

# RESILIENCY GRANTS



Lifeline resiliency grants support **at-risk civil society organizations (CSOs) around the world** to take steps to **avoid and mitigate grave threats to their human rights work**. These short-term grants enable CSOs to **shore up their ability to continue operating** in spite of civic space restrictions. Projects are flexible, demand-driven, and creative; they support CSOs in responding to a change in their threat landscape.

## What can resiliency projects look like?

- **Countering legal harassment** through **training on compliance** with onerous legislation (such as associations laws, tax laws, or audit requirements)
- **Navigating threats by providing protection training** on digital and physical security, in addition to psycho-social support.
- **Building peer-to-peer protection networks** among CSOs, local leaders, the business community, or legal professionals
- **Rehabilitating the reputation of civil society** through creative communications
- Establishing **off-shore presence** to get around restrictions by **creating a shared workspace for CSOs in exile or registering in a new country** to sustain operations
- Sharing **coping strategies** across at-risk communities
- Establishing **mechanisms to transfer and receive funding** in closed spaces

*“One of the organizations that [we] supported with a security audit was visited by Kenya Revenue Authority officers immediately after the general elections on 26<sup>th</sup> August...The staff at [this CSO] was able to block the officers from accessing their offices without the required documentations and permissions. They had also made arrangements to keep crucial documents away from the office premises.”*

-Lifeline grantee in Kenya



*“Participants are overwhelmingly better prepared to address digital threats. Prior to the summit, there was cause for grave concern about the security of [this network’s] communications, the security of sensitive information, and the security of working documents outlining future [network] plans. It is particularly gratifying to see that participants are now committed to address concrete threats.”*

-Lifeline grantee in Russia



The **Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund** is a consortium of seven international NGOs — CIVICUS, Freedom House, International Center for Non-Profit Law, Front Line Defenders, FORUM-ASIA, Swedish International Liberal Centre, and People in Need – supported by 19 governments that seek to address threats to civic space. The Lifeline Fund provides short-term grants to civil society organizations (CSOs) under threat for their human rights work.



## Global Impact

*"We were eager to continue our human rights work in exile from Costa Rica, but we did not have a safe space to work from and did not have sufficient resources. Now with the support of Lifeline, we are able to stay connected with our members and keep fighting for basic human rights."*

-Lifeline grantee in Nicaragua

*"After the implementation of the project, the CSOs that received [legal assistance] or passed our audits became more confident in their dealings with state bodies. At the same time, constructive dialogue with state authorities, both at the local and national levels, will lead to the development of solutions."*

-Lifeline grantee in Tajikistan

*"Our activists are much better prepared in terms of how to minimize physical threats against them (verbal and physical harassment, being followed, being arrested or accused of a crime, etc) when conducting field investigations or activities aimed at empowering local communities we work with."*

-Lifeline grantee in Cambodia



## Highlighted Resiliency Projects

A CSO in **Syria** built a **joint protection mechanism** between local council members and CSOs in four localities in northwest Syria. Given constant displacement, human rights CSOs and local government councils have been pushed from their communities, creating a substantial lack of trust among groups at the exact moment that they need mutual support in the face of threats from armed groups. The four cohorts built relationships and protection plans through a program of digital and physical security training and networking.

Ahead of 2018 elections in the **Maldives**, a CSO that was facing aggressive harassment from the authorities temporarily **relocated to sustain its human rights work** and monitored efforts during the pre- and post-election period. The satellite office provided safe haven for other CSO partners who were also targeted for their human rights work. These CSO members received medical and psycho-social support as they strategized how to continue their rights work and engage in joint advocacy targeting the diplomatic community.

A CSO in **Russia** supported peer organizations to shore up their ability to protect themselves from the government's efforts to slander and discredit their work. The CSO is creating an in-house communications department that can **rapidly respond to slander campaigns and online harassment** and serve as an information channel for affected human rights organizations. Further, drawing on information garnered from CSOs around the country, the partner will engage in a multimedia counter-narrative campaign, which will include videos to generate financial support for the CSOs from community supporters.

In **Uganda**, a CSO assisted peer organizations in **developing legal literacy to comply with onerous NGO legislation** that threatens the ability for CSOs to keep operating. Based on a needs assessment that evaluated knowledge and skills gaps, the CSO convened a capacity-building workshop to develop legal literacy skills to ensure effective compliance with this law, thus enabling civil society to better withstand attacks from the government. The partner also created a coordination and rapid response legal aid mechanism to help CSOs facing government intimidation or harassment.

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