



THREAT 1

NEW & RESTRICTIVE REPORTING REGULATIONS TO COMPLY OR NOT TO COMPLY?

CASE STUDY: RESISTANCE

Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU), Hungary, 2014

The Hungarian PM ordered - without a legal basis - an audit into the operation of the Norwegian NGO Fund targeting the distributing and recipient organizations. The audit ended up in a legal battle involving dozens of NGOs, including the HCLU who refused to cooperate with the auditors. The police raided the offices of three distributing organizations and the Hungarian PM says in a public statement that the NGO-staff are “paid political activists helping foreign interests”.

HCLU managed to enhance its public image by:

- articulating clearly its principle-based opposition to injustice;
- declaring that the audit had no legal basis;
- refusing to submit the requested project documents to the audit-body;
- demonstrating transparency by publishing the requested documents on the HCLU’s website.

THREAT 2

INTERFERENCE WITH NGOS & INTIMIDATION OF STAFF HARDENING THE TARGET?

CASE STUDY: DIGITAL SECURITY

Egyptian Initiative for Personal Right (EIPR) Egypt, 2014

The Egyptian government fabricated The Egyptian government falsely accused the EIPR of violating the national criminal law. To protect its donors, staff and volunteers the EIPR adopted a robust digital security policy by:

- incorporating an operating system that withstands hacking;
- using a VPN (Virtual Private Network) software to store data outside the Egyptian controlled server networks.

The staff:


- uses data-free laptops when travelling;
- communicates by using encrypted communication software;
- receive digital security training.

THREAT 4

NGO-SECTOR-WIDE-ASSAULT FORMING ALLIANCES?

CASE STUDY: PAY ATTENTION TO THE STEALTH ATTACKS

Justice for all Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Nigeria, 2015



THREAT 3

ARBITRARY LEGAL ACTION & FORBIDDING FOREIGN FUNDING FORMING ALTERNATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES?

CASE STUDY: OPERATING INFORMALLY

DRONT, Russia 2014

In 2014, the Russian government stepped up the implementation of the ‘Foreign Agents Law’ adopted in 2012. NGOs who receive foreign funding are registered as ‘foreign agents’. The leadership of DRONT, an environmental organization in Nizhnii Novgorod on the ‘foreign agents’ list, suspended its activities and continued to work as an unregistered public movement.

The Nigerian government introduced a bill intended to impose heavy fines and jail terms on ‘anyone who intentionally propagates false information that could threaten the security of the country...’, “aimed at the growing power of social media users/activists.

An analysis by expert civil society groups and lawyers highlighted the bill’s harmful effects on the free speech and civil society. The analysis went viral on social media. As a result of the outcry, the bill was dropped.

THREAT 5

DELIMITIMIZE THROUGH CLAIMS OF ‘FOREIGN FUNDING’ AND ‘NO LOCAL CONSTITUENCY’ RESHAPING PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND BUILDING CONSTITUENCY?

CASE STUDY: REFRAMING – AN ATTACK ON NGOS IS AN ATTACK ON DEMOCRACY

Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), Israel

ACRI strongly advocates against the ‘tyranny of the majority’ by emphasizing the need to defend the human rights of minorities regardless of their social, religious, national, ethnic, political, ideological status, among others.

INTRO

Respect for freedom of expression and assembly is essential to participatory democracy and a key indicator of a government's respect for human rights.

Yet, in recent years a series of governments around the world have stepped up attacks against civil society actors, imposing restrictions on the work of national Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Drawing on the first-hand experience of INCLO's member and non-member organizations from around the world our network published, in December 2017, the *Gaining Ground: A Framework for Developing Strategies and Tactics in Response to Governmental Attacks on NGOs* highlighting:

- Five types of threats
- Strategic questions and approaches
- Pros and Cons
- Case studies from around the world
- Contextual considerations

OBSERVE ANTICIPATE PREPARE

WATCH closely for signs of a sector-wide assault on civic freedoms.

ANTICIPATE potential threats.

PREPARE for fighting back the tide of harassing government-measures in your countries.



ABOUT INCLO

INCLO is a network of 13 national independent civil liberties and human rights organizations from around the world working to promote fundamental rights and freedoms.

For more information visit www.inclo.net

USE INCLO's *GAINING GROUND MANUAL FOR GUIDANCE WHEN RESPONDING TO ATTACKS*

The Gaining Ground is a **practical manual** proposing strategic approaches and highlighting case-studies of NGOs anticipating and responding to governmental attacks.