



forbidden stories

2017 – 2020

IMPACT REPORT



LAURENT RICHARD

Forbidden Stories' founder
and executive director.

” In October 2017 as we were preparing to launch a collaborative network of journalists dedicated to pursuing and publishing the work of other reporters facing threats, prison or murder, prominent Maltese investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia was horrifically silenced with a car bomb.

Her murder was a cruel and stark reminder of how tenuous the free flow of information can be when democratic systems falter. We added Daphne to the sad and long list of journalists whose work Forbidden Stories is committed to continuing.

For five months, we coordinated a historic collaboration of 45 journalists from 18 news organizations, aimed at keeping Daphne Caruana Galizia's stories alive. Her investigations, as a result of this, ended up on the front pages of the world's most widely-read newspapers. Seventy-four million people heard about the Daphne Project worldwide. Although her killers had hoped to silence her stories, the stories ended up having an echo way further than Malta.

Three years later, the journalists of the Daphne Project continue to publish new revelations about her murder and pursue the investigations she started. Their explosive role in taking down former Maltese high-ranking government officials confirms that collaboration is the best protection against impunity.

A word from the founder and director

forbidden stories

That's why other broad collaborative investigations followed.

The Green Blood Project, in 2019, pursued the stories of reporters in danger for investigating environmental scandals.

A year later, the Cartel Project pursued the work of slain Mexican journalist Regina Martínez and dived deeper into the global networks of Mexican drug cartels.

On a smaller scale, we have developed rapid response projects. We investigated the circumstances behind the murders of Ecuadorian, Mexican and Ghanaian journalists; looked into cases of reporters threatened for working on Covid-19; and followed the cyber-surveillance of Moroccan journalist Omar Radi.

Laurent Richard speaking at a meeting with Forbidden Stories' media partners, in Paris, in March 2020.

By continuing and publishing the work of reporters who can no longer investigate, we have sent a powerful message to enemies of the free press: killing the journalist won't kill the story.

The need for such an organization is painfully apparent.

Our Paris-based team is growing in order to sustain our steady development. It now includes nine full-time employees.

A subsidiary company, Forbidden Films, was created to produce documentaries in order to further broaden the reach of our work.

I would like to express my deepest thanks to the charitable foundations supporting our nonprofit, as well as all of our media partners, without whom none of this would have been possible.

The prestigious George Polk Special Award was recently attributed to the Cartel Project journalists. This award is a strong endorsement of our work and another push for pursuing our mission.

”

LAURENT RICHARD

Killing the journalist won't kill the story.

We are a collaborative journalism network whose mission is to protect, pursue and publish the work of other journalists facing threats, prison, or murder.

Protecting

Forbidden Stories ensures that journalists under threat can secure their information.

We provide them with the ability to drop their sensitive information through one of our secure communication channels. If something happens to them, we will ensure the survival of their stories, beyond borders, beyond governments, beyond censorship.

Pursuing

Forbidden Stories fosters collaboration among journalists to make visible and impactful the work of reporters who can no longer investigate. It is the only existing program with this mission.

Publishing

Our goal is to make sure a maximum number of people have access to uncensored news on such crucial topics as the environment, public health, human rights, or corruption.

By keeping their stories alive, we can send a powerful signal to enemies of the free press: even if you succeed in stopping a single messenger, you will not stop the message.

What is the point of killing a journalist if 10, 20 or 30 others are waiting in the wings to carry on their work? Collaboration is the best protection.



A meeting between Forbidden Stories and its partners, in Paris, in January 2019.

The origin

A non-profit, Forbidden Stories was founded by award-winning journalist and filmmaker Laurent Richard.

In 2015, he arrived at work across from the Charlie Hebdo office in Paris to find his fellow journalists massacred by terrorists.

That day, he decided to create Forbidden Stories., convinced of the need for a journalistic response to crimes committed against the press.

Our inspiration?

Forty-one years ago, reporter Don Bolles was killed in a car explosion in Phoenix, USA. His murder left his investigation on land fraud unfinished. Thirty-eight journalists from 28 newspapers and television stations from all over the United States decided to work together to complete the work of Don Bolles.

This collaboration continues to inspire us today.

The consortium

Forbidden Stories works as a consortium, gathering local and international media outlets from around the world in order to investigate massively and to give the stories worldwide coverage.

38

**countries
of publication**

+100

journalist partners

60

media partners

Since its creation, Forbidden Stories has coordinated the work of 60 news organizations based in the five continents, including some of the most widely read newspapers in the world like The Washington Post, The Guardian, The New York Times, El País, La Repubblica, Le Monde, Die Zeit and Süddeutsche Zeitung.

Journalists whose work has been taken over by Forbidden Stories



2017

2018

OCTOBER

Foundation of
Forbidden Stories

APRIL

Publication of the
"Daphne Project"

JUNE

Funding from
Luminate

JULY

Grant from IJ4EU

OCTOBER

Publication of
"Deadly border"

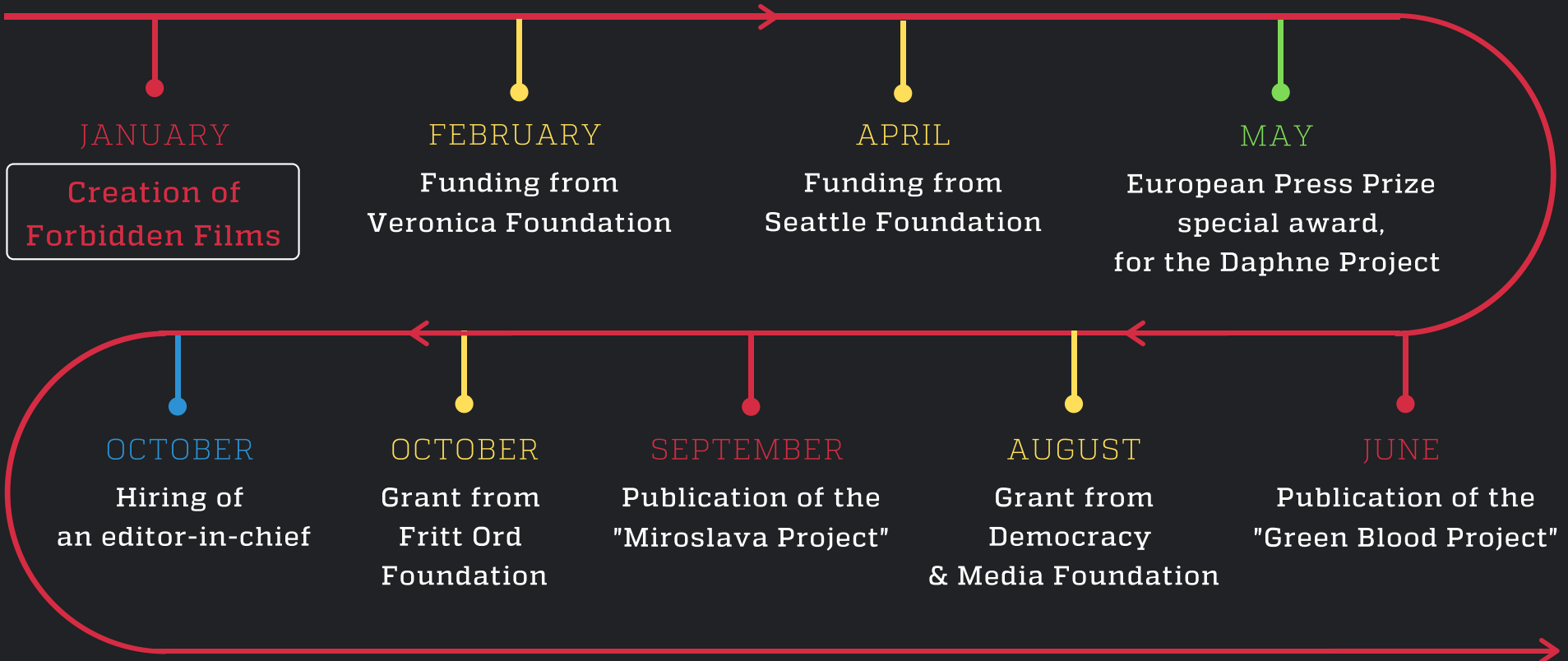
OCTOBER

Publication of the
"Daphne Project,"
1 year later

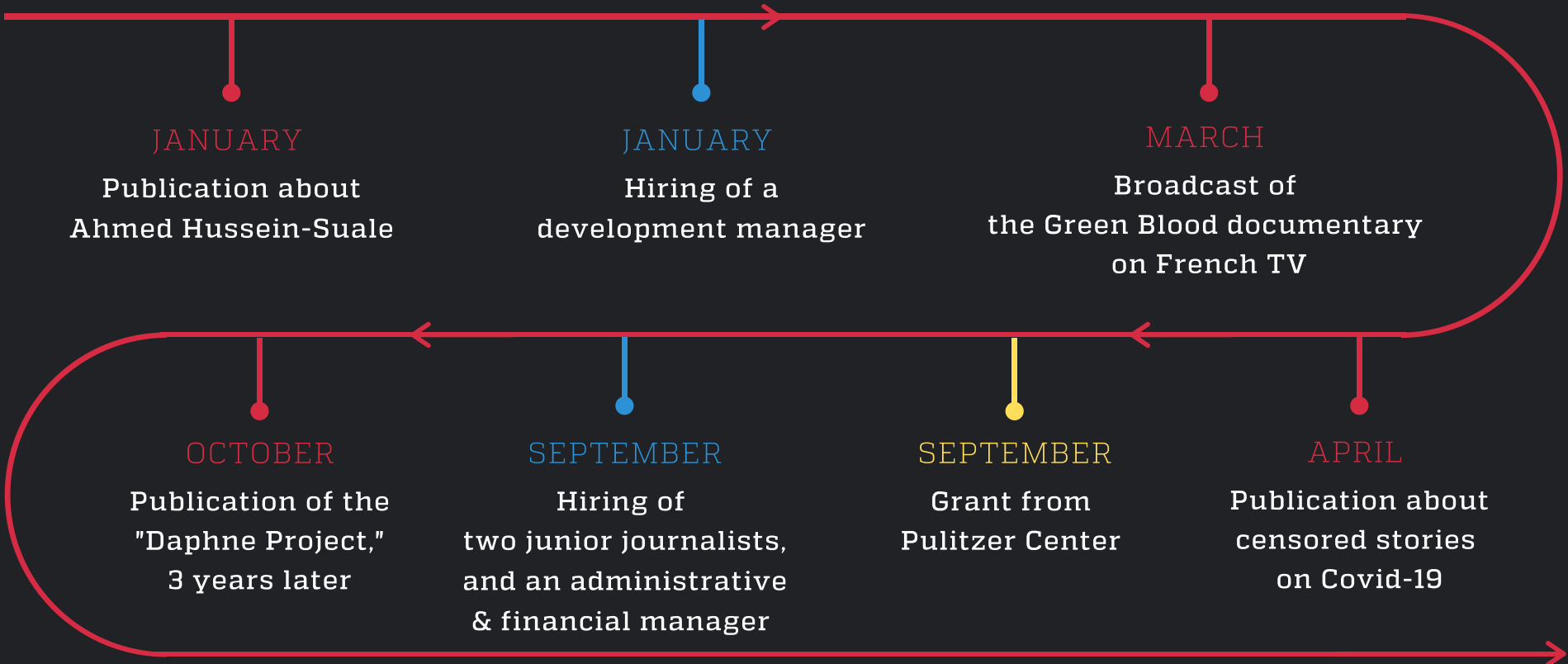
SEPTEMBER

Funding from
Open Society
Foundations

2019



2020



2020

OCTOBER
Prix Europa,
for the Green Blood
documentary

OCTOBER
Funding from
Wellspring
Philanthropic Fund

NOVEMBER
Grant from
UNESCO

2021

FEBRUARY
2020 George Polk Award,
for the Cartel Project

DECEMBER
Publication of the
"Cartel Project"



3 Since its creation, Forbidden Stories has coordinated and published three major collaborative investigations, continuing the work of :

- Maltese investigative journalist **Daphne Caruana Galizia**, after she was killed in a car bombing in 2017.
- Indian journalist **Jagendra Singh**, killed for investigating sand mafias, **Guatemalan journalist Carlos Choc** who was forced to live in hiding, and **Tanzanian journalist Jabir Idriss** whose newspapers were shut down.
- Mexican journalist **Regina Martinez**, murdered in 2012.



The Daphne Project

They killed the journalist. *But not the stories.*

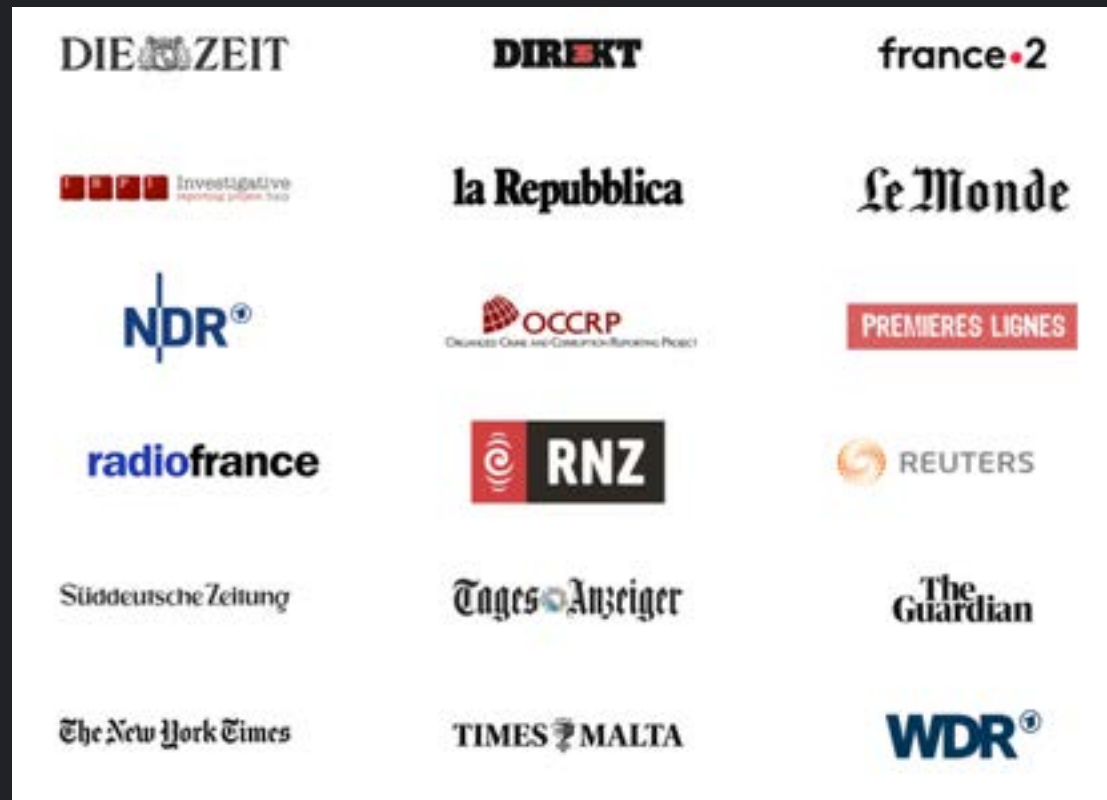
forbidden stories

KEEP STORIES ALIVE



Maltese journalist **Daphne Caruana Galizia** was killed in October 2017, by a car bomb, for her investigations into corruption by government officials and their associates in Malta.

Our partners:



Forbidden Stories successfully brought together 45 journalists from 15 different countries and 18 news organizations to work in secret to complete and publish her investigations, reveal what people who tried to silence her wanted to hide, and uncover the truth about the murder of the country's most renowned corruption reporter.

Six months after its first publications, the Daphne Project made new revelations.

Our consortium has continued to break down the opaque "Passport for Sale" industry that Daphne had been denouncing before she was killed. New exclusive documents reveal how Henley & Partners and its chairman Christian Kälin, the man who designed this lucrative system for the Maltese State, became closely involved in the political elections of several Caribbean islands as the firm worked to spread the practice of selling passports across the region.

The tiny island of Malta is a strategic spot in the Mediterranean Sea for organized crime to secretly operate their smuggling networks. The Daphne Project delved into the darkest parts of Malta to track down the vessels hiding cigarettes and drugs - goods that are now flooding the European market - in their fuel hatches.

Famous for her investigations on corruption at the highest state level, Daphne revealed the secret offshore companies owned by the minister of Tourism and the Prime Minister's chief of staff. Her revelations, confirmed by the Panama Papers, eventually paved the way for judicial inquiries that are still ongoing in Malta. Whilst these two officials, Konrad Mizzi and Keith Schembri, remain in office, the Daphne Project reveals their plan to secretly receive up to 2 million euros from the director of Malta's biggest power station.

The Daphne Project is also committed to investigating Daphne's assassination and search for the masterminds the Maltese authorities have so far failed to arrest. According to our information, one year after the murder, the police had interviewed none of the politicians Daphne was writing about. The Daphne Project has revealed new potential connections between the Maltese Economy minister Christian Cardona and one of the suspects arrested for Daphne's murder.

The secret offshore cash of alleged mastermind of Daphne's killing.

Two years after the Daphne Project, new revelations regarding the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia's murder have sparked an enormous political crisis in Malta: the Prime Minister announced his resignation, while three other members of the government had to step down for their possible link to the murder.

As the official investigation continues, members of the Daphne Project Stephen Grey and Jacob Borg obtained a leak regarding money left in Dubai accounts of mysterious company 17 Black, linked to business tycoon Yorgen Fenech.



The unswept corners of Daphne's murder.

Thanks to exclusive information such as text message and audio recordings played in court, the Daphne Project investigated the involvement of Yorgen Fenech, the businessman and alleged mastermind of the murder currently in prison. We were able to find extracts of audio recordings revealing how Yorgen Fenech was conspiring with Melvin Theuma - the self-confessed intermediary in the murder - to help Daphne's killers in prison.

The Daphne Project also investigated the links between Yorgen Fenech and the cabinet of the Prime Minister to understand the leaks and tips Fenech received about the police investigation on Daphne's murder. Our team focused on Keith Schembri, the chief of staff of Malta's former Prime Minister and how he allegedly passed on information to Yorgen Fenech about the police investigation and how he allegedly gave Fenech guidelines to accuse someone else of the murder after Fenech's arrest by the police.

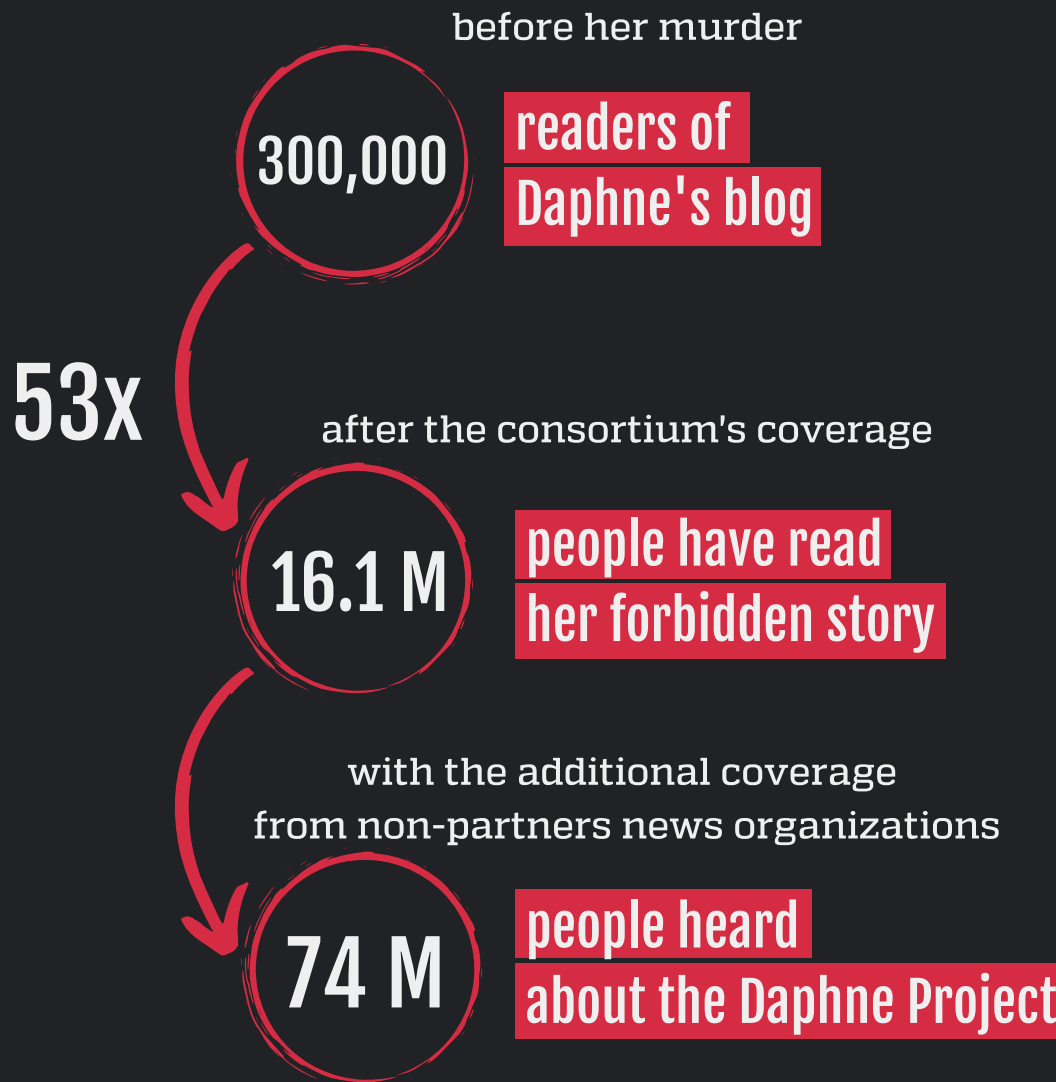
To continue Daphne's investigation, we investigated the financial operations secretly operated by 17Black, Fenech's secret company in Dubai. 17Black was Daphne's last investigation she did not have time to publish. It is considered by the Maltese police as the probable motive for her murder. Our investigation revealed that at least one of 17Black's financial operations involves Swiss oil traders with links to Azerbaijan, rising suspicions of corruption between the two countries that are partners in Malta's biggest energy deal called Electrogas and dedicated to supplying electricity to the island for 18 years.

Thanks to exclusive testimonies and documents in Malta, the Daphne Project was also able to confirm the involvement of the Agius brothers - Malta's most notorious and dangerous criminals - in Daphne's murder. According to these new testimonies the Agius brothers provided the bomb that killed Daphne but are still free thanks to their powerful influence in Malta's police and politics.

Seventy-four million people millions of people heard about the Daphne Project after the first publication, according to a Kantar Media survey.

With its partners, Forbidden Stories managed to amplify the message carried by the slain journalist. While her killers wanted to silence her stories, this case eventually had an echo way further than the small Mediterranean island.

One-hundred-twenty media organizations, in addition to the 18 news organization partners involved in the consortium, have also spread the news of our revelations.



The Daphne Project: impact



The European Commission, European Parliament, Council of Europe reacted strongly after our publication, and created additional ad hoc commissions to further investigate Daphne Caruana Galizia's killing.

The Council of Europe appointed a rapporteur to monitor the rule of law in Malta.

In Malta, tens of thousands of citizens took to the streets to protest against their governments.

Recently, high-ranking government officials and even the prime minister have resigned from office for participating or being complicit in the murder.



Demonstrations in Malta after the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia.



GREEN BLOOD

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANDALS

THEY SILENCED THE JOURNALISTS. THEY WON'T SILENCE THE STORIES.

On every continent, mining giants try to hide dirty secrets.

Across the world, journalists have faced difficulties investigating environmental issues.

Since 2009, at least 13 journalists have been killed working on environment-related stories, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). CPJ is still investigating 16 additional deaths, so there may be as many as 29 cases.

Other journalists were forced to shut down their newspapers. Many, constantly under threat, simply can't work anymore, because they have been forced into hiding or can't find news outlets willing to risk publishing their stories. One subject is particularly perilous: documenting environmental damage by the mining industry.



Guatemalan journalist **Carlos Choc** has been forced to live in hiding.



Tanzanian journalist **Jabir Idriss'** newspapers were shut down.



Indian journalist **Jagendra Singh** was killed.

The Green Blood Project | June 2019

We gathered 15 major media organizations and 40 local and international journalists to finish work begun by these three silenced journalists.

We investigated mining multinationals: a nickel mine in Guatemala, a gold mine in Tanzania and sand mining in India.



Mining in Garra River, near Sharajahapur (India). Credit: Forbidden Films.

For eight months, we collected documents, testimonies and scientific samples, which revealed environmental damage and human rights violations.

As a consortium, we shared our skills and knowledge to trace multiple supply chains, from the mines to end products consumed by individuals around the world.

Our partners:



The Green Blood Project: impact

forbidden stories



After our publication, in June 2020, the Supreme Court of Guatemala ordered the suspension of Solway Investment Group's Fénix nickel mine, which we had investigated.

This investigation focusing on environmental scandals reached 11 million readers, viewers and listeners.

In addition to our media partners' publications, Forbidden Stories produced a four-episode documentary series.

The 52-minute version was broadcasted on French public television (half a million viewers) and has been purchased by Amazon Europe.

The **Cartel** Project

60 JOURNALISTS - 25 NEWS ORGANIZATIONS - 18 COUNTRIES





The consortium of journalists took up the work of **Regina Martínez**, a journalist for the magazine Proceso whose 2012 murder was seen as a new low for impunity in crimes against the press.

Since 2000, 119 journalists have been killed in Mexico, according to the CPJ, making the country the most dangerous place in the world for members of the press.

The Cartel Project gathered 60 journalists from 25 international media outlets.

Working together across 18 different countries over the course of 10 months, the journalists behind this collaboration investigated the global networks of Mexican drug cartels and their political connections around the world.

Our partners:



Eight years after the death of Regina Martínez, they followed her leads about the links between politicians and drug traffickers in the state of Veracruz.

They discovered that in the months before her untimely death, Martínez had been preparing to publish an explosive report about thousands of individuals who had mysteriously disappeared.

They interviewed sources who had never spoken on-the-record before, revealing how local authorities sabotaged the investigation into her death and put a scapegoat behind bars without any tangible proof.

Around the world, journalists partnering with Forbidden Stories also tracked the international associates of Mexican criminal groups, revealing their connections to organized crime.

In China and India, they exposed **drug cartels' expanding supply chain for precursor chemicals used** to make fentanyl, a deadly drug that's ravaging the United States.

In Europe, they investigated the **rise of Mexican "cooks" in underground meth labs** in The Netherlands and Belgium.



A clandestine artisanal fentanyl lab belonging to the Sinaloa Cartel. Credit: Forbidden Films



Weapons belonging to the Sinaloa Cartel are repaired in this workshop. Credit: Forbidden Films

"Cartel Project" journalists also looked into the **highly opaque business of cyber surveillance companies** selling Mexico increasingly invasive surveillance technologies that are being turned **against journalists**.

Finally, they were given access to **exclusive documents showing firearms sales** to Mexico, finding that in Germany, Belgium, Italy and elsewhere multinational weapons manufacturers are selling hundreds of millions of euros of weapons and ammunition to Mexican states with a history of collusion with criminal groups and human rights violations.

The Cartel Project: impact

forbidden stories

Published simultaneously by 25 international media around the world, the project appeared on the front pages of the world's most widely read newspapers including The Washington Post, The Guardian Weekly, Le Monde, Süddeutsche Zeitung and Haaretz.



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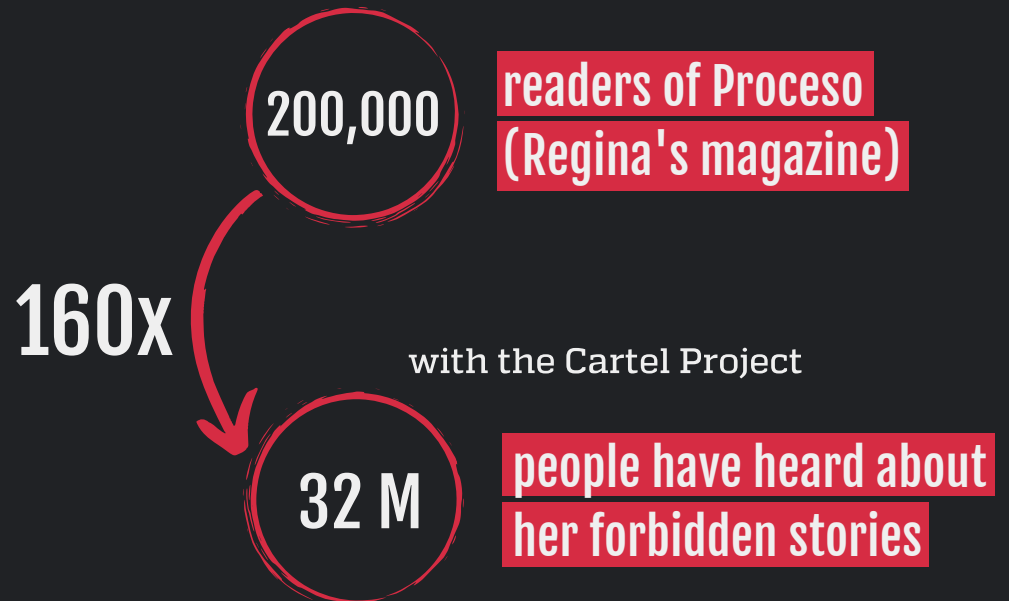
Counting all media organizations that shared our work (through collaboration or republishing), stories were published in 20 countries.

The Cartel Project gave an unprecedented visibility to Regina Martinez's investigative work, particularly on the former governors of Veracruz, Javier Duarte and Fidel Herrera.

The Cartel Project: impact

Based on the combined daily audiences of our media partners, this story reached **32 million readers, listeners and viewers** worldwide.

That's 160 times Proceso's audience, the Mexican magazine in which Regina Martínez used to publish her stories.



Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador talking about Regina Martínez, at a press conference.



When asked by Cartel Project journalists, Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador committed to reopening the case of Martínez's murder if he could find a legal basis for doing so, after eight years of impunity.

In March 2021, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Free Press Unlimited (FPU) and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) released a report about Regina Martínez's murder. They are urging Mexican authorities to reopen the case.

” Among the most admirable traits of investigative reporters is their collective response to an attack on one of their own.

NiemanLab

(Harvard University publication)



(The Cartel Project was part of the top 10 collaborative journalism projects of 2020 established by the Center for Cooperative Media at Montclair State University.)

” This collaboration was intended to send a message:

'Killing the journalist won't kill the story.' And with its worldwide scope, enormity, and fearlessness in taking on criminals and authorities, it did just that.

” Forbidden Stories establishes itself as a new player in a global reporting-network scene that has generally been a bright light in a dark period for journalism around the world.

Columbia Journalism Review.



“ This project is fundamental, not only for Proceso but for Mexican journalism in general.

JORGE CARRASCO

Director of Mexican magazine Proceso, partner of The Cartel Project.

“ The idea not to let the killers determine what is the news, not to let the killers silence individual journalists. And that we will take on the work that they were doing when they were killed. And so that’s what we did.

DANA PRIEST

Journalist at The Washington Post, partner of The Cartel Project.



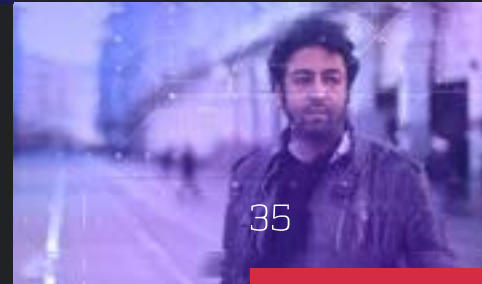


French public TV channel France 2 dedicated a report to the Cartel Project, in the evening news bulletin.
Credit: France Télévisions.

5

Since its creation, Forbidden Stories has conducted and published five rapid-response investigations :

- into the circumstances of the murder of Ecuadorian journalist **Javier Ortega Reyes**.
- into the circumstances of the murder of Mexican journalist **Miroslava Breach**.
- into the circumstances of the murder of Ghanaian journalist **Ahmed Hussein-Suale**.
- into cases of journalists **threatened for working on Covid-19**.
- into the cyber-surveillance case of Moroccan journalist **Omar Radi**.



Following the trial of murdered journalists.



Ecuadorian journalist **Javier Ortega Reyes** was kidnapped on 26 March 2018 in Mataje, in Ecuador, close to the border with Colombia, with his two colleagues, photographer Paúl Rivas, and their driver Efraín Segarra.

The men had been captured by members of a trafficking group. Eight days later the press received information saying that they had been killed. Their bodies were found two months after.

Forbidden Stories partnered with 19 Ecuadorian and Colombian journalists to investigate the assassination of fellow reporter from the daily El Comercio.

These assassinations were a tragic reminder of the terrible conditions journalists face in this region. Controlled by former FARC militias fighting for the control of the drug trade, the border between Ecuador and Columbia is a strategic point from which cocaine is then routed to Central and North America.

Our partners:



Because we believe this story is of global significance, Forbidden Stories mobilized 16 international media to give echo to the brave work of our Ecuadorian and Colombian colleagues, and to keep Javier, Efraín and Paúl's stories alive.



At 7 a.m. on March 23, 2017, **Miroslava Breach**, a well-known journalist in Mexico, got in her car outside her home in Chihuahua City in Northern Mexico, to drive her 14-year-old son to school.

A man appeared - his face hidden by a hat - and opened fire. The journalist did not survive the attack.

Breach was known for her exemplary and fearless investigative work. She worked for the newspapers La Jornada and El Norte de Ciudad Juarez, reporting on organized crime and corrupt local authorities in Chihuahua, her native state which also happens to be one of the most violent in the country.

During the last months of her life, she devoted her work to “narco-politicians,” members of drug cartels who have infiltrated the country’s political sphere to consolidate their control.

More than two years after the murder, investigations by both local and federal authorities have left many loose ends. None of them have established any link between this murder and criminal groups or politicians despite the threats she had received from them.

This is why the Mexican journalists grouped in El Colectivo 23 de marzo, in collaboration with international journalists from Forbidden Stories, Bellingcat and the Latin American Center for Investigative Journalism (CLIP) joined forces to investigate. They shed light on the climate of fear imposed by cartels in the region.

Our partners:



bellingcat



Football in Ghana: an off-limits investigation.

On 16 January 2019, **Ahmed Hussein-Suale**, a Ghanaian investigative journalist, was murdered in Accra. Ahmed Suale worked on some explosive cases: corruption in the judiciary, as well as ritual murders, arms trafficking...

Few months before the attack occurred, he had received death threats from a member of parliament following his investigation into corruption in football.

A year after the assassination of Ahmed Hussein-Suale, Guillaume Perrier went to Ghana for Forbidden Stories. He followed in the footsteps of the investigative journalist who revealed the extent of corruption in Ghanaian football.



In close cooperation with a local journalist, he met with witnesses to the murder, members of the Hussein-Suale's family, as well as officials from the police and the Parliament.

He gathered new elements – most notably an audio recording of president of the Ghana Football Federation Kwesi Nyantakyi threatening Hussein-Suale – that strongly indicates that the Ghanaian reporter's murder was linked to his work. He also found and revealed the existence of other death threats, as well as a key witness to the murder, and sketches of the killers.

The new materials that he gathered and has now been published showed that investigating the corrupt system undermining Ghanaian football remains a risky challenge for many journalists within the country.

Censored stories on Covid-19: a worldwide media blackout threat

The more Covid-19 has spread throughout the world, the more censorship has gained ground.

In the face of the pandemic threat, Forbidden Stories decided to investigate cases of journalists threatened for working on this sensitive topic.

We found out that journalists have had to fight to exercise their profession as they cover one of the largest public health crises in modern history.

For authoritarian regimes, preserving their image during this crisis is paramount, and when journalists have questioned the official statistics — particularly death counts — the response has been swift and harsh: threats, arrests, even disappearances of journalists.

Forbidden Stories has told the stories of these journalists — from Asia to South America to Europe — at the heart of this numbers battle.

Hacked: the story behind the Israel spyware targeting moroccan journalists.

Under fire for a critical tweet, Moroccan journalist **Omar Radi** was reportedly under surveillance for one year, his phone infected by a highly-sophisticated spyware developed by an Israeli security firm, according to an Amnesty International report published on June 22, 2020.

We obtained exclusive access to the report and spoke with Radi about the investigations that made him a state target.

Forbidden Stories coordinated the publication with 16 international media organizations.



In the weeks following the coordinated publication of the Amnesty International report alleging spying into his cell phone, Moroccan journalist Omar Radi was brought in for police questioning two times, accused of espionage.

He was then arrested alongside a colleague while leaving a bar after an altercation with a pro-government cameraman who had been harassing him for several weeks. The most recent episode in the wild saga: just one day after his release, he was again summoned by the police.

Forbidden Stories reported on his harassment.

In short videos designed for social media - and translated into nine languages to reach as many people as possible, Forbidden Stories has highlighted the sensitive stories Mexican journalists were working on just before they were murdered.

Eleven journalists were murdered in Mexico in 2017. This is more than in Syria or Iraq.



Cecilio Pineda:
Shady ties between local officials and drug traffickers.

Local corruption is the most effective of the weapons used by the Mexican cartels. It allows them to operate with complete impunity and to the public's detriment, abducting and terrorizing to the point that people flee the places where they live and work. In a Facebook video, **Cecilio Pineda** drew attention to the strange friendship between the head of a criminal gang and a local legislator. He was murdered on March 2, 2017, two hours after posting the video.



Javier Valdez:
Internal war in the Sinaloa cartel.

The Sinaloa cartel is one of the world's most powerful drug cartels. Ever since the arrest of its long-standing boss, Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán, a bloody internal war has been fought over his succession. **Javier Valdez** interviewed one of the pretenders to El Chapo's throne, Damaso “El Licenciado” López. Henchmen did everything possible to prevent its publication. Valdez was murdered a few weeks later, on May 15, 2017. Forbidden Stories has shed light on the story that drug traffickers didn't want him to look into.

Miroslava Breach:

Drugs traffickers taking over municipalities.

In Chihuahua state, the drug cartels use all possible means to tighten their grip on the territory they control. Some even try to put their men in charge of the state's towns and cities. **Miroslava Breach** published the names of municipal election candidates who were secretly backed by drug traffickers. She was murdered on March 23, 2017 and the newspaper she worked for subsequently closed down.

Two years later, we pursued this story through the Miroslava project.





Forbidden Stories provides journalists with a secure digital safe-box, for uploading investigation materials and instructions.

Their story will be held securely and will never be published without their consent. If something happens to them, what their censors wanted to hide will be publicized globally.

We offer threatened journalists encrypted channels so that they can back up their sensitive information, allowing us to hold their stories securely. The service is available online in English and French, on Forbidden Stories' website.

The journalist will also have to send us instructions to follow: to explain when and how he/she wants us to pursue his/her investigation.

If something happens to the journalist, Forbidden Stories will be able to continue the investigation and publish it broadly, across borders, through its collaborative network.

The security of a digital system can never be fully guaranteed, but the tools used are among the best available. They are open source, well known, and have been audited for bugs and vulnerabilities.

When a journalist is working on a sensitive issue or if he/she feels in danger, there are three ways he/she can securely send messages and documents:



Signal



SecureDrop



Encrypted e-mail

How we run a collaborative investigation

50
journalists



When a journalist in country faces undue threat, and reaches out to Forbidden Stories, our investigative team works to complete the story in cooperation with a global network of:

- **In-country correspondents on the ground**
- **News outlets, to publish and amplify the “forbidden” story**

We create international momentum with media partners to conduct and publish the investigation.

20
countries



20
media outlets



10
months
of investigation



How we run a collaborative investigation |

We deliver the “forbidden” story through an 8-step process:

1

Research on the subject’s work

2

Field reporting

3

Identification of in-country journalistic partners

4

Initial contact with global syndication partners

8

Synchronized publication of the long-form story

7

Fact-checking & legal analysis of the stories

6

Coordination of journalistic partners

5

Initial alignment meeting with in-country and global partners



Forbidden Stories operates a **unique hybrid model** complementing online written content with strong narrative multimedia storytelling.

Through our subsidiary company, Forbidden Films, we utilize documentary and narrative formats **to further broaden the reach of our work.**

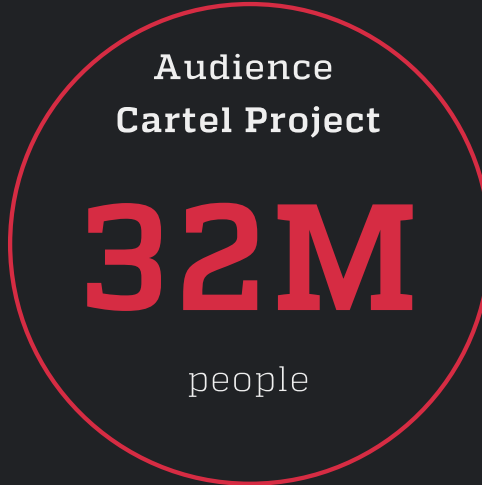
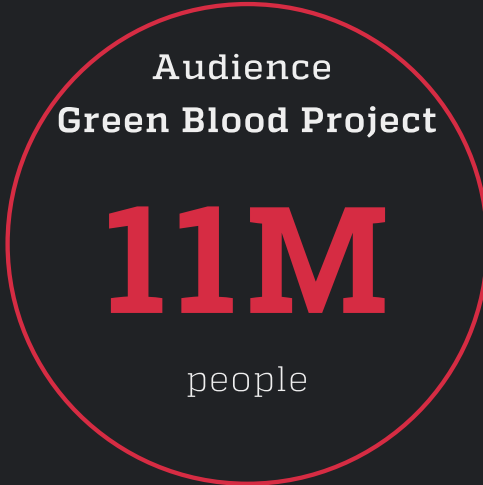
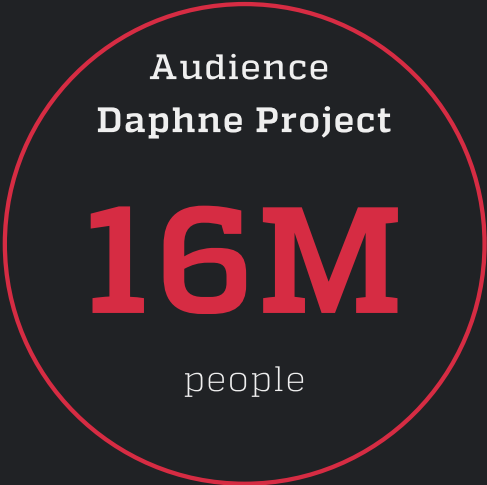
Through our impactful documentaries, we sensitize a wide range of audiences, including illiterate people, and ensure that more people get access to critical information and shine a much larger spotlight on the issues of journalist safety and press freedom, as well as the subjects of crime, corruption, and environmental destruction our stories tell.



forbidden films

During the Green Blood project, a documentary was produced and broadcast on the French TV where it was seen by half a million viewers.

This documentary was purchased by Amazon Europe and awarded the 2020 PRIX EUROPA Best European TV Documentary Series of the Year.



18,4k



18,5k



4,6k



Forbidden Stories has received many prestigious prizes since its creation. They are a confirmation of the quality, impact, and adherence to the mission pursued by Forbidden Stories. **And a prompting to continue to keep stories alive.**



2020 George Polk Award

Special Award

For the Cartel Project and for Regina Martínez.



2020 Prix Europa

Best European TV Documentary Series of the Year

For the Green Blood documentary (Arthur Bouvart & Jules Giraudat).

2018 Prix Europa

Outstanding Achievement Award : European Journalist of the Year

For Laurent Richard, Forbidden Stories' founder.



2020 Lorenzo Natali Europe Prize

For the Green Blood Project
(Cécile Schilis Gallego & Marion Guegan).



2019 European Press Prize Special Jury Award.



2018 "Grand prix of journalism of the year",
at the Assises Internationales
du Journalisme.

Also nominated for:

2020 Fetisov Journalism Award

Shortlisted in the "Excellence in environmental journalism" category
For the Green Blood Project (Cécile Schilis-Gallego & Marion Guegan).

2018 Online Journalism Award

Finalist of the AI Neuharth Innovation in Investigative Journalism Award, Small Newsroom
For the Daphne Project.

2018 and 2020 Prix Albert Londres

Shortlisted twice for the audiovisual prize.
For the Daphne Project and the Green Blood Project documentaries (Arthur Bouvart & Jules Giraudat)



PRIX
EUROPA
THE EUROPEAN JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

Laurent Richard was designated "European journalist of the year" 2018, by Prix Europa.
Credit: Oliver Wolff

2017-2018

Revenue

Foundation grants: 313,748 €

Public donations: 9,000 €

Total Revenue: 322,748 €

Expenses

Staff salaries & taxes: 54,061 €

Operating expenses: 32,946 €

Total expenses: 87,007 €

2018-2019

Revenue

Foundation grants: 279,800 €

Public donations: 5,429 €

Total Revenue: 285,229 €

Expenses

Staff salaries & taxes: 302,419 €

Operating expenses: 193,686 €

Total expenses: 496,105 €

2019-2020

Revenue

Foundation grants: 614,835 €

Prizes: 10,000 €

Public donations: 14,987 €

Sale of images: 80,656 €

Total Revenue: 720,478 €

Expenses

Staff salaries & taxes: 401,053 €

Operating expenses: 162,345 €

Total expenses: 563,398 €

These figures are based on our audited financial statements, our fiscal year covering September to August.

Our supporters

Cross-border investigative journalism is among the most expensive and riskiest in the world. Forbidden Stories is a non-profit project which **relies on charitable foundations** and **on financial support from the public**.

Forbidden Stories is extremely grateful to our supporters whose generosity makes our work possible. Thank you for all you do to keep journalists' stories alive.

They helped make Forbidden Stories happen

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Proceso

Namibia

The Namibian

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Peru

OjoPúblico

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Portugal

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Sweden

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Switzerland

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Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)

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The Washington Post

Forbidden Stories is part of
the **Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN)**



Global Investigative
Journalism Network

EDITORIAL TEAM



Laurent Richard
Founder
& Executive director



Sandrine Rigaud
Editor-in-chief



Arthur Bouvart
Journalist
& Filmmaker



Cécile Schilis-Gallego
Journalist

SUPPORT TEAM



Sara Guglielmi
Development
manager



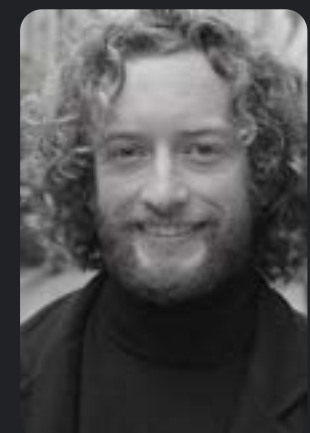
Basma Guessous
Administrative
& financial officer



Audrey Travère
Journalist



**Paloma Dupont
de Dinechin**
Journalist



Phineas Rueckert
Journalist



Edouard Perrin
President



Manon Latscha
Treasurer



Bastian Obermayer
General secretary

As stated in our editorial independence policy, Forbidden Stories maintain a **strict firewall between news coverage decisions and sources of all revenue.**

All editorial decisions are made independently and transparently.

No donor or institution influences Forbidden Stories' coverage.

On the other hand, Forbidden Stories has adopted other best practices charters, including:

- an **equity, diversity and inclusion policy**;
- a **policy against sexual and other unlawful harassment**;
- and **accounting, financial management and reporting policies.**

They talk about us |



“ That feels like a taste of justice.

“ What you are suggesting is creating a newsroom for journalists who have no press freedom. You will get fantastic stories.

MATTHEW CARUANA GALIZIA
Journalist (Malta)



KHADIJA ISMAYILOVA
Journalist (Azerbaijan)



“ It will send a very clear message to oppressive governments that if they touch a journalist anywhere in the world, many others will be ready to support and follow up their story.

“ Now I know that Forbidden Stories will always have my back.

CAN DÜNDAR
Former Editor, of Cumhuriyet (Turkey)



SANDHYA RAVISHANKAR
Journalist at The Lede (India)



” By working together, journalists can make it harder for censorship to win. We’re proud to support Forbidden Stories.

MARINA WALKER

Executive editor at Pulitzer Center (United States)

” The finest project of investigative journalism, in solidarity against censorship.

FABRICE ARFI

Mediapart’s head of investigations (France)



” Truly inspirational and innovative work.



WILL POTTER

Author, journalist and internationally-recognized civil liberties advocate (United States)

Killing the journalist won't kill the story |

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