**Questionnaire for National Human Rights Institutions and International or Inter-governmental Organizations by the**

**UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders**

**Mary Lawlor, August 2020**

The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Ms. Mary Lawlor invites National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and International or Inter-Governmental Organizations (IIOOs) to respond to the questionnaire below. Submissions received will inform the thematic report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of killings of human rights defenders, which will be presented to the UN Human Rights Council in March 2021.

The questionnaire and related concept note on the report are available at OHCHR website in English (original language) as well as in French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic (unofficial translations): (<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SRHRDefenders/Pages/SRHRDefendersIndex.aspx>).

All submissions received will be published in the aforementioned website, unless the submitter clearly indicated that they did not wish to have their input be made publicly available when submitting their response.

There is a word limit of 2500 words per questionnaire. Please submit the completed questionnaire to defenders@ohchr.org

Deadline for submissions: **5** **October 2020**

**Contact Details**

Please provide your contact details in case we need to contact you in connection with this survey. Note that this is optional. (edited for public release)

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| --- | --- |
| Type of Stakeholder (please select one) | [ ]  National Human Rights Institution (NHRI)[x]  International or Inter-governmental Organisation (IIOO)[ ]  Other (please specify): |
| Name of Stakeholder Organization (if applicable)Name of Survey Respondent | Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala |
| Email |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Address |  |
| Can we attribute responses to this questionnaire to your Institution or Organization publicly? | [x]  Yes [ ]  NoComments (if any): |

**Questions**

Human rights defenders are persons, who individually or in association with others, work peacefully to promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, in accordance with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

1) Does your Institution/Organization accept the legitimate right to defend human rights and if a defender is killed in the course of their work, do you publicly condemn it?

Yes.

2) Have there been any cases of human rights defenders killed in your country (or in the geographic area of responsibility of your organization) since 1 June 2019 up to 30 June 2020?

Yes.

3) How many convictions of perpetrators of killings of human rights defenders were there in your country/geographic area of responsibility since 1 June 2019 up to 30 June 2020?

Zero.

4) Does your Institution/Organization have a procedure to respond to death threats to human rights defenders?

Yes. Our international accompaniment of human rights defenders is poised to support HRDs facing death threats. Response protocols vary according to case and include urgent actions and petitions, advocacy with national and international actors as appropriate (such as the Guatemala Human Rights Ombudsman’s office, Human Rights Prosecutor’s Office, U.S. Embassy in Guatemala, etc), and varied communications strategies designed to alert the international community to physical or other threats to HRDs (such as issuing organizational or joint statements, social media, etc).

5) Does your Institution/Organization have or would be willing to put in place legal guarantees and other protection measures to allow human rights defenders to do their work without persecution?

No, as we are a U.S.-based NGO and cannot provide legal guarantees inside the country of Guatemala or to Guatemalan citizens.

6) Could you please share good practices (evidence-based) that have proofed effective to respond to death threats? And to prevent them from escalating into the killing(s) of human rights defenders?

Our main security-based strategy for human rights defenders is physical and remote international accompaniment. We understand international accompaniment as a tool that can dissuade threats and decrease the level of risk to human rights defenders.

With the tool of international accompaniment, we are also able to observe and document threats and incidents, as well as produce and share information internationally via social media as well as periodically share reports.

We have narrative evidence to illustrate that when international accompaniment is part of a holistic strategy to accompany HRDs, death and overall threats do decrease over time. One example is the accompaniment of plaintiffs in cases seeking justice for genocide against the Guatemalan military. From 2000 to 2005 plaintiffs experienced direct death threats in their rural communities – with the support of international and national accompaniment these death threats declined and plaintiffs were able to successfully participate in a highly publicized trial in 2013 without explicit death threats. Subsequent trials against high military commands have taken place without death threats or physical aggression.

We also launch initiatives and campaigns, which look very different depending on the case, but their main objective is to raise awareness and educate U.S citizens about the human rights situation in Guatemala and the role that the U.S plays in the current context. This strategy allows for an educated base of people to take action should a threat occur.