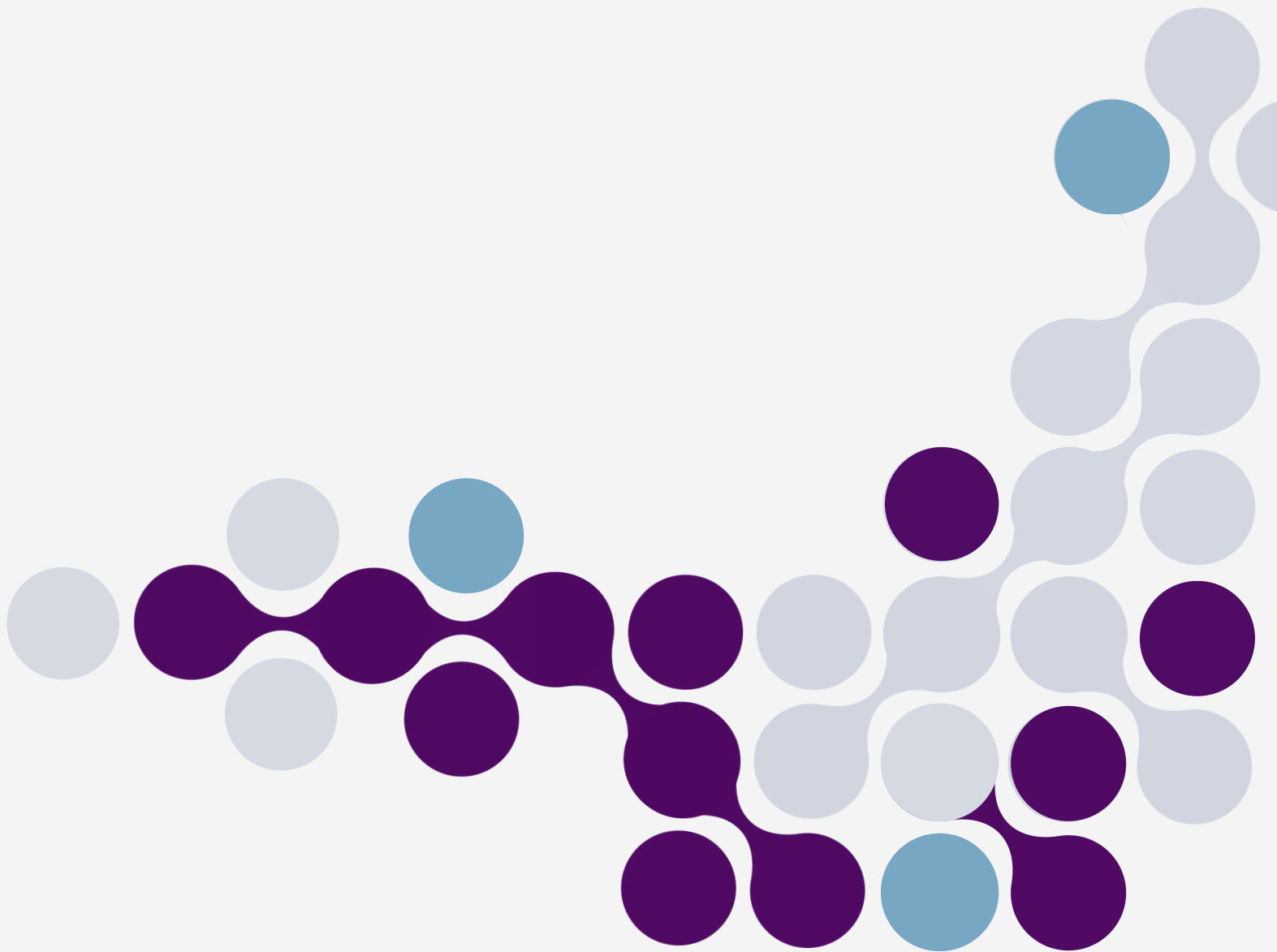# Supporting Activism in Times of Crisis

Emergency Resources for the Western Balkans

Supporting Activism in Times of Crisis

Emergency Resources for the Western Balkans

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October 2024

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FOREWORD

The core of PeaceNexus' mission is to strengthen, through organisational development, actors that are relevant to peacebuilding. In the Western Balkans, we support courageous organisations who contribute to positive interethnic collaboration and to inclusive dealing with the past processes. While we could not be prouder of the work our partners do, we also know that their work has never been more challenging given the rise in threats they face in the increasingly polarized regional context.

We became acutely aware of this in 2023 when we updated our context analysis and interviewed different stakeholders in preparation for our own strategic development reflections. We heard numerous examples of civic space restrictions and noticed that threats and emergencies pose significant obstacles to the long-term internal strengthening efforts we support. In order to inform our response and make adaptations to how we support our partners, however, we needed to find out more: what emergency sources of support are available? How do other funders approach these questions? How should our response be coordinated with others?

We commissioned this report to address these questions. In addition to helping us adapt our support, we hope the report will prove a useful resource for civil society actors and funders alike and look forward to exchanging with other funders about the recommendations.

Happy reading!

Catriona Gourlay,
Executive Director

Deborah Reymond,
Western Balkans Programme Manager

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCSDN	Balkan Civil Society Development Network
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CI	Civic Initiatives
CSO	Civil society organisation
CRD	Civil Rights Defenders
CBM	Community Building Mitrovica
CS	Conflict sensitivity
EJA	Engagement for Joint Action
EC	European Commission
EED	European Endowment for Democracy
EFB	European Fund for the Balkans
EU	European Union
FLD	Front Line Defenders
ForumZfD	Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst e.V.
FoAA	Freedom of assembly and association
HR	Human rights
HRD	Human rights defender
KCSF	Kosovar Civil Society Foundation
MYLA	Macedonian Young Lawyer Association
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
OD	Organisational development
OSF	Open Society Foundations
PN	PeaceNexus
RBF	Rockefeller Brothers Fund
RBS	Robert Bosch Stiftung
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SLAPP	Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation
SRT	Sigrid Rausing Trust
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
VAT	Value Added Tax
WB	Western Balkans

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the growing number and variety of attacks and threats, PeaceNexus has commissioned this research to map available emergency support for individual activists, informal groups and organisations working in the Western Balkans (WB)[1] region facing concrete pressure and direct attacks.

The report provides a comprehensive review of available emergency support and general trends in the provision and use of such support. It serves as a practical guide for local organisations seeking quick, clear information on emergency resources, as well as for donors and funders with partners under threat. The focus of this research was on private funders, due to such donors being often more flexible when responsive to context shifts.

The report maps the most common types of emergency support being used and offered, including financial (grants), legal, psychological/mental health, digital and security (including cybersecurity) support. It provides basic information on private donors and funders' approaches to providing support in unforeseen or emergency situations and maps global, regional and local organisations and providers specializing in offering such support. Geographically, the report outlines the emergency support that is accessible to organisations in all the countries, in which PeaceNexus operates: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. **It presents available emergency support for individual activists, informal groups and registered civil society organisations (CSOs), focusing on peacebuilding, transitional justice, democratic reforms, good governance and rule of law, and work with marginalized and vulnerable groups.**

All information provided in the report is based on data from organisations' websites and 38 interviews[2] with responsible persons to ensure up-to-date information on support available in the region. The information provided in this report were collected in the period between April and June 2024. The report is focused on providing information on those donors, funders, organisations and providers, which reliably have experience in delivering emergency support in the region and have at least general understanding of the specific setting and needs of activists and organisations in the WB region work.

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1   PeaceNexus works in Western Balkans 6 countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) and Croatia. This report covers the same geography.
2   List of persons and organisations interviewed is available at the end of the document.

The analysis concludes that a variety of global, regional and local donors, funders, organisations or providers offer emergency support to activists, informal groups, and organisations in the WB region. However, the information about and the support as such is scattered and sometimes available only through direct contacts and inquiries. Activists and organisations in emergency situations usually lack the knowledge, time, and skills to obtain such information.

Emergency support is available in variety of forms:
- financial assistance through emergency grants or bridging funds;
- specialised technical support in form of advice or specific know-how and
- in-kind support or donations of goods or software.

Procedures to obtain emergency support are usually easy, quick and based on trust – either through verifying the person or organisation requesting assistance or requesting them to provide recommendations. While emergency support for physical relocation due to attacks is less common in the WB region, there is increasing need for support with digital and cyberattacks and legal support, mainly due to Strategic litigation against public participation (SLAPP). Moreover, mental/psychological support is more scarce and the activist and organisations request it less frequently due to various reasons outlined in the report.

When looking at donors and funders for civil society in the WB region several trends can be observed. Multi-lateral and bilateral donors support is seldom useful for addressing emergency needs due to its project-orientation, longer approval procedures and limited access for individuals or unregistered organisations (i.e. activists and informal groups) and has, therefore, not been examined closely. **Private funders and donors are open and flexible to support emergency needs. However, the scope and access to such support is limited and available only to local organisations that receive their general or institutional support.** Local foundations and re-granting organisations utilise a combined approach. They allow emergency needs to be addressed through general or institutional support grants as well as have established a separate emergency or urgent fund open to any organisation needing such support.

To increase support when activists and organisations are under attack, private donors and funders can support their local partners:

1. **Improve access to existing emergency support** by considering providing emergency support beyond their existing partners and developing direct connections and partnerships with providers to respond quickly in case of attack on their local partners.
2. **Organise joint workshops with providers** to familiarise partners with available emergency support and raise awareness about preventive measures, especially in the domain of digital and cybersecurity and mental/psychological care.
3. **Involve past local partners to provide peer-to-peer knowledge** and experience in dealing with emergency situations.
4. **Reflect internally on their understanding of organisational development support with a self-care and holistic security approach** and integrate it into their support to develop preventive measures and better capacity to respond to attacks.
5. **Increase flexibility in eligibility of costs for local partners**, especially regarding mental/psychological health activities and costs for donors that do not currently cover such support.

To increase their capacity and capability to act jointly and support local partners under attack and pressure private donors and funders can:

1. **Improve internal (informal) mechanisms for quick communication** and coordination when a common local partner is under pressure or attack (i.e. through a mailing list or social media group).
2. **Share best practices and recommending emergency support providers.**
3. **Support the establishment of a one-stop shop for pooling information and resources on available emergency support**, especially digital and cybersecurity support and response mechanism, using this report's guide as a basis.
4. **Involve local foundations in this discussions** to boost the reach of support and exchange local practices and knowledge.
5. **Consider pooling resources to establish a regional pooled funding mechanism** for local activists and organisations and
6. **Develop joint standards or practices** on psychological support/mental health and digital and cybersecurity for local partners.

WHY THIS GUIDE AND WHO IS IT FOR?

In recent years, there has been growing pressures on the civic space and a rise in attacks against activists, informal groups and CSOs, both globally and in the Western Balkans region. These pressures and attacks have not only become more common and frequent, but their nature has also evolved in terms of sophistication and pervasiveness. Addressing these challenges requires a systematic, sector-wide response to prevent and counter such trends as well as individual-level actions when concrete attacks occur, necessitating immediate response to protect the activist, groups or organisations.

For that reason, PeaceNexus has commissioned this research with the aim to **map emergency support** in the Western Balkans available to:

- **individual activists,**
- **informal groups and organisations.**

These are working in domains in which PeaceNexus partners are mostly active in:

- transitional justice,
- peace-building,
- democratic reforms,
- human rights
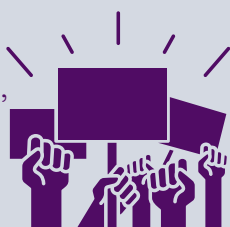
This guide focuses on providing an **overview of available resources** and tools as well as practices in direct and immediate responses in cases of attacks to both individual activists and informal groups or organisations.

The aim is to understand the rapidly changing situation in terms of the needs when activists and organisations are under attack. This understanding helps identify blind spots and possibilities for synergies to improve effectiveness of available assistance, as well as to generate more support.

Based on that, the guide additionally offers both short-term and mid- to long-term oriented **recommendations** primarily aimed at organisations who turned out to mostly support local partners under pressure: **private funders and donors.**

The guide explores how they can individually and collectively:

- improve access,
- enhance capacities, and
- increase resources for emergency needs of their local partners.

However, the recommendations are also designed to serve as a resource for local activists, informal groups and organisations to take measures themselves.

This report is structured in two parts:

Part I
Overview, Main Findings, and Recommendations for Emergency Support

- **Main Findings**: This section presents the key characteristics of the available emergency support. It details the current state of such support and the practices of activists and organisations in the region, based on desktop research and conducted interviews.
- **Conclusions:** This section offers insights into the approaches of private donors and funders toward emergency support, summarizing the key findings and identifying trends and gaps.
- **Recommendations:** Based on the findings, this section formulates actionable recommendations for private donors and funders to improve access to emergency support.

Part II
Practical Overview of Organisations, Providers, Resources, and Tools in Emergency Support

- **Organisations and Providers:** Detailed guide to organisations and providers of specialised emergency support. It includes information on the types of support offered, costs covered, budgets, timeframes, application processes, and eligibility criteria that organisations and activists need to fulfill to receive support.
- **Further Resources:** The last part lists additional resources, such as first aid kits and training guides, categorized by types of emergency support. This section provides further information on specific types of support, helping the reader explore the available options in greater detail.

1

Analysis and Recommendations

ACTIVISM UNDER PRESSURE

The desk research and interviews with organisations that provide emergency support for activists and CSOs reveal some crucial insights into the availability, access to and practices in using emergency support for activists and CSOs in need or under threat in the WB region.

First, based on the interviews with activists, representatives of local CSOs and donors and funders, it becomes clear that they experience an increased need for emergency support because of an increased number of threats and attacks causing them to take preventive measures. A common concern is that while media and journalists as well as activists/organisations engaged in human rights (HR) have been the main target groups exposed to such attacks, there is an increase in attacks and threats to other types of activists and organisations. This is not a region-specific trend but rather reflects a general global trend.

Moreover, activists and organisations working on women and gender issues as well as environmental activists report the rise of variety of attacks and threats against them and their organisations. They reported that attacks by third parties – especially companies and corporations engaged in mining and nature resource exploration and extraction – have become a common new challenge for them as environmental and climate change activists.

Second, the shrinking civic space is well documented by other recent research and analysis and by the ongoing work of key actors such as the Balkan Civil Society Development Network:

Voice from the Field:
Balkan Civil Society Development Network

Balkan Civil Society
Development Network

Pressures on civil society in the region persist and increase

For the past five years, BCSDN's Monitoring Matrix reports have noted a narrowing in the civic space across the Western Balkan region: **increased violations and restrictions to the basic freedoms of association, assembly and expression, deteriorating relationship between governments and civil society, among others.** Over the years, a steady decline has been reported in the participation and meaningful involvement of civil society in the public dialogue and policy-making processes, which threatens to undermine democracy and restrict civil society's ability to advocate for social change.

The persistent use of various tactics to stifle dissent is evidenced by an alarming rise of SLAPPs across the entire region. Environmental defenders, activists and investigative journalists especially find themselves frequently targeted, facing lawsuits and harassment, unprotected by existing media laws and inadequately addressed in judicial systems across the region.

2023 was particularly difficult for the civic space in the region, with numerous attacks carried out against civic actors and authorities consistently failing to respond promptly and effectively. Legislative initiatives aimed at stigmatising CSOs and curbing dissent have emerged, including the reintroduction of criminal defamation penalties and the 'foreign agents' law in Republika Srpska. In Serbia, CSOs focusing on democracy and rule of law issues have faced threats, while LGBT+ and gender groups operate in a hostile environment marked by continuous smear campaigns and attacks on activists. Additionally, the Serbian government resorted to using state-sponsored spyware to target critics challenging its authority. We also witnessed a surge in anti-gender movements, particularly noticeable in North Macedonia.

All these challenges highlight the urgent need for further and sustained efforts to support those at the forefront to uphold democratic principles, protect fundamental rights, and create an enabling environment for civil society to thrive in the Western Balkans.

WHAT EMERGENCY SUPPORT MEASURES EXIST FOR ACTIVISTS FACING THREATS? TYPES, PROVIDERS, AND PRACTICES

In view of this context, there is a variety of needs under the umbrella of emergency support which correspond to the increased number and changing nature of pressures and attacks. Emergency responses by donors and funders as well as specific providers are varied and there are various practices available. **The broader term of emergency support encompasses a range of both financial and non-financial assistance. However, non-tangible support, like generating publicity and public support, is increasingly important** as many attacks aim not only to target specific activists or organisations but also to deter others from expressing dissenting views publicly.

There exists a number of international, regional and local donors, funders, organisations that provide such type of support to activists, informal groups and organisations in the WB region.
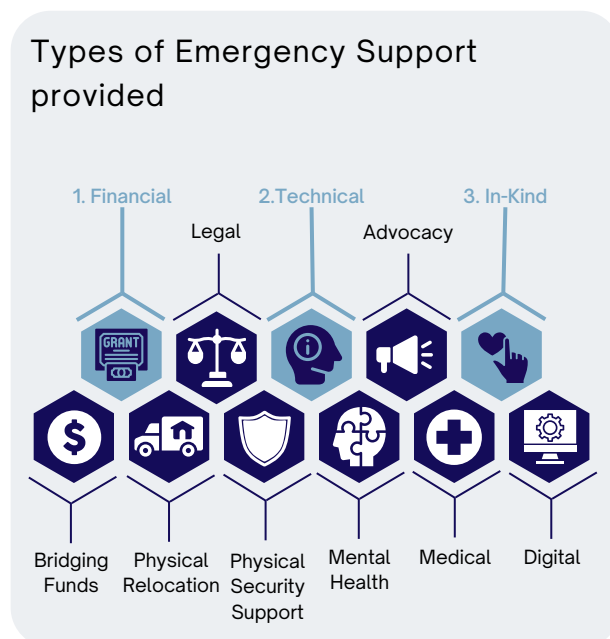
Some organisations often provide several types of emergency support. Others specialize in providing one specific type of support, depending on their core mission and work. However, support measures and information about it is reported to be scattered, requiring knowledge, time and skills to obtain such information.

Below is a short overview of main key characteristic of emergency support.

Generally, emergency support is provided through:
1. Financial support in form of a grant.
2. Specialised technical support in form of advice or specific know-how.
3. In-kind support or donations of goods or software. This is very typical for digital and cybersecurity support as well as in providing of physical security support.

Through these three main ways of providing emergency support, attacked organisations have access to various types of assistance:

Types of Emergency Support provided

1. Financial

Legal

2.Technical

Advocacy

3. In-Kind

Bridging Funds

Physical Relocation

Physical Security Support

Mental Health

Medical

Digital

LEGAL SUPPORT

Legal support such as specific advice on prevention as well as measures to protect the activist, their physical surrounding, their immediate family and colleagues. **Such support can include legal advice or representation in court when an activist or organisation is being sued. It can also include advice on digital and cybersecurity, physical security and other preventive measures that have to do with legal aspects.** In some cases, such support is organised in form of a help-line to provide immediate response and facilitate direct assistance to person or organisation in need to relevant provider of emergency support.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial support is available in three forms:
1. **General institutional support,** which strengthens an organisation's preparedness for emergencies.
2. Emergency support **in response to an attack**.
3. Emergency financial support in the form of **bridging funds**, which helps organisations continue operations between funding cycles or after the sudden termination of support by a major donor.

SUPPORT TO PHYSICAL RELOCATION

Support to physical relocation for shorter period of time to allow activists to rest and decompress from stress, burnout or threats and longer periods of time in case of immediate physical danger to the activists and their family and colleagues.

PHYSICAL SECURITY SUPPORT

Physical security support includes risk assessment of physical threats, protection of person/activities/premises of the organisation or recover and replacement of damaged/stolen equipment or premises.

PSYCHOLOGICAL/MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Psychological/mental health support includes short-term or longer-term support to individual and organisation's team wellbeing and mental health due to pressure, burnout or threats, such as team or individual sessions with a psychologist or therapist.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

Medical support such as physical-related wellbeing support including specialised medical treatment required as a result of stress, burnout due to pressure or attacks.

DIGITAL AND CYBERSECURITY SUPPORT

Digital and cybersecurity support in form of advice on how to deal or resolve an attack or put in place preventive measures, including **risk assessment** and training or mentoring on measures to be undertaken. **This type of support can also include in-kind support or donations of security software or equipment.**

ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATION SUPPORT

International advocacy and public communication support including facilitating access to global and regional institutions of readdress and to amplify activist's case with intent for a quick and fair readdress of the situation and if needed gain public support.

Pathways to Support

While most emergency support mechanism and funds have been set-up with focus on primarily supporting human right defenders (HRDs) – both individual activists and organisations – they are in most cases open to support any individual activist, informal groups and organisations that have been attacked and face an imminent danger or are at risk of such due to their public work.

In most cases, organisations providing emergency support make such support available through an easy-to-use and simple application form. In many cases, they also provide alternatives for secure forms and ways of communication (e.g. encrypted messaged, secured communication lines) in order not to additionally endanger the activist or organisation. Also, most have a quick response mechanism in place, usually responding to the applicant within matter of days.

In practice, however, the activists and CSOs would access such support through a recommendation by their donors or partners since they might not have beforehand information on such providers. Providing (and verifying) references is in many cases a requirement of the application process to access the needed emergency support, especially in cases where the activist or CSOs requesting support has not had previous contact or cooperation with the organisation providing emergency support. In cases where emergency financial support is provided to an individual activist, this usually requires involvement of a fiscal sponsor – organisation through which the financial transaction and reporting takes place on behalf of the individual activist.

In the experience of activists, organisations and donors in the WB region, types of emergency needs vary depending on the topic and issues activists and organisations work on. However, in general and based on the past utilization of available emergency support, organisations offering emergency support report that support requested has less to do with physical safety or requests for relocation or psychological/mental health support. **On the other hand, requests for digital and legal support are on the rise, both in form of requesting financial support for costs being encountered (e.g. paying for protective software, paying cost of legal fines, representation or advice) and requesting direct advice of measures to be undertaken to protect or improve protection.**

It's also noticeable that many activists and organisations do not report having protection measures in place and in many cases they prioritize them only once they are faced with a concrete threat or an attack. Currently, vulnerability in terms of digital and legal attacks seems to be high.

Beyond Basic Needs: Addressing Mental Health in Non-Profit Activism

Also, when it comes to facing psychological and mental health issues, activists and organisations often consider it as part of the consequence of their work. In many cases due to the employment practices in non-profit sector in the region, activists' and organisations' primary focus is on basic needs such as having full medical insurance available first. This provides for basic medical service that might not be included in their working contract. In such cases, considering ones' mental health or wellbeing comes secondary. **In addition, some organisations report facing taboos within the teams concerning offering such support to their staff and, therefore, frame it and address it in the context of team building or strategic development, rather than as a singled-out mental health support to staff.**
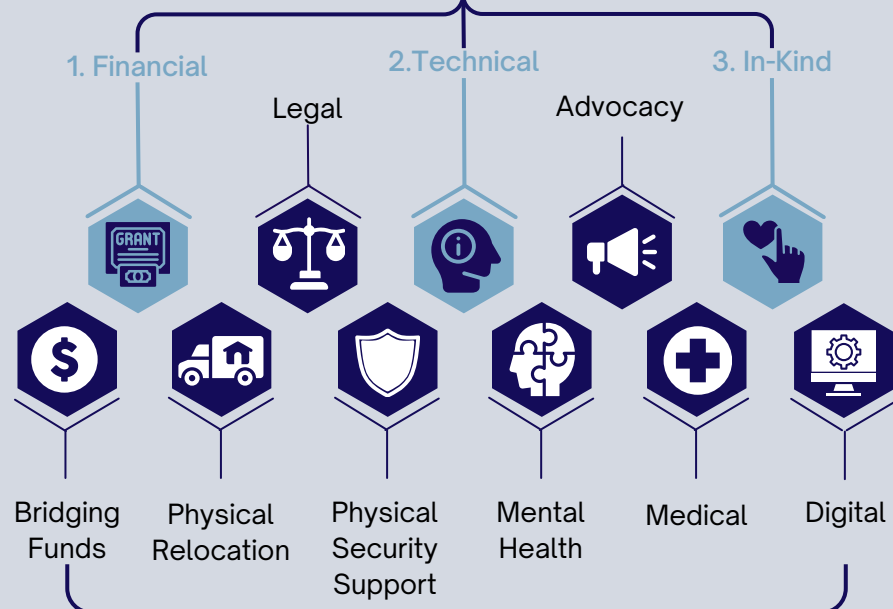
Overview of nature of attacks and of available support
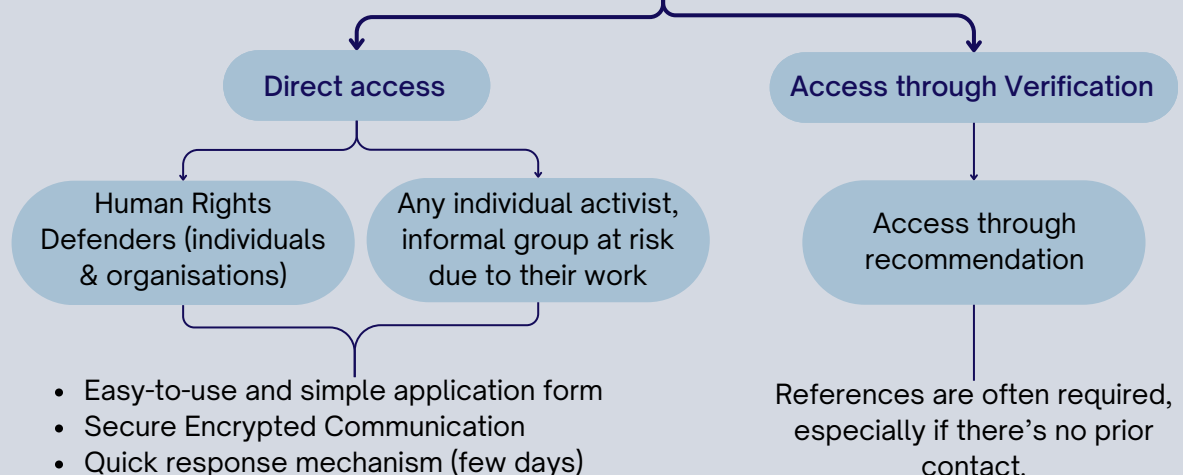
Nature of attacks reported by CSOs

There is an increased need for emergency support due to a rise in threats and attacks, particularly against media, human rights, women and gender issue activists, and environmental activists. Activists are mainly vulnerable in terms of digital and legal attacks but also face physical attacks and psychological and mental health issues.

- Digital
- Legal
- Physical
- Psychological

Types of Emergency Support

1. Financial
2. Technical
3. In-Kind

Legal

Advocacy

- Bridging Funds
- Physical Relocation
- Physical Security Support
- Mental Health
- Medical
- Digital

Pathways to Support

Direct access

- Human Rights Defenders (individuals & organisations)
- Any individual activist, informal group at risk due to their work

  - Easy-to-use and simple application form
  - Secure Encrypted Communication
  - Quick response mechanism (few days)

Access through Verification

Access through recommendation

References are often required, especially if there's no prior contact.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial support is typically provided in the form of grants, which are offered by many local organisations that fund CSOs working on various issues, as well as by providers of support to human rights defenders (HRDs).

Most frequently, the support is publicized on their websites and there is an easy application process involved, including verifying the applicant and the situation with a trusted partner (in case the activist, group or organisation are not known previously).

Eligible criteria for the applicant are usually loose and in general require one or more of the following:

☑ **being involved in Human Rights work or promoting democratic values,**

☑ **being attacked solely due to their work and**

☑ **their need is urgent and cannot be addressed with another instrument.**

Eligible costs vary from organisation to organisation, but in general many organisations avoid to finance legal fines or legal representation costs as these expose them directly to authorities.

Financial support usually covers a variety of emergency costs, but this depends on the type of organisation.

Duration of such support is usually for a short period, i.e. from 3 months up to 12 months and constitutes a small grant, ranging from 1.000 EUR to 10.000 EUR, depending on the provider. Several organisations, such as European Endowment for Democracy (EED) and Open Society Foundations – Western Balkans (OSF WB) reported that financial emergency support also covers bridging funds for the local organisation they support, especially when the funding from a (major) donor has been abruptly terminated or cut.

Organisations providing emergency financial support for activists and organisations in the WB region include: [3]

- Front Line Defenders (FLD)
- Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) – Emergency Fund
- European Endowment for Democracy (EED) [4]
- European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) Response Hub
- Civic Initiatives Fund for Urgent Support
- KCSF Urgent Fund

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[3] Note that the list is non-exhaustive and includes organisations which have been interviewed and provide support in this region.

[4] Focus is on providing bridging support to key civil society actors, but can fund emergency support in exceptional circumstances.

The details of the type and requirements for each specific provider are available under <u>Who offers which support and how to get help</u> (➜pp. 41) of this report. Other main global networks and consortium that provide emergency financial support are listed under <u>What emergency support resources are available</u> (➜ pp. 69), since they either do not focus specifically on the WB region or their financial support is focused on addressing systematic actions to counter sector-wide threats to civic space and are, therefore, not focused on supporting individual emergencies of activists or organisations (e.g. CIVICUS Crisis Response Fund) or are focused on supporting specific a target group (e.g. Urgent Fund with focus on women and gender issues).

LEGAL SUPPORT

Legal support includes financing of or directly providing legal advice when an activist or an organisation has been sued, in many cases with SLAPP suit.[5]

More rarely, legal support can also include financing of legal representation in court and any legal or administrative fines the activist and organisation have been fined with (e.g. for not submitting report timely, organising a protest). Main providers tend to avoid financing payment of administrative or legal fees in order to refrain putting themselves in the cross-fire with local authorities. In most countries, organisations providing pro bono legal aid (e.g., MYLA in North Macedonia) exist to handle such cases. Additionally, due to the increasing number of legal proceedings against activists and organisations, human rights groups (e.g., Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka) are establishing similar support services.

Often, such local organisations work with an informal network of lawyers which can take on cases of representing activists and organisations in court in such proceedings. Also, activists and organisations who have been experiencing attacks and pressure for their work and public statements (including on social media) would work with such local legal aid providers to check their statements and advocacy work to pre-empt possibility of (legal) attack or future lawsuit. Legal support is provided either by paying the costs of the legal support or by referring them to a partner organisations/pro-bono lawyer(s).

Organisations providing emergency legal support (directly or through financial support) accessible activists and organisations in the WB region are: [6]

- Front Line Defenders (FLD)
- Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) – Emergency Fund
- European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) Response Hub[7]
- Civic Initiatives Fund for Urgent Support
- KCSF Urgent Fund (via partners)

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5   Refers to lawsuits brought by individuals and entities to dissuade their critics from continuing to produce negative publicity. By definition, SLAPP lawsuits do not have any true legal claims against the critics.

6   Note that the list is non-exhaustive and includes organisations which have been interviewed and provide support in this region.

7   In specific cases.

The details of the type and requirements for each specific provider are available <ins>Who offers which support and how to get help</ins> (→pp. 41) of this report.

Also, a list of national focal points and support providers in case of SLAPPs in Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia are available in the <ins>BCSDN: From Silence to Strength: A Regional Response to SLAPPs in the Western Balkans study.</ins>

PSYCHOLOGICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Psychological or mental health support is offered to activists and organisations that are under continued stress and pressure either due to attacks or due to the conditions in which they work. Oorganisations providing support to HRDs, such as FLD, include a specific programme which allows the activist or organisation to temporary leave (sometimes for weeks or even several months) and take a break, very much like a regular vacation. **The aim is to allow for physical and mental "rest and respite" and to allow for the activist to consider their situation and how to handle it.** Most of such programmes are available by invitation of the provider organisation. However, the most common type of support reported involves connecting activists with a (local) psychologist, who works with them for as long as needed to help them cope with the situation.

Approaches from organisations providing emergency support vary, but in many cases they would finance such costs within the grant (in case they also offer financial support) or refer the activist to the psychologist which they would then directly pay for their services provided to the activists.

In most cases, this is a short term support in duration of several sessions.

While there is a raising awareness amongst activists, organisations and funders and donors on the importance of work and life balance and care for mental health, this is still the type of support less frequently used or requested as many activists and organisations see it being associated with stigma that there is something wrong. Still, there are examples of organisations or activists who have requested and used such support. What is interesting is that while not all donors and funders cover costs for such support, organisations that do would often include the costs of mental health expert into their budget on strategic planning or organisation's retreat, which would allow this cost to be accepted with their donor as well as this being accepted by the organisation's staff, which might be reluctant to engage in such support.

Donors and funders working with women issues and organisations have built-in such costs into their support programmes for local organisations, so this is available to the organisations they choose to support, either through financing this via the general or institutional grant (as an eligible cost) or through a separate (usually capacity development) measure.

This is the practice with local re-granting organisations working with women or gender issues such as the Ecumenical Women Initiative (EWI) and Trag Foundation's Regional Women's Programme.[8] Such an approach is derived from their self-care concept/approach in supporting local organisations and entails, in short, the ability to care for oneself through awareness, self-control and self-reliance in order to achieve, maintain and promote optimal health and well-being.

It frequently embraces four dimensions: emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual health.

Interestingly, a group of organisations from Poland, Croatia and Slovenia[9] have set-up a one-stop shop Burn-out Aid website with online tools to guide organisations in assessing, developing and implementing self-help anti-burnout activities and which can be used freely. The materials are available both in English and Croatian. Moreover, VoxFemine, the Croatian partner, implemented a project of anti-burnout helpdesk for support to activists in organisations in the country that could provide a model to addressing such needs at thematic/sub-sector level.

> Organisations providing emergency psychological/mental health support (directly or through financing it) accessible to activists and organisations in the WB region are:[10]
>
> - Front Line Defenders (FLD)
> - Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) – Emergency Fund
> - Civic Initiatives Fund for Urgent Support
> - KCSF Urgent Fund

The details of the type and requirements for each specific provider are available under of this report.

DIGITAL AND CYBER SECURITY SUPPORT

Available digital and cyber security support includes providing advice (discounted or free-of-charge) or access to software solutions and hardware equipment to prevent or fight off digital and cyberattacks. Such support addresses a wide variety of situations including attacks on organisation's websites (e.g. phishing), e-mails, servers, operating systems and phones. **This can also be in form of an indirect attacks such as report of a recent attack by Russian hackers on Microsoft which affected thousands of its customers in the region**, especially Albania and who could not use its Microsoft 365 system for days, including being locked out of organisational email accounts and not having access to documentations and files. It also includes direct, predominantly social media, attacks on channels of communication that activists and organisations use to communicate and inform such as Facebook, Instagram and X (former Twitter) whereby these are hijacked or crowded with suspicious activities in order for it to be blocked, deleted or suspended by the social media providers.

Available advice usually includes a risk assessment as a basis for a tailor-made advice on how to upgrade and/or training and mentorship for security measures to be put in place, how to deal with the specifics of the attacks and recover data or access to website and social media.

In case there is an active incident, providers are usually able to support the activist or organisation in reaching out to companies (Meta, Microsoft etc.) to amplify and support quicker and effective resolution of the specific digital or cyberattacks in progress.

Many of the interviewed providers report that while the number of digital and cyberattacks is increasing, the awareness about the need to protect and obtain knowledge is not prioritized by the activists and organisations. This happens mostly as a result of or an experience of concrete threats or an attack. There are local organisations, such as SHARE Foundation in Serbia and Metamorphosis Foundation in North Macedonia, who specialize in digital and online rights and issues and have developed capacities to support activists and organisations in improving their knowledge about possible threats, putting in place protective measures and systems and responding to threats. SHARE Foundation acts as the only certified Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) in the WB region, but mostly covers incidents taking place in Serbia. While Metamorphosis does not provide incident response support, it works directly with organisations that are often exposed to such risks (i.e. due to the target group they work with – LGBTQI, Roma, women or specific issue – journalists, gender) through preventive and capacity development programmes.

Considering the reporting of increasing number of incidences of such attacks on organisations in the region, the support offered by both organisations is not sufficient to address all needs.

SEE Digital Rights Network brings together local organisations working on protecting digital rights and online space from the wider Balkans region. It also acts as an informal contact point and facilitator for organisations to find relevant providers to help them or support their response when under attacks. Although it does not engage in any direct emergency support, it might be a good starting reference point to get in touch in finding support.

While providers of software might not be directly offering emergency support, some allow for free or discounted access for organisations and in some cases to informal groups to official licenced security or programme software that provides digital and cybersecurity support against attacks. Such organisations include TechSoup (Balkans) or project Galileo by Cloudflare. This can be useful to organisations who are considering a preventive approach towards their digital and cybersecurity.

Some digital and cyberattacks require a rapid response. **There are global and regional help-lines available that can give first-aid advice and direct the activist or organisation to receive adequate support.**

Organisations providing emergency digital and cybersecurity support (directly or through financing it) accessible to activists and organisations in the WB region are: [11]

- Access Now – Digital Security Helpline
- Digital Defenders Partnership - Incident Emergency Fund
- Project Galileo – Cloudflare
- SHARE Foundation – SHARE CERT
- Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) – Emergency Fund
- Civic Initiatives Fund for Urgent Support
- KCSF Urgent Fund
- TechSoup Balkans

The details of the type and requirements for each specific provider are available in under Who offers which support and how to get help (→pp. 41) of this report.

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[11]   Note that the list is non-exhaustive and includes organisations which have been interviewed and provide support in this region.

OTHER FORMS OF EMERGENCY SUPPORT

Other forms of emergency support available but used seldom by activists and organisations in the WB region include support to (physical) relocation of activists, their family or organisations due to threats or physical attacks. Relocation can be of short-term (e.g. weeks) or longer-term (e.g. months) duration and it can take place in form of relocation to another part of the same country or relocation to another country. In the region, most cases are of short-term relocation to another part of the country or a neighbouring country. This type of support is provided by organisations supporting HRDs such as CRD and FLD. Relocation support typically covers financial assistance for travel, accommodation, visa, and related costs, along with logistical help, especially when a visa is required.

Another type of relocation support includes legal support to relocation of an organisation that has been disbanded or prevented from operating. While this is currently not the case in the region, Global Nonprofits Guide[12] provides basic guidance on legal frameworks and procedures to relocate or establish a new organisation. The Guide also includes information on pro-bono lawyers and is looking into coordinating peer-to-peer help.[13] In the region, the only case where relocation or (re-)registration is feared to be needed is in Republika Srpska, due to attempts of the authorities to pass the so called Foreign Agents Law. In this case, some funders are considering supporting their partners in re-registering in a nearby country or as a different legal entity to continue providing financial support

Support to physical security includes security risk assessment of the premises of the organisation and activists' routines. These services include advice, training on conduct, and providing equipment like security cameras, personal security gear, and safety doors. In most cases, providers report reviewing and establishing physical security measures or introducing security measures. Organisations like FLD or CRD that specialize in emergency support report employing a holistic approach to security whereby the support provided is based on assessing the situation of the activist or organisation from variety of aspects. In short, the holistic approach integrates self-care, well-being, digital security, and information security into traditional security management practices (see Holistic Security).

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12   Established and maintained by DLA Piper, European Center for Not-for-Profit Law Stichting (ECNL) and PILnet.

13   This service is to be available in the future.

Support to advocacy and communication is mostly provided by global organisations working with protection and support of HRDs, such as FLD and those focusing on SLAPPs such as Coalition Against SLAPPs in Europe (CASE) network. This type of support includes informing relevant international and regional institution (e.g. UN bodies, EU institutions) and publicizing the specific case of attack and threats to an activist and organisation with the aim to gather pressure on responsible (local) authorities to deal with perpetrators or to provide effective (legal) remedies. This is done after careful consideration of the specific case and the context in which the activist and organisation live and work to ensure such support does not backlash and potentially endanger, stigmatize or disable effective work for the activist and the organisation in the future. Case of such support are usually offered pro-bono.

A recent in-depth study[14] on SLAPPs in the WB region published by Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) highlights the importance of availability of legal aid and advice for activists and organisations being targeted by SLAPPs. However, based on analysis of strategies and tactics employed by activists and organisations in recent cases of SLAPPs in the region, the report highlights that it is equally important to have the ability to generate public support by those targeted by SLAPPs as the main aim of each SLAPP is in silencing the activists and in some cases also the community on behalf of which the issue is being raised. Here, activists and organisation practice different tactics – from organising crowdfunding campaign combining fundraising effort needed to pay costs of countering SLAPPs to mobilizing supports locally to engaging with international organisations or respectable media to publicize the case and exert pressure for the SLAPP to be dismissed or withdrawn.

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14   BCSDN: From Silence to Strength: A Regional Response to SLAPPs in the Western Balkans

WHO ARE EMERGENCY SUPPORT PROVIDERS?

1 Are you...

| involved in Human Rights work or promoting democratic values? | being attacked solely due to your work? | in need of urgent help that cannot be addressed otherwise? |

2 What support do you need?

3 Who offers support?

	Digital	Legal	Mental Health	Financial
Front Line Defenders (FLD)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) – Emergency Fund	✓	✓	✓	✓
European Endowment for Democracy (EED)	✗	✗	✗	✓
European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) Response Hub	✗	✓	✓	✓
Civic Initiatives Fund for Urgent Support	✓	✓	✓	✓
KCSF Urgent Fund	✓	✓	✓	✓
Access Now – Digital Security Helpline	✓	✗	✗	✗
Digital Defenders Partnership - Incident Emergency Fund	✓	✗	✗	✗
Project Galileo – Cloudflare	✓	✗	✗	✗
SHARE Foundation – SHARE CERT	✓	✓	✗	✗
TechSoup Balkans	✓	✗	✗	✗

WHO ARE THE DONORS PROVIDING EMERGENCY SUPPORT IN THE WESTERN BALKANS?

Looking at donors and funders, this research focused on private funders and donors who partner and support activists and organisations in the WB region and broadly work in the thematic areas supported by PeaceNexus. **Such funders include (in alphabetic order): Forum ZfD, Kvinna till Kvinna, National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Oak Foundation, Open Society Foundations Western Balkans (OSF WB), Porticus, Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF), Robert Bosch Stiftung, Sigrid Rausing Trust (SRT).**

It also included engaging with several local and regional organisations or foundations supporting civil society, **including Trag Foundation and Civic Initiatives from Serbia, Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF) from Kosovo and three regional ones – Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN), European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) and Ecumenical Women's Initiative (EWI).**

For private funders and donors,[15] a common general characteristic of their overall approach of cooperation is that majority of them **employ providing general or institutional support to their local partner organisations.**

This allows flexibility, including when it comes to addressing emergency or unforeseen needs.

This flexibility involves adjusting budget categories, allocations, and reallocations to cover unexpected costs in case of a situation that has not been anticipated. Also, they report having quick procedures to allow partners to reallocate costs within budget (usually with or even without notification). In many cases, emergency situations cause pause or delays in implementing regular activities.

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15 The term **private funders and donors** refers to donors, whose support comes from private sources such as individuals, families or companies in form of donations, gifts, endowments etc.

The term **multi-lateral and bilateral donors** refers to donors, whose support comes from public, i.e. tax-payer funds. Multi-lateral donors include international and regional governmental organisations such as the United Nations (UN) and its agencies, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Council of Europe (CoE), European Commission (EC) etc.

Bilateral donors include development agencies of national governments or embassies in the recipient countries, including the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) etc.

Therefore, understanding and approval of (non) cost extension is also considered a way of support. **What is common to all is that they all have some kind of established internal mechanism for dealing with emergency support, albeit often informal, and have reported having had concrete experience in supporting their local partners in case of emergency needs in the past.**

There are broadly two reasons why such an approach has been employed to support CSOs and which does not have to do directly with the emergency needs support, but it is complementary to it.

First, these donors work in thematic areas such as human rights, democracy, peacebuilding, transitional justice, rule of law, gender and womens' rights, media, marginalized groups which often tend to attract public scrutiny and attacks for their partners.

Second, it also has to do with their strategic decision and understanding that support is most effective with mid- and long-term approaches and those that employs flexibility, trust and ownership of the local organisation or group being supported. Finally, donors (here referring primarily to local ones) work in specific country contexts where CSOs are particularly vulnerable to pressure and attacks currently but although donors, therefore, anticipate such support being required and needed, it is not possible to anticipate and therefore plan for the specifics of such support in advance.

Secondly, some donors who have several partners facing situations of pressure or threats – mainly supporters of environment, climate change, women and gender-related organisations – also engage in providing direct advice and support for their partners. Such is the case with providing psychological support or digital support and understanding about what the situation is and any delays this might cause in implementing regular activities.

In some cases, advice is provided directly by the person being in charge of the portfolio, while in others, it comes from a specialised unit within the donor organisation (e.g., digital and ICT unit) or from experienced local organisations (e.g., Oak Foundation).[16]

Thirdly, some donors engage in organising capacity development on preventive measures and response mechanism or facilitate such knowledge and know-how through organising internal workshops or partners' meetings that address such topics. Robert Bosch Stiftung and Forum ZfD mentioned organising such activities. It also includes introducing partners to the work of international emergency support specialised providers so that they are aware and have quick access to such organisations in case the need arises.

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16   Some also reported using Nonprofit Builder website - https://nonprofitbuilder.org/

Some donors engage in paying direct costs that may arise from specialised support needed to address the emergency situation and/or finding providers to support them as this was not anticipated in the grant or the donor does not have flexibility within the existing partnership framework. For example, Oak Foundation, which has one programme that focuses on women's groups and gender issues, has implemented measures to help their partners and civil society respond to systemic pressures, such as supporting the establishment of a specialised accountancy agency in India to help organisations meet legal and financial requirements under restrictive legislation.

Also, a SRT representative reported allowing for partners to accumulate a reserve that can be utilised at their discretion in the future or for unforeseen costs, such is an emergency support.

Overall, among the private donors and funders, general or institutional support is seen as the most appropriate and useful way to support CSOs. It also provides for flexibility to respond to unforeseen needs, including emergency needs due to pressure or attacks. **However, the major drawback of such support is that it is limited only to activists and organisations that have established (past or current) partnerships with such donors and funders.**

Therefore, the scope and access to such support is very limited and available to only a handful of local organisations. **In such circumstances, the existence of organisations and providers of specialised emergency support is critical.**

Many local foundations and re-granting organisations also employ similar approach to that of the private donors and foundations, although this depends on their back donors and supports and their internal financing rules. Therefore, those that have established approaches of general or institutional support are able to provide flexibility in terms of the already established general or institutional grant in case of emergency or unforeseen needs.

However, many have also established a separate emergency or urgent fund to allow for established partners or other organisations support if such need arises (e.g. Trag, KCSF, EWI).

Finally, there are also cases of regional re-granting organisations who provide a more limited support but are flexible in interpreting the scope and type of costs which allows them room to manoeuvre when it comes to situation when their partners have immediate unforeseen or emergency needs.

In terms of the types of support, flexibility provides them to support variety of types of emergency needs and costs. While some donors have imposed limitations due to their back donors (e.g. some funders financed from German state funding reported that they are limited in funding psychological and mental health needs of their partners as these are considered part of the individual'(activist')s private life), others might decide to not fund directly certain types of emergency costs due to availability or specialised partners they have established partnership (e.g. KCSF for legal support) and would refer them to them. Costs of fees for legal representation in court or legal or administrative fines for activists and organisation are also not eligible for some donors or try to navigate them as this could bring them in direct collision with local authorities.

On the other hand, several funders reported specific (best) practices in approaching addressing emergency needs. **In particular, organisations working with HRDs utilise holistic security approach which integrates self-care, well-being, digital security, and information security into traditional security management practices** thus allowing for holistic assessment of the emergency situation and providing assistance that responds to the variety and in many cases intertwined needs that the individual activist, groups and organisations might not be aware of initially. This also helps bring a more longer-term perspective and address not only the immediate needs but puts in place longer-term preventive measures.

Donors working with women and gender issues such as Oak Foundation and their local re-granting partner Trag Foundation as well as EWI use the self-care concept as part of their approach to supporting local activists, groups and organisations which includes providing small financial support to self-defined health-care, mental health or well-being issues and priorities by activists or organisations receiving the support.

As a funder specialised in long-term internal strengthening and accompaniment of its partners, PeaceNexus does not focus on emergency support. However, notwithstanding any future implementation of the recommendation of this report, PeaceNexus already provides some relevant support. **Partners that are supported by PeaceNexus on organisational development or conflict sensitivity can use a part of their grant to develop risk management frameworks and related security measures.**

Additionally, PeaceNexus makes available on-demand coaching support which is at times used by leaders to put in place work-life balance measures and boundaries that preserve both their mental health and ability to be effective in their role. In the case of its Myanmar programme, PeaceNexus also adapted when the coup took place and was responsive to its partners' most immediate physical security needs.

HOW CAN EMERGENCY SUPPORT AND PROTECTION FOR LOCAL PARTNERS BE ENHANCED? RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS

This section provides concrete, practical and tangible recommendations stemming from the gaps and synergies identified during the conduct of the research for this report. **They have the aim to help local partners in need better utilise the existing and available emergency support and to consider putting in place measures for mid- to longer term preventive measures.**

While the recommendations are addressed primarily to private donors and funders, they can be equally taken on by local organisations themselves individually or collectively.

The recommendations also aim to highlight and share existing good practices, as well as establish new, practical ways to bolster access, capability, and capacity for a quick and effective support response by private funders and donors when their local partners face an attack. Additionally, they aim to put in place longer-term preventive measures.

Recommendations to individual private funders and donors

1 Develop partnerships with organisations/providers of emergency support to be able to respond quickly when local partner is under threat or attack and support them.

There are currently several global or regional organisations that are specifically interested or already work in the WB region. Among the interviewed organisations, FLD or CRD already work or are interested to at having a holistic toolbox available for support to activists and organisations in WB region. Establishing connection with them could facilitate quick access for local partners in case of emergency needs.

2 Improve accessibility of and knowledge about emergency support to local partners, in particular psychological/mental health and digital and cybersecurity.

Organise internal workshops or sessions on protective measures during partners' meetings and establish contacts with international providers as to effectively facilitate support for partners in case of need. Thematically, raising awareness on self-care/mental health and digital and cybersecurity protection should be prioritised so that local partners' develop awareness as well as get information on where they can get such support. More specifically:

- Maintain a list of specific local pro-bono legal aid providers to be able to support partners in case of need;
- Maintain a list of local psychologists/mental health/well-being coaches and providers in case of need and to be able to support partners quickly in case of need;
- Provide information on available discounted or free-of-charge digital and security software schemes (such as Techsoup Balkan, Cloudflare) to current and new partners so they can benefit from them and put in place higher level of digital and cybersecurity.

3 Expand organisational development support with elements focused on self-care and holistic security.

For funders and donors who offer support to organisations' development or within the general and institutional approach framework, conduct internal review of support in light of the self-care and holistic security concept and approach, identify blind spots and provide an internal reflection on any gaps that may exist. Update the approach based on identified gaps in order to support local partners in a more comprehensive and preventive way. With partners this could be simply provided in form or scanning the situation and providing advice to which provider/organisation turn to increase protection capabilities.

4 **Consider involving past local partners to provide peer-to-peer knowledge and experience in dealing with emergency situations.**

In case of past local partners, especially those from the WB region, who either specialize in providing specific protective measures in specific areas or have experience with pressure and attacks due to the nature of their work, involve them in workshops or meetings addressing specific emergency issues so that they provide hands-on experience and expertise to current or future local partners.

5 **Organise an on-demand digital and cybersecurity prevention programme for current and new partners and facilitate access to protection software.**

This can be put in place as a continued support for all new incoming local partners as a measure to raise awareness and provide direct protection against possible attacks. This will indirectly boost the awareness and concrete digital security levels for the partners in the future without burdening them with additional costs or imposing it as additional (mandatory) requirements.

6 **Provide further flexibility when considering eligible types of cost for partners.**

For donors and funders who do not yet cover cost of digital and cybersecurity or mental and psychological support, consider being flexible in recognising costs of basic digital and cybersecurity, anti-burnout workshops/trainings and other emergency costs partners might incur.

Recommendations for joint action

1

Develop an internal (informal) mechanism for quick communication and coordination when a common local partner organisation is under pressure or attack.

Maintain a mailing list or social media group (WhatsApp, Signal etc.) for quick communication with specific subject matter (e.g. alert) for quick reaction by responsible person in each donor or funder organisation. Moreover, such a mailing list/social media group could serve to exchange experience on specific emergency support providers or experts used.

2

Support establishment of a one-stop shop for pooling information and resources on available emergency support.

Digital and cybersecurity attacks are on the rise, while the awareness and prioritisation of measures on this among activists and organisations remains low. On the other hand, global help-desk and support platforms are already available. Sharing information about these services through an internal joint circular list with local partners of all funders could improve quick access and enhance protection. Additionally, the information in this report should be regularly updated and made publicly accessible, potentially managed by a local or regional organisation focused on civil society protection, which could receive funds for this purpose.

3

Consider establishing a regional pooled funding mechanism for local activists, informal groups and organisations.

While many sources of support exist globally and locally, the increased number of attacks and its pervasiveness regionally requires a concerted strategic approach by private donors and funders. Due to limited availability of their general support, supporting such fund could address the emergency needs of other activists and organisations who are not currently partners, but might face an attack. Such fund could sit with an existing local or regional organisation that has developed capacities both in distributing funds and providing capacity-development support on related topics. Alternatively, existing European networks supporting emergency support could be approached and funded through a pooled fund to extend or enhance their services to organisations in the WB.

4 **Consider developing joint standards or practices on psychological support/mental health for local partners.**

Organise a discussion to share practices (or lack thereof) for self-care practices in funders and donor organisations and establish basic norms that should be considered when dialoguing with local partners on their needs and defining of provision of support. The outcomes of such discussions can serve as a practical/hands-on (informal) manual (or check-list) when establishing partnership and defining the cooperation with the local partner. Donors and funders supporting women and gender-related organisations and issues have advanced practices in this area, which could provide the basis for such discussion and exchange.

5 **Consider developing joint standards or practices on digital and cybersecurity for local partners.**

Similarly, as for psychological support, organise a discussion to share practices (or lack thereof) of digital and cybersecurity practices in funders and donor organisations and establish basic norms that should be considered when dialoguing with local partners on their needs and defining of provision of support. This can serve as a practical/hands-on (informal) manual (or check-list) when establishing partnership and defining the cooperation with the local partner but without it being made into a condition or requirement of cooperation. A starting point for this is can be organising discussion with local providers of digital and cybersecurity support such as SHARE Foundation and Metamorphosis and defining key elements of a digital and cyber-proof support to local partners.

6 **Involve local foundations in these discussions in order to boost the reach of support and the spread of localised practices.**

Local foundations and re-granting organisations utilize both general or institutional and specific – urgent fund – support for civil society. In addition, they have context-specific understanding of civic space threats and are part of the civil society fabric in the give country context. Therefore, including them in exchange and development of joint emergency response mechanism could be beneficial to private donors and funders further understanding of and support of development of civil society solidary and local support.

2

Resources and Support Providers

WHO OFFERS WHICH SUPPORT AND HOW TO GET HELP? LIST OF EMERGENCY SUPPORT PROVIDERS AND MECHANISMS

This section provides a **non-exhaustive list of organisations that provide emergency support available to activists, groups and organisations in the WB region. The list of organisations includes those that provide at least one type of support described in this report and has been verified with the organisation-provider or at least one organisation that has used its services**. Providers are listed in alphabetical order. Information on each organisation includes a short description and basic characteristics of provided support as well as their contact details. Those organisations that could not be verified or provide support that is useful, but does not necessary target emergency situation is listed in the next section of this report.

Access Now – Digital Security Helpline

Type of Support	Digital Security
Who they help	Civil Society Groups, Media and Human Rights Defenders
Frequency	Open continuously
Response Time	Two Hours
Application Language	English, Spanish, French, German, Portuguese, Russian, Tagalog, Arabic, and Italian
Application	Email to help@accessnow.org
Getting Help	@ help@accessnow.org
	🌐 https://www.accessnow.org/help/

Access Now is a non-profit organisation founded in 2009 that focuses on digital civil rights. Access Now's Digital Security Helpline supports individuals and organisations in improving digital security practices or provides rapid-response emergency assistance if under attack.

Type of support

Support in resolving digital security incidents, personalized recommendations, instruction, and follow-up support for digital security issues, assessing risks and creating organisational or community security strategies, guidance and educational materials on security practices and tools, securing technical infrastructure, websites, and social media against attacks, referrals, capacity-building, in-person consultations, and trainings.

Application process

After an e-mail with request for support was sent, Access Now staff will respond within two hours. In doing so, Access Now will contact their partners in the region to confirm the identity of the person and/or organisation seeking support.

Types of costs

The Helpline offers direct free-off-charge support and advice.

Eligibility

No specific eligibility criteria. Support is primarily focused on civil society groups, media and HRDs.

Civic Initiatives – Fund for Urgent Support

Type of Support	Financial, Psychological, Legal and Digital Security
Who they help	Registered CSOs, formal and informal groups and networks operating Serbia or activists/individuals who are citizens or reside Serbia
Frequency	Open continuously
Response Time	Two weeks; 72 hours in urgent situations (e.g. security threat)
Budget	Individual grant is up to 3.000 USD Overall Fund budget of the Fund is 25.000 USD
Time Frame	Up to six months
Application	Application Form 🌐 https://gradjanske.civicatalyst.org/node/405
Getting Help	📍 Civic Initiatives Knez Miloša 4 Belgrade, Serbia Re: Application for the Fund for urgent support, Civic Initiatives. @ podrska@gradjanske.org

🌐 https://gradjanske.org/otvoren-fond-za-urgentnu-podrsku/

🌐 https://vodic.gradjanske.org/konkurs/fond-za-urgentnu-podrsku/

Civic Initiatives is an association in Serbia devoted to strengthening of civil society through education, promoting democracy and support for an active society. Its Fund for Urgent Support aims to contribute to the resilience of civil society in Serbia in the environment of a narrowed space for civic action. **Its role is to provide support in a situation that requires an immediate and urgent response to sudden changes that negatively affect civil society.**

Type of support

The Fund supports two types of activities: (i) advocacy action for the protection of the rights and interests of citizens in a situation that requires immediate reaction and/or mobilization; (ii) in face of pressure, threats and other challenges because of person's/organisations' activism.

Types of costs

- **Legal consultation** (for example, when faced with a potentially unfounded inspection or the threat of closing a bank account due to a selective interpretation of a law, etc.);
- **Legal assistance** (for example, in submitting a case to the court, obtaining insight into the submission, oral representation, involvement in domestic litigation (directly or indirectly), except in situations where the defendant is a state authority) - In case of legal assistance, Civil initiatives refers to one of the legal experts in their database;
- **Costs of repairing damages due to physical damage to premises or property of the organisation/activist**;
- **Temporary relocation costs:** for activists who are in an insecure or vulnerable situation;
- **Therapeutic support;**
- Security infrastructure, security planning and training, preventive security measures;
- **Digital security measures;**
- **Equipment** (only in exceptional cases - for example, when the equipment is a necessary tool for work or when it is necessary for safety protection such as security cameras, etc.).

Application process

Filling in the online Application Form, which includes basic information on the person, group or organisation seeking support, the situation, requested support, budget and list of two references. Application can also be filled-in in Word format and submitted via e-mail or submitted in hard-copy by mail:

Civic Initiatives
Knez Miloša 4
Belgrade, Serbia
Re: Application for the Fund for urgent support, Civic Initiatives.

Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) – Emergency Fund

Type of Support	Financial, Psychological, Legal, Physical and Digital Security
Who they help	Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) who are facing acute situations or risk escalation due to their work
Frequency	Open continuously
Response Time	Usually one day
Budget	Up to 4.000 EUR. Budget can also be submitted in USD equivalent.
Time Frame	In most cases up to 6 months, but possible to 12 months
Geographical Coverage	
Application Language	English, Spanish, Russian
Application	To get access to the Application and Budget Form and apply contact emergencyfund@crd.org
Getting Help	https://crd.org/emergency-fund/

Civil Rights Defenders (formerly the Swedish Helsinki Committee) is an international non-governmental organisation focused on supporting local HRDs by providing then with capacity building, training and funding as well as security and emergency support for HRDs at risk. Provids rapid assistance to HRDs who are in danger. The goal is to improve their security situation so they feel safe to continue their work.

Application process

HRDs themselves or the organisation representing them, must submit filled-in Application Form (in Word) and a Budget Form (in Excel). The Application Form includes information on two references (person/organisation) to verify the situation/threat.

Once a Grant is approved, a Grant Contract will be signed with the grantees. The disbursement of the funding will be made by CRD.

Types of costs

- **Short-term relocation** for HRD and close family such as travel, housing, visa, livelihood;
- **Security equipment** such as CCTV cameras, security doors or assault alarms;
- **Capacity building such as trainings** in digital security, operational security, as well as assessments and consultations;
- **Legal aid,** only when connected to attacks on the HRD, such as fees for legal advice and representation after an arrest or court proceedings. Note that CRD cannot support to pay fines, bails, or damages;
- **Medical aid,** only when connected to attacks of the HRD, such as psycho-social support and rehabilitation, medication, rest, and respite;
- **Humanitarian support** such as prison visits for families of imprisoned HRDs, support to dependents.

Eligibility (administrative and selection criteria)

- Acute situation that has occurred, or to prevent a risk situation from escalating;
- Assistance should be clearly connected to a risk situation arising from the work of the HRD;
- Assistance can be of urgent or preventive nature;
- Application can be submitted by an individual HRD, an organisation, close colleague, friend or relative applying on behalf of the HRD.

Reporting

All grantees are obliged to submit a narrative and financial report to CRD after the end of the pre-determined project period. They will also need to provide supporting documents and receipts evidencing their expenditures. These requirements will be defined in the Grant Contract.

If the project cannot be implemented or if other funding is allocated, the grant must be returned to CRD.

Digital Defenders Partnership - Incident Emergency Fund

Type of Support	Financial, Psychological, Digital Security
Who they help	Activists in the area of women's rights, LGBTQI+ rights, journalists, bloggers, independent media, environmental rights, human rights, good governance, rule of law
Frequency	Open continuously
Response Time	Up to two weeks
Budget	Up to 10.000 EUR
Time Frame	Up to four months
Application Language	English, Spanish, French and Portuguese Other languages (on request)
Application	Multi-step process
	🔗 Details of the application process are available in the Guidelines[17]
Getting Help	@ team@digitaldefenders.org

🌐 https://www.digitaldefenders.org/incident-emergency-fund/#faq

Digital Defenders Partnership is an emergency grant mechanism towards digital activists under threat managed by Hivos. The programme aims to contributes to strengthening the resilience of HRDs by increasing their digital security through a holistic and sustainable approach.

Type of support

- Replacement of hardware or software which has been taken, lost or stolen,
- purchase of more secure hard- and/or software and costs related to installation of the new systems,
- technical support or advice to respond to urgent issues such as internet blockages,
- measures to improve physical security (related to information management and digital security) and
- measures to address the psychological and psychosocial impacts of digital threats and risks.

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17   https://www.digitaldefenders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/IEF-application-guide-Vertical.pdf

Application process

Consists of several steps, including an initial online eligibility test to be taken by the applicant, short online narrative application form including recommendations of two Human Rights organisations and creation of an online account in the system. After an initial screening, the next steps include review and due diligence and approval. Details of the application process are available in the Guidelines.

Types of costs

Purchase of hardware or software, security equipment; installation costs; costs of mental health support

Eligibility (administrative and selection criteria)

- Application is related to digital threats or attacks experienced by activist, group or organisation in the last 3 months;
- Proposed activities are for reducing the risk or impact of the digital threats and attacks faced;
- Does not include staff costs, rent of offices, project activities, filling a funding gap, advocacy or research activities, living costs or allowances, medical costs (apart from psychological and/or psychosocial support), upkeep;
- Applicants work in the area of women's rights, LGBTQI+ rights, journalists, bloggers, independent media, environmental rights, human rights, good governance, rule of law
- Two human rights organisations or networks endorse organisation's/activist's work.

European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) – Response Hub

Type of Support	Financial and Legal Support
Who they help	Civic groups, local initiatives, and movements in the WB
Frequency	Three calls per year are issued. Approximate timing: end of January/beginning of February, May and September.
Budget	Applicants can request between 1,000 EUR and 5,000 EUR, or up to 7,000 EUR for regional support. The total annual budget is approximately 110,000 EUR.
Geographical Coverage	
Application Language	English
Application	🔗 Google Doc Form with accompanying documents[18]
Getting Help	@ responsehub@balkanfund.org

🌐 https://balkanfund.org/empowering-citizens39-engagement/call-for-application-for-the-response-hub

The European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) is a joint initiative by Erste Foundation, Robert Bosch Stiftung, and King Baudouin Foundation. It strengthens democracy, fosters European integration, and highlights the Western Balkans' role in addressing Europe's challenges.

The Response Hub is its instrument of micro financial support to civic groups, local initiatives, and movements in the WB. It offers flexible responses to urgent needs, contributing to impact and sustainability, and empowering the claim for accountable institutions and democratic processes. The Hub has experience funding emergency support, including legal/fine costs for organisations, and can support responses to digital attacks and enhance online security. **The focus is on five thematic areas of EFB work: environment (water, air, mining), public spaces, decent work, Human Rights and activists, SLAPP, cross cutting- media access.**

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18   https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfsGtJ5NDV8mycUJ2FOBNYpl1zULA1S3Zi1Sws58WH6CFHTEQ/closedform

Types of support

1. Knowledge building

- Policy work: Support for hiring experts to provide targeted knowledge and capacity building in specific areas;
- Legal advice: Support for hiring experts with valuable knowledge of institutional and legal mechanisms to protect public interest.

2. Outreach/Visibility - technical support

To increase the outreach of work, it is possible to apply for the following activities:
- Developing, designing and printing of information material, reports and studies;
- Small video production;
- Social media promotion.

3. Community spaces

Short-term financial support to community spaces, as independent safe places of exchange across the region, where needed. Furthermore, support to setting up of new spaces as points of mutual collaboration and networking is possible.

4. Emergency core funding

- Office rent/utilities: Support for short-term difficulties (i.e. rent, utilities, bills)
- Digital tools: Financial support for digital tools and platforms (e.g., internet bills, cloud storage, Zoom);
- Basic technical equipment: Coverage for essential office equipment like laptops or scanners.

Organisations/initiatives can apply for more than one type of support. Focus is on local level organisations. Support is not intended to finance staff costs, but costs such as activities, equipment etc.

Application Process, Evaluation, Selection and Award Criteria

Applicants fill in a simple Google doc application form and provide the statute (for formal groups) or a signed statement by the representative (for informal groups), a brief description (up to 350 words) of their work, funding sources, and the type of support requested, links to the organisation's website showcasing their activities and the total requested budget. Following a review of submitted applications, shortlisted applicants will provide additional information.

During the project evaluation, the criteria considered will include the applicant's profile, visibility and engagement, problem relevance, action consistency and urgency, and expected results and impact.

European Endowment for Democracy (EED)

Type of Support	Financial, Legal and Security Support
Who they help	CSOs, independent media platforms, journalists, new or non-registered organisations, informal platforms and individuals.
Frequency	Applications are received on a rolling basis
Response Time	Decision usually take place between 8-12 weeks. In emergency situation it can be shorter, e.g. between 6-48 hours.
Budget	EED does not have a formal funding range. On average, grant support is between 40.000 EUR and 60.000 EUR.
Geographical Coverage	
Application Language	English and all languages of the Western Balkans
Application	Application Form providing basic information
	https://apply.democracyendowment.eu/
Getting Help	@ secretariat@democracyendowment.eu
	grants@democracyendowment.eu

https://apply.democracyendowment.eu/files/FAQ/FAQ_EN.pdf

EED supports CSOs, pro-democracy movements, civic and political activists, and independent media working towards a pluralistic, democratic system, including newly formed or unregistered organisations, informal platforms, youth groups, and individuals. **It provides fast, flexible technical and financial aid to those who cannot access other donors or EU instruments, complementing existing mechanisms to promote democratization and human rights in the WB region and European Neighbourhood.** Emergency support is an exception and only provided in clearly justified situations.

Type of support

EED has provided emergency support to existing partners when an urgent situation has arisen. **The most typical emergency support provided includes bridge funding to organisation/pro-democracy actors between two contracts to continue its operation, psychological support and support to countering online and digital attacks.** They also support psychological and well-being costs, legal advice, and related expenses on a case-by-case basis, but cannot cover relocation costs.

Front Line Defenders (FLD)

Type of Support	Financial and Protection Support
Who they help	Individual Human Rights Defenders, organisations protecting others' rights facing real or perceived risks (i.e. mental, digital, physical, or legal threats) directly related to their work.
Frequency	Open continuously
Response Time	Usually 48-72 hours Up to a week in cases where they need to verify
Budget	Up to 7.500 EUR. Protection Grants are generally not awarded for 100% of the proposed budget.
Application Language	Arabic, Russian, English, French, Spanish, Farsi, Portuguese, Chinese and Turkish
Application	Protection Grant Online Application Form: 🌐 https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/secure/grant-new.php?l=en Rest & Respite Programme: Invitation only
Getting Help	📞 Secure Phone number: +353 12 100 489 Secure Contact Form: 🌐 https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/secure/comment.php?l=en 🌐 https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/

Front Line Defenders (FLD) work to improve the security and protection of HRDs and organisations around the world at risk for their peaceful and legitimate human rights work. As identified by HRDs, FLD provides support through grants, capacity building, visibility, networking, and advocacy, at the international, regional and local levels.

Type of support

Financial support – Protection grants, physical and digital support and advice, international advocacy with IGOs and visibility support, relocation and wellbeing support – Rest & Respite programme, support, capacity development (risk assessments, training), networking with other HRDs.

Types of costs

Improving physical security of an organisation or individual, digital security and communication security, supporting legal fees except for fines and strategic litigations, medical fees, family assistance.

Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF) – Urgent Grants

Type of Support	Flexible, including legal aid, psychological support, purchase of equipment (in duly justified cases). The Guidelines specify the type of eligible and ineligible costs.
Who they help	Individuals, unregistered initiatives or CSOs
Frequency	Opened as of June 2024
Response Time	Up to 10 days
Budget	Up to 3.000 EUR for individual grant. 3-5 applications/per year. 15.000 EUR/per year. Available for next 3 years.
Time Frame	Up to 12 months
Reporting	Simple report
Geographical Coverage	
Application Language	Albanian, English or Serbian
Application	🔗 Online Application Form[19]
Getting Help	📍 Musa Tolaj, Qendra Nartel, Lam A, H1, Kat.12, no. 65-1, Lakrishtë, Pristina, Kosovo
	📞 +383 (0)38 600 633 +383 (0)38 600 644
	@ eja@kcsfoundation.org

🌐 https://kcsfoundation.org/en/open-call/urgent-grants/

Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF) is the leading local grant-making foundation supporting civic initiatives in Kosovo since 1998. The Engagement for Joint Action (EJA Kosovo) programme aims to foster a democratic and inclusive society in Kosovo, on its path towards integration into the EU. Urgent Grants offer quick and timely interventions by civil society to respond to identified issues that contribute towards the objectives of EJA Kosovo. Beneficiaries of these grants may be individuals, unregistered initiatives or CSOs. It enables various actors to quickly seize opportunities and reacht when there is no sufficient time to apply and react through other instruments and regular calls such as project grants.

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19   https://grants.kcsfoundation.org/node/96?
     fund_name=Urgent%20grants&fund_round_name=Urgent%20grants&language=en

Application process

Filling-in and submitting an online Application Form. Applying for Urgent grants is possible only through the KCSF online application platform. To apply for a grant, an organisation must first register on the platform. After registering and logging in with their details, they can apply for the grant following the Guidelines.[20]
The new round is being opened as of June 2024.[21]

Types of costs

The Guidelines define criteria for eligibility of costs, including:
- are necessary for the successful implementation and achievement of the indicated intervention results;
- are reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, including fair and market-based calculations and cost-efficiency;
- comply with the requirements of applicable tax legislation in Kosovo;
- will incur during the implementation of the grant;
- are indicated in the approved budget;
- are identifiable and traceable.

Types of costs deemed **ineligible** are: salaries; customs and import duties; debt or payments for losses; Value Added Tax (VAT) (for all invoices above 200 EUR); loan and interest repayments; currency exchange fees; equipment depreciation expenditures; purchase of land or immovable property; purchase of vehicle or generator; payment of expenses covered by other donors; credit to third parties.

Eligibility (administrative and selection criteria)
- Be an Individual, unregistered initiatives or organisations active in Kosovo engaged in any non-profit initiative (branches of foreign and international NGOs registered in Kosovo are not eligible to apply);
- Be directly responsible for the management of the grant. Partnerships with other CSOs/unregistered initiatives are allowed based on principle that leading applicant takes full responsibility for project implementation and management;
- Demonstrate capacity for the management of proposed activities;
- Are not led or managed by Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs);
- The need is urgent (one-time event, could not be foreseen, cannot wait).

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20   https://kcsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/02-Guidelines-for-Application-for-Urgent-Grants_EJA_ENG-2.pdf
21   https://kcsfoundation.org/en/news/kalendari-i-granteve-te-kcsf-se-per-shoqeri-civile-2024/

Project Galileo – Cloudflare

Type of Support	The free Business-level services include DDoS mitigation, DNS, Web Application Firewall, and caching. Cloudflare may provide other products on request, such as Workers, Zero Trust application access, and Gateway.
Who they help	organisations supporting the arts, human rights, journalism, and democracy. In WB region, partners of NED have access to this service currently.
Frequency	Open continuously
Types of Costs	Recipients of support get free-of-charge access to Cloudflare Business plan, which includes metered DDoS attack mitigation, DNS, CNAME setup compatibility, SSL certificate, Web Application Firewall (WAF), Content delivery network (CDN), Cache analytics, Cloudflare Workers, Zero Trust application access, Cloudflare Gateway, Image and mobile optimization, PCI compliance
Application Language	English
Application	Either by contacting Galileo partner organisations[22] and asking them for sponsoring the organisation/website or by filling in the basic online application form.[23]
Eligibility (administrative and selection criteria)	• Domain seeking protection must be a live website; • Non-for-profit mission, activities, and the status of the organisation associated with the website; • How the organisation serves the public interest; • Factors that make it a vulnerable target.
Getting Help	https://www.cloudflare.com/galileo/#galileoapplication

Project Galileo is a Cloudflare Impact programme that provides free security services to organisations supporting the arts, human rights, journalism, and democracy. In WB region, partners of NED have access to this service currently.

A Free plan[24] is available free of charge. organisations benefiting from the project get access to the Business-level services free-of-charge.

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22 https://www.cloudflare.com/galileo/#galileoapplication. Currently in the region, NED partners are beneficiaries of this project.
23 ibid.
24 https://www.cloudflare.com/plans/

SHARE Foundation – SHARE CERT

Type of Support	Digital support, legal assistance
Who they help	Human Rights Defenders, Media, CSOs in Serbia
Frequency	Incident report form open continuously
Response Time	Depending on available capacity
Budget	No specific budget. Support is offered pro-bono based on resources within existing projects. On-demand trainings and mentoring can be requested and financed by their donor or organisation requesting it.
Types of Costs	Support in form of advice, incident response etc. is pro-bono, which they pay from their own donors. Do not provide direct support in financing costs of software or hardware. In such case refer to partner, e.g. TechSoup.
Application Language	Serbian
Geographical Coverage	Serbia. Able to respond to request from other Western Balkan countries, but depending on capacity might address directly or connect to one of the partners in SEE Digital Rights Network.
Application	Online submission of Incident report (in Serbian): https://www.sharecert.rs/prijava-incidenta/
Getting Help	Resource Centre (in Serbian only): https://www.sharecert.rs/resursi/

SHARE Foundation was established in 2012 and is primarily focused on freedom of expression online, data privacy, digital security and open access to knowledge. SHARE Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) monitors and analyses security threats in the infrastructure of online and civil media in Serbia, provides assistance in the recognition and prevention of threats, empowers actors for adequate responses to attacks, provides legal assistance in the processing of cyber incidents, maintains communication with competent institutions and more.

Type of support

Preventive work includes audit system by in-house ISO 27001 certified external auditors, and identification of weak system links and their proactive resolution. Support in situation of digital or cyber-attacks including support in communication with the system administrator in order to establish the normal functioning of the system as soon as possible, comprehensive collection of digital evidence, protection of their integrity and writing of criminal reports. Education work including on-demand trainings, advice and mentoring on issues including digital security, personal data protection, online media and freedom of expression (legal training) for media organisations and journalist-related legal issues, surveillance (biometric), open source intelligence (OSI).

They are able to facilitate incident response with social media providers such as Meta, X etc.

TechSoup Balkans

Type of Support	Digital Support: Discounted licence for use of software including Microsoft, Autodesk, Bitdefender, Symantec etc.
Who they help	Non-for-profit organisations such as a CSOs, museum, sport club, religion organisation, library
Frequency	Open continuously
Response Time	Depending on available capacity
Types of Costs	Discounted price for officially licenced software
Application Language	Albanian, English, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Serbian
Geographical Coverage	
Application	The donation process is simple. Just register your organisation on the TechSoup Balkans site for the country the organisation is based in. Once approved, you can order the needed software. An administrative fee of 2% to 9% of the product's commercial price applies. Payment is by invoice, and licences are provided directly by the donors. Available donations are listed on the TechSoup website.
Getting Help	https://www.techsoupalbania.org/ https://www.techsoupbosniaherzegovina.org/ https://www.techsoupcroatia.org https://www.techsoupkosovo.org https://www.techsoupmontenegro.org https://www.techsoupnorthmacedonia.org/ https://www.techsoupserbia.org

TechSoup Balkans provides access to digital and cybersecurity solutions at a discounted prices making such technology easily available to CSOs. Techsoup Balkans offer includes software solutions from established global software companies through a catalogue. It works via local partners.

In the WB region its local partners include MaštaAgency from BiH, Metamorphosis from North Macedonia, Action SEE (Accountability, Technology and Institutional Openness Network in SEE) from Croatia, Mozaik Foundation from BiH which covers Croatia, BiH and Serbia and U.G. "Zašto ne" from BiH that facilitate request for access to (discounted) software and licences.

Solidarna Foundation

Type of Support	Legal, psychological, physical
Who they help	Organisations, non-formal initiatives and individual human rights activists in Croatia, possible support for Western Balkans activists
Frequency	Continuously open based on direct contact
Response Time	Up to 7 days
Budget	No specific budget defined
Types of Costs	Psychotherapy with specialised therapists, legal aid (lawyers' costs) from the pool of lawyers Solidarna has experience and connections with. Solidarna also provides referrals and connections to other donors as well as strategic mentorship support. Solidarna does not only cover costs but also provides direct support.
Application Language	Croatian (primary), Serbian, Bosnian, English
Geographical Coverage	Croatia (primary), case-by-case Western Balkans countries
Application	Direct e-mail with needs and urgency explained
Getting Help	info@solidarna.hr

Solidarna is a foundation from Croatia established at the end of 2015 by 55 HRDs united in a commitment to strengthen the autonomy and solidarity of civic action to reduce inequality and expand rights and freedoms in Croatia, the Western Balkans and the CEE region. **Its work is focused on support to active citizens in the protection of human rights throughout all four generations, providing financial support and capacity building to CSOs, civic initiatives, and individuals.** Solidarna also focuses on the development of philanthropy in the region by connecting activists and donors as well as developing individual and corporate philanthropy.

Application Process

Sending an e-mail with description of: the organization/initiative/individual is working on, what the emergency situation is and what kind of support is needed. A phone/online call for further clarification is organized, after which the decision is made if and what kind of support will be provided.

Type of costs

Attorney fees, legal document preparation, travel expenses for legal consultation or court appearance, therapy or counselling sessions, medical expenses, crisis communication or PR support, media and public relations, fundraising or emergency resource mobilisation.

Eligibility (administrative and selection criteria)

Organisations or activists working in the field of human rights based advocacy (gender, LGBTIQ+, environmental, rule of law, democracy, etc.).

WHO OFFERS WHICH SUPPORT AND HOW TO GET HELP?

Provider	Eligible countries of WB	Types of support offered	Application/ Selection Process	Open to informal groups and/or individuals?
Front Line Defenders	🇦🇱 🇧🇦 🇭🇷 🇽🇰 🇲🇪 🇲🇰 🇷🇸	Financial, Psychological, Legal, Digital, Security	(Online) Application Form, Invitation Only	Yes
Civil Rights Defenders – Emergency Fund	🇦🇱 🇧🇦 🇽🇰 🇲🇪 🇲🇰 🇷🇸	Financial, Psychological, Legal, Digital, Security	(Online) Application Form	Yes
European Endowment for Democracy (EED)	🇦🇱 🇧🇦 🇽🇰 🇲🇪 🇲🇰 🇷🇸	Financial, Psychological, Digital	(Online) Application Form	Yes
European Fund for the Balkans Response Hub	🇦🇱 🇧🇦 🇽🇰 🇲🇪 🇲🇰 🇷🇸	Financial, Legal, Other	(Online) Application Form	Yes
Civic Initiatives Fund for Urgent Support	🇷🇸	Financial, Psychological, Legal, Digital, Security	(Online) Application Form	Yes
Kosovar Civil Society Foundation Urgent Fund	🇽🇰	Financial, Psychological, Legal, Digital	(Online) Application Form	Yes
Access Now – Digital Security Helpline	🇦🇱 🇧🇦 🇭🇷 🇽🇰 🇲🇪 🇲🇰 🇷🇸	Digital	Email Request	Yes
Digital Defenders Partnership	🇦🇱 🇧🇦 🇭🇷 🇽🇰 🇲🇪 🇲🇰 🇷🇸	Financial, Psychological, Digital, Security	Eligibility Test	Yes
Project Galileo – Cloudflare	🇦🇱 🇧🇦 🇭🇷 🇽🇰 🇲🇪 🇲🇰 🇷🇸	Digital	(Online) Application Form	No
SHARE Foundation – SHARE CERT	🇷🇸	Digital	(Online) Application Form	No
TechSoup Balkans	🇦🇱 🇧🇦 🇽🇰 🇲🇪 🇲🇰 🇷🇸	Digital	(Online) Application Form	No

Legend

Type of Support

- 💲 Financial Support
- 🧠 Psychological support
- ⚖️ Legal support
- 🛡️ Security Support
- ⚙️ Digital Support
- ••• Other

Application Process

- ✉️ Invitation Only
- 🖥️ (Online) Application Form
- @ Email Request
- ✓ Eligibility Test

WHO OFFERS WHICH SUPPORT?

In Albania

Type of Support	Provider
Emergency Support	• European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) – Response Hub*
Psychological support	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • European Endowment for Democracy (EED)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Legal support	• European Endowment for Democracy (EED)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Security - digital	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • TechSoup Balkans • Project Galileo – Cloudflare • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Security - physical	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Other types of support	• European Endowment for Democracy (EED)*

✱ Support also available to individuals/activists

In Bosnia and Herzegovina

Type of Support	Provider
Emergency Support	• European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) – Response Hub*
Psychological support	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • European Endowment for Democracy (EED)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Legal support	• European Endowment for Democracy (EED)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Security - digital	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • TechSoup Balkans • Project Galileo – Cloudflare • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Security - physical	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Other types of support	• European Endowment for Democracy (EED)*

✳ Support also available to individuals/activists

In Croatia

	Type of Support	Provider
	Emergency Support	Other Types of Emergency Support
	Psychological support	• Solidarna Foundation * • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
	Legal support	• Solidarna Foundation* • Front Line Defenders (FLD) *
	Security - digital	• TechSoup Balkans • Project Galileo – Cloudflare • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
	Security - physical	• Front Line Defenders (FLD)* • Solidarna Foundation *
	Other types of support	Other Types of Emergency Support

* Support also available to individuals/activists

In Kosovo

	Type of Support	Provider
	Emergency Support	• European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) – Response Hub*
	Psychological support	• Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF)* • Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • European Endowment for Democracy (EED)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
	Legal support	• Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
	Security - digital	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • TechSoup Balkans • Project Galileo – Cloudflare • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
	Security - physical	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
	Other types of support	• Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF)* • European Endowment for Democracy (EED)*

* Support also available to individuals/activists

In Montenegro

Type of Support	Provider
Emergency Support	• European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) – Response Hub*
Psychological support	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) * • European Endowment for Democracy (EED) * • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Legal support	• European Endowment for Democracy (EED) * • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Security - digital	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) * • TechSoup Balkans • Project Galileo – Cloudflare • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Security - physical	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) * • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Other types of support	• European Endowment for Democracy (EED) *

✳ Support also available to individuals/activists

In North Macedonia

Type of Support	Provider
Emergency Support	• European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) – Response Hub*
Psychological support	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • European Endowment for Democracy (EED)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Legal support	• European Endowment for Democracy (EED)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Security - digital	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • TechSoup Balkans • Project Galileo – Cloudflare • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Security - physical	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
Other types of support	• European Endowment for Democracy (EED)*

* Support also available to individuals/activists

In Serbia

	Type of Support	Provider
	Emergency Support	• European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) – Response Hub* • Civic Initiative*
	Psychological support	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • European Endowment for Democracy (EED)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
	Legal support	• European Endowment for Democracy (EED)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
	Security - digital	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • TechSoup Balkans • Project Galileo – Cloudflare • SHARE Foundation – SHARE CERT • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
	Security - physical	• Civil Rights Defenders (CRD)* • Front Line Defenders (FLD)*
	Other types of support	• European Endowment for Democracy (EED)*

* Support also available to individuals/activists

WHAT EMERGENCY SUPPORT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

This section contains a non-exhaustive list of useful resources, websites, toolkits, guides, videos, self-assessment tools etc. providing specific type of emergency support useful to activists, groups and organisations in need. It also contains additional resources that might be available in remedy of emergency situation, although they are not specifically address to emergency or urgent situations.

GENERAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

CIVICUS Crisis Response Fund via Lifeline Embattled CSO Fund

MORE INFO

The Crisis Response Fund (CRF) provides urgent funding to civil society actors who are facing crises in freedom of assembly and association (FoAA) to conduct advocacy activities (Advocacy Grants), or looking to respond proactively to threats to civic freedoms through resiliency activities (Resiliency Grant). Focus is on addressing of systematic threat (and not individual cases). The Fund is part of the Lifeline Embattled CSO Fund and supports organisations addressing them through joint actions.

ProtectDefenders.eu

MORE INFO

MORE INFO

List of alternative funding mechanisms for emergency support.

Civic Initiatives Guide on Financing of CSOs

MORE INFO

Guide with available funding for CSOs in Serbia includes a section with available urgent support to organisations in Serbia, much of which is also accessible to organisations in other countries. The Guide is available only in Serbian.

MORE INFO

Fund for Urgent Support

Solidarna Foundation crowdfunding

MORE INFO

Provides ad-hoc crowdfunding based on organisation's or activist' request for financial and legal support as there is no other structured support available in Croatia currently.

LEGAL SUPPORT

Coalition Against SLAPPs in Europe (CASE)

MORE INFO

The Coalition brings together various organisations committed to combating SLAPPs across the continent. While to Coalition is focused on the work in EU MS, including Croatia, its resources and networking is open to activist, informal groups and organisations from the WB region.

From Silence to Strength: A Regional Response to SLAPPs in the Western Balkans

MORE INFO

The study includes a detailed regional and country-by-country analysis on SLAPPs and it includes a list of national focal points for SLAPPs in each of the WB6 countries that provide legal advice and other types of support for activists and organisations facing SLAPPs.

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka

MORE INFO

Contact
Srpska 5,
78000 Banja Luka,
+387 65 615 535
hcabl@blic.net

The organisation is establishing a help-line for support to HRDs in BiH. Started in beginning of 2024 in partnership Association of BH Journalists as an EU-funded project. Aim is direct legal support and support for legal representation for activists under threat in BiH. Network of lawyers for support is currently being established. The project support is available for 22 months.

Global Nonprofits Guide

MORE INFO ⌒

The guide includes "find a lawyer section" to identify lawyers and legal companies to support organisations.

Kosovo Initiative Against SLAPPs

MORE INFO ⌒

Kosovo Initiative Against SLAPPs is an informal group consisting of activists and civil society experts in Kosovo.

Contact
Email to Flutura Kusari

PSYCHOLOGICAL & MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Burn-Out Aid

MORE INFO ⌒

Burn-out aid website includes self-assessment tools for organisations and short video tutorials in English, Polish, Slovenian and Croatian.

Self-care guide

MORE INFO ⌒

Easy-to-use self-help guide on how to develop and improve psychological and mental help of activists and staff in organisations. The guide is available in English and Arabic and provides information on key terminology, self-test and practical exercise and tools to dela with stress, trauma and self-care.

DIGITAL AND CYBERSECURITY SUPPORT

Digital First Aid Kit

MORE INFO

Free resource (in English, Macedonian, Albanian) to help rapid responders, digital security trainers, and tech-savvy activists to better protect themselves and the communities they support against the most common types of digital emergencies. It can also be used by activists, human rights defenders, bloggers, journalists or media activists who want to learn more about how they can protect themselves and support others. If you or someone you are assisting is experiencing a digital emergency, the Digital First Aid Kit will guide you in diagnosing the issues you are facing, and refer you to support providers for further help if needed.

Digital Standards – Security in a Box

MORE INFO

Security In-a-box is a guide to digital security for activists and human rights defenders. The toolkit ranges from the basic principles of digital security, including advice on how to use social media and mobile phones more safely, to more specific regional advice for activists working in higher risk environments. The guide is available in English and several other languages.

Access Now Digital Security Helpline

MORE INFO

Protect Defenders helpdesk

MORE INFO

SEE Digital Rights Network

MORE INFO

Their website includes short basic videos on digital security (in Albanian, Macedonian, Serbian) and comparative analysis of situation or legislation.

PHYSICAL SECURITY SUPPORT

Front Line Defenders Risk Assessment Training

MORE INFO 〰

Front Line Defenders Risk Assessment and Protection Planning Training

MORE INFO 〰

Workbook on Security

The Front Line Defenders Workbook takes you through the steps to producing a security plan – for yourself and for your organisation (for those HRDs who are working in organisations). It follows a systematic approach for assessing your security situation and developing risk and vulnerability reduction strategies and tactics.

HOLISTIC SECURITY OR INTEGRATED SECURITY

Holistic Security Manual & Website

MORE INFO 〰

It is a strategy manual, created by Tactical Tech, to help HRDs maintain their well-being in action. The holistic approach integrates self-care, well-being, digital security, and information security into traditional security management practices. This manual is considered the first to adopt an explicitly 'holistic' approach to security and protection strategies for human rights defenders. Rather than looking separately at digital security, psycho-social well-being, and organisational security processes, it attempts to integrate them and highlight their interrelatedness. The content is divided into four sections: Prepare, Explore, Strategize, and Act, which are conceived as steps in an evolving, cyclical process and should be regularly revisited as part of ongoing strategic planning.

Integrated Security Manual

MORE INFO 〰

The manual provides step-by-step guide to implement and conduct Integrated Security workshops. Developed by Kvinna till Kvinna and primary targeted to women and gender HRDs it can also be applied to other activist and organisation's needs and variety of geographical contexts.

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES FOR THE REPORT

	Name and Last name (alphabetical order)	Organisation	Position
1	Dragoslava Barzut	Civic initiatives/Serbia	Programme Manager for Local Initiatives
2	Andrea Blazanovic*	National Endowment for Democracy (NED)	Programme Officer for Europe
3	Ivan Blazevic	Foundation Solidarna/Croatia	Executive Director
4	Carolyn Boyd Tomasović	Ecumenical Women Initiative/Croatia & regional	Director
5	Adriana Craciun	Oak Foundation/Switzerland	Senior Adviser/Head of OD
6	Aida Daguda	Center for Promotion of Civil Society (CPCS)/Lead partner in SMART regional programme/ BiH	Executive Director
7	Tihomir Dakic	Center for Environment/BiH, Banja Luka	President
8	Ozlem Dalkiran	Frontline Defenders/Ireland	Protection Coordinator for Europe
9	Dragana Dardic	Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka/BiH	
10	Aleksej Demjanski*	National Endowment for Democracy (NED)/USA	Programme Officer for Europe
11	Julia von Dobeneck	Robert Bosch Stiftung/Germany	WB Programme Manager
12	Milka Domanovic	Balkan Investigative Regional Network (BIRN)	Regional Network Director
13	Tanja Dramac Jiries*	National Endowment for Democracy (NED)	Deputy Director for Europe
14	Masa Elezovic	Trag Foundation/Serbia	Regional IAW Programme Manager

* Interviewed as part of a joint team interview.

** Provided written input as he/she was not available for an interview.

	Name and Last name (alphabetical order)	Organisation	Position
15	Krenar Gashi	European Endowment for Democracy (EED)/Brussels	Senior Programme Manager
16	Katerina Hadzi-Miceva Evans	European Center for Non-profit Law (ECNL)/Netherlands	Executive Director
17	Budimir Ivanisevic	ForumZfD/Serbia	Regional Director
18	Markus Janzen	Porticus Foundation/Austria	CEE Country Manager
19	Mila Josifovska Danilovska	Metamorphosis/North Macedonia	Programme Manager
20	Goce Kocevski	Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA)/North Macedonia	Programme Director
21	Sushruta Kokkula**	European Center for Non-profit Law (ECNL)/Netherlands	Project and Communications Assistant
22	Edona Krasniqi	Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF)/Kosovo	Re-granting Director
23	Lura Limani	Open Society Foundations (OSF)/Kosovo	Team Leader/EI and Regional Cooperation Programme Team
24	Megi Llubani *	National Endowment for Democracy (NED)/USA	Senior Programme Officer Europe
25	Fabien Maitre-Mühl	Sigrid Rausing Trust (SRT)/UK	Programme Manager for Human Rights Programme
26	Nadja Micic*	National Endowment for Democracy (NED)	
27	Goran Miletic	Civil Rights Defenders/Serbia	Deputy Global Programme Director/Director for Europe and MENA
28	Nemanja Nestorovic	Community Building Mitrovica (CBM)/Kosovo	Executive Director
29	Bojan Perkov	SHARE Foundation/Serbia	Digital Policy Coordinator
30	Paola Petric		Independent consultant on mental health/BiH

∗   Interviewed as part of a joint team interview.

∗∗ Provided written input as he/she was not available for an interview.

	Name and Last name (alphabetical order)	Organisation	Position
31	Biljana Spasovska	Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN)/North Macedonia	Executive Director
32	Aferdita Sylaj Shehu	Community Building Mitrovica (CBM)/Kosovo	Executive Director
33	Aleksandra Tomanic	European Fund for the Balkans (EFB)/Serbia	Executive Director
34	Katherine Vorderbruggen*	National Endowment for Democracy (NED)/USA	Assistant Programme Officer
35	Sofija Vrbaski	Kvinna till Kvinna/Serbia	Programme Officer
36	Mia Vukojevic	Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF)/USA	Western Balkans Programme Director
37	Jelena Gordana Zloic	Community Foundation Slagalica/Croatia	Executive Director
38	Aleksandar Zolja	Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka/ BiH	Executive Director

∗ Interviewed as part of a joint team interview.

∗∗ Provided written input as he/she was not available for an interview.