

Introducing: The Fact-checkers Legal Support Initiative

The Fact-checkers Legal Support Initiative (FLSI) is a collaboration between three leading media law and journalism organisations, brought together to support fact-checkers around the world: [Media Defence](#), the [International Fact-Checking Network](#) and the [Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press](#).

FLSI [provides legal defence for fact-checkers](#), connecting them with pro bono lawyers, helping to pay legal fees where pro bono support isn't available, and providing technical legal assistance to pro bono lawyers. FLSI has also [published legal guides](#) providing fact-checkers with information related to legal threats and non-legal challenges, like harassment and physical threats, they may face. Currently, the guides cover the U.S., Brazil, Philippines and Italy, with versions in English, Portuguese and Italian.

“Fact-checking has become a vital tool to combat the spread of misinformation, but the non-partisan individuals and organizations who check facts are increasingly facing threats — including lawsuits, online harassment and violence. The Fact-checkers Legal Support Initiative will continue to help fact-checkers fight these threats against them so they can instead focus on their important work.”

- Alinda Vermeer, Acting CEO, Media Defence

Fact-checkers are facing an increasingly hostile environment. At a time when the term ‘fake news’ has been weaponised, fact-checkers themselves are being targeted with online harassment and threatened with legal action. When facing these threats, many do not have the resources to defend themselves. Though some fact-checkers are housed in large media companies, the majority around the world are small, independent not-for-profit organisations, operating with few resources and on shoestring budgets. This makes them especially vulnerable to legal threats.

Legal cases are often brought against fact-checkers with no purpose other than to harass and silence them. FLSI wants to ensure fact-checkers have the means to defend against such cases. We also want to ensure that journalists and bloggers whose right to freedom of expression has been violated have access to legal remedies. For example, if a fact-checker has been assaulted for their work, FLSI will consider providing legal assistance to ensure that the fact-checker can bring legal action.

If you are a fact-checker or fact-checking organisation under threat or in need of legal support, please get in touch through [the FLSI website](#). We accept cases from around the globe. If you are unsure whether you qualify, please email info@mediadefence.org.

Find out more about the FLSI at www.factcheckerlegalsupport.org.

To keep up to date with developments at the FLSI, such as important cases and new resources, please:

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