Annual Report 2021

It takes a network.

Our Vision

A world where lives, livelihoods, and democracy are not threatened by crime and corruption.

Police in Belarus at mass protests against the government
Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko is OCCRP's Corrupt Person of the Year 2021
Credit: Игорь Токкэм

www.occrp.org | 🐦 **@occrp** | 👍 **/occrp.org**

Our Mission

By developing and equipping a global network of investigative journalists and publishing their stories, OCCRP exposes crime and corruption so the public can hold power to account.

Our Theory of Change

OCCRP exposes and explains the relationship between money and power and serves as a catalyst that arms others with the information needed to drive positive change. As investigative journalists, we expose crime and corruption at the highest levels. Using these revelations, advocates can press for policy reform and package information for law enforcement, which has the authority to act on evidence and deliver justice. Policymakers can point to investigative findings to pass legislation and advance reforms. Citizens who read our work get the information they need to act and organize on their own behalf.

Advancing the International Development Agenda

The historic adoption of Goal 16 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development made peace, governance, and anti-corruption central to advancing international development around the world for the first time. OCCRP's work directly contributes to the global community's ability to meet this goal and reach key targets:

- 16.4: to "significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime;"

- 16.5: to "substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms."

Our work also addresses Goal 10, to reduce inequalities, by exposing how organized crime and corrupt politicians launder vast sums through the global financial system and further widen the gap between elites and the rest of society.

Our work contributes to achieving a key target: 10.5 — improved regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthening of the implementation of such regulations.

Letter from the Publisher

2021 was filled with a sense of achievement, but also growing concern.

Drew Sullivan
Co-founder and Publisher **OCCRP**

Many of the ideals we value most — democracy, independent journalism, equality, fair systems — are increasingly threatened around the world. This only makes us more fiercely committed to the difficult work of holding power to account.

We were honored to be part of three major collaborative investigations this year that did just that and had worldwide impact: OpenLux, which showed how corrupt officials, criminals, and politically exposed people use opaque jurisdictions to hide their money and activities; The Pegasus Project, led by Forbidden Stories, which revealed how spyware is being systematically used against journalists, activists, and politicians; and The Pandora Papers, led by ICIJ, which exposed the shadowy financial system that benefits the world's richest and most powerful and is exploited by criminal networks.

Equally important are the local stories we published, many of which broke new ground. Our story on the polluting effects of "dirty oil" burned in hospital and school heating systems in North Macedonia resulted in an immediate government investigation into the source of the oil and the revocation of the distributors' licenses.

Our network continues to grow in size and strength every month. With the addition this year of team members in South Asia, the Pacific Islands, and North America — marking our first editorial presence in the U.S. — we now have staff on six continents. As criminals are early adopters of technology, investigative reporters must be too, so we started a cryptocrime team to track cryptocurrencies, a popular playground for bad actors. And we continued to report on how crime and corruption contribute to the environmental crisis, forging new collaborations and publishing our first stories with partners in Nicaragua.

With this, we're reaching more people, surpassing a milestone of 100,000 Twitter followers and adding more than a million new visitors to occrp.org in 2021. Our ramped-up design and web teams have been busy building a brand-new look and feel for the OCCRP platform, which will debut in summer 2022 and help us connect with even more readers.

And we're reaching new heights. After almost a decade overseeing the Czech Center for Investigative Journalism and producing award-winning investigations, our Central Europe Editor Pavla Holcová won the ICFJ Knight International Journalism Award. And U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken backed our Global Anti-Corruption Consortium during the Summit for Democracy and issued a call to the rest of the world to join it.

But 2021 also saw significant acceleration of the suppression of independent media around the world. From the new move by the Russian government to classify independent journalists, including our colleagues, as "foreign agents," to the onslaught of lawsuits against media critical of the Serbian government, to the sweeping crackdown and jailing of journalists in Nicaragua, it was a brutal year for many in the OCCRP network.

As OCCRP heads into its fifteenth year, our core purpose is the same as it has always been: producing quality investigative journalism for the public good. We are grateful to our donors and OCCRP Accomplices, who not only make our mission possible but whose faith and support spur us to innovate and help us keep our people safe. We have big plans for 2022 and won't be satisfied until we create a global ecosphere where quality collaborative investigative reporting is practiced everywhere.

With Gratitude,
Drew Sullivan

The Network
Our Member Centers

As an investigative reporting platform for a worldwide network of independent media centers and journalists, OCCRP partners locally and works globally to follow the money across borders and accelerate the exposure of crime and corruption. In the face of rising costs and growing threats to independent media, OCCRP provides our network of member centers around the world with a range of critical resources and tools from editorial coordination to digital and physical security, supporting and raising the standards of local reporting in the countries we work in.

Europe

1 Dossier, Austria
2 CIN, Bosnia & Herzegovina
3 Bird, Bulgaria
4 Bivol, Bulgaria
5 Oštro, Croatia
6 Investigaze.cz, Czech Republic
7 Atlatszo.hu, Hungary
8 DIREKT36, Hungary
9 IRPI, Italy
10 Re:Baltica, Latvia
11 15min.lt, Lithuania
12 Siena, Lithuania
13 RISE Moldova, Moldova
14 MANS, Montenegro
15 Investigative Reporting Lab, North Macedonia
16 Reporters Foundation, Poland
17 Atlatszo Erdely, Romania
18 Context, Romania
19 RISE Project, Romania
20 iStories, Russia
21 Novaya Gazeta, Russia
22 CINS, Serbia
23 KRIK, Serbia
24 Investigative Center of Jan Kuciak, Slovak Republic
25 Oštro, Slovenia
26 Media Development Foundation, Ukraine
27 Slidstvo.info, Ukraine

Caucasus

28 HETQ, Armenia
29 Meydan TV, Azerbaijan
30 iFact, Georgia
31 Journalistic Data Processing Centre, Georgia
32 Studio Monitori, Georgia

Africa

33 Africa Confidential, Africa
34 INK Centre for Investigative Journalism, Botswana
35 News Bridge Africa, Ghana
36 Africa Uncensored, Kenya
37 The Elephant, Kenya
38 New Narratives, Liberia
39 Centre for Investigative Journalism Malawi, Malawi
40 Dépêches du Mali, Mali
41 Le Defi Media Group, Mauritius
42 Verdade, Mozambique
43 The Namibian, Namibia
44 L'Evenement, Niger
45 Premium Times, Nigeria
46 Mail & Guardian, South Africa
47 Noseweek, South Africa
48 Oxpeckers, South Africa
49 L'Alternative, Togo
50 Inkyfada, Tunisia
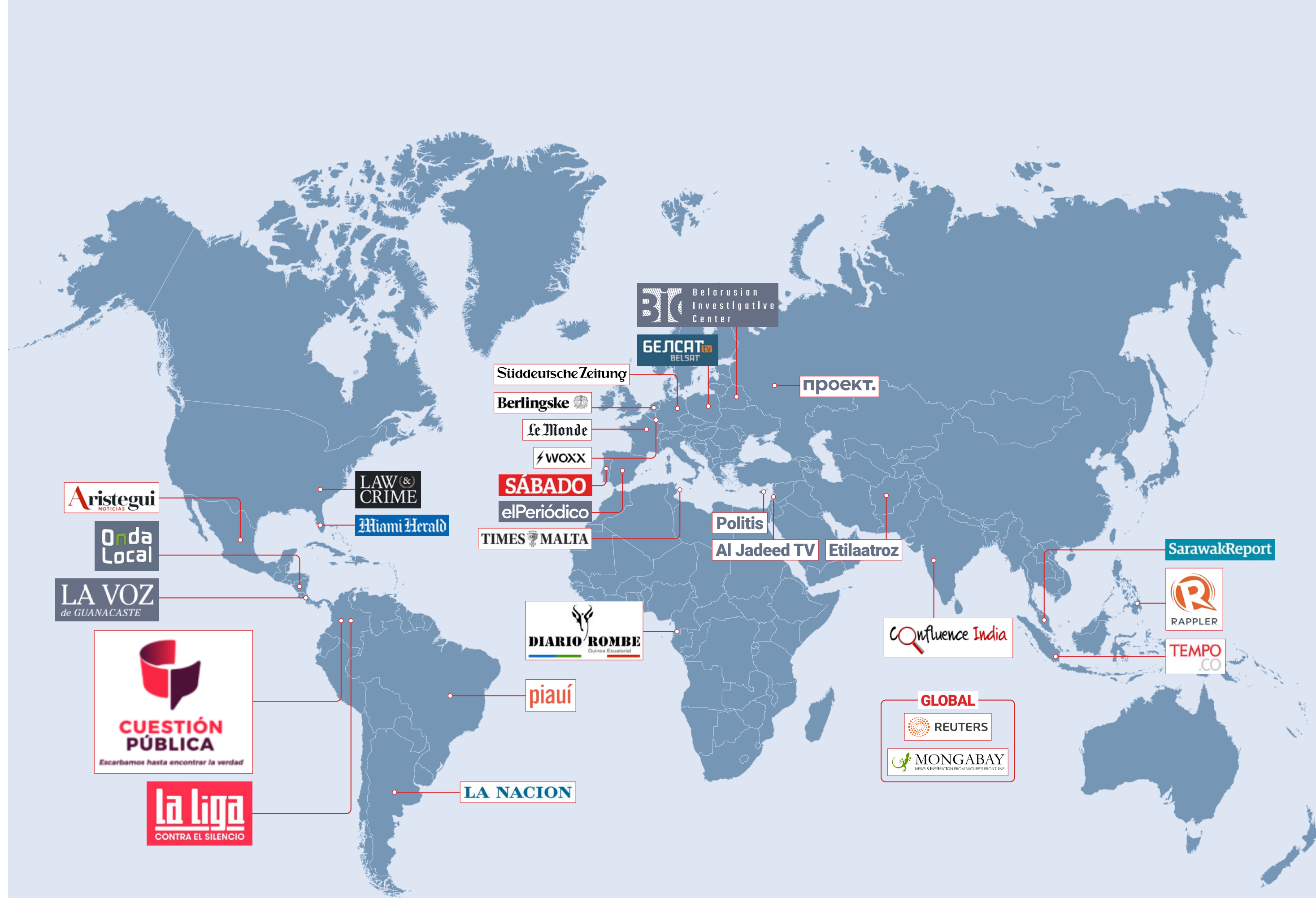**51 News Diggers,** Zambia

Central Asia

52 Kloop Media, Kyrgyzstan
53 Turkmen.News, Turkmenistan

The Network
Publishing Partners

In addition to our media member centers, OCCRP collaborates with an array of publishing partners around the world, further expanding our reach. In 2021, we partnered with more than 60 international, national, and local outlets such as these, helping us reach millions of readers.

Belarusian Investigative Center

БЕЛСАТтв BELSAT

проект.

Süddeutsche Zeitung

Berlingske

Le Monde

WOXX

SÁBADO

elPeriódico

TIMES MALTA

LAW & CRIME

Miami Herald

Aristegui NOTICIAS

Onda Local

LA VOZ de GUANACASTE

Politis

Al Jadeed TV

Etilaatroz

SarawakReport

RAPPLER

CQnfluence India

TEMPO .CO

DIARIO ROMBE
Guinea Ecuatorial

CUESTIÓN PÚBLICA
Escarbamos hasta encontrar la verdad

la liga CONTRA EL SILENCIO

piauí

LA NACION

GLOBAL

REUTERS

MONGABAY
NEWS & INSPIRATION FROM NATURE'S FRONTLINE

Impact to date

$7.4 Billion

of illicitly acquired funds returned to the public sphere

Impact
to date

$7.4B+ fines levied and monies seized
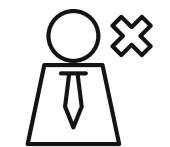
205 civic actions / demonstrations

620 government actions

571 arrests, warrants, sentences

110 corporate actions

129 high level resignations / sackings

372 official investigations
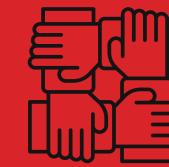
The year
in numbers

2021

150+ team members around the world

53 member centers

$11.1M annual budget

60+ publishing partners

100+ investigations

39M+ unique visitors to website

45 editors

3B+ records in OCCRP Aleph

1000+ requests fielded by OCCRP ID

Stories that mattered

Investigation Highlights
OpenLux

Region
Europe, Global

Date
February 2021

The **OpenLux** project uncovered years of dubious financial activity involving celebrities, organized crime groups, and people with political connections that had been hidden for years thanks to Luxembourg's corporate secrecy laws. After Le Monde journalists scraped the data from Luxembourg's corporate register and worked with OCCRP's data team to upload it into OCCRP Aleph — our investigative data platform — it became fully searchable for the first time. Then a global team of journalists investigated the names and companies in the database. Collaborating with 16 media outlets and scores of reporters, we found several instances of elites hiding their business activities from the authorities and public scrutiny.


Credit: Svetlana Tiourina

Impact

The Luxembourg prosecutor opened at least 12 cases and Luxembourg lawmakers started a process to reform the business registers by making them more transparent and effective.

OpenLux was cited in the European Commission's "Unshell" proposal, a directive that fights against the misuse of shell entities. The European Parliament held a plenary debate titled "Reforming the EU policy framework to stop tax avoidance in the EU after the OpenLux revelations." A German MEP used OpenLux to press for open company registers after an investigation with Indonesian partners showed a palm oil magnate owns a Frank Gehry structure in Dusseldorf — a fact unknown to the German authorities.

Partners

Le Monde (France), IrpiMedia (Italy), IStories (Russia), Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (Middle East), KRIK (Serbia) Bivol (Bulgaria), Investigace.cz (Czech Republic), Süddeutsche Zeitung (Germany), Le Soir (Belgium), Woxx (Luxembourg), McClatchy/Miami Herald/El Nuevo Herald (U.S.), Piaui (Brazil), Tempo (Indonesia), Armando.Info (Venezuela), La Nacion (Argentina), Inkyfada (Tunisia), Infolibre (Spain)
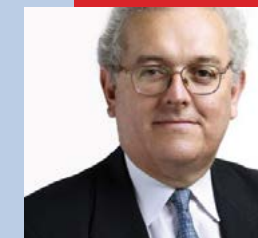
> "The #OpenLux investigation has shown that Luxembourg, a country half the size of Delaware but with 55,000 offshore companies managing assets worth at least €6 trillion, is a major tax haven operating in the heart of the European Union."

José Antonio Ocampo and Tommaso Faccio
The Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation - in ProMarket

PROMARKET

Investigation Highlights

"Europe's Waste Dump": How Dangerously Polluting Oil Ended Up Heating North Macedonia's Hospitals

Region
North Macedonia

Date
May 2021

North Macedonia for years has been among countries in the world with the highest air pollution. After citizen reports of black, billowing smoke oozing from chimneys in several hospitals, schools, and state institutions, OCCRP investigated and found that highly polluting, chemical-laden oil was being used in the heating systems of public buildings across the country. The oil had been bought from Evrotim, a North Macedonian company with ties to a powerful politician and businessman.
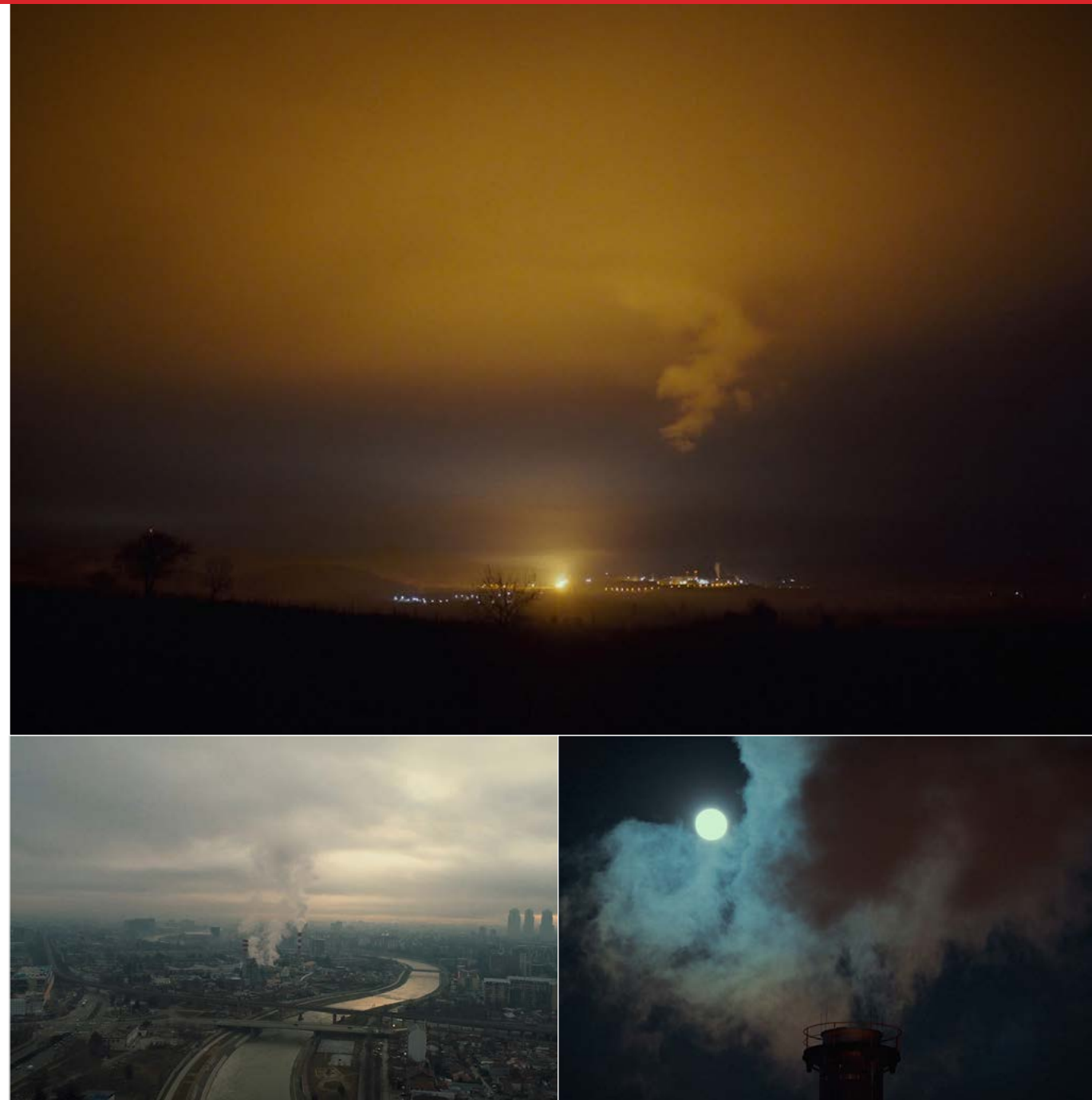
Impact

The story prompted the government to launch its own investigation which showed numerous irregularities and an overall "chaos" on the oil market in North Macedonia. Oil was imported under fake tariff numbers, dirty oil was produced and distributed all over the country, some companies had no licenses, others stored oil in inappropriate warehouses or under conditions that violate technical requirements. In all of those cases the oil was confiscated.

The government fined seven companies $67,570 each, reported them to prosecutors, and left four of them without licences.

Partners

Investigative Reporting Lab, Investigace.cz

Watch the short documentary

EUROPE'S FUEL DUMP

## Investigation Highlights - Partnering with Forbidden Stories
The Pegasus Project

Region
Global

Date
May 2021

The Pegasus Project is a collaborative investigation into NSO Group, an Israeli "cyber intelligence" company that sells sophisticated spyware to governments around the world. Through Pegasus, corrupt and troubled regimes across the world can gain access to vast troves of personal information on just about anyone they want. The spyware, sold as a crime-fighting tool, has been used against activists, political dissidents, and journalists — including those in the OCCRP network.

The project was coordinated by Forbidden Stories, a French nonprofit that focuses on telling the stories of journalists under threat, who gained access to a list of 50,000 phone numbers that had allegedly been picked as targets of the spyware. Amnesty International's Security Lab provided technical support. OCCRP and 16 media partners around the world worked to uncover who might have fallen victim to Pegasus and tell their stories.
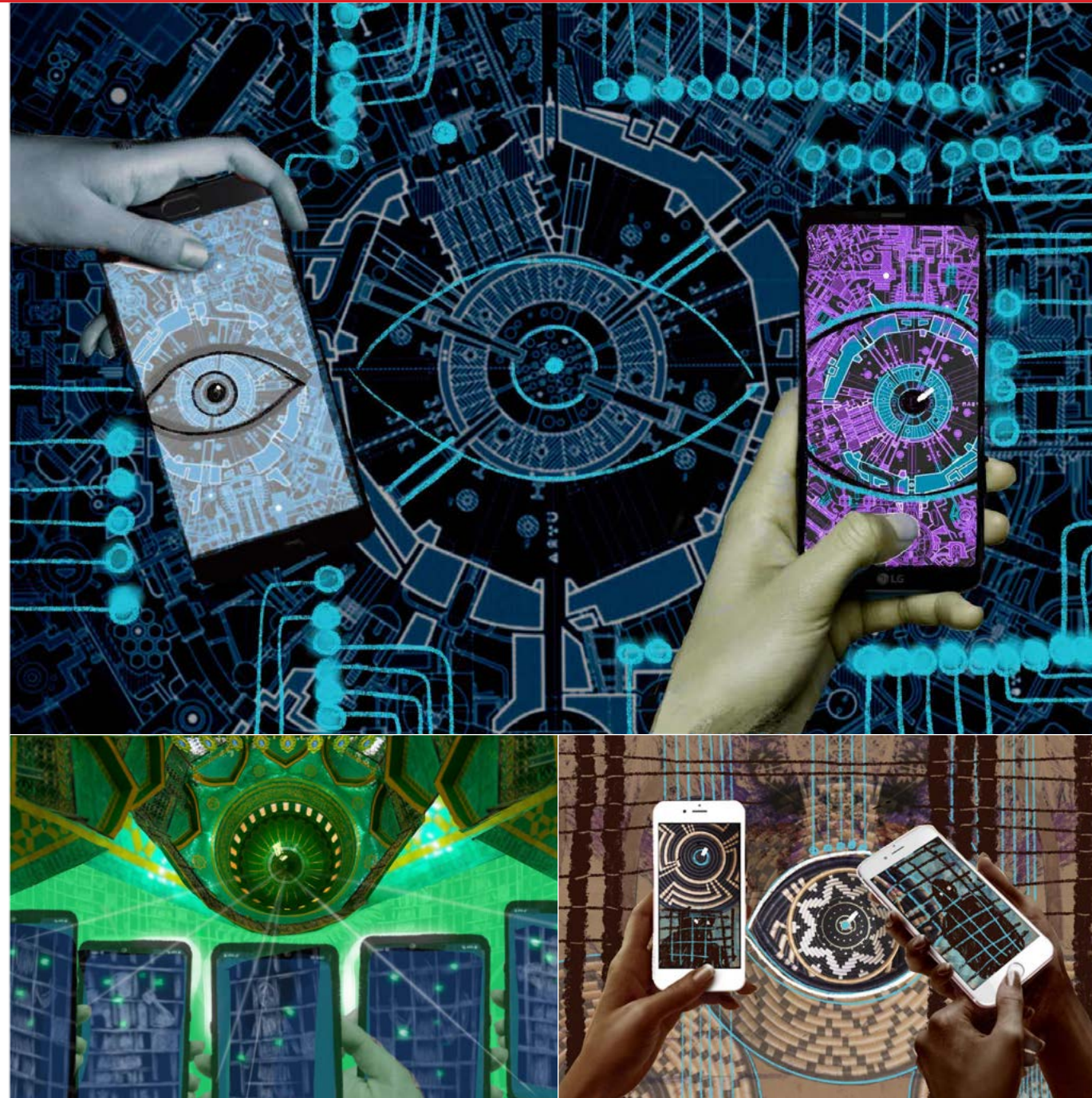
Impact of the Global Project

The U.S. Department of Commerce blacklisted NSO Group, making it illegal for U.S. firms to conduct business with the organization. Mexican authorities arrested a technician who worked for a private firm on allegations he was involved in illegally tapping the phone of a broadcast journalist. Israel's government set up a task force to determine whether the country's policy on cyber exports should be overhauled. Amazon shut down cloud service infrastructure and accounts linked to NSO.

In the UK, MPs called for action against companies which deploy Pegasus and other spyware from NSO. In November, ten parliamentarians signed a letter demanding that the government end cybersecurity programs with countries that are known to have used NSO spyware to target their own citizens, as well as asking for sanctions to be imposed on NSO.

Apple filed a lawsuit against NSO Group and its parent company to hold it accountable for the surveillance and targeting of Apple users. To prevent further abuse and harm to its users, Apple is also seeking a permanent injunction to ban NSO Group from using any Apple software, services, or devices.

The Pegasus Project media partners

The Guardian, Le Monde, The Washington Post, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Die Zeit, Aristegui Noticias, Radio France, Proceso, OCCRP, Knack, Le Soir, Haaretz/TheMarker, The Wire, Daraj, Direkt36, PBS Frontline.

Watch the short video

"What we have is a list of phone numbers that were targeted in Azerbaijan and we have about 1,000 numbers and you are among them. And then we also have some people who are your friends, your lawyers, and obviously a lot of politicans."

OCCRP's Miranda Patrucic tells investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova that she was a target of Pegasus spyware

Ownership of Chemicals that Exploded at Beirut Port Traces Back to Ukraine

Region
Europe, Global

Date
September 2021

A year after a massive shipment of ammonium nitrate exploded in Beirut, an OCCRP investigation settled one of the biggest lingering questions: who actually owned the cargo. A trail of documents reveals a decades-old chemical-trading network controlled by Ukrainians, hidden behind a veil of proxies and shell firms.

Volodymyr Verbonol, a Ukrainian businessman based in Dnipro, and partners were behind the dormant London-registered company, Savaro Ltd., that owned the ammonium nitrate shipment. The cargo, shipped on the MV Rhosus that got detained in Beirut over unpaid debts and technical defects, was intended to be sent from Georgia to an explosives factory in Mozambique. The combustible chemical had been stored unsafely in a port warehouse for almost six years. The company was part of a sprawling network involved in chemical trading since at least the early 2000s. The network disguised its operations behind at least half a dozen trade names and various strawmen and shell companies spanning England, Scotland, the Caribbean, Ukraine, the South Pacific, and the U.S. Offshore service providers in Cyprus and the U.K. facilitated the network's operations for years.

Credit: Nader Hamandi / Alamy Stock Photo

Impact
Lebanese lawyers, led by Camille Abousleiman, are suing Savaro in the U.K. on behalf of the blast victims — 218 dead, 7,000 injured, 300,000+ homeless — arguing that the company bears significant responsibility.

Partners
Al Jadeed (Lebanon), Meduza (Russia), ifact.ge (Georgia), Daraj.com (Lebanon)

"...the data vis-à-vis the owner of the cargo is true. The owner of the company is Verbonol. We are trying to integrate the OCCRP investigation into our case."

Camille Abousleiman
Attorney suing Savaro, Ltd. on behalf of the blast victims

Pandora Papers

Region
U.S., Global

Date
October 3, 2021

The **Pandora Papers** are nearly 12 million files — totalling close to 2.94 terabytes — leaked from 14 companies that provide corporate services in offshore jurisdictions. The documents offer the most comprehensive look to date at how such service providers help the rich and famous — including celebrities, the ultra-wealthy, politicians, and criminals — to hide their money in financial secrecy jurisdictions.

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) received the leaked files and led a worldwide investigation, collaborating with 600+ journalists — including 70+ from the OCCRP network.
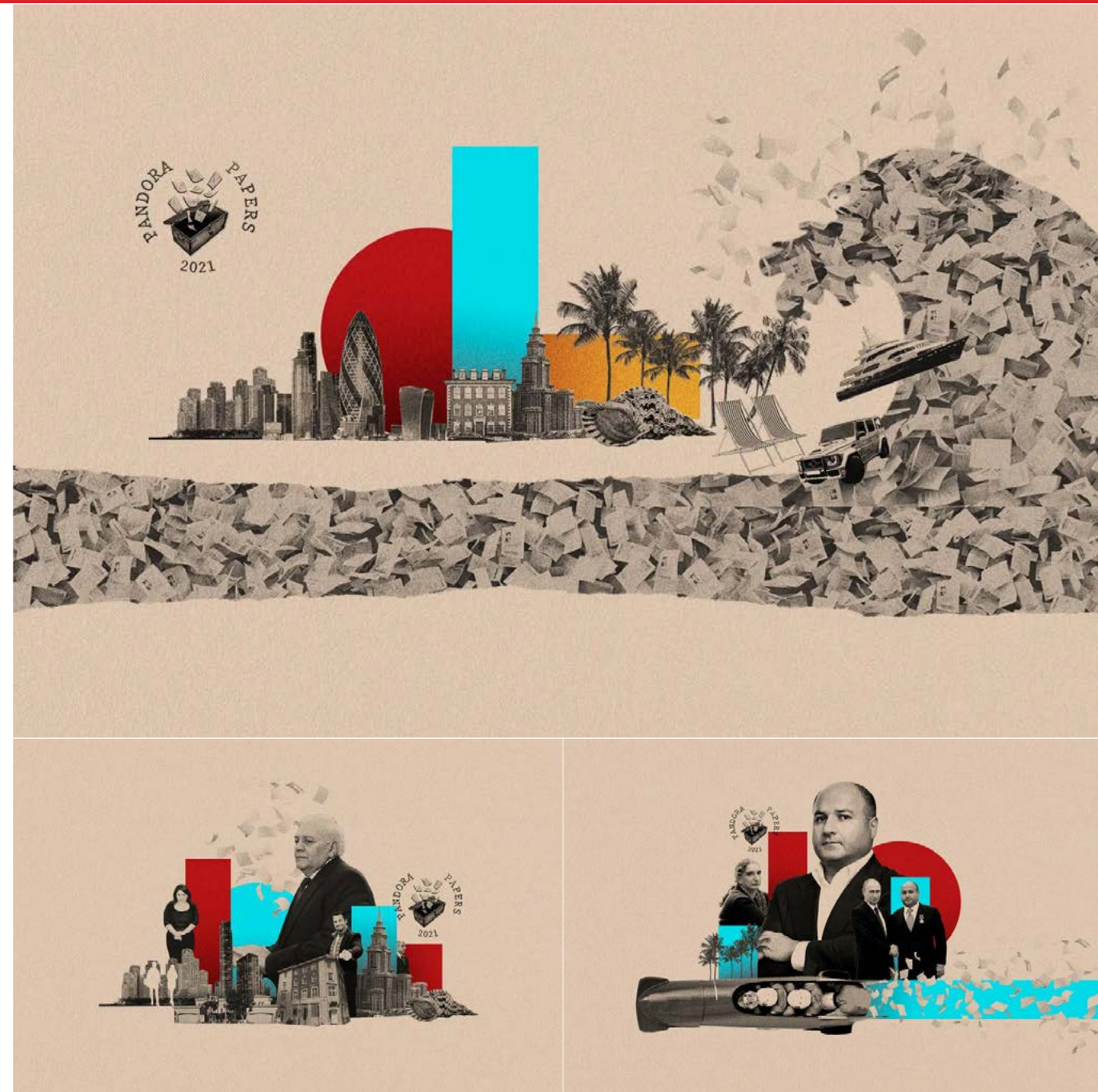
Credit: James O'Brien

Impact

The Pandora Papers led to a flurry of results around the world, including prompting U.S. lawmakers to draft the **ENABLERS Act**, which would make it much more difficult for criminals to use U.S. service providers to hide illicit wealth.

Partners in OCCRP's Pandora Papers stories

Hetq (Armenia), Daraj (Lebanon), Oštro (Croatia), Oštro (Slovenia), Czech Center for Investigative Journalism (Czech Republic), Belsat (Belarus), Siena.lt (Lithuania), MANS (Montenegro), RISE (Romania), RISE Moldova, iStories (Russia), KRIK (Serbia), Slidstvo.Info (Ukraine), Direkt36 (Hungary), iFact.ge (Georgia), BIRD (Bulgaria)

> "The Pandora Papers offer stunning evidence of what we've seen over and over again in our decades of investigating global crime and corruption: These professional enablers are mostly bad apples — and they're rotten to the core."
>
> Drew Sullivan Publisher, OCCRP
> in Washington Post Global Opinions section

The Washington Post

Investigation Highlights
OCCRP & the Environment

At OCCRP, we see how "criminal angel investors" finance and orchestrate natural resource destruction all over the world, frequently enabled by unscrupulous politicians and authoritarian regimes.

Investigative reporters can play an important role in stopping organized crime and corruption from damaging the environment by recognizing criminal patterns, making connections to larger illicit systems, and exposing these illegal infrastructures on a global scale. In 2021, we published more environmental investigations than ever as we continue to ramp up this area of our work. Here is just a sample.

"This story is the first time I've heard about deforestation in Nicaragua."

a new OCCRP Accomplice

"You can't investigate organized crime without talking about the environment because the environment is one of its main victims."

Paul Radu
OCCRP Co-founder

Ukrainian Police Probe Toxic Waste Shipped from World Bank-Backed Project in Montenegro

Date May 2021

Partners
MANS (Montenegro)

Bulgarian Coal Magnate's Plants May Have Saved Around 30M Euros by Under-Declaring Emissions

Date July 2021

Destroying Colombia's Rainforest in Pursuit of Gold

Date August 2021

Partners
Cuestión Pública (Colombia), Miami Herald (U.S.), La Liga Contra el Silencio (Colombia)

How Illegal Mining Fuels Pollution and Corruption in Colombia's Northwest

Date August 2021

Partners
Cuestión Pública (Colombia), La Liga Contra el Silencio (Colombia)

Nicaragua's Forgotten Deforestation Crisis

Date November 2021

Partners
Confidencial (Nicaragua), Onda Local (Nicaragua), Voz de Guanacaste (Costa Rica), Aristegui Noticias (Mexico), Mongabay Latin America, Latin American Center for Investigative Journalism (CLIP), InfoLibre (Spain), Miami Herald (U.S.)

Mexico's Dairy Industry is Destroying an Oasis that may Hold the Key to the Origins of Life

Date December 2021

Accelerating Impact

Launched in 2016, the Global Anti-Corruption Consortium (GACC) combines hard-hitting investigative journalism with skillful civil society advocacy to accelerate the fight against corruption. It brings together investigative reporting by OCCRP's global network of journalists and advocacy efforts driven by Transparency International (TI), including its 100 chapters around the world.

With OCCRP's data and evidence in hand, TI has effectively advocated for change at the highest levels of government and multilateral bodies, brought legal action, and pushed for meaningful reforms to combat corruption with impact recorded both immediately following and years after publication.

An external GACC evaluation conducted this year found a total 228 examples of real world impact in the initiative's first four years alone, including at least 70 instances when an institution took direct action such as firing someone, changing practice, or establishing an inquiry, along with dozens of corporate actions, law enforcement actions like arrests, as well as significant sanctions, and legislative and policy changes.

In 2021, the GACC continued to show results across the globe. Four years after OCCRP's 2017 Azerbaijani Laundromat investigation revealed a $2.9-billion money-laundering operation and slush fund run by Azerbaijan's ruling elite, an Italian court sentenced a former Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe member to four years in prison for accepting slush fund bribes to help mute Europe's criticism of Azerbaijan's human rights record. And an Azerbaijani couple paid $5.5 million to British authorities to settle a money laundering investigation opened by the National Crime Agency into the origin of the couple's wealth.

Following two years of TI's continued calls for an EU-wide banking oversight authority – rooted in OCCRP's 2019 Troika Laundromat investigation exposing a $4.6 billion money laundering scheme facilitated by banks in Lithuania – the European Commission is now working to establish such a mechanism.

And after TI pushed the U.K. government for more regulation on formation agents following a 2019 OCCRP investigation that showed how they are exploited by criminals, the National Crime Agency vowed to crack down on formation agents after conducting an official review that revealed the extent of their links to organized crime.

At the Summit for Democracy in December, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken committed increased U.S. government support for GACC and called on others to provide $10 million in new funding over the next year to help the consortium take its work to the next level. Bringing together leaders across governments, civil society, and the private sector, the summit kicked off a "year of action" that asked participants to invest in initiatives that will make democracies more resilient. GACC partners will work to leverage this opportunity to build multilateral support for our tested model in the hopes of securing enough additional resources to bring additional media and civil society partners into the consortium to generate even greater impact.

We are grateful to the mix of donors who have supported this unique partnership to date: the governments of Argentina, Australia, Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom, Taiwan and the United States, and the Open Society Foundations.

> "OCCRP gave its findings to TI just before they went public which allowed TI to be at the doors of the Council of Europe pushing for action, for official action. We saw immediate impact in terms of official resignations and an official investigation that was launched."

Camille Eiss, Chief of Global Partnerships and Policy, OCCRP in "Cross-Field Collaboration: How and Why Journalists and Civil Society Organizations Around the World Are Working Together" research report by the Center for Cooperative Media

> "An example of a project that had a very active follow-up campaign is the Azerbaijani Laundromat series, from the Global Anti-Corruption Consortium."

Center for Cooperative Media research report

Cutting Edge Tech, Data, and Research

The OCCRP tech, data, and research teams play key roles in keeping journalists safe and providing crucial information for follow-the-money investigations.

As our network continues to expand and digital threats increase, our tech team provides incident response support to our global network of journalists. Services range from analyzing phishing attacks to training journalists on how best to protect themselves to responding to security threats from authoritarian government clampdowns or other dangerous actors. This year, the team conducted forensic analysis of mobile phones to confirm that several journalists in our network had devices infected with **Pegasus software** and advised them on next steps. This type of discovery is devastating to journalists, who may have compromised sources or other sensitive information.

Our signature investigative data platform, **OCCRP Aleph**, is one of the largest databases in the industry, with 3+ billion searchable records and over 13,000 registered users. Available in six languages, OCCRP Aleph is a vast archive of entities that lets journalists search, investigate, and visualize data. The Aleph software is open source

and has steadily grown in popularity, now deployed by dozens of other media outlets and NGOs. As OCCRP maximizes use of data gathering from tools like satellites and drones, the data team is increasingly analyzing that data and creating the best ways to present it, like for the interactive investigation, **Nicaragua's Forgotten Deforestation Crisis**.

Our research arm, **OCCRP ID**, expanded this year, adding Latin America and South Asia researchers who helped field more than 1,000 requests from journalists in our member centers and network. The team of nine expert researchers and data specialists fluent in eight languages helped journalists track down companies, people, and assets. OCCRP ID also operated a remote fellowship with five journalists from our member centers, training them for a month on research techniques.
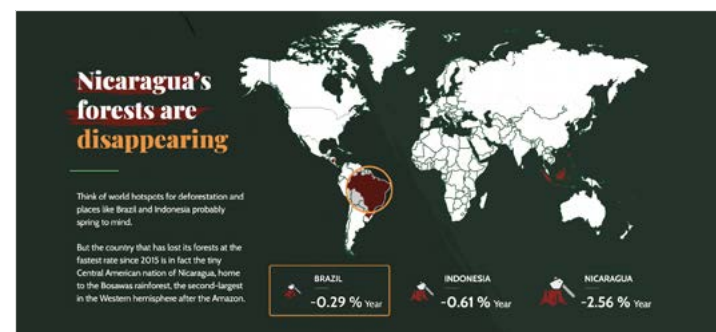
> **"OCCRP ID is a very useful feature of OCCRP and I thank you for helping me improve my stories, especially since I work with small newsrooms that can't otherwise afford access to these databases."** Name withheld

Nicaragua's forests are disappearing

Think of world hotspots for deforestation and places like Brazil and Indonesia probably spring to mind.

But the country that has lost its forests at the fastest rate since 2015 is in fact the tiny Central American nation of Nicaragua, home to the Bosawas rainforest, the second-largest in the Western hemisphere after the Amazon.

BRAZIL	INDONESIA	NICARAGUA
-0.29 % Year	-0.61 % Year	-2.56 % Year

WE HELP THE OCCRP NETWORK TRACE PEOPLE, COMPANIES, AND ASSETS ACROSS THE GLOBE

Accomplice Program

O CCRP's Accomplice program gives readers the opportunity to join our mission to expose crime and corruption and hold power to account. The first full year of the program, 2021 saw hundreds of people signing up to support OCCRP's fight for truth, justice, and accountability. Accomplice members receive benefits like access to our live events, which are discussions with our reporters and partners about our investigations or an area of expertise, like illicit finance in Africa. We are so grateful to those who have joined our network.

Why new OCCRP Accomplices donated

"Your investigations bring crucial additional or hidden information to the mainstream press."

"I believe in the OCCRP mission and the contribution and sacrifices made by the OCCRP staff."

"The OCCRP independently contributes to counteracting crime and anti-money laundering."

"OCCRP's reporting is of exceptionally high quality, on high-impact topics."

"You get it done."

"You guys do an amazing job - rock on!"

OCCRPACC**MPLICE

Film
OCCRP Productions

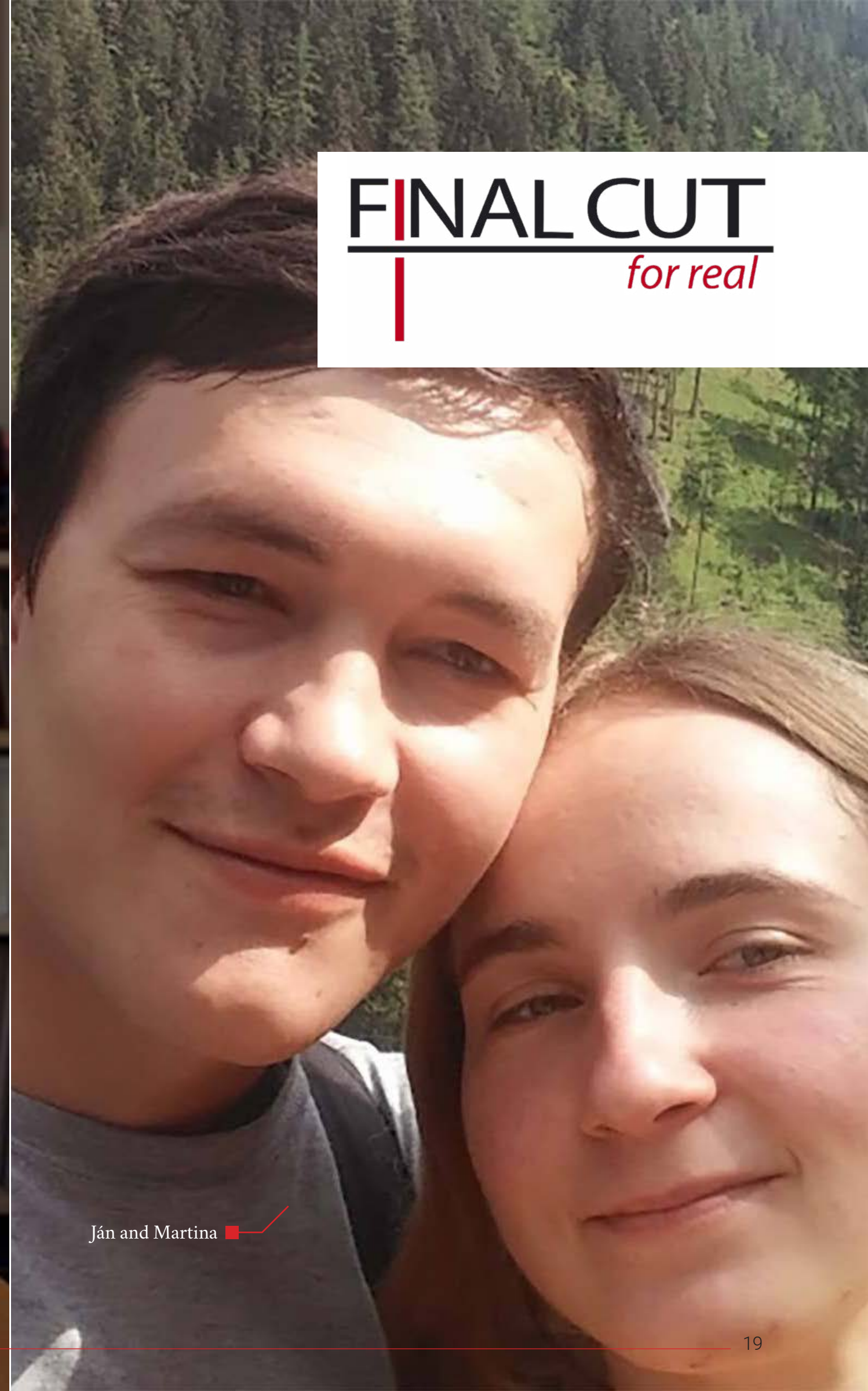
Pavla Holcová, an investigative journalist in the film

O CCRP's latest feature documentary, "The Killing of a Journalist," is complete and will premiere in the spring of 2022.

Directed by OCCRP journalist and producer Matt Sarnecki, the film tells the story of the 2018 murders of our Slovak colleague Ján Kuciak and his fiancee Martina Kušnírová, and how investigative journalists used leaked police files from the murder investigation to uncover vast corruption at the highest levels of Slovak society.

The film is produced by Signe Byrge Sørensen from Final Cut for Real, a five-time Oscar® nominated and four-time Sundance winning production company based in Denmark.

> "I made this film to honor the legacy of Ján and Martina, two young people who were working to build a better, more just Slovakia. I also made it because the story has a twist that tells a deeper, more shocking account of grand corruption — a never-before-seen blueprint of how it works — and is a testament to the power of investigative journalism."
>
> Matt Sarnecki
> Director, "The Killing of a Journalist"

FINAL CUT *for real*

Ján and Martina

Film

THE CAVIAЯ CONNECTION

"Caviar diplomacy is a main tool used by dictators…money showered on people in the West, from the politicians to the artists, this is how they maintain their power. What people don't realize in the West is that it's going to bite them back—big, big, big."

Paul Radu in the film "The Caviar Connection," directed by Benoit Bringer and written by Bringer and Laurent Richard of Forbidden Stories

How do dictatorships like Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan launder their reputations from despotic to democratic? The film, "The Caviar Connection" exposes how Lady Gaga, luxury gifts, and scandalous private wealth are used to wield a new "caviar diplomacy" around the world.

Directed by Benoit Bringer and written by Bringer and Laurent Richard of Forbidden Stories, the film features interviews with OCCRP editors, including Publisher Drew Sullivan, Co-founder Paul Radu, and Regional and Central Asia Editor Miranda Patrucic, about the 2017 Azerbaijani Laundromat investigation.

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE
POV

"Paul Radu, a Romanian investigative journalist specializing in transnational criminal activities in Eastern Europe, explains how journalists, fighting corruption locally, have learned to pool their resources internationally."

Point of View Magazine
Canada's Documentary Magazine

Press Freedom
Rising Threats

With increasingly authoritarian governments going to new lengths to silence critics, reporters across our global network and beyond continue to face intimidation, smear campaigns, and censorship. Independent journalism is now "completely or partially blocked" in more than 130 countries according to the Reporters Without Borders 2021 World Press Freedom Index.

Journalists at our member centers in Russia and Serbia were throttled this year by abusive government tactics. The Russian government named IStories a "foreign agent," ramping up a campaign that has seen some of the country's top independent media outlets effectively blacklisted this year.

In Serbia, KRIK ended the year battling nine "SLAPP" lawsuits — strategic lawsuits against public participation — which are brought against journalists in order to intimidate and silence them. This onslaught of SLAPPS appears to be part of a coordinated campaign by political powers to weaken KRIK and further quash independent media in the country.

These developments make one thing clear: Investigative reporting has given corrupt governments something to fear.
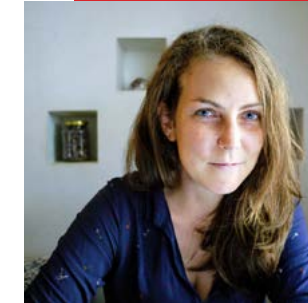
A main reason for the harsh crackdown is that investigative journalism has gotten so good at exposing autocrats' criminal and corrupt activities. Across the globe, reporters are using tools like open source satellite imagery for discovery and analysis. More data in different languages is online and media outlets around the world are helping each other access and interpret it. A robust spirit of collaboration has taken hold across the industry, motivated by the far-reaching impact we have seen from joint investigations spanning continents.

As we continue to support independent media and fight for a free press across the globe, we're grateful to those who have stepped up to defend and support independent journalism and freedom of expression.

"It's not a coincidence that Stevan and Roman have also done some of the most brilliant investigative reporting in their respective countries, exposing wrongdoing on the part of the powerful for years."

Julia Wallace Deputy Editor in Chief, OCCRP, in World Press Freedom Day video calling attention to threats against journalists in our network

"Impugning Mr. Dojčinović's character follows a stereotypical playbook. He has been accused of being a CIA agent. He has been linked to S&M sex clubs. He is constantly being sued. There are currently 10 cases open against him."

Anthony Feinstein
"Moral Courage" column

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

The KRIK team, based in Serbia and led by Editor-in-Chief Stevan Dojčinović, fourth from left.

The iStories team, based in Russia and led by Editor-in-Chief Roman Anin, seated on couch, far left.

Corrupt Person of the Year Award

There's only one prize whose winners include foul-mouthed Filipino leader Rodrigo Duterte, authoritarian Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, and cigarette-smuggling, gangster-loving Montenegrin Premier Milo Djukanovic.

It's OCCRP's "Corrupt Person of the Year" award, which since 2012 has singled out those who do the most to wreak havoc around the world through organized crime and corruption.

With this honor, OCCRP aims to promote accountability by shining a light on those judged to have done the most to bolster corruption and the political collusion that often accompanies it.

After a first round of nominations from journalists and members of the public, a group of judges with expertise in organized crime and corruption selects a winner and four runners-up.

The Winner for 2021

President Lukashenko

Belarusian President Aleksandr G. Lukashenko, Europe's brutal last dictator, is OCCRP's 2021 Person of the Year, in recognition of all he has done to advance organized criminal activity and corruption.

A panel of six journalists and scholars who study and report on corruption had no trouble selecting the post-Soviet autocrat, despite a record field of 1,167 nominees. It is the first time in a decade of handing out the Person of the Year global awards that the decision was unanimous.

Over the past year Lukashenko has generated headlines for:

- Channeling state money to a series of oligarchs close to the Lukashenko family

- Intercepting a Ryanair passenger plane carrying a Belarusian dissident and forcing it to land in Minsk, in violation of international laws on aviation

- Manufacturing a border crisis with the European Union by luring thousands of refugees to the borders of the bloc

- Promulgating misinformation and fake cures for COVID-19

"By playing politics with vulnerable people whom he lured to Belarus under false pretenses, Lukashenko broke new ground in cynicism and cruelty."

Louise Shelley
Director of George Mason University's Terrorism,Transnational Crime and Corruption Center and panel judge

Awards
Highlights

Winner
Pavla Holcová wins ICFJ Knight International Journalism Award

Holcová received this award that honors "outstanding journalism that has an impact" for her body of work, including her investigation into the brutal murder of her colleague Ján Kuciak, which unmasked the perpetrators and contributed to the downfall of the Slovak government.

Winner
"Eppy" Award from Editor & Publisher

OpenLux wins best collaborative investigative/enterprise reporting (1 million or more unique visitors)

OCCRP, Le Monde, IRPI, McClatchy/Miami Herald/El Nuevo Herald, IStories, Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism, KRIK, Bivol, Investigace.cz, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Le Soir, Woxx, Piaui, Tempo, Armando.Info, La Nacion, Inkyfada.

Winner
True Story Award

Khadija Sharife and Mark Anderson from OCCRP's Africa team won this award for their story The Great Gambia Heist: How Yahya Jammeh Stole a Country.

Gambia's former President Yahya Jammeh orchestrated the embezzlement of nearly US$1 billion of public funds and illegal timber revenue during his 22-year rule, looting the treasury in a long-running conspiracy that crippled one of the world's poorest countries.

Winner
First Prize Tackling Air Pollution

The Association of Journalists of Macedonia and the United Nations Development Programme gave this award to Investigative Lab Macedonia for their investigation and documentary about how dirty oil used to heat government buildings contributed to pollution in the country. The jury said that the investigation strengthened public awareness of the problem and offered solutions.

Awards
Highlights

Winner
IStories — The Investigative Reporting Award 2021 from the European Press Prize

Love, offshores, and administrative resources: How marrying Putin's daughter gave Kirill Shamalov a world of opportunity
by *Roman Anin, Alesya Marohovskaya, Irina Dolinina, Dmitry Velikovsky, Roman Shleynov, Sonya Savina, Olesya Shmagun, Denis Dmitriev, published by IStories and OCCRP*

Last year, IStories gained access to thousands of emails sent and received by Kirill Shamalov — Vladimir Putin's former son-in-law — that show the fantastic wealth and personal power that come with access to Russia's first family.

Winner
IJ4EU Impact Award

OCCRP led or was a partner in three out of the four winners of the IJ4EU Impact Award. OCCRP investigations **Troika Laundromat** and **Fraud Factory** both won awards.

The jury hailed Fraud Factory as an "impressive piece of old-fashioned, cross-border journalism." Jury chair Shaun Walker said: "The Fraud Factory was a tenacious piece of work that put human faces to a sad story of cross-border fraud."

OCCRP was a partner in **The Daphne Project**, led by Forbidden Stories, which picked up the unfinished work of Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, who was killed in October 2017 by a car bomb just steps from her home.

Walker said of the project: "We were all in agreement that The Daphne Project was a deserving winner, coordinating many journalists to continue Daphne Caruana Galizia's work and having a clear and important impact."

> "The Troika Laundromat was impressive for the sheer size of the team involved, matched by the size of the vast sums of money it was investigating."

Shaun Walker
The Guardian newspaper's central and eastern Europe correspondent and chair of the inaugural #IJ4EU Impact Award jury

Our Global Reach

European Union	**22.9%**
United States	**21.6%**
United Kingdom	**10.7%**
Russia	**5.9%**
Ukraine	**4.0%**
Canada	**3.1%**
Brazil	**2.0%**
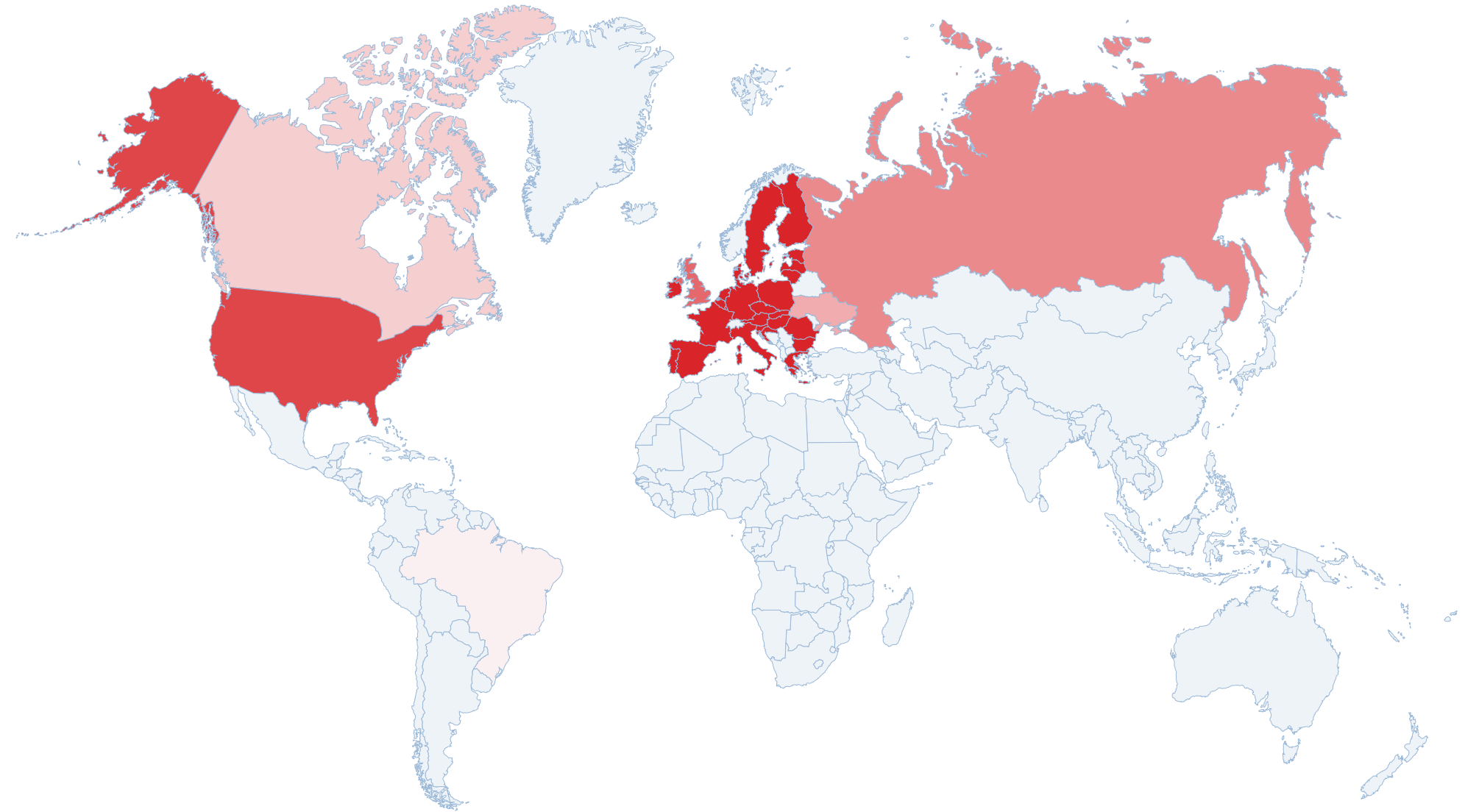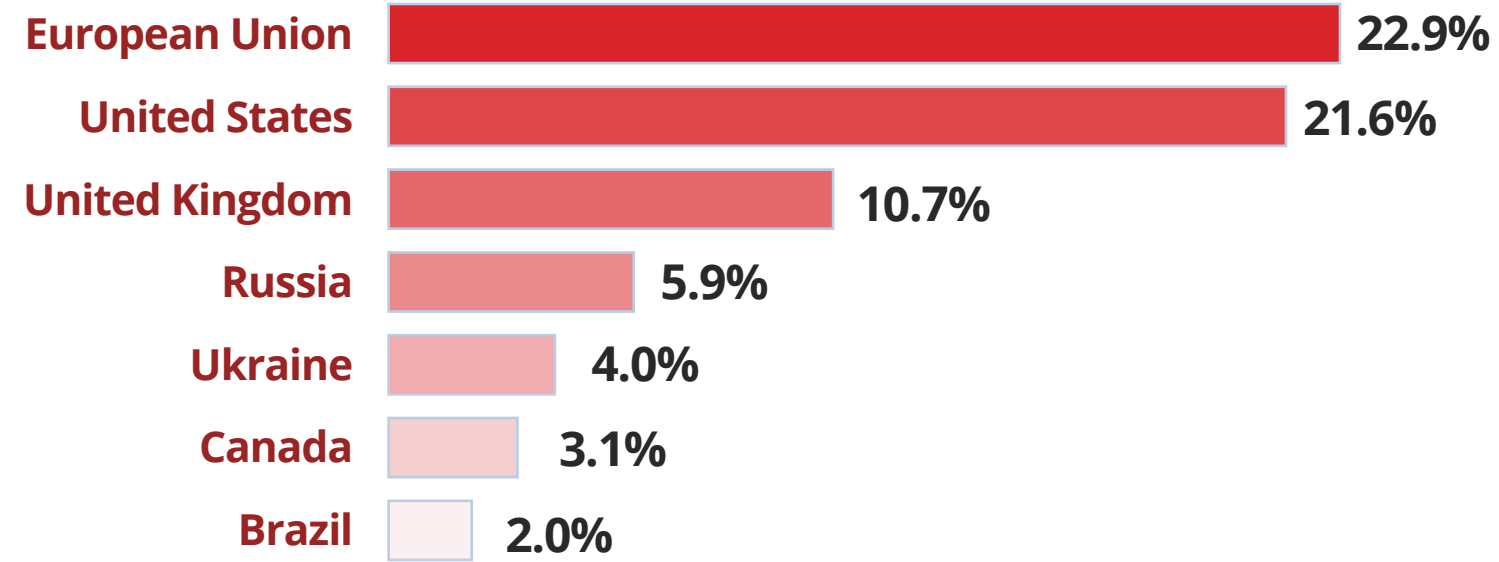
Our most read stories

691,141 readers

The Pegasus Project

576,600 readers

The Pandora Papers

388,871 readers

OpenLux

56,362 readers

Ownership of Chemicals that Exploded at Beirut Port Traces Back to Ukraine

45,771 readers

A Journalist's Undying Legacy

Strategic Plan Update

T he second year of implementing our three-year strategic plan saw clear progress with the organization hitting targeted benchmarks.

From expanding our work across the globe to boosting our membership program and securing more institutional donors, we made significant headway in achieving stated goals.

A roadmap to help scale our model and impact while ensuring we deliver on our mission, our strategic plan has five key focus areas:

1. Strengthen our journalism, innovation and audience strategy

2. Expand and equip the global network

3. Bolster the foundation for growth

4. Maximize our fiscal strength

5. Invest in our people and culture

Notable achievements include:

- Ramping up our teams in Africa, Latin America, Middle East, the Pacific Region, and North America

- Implementing new digital formats to maximize reader participation

- Expanding our partners and presence in the European Union and receiving more recognition for EU-related news

- Completing our second feature-length documentary and continuing to forge relationships with major production companies

- Increasing the number of organizations using their own version of OCCRP Aleph

- Launching a platform services package for member centers

- Improving our editorial management structure with clear chains of command and processes and enhanced use of tech tools to advance cross-regional reporting

- Bolstering our internal structures and policies to better support our teams and work, including improving budgeting and payroll processes and boosting human resources capabilities

- More than doubling donations from individual donors in the second year of the OCCRP Accomplice program

- Executing a revamped strategic fundraising strategy and continuing to grow our unrestricted revenue base

Looking Ahead

From moving our headquarters to the European Union to leveraging the Summit for Democracy to scale our Global Anti-Corruption Consortium, we look forward to making strides toward a number of longstanding organizational priorities in 2022.

Camille Eiss
Chief of Global Partnerships and Policy

We know that press freedom – and how journalists are treated in a country - is the bellwether of democracy. Too many journalists across the OCCRP network have been subject to the recent spike in vexatious lawsuits, or SLAPP suits, meant to intimidate and silence their consequential reporting. To confront the clear and present threat these suits pose around the world, OCCRP has been developing a low-cost pooled media insurance program that we plan to get off the ground next year. Beyond providing coverage and protection, the ultimate aim is to deter bad actors from waging these suits in the first place.

On the heels of the **Pegasus Project**, we are deeply appreciative to the donors who answered our call and understood the need to ramp up digital security across the OCCRP network. Beyond elevating security protocols, we look forward to bringing on a chief information security officer in the new year who will address the myriad risks our reporters face online, helping to keep them safe.

Summer 2022 will bring the launch of a long-awaited new OCCRP website, enabling new ways to present information and engage our readers. With a fresh visual design, more interactives, and the capacity to better connect with our raft of data, we are laying the foundation for new journalism formats that will allow readers to directly access the evidence behind our findings.

And after a major global expansion in 2021, we look forward to bringing our dispersed teams together in person after way too long — with many people meeting face-to-face for the first time.

As we head into a new year with a near 40% increase in our annual operating budget, we are so grateful to our partners and growing pool of donors whose support enables us to focus on driving forward our priorities and maximizing impact.

Camille Eiss
Chief of Global Partnerships and Policy

Board of Directors

President
Marina Gorbis

Marina Gorbis is the executive director of the Institute for the Future (IFTF). She created the Global Innovation Forum, a project comparing innovation strategies in different regions, founded the Global Ethnographic Network, and led IFTF's Technology Horizons Program, focusing on interaction between technology and social organizations. Marina has authored publications on international business and economics with an emphasis on regional innovation.

Director
Victor Jacobsson

Victor Jacobsson is an entrepreneur, investor, and advisor. He currently manages a private investment firm based in Stockholm. As an entrepreneur, Victor co-founded Klarna Bank in 2005 where he served in various roles, primarily as chief financial officer. Victor has a master's degree from the Stockholm School of Economics.

Director
Sue Gardner

Sue Gardner is a special advisor to the Wikimedia Foundation, the non-profit that operates Wikipedia. From 2007 until 2014 she was its executive director. Previously Sue was head of CBC.CA, the website for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and before that she was a journalist working in multiple media including the internet, newspapers, magazines, radio and TV. In 2011 Forbes magazine named Sue one of the world's 100 most powerful women. Sue serves on boards and advisory committees for a half-dozen global non-profit, educational and grantmaking organizations, primarily related to technology, media, gender and digital freedoms.

Director / Member Representative
Saska Cvetkovska

Saska Cvetkovska is an investigative reporter and media freedom activist. She is a co-founder of Investigative Reporting Lab – Macedonia, an OCCRP member center that fights disinformation with investigative reporting that uses interdisciplinary approaches, including technology and academic research. She was a lead reporter on the OCCRP project Spooks and Spin — Information Wars in the Balkans, about how Macedonia became a haven for propaganda.

Saska has worked on a number of national and cross-border investigations, including those that exposed corrupt government officials and the illicit arms trade in the Balkans. She developed Mediapedia, a database of media ownership in Macedonia, and Getdata, an online tool that helps researchers and reporters find data online and offline in Macedonia and the region. Saska has won more than ten domestic and international journalism awards. In 2018 she was elected by Macedonian journalists to represent them on the board of directors of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, an organization that works to improve working conditions for reporters in the country.

Secretary
David Boardman

David Boardman is the dean of the Temple University School of Journalism. He is the former executive editor at The Seattle Times and served as senior vice president 2010-2013. He is also vice president of the American Society of News Editors.

David sits on several boards in addition to that of OCCRP, including the Center for Investigative Reporting and the Reporters' Committee for Freedom of the Press. He is a former two-time president of Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc. Under his leadership The Seattle Times won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting and the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for breaking news.

Treasurer
Anders Alexanderson

Anders Alexanderson is executive vice president at Stockholm School of Economics in Riga (SSE Riga). He is one of the founders of The Centre for Media Studies at SSE Riga, which provides further education in investigative reporting for journalists from former Soviet republics and Russia.

Anders has a background in the media in Sweden and has held management positions at several newspapers. He is a media entrepreneur and was the founder of one of the first internet consulting companies in western Sweden and one of the first private radio stations in Sweden. Before his position at SSE Riga he worked in public affairs in Scandinavia, the Baltics, and Russia.

Ex officio director
Drew Sullivan

Drew Sullivan is a social entrepreneur and co-founder and publisher of OCCRP. He founded the organization in 2007 with Paul Radu. Before that, in 2004, he founded and edited the Center for Investigative Reporting, the leading investigative center in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Under his direction, OCCRP has won numerous awards, including the Daniel Pearl Award, the Global Shining Light Award, the Tom Renner Award for Crime Reporting, the European Press Prize, and the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship.

OCCRP's work on the Panama Papers with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists won a 2017 Pulitzer Prize in Journalism. Before becoming a journalist, he was a structural dynamicist on the space shuttle project for Rockwell Space Systems. He has a degree in Aerospace Engineering from Texas A&M University.

Ex officio director
Paul Radu

Paul Radu is co-founder and chief of innovation at OCCRP. He founded the organization in 2007 with Drew Sullivan. He leads OCCRP's major investigative projects, scopes regional expansion, and develops new strategies and technology to expose organized crime and corruption across borders.

Paul initiated and led the award-winning Russian, Azerbaijani, and Troika Laundromat investigations, and coined the term "laundromat" to define large scale, all-purpose financial fraud vehicles that are used to launder billions of dollars. He is a co-creator of Investigative Dashboard — a research desk that sifts through datasets to help journalists trace people, companies, and assets — and the Visual Investigative Scenarios software, a tool that lets reporters sketch out the people, institutions, and connections in criminal networks so people can easily follow complex investigations. He is also a co-founder of RISE Project, a platform for investigative reporters in Romania.

Paul is a winner of the Daniel Pearl Award, the Global Shining Light Award, the European Press Prize, and the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship, and was part of the Panama Papers team that won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize in Journalism. He has also authored or contributed to handbooks and digital guides such as "Against Corruption: a collection of essays," "The Data Journalism Handbook," and "Follow the Money — A Digital Guide to Tracking Corruption."

Our Supporters

Catharine Hawkins Foundation	Skoll Foundation
European Instrument For Democracy And Human Rights	Slovak Agency For International Development Cooperation
Ford Foundation	The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
Fritt Ord Foundation	
Luminate	The Bay And Paul Foundation
Ministry Of Foreign Affairs Of Denmark	United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
National Endowment For Democracy	University Of Missouri School Of Journalism
Oak Foundation	U.S. Agency For International Development
Open Society Foundations	
Rockefeller Brothers Fund	U.S. Department Of State
Sigrid Rausing Trust	Vital Strategies

Our Role
Exposing crime and corruption at the highest levels.

OCCRP journalists
Working on the collaborative Pegasus Project investigation
July 2021

Financial Statements

Combined Statements of Financial Position
as of December 31, 2021 and 2020

Assets	2021	2020
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 6,261,594	$ 4,759,839
Advances receivable	522,345	53,239
Grants receivable	6,299,905	4,230,409
Prepaid expenses	-	15,000
Fixed assets, net of accumulated depreciation of $15,295 and $10,952 for 2021 and 2020, respectively	8,311	12,654
TOTAL ASSETS	**$ 13,092,155**	**$ 9,071,141**

Liabilities and net assets

Liabilities

	2021	2020
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	$ 189,484	$ 296,387
Refundable advances	387,817	198,618
Total liabilities	577,301	495,005

Net assets

	2021	2020
Without donor restrictions	1,213,945	748,462
With donor restrictions	11,300,909	7,827,674
Total net assets	12,514,854	8,576,136
TOTAL ASSETS	**$ 13,092,155**	**$ 9,071,141**

Combined Statements of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

for the years ended December 31, 2021 and 2020

	2021			**2020**		
Revenue	**Without donor restrictions**	**With donor restrictions**	**Total**	**Without donor restrictions**	**With donor restrictions**	**Total**
Grants and contributions:						
U.S. Government	$ 5,192,396	$ -	$ 5,192,396	$ 5,008,300	$ -	$ 5,008,300
Private foundations and other governments	-	9,215,816	9,215,816	-	2,544,585	2,544,585
Individuals	322,957	-	322,957	344,791	-	344,791
Consulting and other revenue	53,966	-	53,966	492,774	-	492,774
Net assets released from donor restrictions	5,408,487	(5,408,487)	-	4,242,155	(4,242,155)	-
TOTAL REVENUE	10,977,806	3,807,329	14,785,135	10,088,020	(1,697,570)	8,390,450
Expenses						
Program Services	9,445,904	-	9,445,904	8,446,162	-	8,446,162
Management and General	1,065,788	-	1,065,788	1,475,371	-	1,475,371
TOTAL EXPENSES	10,511,692	-	10,511,692	9,921,533	-	9,921,533
Changes in net assets before other item	466,114	3,807,329	4,273,443	166,487	(1,697,570)	(1,531,083)
Other item						
Currency (loss) gain	(613)	(334,094)	(334,725)	(714)	87,534	86,820
Changes in net assets	465,483	3,473,235	3,938,718	165,773	(1,610,036)	(1,444,263)
Net assets at beginning of year	748,462	7,827,674	8,576,136	582,689	9,437,710	10,020,399
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	**$ 1,213,945**	**$ 11,300,909**	**$ 12,514,854**	**$ 748,462**	**$ 7,827,674**	**$ 8,576,136**

Combined Statements of Functional Expenses

for the years ended December 31, 2021 and 2020

	2021			2020		
	Program Services	Management and General	Total Expenses	Program Services	Management and General	Total Expenses
Personnel costs	$ 3,473,846	$ 520,707	$ 3,994,571	$ 3,375,979	$ 521,118	$ 3,897,097
Contract services	3,092,935	96,552	3,189,487	1,987,085	667,610	2,654,695
Facilities and equipment	19,561	166,218	185,779	191,114	48,648	239,762
Donations	-	-	-	60,040	-	60,040
Travel and meetings	342,088	23,295	365,383	311,657	27,919	339,576
Operations	580,520	66,847	647,367	461,602	75,055	536,657
Insurance expense	554	192,169	192,169	-	135,021	135,021
Program expenses and subgrants	1,936,382	-	1,936,382	2,058,685	-	2,058,685
TOTAL	**$ 9,445,904**	**$ 1,065,788**	**$ 10,511,692**	**$ 8,446,162**	**$ 1,475,371**	**$ 9,921,533**

Combined Statements of Cash Flows
for the years ended December 31, 2021 and 2020

Cash flows from operating activities	2021	2020
Changes in net assets	$ 3,938,718	$ (1,444,263)
Adjustments to reconcile changes in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		4,343
Depreciation	4,343	
(Increase) decrease in:		221,408
Advances receivable	(469,106)	3,277,705
Grants receivable	(2,069,496)	16,354
Prepaid expenses	15,000	
(Decrease) increase in:		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	(106,903)	39,771
Due to sub-recipients	-	(48,951)
Refundable advances	189,199	32,479
Net cash provided by operating activities	**1,501,755**	**2,098,846**
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	1,501,755	2,098,846
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	4,759,839	2,660,993
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF YEAR	**$ 6,261,594**	**$ 4,759,839**

Annual Report 2021
It takes a network.

OCCRP

ORGANIZED CRIME
AND CORRUPTION
REPORTING PROJECT

www.occrp.org