



# ANNUAL REPORT 2018

**IRIN** NEWS

THE INSIDE STORY ON EMERGENCIES



# Foreword

**In 2018, a new world order began sinking in**, characterised by a retreat of liberalism, a rise in populist and autocratic leadership, and an attack on human rights and the institutions that defend them.

“Multilateralism has been in the fire,” UN Secretary-General António Guterres told reporters on the eve of the General Assembly.

As isolationism grows stronger, the media has an ever more important role to play in creating understanding and encouraging more nuanced debate on key global challenges.

Yet in a survey we conducted, readers found mainstream media coverage of humanitarian crises to be “selective, sporadic, simplistic, and partial”. And when academics scanned 20,000 English-language international news outlets for coverage of four key humanitarian events they found just 12 to have reported on all four – 12 out of 20,000.

IRIN News was one of them. Our in-depth, field perspectives – from climate change and migration to the war in Syria and the crisis in Venezuela – sought to inform new perspectives rather than entrench existing views.

**At the World Economic Forum in Davos, we shared the stage with Peter Maurer**, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross. “Syria”, he said, “is at the crossroads of strategic interests of powers and a lot of money is made available to address the Syrian crisis. But much less is addressed to some of the fragile contexts in Africa, in the Sahel, in the Lake Chad Basin, in the Great Lakes Basin, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There is no question when I visit those places that needs objectively are bigger than in many others. So it is an important challenge for 2018 to draw the attention of the donor and international community to the potential of escalating violence, warfare, and needs in low-visibility conflicts.”

We are proud to have shone a light on forgotten crises, from the Central African Republic to Myanmar’s northern Kachin state, where conflict has simmered out of view since 2011, even as the Rohingya crisis

makes headlines around the world. We were the first media organisation to embed with a nascent separatist movement in Cameroon; and we combined satellite imagery and field reporting to reveal a hidden war in Congo-Brazzaville.

**In a year of stagnation on commitments to make aid more effective**, including devolving power and resources to local actors, IRIN also pushed key policy issues onto the agenda. We flagged the risks of biometrics, poor data security, and artificial intelligence in humanitarian response and told the stories of local responders on the front lines of crises in their own communities – ensuring their voices are part of the conversation. We chronicled negligence and misconduct in the aid sector – from multi-million-dollar fraud to digital security lapses to sexual abuse, as #MeToo had its impact on the aid sector.

Our stories led to changes in donor funding, were submitted as evidence before the International Criminal Court, and drove mainstream media coverage on humanitarian issues around the world. In our reader survey, respondents said our work prompted internal and external policy change, new aid programmes, needs assessments, and deployments of staff.

**In a precarious media environment** – several specialist development and humanitarian news providers shut down in 2018 – IRIN is bucking the trend. 2018 brought us funding growth and greater visibility and influence. Veteran New York Times Editor, Josephine Schmidt, joined our team as Executive Editor to set us on a bold course towards even stronger journalism, new readers, and more powerful impact. We strengthened our Board of Directors with new expertise in finance, law, and technology, and ended the year by re-evaluating our positioning, audience, and impact in the lead-up to a 2019 rebrand.

Our mission is more relevant than ever. And we are blessed to see IRIN attracting new funding, talented staff, and loyal readers as we step up our quest to put independent journalism at the service of the most vulnerable people on Earth.

**Howard W. French**  
President

**Heba Aly**  
Director



“

**“I read IRIN because it is consistently the best informed humanitarian reporting and commentary out there and i’ve always found it hugely useful in every humanitarian position I’ve ever held.”**

- Jeremy Konyndyk,  
Former director of the  
Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance



Many people were displaced by the battle for the Syrian-Kurdish enclave of Afrin, like this girl who now calls this destroyed house home.  
Credit: Afshin Ismaeli/IRIN

# Table of Contents

<b>3</b>	Foreword
<b>6</b>	About us
<b>7</b>	Delivering insight and accountability
<b>9</b>	2018 at a glance
<b>13</b>	Our strategy in action
<b>16</b>	Producing high-impact journalism
<b>17</b>	The year in review: our most powerful stories
<b>29</b>	How our journalism creates real impact
<b>33</b>	Laying the groundwork for audience growth
<b>44</b>	Managing with excellence
<b>49</b>	Finances

## About Us

**We report from the heart of humanitarian 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 to set the agenda to improve the lives of people affected by conflict, disasters, and other crises. Our journalism contributes to more effective and accountable humanitarian action 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 provide deep analysis and 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.

Through a network of more than 200 local correspondents, a core staff of experienced editors, and an intimate knowledge of the humanitarian sector, IRIN provides unique multimedia coverage from hotspots and policy-making hubs in more than 70 countries.

We tell the local story globally, with integrity, authenticity, and authority. We blend award-winning journalism, analysis, and data to give decision-makers, influencers, and others interested in or affected by crises a real-time, in-depth view of the realities on the ground and the policy debates surrounding them.

## Delivering insight and accountability

**The number of people affected by humanitarian crises has more than doubled in the last decade to 135 million.**

Climate change, protracted conflicts, population growth, volatile markets, and water scarcity 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 an age of viral videos and 140-character narratives, informed examination of serious issues in the public sphere is dangerously rare.

IRIN fills this gap.

We have been a leading source of credible, in-depth, field-based news about crises for two decades, and our independence from our historic home in the UN allows us to cast an even more critical eye over the ever-expanding aid industry.

By bringing more transparency and accountability to this complex and under-scrutinised sector, IRIN is a force for positive change in humanitarian response, which serves the needs of the aid community, including its donors, but more importantly those who are most affected by crises.



# IRIN Values

## IN THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH

### Independence

Our reporting will always remain in the public interest, and will not be influenced by donors, advertisers, governments, multilateral organisations, or any other special interests. We will report on aid priorities based on need, and will not be driven by any political, religious, security, or corporate advocacy agendas.

### Courage

We will ask tough questions, push the limits, and will not be afraid to challenge dominant narratives or powers.

### Trustworthiness

Our work will be meticulously researched, our analysis insightful, and our foresight of future trends reliable. When we make mistakes, we will be honest about them and will welcome our readers publicly holding us to account.

## IN OUR WORK

### Constructiveness

In the battle between substance and eyeballs, we will always choose the former – we will not publish sensational news for the sake of it. We will go beyond predictable narratives and received wisdoms with a view to increasing understanding and seeking out the underlying issues. We will look for deeper analysis that offers solutions, alternatives, and ways to make things better.

### Humanity

We will help people understand and relate to one another, linking global resources to local needs, helping communities communicate across language and geography, recognising the common humanity between people. We will avoid reportage that robs individuals and communities of their dignity.

## IN THE VOICES WE SEEK OUT

### Authenticity

We will pursue opinions from those closest to the story. We will respect local cultures, ideas, approaches, and capacities. We will seek out the views of those most affected by crises, because they have agency and can speak for themselves. We will bring an “insider” perspective that rings true to local villagers and technical experts alike.

### Diversity

We will consult a wide range of stakeholders. We will not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexuality, or any other factor, and will be sensitive to marginalised and under-represented groups. We will bring you surprising perspectives from new voices.





## 2018 at a glance

### JANUARY

We start the year by [recruiting](#) our first ever Executive Editor, Josephine Schmidt, who brings more than 17 years of international newsroom, op-ed, and editorial development experience at The New York Times.

IRIN [reveals](#) flaws in the European Union's \$200 million migration deal with Sudan, in which corrupt officials and traffickers benefit from the criminalisation of migrants. Our freelancer is invited to speak to the British Parliament and interviewed by the BBC World Service alongside representatives of the EU and Sudanese governments.

IRIN and the Overseas Development Institute [convene](#) a panel discussion on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos on [crises on the horizon in 2018](#). Speakers include Mark Lowcock, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and Kenneth Roth, Human Rights Watch Executive Director.

Director Heba Aly [speaks](#) about forgotten crises at an event called 'Suffering in Silence', alongside Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

### FEBRUARY

In an exclusive investigation, IRIN [reveals](#) that the man at the centre of a sexual exploitation scandal at aid agency Oxfam was dismissed by another NGO seven years earlier for similar misconduct. The story makes headlines around the world, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency suspends its funding for Oxfam's humanitarian programmes until it can investigate (it has since resumed).

Director Heba Aly describes the links between exclusion and humanitarian crises at an [event about pluralistic societies](#), on the sidelines of the UN Human Rights Council, alongside Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland.

### MARCH

IRIN uses the faded and brittle government identity documents some refugees still carry to [tell the story](#) of how the Rohingya people have been stripped of their rights and citizenship.

IRIN and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies [co-host](#) a frank and open discussion on what the #MeToo moment means for the humanitarian sector, with a more nuanced and constructive examination of the debate. It features an Oxfam representative speaking publicly in Geneva for the first time since the scandal.

IRIN [speaks on a panel](#) at the International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights in Geneva, on the power of imagery, especially in instances of human distress.



## APRIL

IRIN raised the alarm about the dozens of women, allegedly raped by Myanmar's military, who had fallen pregnant and were at risk of abandoning their babies en masse in the [first reporting](#) on the subject.

Our special [report](#) on the links between famine and conflict is longlisted for a One World Media Award in the Popular Features category.

IRIN participates in the [War Stories. Peace Stories.](#) symposium in New York, together with other high-profile journalists who have covered conflict all over the world, to discuss the need for more balanced reporting about not only conflict but also peace.

Belgium's Federal Public Service of Foreign Affairs comes on board as a new donor.

IRIN chairs a [high-level discussion](#) about gender-based violence at the UN pledging conference for the Democratic Republic of Congo.

## MAY

IRIN publishes a [series of stories](#) from Central African Republic exploring UN operations in one of the world's most neglected and least understood conflicts, the violence that hobbles humanitarian efforts, and rape victims left to fend for themselves long after revelations of their abuse and promises of compensation.

The World Economic Forum names IRIN Director Heba Aly as one of 100 Young Global Leaders under 40 and invites her to join its Global Future Council on the Humanitarian System.

IRIN and the University of East Anglia (UEA) [publish results](#) from a detailed survey on how readers view media coverage of humanitarian crises. It provides key insights into our added value and impact, opportunities for development, and the wider media landscape. Over 45% of respondents say our reporting is important or very important to their work.

Editor-at-Large Obi Anyadike co-hosts an episode of the Carnegie Corporation's [Peacebuilders](#) podcast about the militarisation of policing and counterterrorism operations in East and West Africa.

## JUNE

IRIN publishes the [first reporting](#) from inside Cameroon's anglophone separatist conflict, with a special report exploring the make-up and motivation of the Ambazonia Defense Forces, and how the brewing civil war is changing the lives of fighters, civilians, and refugees. The report is cited by RFI English, BBC Newsday, Al Jazeera TV, and the Popular Front podcast and goes viral in Cameroon's diaspora.

IRIN's [special report](#) on Congo-Brazzaville's hidden war uses satellite imagery to document the humanitarian toll of a little-known two-year-old conflict. Congolese lawyers use the story as evidence in their efforts to both lobby the UN for resolutions in what they termed a genocide and in their submission to the International Criminal Court.

The Open Society Foundation's Program on Independent Journalism provides IRIN support to ramp up our investigative reporting.

Senior Editor Ben Parker moderates a discussion hosted by the Norwegian Council of Refugees on the impact of counter-terrorism measures on aid in Gaza.



## 2018 at a glance

### JULY

IRIN publishes the longform feature [“Searching for Othman”](#) by Middle East Editor Annie Slemrod, who travelled to Iraq in 2018 to find one boy in a country of 37 million people. Through his story, she explores the past, present, and future of millions of displaced Iraqis.

IRIN [gains rare access](#) to civilians and militia in Rutshuru, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where two years of tit-for-tat attacks have had a dramatic impact on the local population, with villages burnt, more than 100 dead, and communities divided along ethnic lines.

As new EU policies and deals with African nations to deter hundreds of thousands of migrants start to swing into action, we publish our [“Destination Europe”](#) series, delivering unique takes from Niger and Libya and reporting on the experience of refugees and migrants, including what happens to them when they return home.

### AUGUST

We begin publishing a series of stories from Syria’s Idlib province, a region controlled by a patchwork of armed groups – on [aid diversion](#) to militants, the [tighter controls](#) over aid that followed, and the fact that donor restrictions could now be [impeding life-saving work](#).

We intensify our coverage of local responders, with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, in an effort to give voice to those on the front lines. One of our first stories [features Nigeria’s “Baba IDP”](#) (father of internally displaced persons). A widower who has outlived his own children, Baba ensures Boko Haram victims in rural areas get desperately needed healthcare.

### SEPTEMBER

We are the first to highlight the [story of the Tebu](#), one of Libya’s most marginalised minorities, who are at the heart of its smuggling trade.

“Welcome to Refugee Purgatory on the Hungary Border”, our film about young migrants’ experience in a no man’s land near the Hungarian border, takes the top [prize](#) in the Migration Media Awards’ video category.

In one of our features on aid localisation, we [investigate why](#) local grassroots groups, the backbone of the aid response to the Rohingya refugee crisis, feel overshadowed by international aid groups.





## OCTOBER

IRIN produces a [special report](#) with poignant photos from inside Venezuela, highlighting the humanitarian impact of the country's economic collapse, from the healthcare crisis to a lack of basic food, water, and electricity.

[The State of Humanitarian Journalism](#) report, published by a group of independent academics, highlights the lack of media coverage of humanitarian crises and acknowledges IRIN as one of few international news organisations consistently covering them.

IRIN chairs the first meeting of humanitarians and climate scientists in Geneva, to unpack the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's report and explore its implications for humanitarian policy.



## NOVEMBER

IRIN [reports](#) on a damning audit that found the UN refugee agency guilty of wasting millions of dollars of donor funds in Uganda. Donor countries push UNHCR's leadership for a response and the European Union calls for an investigation and accountability.

IRIN hosts our [first webinar](#), "In Conversation with IRIN: Countering Militancy in the Sahel", to discuss some of the findings from our five-nation reporting project on insurgent conflicts in Africa's Sahel region.

IRIN and Fondation Hirondelle bring together a group of prominent local and international journalists for a debate on the contributions the media can make to peacebuilding during Geneva Peace Week.

Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs joins our growing base of donors.

Accountant Martin Aked, media investor Turi Munthe, technologist Nanjira Sambuli and lawyer Sacha Meuter [join](#) IRIN's board of directors, bringing new skillsets to IRIN's growing governance body.



## DECEMBER

Our [powerful feature](#) on the adverse effects of programmes designed to help migrants in Burkina Faso is a winner in the 2018 Global Media Competition on Labour Migration.

In "[Nowhere to go](#)' on the front lines of climate change", IRIN speaks to people struggling to cope with staggering changes to their ways of life due to the impacts of extreme weather, shifting seasons, and volatile temperatures.



# Our strategy in action

The first three years following our exit from the UN involved laying the significant ground work required to become a fully autonomous organisation. We built a new legal entity and governance functions, raised the necessary funding for an independent newsroom and opened a new HQ in the heart of the international sector in Geneva. On the editorial front, we sharpened our focus on investigative reporting, improved our digital presence with a new website, and starting pushing out our content and voice on social media in earnest.

At the end of 2016, we developed a comprehensive five-year strategy, to run from 2017 to 2021. This strategy aims to further professionalise our journalism, grow our audience, and create the necessary operational and financial support structures to better achieve our mission of putting independent journalism at the service of the millions of people affected by humanitarian crises around the world.



“The foreign correspondent is dead or dying... I think IRIN has a very key role to play in that it is able to do stories which most mainstream media are not doing at all. You need journalists on the ground to be able to cover stories and provide some sort of consistency, and not just do flash in the pan reportages.”

- Edward Girardet, Editor  
Global Geneva Magazine

## A YEAR OF PROFESSIONALISATION

In 2018, with a full management team in place, progress against our five-year strategy accelerated, with a greater sense of professionalisation across all aspects of our work, and our culture shifting closer towards that of a nonprofit newsroom.

Key achievements against the strategy include:

**Implementing our new editorial strategy.** With our new Executive Editor in place at the start of the year, we made improvements to the quality and accessibility of our journalism, introducing new products and a more accessible tone.

**Putting in place new infrastructure and processes to better engage and grow our audience and measure our reach and impact.** We recruited an experienced web developer who supported our product development and improved the efficiency of our web operations. We also undertook our first major audience survey in years, helping us understand how we can better serve our readers. Finally, we improved our visibility and profile, holding more thought-provoking discussions at platforms such as the World Economic Forum that attract a broad range of decision-makers.

**Developing more strategic funding partnerships.** We stabilised our income, successfully attracting a more diverse range of donors and striking more multi-year partnerships; our income grew 16% year on year, at a time when other nonprofit newsrooms covering similar issues were struggling.

## REBRANDING FOR GROWTH

In 2018, we also embarked on an organisational rebrand, a key pillar of our five-year strategy, aimed at marking our break from the UN, positioning us as an independent media organisation, and opening ourselves up to the world. We prepared for a successful rebrand in 2019 by conducting a deep strategic reflection on our mission, audience, and theory of change; and by beginning the development of a new name and visual identity.

In the following pages, you will find much more detail on our developments, work, and achievements under the three pillars of our strategy – producing high-impact journalism, engaging the widest relevant audience, and managing with excellence.

- Soon after this photo was taken, mother Dinora Rivera met men who claimed to be able to smuggle her and her son across the border to the United States. After days wrestling with the decision, she took up the offer and left with a group of other “caravanners”. She hasn’t been heard from since.

Credit: Tomás Ayuso/IRIN









# Producing high-impact journalism

## DEFINING A NEW EDITORIAL APPROACH

2018 was a watershed year for us editorially. We started the year with a new Executive Editor at the helm, Josephine Schmidt, formerly with The New York Times – someone with a tenured background from a major news organisation who could introduce new ideas and help professionalise our newsroom.

Josephine's sharp eye and expertise in professional journalistic standards stood us in good stead over the course of the year. She has played an instrumental role in moving us towards a news DNA by putting in place a number of systems and practices to professionalise our journalism and improve our editorial processes. Working together with our editorial team, she has helped make our language more accessible, ensured we better package and frame our work, and provided more detailed guidance for our freelance reporters.

Perhaps most significantly, she has also started to imbue an 'audience first' culture into our newsroom and organisation, ensuring we think more carefully about how we select and craft stories to maximise engagement and to ensure that our journalism meets our mission of informing the response to and prevention of humanitarian crises. This year we made a conscious effort to ensure that all our coverage is timely – pegged to a news event or trend, or reflecting a sense of urgency – so readers understand why we're covering particular issues at certain times and why it's necessary for them to read on.

Finally, and underlining our commitment to amplifying the voices of people at the heart of humanitarian crises, she has made sure we feature their voices more prominently, for example, introducing new formats like 'First Person': stories of individuals' personal experience of crises.

The results of our first major audience survey also confirmed that people are looking for guidance in gaining a sense of perspective amid the plethora of humanitarian crises. So we were more pointed in helping readers understand how important trends are unfolding and in exploring hidden angles.

For example, in November we held our first webinar on the morphing nature of violent extremism in Nigeria and the Sahel, identifying the crucial lessons that emerged from our reporting on this topic, connecting the dots amongst the various reports and offering a big-picture view of what our reporting revealed.

Feedback from decision-makers in particular underlined the importance of newsletters in delivering curated and personalised signposts towards our most important or topical stories. Towards the end of the year, we revamped our newsletters from automated digests to manual curations, using a more visually compelling layout and tapping into the news of the day – changes that resulted in a significant increase in open rates.

We also started to attract more influential and diverse opinion writers. In April, the former US ambassador to Yemen, Stephen A Seche, delivered a [powerful argument](#) for scrapping the current framework for negotiating an end to the now lengthy conflict in Yemen and taking a fresh approach. And in November, one of the authors of the UN climate report, Maarten van Alst, wrote a piece on the urgency of seeing [climate change as a humanitarian issue](#), stating that "humanitarians need to be ambassadors for climate action by, above all, telling the stories of the impacts we address every day and sharing the solutions that work in the most difficult places".



# The year in review: our most powerful stories

Over the following pages, you'll find highlights of our most impactful reporting.

## IN-DEPTH, FIELD-BASED PERSPECTIVES ON HUMANITARIAN CRISES

*Our specialised editors and on-the-ground correspondents provide deep analysis and reportage with informed 'insider' takes.*

Among the critical and complex trends IRIN reporting led the way on this year: the impact of humanitarian crises on women and girls; changing migration policies as attitudes harden; the progress of the aid localisation agenda; and increasing acceptance of climate change as a humanitarian issue.

### THE IMPACT OF HUMANITARIAN CRISES ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

Women and girls remain disproportionately affected by crises, yet their needs are often overlooked by aid agencies and in media coverage. As more and more humanitarian agencies and funders began mainstreaming a gender lens across their work, and as two leading campaigners against rape during warfare won the Nobel Peace Prize, our coverage sought to highlight the particular needs of and risks facing women and girls in crises. We documented abuses against and failure to protect women and girls, so that those responsible can be held to account. And our stories amplified their voices – not only as victims, but also as agents of change in their efforts to reclaim their livelihoods.

*“Rape as a weapon of war – and sometimes as a tool of ethnic cleansing – is nothing new, yet it made a stark return to public consciousness last week when the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to two leading campaigners against rape during warfare: Dr Denis Mukwege, a Congolese gynaecologist who has treated many thousands of victims of sexual violence in his country, and Nadia Murad, an Iraqi Yazidi who was raped and tortured by militants of the so-called Islamic State (IS) and went on to become an acclaimed activist.”*

Our story on [Rohingya women who had been raped by the Myanmar military](#) focused on the aftermath; the desperate search to find those pregnant as a result, many of whom were hiding their pregnancies because of shame and stigma. It was the first news story published on this harrowing issue and prompted other media – from The Guardian to The Times – to subsequently publish stories on the topic.







^ Madha Khatun, a traditional Rohingya midwife, believes women and girls are hiding rapes and pregnancies from their families and communities. Credit: Kaamil Ahmed/IRIN



^ Mariam Sesay: "I knew it wasn't going to be good, but when I got back it was even worse." Credit: Susan Schulman

In a long-form piece published in July, we spoke to victims of sexual abuse by UN peacekeepers in Central African Republic. Our [reporting](#) revealed stark gaps in assistance to survivors, a flawed investigation that triggered an internal UN review, and new allegations by women who had not previously come forward out of fear they would be stigmatised. The story was cited by several other media and reporter Philip Kleinfield was interviewed by the BBC among others.

We also told overlooked but vital stories of resilience and support from women themselves, found in unexpected places such as the [hair salons of Mosul](#). In this inspiring story, journalist Peshia Magid explored how, in the absence of mental health services, a salon had transformed into unofficial group therapy – one of the few places where women could gather to process the collective trauma of three years of terror.

## NEW PERSPECTIVES ON MIGRATION AS EUROPEAN POLICIES HARDEN

As the EU set new policies and made deals with African nations to deter hundreds of thousands of migrants from seeking new lives on the continent, we explored what these hardening attitudes meant for those following dreams northwards and for those in the countries they were transiting through who had become dependent on the migratory flow. [‘Destination Europe’](#) examined their experiences, choices, and challenges in a series of reports from Niger and Libya and several other countries. This unique series examined the ‘other side’ of the

Mediterranean migrant story; from an African – rather than a European – standpoint and offered a 360-degree view of the impact of EU policies on migrants, as well as their families back home, as well as local communities and local governments.

Our team of journalists interviewed dozens of refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers as well as officials, coast guards, police, militiamen, and people smugglers. Tom Westcott gained rare access to detention centres inside Libya and Eric Reidy followed the trail to Niger's migration hub of Agadez, while Susan Schulman travelled to Sierra Leone to find out what happens when migrants end up back where they started.

We were also the first to report in-depth on the re-emergence of an old migration route from Turkey to Greece across the dangerous Evros river. Over the course of three articles, we examined how, despite the deadly river

crossing, it had become a more popular – and less policed – route into Greece than the Aegean.

In the first part of the Evros series, '[Greece's man in the migrant morgue](#)', journalist Sarah Souli talked to Pavlos Pavlidis, who has spent nearly two decades identifying the bodies of those who have died attempting one of the least known but deadliest routes into Europe.

Our powerful feature, '[How weavers in Burkina Faso are now on Europe's migration front line](#)', challenging entrenched notions about migration policy and development assistance, was one of four winners of the 2018 Global Media Competition on Labour Migration. The story showed how business-generating incentives, including millions of euros from the European Union, can increase prosperity in countries like Burkina Faso but also encourage more people to migrate.

✓ The morgue can keep up to two dozen bodies at a time. Here, Pavlos stands in front of the last corpse to arrive in 2017. Credit: Nikolaos Symeonidis/IRIN

✓ Workshop at Association Zoodo pour la Promotion de la Femme. Credit: Saskia Houttuin/Sarah Haaij/IRIN







^ Therese Kafando, director of CEFISE and widow of the late founder, explains that all children are welcome at her school. Credit: Stefanie Glinski/IRIN

v Before turning to humanitarian work, rights activist Samira Gutoc lost her home during the siege. She continues to advocate for Marawi's displaced: "We need to highlight that there are groups working on the ground." Credit: Wes Bruer/IRIN





## FROM THE GROUND UP

The aid sector has made broad commitments to ‘localise’ aid by shifting more power and funding to local humanitarians on the ground where crises hit. But change has been slow. In 2018, we launched a reporting project to more intentionally seek out the stories of local aid workers on the front lines of humanitarian crises, hold the sector accountable to its ‘localisation’ promises, and inform the debate on this key aid reform issue. The landmark series gave local organisations a voice – in many cases for the first time – brought to the fore deep rooted frustrations in the relationship between local and international aid organisations, and put new issues on the agenda, such as the gender lens of localisation.

The case of Marawi – where [locals stepped in](#) when fierce clashes and martial law prevented international aid groups already working on the island of Mindanao in the southern Philippines from reaching the worst-hit communities – underlines the challenges new and local actors face in finding sustainable and secure funding to continue and build up their operations.

In Burkina Faso, where hundreds of schools have been forced to close in the north as jihadist attacks spread, Stefanie Glinksi reported on a [local drive to educate children fleeing extremist violence](#).

And in the Caribbean, where soaring numbers of Venezuelan refugees have taken small island governments by surprise, Bram Ebus [spoke to](#) local civil society and church groups filling in for authorities who did not have the resources, infrastructure, or policies in place to receive asylum seekers.

## THE HUMAN FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

In October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published a landmark report warning that the impact of global warming would be far greater than expected. We are one of the few newsrooms to have examined the case for viewing climate change as a serious humanitarian threat in its own right. For this [hard-hitting collection of reporting](#), we looked in depth at the impact climate change was already having on vulnerable populations.

For example, our story on [Senegalese herders](#) showed lives already being upended, with families previously making a comfortable living now bordering on poverty as they lose their herds of livestock to drought.

But we also looked more hopefully at communities finding smart ways of adapting, such as in Afghanistan, where [new local water systems](#) have allowed some farmers to grow food and buck the trend of leaving their homes in search of help, as thousands have had to.



## CASTING 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.*

In 2018, we helped to set the media agenda in our coverage of misconduct and corruption in the emergency aid industry, with our stories sparking donor investigations and forcing the UN and other agencies to re-examine their policies.

### SEXUAL ABUSE AND #AIDTOO

In one of our most read stories of the year, we [revealed](#) that the man at the heart of a sexual exploitation scandal at aid agency Oxfam had been dismissed by another British NGO seven years earlier for similar misconduct. The article, based on an exclusive interview with the aid worker who reported his behaviour and instigated his dismissal, identified a critical gap in the sector – NGOs hiring new staff had no way of tracking their past – and prompted policy discussions about potential solutions. The article was cited in a number of international publications including the BBC, France24, and The Financial Times.

Our reporting on the humanitarian sector's #MeToo moment brought a nuanced and informed perspective to a highly sensational topic, steering the debate towards a more thoughtful understanding of the underlying challenges and ways forward.

For instance, Senior Editor Ben Parker [mapped](#) out and evaluated various accountability initiatives, from vetting aid agencies and workers, to introducing mandatory professional standards, to reviving the idea of an ombudsman for humanitarian aid.

### THE DAMAGE WROUGHT BY AID CORRUPTION

Corruption in the management and delivery of humanitarian aid has devastating consequences. Our reporting on fraud in the sector in 2018 was often a catalyst for further media attention, but more importantly forced internal investigation and reforms and other actions by donors.

In May, we published an [exclusive story](#) on alleged chronic corruption in the resettlement process for refugees in Sudan, a number of whom we interviewed in the capital Khartoum over a 10-month period. More than a dozen people told IRIN of experiences in which individuals claiming to be affiliated with UNHCR solicited money in exchange for advancing refugees a few rungs up the long ladder to resettlement in the West, in a kind of “pay-to-play” scheme.



^ Teenagers sit in a dormitory in the unaccompanied minors section of Shagarab refugee camp, eastern Sudan, where many refugees who've fled Eritrea first go to get registered. Credit: Sally Hayden/IRIN

Shortly after our story was published, the UN's refugee agency suspended resettlement operations in Sudan, further to investigating its own operations in the country. Our journalist was then invited to the EU to talk about her reporting in an informal meeting followed by a public hearing.

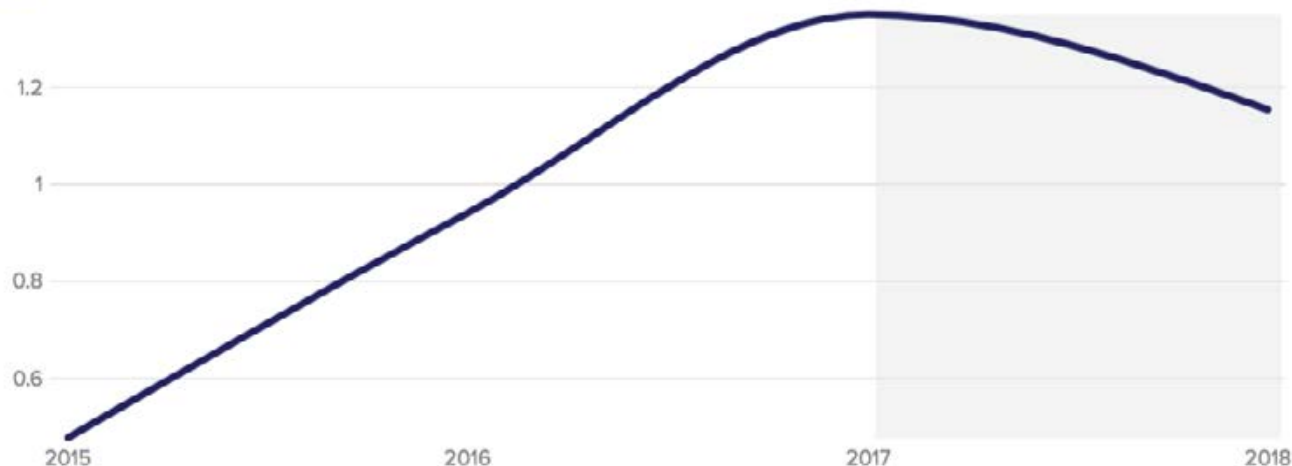
In November, we exposed tens of millions of dollars of fraud and corruption in UNHCR

services for more than one million refugees in Uganda. Our story uncovered a damning audit by the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services, which found that UNHCR overpaid for goods and services, awarded major contracts improperly, and was "pervasively non-compliant" with regulations. We were the first to provide a detailed account and analysis of this corruption and other media swiftly followed including AP, Reuters, and the UK's Daily Mail.

## Uganda refugee recount

Uganda has 300,000 fewer refugees than previously reported, after fraud allegations triggered an \$11 million re-registration drive

■ Refugees in Uganda (millions)



Source: UNHCR





## ‘DIGITAL DO NO HARM’: A WARNING ON POTENTIAL RISKS

As the aid sector races towards artificial intelligence, biometrics, and big data, our reporting on the use of new technology in disaster response highlighted both the promise and the risks. Our stories on false dawns and unintended consequences put the dangers of several flashy new tools onto the radar and forced a rethink among several aid agencies.

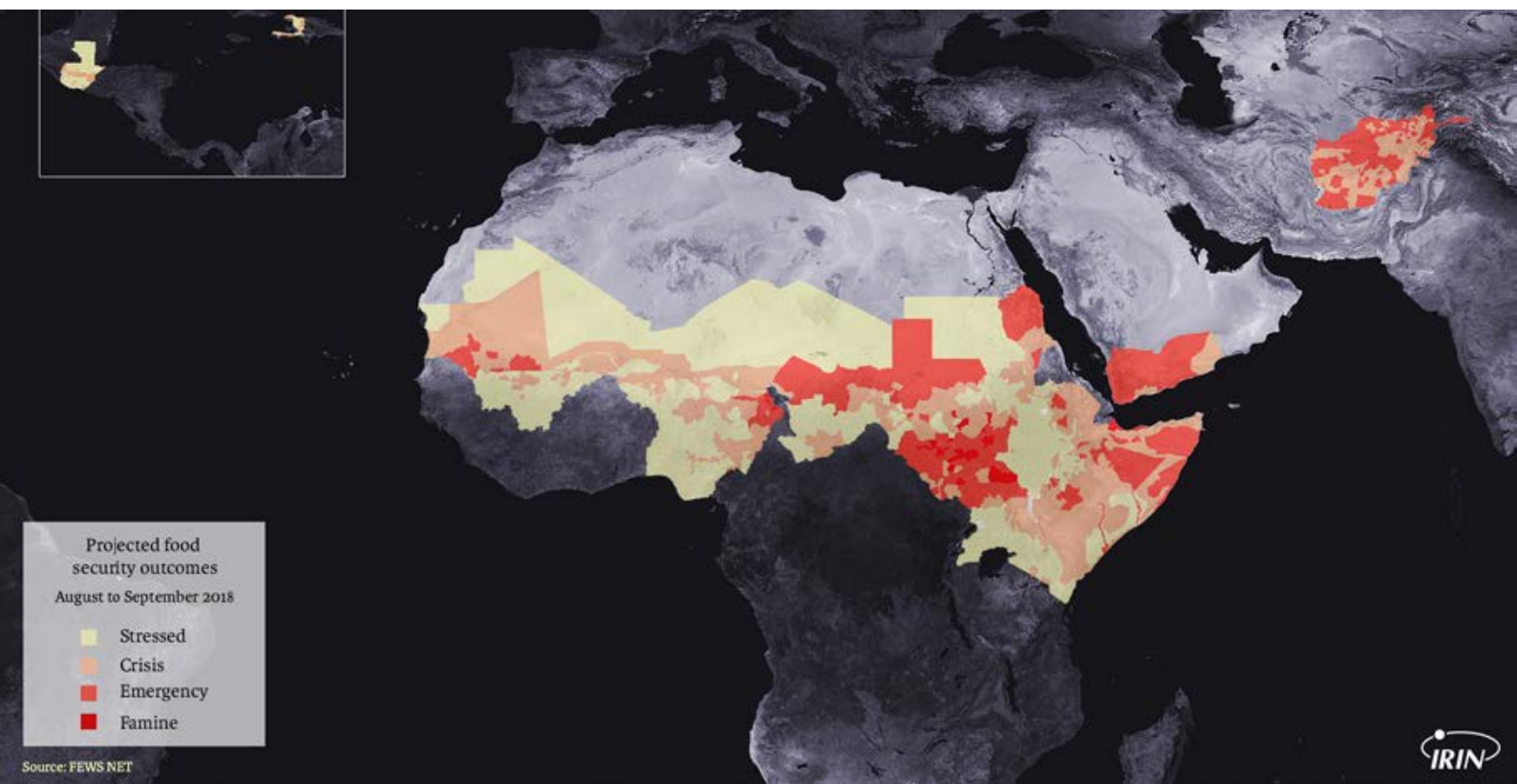
In an exclusive story, we revealed that the World Food Programme lacked proper safeguards when handling the sensitive data of 82 million beneficiaries, exposing vulnerable people in the world’s hotspots to potential risk. We also explored how a litany of data protection failings across the UN agency’s data management systems were indicative of wider challenges in data protection. One data specialist told us: “I’m sure that other entities both in and out of the UN who are delivering digital forms of aid, including identity management, would fail a similar audit.”

In our article [Famine and the Machine](#), we took a critical look at the use of big data to prevent famines, as the World Bank launched – with much fanfare – a new initiative to use AI-driven analytics to trigger payouts to famine-prone countries.

Our story identified flaws in the much-vaunted mechanism, including the risk that algorithms adopt human biases in the historical data and the reality that political will – not data-driven evidence – is ultimately at the heart of any declaration of famine.

^ A UNHCR app allows field workers in Lebanon to check refugee entitlements via barcode Credit: Ben Parker/IRIN

^ Image from our article [Famine and the Machine](#)



## SHINING 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 crisis*

Our most read article of 2018 was our annual [10 Crises to Watch](#) briefing, underlining our role in helping readers navigate the most critical crises brewing or worsening. Over the course of the year, we drew attention to simmering conflicts that didn't make the headlines elsewhere, despite high levels of need; and flagged emerging crises early.

### COVERING OVERLOOKED CONFLICTS

In May and June, our reporter Emmanuel Freudenthal became the first journalist to embed with a nascent secessionist movement in anglophone-speaking Cameroon, trekking for a week with fighters as they moved from camp to camp. He explored [the make-up and motivation of the Ambazonia Defense Forces](#), and how the civil war brewing in Cameroon is changing the lives of fighters, civilians, and refugees. The video interviews we featured with the fighters were widely viewed and the stories, circulated by Cameroon's very active diaspora, went viral on Twitter.

Meanwhile, journalist Philip Kleinfield spent five weeks reporting from inside the peacekeeping mission in Central African Republic. His series looks at UN operations in one of the world's most neglected and least understood conflicts, the violence that hobbles humanitarian efforts, and rape survivors left to fend for themselves long after initial revelations of their abuse by peacekeepers and



**“Most of them were our friends before.”**  
Zanaba Hamat, a 47-year-old Muslim whose elderly father was shot dead by fighters from a predominantly Christian militia.  
**“Suddenly they changed and wanted to kill us.”**









^ Paul Muhindo, 36, leader of the local displaced community for the villages of Katolo and Ngorobo, DRC. Credit: Alex McBride/IRIN



^ From farmers to fighters: With a battle planned for the next day, separatist fighters sort through their equipment. Credit: Emmanuel Freudenthal

unmet promises of compensation. In a frank [Reporter's View](#) interview after his trip, Kleinfeld explained his drive to report on the ground from the heart of overlooked conflicts – from places where humanitarian needs are sky-high but media reporting is almost non-existent.

And while attention in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo was more centred on the better-known conflict in Kasai and the run-up to long-delayed presidential elections, IRIN reporters found their way into [Rutshuru Territory](#) in North Kivu, and into neighbouring [Ituri province](#), where waves of tit-for-tat attacks had left scores of villages burnt, hundreds dead, and hundreds of thousands displaced.

With many eyes on Myanmar's Rakhine State, the home of violence that led hundreds of thousands of Rohingya people to flee, reporter Verena Hölzl [investigated the long-simmering conflicts](#) that continue to fly under the radar elsewhere in Myanmar. Clashes between

Myanmar's military and ethnic armed groups in the country's north have escalated, largely out of the public spotlight and in northern Kachin and Shan states some 100,000 people have been uprooted since 2011, when a government ceasefire with the Kachin Independence Army collapsed.

## VENEZUELA'S RAPIDLY ESCALATING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

By 2018, Venezuela's descent from oil-rich powerhouse to economic basket case had been well chronicled, but its disintegrating healthcare had not. Susan Schulman was one of few foreign journalists to gain access to much of the country as the crisis deepened. Her story, ['Worse off than a warzone': Inside Venezuela's healthcare crisis](#), exposed a thriving black market for everything from oncology medicines to insulin, even baby formula. Her photo feature, ['Life and death in Venezuela's depleted hospitals'](#), profiled the patients whose lives hung in the balance.

# How our journalism creates real impact

*'I found IRIN's in-depth coverage of the Rohingya crisis very informative and used it as a reference for formulating our organisation's response plan'*

*- Survey Respondent*

Our reporting informs the prevention and response to humanitarian crises by contributing to better decision-making, accountability and transparency, and greater awareness. We actively monitor the impact of our journalism. We track our reach, including republication by other media; survey our readers about how they use our work; monitor feedback on social media and via email; and actively investigate cases where our stories have resulted in tangible impact, for example, policy change.

In many cases, simply bringing awareness to an overlooked issue results in concrete change. For example, following the publication of our July story on the [plight of Islamic State orphans left in limbo in Libya](#) 12 Egyptian children were finally reunited with their families.

More than two thirds of our audience is involved in humanitarian response in some capacity, working in a broad range of roles for NGOs, governments, the UN, academic institutions, or as lawyers or individual activists. In a survey we carried out in early 2018, it was clear that our reporting and analysis had a tangible impact.

More than 45% of our readers said IRIN News is important or very important to their work, and 73% agreed that IRIN content has stimulated further research or advocacy. A further 35% said IRIN informed organisational and operational priorities, including the deployment of staff and resources, 32% said we influenced a decision to undertake a needs assessment and 29% said IRIN led their organisation to push for internal or external policy change.

At the end of 2018, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) commissioned a detailed evaluation of how six different organisations they fund, including IRIN, contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian system. The report found that 'IRIN, through its focus on humanitarian issues and its, in comparison to most media outlets, well-developed understanding of crises and local contexts, provides a type of journalism not provided by mainstream media. This in turn contributes to transparency and accountability within the humanitarian system'.

Here are a few examples of the impact of some of our stories from 2018:





## BEARING WITNESS TO A FORGOTTEN CONFLICT IN CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE

One of our most impactful stories in 2018 was our [coverage](#) of the brutal yet overlooked conflict in Congo-Brazzaville. Unlike better-known conflicts in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, unrest here after disputed elections in 2016 occurred with little international attention or outside scrutiny.

At the end of 2017, IRIN correspondent Philip Kleinfeld gained rare access to the Pool region, where he documented the toll of two years of conflict. In the government's crackdown on former militias, villages were bombed from the air while others were pillaged by ground troops. Entire areas were left empty and, despite huge suffering, the government refused to recognise the existence of the crisis for more than a year.

Our two-part series took an exclusive look at the lives upended in this brutal hidden war. We also obtained satellite images that provided more evidence of the scale of the government's scorched-earth campaign.

At the end of the year, we heard from Congolese lawyers working to submit a claim to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. They said our story, in particular the satellite imagery that captured the bombing and razing of the villages Soumouna, Mayama and Kindamba Ngouedi – where their own families lived – played an instrumental role in

their efforts to both lobby the UN for resolutions and make their submission to the ICC. They said the story contributed to opening up channels for peace, because the government realised the international community was now paying attention to what they termed a genocide.

## HIGHLIGHTING THE YAZIDI HEALTHCARE CRISIS

In March, we discovered a serious healthcare crisis in Sinjar, northern Iraq. The region had previously made headlines for the the 2014 massacre, enslavement, and displacement of its Yazidi people by IS militants. Many Yazidis had since returned to the shattered town, but were struggling with a lack of basic services, especially medical care – 25,000 were dependent on a single, bullet-ridden hospital with one doctor and no ambulance.

Not only was there scant aid from both the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Regional Government (which claimed the area as part of its territory until Iraqi forces took control last October), but the people we talked to accused UN agencies and major international NGOs of largely overlooking the town and the scale of its needs. As one frustrated hospital volunteer, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: "While the foreign NGO employees are sitting comfortably in the Green Zone in Baghdad or luxury hotels in Erbil, our people are dying here in Sinjar."



^ A derelict wing of Sinjar General Hospital that NGO Road to Peace has turned into a makeshift paediatric clinic  
Credit: Tom Westcott/IRIN

Within a few months of the publication of our report, the situation had improved considerably. Our story prompted action from the International Organization for Migration, Médecins Sans Frontières, the International Medical Corps, and British charity Swinfen Telemedicine. By July, the hospital finally had a military ambulance and plans were afoot to relocate the shattered premises to a better location in Sinjar town. The IMC planned to set up an operating room and possibly a maternity unit. By December, the hospital had moved premises and acquired several ambulances.

### **‘POINTING OUT’ THE MISMANAGEMENT OF DONOR FUNDS IN UGANDA BY UNHCR**

In November, we revealed how the UN refugee agency had wasted tens of millions of dollars of donor funds in Uganda, overpaying for goods and services, awarding major contracts improperly, and failing to avoid fraud and corruption in one of the world’s largest refugee aid operations.

UNHCR had already announced in February that its Inspector General’s Office, which can refer staff for disciplinary or other measures, had opened an investigation into “fuel embezzlement, one allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse, irregular tendering of

water trucking, and fraud in procurement and food distribution.” The internal watchdog then reported in July that UNHCR was assisting Ugandan investigations into “corruption by government officials relating to, among others, irregularities in land allocation to refugees, bridge construction, theft of food and non-food items and fuel mismanagement.”

But until then, the narrative put the blame for any alleged corruption on the Government of Uganda. In November, the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services quietly published a report on its website of its audit into the case, providing a wealth of new detail on the UNHCR’s role in the mismanagement – and likely fraud – affecting refugee registration and services in 2017. The information was hiding in plain sight, but only we knew where to look for it.

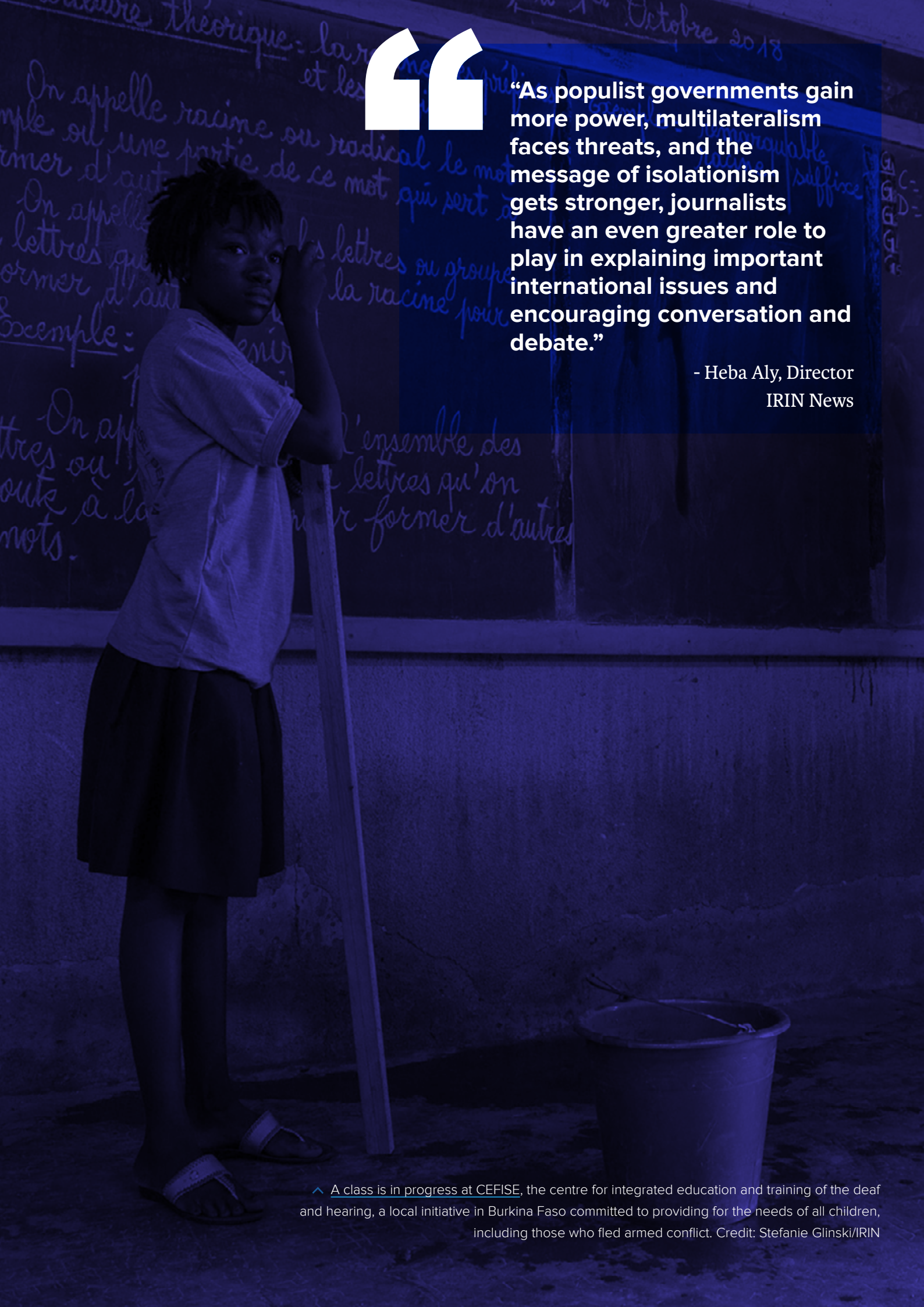
Following our story, we received phone calls from donor countries, bewildered at how such a scandal could have escaped their knowledge. Ministers of donor countries sent frantic communications to UNHCR leadership. Two donors stopped funding until UNHCR did more to address the issues identified, and the European Union called for an investigation and accountability. The Associated Press, Reuters, and the UK’s Daily Mail all covered the story.





**“As populist governments gain more power, multilateralism faces threats, and the message of isolationism gets stronger, journalists have an even greater role to play in explaining important international issues and encouraging conversation and debate.”**

- Heba Aly, Director  
IRIN News



^ A class is in progress at CEFISE, the centre for integrated education and training of the deaf and hearing, a local initiative in Burkina Faso committed to providing for the needs of all children, including those who fled armed conflict. Credit: Stefanie Glinski/IRIN

# Laying the groundwork for audience growth

In 2018, an average 170,000 people visited our website every month, a slight decrease from 2017. When taken in the context of a 38% reduction in the number of stories published, as part of a strategy to focus on quality over quantity, this in fact represents a 37% increase in page views per article.

Growth in the number of followers on social media slowed (10.3% growth year on year compared to 13% growth in 2017), but remained in line with the industry average. By the end of the year, nearly 88,000 Twitter followers and 46,000 Facebook followers were more actively engaged in terms of impressions, engagements, and link clicks.

We lost nearly 9,000 newsletter subscribers due to clean-ups and unsubscribes prompted by new EU data privacy regulations (GDPR), but attracted 10,700 new subscribers, resulting in a net increase of 3.66%. Open rates increased significantly in Q4 after we launched our manually curated daily and weekly newsletters, replacing the automated digests.

## INSIGHTS FROM OUR USER SURVEY AND OTHER RESEARCH

In January, we joined forces with the [Humanitarian Journalism](#) research project to launch a major reader survey, designed to benchmark progress over time against a number of criteria. It had multiple aims. Firstly, we sought to understand the needs, preferences, and consumption habits of our readers, in order to serve them better. Second, we sought feedback on the quality and relevance of our journalism. And, finally, we wanted to gather views on wider media coverage of humanitarian issues.

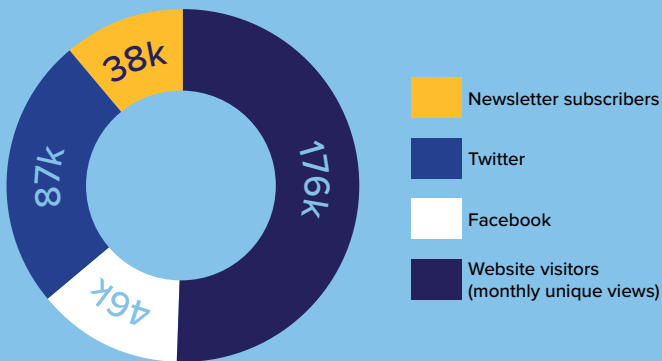
We had 1,626 respondents, of whom 86% were existing readers. The survey confirmed the influential nature of our audience, with many respondents indicating that our news coverage plays an important role in shaping responses to crises.

***'I thought your coverage on Libya was outstanding. It influenced how I presented donor materials'***

More than 45% of readers said IRIN is important or very important to their work; this rises to 53% for respondents working at an executive level. 83% of senior executives said IRIN content has stimulated further research and/or advocacy.

More than 70% of respondents said the mainstream news media does not offer enough coverage of humanitarian issues, while 72% thought IRIN reports on issues that other news agencies do not. A common complaint was that mainstream news coverage was “sensationalist” and “lacked in-depth analysis”.

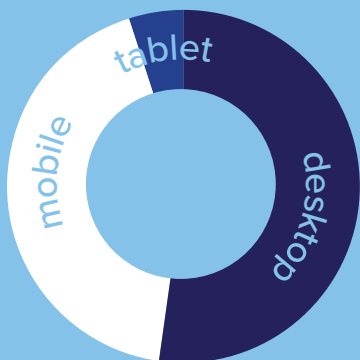
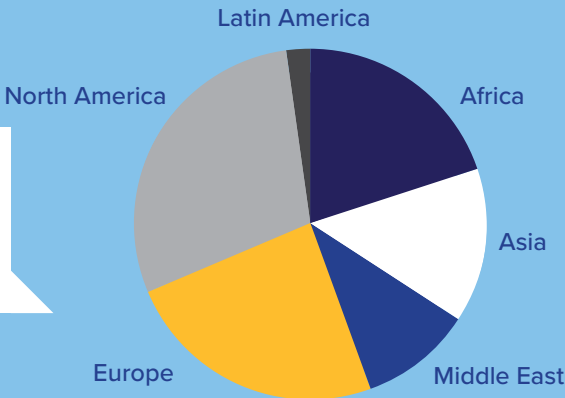




**Audience**

IRIN has a diverse global readership, drawn predominantly from the international aid sector.

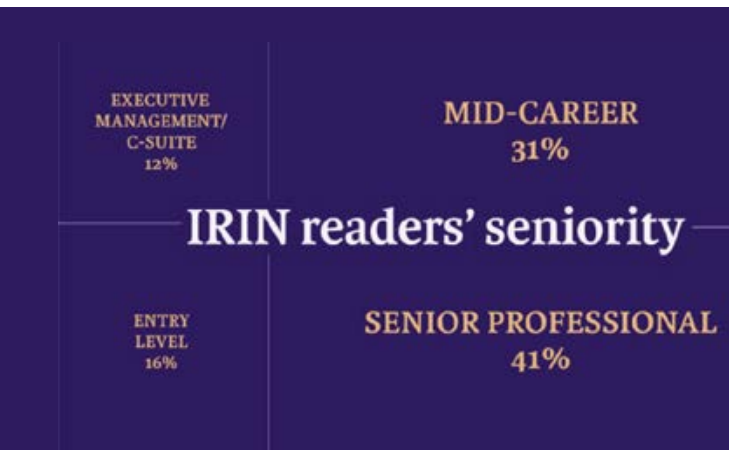
More than 40% of IRIN's audience originates from Africa, Asia & the Middle East



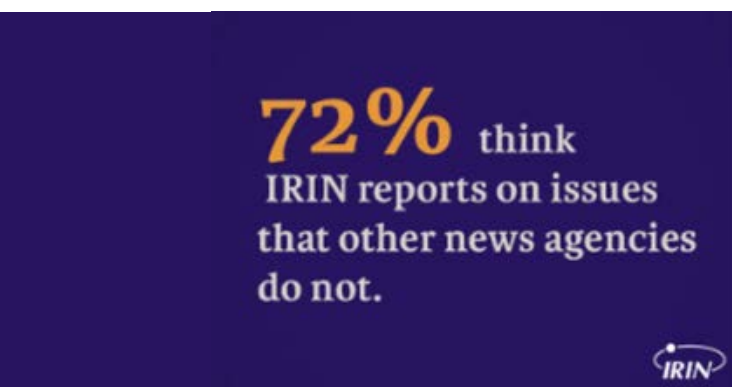
**Desktop vs Mobile**

Nearly 50% of IRIN's audience is reading, watching, listening to IRIN's content on mobile (43%) and tablet devices (4.74%)

An increasing number of IRIN's readers are engaging with content through mobile and tablet devices



*“I appreciate the long form articles produced by IRIN as they provide much needed facts and accompanying analyses on relevant humanitarian issues.”*



*“IRIN covers stories from ‘forgotten’ places, and offers a critical voice to those most impacted by conflict and war.”*

As one respondent put it, “there’s just very little scrutiny of the sector”. By contrast, nearly 60% of respondents rated IRIN’s expert analysis as above average and over 50% rated our investigative reporting as above average.

The survey has been an important tool in shaping our direction, especially in the lead-up to a rebrand. We will be repeating the survey over the coming years to measure our progress against the performance criteria key to our mission such as impact, the quality of our journalism, and engaging new audiences.

### INSIGHTS FROM THE HUMANITARIAN JOURNALISM RESEARCH PROJECT

In October 2018, a consortium of academics published a report on the ‘[state of humanitarian journalism](#)’. A culmination of four years of research, it made the case that now, more than ever, there was both a hunger and a need for much more impartial reporting on humanitarian crises. Its message underlines the urgency of our quest to ensure our work reaches more people.

The study involved research among journalists, readers, and humanitarian workers around the world and referenced a large-scale, multi-year survey of 8,000 people in the UK, France, Germany, and the US (the Aid Attitudes Tracker by [www.dev.commslab.org](http://www.dev.commslab.org)). It found that only a handful of international news outlets regularly report on humanitarian affairs, despite a desire among audiences. Some 59% of their survey respondents said they were more interested in news about conflicts and crises than any other type of international news.

IRIN’s reporting on the 2015 earthquake in Nepal forms the centrepiece of a chapter on the differences between the way international news agencies and dedicated humanitarian news outlets cover natural disasters. Two key findings were that two thirds of all IRIN articles cited at least one affected citizen and IRIN coverage addressed a wider range of issues than news agency reporting, including aid policy, disaster risk reduction, and migration/internal displacement.



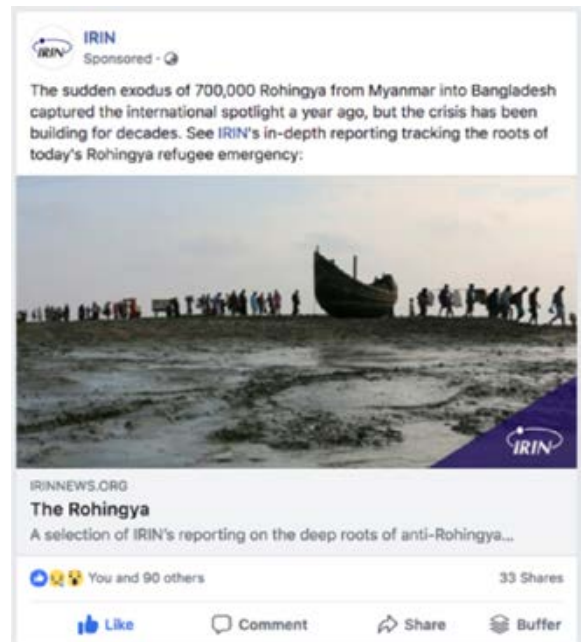
# Developing our audience and influence

In 2018, we adopted a more data-informed and iterative approach to attracting new audiences and better engaging our readers. We also recruited a seasoned web developer to help us with more experimentation in product development, improve usability, and support us in our first forays into using behavioural tracking tools like Hotjar.

We experimented with new formats and approaches on social media, more proactively targeting different stories to different audiences, with some encouraging results, such as higher click-through rates. And we were more deliberate in our events strategy, convening engaging events linked to our editorial coverage, such as #MeToo in the humanitarian sector. We worked on strengthening existing partnerships with the likes of the World Economic Forum and embarked on new ones, such as that with the Fragile States Index.

## PUSHING SOCIAL: MORE EXPERIMENTATION

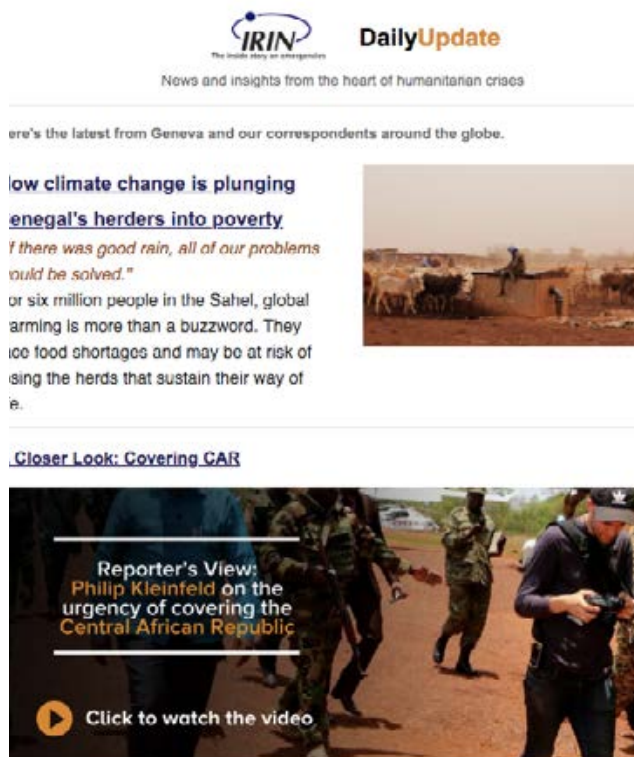
According to our survey, social media was the third most popular means of accessing news and analysis in general (after newsletters and direct access to websites) and was,



unsurprisingly, more popular with younger readers. In 2018 we spent more time and care crafting our social media communications and targeting them more effectively to boost referrals.

For example, we experimented with promoting specific stories to readers we already know are interested in certain topics, with more rigorous measurement and analysis of the results.





Using a Facebook pixel to track pages that people are viewing, we used paid promotion to ensure 'very relevant' content appeared on users' feeds, based on their previous reading history on our website. The results were encouraging, with lower cost per click and higher click through rates.

While our focus was on our most popular social media channels – Twitter and Facebook – we also made our content more friendly to Instagram – a platform experiencing strong growth among certain news consumers – by posting more photos with quotes, for example.

## NEWSLETTER DEVELOPMENT

Newsletters are an important vehicle for building more regular and targeted engagement with audiences and have been experiencing a renaissance across the media landscape. This was backed up by our survey: 65% of respondents valued them above all other channels including accessing our content on the website directly (51%). They were clearly more popular with older and more senior readers too; with over 70% of senior professional or executive management level preferring email.

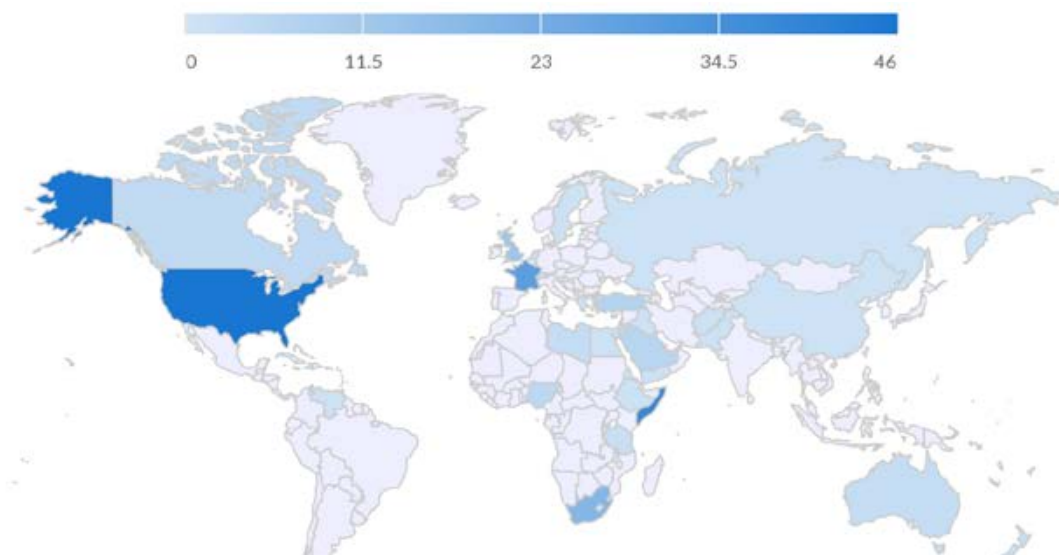
In Q4 2018, we relaunched our daily and weekly newsletters with a better layout and curated content written by editors to replace the automated ones that just featured headlines. New features included a "Closer Look", featuring archival multimedia/visual stories and "In the news" – a short news item for the day.

Since the relaunch, we have seen an increase in open rates, and higher overall web referrals. Next steps in expanding our newsletter portfolio will be thematic newsletters such as 'forgotten crises' or the 'view from Geneva'.

## MEDIA CITATION

How other media react to, cite, and republish our work is an important element of our audience engagement and outreach, particularly in reaching a wider public.

Countries where our content was cited are shown in the map below. It underlines how our



Source: countries of media mentioning IRIN. Lexis Nexis, August-November 2018



## Venezuela's doctors and patients share tales of despair and dismay

'We feel very helpless because there is nothing'

IRIN News

Dec 6 · 12 min read



## Yemen connects

Untangling "lifesaving communications" in the largest hunger crisis gripping the world

Suzanne Fenton in World Food Programme Insight

Dec 4 · 4 min read



stories are popular across diverse geographies, with the US closely followed by Somalia (38), France (29) and South Africa (19).

And while we have syndication agreements with a number of well-known international news outlets – HuffPost, The Guardian, All Africa, The Los Angeles Times – diaspora and regional news outlets publish our stories most frequently, ensuring we are reaching audiences much closer to the crises we are covering. For example, Hiraan Online, an English-language website for news about Somalia, republished 37 of our stories in 2018.

In our survey, journalists made up 15% of overall respondents, and their views were an important indication of how other media organisations use and refer to our work. More than 60% stated that IRIN has frequently or very frequently covered stories their media organisation has not pursued, and more than 20% said our content frequently or very frequently played a part in their decision to pursue a story.

In at least 30 instances over the course of the year, our reporting prompted coverage by larger media organisations such as The Financial Times, Al Jazeera, The New York Times, The Washington Post, the BBC, The Guardian, The Times and Sky News. They published follow-up stories or cited our coverage on a wide range of subjects including the pregnancies of Rohingya rape survivors, the EU's flawed migration deal with Sudan, and the fact that an Oxfam sexual exploiter at the centre of an ongoing scandal

had been caught seven years earlier in Liberia.

Over the course of the year, our reports were also cited and/or linked to by the House of Commons' International Development Committee, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, the Columbia Journalism Review, The New York Times, Bloomberg, AFP, El Pais, Solutions Journalism, UNHCR, IOM, and Human Rights Watch, among many others.

We've also started to promote our content on popular sites that curate and publish opinion pieces and long-form content. For example, since we started republishing our content more regularly on Medium, the curators have featured a number of our stories for the landing pages of World, Politics, and Health.

## THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS

Events about our work are vital in complementing our journalism to foster debate and raise our profile. We hosted, co-hosted, and took part in a number of bold and well-received events that highlighted our growing reputation for thought-leadership and provided an important boost to our profile ahead of our planned rebrand.

We were invited to showcase our expertise at the World Economic Forum's elite annual meeting in Davos for the first time. In partnership with the Overseas Development







Institute, we convened at Davos ‘[The Global Humanitarian Outlook](#)’ – a discussion on crises on the horizon in 2018 between UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock, professor and former Mauritanian foreign minister Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou, Human Rights Watch Executive Director Kenneth Roth, and ODI’s Managing Director Sara Pantuliano.

We also inked an important new partnership with Fund for Peace on their Fragile States Index – an annual ranking of the pressures experienced by 178 nations that combines social science with quantitative data sifted from millions of publicly available documents. We are now working with them to deliver a new annual co-production called “Tipping Points”, examining drivers of fragility in some of the world’s most vulnerable contexts.

In March, with the Graduate Institute in Geneva, we co-hosted an [important discussion](#) on the humanitarian #MeToo moment, asking “where do we go from here?”. We brought together whistle-blower, investigator, NGO and donor perspectives. Amidst the heated media coverage, we were deliberate in guiding the discussion towards a more nuanced and constructive examination of the issue.

We were also more deliberate in following up critical topical coverage with opportunities for public debate and discussion. For example, alongside our reporting on the risks and

opportunities of technology in humanitarian response, we spoke about the topic at the Humanitarian Congress in Berlin – an annual meeting of experts involved in humanitarian action from around the globe. The [discussion](#) offered rare candour on “doing no digital harm”, balancing the benefits of technology against the potential problems. Whilst innovation is enabling refugees to pay for groceries with the blink of an eye in Jordan, the explosion in the storing of sensitive data on vulnerable populations leads to a substantial risk of this data being hacked, sold, or shared with abusive governments.

In November, we hosted our first webinar, ‘In Conversation with IRIN: Countering Militancy in the Sahel’, where we discussed some of the findings from our five-nation reporting project. We explored what works and doesn’t work to counter violent extremism, talking with analysts and journalists who work in the region. The discussion was moderated by Obi Anyadike, IRIN’s editor-at-large, who is a regular commentator on Boko Haram for media outlets around the world.

In November, we organised a debate on the contributions media can make to peacebuilding. We brought together local and international journalists including Michel Beuret, Head of Editorial at Fondation Hirondelle and former reporter for Swiss Radio and Television. The event was moderated by Stéphane Bussard, Geneva Correspondent for Le Temps.



Webinar | Thursday, 8 November 13:00-13:40 CET

## RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

2018 also saw a growing public profile for individuals within our organisation. Director Heba Aly was named one of 100 Young Global Leaders under 40 by the World Economic Forum, member of the WEF Global Future Council on the Humanitarian System, and one of 100 Most Influential Africans of 2018 by New African Magazine. We have a strong reputation for effective event moderation and were invited to moderate a string of high-level discussions. We also contributed an op-ed for Niemans Lab.

Several members of our editorial team, including Executive Editor Josephine Schmidt and Senior Editor Ben Parker, moderated or spoke at high-profile events ranging from a Humanitarian News Research Network discussion on humanitarian journalism to the Computers, Privacy and Data Protection conference.

We won a number of significant awards during the course of the year:

### GLOBAL MEDIA COMPETITION ON LABOUR MIGRATION

“How weavers in Burkina Faso are now on Europe’s migration front line”, by Sarah Haaij and Saskia Houttuin, won one of four awards from the International Labour Organization’s media contest.

### PICTURES OF THE YEAR INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION, DONALD W. REYNOLDS JOURNALISM INSTITUTE

The same film won an Award of Excellence in the Category for Multimedia News & Issue Reporting Story.

### MIGRATION MEDIA AWARDS

Our film “Welcome to Refugee Purgatory on the Hungary Border”, by Jaime Alekos, won first place in the English video category.

### ONE WORLD MEDIA AWARDS

“We are not the world: Inside the ‘perfect storm’ of famine” was longlisted for a Popular Features Awards.

### KURT SCHORK MEMORIAL AWARDS

Regular contributors Sally Hayden and Tom Westcott were finalists in the 2018 Freelance category at the Kurt Schork Memorial Awards, Sally for her reporting on Sudan and Tom for work from Iraq.



## **SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES**

World Economic Forum, Davos

Geneva International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights, Geneva

Geneva Peace Week

Forum Espace Humanitaire 2018, Paris

Launch of CARE International's annual report forgotten crises, Geneva

UN Human Rights Council , Geneva

Humanitarian News Research Network, London

MSF Humanitarian Congress Berlin

Brussels Privacy Hub, Conference on Data Protection in Humanitarian Action

Security Risk Management, The European Interagency Security Forum, London

4th French National Humanitarian Conference, Paris

War stories, Peace stories symposium, New York

Hacks/Hackers, London

Dochas Annual Conference, an annual meeting of Irish NGOs, Dublin

EU public hearing on addressing criminalization of refugees and impunity of human trafficking, Brussels.

## **MEDIA INTERVIEWS**

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

BBC focus on Africa

BBC Radio 5 Live Breakfast

RTE Ireland, 'The Late Debate

Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development

Peacebuilders (podcast), Carnegie Corporation

TV5 Monde

RFI English (also BBC Newsday, Al Jazeera TV and the Popular Front podcast)

Popular Front Broadcast

World Economic Forum

Al Jazeera: The Stream

BBC World Service - Newsday

MSF Germany

France24

World Economic Forum

## **UNIVERSITY LECTURES**

Carleton University, Canada

Sussex University, England

Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, United States

✓ In Badghis Province, Afghanistan, a severe drought has left barely any vegetation alive. Haji Bismillah decided not to leave and now tends to his crops, which are fed by new irrigation systems set up in parts of drought-hit Abkamari District. Credit: Stefanie Glinski/IRIN



“

**“I don’t have to plow through humanitarian jargon when I read IRIN, and it gives me insight, depth, into one issue at a time, when it covers a whole question about humanitarian action, or a place, or a conflict, or a context.”**

- Hugo Slim, Head of Policy,  
International Committee of the Red Cross



# Managing with excellence

## THRIVING IN A CHALLENGING LANDSCAPE

2018 was a tough year for several non-profit and specialist media providing deeper coverage of international issues. The International Reporting Project closed in February; Humanosphere, which covered global health and poverty, followed suit shortly thereafter. GlobalPost, which promised to “redefine international news for the digital age” was acquired by WGBH; and News Deeply — a mission-driven B Corp that made waves with single-issue verticals on the Syrian conflict, refugees, water and peacebuilding — has had to [shut down](#) several of its platforms. Whereas US-based nonprofit newsrooms are thriving (there are now around 200, according to the Institute for Nonprofit News), the institutional funding landscape for nonprofit journalism about international news is much more fragile, as IRIN Director Heba Aly wrote in an [article for Nieman Lab](#), a news outlet focused on the media industry.

IRIN has bucked this trend, and our performance this year has shown that we are thriving rather than just surviving. This can be attributed to the relevance of our mission, and the strength, breadth, and depth of our journalism; but we have also made significant strides in the management and financing of our organisation.

## SUCCESSES IN OUR FUNDING STRATEGY

Ultimately, the impact of IRIN’s work depends on our ability to raise the revenue we need to continue our operations. Stronger journalism, bigger audiences, and a fresher brand can certainly assist this effort, but also depend on it.

In 2018, we grew our income by 16 percent over 2017, attracted three new donors, converted narrow project funding into wider organisational support, and struck several multi-year partnerships, providing us better visibility over our income in the coming years. We also increased the percentage of our income coming from outside the humanitarian sector, to further protect our editorial independence.

While securing longer-term core funding partnerships, we have also proven the value of our focus on certain themes and types of reporting, as reflected by new funding for our work on locally-led humanitarian response and investigative reporting.

We grew our small reserve fund to CHF 32,021, and began gathering data on our audience’s appetite to contribute to a paid membership model, an effort which will continue into 2019.

## REBRANDING: A CRITICAL STEP

Having strengthened IRIN's journalism and stabilized its finances as an independent entity over the last few years, in 2018, we embarked on a long-planned rebranding project. Intended to mark our break from our UN past, and to make our brand more palatable to wider audiences, the rebrand was a watershed project for the organisation.

Over the course of the year, we laid the groundwork for a successful rebrand, developing a new name, logo, and brand identity; reflecting deeply on our positioning and added value; more clearly articulating our target audience; and redesigning our website.

## BUILDING THE RIGHT TEAM

The recruitment of Josephine Schmidt as Executive Editor in 2018 completed our management team, with each of the organisation's key functions represented. This new editorial leadership has given our journalism more direction, in line with the strides made in 2017 by hiring senior professionals to lead our finances and fundraising. In the first year with a full management team in place, we began tackling goal-setting and implementation, strategic planning and organisational workflow in a more structured manner.

Other important additions to the team in 2018 were: a senior web developer with extensive experience at CNN International, hired to improve the user experience on our digital platform; a marketing manager, who joined us in September to help develop our outreach and implement our rebrand. We also hired South African journalist and editor Sumayya Ismail to bring fresh talent to our coverage of the continent.

## STRENGTHENING OUR GOVERNANCE

In 2018, we introduced new essential skills to our board of directors, increasing its diversity and strengthening its expertise in finance, technology, law and media as a business.

Martin Aked, a chartered accountant and business consultant, who had a long career at a senior level at PwC and served as Treasurer

of the Board of MSF International, joined the board as Treasurer to support our financial management.

Nanjiri Samuli, digital equality advocacy manager at the World Wide Web Foundation, columnist for the Daily Nation newspaper in Kenya, and member of the UK Department for International Development's Digital Advisory Panel, joined us to boost our technology expertise. She also served as a deputy on the United Nations High Level Panel for Women's Economic Empowerment in 2016-2017.

Sacha Meuter, head of policy and research and legal advisor at Fondation Hironde, which supports the local production of impartial journalism in crisis zones, brings an expertise in non-profit law and the regulatory environment in Switzerland.

Finally, Turi Munthe, a journalist turned media entrepreneur and venture partner at North Base Media investment group, brings us media-relevant entrepreneurial flair and a deep understanding of the media market.

In addition to growing our board of directors, we took a number of steps to improve our governance:

- We improved our internal expenditure analysis and cash forecasting system.
- We further developed our Standard Operating Procedures (SoP's), and began developing policies on code of conduct, recruitment and crisis management.
- We created a comprehensive risk register and risk heat-map that identify those risks that could adversely affect our organisation. Mitigating actions have been identified and this is subject to ongoing review by the management team and board of directors.
- We created a privacy policy to effectively manage all elements of personal data and ensure compliance with new European regulations on data, GDPR, and other relevant privacy regulations.
- We finalised an agreement with our freelance contributors, governing intellectual property rights, and improved our process for insuring our freelancers during travel to high-risk environments.



## Our Board



**Howard French**  
**President**  
Associate Professor,  
Columbia Journalism School



**Andy Martin**  
**Vice-President**  
Founder and Director,  
Firetail



**Martin Aked**  
**Treasurer**  
Chartered Accountant and  
Business Consultant



**Sacha Meuter**  
**Secretary**  
Head Of Policy And Research  
and Legal Advisor,  
Fondation Hirondelle



**Dr. Sara Pantuliano**  
Managing Director,  
Overseas Development  
Institute



**Nanjiri Samuli**  
Digital Equality  
Advocacy Manager,  
World Wide Web Foundation



**Peter Bouckaert**  
Consultant,  
Catholic Relief Services  
Madagascar



**Paula Fray**  
Founder and  
Managing Director,  
frayintermedia



**Turi Munthe**  
Venture Partner,  
North Base Media  
Investment Group

## Our Team



Heba Aly, *Director*

### EDITORIAL

Josephine Schmidt, *Executive Editor*  
Andrew Gully, *Managing Editor*  
Ben Parker, *Senior Editor*  
Obi Anyadike, *Editor-at-Large*  
Annie Slemrod, *Middle East Editor*  
Irwin Loy, *Asia Editor*  
Sumayya Ismail, *Africa Editor*  
Rishi Arora, *Senior Web Developer*  
Kenneth Dimalibot, *Audience Engagement Officer*  
Whitney Patterson, *Digital Content Producer*

### PARTNERSHIPS

Sarah Noble, *Director of External Relations*  
Anna Rohleder, *Marketing Manager*  
Emmeline Booth, *Outreach and Reporting Officer*

### FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

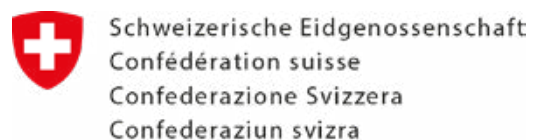
Richard Golding, *Director of Finance*  
Victoria Bytsko, *Administration, HR and Finance Manager*



## Our Partners

IRIN's funding comes largely from governments and foundations. We also generate small amounts of revenue from other sources, including advertising, honorariums for speaking roles, and donations from individual readers.

Our main donors in 2018 included:



# Finances

A summary of the 2018 income and expenditure together with the year-end balance sheet, alongside the 2017 comparatives, are listed below and on the opposite page. Our financial statements are subject to independent audit by Berney Associés of Geneva, and their audit report and detailed financial statements can be found in Annex 1.

With income of CHF 1.69 million, our expenditure totaled CHF 1.68 million in 2018. After almost three years of operations as an independent entity, we had accumulated reserves of CHF 43,000 by the end of 2018.

## 2018 INCOME

Nearly half (43%) of our grant income for 2018 was in the form of unrestricted grants for our core operations, with the remainder earmarked for specific parts of our core operation or in support of additional projects that are aligned with our core mission and objectives.

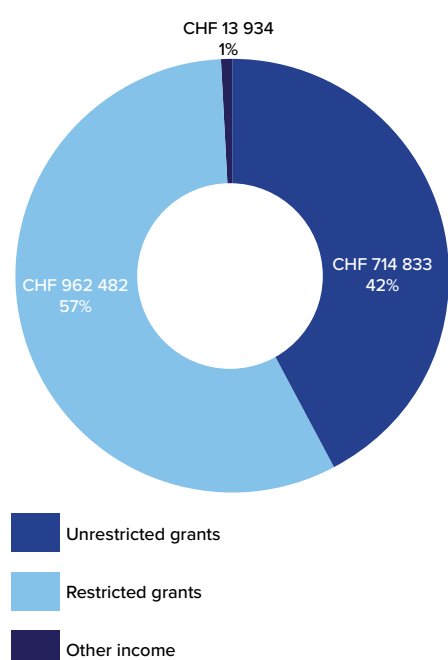
## 2018 EXPENDITURE

Editorial production remains our priority expenditure area, representing 58% of total costs. The overall allocation of 2018 expenditure across each of our operating functions is illustrated in the chart below.

Thanks to a growth in income over 2017, we were able to increase our investment in editorial production by CHF 116,000 and in our marketing and audience development activities, including the groundwork for our rebrand, by CHF 96,000, with very small increases in our support operations (CHF 14,000) and governance structure (CHF 12,000).

The additional chart below illustrates the proportion of expenditure on staff resources (both Geneva-based employees and consulting staff around the world) at 65% and non-staff expenditure at 35%.

✓ IRIN - 2018 Income

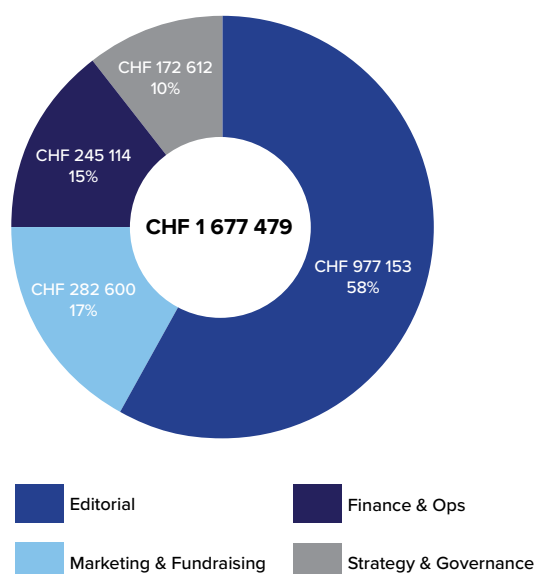


INCOME (CHF)	2018	2017
Unrestricted grants	714 833	844 448
Restricted grants	962 482	602 574
<b>TOTAL GRANT INCOME</b>	<b>1 677 316</b>	<b>1 447 023</b>
Other income	13 934	8 428
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>1 691 250</b>	<b>1 455 451</b>

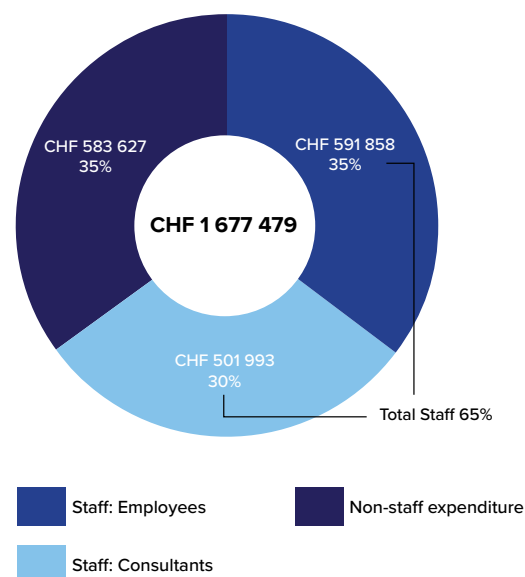
EXPENDITURE		
Editorial costs	977 153	860 893
Marketing & Fundraising	282 600	186 322
Finance & Operations	245 114	230 899
Strategy & Governance	172 612	160 400
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>1 677 479</b>	<b>1 438 514</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>13 771</b>	<b>16 937</b>



## ✓ IRIN - 2018 Expenditure analysis



## ✓ IRIN - 2018 Staff &amp; non-staff costs



BALANCE SHEET (CHF)	31.12.2018	31.12.2017
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash & cash equivalents	623 710	527 481
Other current receivables	3 061	1 490
Prepaid expenses	134 250	177 570
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>761 021</b>	<b>706 541</b>
<b>Other Assets</b>		
Office security deposit	14 635	14 632
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>775 656</b>	<b>721 173</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; AVAILABLE FUNDS</b>		
<b>Short Term Liabilities</b>		
Creditors & other current liabilities	34 825	52 633
Deferred income	500 859	641 470
<b>TOTAL SHORT TERM LIABILITIES</b>	<b>734 815</b>	<b>694 103</b>
<b>Other liabilities</b>		
Sub-let office security deposit	8 820	8 820
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>743 635</b>	<b>702 923</b>
<b>Available Funds</b>		
Brought forward from prior year	18 250	1 313
Net Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	13 771	16 937
<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS</b>	<b>32 021</b>	<b>18 250</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; AVAILABLE FUNDS</b>	<b>775 656</b>	<b>721 173</b>

Please see our detailed 2018 audited accounts in Annex 1.

**IRIN**NEWS

**THE INSIDE STORY ON EMERGENCIES**

IRIN Association  
Rue de Varembe 3  
CH - 1202 Geneva  
Switzerland

Tel: + 41 22 525 6603  
Email: [hello@irinnews.org](mailto:hello@irinnews.org)

Geneva, April 10, 2019

### Report of the statutory auditor on the limited statutory examination to the general meeting of Irin Association, Geneva

As statutory auditor, we have examined the financial statements (balance sheet, income statement and notes) of Irin Association for the financial year ended December 31, 2018.

These financial statements are the responsibility of the Board of Directors. Our responsibility is to perform a limited statutory examination on these financial statements. We confirm that we meet the licensing and independence requirements as stipulated by Swiss law.

We conducted our examination in accordance with the Swiss Standard on the Limited Statutory Examination. This standard requires that we plan and perform a limited statutory examination to identify material misstatements in the financial statements. A limited statutory examination consists primarily of inquiries of company personnel and analytical procedures as well as detailed tests of company documents as considered necessary in the circumstances. However, the testing of operational processes and the internal control system, as well as inquiries and further testing procedures to detect fraud or other legal violations, are not within the scope of this examination.

Based on our limited statutory examination, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the financial statements, disclosing available funds of CHF 32'021, do not comply with Swiss law and the Association's articles of incorporation.

Berney Associés Audit SA

**BA** Signature électronique authentifiée



Cosimo PICCI  
Licensed Audit Expert  
Auditor in charge

**BA** Signature électronique authentifiée



Claude HERI  
Licensed Audit Expert

Enclosure: financial statements (balance sheet, income statement and notes)

1207 Genève  
Rue du Nant 8  
+41 58 234 90 00

1700 Fribourg  
Blvd de Pérolles 37  
+41 58 234 93 00

1950 Sion  
Rue de la Dent-blanche 18  
+41 27 322 75 40

1003 Lausanne  
Rue Étraz 4  
+41 58 234 91 00

1896 Vouvry  
Rue Arthur Parchet 1  
+41 58 234 90 20

En ligne  
berneyassociés.com  
info@berneyassociés.com

Audit

Comptabilité

Expertise & Conseil

Fiscalité

Payroll

Corporate finance



## BALANCE SHEET AT DECEMBER 31, 2018

	Notes	31.12.2018 CHF	31.12.2017 CHF	31.12.2018 USD	31.12.2017 USD
<b><u>ASSETS</u></b>					
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Cash and cash equivalents		623'710	527'481	632'758	541'298
Other current receivables		3'061	1'490	3'105	1'529
Prepaid expenses		134'250	177'570	136'198	182'221
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>761'021</b>	<b>706'541</b>	<b>772'061</b>	<b>725'048</b>
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Sub-let building security deposit		14'635	14'632	14'847	15'015
<b>TOTAL FIXED ASSETS</b>		<b>14'635</b>	<b>14'632</b>	<b>14'847</b>	<b>15'015</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>775'656</b>	<b>721'173</b>	<b>786'909</b>	<b>740'063</b>
<b><u>LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY</u></b>					
<b>SHORT TERM LIABILITIES</b>					
Trade creditors		34'825	52'415	35'330	53'788
Other current liabilities	4.1	199'131	218	202'020	224
Deferred income and accrued expenses	4.2	500'859	641'470	508'125	658'272
<b>TOTAL SHORT TERM LIABILITIES</b>		<b>734'815</b>	<b>694'103</b>	<b>745'475</b>	<b>712'284</b>
<b>LONG TERM LIABILITIES</b>					
Sub-let building security deposit		8'820	8'820	8'948	9'051
<b>TOTAL LONG TERM LIABILITIES</b>		<b>8'820</b>	<b>8'820</b>	<b>8'948</b>	<b>9'051</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>743'635</b>	<b>702'923</b>	<b>754'423</b>	<b>721'335</b>
<b>AVAILABLE FUNDS</b>					
Surplus					
- Brought Forward		18'250	1'313	18'535	1'333
- Net result for the year		13'771	16'937	13'948	17'202
- CHF Exchange Rate Adjustment		-	-	3	193
<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS</b>		<b>32'021</b>	<b>18'250</b>	<b>32'486</b>	<b>18'728</b>
		<b>775'656</b>	<b>721'173</b>	<b>786'909</b>	<b>740'063</b>

**IRIN ASSOCIATION, Geneva**
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018**

	<b>Notes</b>	<b>01.01.2018 - 31.12.2018</b>	<b>01.01.2017 - 31.12.2017</b>	<b>01.01.2018 - 31.12.2018</b>	<b>01.01.2017 - 31.12.2017</b>
		CHF	CHF	USD	USD
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>					
Grants received		1'677'316	1'447'023	1'698'892	1'469'637
Other operating income		13'934	8'428	14'113	8'560
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>1'691'250</b>	<b>1'455'451</b>	<b>1'713'005</b>	<b>1'478'196</b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURES</u></b>					
Editorial expenses		(236'249)	(221'034)	(239'288)	(224'488)
Staff costs		(628'973)	(392'846)	(637'064)	(398'985)
Other operating expenses*	4.3	(796'096)	(801'450)	(806'336)	(813'975)
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>(1'661'318)</b>	<b>(1'415'330)</b>	<b>(1'682'688)</b>	<b>(1'437'448)</b>
<b>EARNINGS BEFORE INTERESTS AND TAXES</b>		<b>29'932</b>	<b>40'121</b>	<b>30'317</b>	<b>40'748</b>
Financial income	4.4	10'590	2'005	10'726	2'036
Financial costs	4.5	(26'751)	(25'189)	(27'095)	(25'583)
<b>SURPLUS BEFORE TAXES</b>		<b>13'771</b>	<b>16'937</b>	<b>13'948</b>	<b>17'202</b>
Taxes		-	-	-	-
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE PERIOD</b>		<b>13'771</b>	<b>16'937</b>	<b>13'948</b>	<b>17'202</b>

\* Includes costs of journalists and editors contracted as consultants to produce the Association's journalism

**1. GENERAL**

The Association was incorporated in Geneva on March 29, 2016.

The Association's charitable purpose is to improve understanding of natural and/or man-made humanitarian emergencies, particularly those less reported or overlooked. The Association will enhance the well-being of affected people by advancing public education and research in the humanitarian field and providing independent and non-partisan reporting, analysis and information on the causes, consequences and responses to crises. In doing so, the Association seeks to bolster justice and equity; promote human rights, peace and preventative action; improve humanitarian response; and, ultimately, save the lives of people at risk around the world.

Prior to becoming an Association, IRIN existed for 20 years as part of the United Nations. Its establishment as a Swiss association was the conclusion of IRIN's transition to becoming an independent entity. The Association was registered with the Geneva Commercial registry on the March 29, 2016 and opened a bank account in May 2016.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the legal accounting Swiss legal accounting policies applicable in Switzerland and under the historical cost convention (articles 957 to 960 of the Swiss Code of Obligations). Revenues and expenses are recorded on an accrual basis.

**2. NUMBER OF FULL-TIME POSITIONS**

	2018	2017
--	------	------

The number of full-time equivalents on a yearly average did not exceed :

10	10
----	----

**3. RESIDUAL AMOUNT OF LIABILITIES ARISING FROM LEASE OBLIGATIONS EXPIRING IN MORE THAN TWELVE MONTHS**

	31.12.2018 CHF	31.12.2017 CHF	31.12.2018 USD	31.12.2017 USD
Rent covenant	99'579	129'800	101'024	133'200

Nevertheless, a part of this covenant is supported by subtenants for a total amount of CHF 18'528 for the period of April 1st, 2017 to March 31, 2019.

**4. INFORMATION AND EXPLANATIONS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE BALANCE SHEET**

	31.12.2018 CHF	31.12.2017 CHF	31.12.2018 USD	31.12.2017 USD
<b>4.1 Other current liabilities</b>				
Liabilities due to third parties	199'131	9	202'020	9
Liabilities due to pension fund	-	209	-	214
<b>Total</b>	<b>199'131</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>202'020</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>4.2 Deferred income and accrued expenses</b>				
Deferred income	492'859	625'470	500'009	641'854
Accrued expenses	8'000	16'000	8'116	16'419
<b>Total</b>	<b>500'859</b>	<b>641'470</b>	<b>508'125</b>	<b>658'273</b>



	2018	2017	2018	2017
	CHF	CHF	USD	USD
4.3 <u>Other operating expenses</u>				
Office charges	(29'381)	(29'378)	(29'759)	(29'837)
Insurance costs	(16'539)	(12'942)	(16'752)	(13'144)
Administrative costs	(18'834)	(16'766)	(19'076)	(17'028)
Telecommunication costs	(2'710)	(2'717)	(2'745)	(2'759)
IT costs	(37'446)	(41'919)	(37'928)	(42'574)
Professional fees	(508'404)	(590'554)	(514'944)	(599'783)
Legal fees	(14'695)	(1'220)	(14'884)	(1'239)
Travel costs	(88'608)	(82'013)	(89'748)	(83'295)
Advertising, events and campaigns costs	(79'479)	(23'941)	(80'501)	(24'315)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(796'096)</b>	<b>(801'450)</b>	<b>(806'336)</b>	<b>(813'975)</b>
4.4 <u>Financial income</u>				
Bank interest income	990	565	1'003	573
Foreign exchange gain	9'599	1'441	9'723	1'463
<b>Total</b>	<b>10'590</b>	<b>2'005</b>	<b>10'726</b>	<b>2'037</b>
4.5 <u>Financial costs</u>				
Interest and bank fees	(10'193)	(10'858)	(10'324)	(11'028)
Transfer costs	(451)	(263)	(457)	(267)
Exchange Loss	(16'107)	(14'067)	(16'314)	(14'287)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(26'751)</b>	<b>(25'189)</b>	<b>(27'095)</b>	<b>(25'582)</b>