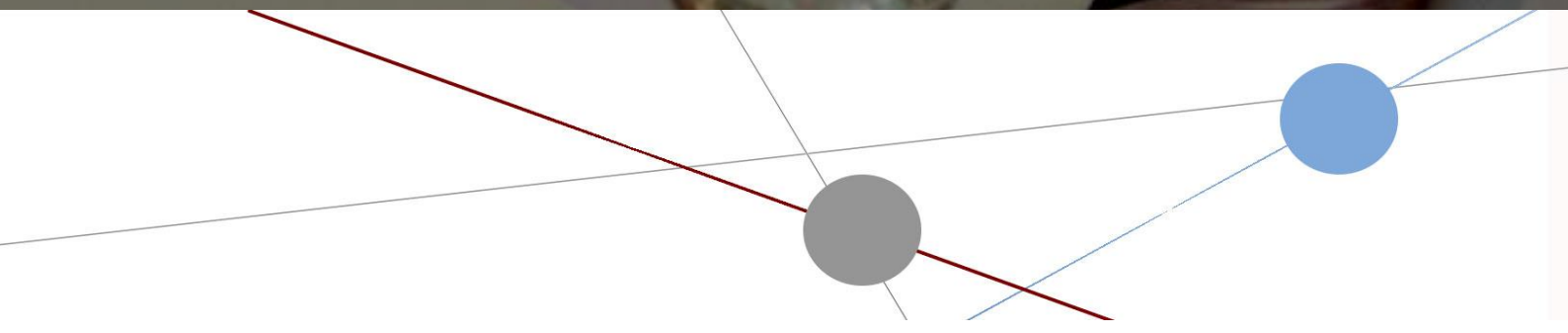


A dimly lit photograph of three people sitting around a table, looking at documents. The image is dark and serves as a background for the text.

CiFAR

Civil Forum for
Asset Recovery e.V.

Annual Report 2016



CiFAR was founded in 2015 to support civil society to campaign across borders to prevent public asset theft and for accountable and transparent asset recovery. Through education, our mission is to amplify as the voice for civil society worldwide on stolen assets, to support civil society across the globe to be a strong and effective actor on stolen assets and to close the gap missing in global civil society asset recovery work.

CIVIL FORUM FOR ASSET RECOVERY e.V.

www.cifar.eu

January 2017

Founded in 2015, the Civil Forum for Asset Recovery is a global civil society organisation fighting the theft of state assets. We provide civil society with the skills, knowledge and network to advocate, inform, campaign and investigate cases where public and private officials are complicit in the illicit removal of public goods to private accounts and private ownership across national borders. We also ensure that civil society can be an active voice in the transparent and accountable return of confiscated stolen assets and that civil society acts together globally against the systems that allow public assets to be stolen by those in power.

2016 was a successful, first year of work for CiFAR and represented a promising start for the years to come. We undertook work that crossed our strategic priorities and helped us to establish our work, our network and our priorities for the years to come.

Highlights of our work are listed in the following report and include:

- Developing research pinpointing the issues that affect asset recovery in Germany
- Supporting the work of civil society engaged in asset recovery through the United Nations Convention Against Corruption
- Holding an exhibition and series of talks on stolen assets and the common links between corruption and organised crime
- Participating in conferences and events to develop our network of civil society against the theft of public assets.

Moving from 2016 to 2017, we have a lot more to do. The year ahead looks to be one of both opportunities – with the first Global Forum on Asset Recovery due to be held in July in Washington D.C. and an ever growing number of countries putting in place measures to try to prevent the theft of state assets – and one of challenge, with a rise in world leaders who look increasingly less likely to prioritise the fight against corruption and difficulties arising in ongoing returns processes.

It is at times like this that independent, values-driven civil society is needed more than ever to transform the world into the place we want it to be.

We remain committed to the fight against transnational corruption and for the transparent and accountable return of stolen assets and we invite you to join us if you feel the same.

Jackson Oldfield



Laila Martin



Agatino Camarda



EMPOWERING CIVIL SOCIETY

Hunting the Stolen Billions

Results area 1: Developing the expertise, knowledge and skills of non-state actors to play an effective role in the asset recovery process

Between the 8th and 11th of December 2016 in Berlin CiFAR and Mafia? Nein Danke! through the support of Engagement Global GmbH on behalf of the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, put together the exhibition “Hunting the Stolen Billions” and held a series of talks on public asset theft, organised crime, money laundering, tax havens and what Germany and the international community can do.

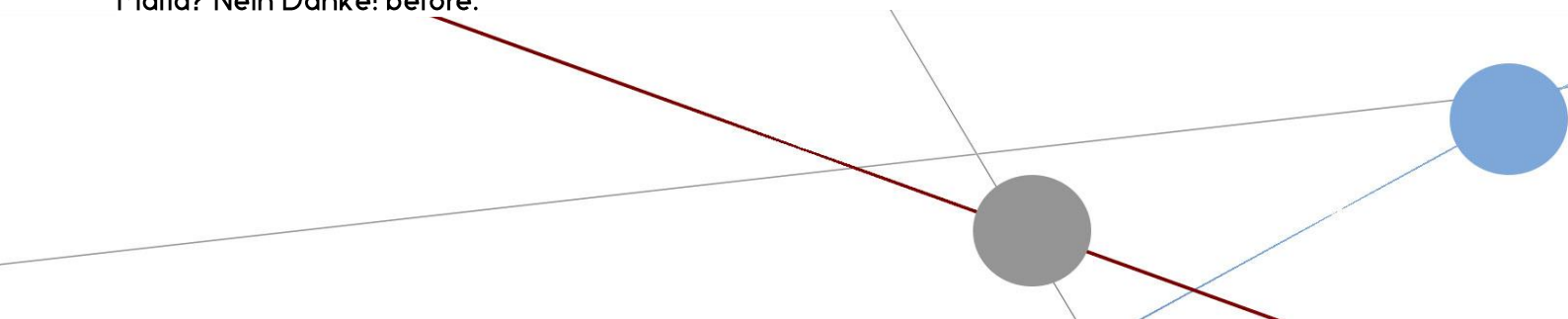
We did this to try to engage new audiences in the topics we are passionate about. Too often these topics are seen as technical, complex and often best left to specialists.



30 Placards, 9 Photos and 12 videos formed our exhibition with the aim to explain in a clear and straightforward manner the means used to hide illegally acquired wealth. We also wanted to show some examples of what happens if governments don't act, and to make suggestions as to what politicians and people can do to change the current system.

The talks on 9th and 10th December drew and expanded on this; experts from our organisations, Tax Justice Network and Transparency International discussed money laundering, tax havens and the international response in more detail and the audience was encouraged to ask questions and debate how change could come on these topics.

By the end of the four days, over 110 people had visited the exhibition, with many of those coming back or staying for the talks. A large number of those were people unknown to both CiFAR and Mafia? Nein Danke! before.



Research has been a cornerstone of our work in 2016 and will continue to be so in the coming year.

We published two, substantive research reports in 2016 that were designed to inform and assist civil society to work on asset recovery.

“Overview of Asset recovery in Germany” was a paper we wrote with Transparency International and the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre and was designed to provide a simple, quick overview of asset recovery legislation and efforts in Germany. We plan to continue this format for other countries in the near future.

Results area 1: Developing the expertise, knowledge and skills of non-state actors to play an effective role in the asset recovery process



Anti-Corruption Summit: Public Asset Theft and Recovery Commitments is a tool developed to allow civil society groups to track their country's progress in meeting the commitments made at the 2016 Anti-Corruption Summit.



RESEARCH

Global institutions, international conferences and regional summits are some of the places where the most important, current issues are discussed and where policies that affect all our lives are made. Unfortunately, when it comes to stolen assets, many of these forums do not automatically include civil society presence. This is true of the UNCAC Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery and has been true of some of the regional asset recovery forums.

While it is understandable that, under certain circumstances and in specific cases, governments may need bilateral discussions to be away from public scrutiny, for example when discussing the specifics of an on-going criminal investigation, civil society presence is needed at all other times to ensure accountability in the addressing public asset theft. This is particularly the case when governments make far reaching commitments that incur legal change or the allocation of public resources, in what is a highly technical field and one where commitments made are not readily comprehensible.



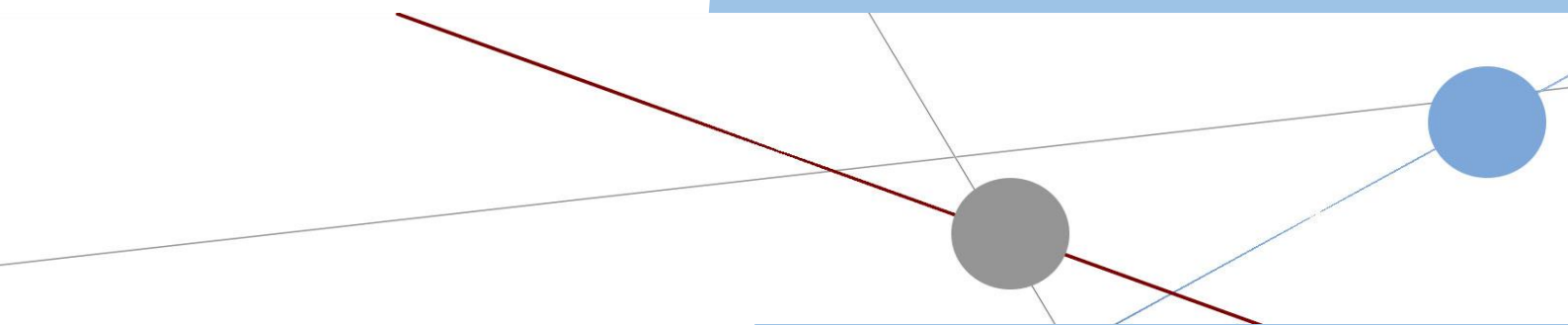
Civil Society Working Group on Accountable Asset Recovery

Helping to coordinate the UNCAC coalition's accountable asset recovery working group, we aim to support the active engagement of civil society with the inter-governmental working group at the UN.

Our work within this group has aimed at securing civil society participation at the Global Forum for Asset Recovery, due to be held in Washington D.C. in July 2017.

Alongside this, we have also worked to network civil society together and develop a common research tool for the group to report on national asset recovery work in the context of the UN Convention against Corruption and are working with a group of civil society on the ongoing Uzbekistan case.

OPENING UP
GLOBAL
INSTITUTIONS



NETWORKING

In autumn 2016, we attended four conferences:

The 17th International Anti-Corruption Conference, Panama, the world's largest anti-corruption conference.

Third Annual International Asset Recovery Conference, Ukraine, where we presented on a panel on the role of civil society in asset recovery.

PtP: The Take-off Phase, Hannover, Germany, discussing the role of foundations in the asset recovery returns process.

Anna Lindh Network Meeting, Göttingen, Germany.



A large part of our work in 2016 was to build and expand a network of organisations working on asset recovery.

Alongside our work on this with the UNCAC coalition, we also reached out to a number of organisations from across the world to bring them into our network.

One way we did this was through joining networks and attending and speaking at conferences.



We also joined the Anna Lindh Network in 2016, connecting CiFAR together with civil society organisations from 42 countries on both sides of the Mediterranean.

These organisations work primarily on education and cultural projects connecting the region together. We believe there need to be better connections between civil society working in diverse fields, particularly as we often both deal with issues of transitional justice, and so this connection was import for us.



KEEP THE ASSETS FROZEN

PHOTO BY VINCENT MOSCHETTI

Our campaigning activities were planned to be relatively modest in 2016, in line with our strategy to steadily grow our network. However, we ran a campaign in winter 2016 focussed on asking the Council of the European Union to keep the freezing order in place on the assets of the former rulers of Egypt and Tunisia, Mubarak and Ben Ali.

This was based on the 2011 order put in place after the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia, which pre-emptively froze the assets held by the deposed dictators and their immediate collaborators and families across the EU.

This freezing order was extended until 2017 for both, however it is unclear how much longer the EU will keep these sanctions active.

CAMPAIGNS AND OUTREACH

As part of our outreach work, we have given media interviews on various topics and produced a large number of blogs and explanatory documents over the year. The purpose of this has been to make the issues surrounding asset recovery more understandable and hence, to give more people the opportunity to engage in discussions over the policy choices made in this field. CiFAR's website was visited over 1,300 times in 2016.

Our 13 blogs published in 2016 included articles on topics ranging from:

- Asset recovery in Germany
- Explaining the returns process
- Brexit and asset recovery
- Tunisia's stolen assets, and
- The US and the Panama Papers