**Press Release: Leadership Renewal and Organizational Restructuring of Defenders Coalition Somalia**

Since August 2024, and under the leadership of Hassan Shire, Executive Director of DefendDefenders and Chairperson of AfricanDefenders, two missions have been deployed to Somalia to evaluate the current landscape for human rights defenders (HRDs), 10 years after the launch of the report titled **Between the Rock and the Hard Place**.

The primary objective of these missions was to rejuvenate the Somalia HRDs Coalition through the establishment of new leadership and an active board capable of effectively addressing the evolving challenges encountered by HRDs in Somalia.

We are pleased to report significant advancements in the development of a new governance framework, which has expanded the secretariat's capabilities to enhance protection mechanisms, with clearly defined objectives.

Consequently, board members have been nominated and confirmed for a once renewable three-year term.

Both AfricanDefenders and DefendDefenders have taken the opportunity to reinforce the skills and strategic capacity of the board of directors, focusing on competencies in decision-making and effective governance oversight.

The Chairperson of AfricanDefenders engaged in a private meeting with the board of directors to discuss the foundational elements that led to the creation of the Defenders Coalition Somalia and extensively addressed the board's critical role in ensuring robust governance and organizational performance.

On May 14, 2025, the Board of Defenders Coalition Somalia convened for the first time since its establishment in 2015. Key outcomes from the inaugural meeting included the formal constitution of the Board’s leadership structure, with the Chairperson Hassan Ali Gesey presiding.

The board formally adopted the following foundational governance documents:

- The Board Charter

- The Bylaws of Defenders Coalition Somalia

- The Annual Work Plan and 2025 Strategic Budget

The Board resolved to reconvene in the next quarter to deliberate and ratify additional organizational policies.