

LAWYERS FOR LAWYERS  
**Strategic Plan 2022-2025**

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## Executive Summary

Lawyers play a vital role in the protection of the rule of law and human rights. It is the responsibility of lawyers to protect and establish the rights of citizens from whatever quarter they may be threatened. Their work is indispensable for ensuring effective access to justice for all.

To fulfil their professional duties effectively, lawyers should be able to practice law freely and independently, without any fear of reprisal. Around the world, however, lawyers are harassed, threatened, attacked or even worse, for simply doing their job.

Lawyers for Lawyers is an independent, non-profit organization, based in the Netherlands and working on a global scale. We are lawyers who promote the common values of lawyers and their contribution to the justice system. Around the world, we stand up for colleague-lawyers under threat.

Established in 1986, Lawyers for Lawyers has more than 35 years of experience in providing emergency support and assistance to lawyers in danger and creating awareness of the importance of the independent functioning of the legal profession to protect citizens' rights.

Lawyers for Lawyers' Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2025 is informed by consultations with lawyers at risk and other stakeholders, our research and analysis of recent global rule of law trends and developments affecting the legal profession, and the evaluation of and lessons learned from the period covered by our Strategic Plan for 2018 – 2021.

It builds on our experience in supporting lawyers to protect them from risks and reprisals, strengthen their international recognition and legal protection, and empower them to fulfil their role as essential agents of the administration of justice. Especially, but not exclusively, in countries where respect for fundamental rights is not self-evident.

The outcomes of our strategic planning process show that our ongoing work to support lawyers and protect the universal right to effective legal representation, continues to be vital. We are deeply concerned by the unabated rise in reprisals against lawyers, and the chilling effect these attacks have on the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms.

The increased risks for the legal profession should be seen in the context of a global decline of the rule of law in both established democracies as well as in less free states, and in every region of the world, including Europe. This decline has been exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic, as governments around the world have used the pandemic to tighten restrictions on fundamental freedoms and protections of citizens. At the same time, the world is also grappling with other global challenges such as climate change, armed conflict and mass violence, increased migration flows, terrorism, and organized crime, rising authoritarianism, and digital transformation, that raises human rights concerns.

In the next four years, we will focus on two key priorities. First, we will continue to strengthen our work in support of lawyers under threat. We will do so by further enhancing, aligning, and expanding our Defend, Empower, and Influence programs, and through ongoing collaboration and alliances' building with stakeholders.

Notably, we will:

- Set up a dedicated trial monitoring project to improve and expand our trial observation activities, explore new and additional opportunities to participate in global and regional human rights mechanisms, highlight how global challenges have increased risks for certain groups of lawyers and align these activities with targeted advocacy and empowering lawyers to achieve national-level change.
- Expand and enhance capacity building support for lawyers and associations of lawyers to strengthen their ability to fulfil their professional duties and responsibilities over time.
- Amplify our awareness raising efforts to be sure people know what lawyer independence is and why it can't be given up, especially in countries where the rule of law is under duress.

Secondly, we will enhance the effectiveness, potential, and capacity of our people, processes, and resources in achieving our mission by further professionalizing our approach to organizational development.

Notably, we will:

- Enhance our policies, procedures, and practices on employment conditions, personal growth and development, succession planning, as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across the organization, and transform our volunteer engagement in a more tailormade approach.
- Improve our communication skills and strategies, and expand our concerted efforts and resources allocated to it.
- Expand and diversify our fundraising strategies as well as our funding sources, in-kind support, partnerships, and collaborations.

Throughout the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025, we will monitor and evaluate our progress and results and capture lessons learned. We will solicit and act upon feedback from lawyers at risk, board members, staff members, volunteers, and other stakeholders, and be adaptive to changing developments and demands as appropriate.

## **PART I Strategic Framework**

### **1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values**

Established in 1986, Lawyers for Lawyers is an independent, non-profit organization, consisting of lawyers who value the core principles underpinning the legal profession and stand up for colleague-lawyers at risk around the world.

#### **1.1 Mission**

##### **Promote and protect the independence of lawyers**

Lawyers for Lawyers promotes and preserves the independence of the legal profession worldwide and defends the professional rights of lawyers to provide legal services safely and independently, without fear of reprisal. We safeguard the lawyers' role in protecting the rule of law and human rights and ensuring effective justice for all by acting wherever lawyers are under threat.

In doing so, we refer to internationally recognized human rights laws and standards, including the [UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers](#).

#### **1.2 Vision**

##### **Every lawyer can practice law independently without fear of reprisal**

We strive for a world where lawyers can practice law freely and independently to effectively fulfil their role in upholding the rule of law and the protection of human rights. Lawyers should be able to do their job without improper interference or fear of reprisal. Always and everywhere. Also, when that does not suit the government, the bar association, or the establishment.

#### **1.3 Core Values**

##### **Put lawyers under threat at the heart of our work**

When we work to promote and protect the independence of lawyers, we are committed to:

- Put lawyers under threat at the heart of our work.
- Provide support to meet expressed needs by lawyers whose professional guarantees, immunities, and privileges are violated.
- Analyse root causes of why lawyers face reprisals, guided by local lawyers and other stakeholders.
- Identify the most effective ways to achieve tangible impact and lasting progress.
- Act independently, objectively, professionally, and with integrity.
- Leverage resources through collaboration and coordination with other actors working toward common goals.

- Improve outcomes through the creation of solidarity within the community.

## **Foster an inclusive and welcoming working environment**

The values we have and maintain in supporting lawyers at risk also guide our daily practices and relationships, including how we interact with our staff, legal fellows, volunteers, board, funders, and other stakeholders. We value integrity, accountability, collaboration, responsibility, sustainability, trust, and quality in the workplace, and strive for a diverse and inclusive environment which fosters personal and professional development and where people feel empowered to meaningfully contribute to our mission.

## **Why do we need independent lawyers?**

### ***The independence of lawyers is indispensable for the rule of law and a fair judicial system***

#### **Vital role of lawyers in the protection of the rule of law and human rights**

Lawyers play a vital role in upholding the rule of law and the protection of human rights, including the rights to effective remedy, due process of law, fair trial, and the right of freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. Their work is indispensable for the public confidence in the administration of justice and to ensure effective justice for all.

All persons are entitled to call upon the assistance of a lawyer of their choice to provide legal services. It is the responsibility of lawyers to protect and establish the rights of citizens from whatever quarter those rights may be threatened and defend them in all stages of legal proceedings.

#### **Prerequisites for lawyers to fulfil their role effectively**

To fulfil their professional duties effectively, lawyers should be able to practice law safely and independently in accordance with recognized laws, standards, and ethics. They should be free from improper interferences, any fear of reprisals, or unreasonable restrictions.

A legal profession which is controlled, manipulated, or intimidated by politicians or any other third-party, cannot effectively carry out its duty of sustaining the rule of law and the independence of the administration of justice.

#### **Chilling effect**

Where improper interference or reprisals become widespread and systematic, this may create a climate in which lawyers may eventually refuse to represent clients connected to politically sensitive or controversial issues out of fear of becoming the target of acts of harassment.

This severely compromises the universal right to effective legal representation as well as the proper functioning of the rule of law and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

## 2. Goals, Programs, and Activities

### 2.1 Goals

#### Promote and protect a safe and enabling environment for lawyers

We pursue three complementary and interrelated goals to enable lawyers to fulfil their professional duties and responsibilities safely and independently, and consequently protect and preserve the universal right to have access to legal services provided by an independent legal profession.

##### 1. ENDING REPRISALS

We support lawyers and organisations of lawyers to be agents of change for lawyer independence in their home countries, including towards ending, mitigating, or preventing infringements of their professional rights and reprisals against them resulting from discharging their functions, as well as ensuring accountability where such acts occur.

##### 2. STRENGTHENING PROTECTIONS

We engage with stakeholders and promote the key principles underpinning the legal profession to strengthen effective protections for the independent functioning and security of lawyers in laws, policies, and practices at international, regional, and national levels.

##### 3. LEVERAGING IMPACT

We collaborate with actors working toward common goals and create community solidarity with lawyers at risk across the world to leverage impact and achieve better outcomes.

### 2.2 Programs and Activities

#### Supporting Lawyers - Defend, Empower, and Influence

To achieve our mission, vision, and goals, we conduct three strategic **programs**: Defend, Empower, and Influence. Through these programs, we **support lawyers** at risk worldwide and **raise awareness** of the importance of the independent functioning of lawyers for the protection of the rule of law and human rights and fundamental freedoms to which all persons are entitled.

##### 2.2.1 DEFEND

We **defend** lawyers at risk globally to end, mitigate, or prevent infringements of their professional rights as well as reprisals against them for simply doing their job, and **ensure accountability** where such acts occur.

We'll do so by:

- Providing tailor-made support to individual lawyers at risk, guided by the lawyers concerned or their representatives.
- Monitoring and highlighting violations of lawyers' professional guarantees, immunities, and privileges, and the consequences thereof
- Conducting advocacy on targeted impunity cases.
- Building networks and alliances to act in collaboration and solidarity.



### 2.2.2 EMPOWER

We **empower** lawyers and associations of lawyers to help support and safeguard the independent functioning of the legal profession in their home countries.

We'll do so by:

- Sharing best practices on core values and ethics underpinning the legal profession.
- Providing interactive training sessions and resource materials on international human rights treaties and mechanisms for the protection of human rights.
- Developing tools, such as the [Lawyers for Lawyers database of the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers](#), to access, manage, and analyse data that help inform public discussion and decision making.
- Using our convening power to facilitate communication, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing among international networks of lawyers, associations of lawyers, and other stakeholders.

### 2.2.3 INFLUENCE

We **advocate** for laws, regulations, and practices that provide or reinforce effective protections for the independent functioning and security of lawyers in accordance with internationally recognized laws and standards at all levels.

We'll do so by:

- Engaging with global and regional bodies and their mechanisms to advocate for standards, resolutions, and recommendations that strengthen the independence and security of lawyers.
- Lobbying governments and professional associations of lawyers to adopt, implement, and enforce effective legal protections, including effective legal remedies against improper interferences, and change laws, regulations, and practices that encroach on the independence of lawyers.
- Promoting the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers and other guiding principles recognising the independence of the legal profession as an essential component of the rule of law.
- Informing the public about what lawyer independence is, how it affects peoples' lives or what life might be like without it, and what governments should do to ensure the independent functioning of lawyers in accordance with international standards.

## PART II Looking Back and Ahead

### 3. Reflections: Achievements and Lessons Learned

Looking back at the period covered by our Strategic Plan for 2018 – 2021, we took the opportunity to reflect on achievements, observations, and lessons learned of our programs to support lawyers at risk worldwide and raise awareness of the critical role of lawyers in ensuring access to justice for all. In doing so, we considered both internal and external factors affecting our work. Our reflections were also informed by our ongoing consultations with lawyers at risk and other stakeholders and our research and analysis of global rule of law trends and developments affecting the legal profession. These reflections helped guide us in determining our strategic priorities to support lawyer independence in 2022-2025.

#### 3.1 Global Rule of Law Trends and Developments Affecting Lawyer Independence

##### *Challenges affecting lawyer independence*

The challenges to lawyer independence we identified in preparation of our Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021 (see page 14-15) not only still exist but have also increased in recent years, and new risks and challenges emerged. Around the world, lawyers are continuously and increasingly harassed, threatened, or otherwise attacked for simply doing their job. This has also been acknowledged by global and regional organizations.

During its 44<sup>th</sup> session (from 30 June – 17 July 2020), the Human Rights Council adopted without a vote a [resolution](#) on the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, jurors and assessors, and the independence of lawyers. While recalling the Basic Principles and condemning the increasingly frequent attacks on the independence of lawyers, in particular threats, intimidation and interference in the discharge of their professional functions, the Human Rights Council reminded all States of their duty “to uphold the integrity of [lawyers] and to protect them, as well as their families and professional associates, against all forms of violence, threat, retaliation, intimidation and harassment resulting from the discharging of their functions, and to condemn such acts and bring the perpetrators to justice”.

On 30 June 2021, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe also [expressed](#) its concern about ‘the numerous cases of violations of lawyers’ rights, including attacks on their safety and independence, in recent years’.

The increased risks to the free practice of the legal profession should be seen in the context of a global decline of the rule of law in both established democracies, as well as in less free states, and in every region of the world, including Europe. This global decline has been exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic, as governments around the world have used the pandemic to tighten restrictions on fundamental freedoms and protections of citizens. A 2021 [study](#) revealed that more countries declined than improved in overall rule of law performance for the fourth consecutive year. It showed the worst decline in the factor ‘constraints on government powers’, which measures the

extent to which government powers are limited, e.g., by a legislative oversight or by an independent judiciary. Other key governance factors that showed pronounced declines include civic space, timeliness of justice, and absence of discrimination.

At the same time, the world is also grappling with other global challenges such as climate change, armed conflict and mass violence, increased migration flows, terrorism, and organized crime, rising authoritarianism, and digital transformation, that raises human rights concerns.

These global trends have also affected lawyers' ability to carry out their professional duties around the world and the challenges they face as a result thereof. Consequently, they have impacted the daily operations of Lawyers for Lawyers as well. In every region of the world, for example, lawyers have encountered unprecedented challenges because of measures to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, including delayed court cases, restrictions to freedom of movement, and access to clients. In various countries, the pandemic caused additional security risks for lawyers, especially with respect to the enforcement of restrictive measures. Lawyers for Lawyers has highlighted these challenges by featuring lawyers affected by the pandemic in a blogpost series.

Other examples to illustrate how global trends affected our work to promote lawyer independence include the following.

#### *Increase in volume and complexity of support requests*

We have seen a significant increase in the volume and complexity of requests and demands on Lawyers for Lawyers from lawyers at risk. On average, we supported 180 lawyers each year from 2018-2021, compared to 140 lawyers each year from 2014-2017. A higher percentage of support requests related to lawyers operating in extremely challenging circumstances, such as armed conflict, martial law, authoritarian regimes, health crises, or a combination of these circumstances, which added to the complexity of meeting these requests.

#### *Increase in the number of different countries in which we support lawyers*

In an increased number of countries across the world, lawyers are facing harassment and reprisals for carrying out their professional functions, , such as attacks on their reputation, arbitrary arrest, prosecution and detention, and groundless suspension or disbarment. In parallel, we have received an increased number of support requests from lawyers and lawyers' organizations based in countries new to Lawyers for Lawyers, including European countries such as Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Serbia. On average we supported lawyers in 37 different countries per year from 2018-2021 compared to 28 per year from 2014-2017.

#### *Forms of attacks and infringements*

Attacks on lawyers often continued to remain the direct consequence of the identification of lawyers with their clients or their clients' causes. However, around the world, including in established democracies, we have seen an increase in the use of invasive surveillance of lawyers, including through their phones, smear campaigns (both offline and online), and the public labelling of lawyers as 'enemies of the state', a practice that according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) "[has proved extremely dangerous](#)". In various countries, governments have also increased their efforts to control the disciplinary system for lawyers as well

as the entry into and continued practice within the legal profession, enabling them to prevent lawyers from practicing law on arbitrary or fabricated grounds, and use legal reforms to increase control or weaken the independent functioning of professional associations of lawyers, seeking to undermine the vital role of these associations in protecting their members from persecution and improper infringements and furthering the ends of justice and public interest.

#### *Targeted lawyers and nature of support requests*

We have seen an increase of requests in support of lawyers dealing with cases related to climate change and the environment, freedom of expression and association, free and fair elections, and asylum and migration. In many countries, there is also an increased risk for lawyers taking part in public debates about legal issues and human rights. In addition, we have seen an increased interest from lawyers at risk in getting support to enhance digital safety and use sanction regimes to drive change.

## Challenges affecting Lawyer Independence

### *Various instruments are used to oppress lawyers*

Around the world, lawyers are harassed, threatened, or attacked for simply doing their job.

It depends on the political reality and the factual circumstances what instruments are used to silence lawyers or prevent them from representing certain clients. These include, amongst other things, unlawful killings, (death)threats, attacks on the physical integrity and reputation, intimidation, enforced disappearances, and harassment of lawyers (and sometimes also their family members).

Lawyers also increasingly face arbitrary arrest and prosecution as well as abuse of disciplinary proceedings and contempt of court. As a result, lawyers are subject to groundless detention or disbarment and to other sanctions or unreasonable restrictions, including travel bans or house arrest.

In some cases, lawyers have been released after several weeks or months; long enough, however, to disrupt their practice and prevent them from representing certain clients. In other cases, lawyers have been sentenced to more than twenty years in prison.

Lawyers in custody very often face poor prison conditions. Their health may deteriorate rapidly, while adequate medical treatment is lacking. They also suffer ill-treatment, including torture and solitary confinement, to punish them, e.g., for issuing complaints or continuing legal proceedings.

In some countries, lawyers are increasingly summoned as witnesses in their own client's cases as a tactic to force lawyers to withdraw from these cases for compromising lawyer-client privilege.

### *Clear violations of international law*

The attacks on lawyers and instances of improper interference constitute clear violations of various international human rights instruments, most notably the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.

### *State authorities are very often the perpetrators*

The perpetrators are very often (entities linked to) state authorities, including politicians, law enforcement and security agencies, the armed forces and sometimes even judges or their own bar associations, but also non-state actors.

### *Impunity is the rule rather than the exception*

Where state authorities refrain from attacking lawyers themselves, they still may contribute to an environment that is hostile to lawyers, by failing to publicly condemn such attacks.

Very often, state authorities also fail to even begin proper investigations to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators of attacks against lawyers.

## *Underlying causes*

### *Safeguards for the professional functions of lawyers and their security are lacking*

It is up to the government of each state to ensure that safeguards are put in place to guarantee the independence of the legal profession as well as the liberty and security of lawyers.

There are still many states, however, where the independence and security of lawyers is not fully protected, or where domestic legal guarantees are not adequately implemented and enforced.

Domestic guarantees for the independence of the legal profession are also often curtailed by other laws, such as counter-terrorism, surveillance, or defamation laws.

### *Lawyers' activities threat to established interests*

Attacks on lawyers are frequently the direct consequence of the identification of lawyers with their clients or their clients causes.

In many cases, the victims are lawyers who represent or defend people who are considered 'enemies of the state', such as people who are accused under counter-terrorism laws, or who have been critical to the government's policies or behavior, including journalists, bloggers, environmental activists, human rights defenders, opposition leaders, trade union leaders or members of minority groups.

Lawyers also face reprisals for taking part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights or for joining or forming local, national, or international organizations and attend their meetings.

The activities of lawyers are very often considered as threats to the power of a state in general, certain institutions, groups, or individuals. In most cases these appear to be state authorities. The lawyers remind these entities of the concept of the rule of law, which - in many states - endangers established interests.

### *Bar associations lack independence*

Professional associations of lawyers have a vital role to play in promoting and safeguarding the independence and the integrity of the legal profession and protecting their members from persecution and improper restrictions and infringements.

To fulfil their role effectively, these associations should be self-governing bodies, independent from the state or other national institutions.

There are countries, however, where state authorities control the bar or attempt to take over control over the bar. Sometimes lawyers are compelled to be members of a state-controlled professional association of lawyers.

### *Admission to the legal profession controlled by the Executive Branch*

A closely related issue exists when the admission or continued practice within the legal profession is conditioned or controlled by the executive branch.

### *Opportunities for enhancing Lawyer Independence*

In addition to the challenges affecting the independent functioning of the legal profession, there are also global developments offering opportunities to enhance lawyer independence. Examples include the following.

#### *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

Sustainability Development Goal 16 in which the Member States of the United Nations acknowledged the centrality of the right to access to justice, continues to create opportunities to act in collaboration and coordination with other actors to work towards promoting and protecting the vital role of lawyers in ensuring the right to access to justice and other fundamental human rights and freedoms.

#### *Proposed new legal instrument on the Profession of Lawyers*

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe acknowledged that the minimum standards set out in its Recommendation [Rec\(2000\)21](#) on the freedom of exercise of the profession of lawyer may no longer provide the necessary level of protection for lawyers in today's society. Following a study on the feasibility of a new European legal instrument on the profession of lawyer carried out by the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ), a committee of experts will now be instructed to prepare a draft legal instrument aiming at strengthening the protection of the profession of lawyer and the right to practice the profession without prejudice or restraint. Based on the draft legal instrument prepared by this committee of experts, the CDCJ will then propose to the Committee of Ministers the nature of the legal instrument, i.e., binding, or non-binding.

#### *Guidelines for lawyers in support to peaceful assemblies*

During the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council, June 2021, Clément Voule, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Assembly and Association (FoAA) presented a report on '[Access to justice as an integral element of the protection of rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association](#)'. With his report, the Special Rapporteur published '[Guidelines for Lawyers in support to peaceful assemblies](#)'. These guidelines provide a set of key principles on the role of lawyers in upholding the rights to freedom of assembly and association as well as a non-exhaustive list of practical recommendations for lawyers, aimed at supporting them in their work facilitating access to justice in the context of peaceful assemblies.

## **3.2 Consultations with lawyers at risk and other stakeholders**

When we work to promote and protect the independence of lawyers, we solicit and act upon feedback from lawyers at risk and other stakeholders on an ongoing basis. These consultations help us identify what works well and less well and determine the most effective ways to provide support that meets expressed needs and leads to tangible impact and lasting progress.

Lawyers at risk and local stakeholders have particularly highlighted the importance of permanent reminders that the international community is watching, including through:

- Observing court hearings, especially in cases where lawyers are detained, followed by targeted advocacy, and accompanying lawyers to meetings with government and law enforcement officials.
- Conducting fact-finding and needs assessment missions to affected countries and transforming findings in concrete follow-up actions.
- Issuing submissions to governments and *amicus curiae* briefs.
- Translating and disseminating reports from international bodies in the countries concerned.
- Providing public recognition of the legitimate professional duties of lawyers at risk and the vital role they play in upholding the rule of law and the protection of human rights.
- Calling upon governments to either publicly raise concerns about the situation of lawyers in other countries or raise concerns during closed diplomatic sessions.
- Encouraging regional and international institutions, such as the European Union Commission or the United Nations Human Rights Council, to call upon member states to comply with the international standards for the protection of lawyers.

They also emphasized the need of moral and practical support to lawyers working in challenging environments, including through:

- Strengthening the position of lawyers who are excluded from the formal status of lawyers because of a lack of an independent bar association.
- Building the capacity of lawyers and lawyers' associations by sharing best practices, resource materials, tactics, and networking opportunities.
- Promoting the access and use of global and regional mechanisms for the protection and safety of lawyers.

### **3.3 Goals, Programs, and Activities**

#### ***Consolidation and Strengthening***

From 2018 – 2021, Lawyers for Lawyers consolidated, strengthened, and streamlined its existing means and ways of working to support lawyers at risk, enabling us to spend more time on activities directly leading to meaningful results. As further explained below, we created or co-created significantly more outputs that contributed to the desired outcomes under our Defend, Empower, and Influence programs. In doing so, we addressed the needs of an increased number of lawyers in danger, in an increased number of different countries in all parts of the world. On average, we supported 180 individual lawyers per year in 37 different countries to end, mitigate, or prevent attacks against lawyers and instances of arbitrary or unlawful interference or restrictions to the free practice of their profession. Moving forward, we aim to further enhance a more result-oriented approach in terms of prioritizing means and actionable steps that bring us closer to our goals and develop innovative ways to meet the requests to our organization more effectively and efficiently, both online and offline.

#### ***Raising Awareness of the Role of Lawyers***

During 2018 - 2021, we continued to inform lawyers, judges, prosecutors, members of the executive and the legislature, and the public in general about what lawyer independence is, how it affects



peoples' lives or what life might be like without it, and what governments should do to ensure the independent functioning of lawyers in accordance with international standards. In doing so, we promote the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, and other guiding principles recognising the independence of the legal profession as an essential component of the rule of law. To this end, we held many online events and lectures, we engaged in professional ethical training of young lawyers and disseminated information on the key principles underpinning the legal profession. We also offered a platform to lawyers at risk to share their experiences with colleague-lawyers and other stakeholders. In this context, we organized two 'speaker tours', with lawyers from the Philippines and Belarus. These lawyers gave online and offline lectures to young lawyers' associations, law firms and university students in The Netherlands. Sharing personal stories proved to be an effective tool to raise awareness of the vital role of lawyers in protecting our fundamental rights and freedoms.

### ***Impact Assessment***

We are in the process of improving our methods to measuring the impact of our work and consequently enhance our ability to make informed choices, put lessons learned into practice, be accountable and transparent about our results, and explain why our work is effective. Moving forward, we seek to enhance our Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) approach.

### **3.3.1 DEFEND**

To meet the increase in the volume and complexity of the requests and demands on Lawyers for Lawyers from lawyers at risk, during 2018-2021, we were able to increase our activities and outputs under our Defend program in support of individual lawyers at risk. We wrote 45 letters per year to governments and domestic bar associations to highlight violations of lawyers' professional rights and attacks to their safety and independence, compared to typically 20 to 30 letters each year between 2014-2017. In addition, we organized many letter-writing and social media campaigns to remind governments that the international community is watching how they perform their task of promoting and ensure the proper role of lawyers, and to provide moral support to lawyers at risk. We also further developed targeted campaigns in support of individual lawyers facing the same form of reprisals, such as the #FreetheLawyers campaign, and we expanded the scope of our Recognition project. We continued to observe an increased number of legal proceedings and disciplinary hearings against lawyers, especially in Turkey, and we worked together with at least 110 other organizations compared to 80 in the period covered by our previous Strategic Plan.

### ***Recognition Project***

Our experiences and feedback from laureates, nominees, their family members, and colleagues as well as from nominating organizations, strengthened our assumption that human rights awards are a powerful tool to generate international recognition and protective publicity to lawyers working in challenging environments. For this reason, we successfully enhanced the impact of the Lawyers for Lawyers Recognition Project during 2018-2021 in two ways. First, we co-organized the Lawyers for Lawyers Award Ceremony with the Amsterdam Bar Association, allowing us to spend more resources

to the event and to reach a new audience. Secondly, we expanded the scope of our project. In addition to granting the Lawyers for Lawyers Award, we also started to nominate lawyers ourselves for prestigious human rights awards and we support award nominations of lawyers submitted by other civil society organisations (always with the consent of the lawyers concerned).

### *Lawyers for Lawyers Award*

During the period covered by our Strategic Plan for 2018 - 2021, the Lawyers for Lawyers Award was awarded twice. In 2019, the Award was granted to Selçuk Kozağaçlı, a lawyer from Turkey, and in 2021 to Belarusian lawyers Maksim Znak and Liudmila Kazak. We co-organized the Award ceremony for the first time with the Amsterdam Bar Association in 2019, in combination with an event focusing on a proposal by the Council of Europe to prepare a draft legal instrument aiming at strengthening the protection of the profession of lawyer and the right to practice the profession without prejudice or restraint. This collaboration enabled us to invite more people to the event. 180 people attended the Award Ceremony, compared to 90 people in 2017. The event was also available via livestream, resulting in many viewers from Turkey and other countries who otherwise would not have been able to attend. It also made it easier to engage the lawyers' local communities and generate both international and local media attention, contributing to increased protective publicity and moral support to the laureate, shortlisted candidates and their family and colleagues. In 2021, we further enhanced the cooperation with the Amsterdam Bar Association.

### *Other Human Rights Awards*

Since 2019, when we started to roll out our additional activities under the Recognition Project, we nominated on average five (5) lawyers or group of lawyers per year for different human rights awards, compared to 1 nomination each year on average from 2014-2017. Two of the lawyers we nominated for an award, also received that award. This helped raising their international profile and speaking opportunities to new audiences. The nominated lawyers who did not receive the award, informed us that the mere fact that we have been nominating them and generated publicity to their nominations at international and domestic level was of great moral support to them, their family members, and local communities, and contributed to the aim of creating international recognition and protective publicity.

### *#FreetheLawyers campaign*

On 10 December 2019, i.e., international Human Rights Day, we launched a worldwide two-year long [#FreeTheLawyers Campaign](#). The campaign was designed to bring awareness, build support, and inspire action in support of lawyers unlawfully imprisoned as a reprisal for their work. We wanted the world to learn their stories, send them messages of hope, and join the campaign to stand in solidarity and advocate for their immediate release.

The #FreetheLawyers campaign has proven to be very effective in raising awareness and mitigating arbitrary detention as form of retaliation for lawyers at risk. By highlighting the situation of [seven arbitrarily detained lawyers in different countries](#), our campaign took a personal approach in describing a problem that affects lawyers all over the world. Because of this, we were able to better connect with our audience and achieve higher engagement rates. This led to increased likes on our

social media channels, increased participation of communities in solidarity actions, and more attention for arbitrarily detained lawyers at national and international levels.

In total, more than 400 greeting cards were sent to the lawyers highlighted in the campaign. We also generated international attention for the lawyers highlighted in the campaign through numerous social media posts, a video, by sending letters to local authorities and issuing statements jointly with other organizations. One of the detained lawyers was able to inform us that he received many greeting cards in prison and felt incredibly supported through the international solidarity from lawyers across the world.

*“The international community’s attention and assistance to the cases of human rights lawyers and human rights defenders is of utmost importance. I am very grateful for the international support for Yu Wensheng. Advocacy is useful to improve the living conditions of detainees and reduces the possibility of the exercise of torture on detainees. Moreover, it has an impact on the outcome of the verdict, the physical health, and the fate of the detainees. I hope that everyone will continue to support Yu Wensheng until he returns to his home in Beijing to reunite with his wife and children.”* - Spouse of Yu Wensheng, detained lawyer highlighted in the #FreeTheLawyers campaign.

One of the lawyers highlighted in our campaign was released during the campaign. The prison sentence of a second lawyer has been reduced significantly. The lawyers and their family members are convinced that the international attention to their cases, amongst others generated the #FreeTheLawyers Campaign, helped in securing the release and prison sentence reduction. The campaign also helped booster our support to other lawyers subject to arbitrary arrest, prosecution, and detention.

More generally, we learned that a campaign targeted on highlighting one form of retaliation faced by lawyers across the world, enhances the public understanding of tactics used to effectively prevent lawyers from performing their professional activities and helps create solidarity with the victims of such practices. We also learned, however, that it is quite challenging to continue one and the same campaign for more than one year. Moving forward, we will limit our targeted advocacy campaigns to one year or change the pool of lawyers that will be highlighted in a campaign.

### ***Trial monitoring***

During the period covered by our Strategic Plan for 2018 - 2021, we have investigated ways to enhance the impact of our trial monitoring activities by covering more trials against lawyers, issuing, and disseminating more trial monitoring reports, and better aligning our trial monitoring activities to support other advocacy and capacity-building activities. Although we were unable to travel and monitor trials during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have established meaningful ways of cooperation with both other international organizations and universities, allowing us to increase our trial monitoring activities, including by attending more trial hearings now that travel is allowed again. Through our cooperation with other parties, we have also gained useful insights in how to improve the impact of our trial monitoring activities.

### **3.3.2 EMPOWER**

In 2018, we launched our empowerment program (**‘EMPOWER’**) to build the capacity of local lawyers and association of lawyers to be agents of change to help promoting and safeguarding

lawyer independence in their home countries, and achieving sustainable engagement and lasting progress.

### *Training and Roundtable Dialogue*

Upon request, we conducted interactive training to lawyers and human rights defenders on internationally recognized norms on the role of lawyers and human rights mechanisms. We also held roundtable sessions with lawyers and representatives from bar associations to share best practices on the functioning of lawyers and of professional association of lawyers. Participants were based in countries in Europe, Central Asia, and North and East Africa. The meetings were held both in person and remotely. During the pandemic, we enhanced our skills and methods to engage remotely.

Feedback from participants showed that the interactive training increased lawyers' capacity to use international human rights laws and norms more effectively at national level. Many participating lawyers indicated that, prior to the training, they had little to no knowledge of instruments covering internationally recognized professional guarantees, rights, and privileges of lawyers, such as the UN Basic Principles on the role of lawyers and that this knowledge created value for themselves, their clients, and society.

Lawyers felt also empowered to make use of international mechanisms, which led to a group of lawyers engaging with the United Nations Universal Periodic Review for the first time after the training. We also learned that regional mechanisms are often more accessible to lawyers than global mechanisms, and that it is important to provide training on both to fully empower lawyers to make an informed decision on which mechanisms to engage with when their rights are being violated.

Through consultations with participating lawyers, we further appreciated the need of lawyers to gain more knowledge about digital and physical security to become more resilient against (cyber)attacks and confidentiality breaches. To address this need we initiated a collaborative approach with an organization specialized in digital and physical security training, allowing us to offer combined training covering both legal and security issues.

Finally, lawyers indicated how they valued the opportunity to build connections and relationships with lawyers from other parts of the country or from neighboring countries offered to them through our training and stakeholder sessions; the mere fact that lawyers could share experiences empowered them to explore the benefits of peer-to-peer support and networking.

### *Toolkit on Lawyers at Risk*

We have cooperated with the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute on a Toolkit on Lawyers at Risk. The Toolkit is a unique tool aimed at facilitating the efforts of those seeking to protect lawyers at risk – that is, attacked for performing their professional duties and representing their clients' interests – as well as to support and assist the targeted legal profession in their struggle. By actively distributing the toolkit during our online and offline training courses, including the translation of the toolkit in French, more lawyers have access to our toolkit in line with the objectives and results as formulated in our Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

### *Supporting Change Agents Project*

Lawyers for Lawyers partnered in the 'Supporting Change Agents' project conducted by the Dutch development organization Cordaid and another organization working on digital security and data

collection. As part of this project, we provided both offline and online training to lawyers from Eastern Africa. In addition, we launched a ‘twinning project’, connecting Dutch lawyers to colleague lawyers from Eastern Africa for moral and practical support. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the twinning project had to be conducted fully online. This proved to be very challenging for two main reasons. First, the internet connection of lawyers in Eastern Africa was often not sufficient to have video calls with lawyers in the Netherlands. Secondly, the ‘distance’ between the Dutch lawyers and the lawyers from Eastern Africa made it difficult for the lawyers to have meaningful exchange, contributing to moral and practical support. We will therefore not continue using the current twinning project format. However, connecting lawyers from different Eastern African countries proved to be valuable. We’ll keep these lessons in mind when further exploring twinning opportunities in the coming period.

### 3.3.3 INFLUENCE

#### *Engagement with global and regional human rights bodies and mechanisms*

During 2018 – 2021, we have significantly increased our engagement with the United Nations Human Rights Council and its procedures and mechanisms, including the Universal Period Review, the special procedures, and the human rights treaty bodies. In 2021, for example, we issued 15 written submissions, and delivered 13 (joint) oral interventions to the United Nations. In doing so, we worked closely together with other organizations with an ECOSOC status working toward common goals. These collaborations also enabled us to co-host an increased number of side-events at the UN and monitor government actions on recommendations enhancing lawyer independence. We also provided input to the thematic report of the UN Special Rapporteur of Judges and Lawyers devoted to the independence of lawyers and the legal profession that will be published in 2022.

In 2018, we also filed a joint petition to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) on behalf of Buzurgmehr Yorov, a lawyer from Tajikistan, together with Freedom Now and law firms Hogan Lovells US LLP and DLA Piper UK LLP. In 2019, the WGAD rendered an [opinion](#). It found that Mr. Yorov’s detention was arbitrary and called upon the government of Tajikistan to take the steps necessary to remedy his situation without delay. The WGAD opinion helped to generate international attention of Mr. Yorov’s case and proved to be very useful in advocating for his release. Moving forward, we seek to file more petitions to the WGAD and other global and regional bodies and mechanism allowing for individual complaints.

#### *Research Reports and Advocacy*

During 2018-2021, we issued several reports to offer analysis of developments concerning the independent functioning of the legal profession in specific countries. Two reports reflecting on developments in Turkey and Zimbabwe were released at well-attended events featuring speakers from both the focus countries and international experts, including the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers. The reports proved to be a powerful tool for our own advocacy efforts to achieve positive legal reforms as well as for advocacy efforts from other lawyers’ organizations. Moving forward, we will explore opportunities to produce more reports offering analysis of issues affecting lawyer independence.

### *Fact-Finding and Needs Assessment Missions*

During 2018-2021, we participated in three fact finding missions. Following these missions, we published our findings in reports with concrete and detailed recommendations for the improvement of the working conditions of lawyers. These reports proved to be a helpful tool for advocacy.

In addition, we conducted three needs assessment missions to help us identify targeted strategies and prioritize resources to ensure that our support is appropriately tailored to the needs of the lawyers and lawyers' organizations concerned. We consider these assessments of needs as a powerful tool for decision making, resource allocation, and achieving desired outcomes. The follow-up of these missions was hampered by the Covid-19 restrictions, but still helpful to inform programmatic priorities.

## **3.4 Organizational development**

We are in the process of professionalizing our approach to organizational development to enhance the effectiveness, potential, and capacity of our people, processes, and resources in achieving our mission. We have made progress but given the significant increase in the volume and complexity of support requests from lawyers at risk, organizational development will be a key priority in the coming years.

Our efforts to further develop Lawyers for Lawyers as an effective and inspiring organization were naturally affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the restrictive measures to combat Covid-19, many of our activities and fundraising plans could not be carried out at all, or not in their original form. However, the corona crisis has changed, but certainly not diminished, the work that Lawyers for Lawyers does. We've responded quickly to the new challenges, while remaining steadfast in our commitment to supporting lawyers all over the world who are at risk in connection with their professional activities. The pandemic also offered opportunities to experience new ways of working that may positively affect time management, our environmental footprint, and engagement strategies.

### **3.4.1 Our People**

#### *Staff*

We have increased the number of FTEs from 0,7 in 2018 to 2,1 in 2021. We hired a program officer and program assistant and increased the work hours of the Executive Director. With the increase of the number of FTEs, we have also developed a framework for the employment conditions of our staff.

Since 2019, we are also working with legal interns. Each university semester, 3 or 4 students join our staff as interns for 8 hours a week. They support staff and volunteers with ongoing tasks and are responsible for the planning of meetings of our volunteers.

We continue to strive for an inclusive and welcoming working environment which fosters personal and professional development and empowers people to meaningfully contribute to our mission.

We have developed policies and practices to enhance the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across the organization. As part of these efforts, we have developed new policies and guidelines outlining the core ethical values of our organization applicable to everyone involved.

In 2019 we moved into a new office space which is part of the so-called 'Law-Hub' of the University of Amsterdam. Being part of the Law-Hub brings opportunities for collaboration with the University and other Dutch NGOs based in the Law-Hub.

Moving forward, we seek to further expand the number of FTEs and further develop our policies and practices.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are essential to fulfill our mission. In the last four years, we have been able to attract and retain highly motivated and qualified volunteers to help us manage the increased workload. We currently have 70 volunteers actively contributing to our mission, compared to 50 during 2014-2017.

To facilitate a smooth start, we have enhanced our volunteer onboarding and training program. All new volunteers must sign a volunteer agreement, adhere to our code of conduct and policies and procedures, read our handbook, and join a training on Lawyers for Lawyers' mission, mandate, goals, programs, and core values.

New volunteers have joined existing focus groups. We have also created new groups focusing on countries or regions in which we have supported an increased number of lawyers in recent years, such as Europe, Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia. In addition, we have created a group focusing on the Netherlands.

Experience has shown that most of our volunteers have a more than fulltime job and that the time they can dedicate to Lawyers for Lawyers differs from time to time. For this reason, we have started to explore alternative ways to serve as a volunteer than joining one of our focus groups. One volunteer, for example, spent about 20 hours a week for a period of one month to write a report. This proved to be very successful. Moving forward, we should further enhance a volunteer program, leveraging their strengths, and accommodating flexibility and variety in time commitments.

### **Board**

In 2021, three new board members joined our organization. The current board composition represents a better mix of expertise, experience, geographical diversity, and networks needed to serve our mission successfully. One board member is now specifically tasked with human resources in line with the objectives in our Strategic Plan 2018-2021. Moving forward, we should further develop and implement succession planning strategies to transition its composition, leadership, and structure in a sustainable way.



### **3.4.2 Funding and Financial Resources**

In 2019, a professional fundraiser developed a fundraising plan for Lawyers for Lawyers, with the aim of expanding and diversifying our funding sources and in-kind support to safeguard our financial sustainability, be able to do long-term planning, and reach our full potential.

We reviewed our current development and fundraising strategy and explored innovative fundraising approaches. In 2020, we released our 'friend' initiative – asking individual lawyers to support us financially for a minimum of five years.

We retained existing donors and reached out to new donors for monetary and in-kind support. We expanded our 'partner' law firms – law firms that support us financially for a period of three years.

We were also able to diversify our funding sources. In 2021, we received financial support to write a series of reports from another human rights organization.

In addition, we have explored opportunities for partnerships with other civil society actors in empowerment projects as well as new collaborations with law firms and academic institutions to contribute to our work on a pro bono basis.

We ultimately succeeded in achieving a 10% increase in revenues compared to 2017. Moving forward, we will continue to expand and diversify our sources of income.

### **3.4.3 Communication**

In line with the objectives and results as formulated in our Strategic Plan for 2018-2021, we launched a new Lawyers for Lawyers website in 2018. We have enhanced our external and internal communication and engagement strategy, including developing our social media presence and innovating our empowerment tools. Through a cooperation with 'Nieuwe Gevers', we have developed and expanded our media portfolio, including the use of visual communications, such as design icons, infographics, photos, movies etc. We have invested in photo stock material and increased the use of video material to ask attention for lawyers at risk. This has resulted in improved brand recognition, an increased # of visitors to our website and followers on social media, and enhanced accessibility and impact of our messages, tools, and resources.

## **4. Future situation**

### **4.1 Our focus in 2022 - 2025**

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to inform our continued journey to be an internationally recognized expert in promoting and safeguarding the independence of individual lawyers and the legal profession across the world, serving as a catalyst for a safe and enabling environment for lawyers.

The outcomes of our strategic planning process show that our ongoing work to support lawyers and protect the universal right to effective legal representation, continues to be vital. We are deeply



concerned by the unabated rise in reprisals against lawyers, and the chilling effect these attacks have on the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms.

### *Key Priorities*

In the next four years, we will focus on two key priorities. First, we will continue to strengthen our work in support of lawyers under threat. We will do so by further enhancing, aligning, and expanding our **Defend, Empower, and Influence** programs, and through ongoing collaboration and alliances' building with stakeholders.

Notably, we will:

- Set up a dedicated trial monitoring project to improve and expand our trial observation activities, explore new and additional opportunities to participate in international and regional human rights mechanisms, highlight how global challenges have increased risks for certain groups of lawyers, and align these activities with targeted advocacy and empowering lawyers to achieve national-level change.
- Expand and enhance capacity building support for lawyers and associations of lawyers to strengthen their ability to fulfil their professional duties and responsibilities over time.
- Amplify our awareness raising efforts to be sure people know what lawyer independence is and why it can't be given up, especially in countries where the rule of law is under duress.

Secondly, we will enhance the effectiveness, potential, and capacity of our people, processes, and resources in achieving our mission by further professionalizing our approach to organizational development.

Notably, we will:

- Enhance our policies, procedures, and practices on employment conditions, personal growth and development, succession planning, as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across the organization, and transform our volunteer engagement in a more tailormade approach.
- Improve our communication skills and strategies, and expand our concerted efforts and resources allocated to it.
- Expand and diversify our fundraising strategies as well as our funding sources, in-kind support, partnerships, and collaborations.

### *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning*

Throughout the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025, we will monitor and evaluate our progress and results and capture lessons learned. We will solicit and act upon feedback from lawyers at risk, board members, staff members, volunteers, and other stakeholders, and be adaptive to changing developments and demands as appropriate.

## 4.2 Goals, Program Priorities, and Results

### 4.2.1 Goals

Lawyers for Lawyers primary goal is to promote and protect the independence of lawyers and consequently protect and preserve the universal right to have access to justice for all. In the coming years, we will continue to pursue three complementary and interrelated goals to foster a safe and enabling working environment for lawyers.

**Ending Reprisals:** We will continue to support lawyers at risk to end, mitigate, or prevent infringements of their professional rights and reprisals against them for carrying out their functions, and ensure accountability where such acts occur.

**Strengthening protections:** We will continue to advocate for positive legal reform to strengthen effective protections for lawyer independence and security.

**Leveraging impact:** We will continue to collaborate with actors working toward common goals and create community solidarity with lawyers at risk across the world to leverage impact and achieve better outcomes.

### 4.2.2 Program Priorities and Results

#### *Priorities*

In 2022 – 2025, we will focus on the following priorities and objectives to achieve our mission and goals:

- Providing support to lawyers who face arbitrary arrest, prosecution, and detention or abuse of disciplinary proceedings and contempt of court.
- Providing support to lawyers who face to be arbitrarily excluded from entry into or continued practice within the legal profession.
- Providing support to lawyers who are publicly labelled as ‘enemies of the state’.
- Providing support to lawyers who face reprisals in their work facilitating access to justice in the context of climate changes and peaceful assemblies.
- Ensuring accountability for attacks and reprisals against lawyers, including through effective legal remedies for lawyers against improper interferences with their work, and effective investigation and prosecution to bring perpetrators to justice.
- Expanding capacity-building support to lawyers and associations of lawyers who will be able to act as agents of change in fostering lawyers’ independence in their home countries.
- Strengthening protections against weaponizing laws to undermine domestic guarantees of lawyer independence, such as anti-terrorism, surveillance, and foreign agents’ laws.

- Enhancing collaboration with NGOs working toward common goals, especially NGOs with ECOSOC status, and civil society organisations who will be able to provide emergency support to lawyers which falls outside our scope, such as humanitarian and relocation support.
- Amplifying our awareness raising efforts to be sure people understand why we need independent lawyers, especially in countries where the rule of law is under duress.

## Results

In 2025, we seek to have achieved the following:

- An increased number of lawyers facing risks will feel supported and recognized through nominations and receiving international human rights awards.
- An increased number of lawyers subjected to arbitrary arrest, prosecution, and detention, and other acts of harassment, feel morally supported through international solidarity and recognition, are released from prison, get better treatment in prison, get reduced sentences, or are otherwise positively impacted.
- International attention for arbitrary arrest, prosecution, and detention of lawyers, abuse of disciplinary proceedings and the practice of public labelling as forms of retaliation for discharging their professional functions has increased, resulting in a reduction of these acts of harassment.
- Lawyers are better protected through positive legal reforms and effective action by national, regional, and international institutions and mechanisms.
- There will be an increase in the number, quality, and implementation of recommendations to improve lawyer independence through global and regional bodies and mechanisms.
- Increased international attention for the promotion of accountability for violations of professional rights of lawyers and reprisal against them to combat impunity, and for effective remedies and reparation.
- Lawyers have better access to and knowledge of using global and regional human rights mechanisms and are better connected to conduct national and global policy advocacy.
- An increased number of lawyers will be encouraged or supported to pursue justice by engaging with UN bodies and mechanisms, or with regional bodies and mechanisms.
- We will have expanded our collaboration and partnerships with other organisations to fulfil our potential.

- More people and organisation will engage in our actions and campaigns in support of lawyers.

## Activities

To this end, we will undertake the following activities under our Defend, Empower, and Influence programs.

## DEFEND

We **defend** individual lawyers at risk globally to end, mitigate, or prevent infringements of their professional rights and reprisals against them for doing their jobs and **ensure accountability** where such acts occur.

- Enhancing the [Lawyers for Lawyers Recognitions](#) project through which we generate international recognition and protective publicity to lawyers working in challenging environments.
- Relaunching the [Free the Lawyers Campaign](#) with a focus on greeting cards campaigns, social media campaigns and letter writing campaigns.
- Releasing two new one-yearlong campaigns highlighting one group of lawyers at risk or one form of retaliation they face, the first one concerning [Environmental Lawyers](#).
- Setting up a dedicated trial monitoring project to improve and enhance our trial observations activities.
- In collaboration with partners, setting up a [European Rule of Law Amicus Clinic](#), monitoring emerging cases before the European Court of Human Rights, and drafting and submitting amicus interventions.

## EMPOWER

We **empower** lawyers and associations of lawyers to help support and safeguard the independent functioning of the legal profession in their home countries.

- Increasing our engagement with the United Nations and explore new and additional opportunities to participate in global en regional human rights mechanism.
- Expanding and innovating our empowerment tools and projects for groups of lawyers from at least two new countries and exploring opportunities to enhance collaboration with bar associations.

- Continuing to develop our online and offline interactive training sessions, and further expand our existing training projects.
- Develop a new empowerment project in support of lawyers in Suriname.
- Exploring opportunities to set up the *Lawyers for Lawyers Academy* to bring together lawyers at risk whose rights are violated, our network of lawyers-volunteers, and external experts, to share knowledge, expertise, best practices, and tactics.

## INFLUENCE

*We **advocate** for laws, regulations, and practices that provide or reinforce effective protections for the independent functioning and security of lawyers in accordance with internationally recognized laws and standards at all levels.*

- Reinforcing our engagement with human rights bodies and mechanisms at the United Nations.
- Exploring opportunities to increase effective participation and engagement with regional mechanisms.
- Advocating for recommendations to strengthen accountability and redress for attacks and reprisals against lawyers for carrying out their professional duties.
- Translating and disseminating recommendations from international mechanisms in the countries concerned.
- Increasing our collaborative approach.

## 4.3 Organizational Development

### 4.3.1 Our People

#### *Staff, Volunteers, and the Board*

Lawyers for Lawyers' volunteers are essential to fulfil our mission. They also significantly outnumber paid staff. Lawyers for Lawyers has a Board of Directors comprised of practicing lawyers and human rights experts and a pool of more than 70 highly motivated and skilled volunteers, consisting mainly of practising lawyers, as well as a journalist and a management assistant.

Additionally, Lawyers for Lawyers has three part-time staff members who are responsible for the day-to-day management of the organization. They are supported by a team of interns.

The Board of Directors of Lawyers for Lawyers currently consists of six members:

Irma van den Berg	President
Maaïke de Jong	Secretary
Tony Vermeulen	Treasurer
Judith Lichtenberg	Member
Jeroen Brouwer	Member
Sander Oudenhoven	Member

### ***Priorities and Results***

We strive for a diverse and inclusive environment which fosters personal and professional development and where people feel empowered to meaningfully contribute to our mission. In the coming four years, we will further develop Lawyers for Lawyers as an effective and inspiring organization that continues to be able to attract and retain highly motivated and qualified volunteers and staff members with complementary competencies, expertise, and skills. To meet the the growing volume and complexity for support requests, we also seek to expand the number of FTEs.

We'll do so by:

- Enhancing our policies, procedures, and practices on employment conditions, personal growth and development, succession planning, and the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion across the organization.
- Developing a volunteer program, leveraging volunteers' strengths and interests, and transforming their opportunities for engagement in a more tailored approach.
- Quantifying both the financial and nonfinancial impact that our volunteers have on our programs.

### ***Results***

Lawyers for Lawyers' staff members, board members, and other volunteers value our work environment as welcoming, collaborative, flexible, inspiring, and respectful, and they feel empowered to share responsibility in providing meaningful support to lawyers at risk.

## **4.3.2 Funding and Financial Resources**

As a foundation, Lawyers for Lawyers does not have any members. Lawyers for Lawyers is supported entirely by financial donations and in-kind support, mainly from individual lawyers, law firms, lawyers' associations, and other organizations related to the legal profession.

Lawyers for Lawyers prefers unrestricted support for implementing our mission and core activities. We may also accept designated support and specific project support if their purpose is consistent with our mission and goals.

We raise funds by cultivating relationships and partnerships in the legal sector and through third-party events. We sometimes also receive royalties from an author or composer for each copy of a legal book that has been sold or fees for a service that has been provided, such as a legal training.

Lawyers for Lawyers is tax-exempted under Dutch law. It qualifies as a Public Benefit Organisation (ANBI status).

Lawyers for Lawyers has also been recognized as a charity by the Central Bureau on Fundraising (CBF), i.e., “CBF-erkend goed doel”.

The reserves of Lawyer for Lawyers are at a level that is justified by the Herkströter Committee (Commission on Capital Standards for Charities), i.e., a continuity reserve of a maximum of one and a half times the annual turnover.

### **Priorities**

In the coming years, we will continue to expand and diversify our funding sources and in-kind support to safeguard our financial sustainability, be able to do long-term planning, and reach our full potential.

We'll do so by:

- Reviewing our current development and fundraising strategy and exploring innovative fundraising approaches.
- Retaining existing donors and reaching out to new donors for monetary and in-kind support.
- Exploring funding opportunities by private foundations.
- Exploring new funding opportunities for certain projects and activities under our EMPOWER program, including from government bodies, to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- Exploring opportunities for partnerships with other civil society actors in empowerment projects.
- Exploring new collaborations with law firms and academic institutions to contribute to our work on a pro bono basis.

### **Results**

- Income growth of 25 %.
- Increased number of long-term donors.
- Increased number of partners that provide in-kind support.

Please visit our website for our annual report and 2021 financial statement with explanatory notes, including information on the ratio between the spending on the objective, generating income and management and administrative records.

### **4.3.3. Communication**

Lawyers for Lawyers can only deliver results and have an impact if we communicate effectively with all our stakeholders, externally as well as internally, through various channels, including social media.

We have developed and implemented different communication tools, methods, and products to ensure that external and internal stakeholders are kept informed and engaged, including policy reports, annual reports, newsletters, press releases, articles, briefings, minutes, speeches, as well as through our website and social media presence.

#### ***Priorities and Results***

In the coming four years, we will improve our communication skills and strategies, and expand our concerted efforts and resources allocated to it, to strengthen our brand positioning and visibility for multiple audiences, including lawyers at risk, existing and potential partner organizations, donors, and volunteers, to enhance our social impact as well as our organizational capacity and cohesion.

We'll do so by:

- Enhancing and innovating our external and internal communication and engagement strategies, including with respect to our storytelling, social media presence, empowerment tools, and the development and enhancement of our funding strategy.
- Expanding our capacity to produce timely and effective multimedia messages across platforms.
- Further expanding our media portfolio, including the use of visual communications, such as design icons, infographics, photos, movies etc.

#### ***Results***

- Improved brand recognition, including on what we do and why, and trusted by the public.
- Increased # of visitors to our website, followers on social media, subscribers of our newsletter, etc.
- Enhanced accessibility and impact of our messages, tools, and resources.
- Better public understanding of the vital work of lawyers.



## PART III About Lawyers for Lawyers

### 5.1 Who we are

Lawyers for Lawyers is an independent, non-profit organization that promotes the independence of lawyers worldwide. We defend the professional rights and privileges of lawyers to assist clients safely and without fear of reprisal.

Lawyers for Lawyers has more than 35 years of experience in providing emergency support and assistance to lawyers who are under threat for exercising their professional duties and for creating awareness of the importance of the independent functioning of the legal profession to the protection of human rights.

Established in 1986, Lawyers for Lawyers initially focused on providing support to lawyers in South America, including Argentina, Brazil, and Colombia, as well as in Cambodia through tailor-made measures and solidarity campaigns, with the ad-hoc support of a network of lawyers-volunteers.

Over time, Lawyers for Lawyers has become a professional organization led by an inspiring board and a qualified staff, and on top of that having an effective workforce of more than seventy dedicated lawyers-volunteers organized in focus groups that specialize in thematic and country specific issues concerning the independence and security of lawyers and the legal profession.

### 5.2 History

The organization has its roots in a solidarity campaign for lawyers in Argentina who ‘disappeared’ or were detained without trial under the military juntas from 1976-1983. The campaign was initiated by a Dutch lawyer and cartoonist, Willem van Manen, in the context of an international congress of lawyers hosted in Buenos Aires.

It showed that international solidarity of the legal profession can play an important role in order to defend and protect colleague-lawyers from attacks, especially since lawyers are bound by universal core values underpinning their profession.

Inspired by the lack of an independent lawyers’ organization dedicated to raising international awareness and recognition of the specific role of lawyers in the protection of the rule of law and human rights and responding to immediate threats to their safety and ability to perform their professional duties effectively, Lawyers for Lawyers was established in 1986.

The creation of Lawyers for Lawyers was supported by the Dutch sections of Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists (NCJM), the Netherlands Bar Association and the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM) at University Utrecht.

#### *Lawyers for Lawyers penguin logo*

The first President of Lawyers for Lawyers was Willem van Manen. He was also the originator of the Lawyers for Lawyers penguin-logo that was based upon his famous series of penguin lawyers’ cartoons.

### **5.3 Who we support - Where we work**

Lawyers for Lawyers supports lawyers at risk in all continents of the world, especially lawyers who work in challenging environments.

We stand up for lawyers who have the formal status of lawyers in accordance with domestic laws and are bound by recognized standards and ethics of the legal profession. At the same time, we may include lawyers who exercise the functions of lawyers but are not or not any longer formally recognized as such, for example because access to the legal profession has been refused to them or they have been suspended or disbarred on improper grounds as a reprisal of their work.

On the individual level we prioritize support to lawyers who are in imminent danger or acutely vulnerable. However, since our resources are limited, we are forced to make choices. These choices are based upon our capacity, expertise, and networks, as well as potential opportunities and impact. Also relevant is whether support is already or can be better provided by other organizations.

### **5.4 What we do - How we collaborate**

In addition to emergency support and rapid assistance to lawyers in immediate danger, we provide a range of tools and preventive support to defend and protect lawyers from attacks and improper interference and to strengthen their international recognition and legal protection. At the same time, we empower lawyers and associations of lawyers to support, safeguard, and advocate for the independence of the legal profession on a more lasting basis at the domestic level.

We promote respect for the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.

In doing so, we act in collaboration or coordination with international bar associations, lawyers' organizations, and other civil society actors.

Lawyers for Lawyers is a member of the BMO (*Breed Mensenrechten Overleg*), a coalition of human rights and development organizations based in the Netherlands.

We also engage with governments and international and regional intergovernmental institutions and their mechanisms. In 2013, Lawyers for Lawyers was granted consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), providing us access to this Council and its many subsidiary bodies, to the Human Rights Council, to the various human rights mechanisms of the UN, as well as to special events organized by the President of the General Assembly.

### **5.5 How we make an impact**

Lawyers for Lawyers acknowledges that it is often hard to tell whether our activities have contributed to or resulted in reducing or preventing attacks and restrictions against lawyers or improving legal protections, and if so, to what extent. Our activities can also have unintended effects, both positively as well as negatively.

When it comes to supporting lawyers, we define success in terms of making a positive difference for individual lawyers. We make a positive impact, when lawyers feel morally supported, when we offer a source of strength in times of need, or when their personal situation changes positively, e.g. they

are released from prison, travel bans are lifted, disciplinary or criminal proceeding are withdrawn, etc. Our impact is also positive when lawyers feel empowered to support their colleague lawyers at home.

When it comes to structural support, we define success in terms of progress, e.g. is there an increased number of recommendations made by United Nations human rights mechanisms, strengthening the independence of lawyers and the legal profession that were originally issued by Lawyers for Lawyers or by organizations we are collaborating with or by governments we have engaged with; is there an increase in the number of governments we have engaged with, accepting those recommendations; are those supported recommendations implemented effectively; and do they result in positive changes for lawyers discharging their professional duties.

When defining performance indications for specific projects, we make a distinction between what outcomes may be reasonably expected, given our circle of influence, and what outcomes would be best in terms of achieving our mission, vision, and goals.

To understand our impact, we monitor and evaluate the results of our activities on an on-going basis.

## **5.6 Why Lawyers for Lawyers**

Lawyers for Lawyers has a strong track record in acting quickly and effectively to support lawyers in danger. Our international network and the way we operate, enable us to be flexible and amendable to fast-changing situations and developments.

Lawyers for Lawyers are practicing lawyers and human rights experts. We are therefore particularly well placed to monitor and highlight violations of lawyers' rights and threats to their independence and to raise awareness of the harmful consequences thereof for upholding the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

Our board of directors, staff members, and lawyer-volunteers have deep knowledge and expertise of the laws, standards and ethics underpinning the legal profession, the concept of the rule of law as well as international human rights laws and mechanisms. They also know how to apply these laws, concepts, and mechanisms in practice.