
Media Legal Defence Initiative

(trading as Media Defence)

Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2024

Registered name: Media Legal Defence Initiative.

Registered charity in England and Wales (1128789).

A company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (06621203).

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Reference and administrative information

Company number Country of incorporation

06621203
England and Wales

Charity number Country of registration

1128789
England and Wales

Registered office and operational address

Holborn Gate, 330 High Holborn,
London WC1V 7QH, United Kingdom

Key management

Carlos GAIO (Chief Executive Officer)

Trustees

Trustees, who are also directors under company law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Maria Teresa Ronderos (Chair from March 2024)
David Jones (Vice-Chair from March 2024)
Peter Hyde
Catherine Anite
Galina Arapova
Chivonne Preston
Elizabeth Rivera
Jia Yi Rina See (Appointed in January 2025)
Layal Bahnam (Appointed in May 2025)
Rachel Oldroyd (Appointed in May 2025)
Sarah Bull (Stepped down in March 2024)
Caroline Frost (Stepped down in May 2024)
Steven Finizio (Stepped down in December 2024)
Victoria Dean (Stepped down in May 2025)

Bankers

Triodos Bank	Barclays Bank
Deanery Street	1 Churchill Place
Bristol	London
BS1 5AS	E14 5HP

Auditor



Sayer Vincent LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor
110 Golden Lane, London, EC1Y 0TG



Trustees' Annual Report

The trustees present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024. The trustees review the aims, objectives and activities of the Media Legal Defence Initiative (hereinafter Media Defence) each year. This report looks at what Media Defence has achieved in the reporting period. The trustees report the success of each key activity and the benefits that Media Defence has brought to those groups of people that it is set up to help. The review also helps the trustees to ensure the charity's aims, objectives and activities remain focused on its stated purposes. Reference and administrative information set out on page 3 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the memorandum and articles of association, the requirements of a directors' report as required under company law, and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.



Objectives and Activities

Charitable Objectives

Media Defence's charitable objectives are to promote human rights throughout the world, in particular through protecting freedom of speech and the right to free expression, and to advance education in law, including human rights and media law.

Mission

Media Defence's core mission is to ensure legal protection of journalists and media workers under threat for reporting on issues of public interest, in the belief that freedom of expression is essential to holding power to account.

Mandate

Media Defence works globally, where there is the greatest need, to ensure legal defence and protection of journalists, citizen journalists and media outlets from legal threats related to their journalism that violate the right to freedom of expression, ensuring that they can continue to report on issues of public interest.



Main activities

Emergency Defence

Media Defence provides free emergency legal assistance to journalists and independent media in need across the world. We support the legal defence of journalists and media houses when they are sued or prosecuted, and we help them bring legal action to compel the state to protect their rights where these have been violated, including to investigate abuses and bring perpetrators of attacks to justice. Our assistance can be in the form of a grant to a local lawyer to fund the legal defence of a journalist or media outlet, and/or pro bono legal support by our in-house legal team. We also help identify a suitable lawyer where necessary.

We provide assistance to all requests for emergency legal support that fall within our mandate where we are the only realistic avenue to provide the help required. In the event that we do not have the financial ability to support all cases within our mandate, we prioritise cases where there is a real risk that the case will result in the imprisonment of the journalist concerned, or the case is of potential strategic importance.

Strategic Litigation

We undertake strategic litigation to improve the climate for press freedom worldwide. We directly represent journalists in cases before influential domestic courts and international tribunals, intervene in cases that are already under way, and we support local lawyers to do the same.

Our strategic litigation priorities are:

- 1) obtaining redress for journalists who have become victims of violence and harassment and
- 2) protecting free speech online. In order to respond to the rapidly changing freedom of expression landscape, we also litigate other strategic cases that offer an important opportunity to advance media freedom standards.



Local Legal Capacity Building

We build local legal capacity to defend journalists in two ways:

1. Grants to partner organisations

Media Defence provided grants of up to £30,000 in 2024 and added value support to partner organisations in countries or regions where there is a strong need for legal support for journalists and where it can be difficult for independent media to obtain quality and affordable legal support. This support enables them to provide legal defence to journalists in their countries.

By strategically selecting partner organisations in regions around the world and building and strengthening their legal capacity, we are able to establish a more sustainable infrastructure for quality media defence at the national level. Working with and through partner organisations also boosts the availability, speed, value for money and sustainability of legal defence for journalists at a national level. Partners are knowledgeable of domestic laws and the political and cultural context; they are able to move nimbly, providing support faster and with lower cost than would otherwise be possible.

We assess partnership applications on the following criteria:

- The need in the country or region concerned;
- Legal capacity within the applicant organisation;
- Administrative and financial capacity within the applicant organisation;
- The existence of other organisations offering legal defence to journalists and media in the applicant organisation's country;
- Financial need / availability of alternative sources of funding.

2. Training of lawyers

Lawyers are our primary partners in defending the media and it is of paramount importance that they have the expertise necessary to successfully defend journalists under threat. We run litigation surgeries and provide 'on the job' mentoring for lawyers to develop their technical expertise in litigating freedom of expression cases, ultimately building strong legal communities able to defend journalists, citizen journalists and media outlets and promote media freedom through the courts. The trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. All Media Defence's charitable activities focus on ensuring legal protection of journalists in the belief that freedom of expression is essential to hold those with power to account. They are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the public benefit. Media Defence does not engage in political campaigning.



Achievements and Performance



Highlights of the Year

In 2024, the global landscape for press freedom remained deeply concerning. The failure of governments and political authorities to protect independent journalism — and, in many cases, their active effort to undermine it — was starkly evident. Journalists faced ongoing threats, from spyware, abusive lawsuits and restrictive litigation to harassment, arrests, violence, and killings. Over the past five years, press freedom has continued to decline and civic space has steadily shrunk across the globe. Protecting press freedom depends on strong, accessible legal defence — and the need has never been greater. As a result, our work remains crucial, defending those on the frontlines of press freedom.

716

**Total number of
active cases***

228

New cases in 2024

150

**New emergency
defence cases**

78

New strategic cases

19

**Number of active
partner organisations**

133

**Lawyers engaged
in legal trainings**

*Ongoing cases up to 31 Dec 2024, plus the number of closed cases in 2024

Standing Up for Journalists Worldwide

In 2024, we supported 228 new cases defending journalists and independent media outlets. Of these, 78 were strategic cases — chosen for their potential to drive systemic change and improve the broader media environment.

But new cases are only part of the picture. With litigation often spanning years, our team worked on or monitored a total of 716 active cases in 87 countries, a 20% increase from 2023. This sharp rise reflects both the growing need for legal support and the deepening threats to press freedom globally.

Confronting Emerging Threats

Throughout the year, we tracked emerging tactics, from foreign agent type laws to extra-territorial jurisdiction used to silence critical voices, and responded with targeted legal action and support at national, regional, and international levels. These efforts ensure that our strategies remain adaptive and effective in an ever-changing landscape.

Supporting Our Global Network of Press Freedom Lawyers

In 2024, we worked closely with **19 funded partners across the world**, enabling them to continue delivering expert legal support where it's needed most. Recognising the increasingly repressive environments many of our partners face, we've prioritised more flexible, responsive support. We held **three partner convening events**, in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and Europe, providing continued support to our grantees, facilitating collaboration and knowledge exchange to enhance the impact of our funding and ensure the effective delivery of their vital work.

We significantly **advanced our capacity-strengthening and training initiatives**. We continued the delivery of our multi-lingual litigation surgeries while expanding to offer our first MENA-based workshop. These directly strengthen the skills and networks of legal professionals working to defend freedom of expression. We launched the second phase of our **peer-to-peer mentorship programme**, which matched cross-regional lawyers to develop their expertise, build confidence, and offer sustained support. This iteration introduced our inaugural cross-regional, **women-only peer mentorship programme**, aimed at empowering women lawyers engaged in issues of freedom of expression.

Expanding Access to Legal Knowledge

We enhanced our Resource Hub, a free online platform offering over 250 legal resources across five global regions. In 2024, we expanded the Hub's legal content on freedom of expression to include more English, Spanish and French language materials. We also added resources in Portuguese, Arabic and Farsi for the first time.



Emergency Defence

We step in when it matters most — providing emergency support to journalists facing legal threats designed to silence them. Through rapid-response grants and pro bono legal assistance, we help them stand their ground, defend their rights, and keep telling the stories that matter.

150

**Number of new
emergency
defence cases**

392

**Total active emergency
defence cases**

Most cases by type:

Civil defamation/libel	40
SLAPP	34
Criminal defamation/libel	19
Other Criminal	19
Counter-Terrorism /National Security	11
Administrative measures/sanctions	5
Disinformation, False News, and Misinformation	5

Most represented countries for the new emergency defence cases:

Brazil	52
Turkey	24
Nigeria	10
Kyrgyzstan	7
France	6
Azerbaijan	5
Thailand	5

On the Frontlines Without a Newsroom: Why a Broad Definition of Journalism Is Key to Our Emergency Defence Programme

In 2024, the majority of the journalists we supported through our Emergency Defence programme were not affiliated with large or established media houses—they were freelancers, citizen journalists, or individuals working with small, independent outlets.

These journalists are reporting on issues of crucial public interest, including corruption, politics, environmental harm, and police or state violence. Over a quarter of this reporting was published via blogs and social media platforms — reflecting the evolving landscape of journalism today.

As independent media is increasingly targeted, dismantled, or forced into exile, especially under autocratic regimes, citizen journalists often step in to fill the void. With growing internet access and cheaper technology, the line between professional and citizen journalism continues to blur.

However, these individuals are more vulnerable: they often work without the backing of an institution and are frequently excluded from legal definitions of journalism, making them easy targets for repressive laws and state harassment.

That's why our emergency defence work is grounded in a broad, inclusive definition of journalism — because press freedom depends on defending all who seek to inform the public.



Strategic Litigation

We litigate strategic cases in courts around the world to push back against unjust laws and protect press freedom.

Our focus is on cases with the power to shape the legal landscape for journalists everywhere. From online speech and privacy to surveillance, arbitrary detention, and impunity for violence, we challenge the systems that threaten free expression and fight for lasting change.

78

Number of new strategic cases

324

Total active strategic cases

We took the most strategic cases in 2024 in:

Azerbaijan	23
Colombia	8
Brazil	5
Turkey	5

Most 2024 new cases related to:

Spyware and Surveillance	16
Other Criminal	6
Violence and Bodily Harm	6
SLAPP	5
Arbitrary Detention	5
Closure of Media Outlet	5



Legal Capacity Strengthening

We strengthen local legal capacity to defend journalists through knowledge sharing, litigation surgeries for lawyers and support for national legal centres. With our funding and practical support, our partners can help journalists more quickly and with the benefit of their expertise in countries where the need for our support is very high.

19

Partner grants approved

408

Cases litigated by partners

22

Lawyers started our 2024 peer-to-peer mentorship programme

2

New partners funded

5

Litigation surgeries

133

Lawyers attended our capacity strengthening activities

A global network of lawyers defending Journalists

In 2024, Media Defence delivered a mix of in-person and online activities to strengthen our global network of lawyers defending journalists. This included five litigation surgeries—four in person and one online—quarterly know-how sessions, and our peer-to-peer mentoring programme. A total of 133 lawyers took part, enhancing legal expertise, fostering collaboration, and expanding our community.

This year marked two firsts: our inaugural litigation surgery in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and our first Portuguese-language surgery in Lusophone Africa.

Spotlight: Middle East and North Africa Litigation Surgery

Media Defence's first litigation surgery in the MENA region brought together 12 lawyers from eight countries. The training was designed to reflect the region's particularly complex environment for journalists, shaped by authoritarian regimes, limited legal recourse, and international sanctions. The training covered regional case law, digital rights, and best practices in defending the press. Lawyers reported that the experience not only deepened their understanding of applicable strategies but also created essential space for regional solidarity.

Spotlight: Lusophone Africa Litigation Surgery

In July 2024, Media Defence hosted a Lusophone Africa litigation surgery in Nairobi, Kenya, bringing together 12 Portuguese-speaking lawyers from Sub-Saharan African countries. The three-day, in-person workshop focused on strengthening participants' expertise in freedom of expression and digital rights litigation. The programme also fostered cross-border collaboration and helped build a sustainable network of digital rights defenders in Lusophone Africa.

Spotlight: South and Southeast Asia Litigation Surgery: Empowering Women Lawyers

Since 2021, Media Defence is building legal communities of women lawyers who are working to defend, promote, and strengthen freedom of expression online. In September 2024, we held our first South and Southeast Asia Women Lawyers' Litigation Surgery in Kathmandu, Nepal. The three-day training brought together 16 women lawyers from seven countries across the region.

"Participating in the litigation surgery was an incredible experience that transcended borders. Being in an all-women space fostered hope, support, and safety. I believe I've formed friendships that will last and fuel future collaboration."

— Anonymous participant

Peer-to-Peer Mentorship Programme

In 2024, we launched the second phase of our peer support mentorship programme, which matched cross-regional lawyers to develop their expertise, build confidence, and offer sustained support. This iteration also introduced our inaugural cross-regional, women-only lawyer mentorship programme, aimed at empowering women legal professionals.



Legal Capacity Strengthening Working with Funded Partners

Established in 2009 the programme funds local legal centres worldwide that focus on the defence of journalists. We believe building partnerships with national media defence centres is vital. These partnerships facilitate culturally sensitive and sustainable protection for journalists facing legal threats.

In 2024 we awarded more than £500,000 in grants to partner organisations to run media defence centres and worked in partnership with 19 organisations operating in Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East and North Africa. Our financial and legal support enabled our partners to litigate 408 cases across a range of freedom of expression issues, nationally and internationally. We also held three partner convening events, in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and Europe, providing continued support to our grantees, facilitating collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Our Partners in 2024

In Europe, we support organisations working on pressing media freedom issues. Our partners the **Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights in Poland (HFHR)**, **Ossigeno per l'Informazione** in Italy, and the **Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU)** in Hungary worked on several cases relating to SLAPPs and Pegasus spyware.

We also support the efforts of **Human Rights Platform (HRP)** in Ukraine to continue providing journalists with much needed legal defence. This area of work has proved crucial given the ongoing war.

In Turkey, the **Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA)** and the **Foundation for Society and Legal Studies (TOHAV)** continued to defend journalists accused of incitement to terrorism, criminal defamation or anti-State rhetoric for their reporting critical of the government.

In Latin America, we worked with the **Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP)** in Colombia to support journalists who have been physically abused as a result of their work, and to fight legal challenges to rectify or remove online content. We worked with the **Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism (Abraji)** in Brazil. Additionally, we are now working with **Propuesta Cívica**, an organisation in Mexico, and **Red Centroamericana de Periodistas** – vital partnerships given the risks journalists face in the region.

We have partnerships with **Le Collectif des Associations Contre l'Impunité au Togo (CACIT)** in Togo and **Campaign for Free Expression (CFE)** in South Africa. These organisations provide legal assistance in court and undertake precedent-setting legal action on press freedom cases.

Finally, we strengthened our work in Asia. We supported the **Media Policy Institute** (Kyrgyzstan), **Legal Aid for Cambodia** (Cambodia), **Digital Rights Nepal**, and two additional partners in South Asia.

We also support one partner organisation in the Middle East and North Africa, and another in Eastern Europe.



Impact Monitoring: 2024 Journalist Impact Survey

In March 2024, we published our 8th Journalist Impact Survey. This Survey provides an important opportunity to learn from journalists we supported during the year. The report shares findings and observations on the effectiveness and long-term impact of our legal and financial help, as well as the threats and trends affecting the journalists we support around the world. We are pleased with the strong feedback about our communications and the quality of our legal support.

Key findings on threats facing journalists:

80% of respondents believed that they would face some form of legal action in the future as a result of their journalistic activity.

58% of respondents cited reporting on corruption as the public issue most likely to result in legal action.

Journalists who took part also reported facing legal threats for reporting on crime and justice, national security, indigenous and minority rights, environment and energy & women's rights.

Key findings about our support:

71% of respondents reported feeling satisfied or extremely satisfied with the outcome of their case.

100% of respondents would recommend our support to other journalists facing legal action.

71% of respondents believe that their case had a positive wider impact, either in their country or their region.

92% of respondents have continued to practice journalism since the conclusion of their case.



Looking Forward: Our 2025 – 2029 Strategy

Since 2008, Media Defence has supported over 2,000 cases in 120 countries, helping journalists fight back against those trying to silence them.

During our 2020–2024 strategy period, we aimed to scale up our support — and we did. We approved over 500 legal cases across 100+ countries, disbursing more than £1.5 million in grants.

Our capacity-building efforts included 78 partner grants, 12 litigation surgeries, peer mentoring, regionally focused legal resources and convenings — through these activities we supported 351 lawyers.

Looking Forward: Our New Strategy

While we're proud of what we've achieved over the past four years, the growing rise of autocracy and increasingly complex threats to journalists demand that we adapt and go further.

As we look ahead, Media Defence is poised to build on its foundations — expanding our reach, deepening our impact, and raising our ambition.

At this pivotal moment, we are sharpening our focus around four urgent priorities:

Violence Against Journalists, Lawfare, Digital Rights, and Fighting Impunity & Promoting Accountability.

These areas will anchor our work and drive our mission forward. Our new strategy is built around four mutually reinforcing goals designed to ensure we remain a vital line of defence for journalists worldwide.

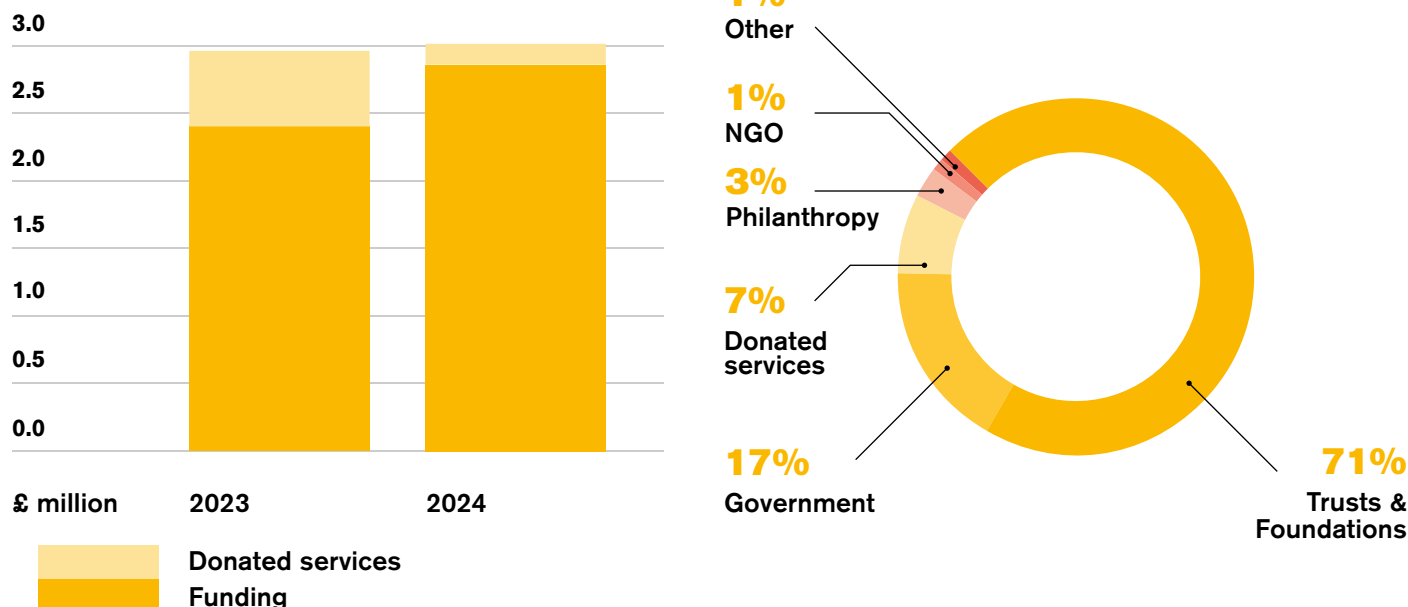


Financial Review

Our Spending

Our Income and Expenditure

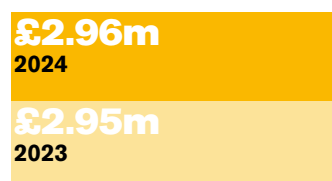
Income



In **2024**, we received total incoming resources of **£3,011,724** of which **£190,331** correspond to donated services. Our overall income from donations increased by **5%**. The total donations excluding the donated services increased by **19%**.

61% of incoming resources from donations were restricted to either a region or a theme. **39%** of funding was unrestricted. Donated services constituted **10%** of the restricted donations, compared to **27%** in **2023**.

Expenditure



2024 saw a **0.4%** increase in expenditure from **£2.95** million in **2023**, to **£2.96** million in **2024**. This year, 27% of the expenditure was on strategic litigation, 28% on emergency defence, 24% on support to NGOs, 18% was for capacity building and legal training and 3% on fundraising.

Our total support and governance costs in **2024** were **£522,954**, compared to **£498,211** in **2023**, representing 18% of our total expenditure (compared to 17% in 2023). 3% of our total expenditure was spent on raising funds.

2023: 15 grants to national legal defence centres approved
2024: 19 grants to national legal defence centres approved

Overall Picture

£50.04k

Net income /
(expenditure)
for the year

We closed the year with a net **surplus of £50.04K**. The liquidity ratio was **2.2** compared to **2.00** in **2023**.



Financial Review

Principal risks and uncertainties

The Board of Trustees, management team and staff actively discuss, manage and mitigate risk throughout the year. Media Defence has a risk policy and risk register which are reviewed and updated regularly. Strategic risks are owned by the Board and considered at least annually, while management of other risks is delegated to management who report the effectiveness of key controls to the Board.

The following risks have the greatest overall potential impact on Media Defence in 2025.

Cyber Security and Information Technology Risk

The most significant risk currently facing the organisation relates to cyber security and information technology. A malicious cyber-attack could lead to inability to access data and/or loss of data, including information that might endanger our beneficiaries, and loss of funds. We mitigate this risk by performing regular internal and external reviews of digital security threats, upgrading procedures and planning, increasing staff awareness and regular penetration testing of our website.

Financial risk, including worldwide inflationary pressures

International conflicts, changes in government policies have fuelled higher inflation. While we are not dependant on individual giving and therefore not impacted by a decrease in individual donations, the value of our multi-year funding decreased. At the same time, the demand for our support as well as our operational costs increased. We mitigate this risk by investing in fundraising and communications and by diversifying our funding streams.

We regularly report on our financial performance and position to ensure that the financial risks to our organisation over this strategy period are well understood and appropriately managed. We also conduct periodic reviews of staff salaries and salary scales to ensure staff retention and monitor budgets and forecasts on a monthly basis.

Reserves policy and going concern

We have a reserves policy, which defines the level of funds that should be held to ensure we can continue to operate. The reserves policy identifies and distinguishes between restricted and unrestricted reserves, and the level of unrestricted reserves held is informed by income and expenditure forecasts based on planned activities and analysis of potential risk.

The Trustees conduct yearly reviews of the charity's reserves to ensure they remain sufficient and appropriately allocated to support the charity's objectives.

Transfer of Designated Funds to General Funds

During the financial year, the Trustees conducted a review of the charity's designated funds and resolved to transfer £365,175 previously designated into the general funds. This decision ensures that the charity maintains sufficient resources to responsibly manage its financial commitments while continuing to support its mission and services.

Following the transfer, the total Unrestricted Funds as of 31st December 2024 stands at £1,056,442.

The Board of Trustees has determined, in line with the organisation's Reserves Policy, that Media Defence requires reserves of £500,478 to be held to ensure, that as a minimum, we can meet any costs of closing the organisation whilst remaining operational for a period of six months, to be able to ethically exit existing agreements, cases and partnerships.

Media Defence currently holds a level of reserves exceeding the six-month target required by our policy. These funds will be utilised to implement strategic initiatives, programmes, and other planned activities aligned with the charity's mission in 2025.

Trustees have made an assessment of the impact of the risks on the charity's operations and have concluded that, despite the wider risks and uncertainties facing large sectors of society, Media Defence has the ability and intention to continue as a going concern. The reasons for this affirmation are:

- Cash flow forecasts for the next 18 months have been reviewed and Media Defence is confident
- that adequate resources are available to cover foreseeable expenditure;
- Media Defence has adequate reserves to cover any unrealised expected funding; and
- Media Defence has adequate management, programme and support expertise in place to discharge the day-to-day and long-term programme of activities.

The Charity recognises the potential for substantial, unforeseen reductions in funding and is committed to ensuring the continuity of its mission during such events. The following steps will be taken to mitigate the impact:

- **Immediate Assessment:** The Board of Trustees and senior leadership will convene promptly to evaluate the scale and implications of the funding cut, identifying the areas of highest financial risk.
- **Prioritisation of Core Activities:** Non-essential projects or activities may be paused or scaled back to focus resources on the charity's core objectives and critical services.
- **Cost-Reduction Measures:** Temporary cost-saving measures, reducing discretionary spending, or deferring planned activities.
- **Donor Engagement and Fundraising:** The charity will increase efforts to engage existing and potential donors, communicate the urgent need for support, and explore alternative income streams, such as grants or partnerships.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** Regular financial monitoring will ensure the effectiveness of these measures, and trustees will provide transparency to stakeholders through timely updates.



Plans for the Future

As outlined previously, our 2025–2029 strategy focuses on expanding our reach, deepening our impact, and raising our ambition in response to growing threats to journalism. Building on a strong foundation, we are sharpening our focus around four urgent priorities: **Violence Against Journalists**, **Lawfare**, **Digital Rights**, and **Fighting Impunity**. These priorities will guide our continued emergency legal defence work, high-impact strategic litigation, and strengthened support to our partners and network of lawyers working to protect journalists worldwide.



Structure, Governance and Management

Media Legal Defence Initiative, trading as Media Defence, is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated 16 June 2008, as amended 19 November 2012, and was registered as a charity on 24 March 2009. The company is governed under its Articles of Association, which sets out its objects and powers. Media Legal Defence Initiative is an independent and autonomous UK charity. Media Defence is governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is currently composed of 9 members.

The trustees set the strategic aims and directions for the organisation. They also partner grants made by the charity. The chair of the Board approves grants of amounts over £5,000, on the recommendation of the CEO. Media Defence's UK-based staff carry out day-to-day operations. This includes decisions on financial support for the defence of individual journalists up to a maximum of £5,000. The trustees of Media Defence meet once every three months and receive detailed reports to retain effective control over the organisation and to monitor the work of the CEO and team.

The Board held two advisory committees which also met at least quarterly to support it in its oversight role:

- The Finance, Risk and Audit Committee, to monitor the financial health of the organisation as well as risk management and compliance.
- The Governance Committee, to support the review of and recommendations on the governance of the organisation, trustee recruitment and policy development.

Media Defence determines its resource requirements in a thorough financial planning process, which comprises an annual review and approval of detailed plans and budget, and a mid-year review, in addition to quarterly forecasting. The trustees empower the chair to monitor, control and ensure delivery of the plans within the resources available. All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 6 to the accounts.

Appointment of trustees

Under Media Defence's Articles of Association, the first directors of the company became its first trustees when the charity was registered on 24 March 2009. Additional trustees are selected and appointed by the board. Trustees are appointed for a three-year term under the Articles of Association and can serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. They are then eligible for reappointment following at least a one-year absence from the position.

Trustee induction and training

Trustees are familiar with either the fields of charity finance/management, law, human rights and / or journalism and undergo an induction on their role and responsibilities as well as the work of the Media Defence. On appointment, trustees are provided with the Articles of Association of Media Defence, a Trustee Handbook and a copy of the Charity Commission's guidance on the role and responsibilities of trustees. Trustees have a responsibility to attend appropriate training in order for them to perform their legal duties. The trustees are offered training opportunities throughout the year.

Remuneration policy for key management personnel

The trustees have specific responsibility for remuneration matters. They make final recommendations on annual increases to the salary budget through the budget setting process for the forthcoming financial year. The trustees make decisions on starting salaries for a new CEO. The CEO makes decisions on starting salaries for new staff based on job function and market conditions prevailing in the location of the job and the Media Defence Job Evaluation Framework and Salary Scale. The CEO makes decisions on performance related increases for existing staff subject to approval of the budget by the Board. The Job Evaluation Framework and Salary Scale is periodically reviewed, including on the basis of external market benchmarking.

Employee information

Media Defence's staff is integral to the meaningful work that we do and the delivery of our charitable objectives. The staff is led by the CEO and comprises legal, finance, monitoring and evaluation, capacity building, fundraising, communication and grant making specialists. Media Defence provides its staff with training to ensure skills are kept up to date and has in place a range of mechanisms to ensure smooth operational functioning.

In 2024 we welcomed a new Events Coordinator and Teams Assistant, a Finance and Operations Officer, and a Grants Officer. One Grant Officer was promoted to Senior Grants Officer and our Communications Coordinator was promoted to Communications Officer.

Structure, Governance and Management

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of Media Defence for the purpose of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- The trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions. Members of the charity guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 December 2023 was 10 (2022: 12). The trustees are members of the charity but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the Charity.

Auditor

Sayer Vincent LLP was the charitable company's auditor during the year. The directors' annual report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The trustees' annual report has been approved by the trustees on 21st May 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Maria Teresa Ronderos
Chair of the Board of Trustees

Independent auditor's report to the members of Media Legal Defence Initiative

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- The information given in the trustees' annual report, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- The trustees' annual report, has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' annual report. We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- Adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- Certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- The directors were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the trustees' annual report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities set out in the trustees' annual report, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud are set out below.

Independent auditor's report to the members of Media Legal Defence Initiative

Capability of the audit in detecting irregularities

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, our procedures included the following:

- We enquired of management and the finance committee, which included obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation, concerning the charity's policies and procedures relating to:
- Identifying, evaluating, and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
- Detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any
- actual, suspected, or alleged fraud;
- The internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- We inspected the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.
- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework that the charity operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a material effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the charity from our professional and sector experience.
- We communicated applicable laws and regulations throughout the audit team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit.
- We reviewed any reports made to regulators.
- We reviewed the financial statement disclosures and tested these to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- We performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud.
- In addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, we tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments, assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias and tested significant transactions that are unusual or those outside the normal course of business.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Independent auditor's report to the members of Media Legal Defence Initiative

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Jonathan Orchard (Senior statutory auditor)

for and on behalf of

Sayer Vincent LLP, Statutory Auditor

110 Golden Lane, LONDON, EC1Y 0TG

Date: 30 May 2025



Financial Statements

Media Legal Defence Initiative (Trading as Media Defence)
Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)
For the year ended 31 December 2024

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 Total £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2023 £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	2	1,165,756	1,828,268	2,994,024	984,625	1,865,528	2,850,153
Investments		13,015	-	13,015	12,557	-	12,557
Other		4,685	-	4,685	4,174	-	4,174
Total income		1,183,456	1,828,268	3,011,724	1,001,356	1,865,528	2,866,885

Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	3	82,608	3,645	86,253	103,301	3,070	106,371
Charitable activities							
Support to Individuals for Legal Defence	3	354,095	480,301	834,396	540,805	339,879	880,684
Support to NGOs for Legal Justice	3	151,822	564,581	716,403	179,418	515,817	695,235
Support for training & capacity building	3	153,388	365,104	518,492	148,922	195,759	344,681
Strategic Litigation	3	331,360	474,775	806,136	210,194	712,536	922,730
Total expenditure		1,073,274	1,888,407	2,961,680	1,182,639	1,767,062	2,949,701

Net income / (expenditure) for the year	5	110,182	(60,138)	50,044	(181,283)	98,466	(82,817)
Transfers between funds		2,500	(2,500)	-	1,971	(1,971)	-

Net movement in funds		112,682	(62,638)	50,044	(179,312)	96,495	(82,817)
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Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		943,761	265,850	1,209,611	1,123,073	169,355	1,292,428

Total funds carried forward		1,056,443	203,212	1,259,654	943,761	265,850	1,209,611
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All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 16 to the financial statements.

Media Legal Defence Initiative (Trading as Media Defence)
Balance sheet
As at 31 December 2024

	Note	£	2024 £	£	2023 £
Fixed assets:					
Tangible fixed assets	10		18,194		9,400
Current assets:					
Debtors	11	226,911		283,129	
Cash at bank and in hand	18	2,076,649	-	2,161,701	-
		2,303,560		2,444,830	-
Liabilities:					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	1,062,101		1,244,619	
Net current assets			1,241,459		1,200,211
Total net assets	15		1,259,654		1,209,611
The funds of the charity:					
Restricted income funds	16.i		203,212		265,850
Unrestricted income funds:	16.ii				
Designated funds		-		365,175	
General funds		1,056,442		578,586	
Total unrestricted funds			1,056,442		943,761
Total charity funds			1,259,654		1,209,611

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.
Approved by the trustees on 21st May 2025 and signed on their behalf by María Teresa Ronderos.

María Teresa Ronderos
Chair of the Board of Trustees

Media Legal Defence Initiative (Trading as Media Defence)
Statement of cash flows
For the year ended 31 December 2024

	Note	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities	17				
Net cash (used in)/ provided by operating activities			(82,888)		378,602
Cash flows from investing activities:					
Dividends, interest and rents from investments		13,015		12,557	
Purchase of fixed assets		(15,179)		(7,546)	
Loss on disposal					
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities			(2,164)		5,011
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year			(85,052)		383,612
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year			2,161,701		1,778,089
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	18		2,076,649		2,161,701

Media Legal Defence Initiative (Trading as Media Defence)
Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 December 2024

1. Accounting policies

a) Statutory information

Media Legal Defence Initiative is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office address is Holborn Gate, 330 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7QH.

b) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy or note.

c) Public benefit entity

The charitable company meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

d) Going concern

The trustees' report contains information on the risks of cyber security and IT failure, worldwide inflationary pressures and the loss of donor funding. The Trustees have concluded that, despite these risks and the wider risks and uncertainties facing large sectors of society, the charity has taken the relevant measures to mitigate the impact of these risks and uncertainties on its operations.

The charity's financial forecasts, income streams, and cost structure are regularly reviewed to evaluate its ability to continue operating effectively.

Risk assessments are conducted quarterly to identify potential financial risks, including reduced funding or increased expenses, and mitigation strategies are developed accordingly.

The Charity actively seeks diversified income streams to reduce reliance on a single source of funding.

The trustees are confident that the charity has the ability and intention to continue as a going concern because adequate resources are available.

The trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

e) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and that the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Income received in advance of the provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

Media Legal Defence Initiative (Trading as Media Defence)
Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 December 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

f) Donations of gifts, services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item or received the service, any conditions associated with the donation have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised so refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

On receipt, donated gifts, professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

g) Fund accounting

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund.

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources received or generated for the charitable purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

h) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds relate to the costs incurred by the charitable company in inducing third parties to make voluntary contributions to it, as well as the cost of any activities with a fundraising purpose
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of legal defence to individual, legal justice support to NGOs, support for training and capacity building and support towards strategic litigation undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

i) Allocation of support costs

Resources expended are allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates directly to that activity. However, the cost of overall direction and administration of each activity, comprising the salary and overhead costs of the central function, is apportioned on the following basis which are an estimate, based on staff time, of the amount attributable to each activity.

- Support to Individuals for Legal Defence - 36%
- Support to NGOs for Legal Justice - 25%
- Strategic Litigation - 25%
- Support for Training & Capacity Building - 14%

Where information about the aims, objectives and projects of the charity is provided to potential beneficiaries, the costs associated with this publicity are allocated to charitable expenditure.

Media Legal Defence Initiative (Trading as Media Defence)
Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 December 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

j) Operating leases

Rental charges are charged on a straight line basis over the term of the lease.

k) Tangible fixed assets

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £1,000. Depreciation costs are allocated to activities on the basis of the use of the related assets in those activities. Assets are reviewed for impairment if circumstances indicate their carrying value may exceed their net realisable value and value in use.

Where fixed assets have been revalued, any excess between the revalued amount and the historic cost of the asset will be shown as a revaluation reserve in the balance sheet.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

- Computer Equipment - 3 years
- Fittings and Office equipment - 4 years

l) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

m) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account. Cash balances exclude any funds held on behalf of service users.

n) Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

o) Pensions

MLDI will match pension contribution for individuals from 5% up to 8% of employees qualifying earnings.

p) Foreign currency translations

Monetary assets and liabilities in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the rates of exchange ruling at the balance sheet date. Transactions in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the actual rate of exchange. Exchange differences are taken into account in arriving at the net incoming resources for the year.

Media Legal Defence Initiative (Trading as Media Defence)

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2024

2. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Gifts & Donations	1,165,756	1,637,937	2,803,693	2,347,844
Donated Services	-	190,331	190,331	502,310
	1,165,756	1,828,268	2,994,024	2,850,153

In 2023 there were unrestricted gifts and donations of £984,625, the balance of donations and legacies were restricted.
Donated services are comprised of pro-bono legal support services and are calculated on the basis of the value of the service to Media Defence.

3a. Analysis of expenditure (current year)

	Note	Fundraising £	Charitable activities				Governance costs £	Support costs £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
			Support to Individuals for Legal Defence £	Support to NGOs for Legal Justice £	Support for training & capacity building £	Strategic Litigation £				
Staff Costs	6	79,080	299,198	149,599	199,465	149,599	49,866	149,599	1,076,406	926,199
Other Staff Costs		-	6,423	3,212	4,283	3,212	1,071	3,212	21,413	36,385
Grant Expenditure	4a	-	339,620	432,412	-	475,591	-	-	1,247,623	1,520,007
Translation services		-	-	-	-	40,944	-	-	40,944	14,156
Fundraising costs		7,174	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,174	19,123
Volunteers' expenses		-	891	446	595	446	149	446	2,973	5,707
Travel and subsistence		-	-	-	-	5,609	-	46,760	52,369	42,205
Meetings and events		-	-	-	214,263	-	-	-	214,263	85,613
Marketing and promotion		-	-	-	-	-	-	5,615	5,615	8,660
Monitoring, Evaluation & Research		-	-	-	26,664	-	-	-	26,664	13,111
Premises		-	-	-	-	-	-	62,023	62,023	44,731
Depreciation		-	-	-	-	-	-	6,385	6,385	7,587
Office costs		-	-	-	-	-	-	79,625	79,625	81,987
Bank Charges & Exchange losses		-	-	-	-	-	-	50,366	50,366	72,274
Board expenses		-	-	-	-	-	8,410	-	8,410	9,327
Audit and accountancy		-	-	-	-	-	14,400	5,489	19,889	15,702
Legal and professional		-	-	-	-	-	-	39,537	39,537	46,928
Sub-total		86,254	646,132	585,669	445,270	675,402	73,896	449,057	2,961,680	2,949,7020
Support costs			161,661	112,264	62,868	112,264	-	(449,057)	-	-
Governance costs			26,603	18,474	10,345	18,474	(73,896)	-	-	-
Total expenditure 2024		86,254	834,396	716,407	518,484	806,140	-	-	2,961,680	
Total expenditure 2023		106,371	880,683	695,235	344,682	922,731	-	-	-	2,949,702

Media Legal Defence Initiative (Trading as Media Defence)

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2024

3b. Analysis of expenditure (prior year)

	Charitable activities								
	Note	Fundraising	Support to Individuals for Legal Defence	Support to NGOs for Legal Justice	Support for training & capacity building	Strategic Litigation	Governance costs	Support costs	2023 Total
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs	6	87,248	251,684	125,843	167,790	125,843	41,948	125,843	926,199
Other Staff Costs		-	10,915	5,458	7,277	5,458	1,819	5,458	36,385
Grant Expenditure	4a	-	437,016	438,525	-	644,467	-	-	1,520,007
Translation services		-	-	-	-	14,156	-	-	14,156
Fundraising costs		19,123	-	-	-	-	-	-	19,123
Volunteers' expenses		-	1,713	856	1,141	856	285	856	5,707
Travel and subsistence		-	-	-	-	7,398	-	34,807	42,205
Meetings and events		-	-	-	85,613	-	-	-	85,613
Marketing and promotion		-	-	-	-	-	-	8,660	8,660
Monitoring, Evaluation & Research		-	-	-	13,111	-	-	-	13,111
Premises		-	-	-	-	-	-	44,731	44,731
Depreciation		-	-	-	-	-	-	7,587	7,587
Office costs		-	-	-	-	-	-	81,987	81,987
Bank Charges		-	-	-	-	-	-	72,274	72,274
& Exchange losses		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Board expenses		-	-	-	-	-	-	9,327	9,327
Audit and accountancy		-	-	-	-	-	10,920	4,782	15,702
Legal and professional		-	-	-	-	-	-	46,928	46,928
Sub-total		106,371	701,328	570,682	274,932	798,177	54,972	443,240	2,949,702
Support costs		-	159,566	110,810	62,054	110,811	-	(443,240)	-
Governance costs		-	19,790	13,743	7,696	13,743	(54,972)	-	-
Total expenditure 2023		106,371	880,683	695,235	344,682	922,731	-	-	2,949,702

4a. Grant making

Cost	Grants to institutions £	Grants to individuals £	2024 £	2023 £
Support to Individuals for Legal Defence	-	339,620	339,620	437,016
Support to NGOs for Legal Justice	432,412	-	432,412	438,525
Support for Training & Capacity Building	-	-	-	-
Strategic Litigation	190,331	285,260	475,591	644,467
At the end of the year	622,743	624,880	1,247,623	1,520,007

4b. Grant making (prior year)

Cost	Grants to institutions £	Grants to individuals £	2023 £
Support to Individuals for Legal Defence	-	437,016	437,016
Support to NGOs for Legal Justice	438,525	-	438,525
Support for Training & Capacity Building	-	-	-
Strategic Litigation	502,310	142,157	644,467
At the end of the year	940,835	579,173	1,520,008

Grants are provided to individuals and institutions from MLDI based on the charitable objectives of the organisation and with consideration for affordability. MLDI has a listing of the partner organisations with which it works on its website. MLDI does not provide the detail of the amounts given to individual institutions as it believes these could prejudice the furtherance of the charitable objectives of MLDI and the recipient.

Media Legal Defence Initiative (Trading as Media Defence)

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2024

5. Net income for the year

This is stated after charging / crediting:

	2024 £	2023 £
Depreciation	6,385	7,587
Operating lease rentals:		
Property	-	-
Property and Equipment	59,174	43,459
Auditors' remuneration (excluding VAT):		
Audit	12,000	9,100
Foreign exchange (gains) / losses	42,596	69,731

6. Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel

Staff costs were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Salaries and wages	939,240	807,078
Social security costs	104,022	90,947
Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	33,145	28,174
	1,076,406	926,199

The following number of employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs and employer's national insurance) during the year between:

	2024 No	2023 No
£60,000 - £69,999		
£70,000 - £79,999	3	3
£80,000 - £89,999	1	-

The total employee benefits (including pension contributions and employer's national insurance) of the key management personnel were £353,727 (2023: £320,472).

The charity trustees were neither paid nor received any other benefits from employment with the charity in the year (2023: £nil).

No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2023: £nil).

Trustees' expenses relating to travel for 6 Trustees (2023: 6) were £7,257(2023: £6,927).

7. Staff numbers

The average number of employees (head count based on number of staff employed) during the year was 20.42 (2023: 17.8).

8. Related party transactions

One of our Trustees, Catherine Anite, serves on the Board of Directors at the International Centre for Not-For-Profit Law (INCL). INCL gave grants worth £40k to Media Defence in 2024 (2023: £131k).

9. Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

Media Legal Defence Initiative (Trading as Media Defence)
Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 December 2024

10. Tangible fixed assets

	Fittings and office equipment £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation			
At the start of the year	8,900	21,344	30,244
Additions in year	10,880	4,299	15,179
Disposals in year	-	-	-
At the end of the year	19,780	25,643	45,423

Depreciation			
At the start of the year	7,952	12,892	20,844
Charge for the year	479	5,906	6,385
Eliminated on disposal	-	-	-
At the end of the year	8,431	18,798	27,229

Net book value			
At the end of the year	11,349	6,845	18,194
At the start of the year	2,620	6,821	9,441
All of the above assets are used for charitable purposes.			

11. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Grants Receivable	185,322	263,887
Other Debtors	14,041	12,925
Prepayments	27,549	6,316
	226,911	283,129

12. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade Creditors	13,999	4,189
Other Creditors	4,299	31,591
Grants Payable	669,017	547,144
Deferred Income	310,884	587,963
Accruals	63,901	73,732
	1,062,101	1,244,619

13. Deferred income

Deferred income is for 2025 activities received in 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Balance at the beginning of the year	587,963	-
Amount released to income in the year	(508,510)	
Amount deferred in the year	231,431	587,963
Balance at the end of the year	310,884	587,963

Media Legal Defence Initiative (Trading as Media Defence)
Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 December 2024

14. Pension scheme

MLDI matches Employee's Pension contributions from 5% and up to 8% of qualifying earnings.

15a. Analysis of net assets between funds (current year)

	General unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	18,194	-	-	18,194
Net current assets	1,038,248	-	203,212	1,241,460
Net assets at the end of the year	1,056,442	-	203,212	1,259,654

15b. Analysis of net assets between funds (prior year)

	General unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	9,400	-	-	9,400
Net current assets	569,186	365,175	265,850	1,200,211
Net assets at the end of the year	578,586	365,175	265,850	1,209,611

Media Legal Defence Initiative (Trading as Media Defence)
Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 December 2024

16a. Movements in funds (current year)

	At the start of the year £	Income & gains £	Expenditure & losses £	Transfers £	At the end of the year £
16.i Restricted funds					
Adessium	34,514	81,800	(75,310)		41,004
Donated Services	-	190,331	(190,331)	-	-
DRL EWDR	54,072	109,469	(163,541)	-	-
David & Lucille Packard Foundation	-	163,017	(34,521)	-	128,497
Ford Foundation	79,969	157,623	(223,467)	(2,500)	11,625
Ford NV Venture	-	78,553	(78,553)	-	-
ICNL (CAIP)	23,121	40,093	(63,214)	-	0
IWPR (DFID)	640	-	(640)	-	-
Limelight Foundation	33,244	171,319	(204,562)	-	-
National Endowment for Democracy (NED)	(1,426)	54,827	(53,401)	-	-
Other - Rtd/cncl'd Grants	10,835	-	(10,835)	-	-
Thomson Reuters Foundation	-	-	-	-	-
UNESCO	(595)	18,596	(18,001)	-	-
FRED Foundation	24,199	64,537	(74,166)	-	14,571
USDDRL	(251)	-	251	-	-
Digital Freedom Fund	7,529	8,152	(15,682)	-	0
IFEX	-	94,860	(94,860)	-	-
INIFL	-	302,025	(302,025)	-	-
TRF BRIMEA	-	3,085	(3,085)	-	-
FPU	-	177,794	(185,121)	-	(7,328)
HIVOS MENA 2024	-	15,323	(6,612)	-	8,711
HIVOS	-	90,732	(90,732)	-	-
MPI	-	6,132	-	-	6,132
Total restricted funds	265,851	1,828,268	(1,888,408)	(2,500)	203,212

16.ii Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds	365,175	-	-	(365,175)	-
General funds	578,586	1,183,456	(1,073,274)	367,675	1,056,442
Total unrestricted funds	943,760	1,183,456	(1,073,274)	2,500	1,056,442

Total funds	1,209,611	3,011,725	(2,961,682)	-	1,259,654
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Transfer from Ford Foundation of £2,500 to General Funds to cover costs under this project paid from General Funds. The Board determined to transfer previously designated funds (£365,175) to General Funds in 2024.

Media Legal Defence Initiative (Trading as Media Defence)
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16b. Movements in funds (prior year)

	At the start of the year £	Income & gains £	Expenditure & losses £	Transfers £	At the end of the year £
16.i Restricted funds					
Adessium	57,652	129,358	(152,496)	-	34,514
Donated Services	-	502,310	(502,310)	-	-
DRL EWDRA	(36,435)	248,228	(157,721)	-	54,072
Evan Cornish Foundation	2,000	-	(2,000)	-	-
Ford Foundation	112,726	156,633	(189,390)	-	79,969
ICNL (CAIP)	33,309	130,756	(140,944)	-	23,121
IWPR (DFID)	-	640	-	-	640
Limelight Foundation	6,198	132,000	(104,954)	-	33,244
National Endowment for Democracy (NED)	(21,578)	177,910	(157,758)	-	(1,426)
Other - Rtd/cncl'd Grants	11,936	-	-	(1,101)	10,835
Thomson Reuters Foundation	-	21,904	(20,632)	(1,272)	-
UNESCO	3,547	12,200	(16,226)	(116)	(595)
FRED Foundation	-	65,285	(41,087)	-	24,199
USDDRL	-	-	(769)	518	(251)
Digital Freedom Fund	-	8,940	(1,411)	-	7,529
IFEX	-	5,806	(5,806)	-	-
INIFL	-	34,877	(34,877)	-	-
FPU	-	142,504	(142,504)	-	-
HIVOS 2023	-	91,177	(91,177)	-	-
Law Society	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
Total restricted funds	169,355	1,865,528	(1,767,062)	(1,971)	265,850

16.ii Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds	365,175	-	-	-	365,175
General funds	757,898	1,001,356	(1,182,639)	1,971	578,586
Total unrestricted funds	1,123,073	1,001,356	(1,182,639)	1,971	943,761

Total funds	1,292,428	2,866,885	(2,949,701)	-	1,209,611
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16.i Purposes of restricted funds
Adessium - Support to ensure legal protection of journalists, citizen journalists and media outlets in Europe
Donated Services - free legal services provided in support of strategic cases, website design, wellbeing support and capacity building.
US State Department - develop legal communities to defend, promote and strengthen freedom of expression online.
David & Lucille Packard Foundation -provide core support for our strategic litigation work.
Ford Foundation - legal assistance to journalists, bloggers and independent media under oppression
Ford New Venture - support our work to develop a global approach to challenge the use of spyware before the courts.
ICNL -Countering Authoritarianism through Civil Society Empowerment in the Indo-Pacific (CAIP)
IWPR -to explore the freedom of expression landscape in three countries in the MENA region
Limelight Foundation - Support to ensure legal protection of journalists, citizen journalists and media outlets in Europe
National Endowment for Democracy - Defending Independent Media and Protecting at-risk Journalists.
UNESCO - support for a free and safer environment for journalist
Fred Foundation - support our work so that journalists, citizen journalists and independent media are defended from legal threats for their reporting, with an emphasis on local legal capacity building
Digital Freedom Fund - Challenging Spyware and Surveillance against Journalists in Europe .
IFEX -Protecting journalists globally through a collaborative stakeholder movement.
INIFL- Foster a global network of legal communities defending freedom of expression online in internet-repressive countries.
Thomson Reuters Foundation-Building Resilient and Independent Media Ecosystems
FPU -Provide legal help to journalists,citizen journalists and media across the world.
Hivos - legal defence to online media and bloggers
MPI - Training in the International Standards of Media.
16.ii Purposes of unrestricted funds
Designated funds - maintained to ensure any significant financial risks to Media Defence are mitigated.
General funds - provided by the following funders: Craig Newmark Philanthropies, Open Society Foundations, Luminate and Wellspring.

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17. Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Net Income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	50,044	(82,817)
Depreciation charges	6,385	7,587
Dividends, interest and rent from investments	(13,015)	(12,557)
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	56,218	(220,095)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	(182,518)	686,483
Net cash provided by / (used in) operating activities	(82,888)	378,602

18. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	At 1 January 2024 £	Cash flows £	Other changes £	At 31 December 2024 £
Cash in hand	1,714,316	-96,636	-	1,617,680
Notice deposits (less than three months)	447,385	11,584	-	458,969
Total cash and cash equivalents	2,161,701	(85,052)	-	2,076,649

19. Operating lease commitments

The charity's total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases is as follows for each of the following periods

	Property	
	2024 £	2023 £
Less than one year	61,632	49,562
One to five years	82,176	-
	143,808	49,562

20. Capital commitments

At the balance sheet date, the charity had made no capital commitments.

21. Contingent assets or liabilities

There are no contingent assets or liabilities.

22. Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The liability of each member in the event of winding up is limited to £1.