

Protection Support for Women Human Rights Defenders Globally

Key results:

FLD will provide a holistic and comprehensive programme of support to WHRDs at risk globally and in line with FLDs [Strategic Plan 2023-2027](#), and *directly support approximately 4,000 Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD) at risk* during this project through following activities

- **Protection:** Provision of 1.180 protection grants to WHRDs and support 375 WHRD cases through urgent actions, including by issuing urgent appeals, alerts and other forms of advocacy
- **Psychosocial support:** 345 WHRDs supported w. tailored well-being and psychosocial support, and 1.850 WHRDs reached through one-to-one consultations, group consultations and workshops on all aspects of protection
- **Capacity building:** Development of visibility for protection strategies to support around 205 WHRDs, provision of training sessions for a total of 55 WHRDs on Advocacy and on the EU Guidelines on the protection of Human Rights Defenders and support to 1 WHRD local protection initiatives annually

Justification for support:

The assumption is that if WHRDs are properly protected and enabled, they can be key agents of change in their societies, and local WHRDs are best placed to promote and protect human rights of the most vulnerable populations and strengthen rule of law, justice, and accountability for serious human rights violations.

Major risks and challenges:

- framework conditions for civil society continue to be under pressure globally
- human right defenders are particularly at risk, being subject to increasing threats and killings in the past decade
- there is a wider push-back on gender-normative frameworks
- WHRDs are one of the most vulnerable groups facing gender based violence, harassment and threats to themselves and their families, while also being the most targeted group of HRDs

Background regarding financing

FLD has since 2019 been supported by DK MFA. For the specific project, DK MFA contributes to a pool funded program with 32% of the collective funds. Other donors to the program supporting WHRDs are the Ford Foundation, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland and Bread for the World.

File No.	25/23365					
Country	Global					
Responsible Unit	HUMCIV					
Sector	15160 Human Rights					
Partner	Front Line Defenders					
<i>DKK million</i>	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Tot.
Commitment	15	0	0	0	0	15
Projected ann. disb.	3	4	4	4	0	15
Duration	42 months (01 July 2025-31 December 2028)					
Previous grants	17,15 DKK mill (2019-2025)					
Finance Act code	06.32.08.70					
Head of unit	Marie-Louise Koch Wegter					
Desk officer	Ane N. Bertelsen					
Reviewed by CFO	Karsten Ivar Schack					

Relevant SDGs – SDG 16, Peace & Justice, Strong Inst.

 No Poverty	 No Hunger	 Good Health, Wellbeing	 Quality Education	 Gender Equality	 Clean Water, Sanitation
 Affordable Clean Energy	 Decent Jobs, Econ. Growth	 Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure	 Reduced Inequalities	 Sustainable Cities, Communities	 Responsible Consumption & Production
 Climate Action	 Life below Water	 Life on Land	 Peace & Justice, strong Inst.	 Partnerships for Goals	

Strategic objectives:

Front Line Defenders (FLD) will provide rapid and practical security support to HRDs at risk around the world, specifically by supporting Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) with protection strategies informed by gendered and intersectional dimensions of risk.

Justification for choice of partner:

Front Line Defenders (FLD) was founded in 2001 with the aim of providing rapid and practical security support to HRDs at risk around the world. Fundamental to FLD's work is supporting Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) with protection strategies informed by the gendered and intersectional dimensions of risk. Denmark has an ambition to invest strategically in partners on the Human Rights and Democracy agenda, and support to FLD is given in that regard. FLD has delivered as an important partner in relation to Danish objectives of overall protecting and strengthening civil society's space and human rights defenders for action throughout previous grant periods.

Summary:

The project will work to improve the security and protection of WHRDs and organisations around the world at risk for their peaceful and legitimate human rights work. 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, via a three stringed approach: enabling rapid response, capacity building and advocacy.

Budget:

Outcome 1: Increased protection through the provision of rapid, practical and intersectional support	5,251,840
Outcome 2: Strengthened resilience and capacity to manage protection	5,225,972
Outcome 3: Stronger policies and political action to protect WHRDs at risk	3,398,651
Indirect costs (7%)	971,352
Audit	152,184
Total contribution	15,000,000 DKK

Project Document

Support to Front Line Defenders 2025-2028: Protection Support for Women Human Rights Defenders Globally

List of abbreviations

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
FLD	Front Line Defenders
HRD	Human Rights Defender
HUMCIV	Department for Humanitarian Action and Civil Society
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
WHRD	Woman Human Rights Defender

1. Introduction

The present project document outlines the background, rationale and justification, objectives and management arrangements for development cooperation concerning the project “Protection Support for Women Human Rights Defenders Globally” implemented from 1 July 2025 - 31 December 2028 (42 months) as agreed between the parties: The Front Line Defenders (FLD) and the Department for Humanitarian Action and Civil Society (HUMCIV) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (MFA).

The project document is an annex to the legal bilateral agreement with the implementing partner and constitutes an integral part hereof together with the documentation specified below.

“The Documentation” refers to the partner documentation for the supported intervention, which is the present project document (PD), including annexes.

1.1. Project and partnership introduction

Rising authoritarianism across the world has undermined a range of human rights¹. Conflicts continue to grow across the world and Human Rights Defenders (HRD) continue to be particularly targeted due to their role in monitoring and reporting violations during conflict. Perpetrators use increasingly sophisticated and varied measures against HRDs; including through criminalisation, defamation and stigmatisation, and digital attacks. Resources available to respond to these growing, existential threats are limited. As a result, organisations are scaling back programs, pausing partnerships, laying off staff, and cutting salaries, further eroding global protection efforts. In such a context, it is critical to ensure a continued effort to support the work of protecting both human rights and human rights defenders. Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) remained at the forefront of social movements claiming rights in 2024. Yet, according to FLD’s Global Analysis from 2024, it was defenders working specifically on women’s rights who were among the most targeted and most in need of

¹Amnesty International, 2025: Annual Report <https://www.amnesty.ie/annual-report-launch/>

support. In the context of a global backlash against women's rights, WHRDs who persisted in their advocacy were on the frontlines.

Within this context, groups of HRDs are facing the brunt on increased threats. Despite this, HRDs and WHRDs continue to show extraordinary resilience in responding to these threats and continue to make progress on human rights.

Front Line Defenders (FLD) was founded in 2001 with the aim of providing rapid and practical security support to HRDs at risk around the world. Fundamental to FLD's work is supporting Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) with protection strategies informed by the gendered and intersectional dimensions of risk. In the context of a global backlash against women's rights, WHRDs who persisted in their advocacy were on the frontlines both in terms of their visibility and exposure to risk. According to FLD's data from 2024, it was defenders working specifically on women's rights who were among the most targeted and most in need of support globally. Of the Protection Grants provided by FLD in 2024, **345** (29%) supported WHRDs. Additionally, in terms of Urgent Actions taken by FLD, **117** were on behalf of WHRDs and women's rights was one of the main issues worked on by those supported through FLD's activities (16%).

With this project, FLD intends to support specifically WHRDs through a three stringed approach being enabling rapid response, ensuring capacity building and conduct advocacy for HRDs and WHRDs particularly.

FLD has been in partnership the MFA since 2019 with the current agreement running until mid-2025, managed by HUMCIV. The agreement is part of the wider Human Rights and Democracy portfolio in the MFA, also managed by HUMCIV. FLD is part of the MFA focus on Human Rights and Democracy, and FLD collaborates with other relevant partners of the MFA. The current grant of 10 million DKK has ensured that FLD could continue its important work between 2022-2025, and was carried over from a previous phase of support (7.15 million DKK) for a similar project between 2019-2021. Overall, FLD has positively delivered and maintained good results according to the previous agreement.

As outlined in the 2025 Danish Strategy for Development Cooperation "A World Disrupted – Partnerships in Development", Denmark has an ambition to support HRDs. This partnership is to that end complimentary, and support towards the agenda also takes place through other partners such as for instance Claim Your Space with Global Focus providing protection for HRDs partnering Danish Embassies and Danish Civil Society Organisations, and the Digital Democracy Initiative addressing digital threats towards HRDs and providing protection to HRDs through partnerships with Digital Defenders Partnership and Access Now. FLD is thus an important partner in relation to Danish objectives of overall protecting and strengthening civil society's space and human rights defenders for action.

2. Background, context analysis and strategic considerations

2.1. Background

FLD works to improve the security and protection of HRDs and organisations around the world at risk for their peaceful and legitimate human rights work. As identified by HRDs 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.

FLD now works with a network of over 23,000 active human rights defenders in over 150 countries. Each year FLD provide practical support to over 2,500 human rights defenders and 400 organisations at risk, empowering them to continue their vital work to drive social change in their communities. The mission of FLD is to protect and support human rights defenders who are at risk as a result of their human rights work. FLD leads the coordination under the EU's Protect Defenders mechanism and is a partner in the UN Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund's Safety Net Window FLD enjoys broad support from other donors, including the Netherlands, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain as well as the EU and a number of private foundations.

By design, FLD works globally. FLD has two offices, in Dublin and Brussels. FLD's policy is not to develop country offices and programmes as this might take the space of local HRDs. FLD strongly believes that local HRDs are best placed to achieve change in their countries. Not having established country presence also allows FLD to operate without too much visibility in some restrictive contexts enhancing outreach and practical support. Through its 70+ staff based in 27 countries, FLD has the capacity to provide global support, with specific field-based staff reaching out and supporting HRDs in their respective regions.

2.2. Context Analysis

WHRDs remained at the forefront of social movements claiming rights in 2024. These rights are critical in and of themselves, but also critically important to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal, including SDG 1 and SDG 10. Yet, according to FLD's Global Analysis from 2024, it was defenders working specifically on women's rights who were among the most targeted and most in need of support. In the context of a global backlash against women's rights, WHRDs who persisted in their advocacy were on the frontlines.

WHRDs continue to absorb the burden of the various crises that their communities are experiencing. In Myanmar, Ukraine, Palestine, and in Sudan, despite systemic targeting, they continued to advocate for justice, gender equality and peace often at great personal risk. They played a critical role in documenting abuses and mobilising communities.

WHRDs inclusive of trans and gender diverse defenders, are subjected to additional gender-specific threats and attacks. Violence, or the threat or fear of violence, is often used as a way of excluding WHRDs from the public sphere, pushing them to stay within the borders of patriarchal culture. They are more likely to experience sexual assault, harassment and intimidation of a sexualised nature. WHRDs also continue to pay with their lives for working outside the home instead of staying within the private sphere as dictated by patriarchal norms; for going to school or university; for 'daring' to live their sexuality openly. Furthermore, women were targeted as a way to threaten their relatives who were engaged in human rights work, and as documented in the FLD Global Analysis from previous years, the targeting of family members is a violation that often goes under-reported.

In the context of criminalisation of social movements and protest, repression against women activists engaged in struggles often takes the form of sexual violence. Furthermore, discrimination against women is compounded by the intersection of different modes of oppression: they are discriminated against for being women, but also because of their skin colour, language, race, ethnicity, class (and financial situation), religion and sexuality.

The gendered risks faced by WHRDs were nowhere more visible or urgently felt than in Afghanistan. Afghan defenders, particularly women, have faced serious risks in reaching safety, facing obstacles at every turn while trying to locate pathways for themselves and family members. HRDs and organisations working in Afghanistan were the second highest recipients of Protection Grants from FLD in 2024, totalling 101 grants with almost 60% of these grants supporting temporary relocation or resettlement. Of the grants that supported temporary relocation 51% were within the country, 37% were relocations within the region (often to Pakistan or Iran) while awaiting visa approval for onward resettlement. Other grants supported the onward relocations once visas were approved. Of those who received a grant and responded to the survey, 92% stated that it had increased their security.

2.3. Policy framework and strategic considerations

In addition to Danish strategic interests as described above, which prioritises democratic values and human rights and underlines a particular contribution to the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls, the main policy framework to which this project aligns itself with is further composed of international and regional instruments. This includes in particular the *UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders*. Having played a key role in the shaping of the *EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders*, Front Line Defenders aims to continue to promote their implementation. This project will seek to contribute to the implementation of the *EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy*. FLD supports the mandate of the *UN Special Rapporteur*

on the situation of Human Rights Defenders, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special Rapporteur on HRDs and Focal Point on Reprisals in Africa.

FLD's support to the most marginalised and vulnerable HRDs aligns with Danish strategic objectives, in particular the vulnerabilities and gender-based violence faced by WHRDs. This is an important agenda in the context of the wider push-back on gender-normative frameworks, which highlights the need for Denmark to continue its effort to advance gender equality, and promote and protect the rights of girls and women.

This project is also in line with Denmark's commitment to the *Sustainable Development Goals*. The achievement of these goals is contingent on an independent, effective civil society to play key roles in providing practical support and assistance, mobilising communities, strengthening local knowledge and skills, and holding governments accountable. This programme will contribute to ensuring that civil society, and more specifically WHRDs, can continue to play this role in an increasingly challenging context. In line with the prioritisation of the Danish MFA, the programme will also contribute to the realisation of SDG 6 (Gender equality) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Institutions) .

By supporting WHRDs at risk working in the most difficult contexts around the world, this project aligns with the priorities of the 2025 Strategy for Danish Development Cooperation – A World Disrupted – Partnerships in Development.

Leave No One Behind: FLD works to ensure that marginalised groups', particularly WHRDs, participation, inclusion and access to justice will be promoted. Careful analysis of the context will ensure systematic concern for the rights and inclusion of marginalized groups, specifically WHRDs, and keeping in line with the Leaving-No-One-behind principle. Across its regional protection programmes, FLD prioritises reaching out to the most at risk WHRDs, who tend to represent the most marginalised in society. At risk groups are identified based on context and needs analysis, including during outreach country visits. Informed by its Gender Action Plan, Protection Coordinators undertake regular gender and diversity analysis to ensure that the most excluded groups are targeted and can access support. FLD ensures its grants and other support are accessible to remote/rural WHRDs and WHRDs with low literacy and disability through facilitating different forms of communication. The FLD emergency line is available in 5 official languages (but with over 25 languages covered by FLD staff). Resources are made available in multiple languages (Security in a Box toolkit is available in 17 languages). FLD's HRD-driven approach, reflected in programmes of work designed on the basis of consultations with HRDs, reinforces *localisation, or defender led solutions*. FLD supports *resilience* of WHRDs through the provision of holistic protection support which addresses their diverse protection needs as well as their well-being.

Gender: FLD prioritises most at risk WHRDs with little or no access to other protection support. FLD defines risk as the possibility of events that result in harm and this is assessed based on the level of threats, gender, diversity, location, area of work, and connectivity to protection mechanisms. While the organisation seeks to ensure global reach, regional workplans identify priority countries and groups each year.

Thus, FLD carries out gender and intersectional analysis of the contexts WHRDs are working in and the risk they face; ensure targeted outreach to WHRDs and women's rights organisations while on visits; aim for 50% participation rate of WHRDs in FLD training - and carry out WHRD specific training, convenings and meetings where appropriate/relevant to provide safe and open spaces for risk assessment; ensure that WHRDs are aware of FLD resources and can easily access FLD case and security grant support and when necessary provide assistance to WHRDs to submit grant requests; provide gender specific response and support to WHRDs e.g. temporary relocation of children and family members as well WHRD, provide funding for rape counselling and safe spaces for women affected by gender based violence. Across all its protection work, FLD is cognizant of the gendered impacts of armed conflict and insecurity, including the gendered nature of abuses and violations committed by State and non-state actors, the differential gendered impacts that defenders' activism can have within their communities and family networks and the different risks faced by women and men in situations of forced displacement. As part of the regular risk assessments conducted with HRDs, WHRDs as well as HROs, FLD will assess the different gendered impacts of conflict on defenders and the

different protection needs arising from their experiences of conflict, making sure to tailor protection responses to gender and other factors of their identity including legal status, ethnicity, ability, socio-economic status etc. FLD aims to collaborate actively with peer organisations to improve and increase support to women human rights defenders in this increasingly difficult environment. Specifically, FLD will continue to strengthen strategic partnerships with feminist, WHRD, environmental organisations in order to provide more effective support to WHRDs at risk and strengthen best practice.

Localization: FLD has a priority focus on working with and supporting *local protection initiatives*. The aim of this support has been to build the capacity of local emergency responses to HRDs under threat; to build the capacity of local HRD networks to assess the risks inherent in their work and plan better for their own protection; and to encourage the concept of collective protection among local HRDs so that they form and are aware of their local support systems. This work involved deeper engagement with local protection networks to strengthen their capacity, including by providing funding for institutional strengthening, training, or mentorship. In 2024, FLD conducted a review of their work, which focused on improving the roll-out of local protection initiatives given their increased priority. It highlighted a number of examples of past activities that had significantly increased local protection, including in Bangladesh, Colombia, and West Africa. However, the report highlighted a number of ways to improve and refine the methodology behind local protection initiatives. There is a need to ensure systems and processes allow for efficiencies when delivering support. It was acknowledged that more could be done to enhance local initiative's impact, including the reach toward a broader audience, ensuring that gatekeeping was avoided, and profiling them with potential donors. These findings have led to improvements in defining local protection initiatives for 2025 with a more systemic approach being adopted to ensure their continued success. FLD will introduce a Local Protection Initiative support specifically to WHRDs initiatives in this new proposed programme of work.

2.4. The Partnership between Front Line Defenders and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The shared commitment and strategic alignment of FLD and MFA to support HRDs will continue to shape the partnership. Denmark has a resource in FLD during the Danish Presidency of the Council of EU to leverage the agenda on HRDs in 2025. At UN level, FLD will continue to engage with Danish Representations in Geneva and New York, including with regard to Denmark's role in the UN Security Council, and where relevant can also include UN processes and supporting the DK MFA with security related issues to HRDs briefing the UN.

FLD and DK MFA has a close collaboration and mutual understanding of the sensitivity related to the project. This also relates to the external communication of the project, to which both partners understand that communication of the project and the financial support from DK MFA to FLD will be communicated in a proportional way and with mutual agreement.

FLD is also an important actor recognized by other Danish engagements on human rights, and human rights protection, and contributes to the overall effort and coordination for protection and advocating for human rights defenders. FLD contributes to Building Response Together, an MFA supported initiative under Global Focus, where organisations supporting and protecting human rights defenders are coordinating efforts and sharing best practises. Furthermore, FLD engages with Danish Human Rights organisations, including Action Aid Denmark, and participated in the Peoples Power Conference in 2025. The collaboration with FLD complements the MFA supported initiative "Claim Your Space", which seeks to protect human rights defenders, but with a particular focus on partners to Danish Embassies and Danish Civil Society Organisations, as well as support to HRDs through the Digital Democracy Initiative with the purpose to safeguard inclusive democracy and human rights in the digital age, including protection for HRDs through the partnership with Access Now and Digital Defenders Partnership. Through the MFA engagement with FLD, the protection of HRDs is specifically targeting women in the sphere of human rights defenders, and thereby contributes to the MFA cross-sector priority on protecting girls and women's rights. The specific programmatic focus on WHRDs is important to ensure the inclusion of a marginalized target group, that has special intersectional vulnerabilities. The program is pool-funded by additional donors, including Ford Foundation, Bread for the

World and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ireland, a modality that allows cost effectiveness and minimalized individual grants management.

Particularly on protection of WHRDs, FLD has significant experience in providing *protection support to WHRDs* and is a leading organisation in the field of HRD protection. Given its Global mandate, FLD is one of few organisations that can *respond quickly* to the needs of WHRDs in contexts with limited reach from the international community. FLD's global reach – having supported WHRDs in *over 147 countries* in 2024 means the organisation is well placed to support WHRDs wherever they are most at risk. FLD's strengthened regional structure within FLD enables us to take an informed approach to selecting contexts where WHRDs are at the greatest risk/most vulnerable. FLD has been working on protection and security of HRDs for 25 years and has built extensive expertise in areas such as physical and digital protection, well-being and visibility for protection.

With close relationships at grassroots and international levels, FLD acts as a *bridge between grassroots HRDs and international institutions*, governments and other actors. This includes the Dublin Platform, to which the MFA has previously participated. The Dublin Platform brings together over 100 HRDs with no or very limited international contacts, in addition to the work with UN and ACHPR, and FLD's close connections with EU institutions and member states, including the DK MFA, led by the Global Advocacy office.

FLD has the *existing infrastructure, systems and partnerships* in place to continue delivering support to WHRDs at risk under this project. FLD will conduct ongoing outreach to ensure it is reaching and supporting the most at risk WHRDs. WHRDs requiring additional, targeted, priority support will be identified on an ongoing basis at the local level through risk analyses of country contexts, through outreach carried out during in-country visits and workshops, events, and consultations, and through network strengthening activities. A critical aspect of outreach activities is to build trust with WHRDs at risk and to ensure accessibility of support provided to different groups, for example ensuring women only spaces for excluded WHRDs in certain contexts. Outreach activities will build on FLD's network of over 23,000 HRDs (including 10,000 WHRDs) working on over 40 human rights issues in 169 countries. Additionally, FLD will cooperate with a wide range of organisations and networks working on a variety of issues, building on strong existing partnerships, such as membership of the WHRD International Coalition, ESCRN-Net (International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) and [the Alliance for Land, Indigenous, and Environmental Defenders](#).

3.5 Lessons Learned

This project builds upon previous collaborations with the MFA since 2019. FLD has made substantial progress with Danish support, as highlighted in its regular reporting to HUMCIV. On-going analysis, reviews and documentation from FLD on trends identifies a continued need for support for HRDs and WHRDs particularly. Review of the current project has led to the identification of the following priorities for the proposed project:

- For ***emergency and rapid support***, it will be relevant to continue strengthening internal processes and monitoring of impact, as well as coordination with other mechanisms that provide Protection Grants to ensure more WHRDs at risk can be supported. This is particularly critical at a time where less international funding has led to a significant reduction of resources for rapid response mechanisms.
- Continue strengthening and systematising a range of advocacy support. This will be supported through ***sustained capacity for rapid information/event verification*** that will enable efficient and appropriate action to be taken on behalf of at-risk WHRDs.
- It has proven relevant to ***apply a holistic approach and tailor interventions to individual WHRD needs***. Therefore, protection grants can now cover various aspects of safety based on the needs of WHRDs, and will often include a mix of support, such as relocation support to provide physical safety or legal support in a case of criminalisation; combined with psycho-social support and digital safety support.
- Use the learnings from the review on Local Protection Initiatives to ***work with local initiatives and networks and include a focus on support to WHRDs*** through this activity.

- Reaching out to more stakeholders to strengthen advocacy in key European (and like-minded) capitals, at EU level, at UN level, at the local national level, and, where appropriate, *advocate for policies which promote a more enabling environment for HRD* at risk.
- Strengthening *WHRDs' use of current mechanisms through training on Advocacy workshops*, including specific sessions on EU HRD guidelines.
- Continue *giving a platform and supporting HRDs to attend international advocacy spaces* in Brussels, Geneva or wherever it may be useful.

3. Theory of change and key assumptions

IF WHRDs working at local and national level are recognized and supported, **THEN** they will be better able to protect and promote human rights and bring about positive change for their societies and communities. Effective international support will enhance the resilience and the capacity of WHRDs to manage risks, foster an enabling environment, dissuade attacks, facilitate recovery and contribute to their protection, thus enabling them to carry out their work.

The Theory of Change for the current project aligns with the organisational *Theory of Change* for FLD:

- FLD believes that WHRDs working at the local and national level play the most important role in protecting human rights and bringing about positive change for their societies and communities. WHRDs in many contexts face significant risks as a result of their work. WHRDs remained at the forefront of social movements claiming rights in 2024. The role of women in organising, strategising and leading many of these protests has been especially apparent and they have been at the forefront of significant victories. Violence, or the threat or fear of violence, is often used as a way of excluding WHRDs from the public sphere, pushing them to stay within the borders of patriarchal culture. In 2024 women came out in even greater numbers to join the protesters. WHRDs continued to absorb the burden of the various crises that their communities are experiencing. In Myanmar, Ukraine, Palestine, and in Sudan, despite systemic targeting, they continued to advocate for justice, gender equality and played a critical role in documenting abuses and mobilizing communities.
- FLD believes international support can add value through providing fast, flexible and needs-based support to strengthen the capacity of WHRDs and their communities to manage the risks they face as a result of their work and enable them to continue their work. In 2024, 88% of WHRDs who received emergency support from Front Line Defenders reported increased security as a result of Front Line Defenders urgent support. Additionally, 98% of WHRDs reported that the trainings and support provided by the Capacity Development team, the Digital Protection team, and the Physical security team led to improved capacity.
- FLD believes that achieving impact requires strategies that respond to immediate risks in an urgent way, strategies that build longer-term capacities for WHRDs, organisations, communities/networks and civil society, and strategies that change policy and practice to strengthen the protection of WHRDs. Front Line Defenders has experienced positive outcomes of working with gender-responsive protection measures for WHRDs. This includes strengthening the legitimacy and recognition of groups of WHRDs, e.g. Mothers of the disappeared, Sex Worker Rights Defenders, women refugee and migrant rights defenders and the role of WHRDs within broader movements.

The partnership with the MFA for the Protection Support for Women Human Rights Defenders will play a key role in achieving these goals.

Assumptions:

- Individuals are still willing to continue to act as WHRDs despite challenges in external context, including legal restrictions and escalating attacks, when they are protected and supported as needed. In 2024, 89% of HRDs supported by Front Line Defenders reported that they were able to continue their work following this support. Front Line Defenders also recognises that not all WHRDs will be

in a position to continue their work, especially those in conflict or crisis contexts or where they have had to relocate to safety.

- WHRDs at local and national level continuing to be able to engage with international support mechanisms and INGOs. Shrinking civic space in many countries is making this engagement more challenging, especially for WHRDs. As a part of Front Line Defenders Strategic Plan, the organisation is working to increase opportunities for cross-regional experience sharing and learning on effective protection strategies, including engagement with international support mechanisms and INGOs, as learning has shown it enables continued international engagement of local and national WHRDs.
- Front Line Defenders continues to be in a strong and sustainable position to support WHRDs through rapid response, capacity development and advocacy. Front Line Defenders has 25 years' experience supporting WHRDs globally and receives support from a range of government donors and foundations. While the whole HRD sector is facing huge challenges following the withdrawal of US Government resources, as well as a decrease in support from some other governments and foundations, Front Line Defenders has put in place measures to ensure continued support to HRDs.
- Front Line Defenders is able to continue to provide support to WHRDs by also capacitating Local Protection Initiatives, despite a trend of increasing restrictions on the work of WHRDs in the most difficult contexts including repressive laws, administrative provisions, judicial harassment, sanctions, and defamation campaigns. With Front Line Defenders' regionally-based staff within areas of Protection, Digital Protection and Capacity Development, who can respond rapidly to requests from WHRDs. Additionally, the Protection Grants team has a dedicated staff member per region and emergency grants can be approved within 24 hours. In 2024, over a third of emergency grants were provided within 48 hours.

4. Programme Rationale

The **overall objective** of the project is that WHRD are recognised and supported as essential actors in defending and advancing human rights, and bringing about positive change in society.

The **specific outcomes** are:

1. WHRDs working at local/national level have increased protection through the provision of rapid, practical and intersectional support
2. WHRDs, their communities and civil society have strengthened resilience and capacity to manage their protection in the longer-term
3. There are stronger policies and political/practical action at national, regional and international levels to protect women human rights defenders at risk

Through this project, FLD will provide a holistic and comprehensive programme of support to WHRDs at risk globally and in line with FLDs Strategic Plan 2023-2027, **directly support approximately 4,000 Women Human Rights Defenders at risk** during this project. WHRDs who are properly protected and enabled can be key agents of change in their societies, and local WHRDs are best placed to promote and protect human rights of the most vulnerable populations and strengthen rule of law, justice, and accountability for serious human rights violations.

Activities are designed to support a broad range of WHRDs who may work on any given human rights issue, but will take into account the specific area of work when providing support. **Protection grants are open to any WHRD at risk**, independent of the issue worked on, but the type of grant provided may be tailored to their human rights focus area. This is to ensure they are offered the most suitable protection support – for example, defenders documenting conflict may need to be provided with security equipment or urgent relocation support. Similarly, **urgent advocacy strategies can support any WHRD at risk**, but the specific area within human rights will be taken into account when designing an advocacy strategy, e.g. by mobilising international trade union bodies in support of labour rights HRDs at risk. Security workshops are likewise designed based on initial needs assessment of participants. Some workshops can be held at the regional level for defenders

working on diverse issues and will allow for sharing of experiences and solidarity more broadly. In contrast, workshops that are organised for particular defender groups will be dedicated workshops that only focus on their specific human rights areas.

5. Summary of the Results Framework

Outcome 1 will respond to the more immediate protection and risk mitigation needs of the most marginalised and at-risk WHRDs, including emergency cases. A key impediment for WHRDs to manage their safety is the lack of rapid support tailored to their risk profiles, gender, and intersectional needs and specific contexts. If WHRDs and their communities and organisations have access to emergency protection advice, as well as timely financial and material support covering *safety as a whole: digital, physical, legal and well-being*, they will be better equipped to protect themselves, while mitigating risk in the longer-term. Moreover, when faced with life-threatening risks and serious violations of their rights, WHRDs will in most contexts benefit from visibility of their cases through sustained advocacy and political pressure at the global, regional, and national levels.

Output 1.1: WHRDs at risk have access to financial and material support. i.e. Security Grants to strengthen their protection

FLD will provide **1,180 protection grants** to WHRDs globally with practical security needs including legal costs, temporary relocation, and office and home security systems, psychological and medical costs.

Output 1.2: Action in response to urgent WHRD cases

FLD will support **375 cases WHRDs from all world regions through urgent actions**, including by issuing urgent appeals, alerts and other forms of advocacy, tailored to the specific context.

Outcome 2 will focus on ensuring WHRDs are better able to prevent and mitigate safety threats and become more resilient over time, with a range of *holistic prevention training on protection*. WHRDs and their organisations and communities most value capacity development processes that are tailored to their local contexts and specific needs and on which they are consulted. FLD will provide to WHRDs with a range of capacity development focuses covering *diverse components of prevention (for example, physical and digital security, risk analysis and planning, well-being, and visibility for protection)*. Other WHRDs as well as their communities are often the most significant source of support to WHRDs at risk, both informally as well as through formal structures like national and regional level HRD protection networks. *Network-strengthening* is an important element of collective protection and contributes to strengthening the human rights movement. *The integration of well-being and psychosocial support* across capacity development interventions is also essential to empowering and enabling WHRDs to mitigate threats and continue their work.

Output 2.1 - WHRDs receive tailored capacity support and resource materials to assist with immediate and long-term security.

FLD will provide one-to-one consultations, group consultations and workshops on all aspects of protection, to **over 1,850 WHRDs at risk**.

Output 2.2 - WHRDs receive tailored well-being and psychosocial support to strengthen their resilience.

FLD will **support around 345 WHRDs** with tailored well-being and psychosocial support during this project and continue to implement its *Rest & Respite programme* which will allow around **30** WHRDs to take much needed rest from their daily work and enhance their skills so they can work more effectively.

Output 2.3 - WHRDs have increased opportunities for cross-regional experience sharing and learning on effective protection strategies.

Front Line Defenders will support HRDs to *share cross-regional experiences*, learn from each other and develop more effective strategies for their security and protection, including the organisation of the Dublin Platform in 2027.

Output 2.4 - Work of WHRDs and organisations promoted through visibility and communications.

FLD will develop further *visibility for protection strategies* to support around 205 WHRDs and present the *Annual Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk* which honours the work of HRDs who are courageously making outstanding contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights.

Output 2.5 - WHRDs and organisations supported through local protection initiatives.

FLD has had a priority focus on working with and supporting **local protection initiatives**. The aim of this support is to build the capacity of local emergency responses to HRDs under threat. FLD plans to support one local protection initiative focused on WHRDs per year.

Outcome 3 will contribute to strengthening policies, laws, and practices as well as the broader ecosystem for the protection of WHRDs, thus contributing to and promoting more enabling environments and the sustained protection of WHRDs. In order to bring about positive and sustainable changes to the safety of WHRDs and the environment where they operate, direct support to WHRDs and their movements must be reinforced by *sustained advocacy and engagement with decision-makers and duty-bearers at national, regional and international levels*. Strategic international pressure on national governments and other non-state perpetrators (e.g. corporate actors) can have a positive impact on the protection of HRDs, while if key allies have access to timely, reliable, and compelling evidence on trends relating to WHRDs at risk, as well as recommended solutions for protecting and preventing harm to WHRDs, they will be more likely and equipped to mobilise and take action. FLD will carry out diverse forms of advocacy and engagement with decision-makers at all levels, and will push for robust mechanisms to protect HRDs, including both proactive development of policies and laws in favour of the protection of HRDs as well as the reform of legal frameworks that greatly hinder, delegitimise, and/or endanger WHRDs. Advocacy on urgent cases of at-risk WHRDs under Result 1 will feed into advocacy processes under this outcome.

Output 3.1 - Tailored advocacy on specific WHRD cases targeted at national, EU, UN, US actors.

FLD's Global Advocacy team will **take up over 220 cases** to EU and other key actors and carry out specific advocacy to push for concrete positive outcomes of the cases of WHRDs.

Output 3.2 – Strengthened engagement of key allies.

FLD will engage in thematic advocacy work focusing on areas where it can bring particular added value. This will include participation in *advocacy rounds* with a total of 70 WHRDs in Brussels and Geneva.

Output 3.3 – Tailored training on advocacy and EU Guidelines.

FLD will continue to carry out training sessions for a total of 55 WHRDs on Advocacy and on the EU Guidelines on the protection of Human Rights Defenders. As well as this, the Global Advocacy team will continue to engage with WHRDs and Diplomats on the *Toolkit for the EU on WHRDs*.

Output 3.4 – Global Advocacy and Analysis.

FLD sees a particular added value in having a global scope for the research and analysis element of the project to allow for deeper analysis of the issues and trends, and create opportunities for much-needed cross-regional learning. It is estimated that FLD will **publish two research papers annually**, where the organisation monitors threats faced by WHRDs at risk globally and research and analyse key threats faced, more specifically gender related threats, digital threats and threats linked to businesses. FLD will also continue to publish its annual *Global Analysis report*.

Estimated global reach per Outcome

	Global	Africa	Other region
Outcome 1*: WHRDs working at local/national level have increased protection through the provision of rapid, practical and intersectional support	0%	18%	82%
Outcome 2: WHRDs, their communities and civil society have strengthened resilience and capacity to manage their protection in the longer-term	0%	25%	75%
Outcome 3: There are stronger policies and political/practical action at national, regional and international levels to protect women human rights defenders at risk	20%	20%	60%

*The estimated geographical reach under Outcome 1 is based on reach in 2024, given the responsive nature of the activities.

See annex 2 for further elaboration on approach, outputs and full result framework.

6. Inputs/budget

The budget covers a period of 42 months, and reflects FLD's strategic approach to the context and needs of WHRDs globally. This budget will be co-funded with funding from Ford Foundation, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland and Bread for the World (see separate budget in Annex 4). The total project budget is 6,243,888 EUR. The targets set out for this project is based on the full project budget, and not only on the share of contribution from the Danish MFA.

Total budget for the period 1 July 2025 to 31 December 2028.

	Total budget - EUR	DK MFA budget - EUR	DK MFA budget - DKK
Outcome 1 - WHRDs working at local/national level have increased protection through the provision of rapid, practical and intersectional support	4,156,164	104,000	5,251,840
Outcome 2 - WHRDs, their communities and civil society have strengthened resilience and capacity to manage their protection in the longer-term	1,127,350	700,533	5,225,972
Outcome 3 - There are stronger policies and political/practical action at national, regional and international levels to protect women human rights defenders at risk	532,830	455,583	3,398,651
Indirect costs (7% of direct costs)	407,144	130,208	971,352
Audit	20,400	20,400	152,184

Total	6,243,888	2,010,724	15,000,000
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See Annex 5 for a detailed budget.

7. Institutional and Management arrangement

The project will be implemented by FLD. The project builds on the previous development engagement and extends the partnership between FLD and the MFA, which started in 2019.

HUMCIV in the MFA is the owner of the project. The below outlines the framework for ensuring adequate reporting, structured dialogue, timely decision-making and joint learning between HUMCIV and FLD. FLD is responsible for all management and planning according to relevant MFA Guidelines, [*Guidelines for programmes, projects, country strategic frameworks & hard earmarked multilateral support*](#). HUMCIV shall have the right to carry out any technical or financial supervision that is considered necessary to monitor the implementation of the project. After the termination of the project support, HUMCIV reserves the right to carry out evaluations in accordance with this article. The MFA grant is only to be spent on ODA countries and possible MFA funds spent on non-ODA countries should be paid back.

For results-based management, learning and reporting purposes the MFA will base the actual support on progress attained in the implementation of the project as described in the documentation. Progress will be measured through FLDs monitoring framework. Progress, and thus the Results Framework will be discussed during Annual consultations.

In 2025, FLD will carry out a midterm review of its Strategic Plan 2023-2027 which will be led by an External Consultant. The review is due to be completed by end 2025 and the results of the review including recommendations will be shared with Danish MFA.

7.1. FLD governance, Programme Management and Decision-making

FLD has had the benefit since it was founded in 2001 of a strong **Board of Directors** that has combined business and financial management expertise, and human rights expertise. The Board of Directors is responsible for the approval of strategic plans, annual business plans and budgets, approves the statutory financial statements and ensures FLD is compliant with the Governance Code. The Board delegates the day to day running of the organisation to the Executive Director who is responsible and accountable for the implementation of the Annual Business Plan and Budget. The board is elected and meets 4 times a year (full Board). The board sub-committees for audit, governance and programmes meet 4 times a year as well. FLD also has an International Advisory Council which provides further expert advice and strategic support to the organisation.

As of 2024, an Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is in place, composed of the Executive Director, Deputy Director, Director of Development and Operations, Head of Protection, Head of Finance and Head of Protection Grants. There are weekly ELT strategy meetings and also monthly Management Team meeting including Heads of programmes and teams, to review progress made on programmes.

7.2. Project Team

Project Team Overview:

- **Protection Grants Coordinators:** Manage grant processes and coordinate with partners to avoid duplication, based in Dublin.
- **Global Advocacy Manager:** Leads advocacy for HRDs at risk at multiple levels, based in Brussels.
- **Business and Human Rights Officer:** Focuses on advocacy related to corporate actors and policy change, based in Brussels.
- **Capacity Builders:** Support HRDs and organizations with risk management and resilience across three regions.
- **Visibility Coordinator:** Develops visibility strategies and materials to protect HRDs.
- **Research Coordinator:** Conducts research and reporting on HRD risks and protection needs.

- **Digital Protection Coordinators:** Provide digital protection support and training regionally.
- **Senior Philanthropy and Protection Lead:** Advocates for increased funding for HRD protection, based in the US.

7.3. Anti-corruption, anti-terror, PSEAH and other measures

FLD, and any partner contracted under this project, must take responsibility for preventing corruption, including by actively working with risk management, sound financial management, transparency, and value for money while spending and procuring. This includes a responsibility to commit to recognized standards of transparency, probity, and accountability. No fraud, bribery, or corruption can be tolerated under the project. Upon suspicion or awareness of specific cases of corruption involving staff members and/or implementing partners, FLD is obliged to immediately notify the MFA in accordance with the “Zero Tolerance” Anti-Corruption Policy of the MFA. A standard corruption clause applies between the parties of this project and shall be inserted in agreements signed with any recipients of funding under the project. FLD is expected to revisit the anti-corruption approach and the mechanisms applied. The MFA will follow up on this during yearly consultations.

FLD is committed to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH). FLD shall abide by applicable national laws as well as applicable international instruments, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age and Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. FLD’s own Code of Conduct shall apply to all staff working under the project. Partners will be contractually obliged to comply with international PSEAH standards. FLD must take responsibility for ensuring that partners have a functioning code of conduct and other PSEAH policies and procedures in place. This will be monitored by FLD during partner capacity assessments. Incidents of PSEAH can be reported through FLD’s internal grievance handling mechanisms, through FLD’s anonymous whistle-blower mechanism or through the MFA’s equivalent.

FLD will also ensure to adhere to Article 11, Restrictive Measures (sanctions) and Anti-Terrorism. Denmark/The Parties are firmly committed to ensure that any activity under this Agreement is in full compliance with United Nations (UN) Security Council Sanctions [and] European Union (EU) Restrictive Measures. Moreover, consistent with UN Security Council Resolutions relating to terrorism, including but not limited to, UNSC Resolution 1373 (2001), 1267 (1999), 2462 (2019), and EU autonomous measures to combat terrorism, the Parties are firmly committed to the international fight against terrorism, and in particular, against the financing of terrorism. Accordingly, the Implementing Partner agrees that it and/or its implementing partners (including contractors, sub-contractors and sub-grantees) will take all reasonable steps to secure that no funds in relation to the Project/Programme will – directly or indirectly – benefit persons, groups or entities associated with terrorism or subject to UN Sanctions or EU restrictive measures.

If, during the course of implementation of this Project, the Implementing Partner discovers that any funds in relation to the Project have been made available to, or for the benefit of, persons, groups or entities associated with terrorism or subject to UN Sanctions or EU Restrictive Measures, it must inform the MFA immediately. FLD and the MFA shall promptly consult each other with a view to jointly determining remedial measures in accordance with their respective applicable legal framework. Such measures may include, but shall not be limited to, the reallocation of the remaining MFA funds under the Agreement.

Any violation of this clause is ground for immediate termination of the Agreement returning to the MFA all funds advanced to the Implementing Partner under it.

7.4. Budgeting and Financial Management

FLD commits to follow MFA “[General Guidelines for Financial management](#)”, beyond their own financial management procedures. FLD Financial Policies currently in place include: Organisational Financial Policies and Procedures Manual; Reserves Policy; Fraud Policy (including Anti-Corruption); Procurement Policy; Per Diem Policy and Travel Costs Policy. An updated Whistleblower policy is currently being reviewed by Senior

Management.

The Board of Directors approves the annual Budget and monitors financial reports detailing income and expenditure at each meeting. Designated Board members are involved in budget preparation and a designated Audit sub-committee signs off on the annual audited accounts.

Unspent funds at the end of the grant period and interest earned on the grant should be paid back.

7.5. Audit

The Board of Directors has appointed Grant Thornton Ltd as Front Line Defenders' financial auditors. In addition to an annual audit Grant Thornton also undertakes donor/grant specific audits as necessary. Approximately six donor-specific audits are completed per year.

The MFA requires annual audits of the grant and a management letter. The financial statement should include the same level of details as in the budget however it is sufficient that the financial statement is in EURO (only). The audit should follow the audit instruction included in the "[General Guidelines for Financial management](#)" as per Annex 5A and Annex 5B and as such include a financial audit, a compliance audit and a performance audit. Observations related to the audit should be included in the management letter.

Front Line Defenders' financial management is coordinated by five Finance Officers and a Head of Finance and Operations under the oversight of the Executive Director. Management of monthly accounts is administered using Sage Pro 50 accounting tool. FLD's accounts are fully compliant with the SORP "Statement of Recommended Practice", developed by the UK Charity Commission. Front Line Defenders publishes its Annual Trustees Report and Financial Statements on its website.

8. Reporting

HUMCIV will oversee and monitor delivery on the project through the following schedule, which will apply for every implementation year of the project starting in 2025 to the year following project end. Every year after update of the coming years plan, result framework and budget, HUMCIV and Front Line Defenders will do the annual consultations to align expectations for the coming year.

Planned narrative and financial reporting schedule:

Date	Deliverable
By 1 October 2026 and 2027 FLD shall submit to the MFA (as input to the annual consultation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget monitoring report covering progress until month of June of existing year, and including all years of the grant.• Updated plan, results framework and updated budget for the grant period.
By 30 June 2027 FLD shall submit to the MFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Results Report covering 01.07.2025 until 31.12.2026• Annual audits of the grant and a management letter
By 30 June 2028 FLD shall submit to the MFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Results Report covering 2027• Annual audits of the grant and a management letter

By 30 June 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Results Report covering 2028 • Final audit covering the entire period • Final completion report on the results of the engagement covering the full period (July 2025 – Dec 2028)
FLD shall submit to the MFA	

FLD will deliver a final report and the final audited accounts by June 2029 at the latest. If the project is not extended, FLD will return unspent funds and accrued interest within the first six months of 2029.

9. Risk Management

FLD works in high risk and unstable political and security environments. Risk assessments are carried out before engagements and activities which consider both staff security and the security of HRDs. FLD has developed a systematic approach for dealing with such risks and prioritises ensuring its interventions 'do no harm' for HRDs and their work. It strives to ensure that the support provided does not add to or increase risks for the HRDs, their families and communities. FLD aims to be continuously mindful of the potential risks of harm it may bring, and exercise caution, sensitivity and good judgement at all times. It also respects the importance of informed consent and confidentiality. The security of data, visibility strategies, transfer of funds, ensuring our support does not divide communities, and ensuring inclusivity and consideration of groups that have been historically discriminated such as women, indigenous peoples, and LGBTQI+ are particularly important areas FLD will consider carefully.

FLD has an organisational Risk Register, which highlights key physical, environmental, political, economic, and social risks and associated mitigation strategies. It is reviewed regularly by the Security Working Group and approved on an annual basis by the Board. Risks are also discussed by the board audit and risk subcommittee on a quarterly basis. FLD is committed to internal learning and adaptation based on risk analysis. FLD currently facilitates internal learning on how to work more effectively and securely in crisis situations and politically high-risk contexts.

Key elements of FLD's security approach include:

- Strong digital security systems in place, safe communication means used with HRDs, among staff and externally (including secure devices, encrypted emails and communications). Ongoing staff training in digital security.
- FLD's Security Advisor provides security briefings for all new starters on security policies and procedures. Line managers also provide briefings on security, Health and Safety policy, Wellbeing Policy and others. FLD seeks informed consent and input from staff regarding their requirements for a safe workplace.
- New starters receive a briefing on FLD's office security measures.
- Regular Staff training in security during travel/field work (staff safety when travelling, first aid, crisis management, interrogation and crossing borders). Staff at high risk have also conducted Hostile Environment Awareness Training. All staff are encouraged to access ongoing training on safety and security.
- Incident reporting systems and a crisis management team are in place.
- Quarterly meetings of the Security Working Group, overseeing security issues including updating the Risk Register. Key policies and Guidelines: Travel Security Guidelines; IT Guides and a IT Security Policy; Office Security Policy.

Priority Risks

1. Harm coming to a HRD as a result of Front Line Defenders action (or inaction);
2. Harm coming to Front Line Defenders personnel or representatives in the field;
3. Decline in funding/ loss of a key funder;
4. An incident seriously damaging the reputation of Front Line Defenders, particularly through publishing false information or through fraud/mismanagement of funds, a serious safeguarding

- incident, or through actions of someone affiliated with the organisation.
5. Security environment in certain contexts (e.g. security level, restrictive legislation) preventing FLD from delivering its programmes
 6. Personnel developing problems due to stress.
 7. Diminishing support to WHRDs among key actors. Key actors' (governments, UN and EU institutions) interest in supporting WHRDs diminishes, due to competing priorities, loss of involvement in human rights issues or budget cuts,

HUMCIV and FLD will enhance the dialogue and potential coordination regarding risks related to the project. The continuous evaluation of risks related to the project will be incorporated and discussed in annual consultations between FLD and HUMCIV. Some abovementioned risks may also impact on HUMCIV and the MFA at large, depending on the category of risk. HUMCIV aim to mitigate these risk to ensure optimal risk mitigation.

10. Sustainability, closure and exit strategy

The overall objective of the project is that WHRD are recognised and supported as essential actors in defending and advancing human rights, and bringing about positive change in their society. This long-term change will significantly contribute to the sustainability of the human rights movement and the ability of WHRDs to be drivers of positive change beyond the life-time of the project. As a part of the current project, FLD will continue to strengthen the long-term sustainability by

- Continuing to give priority to *building the capacity of HRDs* to manage their own security through personal security training, digital security training, grants and visibility. FLD also puts a strong emphasis on working with and *strengthening organisational capacity* to manage risk. For example, this includes, promoting digital security 'focal' points in organisations, the development of organisational security plans, security policies and procedures. A key focus of the programme will also be to strengthen the development of national and regional civil-society led protection initiatives.
- focusing on *building local capacity* and trainers who can continue to share knowledge of security strategies and skills beyond FLD's intervention. FLD achieves this through its training methodology and Training-of-Trainers (ToT) Programme.
- advocating for *stronger national, international and regional structures to support HRDs at risk*. To date, FLD has had a particular focus on strengthening the capacity of the offices of the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Defenders and of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) Special Rapporteur on HRDs.
- continue to seek *funding* from other donors to support this project on an ongoing basis. FLD has developed a robust fundraising strategy and has a diversified pool of committed donors. FLD also continues to advocates in donors' circles for an increase in funding for HRDs.

Considerations toward an exit strategy shall be included in the project, which will be included in consultations midway through the project phase. Any management of an exit process would be guided by a plan or strategy. FLD as the partner should be consulted on this plan to ensure inclusion and realistic prospects. The specific context at the time of the exit decision is critically important in determining strategic options in the exit strategy. This would be based on an analysis of the role of the partner, Danish development cooperation in general and the rationale for any Danish exit. Any exit plans should be based on partnership and mutuality.

Annex:

Annex 1 – Context and Stakeholder Analysis – Front Line Defenders

Annex 2 – Partner Assessment – Front Line Defenders

Annex 3 – ToC, Results Framework – Front Line Defenders

Annex 4 – Risk Management – Front Line Defenders

Annex 5 – Budget – Front Line Defenders

Annex 6 – Communications Plan – Front Line Defenders

Annex 7 – Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning – Front Line Defenders

Annex 8 – Process Action Plan – Formulation of FLD Grant 2025-2028

Annex 9 – Quality assurance checklist

Annex 1 - Context and Stakeholder Analysis – Front Line Defenders

Context Analysis

There is no doubt that progress in human rights and support for human rights protection is facing the biggest test since its establishment. The rise in authoritarianism across the world has undermined a range of human rights. Conflicts continue to grow around the world and human rights defenders continue to be particularly targeted due to their role in monitoring and reporting violations during conflict. On top of these threats, cuts by donor governments have led to the removal of a large amount of resources available to respond to these growing, existential threats. Front Line Defenders own analysis shows that the US freeze on development aid led to 30-40% of the emergency security funds earmarked for HRDs in 2025 been wiped out from the international protection system, to say nothing of other government cuts in developmental aid.

Within this perfect storm, groups of HRDs are facing the brunt on increased threats. Despite this, HRDs continue to show extraordinary resilience in responding to these threats and continuing to make progress in human rights. In 2024, despite escalating efforts to restrict and undermine the work of HRDs, defenders across various regions demonstrated remarkable resilience and courage. HRDs faced a range of violations, including arbitrary arrest and detention, legal action and death threats which were among the most frequently reported abuses. Digital threats also emerged as a significant concern, with HRDs often subjected to surveillance and online harassment. Efforts to suppress freedom of expression intensified, particularly targeting journalists, indigenous, land and environmental defenders. HRDs documenting violations in their communities frequently received death threats from businesses, corporate entities and military groups as a consequence of their investigative work. Amongst the most targeted were defenders advocating for indigenous rights, Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) and LGBTIQ+ rights defenders.

In 2024, the HRD Memorial (led by Front Line Defenders) documented the killings of **324 HRDs** in 32 countries.

Below is a summary of specific threats faced by HRDs as well as information on targeting of specific groups.

The need for HRD protection has long outstripped available funding. FLD has historically had to turn away a significant number of critical protection requests due to limited resources. In 2024, FLD provided 1206 grants (totaling €3.6million) but had to turn down an additional 2099 grant applications. FLD also often has to provide smaller grants than requested by HRDs (on average FLD provides 57% of the amount requested by HRDs). The growing demand for HRD support—intensified by the rise of authoritarianism and anti-rights movements—has further widened this gap, leading to an increase in requests for assistance even as resources dwindle.

Local HRDs and organisations, which often operate with small budgets and depend on a few key donors (including some important US-funded intermediary donors), have been disproportionately affected. FLD has already documented program shutdowns or severe cutbacks in Sudan, Ukraine, Myanmar, Cambodia, the Philippines, Guatemala, Venezuela, and Ghana, severely limiting support to HRDs in these high-risk areas.

Without intervention, countless HRDs in authoritarian states, conflict zones, high-risk, and remote regions will be left without critical protection. During this defining moment of global uncertainty and rights regression, human rights defenders across all regions and issues remain our strongest bulwark against further human rights deterioration.

Women Human Rights Defenders

WHRDs remained at the forefront of social movements claiming rights in 2024. These rights are critical important to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal, including SDG 1 and SGD 10. This was especially notable in Bangladesh where young women actively participated in, organised and led the protest movement. Violence, or the threat or fear of violence, is often used as a way of excluding WHRDs from the public sphere, pushing them to stay within the borders of patriarchal culture. The opposite happened in this case, however, and women came out in even greater numbers to join the protesters.

WHRDs continued to absorb the burden of the various crises that their communities are experiencing. In Myanmar, Ukraine, Palestine, and in Sudan, despite systemic targeting, they continued to advocate for justice, gender equality and peace often at great personal risk. They played a critical role in documenting abuses and mobilising communities.

Sexual and physical abuse were also used against WHRDs to punish them for their work. In Guatemala, indigenous women have traditionally been at the forefront of the struggle for rights. In April, over 40 women from the indigenous community of Chirrix Tzul, including eight WHRDs, were evicted. In the process, they reported being physically and sexually assaulted by armed groups allegedly linked to land-grabbers seeking to take over the community's land. The following month, a consortium of business leaders attempted to criminalise the women by accusing them of land usurpation and aggravated theft.

Women Human Rights Defenders in the digital space

Digital platforms are crucial for human rights defenders, enabling communication, coordination, documentation, and advocacy. However, these technologies are also increasingly weaponized to target defenders through surveillance, censorship, harassment, and digital silencing tactics like shadow-banning. Online attacks create a chilling effect, leading to self-censorship and potentially escalating to physical threats.

WHRDs face particularly threats in the digital space, with many experiencing online gender-based violence due to their activism. This can include death threats, harassment, and doxing online to undermine their credibility as a HRD as well as their resiliency and ability to continue their work.

Conflict, Post-Conflict and Crisis Situations

In conflict and crisis situations, including in Gaza, Sudan, Ukraine, Myanmar, Ethiopia, DRC, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Colombia and Syria, Human Rights Defenders play a vital role in documenting and monitoring violations, raising awareness of human rights, promoting accountability, assisting victims of violations gain access to justice, and contributing to the building of accountable and responsive institutions. However, these conflicts have had a devastating impact on defenders, with many killed, threatened or harassed. This has forced many HRDs to relocate during conflict.

WHRDs are often particularly threatened during conflict and crisis, including with sexual violence. This is often due to their role in advocating for gender justice and against patriarchy. Even with these increased threats, many are unable to relocate as early as other due to their role as caregivers. This means that relocation, particularly outside of a conflict country, may not be possible and other protection measures would need to be explored. In Sudan, for example, this has meant supporting shelters for WHRDs specifically to enable them to have access to safe and secure accommodation.

Criminalisation

Criminalisation was the most reported violation against HRDs in 2024. In every region, governments and non-state actors turned to the judicial system to disrupt, tie up, stigmatise, bankrupt and imprison HRDs, regardless of the human rights they were defending. Legal actions against HRDs representing 15% of violations in Europe and Central Asia, 14.6% in the Americas, 8.8% in Asia-Pacific region and 8.6% in Middle East and North Africa, as reported to Front Line Defenders. The most commonly cited legal charges recorded against HRDs in 2024 were defamation /insulting state / damaging national unity (23.4%), National/State Security / Sedition (19.8%), other criminal charges (12.1%), Public Order / Assembly / Illegal Gathering (11.2%), and Terrorism / Membership or Support of Terrorist Organisation (11.2%). For example, the Russian authorities made widespread use of state security laws to silence Ukrainian HRDs working in Russian-occupied territories as well as Russian HRDs objecting to the country's continued illegal invasion of Ukraine. WHRD Iryna Horobtsova was sentenced to ten and half years in prison following a closed-door trial. The Ukrainian defender was found guilty of espionage. Iryna's case highlights the broader pattern of persecution faced by Ukrainian human rights defenders and civilians in Russian-occupied and controlled territories, many of whom have been abducted, tortured, or unlawfully imprisoned on state security charges.

Restrictive Legislation

Foreign Agent Laws, which stigmatise or penalise organisations and individuals who received funding from foreign entities, were drafted or introduced in a number of countries, including Georgia and Serbia. Draft NGO laws were also introduced or passed, including in Rwanda, Zambia, Paraguay, Venezuela, and Tunisia. Though differing in detail, these laws generally impose excessive reporting requirements, extensive government oversight, burdensome registration requirements and opaque criteria allowing for denial of registration or suspension of activities. There were also greater restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly, including by governments in Angola, Peru, Pakistan, and Slovakia. Many of these laws were justified to limit the influence of perceived Western influence, with gender equality often in the spotlight.

Land, Indigenous and Environmental Rights Defenders

Non-state actors, including paramilitary groups and organised crime, presented grave risks to HRDs working on land, environmental and Indigenous Peoples' rights. In Brazil, rural, quilombola and indigenous communities faced violence and threats, exacerbated by a lack of legal guarantees relating to their lands. Armed militias, often composed of landowners and local rural groups, intensified attacks against communities resulting in physical violence and fatalities. In August, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders highlighted the increased risk faced by the Ava Guarani indigenous people in Parana if the government were to remove the National Force from their territory due to violent attacks carried out by local landowners' private security. The impunity enjoyed by these groups perpetuates the insecurity and conflict in indigenous areas.

Front Line Defenders own learnings in this area highlight the particular needs of WHRDs in this area. Women in indigenous communities often are primary caregivers and their activism is seen as going against the patriarchal norms in some communities. Many security measures may be more complicated, such as relocation or the provision of digital security equipment (as devices may be shared with family members). Learnings on these adjustments has been critical to Front Line Defenders work in this area.

LGBTIQ+ Rights Defenders

In 2024, certain positive developments in legalisation in Thailand, Estonia, Greece and Czechia, were overshadowed by dire developments elsewhere. The Ugandan Constitutional Court upheld the dehumanising 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act while Liberia introduced a similarly regressive law to parliament in July. The

Constitutional Court in Malawi rejected a challenge to sections of the penal code which criminalise homosexual relationships and, in Ghana, the Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Act was passed in parliament in February.

Women within the LGBTIQ+ community often face increased threats – trans women are more likely to be killed and lesbians can face the practice of homophobic rape. Added to this, LGBTIQ+ rights is often added to attacks on feminism as a Western ideology in many contexts.

Stakeholder Analysis

Rights-Holders:

The main rights holders are the human rights defenders and the communities they support. Fundamental to FLD's work is supporting **WHRDs** – inclusive of trans and gender diverse defenders - with protection strategies informed by the gendered and intersectional dimensions of risk. They are more likely to experience sexual assault, harassment and intimidation of a sexualised nature. Their leading role in human rights struggles often fails to be recognised or is intentionally overlooked because of the challenge it presents to patriarchal gender norms and structures. They are often not afforded the same standing in their communities nor the same access to protection resources that their male colleagues have, while the risks they face are similar or sometimes greater. This is especially true in cases of intimate partner violence and other forms of family and community pressure used as a way to 'punish' WHRDs for their identity as activists – a phenomenon that often goes unreported and unrecognised as a legitimate threat. WHRDs face discrimination and threats also from other HRDs within their human rights spaces.

The support provided as part of this project is based on their needs, as expressed by the WHRDs themselves. FLD works with a network of over 23,000 active HRDs worldwide (including around 10,000 WHRDs), and consults regularly with them – including during its Dublin Platform, as well as frequent country visits. All support provided by Front Line Defenders, e.g. protection grants, advocacy, training, is addressing needs expressed directly by defenders. FLD carries out outreach through over 70 missions per year to extend its network of HRDs and WHRDs and ensures that more benefit from the support FLD provides.

Duty Bearers:

States are the primary duty bearers and have a duty to regulate other actors, including corporations, that cause human rights violations. Front Line Defenders works with and encourages States to meet their obligations, i.e. to respect, protect and fulfil every right. As part of the programme, FLD will continue to document violations committed by States and other perpetrators against HRDs and use this data to hold States accountable. Through Urgent Appeals and broader advocacy, FLD will urge States to take steps to protect HRDs and enable them to continue their work. FLD will encourage and support states to develop policies, legislation or mechanisms in support of HRDs and to reform restrictive legislation and policies that limit their work. FLD calls on States to protect Human Rights Defenders and create an enabling environment for civil society, and regularly calls on governments to cease targeting HRDs. FLD also engages when relevant with Federal and Local Authorities. FLD has also provided consultations to national Government and civil society led Protection Mechanisms, e.g. Mexico National Protection Mechanism.

Other responsible actors:

Front Line Defenders also works and engages with many other responsible actors, such as civil society actors, donors, international organisations, the private sector, international and regional institutions.

FLD engages with *international and regional organisations*, including with the UN and ACHPR regarding specific cases of WHRDs at risk. The international and regional institutions play a key role in monitoring the implementation of key international obligations, including the 1998 Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. Front Line Defenders provides those institutions with information on the specific challenges facing defenders around the world through regular meetings, inputs through established processes (e.g. UPR Submissions, OHCHR consultations) and practical support to existing mandates such as the ACHPR and UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders (through Geneva and Banjul-based fellowships). Front Line Defenders also engages EU institutions, provides input on the situation and helps ensure that EU delegations and EU Member States implement the EU Guidelines on the protection of Human Rights Defenders – including through regular meetings and EU Guidelines workshops (which include EU Diplomats).

FLD will continue to strengthen its engagement with *International Financial Institutions* and *the private sector* as key actors in major development projects which WHRDs are often advocating on and where there is potential to influence practice. FLD engages with the World Bank, the European Development Bank and national development banks. During this period, Front Line Defenders will continue to develop and increase our advocacy and engagement in the field of Business and Human Rights. FLD's Business and Human Rights Officer joined the team in 2023 and will continue to expand FLD's research and advocacy on risks to HRDs.

FLD engages with donors, and is present in a variety of fora, including the International Human Rights Funders Network. FLD also continued to engage with donors in order to push for the establishment of funding instruments that are best suited to the needs of HRDs. As part of ProtectDefenders.eu, FLD actively supported the development of a report on funding for human rights defenders. FLD organises a Donor Day before its Dublin Platform to maintain the issue of human rights defenders on donors' agenda, and help enhance the impact of funding to HRDs. In addition, FLD is regularly invited by donors to input into their strategic planning and provide contextual information. The 2024 Donor Day provided a roadmap for donor collaboration, emphasising enhanced coordination, flexible funding, resilience-building, and well-being integration to ensure HRDs can continue their vital work globally with strengthened protection systems.

FLD engages and cooperates with most *international and regional civil society actors* supporting human rights defenders. FLD achieves this mainly through active participation in consortia. For instance, Front Line Defenders is the lead partner in the EU Human Rights Defenders Mechanism (ProtectDefenders.eu), bringing together FIDH, OMCT, ILGA, Reporters without Borders, Defend Defenders, Urgent Action Fund, Forum Asia, EMHRF, Protection International, Peace Brigades International and ESCR-Net. ProtectDefenders.eu has enabled the members to significantly improve coordination of support to HRDs. Front Line Defenders is also a partner in the UN Women Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund Safety Net Window for WHRDs in conflict and crisis contexts. In a series of key networks, such as Journalists in Distress Network, the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition, and ESCR-Net – the International Network for Economic, Social & Cultural Rights. In addition, Front Line Defenders is increasingly working to support new national and regional initiatives supporting human rights defenders at risk (including the Western Africa Human Rights Defenders Network or the Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network).

Front Line Defenders aims to collaborate actively with peer organisations to improve and increase support to human rights defenders in this increasingly difficult environment. Specifically, FLD will continue to strengthen *strategic partnerships with feminist, WHRD, environmental organisations* in order to provide more effective support to WHRDs at risk and strengthen best practice.

Annex 2 – Partner Assessment – Front Line Defenders

Front Line Defenders - May 2025

1. Brief presentation of partners

Front Line Defenders is an international human rights organization founded in Dublin in 2001. The specific aim of the organization is to protect human rights defenders at risk. Front Line Defenders provide rapid and practical support to human rights defenders at risk through grants, psychosocial support, advocacy, capacity building and emergency and crisis response and support. Front Line Defenders has an annual turnover of around 10 mill. EUR annually.

Front Line Defenders maintains its headquarters in Dublin, an EU Office in Brussels, and regionally-based field staff in the Americas, Asia, Africa, Europe & Central Asia, and the Middle East.

The organization has received support from the MFA since 2019 and currently has one grant with the HUMCIV Department amounting to a total of 10 mill. DKK in the time period of 2022-2025. Furthermore, Front Line Defenders are a part of the Building Responses Together Network, which is managed by Global Focus, also funded by the MFA.

2. Summary of partner capacity assessment

Front Line Defenders is working to protect and advocate for the rights of human rights defenders across the world. FLD is recognized as a leading organisation within the sphere of protection for human rights defenders, where FLD both provides long-term capacity building for local organisations to improve protection and rights of HRDs, as well as rapid emergency protection support.

FLD has identified the following three goals in their strategic plan 2023-2027 that is envisioned to shape the work of the organisation, enabling the organisation still to be relevant and agile in a fragile context, where needs can change rapidly: i) HRDs working at local/national level have increased protection through the provision of rapid, practical and intersectional support, ii) HRDs, their communities, and civil society have strengthened resilience and capacity to manage their protection in the longer-term, and iii) There are stronger policies and political/practical action at national, regional and international levels to protect human rights defenders at risk.

The work of Front Line Defenders are guided by the Front Line Defenders values statement as well as relevant international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. The policies adopted by Front Line Defenders includes Safeguarding Policy, Child Protection Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, and are all in reference to the relevant UN Charters. Furthermore, FLD has adopted policies and standards with regard to external audit, financial transparency, conflict of interest and privacy.

FLD works in partnerships and alliances to achieve their goals and broaden their impact. This includes recognition and collaboration with both UN, EU and other international partners. FLS supports the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders through the FLD Frank Jennings Fellowship Programme, and has a Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

Front Line Defenders has Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and supports the work of the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Defenders at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights by providing an intern/fellow support on an annual basis.

Front Line Defenders also has a partnership status with the Council of Europe, and serves as the lead partner in ProtectDefenders.eu - the European Union Human Rights Defenders mechanism, established to protect defenders at high risk and facing the most difficult situations worldwide. It is a consortium of 12 international and regional human rights organisations which collectively implement the European Human Rights Mechanism. Front Line Defenders provides rapid Security Grant support to human rights defenders in partnership with the Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund. Front Line Defenders is also a member of the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition, ESCRNet – the International Network for Economic, Social & Cultural Rights, and the Human Rights Funders Network.

FLD annually publishes the Global Analysis of Human Rights Defenders to shed light on the developments for Human Rights Defenders, activists and organizations, as well as hosts the bi-annual Dublin Platform conference, where human rights defenders from all over the world meets to take stock and share learnings.

Since 2019 the MFA and FLD has been in partnership, with funding from the MFA amounting to a total of estimated 17 mill. DKK. The partnership has performed with satisfactory results based on yearly reporting received by HUMCIV, but up until now no partner review has been conducted. Through the partnership, the MFA has co-funded both the Dublin Platform, the Global Analysis as well as grants support to more than 600 human rights defenders.

3. Summary of key partner features

Name of Partner	Core business	Importance	Influence	Contribution	Capacity	Exit strategy
	<i>What is the main business, interest and goal of the partner?</i>	<i>How important is the project/programme for the partner's activity-level (Low, medium high)?</i>	<i>How much influence does the partner have over the project/programme (low, medium, high)?</i>	<i>What will be the partner's main contribution?</i>	<i>What are the main issues emerging from the assessment of the partner's capacity?</i>	<i>What is the strategy for exiting the partnership?</i>

Front Line Defenders	<p>The main purpose of the organisation is to improve the security and protection of human rights defenders and organisations around the world.</p> <p>The organisation responds to protection and security needs by providing grants, capacity building, visibility, networking and advocacy support at international, regional and local level.</p> <p>The organisation is financed through grants from both institutional donors and private</p>	<p>Medium.</p> <p>The annual turnover is 10 mill. EUR in 2023, whereof the MFA project is only supporting w. estimated 330.000 EUR. However, the funding landscape for human rights organisations is getting smaller, thus the support is more essential and symbolic important now.</p>	<p>High.</p> <p>Overall outcomes and outputs have been defined by the FLD in the project document.</p>	<p>The partner will provide support to Women Human Rights Defenders through a three-stringed approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of rapid, practical and intersectional support such as security grants and rapid emergency grants - Provision of tailored capacity support and resource materials to assist with immediate and long-term security such as trainings, cross-regional learning exchange and access to psychosocial support - Advocacy for stronger policies 	<p>Strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Globally recognized advocacy and protection organisation both nationally by states and internationally. - Has a global outreach with presence in all regions and close proximity to the HRDs they are supporting. <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematic weaknesses. <p>Previous experience with a sub-partner had FLD tighten financial management procedures, which</p>	<p>No special requirements after end of contract for the MFA. Parts of the capacity building activities conducted under the project are intended to improve the self-sustainment of the organisation and the local actors, which Front Line Defenders are working with.</p> <p>Exit strategy and approach are accounted for within the project documentation.</p>

	foundations with an annual turnover of 10 mill. EUR in 2023.			and political/practical action at national, regional and international levels to protect women human rights defenders at risk through activities such as research and trainings in advocacy	<p>have since improved.</p> <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closer collaboration with other HRD actors through established network. - Increased focus on decentralization and strengthening the capacity of local human rights defenders' organisations. <p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decrease in institutional funding streams for development organisations, including human right defenders organisation. <p>Currently the organisation remains able to conduct its core</p>	
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					<p>tasks including protection and advocacy.</p> <p>- The organisation is expected to experience an increased request for support, which they may not be able to cover. This would be the result of other actors to have experienced cuts.</p>	
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Annex 3 – ToC, Results Framework – Front Line Defenders

Theory of Change

Front Line Defenders' vision is that **HRDs are recognised and supported as essential actors in defending and advancing human rights, and bringing about positive change in society.**

In line with the organisational *Theory of Change*:

- FLD believes that WHRDs working at the local and national level play the most important role in protecting human rights and bringing about positive change for their societies and communities. WHRDs in many contexts face significant risks as a result of their work.
- FLD believes international support can add value through providing fast, flexible and needs-based support to strengthen the capacity of WHRDs and their communities to manage the risks they face as a result of their work and enable them to continue their work.
- FLD believes that achieving impact requires strategies that respond to immediate risks in an urgent way, strategies that build longer-term capacities for WHRDs, organisations, communities/networks and civil society, and strategies that change policy and practice to strengthen the protection of WHRDs.

IF WHRDs working at local and national level are recognised and supported, **THEN** they will be better able to protect and promote human rights and bring about positive change for their societies and communities. Effective international support will enhance the resilience and the capacity of WHRDs to manage risks, foster an enabling environment, dissuade attacks, facilitate recovery and contribute to their protection, thus enabling them to carry out their work.

Front Line Defenders will support and enable WHRDs to continue their work by achieving the following goals:

1. WHRDs working at local/national level have increased protection through the provision of rapid, practical and intersectional support;
2. WHRDs, their communities and civil society have strengthened resilience and capacity to manage their protection in the longer-term;
3. There are stronger policies and political/practical action at national, regional and international levels to protect WHRDs at risk.

The partnership with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Protection Support for Women Human Rights Defenders will play a key role in achieving these goals.

Assumptions:

- Individuals are still willing to continue to act as WHRDs despite challenges in external context, including legal restrictions and escalating attacks, when they are protected and supported as needed
- WHRDs at local and national level continuing to be able to engage with international support mechanisms and INGOs.
- Front Line Defenders continues to be in a strong and sustainable position to support WHRDs through rapid response, capacity development and advocacy.
- Front Line Defenders is able to continue to provide support to WHRDs by also capacitating Local Protection Initiatives despite a trend of increasing restrictions on the work of WHRDs in the most

difficult contexts including repressive laws, administrative provisions, judicial harassment, sanctions, and defamation campaigns.

Overall project Objective:

Women Human Rights Defenders are recognised and supported as essential actors in defending and advancing human rights, and bringing about positive change in society.

FLD's Approach:

- **HRD-driven:** Key to our approach to protection is putting HRDs' experiences of risk at the centre of our support; supporting HRDs to assess the risks that they face and allowing HRDs to define their own needs; providing support that is flexible and having the organisational ability to adapt and customise our support to individual and collective needs. Our support is built on building trusted relationships. Many HRDs and communities have their own strategies for protection, we learn from and build on these. We recognise that protection is not linear – needs and risks of HRDs evolve in different ways and at different times. While we aim to maintain a consistency we also aim to be flexible to the needs of the defender, the risks they face and their context.

- Being HRD-driven also means that we ensure that we *do no harm*. We strive to ensure that the support that we provide does not add to or increase risks for the HRDs, their families and communities we support. We aim to be continuously mindful of the potential risks of harm we may bring, and exercise caution, sensitivity and good judgement at all times. We also respect the importance of informed consent and confidentiality. The security of data, visibility strategies, transfer of funds, ensuring our support does not divide communities, and ensuring inclusivity and consideration of groups that have been historically discriminated such as women, indigenous peoples, and LGBTQI+ are particularly important areas that we consider carefully.

- A key element of our approach is also to *support HRDs globally*. We recognise the importance of being accessible and we are well positioned to support HRDs working across all regions. We have a strong and diverse network of over 23,000 HRDs upon which to build our support and we have worked to support HRDs in over 150 countries in the previous Strategic Plan.

- **Holistic protection:** Since the organisation's inception we have always recognised that risks and threats are multifaceted, and that often multiple interventions/ areas of support/ ways of assessing risks are needed 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. We recognise there are many other elements of risk that fall outside our capacity and mandate and that linking and referring HRDs with others is also often crucial for their needs. We provide support that is reactive to immediate threats and also support that is preventative, or focused on resilience and capacity strengthening. Over the next years, we will strengthen our approach to holistic protection, learning and documenting good practise, and we will create more opportunities for cross-team training and shared learning within the organisation.

- **Individual and collective protection:** While individual protection will continue to be a key focus for us we know that effective protection comes firstly from families, communities, collectives, movements and local networks of support. We know that it takes groups of HRDs, social movements, and communities to make

change happen, and that the rights HRDs are fighting for are often collective rights or require collective strategies. The risks associated with taking action are often shared risks.

During the course of this Strategic Plan we will continue to support the protection needs of individual human rights defenders, based on the level of risk and the needs expressed by HRDs, whilst further strengthening our approach to collective protection and we will ensure that our protection work can be adapted to supporting collective strategies. This includes finding ways to strengthen collective protection capacity and mechanisms; supporting communities, networks, social movements and groups of HRDs to strengthen their connectivity; and increasing visibility for communities of HRDs. We recognise 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. We also recognise that we need to better adapt our support to HRDs working in the context of collective protest movements.

- *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. Risk and the capacity to access protection support relate to both their work and identity/ies. Ensuring our support is aligned to HRD needs is a process that requires an intersectional approach. Building trust, listening, asking the right questions and flexibility to provide a variety of protection measures are key to our support.

During the next years we will sharpen our 'lens' and provide tailored protection support. Priorities will include: increasing our outreach to particular groups of defenders (in particular HRDs with disability, transgender HRDs, and land/environmental/indigenous rights HRDs), increasing our understanding of the nuanced risks for particular groups of HRDs and continually develop our thinking on what constitutes a risk; strengthening the accessibility of our support; strengthening how we communicate our work from an intersectional perspective; strengthening learning and analysis of the support we provide; building knowledge and capacity internally.

We also acknowledge and are conscious of the power dynamics and privilege that comes with being an international organisation based in Europe and the Global North. We recognise the importance of addressing and overcoming barriers to diversity, equity and inclusion in the support that we provide and to ensure the organisation is truly representative of our global mandate and values.

- *Ecosystem approach:* Our work fits within an ecosystem of protection support at a local, national, regional and international level. We will remain thoughtful about how we can 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 bigger alliances of support for HRDs. We also know that we need to continue to build our network and diversify our contacts in order for verification processes to be effective.

At an international level we will continue to be the lead organisation of ProtectDefenders.eu and an active member of other consortia such as Lifeline Embattled CSO fund, Digital Defenders Partnership, Defenders in Development, and HRD Memorial Project. As part of this Strategic Plan some key priorities will include strengthening our support to locally-led protection mechanisms, sharing our data and analysis more effectively, and strengthening strategic partnerships for referrals **including specialist support (e.g. organisations focused on legal support, psychosocial support, resettlement) and strengthening our outreach (disability, transrights, environmental rights organisations).** FLD also collaborates closely with governments and

foundations as donors and as key allies in supporting the protection of HRDs. We will aim to be a reliable partner, sharing information and knowledge with others.

Outcome 1: WHRDs working at local/national level have increased protection through the provision of rapid, practical and intersectional support.

Output 1.1: WHRDs at risk have access to financial and material support. i.e. Security Grants to strengthen their protection

FLD will provide **1,180 protection grants** to WHRDs globally with practical security needs including legal costs, temporary relocation, and office and home security systems, psychological and medical costs. Protection grants are on average awarded for an amount of approximately 3,000 Euro (maximum 7,500 Euro) and in emergency situations can be provided within 48hrs. In light of the increasing difficulties in sending funds to HRDs, FLD will continue to develop and explore more options for safe and effective ways of transferring funds in increasingly restrictive environments. In recognition of the importance of holistic protection for ensuring HRDs are able to successfully and safely continue their work, FLD's grants can cover a range of needs including, but not limited to:

- improving physical security of an organisation or individual, digital security and communication security;
- temporary relocations;
- supporting legal fee;
- paying for medical fees;
- providing family assistance
- Providing psycho-social support.

Output 1.2: Action in response to urgent WHRD cases

FLD will support **375 cases WHRDs from all world regions through urgent actions**, including by issuing urgent appeals, alerts and other forms of advocacy, tailored to the specific context. Front Line Defenders will advocate for national governments, international institutions and other relevant actors to take action on the cases of WHRDs. FLD will continue to strengthen its advocacy on HRD cases where private sector actors/companies are the perpetrators. FLD will seek to highlight more flexibility in its Urgent Advocacy responses (urgent appeals, statements, private letters, visibility and social media strategies), and develop more strategies tailored at national and local levels. FLD's casework will include support to individuals WHRDs and collective support to groups, organisations and communities.

Key indicator of impact will be:

- 86% of HRDs reporting increased security as a result of FLD support.
- 99% of grants improved security
- 45% of urgent advocacy positive outcome

Outcome 2: WHRDs, their communities and civil society have strengthened resilience and capacity to manage their protection in the longer-term

Output 2.1 - WHRDs receive tailored capacity support and resource materials to assist with immediate and long-term security.

FLD will provide one-to-one consultations, group consultations and workshops on all aspects of protection, to *over 1,850 WHRDs at risk*. This will include:

- ***Holistic Protection workshops:*** Those workshops are typically 3 days and include 10-15 participants. Risk Analysis and Protection Planning (RAPP) training covers topics such as risk assessment, threat analysis, stress reduction, creating security plans for specific risks, and completing personal security plans, organisational or network security plans after returning. During this project, FLD will enhance its capacity to deliver workshops to WHRDs, building on successful regional capacity building programmes. This will include specific workshops for WHRDs and supporting WHRDs to attend workshops.
- ***Digital Protection workshops and consultations*** will be organised with WHRDs. Support is adapted to the context of each WHRDs but typically include topics such as: digital protection risk assessment, protecting computer from malware and hackers, how to protect sensitive data on computers, improving email privacy, improving security of social media use, and mobile phone security. This support will be provided by FLD's team of Digital Protection Coordinators based in all world regions.
- ***FLD Security Advisors*** will provide practical physical security support to WHRDs working in particularly difficult contexts, including in-person and remote tailored consultations. This support will focus on WHRDs most immediately at-risk, with support tailored to their specific environment and focusing on physical and personal security strategies and steps to implement security measures, including in their homes and offices.

When implementing those training activities, FLD will make full use of – and continue to update - its ***training and security resources*** such as its [Workbook on Security](#): Practical Steps for Human Rights Defenders at Risk and [Security in-a-box \(to be updated in 2025\)](#), as well as continue to develop context/ issue-focused resources/guidelines for WHRDs highlighting best-practice.

Output 2.2 - WHRDs receive tailored well-being and psychosocial support to strengthen their resilience.

FLD will ***support around 345 WHRDs*** with tailored well-being and psychosocial support during this project. This will include specific consultations on well-being, co-create collective spaces and workshops focused on well-being, and strengthen our referral process for well-being and psychological support for WHRDs. This activity will improve the response to the ***well-being needs of WHRDs***, ensuring a diversification of the well-being support FLD provides that is rooted in what well-being means to WHRDs and in their local context, and when relevant adapt our support to a collective approach to well-being.

Furthermore, under this activity FLD will continue to implement its ***Rest & Respite programme*** which will allow around **30** WHRDs to take much needed rest from their daily work and enhance their skills so they can work more effectively. This support is tailored to the specific needs of the HRD and their area of work. Rest & Respite support is implemented in Ireland, as well as regionally, and in coordination with the EU Temporary Relocation Platform and includes efforts to develop and strengthen local and regional shelter initiatives.

Output 2.3 - WHRDs have increased opportunities for cross-regional experience sharing and learning on effective protection strategies.

Front Line Defenders will support HRDs to *share cross-regional experiences*, learn from each other and develop more effective strategies for their security and protection. Specifically, the ***Dublin Platform for Human Rights Defenders*** will be organised in 2027. The Dublin Platform brings together over 100 Human Rights Defenders from around the world. The Platform provides a safe space for sharing cross-regional strategies for protection and provide a vital opportunity for lesser known and less connected HRDs to gain recognition of the crucial importance of their human rights work among their peers and the international community, and increase solidarity among HRDs. FLD will also seek to convene and co-create more *spaces at a regional level for HRDs to exchange ideas* and facilitate cross-regional learning opportunities for HRDs focused on specific threats, contexts, protection issues.

Output 2.4 - Work of WHRDs and organisations promoted through visibility and communications.

FLD will develop further *visibility for protection strategies* to support around 205 WHRDs. This will include exploring more opportunities for the strategic use of visibility and communications for WHRD protection, and deploying storytelling strategies to change and reconstruct narratives of human rights and WHRDs. FLD will seek to focus on visibilising marginalised groups of WHRDs and building positive narratives on the work and impact. FLD will co-develop strategic communications materials with WHRDs such as graphic novels, calendars, podcasts, videos, etc. depending on the specific needs on key cases where solidarity, memory, recognition and visibility can play a crucial protection role (cases of criminalisation, smearing, division in the movement, contested false narratives, etc).

Under activity 2.4, Front Line Defenders will also present the **Annual Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk** which honours the work of HRDs who are courageously making outstanding contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights. The Award continues to provide an opportunity to highlight the important work of WHRDs at an international, regional and national level and the award is an opportunity to demonstrate international recognition for their valued role and exemplify their commitment. The Award provides an opportunity to leverage media attention for the winners at both national and international levels. Front Line Defenders Awards are presented to five regional winners each year.

Output 2.5 - WHRDs and organisations supported through local protection initiatives.

FLD has had a priority focus on working with and supporting **local protection initiatives**. The aim of this support is to build the capacity of local emergency responses to HRDs under threat; build the capacity of local HRD networks to assess the risks inherent in their work and plan better for their own protection; and to encourage the concept of collective protection among local HRDs so that they form and are aware of their local support systems. In 2024 alone, FLD has enabled 10 local, national or regional protection initiatives through strategic funding and additional capacity and networking support. FLD plans to support one local protection initiative focused on WHRDs per year.

Key indicator for impact will be:

- 98% of WHRDs supported through FLD capacity building support reporting improved capacity to assess and manage risks.

Outcome 3: There are stronger policies and political/practical action at national, regional and international levels to protect women human rights defenders at risk

Output 3.1 - Tailored advocacy on specific WHRD cases targeted at national, EU, UN, US actors.

FLD's Global Advocacy team will **take up over 220 cases** to EU and other key actors and carry out specific advocacy to push for concrete positive outcomes of the cases of WHRDs. FLD will continue to encourage the key stakeholders to engage in urgent assistance for WHRDs facing immediate or long-term threats. Front Line Defenders will also work to expand awareness and support of particularly vulnerable WHRDs. This will include ongoing engagement with EU institutions, governments, the UN and other key stakeholders, including at the national and local levels where appropriate.

Output 3.2 – Strengthened engagement of key allies.

FLD will engage in thematic advocacy work focusing on areas where it can bring particular added value. FLD will also engage where relevant with local and international coalitions and networks to support this work. FLD will continue to conduct focused **advocacy on business and human rights** initiatives, including on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence. FLD will also continue to advocate for stronger implementation of the EU Guidelines on the Protection of HRDs and other similar guidelines and initiatives, including in the private sector, and utilise casework to build strong evidence to change policy by producing regular analyses to be shared with relevant advocacy targets. FLD will also advocate for the need to increase and improve funding for HRD and WHRD protection. This will include participation in **advocacy rounds** with a total of 70 WHRDs in Brussels and Geneva.

Output 3.3 – Tailored training on advocacy and EU Guidelines.

FLD will continue to carry out training sessions for a total of 55 WHRDs on Advocacy and on the EU Guidelines on the protection of Human Rights Defenders. As well as this, the Global Advocacy team will continue to engage with WHRDs and Diplomats on the **Toolkit for the EU on WHRDs**. Under this activity, FLD will continue to connect WHRDs with EU Diplomats in Brussels and globally. This will include through online workshops with EU Diplomats where WHRDs can share their experiences.

Output 3.4 – Global Advocacy and Analysis.

FLD sees a particular added value in having a global scope for the research and analysis element of the project to allow for deeper analysis of the issues and trends, and create opportunities for much-needed cross-regional learning. It is estimated that FLD will publish two research papers annually, where the organisation monitor threats faced by WHRDs at risk globally and research and analyse key threats faced, more specifically gender related threats, digital threats and threats linked to businesses. FLD will also continue to publish its annual Global Analysis report. The findings and results of the research will be used actively to engage with relevant stakeholders and advocate for the protection of WHRDs in relevant spheres.

Topics to be included in the research:

- The impact of Cyber Security Laws on freedom of expression and how they target WHRDs in different countries and regions
- Research on social media, engagement with technology companies and the protection of WHRDs
- The impact of processes around extractive industries and the green transition on WHRDs' protection.

Key indicators of impact will be:

- 90 % of cases have a positive response from advocacy target
- 40% of positive outcomes on HRD cases

Estimated global reach per Outcome

	Global	Africa	Other region
Outcome 1*: WHRDs working at local/national level have increased protection through the provision of rapid, practical and intersectional support	0%	18%	82%
Outcome 2: WHRDs, their communities and civil society have strengthened resilience and capacity to manage their protection in the longer-term	0%	25%	75%
Outcome 3: There are stronger policies and political/practical action at national, regional and international levels to protect women human rights defenders at risk	20%	20%	60%

Results Framework

Project	Protection Support for Women Human Rights Defenders Globally
Project Objective	Women Human rights defenders are recognised and supported as essential actors in defending and advancing human rights, and bringing about positive change in society.
Impact Indicator	% of WHRDs have continued their work following the receipt of FLD assistance over the programme
Baseline	2024 – 88%
Target	2028 – 90%

Outcome 1		WHRDs working at local/national level have increased protection through the provision of rapid, practical and intersectional support	
Outcome indicator		% of WHRDs reporting increased security as a result of FLD urgent support - % of grants improved security - % of urgent advocacy positive outcome	
Baseline	Year	2024	82% of WHRDs reporting increased security as a result of FLD urgent support 98% of grants improved security 32% of urgent advocacy positive outcome
Target	Year	2028	86% of WHRDs reporting increased security as a result of FLD urgent support 99% of grants improved security 45% of urgent advocacy positive outcome

Output 1.1		WHRDs at risk have access to financial and material support. i.e. Security Grants to strengthen their protection	
Output indicator		# of protection grants provided to WHRDs globally per year	
Baseline	Year	2024	360
Target	Year 1	2026	380
Target	Year 2	2027	400
Target	Year 3	2028	400

Output 1.2		Action taken in response to urgent WHRD cases	
Output indicator		# of WHRDs supported through Urgent Actions	
Baseline	Year	2024	119 WHRDs
Target	Year 1	2026	120 WHRDs
Target	Year 2	2027	125 WHRDs
Target	Year 3	2028	130 WHRDs

Outcome 2		WHRDs, their communities and civil society have strengthened resilience and capacity to manage their protection in the longer-term	
Outcome indicator		% of WHRDs supported through FLD capacity building support reporting improved capacity to assess and manage risks	
Baseline	Year	2024	98%
Target	Year	2028	98%

Output 2.1		WHRDs receive tailored capacity support and resource materials to assist with immediate and long-term security	
Output indicator		# of WHRDs who receive tailored capacity building support	
Baseline	Year	2024	602
Target	Year 1	2026	600
Target	Year 2	2027	620
Target	Year 3	2028	630

Output 2.2		WHRDs receive tailored well-being and psychosocial support to strengthen their resilience	
Output indicator		# of WHRDs supported through well-being and psychosocial support	
Baseline	Year	2024	115
Target	Year 1	2026	120
Target	Year 2	2027	120
Target	Year 3	2028	125

Output 2.3		WHRDs have increased opportunities for cross-regional experience sharing and learning on effective protection strategies	
Output indicator		# of WHRD who attend cross regional learning spaces facilitated by FLD	
Baseline	Year	2024	70 (Platform and Award)
Target	Year 1	2026	3 (Award)
Target	Year 2	2027	70 (Platform and Award)
Target	Year 3	2028	3 (Award)

Output 2.4		Work of WHRDs and organisations promoted through visibility and communications	
Output indicator		# WHRDs supported through visibility and communications	
Baseline	Year	2024	63 WHRDs
Target	Year 1	2026	65 WHRDs
Target	Year 2	2027	70 WHRDs
Target	Year 3	2028	70 WHRDs

Output 2.5		WHRDs and organisations supported through local protection initiatives	
Output indicator		# of local protection initiatives with a focus on WHRDs supported	
Baseline	Year	2024	N/A
Target	Year 1	2026	1
Target	Year 2	2027	1
Target	Year 3	2028	1

Outcome 3		There are stronger policies and political/practical action at national, regional and international levels to protect women human rights defenders at risk	
Outcome indicator		3.1 a. % of cases where targets at EU, UN, US level take action as a result of FLD advocacy. 3.1.b % of positive outcomes on HRD cases 3.2 Evidence of stronger policies/laws in place for the protection of WHRDs at national and international level e.g. EU, UN, Business/Private Sector Actors, Donors, national actors	
Baseline	Year	2024	82% of cases have a positive response from advocacy targets

			26% of cases taken up by the Global Advocacy Team resulted in a positive outcome for the HRD.
Target	Year	2028	90% of cases have a positive response from advocacy targets 40% of cases taken up by the Global Advocacy Team resulted in a positive outcome for the HRD.

Output 3.1		Tailored advocacy on specific WHRD cases targeted at national, EU, UN, US actors	
Output indicator		# of cases sent to key global advocacy targets per year	
Baseline	Year	2024	50 cases
Target	Year 1	2026	50 cases
Target	Year 2	2027	60 cases
Target	Year 3	2028	60 cases

Output 3.2		Strengthened engagement of key allies	
Output indicator		# meetings held with key actors # WHRDs supported through advocacy rounds	
Baseline	Year	2024	201 23
Target	Year 1	2026	220 20
Target	Year 2	2027	220 25
Target	Year 3	2028	230 25

Output 3.3		Tailored training on advocacy and EU Guidelines	
Output indicator		# of WHRDs who take part in Advocacy Training	
Baseline	Year	2024	14
Target	Year 1	2026	15
Target	Year 2	2027	20
Target	Year 3	2028	20

Output 3.4		Global Advocacy and Analysis	
Output indicator		# of research papers published	
Baseline	Year	2024	1
Target	Year 1	2026	2
Target	Year 2	2027	2
Target	Year 3	2028	2

Annex 4 – Risk Management – Front Line Defenders

TEMPLATE: Risk Management Matrix

Contextual risks

Risk Factor	Likelihood	Impact	Risk response	Residual risk	Background to assessment
Diminishing support to HRDs among key actors. Key actors' (governments, UN and EU institutions) interest in supporting HRDs diminishes, due to competing priorities, loss of involvement in human rights issues or budget cuts	Low	High	FLD is in touch with key actors on a regular basis and keeps abreast of all relevant political developments, to maximise the impact of its advocacy and maintain the issue of human rights defenders on the political agenda. Contacts are also developed with actors who are not necessarily obvious supporters of human rights defenders (e.g. Non-Western states and private companies) to try to increase the constituency of supporters of human rights defenders.	Low	FLD's extensive network and strong advocacy make it unlikely that key actors will stop supporting HRDs.
Inflationary pressure continues to worsen, leading to raise in costs that make it more expensive for FLD to deliver support	High	Medium	FLD monitors budget spend and the average cost of its trainings and grants, ensuring that these stay in line with programme budgets. Cost saving measures are implemented where appropriate. Close communication with donors on budget spend in case adjustments are needed.	Low	Inflation has continued to increase the cost of some areas of work for FLD, such as the average grant increasing between 2023 and 2024.
Security environment in certain contexts (eg. security level, restrictive legislation) preventing FLD from delivering its programmes	Low	High	FLD develops an annual Global Analysis of security context for HRDs; Range of methods for secure transfer of funds; High level of security expertise & regional/ country analysis on staff – and strong expertise in operating in	Low	FLD is exceptionally experienced in adjusting programmes and delivery modalities to ensure support to HRDs in the most challenging contexts can still take place. E.g. in Afghanistan in 2021, despite difficulties with the banking system, FLD still safely delivered grant support to HRDs at risk.

			supporting HRDs in very restricted spaces.		
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Programmatic risks (for bilateral programmes at the country level, it has to be filled out for the portfolio under each strategic objective)

Risk Factor	Likelihood	Impact	Risk response	Residual risk	Background to assessment
Harm coming to a human rights defender as a result of Front Line Defenders action (or inaction) or leakage of information/communication	Low	High	Front Line Defenders has a number of internal policies and processes in order to mitigate this risk – including guidance on when HRD cases can be public, informed consent on any publicity, and mechanisms in place to ensure the privacy of HRD names if required. Transfer of money is done with a range of mechanisms which can be adjusted depending on the security mechanism. Management are also required to sign-off for HRD public cases, ensuring that risks are mitigated.	Low	HRDs may be put at greater risk if they are known to be receiving support from an international human rights organisation.
Losing key supporters and contacts within international institutions and governments, which might affect effectiveness in advocating for Human Rights Defenders.	Low	Low	FLD invests in relationship building with key actors. FLD teams meet very regularly with key contacts at EU and UN levels and with key NGOs. FLD is aware of developments at international level and is able to create and establish new relationships with key contacts as required. FLD increases its involvement with key governments supporting HRDs.	Low	FLD will keep engaging with key governments and institutions to make sure that HRDs remain on the agenda of those actors. FLD will also seek support from additional – and traditionally less involved – Governments.
Difficulty to access decision makers and key actors.	Low	High	FLD has developed a good reputation and strong working relationships with key actors including at higher levels.	Medium	FLD is experienced in approaching decision makers and calibrates its asks based on the target audience. The impact of this is high but very unlikely to occur.
Unable to find suitable HRDs for events and trainings. Difficulty to identify and secure	Low	Low	FLD has developed a strong network of HRD contacts in each country and is able to identify and secure relevant participants. Field-based protection coordinators are involved in the	Risk of HRDs not willing to participate	Due to FLD's extensive network, this risk is very unlikely to occur.

relevant participants to events and trainings.			development of the workshops and workshops are planned in places based on expressed needs of HRDs.	may still remain.	
Unable to ensure security of a planned training or workshop. Security risks of organizing a training or event are too high, and participants could be put at risk for participating. Or repressive governments ban or block participants from attending.	Low	High	FLD always carries out a security assessment – also taking into account feedback from local HRDs – regarding the organisation of a training or event. FLD can organise the workshop in a different venue and country to meet the necessary safety requirements.	Medium	If it is too dangerous to organise a workshop in a specific country, FLD can organise it in another country. FLD can also prepare alternative venues, change timing; arrange alternative travel routes and/or send more neutral invitations.
Lack of progress on key policies impacting on HRDs. Competing interests water down progressive policies supporting HRDs, or lead to adoption of negative policies.	Low	High	FLD is experienced in lobbying and works well in coalition with partners to campaign for progressive policies. FLD can build and work with effective alliances working in a timely manner in the policy development process. FLD carries out analysis ahead of inputting in policy process to identify best ways to impact. FLD provides quality evidence and data to help support the need for progressive HRD policies, and is adept at creating buy-in among decision makers.	Medium	This risk is significant given that FLD's advocacy aims to improve the framework for HRDs. However, it is unlikely due to FLD's experience in lobbying.
Fraudulent application to the protection grants programme leads to funding	Medium	Low	The Protection Grants team has a strong process for verifying grant applications are from legitimate HRDs and are not double funded by peer organisations. A strong network of trusted contacts supports this work.	Low	FLD's processes are robust enough that no fraudulent applications were funded in 2024.

Institutional risks

Risk Factor	Likelihood	Impact	Risk response	Residual risk	Background to assessment
The risk of a decline in funding/ loss of a key funder;	High	Medium	FLD monitors income & expenditure through monthly accounts, prioritising financial planning depending on the position of the organisation. We maintain good relationships with current and potential donors, conveying the impact and urgency of our work. This is backed up by our strong advocacy for funding to support HRD work. This aims to maintain and expand a diverse base of donors	Medium	Funding for international human rights work is currently declining and there is a risk that Front Line Defenders suffers a decline in funding. We remain in touch with all our donors, have a strong and diversified donor base, and so remain in a strong position funding wise.
The risk of harm coming to Front Line Defenders staff or representatives.	Medium	High	FLD has strong travel and security guidelines for staff, developed with experts within the organisation. All staff based outside of FLD's offices are required to have security plans in place which are reviewed by the Security Advisory team. Travel plans are also prepared and reviewed.	Medium	Many of Front Line Defenders staff members are based around the world, including in fragile and conflicted-affected states. Due to the nature of their work they may also be targeted. Therefore, strong action is taken to ensure relevant security plans are in place, including consultations with Front Line Defender's expert team on security.
Lack of compliance with donor requirements/ restrictions	Medium	Medium	FLD has a strong board which monitors our compliance with charity regulations. Systems and processes, such as accounts management, ensure compliance with donor requirements.	Low	
Mismanagement of funds/ fraud including the use of informal financial service providers and compliance with money-laundering and sanctions-regimes.	Low	High	FLD has strong fraud and financial policies, including the anti-fraud policy, which ensures receipts for all spending and expenses are submitted promptly, ensuring oversight of grants, with robust verification and checking with other grant providers, and ensuring financial policies and procedure manual kept up	Low	No fraud was recorded in 2024.

			to date and staff are provided with clear and consistent guidelines on how to comply with fraud and sanction-regimes.		
An incident seriously damaging the reputation of FLD particularly through publishing false information, leakage of information, through fraud/ mismanagement of funds or through actions of someone affiliated with the organisation.	Low	Medium	FLD has clear guidelines for communication of our mission by all staff. We have a clear visibility & communications strategy in place, including monitoring for reputational risks and a policy of not engaging publicly with bad-faith actors (e.g. online trolls, state media in repressive regimes).	Medium	
The risk of harm coming to a human rights defender due to inadequate safeguarding measures in place.	Low	High	Safeguarding policy & Complaints procedure in place.	Low	The impact of this risk is Major but due to FLD's policies, it is unlikely, as staff are provided with training and support on how to engage HRDs safely.

Annex 5: Plan for Communication

FLD seeks *primarily to enhance the visibility of human rights defenders and the positive impact of their work*. FLD gives priority to the voice and perspective of HRDs in all its communications. Key messages are rooted in presenting HRDs as powerful individuals and FLD seeks to promote the agency and the work of HRDs rather than the image of HRDs as victims. FLD draws attention to the diversity of HRDs (as peacebuilders, women HRDs defending environmental rights etc.) and their lived experiences in our discourse for a richer appreciation of their critical work. FLD aims to *depict the wider context* in which HRDs are working both within a global and national context.

FLD develops strategic campaigns and innovative communications tools (e.g. videos, graphic novels and zines, podcasts – in addition to media and social media work) linked to an overall package of protection supports for HRDs in specific contexts, develops specific thematic reports on targeted HRDs and seeks to cultivate new voices to enhance the visibility of HRDs.

FLD is also very much aware that visibility and communication can be a strategy for protection but also put some HRDs at higher risk. FLD carries out risk assessments ahead of visibility actions and provides visibility for protection training to help HRDs mitigate risks related to increased profile, and to make the most out of visibility as a tool to enhance theirs and their communities' security.

FLD subscribes to the Dochas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages. FLD has strict policies and procedures in place with regards to images. The use of images has to be approved by the HRD, and is categorised as such in FLD's photo database. For example, a number of HRDs at the Dublin Platform do not have a public profile. All content that is produced by FLD – either by staff or in collaboration with content producers who are commissioned – is done in collaboration with HRDs and with their consent and input into the product.

Under this project, FLD will promote and celebrate the work of WHRDs through:

- **Annual FLD Award:** The annual Front Line Defenders Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk was established in 2005 to honour the work of HRDs who are courageously making outstanding contributions to the promotion and protection of the human rights of others, often at great personal risk to themselves. The Award focuses international attention on the work and struggles of HRDs, providing a greater national and international platform to speak about and advocate for the human rights issues they are defending. Laureates are selected from among scores of candidates which are put forward in a secure, public nomination process carried out towards the end of each year and Award winners are announced on the day of the Award Ceremony in Dublin usually in May the following year.
- **Arts and Human Rights Festival:** The Dublin Arts and Human Rights Festival is an annual, international festival organised by Smashing Times International Centre for the Arts and Equality and Front Line Defenders. The festival aims to promote human rights and justice for all, and the vision of a world where all people are treated equally, with dignity and respect – linking the arts to civil society, active citizenship and politics.
- Communications at Front Line Defenders supported 63 WHRDs in 2024 through podcasts, photo exhibitions, other events, and with visibility on their cases through the website or social media. Under this project, FLD will develop other **communication tools** together with WHRDs such as:
 - Podcasts - ***Rights on the Line*** is an exclusive human rights podcast produced by Front Line Defenders, presenting the voices, perspectives and experiences of HRDs at risk and focusing on human rights issues across the globe.
 - **Calendars** – Visibility for Protection Calendars will be created in collaboration with WHRDs in

- different regions to showcase their work
- **Documentary** – Due to a lack of visibility on the situation facing WHRDs and HRDs from Western Sahara, FLD decided to focus a media for visibility campaign on Sahrawi HRDs and WHRDs. This is due to be finalised and shared in 2025, including at film festivals.
 - FLD is currently redesigning its Website to better make it more accessible and ensure HRDs and WHRDs are at the centre of all of FLD's communications work.

Annex 7 – Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning – Front Line Defenders

Front Line Defenders has a strong Monitoring and Evaluation process in place. FLD monitors and evaluates the success and impact of its work against its: **Strategic Plan 2023-2027** and **Theory of Change**. A **Results Framework** is used to track key outcome indicators on an annual basis. In conjunction with the results framework, FLD tracks key milestones for the organisational strategic plan through its **implementation Plan** which is reviewed by the board on a biennial basis.

FLD monitoring and evaluation work is supported by a specific **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Team**, composed of a MEAL Manager and a Database Officer.

The attached Results Framework will be the key framework to monitor progress made under this proposed project. The methodology for monitoring the project are outlined below.

Outcome 1 – Emergency Response

Protection Grants – Following receipt of a grant, Front Line Defenders requires that WHRDs provide an evaluation of the support within six weeks of receiving the grant. This evaluation assesses the impact of the grant on the WHRDs security, their capacity to return to work, and their capacity as a human rights defender. Front Line Defenders uses these evaluations to monitor the effectiveness of this activity and determine if further or additional support is needed for the WHRD. In addition, Front Line Defenders includes all results for grants in our organisational database and can run analysis reports on key areas such as the impact of grants for HRDs working in specific countries etc. This supports decision making and can determine the most effective support for WHRDs in specific contexts. FLD Protection Grants team also monitors developments and can adapt grant-making strategies to keep providing support to WHRDs at risk.

Urgent Advocacy - Front Line Defenders' HRD database includes information on all verified human rights defenders and cases that the organisation takes up. Front Line Defenders tracks all cases and determines the status of support as having had a 'negative', 'neutral' or 'positive' outcome. The tracking and monitoring of cases is carried out on an ongoing basis by regionally based Protection Coordinators, who are in direct contacts with WHRDs in their regions. Actions such as increasing contact with authorities (and/or contacting new actors at the international, national or local level), increasing visibility of specific cases, adapting messaging or reaching out to groups of specific WHRDs are taken based on this monitoring system.

Outcome 2 – Building capacity and resilience

Front Line Defenders has a thorough evaluation process following every capacity building activity that is implemented. For example, for Risk Assessment and Protection Planning workshops, at the end of each workshop an evaluation is completed by all participants. Key questions included at this evaluation stage are: Do you feel confident to create and implement your organisational/individual security plan? What are the top 3 measures you are going to implement to improve your security and/or your organisations security? On a scale of 1 – 5, if 1 = very low capacity to react to threats, and 5 = very high capacity to react to threats, what number do you think you were before the workshop, and what number afterwards? Six weeks later FLD sends out the second evaluation form. In addition, the local trainer follows up with trainees to support the evaluation process. The key areas covered at this evaluation stage include: -has an organisational (or an individual if the HRD is not part of an organisation) security plan been put in place to improve security? - any changes the HRDs has made to their lifestyle to deal with stress – attitude to security before and after the workshop. FLD Digital Protection Consultations capture impact through 'change stories' as a way to assess how the support has improved a HRD's safety and security.

The monitoring of this area of work enables Front Line Defenders to determine if changes are needed in both content and methodology of the workshops and if additional support is required.

Outcome 3 - Strengthened national, regional and international protection

Similarly to Urgent Advocacy, Front Line Defenders tracks all cases raised with the EU institutions, member

States and UN Special Rapporteurs. All responses are recorded from key advocacy targets and positive action taken such as going to the trial, issuing statements etc. are all recorded. Front Line Defenders also monitors the impact that this action has on the security of the WHRD. Based on this approach, Front Line Defenders can determine the effectiveness of its advocacy, which advocacy strategies are having the most impact in terms of action by the advocacy targets, and also which strategies have the greatest impact. Based on this information, FLD can amend its activities (and advocacy targets) to ensure highest impact of advocacy for each specific case.

Internally, FLD's monitoring system accounts for gender and is reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure that differences in outreach to men, women and gender non-conforming people are accounted for. All activities (consultations, trainings, grants) are recorded on the database and a dedicated Database Officer assists in analyzing the data in quarterly reports.

Evaluations

Learning Reviews: Each year, FLD will engage in one thorough learning review/evaluation. The reviews/evaluations will be carried out by both an internal staff member (Strategy, Monitoring and Learning Manager) and an external evaluator. During such evaluations, the evaluators meet with HRDs having received FLD support (e.g. relocation, training, visibility, advocacy) and gather and analyse feedback on the effectiveness and impact of such support. These in-depth evaluations provide both useful samples of the impact of the project at a country level and important learning for the organisation.

External Evaluation: In line with its Strategic Planning time-frame (2023-2027) Front Line Defenders will also engage an external evaluator to assess its strategy, work and internal coordination. A mid-term evaluation process will be completed in 2025 and a final external evaluation will take place in 2027 so as to inform the development of the next Strategic Plan (2028-2032).

Annex 8 - Process Action Plan – Formulation of FLD Grant 2025-2028

Process Action Plan (PAP) for formulation of new project with Frontline Defenders

Action/product	Deadlines	Responsible/involved units	Comment/status
Identification			
Process Action Plan for project/programme development up to the registering of commitments		HUMCIV in consultation with Frontline Defenders	PAP to be updated at regular intervals
Formulation, quality assurance and approval			
Submission of draft project document, incl. relevant annexes	April 8	Frontline Defenders	Application of the fundamental considerations proportionally to the complexity of the project/programme.
Revision of the project document	April 8-18	HUMCIV, Front Line Defenders	
Quality assurance: Internal Appraisal	May 15-23 (within these dates) NEW: May 20-26	HUMCIV	HUMCIV development specialist
Finalisation of the project/programme document	May 23-30 NEW: 26-30	HUMCIV, Front Line Defenders	
Finalise Appropriation Cover Note, partner assessment	May 23-30 NEW: 26-30	HUMCIV	
Approval of PD and all documentation	May 30 – June 6	HUMCIV management	
Quality Assurance Checklist (Annex 9): documentation of the appraisal process	June 2-6	HUMCIV	Signed by the responsible desk officer and the Head of unit and attached to the project/programme documents

Checklist for approval by the Under-secretary for development policy: QA of required documentation	June 2-6	HUMCIV	The filled-in checklist to be attached to the project/programme document, appropriation cover note and Annex 9
All documentation is sent in P360 for the Under-secretary's endorsement via the Head of unit and LEARNING (Modtagelse i Bevillingssekretariatet)	9 June	HUMCIV	Required documentation: Appropriation cover note Final Project Document, including annexes Quality Assurance Checklist (Annex 9) Checklist for approval by the Under-secretary for development policy
LEARNING presents the grant for final approval by the Minister	June	LEARNING	
The minister approves the project	June	LEARNING submits the proposed project/programme together with the minutes of meeting	
Initial actions following the Minister's approval			
LEARNING facilitates that grant proposals are published on Danida Transparency after the Minister's approval	After Minister's approval	LEARNING	
Signing of Government-to-government agreement(s) and/or other legally binding agreements (commitments) with partner(s)	After Minister's approval	HUMCIV	

Register commitment(s) in MFA's financial systems within the planned quarter	After agreement(s) are signed, Q3	HUMCIV	
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