



ANNUAL REPORT 2017

IRIN NEWS

THE INSIDE STORY ON EMERGENCIES

Foreword

Around the world, 2017 saw press freedom decline and fake news rise.

Donald Trump was sworn into power, unleashing an attack on multilateral action and global solidarity not seen in decades. Trump's arrival onto the scene also came at another price: the near-singular focus of international media on American politics. While the world was distracted, four countries skirted with famine and parts of South Sudan slipped into one; more than 700,000 Rohingya fled a military crackdown in Myanmar; and cholera, at its peak, killed one person an hour in Yemen.

It has never been more important to understand our complex world, yet IRIN remains one of few news organisations consistently covering the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the collapse of Venezuela and of countries at risk of being wiped off the map by climate change.

By filling this gap in the media landscape, our stories have impact. This year, we prompted a public petition on refugee resettlement; we led the UN's refugee agency to look into sexual abuse of refugees in Germany; and we drove media coverage of forgotten conflicts like that in South Sudan's Equatoria region.

In 2017, we took strides to grow our impact and influence even further, embarking on a new five-year roadmap towards journalistic excellence, audience growth, and robust management.

We built a leadership team to take the organisation forward, launching the recruitment of an Executive Editor, and hiring a Director of External Relations and a Director of Finance.

We established a senior reporter in our headquarters in Geneva, complementing our deep field reporting with a lens into the people and institutions that shape humanitarian policy. And while we continued investigating corruption and misconduct in the aid sector, we also shone a light onto what's working, launching a new stream of 'solutions journalism'. We invested in improving the quality of our work, producing fewer but harder-hitting stories. The early results are encouraging: we saw a 33 percent increase in average page views per article.

We also focused on better engaging with our audiences, by building an infrastructure to allow us to better understand how our readers use us, what their needs are, and how our journalism can be most impactful. 2017 also saw IRIN shaping the conversation, from convening a standing-room only event on humanitarian reform, to giving a TEDx Talk, to prompting media coverage the world over. These are all pillars of our audience growth strategy, which we hope will help our critical coverage reach more people.

And we saw many successes in diversifying IRIN's funding base, with more governments, foundations, and – as of 2017 – readers supporting our work.

But what we're most proud of is the work our journalists do – day in and day out – to tell stories from the heart of crisis zones, injecting two values into a world that badly needs them in the current political landscape: empathy and understanding.

We hope you'll join us on this crucial mission. Our humanity depends on it.

Howard W. French
President

Heba Aly
Director



“IRIN scans the globe through a lens that is of unique value for the UN. Your critical voice as an organisation that knows us is of great value.”

Fabrizio Hochschild

UN Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination



Kurdish Peshmerga fighters train in urban guerrilla warfare in an unfinished housing project in the outskirts of the city of Erbil. Martyn Aim/IRIN

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About us

IRIN's non-profit newsroom puts independent journalism at the service of the millions of people affected by humanitarian crises around the world.

We report from the heart of conflicts, disasters and other crises to inform prevention and response. Our on-the-ground reporting amplifies the voices of those most affected, connecting them with those best placed to help.

Our **vision** is of a world where our journalism informs the attitudes and actions of people in a position to save lives, alleviate suffering, and protect human dignity in times of crisis.

We inform the prevention of crises and response to them by:

- Informing decision-makers and practitioners
- Providing accountability and transparency
- Raising awareness among wider audiences

We do this by producing journalism that:

Provides in-depth, field-based perspectives on humanitarian crises:

Our specialised editors and on-the-ground correspondents produce deep analysis and field reportage with informed “insider” takes.

Casts a critical eye over the emergency aid sector:

We ask tough questions and conduct independent investigations into aid policy and industry dynamics: how aid is delivered, who really benefits, where the money comes from and how it is spent.

Shines a spotlight on forgotten stories and emerging trends:

We highlight crises, angles, and communities overlooked by mainstream media, and flag brewing problems before they erupt into full-blown crises.

Our recent change in status to an independent non-profit media organisation has strengthened our voice and provided new opportunities to develop our content, reach, and impact.

Delivering insight and accountability

The number of people affected by humanitarian crises has more than doubled in the last decade to 134 million.

Climate change, population growth, volatile markets, water scarcity, and the mushrooming of armed groups are pushing more and more communities to the edge.

The resulting crises have exposed serious weaknesses in the world's capacity to respond: financing is unsustainable; local communities do not have enough of a voice, and needs are inadequately met. It is a critical time of change for the international emergency aid industry, which is under pressure to reform the way assistance is delivered.

The humanitarian sector, like all others, requires an independent voice that can assess needs on the ground, make sense of complexity, dispel misconceptions, and hold those responsible to account.

Yet international reporting – especially thoughtful, accessible analysis – has declined as mainstream news outlets have cut foreign bureaus and reduced travel budgets.

Technology has enabled information-sharing at unprecedented levels, but it hasn't guaranteed its veracity, nuance, or depth. In the age of viral videos and 140-character narratives, informed examination of serious issues in the public sphere is dangerously rare.

IRIN fills this gap.

IRIN value added

STORYTELLING

We listen to those at the heart of crises and amplify their voices by blending interviews and reportage to tell their important stories. We maximise our use of photography and film to ensure our content always has a powerful human element.

EXPERTISE

We are specialists at our beat. We have an intimate understanding of the humanitarian sector that gives us rare insights. Our history as part of the UN has strengthened our extensive networks of contacts and provided us an insider view that avoids sensational reporting.

GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

Many of IRIN's 200 correspondents are citizens of the countries they cover, and our editors are based in the field. We speak the local language, understand cultural dynamics, and have access to people and places that many aid agencies and foreign journalists do not.

PERSPECTIVE

We don't parachute in. Our journalists are present in-country before crises erupt, and long after the foreign teams have packed up and left. We take the long view, factoring in historic trends and putting current events into context.

VALUES

We are neither driven by commercial or corporate interests, nor by advocacy. We strive to be independent, authentic, constructive, bold, humanising, trustworthy, and respectful of diversity.

2017 at a glance



JANUARY

IRIN exposes a major financial deficit and management failings in the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Our story is shared with the UN secretary-general by the staff union and prompts donors to intervene.

We recruit our first Director of Fundraising and External Relations, Sarah Noble, who brings a decade of experience from global peacebuilding organisation Interpeace.



FEBRUARY

IRIN investigates claims that the UK Home Office funded NGOs to pressure asylum seekers to return home “voluntarily”. Our exposé of what was essentially a soft deportation operation leads one NGO to admit to undisclosed financial links with the Home Office.

We expose the negative effects of US conflict-free mineral regulations on mining communities in eastern Congo, just as US President Donald Trump is poised to issue an executive order suspending section 1502 of the Dodd-Frank Act, which regulates conflict-free minerals.



MARCH

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and others use IRIN as a key source in their request to the UN Human Rights Council to launch an inquiry into abuses against Rohingya refugees.

IRIN's film “Who in the world is Millie Wonder?” is shortlisted for the One World Media Women's Rights in Africa Award.



APRIL

A months-long investigation reveals extrajudicial killings of captives of the so-called Islamic State and serial violations of international law on the treatment of prisoners, with commanders turning a blind eye to frontline Iraqi troops taking justice into their own hands.

IRIN launches a new reporting project, in partnership with the Open Society Initiative for West Africa, to examine grassroots approaches to countering violent extremism in the Sahel. Its main goal is to deepen understanding of radicalisation and identify interventions that help reduce violent extremism and build peace.

An interview with Annie Slemrod, Middle East editor at IRIN News



MAY

IRIN Middle East Editor Annie Slemrod discusses IRIN's work in a Facebook live interview with the World Economic Forum at its annual Middle East and North Africa Summit, discussing key crises and the challenges faced by our journalists in the field.

IRIN produces a multimedia package about the crises facing small-scale farmers in Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and Zimbabwe as part of an in-depth series on climate change and food security.



JUNE

In a TEDx Talk, IRIN Director Heba Aly highlights the dangers of simplistic narratives in reporting on crises, saying, "Only when we properly understand our complex world can we begin to change it for the better."

IRIN launches a new project to report on policy developments in Geneva. Designed to complement IRIN's field journalism from crisis zones, it focuses on the aid sector itself, examining aspects such as humanitarian assistance financing and the aid reform agenda.

The Society of Publishers in Asia recognises IRIN's work with an award for excellence in video reporting for the story of Indonesian fishermen using bomb blast fishing, and an honourable mention for our human rights reporting for our story on atrocities committed against Rohingya civilians by the Myanmar military.

One year after the World Humanitarian Summit, on the eve of the UN Economic and Social Council's Humanitarian Affairs Segment, IRIN hosts a breakfast roundtable examining progress towards a wide-ranging package of humanitarian aid reforms known as the Grand Bargain.



JULY

IRIN begins investing in audience engagement by putting in place infrastructure to make better use of analytics and A/B testing, deepening our understanding of our users' interaction with content.

We recruit our first Director of Finance, accountant Richard Golding. He comes to IRIN from a 25-year career at PwC, where he advised the UN, the Global Fund, and the UK and Swiss governments, among others.



AUGUST

IRIN holds a staff retreat to analyse performance and set strategy. Guest speakers include the President of the non-profit news organisation ProPublica and the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination.



SEPTEMBER

On the International Day of Peace, IRIN Director Heba Aly speaks at the Geneva Peace Talks about the critical role independent and impartial journalism has in building empathy and understanding. Other speakers range from former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan to Christian Picciolini, a reformed far-right activist who co-founded the NGO Life After Hate.

Aly is recognised by her alma mater Carleton University as one of its 75 most inspiring alumni on its 75th Anniversary.



OCTOBER

IRIN's Senior Editor Ben Parker delivers a keynote speech to the Humanitarian Congress in Berlin on the theme "Out of order? Reshaping humanitarianism".

IRIN Director Heba Aly attends the Pacific Humanitarian Partnership meeting in Fiji to examine how local communities in the Pacific are responding to humanitarian crises without international assistance.

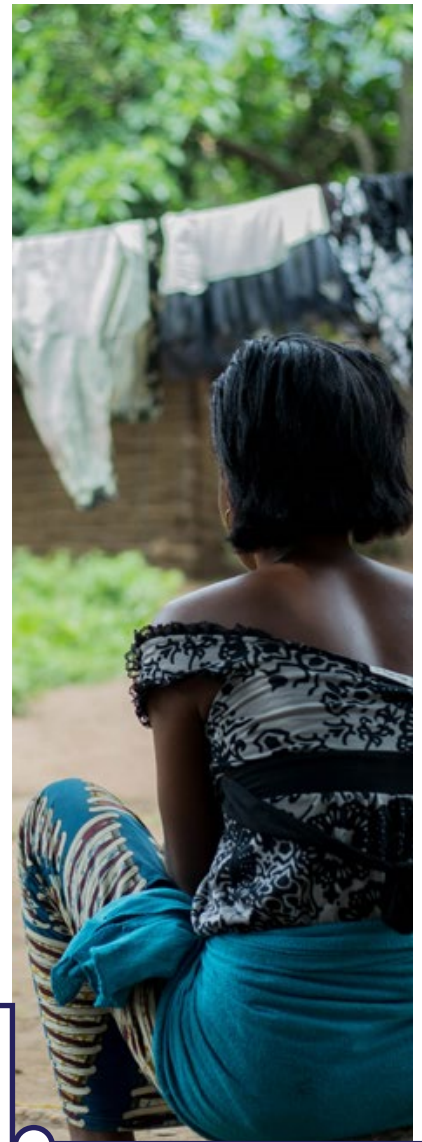
IRIN Africa Editor Obi Anyadike speaks at the Positive Peace Conference at Stanford University about the role of the media in contributing to peacebuilding.



NOVEMBER

IRIN Middle East Editor Annie Slemrod visits Yemen to report on the country's humanitarian crisis – including displaced people, water shortages, and a burgeoning famine – from the ground.

The United Nations Correspondents Association awards IRIN Asia Editor Jared Ferrie a silver medal for best written media coverage of the United Nations.



DECEMBER

IRIN publishes an exposé on violence in Congo's South Kivu province, uncovering a campaign of rape by the security forces. The report is used by an organisation combating violations of international humanitarian law to build an investigation and criminal case against the Congolese army.



A crowd of Rohingya refugees clamours for food during a distribution by volunteers in Kutupalong in southern Bangladesh. Tommy Trenchard/IRIN

Our journalism in action: The year in review

From January's inauguration of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States to the ouster at the end of November of Robert Mugabe as Zimbabwe's leader after 37 years, 2017 was punctuated by major political events with far-reaching humanitarian implications.

On the front lines in Syria and Iraq, forces belonging to the so-called Islamic State conceded territory (Mosul fell in July, Raqqa in October). These developments signalled new challenges as the war in Syria entered a new, complex phase and the Iraqi government set about ending a long cycle of sectarianism and conflict.

Conflict was at the heart of burgeoning humanitarian needs elsewhere too. For the first time since 2011, a famine was declared. The unfortunate country was South Sudan, but parts of Yemen, northeastern Nigeria, and Somalia came close too – all of these crises driven by violence and pervasive insecurity. With the gap between humanitarian needs and funding growing, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien warned in March that 20 million people risked starving to death in Yemen and African countries if the international community didn't act quickly.

Hurricanes, meanwhile, ravaged the Caribbean and the US Gulf Coast. Harvey, Irma, and then Maria claimed hundreds of lives and caused an estimated \$280 billion of damage to the region. Most of that cost came in the mainland United States, but small, poorer islands like Barbuda and Dominica were almost wiped off the map and could take decades to recover, while the scale of the toll in Puerto Rico was only realised months after.

If one major humanitarian story broke through in 2017, it was the exodus of Muslim Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, fleeing in their hundreds of thousands to Bangladesh to escape alleged ethnic cleansing. Away from the spotlight, the awful situation faced by millions more people in crisis hotspots like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, and the Lake Chad Basin region failed to attract the same kind of media attention.

IRIN was present in all these places, providing in-depth analysis, exposing wrongdoing, and bringing to light the forgotten.



“IRIN reports on places no one else is covering. When the Central African Republic blew up in 2013-2014 and the US embassy was closed, we were starved for information. We counted on IRIN to provide accurate, real-time reporting. I’ve been a regular reader ever since.”

Charles J. Brown,
former Senior Director for Rule of Law
and International Humanitarian Policy
in the US Department of Defense

We are proud of the breadth and depth of our coverage. In addition to hundreds of news features and analyses on humanitarian disasters, emerging crises, neglected conflicts, and aid industry dynamics around the world, we published more than 40 investigative pieces and special reports on topics ranging from cash aid in Lebanon to the war in Equatoria, South Sudan.

We continued to diversify our editorial coverage and formats. On a trip to Iraq, Middle East Editor Annie Slemrod produced IRIN’s first [audio documentary](#): “Shrapnel, security and sectarianism: A reporter’s diary on Iraqi displacement”. We also experimented with our first [360-degree film](#), “Besieged: A 360 experience in Sudan’s Nuba Mountains”, immersing the audience in an under-reported conflict in Sudan and the immense hardships faced by the people of the region.

In June, we launched two dedicated reporting projects. One examining how African farmers were responding to [climate change](#); the other exploring grassroots responses to [violent extremism](#) in Nigeria and the Sahel.

Then, in July, we began a [new project](#) to report on policy developments in Geneva, designed to complement our field journalism and investigative stories. Senior Editor Ben Parker is heading up this new focus on topics such as the financing of humanitarian assistance, the aid reform agenda, and data protection standards within aid agencies.

In the following pages, you’ll find highlights of our coverage and examples of this year’s most powerful stories, as they relate to the main objectives of our work: informing decision-makers, providing accountability, and raising awareness.



Fighters of the UPC militia in the Central African Republic town of Bambari. A split between factions of the Seleka rebel alliance led to a fresh surge of violence in mid-2017. Philip Kleinfeld/IRIN



“IRIN is an essential source. For humanitarian news or when I’m researching something, it’s my first go-to source.”

**Ambassador
Hesham Youssef**

Assistant Secretary-General
for Humanitarian Affairs at
the Organisation of Islamic
Cooperation

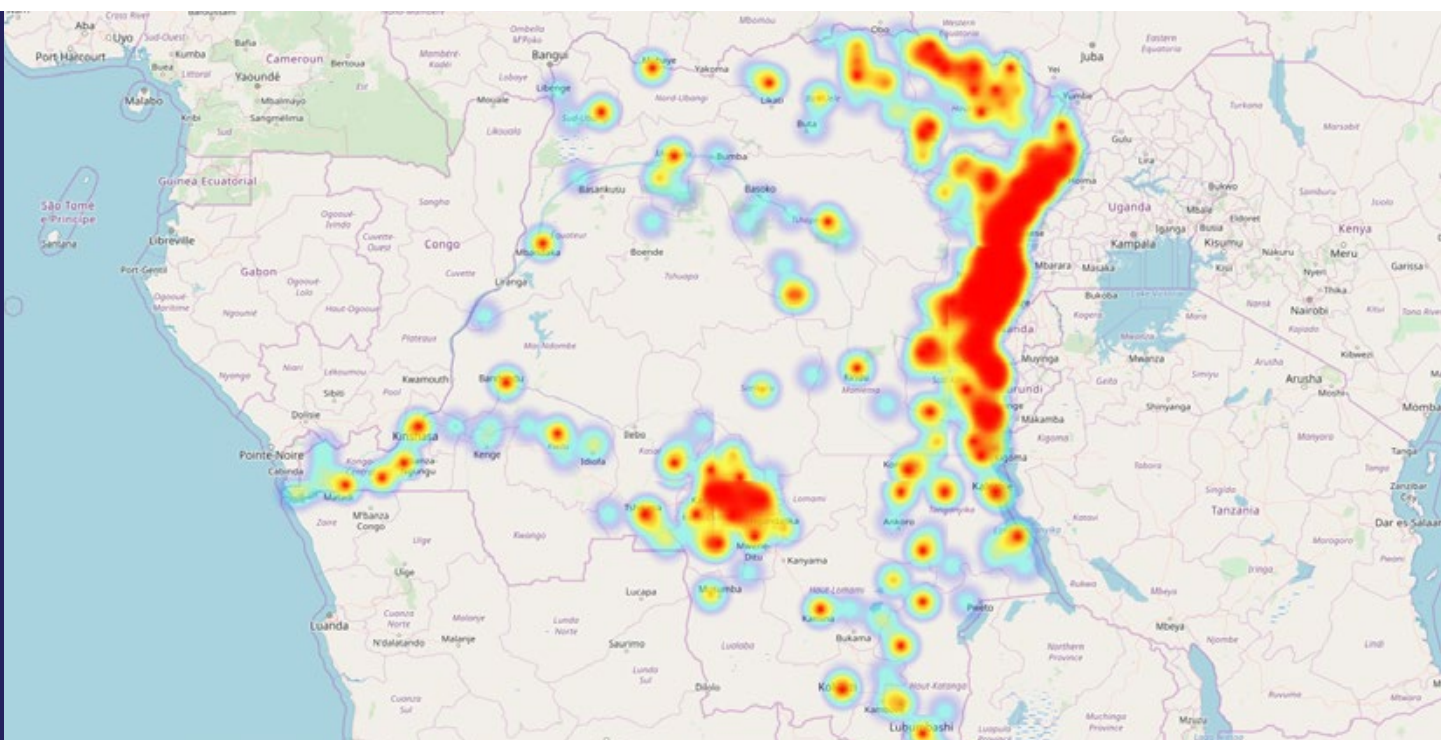
THE WIDER CONTEXT OF CONFLICT

The year began with former Portuguese prime minister António Guterres taking office as the new UN secretary-general. IRIN took an early look at what he has made the priority of his tenure: conflict prevention.

Africa Editor Obi Anyadike took deep dives into Boko Haram de-radicalisation and into the merits of CVE (countering violent extremism), a new trend in humanitarian programming. We also assessed the impact of Trump’s threatened budget cuts to UN peacekeeping and other programmes.

Meanwhile, the crises in Iraq and Syria were far from over. Our in-depth coverage from Syria specialist Aron Lund, Middle East Editor Annie Slemrod, and others unpicked the complex factors at play and warned about the dangers ahead, particularly the displacement crises and unresolved sectarian tensions.

In another in-depth report, we found that burgeoning famines in places like South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and northeastern Nigeria are increasingly a consequence of conflict. This additional complexity in the nature of emergencies is also reflected in the changing face of aid delivery: whereas 80 percent of humanitarian assistance used to go to victims of natural disasters, that same percentage now goes to populations affected by violence.

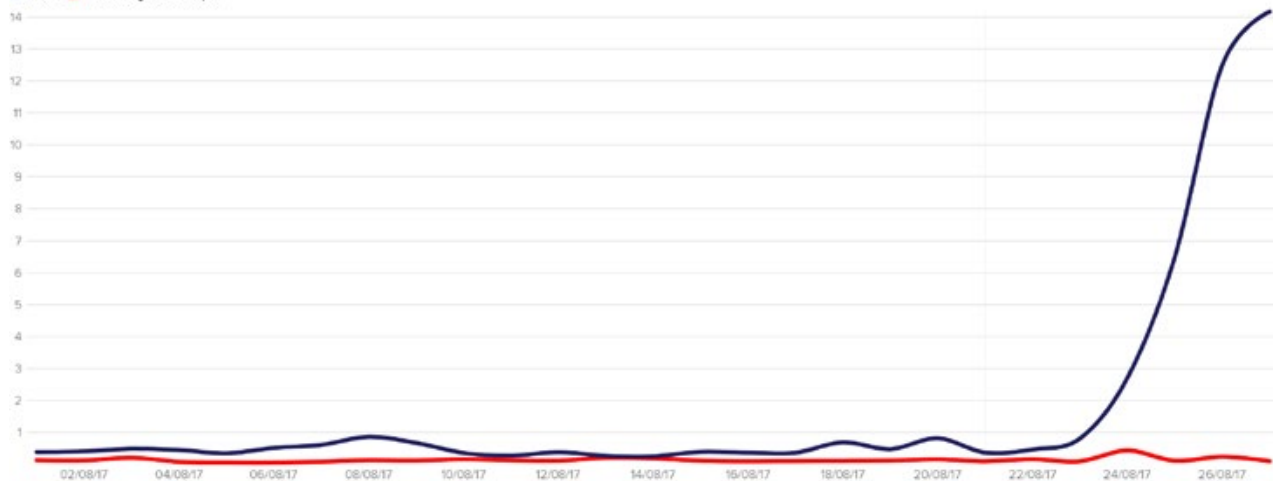


Conflict incidents in DRC 2016 to July 2017. Data: ACLED

Hurricane vs Monsoon

Natural disaster news in US media: articles published in August 2017

■ Texas ■ India/Bangladesh/Nepal



y-axis shows number of articles as % of total scanned on any topic

Source: GDELT up to 26 August



PARSING THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

With more severe weather, drought, and higher temperatures creating new humanitarian crises, Project Editor Anthony Morland spent the year looking at the impact of climate change. He focused on communities of smallholder farmers in Africa, the continent most affected by climate change yet with the least resources to adapt. The resulting e-book “[Unjust Burden](#)”, a collection of more than 30 stories, fact files, and commentaries, provides an overview of the scale of the problem as well as some of the innovative, grassroots approaches that local

communities are taking to meet rising food insecurity, water scarcity, and other resource shortfalls.

Hurricanes versus monsoons

We know that media coverage of natural disasters in developing countries is dwarfed by news on those that take place in the West. But the extent to which this is true is disconcerting. Using open data, Senior Editor Ben Parker [showed how](#) Hurricane Harvey, which affected an estimated 13 million people, gobbled up the majority of the US media’s attention at a time when floods in South Asia were affecting 41 million people.



The island of Barbuda was severely damaged by Hurricane Irma. Ben Parker/IRIN



“Keep up all the great work. IRIN has been on a roll lately and I am impressed with the leadership you and your team have taken during the much-needed upheaval in the sector.

Hopefully, these conversations and reporting on it continue to make an impact on how work is done.”

Tom Murphy,
formerly of Humanosphere

ADDING DEPTH TO MIGRATION COVERAGE

Our reporting disputed the simplistic narrative that the refugee crisis was over just because the numbers of people crossing the Mediterranean were dwindling. We focused on: slow integration in host countries; low levels of burden-sharing between states; South-South migration within the developing world; and the movement of displaced people to cities, creating new urban problems that humanitarianists are under-prepared for.

REPORTING ON HUMANITARIAN PRACTICE AND POLICY

In 2017, we ramped up our reporting on humanitarian policy developments by placing a full-time senior journalist in the global humanitarian hub of Geneva. With the goal of driving better accountability, transparency, and knowledge-sharing in humanitarian intervention, we identified key issues affecting the sector, from aid reform to financing, from data privacy to sexual abuse.

We set the agenda on questions of humanitarian finance, from the impact of potential cuts to the UN budget due to new US policies, to new insurance-based mechanisms for disaster financing.

For example, we exposed deep budget and management malaise at the UN's humanitarian coordination arm, OCHA. We examined progress (or the lack of it) on the humanitarian reform agenda known as the “Grand Bargain”, and hosted a well-attended public event on the annual review of these reforms. We brought insider wrangles in the OECD donor club to public view, including loopholes in the way donors were counting aid as a result of the refugee crisis.

We also analysed the developing frictions between the UN and donors in Lebanon on the use of large-scale cash distribution, a microcosm of future challenges to aid “business models” and the role of aid agencies themselves.



Ebrima Gaye, 17, from Gambia, on board the MOAS rescue ship 'Phoenix' as he waits to be disembarked at the port of Pozzallo in Sicily. Jason Florio/IRIN/MOAS



“We are very appreciative of IRIN’s rigorous and in-depth coverage of under-reported humanitarian news. Thank you for ensuring that the crisis in Yemen is not ignored.”

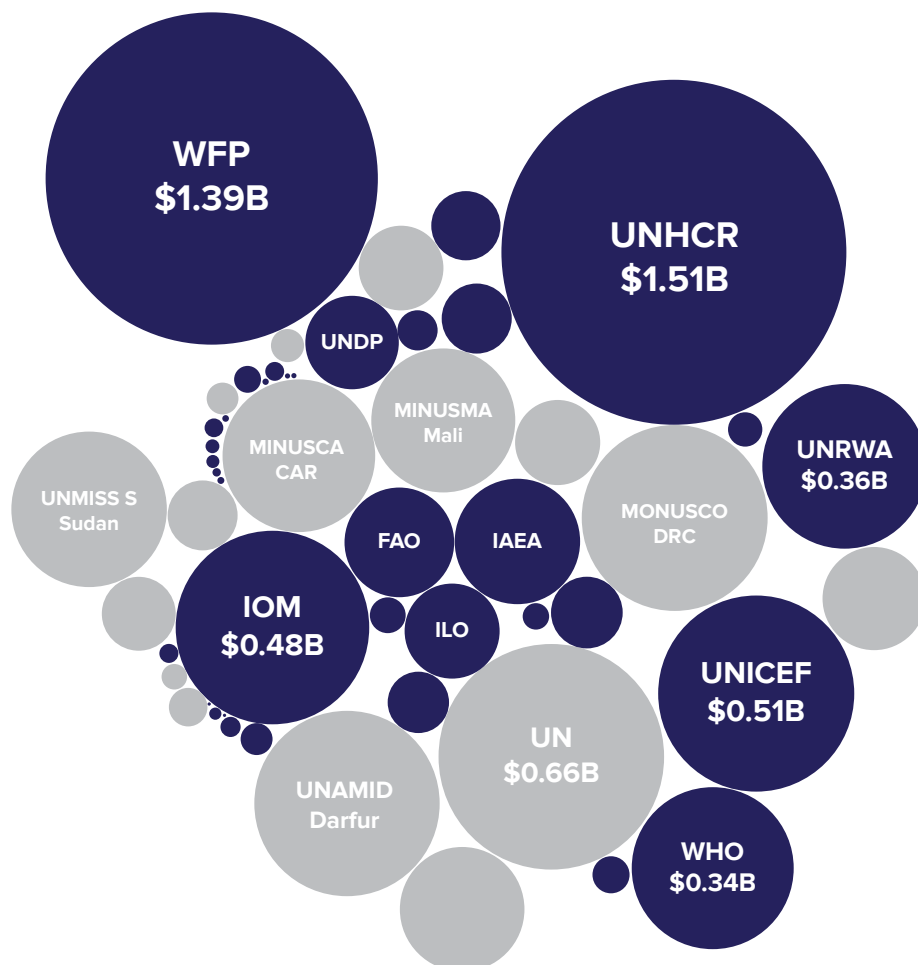
Elizabeth Wright

Head of Communications,
Action Against Hunger

Trump-inspired cuts to foreign aid budgets: number-crunching the possibilities

One of our most popular stories in 2017 was Senior Editor Ben Parker’s [examination](#) of potential cuts to UN agency budgets by the Trump administration in its quest to reduce US spending on the UN and foreign aid. Parker conducted a line-by-line review of US spending on international relations, aid, and multilateral affairs, finding that \$4 billion worth of cuts were being weighed in total, whilst the disproportionate impact of such cuts would likely fall onto the UN’s aid agencies, especially WFP and UNHCR.

In a [guest contribution](#), chief economist at the UK Department for International Development Stefan Dercon outlined how millions of dollars of relief finance are already being efficiently paid as a result of pre-arranged disaster response financing. One example is the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility, set up 10 years ago, which – following hurricane damage – promptly announced it would pay out \$15.6 million to the governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, and St Kitts and Nevis to get public services and infrastructure functioning again.





A displaced child in Al-Dashin camp in rural Taiz, Yemen. Ahmed al-Basha/IRIN

The rising danger of data breaches in the humanitarian sector

In 2017, IRIN was a leading voice in an area of growing importance and sensitivity: data protection and security. Our reporting moved the agenda forward at a time when this issue was not yet taken very seriously, with warnings on the risks and benefits of biometric ID systems, cybersecurity, and international humanitarian law, and an exposé of an insecure mobile app used by multiple aid agencies.

At the end of the year, we published a piece calling for new approaches to tackling the growth of data breaches within the humanitarian sector. The article underlined the danger of potentially catastrophic breaches of the personal data of already vulnerable populations.

FORGOTTEN CRISES

Beyond the headlines from Syria and Iraq, a host of less-covered crises spiralled out of control in 2017, many of them driven by increased conflict. From Congo to the Central African Republic, from Burundi to South Sudan, from the Philippines to Venezuela, IRIN drew attention to these more neglected countries.

Intractable conflicts in Yemen and South Sudan

In Yemen, IRIN was among only a handful of media organisations reporting about the increasingly catastrophic situation on the ground. We brought to light neglected angles, including stories on the hardest-hit rural communities that aid couldn't reach, and on the cholera epidemic that was killing more people than bombs and bullets. We also explored indirect impacts, such as the growth in child marriages as families sought to protect their children from critical poverty.



Every day, thousands of Venezuelans walk into Cucuta, Colombia, crossing a bridge that marks the border between both countries. Many decide not to return. Manuel Rueda/IRIN

IRIN offered sustained coverage of the neglected conflict in South Sudan, where 2017 saw the civil war fragment and spread. We reported on the impact of the war on its neighbours as millions fled to Uganda and Congo, and as conflict encroached into formerly peaceful parts of the country like the Equatoria region.

In a special report, journalist Jason Patinkin and videographer Simona Foltyn documented the descent of Equatoria, known as the country's breadbasket, into conflict, interviewing civilians and rebels caught up in the violence. The government army's purge of perceived opponents in the region triggered the world's fastest-growing refugee crisis last year, with

the UN warning of a potential genocide. With ongoing conflict and little aid forthcoming, one county saw some three quarters of its population flee to Uganda, settling in sprawling camps that – as of August 2017 – housed nearly one million people.

In South America, the world's largest displacement without war

In Venezuela, where an economic crisis has plunged the country into freefall, we reported on a hidden healthcare crisis and a refugee exodus. Despite major challenges due to government-imposed media restrictions, we sourced our stories with on-the-ground testimony that painted a harrowing picture of a nation in chaos.



The landslide triggered by Hurricane Maria flowed down Pointe Michel's ravine, taking houses and trees into the sea. Tomás Ayuso/IRIN



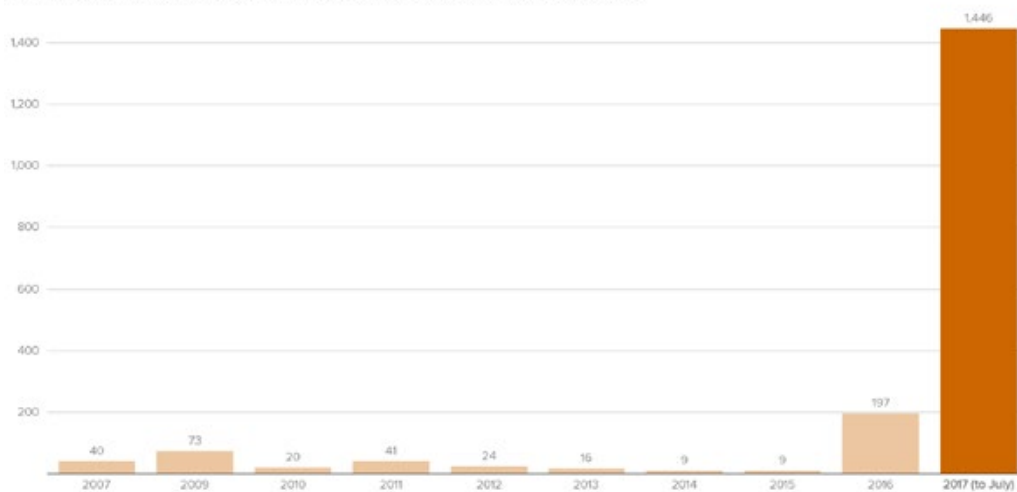
Video documenting the plight of displaced people in rebel-held areas of South Sudan. Simona Foltyn/IRIN

Conflict in Congo spirals

Over the course of 2017, we published a series of articles on the emerging conflict in Congo's Kasai region. Fuelled by clashes between a new anti-government movement and Congolese forces, local conflict spread rapidly. IRIN contributor Philip Kleinfeld was on the ground exploring the conflict's root causes and assessing its toll, which included more than 3,000 deaths, 87 mass graves, and 1.4 million displaced people. Kleinfeld's [feature](#) and a [briefing](#) by fellow IRIN contributor William Clowes featured in a broader [in-depth series](#) on Congo's decades of war.

Conflict fatalities in Greater Kasai, DRC

Estimates of conflict fatalities vary, but all indicate a major outbreak of violence since 2016



*ACLED data within the previous provincial boundaries of East and West Kasai only

SOURCE: ACLED





Displaced Congolese queue at a registration centre for IDPs in Kananga, Kasai. 1.4 million people were forced to flee their homes in Kasai at the peak of the crisis last year. Philip Kleinfeld/IRIN

Production and reach: Our numbers

In 2017, IRIN produced more than 450 text, data, audio-visual, and multimedia reports on conflict and militancy, natural disasters, aid policy, refugees and migration, and food security.

In line with our audience's appetite for depth and context in news stories, we placed more emphasis on producing analyses and investigations, alongside multimedia-rich features and special reports from the field. And, as ever, our coverage spanned the globe, reporting from more than 60 countries in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, Europe, and the Americas. We also translated key stories, with 80 reports translated into Arabic and 70 reports into French.

IRIN's Global Presence in 2017

Our stringers and editors reported from these countries



Articles written from:

Alghanistan	Myanmar
Antigua and Barbuda	Nepal
Bangladesh	Niger
Barbados	Nigeria
Botswana	Norway
Brazil	Pakistan
Burundi	Palestine
Cameroon	Peru
Canada	Philippines
Central African Republic	Romania
China	Senegal
Colombia	Serbia
DRC	Somalia
Dominica	South Africa
Egypt	South Sudan
Ethiopia	Sri Lanka
Fiji	Sudan
France	Sweden
Germany	Switzerland
Greece	Thailand
Iraq	The Gambia
Israel	Tunisia
Italy	Turkey
Ivory Coast	Uganda
Jordan	Ukraine
Kenya	United Kingdom
Lebanon	United States of America
Liberia	Venezuela
Mali	Yemen
Mexico	Zimbabwe
Mozambique	



Production in English by Region (%)

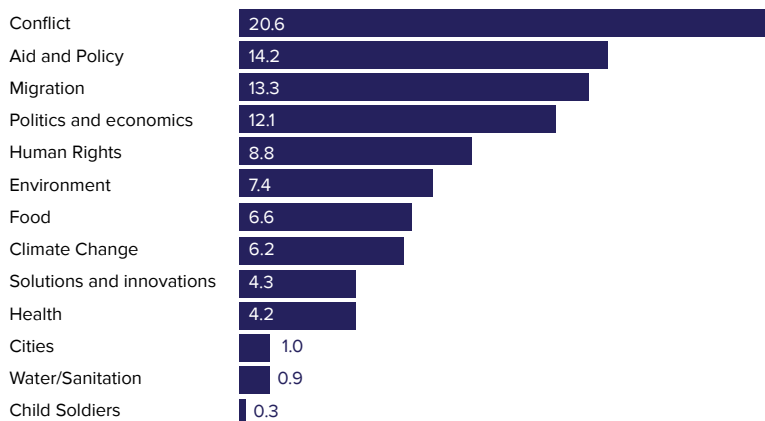
1 January - 31 December 2017



Our coverage reflected the geographic distribution of conflicts, crises, and natural disasters in the course of the year.

Production in English by Theme (%)

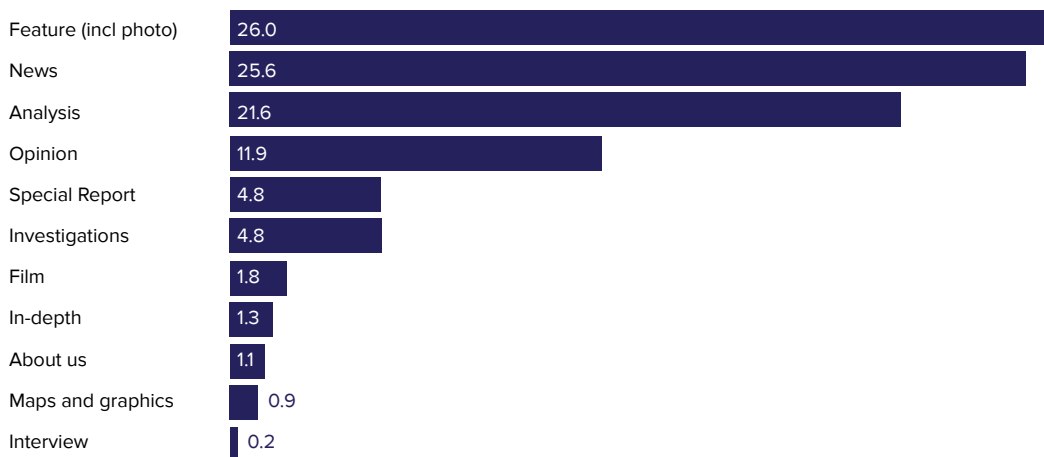
1 January - 31 December 2017



Our key theme in 2017, conflict has emerged as the primary cause of most humanitarian crises today.

Production in English by Format

1 January - 31 December 2017

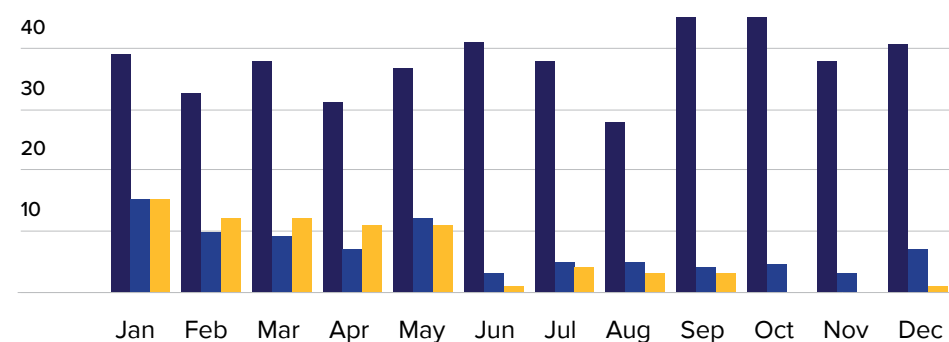


Strengthening our expertise in in-depth reporting and analysis was a priority for our editorial coverage during the year.

Production by Language

1 January - 31 December 2017

■ English ■ French ■ Arabic



The majority of our audience follows news in English. In May, we reduced our translation services to refocus our efforts on our core product.

Audience, syndication, and marketing: Building engagement

IRIN's core audience is made up of decision-makers and practitioners in the humanitarian realm, from the UN and international NGOs to philanthropists and private-sector policymakers.

Our secondary audience includes professionals in adjacent fields such as development, as well as journalists and researchers, and people and host communities affected by crises.

Our wider audience is made up of informed general readers who want to better understand the world around them. Nearly two thirds of IRIN readers have an impact on humanitarian issues and policies; 40 percent live in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

We provide our readers local texture and expert analysis that other news organisations lack the expertise, time, or money to cover.

OUR AUDIENCE IN NUMBERS

In 2017, more than 1.93 million people visited IRIN's website, with an average of 176,812 monthly unique visitors. This was accompanied by a 33 percent increase in the average page views per article; a reflection of deepening engagement with our readers, which we hope to continue to strengthen in the future through the launch of new products, services, and a membership model.

We continued to see steady growth in our social media audience, with 9,500 new followers on Twitter and 4,200 on Facebook, bringing our total followings to 123,181 by the end of the year. We are targeting further growth in these channels as only one in seven visitors to the site currently comes via social media; 50 percent of site visitors now come to us via mobile.

Meanwhile, our email newsletter was the fastest-growing source of traffic to our website in 2017. After launching a new weekly email newsletter, our overall email subscriber base grew by more than 4,000 sign-ups to a reader base of 37,000.

DRIVING VISIBILITY AND ENGAGEMENT

A key objective of our work – achieved through media syndication – is to raise awareness about crises among wider audiences, forcing humanitarian issues onto the public agenda. By helping sophisticated global audiences understand how and why crises happen and what can be done to prevent them in the future, IRIN contributes to increased global solidarity and an enabling environment for humanitarian response.

Mainstream media channels and local newspapers turn to IRIN as a source for new insights into humanitarian crises and regularly cite or republish our material. In 2017, we brokered new syndication agreements with the Huffington Post, News Deeply, and Bistandsaktuell, a Norwegian outlet focused on development, in addition to maintaining existing partnerships with The Guardian, All Africa, The Los Angeles Times, and Reliefweb.

Over the course of the year, we were regularly republished by everything from major media outlets to regional newspapers and diaspora publications. These included: CNN, Voice Of America, Wired, Al Jazeera, VICE, the Guardian, Poynter, BBC Africa Live, Le Monde Afrique, the Daily Mail, National Geographic, Foreign Policy Interrupted, Politico, Canada's Globe and Mail, Amnesty International, Paris Match, The EastAfrican, Friends of Nigeria and Down to Earth (India).

We also spurred further media coverage, in several instances prompting other media to cover topics previously unreported. For example, our investigation of sexual abuse by peacekeepers in the Central African Republic was picked up by Al Jazeera, and our map of under-reported conflicts was republished in Wired magazine.



Syrians displaced from the fight against so-called Islamic State in Ain Issa camp, north of Raqqa. Andrea DiCenzo/IRIN

Safe Zones

'De-escalation Zones' Unlikely to Entirely Wind Down the War in Syria

As Russia's 'de-escalation' plan comes into effect in four areas of the country, Syria expert Aron Lund explains in IRIN News why the Astana deal may not result in a lasting cease-fire.

WRITTEN BY: ARON LUND | PUBLISHED ON: May 8, 2017 | READ TIME: Approx. 7 minutes

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STORIES IN THIS SERIES

Safe Zones

Unsettled, safe zones are meant to provide protection for civilians. But in the case of Syria they have been considered for a multitude of other reasons – including securing oil pipelines, ensuring the flow of commerce flowing to neighboring countries and enabling foreign aid agencies to exert control over an area.

How De-Escalation Zones in

An IRIN article republished in News Deeply

Building our profile, informing debate

A range of IRIN stories and contributors were recognised for quality and originality over the course of the year.

AWARDS

EXCELLENCE IN VIDEO REPORTING

The Society of Publishers in Asia (SOPA) for the film “Why this Indonesian fisherman risked it all”

Honourable mention EXCELLENCE IN HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING

SOPA for the article “Myanmar says Rohingya rape and abuse allegations ‘made up’, despite mounting evidence”.

JOINT SILVER MEDAL

United Nations Correspondents Association (UNCA) Awards’ Elizabeth Neuffer Memorial Prize, to former IRIN Asia editor Jared Ferrie for his reporting on Myanmar’s Rohingya crisis

SPECIAL MENTION

Frontline Club Awards for our special report on conflict minerals in DRC

Shortlist WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN AFRICA AWARD

The One World Media Awards for IRIN’s film “Who in the World is Millie Wonder?”



Nick Calverey/TEDx Chamonix

Over the course of 2017, our team were sought-after participants in debates, conferences, and other events that seek to explore, understand, and raise awareness about humanitarian crises and the trends that shape them. The events and topics ranged from Ben Parker’s chairing of the keynote panel at the 19th annual Humanitarian Congress in Berlin to Heba Aly’s moderation of discussions at the World Economic Forum.

Africa Editor Obi Anyadike spoke on a panel on the role of media in contributing to peacebuilding at a conference at Stanford University and IRIN Director Heba Aly gave an eloquent [TEDx talk](#) on the dangers of ‘junk news’. She also joined former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan and others at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva to deliver a speech on the International Day of Peace about the critical role played by independent and impartial journalism in peacebuilding.

We’re also regularly consulted for our views on improving humanitarian response. For example, Director Heba Aly was invited by the Overseas Development Institute’s Humanitarian Policy Group to join a project using design thinking to imagine a new model for international humanitarian response through the eyes of its users, as part of a project called “Constructive Deconstruction”. The project lasted six months and brought together members of the humanitarian, development, technology, media, and private sectors.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) Annual Conference, Stockholm

International Humanitarian and Security Conference, Geneva

International Council for Voluntary Agencies Annual Conference, Geneva

Humanitarian Response Network of Canada, Ottawa

World Economic Forum, Jordan, New York

Global Cash Forum, Geneva

TEDx, Chamonix

Aid for Trade Global Review conference, World Trade Organisation, Geneva

Launch of report on the Future of Aid, London

Geneva Peace Talks

Global People's Summit (Virtual summit to make discussions at the UN General Assembly more accessible to the public)

MSF Humanitarian Congress, Berlin

Positive Peace Conference, Stanford University, San Francisco

AidEx Conference, Brussels

Computers, Data, and Data Protection conference, Brussels

Brussels Privacy Hub

European Interagency Security Forum, London

Rethinking Philanthropy conference, Geneva

International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights, Geneva

Pacific Humanitarian Partnership meeting, Fiji

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

BBC Focus on Africa

TVC News

BBC World Service

BBC Profile

TV5 Monde

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

Bayerischer Rundfunk Television

Africanews

World Economic Forum

UNIVERSITY LECTURES

Villanova University

University of Sussex

New York University

University of Notre Dame



After almost 40 years in Bakari refugee camp near the Pakistani city of Peshawar, this family is forced to join the mass migration back to Afghanistan. Andrew Quilty/IRIN

Organisational developments

IRIN's path towards full independence was carefully planned and executed to ensure we constructed strong foundations for future growth and development.

In late 2016, we developed an ambitious five-year strategy that had three key pillars:

1. **Producing high-impact journalism**
2. **Engaging the widest possible audience**
3. **Managing with excellence**

During the course of 2017, we took concrete steps to align our planning and operations with this strategy, setting in motion both short-term and longer-term projects, recruitments, and infrastructure to help us fulfill our goals.

FOCUSING ON QUALITY JOURNALISM

We restructured our editorial team, and created a new Executive Editor role to raise the standard of IRIN's reporting, implement an enhanced news culture, better express IRIN's editorial voice, and attract new partners. Recruitment began at the end of 2017.

We reduced our translation services to refocus our efforts on our core product. In so doing, we increased our investigative reporting and special projects, and sought out partnerships to allow us to further ramp up this important work in the future.

We attracted several new high-calibre contributors and rolled out new formats like 360-degree video and audio documentary, while also introducing a new strand of our journalism to focus on humanitarian solutions and innovations.

GROWING AND ENGAGING OUR AUDIENCE

In mid-2017, we developed a roadmap for audience growth and better engagement with users. Key components of the plan included an audience survey, better use of analytics to deepen understanding of user interaction with content, a more user-friendly website, the development of better syndication partnerships and outreach strategies, recruitment of a web developer, and finding new ways to assess the impact of our work. We're ensuring this project incorporates both industry best practice and the lessons we've learnt since our independence.

SEEDING A MEMBER COMMUNITY

In May 2017, we launched a new direct donations platform enabling individual IRIN readers to donate to support our work. In its pilot phase, this platform raised approximately \$7,500. More importantly, it laid the foundations for greater community-building, and potential membership models.

PUTTING ORGANISATIONAL SAFEGUARDS IN PLACE

New corporate policies developed over the course of the year included Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), a due diligence process for prospective donors, and a refined risk assessment for travel to high-risk regions and countries.



2017 Team Retreat

2017 TEAM RETREAT

IRIN's annual staff retreat in August brought together staff from as far afield as Kenya, Jerusalem, and the Philippines for three intensive days of strategy discussions and team-building. Guest speakers included Richard Tofel, President of American investigative news outlet ProPublica; Fabrizio Hochschild, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination; and Jina Moore, then New York Times East Africa Bureau Chief. Other sessions included a review of IRIN's mission, objectives, positioning, and audience; as well as story analytics and performance.

IRIN Board



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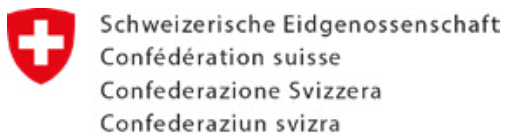


Peter Bouckaert
Member
Emergencies Director,
Human Rights Watch

Our partners

IRIN is a non-profit newsroom. Our work is funded by generous contributions from governments, foundations, and individuals. IRIN also continued generating small additional revenues from activities such as syndication and advertising.

Our donors in 2017 were:



Finances

2017 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Overview

Income grew by nine percent from the previous year to CHF 1.46 million with expenditure growing by eight percent to CHF 1.44 million, reflecting steady, controlled growth.

Our grant income comes from a blend of government and foundation donors. Almost 60 percent (CHF 884,448) of 2017 grant income took the form of unearmarked grants. We also received CHF 602,574 in funding for specific projects that are aligned with our core mission and objectives.

Below is a summary of IRIN's statement of income and expenditure for 2017 together with the year-end balance sheet, including prior year comparatives. Further detailed information can be found in the report from IRIN's external auditors – Berney Associés.

INCOME (CHF)	2017	2016
Unrestricted grants	844 448	760 000
Restricted grants	602 574	543 616
TOTAL GRANT INCOME	1 447 023	1 303 616
Other income	8 428	1 813
TOTAL INCOME	1 455 451	1 305 429

EXPENDITURE		
Editorial costs	(860 893)	(820 421)
Marketing & Fundraising	(186 322)	(55 587)
Finance & Operations	(230 899)	(272 330)
Strategy & Governance	(160 400)	(155 778)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	(1 438 514)	(1 304 116)
NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	16 937	1 313

BALANCE SHEET (CHF)	31.12.2017	31.12.2016
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash & cash equivalents	527 481	249 245
Other current receivables	1 490	290
Prepaid expenses	177 570	16 376
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	706 541	265 911
Other Assets		
Office security deposit	14 632	14 632
TOTAL ASSETS	721 173	280 543

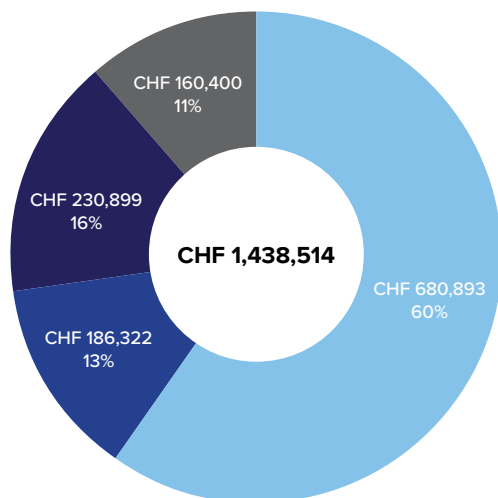
LIABILITIES & AVAILABLE FUNDS		
Short Term Liabilities		
Creditors & other current liabilities	52 633	28 242
Deferred income	641 470	245 108
TOTAL SHORT TERM LIABILITIES	694 103	273 350
Other liabilities		
Sub-let office security deposit	8 820	5 880
TOTAL LIABILITIES	702 923	279 230
Available Funds		
Brought forward from prior year	1 313	
Net Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	16 937	1 313
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS	18 250	1 313
TOTAL LIABILITIES & AVAILABLE FUNDS	721 173	280 543

OPERATING COSTS

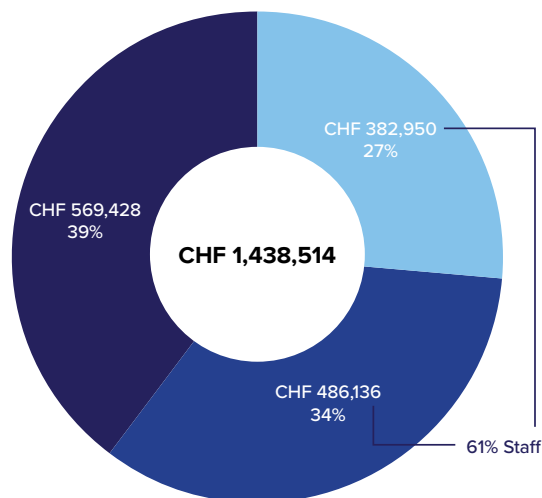
As can be seen in the chart below, editorial production remained our largest area of spending at 60 percent of overall expenditure. We have also increased investment in IRIN's marketing and fundraising resources for future sustained income generation while making some reductions in finance and operations expenditure.

The chart below shows that our staff costs (both employees and long-term consultants) constituted 61 percent of our expenditure in 2017. After its first two years of operation, by the end of 2017, IRIN Association has accumulated reserves of CHF 18,250.

Expenditure Analysis 2017 Actual



Staff & Non Staff Costs 2017 Actual





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Mohammed, 10, works as a brick collector to help his family earn a living in the world's fastest growing refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Stefanie Gliński/IRIN

IRINNEWS

THE INSIDE STORY ON EMERGENCIES

IRIN Association
Rue de Varembe 3
CH - 1202 Geneva
Switzerland

Tel: + 41 22 525 6603
Email: hello@irinnews.org