



# 2025 Annual Report



Date:  
December 2025



# A word from our Chairman

Since the inception of Reporters Shield in 2023, our principle aim remains to protect and defend investigative journalism and other public interest reporting from being silenced or crippled by legal threats and intimidation.

In recent years, the growth of strategic lawsuits against public participation, often referred to as SLAPPs, has created an environment in which litigation itself can become a weapon. Lawsuits costing millions of dollars in legal fees, prolonged court battles, and the looming threat of ruin can deter even the most determined newsroom from publishing stories of public importance.

Reporters Shield was launched to confront this reality head-on. We are a membership organisation that equips journalists and organisations with the legal support they need to continue fearless reporting. Through our mutual defence fund and in collaboration with media lawyers and freedom of expression advocates, members have access to specialist legal support, from prevention and pre-publication risk assessment, to robust responses to threats, and full defence in court when necessary.

The impact of our work is evident. Our membership has grown to include investigative newsrooms and public-interest organisations across continents. We have supported outlets in navigating complex legal threats, provided pre-publication risk assessments that help avert litigation before it begins, and strengthened the resilience of independent reporting in jurisdictions where legal intimidation is most acute.

As we look ahead, the mission of Reporters Shield remains urgent and undiminished. For every editor that thinks they will never get sued, you might not have been sued yet but, if you're publishing reporting that matters, you will be. With a global community of members, we are building a model of solidarity that ensures no newsroom faces these challenges alone.

## Drew Sullivan

Co-director and the publisher of OCCRP &  
Chairman of Reporters Shield

# A Growing Global Membership



## 60+

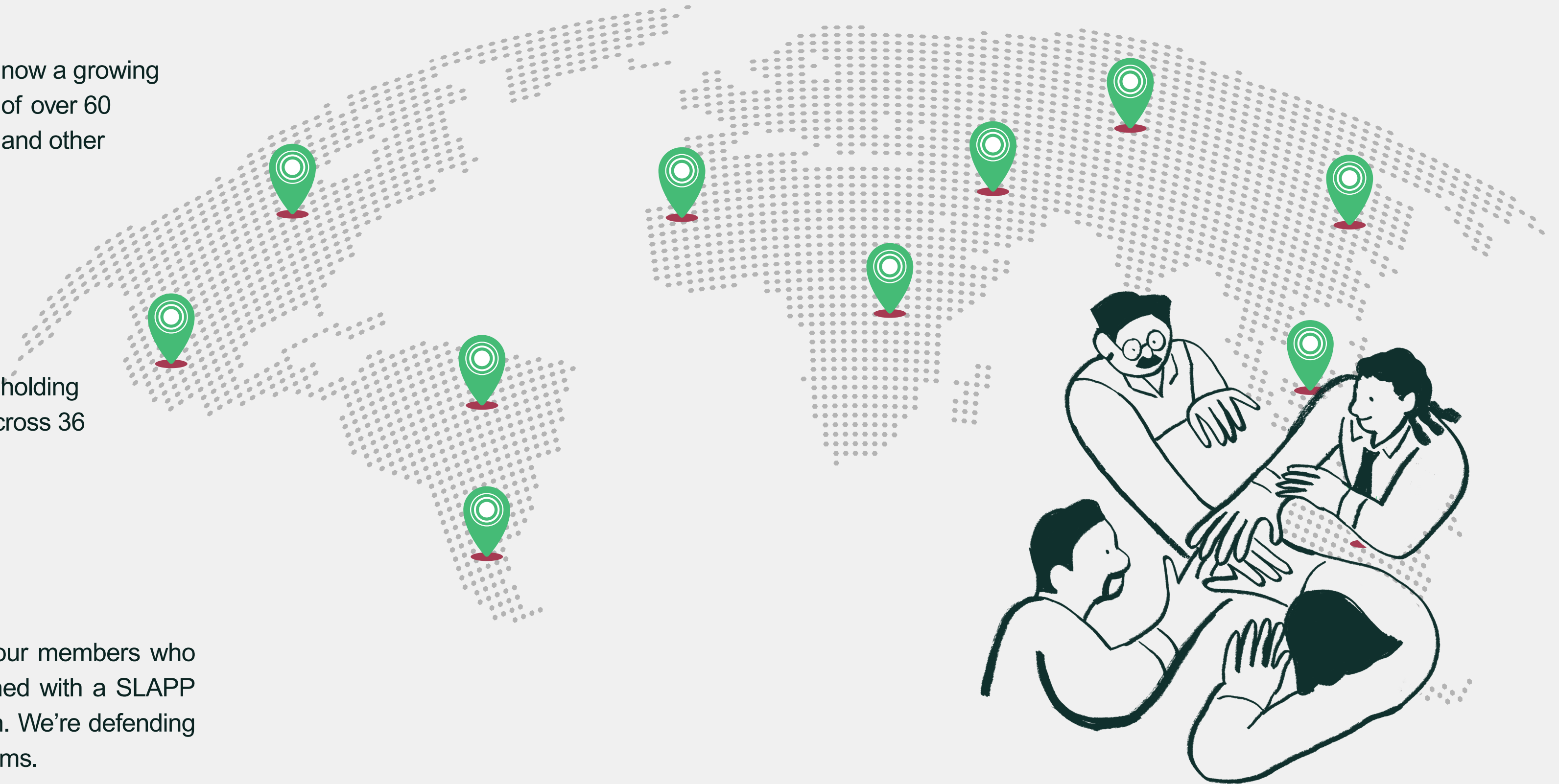
Reporters Shield is now a growing global membership of over 60 newsrooms, NGOs and other publishing outlets

## 36

Our membership is holding power to account across 36 countries

## 60%

The proportion of our members who have been threatened with a SLAPP or other legal action. We're defending vulnerable newsrooms.





# Reporters Shield in Action

01.

## Prevent



Before the publication of high risk investigations, pre-publication legal risk assessments strengthen reporting and mitigate the financial risk of a lawsuit.

112

Legal Risk Assessments delivered

02.

## Respond



When faced with formal threats of legal action, our specialist lawyers respond on members' behalf, demonstrating access to legal expertise and resources to fight intimidation.

9

Profesional responses delivered - so far only one progressed to court

03.

## Defend



Paid legal defense in court by a specialist lawyer from our global network and/or financial support (capped at \$500,000/year) for members to pay their own lawyer.

12

legal defence cases taken on

# Our Impact in Action

01.

## Climate Home News



“We've learned from the top-quality legal advice we have received.”

Our programme reduces the legal risks Climate Home News incur from their reporting of businesses who fail to meet their green commitments.

■ Pre-publication legal risk assessments

02.

## Press One



“He didn't pursue charges, so the intervention had the desired effect”

Press One was threatened with formal legal action by the subject of an investigation reporting sexual misconduct towards students. We coordinated a robust response letter that gave the editors the confidence to publish the story.

■ Robust response letters to formal legal threats.

03.

## Context



“Without their support, we would have been wiped out.”

Reporters Shield is providing Context with assistance in several cases, including a €3.4 million SLAPP by the business tycoon Jurgen Faff.

■ Initial trial won  
■ Gag lawsuit thrown out



# What makes Reporters Shield Unique

## Mutual Defence Fund

Created by journalists for journalists. Each member contributes to a shared mutual defence pot designed to cover potentially ruinous legal fees



## Inclusive Membership

Our membership is deliberately cross-sectoral so it can protect journalism that performs public-interest reporting even when produced outside traditional newsroom models



## International Legal Cover

Liability tourism means defendants are increasingly sued in foreign jurisdictions. Paid-for legal defence from a global network of lawyers ensures specialist representation wherever it's needed.



# 2025 Annual Members Survey Highlights



83%

of our members  
would recommend  
Reporters Shield

The certainty and support of having legal assistance, even in litigation situations, has been fundamental to our work. This has been the only space in which we have been able to receive this type of support, which we deeply value and appreciate.



78%

Members feel more confident  
about facing legal threats after  
joining Reporters Shield

Being part of Reporters Shield makes you feel confident you have international standard advice and support in any jurisdiction where you are facing a lawsuit from powerful parts



# As Featured In





# Thank you to our partners

Thank you to all our **members**,  
to all the **lawyers** who've supported them,  
and to our **operational partners** for their technical expertise



# What's next for 2026



## LEARN

Deepen our understanding of our members and their legal challenges so our program keeps up with their needs

## SHARE

Encourage newsrooms not to bow to legal pressure by sharing our members success stories when we can

## GROW

Our business model depends on a large membership. The more members > the stronger the mutual defence fund > the better protected investigative reporting will be

# Join us

*Find out more about Reporters Shield*

CONTACT US



info@reporters-shield.org



www.reporters-shield.org

