**Questionnaire for Civil Society 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 you or your organization 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 cote 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 you/your organization clearly indicated that you did not wish to have your input be made publicly available when submitting your response.

There is a word limit of 2500 words per questionnaire. Please submit the completed questionnaire to [defenders@ohchr.org](mailto: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) | Civil Society Group or Organisation  Individual human rights defender  Academic/training or research institution  Other (please specify): |
| Name of Stakeholder/Organization (if applicable)  Name of Survey Respondent | Safety and Risk Mitigation Organization (SRMO) |
| Email |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Address |  |
| Can we attribute responses to this questionnaire to you or your organization publicly? | Yes  No  Comments (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) Have you, any of your colleagues or your organization received online/offline threats and attacks since 1 January 2019 up 30 June 2020?

Yes, SRMO founder received death threat by Taliban and SRMO office was under surveillance by unknown individuals for a long time.

Furthermore, SRMO itself is working on protection of HRDs at risk in Afghanistan and its mandate is to protect the HRDs, WHRDs and CSOs members at risk and provide risk mitigation strategies including safety and protection training, digital security training, hostile environment training, road safety, first aid training and etc.

Meanwhile, SRMO is systematically documenting the cases of threats against Afghan HRDs, WHRDs and CSOs activists across Afghanistan.

Our annual reports on State of Afghan HRDs could be found in our website [www.srmo.org](http://www.srmo.org)

2) If yes, can you please detail and in the case of Facebook preferably provide screenshot with URL?

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/jmyavkcyshenbye/Horia%20threat%20letter%20eng.jpg?dl=0>

https://www.dropbox.com/s/n9e6caeo6vo3ad0/Horia%20threat%20letter%20farsi.jpg?dl=0

The threats was in a letter dropped to a physical address by the letter head of the Taliban.

3) Did any of these threats/attacks escalate into killings - can you please chart the path as you see it?

The death threat was not escalated into the killing of the founder, but SRMO documented more around nine HRDs killed in Afghanistan.

4) Have any of your colleagues been killed since 1 January 2019 up to 30 June 2020?

NOT our colleagues in SRMO, but we have documented four killings in 2019 and nine killings till the end of August 2020 of other HRDs, WHRDs in Afghanistan.

5) If so in what context did the killing(s) occur? Have there been any convictions for the killing(s)?

Non of those killings resulted in prosecution or conviction as most attacks were committed by the Taliban or unknown individuals.

6) Do you normally report death threats? If so, where?

SRMO usually report the threat to the government related security authorities, UNAMA, AIHRC and Afghan HRDs Committee.

7) What in your/Organization’s experience has worked well to respond to death threats? And to prevent them from escalating into the actual killing(s) of human rights defenders?

Safety and Risk Mitigation Organization (SRMO) is working on protection and risk mitigation strategies for HRDs, WHRDs and CSOs activists across Afghanistan. We are also a member of the HRDs Committee. Once we receive the reports of death threats from HRDs we assess the threats including sources of threats, type of threats, location of threats, nature of the threats and whether the threats was posted online, verbal or in a letter. Once we assess this, we start the investigation and where possible we share the threats with the police, UNAMA or Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) as they have better sources of verifications. Meanwhile, we also look at the trend of threats and attacks against HRDs, WHRDs and CSOs activists. Then we will look at how we can assist the HRD at risk in close consultation with the HRD herself/ himself and other members of the HRDs Committee and in vast majority of the cases we decide on internal or external relocation. The internal relocation will be to relocate them to another province within Afghanistan, and external relocation will be to relocate within the region South Asia or Central Asia. After the decision is made, since SRMO does not have the funding of its own to support HRDs at risk, we have to submit an application to one of the international relief fund providers such as Frontline Defenders, Freedom House, Urgent Action Fund, Protect Defenders EU and Forum Asia.