



Release International

***The Trustees' Annual Report
and Financial Statements***

For the Year ended 31st December 2021

A Company Limited by Guarantee. Company No. 01506576

Registered Charity No. 280577 and Registered in Scotland No. SCO40456



**RELEASE INTERNATIONAL – THE TRUSTEES’ ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021**

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Trustees’ Annual Report

The Trustees have the pleasure of presenting their Annual Report together with the Financial Statements of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2021, which are also prepared to meet the requirements of a Directors' Report and Accounts for Companies Act purposes. Release International is a Christian Ministry and will often be referred to in this report as the Ministry.

Message from the Chair



I am very pleased to have the opportunity to present the Trustees’ Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2021. Last year was another challenging period due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, though our systems and processes for remote working enabled us to continue to do our utmost to follow God’s calling to serve persecuted Christians.

As I wrote last year’s introduction, we were still subject to COVID restrictions, with international travel difficult, if not impossible, and a requirement to conduct our activities ‘virtually’. We praise God that most of those restrictions have now been removed, that our churches are open, that our meetings can again be face to face, and that our staff have started to travel overseas once more to meet with those we support. But I write now with a heavy heart due to the unfolding horrific circumstances in Ukraine and I am sure that you are joining me in prayers for God’s intervention and protection, not only for the large community of Christian believers affected, but for all of the people of Ukraine. It has also caused me to reflect on the huge numbers of our brothers and sisters around the world affected by war or its consequences at this time - in Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea and Ethiopia and elsewhere, whose plight is not as well highlighted in our media as the unfolding tragedy in Europe. The need is astronomical. We are privileged at Release International, whether as permanent staff, volunteers, supporters or prayer warriors, to have the opportunity to play a small role in supporting and serving them.

Through God’s grace, the sacrificial generosity of our many supporters has continued this year and we remain in a very strong financial position, which has enabled us to deliver the strong programme of work outlined by Paul, our CEO, in his introduction to this report. During 2021, our CEO and Leadership Team delivered the recommendations of a Strategic Review, which included the incorporation of learning gained during the pandemic relating to our working practices. As a result, a significant restructuring of our staff team was implemented to ensure we are best able to fulfil our Mission and Calling going forwards. We reviewed each existing role, making changes as required, and recruited to vacant and new posts. Our increased and innovative use of online communications technology during the pandemic has enabled us to adopt a flexible hybrid working model, allowing staff to work effectively from a variety of different locations, with most now working from home for part of the week and at our offices for the remainder. We have already seen the benefits of increased efficiencies, as well as significant improvements to employees’ work-life balance.

Our Board of Trustees has continued to meet throughout the year, with the September meeting being our first face-to-face event of the year. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce a new member of the Board of Trustees, Martin Lee, the former Director of Global Connections, who brings a very broad set of skills and experience to the team. Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the continuing witness, service and commitment of the Release International team of staff members and volunteers, who have worked tirelessly with our Partners around the world to ensure that the voice of persecuted Christians is heard more widely. I also give glory and thanks to God for you, our huge network of supporters, whose faithful prayer, time and financial support make this work possible.

David Armond CBE QPM
Chair of Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Armond', written over a white background.

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Chief Executive’s Introduction



I began last year’s Report by writing, “*As a Christian Ministry which deals with the unexpected around the world on a regular basis, we were well placed to respond to the news of an emerging global pandemic...!*” We have again faced obvious pandemic-related challenges but are now well versed in how to manage its changing dynamic, while at the same time continuing to do all we can to fulfil our privileged God-given calling – *to love and serve persecuted Christians.*

Occasions for international travel were again quite limited in 2021 but, apart from the all-important personal visits to our Partners and persecuted brothers and sisters, our international ministry remains effective and targeted through the use of our well-developed *Taxonomy of Persecution*, which constrains us to *prayerfully, pastorally and practically* help: *Families of Christian martyrs; Prisoners of faith and their families; Christians suffering oppression and violence; and Christians forced to flee.*

I’m writing this introduction immediately after spending time with Christians and leaders from the Horn of Africa, once again being an eyewitness to the ways our indigenous Partners in more than 28 countries give of themselves sacrificially to ensure persecuted Christians get the ‘*tools*’ they need to live for Jesus Christ. Amid real suffering, it is wonderful to see again the victory of Christ in the lives of those who suffer and yet continue to live fully for Him. It is so good to be able to travel overseas again but our use of online technology has become so well developed that it is now a vital part of maintaining our long-term relationships with those we serve.

Our main role in the UK and Ireland is to present the first-person VOICE of those being persecuted, hoping Christians here will become even more engaged with those suffering around the world for the sake of Christ. So, during the various lockdowns and restrictions we continued to deliver much needed prayer opportunities and engagement resources, including live online *overseas speaker tours* in which we welcomed Jamal Liddawi from Iraq in November, and, earlier in the year, Lazarus Yeghnazar from 222 Ministries, which works to support Iranian Christians.

We invested in appointing a new Volunteering Ambassador and have written a new volunteering plan. God has brought tremendous volunteers to us to help us in ministry and we look forward to developing our volunteering capabilities still further.

Despite the ongoing impact of the pandemic, 2021 was a truly remarkable year in terms of God’s gracious provision towards us through our faithful supporters, with total income increasing significantly, enabling us to provide more financial support to our overseas Partners and also make our ministry in the UK and Ireland even more effective.

Having already seized the opportunity afforded by pandemic restrictions to undertake routine maintenance of the building we have been renting, and to reconfigure its interior to allow for more flexible *hybrid* working, our faith was exercised when the opportunity arose to purchase the lease. We would never spend donors’ sacrificial giving on such a huge capital cost but, after much prayer and consideration, we received a single, unexpected, major donation for this exact purpose and so the purchase was completed in September 2021. God’s wonderful provision through His faithful servants means we effectively own the building! To God be the glory!

Paul Robinson

Chief Executive

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Our Charitable Objects

- The advancement of the Christian faith;
- The relief of poverty amongst peoples worldwide, who are suffering persecution or marginalisation for their Christian beliefs;
- The furtherance of the charitable work of the Charity by the advancement of such other charitable purposes as the Trustees shall from time to time decide.

The Objects are to be carried out as a proclamation of the beliefs set out in our Statement of Faith, which is available on our website releaseinternational.org.

About Release International

Release International was founded in 1968 as the Christian Mission to the Communist World, inspired by Pastor Richard Wurmbrand, who was imprisoned and tortured by Romanian secret police under brutal Communism. Following the demise of Communism in Eastern Europe and the increase in the persecution of Christians elsewhere in the world, the Ministry broadened its activities and changed its name to Release International.

Our Calling and Mission

Our Calling

Through the ministry of Pastor Richard Wurmbrand and Hebrews 13:3 we have been called by God to **Love and Serve Persecuted Christians**.

Our Mission (five Strategic Purposes)

Our Mission is to love and serve persecuted Christians by:

- Giving them the **‘TOOLS’** they need to live for Jesus Christ.
- Raising their **VOICE**.
- Calling UK Christians into **FELLOWSHIP** with them.
- Learning lessons of Christian **DISCIPLESHIP** with them.
- Maintaining Christian **STEWARDSHIP** to honour them.

Our Taxonomy of Persecution

Around the world, we prayerfully, pastorally, and practically help:

- Families of Christian martyrs
- Prisoners of faith and their families
- Christians suffering oppression and violence
- Christians forced to flee

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How our Activities Deliver Public Benefit

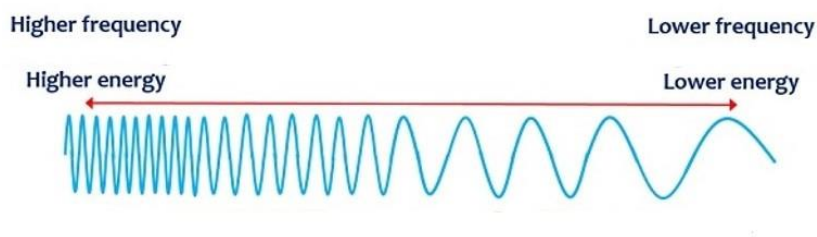
The Trustees confirm they have complied with the duty in Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. Release International seeks to prayerfully, pastorally, and practically help those who are persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ, and to help Christians, churches, faith-based organisations and the general public understand and engage with the reality of persecution. Those who benefit from our activities are Christians globally whose religious freedoms have been curtailed or abused, and any member of the public wanting to be educated about the circumstances of persecuted Christians and/or become involved in supporting and helping them. Our approach stems from our Charitable Objects (page 5). The Trustees consider Release International’s, Calling, Mission, and Operational Strategies fulfil the duty and are confident the Charitable Company’s activities are delivering public benefit.

Our Achievements and Performance

Strategic Purpose: Giving them the ‘TOOLS’ they need to live for Jesus Christ

Release International delivers the international aspects of its ministry by working in-country through local churches or organisations, with whom we have established formal partnerships. Where possible these Partners are indigenous to the area in which our Ministry operates, but sometimes the work is carried out through Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) where they are well connected with the local church. These partnerships form the main connections between Release International and persecuted Christian communities. The very nature of this work makes it difficult to report on it without endangering those being served. However, we can share some stories that demonstrate what we’ve been doing to benefit persecuted Christians overseas.

History has shown that persecution comes and goes around the world. There are a variety of different types of persecutors, who have varied reasons for persecuting. No matter who, when or where, the intensity of persecution in the Christian life could be likened to the radio frequency spectrum (see diagram below): at one end, Christians face a high frequency of terrible persecution, at the other end occurrences are rare and Christians pay little or no cost for following Christ.



Our international work is focused on the high frequency end of the persecution spectrum. Our own Taxonomy of Persecution is used to ensure the Ministry remains in the right place for the foreseeable future. We have identified four clear areas of ministry: Families of Christian martyrs; Prisoners of faith and their families; Christians suffering oppression and violence, and Christians forced to flee. Having ministered to and with Christians at this high end of the persecution spectrum, Release International is able to continue presenting the first-person VOICE of persecution to those at the lower end of the spectrum, with the hope and prayer that they will become engaged with those suffering and be better prepared should they face serious persecution themselves! (2 Tim 3:12).

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The stories below demonstrate current examples from each element of the Taxonomy.

Families of Christian martyrs

Christians in northern and eastern Burkina Faso are suffering because of Islamist attacks. For years, the country's diverse religious groups lived in relative peace. This situation changed in 2016 with the rise of the activity of Islamist militants linked to ISIS and al-Qaeda. It began with occasional attacks in various villages in the northern part of the country, targeting the general population: Christians, Animists, and Muslims alike. Initially, the situation was not so critical and affected only the lives of a small number of Christians from the far north. With time, when the attacks of terrorist groups started to become more intense, some of the radical groups determined to target Christians only. The campaign against Christians was first launched by jihadist groups in April 2019 and has continued ever since. In 2021 Release International engaged with this situation by providing educational support to orphans and children who lost a parent, as well as food packages for those displaced by the violence.

Prisoners of faith and their families

In Eritrea 2021 saw the release of many Christian prisoners of faith; however it also saw large numbers of arrests and the forced return and internment of many believers who were living in refugee camps in Ethiopia, near the Eritrean border, because of the Eritrean army's involvement in the conflict in Tigray. It was encouraging to see many long-term prisoners released, despite some being re-arrested later in the year. However, the needs of these prisoners do not stop after they leave prison.

As well as providing support to prisoners, families of prisoners and ex-prisoners, we have also provided vocational training to some of the ex-prisoners. This support has helped them find jobs or start businesses. For example, one prisoner was 15 when she was arrested and was a secondary school student. She had no chance to finish her school or college education, and now, at the age of 30, after being in prison for 15 years, she needed some support to start work. She took some tailoring classes and we paid for her lessons. Now she is ready to start her own shop and asked us to buy her a sewing machine.

Christians suffering oppression and violence

During and since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, Release International has continued to support the production and distribution of inspirational multi-media resources, including materials for seekers and believers often located in difficult and isolated situations. There is also provision for follow-up of those who respond by phone, text message and email, together with training of believers in ministry and/or leadership.

Many of the Afghan people who contact this service have talked about the peaceful situation in their locations: for them life is going on almost as normal. But there are those who are extremely troubled by the Taliban's takeover. As followers of Jesus they are fearful for their lives, wondering if someone will denounce them to the Taliban. Some are still looking for ways to get out of the country.

Christians forced to flee

Many Christians had to leave their homes because of persecution in 2021, in the Middle East, Asia

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and Africa. The traumatic events in the summer, when coalition forces left Afghanistan and the Taliban sought to retake control of the country, saw another exodus of Christians.

A relatively small number of Christians who fled Syria and parts of Iraq to Kurdistan (in Northern Iraq) during the ISIS invasion have been able to return home. However, those who remain in Kurdistan are in great need of hope for their future. Joseph is one such example: he was 23 when he was forced to flee from Syria. In Kurdistan he looked for work to support himself, but sadly did not find anything because he couldn't speak Kurdish or English. He had his few belongings stolen, leaving him with no money or shelter. He reached a state of extreme despair, but the Lord guided him to our partner's organisation in Erbil, the capital of Kurdistan, where he was provided with food, financial aid and a place to stay until he found a job. During 2021 he enrolled onto our partner's vocational training course to improve his job prospects. Most important, he is still going to our partner for Christian discipleship.

Strategic Purpose: Raising their VOICE

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (Luke 6:38)

In 2021, the UK church and Christians across the country continued to adapt and seek to navigate the 'new normal' in Lockdown due to the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic. This global health crisis impacted the ministry of Release International, as churches remained closed for much of the year and were reluctant to re-open. We learned more about how to develop online events using platforms such as Zoom and to raise the voice of persecuted Christians through our expanding digital social channels. In Spring 2021 we therefore launched our Lockdown Church 2 resources campaign, which followed on from our successful Lockdown Church campaign which was published in April 2020. Our new campaign culminated in a national online worship event for persecuted Christians on Maundy Thursday entitled '*Behold the Lamb*', which attracted over 600 supporters.

We worked again with our friends, Christians in Parliament, for their second online National Prayer Breakfast, which attracted over 2,000 delegates. Our seminar '*Blessed are those who are Persecuted: Hearing Christian Voices around the World*' was very well attended and we invited our partners on the ground to share their witness and testimony. We heard from Christians working in North Korea, Nigeria and Eritrea about persecution there.

Lockdown was finally lifted in England in July 2021, but not in time to rescue the extensive programme of summer Christian events and conferences, which would usually have attracted large support. There were also differing rules and standards across the devolved nations which added to the complex picture. We decided therefore to focus on online events for the remainder of the year, due to the uncertainty and continued cancellations. We were very pleased, however, to be part of the Bangor Worldwide Missionary Convention in Northern Ireland at that time, as one of only a few Christian live events held that year.

Our direct mail channels of engagement continued to remain strong and flourished throughout the year. The *Voice Magazine* performed well and continued to strengthen both readership and income. We also reduced costs and increased our return on investment from 2:1 to 6:1, a significant improvement.

Our appeals also continued to flourish and grow during 2021 with additional support from emails

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and the web alongside our print schedules. We focused particularly on fundraising for projects linked to Christians enduring oppression and violence for Jesus.

We launched our ‘*All for Jesus*’ Study Course which attracted very strong sales from individuals and from churches, selling over 1400 copies. We continued to promote our ‘*Where is Raymond Koh*’ global petition, to raise awareness of the kidnapping and disappearance of a highly respected pastor in Malaysia. The petition attracted over 65,000 signatures worldwide.

Our press and media coverage received unprecedented attention with the crisis in Afghanistan unfolding in August 2021. We were able to share the testimony of our partners who work there and work to help the efforts to relocate Christians in fear of their lives from the Taliban. Social media statistics continued to strengthen with increased followers on all channels.

We were pleased to launch our delayed theatre production in partnership with the Christian *Artless Theatre Company* in September 2021 at Brentwood Theatre in Essex. The book *Imprisoned with Isis* by Petr Jasek was turned into a dynamic one-man play about the life of a prisoner of faith in Sudan. The drama company toured in the South of England in 2021 and will continue to tour into 2022.

Strategic Purpose: Calling UK Christians into FELLOWSHIP with them

This Strategic Purpose is integrated into the activities of raising their VOICE, and so has not been reported separately on the Statement of Financial Activities (page 25).

Due to continued Lockdown into the Summer of 2021, we worked to bring our partners into fellowship with our volunteers and supporters through digital channels. Our two speaker tours held during the year were very well attended and raised online funds through web donations and text giving. From March 8th to 11th we invited our partner, Lazarus Yeghnazar, as our guest speaker for ‘*Christian Persecution in Iran: Strengthening the Church in the Midst of Oppression.*’ And then, from November 1st – 4th, we invited our partner, Jamal Liddawi, as our guest speaker for ‘*Christian Persecution in Iraq: When Faith is Forced to Flee.*’ We held four Zoom events on consecutive nights in the four countries of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and our host was Paul Robinson, our Chief Executive.

We had to cancel our supporter and volunteers’ overseas trip however, for a second year. This was a disappointment to those who had been looking forward to visiting our partners since November 2019. We aim to take selected long-standing and trusted friends and donors out to other countries, to meet with partners and to facilitate fellowship with them. This exchange builds our relational ministry both here and in hostile and restricted countries. Many supporters find these visits fruitful, in terms of understanding persecution at first hand and seeing spiritual resilience being built. We do hope to resume overseas ministry for supporters in 2022.

As part of the Strategic Review held in the summer of 2021, we made the decision to move away from sub-brands of Release International to an integrated model of engagement. Release Women communications were therefore phased out and Release Potential moved to online social media delivery only. Prisoners of Faith was integrated into our international projects programme.

Strategic Purpose: Learning lessons of Christian DISCIPLESHIP with them

This Strategic Purpose is integrated into the activities of raising their VOICE, and so has not been reported separately on the Statement of Financial Activities (page 25).

Growing Christian discipleship in the UK continues to be a strategic communications priority for

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Release International’s Engagement Team. Our calling and mission, to love and serve persecuted Christians, involves a direct call to our supporters and volunteers to journey with us in faith; and with a living and active commitment to Jesus. We have been praying into a new theological strand of work entitled ‘*Persecuted Discipleship*’ to further articulate the evangelistic message of salvation in Christ through faith, and as expressed and lived out by our beneficiaries, persecuted Christians around the world. In 2022 we will continue to explore this fresh perspective. We plan to further develop our publishing portfolio into 2023 to build on this commitment to help Christians to understand mature gospel discipleship through the experience of persecution.

Strategic Purpose: Maintaining Christian STEWARDSHIP to honour them

This Strategic Purpose is integrated into all the activities, and so it is not reported separately on the Statement of Financial Activities (page 25).

During the year as part of implementing the recommendations of the Strategic Review, the Release International staff team was restructured. Some new roles were created, and other roles were changed. Some staff moved to new or changed roles; three staff were made redundant. A recruitment plan for new roles has been implemented. Working arrangements for all staff were reviewed, to determine where each role needed to be located in terms of being home-based, office-based or office-based with some agreed flexibility to work from home. In September, in line with some easing of the COVID-restrictions, we implemented the restructure and the new working arrangements and returned to the office but with a much more ‘hybrid’ approach, with a combination of people working and meeting remotely and in-person. We have sought to provide a safe working environment for staff, at home or in the office. We are committed to professional development and have provided relevant training opportunities for all staff, with a continued focus on developing our line managers. We were very pleased to be able to hold two relational in-person Staff Days for all staff, in September and December, along with other regular opportunities online to meet together for worship, devotions, training and to socialise.

In September 2021 with the help of a substantial donation, Release International purchased the lease of the offices we had been renting. This will ensure that the Ministry no longer has to be concerned about whether the short-term lease will be renewed. In addition, instead of paying rent we will now be receiving rent from part of the building that is sub-let. Substantial progress was made on the IT systems which are used to manage international projects and also the digital media used to raise the VOICE.

Volunteers

As part of the Strategic Review in 2021, we appointed to a new post of Volunteering Ambassador, with the Revd Imtiaz Ashraf taking up the challenge in September. We wanted to increase our staffing capacity and complement the administrative role of the Volunteering Co-ordinator. The new Volunteering Ambassador has already started to meet with volunteers and continued our programme of recruitment and retention of proactive volunteers. Our focus for 2021 was to recruit new volunteer speakers and volunteer fundraisers. We decided that we need to overhaul the volunteer speakers’ course first of all. That work took place and we are looking to 2022 to roll out this new training. We focused particularly on planning the recruitment of new volunteer fundraisers for the Robert de Berry Bike Pilgrimage, which we started to work on in 2020 and continued developing throughout 2021. The Bike pilgrimage will take place from 14th May 2022 and finish on 25th June.

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We were very encouraged that we continued to recruit new volunteers. At the end of 2020 we had a total of 206 volunteers and by the close of 2021 we recorded 235 volunteers. We also had an additional 40 volunteers sign up to support the Bike Pilgrimage.

Praise the Lord for His great blessings and thank you to all our amazing volunteers for all you do.

Fundraising

Our engagement and fundraising plans are approved by Trustees and monitored by the Leadership Team. Most of our income is generated through charitable donations we receive from individuals, churches, trusts and foundations (note 3, page 30). In addition, we work in partnership with several International Christian Association (ICA) Ministries, who contribute to our project work.

Our fundraising activities are conducted by our staff team, drawing on the expertise of external fundraising advisors for selected campaigns. We do not contract out fundraising to third parties. We maintain oversight of all third-party suppliers and have written agreements where necessary with them under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation 2021.

We are committed to the highest standards in fundraising practice. We are regulated by the Fundraising Regulator and abide by the Fundraising Code of Practice which includes guidelines on how to fundraise with people in vulnerable circumstances. In 2021 we handled 11 fundraising complaints (2020: 8) through our Supporters’ Complaints Procedure, which were all resolved. We have a fundraising policy, which gives a clear commitment to protect supporters from unreasonably persistent or obtrusive fundraising practice. We do not undertake donor profiling or sell data to third parties at any time.

Risk Management

The Board recognises that avoiding and mitigating risk is better than simply being covered by insurance. Release International operates a risk management strategy which identifies generic risks and which is reviewed annually each September. Dynamic or current risks are assessed and reported each quarter, together with strategies to mitigate those risks. This approach has proved helpful in focusing attention on areas which require additional monitoring or action.

A major risk to the Ministry is a significant reduction in income. The fact that our income sources are spread over many individuals and churches mitigates the likelihood of a sudden dramatic change, but we monitor this risk closely. Accordingly, our financial and data systems assess income each month to identify any significant variation and to determine if specific action is required.

As for all organisations, there is a significant risk of a malicious attack on our IT systems. This is mitigated by security measures, including proactive testing. Staff are regularly trained and reminded about IT security, particularly phishing attacks.

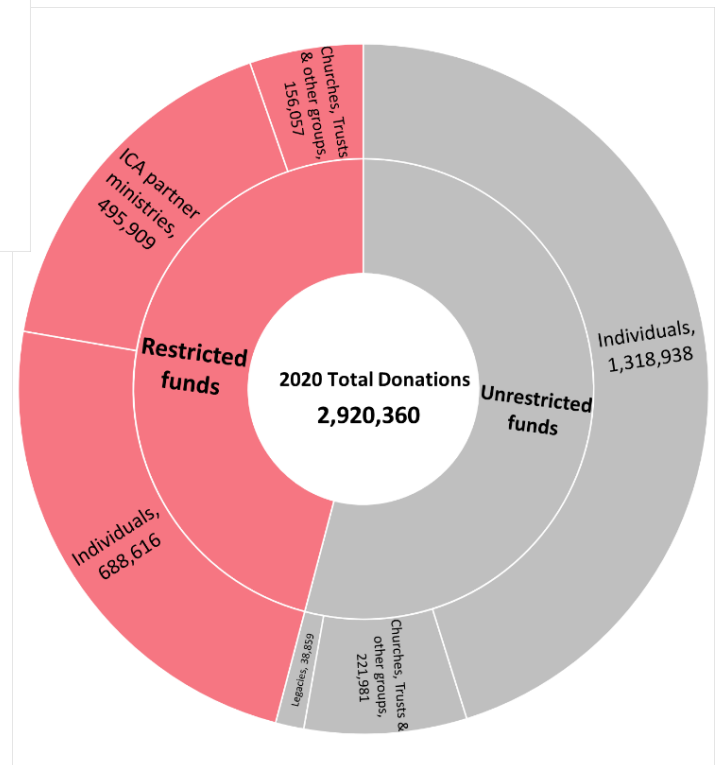
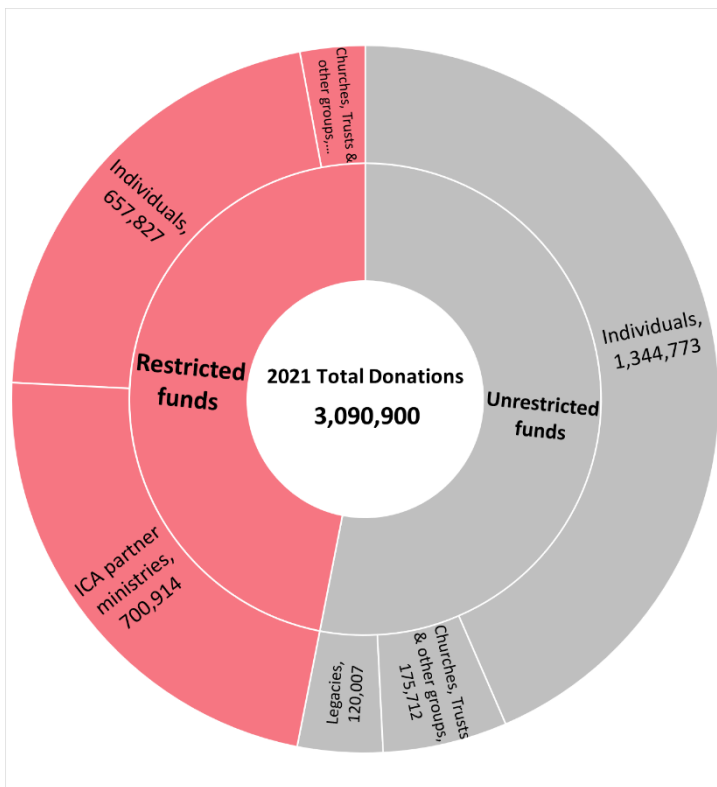
Staff have not been travelling internationally for most of 2021, but due to the nature of the Ministry there is a risk when travelling to visit Partners in contexts where they are being persecuted. This is mitigated by good communication with Partners to assess the current situation, extensive pre-trip briefing and security training.

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Financial Review Year ended 31st December 2021

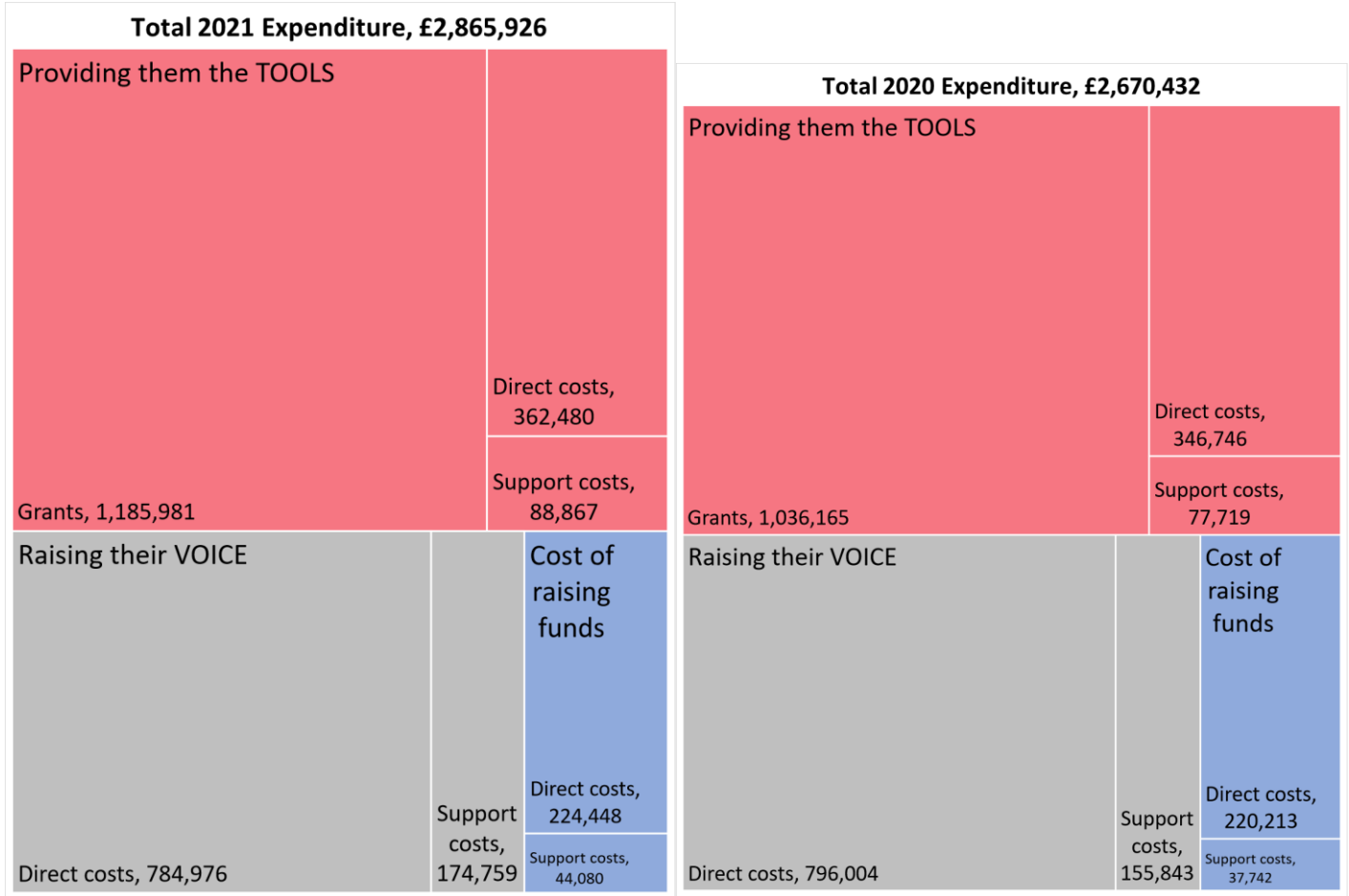
2021 has been a good year financially for the Ministry. We thank God for his provision through our many faithful supporters. The Trustees express their gratitude for their continuing generosity.

The diagrams below show the different sources of donations. Total income increased by 5% to £3,124k (2020: £2,978k). Unrestricted and restricted donations from individuals, churches and trusts increased by 4% and 8% respectively (note 3, 30). Donations from ICA Partner Ministries (see page 15 of the trustee annual report) increased by 40%; the Trustees gratefully acknowledge the receipt of a donation of £178k in September 2021 which helped to enable the Ministry to purchase the long-term head lease of our offices at Priory Buildings in Orpington, see the comments below in the Reserves Policy section (see page 14 of the trustee annual report).



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The diagrams below show the expenditure for the year. Total expenditure increased by 7% to £2,866k (2020: £2,670k). While many activities were curtailed due to the pandemic, the expenditure on grants to Partners increased by 14% to £1,186k (2020: £1,036k). Staff costs increased by 8% to £1,054k (2020: £979k). This included a pay increase of 1.5% and an increase in pension contributions of 1%. The Board have agreed a 3% pay increase from 1st January 2022.



Restricted Funds at the year-end were £687k (2020: £725k), a reduction of £38k. It should be noted that Release International’s overseas projects funds relate to a broad range of international projects, some of which are longer term, multi-year projects. Release International’s policy is to spend balances held in restricted funds as soon as is practicable, once all the grant conditions have been met. For further information on restricted funds see note 17 of the financial statements.

Grants Policy

A significant proportion of the overseas work of the Ministry is carried out through agencies local to areas of persecution that are usually indigenous. Grants are made for specific named purposes to agencies that share our objectives. Receipts and reports of the work carried out are obtained. Staff members usually carry out visits to evaluate potential projects, monitor existing projects, and assess the outcome of completed projects on a sample basis. COVID-19 travel restrictions meant that for most of 2021 evaluation and monitoring was online rather than in person.

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Reserves Policy

After considering the Charity Commission’s guidance CC19 (Charities and Reserves) the Trustees have agreed to maintain a ‘range’ as the basis for the level of General funds, which are ‘free reserves’. At the Board meeting in December 2021, it was agreed to maintain this range at £350k to £450k. This would allow the Ministry to keep operating if donations from individuals and churches dropped by 10 -15% from current levels and income from legacies and ICA partners, which are more unpredictable, dropped 20%. The donation for the building has been excluded from the calculation, due to this being a one-off amount.

The Trustees also agreed at the December 2021 Board meeting to designate £250k as a property reserve which was the value paid for the long lease of the office in September 2021. In addition, the Trustees designated a further £170k for property repairs to the office which a listed building.

The free reserves, after adjusting for fixed assets, as at 31st December 2021 amounted to £591,349, which is 31% above target. The Trustees have agreed a deficit budget for 2022 of £332k which includes additional grant expenditure of £104k from unrestricted funds. This expenditure will reduce free reserves to £412k, which is within target. Trustees deemed this to be a good position and a welcome provision at this time of uncertainty.

Investment Policy

Income is largely received through voluntary donations and cannot be guaranteed; the Ministry has no permanent endowment. The only funds that are not expendable within 12 months of receipt are those held for reserves or money associated with international projects that remain active beyond the year end. The Board has considered this position and seeks to place funds in savings accounts to achieve a balance between accessibility and higher returns. Funds may be invested in accounts with up to 12 months’ notice, but it is not considered prudent at this time to invest income for the longer term. The funds are now spread across five institutions, Barclays, CAF Bank, Charity Bank, Nationwide Building Society and Epworth Investment.

Structure, Governance and Management

Release International is a Christian Ministry, which is a registered Charity, regulated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and also registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. It is constituted as a Company limited by guarantee. The Company operates under its Articles of Association, which were updated in January 2022. Release International was founded in 1968 as the Christian Mission to the Communist World, legally changing its name to Release International in June 2017.

The Board of Trustees normally meets four times each year and administers the Charity through its four committees: International Ministries, UK Engagement, Finance and Resources. The Leadership Team holds executive responsibility for implementing the policies and strategies approved by the Board and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), appointed by the Board, manages the day-to-day operations of the Company.

The Board has an established process for identifying and interviewing potential new Trustees. Vacancies are identified where there are gaps in experience and skills. All prospective Trustees will be practising Christians, who uphold Release International’s Statement of Faith, Ethos Statement, and Trustee Code of Conduct. Nominations arising from this process are considered by the Board as

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a whole and they may subsequently be invited to join the Board. Trustees serve no minimum or maximum terms of service but retire by rotation with the opportunity to stand for re-election.

New Trustees go through an induction and training process to familiarise them with Release International, the persecution sector and their responsibilities as Trustees and Directors under Charity and Company law. New Trustees are referred to the Charity Commission’s guide *The Essential Trustee (CC3)* and they also meet with the Leadership Team and other Trustees. Each year the Chair and the CEO plan areas for trustee training which, with the Board’s agreement, are covered in conjunction with other meetings.

Pay for key management personnel

The key management personnel in charge of directing and running the operations of the Charity comprise the Trustees and Leadership Team, as set out on page 16. All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration from the charitable Company as Trustees (Rev Dr B. Asmelash is paid a retainer as a consultant on Eritrea see note 22, page 38). Expenses reimbursed to Trustees are disclosed in note 8, page 32.

Salaries for all staff, including key management staff, are determined on appointment to post in line with Release International’s agreed 5-level salary banding, and in line with the requirements and responsibilities of the role. All roles are reviewed annually through the appraisal system to ensure that any significant changes which may affect remuneration are addressed. In 2021 the staff team was restructured and as part of this some roles were added, changed and made redundant. Salaries were reviewed as part of this process. The Trustees will periodically carry out a review of all salaries across the Ministry through a benchmarking exercise to ensure that they remain reasonable and competitive.

International Associations

Release International is a member of the International Christian Association (ICA). The purpose of the ICA is to provide a relational link between Christian Ministries around the world whose foundings were inspired by Pastor Richard Wurmbrand. In doing so member Ministries seek to maintain a focus upon the Biblical mandate of Hebrews 13:3, *‘Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow-prisoners, and those who are ill-treated as if you yourselves were suffering’* (NIV).

As a member of the ICA, Release International co-operates in a range of international projects and shares information and resources with other members. An Annual General Meeting is the decision-making forum for ICA business. Release International is a voting delegate.

Through ICA membership, Release International is directly able to support many more persecuted Christians throughout the world than it could in isolation. Currently Release International’s CEO, Paul Robinson, is an elected member of the Executive Committee of the ICA, which helps co-ordinate the activity of the ICA Ministries.

Release International is also a member of The Evangelical Alliance, Middle East Concern, The Religious Liberties Partnership, and Global Connections.

RELEASE INTERNATIONAL – THE TRUSTEES’ ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021

Company Information

The Directors set out below are also the Trustees of the Charity and members of the Company.

Board of Trustees

David Armond CBE QPM Chair of Trustees

Rev Dr Berhane Asmelash

David Bentley

Susan Harrison

Martin Lee (appointed 11 November 2021)

Mary Print

Sarah Shearer FCA

Andrew Wayland

Company Secretary

Imogen Cole (resigned 20 December 2021)

Patrick Lineen (appointed 20 December 2021)

Leadership Team

Chief Executive Officer

Paul Robinson

Director of International Ministries

Christopher Badley

Director of Engagement UK & Ireland

Laura Hayes

Director of Finance

Patrick Lineen (appointed 1 December 2021)

Director of Finance

Imogen (Jenny) Cole (leaving 30 June 2022)

Director of Personnel & Internal Operations

Lynnette Feist

Registered Office

Betchworth House, 57-65 Station Road, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 1DL

For security reasons, as we work with many people under threat of intimidation, violence or detention, our registered address is our auditor’s Surrey office.

Auditors Moore Kingston Smith LLP, Devonshire House, 60 Goswell Road, London, EC1M 7AD

Bankers CAF Bank Limited, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4JQ

Solicitors Edward Connor, 10 The Point, Market Harborough, LE16 7QU

Bates Wells, 10 Queen Street Place, London, EC4R 1BE

RELEASE INTERNATIONAL – THE TRUSTEES’ ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021

Plans for the Future

The primary role of our International Partners is to extend the kingdom of God and His loving care in their communities, whatever the situation they may face. We will continue to support them by listening to their VOICE and providing the ministry ‘TOOLS’ that they ask for.

We have expanded the staff team at the beginning of 2022, making us better equipped for travel in the post-lockdown world. We will visit partners and encourage them in their callings, sharing in fellowship and hearing their VOICE. We will continue to develop and monitor projects with them that ensure the gospel of Christ will be proclaimed in the hardest of places around the world. As funds allow, we hope to continue building the team to support more partners and projects.

Release International is a relationship-based Ministry and it will be vital that there are opportunities to develop and maintain relationships in person with our Partners around the world. This is the core and underpinning reason for our travel and why much of our work is conducted in person.

There are other reasons why travel is an important aspect of this Ministry; for example: it enables us to be an authoritative source for what is happening around the world, speaking out in a timely manner and to produce media, which helps to inform and educate people in the UK about matters relating to the persecution of Christians; it is a crucial part of exercising the due diligence and good governance we need to monitor the projects we support. We also want to create opportunities to enhance the Ministries of our Partners through visits, which they testify are beneficial to them and which encourage them in their work.

Technology will continue to play a significant part in how we will communicate globally. We will be exploring opportunities to further develop digital tools that will benefit our partners and help them to express their VOICE.

Many Christians in today’s world are still being forced to flee from their homes, especially in Africa and the Middle East. There are many Christians who have been forced into hiding because of their faith and are unable to move because of the pandemic lockdown. We pray that in 2022 they will be able to find new places to live out their lives for Christ and we will continue to work to that end as well.

Other Christians face imprisonment, an ongoing trend in Eritrea and other places such as Iran and North Korea. We pray on for imprisoned believers and their families, many who remain in need of our practical support.

Christians in the Sahel region of Africa are set to face more violence and martyrdom at the hands of several Islamist militant groups such as Boko Haram and others aligned to Al-Qaeda and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara. Release International will be expanding its work in this area to help the Church, especially in Burkina Faso. We will continue to support the church in Nigeria, which saw attacks continue throughout 2021. Some 4,000 Christians lost their lives, more than 50 villages were destroyed and nearly 5,000 people were displaced, according to our partners on the ground. These attacks could escalate in 2022, as political campaigning gets underway ahead of the 2023 general election. Sadly, this pattern of violence is being replicated in other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa too.

RELEASE INTERNATIONAL – THE TRUSTEES’ ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021

Release International remains committed to developing the bonds of fellowship we have enjoyed with our persecuted brothers and sisters for so long, delivering over 60 projects in more than 30 countries. As persecution in these countries continues, we will go on being creative and flexible to ensure we provide the fellowship and ‘TOOLS’ persecuted believers ask for and need.

As we move into 2022, we are deeply encouraged and thankful to God for all the blessings He has bestowed upon us during the last year, especially as we have emerged into the New Year with most pandemic restrictions ending. We are still mindful that so many Christian churches and supporters remain understandably careful and wary of returning to events in person, so as we go to print with our Annual Report, we continue to pray for wisdom and guidance, especially for making decisions about choosing live or online engagements. We are also deeply aware of the growing global concern for our friends in Ukraine, as the Russian military machine has invaded a peaceful sovereign country, causing death and destruction there. We have already been in contact with our partners to support the church through prayers and financial aid, principally via our friends at Voice of the Martyrs Poland, who are close to the front line. Thousands of people have fled into neighbouring countries, and we continue to pray for them and for all our persecuted Christian brothers and sisters, who are forced to flee from or within many restricted and hostile countries.

We held the first of our hybrid speaker tours in March, engaging with our churches around the country and running online national events on Zoom. We will need to evaluate this plan carefully to decide on delivery planned for October. We are pleased to report that we are engaging again with Christian conferences and events, with news of live event bookings at Spring Harvest, New Wine United and Keswick. The last two years have seen most Christian events cancelled and moving to online delivery. However, this year the mood seems to be moving us back to live events once more. This will really help Release International teams and volunteers get out to meet new contacts and share the ministry face to face.

Our programme of engagement activity is always carefully planned and each month we have a clear focus for all our multi-channel activity. We will promote *Voice* magazine over four quarterly editions in March, June, September and December. We plan to look at the magazine in the Summer and review its content, style and delivery. We will be in touch with our supporters and volunteers to feedback and share with us about how we might improve and extend our readership. Our dedicated ministry testimony letters to supporters also go out around four times per year.

Key to our UK church and supporter engagement work for this year are the two major volunteer-led events that we are involved with: The *Robert de Berry Bike Pilgrimage* and the Artless Theatre Company Tour – *Imprisoned with Isis*. The *Bike Pilgrimage* is a major event with cyclists attempting to ride over 900 miles from North Foreland Point Lighthouse in Kent to Lands’ End in Cornwall and back. There will be over 40 church worship events en route and more than 50 cycling stages. We pray for retired vicar Robert and his team of volunteer ‘bike pilgrims’ as they continue to practice for this fantastic challenge. The play *Imprisoned with Isis* is also being performed throughout 2022 across the UK and will continue to tour into 2023, reaching out to over 100 churches. This wonderful drama, based on the life story of prisoner of faith Petr Jasek, has already received very encouraging reviews. Both events will help us share our calling and mission with current and new Christians.

All out for God online and the *Day of the Christian Martyr* are planned again for May and June respectively. For the *Day of the Christian Martyr* for 2022 we are hosting our dear friend Dr Susannah, who will be undertaking a round of speaking engagements in the Midlands and the North

RELEASE INTERNATIONAL – THE TRUSTEES’ ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021

of England region to update our supporters there on the situation in Burkina Faso. We were delighted to welcome a new Engagement Manager for this region in March. Dr Susannah will also be working alongside us at the upcoming live National Parliamentary Prayer breakfast in Westminster Hall London where we will host a seminar for the first time in three years.

As we go into November, we will again be planning for the *International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church*. (IDOP) This year we will focus on the plight of Christians who have had to flee for their lives. We will cover many of the world’s most cruel and unjust places for Christians to witness, including Nigeria, China, North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia and many more.

**RELEASE INTERNATIONAL – THE TRUSTEES’ ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021**

Trustees’ Responsibilities in Relation to the Financial Statements

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees’ Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. The accounts in this report have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Company law requires the Trustees to ensure financial statements are prepared for each financial year. Under that law, the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law, the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company and of the income and expenditure of the Company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Comply with applicable UK Accounting Standards. These have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable Company will continue its operations.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which are sufficient to show and explain the Company’s transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable Company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees are committed to compliance with the *Charity Governance Code*. In March 2021, the Trustees attended a seminar which particularly focused on the updates to the *Governance Code* published in December 2020.

So far as the Trustees are aware, there is no relevant information that the Company’s auditors are not aware of, and each Trustee has taken all the steps necessary to ensure they are aware of any relevant information, and to establish that the Company’s auditors are aware of the information.

Auditors

A resolution to re-appoint Moore Kingston Smith LLP as the independent auditors to the charitable Company was passed at the AGM in June 2021.

The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities SORP (FRS 102).

This report was approved by the Board on 23 June 2022 and signed on its behalf by,



David Armond CBE QPM
Chair of Trustees

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO TRUSTEES AND MEMBERS OF RELEASE INTERNATIONAL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021

Independent Auditor's Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Release International ('the company' for the year ended 31 December 2021 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 December 2021 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended), regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs(UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the audit of financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Corporation in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO TRUSTEES AND MEMBERS OF RELEASE INTERNATIONAL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021

this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' annual report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the trustees' annual report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' annual report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the Charities Act 2011 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; [or]
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.[or]
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies exemption in preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and from preparing a Strategic Report.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 20, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under Section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Companies Act 2006 and Section 151 of the Charities Act 2011 and report to you in accordance with regulations made under those Acts.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO TRUSTEES AND MEMBERS OF RELEASE INTERNATIONAL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK) we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purposes of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

The objectives of our audit in respect of fraud, are; to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud; to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud, through designing and implementing appropriate responses to those assessed risks; and to respond appropriately to instances of fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both management and those charged with governance of the charitable company.

Our approach was as follows:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements applicable to the company and considered that the most significant are the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended), regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO TRUSTEES AND MEMBERS OF RELEASE INTERNATIONAL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021

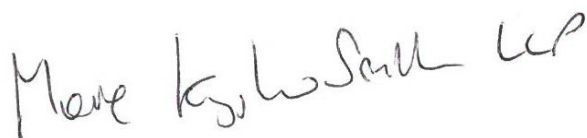
(Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended), the Charities Act 2011, the Charity SORP, and UK financial reporting standards as issued by the Financial Reporting Council and UK taxation legislation.

- We obtained an understanding of how the charitable company complies with these requirements by discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Based on this understanding, we designed specific appropriate audit procedures to identify instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. This included making enquiries of management and those charged with governance and obtaining additional corroborative evidence as required.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in the financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006; and to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, and in respect of the consolidated financial statements, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 8 of the Charities Act 2011. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members and trustees those matters which we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to any party other than the charitable company, the charitable company's members, as a body, and the charity's trustees, as a body for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinion we have formed.



Andrew Stickland (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Moore Kingston Smith LLP, Statutory Auditor

Devonshire House
60 Goswell Road
London
EC1M 7AD

Date: July 2022

Moore Kingston Smith LLP is eligible to act as auditor in terms of Section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

**RELEASE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021**

Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 31st December 2021

(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2021 Total Funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2020 Total Funds
	Notes	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income from							
Donations and legacies	3	1,640,492	1,450,408	3,090,900	1,579,778	1,340,582	2,920,360
Charitable activities							
Literature and Events		19,633	248	19,881	23,737	611	24,348
Interest receivable		1,352	-	1,352	3,199	-	3,199
Other		11,752		11,752	30,279	-	30,279
Total income		1,673,229	1,450,656	3,123,885	1,636,993	1,341,193	2,978,186
Expenditure on							
Costs of raising funds	4						
Fundraising		234,948	33,579	268,527	222,658	35,297	257,955
Charitable activities	4						
Providing them the TOOLS		388,303	1,249,025	1,637,328	370,154	1,090,477	1,460,631
Raising their VOICE		931,478	28,258	959,736	919,395	32,452	951,847
Total expenditure		1,554,729	1,310,862	2,865,591	1,512,207	1,158,226	2,670,433
Net income/ (expenditure)		118,500	139,794	258,294	124,786	182,967	307,753
Transfers		177,801	(177,801)	-	-	-	-
Net income/ (expenditure) after transfers		296,301	(38,007)	258,294	124,786	182,967	307,753
Total funds brought forward at 1 January 2021	16&17	926,383	724,836	1,651,219	801,597	541,869	1,343,466
Total funds carried forward at 31 December 2021	16&17	1,222,684	686,829	1,909,513	926,383	724,836	1,651,219

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

**RELEASE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021**

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2021

For Release International - Company Number 01506576

	Notes	2021		2020	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	11		257,185		28,045
Intangible Assets	11		4,150		2,537
Current assets					
Debtors	12	72,965		91,690	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>1,655,054</u>		<u>1,613,543</u>	
		1,728,019		1,705,233	
Creditors – Amounts falling due within one year	13	<u>(79,841)</u>		<u>(84,596)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>1,648,178</u>		<u>1,620,637</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>1,909,513</u>		<u>1,651,219</u>
Reserves					
Unrestricted funds					
General Fund	16		602,684		726,383
Designated Fund	16		620,000		200,000
Restricted funds	17		686,829		724,836
Total funds			<u>1,909,513</u>		<u>1,651,219</u>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and with FRS102.

The notes on pages 28 to 38 form part of these accounts.

Approved by the Board on 23 June 2022 and signed on its behalf by:



David Armond CBE QPM

Chair of Trustees

**RELEASE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021**

Statement of Cashflows for year ended 31st December 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
Net cash used in operating activities	20	296,119	683,512
Cashflows from Investing Activities			
Purchase of property plant and equipment		(251,760)	-
Purchase of intangible fixed assets		(4,200)	-
Proceeds from sale of fixed assets		-	4,801
Interest received		1,352	3,199
Net cash used by investing activities		<u>(254,608)</u>	<u>8,000</u>
Net increase/ (decrease) in cash	10	<u>41,511</u>	<u>691,512</u>
Cash at the beginning of the year		<u>1,613,543</u>	<u>922,031</u>
Cash at the end of the year		<u>1,655,054</u>	<u>1,613,543</u>

Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2021 £	2020 £
Net Income / (Expenditure)	258,294	307,753
Adjusted for		
Depreciation charge	15,383	16,246
Amortisation charge	2,587	3,286
(Profit)/Loss on disposal of assets	7,237	(4,801)
Interest from deposits	(1,352)	(3,199)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	18,725	367,812
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(4,755)	(3,585)
Net cash used in operating activities	<u>296,119</u>	<u>683,512</u>

RELEASE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Accounting Policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) - Charities SORP (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

1.1 Going Concern

The Trustees have assessed whether the use of going concern is appropriate and made this assessment for a period of at least one year from the date of the approval of these financial statements. The Trustees have given due consideration to the current risks facing the Ministry. Income increased in 2021 due to the loyal donor base and increased legacy and ICA donations. The Ministry's reserves were above the planned level (page 14). Income estimates for 2022 and 2023 are cautious as with the continued cancellation of many events in 2021 there has been a reduction in the number of new donors, which is being actively addressed. Having reviewed forecasts prepared by management the Trustees are confident that the Ministry will continue to meet its obligations as they fall due and that therefore the going concern basis continues to be appropriate.

1.2 Basis of Accounting

Release International Limited meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

1.3 Fund Accounting

Funds held are either

- Unrestricted general funds which are funds that can be used within the charitable objectives at the Trustees' discretion. Some of these funds have been designated by the Trustees for specific purposes.
- Restricted funds which are funds that can only be used for specified purposes. The restriction may be imposed by the donor or the terms under which the funds were raised.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the Charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably.

Donations, interest and rent are recognised in the accounts on a received basis. For donations made under the gift aid scheme, the gift aid is recognised in the year in which the gift is received. Gifts in kind are valued at their value to the Charitable Company.

For legacies, entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the Charity is aware that probate has been granted, the estate has been finalised and notification has been made by the executor(s) that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate. Receipt of a legacy, in whole or in part, is only considered probable when the amount can be measured reliably, and the Charity has been notified of the executor's intention to make a distribution.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds are costs incurred in encouraging voluntary contributions to the Charitable Company and their associated support costs.
- Expenditure on charitable activities are costs directly relating to the objects of the Charitable Company and include grants made, direct costs incurred, and an apportionment of support costs as shown in note 7.

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Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the Charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the Charity's activities. The Charity initially identifies the costs of its support functions. It then identifies those costs which relate to the governance function. Having identified its governance costs, the remaining support costs together with the governance costs are apportioned between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities pro rata to staff full time equivalents.

Grants payable are payments made to third parties in the furtherance of the charitable objectives of the Charitable Company. The grants are included in the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which the awards are made. Grants where the beneficiary has not been informed or has to meet certain conditions before the grant is released are not accrued but are noted as financial commitments.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

1.6 Tangible Fixed Assets

Fixed assets are all used for charitable purposes and are shown at cost less depreciation. The threshold at which purchases are not normally capitalised is £1,000. Depreciation on assets is calculated to write off the cost over their estimated economic useful lives. Assets are depreciated annually on a straight-line basis over 4 years for computer equipment, 5 years for office equipment and the remainder of the lease for leasehold improvements. The leasehold property is amortised monthly over the remainder of the lease.

1.7 Intangible Fixed Assets

Intangible assets are the development costs for specific IT projects which are capitalised at cost, provided it is likely to bring future economic benefit to the Charity. If the criteria for recognition as assets are not met, the expense is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which it is incurred. Capitalised IT costs include all direct and indirect costs that are directly attributable to the development process. The costs are amortised using the straight-line method over 4 years being their estimated useful lives.

1.8 Foreign Currencies

Income and expenditure in foreign currencies are converted into sterling at the rates of exchange ruling on the date of transaction. Amounts held at the balance sheet date are converted at the rates prevailing at the balance sheet date.

1.9 Pension Costs

The Charity operates a defined contribution scheme for the benefit of its employees which is funded by contributions from the employee and employer contributions payable to scheme and employees' personal pension plans are charged in the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate. Further details of the scheme are given in note 15.

1.10 Operating Leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease.

1.11 Financial Instruments

The Charitable Company only has basic financial instruments measured at amortised cost, with no financial instruments classified as 'other' or basic instruments measured at fair value.

2. Critical Estimates

In the view of the Trustees applying the accounting policies adopted, no judgements were required apart from those listed below.

- the allocation of support costs
- useful economic lives of intangible fixed assets
- depreciation rates of fixed assets
- estimation of legacy accrual

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3. Donations and Gifts

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2021 Total funds £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2020 Total funds £
Individuals	1,344,773	657,827	2,002,600	1,318,938	688,616	2,007,554
Churches & other groups	151,706	86,557	238,263	153,991	141,897	295,888
Trusts	24,006	5,110	29,116	62,690	14,160	76,850
ICA partner ministries	-	700,914	700,914	5,300	495,909	501,209
Legacies	120,007	-	120,007	38,859	-	38,859
	1,640,492	1,450,408	3,090,900	1,579,778	1,340,582	2,920,360

There were no gifts in kind in 2021 (2020: £5,300 books donated by an ICA Partner Ministry).

4. Expenditure

	Grants £ (see note 5)	Direct costs £ (see note 6)	Support costs £ (see note 7)	2021 Total £
Costs of raising funds				
Fundraising	-	224,448	44,080	268,527
Charitable activities				
Providing them the TOOLS	1,185,981	362,480	88,867	1,637,328
Raising their VOICE	-	784,976	174,759	959,736
	1,185,981	1,371,904	307,706	2,865,591

	Grants £ (see note 5)	Direct costs £ (see note 6)	Support costs £ (see note 7)	2020 Total £
Costs of raising funds				
Fundraising	-	220,213	37,742	257,955
Charitable activities				
Providing them the TOOLS	1,036,165	346,746	77,720	1,460,631
Raising their VOICE	-	796,004	155,843	951,847
	1,036,165	1,362,963	271,305	2,670,433

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5. Grants made

Grant payments made were for the charitable purposes of Release International. They provided support for:

- Families of Christian martyrs
- Prisoners of faith and their families
- Christians suffering oppression and violence
- Christians forced to flee

The Ministry has taken advantage of the exemption available in the Charity SORP not to disclose specific information in relation to grant making, on the grounds that the disclosure could result in serious prejudice to the grant maker and/or the recipient institution, individuals working for the recipient institution or individuals.

Included in the table below were 5 grants to individuals in South, South East Asia and Other totalling £13,420 (2020: 5 grants South and South East Asia totalling £14,986).

No support costs have been allocated to the total amount of the grants.

	Total 2021		Total 2020	
	No.	£	No.	£
Central Asia	8	54,330	5	38,558
Middle East/Gulf	17	220,680	33	316,863
North East Africa	25	425,201	24	357,357
West Africa	17	125,635	16	113,434
South Asia	40	219,499	39	120,222
South East Asia	23	139,636	22	88,973
Other	1	1,000	1	758
	131	1,185,981	140	1,036,165

6. Direct costs

	2021			2020		
	Staff costs*	Other costs	Total costs	Staff costs*	Other costs	Total costs
*See note 8	£	£	£	£	£	£
Costs of raising funds						
Fundraising	108,390	116,058	224,448	100,658	119,555	220,213
Charitable activities						
Providing them the TOOLS	226,626	135,854	362,480	211,018	135,728	346,746
Raising their VOICE	522,589	262,387	784,976	486,875	309,129	796,004
	857,605	514,299	1,371,904	798,550	564,413	1,362,963

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7. Support costs

*See note 8	2021			2020		
	Staff costs*	Other costs	Total costs	Staff costs*	Other costs	Total costs
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Costs of raising funds						
Fundraising	28,076	16,004	44,080	25,063	12,679	37,742
Charitable activities						
Providing them the TOOLS	56,602	32,265	88,867	51,611	26,108	77,719
Raising their VOICE	111,308	63,451	174,759	103,492	52,352	155,844
	<u>195,986</u>	<u>111,720</u>	<u>307,706</u>	<u>180,166</u>	<u>91,139</u>	<u>271,305</u>

8. Staff costs

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	838,864	808,386
Social security costs	79,758	76,176
Pension costs	96,054	85,025
Redundancy	29,246	-
Group Life policy	9,668	9,130
	<u>1,053,590</u>	<u>978,716</u>

Total split as follows:

	2021			2020		
	Direct	Support	Total staff costs	Direct	Support	Total staff costs
	(note 6)	(note 7)		(note 6)	(note 7)	
Costs of raising funds	108,390	28,076	136,465	100,658	25,063	125,721
Charitable activities						
Providing them the TOOLS	226,626	56,602	283,227	211,018	51,611	262,629
Raising their VOICE	522,589	111,308	633,898	486,875	103,492	590,366
	<u>857,605</u>	<u>195,986</u>	<u>1,053,590</u>	<u>798,550</u>	<u>180,166</u>	<u>978,716</u>

The Trustees receive no remuneration. During 2021 and 2020 no Trustee received out of pocket expenses. During the year donations from 5 Trustees (2020: 5) were received totalling £5,312 (2020: £5,656)

The remuneration and benefits received by key management personnel in the year were £319k (2020: £310k). During the year there was 1 employee whose remuneration was in the bracket £60,000 - £69,999. (2020: 1).

At 31st December 2021, the Charitable Company included in creditors accrued holiday pay not taken of £17k (2020: £21k).

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The average number of employees was:	2021	2020
Management	5	5
Administration and support	5	4
Overseas project management and UK information and education	18	17
	28	26

9. Net Income/Expenditure for the Year

The net income/ expenditure for the year is stated after charging:

		2021	2020
		£	£
Depreciation of assets	(see note 11)	17,970	19,532
Auditors' remuneration		14,019	14,587
Hire of equipment		6,674	3,584

10. Analysis of cash, cash equivalents and net debt

2021	As at 1 Jan 2021	Cash flows	Non cash movements	As at 31 Dec 2021
Cash at bank	522,683	142,495	-	665,178
Cash on deposit	1,090,860	(100,985)	-	989,875
Net Cash	1,613,543	41,511	-	1,655,054

2020	As at 1 Jan 2020	Cash flows	Non cash movements	As at 31 Dec 2020
Cash at bank	298,970	223,713	-	522,683
Cash on deposit	623,061	467,799	-	1,090,860
Net cash	922,031	691,512	-	1,613,543

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12. Debtors

	2021	2020
	£	£
Due within one year		
Other debtors	27,954	60,829
Prepayments	29,271	30,361
Accrued legacies	15,740	500
	<u>72,965</u>	<u>91,690</u>

13. Creditors – Amounts Falling Due Within One Year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade creditors	24,912	37,406
Other creditors	19,201	13,662
Accruals	35,728	33,527
	<u>79,841</u>	<u>84,596</u>

14. Members' Liability

The Charitable Company is limited by guarantee and each of the members is bound to contribute a sum not exceeding £10 in certain circumstances as set out in clause 7 of the Articles of Association.

15. Pension Commitments

The Charitable Company participates in the Global Connections pension scheme which is a defined contribution pension scheme. The assets are held separately from those of the Charitable Company in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge representing contributions payable by the Charitable Company to the scheme and to other personal pension schemes amounted to between 7% or 10% of gross salaries depending on whether the staff member also contributes (2020: 7% or 9%). At 31st December 2021 there were no significant contributions outstanding payable to the scheme. The Charitable Company's pension arrangements comply with its statutory obligations in respect of auto-enrolment.

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16. Unrestricted Funds

	Balance 01-Jan-21	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance 31-Dec-21
	£	£	£	£	£
General Reserve Fund	726,383	1,608,729	(1,490,229)	(242,199)	602,684
Designated Fund - Grant Reponse Fund	200,000	64,500	(64,500)	-	200,000
Designated Fund - Property reserve	-	-	-	250,000	250,000
Designated Fund - Property repairs	-	-	-	170,000	170,000
	<u>926,383</u>	<u>1,673,229</u>	<u>(1,554,729)</u>	<u>177,801</u>	<u>1,222,684</u>
	Balance 01-Jan-20	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance 31-Dec-20
	£	£	£	£	£
General Reserve Fund	801,597	1,636,993	(1,512,207)	(200,000)	726,383
Designated Fund - Grant Reponse Fund	-	-	-	200,000	200,000
	<u>801,597</u>	<u>1,636,993</u>	<u>(1,512,207)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>926,383</u>

The reserve policy is explained on page 14 of the trustee report. The Grant Response Fund allows Release International to be more agile and give grants to overseas partners, usually funded by restricted gifts in anticipation of funds being received later in the year. The property fund relates to the office building purchased in September 2021.

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17. Restricted Funds

These are donations received for specific purposes as requested by the donors. The first four funds are for the taxonomy of persecution (page 5 of the trustee report) The other funds are many and varied and where appropriate have been grouped into geographical areas. They are all within our objectives as described on page 5.

	Balance 01-Jan-21	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balance 31-Dec-21
	£	£	£	£	£
Families of Christian martyrs	51,208	143,198	(101,298)	-	93,108
Prisoners of faith and their families	78,369	74,031	(106,499)	-	45,901
Christians forced to flee	38,629	90,165	(126,771)	-	2,023
Christians suffering oppression and violence	26,981	203,584	(151,863)	-	78,702
Central Asia	7,193	18,233	(23,528)	-	1,898
Middle East/Gulf	25,602	119,340	(132,656)	-	12,286
North East Africa	329,774	383,489	(384,151)	-	329,112
West Africa	28,321	55,420	(70,543)	-	13,198
South Asia	65,798	91,152	(110,454)	-	46,496
South East Asia	34,166	23,735	(39,718)	-	18,183
Purchase of long lease of office building	-	177,801		(177,801)	-
Personal Support	196	43,354	(43,355)	-	196
Generic funds and other	38,599	27,154	(20,027)		45,726
	<u>724,836</u>	<u>1,450,656</u>	<u>(1,310,862)</u>	<u>(177,801)</u>	<u>686,829</u>
	£	£	£	£	£
Families of Christian martyrs	29,316	104,005	(82,112)	51,208	
Prisoners of faith and their families	42,079	169,843	(133,553)	78,369	
Christians suffering oppression and violence	7,020	77,568	(57,607)	26,981	
Christians forced to flee	-	159,942	(121,312)	38,629	
Central Asia	1,935	12,526	(7,268)	7,193	
Middle East/Gulf	35,171	158,899	(168,468)	25,602	
North and East Africa	283,355	365,034	(318,616)	329,774	
West Africa	44,081	42,842	(58,603)	28,321	
South Asia	44,484	92,542	(71,228)	65,798	
South East Asia	19,540	20,694	(6,069)	34,166	
Personal Support	-	50,221	(50,025)	196	
Generic funds and other	34,888	87,074	(83,364)	38,599	
	<u>541,869</u>	<u>1,341,193</u>	<u>(1,158,226)</u>	<u>724,836</u>	

The transfer in 2021 relates to a donation for the purchase of the office building where it was agreed with the donor that once the building had been purchased the restriction on the donation was fulfilled.

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18. Analysis of Net Assets Between Funds

2021	Fixed assets	Cash	Net Current assets	Totals
	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds	-	678,742	8,088	686,830
Unrestricted funds	261,335	976,312	(14,964)	1,222,684
	<u>261,335</u>	<u>1,655,054</u>	<u>(6,876)</u>	<u>1,909,514</u>

2020	Fixed assets	Cash	Net Current assets	Totals
	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds	-	708,173	16,663	724,836
Unrestricted funds	30,582	905,369	(9,568)	926,383
	<u>30,582</u>	<u>1,613,543</u>	<u>7,094</u>	<u>1,651,219</u>

19. Other Financial Commitments

	2021		2020	
	Office Equipment	Premises Rental	Office Equipment	Premises Rental
	£	£	£	£
Operating Leases				
Due under 1 year	6,674	225	7,060	28,000
Due between 2 to 5 years	18,353	900	26,475	61,833
Due after more than 5 years	-	15,007	-	-
	<u>25,027</u>	<u>16,132</u>	<u>33,535</u>	<u>89,833</u>

The premises rental is ground rent for the leasehold property.

21. Taxation

As a Charity Release International benefits from exemptions on income and gains falling within Sections 466-493 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the extent they are derived from charitable activities.

22. Related party transactions

Revd Dr Berhane Asmelash, who is a Trustee, receives no remuneration for his role as Trustee. He was paid as a consultant on Eritrea £7,200 (2020: £7,050)

23. Capital Commitments

There were no capital commitments not provided for in the financial statements (2020: none).