news sources;
- Creation of a system for protecting the European information space against authoritarian regimes;
- More energetic defence and promotion of journalists' safety and media independence in third countries.

→ **RSF is a co-signatory of the EU Code of Practice** on Disinformation, a mechanism envisaged by the DSA. Drafted under the European Commission's aegis by leading online platforms and civil society organisations including RSF, the code contains a number of platform undertakings to combat online disinformation. **The DSA and the Code of Practice incorporated around 60 of RSF's recommendations and initiatives.** RSF participated in 68 meetings on the Code of Practice in 2022.

→ RSF sent **position papers to the European Commission, the Council of the EU and the European Council, as well as to European parliamentarians and member countries.** RSF also published and sent its recommendations on the European Media Freedom Act.

→ In 2022, RSF participated in several **hearings on press freedom within the EU and on various proposed laws.**

→ RSF's alerts on the intimidation and judicial harassment to which Moroccan journalists are subjected, and **RSF's advocacy on the press freedom situation in Morocco** contributed to the adoption of a European Parliament emergency resolution on press freedom in Morocco on 19 January 2023.



©AFP

JOURNALISM TRUST INITIATIVE - JTI

Journalism is being subjected to direct competition from the various forms of manipulative content that proliferates in the digital domain, including propaganda, advertising and disinformation. This has resulted over the years in an erosion of audiences, mistrust of the media, and a fall in revenue from advertising, subscriptions and direct purchase.

The Journalism Trust Initiative (JTI) is **the first and only international ISO-style standard for trustworthy news and information**. It was initiated and is managed by RSF, supported by partners including the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and Agence France-Presse (AFP), to promote quality journalism, to make its practice a real competitive advantage and thus to fight against disinformation.

The JTI offers a transparent mechanism **for rewarding compliance with ethical and professional journalistic standards**. In 2022, there was a significant increase in the number of media publishing a transparency report that was the result of a self-assessment of compliance with the JTI standard.

- More than **450 media** outlets are registered on the JTI platform and nearly **50** have published a transparency report.
- **13 media outlets have been certified as compliant by an external audit**. In April 2022, Studio Kalangou, a Nigerien radio station, became the first African media outlet to be certified by the JTI standard.

At the same time, **RSF advocated for the JTI to be promoted by democratic institutions**. As a result:

- In May 2022, the European Union's Code of Practice on Disinformation explicitly named the JTI as a way to identify reliable information in the content provided by platforms.
- In July 2022, a French Council of State report on social media regulation recommended supporting mechanisms that promote reliable information, and it named the JTI.¹
- In September 2022, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, 11 of the countries that have signed up to the Partnership for Information and Democracy undertook to back the JTI.²
- 2023 could be a decisive year for the JTI, with funding being made available for certifying media and with the JTI's deployment in countries in crisis in partnership with NewsGuard.



JTI workshop with media, Abidjan, November 2022.

¹ https://www.conseil-etat.fr/Media/actualites/documents/2022/09-septembre/ea22_reseaux-sociaux_internet.pdf

² <https://rsf.org/en/11-countries-undertake-back-journalism-trust-initiative-iti> Andorra, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia and Slovenia

FORUM ON INFORMATION AND DEMOCRACY - I&D

Forum
Information
& Démocratie

Founded in 2019 by RSF and 10 civil society organisations and research centres, the Forum on Information and Democracy is the implementing body of the International Partnership for Information and Democracy, which formulates democratic principles adapted to the digital age. Drawing its mandate from this intergovernmental agreement, the Forum provides governments, civil society and online platforms with concrete recommendations for public policies to protect the public debate from information chaos.

With support from RSF, the Forum developed its activities in 2022 in order to strengthen its impact and its commitment to the various stakeholders around the world.

- **Six more countries joined the Partnership this year:** Albania, Ireland, Niger, Romania, the United States and Uruguay. Its 50 members are a coalition of democracies that are committed to promoting and implementing democratic safeguards in the information and communication domain. In June, **the G7's culture and media ministers hailed the Partnership's role in defending democracy.**
- The **second Summit for Information and Democracy was held in New York** on 22 September in parallel to the UN general assembly. Seventeen foreign ministers and representatives of member countries, and UN high commissioner for human rights Volker Türk, met to discuss how to move the initiative forward.

→ A report by the Forum's working group on "accountability regimes for social network accounts and their users" was published during the Summit. Led by Kjersti Loken Stavrum and Damian Tambini, this working group made specific recommendations on how to end online immunity.

→ The group tasked with designing the future Observatory on Information and Democracy, co-chaired by Shoshana Zuboff and Angel Gurria, delivered its conclusions at the Summit after one year of work. This opens the way for the creation of the Observatory and its first cycle of work in 2023. An interface between the world of research and politics, the Observatory is intended to be the IPCC equivalent for the digital information domain.

In order to include perspectives from different regions of the world in its recommendations and, more broadly, in the global discussion on digital regulation, the Forum has increased its cooperation with civil society organisations based in West Africa, North Africa and the Middle East, as well as Latin America. Some 50 experts based in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Lebanon, Tunisia and Senegal were brought together thanks to civil society organisations and took part in workshops on the subjects of the Forum's working groups.



Group photo at the Ministerial Summit for Information and Democracy on 22 September 2022 in New York.

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2023 ACTION PLAN

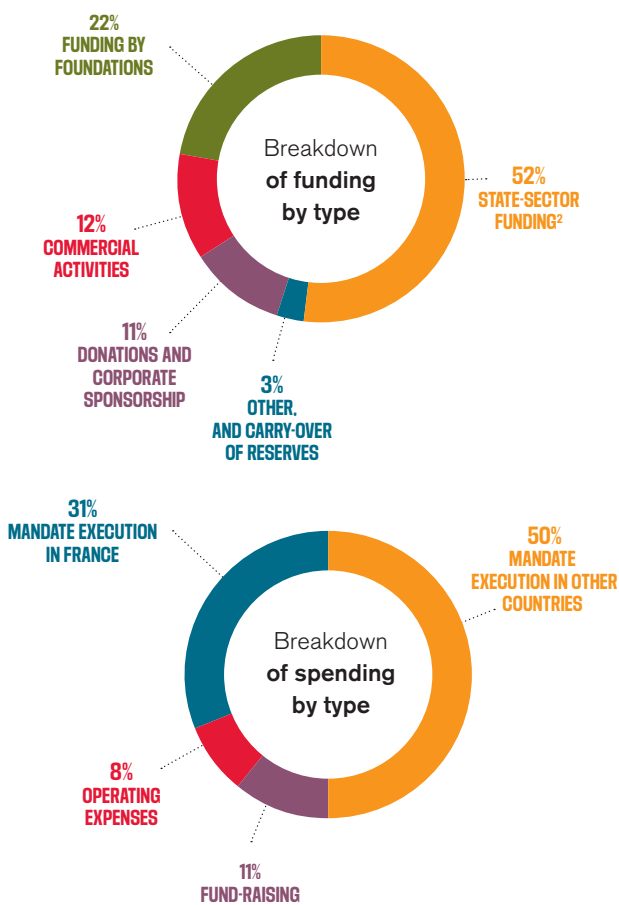
2022 CONFIRMED THE RELEVANCE OF STRUCTURING RSF ACTIONS IN CAMPAIGNS FOR THE SECOND YEAR RUNNING. THIS AGILE OPERATING MODE IS PARTICULARLY SUITED TO RSF, WHICH ACTS AT SEVERAL LEVELS TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY AND PROACTIVELY TO ISSUES RELATED TO INFORMATION CHAOS.

This approach has enabled RSF's staff to create more synergies, among themselves and with RSF's partners. It has allowed them to focus efforts to obtain concrete progress in support of every human being's right to freely reported and reliable news and information.

Building on the successes of 2021 and 2022, RSF is deploying its 2023 action plan, which is structured around five cross-cutting campaigns:



A FAST-GROWING BUDGET AND DIVERSIFIED FUNDING



RSF'S BUDGET GREW SHARPLY IN 2021 (+50%) THANKS TO INCREASED SUPPORT BY TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL PARTNERS AND A REMARKABLE LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

RSF ensures that its sources of funding are as diverse as possible. In 2022, the sources were as follows¹:

- **State-sector donors²** (52%), including the French Development Agency (AFD), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the European Union;
- **Private-sector foundations** (22%);
- **Commercial activities** (12%), namely the sale of photo books, published three times a year;
- **Corporate sponsorship and donations** by the public (11%).

RSF's accounts are audited annually by Deloitte. In addition to this statutory annual audit, specific audits are carried out in connection with certain funding contracts.

On 9 November 2022, RSF signed a Multiyear Partnership Agreement with the French Development Agency (AFD) and France's Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) with the aim of strengthening RSF's ability to address the major challenges to journalistic freedom, independence and pluralism around the world.

¹ Breakdown from the income statement by origin and destination presented in the auditor's report.

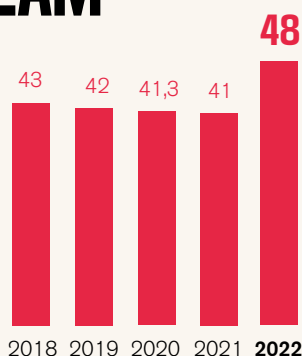
² 25.2% of the funding from state-sector donors came from various branches of the French state. They represented 13% of the total sources of funding.

RSF'S LEADING PARTNERS



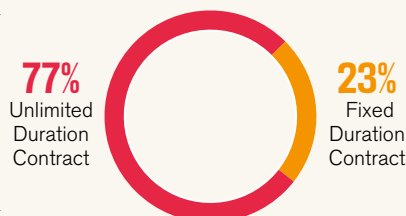
With support from: Bioport - Bloomberg LP - Bonnier Group - Côtes d'Armor le Département - Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development of Canada - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) - Fred Foundation - Hellman and Friedman LLC - King Baudouin Foundation (BEL and USA) - Klarman Family Foundation - Limelight Foundation - French Ministry of Culture - International Organisation of La Francophonie - Rory Peck Trust - Schöpflin Foundation - The Fix

A COMMITTED TEAM



Average number of RSF employees (full-time equivalent)

A GROWING TEAM



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The members of the board of governors are elected for two years by the general assembly of RSF's members. The board of governors elects an executive bureau from among its members. The board of governors meets four times a year and makes overall policy decisions.

EXECUTIVE BUREAU

President

PIERRE HASKI

Journalist at France Inter

Vice-President

FRANÇOISE SIVIGNON

Member of France's Economic, Social and Environmental Council

Treasurer

GÉRARD TSCHOPP

Former president of RSF Switzerland

OTHER EXECUTIVE BUREAU MEMBERS

ANTOINE KABURAHÉ

Founder of the Burundian newspaper Iwacu

PAOLA SANDOVAL

Journalist, honorary president of France's Foreign Press Association

ELAINE SCIOLINO

Journalist, former New York Times bureau chief in Paris

DAN SHEFET

Lawyer specialising in online human rights

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS

MICHAEL BERGMEIJER

Former director-general of Reuters Europe

ANGELA CHARLTON

Associated Press bureau chief in Paris

PHIL CHETWYND

Agence France-Presse news director

ELAINE COBBE

CBS correspondent in Paris and Dart Center representative

MICHEL CORMIER

Former head of news at Radio Canada

LOUIS DREYFUS

President of the Le Monde group

FRÉDÉRIC FILLOUX

Publisher of the Monday Note newsletter

ANNETTE GERLACH

Journalist and Arte presenter

KADRI GURSEL

Turkish reporter and columnist

JULIE JOLY

Head of France's Journalists Training Centre (CFJ)

CÉCILE MÉGIE

Head of Radio France International (RFI)

PAUL MOREIRA

Founder of the Premières Lignes news agency

EYOU M NGANGUÈ

Founder of African Journalists in Exile (JAFE)

MARTINE OSTROVSKY

Lawyer and lecturer on media law

MICHAEL REDISKE

President of RSF International and RSF Germany

EDITH RODRÍGUEZ CACHERA

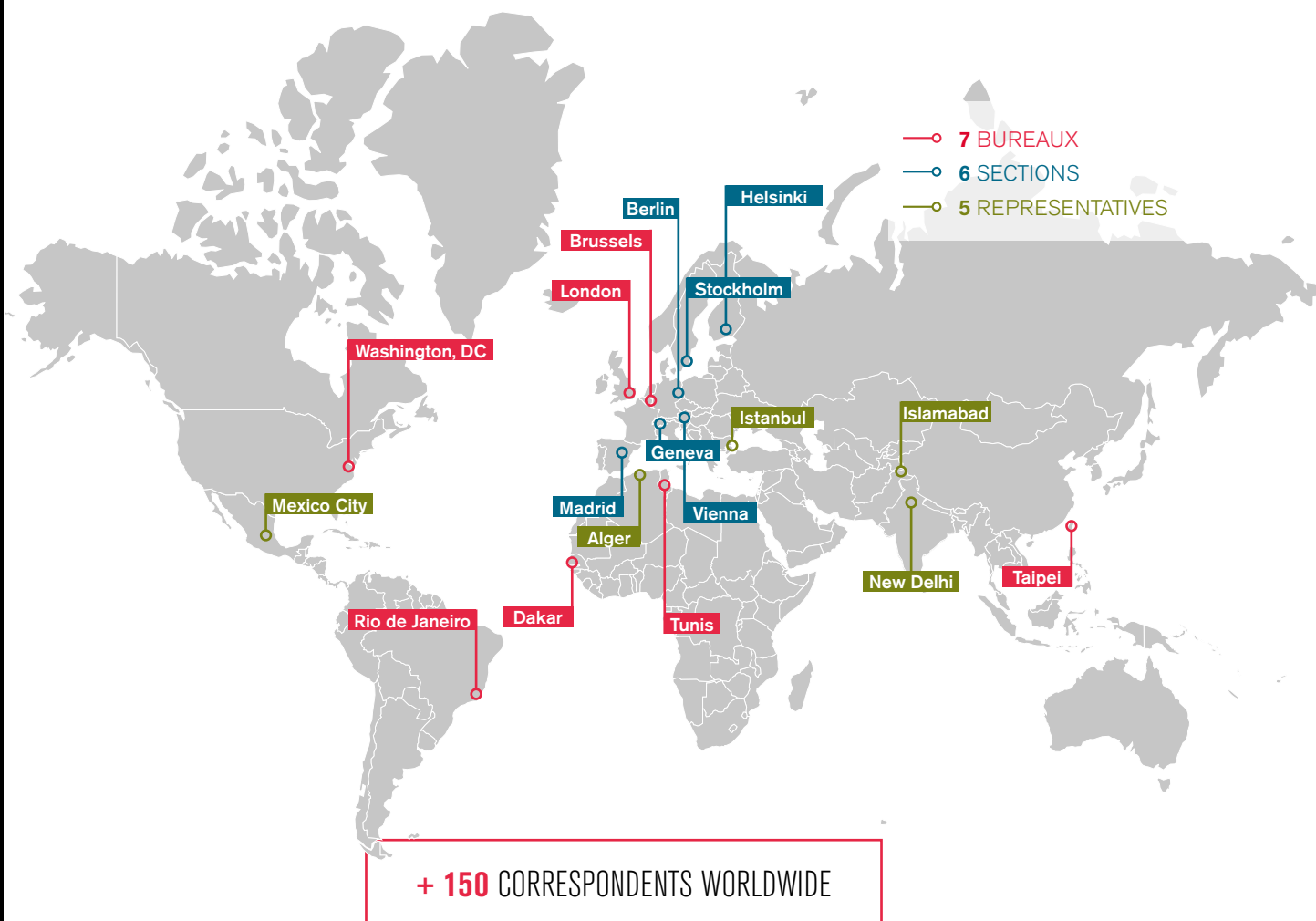
Vice-President of RSF Spain

ABDOULAYE TRAORÉ

Journalist with Romainville web radio

INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

RSF has a large network allowing it to have a **strong global presence** with players present in **more than 90% of the world's countries**. Thus, in 163 of the 180 countries covered by RSF, the organisation can count on at least one player present at the local level, be it a correspondent, representative, local partner or even a bureau or section. And this presence is evenly distributed throughout the world's regions.



RSF works in cooperation with **12 partner organisations** in a total of **11 countries**.

In 2022, a new partnership agreement was signed with **Botan International**, an organisation based in the Turkish city of Diyarbakir that defends and protects Kurdish journalism and press freedom. It supports Kurdish media and journalists by making various resources and equipment available to them and by organising training sessions in Kurdish.



RSF organised two meetings of its **correspondents** in 2022. The first one brought 25 **EU-Balkans** correspondents together in Paris, and the second one brought 31 **sub-Saharan Africa** correspondents together in Dakar. These meetings enabled the correspondents to discuss press freedom issues in their respective areas and to improve collective action to address the challenges faced by the different countries. The meetings were also an opportunity to share experiences and improve working practices through training and thematic workshops.

Thanks to RSF's cooperation with its network's many local organisations, it was able to organise many training courses around the world in 2022 and to train a total of 1,727 people. With RSF's support, the **International Women's Network (RIF)** organised a meeting in Senegal to "*strengthen the network of women journalists and communicators in the Sahelian strip.*" Linked to RSF's priority campaign on the Sahel, the meeting's workshops aimed to improve the **freedom of expression and safety of women journalists**, and to promote their autonomy within radio stations and organisations in Senegal, Côte d' Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Gambia and Niger.

THREE DECADES OF PRESS FREEDOM PHOTO BOOKS

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST “100 PHOTOS FOR PRESS FREEDOM”



“No freedom without press freedom.” These are the words that began the editorial in the first-ever book of photos for press freedom that RSF published on 3 May 1992.

A big chain of solidarity developed around this first book, and it hasn't wavered since. All those who usually contribute to the production of a publication – distributors, journalists, illustrators, photographers – volunteered their time. As such, the entire proceeds from book sales could be directly funneled into funding our field work, advocacy operations and other activities.

Many of the world's greatest photographers have participated in this great collective endeavour during the past 30 years, including Sebastiao Salgado, Raymond Depardon, Robert Capa, Helmut Newton, William Klein, Peter Lindbergh, Steve McCurry and Don McCullin. All of them donated their photos to our NGO. Ad agencies, illustrators and even a well-known astronaut were similarly generous. The formula has been adapted and modernised over the years in response to the public's changing expectations, but the challenges have remained the same – to defend, everywhere and always, those who have to fight to keep us informed.

To make the year 2022 a celebration and to thank all those who have accompanied us during the last three decades, we chose subjects that hewed closely to our values.

The first book of the year was dedicated to **Patrick Chauvel**, a French photographer who has been covering conflicts in Vietnam, Cambodia, Northern Ireland, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Libya, Syria and Iraq for more than 50 years. He returned from his risky reporting trips with thousands of photographic fragments of history. This was the first book dedicated to his work.



The June book, with a theme about **trees**, was a huge success with our readership. The issue included pictures from nearly 80 photographers and the topic was extended by an exhibition in partnership with the La Gacilly festival.



And finally, the year ended brilliantly with a book dedicated to the work of the late Hungarian-French photographer and artist **Brassai**. RSF paid homage to this photography legend with some of his most iconic images and others chosen from the family archives that were mostly unpublished.

AGAINST PROPAGANDA, THERE ARE FACTS

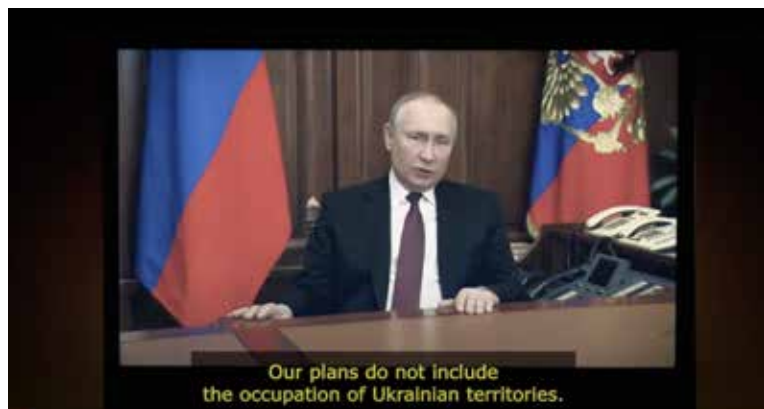
RSF LAUNCHES NEW CAMPAIGN VIDEO

In the new video, Vladimir Putin's lies about the invasion of Ukraine are contrasted with images of reporters covering the war. Only the facts reported by journalists can thwart the Kremlin's propaganda. Like the #FightForFacts campaign video that RSF released at the end of 2020, this new video aims to get viewers to appreciate the importance of journalism in raising awareness and in motivating the public about issues that are decisive for their future.

RSF's video was translated into 11 languages, was broadcast by around 30 TV channels throughout the world and was seen by nearly 200,000 people on social media.

“Without journalists to cover the war in Ukraine, we would be powerless against disinformation and propaganda, we wouldn't know whether the bombing of civilians in Ukraine was true or false, or whether the Bucha massacres really took place. After the world was stunned by the war in Ukraine, RSF wanted to raise awareness about the other war being waged by the Kremlin, the information war.”

Christopher Deloire, RSF secretary-general





REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS (RSF) works for journalistic freedom, independence and pluralism all over the world. Headquartered in Paris, with 13 bureaux and sections and 150 correspondents around the world, it has consultative status with the United Nations and UNESCO.