Front Line Defenders
Appointment of Executive Director

June 2023
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Front Line Defenders (FLD) is an international human rights organisation founded in Dublin in 2001, with the specific aim of protecting Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) at risk.

FLD works to improve the security and protection of human rights defenders and organisations around the world at risk for their peaceful and legitimate human rights work. As identified by human rights defenders themselves, FLD responds to protection and security needs by providing support through grants, capacity building, visibility, networking, and advocacy, at the international, regional, and local levels.

Front Line Defenders maintains its headquarters in Dublin, an EU Office in Brussels, and a US board, regionally based field staff in the Americas, Asia, Africa, Europe & Central Asia, and the Middle East.
In January of this year, Front Line Defenders launched their new 5-year strategy. This new strategy builds on 21 years of experience working with and learning from human rights defenders. It draws on the input of funders, human rights defenders, our dedicated staff, partners, and key stakeholders.

A complex and unprecedented landscape for human rights defence lies ahead with many challenges, including a sustained, well-resourced, and concerted repressive strategy by authoritarian governments to target HRDs, a weak defence of human rights from some democratic governments, and the further erosion of human rights protections in some of those countries.

Civic space restrictions, conflict and crises, climate change, technological threats, rising authoritarianism, and anti-gender policies will all significantly affect the work, safety and well-being of human rights defenders. Covid-19 has had and will continue to have economic, social, organisational, psychosocial, and physical impacts on defenders.

Given the increasing needs of HRDs, we will continue to expand our support and aim to reach more defenders during the course of this Strategic Plan.

**VISION**

Human rights defenders are recognised and supported as essential in defending and advancing human rights and bringing about positive change.

**MISSION**

The mission of Front Line Defenders is to support and enable the protection of human rights defenders who are at risk as a result of their human rights work.

**GOAL 1:** HRDs working at the local and national levels have increased protection through the provision of rapid, practical, and intersectional support.

**GOAL 2:** HRDs, their communities, and civil society have strengthened resilience and capacity to manage their protection in the longer-term.

**GOAL 3:** There are stronger policies and political/practical action at national, regional and international levels to protect human rights defenders at risk.
HOW WE DO IT
Front Line Defenders provides rapid and practical support to human rights defenders at risk through:

- International advocacy on behalf of human rights defenders at risk, including emergency support for those in immediate danger.
- Grants and support for the practical security needs of human rights defenders; including temporary relocation of human rights defenders.
- Capacity building and resource materials on wholistic security and protection, including digital security.
- Wellbeing opportunities such as the “Rest and Respite” program for human rights defenders dealing with extreme stress as a result of their work.
- Support for visibility needs including media outreach, campaign support, the FLD Award, production of visibility materials, and capacity-building training on visibility, aimed at protection.
- Opportunities for networking and exchange between human rights defenders, including at the biennial Dublin Platform.
- Emergency and crisis response through an emergency 24-hour phone line operating in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish; as well as rapid crisis support as needed.

As a part of our strategy, we will continue to develop Front Line Defenders as an organisation to strengthen our impact and ensure we can meet the needs of HRDs in the challenging global context. To achieve this, we will focus on organisational effectiveness, sustainability, and ensuring that we are a diverse, inclusive, and people-centred organisation.

OUR VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

- **We are focused**: In a complex global context, remaining focused as an organisation on our core mandate - protection of HRDs at risk - is our strength. The organisation is built on a foundation of the primacy and centrality of defenders and being fast, flexible, and agile in its support. We will remain focused on responding to the needs expressed by HRDs.

- **We demonstrate respect**: Our work is built on a profound respect for HRDs, for the work that they do, their courage and their knowledge. We respect the leading role of local civil society in their contexts. We recognise that listening with empathy to HRDs and understanding their situations is key to providing effective protection support. We demonstrate humility in the role that we have in supporting them.

- **We demonstrate perseverance**: We will continue to find ways to provide meaningful support and be present to HRDs facing the most difficult circumstances and at the most risk. In many cases, this means finding creative solutions, innovating and being brave in our decision-making. We also appreciate the importance of continued solidarity as a key element of protection support. We will continue to show determination to hold those in power to account.

To achieve this Strategic Plan we need to build, strengthen and invest in our organisational culture rooted in these values. We will respect each other as colleagues and value the expertise, experience and background that all colleagues bring to the organisation as well as the specific responsibilities that they undertake. We recognise the importance of diversity in the organisation and commit to addressing barriers to inclusion and participation.

We know that to achieve impact we need to strengthen our collaboration, be accountable to each other, and communicate effectively. We will build a culture of reflection and encourage creativity. We will celebrate our achievements, and learn and adapt when things don’t go well. We acknowledge that doing this work is challenging and to pursue our vision we need to strengthen our support and empathy for each other.
WHOM WE SUPPORT
We will continue to focus on supporting HRDs who are most at risk and we will remain responsive to HRDs facing risks globally. HRDs work in diverse contexts and on diverse issues – we intentionally take a broad and context-sensitive perspective of who is a human rights defender. Proving protection support and legitimacy to new and emerging groups of HRDs is an important added value of our work.

We know that the risks HRDs face are impacted by many factors including governance; elections; conflict; corruption; geography; issues they are working on; gender; race; class; disability; religion etc.

At an organisational level, we will aim to strengthen our support to several groups of HRDs that we are conscious of face specific risks. These include:
- WHRDs
- LGBTQI+ HRDs
- Land/Environmental/Indigenous Peoples’ rights defenders
- HRDs with disability
- HRDs in the context of social movements
- HRDs on the move

OUR APPROACH
HRD-led: A central part of our approach is enabling HRDs to assess the risks that they face and define their own needs. We aim to do no harm to HRDs, their families and communities through our work, and we aim for our support to be global in reach.

Holistic Protection: HRDs face multifaceted risks and threats, and we often need to address multiple layers of risk to strengthen security, bring about change, and have a long-term impact on HRD protection. Elements of personal security, physical security, legal security, digital security, well-being and stress management, visibility, solidarity, advocacy and organisational security are core elements of the support that we provide.

Individual and Collective Protection: While individual protection remains at the core of our support to HRDs, we recognize that we need to better adapt and strengthen our support to HRDs working in the context of collective protest movements. We recognize that collective protection is particularly important for HRDs working within social movements, as well as for indigenous peoples’ rights defenders, LGBTQI+ HRDs, WHRDs and HRDs working on labour rights.

Intersectional Approach: To provide effective support and protection we need to analyse the intersection of risk with the various and multiple identities of HRDs – including gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability, religion, class, economic status, immigration status and age. We will sharpen our ‘lens’ and provide tailored protection support by increasing our outreach to particular groups of HRDs, making our support more accessible, communicating from an intersectional perspective, and building internal knowledge and capacity.

Eco-system Approach: Our work fits within an ecosystem of protection support at a local, national, regional, and international level. We will strive to learn from, strengthen and add value to this ecosystem. We are also conscious that there are limits to our mandate and where it has added value we need to build and maintain bigger alliances of support for HRDs, including through our participation and leadership in consortia with other civil society actors.

To read more about our strategy please visit: https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/strategic-plan
For information on Front Line Defenders’ finances, please visit: https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/financial-information
For information on Front Line Defenders Board and governances, please visit: https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/who-we-are and https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/board-directors
Front Line Defenders is now seeking an Executive Director to lead us through the next phase of our growth and to deliver our ambitious new five-year strategic plan. You will lead the management of the organisation with a particular focus on strategy and policy development, financial management, risk management, fundraising, grants, communications, external representation and ensuring effective action on behalf of human rights defenders at risk.

The Executive Director will work closely with the Deputy Director, forming the Directorate. The purpose of the Directorate is to ensure that the vision, mission, and core values of the organisation are upheld, the Strategic Plan is implemented, the organisation is adequately resourced, and that all resources are fully aligned to best meet the protection needs of HRDs.

The Directorate has overall responsibility for the strategy, planning, management, evaluation and finances of Front Line Defenders, and oversight of all operational and programmatic aspects, including staff security and well-being. The Directorate is supported by the Management Team, and several organisational working groups on resourcing and sustainability, security, safeguarding, well-being etc. The Executive Director will line-manage the Deputy Director, and several managers including finances, development/fundraising, and communications.
KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
The new Executive Director of Front Line Defenders will be responsible for:

Governance and Supporting the Board
- Working closely with the Chair of the Board and building strong and effective working relationships with the whole Board, and Board Sub-Committees.
- Serve as the organisation’s Company Secretary.
- Implementing and ensuring the execution of Board decisions within the Organisation.
- Preparing strategic and annual business plans and reports for Board approval
- Providing clear and timely information and advice to the Board based on professional knowledge and understanding, on all matters relevant to the discharge of legal and constitutional obligations.
- Ensuring the organisation fulfils its legal, health and safety, well-being, diversity, equality and inclusion and other regulatory responsibilities.
- Ensuring that best practices in governance, safeguarding, and risk management remain paramount and are maintained to an exemplary standard.

Strategy and Management
- Leading the development and implementation of the strategic plan with a focus on ensuring effective action on behalf of human rights defenders at risk in line with our vision and mission, robustly managing risks, and ensuring staff management and support is optimal and in conformity with organisational values.
- Supporting FLD to be a learning organisation, that continually measures, evaluates, reviews, and learns to improve and enhance our delivery and responsiveness to HRDs by anticipating, identifying and solving problems and we share learning to ensure continuous improvements.
- Overseeing the organisation’s risk management process, ensuring the high-risk levels within the organisation’s work are supported by robust and comprehensive risk management processes.
- Supporting the organisation and the Board in developing a vision for organisational growth and development, based on the input and needs of HRDs.

Finances and Funding
- Ensuring the implementation and promotion of effective governance and financial management systems to ensure the financial position of the organisation is robust.
- Overseeing the monitoring and controlling of budgets to ensure the organisation operates within available finances and ensuring the timely preparation of annual reports and accounts for the Board’s consideration and approval and for accountability to donors.
- Supporting the implementation of the organisation’s fundraising strategy including through direct engagement with donors and potential funders.
- Maintaining and developing new relationships with partners, supporters, funders, and potential funders to maximise additional sources of funding to support the work, and further development of programmes and sustainability of the organisation.
Executive Director

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
The new Executive Director of Front Line Defenders will be responsible for:

People Management and Leadership
- Providing direct line management to several management roles, including recruitment, appraisal, and ongoing development of these roles.
- Being an inspirational leader for the organisation, promoting a focus on effectiveness of delivery and impact on behalf of HRDs in line with our values and mission whilst encouraging a sustainable and healthy working environment that supports and develops staff and fellows.
- Lead by example and drive an inclusive and cohesive working culture, championing the organisation’s values and commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and anti-racism.
- Ensuring that policies and procedures are in place to effectively manage the safety, security and well-being of staff, fellows and others working with Front Line Defenders
- Ensuring that the Leadership Team is empowered and developed to fulfil their individual and team roles and responsibilities.

External Representation
- Taking the lead in the external representation of the organisation with human rights defenders, governments, donors, the media, and other stakeholders.
- Developing and maintaining positive working relationships with other organisations and institutions, liaising with, and maintaining effective links with statutory bodies, the media, and other stakeholders.
- Using internal and external networks effectively, leveraging relationships and exchanging knowledge and expertise to strengthen the protection of human rights defenders.

Protect Defenders
- Lead the organisation’s engagement in the ProtectDefenders.eu consortium including through membership of the Board ensuring that financial and operational risks are well managed and that the project delivers effectively for HRDs.
Executive Director

PERSON SPECIFICATION
Front Line Defenders is looking for an inspirational leader with vast strategic delivery and people management experience and a track record of working in the international humanitarian or human rights sector. They must have a strong understanding and experience of the needs of human rights defenders at risk and holistic protection responses. They will be decisive, result and solution-focused and will have demonstrable experience in building and maintaining effective working relationships, both internally and externally. As strategic thinkers, they will be used to operating in a complex organisation and will understand what constitutes good governance and appropriate risk management.

Knowledge, Skills, and Experience:
- Extensive experience working at a senior level for the protection of human rights defenders or equivalent experience in a human rights-based activity/organisation in a leadership role.
- Strategic leader with the ability to engage and empower senior leaders in co-creating solutions.
- Experience in successful management, executive leadership (including finances, people and resources), risk management, and organisational growth and development in an international complex organisation.
- Strong interpersonal, advocacy and communication skills, the ability to credibly represent Front Line Defenders at various fora and inspire support for the organisation’s mission and vision.
- Strong interpersonal skills and a managerial style that fosters inclusivity, mutual respect, and collaboration.
- Exceptional networking, consensus-building, and brokering skills and the ability to build strong, open relationships across the organisation and all our stakeholders.
- Politically astute, with demonstrable experience in contributing to a conducive policy environment, influencing policy processes at the global, regional, and national levels and a clear understanding of the context for human rights defenders.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, including diplomatic skills and demonstrable mediation and negotiation abilities.
- Sensitivity towards gender, ethnic and cultural identities and related dynamics, and an understanding of equitable organisational employment strategies.
- A third-level qualification in the area of human rights, law, politics, international relations or a relevant discipline is desirable.
- An ability to provide solutions that are responsive to local contexts and global trends to achieve greater alignment and impact.

Personal Qualities:
- Strong personal commitment to Front Line Defenders’ purpose and values.
- A demonstrable commitment to, and deep experience in, empowering HRDs and working with communities in the global south.
- Integrity, sound judgment, cultural intelligence, and passion for EDI in an international context, with an ability to foster respect internally and externally.
- Effective problem-solving skills and the ability to shape organisational designs and processes to ensure effective collaboration.
- Commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
How to Apply

To apply, please submit a CV and cover letter, detailing how you fulfil the role description and person specification through the 'Apply Now' button in the advert following this link: https://candidates.perrettlaver.com/vacancies/3660/executive_director/ by Wednesday, 26th July at noon Irish Time.

Front Line Defenders is an Equal Opportunities Employer and encourages applications from all sectors of the community.

For a conversation in confidence, please contact Feride Yetis at feride.yetis@perrettlaver.com.
Should you require access to these documents in alternative formats, please contact Siri Oldervik at siri.oldervik@perrettlaver.com.

If you have comments that would support us to improve access to documentation, or our application processes more generally, please do not hesitate to contact us via accessibility@perrettlaver.com.

Protecting your data is of the utmost importance to Perrett Laver and we take this responsibility very seriously. Any information obtained by our trading divisions is held and processed with the relevant data protection legislation. The data you provide us with is securely stored on our computerised database and transferred to our clients for the purposes of presenting you as a candidate and/or considering your suitability for a role you have registered interest in. As defined under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Perrett Laver is a Data Controller and a Data Processor, and our legal basis for processing your data is 'Legitimate Interests'. You have the right to object to us processing your data in this way. For more information about this, your rights, and our approach to Data Protection and Privacy, please visit our website: http://www.perrettlaver.com/information/privacy.