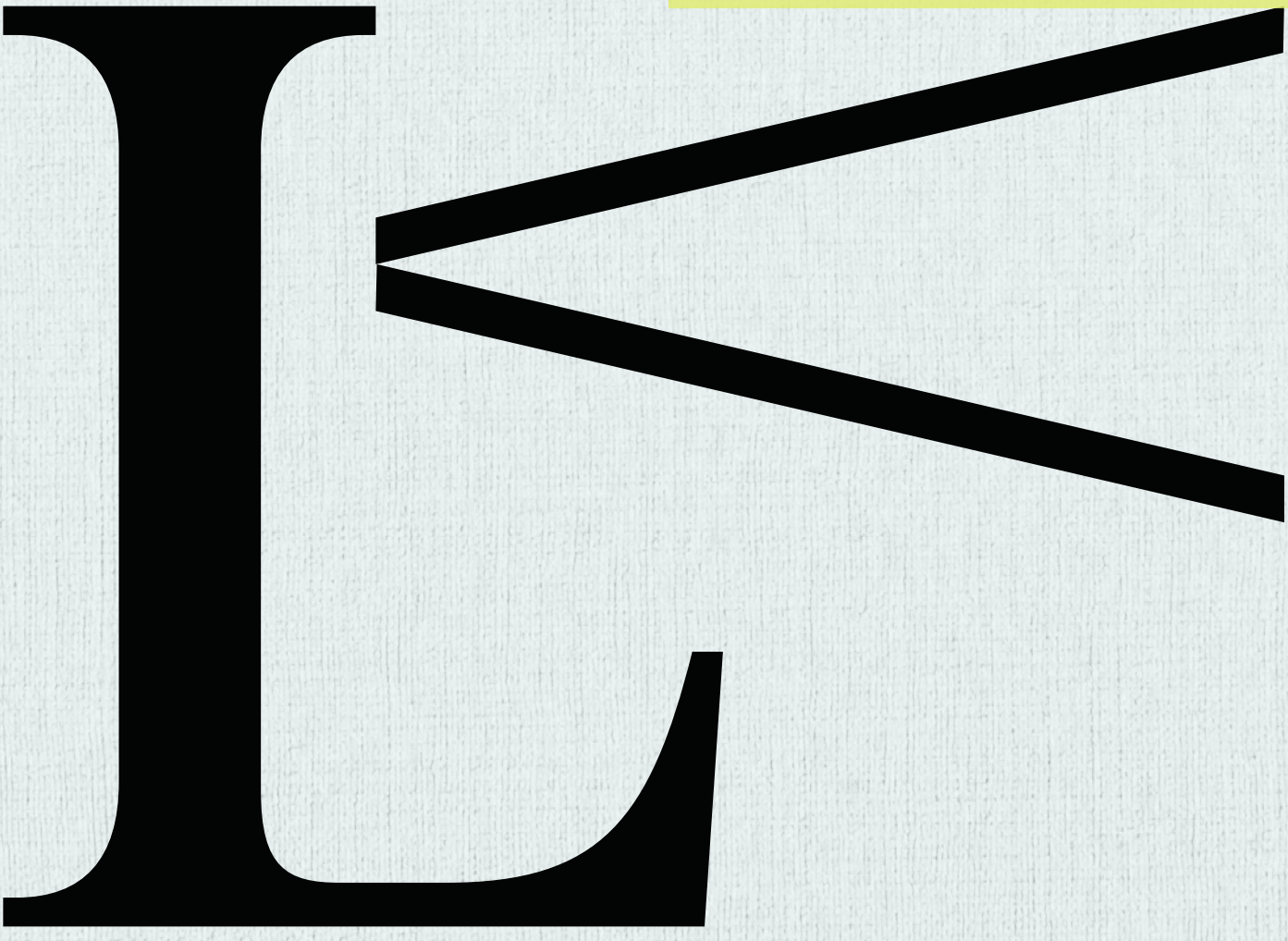
LIGHTHOUSE
REPORTS

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



IMPACT AT GLANCE

*From our **War Winners** Newsroom*

War Winners builds coalitions from local, international and exiled journalists to return attention and accountability to complex contexts. It combines digital investigations with money trails and ground reporting to explore some of the most under-reported places in the world.

On

Sudan



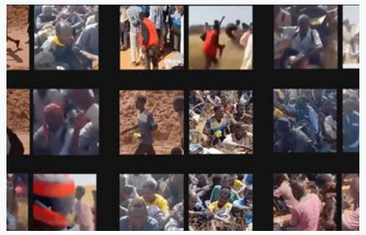


16.12.2025

The Kanabi Killings

Sudan's Armed Forces ethnically target farming communities amidst a famine

The UK and EU **impose sanctions on Sudanese military and militia leaders**



3.11.2025

The Killing Fields of Al Fashir

Sudanese military leaders secured their escape while civilians were left behind

The UN Fact Finding Mission **cites The Kanabi Killings as evidence of genocide**

Saudi Arabia warns Sudanese Armed Forces to halt revenge killings **following our reporting**



15.10.2025

Hunted by the Taliban

Taliban claims of amnesty are contradicted by evidence of ongoing reprisal killings

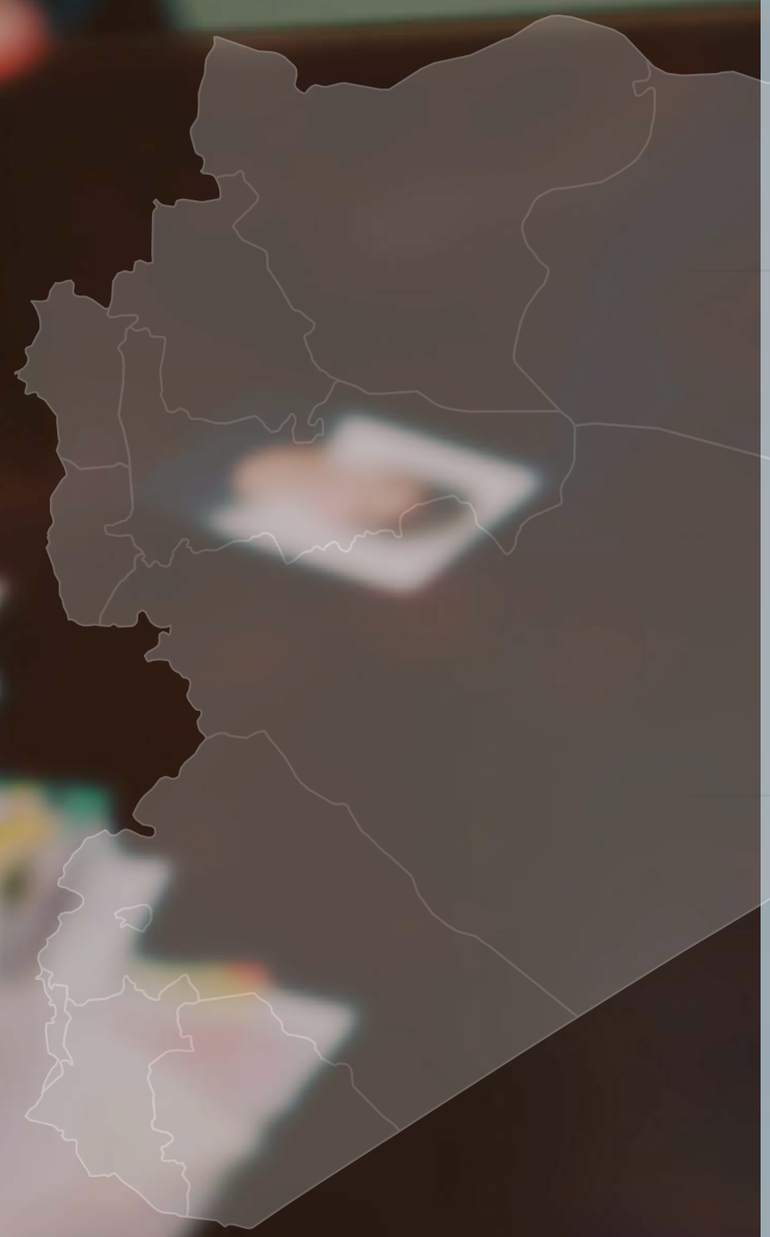
The violence against Kanabi communities in Gezira State **reduces**, a local **mediation process begins**

IMPACT AT GLANCE

*From our **War Winners** Newsroom*

On

Syria



Following **Syria's Stolen Children**, the SOS Children's Villages organisation **issues an apology** and **launches an internal investigation**

The **Syrian government meets with the families** featured to hear their demands

The UN **High Commissioner for Human Rights** calls the findings **"extremely serious"**

IMPACT AT GLANCE

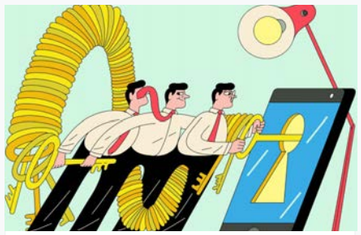
*From our **Surveillance** Newsroom*



14.10.2025

Surveillance Secrets

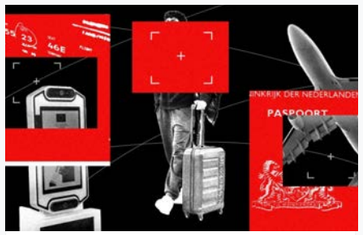
Trove of surveillance data challenges what we thought we knew about location tracking tools, who they target and how far they have spread



16.6.2025

Two Factor Insecurity

How Google, Amazon, Meta and thousands of other companies leave customers vulnerable over one-time codes to save time and money



15.10.2025

Computer says no fly

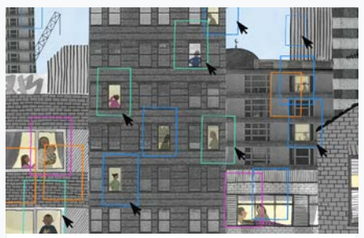
Opaque surveillance tools being sold to governments with the promise they can 'export borders' to everywhere we board trains, planes and ships



3.11.2025

Blair and the Billionaire

Insiders reveal how Larry Ellison's money turned Blair's institute into a tech sales and lobbying operation for Oracle



11.6.2025

The Limits of Ethical AI

Unprecedented access to high-stakes algorithmic experiment tests promise of Ethical AI



1.2.2025

Inequality Before the Law

Investigating bias in the world's most vaunted criminal justice system

The Swedish welfare agency **shuts down its discriminatory AI system** following an investigation prompted by our reporting

A Dutch court **suspends a woman's visa rejection**, citing our **Ethnic Profiling** investigation

The UK telecom regulator **shuts down access to phone networks used by spyware** and surveillance companies, citing our reporting

IMPACT AT GLANCE

*From our **Borders** and **Migration** Newsroom*



15.10.2025

Abandoned Afghan Commandos

Left Behind: Dozens of Afghans who served in special forces units funded and trained by the UK have been murdered or tortured by the Taliban

Months after the publication of **Left Behind**, the UK High Court rules that Afghan special forces were wrongly rejected for sanctuary, ordering the Ministry of Defense to act

The **President of Comoros** asks at the UN General Assembly **for an investigation into French police tactics** at sea, citing our work

FOREWORD

There's an awkward question that investigative journalism often evades: Who is it for?

The simple answer has always been the public. But then who do we mean? Another enduring answer has been decision-makers. What unites both responses is the assumption that consequences automatically follow the publication of findings. Why do we assume that our stories will find their way to their intended audience? And that audience will act? Most of the time they won't.

The assumed formula for accountability has been to deliver a strong story which commands public attention. That's almost never been enough. And when that attention fragments, as it has everywhere, it gets even more complicated. To drive outcomes, you need an engagement strategy. But at what point does that strategy start to resemble activism? Isn't that the enemy of objectivity and neutrality needed to provide rigorous findings?

So pause.

A more honest starting point would be to admit that investigative journalism has not wanted to be specific about who it serves. But huge changes in the way people receive and process information mean there's no space left for this reluctance. The process of answering who the work is for informs where it needs to go. Thinking in advance about how findings can reach relevant audiences and how to engage those audiences does not undermine standards. In fact, there's another kind of rigour to this form of self-questioning.

The harder you work at the question, the clearer your choices become over what to investigate, how to report and who to partner with in doing that work and narrating what you find.

Most of the time there will be more than one answer. In the case of Syria's Stolen Children (see War Winners section) the answers ranged from the intimate: the affected families; to the distant: the people who gave money to an international charity that collaborated in family separation under the Assad regime.

These answers informed how we shared findings, from family WhatsApp groups and in-person meetings to Arabic podcasts and a BBC film.

So many of the answers to the challenges facing journalism -- from relevance and audience to resources and innovation -- begin by asking who is this for?

Daniel Howden
Managing Director

Lighthouse was designed around the idea that a small, strategically-minded team dedicated to partnerships with civil society and journalists could **inform change at a scale relevant to current challenges to democracy and the rule of law.**

OUR MODEL:
HOW WE INVESTIGATE & DRIVE CHANGE

Lighthouse Reports is an award-winning, impact-driven investigative newsroom. In our first six years, we have worked with more than 200 news outlets around the world, from leading international broadcasters to innovative metro newsrooms and content creators, on ground-breaking public interest stories. Our team, which includes data scientists, visual investigators, impact producers and money trails experts is a sought-after partner for some of the most complex and important journalism collaborations out there.

We are both a journalism support organisation and the leaders of high-impact original investigations holding power to account. Lighthouse was designed around the idea that a small, strategically-minded team dedicated to partnerships with civil society and journalists could inform change at a scale relevant to current challenges to democracy and the rule of law.

We have pioneered impact production in investigative journalism and achieved accountability breakthroughs on critical topics from climate and food systems to tech and AI, human rights and migration.

Lighthouse seeks to make progress on the issues we cover while driving innovation across the rest of the collaborative journalism space. Our ~30person team is distributed across four continents, representing more than a dozen nationalities and able to work in more than 20 languages. This diversity enables us to focus our investigative power on the places of greatest need and strategic importance.

We have a track record of building networks around our journalism that include journalists, lawyers, civil society organisations and activists. These *communities of accountability* generate ideas, share skills and form strategic reporting coalitions to investigate issues in the global public interest over the long term.

We also see transnational collaborations as essential to growing the field to meet the scale of the challenges faced by communities around the world. As an investigative and project management team behind powerful accountability journalism, our work lives through our partners where it appears as stories that address audiences of millions, as well as reaching specific affected communities on platforms they know and trust.

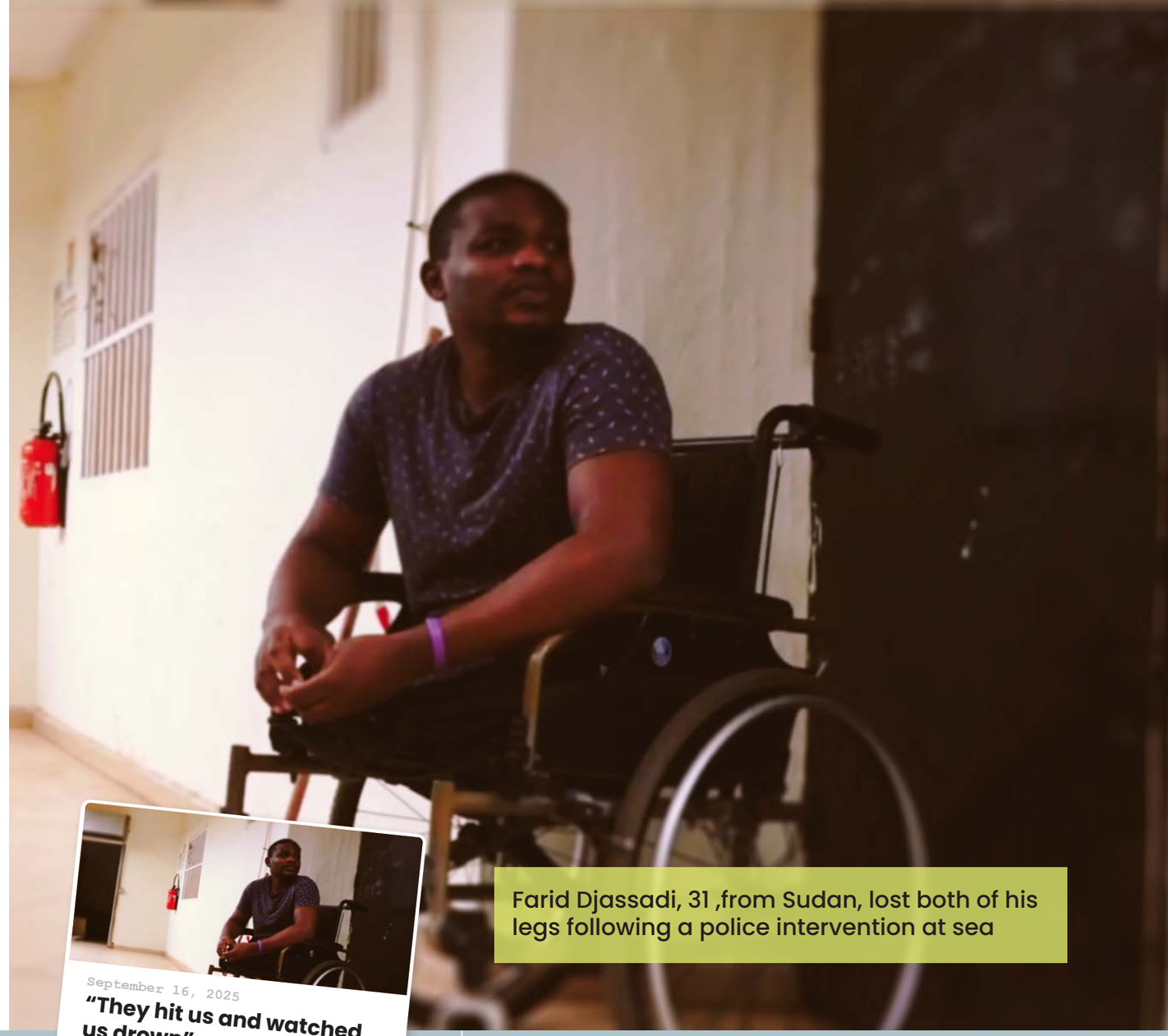
NEWSROOM

BORDERS

In 2025 we exposed for the first time the brutal tactics used by the French Police to stop migrants' boats from reaching overseas territory Mayotte. Using court documents, insider testimonies and survivor accounts, we were able to confirm that at least 24 people including pregnant women and children were killed during police operations at sea.

The methods used – including creating waves, unplugging the motor, colliding with the small boats – are dangerous and not officially approved by the Police force.

This was the first ever reporting on the subject, putting on the map a practice that was ignored for decades. It led to increased public, NGO and legal scrutiny.



Farid Djassadi, 31 ,from Sudan, lost both of his legs following a police intervention at sea

Impact Highlights

Our work was cited at the UN General Assembly by the **President of Comoros**, who asked for an investigation

The Prosecutor of Mayotte **was grilled** on national Television

A network of NGOs intend to file a complaint in the name of several victims

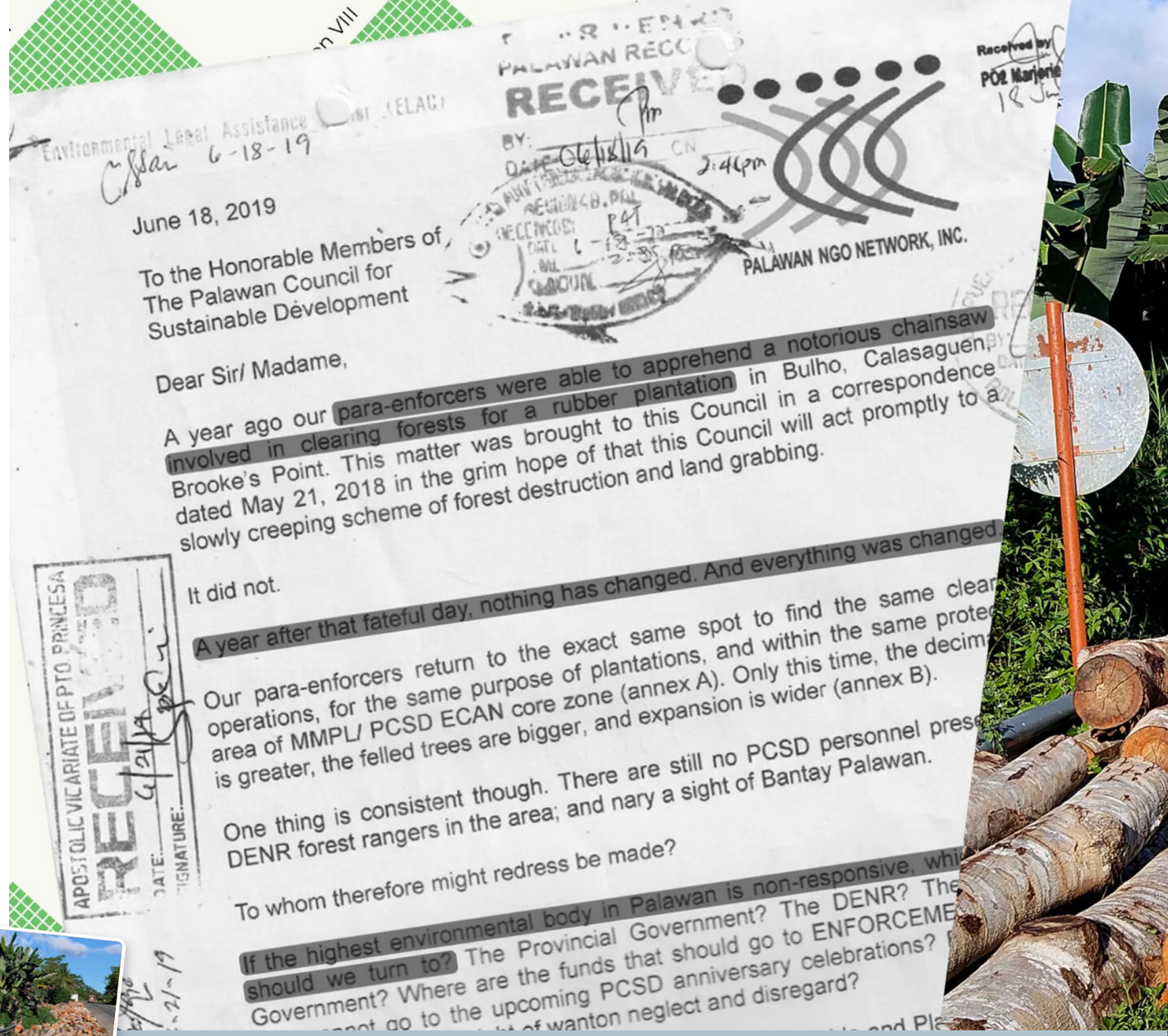
NEWSROOM

FOOD SYSTEMS

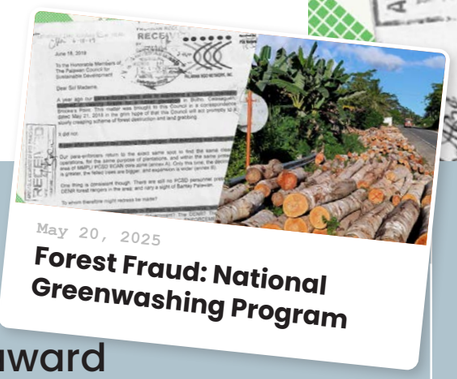
In 2025, we launched Forest Fraud, an ambitious, multi-country investigation that combined remote sensing, machine learning and persistent on-the-ground reporting, to track deforestation in protected areas across Southeast Asia, home to the world's third-largest rainforest after Brazil and Congo.

The first story exposed greenwashing behind the Philippines' much-lauded National Greening Program, designed to rehabilitate land scarred by decades of rampant logging. Instead of a win-win-win for the environment, local communities and the country, we discovered instances where forests were being cleared before or during regreening efforts and communities were forced to adopt crops and practices that do not provide long-term sustainability.

We also embarked on new projects that involve collaborating with scientists and academics to investigate structural inequalities within our food systems.



Impact Highlights



May 20, 2025

Forest Fraud: National Greenwashing Program

Poison PR won the One World Media award for Environmental Reporting and was **cited** in the Secretary-General's report on journalism safety and impunity to the United Nations' General Assembly.

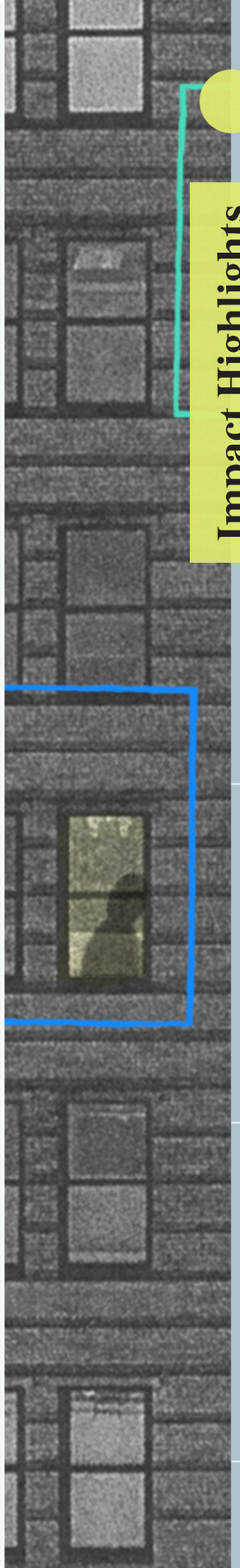
The publication of Forest Fraud also generated much discussion and secondary-coverage within the Philippines.

NEWSROOM

SURVEILLANCE

Our Surveillance Secrets investigation, drawing together more than 70 journalists from 14 media outlets, took us deep inside the location tracking industry, exposing two decades of activities by First Wap, a previously unreported spy company. The investigation combined large-scale data analysis, confidential documents, interviews with more than a hundred victims and hidden camera footage of company executives.

As deals by the Trump White House spotlighted the activities of Larry Ellison, one of the world's richest men, we revealed how his money turned the Tony Blair Institute into a global tech sales and lobbying operation for Ellison's company. We explored how the city of Amsterdam's effort to make a "fair" AI fraud detection system ran aground, and uncovered systemic biases in Norway's criminal justice system. Combing through a leak of millions of one-time passwords sent by text message, we exposed how Google, Amazon, Meta and thousands of other companies save time and money but leave customers vulnerable.

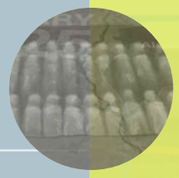


Impact Highlights

The Swedish welfare agency **shut down its discriminatory AI system** following an investigation prompted by Lighthouse's reporting



3.11.2025
Blair and the Billionaire



14.10.2025
Surveillance Secrets

In an interim ruling in the case of a Moroccan woman seeking to visit her sick husband in the Netherlands, a judge paused her visa rejection, **citing our research on ethnic profiling** and ordering the ministry to disclose how the system works.



11.6.2025
The Limits of Ethical AI

Citing reporting from Lighthouse and partners, the UK phone regulator banned trade in phone network access which had served as enabler to spyware and surveillance companies



16.6.2025
Two Factor Insecurity

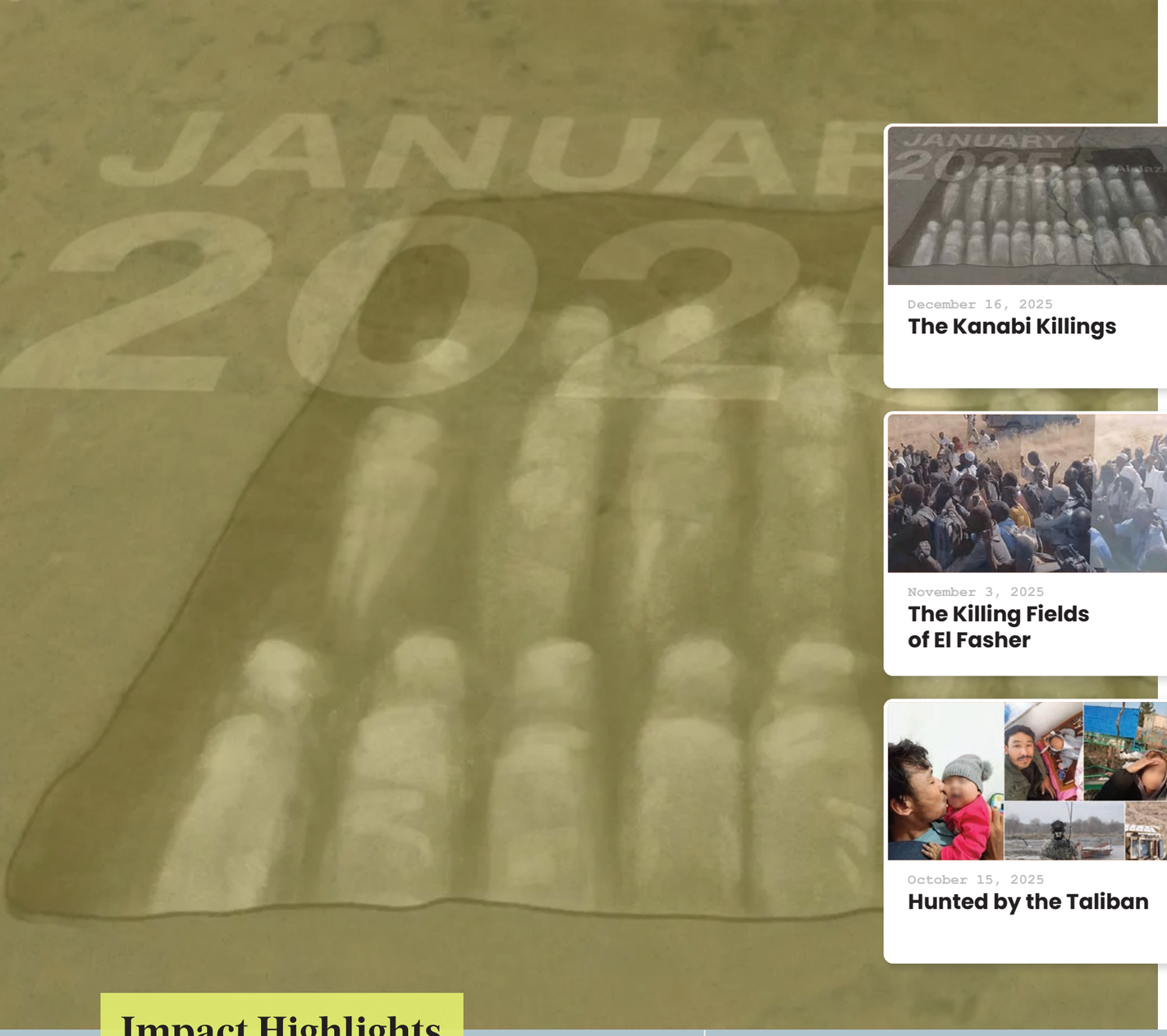


15.10.2025
Computer says no fly

Norway's court administration credits **Inequality Before the Law** with prompting courts to address systemic discrimination for the first time



1.2.2025
Inequality Before the Law



December 16, 2025

The Kanabi Killings

November 3, 2025

The Killing Fields of El Fasher

October 15, 2025

Hunted by the Taliban

NEWSROOM

WAR WINNERS

This year we set up a War Winners Sudan team. Nearly three years into Sudan's civil war, fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has ravaged and divided the country and led to the world's most dire humanitarian crisis. More so than ever, civilians are caught in the middle of intense fighting as cities and regions change hands between the two sides. Both sides have targeted civilians with unimaginable brutality. We've documented how the RSF chased and killed thousands of civilians who were trapped in the city of El Fasher – the last stronghold of SAF in the western region Darfur – after the city fell into the hands of the militia. While the little coverage of the conflict in Sudan focused mainly on atrocities committed by the RSF, the Army wasn't doing any better. We've documented widespread ethnically motivated attacks by SAF on farming communities in Gezira State amidst a famine, combining field reporting, whistleblower accounts, remote sensing techniques and open source information.

Impact Highlights

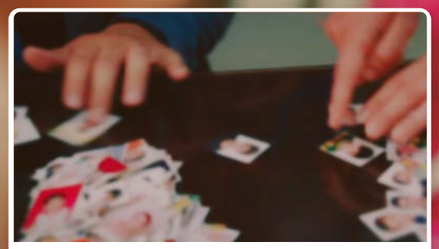
Following our reporting on the massacres in El Fasher and Gezira State, **the UK and the European Union sanctioned two individuals** from the RSF and another two from SAF-allied militias

Saudi Arabia, a key backer of the Sudanese Army, **told the leadership of SAF to stop the killings of civilians** or they would retract their support

The SAF-allied militias who were involved in the killings of farming communities **reduced the violence after our report came out**, sources on the ground told us, and changed their hate speech into reconciliation language

SPECIAL PROJECTS

SYRIA'S STOLEN CHILDREN



September 11, 2025

Syria's Stolen Children

Following the sudden collapse of a decades-long dictatorship in Syria, we worked with our longstanding Syrian investigation partners to build a cross-border investigation into one of the most painful and complex aspects of dismantling an autocratic police state: investigating the fate of the disappeared. Among them are hundreds of children who were taken from their parents and hidden in orphanages in order to coerce their families into cooperation with the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Over nine months, Syrian and international reporters from six media outlets spoke to hundreds of sources and gathered thousands of documents to build a database of hidden children. These records established systematic coordination between the intelligence services and orphanages, including one run by global charity SOS Children's Villages. Our investigation found the charity's leadership in Austria was warned by whistleblowers years earlier, but remained silent.

Impact Highlights

Families whose children were taken to orphanages joined together, after which the Syrian Interim Government agreed to meet with them and hear their demands for truth and justice

Our database **enabled** the UN's Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria (IIMP) **to identify a significant number of additional children affected**

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights calls findings **"extremely serious"**

The leadership of the SOS in Austria **publicly apologised** to the families and acknowledged institutional failings

Several major donors of SOS Syria decided **to withdraw funding** and as a result SOS Syria scaled down operations

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

17
International awards as well as recognition across Europe and the US Latin America

SMOKE AND LIES

WINNER
Texas Managing Editors Awards

WINNER
Investigative Reporters and Editors Video Award

NOMINATION
CIR Open Source Film Awards

AFGHAN WAR PROFITEERS

WINNER
Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing Best in Business Awards

SHORTLISTED
Sigma Awards

FALSE PROMISE OF BIOMETRICS

SPECIAL MENTION
Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing Best in Business Awards

DESERT DUMPS

WINNER
Robert Geisendörfer Prize

WINNER
IJ4EU Impact Award

WINNER
German Civis Video Award

POISON PR

SHORTLISTED
One World Media Environmental Reporting Award

INEQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW

SHORTLISTED
Sigma Awards

ABANDONED AFGHAN COMMANDOS

NOMINATION
UK Press Awards

DROWNINGS AND DETERRENCE IN THE RIO GRANDE

WINNER
Premio Gabo

SHORTLISTED
Sigma Awards

TURKEY'S EU-FUNDED DEPORTATION MACHINE

SHORTLISTED
Global Investigative Journalism Network Shining Light Award

NOMINATION
Premio Gabo

THE KUTUM MASSACRE

NOMINATION
Amnesty Media Awards

PARTNERSHIPS & MEDIA COLLABORATIONS

EL UNIVERSAL
EU UNIVERSAL
BRUSSELS

KRIK
KRIK
SERBIA

AL-JUMHURIYA
SYRIA

CNN
CNN
UNITED STATES

DER STANDARD
DER STANDARD
AUSTRIA

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ISRAEL

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DAVAO TODAY
PHILIPPINES

DIE DUNKELKAMMER
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Military Times
MILITARY TIMES
UNITED STATES

BBC
BBC
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MIT Technology Review
MIT TECHNOLOGY REVIEW
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ITALY

Mother Jones
MOTHER JONES
UNITED STATES

NRK
NORWAY

SUDAN WAR MONITOR
SUDAN

The Observer
THE OBSERVER
UNITED KINGDOM

de Verdieping Trouw
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SWITZERLAND

PCIJ
THE PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM
PHILIPPINES

WIRED
UNITED STATES

SIRAJ
JORDAN

TEMPO
INDONESIA

THE TIMES
UNITED KINGDOM

نساء ربحن الحرب
WOMEN WHO WON THE WAR
SUDAN

sky news
SKY NEWS
UNITED KINGDOM

THE INDEPENDENT
THE INDEPENDENT
UNITED KINGDOM

The Washington Post
THE WASHINGTON POST
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SOWT
JORDAN

THE NEW STATESMAN
THE NEW STATESMAN
UNITED KINGDOM

THIBI
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SOUTH KOREA

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THE groundtruth PROJECT

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Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Philanthropy for an Interdependent World

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European Climate Foundation

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SUB 3

CHOOSE LOVE

European Journalism Centre

IJ4EU Investigative Journalism for Europe

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

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dioraphte

Ford Foundation

Journalismfund Europe
Strengthening democracy

Pulitzer Center

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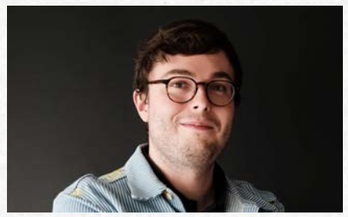
Tahmeed Shafiq
Data Fellow



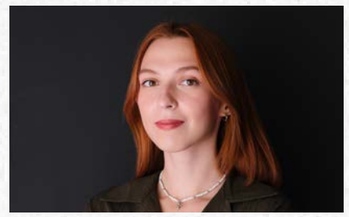
Tessa Pang
Impact Editor



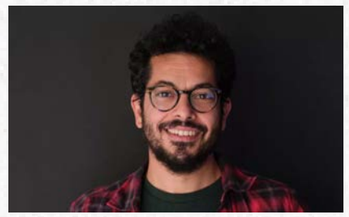
Thin Lei Win
Lead Reporter Food Systems



Tomas Statius
Investigative Reporter



Viktoriia Maksymova
Data Fellow



Wael Eskandar
Visual Impact Producer

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Alyna Smith



Gauri van Gulik



Sarah Stillman



Maria Margaronis



Tuesday Reitano



Andrew Feinstein

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE		
	(€) 2025	**(€) 2024**
INCOME		
Grants and contract income	2,499,181	2,035,126
Media partners	14,427	1,843
Other income	14,640	18,317
	2,528,248	**2,055,286**
FINANCIAL INCOME		
Interest received	4,138	0
	4,138	**0**

GRANTS AND CONTRACT INCOME		
Project grant funding	1,461,076	1,312,423
Core grant funding	695,597	355,302
Other Grants		
Nationale Postcode Loterij	325,373	344,401
Contract Income	17,235	23,000
	2,499,181	**2,035,126**

WAGES AND SALARIES		
Wages and salaries	291,661	215,320
Social security charges	63,265	54,171
Holiday payments	15,227	9,673
Core team compensation	1,342,778	1,136,072
Other personnel costs	1,878	0
	1,714,809	**1,415,236**

PROJECT COSTS		
Consultancy costs	3,550	1,845
Freelancers	208,726	205,095
Software ,subscriptions and hosting costs	5,013	2,941
Travel costs	179,415	97,225
Workshop costs	4,899	1,109
Other costs	15,373	116
	416,976	**308,331**

DEPRECIATION TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS		
Equipment	**9,771**	**7,994**

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION COSTS		
Accountancy costs	4,922	11,053
Auditor‹s costs	12,100	15,746
COO Consultant costs	0	3,294
Consultancy costs	22,801	15,045
Bank and interest charges	6,431	6,761
Supervisory board expenses	5,424	6,482
Insurance costs	20,018	9,816
Office and phone costs	68,751	52,481
Software ,subscriptions and hosting costs	33,727	53,445
Travel costs	58,866	52,231
Workshop costs	719	2,420
Web development	13,150	8,550
Other costs	47,304	19,373
	294,213	**256,697**

Lighthouse is built on the trust and support of our partners and our funders. We rely on our core team and also the deep network of freelance and staff journalists who invest their time and talent in our ambitious work. Our impact work relies on the openness and collaborative nature of civil society organisations in the many countries where we publish. We're incredibly grateful for everything our partners do to improve, promote and sustain our work.

LIGHTHOUSE REPORTS