



forbidden

stories

2022

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

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A word from Laurent Richard, founder and director

"

For the first time, in 2022, Forbidden Stories pursued the investigations of a journalist who had passed on his sensitive information to us before being murdered.

In the days leading up to his killing, Rafael Moreno was in contact with Forbidden Stories. The threats the Colombian journalist was receiving were becoming more and more disquieting. This is why Rafael had decided to share the information he was working on with us: so that in case anything happened to him, we could pursue his work.

At 7:10 p.m. on October 16, 2022, Rafael Moreno was shot dead in the city of Montelíbano, in the north of Colombia – a dangerous region dominated by the Gulf Clan, a powerful organized crime group.

Immediately after his death, we went to Colombia and united forces with 30 Latin American and international journalists to pursue Rafael's unfinished work. At the time of his murder, he was looking into irregularities in the attribution of contracts for public works in Córdoba, as well as the health and environmental consequences of mining activities in the region. The Rafael Project will be published in 2023.

Like Rafael, dozens of journalists around the world are currently protecting their investigations through our SafeBox Network. Launched in May, this new network is quickly growing.

Its mechanism is essential because isolation can be deadly for journalists. The SafeBox Network breaks this pattern.

Some of these journalists – like Alfredo Guachiré in Paraguay, Paola Ugaz in Peru and Haruna Mohammed Salisu in Nigeria – have made the choice to make it publicly known that they've joined this network.

They are doing this for their own security, so that those who may have wanted to silence them will know that their stories will be revealed, one way or another, globally.

”

Even before the SafeBox Network was created, Moroccan journalist Omar Radi sent us information before he was imprisoned. This year, while he is still serving a 6-year sentence, we continued one of his investigations, showing how wealthy members of the King of Morocco’s inner circle became even richer by stealing land from a tribe of farmers near Rabat.

Omar Radi was one of the first known targets of Pegasus. Our consortium's unprecedented investigation into abuses of this spyware, which we published in 2021, continued to have consequences in 2022.

It's a further sign of the strength of our collaborative approach, which is all the more relevant in today's context of increasing pressure on the environment and climate change.

”

Environmental damage is a global crime. The response must be global, because it concerns us all.

That's why, in 2022, we also brought together 65 journalists to publish Mining Secrets. Following the Green Blood project, released three years ago, this investigation pursued the work of colleagues threatened for investigating environmental scandals in Guatemala - uncovering how damning scientific studies were hidden from public view, and how loyalties were bought through generous donations.

More than ever, we are making an impact. Our mission takes us right to the heart of society's most pressing challenges.

Laurent Richard

About the organization

About the Organization |

forbidden stories |

A non-profit organization based in France, Forbidden Stories was founded by award-winning journalist and filmmaker Laurent Richard in **October 2017**.

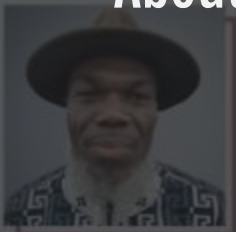
Richard previously produced long form documentaries from **conflict zones** such as Iraq and Kashmir, and has investigated money laundering, corruption, and human rights violations in many parts of the world.

In 2015, Richard witnessed the traumatic Charlie Hebdo attack, in which several journalists were killed by Islamist terrorists. This attack on press freedom convinced Richard of the need to create a **worldwide organization whose mission would be to continue the work of silenced journalists**.



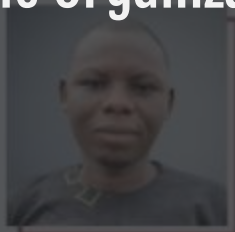
About the Organization

forbidden stories



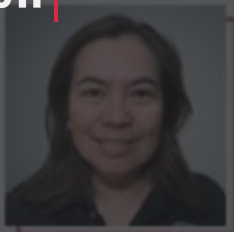
Godson Ketemagnan

Togo



Ayatullahi Salihu

Nigeria



Gina Dean

Philippines



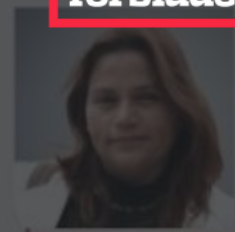
Lance Lucian Banice

Philippines



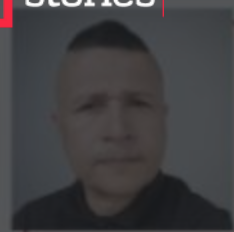
Elijah Akaji

Nigeria



Claudia Julieta Duque

Colombia



Pissin Mora

Colombia

By keeping alive the stories of journalists who have been impeded from reporting, whether through threats, imprisonment, or murder, Forbidden Stories sends a powerful message to the enemies of press freedom:

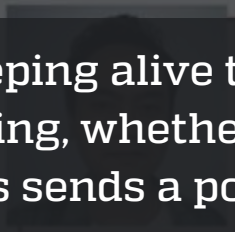
Killing the journalist won't kill the story.

Through its unique mission, the organization both deters violence against journalists and ensures access to crucial information for millions of citizens around the world.



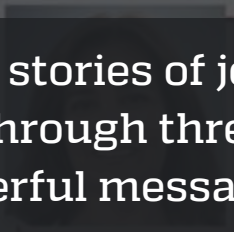
Juan Carlos Lacayo

Honduras



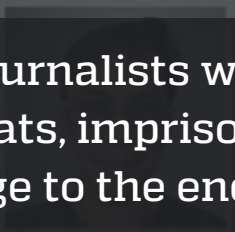
Henry Salas

Colombia



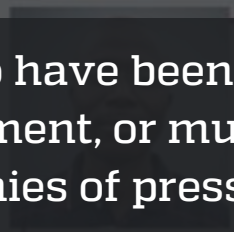
Anna Makhadmeh

Lebanon



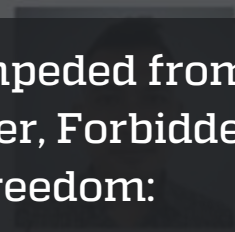
Nour El-Dine

Syria



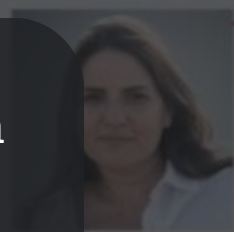
Nour El-Dine

Syria



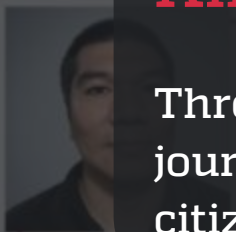
Nour El-Dine

Syria



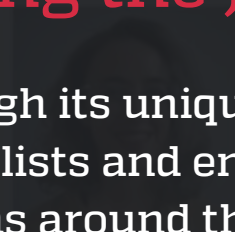
Alia Ibrahim

Lebanon



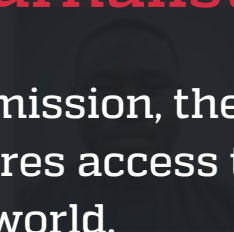
Sherwin L. Vera

Philippines



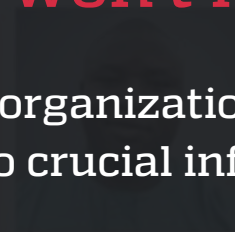
Nurhidayah

Indonesia



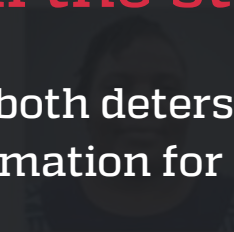
Elizabeth

Nigeria



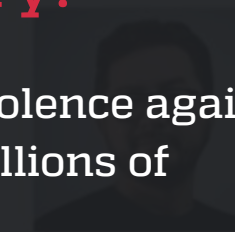
Ayo

Nigeria



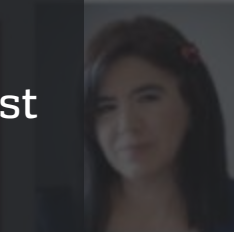
Nour El-Dine

Senegal



Nour El-Dine

Paraguay



Paola Ugaz

Peru



Aboubakar Kigabi

Democratic Republic of the Congo



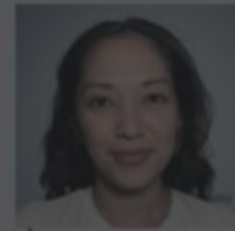
Loukoumane Worou Tchou

Senegal



Hala Nasreddine

Lebanon



Joann Manabat

Philippines



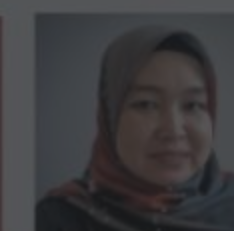
Haruna Mohammed Salisu

Nigeria




Maria Teresa Montaño Delgado

Mexico




Betty Herlina

Indonesia



Since 2017, Forbidden Stories has coordinated and published **17** investigations on issues ranging from **environmental crimes** to **corruption** and **organized crime**, such as the Daphne Project; Green Blood; the Cartel Project; the Forbidden Stories of Rappler.com; and the Pegasus Project, among many others. It has built a network of **60 media partners** across **49 countries** and five continents.



Five years after its creation, Forbidden Stories is now entering a new phase of global **development** with the expansion of the **SafeBox Network** on all continents and the growth of its investigative consortium worldwide.

A year of impactful stories

- Mining Secrets
- The Moroccan Cash Machine
- The Pegasus Project

A year of impactful stories |

MINING SECRETS |

forbidden stories |

Mining Secrets

In March 2022, Forbidden Stories published “Mining Secrets”, which brought together **65 journalists** from **20 media organizations** to pursue the work of **Carlos Choc**, threatened for investigating environmental scandals. The project uncovered how damning scientific studies were hidden from public view, and how loyalties were bought through generous donations.

This project started in May 2021, when Forbidden Stories received a **leak** from a collective of hackers calling themselves “Guacamaya”. The collective, named after a tropical macaw present in Guatemala, was spurred into action by the revelations of the “Green Blood” investigation, published in 2019.

The documents they shared with us came from the local subsidiary of mining conglomerate **Solway Group**, and revealed how journalists who reported on a **mine** in the Guatemalan town of El Estor were systematically profiled, surveilled and even followed by drones. The data leak also unveiled the company’s efforts to avoid responsibility, despite repeated abuses against the press and serious risks to the environment.

Ten days after the publication of our investigation, the parent company, **Solway**, started “a board-led investigation of events in Guatemala”, a decision which they claimed “resonates [their] dedication to learn lessons and to make any necessary improvements to the Group’s processes and governance.” They **never** published the results of this investigation.

Two months after the Mining Secrets revelations, an **internal assessment** led Outokumpu, a powerful Finnish steel multinational, to suspend the purchase of ferronickel from the mine El Estor.

In November 2022, the U.S. Department of the Treasury sanctioned the leaders of Solway mining operations in Guatemala, **Dmitry Kudryakov** and **Iryna Litviniuk**. The sanctions state that they “allegedly led multiple bribery schemes over several years involving politicians, judges, and government officials.”

Another major impact of this investigation is that one of the **complaints** filed against **Carlos Choc** was dropped. In September 2022, during a trip in Europe, he told us: “I am happy to have passed immigration in my country, without any problems and also in Paris. I'm finally free of charges”.

“...allegedly led multiple bribery schemes over several years involving politicians, judges, and government officials.”

Human rights associations have also taken up the issue. Local organizations, such as the **Extractive Industries Observatory** (Observatorio de Industrias Extractivas), which works for more transparency of mining companies in Guatemala, are trying to move things forward in the country.

In addition, members of the US Congress and officials from the US and Swiss embassies are in contact with **Prensa Comunitaria**, the press agency for which Carlos Choc works, to improve the situation on the ground in El Estor.

The Prensa Comunitaria team now aims to meet community journalists from other countries to show them that anything is possible, and to pass on to them an essential tool: **hope**.



THE MOROCCAN CASH MACHINE

PURSUING OMAR RADI'S INVESTIGATION

A year of impactful stories |

forbidden stories |

The Moroccan Cash Machine

For "The Moroccan Cash Machine", published in September 2022, Forbidden Stories pursued the work of imprisoned journalist **Omar Radi**, who investigated how wealthy members of the King of Morocco's inner circle became even richer by stealing land from a tribe of farmers near Rabat.

Omar Radi is a Moroccan investigative journalist. His phone was infected by Pegasus in 2020 and, after a biased trial, **he was sentenced** in March 2022 to six years in jail on charges of "espionage" and "rape". In keeping with the core mission of Forbidden Stories, we pursued the investigation he was working on at the time of his arrest and subsequent judicial harassment.



Omar Radi spent **years investigating the expropriation of tribal lands**, and focused on the case of a tribe near Rabat named Ouled Sbita. Although tribal lands have special legal status in Morocco, Omar Radi's investigation revealed that **the state had circumvented the law**, abused its power, and taken the land away from the Ouled Sbita tribe to sell it to a private company – a company which belongs to a close friend of the King's personal secretary.

Omar Radi had received **threats** for his work and had started to **collect** some **documents**: a notary act, videos, and photos. Based on these, we were able to investigate and discover that this scandal of land grabbing goes even further: from the very beginning, it was linked to a case of insider trading, related to the same company.

"The Moroccan Cash Machine" is Omar's account of how members of the King's entourage **manipulated** the law to become even richer, at the expense of a tribe of farmers.

Our article was published on our website, as well as by our partners at Le Monde (France), Die Zeit (Germany), Knack (Belgium), and Daraj (Lebanon). The publication had a direct impact on the **international recognition** of Omar Radi's work.

Imprisoned since 2020, Omar received in 2022 an award from Reporters Without Borders to honor his **journalistic independence**. The ceremony, held in Paris in the presence of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dmitry Muratov, was a beautiful celebration of courageous journalism.

DIE  ZEIT

Knack

Le Monde


DARAJ

THE PEGASUS PROJECT

Global democracy under cyber attack

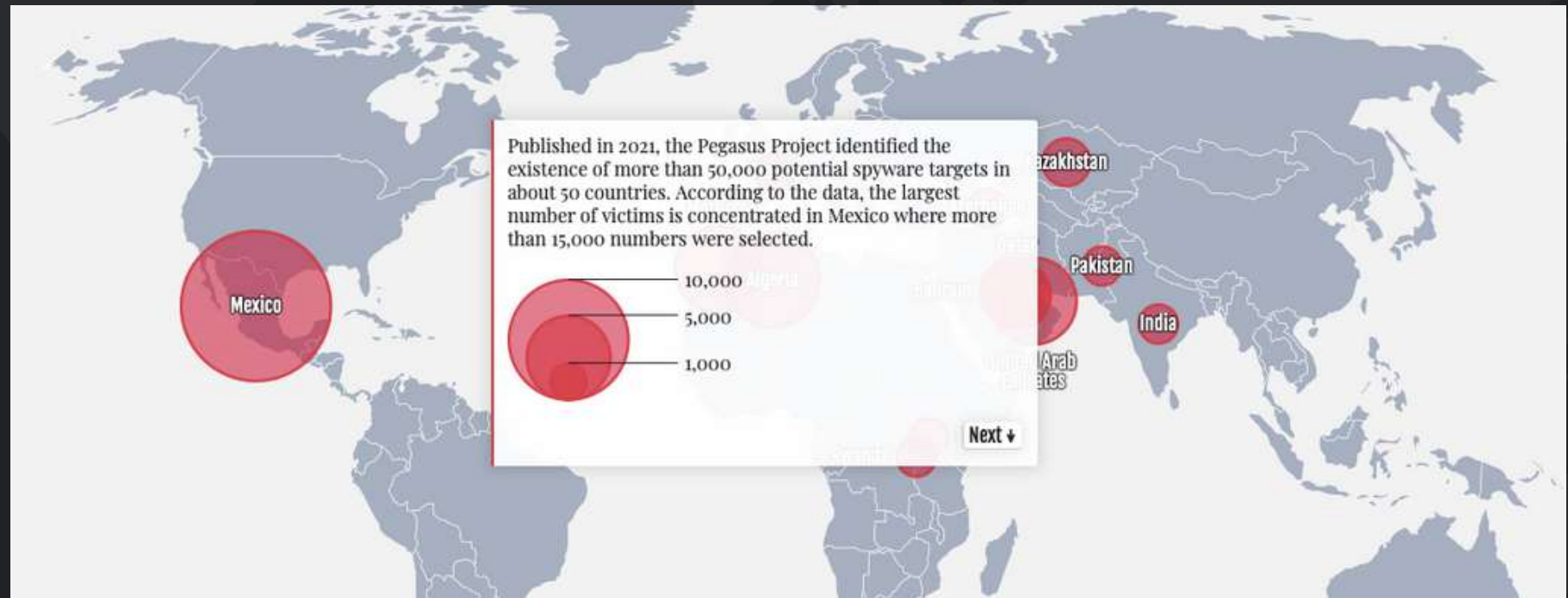
The Pegasus Project

The Pegasus Project continued to make waves in 2022, with new impacts and new revelations about NSO Group's spyware.

How Pegasus was used against critical journalists in El Salvador

In January 2022, Forbidden Stories published a piece on how investigative journalists at El Faro and GatoEncerrado in El Salvador were repeatedly and aggressively targeted with Pegasus spyware. The findings were based on a report by Citizen Lab and Access Now shared with Forbidden Stories and published simultaneously.

In July 2022, on the occasion of the one-year anniversary of the Pegasus Project, Forbidden Stories published an **interactive map** compiling and summarizing all of the available information about NSO Group's Pegasus. The map contains country pages with detailed information and key statistics, including the number of confirmed victims per country.



“...evidence of Pegasus attacks had been found in the phones of more than 300 people of over 30 nationalities on 4 continents...”

One year after the publication of our investigation, evidence of Pegasus attacks had been found in the phones of more than 300 people of over 30 nationalities on 4 continents, including more than 110 journalists and more than 100 human rights activists, political activists, and lawyers.

Eight countries and the European Union have announced the opening of **judicial** and **parliamentary** investigations.

The map was updated for the two-year anniversary of the project, on 18 July 2023.

New confirmed victims and new confirmed clients

In 2022, new confirmed victims of NSO Group's spyware were identified in Bahrain, Belgium, El Salvador, Jordan, Lebanon, Mexico, Poland, Spain, Thailand and the United Kingdom. Media outlets reported additional victims in Finland, Djibouti, European Union institutions, and possibly Indonesia.

Media outlets also reported that the governments of Djibouti, Estonia and the Netherlands **had acquired the spyware** (the countries either denied the allegations or declined to comment).

In Hungary, Pegasus Project member Direkt36 reported that, according to Hungarian MPs who investigated the matter, Pegasus likely had been used in the country after the revelations of the Pegasus Project.

The case of Poland

In early January 2022, Polish newspaper and Pegasus Project member **Gazeta Wyborcza** reported that NSO Group had sold its spyware to Poland's anti-corruption body and to Hungary after leaders of the two countries met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 2017.

A few days later, the chairman of Poland's ruling party Jarosław Kaczyński acknowledged that the Polish government had bought Pegasus, but denied having used it against political opponents.

Later that month, a Polish Senate commission opened a probe into the use of Pegasus against government critics. Senators who participated in the commission plan to draft a **law** regulating the use of surveillance technology in Poland.



+ 6,000
attempted
attacks by
Pegasus in
2020 and 2021

One month later, Amnesty International's Security Lab found that the phones of two people close to a key Polish opposition figure (himself hacked with Pegasus) were **targeted** with NSO Group's spyware. Gazeta Wyborcza and other members of the Pegasus Project consortium coordinated by Forbidden Stories reported that their numbers were selected for potential targeting, along with **more than 100 others** in Poland.

The same month, Polish and international media reported that Poland's Supreme Audit Office (NIK) claimed to have been subjected to over 6,000 attempted attacks by Pegasus on **more than 500 devices in 2020 and 2021**, including over 100 smartphones. A few days later, this authority said it suspected the hacking of three phones with Pegasus, according to Gazeta Wyborcza.

In July 2022, Gazeta Wyborcza revealed that the **Central Anti-Corruption Bureau of Poland** had targeted the phones of three individuals involved in the privatization of the chemical company CIECh.

Later in the year, the news outlet also reported that left-wing senator Grzegorz Napieralski had been **targeted** with Pegasus. Gazeta Wyborcza has kept reporting on new victims of the spyware ever since.



Grzegorz Napieralski



In the United States, the FBI **confirmed** the purchase of a "limited license" of Pegasus, but said there had been "no operational use in support of any investigation" and that it used the software "for product testing and evaluation only".

Yet, according to the New York Times, the **FBI was close to deploying Pegasus** in its criminal investigations – until it decided not to on 22 July 2021, four days after the Pegasus Project was published.



In Mexico, Pegasus Project members Aristegui Noticias and Proceso, along with Animal Político, Citizen Lab and R3D, **reported** in October 2022 that contrary to what Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador had previously stated, his administration had kept using NSO Group's spyware as late as 2021.

Two political crises triggered by Pegasus

In Spain, Canadian research laboratory Citizen Lab revealed in April 2022 that the phones of more than **60 Catalan politicians and pro-independence activists** were infected or targeted with Pegasus, with “strong circumstantial evidence” suggesting that the Spanish government was involved in the **surveillance**.



The Spanish government declared shortly after that the phones of Spain’s Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and two ministers were infected or targeted with Pegasus, the first confirmation of the use of Pegasus against a head of state. The revelations created a political scandal dubbed “**CatalanGate**” and provoked a crisis in the Spanish parliament.

The head of Spain’s secret services eventually reportedly admitted that her agency had spied on 18 Catalan independence leaders. She was ousted a couple of days later.



In Israel, revelations about the **alleged misuse of Pegasus** by the Israeli police on Israeli civilians caused political turmoil, and politicians vowed to investigate the scandal.

A report by the Ministry of Justice finally found that the **Israeli police** had acted largely in accordance with the law and that it had not hacked the phones of most individuals reported as victims.

The report nevertheless stated that the Israeli police had repeatedly exceeded the bounds of cyber warrants.

New investigations and lawsuits: a tense situation for NSO Group

After allegations that the governments of Poland and of Hungary had used Pegasus to spy on their critics, the European Parliament announced in March 2022 the creation of an inquiry committee on the Pegasus scandal (**PEGA** Committee). The Committee's work began in April and will continue until May 2023.

In May 2022, it auditioned a representative of NSO Group, who stated under fire from MPs that **at least five European countries** had used

Pegasus and that NSO Group had terminated a contract with at least one of them.

In August 2022, NSO Group told the PEGA Committee it had **active contracts** with 22 security and law enforcement organizations in **12 EU countries**, and that it used to work with two additional EU countries. The company did not disclose which countries were active customers and which were former ones.

In Hungary, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States, victims of Pegasus announced in 2022 **their intention to sue NSO Group** and/or client governments (Bahrain, Hungary, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates).

In the United States, members of the Pegasus Project disclosed in 2022 that the U.S. Department of Justice had **launched a criminal investigation into NSO Group** that focused on allegations of unauthorized intrusions into networks and mobile devices.

As for NSO Group, it laid off 100 of its 700 employees and its CEO and co-founder of NSO Group Shalev Hulio announced he would step down.

**“victims of Pegasus
announced in 2022
their intention to
sue NSO Group”**

New collaborations and investigations

In addition to the publication of “Mining Secrets” and “The Moroccan Cash Machine”, Forbidden Stories and its partners launched in 2022 two new investigative projects: the first on the inner workings of the global disinformation industry, and the second on a system of embezzlement and mining malpractice in northern Colombia. Both will be published in 2023.

Story Killers

Gauri Lankesh was an Indian investigative journalist based in Bangalore. At the time of her **assassination on September 5th 2017**, Lankesh was planning to publish an editorial entitled “In the age of fake news”, in which she denounced India’s “**lie factories**”.

Her piece notably revealed how a local news outlet spread a virulent rumor, which was then amplified by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and other right-wing individuals.



In June 2022, Forbidden Stories gathered a consortium of over **100 journalists** from **30 media outlets** at a two-day meeting in Paris, with the aim of pursuing Lankesh's work and exposing the mechanics of the business of disinformation. It was the first time such a large consortium of journalists investigated the issue.

For the next six months, we looked into the virality, industrialization and **weaponization of fake news**, and traced disinformation narratives back to their original sources, from India and Saudi Arabia to Israel, Spain, and the United States.

Through the "Story Killers" investigation, we aim to expose how **disinformation can threaten democracy** and **press freedom** by destabilizing elections, destroying reputations, inciting violence against journalists, and erasing the truth around the world.

The Rafael Project

A coal miner turned political activist who later became a journalist, Rafael Moreno was known in his native province of Córdoba, Colombia, for his investigations into corruption.

At the time of his killing on 16 October 2022, Moreno was looking into irregularities in the attribution of contracts for public works in Córdoba, as well as into health and environmental consequences of mining activities in the region.

Before his death, Rafael Moreno had confided his concerns about threats he had been receiving to Forbidden Stories and its SafeBox Network, and asked that we pursue his work should anything happen to him.



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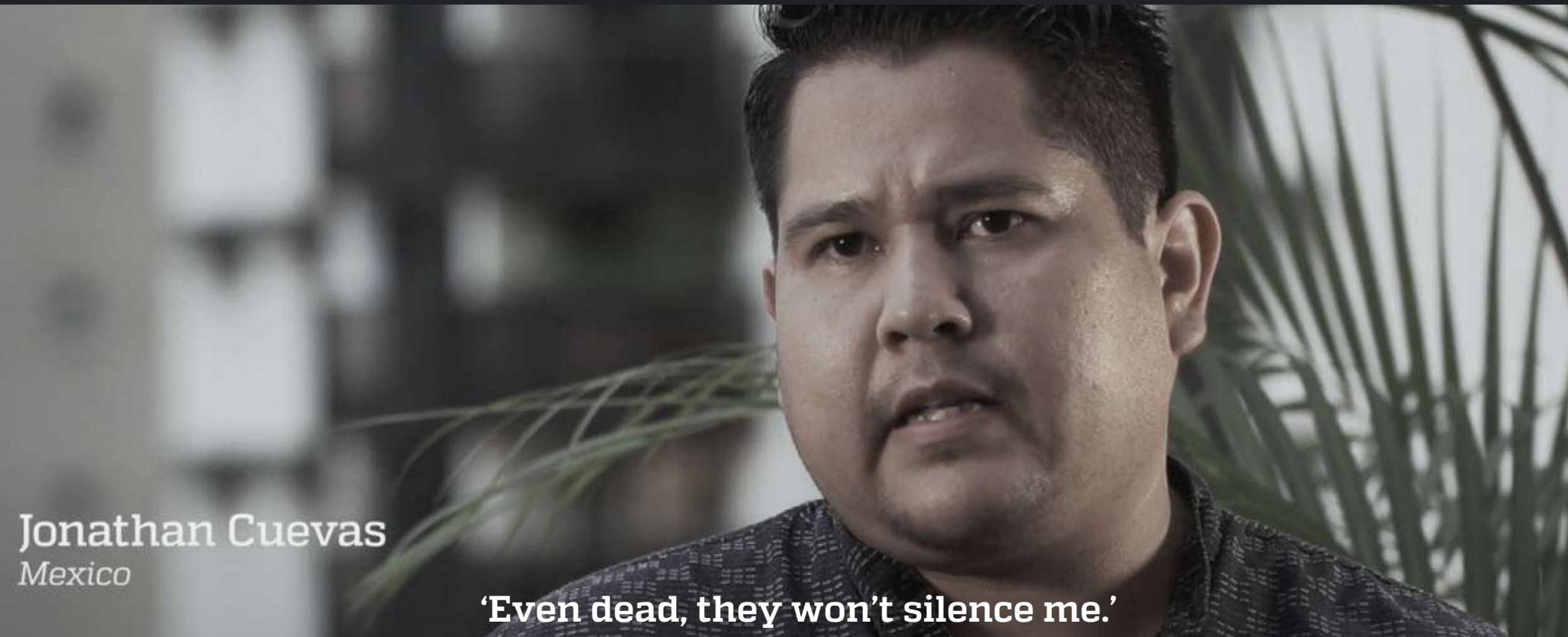
#NOSUNENLASHISTORIAS

Upon hearing of Moreno's assassination, we **immediately traveled to Colombia**, got in touch with Moreno's relatives, and met with dozens of Colombian, Latin American and international journalists.

A few days later, we gathered them during the **Gabo Festival in Bogotá**, a yearly event that celebrates and promotes Ibero-American journalism.

On **23 October 2022**, the last day of the festival, 30 journalists decided to join forces to pursue Rafael's unfinished work and formally launch the Rafael Project. It is the **first time** Forbidden Stories continues the work of a journalist based on the information he had protected through the SafeBox Network.

Launch of the SafeBox Network



Jonathan Cuevas
Mexico

'Even dead, they won't silence me.'

2022 has also been a year of technical innovation. Five years after its creation, Forbidden Stories is deploying a new dimension of its strategy to keep stories alive through the SafeBox Network, a **unique tool that enables threatened journalists to safeguard their information.**

If they are imprisoned, kidnapped or murdered, Forbidden Stories and its partners will be able to continue their investigations and publish them worldwide. Dozens of threatened journalists are already using it.

The SafeBox Network **connects journalists at risk**, who are often isolated, with **their colleagues** around the world who benefit from greater **freedom** and **safety**. By sharing their information with our global network of journalists, they are ensured that their information is unstoppable, and that their investigations will not disappear should anything happen to them.



Group picture taken in Latin America with journalists who took part in the SafeBox Network's first workshop.

Indirectly, this mechanism also helps protect these journalists in danger, by making it publicly known - if they so wish - that their information is secure. That way, the SafeBox Network acts as a **deterrent** to those who wish to attack them: whatever they try to hide will be amplified by many.

This is for example the case of Alfredo Guachiré, a Paraguayan journalist threatened for his scoops on ‘narco-politics,’ who tweeted in March 2022:

“For my safety, (...) I turn to the organization Forbidden Stories to protect my investigations.”

While this innovative tool was formally launched in May 2022 during the World Press Freedom Day conference organized by UNESCO in Uruguay, it had already been introduced to a group of at-risk Brazilian, Mexican, Colombian and Paraguayan journalists during a training workshop in São Paulo, Brazil, in March 2022.

The risks faced by this group of **12 journalists** were harrowing: one had been **threatened** by a cartel, another had been **brutally kidnapped** just months earlier, a third had dodged **multiple murder attempts**, and others were under military **surveillance** or experiencing **judicial harassment** because of their work. Through this workshop, Forbidden Stories trained them on the SafeBox mechanism and secure means of communication.



Other workshops soon followed: in-person in Colombia during the Gabo Festival in October 2022, but also online, throughout the year, with journalists from Haiti, Mexico, and West Africa.

A total of **51 journalists** were trained through the **SafeBox Network's workshops** in 2022, and partnerships were formed with close to 10 organizations to strengthen the development of the Network locally. This development will be stepped up in 2023 with around a dozen in-person workshops planned, with a focus on Africa and Asia.

Keeping Rafael Moreno's stories alive through the SafeBox Network

Just a few months after its launch, the **SafeBox Network mechanism** had already been “triggered”, following the murder of Colombian journalist Rafael Moreno on **16 October 2022**. Prior to his killing, Moreno had protected his information through the Network, and asked that Forbidden Stories continue his investigations.

A week after his death, the Rafael Project was launched. **Thirty** journalists from Colombia, Latin America and all around the world were gathered by Forbidden Stories in Bogotá during the Gabo Festival, on 21-23 October 2022.

Together, they agreed to join forces and continue Moreno's investigations into **corruption** and **mining malpractice** in his native region of Córdoba.

The investigation will be published in 2023.

They are using the SafeBox Network:



"If I leave this world tomorrow, I want this information to be known. [With the SafeBox Network], our response to these attacks will be primarily journalistic."

- Paola Ugaz, Peruvian journalist

"We are afraid. And we want to continue investigating. In Colombia, a journalist's life is worth nothing. [With the SafeBox Network] we can let those on the front lines know that even if something happens to one of us, the investigation will be published. I think that protects both our work and our lives."

- Óscar Parra, Colombian journalist



They are using the SafeBox Network:



"For me, the SafeBox Network represents hope. I come from a [Mexican] state where most of the territory has been silenced by both organized crime and the government. From now on, the enemies of the press will think twice before committing such crimes. If they come after me, it won't end there. Even if they kill me, they will not silence me."

- Jonathan Cuevas, Mexican journalist



forbidden stories

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KEEP STORIES ALIVE

Development of Forbidden Stories

Our Board of Directors

As it continues to grow and expand its mission and reach, Forbidden Stories is advised by an international Board of Directors composed of members from different backgrounds and areas of expertise, including investigative journalism; law; finance; development strategies; media development; human rights; and digital security.



Lynette Clemetson

Chair



Edouard Perrin

General Secretary



Louisa Handem Piette

Treasurer



Bastian Obermayer

Member



Laurence Franc-Menget

Member



Rémi Labed

Member



Joanne Levine

Member

Following the introduction of five new members to the Board in 2021, a new Co-Chair will be elected in 2023. The diversification of the Board aims to reflect the emphasis Forbidden Stories places on international partnerships and collaboration.

The Board will continue to be strengthened in coming years, notably by broadening the range of skills and expertise represented amongst its members, as well as its diversity in terms of gender and cultural background.

In addition to its expansion, the Board has also become more involved in the life of the organization, and now meets on a quarterly basis, including once a year in person.

The first meeting of the Board of Directors was held online in November 2021, and the first in-person Board meeting was held in October 2022 in Paris.

Our team

To support its expansion and enable the intensification of its activities, Forbidden Stories began the process of strengthening its team in 2022. A new **Communications Manager** position was created and filled, thus bringing the total number of staff members to **11**. Several other positions are expected to be created in 2023.

As it works on a **growing number of investigations** with more and more partners, and as it faces an increasing number of requests for support from journalists, Forbidden Stories needs to further strengthen its editorial and SafeBox Network teams.

In parallel with Forbidden Stories' growth, we aim to increase **diversity** across all aspects, including gender and cultural background.



Laurent Richard

Founder & Executive Director

Editorial team



Sandrine Rigaud
Editor-in-chief



Cécile Andrzejewski
Journalist



Léa Péruchon
Journalist



Karine Pfenninger
Journalist



Paloma Dupont de Dinechin
Journalist



Phineas Rueckert
Journalist



Audrey Travère
Journalist



Youssr Youssef
Journalist



Juliette Gache
Intern

Support team



Sara Guglielmi

Chief Financial Officer



Antoine Cauty

Communications Manager

SafeBox Network team



Clément Le Merlus

SafeBox Project Manager



Margaux Farran

Intern

Events and Conferences in 2022

Forbidden Stories' popularity and reputation are growing around the world. This year, Forbidden Stories was given the opportunity to showcase its innovative and unique mission of defending press freedom and reinforcing democracy through collaborative journalism at various events and conferences, such as:

The International Journalism Festival in April

The Legatum Courage in Journalism Award Conference in July

The Daphne Festival and the Gabo Festival in October

The Media For Freedom Summit in February

The World Press Freedom Day Conference in May

The One World Media (OWM) Global Reporting Summit in September

Events and Conferences

In addition to these, we also participated in the **Knight-Wallace** Fellows presentation in March; the **Limelight Foundation**'s meeting on digital safety and security in April; the **Veronica Foundation**'s Conference in June; as well as the **Ashoka** Changemaker Summit and the **Wallace** House Board, both in November.

Forbidden Stories' Founder and Director, Laurent Richard, was furthermore invited to join the Grand Jury of the European Commission's Lorenzo Natali Media Prize.

Our work also traveled beyond the walls of journalism conferences and events and reached the **European Parliament**, which invited us to a hearing on the work of its Committee of Inquiry to investigate the use of **Pegasus** and equivalent surveillance spyware (PEGA) in May. This is an example of the importance and impact that our investigations can have.

As the year 2022 marked the **fifth anniversary of Forbidden Stories**, a commemoration was organized in Paris and attended by close to a hundred people. It notably featured a roundtable with Andrew Caruana Galizia, Co-Founder of the Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation, and Lynette Clemetson, Chair of Forbidden Stories' Board of Directors.



Development of Forbidden Stories

Awards

Forbidden Stories received two new awards for the Pegasus Project in 2022: the **Investigative Journalism for Europe (#IJ4EU) Impact Award**, and the Online Journalism – **AI Neuharth Innovation in Investigative Journalism Award**; bringing the total number of awards received for this investigation to six.

These prestigious awards are a testament to the quality and impact of our investigations, and we are deeply honored by these recognitions.



“This global investigation shows the power of collaboration between NGOs and media to uncover the practices that affect the people who are often under threat by powerful governments.

The presentation is simple and impactful. It’s a significant collaborative achievement using fresh technological techniques.”

- Online Journalism Awards Judges comments



JAMAL KHASHOGGI

“The Pegasus Project is a successful and massive journalistic undertaking, that revealed how governments all over the world spy on journalists, politicians and activists using the so-called Pegasus spyware developed by the Israeli technology organization NSO Group.

The jury valued that the project is a prime example for cross-border investigative journalism at its best. Building on a powerful leak of 50,000 phone numbers, a great team of reports from all over the world came together, and with an elaborate methodology, produced a high-quality investigation on a global topic, with global impact. The result of their work is also vital for the future of journalism.”

– #IJ4EU Awards Jury statement

New supporters and donors

As it enters a new phase of global development, Forbidden Stories has secured the generous support of two new donors: the National Endowment for Democracy, and the Skoll Foundation. These new funding agreements will notably enable Forbidden Stories to publish a growing number of investigations, to expand the SafeBox Network worldwide, and to reinforce its operational and internal capacities.



Our financial reports

Revenue	
Foundation grants	1 321 560
Public donations	31 046
Prizes	45 297
Sales of images	10 320
Dividends from Forbidden Films	21 300
<u>Total Revenue</u>	1 429 523

Our financial reports

Expenses	
Staff salaries & taxes	557 466
Operating expenses	284 097
Total expenses	841 564

Forbidden Stories' Director elected Ashoka Fellow

In addition to financial support, Forbidden Stories has begun receiving guidance from the [Ashoka Support Network](#). Laurent Richard, Forbidden Stories' Founder and Director, was elected as an Ashoka Fellow in October 2022, and is now part of this international network.

For more than 35 years, [Ashoka](#) has built the world's largest network of leading social entrepreneurs, which today **brings together more than 3,500 social entrepreneurs from 93 countries**.

Ashoka Fellows champion innovative new ideas that transform society's systems, providing benefits for everyone and improving the lives of millions of people.

ASHOKA
SUPPORT
NETWORK

Forbidden Films

Forbidden Films

Forbidden Stories' subsidiary company, Forbidden Films, produces documentaries from behind the scenes of our international collaborative investigations.

These documentaries present complex investigations through compelling storytelling, and are also a useful tool to raise awareness on Forbidden Stories and increase the impact of our investigations.

Through its dividends, Forbidden Films has furthermore begun contributing to the financing of Forbidden Stories.



This year, two documentaries that had been produced in 2021 won prestigious awards:

- [“The Caviar Connection”](#), a documentary about attempts by the Azerbaijani regime to corrupt European politicians, won the 2022 Palm Spring Festival Award as well as the 2022 Etoile de la SCAM (Société civile des auteurs multimédias) Award;
- [“Daphne”](#), a documentary about the 2017 murder of Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia and the ensuing international investigation of the Daphne Project, received the Reporters Without Borders Prize for Human Rights at the 2022 FIGRA (Festival international du grand reportage d’actualité et du documentaire de société) Awards.

Upcoming documentaries

Forbidden Films additionally advanced the production of two documentaries, in partnership with Arte, BBC and PBS Frontline, that will be broadcast in 2023.

The first, entitled “The Spy in Your Mobile”, will retrace the work of the international consortium coordinated by Forbidden Stories in the months leading up to the publication of the Pegasus Project.

The second, entitled “The Rise of Wagner”, will tell the story of the Russian journalists who risked their lives to investigate and reveal the existence of this dangerous group of mercenaries.

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**WE ARE A COLLABORATIVE
JOURNALISM NETWORK DEVOTED
TO KEEPING STORIES ALIVE.**

Follow us:



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