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## **Front Line Defenders Welcomes the Appointment of Mary Lawlor as UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders**

[Dublin, Ireland] – Front Line Defenders welcomes the appointment of Mary Lawlor as UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders by the UN Human Rights Council during its 43<sup>rd</sup> session. Ms. Lawlor’s appointment is a clear recognition of her dedication to the safety, security and wellbeing of human rights defenders at risk around the world, exemplified by her establishing Front Line Defenders in 2001.

Under Ms. Lawlor’s leadership until her retirement in 2016, Front Line Defenders became one of the leading organisations providing resources for the protection and security of human rights defenders at risk, with a global reach and able to respond to HRDs’ needs in emergencies. She helped spearhead civil society efforts to bring the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders into effect and became a recognised leader in focusing attention on the unique protection needs of HRDs.

Remarking on the announcement, Andrew Anderson, Front Line Defenders Executive Director, said, “Mary Lawlor is an excellent choice as UNSR, she has huge experience of working with human rights defenders in all world regions with a focus on creative and practical support and she has the empathy, tact and tenacity to make a considerable impact.”

Front Line Defenders also takes this opportunity to thank Mr. Michel Forst, the current UNSR, for his tireless efforts during the past six years to meet human rights defenders and defend their work. Mr. Forst attended the FLD Dublin Platform in October 2019 and addressed over 120 HRDs, offering his unyielding commitment to human rights defenders even beyond his mandate.

Front Line Defenders looks forward to working with Ms. Lawlor in her new role to advance and strengthen support for human rights defenders around the world, even as unprecedented threats and attacks are occurring on a daily basis.

**Front Line Defenders Board of Directors**

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