



Executive Director

April 2025

About Protection International

Protection International (PI) is an international non-profit association, subject to Belgian law (Aisbl), which has its global team in Brussels, but primarily works where protection of HRDs is needed. PI has long-term presence in several countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and with programmes and partnerships across the globe.

Protection International stands for the right to defend human rights (RDHR) for everyone.

Since 2007, we have been working with human rights movements across the globe. We provide long term accompaniment and support to human rights defenders (HRDs) and their collectives at risk. Our objective is to support the defenders in ensuring their own safety, holding duty bearers accountable to fulfil their obligation to protect HRDs, and garnering support from key stakeholders to maximise their contribution to HRD protection.

Our Vision

We aspire to a world in which fundamental human rights and freedoms are universally recognised and respected by all. Everyone has the right to defend these rights and freedoms without fear of threats or attack.

Our Mission

Our contribution to that world is to support human rights defenders (HRDs) through comprehensive protection programmes. Our programmes enable HRDs to build capacities for managing their protection effectively. We carry out targeted advocacy so that those who have the duty to protect HRDs fulfil their obligations, and we work to convince other individuals and institutions with a stake in the protection of HRDs to maximise their positive contribution. Protection International always works in partnership with defenders.



Our Values

Solidarity & Collaboration

We are committed to standing alongside HRDs and supporting their efforts to improving our societies through peaceful means.

Grassroots Ethos

We are committed to identifying the needs of HRDs and their communities, to adapting our work to their realities (cultural, historical, economic, etc.), and to valuing their work and their voices.

Commitment to Human Rights

We believe that respecting human rights will contribute to a more just global society. Everybody has the right to defend human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination based on their identity, nor fear of being threatened or attacked.

Participatory Decision-Making

We promote the respect and participation of everyone in the decision-making process. We are committed to horizontal and active listening – recognising the value in having a diversity of skills, perspectives and ideas.

Accountability & Integrity

We are committed to communicating, both internally and externally, about what we are doing as an exercise of transparency that reflects a reliable and credible organisation, fostering trust amongst our partners. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy on corruption.

Creativity & Learning

We are committed to: reflecting on our individual and collective practices; learning from our mistakes; being open to new ideas and ways of working; sharing internally in order to learn; innovating and improving our level of understanding; and putting our lessons learned into practice to more effectively contribute to the work of others.

You can learn more about Protection International's work, strategy, and access our annual reports by visiting [this link](#).



Letter from the Chair

Dear Future Executive Director,

It is with great enthusiasm that I invite you to consider joining Protection International (PI) as our next Executive Director. As Chair of the PI International Board, I am deeply inspired by our mission and the profound impact we have on the ground. Since our founding in 2007, we have steadily evolved into a globally connected organization dedicated to empowering Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and their collectives to create enabling environments for the right to defend human rights.

As we enter a critical phase guided by our ambitious 2024-2028 Global Strategy, we are seeking a visionary and values-driven leader who can navigate the complexities of our challenging landscape. This strategy serves not only as a response to the increasingly hostile environment faced by HRDs but also as a blueprint for transformative change. We aim to amplify the agency of HRDs, strengthen collective protection mechanisms, challenge stigmatization and criminalization, and drive policy change—while fostering resilience from within our team.

In leading us through this next chapter, you will not merely occupy a leadership role; you will become a steward of our values and a catalyst for the change we envision. The incoming Executive Director will guide a diverse and highly motivated senior management team, ensuring financial sustainability, efficient governance, and impactful advocacy. You will build consensus, harness the expertise of experienced colleagues, and foster an environment rooted in teamwork, accountability, and excellence.

This is an exciting opportunity to take on a role that demands cultural sensitivity and problem-solving skills in a dynamic environment. As we adapt to current needs—optimizing governance, diversifying funding sources, and transitioning to a more locally focused model—we seek someone who thrives in uncertainty and complexity with clarity, purpose, and heart.

If you are strategic, compassionate, and unafraid to lead with conviction—believing wholeheartedly in collective leadership—then we would be honoured to embark on this journey with you. Together, we will continue to support HRDs as they carry out their courageous work—often at great personal risk while pushing for the structural and political changes needed to protect human rights.

In brief, we are seeking a visionary leader devoted to operational excellence, with deep alignment on human rights issues, a real understanding of advocacy, who truly enjoys inclusive team work and is resilient and adaptable.

Warm regards,

Sandra Petersen
Chair of the International Board
Protection International



The Role

Role:	Executive Director
Reporting to:	The Board of Directors - Chair, Sandra Petersen
Location:	Preferably Brussels (a considerable amount of time will need to be spent in the Brussels office and with PI leaders and teams in the regions)
Contract:	Open ended Belgian employment contract
Travel:	Regular travel to be expected

Main Responsibilities

The new Executive Director will lead by example, practising the organisation's values and raising the profile of PI as the leading organisation for Human Rights Defenders globally.

The new ED will:

- Have the ability to craft a vision aligned with organisational goals, and drive its implementation with a diverse senior management team with clear action plans and success measurement tools;
- Seek to ensure adapted structures and processes to bring about organisational goals, building capacity for sustained growth;
- Ensure financial stability, embedding an adapted funding model with agreed actions and establishing a global framework adaptable to local needs that will make for compelling case studies to present to potential donors;
- Raise the profile of Protection International through impactful advocacy activity campaigns and engage meaningfully with coalition and alliance partners to maximise the voice of Human Rights Defenders;
- Foster inclusivity and close collaboration across the global teams and empowering teams across continents, promoting accountability and building a culture of excellence.
- Build and maintain a solid relationship with PIs governing structures and the International Board.



Required Experience and Qualifications

- A minimum of 10 years' experience in an international environment preferably dealing with Human Rights or similar issues.
- A university degree in a relevant field and business management know-how.
- Recognised leadership level, with honed experience in organisational change management and governance optimisation.
- Proven legal and financial literacy with the ability to ensure financial sustainability through effective engagement with donors, global philanthropy in particular.
- Long distance and virtual multi stakeholder management.
- Recognised advocate who can with the team, bring about a global impactful campaign that can be nimbly adapted to a regional or local context.
- An empathetic people leader with noted cultural sensitivity, who motivates the team to deliver excellence for the cause.
- Excellent communication and presentation skills.
- Fluency in English and with a preference for Spanish and/or French.
- Knowledge of Belgium's legal framework for not for profit organisations is a plus.

How to Apply

All correspondence, at this stage, should be via Oxford HR. To apply for this post, click on the "Apply" button on the job advert page, complete our online application form, and submit your CV and cover letter as two different documents, which should be prepared before applying as they will be considered in the application process.

The cover letter should be no more than two pages long and explain why you are interested in this post and how your skills and experience make you a good fit.

The document should be saved in PDF in the following format: Your First Name-Your Last Name-Document Name-Date (mmyyyy)-Organisation e.g., Pat-Jones-CV-042025-ProtectionInternational or Pat-Jones-CoverLetter-042025-ProtectionInternational.



Timeline

Closing Date:	23rd May 2025
First stage interviews:	6th – 13th June 2025
Final interviews:	End of June 2025 – TBD

Selection Process

All candidates will receive an update regarding their application after the closing date. We advise candidates to add the role email to their safe senders list and regularly check their spam folder.

Equality Statement

The organization shall not discriminate and will proactively apply affirmative action principles against discrimination in advertisements, recruitment and other conditions of our search for candidates, preventing discrimination against any candidate on the basis of race, colour, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. Adhering to Protection International means to comply with our Code of Conduct & Ethics, Anti-Corruption Policy, Security Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Child Protection Policy, Policy for Protection from Harassment, Abuse, Exploitation & Discrimination. For more info, visit www.protectioninternational.org.

Queries

If you have any queries on any aspect of the appointment process, need additional information, or would like to have an informal discussion, please email at r.barlow@oxfordhr.com in the first instance.

About Oxford HR

Oxford HR is a B Corp certified leadership consultancy. Having worked within a diverse range of institutions, from not-for-profits and charities to governments and corporate environments, we've seen the powerful impact that the perfect team can have.

Finding innovative leaders can be a challenge; and yet their transition into leadership is vital to an organisation's mission and success. We work across the globe to search for and support remarkable leaders and teams, improve their board effectiveness and support on a range of leadership functions. Learn more at: oxfordhr.com