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# Rapid Response

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IMS (International Media Support)'s Rapid Response mechanism is the organisation's ability to provide urgent support to local media caught in emergencies and conflict.

The RR mechanism is global and flexible; it entails interventions which are context-specific, targeted and limited in scope as well as duration.

The aim is to enable media to continue to operate and do so safely while producing reliable, accurate and conflict-sensitive information for the public.



Hosts at Cambodian women's community radio station.

Photo: Andreas Sugar/IMS

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## Why media support is vital in emergencies

- Good journalism can help promote dialogue and reconciliation during conflict. But media can also reinforce tensions, incite violence and disrupt peace efforts through one-sided and inaccurate coverage.
- Access to credible and reliable information is often more limited during crises. In certain contexts, ensuring that media are able to provide information may help save lives.
- Media are often targeted physically or politically, or face logistical, financial and other challenges.
- Unrest frequently leads to censorship and self-censorship.
- Media support should be an integral part of all stages of emergency response – be it prevention, mitigation, disaster relief, recovery or reconstruction. New technologies have only made the role of media in such situations more relevant.

## Types of interventions

IMS divides its RR interventions into the following contextual categories:

- Emergencies, e.g., conflict or natural disaster.
- Drastic change in political context (positive or negative), e.g., a peace agreement, end of a repressive regime, sudden political tension or polarisation.
- Rapidly closing space and/or media under threat.
- Early warning – either worrying trends, e.g., tension between media and security forces, poor coverage of certain issues such as radicalisation or preventive action, e.g., preparing media for potentially divisive elections.

## Recent interventions

*Ukraine:* Acting in response to the invasion by Russia in February 2022, IMS has provided comprehensive emergency support to a host of Ukrainian media actors from the provision of protective equipment to generators and power banks to the establishment of working hubs for displaced journalists, micro grants for dozens of outlets and support of content focusing on gender aspects of the war.

*The Philippines:* Following the super typhoon that struck the country in December 2021, IMS and local partners have launched an intervention aimed at promoting accountability journalism during the reconstruction phase, exposing corruption, mismanagement of funds, etc.

*Syria:* IMS enabled a radio station to relocate following threats of hostilities in its area of operations. The station continues its work from neighbouring Iraq, reaching its audience inside Syria.

*Sri Lanka:* In response to the unrest that swept the country in the summer of 2022 – starting with protests against the fuel and economic crisis – IMS has worked with local partners to provide media actors with training, legal assistance and funds for content production covering the root causes of the crisis.

Desk studies and missions aimed at assessing the needs of media facing conflict, emergency or political transition. Recent work has covered Colombia, Cuba, Tanzania and Thailand.



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IMS is a non-profit organisation working to support local media in countries affected by armed conflict, human insecurity and political transition.

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