

# SAFETY GUIDE FOR JOURNALISTS

A handbook for reporters in high-risk environments



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

**REPORTERS  
WITHOUT BORDERS**  
**FOR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

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## ■ PREFACE

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### **A survival kit to keep in your pocket and in your head**

“Dead men have indeed died in vain if live men refuse to look at them.” This quotation by the celebrated war photographer Robert Capa referred to all humans, but can be applied particularly to journalists killed in the line of duty. We won't dwell on the grim figures here, but which of us doesn't know a colleague hit by a stray bullet or deliberately targeted while on assignment?

In war zones, as in times of peace, figures show that international law is regrettably insufficient to protect journalists. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) contributed significantly to the resolutions on the protection of journalists approved by the UN Security Council in 2006 and 2015. But, like the Geneva Conventions, these resolutions are not panaceas.

Those whose vocation and profession take them into dangerous parts of the world will never be entirely out of harm's way, and safety is to a large extent a matter for journalists themselves, both collectively and individually. In the collective sense, the establishment of procedures for editorial staff, the exchange of information among colleagues and the provision of facilities by organisations such as Reporters Without Borders are essential.

The *Safety Guide for Journalists* issued by Reporters Without Borders is aimed at providing guidelines and practical advice for all those who risk running into an enemy of press freedom on a street corner or on a deserted road. Such a situation can quickly test the difference between a happy-go-lucky journalist who set

off unprepared and a reporter who packed the right survival kit of experience and equipment.

In partnership with UNESCO, Reporters Without Borders is bringing out a new edition of the Handbook for reporters in high-risk environments. First published in 1992 and updated several times since, this Handbook has also been issued in French, Spanish and Arabic and distributed on every continent.

**Christophe Deloire**

*Reporters Without Borders' Secretary General*

## **A guide that symbolizes coordinated action**

The right to free expression is a human right and a basic freedom enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the first place, it is a right in itself – the right to receive and impart information and ideas through any media – but it also allows all other basic rights to be freely exercised and protected. Many instances throughout history have taught us that, when freedom of expression starts to collapse, other basic freedoms can quickly suffer the same fate.

The first article of the constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), approved on 16 November 1945, states that its mission is “to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image”. Freedom of expression and its corollaries, freedom of information and freedom of the press, are thus at the heart of UNESCO’s mandate.

Journalists and news organisations are essential participants in the exercise of this basic freedom, which is why those who want to impose tight control on public debate and citizens’ right to information so often target them. The huge number of journalists killed in the course of their work in recent years – more than 700 since 2006, according to a report presented by the Director-general of UNESCO at the International Programme for the Development of Communication on 21 November 2014 – shows the scale of the problem and the difficulty of dealing with it.

The figures are alarming. According to the UNESCO Director-general’s report, the vast majority – almost 95 percent – of those killed in the course of their work were local journalists. Most were not covering armed conflicts, but were reporting on local stories. Furthermore, in the past 10 years only 6.6 percent of cases involving

the deaths of journalists have been resolved. This is an impunity rate of more than 90 percent, which sends out the devastating message that killing a journalist in order to silence him or her will have few repercussions for those responsible.

The United Nations Chief Executives Board endorsed a UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity on 12 April 2012 as a coordinated response and to motivate all partner organisations. The Plan of Action is a coordinated inter-agency mechanism with a multi-pronged approach towards implementing a global strategy designed to improve the protection of journalists.

On 18 December 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 68/163 on the safety of journalists, which proclaimed 2 November the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists and tasked UNESCO with coordinating the implementation of the Plan of Action. Since then, various resolutions have been adopted by the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, UNESCO and regional inter-governmental organisations, which signify the strengthening of safety standards for journalists.

The Plan of Action highlights the importance of raising public awareness of journalists' safety and of the issue of impunity, and of the need to implement safeguards, strengthen the capacity of the judicial system, the police, the army and civil society in relation to the obligations and commitments made by governments on journalists' safety.

Dealing with new threats and challenges to an increasingly dangerous profession will require the efforts of all those involved. Among the many measures and good practices implemented to improve journalists' safety, the *Safety Guide for Journalists* issued by Reporters Without Borders and UNESCO stands out. The



first version, produced in 1992, has been translated into several languages and updated several times since. More than 20 years on, the threats facing journalists in 2015 have changed. New dangers have appeared while others are being better tackled. To cope with these changes, several new chapters have been added to the Guide. It now covers the issue of digital safety, a growing worry for journalists (UNESCO has just published a study on the subject: Building Digital Safety for Journalism), safety precautions for those covering natural disasters or epidemics, and also the problem of sexual violence, aimed particularly at female journalists.

No single stakeholder can meet the huge challenge of journalists' safety alone. The Guide is an important body of knowledge and experience acquired over the years by journalists, news organisations and groups that campaign for freedom of expression. By gathering and encapsulating these good practices from many different sources, the Guide embodies the desire of all partners to join forces and work more closely together to strengthen every aspect of the safety of journalists and the fight against impunity.

**Guy Berger**

*Director of the Division of Freedom of Expression and Media  
Development, UNESCO*

## ■ INTRODUCTION: RSF AND THE PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS

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In some countries, a journalist can be thrown in prison for years for a single offending word or photo. Jailing or killing a journalist removes a vital witness to events and threatens the right of us all to be informed. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) fights for press freedom on a daily basis.

From its creation in Montpellier in 1985 to its nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, RSF has grown to become an international NGO with a presence in all five continents and consultative status with the United Nations and UNESCO. Nowadays its activities span the entire globe thanks to its national sections, bureaux in Washington, Rio de Janeiro and Brussels and a network of more than 150 correspondents.

### **Through its daily work and its campaigns, RSF:**

- Defends journalists and media assistants imprisoned or persecuted for doing their job and exposes the mistreatment and torture they are subject to in many countries.
- Fights censorship and laws that undermine press freedom.
- Provides financial aid each year to around 100 journalists or media outlets in need (to pay for lawyers, medical care and equipment) and to the families of imprisoned journalists.
- Works to improve the safety of journalists, especially those reporting in war zones, by providing them tailored insurances, equipment, digital safety training and a 24/7 hotline.

## **Fighting for journalists' safety**

RSF played a key role in 2006 and 2015 in getting the United Nations Security Council to vote resolutions 1738 and 2222 on the protection of journalists in armed conflicts. RSF now campaigns for improvements in the implementation of international law, including:

- The appointment of a special representative to the UN Secretary-general on the protection of journalists, with the task of monitoring member states' compliance with resolutions protecting media workers. The adviser would draft recommendations, alert the Secretary-general of any abuses affecting news providers and undertake investigations into acts of violence against journalists in the event that no investigation has been carried out by the relevant member state.
- That the UN Security Council refer to the International Criminal Court (ICC) the crimes committed against journalists in Syria and Iraq, crimes that can be regarded as war crimes under international law.
- To ensure protection for all news providers, both professional and non-professional (bloggers, "netizens"), and both in wartime and peacetime.

## **Practical assistance**

The safety of journalists largely depends on the precautions they take while on the job: that is why RSF lends them helmets, bulletproof vests and GPS personal locator beacons, offers digital safety training and insurance for freelance reporters.

➔ *To enquire about this equipment, email [assistance@rsf.org](mailto:assistance@rsf.org).*

Thanks to a partnership with American Express, any journalist in trouble can immediately contact the Reporters Without Borders team, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling the “SOS Press” hotline on **+33 1 4777-7414** or by going to any local American Express agency. A Reporters Without Borders representative will provide the journalist with advice or contacts, or will alert local or consular authorities when needed.

## **A guide for everyone working in news and information**

RSF offers reporters this handbook, published in partnership with UNESCO and translated into several languages. It is aimed mainly at journalists who travel to dangerous spots and provides practical advice on how to avoid pitfalls in the field, as well as highlighting international legal standards protecting press freedom.

The guide does not claim to be exhaustive or infallible, but it contains practical advice to follow before, during and after an assignment in dangerous areas. It is aimed at all those who work in news and information. The murders in 2014 of the U.S. journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, who were freelancing in Syria, were a sad reminder of the growing risks facing freelance journalists who travel on their own initiative to hostile parts of the world.

With this in mind, some 60 news outlets and journalists’ protection organisations – including RSF – met in New York in February 2015 to draw up an employers’ code of conduct designed to protect freelance journalists on dangerous assignments. Chapter 5 gives details of this international effort and some examples of action taken by several news organisations to improve journalists’ safety.

## ■ CHAPTER 1: THE GROWING RISKS FOR JOURNALISTS

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High-risk assignments for journalists mean working in conditions where the likelihood of physical harm (death, injury or serious illness) is significantly higher than normal. These include:

- Hostile environments: dictatorships, zones of conflict, insurgency or high crime, and also regions of extreme climate or terrain (jungle, polar regions, desert).
- Dangerous events, such as violent demonstrations, riots, terrorist attacks, or chemical, biological or nuclear accidents, natural disasters (earthquakes, hurricanes, floods) or pandemics.
- High-risk activities such as investigations into terrorist groups, mafias or violent extremists and/or working under cover.

### **Journalists as targets**

More than 750 journalists have been killed since 2005 in the course of, or as a result of, their work. They have been targeted because they are journalists and their stories and investigations are a threat to the propaganda of one side or the other. Syria provides a sombre case study of such persecution. Since 2012, it has been among the three most deadly countries for journalists, and editors are increasingly reluctant to deploy staff there in light of the growing risks that they might be kidnapped, taken hostage or even beheaded.

The rapid progress in information and communications technology has given rise to a new danger for journalists: surveillance of their

activities and interception of their data. Digital safety is a constant challenge and we devote a whole chapter (Chapter 4) to it in this edition.

## **Female journalists face a two-fold threat**

As the media have increasingly opened up to women, another danger has arisen: sexual harassment and violence. A violent attack on a war reporter from the CBS television network in Cairo's Tahrir Square in 2011 helped to remove the taboo on sexual violence against female journalists. According to a study by the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF), carried out among 977 female journalists between August 2013 and January 2014, almost one respondent in two said they had been the target of sexual harassment in the course of their work. Although such pressure occurred mainly in the office, it also happened on reporting assignments and at press conferences. In the same study, one respondent in seven said they had been subjected to physical harassment – mainly molestation – and eight in 10 said they did not report the incidents, with some saying they feared that would make them more traumatising.

The Director-general of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, has described such violence against female journalists as a “double attack”, as a result of their sex as well as their profession. In the light of this, UN Security Council resolution 2222 passed on 27 May 2015 notes the “specific risks” to which female journalists and media workers are exposed in the conduct of their work and calls for the importance of gender when considering measures to ensure journalists' safety during armed conflict.

With this in mind, and based on advice from experienced female colleagues, you will find throughout this guide some practical tips for women in the field.

## ■ CHAPTER 2: PLANNING AND PREPARATION

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Before setting off on an assignment in a dangerous area, you must be prepared physically, mentally and logistically. This means gathering information, assessing risks, choosing “fixers” and trustworthy contacts, and working out safety and communications procedures for use while you are travelling.

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### **1. LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

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Find out as much as you can about the place where you intend to go, such as security and social, political and health conditions, as well as the climate, media and infrastructure. Familiarise yourself with the culture, customs and codes of dress and behaviour. This will help you better understand your surroundings and integrate more easily.

#### **To gather as much information as possible, you should contact:**


- Local news organisations and colleagues who are already there or who have recently returned. Through word of mouth you should be able to find a fixer and a driver, as well as somewhere to stay and places to go. There are journalists' discussion groups on social media for exchanging advice, such as the Vulture Club on Facebook.
- Diplomats from your own country and representatives from the United Nations or NGOs working in the area.
- Researchers, humanitarian workers and military personnel familiar with the area.
- More experienced journalists – ask them how they would approach the assignment.

Find out what permits and accreditation you need for the country or region. The bureaucracy could be tedious and time-consuming, but once you arrive in the country or find yourself stopped at a checkpoint, you will be relieved that you have the right permits.

### **Assess the risks carefully**

Before leaving, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I know enough about the place where I am going?
- Is the subject sufficiently newsworthy to justify the risks that I am taking?
- What are the potential risks and how well prepared am I to cope with them?
- Have I worked out a procedure to stay in contact with my newsdesk and my family?
- Do I really want to go and am I physically and psychologically ready?

 **Know your limitations:** if an assignment appears difficult and you do not really want to go, speak to your manager or a family member. Listen to your instincts and do not force yourself to go.

The BBC, and the Rory Peck Trust which helps freelance journalists, both recommend carrying out a written assessment of the hazards that the assignment might entail and the steps that can be taken to minimise them. These might include health, climate, infrastructure, crowds, conflict, risk of kidnapping, bomb attacks, etc.

The Rory Peck Trust ([www.rorypecktrust.org](http://www.rorypecktrust.org)) and the International News Safety Institute ([www.newssafety.org](http://www.newssafety.org)) have checklists and sample documents on their websites to enable you to carry out your



own risk assessment and establish a procedure for communicating with your newsdesk and other key contacts, so that you can keep them informed and sound the alarm in the event of an emergency.

### **Risk of embedded reporting**

In order to cover an armed conflict at close quarters, many journalists recommend being “embedded” as a safety measure. This means asking a military unit, either from the regular army or a rebel group, to be embedded with them for the assignment and thus benefit from their protection. However, there is a danger of coming under fire or attack from the other side. For this reason, it is recommended that embedded journalists take extra care in areas of gunfire and always wear clothing that distinguishes them from the troops, avoiding battle fatigues and carrying a sign with the logo “PRESS” or “TV”. It is worth recalling that journalists working in areas of armed conflict are considered as civilians under article 79 of the Geneva Conventions (see Appendix 1) and should be protected as such, provided they take no part in the hostilities.

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## **2. HEALTH PRECAUTIONS**

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Only travel to a dangerous area if you are in good physical and psychological health. Plan well in advance. Some vaccinations must be carried out three weeks before departure.

- ✓ Visit your doctor for a complete health check-up.
- ✓ See a dentist. It's a good idea to avoid toothache while you are in a war zone.
- ✓ Update your vaccinations and note them in your international vaccination card.
- ✓ Be aware of your blood type and any allergies you may have. Note these in your identity documents.

### **If you are taking medication, ensure that:**

- You have copy of your prescription with the international generic name of the medication.
- You have twice the quantity of medication required for the duration of your mission.
- You keep your medication within reach.

### **Update your standard vaccinations:**

- Diphtheria, tetanus, polio
- Whooping cough
- Measles, mumps, rubella

## **Country-specific vaccinations – some are compulsory (seek advice from the health authority in your home country)**

- Yellow fever (sub-Saharan Africa and Amazon region)
- Typhoid fever (developing countries)
- Hepatitis A (developing countries)
- Hepatitis B (for long trips)
- Rabies (for remote areas)
- Japanese encephalitis (rural areas in India and Southeast Asia)
- Tick-borne encephalitis (temperate areas of Central and Eastern Europe)
- Meningococcal meningitis groups A+C+W135+Y (Sahel. Compulsory for Mecca)

➔ *Visit <http://www.pasteur.fr/en/> for recommended vaccinations by country.*

## **Malaria prevention**

Malaria is a major health problem worldwide, mostly in the tropics and especially sub-Saharan Africa. The World Health Organisation (WHO) says there are 200 million cases a year and at least 500,000 deaths. Steps to prevent it vary according to the part of the world and the length of stay. Just as for tourists, it is based on:

- protecting against mosquito bites (repellent sprays, mosquito nets)
- taking pills throughout the trip and upon return diagnosing fever and managing attacks.

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### **3. FIRST AID AND HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING**

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You are advised to take a first aid course and refresh your knowledge regularly. The course, which may be given by the Red Cross or Civil Defence, will teach you how to respond in an emergency. On its BBC Academy website, the broadcaster has posted a video that demonstrates how to deal with, for example, severe bleeding from a lower limb or a chest wound.

Some editors and insurers also encourage journalists to undergo hostile environment training, which usually takes several days and is supervised by former soldiers. The journalists learn, for example, how to detect mines and how to move around in a combat zone, and are subjected to a simulated kidnapping. Private companies usually give such training courses, but the French Defence Ministry also provides two per year that are free of charge. The organisation RISC ([www.risctraining.org](http://www.risctraining.org)) also provides free training, financed by donations, for freelance journalists working in dangerous areas. There is a list of such organisations in Appendix VII.

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### **4. FINANCES, FORMALITIES, FAMILY: SET OFF WITH PEACE OF MIND**

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#### **Insurance**

If you are working as a freelancer, make sure you have insurance to cover illness, repatriation, disability and loss of life. Take time to compare policies and make sure they are compatible with the conditions of your assignment. Some do not cover risks associated with war, terrorism or demonstrations. Find out whether the policy can

be changed while you are on assignment, for example to add another country or risk category. Keep your insurance company's emergency contact details on you and make sure you know the procedure to request repatriation in the event of an accident or health issue. Also give your key contacts this information before you set off.

➔ *Note: RSF offers insurance coverage tailored specifically for journalists going on dangerous assignments (see Appendix VI).*

## **Finances, estate and personal life**

Before leaving, settle all financial and business affairs that could be a cause for concern during your assignment, such as your tax declaration or life insurance. You should also try to settle any disputes with family or friends to prevent unresolved quarrels from affecting your morale or concentration while you are away.

## **Digital security**

If you are kidnapped during your assignment, one of the first things your abductors may do is to enter your name in a search engine to find out more about you. For this reason we suggest you have a thorough clear-out (see Chapter 4):

- Leave with as “clean” a digital identity as possible, online as well as on your laptop and smartphone.
- Determine what are the most significant risks and the most sensitive data.
- Install digital safety tools and learn how to use them.

As you could lose your identity documents during your assignment, or you may need to prove at some stage that you are a journalist, not a spy, you are advised to create your own password-protected

private Web page to which you should upload some of your personal documents (such as your identity card, passport and medical prescriptions) and information about your status as a journalist (such as your press card and a letter of assignment from the editor). To create this page, all you need to do is open a blog on a free platform such as Wordpress, create a page or an article, upload your documents, then, in the advanced settings, select “Visibility: Private” or “Password protected” before publishing. You could also just create a new email account specifically to host a copy of your documents: upload these in a draft and memorise the password to that new account (Note: this password must be unique and must not make it easy to guess the passcodes to your other accounts). In case of abduction, you could tell your abductors to check that email or that web page to confirm your identity.

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## 5. PREPARING YOUR KITBAG: CHECKLISTS

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### **Keep a basic kit for reporting in high-risk areas.**

This basic kit shows the key items to take in high-risk areas. It has been put together by the AFP news agency with help from specialists, including military experts, and ideally should be kept packed at all times and ready to be adapted and topped up according to circumstances.

- Light helmet
- Insulated blanket
- Coloured glowsticks / lightsticks
- Snap links
- Toilet waste bags
- Multi-function tool
- Head lantern with white, red and blue beams
- Dark rucksack with several pockets and loops for attaching accessories
- Gas mask
- Oxygen mask
- Multiple plug adapter
- Strong adhesive tape
- Super glue
- Padlock
- Hand and ear warmers
- Compressed tee-shirt
- Protective eyeglasses
- Pocket flashlight
- Wind-up flashlight
- Zip lock bags
- Flat Swiss-style knife
- Saline solution
- Lighter
- Foldable cutlery Earplugs







### **Don't forget:**

- 2 USB flash drives for a quick backup
- 1 universal charger for use in a car
- 1 international adapter for electric sockets



### **Banned: anything in camouflage print and knives (use a multi-function tool instead)**



### **Important documents (also take photocopies)**

- Passport, valid for at least six months. If you are travelling to countries with incompatible visas, consider obtaining a second passport.
- Press card
- A card showing your blood type and any serious allergies
- International vaccination card
- International driving licence
- Road maps and city street maps
- List of emergency contacts, including your newsdesk, consular authorities, hospitals, assistance organisations etc.
- Local and international currency in small denominations, distributed among several pockets

### **Clothing: discreet, durable and appropriate for the climate**

- Comfortable, solid and waterproof walking boots
- Light, neutral-coloured trousers (not khaki)
- Tee-shirt – for women, a long, loose-fitting shirt or tunic
- Jacket of a neutral colour (not khaki)

- Waterproof jacket
- Scarf or head covering as a protection against sand, tear gas etc.
- Bracelet with blood type marked on it
- No valuable objects such as watches, gold chains or rings
- A whistle in case of personal attack or to indicate one's presence

AFP suggests having two kitbags. The idea is to be able to run about 500 metres or yards with the entire load on one's back. The bags should not be too heavy and should have many pockets. One, containing nothing essential, can be left in a hotel room while the second is carried at all times. Don't forget that anything inaccessible is useless.

**In the first bag you should have:**

- A sleeping bag suitable for the temperature, and a mosquito net in areas where malaria is endemic
- A spare pair of light shoes such as trainers or running shoes
- Spare trousers
- A shirt for more formal occasions
- Three or four spare pairs of underwear
- Personal care items: soap, toothbrush, micro-fleece towel (for quick drying)
- Sanitary protections for women
- Small packets of wipes
- Combination padlock
- A tube of Super Glue to repair broken equipment
- A small sewing kit
- Small zip lock bags for waterproof storage

**In the second, which you should keep on you, you should already have your basic kit ready:**

- Important documents and money
- Phone kit: charger, battery, international power adapter. Your emergency number should be stored on a shortcut key
- Compass
- Map
- Notebook and pencils
- Sunglasses, hat and sun cream
- Anti-bacterial hand gel
- Water purification tablets
- Mosquito repellent
- Packets of wipes and tissues
- Small zip lock bags for waterproof storage
- Safety equipment: Press armband or other removable ID
- Gaffer-type tape to use for writing PRESS or TV on any surface
- Protective equipment such as bullet-proof vest and helmet
- Noise-reducing earplugs
- Swimming goggles for protection against tear gas
- Mask that covers the face and nose
- Survival equipment
- Swiss knife
- Lighter
- Head lantern with spare batteries or wind-up type
- Cereal or energy bars
- Bottled water
- String
- Survival blanket

## **First aid kit:**

- Medication; painkillers, antidiarrhoeals, broad-spectrum antibiotics, antispasmodics, antiallergics, antimalarials. If possible, take products that can be administered without water.
- Tourniquet to stop bleeding in an emergency. Make sure it is practical, light and can be applied with one hand, i.e. on oneself.
- Haemostatic cushion for use on haemorrhages. This should be used instead of a tourniquet where possible and can be applied to wounds to the head, neck and body.
- Antiseptic, for disinfecting wounds.
- Adhesive sutures for cuts
- Sterile compresses
- Microporous sticking plasters
- Dressings that can be cut to size
- Emergency scissors for cutting clothing or dressings
- Compression bandage
- Elasticated bandage
- Gel for burns
- Instant cold packs to relieve bruises and sprains
- Protective breathing mask
- Protective plastic gloves
- Saline solution suitable for use on the eyes and in the nose
- Safety pins
- Tweezers
- Plastic bag for rubbish



## **REMEMBER :**

### **BEFORE LEAVING**

- ✓ Make sure you are vaccinated, in good health and trained in first aid and safety
- ✓ Assess the risks of the assignment and prepare for the worst
- ✓ Ensure your family is forewarned and safe
- ✓ Draw up a checklist of what you need to take

## ■ CHAPTER 3: KEEPING SAFE ON ASSIGNMENT

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The circumstances of each reporting assignment are different, but there are a number of general rules that can be applied:

- Be humble: over-confidence can be dangerous. Approach each assignment as if it is your first. Be modest and respectful, of other people and local customs.
- Be prepared: anticipate the risks. Find out as much as you can about the culture of the country and the region in order to blend as much as possible into the environment. Besides physical differences, differences in behaviour can easily give you away in some countries, such as smoking during Ramadan or holding out your hand to greet a woman.
- Use common sense: learn to trust your instincts. Be careful, discreet and aware of any warning signs. Don't let adrenaline or the drive for recognition carry you away. A story or a photo is not worth your life.

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### **1. ACCOMMODATION, TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATIONS**

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It is always better to be met personally on arrival, at the airport for example, by a colleague, a fixer or other trustworthy local contact. He or she can also advise you on what to do next.

#### **Choice of accommodation**

The main criterion in choosing where to stay should be whether it will

allow you to work in safety. It may be a hotel or a private house, but the point is that it should provide you with sanctuary.

In some cases it is better to stay in an international hotel with a high level of security where you will be among other journalists. But there are circumstances where this type of hotel, especially if political and religious officials often stay there, could be a prime target for bomb attacks, whereas a small hotel or a room in a private house would allow you to work in peace and out of view. As part of your preparation, identify places to stay before you leave (see Chapter 2) wherever possible.

Some basic tips: avoid choosing a house, apartment block or hotel in a remote area, on a one-way street or in a dead end. Avoid the ground floor or a room with a balcony, which could make it easier for someone to get in. Do not put your name on the main door.

A few things to bear in mind if you have the luxury of choosing a hotel: admission to the building should be controlled both day and night, it should have outside lights and solid locks, windows and doors, the latter equipped with peepholes. A main road and an airport nearby will allow you to leave town quickly if need be. Avoid rooms at the front of the building or looking onto a car park, which could be more vulnerable to attack. Instead choose a room at the back of the building or on a courtyard and identify all possible exits.

Once you have settled in: locate all the entrances and emergency exits. Check all locks each night and close the shutters and curtains as soon as it gets dark. Check the identity of anyone who comes to the door before opening it. If there is a high risk of an attack or explosion, move the bed away from the window, out of the way of flying

glass. Get a wedge to block the door from the inside, and possibly an intruder alarm. Locate a safe room to which you may be able to move to escape gunfire, bomb fragments or attackers. It should have no windows – a bathroom, for example – and should contain stockpiles of water, food and energy, and a means of communication such as a telephone.

➔ *Note: Bear in mind that you can't be sure of your privacy and a safe is no guarantee that your documents or equipment are secure. Encrypt your data and secure your computer and telephone (see Chapter 4 on digital safety). Finally, try to keep your room perfectly tidy so that you will notice any signs of intrusion.*

### **Getting around and choosing a driver and car**

Choosing a driver: assess his experience and how tired he may be (his licence plate will tell you if he has driven far), look into his eyes. Have the upper hand, and if he drives dangerously don't assume that this is the norm in the country. He has your life in his hands.

Choosing a car: the top-selling model in the region is often a good option for blending into the crowd. Do all the basic checks – mechanical condition, tyres, engine oil, brakes, spare wheel and jack. Once you have made your choice, France Médias Monde – the French media group that includes the international radio station RFI and TV news channel FRANCE 24 – advises taking a photo of the driver with the car, with the make and licence plate clearly visible, and send it to a contact in your home country. The photo could turn out to be useful if you disappear or are kidnapped.



## **Guidelines for moving around:**

- Don't follow a routine as regards times, routes and places, which could increase the likelihood of being ambushed.
- Before you set off, tell a local contact where you are going.
- Do not give your itinerary to the driver until you are inside the car, the doors are closed and he has pulled away. If possible, only let him know your plans for the day a little at a time.
- Agree on a secret signal with your dedicated driver so that he can warn you if there is a threat and you should not approach the vehicle.
- If another driver turns up unexpectedly in place of your appointed driver, do not get into the car, even if that means you have to change or give up on your reporting plans.
- Similarly, if your local fixer does not arrive for a pre-arranged meeting, this could mean there is a problem or imminent danger. Wait for him or postpone your plans for the day. Do not be tempted to go without him, or to take another fixer instead at short notice.
- In a team, one member should be responsible for regularly checking the car for the duration of the assignment and making sure it has fuel.
- Drive with the doors locked and the windows closed, keeping some distance from the vehicle ahead of you. Beware of staged accidents that are designed to force your car to stop.
- Do not park in places that are not supervised.
- Do not put yourself entirely in the hands of your driver. Make sure that you can always figure out where you are in time and space, for example by having a map and GPS with you.

## Communication with your home country

Stick to the pre-arranged procedure to keep your key contacts, such as your newsdesk, colleagues and family, informed about your plans, movements and any problems that arise. Have a fallback arrangement in the event that you can't contact them as arranged.

➔ *NB: don't spend a long time on the telephone and make sure your communications are secure (see chapter 4) to reduce the risk of interception or digital surveillance.*

In order to ensure your family life is stable and peaceful on your return, keep in contact and remain on good terms with your family as best as you can. Try to put your assignment out of your mind when you talk to them. Keep in mind that the problems they have to deal with may seem unimportant to you but are no less valid than the story and the excitement that you are experiencing in the field. Those close to you still have to cope with day-to-day concerns, which may in fact be caused by your absence.



### REMEMBER :

#### AS YOU SETTLE

- ✓ Choose your fixer, driver and accommodation carefully
- ✓ Avoid routine and do not move around alone
- ✓ Be smart when communicating with your newsdesk and family

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## 2. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS IN WAR ZONES

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### **Getting around**

Travelling in a combat zone is always very tricky and must be very carefully planned.

### **Before setting off**

- Prepare and check your vehicle (or have it checked) for its general condition and make sure it has a full tank of petrol, repair tools and common spare-parts.
- Put together a "survival kit" (warm clothes, a duvet, first-aid kit, water and food).
- Assemble official documents, such as press cards and any relevant laissez-passer.
- Study the route on a map.
- Check with colleagues, authorities and NGOs about any dangerous areas.
- Identify the location of checkpoints and who mans them. Find out what warning signals the military uses and what to do at a checkpoint.
- Check any curfew times.
- If you have to sleep rough, stay in your vehicle with the doors locked from the inside. If there are several of you, organise a rota for keeping watch.

## **During the journey**

- Try to stick to the planned route and schedule and stay in regular touch with the newsdesk or with other journalists. Try to include contacts, other journalists or places to stay on your itinerary. Don't drive at night.
- Don't carry anything that could confuse people about your role as an observer, such as binoculars, signalling devices, military-style clothing or weapons.
- If you're part of a military or humanitarian convoy, obey the convoy leader.

## **Walking around at night**

Doing anything at night is more risky. You may be hard to identify and may be taken for a combatant.

- Discretion is key. Wear appropriate dark clothing.
- Switch off your telephone and any cameras, radios and recorders. Watch your own sources of light or noise.
- Walk in the shadows, make detours if necessary, stop often to look around and listen.  
If you're part of a team, agree on assembly points.
- If faced with searchlights, lie flat on the ground and wait for them to go off.

## **Checkpoints**

A checkpoint usually consists of a roadblock manned by guards, who may be regular troops or irregular forces such as bandits, rebels or militia. Regular soldiers will generally want to stop the vehicle to check on the passengers and their documents and to flush out any

illegal trafficking. However, irregular forces will often try to extort money or equipment, or even seize the car or capture its occupants. As you approach a checkpoint, size up those manning it – whether they are lightly or heavily armed, how they are dressed (as soldiers or militiamen), whether they look young or old (young people will generally be more nervous and unpredictable), whether they are drunk, jumpy or aggressive, and prepare yourself accordingly.



### **Some precautions:**

- On the road, keep an eye on the flow of traffic. If several cars unexpectedly do a U-turn ahead of you, it may be because there is a dangerous checkpoint ahead.
- When you are approaching an unidentified checkpoint, contact your newsdesk and give them your location, or activate your personal distress beacon.
- If at an early stage, when you are not yet within sight or within firing range, you feel that it is a dangerous checkpoint, turn around and leave the area.
- Be careful, however: if the guards have clearly spotted you, it's too late, especially if the checkpoint is manned by regular (i.e. well-trained) troops. If you turn around, you will immediately become a target. Carry on slowly, one vehicle at a time.
- Keep the doors locked and lower the window on the driver's side slightly, just enough to talk to the guards.
- Remove your sunglasses, keep your hands visible at all times and avoid sudden gestures. Guards are often highly nervous.
- Be calm and courteous. Don't forget some guards may

- understand your language, so be careful what you say.
- Show the required laissez-passer, and if you have several from rival factions, make sure you don't mix them up.
  - Don't get out of the car unless asked. Do not switch off the engine.
  - If things get tense, negotiate and ask to speak to a superior.
  - Be cooperative. Allow the guards to search your vehicle. If they steal your things, protest but don't insist. Your life is worth more than your equipment.
  - Depending on the circumstances and the attitude of guards, some journalists may offer cigarettes, water, sweets, magazines, small amounts of cash or other small bribes in order to ease tension and get through a troublesome checkpoint.

## Coming under fire



**Passing through an area that is under fire: do so only if you have no alternative.**

- Beforehand: put on a helmet and bullet-proof jacket and make it clear you are a journalist, not a combatant, by writing PRESS or TV on your vehicle and your jacket. Assess the lie of the land and the position of those who are shooting. Identify and commit to memory the route you plan to take, staying under cover as much as possible.
- If you come under fire: lie flat on the ground, take shelter in a hole in the ground, behind a thick wall or behind a vehicle (remember only the engine compartment and the

wheels and axles are effective protection against gunfire). Leave the area as quickly as possible running in short “s spurts”, from one sheltered spot to another, covering about 10 metres (33 feet) at a time, or if crossing open ground, stay low and run in irregular zigzag fashion. If the firing is intense, stay in one place until there is a lull, which may take a while, or play dead.

A few words about snipers: Snipers use guns that allow them to hit targets at a distance of up to 600 metres and sometimes 1,000 metres (650 to 1,100 yards) in daylight and 300 metres (328 yards) at night. A sniper usually takes up a position in an apartment building that has a number of openings; never on the top floor and never at the front of the building. They are expert at hiding in roofs and attics. They sit behind sandbags and remove one or two roof tiles so they can see out. These holes look like unsuspecting shell impacts from a distance.

The echo problem: The sound of a gunshot spreads in all directions at a speed of just over 330 metres (360 yards) per second (a bullet's speed is 1,000 metres a second). In a flat desert area, it's easy to tell exactly where a shot came from. The targeted person always hears first the noise of the shot being fired (quick and sharp) and then afterwards the echo (longer and muffled). A good sniper will usually seek out a place from where the sound of a shot can be confused with its echo.



## **Brief overview of weapons and their ranges**

*This is taken from a hostile environment training course designed by Sovereign Global Académie and given to staff of the group France Médias Monde:*

- Revolvers and automatic pistols (Colt, Glock, etc.): calibre between 6.35 mm (.25 inches) and 11.43 mm (.45 inches) and with an effective range of 50 metres (55 yards). These are dangerous for up to several hundred metres. More useful for self-defence than combat.
- Assault rifles (AK-47, M4, AK-104, etc.): calibres vary. These are the most widespread battlefield weapons. Effective range 300 metres (328 yards), dangerous up to 1,500 metres (1,640 yards).
- Long range or sniper rifles (M21, Ultima Ratio, etc.): effective range of 50 to 1,300 metres (55 to 1,422 yards) or more. It is the preferred weapon of rebel movements.
- Heavy machine-guns: calibre between 7.62 mm (.3 inches) and 14.5 mm (.57 inches), effective range of more than 600 metres (656 yards).
- Grenades: hand- or rifle-launched (anti-personnel or anti-tank). Effective radius of 30 metres (33 yards). Can be launched up to 300 metres (328 yards) depending on the model (rifle-launched type).
- Rocket-launcher: range 15 metres to 500 metres (16.4 to 547 yards) for the most powerful types.
- Mortars: range 50 metres (55 yards) to 13 kilometres (8 miles). Lethal zone: 35 metres (38 yards) from the point of impact.
- Anti-aircraft guns: calibre from 20 mm (.787 inches) to 128 mm (5.04 inches), range of more than 2 kilometres (1.24 miles).
- Artillery guns: calibre from 20 mm (.787 inches) to 800 mm (31.5 inches), range several dozen kilometres/miles.
- Missiles: range varies between 100 metres (109 yards) and several dozen kilometres/miles.
- Multiple rocket launchers: range varies, up to 90 km (56 miles). They make characteristic whistling sound.



### **To protect yourself against snipers:**

- Prepare your itinerary beforehand.
- Indicate clearly that you are a journalist. Write PRESS or TV on everything.
- Don't wear military-style clothing so as not to be confused with a combatant. And be careful with how you carry your equipment – cameras and zooms could look like weapons from afar.
- Rain, snow, wind and fog can be your allies against a sniper.

### **Heavy artillery, air raids and chemical weapons**

In the event of heavy artillery fire and aerial bombardment, you need to protect yourself from the blast and also from the resulting shrapnel and fragments:

- In towns and cities, residents may be forewarned and leave the area or remain in their homes with the blinds drawn and shutters closed. Look out for such warning signs.
- Don't panic and instead of trying to run away, lie flat on the ground and crawl to the nearest safe place in order to protect yourself from the impact, for example in a hole in the ground or in the centre of a building, in the stairwell and away from windows (to protect yourself from shattering glass). Do not use cellars or attics, which are prone to collapse. Make sure you have several exits to the outside. Remain flat on the ground and cover your head.
- Use lulls in the firing to evacuate the wounded and leave the area as quickly as possible. An artillery round is often followed by an infantry attack.
- In woodland, shellfire can be especially destructive,

causing wood splinters and flying rocks. Under heavy fire, take cover in any way you can, using the shape of the land to find a sheltered spot such as a hole in the ground. If the bombing is more widespread, run away as fast as possible, listening for the whistling sound of a shell. If you hear it, fall to the ground and lie flat. After the blast, get up and carry on running, then fall to the ground when you hear the next shell coming, and so on.

### **Chemical and biological weapons**

Chemical or biological substances are usually dispersed by aerial bombardment or shellfire. The warning signs that should alert you are blurred vision, a sudden headache, excessive salivation and a running nose.

The basic instructions are the same as for other bombardments: lie on the ground, find shelter and leave the area. The main difference is that you should put on a protective breathing mask and shout "Gas! Gas!" to warn those around you to leave the area as quickly as they can. If you are heading towards an area that has just been hit by a chemical attack, stop immediately and leave after verifying the direction of the wind in case the gas cloud spreads.



## **REMEMBER :**

### **IN A COMBAT ZONE**

- ✓ Wear your bullet-proof jacket and helmet and be clearly identified as a journalist
- ✓ Prepare your itinerary carefully before you travel
- ✓ At checkpoints, stay calm and co-operate with the guards
- ✓ If you come under fire, lie on the ground and take cover

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### 3. MINES AND CLUSTER MUNITIONS

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#### Mines

In many combat zones, journalists may encounter landmines. Some are on the ground, buried close to the surface or covered up with stones. Others are fixed to trees, placed at the roadside attached to a tripwire or immersed in water. They can be triggered by a tripwire (which tightens and slackens), by pressure (or release of pressure), or a meter (“intelligent” mines are set to explode after a certain number of people or vehicles have passed). Others may be laid in unpredictable ways by untrained fighters. Places likely to be mined include former combat zones, border areas, occupied or abandoned military sites, ruins and abandoned houses, bridges, forests, abandoned fields, potholes and roadside verges.



#### Basic precautions for minefields:

- Never stray from well-used roads or paths, even to go to the toilet.
- Do not move around at night. You should be able to see where you are walking.
- Pay attention to how well-used the road may be. If it peters out, you should take heed.
- There may be tell-tale signs of a mine: tree branches set in a cross, a stick pushed into the ground, a circle of pebbles or a knot in the vegetation. Keep your eyes peeled.
- Bear in mind that isolated mines are rare. Usually half a dozen mark out an area, or they're laid in groups of about 30, or in rows (often indicated by stakes in the ground).
- If you find a booby trap or mine, you must leave the area at

- once, exactly retracing your footsteps or vehicle tracks.
- Never handle a mine or an explosive device that has not gone off. Never encourage anyone to deactivate a mine to take as a souvenir.
- If you spot a previously unknown minefield, mark it clearly, locate it on the map or on GPS and report it to the local authorities.



### **Tips on how to survive in a minefield**

On foot: Walk in single file with plenty of space between each person. Keep calm, don't move and alert the others who are with you. Carefully inspect the area around you and try to locate the danger. Then leave the mined area exactly retracing your steps, or tell the person in it to do so.

When a casualty is in the middle of a minefield, they must try not to move and other people must not rush to help. A safe pathway must be found to get first aid to them and then bring them out. Adopt a crouching position and use a pointed implement to probe into the ground at an angle of 30 degrees. If you encounter any resistance, do not use force but mark the obstacle and go around it. Don't step over a tripwire – mark it and go around it. Meanwhile, try to keep the casualty calm by talking to them, and don't forget to probe the ground near and underneath them. Then administer first aid (N.B.: if you use a tourniquet, note the time you put it on) and if possible carry them to a safe area for evacuation (see Chapter 6 on life-saving techniques).

In a vehicle: do not drive over roadside verges, potholes, sections that have recently been covered with sand, earth or rubble. If a mine explodes:

- Uninjured passengers must not get out hastily as they would risk stepping on a mine themselves. They should leave by the rear and walk in the tyre tracks to reach a safe area. The same route should be used to evacuate casualties.

- Don't try to reverse the vehicle into its tracks. Leave the area on foot and wait for the mine clearance service.

### **Cluster munitions**

Cluster munitions are parent munitions (air-launched bombs and shells or rockets) that are fired from planes, helicopters, ships or the ground and contain explosive projectiles that scatter over an area the size of several football fields.

Although designed to detonate on impact, many fail to do so and stay on the ground as an unexploded danger. Cluster munitions are very diverse (from grenades to small-calibre bomblets) and come in all shapes and sizes. They should be regarded as an unstable, unpredictable and dangerous type of mine. Unlike mines laid by a machine or by people, their location cannot be recorded because they are scattered randomly.



## **REMEMBER :**

### **TO AVOID MINES**

- ✓ Stick to well-used roads and pathways
- ✓ If you spot a mine, there are bound to be others nearby
- ✓ Walk in existing footprints or tyre tracks

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#### 4. BOOBY TRAPS, BOMB ATTACKS AND AMBUSHES

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In recent years, journalists have become preferred targets for kidnapping, bomb attacks and murder. Reporters and photographers should take the greatest care when travelling to dangerous areas where abduction is commonplace.



##### **General safety rules:**

- Keep yourself in good physical and mental condition, with adequate exercise and rest.
- Dress according to local customs and behave modestly. In Islamic countries, women should avoid casual clothes so as not to shock (no low necklines, figure-hugging clothes or short skirts; cover your shoulders and head if necessary).
- Try to move around only in groups and only in well-frequented public places. Do not go alone to isolated places and avoid badly-lit streets.
- Avoid predictable behaviour. Never go to the same place at the same hours. If possible, regularly change the place where you live as well as your vehicle.
- Always be discreet about how and when you move around – times, routes, where you are stopping, how you are travelling, who is accompanying you. Be careful in your communications and be careful what you publish on social media (see Chapter 4).
- Agree on a harmless signal among your team or with your family to warn them or be warned in case of danger.
- Pay attention to how much alcohol you drink and generally watch what you drink.

- Avoid conducting interviews inside houses and don't get into a vehicle with someone you have just met. Also, avoid spending too long in the street carrying out your work as a journalist, using a microphone or video camera, for example.
- Avoid taking buses, which can be the target of suicide attacks.
- Beware of suspicious-looking vehicles.
- If you think you are being followed, alert your contact or your newsdesk using whatever communication device you have in your possession, such as a tracker or phone and make your way to a safe place, such as a police station or military barracks, or at least to a crowded area. Try to make a note of the identification details of the vehicle, such as model, colour, number of people inside and licence number).
- Try to look as if you know where you are and where you are going, especially if this is not so.

If you are threatened: Always take death threats seriously. If you are in a place where the rule of law is respected, tell officials you think can protect you. Change your habits immediately. Find out where the threat came from and find the person who made it and either consider organising a confrontation in a place where you have an advantage (such as a police station) or avoid any meeting at all. If there is no rule of law, and the threats are repeated and occur over a considerable period, inform press freedom groups such as Reporters Without Borders and build a network of international support. If the danger is too serious, consider getting away from the subjects you were covering or from the people threatening you until the danger diminishes and you have mustered some support.



## **Bomb attacks and booby traps**

When a journalist or media outlet receives repeated death threats, special safety measures should be taken to reduce the danger of sabotage or a bomb attack. Security precautions must be worked out and strictly observed by all staff, and must include monitoring of possible sources of explosions, such as radio waves or electric current, switches and wiring, alarm-clocks, watches, doorbells, timers, chemicals and sources of heat or vibration.

### **The most common booby traps are:**

In houses (doors, windows, floors, furniture, phones, TVs, household appliances, books, alarm-clocks, beds, armchairs, suitcases). When you enter a room, avoid standing on the doorstep. Do not touch anything in a house that you don't know.

In kitchens (kettles, canned food, bottles).

On the road (food depots, bridges, roadsides, natural shelters, vehicles, abandoned weapons, grenades and munitions, corpses).

### **If you find a suspicious device:**

- Do not touch it in any circumstance, even if it has already gone off or seems not to have worked properly.
- If it makes a noise (a timer) or changes appearance (begins to smoke), leave immediately.
- Set up a safety perimeter around the site, at least 100 metres (110 yards) away from the device.
- Do not use a mobile phone or any electrical or electromagnetic device to raise the alarm.
- How to spot a parcel bomb:
- Unusually stiff envelope or packaging

- Excess packaging or large number of postage stamps
- A drawing or decoration
- Special wording (“very urgent” ... “very personal” ... “to be personally delivered”)

### **How to spot a car bomb:**

Check the immediate vicinity of the vehicle and look for any package or suspicious object near the wheels.

Note the general appearance of the vehicle (without touching it).

Look for any wiring or suspicious or unusual object.

Inspect key parts of the vehicle such as the wheels, the underneath, exhaust pipe, driving seat, front passenger seat, windscreen wipers, headlights, the catch to open the hood, engine compartment, dashboard and under the seats.

After dark, keep a flashlight with you so you can make these checks.

### **How to spot someone about to carry out a suicide bombing:**

- They appear to be wandering about without a clear direction
- They are perspiring and appear tense
- They look bundled up or dressed in a way that could conceal explosives
- If they think they have been spotted, they try to take cover in a group of people or stationary vehicles

### **If you receive a telephone bomb threat:**

Record the time and length of the call, note any details that might help identify the caller or establish where they are calling from (cadence of voice, pitch, accent, diction, background noise) and ask the following questions:

- When is the bomb set to explode?
- Where is it?
- When was it put there?
- What does it look like?
- What kind of bomb is it?
- What will set it off?
- Did you personally place the bomb?
- Why?
- Who are you?
- Where can you be contacted?

## **Ambushes**

### **If you are in vehicles in a military or humanitarian convoy:**

- In open country: keep 50 metres (55 yards) between vehicles and more if possible. Drive fast and be ready to speed up to escape any attack.
- In towns and cities, stay at brake distance between vehicles. Drive no faster than 50 km/hour (30 mph) to avoid accidents. See that no unknown vehicle inserts itself into the convoy and beware of motorcycles. Pay attention to traffic lights and stop signs. If you're approached, speed up.

### **If you are ambushed:**

- Speed up to get out of the dangerous area, or reverse or turn around if the road is blocked ahead of you but not behind.
- If the road is blocked by gunfire, get out of the car on the side away from the shooting and take cover behind the engine compartment and the wheels. Beware of the risk of mines at the roadside. Beware of a pause in the shooting, as an attacker may appear on the road to search or loot vehicles or even kill the wounded.



## **REMEMBER :**

### **TO AVOID BOOBY TRAPS AND ATTACKS**

- ✓ Be careful and discreet when you move around
- ✓ Take any threats seriously and follow safety procedures
- ✓ Remain on alert throughout your daily routine

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## 5. NATURAL DISASTERS AND EPIDEMICS

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### Natural disasters



**Here are some tips from the International News Safety Institute for journalists covering natural disasters:**

- Learn as much as you can about the type of disaster (hurricane, earthquake, tsunami, chemical spill, etc.) you are going to cover. Ensure you have appropriate insurance.
- Ensure you have conducted an in-depth risk assessment and are prepared to 'survive' in this challenging hostile environment.
- Wear appropriate protective clothing and gear and ensure that you and your crew are adequately trained to live and work in these conditions.
- Do not get in the way of rescue and relief workers. Be self-sufficient and do not be a burden to an already strained system. Check the weather.
- Make sure the newsdesk knows where you are and what you intend to do. If you move locations then let them know. Ensure they have other local contacts in case you go missing.
- Make sure you take something to wash yourself if there is no water, such as wet wipes or baby wipes. Ensure you maintain your personal hygiene so you don't get sick and ensure you know the location of the nearest hospital or medical facility.

### **Clothing and equipment:**

- Ensure you have luggage that you can carry (rucksack) with a waterproof cover.

- Wear suitable protective clothing and ensure it is appropriate for the heat and humidity. When reporting on hurricanes or floods, ensure you have good quality rain gear that fits you and is lightweight. Wear sturdy boots or wellington boots/waders. Also ensure all of your team has reflective gear.
- Mobile/cell phones may not work or networks may be disrupted. Take several SIM cards from different providers and make sure you have a satellite phone, that it is charged and that you have a charger that can be used in the car.
- A 4x4 vehicle is preferable if there is a danger of flooding. Make sure it is fitted with an up-to-date GPS, a spare wheel and a jack, and has a first aid kit.
- Make sure you have a grab bag at all times containing a flashlight and spare batteries, or wind-up torch, warm clothing, water, water purification tablets, compass, Swiss knife and food (energy bars, dried food and freeze-dried food).
- A generator is often vital in situations where there is no power or electricity. Make sure you know how to use it and you have sufficient fuel stored in safe containers.

 **NB:**

- Be aware of dangers such as flying debris, torrential rain or high winds.
- Do not take up positions under or near trees. This is because of the risk of being struck by lightning, or being hit by falling trees and branches.
- Do not approach or work in any area where power cables have come down.
- Refrain from smoking, as there may be fractured gas lines.

- If you smell gas, natural gas or sewer odours, do not switch on engines and refrain from using mobile/cell phones. Leave the area on foot as quickly and safely as possible.

## **Precautions during epidemics**

During the deadly Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014, AFP journalists reporting from the affected areas were instructed to remain at least six metres (20 feet) away from anyone suffering from the disease and at least four metres (13 feet) from a dead body, provided it was contained in a sterile body bag. They were advised to observe instructions given by NGOs such as Doctors Without Borders through which they made contact with nurses, patients or convalescents.



### **More generally, when faced with any epidemic, AFP recommends following some basic rules:**

- Drink bottled water, only eat food when you know where it comes from and how it was cooked, wash your hands frequently with soap or an alcohol-based solution and avoid contact with other people's body fluids, for example on a borrowed phone or dirty dishes.
- Wear long-sleeved clothes, as a protection against mosquito bites as well as to prevent direct contact with a sick person.
- During the rainy seasons, keep a pair of plastic boots that are easy to clean and disinfect.
- Don't shake hands, even with colleagues. Don't let anyone else into your car. Give them some money to help them out if necessary. Don't touch animals, not even pets. Don't borrow

anything such as a pen or mobile phone and keep you own equipment clean.

- Avoid overcrowded places and don't go out at night (a curfew may be in effect in some places) and use the hotel restaurant in preference to somewhere more crowded.
- Never eat – or even touch – bush meat.



## **REMEMBER :**

### **IN THE EVENT OF NATURAL DISASTERS OR EPIDEMICS**

- ✓ Wear suitable clothing and protective gear
- ✓ Avoid direct physical contact and swapping items with others
- ✓ Keep some wipes that you can use to disinfect your hands



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## 6. CROWDS, DEMONSTRATIONS AND RIOTS

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### **Covering a demonstration**

Try to work in a group or at least in a pair, so that you can warn each other if things get out of hand. Look for escape routes and plan how to get away in case of necessity. In towns and cities, it may be a good idea to get to know a few shopkeepers and residents beforehand. If the demonstration turns violent, you may be able to take refuge with them.

Where applicable, identify yourself as a journalist to the police at the start of the demonstration so that they won't take you for a protester later on. Find out what weapons or other means may be used so you can work out the risks and prepare yourself. Also, depending on the size of the crowd or the type of demonstration, try to determine if it would be better to be clearly identified as a journalist or if that might arouse hostility on the part of the demonstrators.

Reduce the risk of being robbed or attacked by not parking or preparing your equipment within sight of a potentially hostile crowd. Don't put on your protective gear at the start of the demonstration. This might anger the protesters, who often consider themselves to be peaceful and accuse journalists of anticipating trouble.

While the atmosphere is still calm, introduce yourselves to the demonstrators and their leaders and ask them about their demands. Not only is this part of your job, but they will also generally be less hostile if you have spoken to them in advance.

## Equipment

- Wear discreet protective clothing appropriate for the season, for instance a motorcycle jacket and a baseball cap with a protective liner.
- Wear strong and comfortable lace-up shoes, such as hiking boots. In the countryside, make sure they are waterproof and consider wearing gaiters if it's muddy.
- In the cold season, wear an anorak with a waterproof hood and warm underwear, socks, gloves and a ski hat in case you have to spend a long time outdoors.
- To prevent sexual harassment, women should carry a whistle. Some recommend wearing a one-piece bathing suit under several layers of loose clothes that cover up their figure (see also the following section on sexual violence and advice for women).
- Consider wearing an anti-riot jacket, which protects against handguns and other weapons and absorbs blows from batons. However, first assess the risks – you could be taken for a plain-clothes police officer if you try to cover it up, and if you wear a PRESS sign you may expose yourself to anti-journalist violence by the demonstrators.
- Make sure you have a small unobtrusive backpack to carry the following items, which you can take out quickly if things start to deteriorate:
  - A light helmet, such as those used for climbing or skiing, which is easy to put on and take off, preferably without ventilation holes in case of rain.
  - A gas mask, or swimming goggles, a ski mask or even a painting mask with filters that covers the nose and mouth.

- A scarf or kerchief is also useful for low concentrations of tear gas, or to dry your face after water cannon have been used.
- Since you don't know how long a demonstration may last if it gets out of hand, think of taking:
  - Water
  - Energy bars or dried fruit (for quick-release sugar)
  - Back-up batteries
  - First aid kit
  - Tissues
  - Saline solution or eye drops (in case of tear gas)
  - A press armband that is easy to access, which you should wear only when the risk of being taken for a demonstrator during a police charge is greater than that of being attacked because you are a journalist.
  - A head lantern, vital for demonstrations in open countryside that continue after dark.

### **Dealing with violent crowds and riots**

- Never stand between police/troops and demonstrators or in their line of fire. Beware of grenades, Molotov cocktails, Flash-Balls and moving vehicles.
- Look out for the people most likely to present a danger (those who are armed or wearing masks or hoods) and try to anticipate the movements of the crowd by watching the eyes and gestures of the demonstrators.
- In towns and cities, be aware of high buildings from which rocks may be thrown.
- If you encounter harassment, negotiate to calm things down.

Avoid physical contact. If you are physically attacked or rocks are thrown at you, run away, take shelter and leave the area. If you are beaten up, try to protect your face and head.

- Keep an eye on photographers and police. If they put on their helmets, it's time to put on your own protective gear, such as helmets and masks.
- Don't underestimate the debilitating effects of tear gas and bear in mind it is difficult to run wearing a gas mask – you quickly get out of breath.



## **REMEMBER :**

### **DURING A VIOLENT DEMONSTRATION**

- ✓ Take protective gear: helmet, mask, security jacket
- ✓ Check out the location and identify allies, escape routes and shelters
- ✓ Never stand between security forces and demonstrators

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## 7. SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ADVICE FOR WOMEN

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Male and female journalists cover the same areas and there should be no restrictions on reporting based on gender. However, in some cases women are recommended to take particular precautions in order to ensure their safety in dangerous areas.

The sexual abuse suffered by several female journalists in Egypt during the anti-government demonstrations in Tahrir Square, including a violent attack on Lara Logan, war reporter for the CBS network, highlighted the sexual violence to which journalists, particularly women, are exposed in the field.



**Here are some recommendations for female journalists working in dangerous areas. Most of them come from experienced colleagues. One, Judith Matloff, who is a security expert working for a number of journalists' protection organisations, published an article on the subject in the *Columbia Journalism Review* in 2011.**

### **Dress and attitude**

- Wear a wedding ring, or a band that looks like one.
- Respect the local dress code and err on the conservative side. Wear loose, even shapeless, clothes. Wear a long tunic, loose pants with a pullover shirt and a thick belt. These layers will slow down an attacker.
- Avoid low-cut and figure-hugging clothes and wear a headscarf if necessary.
- Wear comfortable shoes that will allow you to run easily.

- Avoid necklaces, which an attacker could grab hold of.
- Take care how you behave. Be aware of the local culture and customs. For example, smoking, shaking the hand of a man, drinking alcohol or laughing loudly may in some places be seen as signs of frivolity and promiscuity.
- Have your own vehicle and/or driver, so you can return home under your own steam and in safety.

### **In a hotel**

Take a room near your colleagues (unless they have been harassing you, in which case stay on another floor)

Keep a wedge to push under the door on the inside, an alarm, or a chair that will fall over if the door is opened.

Don't use the lift if you believe you are being followed.

### **In a crowd or a dangerous demonstration**

- Take even more care than usual to ensure that you are soberly and discreetly dressed. Plan to wear a one-piece bathing suit under several layers of clothing and a strong belt.
- Take a trusted male companion to watch your back. Ideally this will be your local fixer or your driver, someone you can trust who will not be worrying about his own story and will be able to warn you and protect you if things get dangerous.
- Stay at the edge of a crowd and always have an escape route in case things turn ugly.
- Carry a whistle or a small aerosol spray, for example deodorant, which you can squirt into the eyes of an attacker.
- If you encounter wandering hands, raise your voice and be firm. Don't let yourself be carried away by a group, put up a struggle.

## **If you are sexually attacked or raped**

- Struggle, shout, call for help from those around you. If you spot a group of women, call out to them to ask them for help or to sound the alarm.
- Tell the attacker that you have children, that you are pregnant, that you could be his mother or his sister, or try to distract his attention to something nearby.
- Say you are menstruating (you can use a capsule of fake blood and a sanitary pad to add credibility), that you are impure, sick, HIV-positive etc.
- If nothing works, force yourself to vomit or defecate to put off the attacker.
- If you are faced with a group of attackers, try to identify the least determined among them and try to persuade him to protect you from the others.
- After an attack, seek medical and psychological help and do not feel guilty. Go to the nearest hospital and ask for a post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) kit of antiretroviral medication that you can take right away to reduce the chances of becoming HIV positive.

➔ *NB: The risk of sexual attack is not confined to women and some of these tips may also apply to men.*



## **REMEMBER :**

### **TO AVOID SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

- ✓ Cover up with several layers of loose-fitting clothes
- ✓ Be aware of local practices regarding relations between the sexes
- ✓ Try to put off your attacker, or appeal to his humanity



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## **8. IF YOU ARE HELD CAPTIVE OR KIDNAPPED**

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The attitude of a hostage depends on the behaviour of the kidnappers and local conditions, but in most cases, the following advice should help:

- Don't panic and try to appear calm. The kidnappers are likely nervous enough themselves.
- Don't resist or try to escape unless you're sure you can.
- Be patient. Do not provoke your captors and don't be servile or beg for things.
- Try to remember as many useful details as possible: voices, smells, noises, language spoken, routes taken...
- Do all you can to stay healthy, using sport, exercise and mental activities.
- Accept reasonable orders and requests by the kidnappers.
- Accept food, water and anything that can improve your health.
- Get the kidnappers to call you by your name. This will get them to see you as a person. Try to establish a dialogue and a relationship with them to create a more relaxed atmosphere.
- If you are kidnapped at the same time as one or more of your colleagues, try to persuade your captors to keep you together. This will be less work for them and you will be able to offer each other mutual support.
- Try not to believe threats and promises made by your captors.
- Don't lose hope and don't be discouraged if negotiations drag out – that means your chances of release are greater.
- Retain your instincts as a journalist and observer to try to take a step back from what you are undergoing and imagine

how you will tell this story later.

- If the kidnapers ask, agree to make a voice recording or write a neutral note. This can help show you're alive and lead to your release.
- As your release nears, don't be impatient and obey the kidnapers right up to the last moment.
- After you've been freed, you'll be medically examined and "interrogated." This is vital. Also try to find someone to confide in about what happened. Don't keep the experience to yourself (see Chapter 6 on psychological trauma).
- Follow the advice you'll get before making any statement to the media.
- When you resume your normal life, take safety precautions against possible reactions by angry kidnapers.

## ■ CHAPTER 4: DIGITAL SAFETY

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There are considerable security risks for a journalist or blogger who uses the Internet, a smartphone or a satellite phone in a war zone or under a repressive regime. The data that you transmit may be used to locate you and thus put you in danger. Your files and your communications may be intercepted, compromising your sources. For this reason, it is essential to take precautions regarding digital security.

➔ *The following guidelines, which apply to your computer and smartphone, are not intended to be exhaustive. Reporters Without Borders organises regular training sessions on digital safety and offers free tutorials at [wiki.rsf.org](http://wiki.rsf.org) and <http://slides.rsf.org>.*

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### 1. HAVE A GOOD CLEAR-OUT BEFORE YOU LEAVE

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**Rule 1: Have as “clean” a digital ID as you can.**

If you are intercepted or taken hostage, everything about you on the Internet or on your computer may be used against you and put others around you in danger. Do some cleaning, particularly on social media – remove photos and comments on politics or religion that could be damaging if taken out of context. Use high-level privacy settings in order to restrict what is publicly accessible about you, including your networks, stories and photos, and on your Facebook profile, consider replacing your real ID with a nickname.

Back up your hard disk and leave a copy at home. Reformat your computer, i.e. permanently wipe all the data. If you don't know how to do this, install a new disk and leave the old one at home. Then all you need to do is install the operating system and all traces of your previous activity will have been removed.

 **NB:**

- If you merely delete all your files, they can still be found easily on your computer.
- Do the same with your smartphone, whether Android or iPhone, which these days behave like a computer. Back up the content on another medium, which you can leave behind, and restore the phone to its factory settings.

**Rule 2: On this clean slate, install your digital safety tools.**

Carry out all recommended updates so that your operating system, browser and your anti-virus software (such as ClamXav, ClamTk, Avast, MSE, McAfee or Norton) are as secure as possible when you set off. Turn on the firewall. You are strongly advised not to carry out any updates once you are in the field because of the risk of inadvertently downloading malicious software or spyware.

Encrypt your entire hard disk, using FileVault for Mac, or TrueCrypt or BitLocker for Windows. This is essential to protect your data. Using a password each time you log in will reduce the chances of opportunistic surveillance, but a more determined hacker will be able to take control of your disk and unlock it.

Lock you sessions and strengthen your passwords. Prefer longer

“pass phrases”, combining random words that can be easily memorised but could not be easily deciphered by software. For example: “spider in pyjamas knitting bandanas”. NB: it is advisable to use different pass phrases for different applications. If necessary, use a password manager such as LastPass, 1Password or KeyPass.

Install a Virtual Private Network (VPN) that will encrypt your Internet connections. This means they cannot be read by anyone else, making them secure against interception or hacking and will allow you to access sites that are blocked or censored in the country you are visiting. Reporters Without Borders, with help from French Data Network, a French non-profit organisation, has its own VPN server, which is available, free of charge to journalists and netizens who request it.



**NB:** never connect to a Wi-Fi network without VPN.

Install the Tor Browser, which will allow you to browse sensitive sites anonymously via an encrypted Internet connection. It can be used with VPN.

Install cryptographic software and applications that you can use on assignment to encrypt emails, chat and SMS messages, making them indecipherable to anyone except the sender and recipient:

- Email: Thunderbird or Enigmail
- Instant messaging: OTR, CryptoCat, Pidgin, Adium
- Phone calls or online video: Firefox Hello or Qtox (more secure than Skype, whose data can theoretically be decrypted by Microsoft)

➔ *Note that those you communicate with must use the same tools for them to work. Familiarise yourself with a range of simple cryptographic tools and also encourage your sources to encrypt their messages. Examples are CryptoCat or Zerobin.*

**Rule 3: Know the risks and keep your activities separate.**

Computer experts note that it has become almost impossible for non-professionals to secure their data permanently and it would be counter-productive to encrypt all one's communications, as this might in fact attract the attention of some authorities. A more pragmatic approach would be to find some private space to allow you to carry out sensitive activities discreetly. You will have to decide which data you particularly want to protect and take targeted and effective action. Ask yourself these questions:

- What are the critical data that I want to protect as a priority?
- Who would want to get their hands on them and why?
- What steps can I take to protect them?
- If this fails, what would be the consequences?
- If anything goes wrong, how can I delete the data and limit the damage?



**Once you have identified the risks, keep your activities – professional, personal, highly sensitive – separate on different devices and numbers and in different mailboxes in order to avoid possible links between them and better protect your data.**

**Some examples:**

- To contact a sensitive source, you could use a prepaid mobile phone, which cannot be put under surveillance and which you use rarely and briefly, away from your usual haunts.
- You could also create an email address to connect with a sensitive contact, via a secure and encrypted browser session, and specifically encrypt your communications with them. In parallel, you should continue normal, unencrypted activity using your normal mailbox for innocuous correspondence, in order not to generate a suspicious volume of encrypted messages.
- With your newsdesk and your key contacts, you could also agree on certain code messages to impart news or sound the alarm if you are encountering difficulties.

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## **2. IN THE FIELD, BE CAUTIOUS AND DISCREET**

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You've set off with little information about yourself and plenty of digital safety tools ready for use. Throughout your mission, caution and discretion are your best allies.

**Rule 1: Watch out for prying eyes.**

Avoid working with your back to a window. Put a privacy filter over your screen, which restricts lateral vision and prevents those sitting next to you from seeing what you are looking at.

As far as possible, keep your equipment with you. Never leave your laptop in your hotel room when you go down to breakfast, for example.

If you are working in an Internet café or using a shared computer:

- Remember to log off from your email or social network account.
- Erase your browser history, as well as cookies and any information you have entered in forms (or activate “private browsing”).

**Rule 2: Be wary of smartphones.**

In the field, carry a basic phone with a local prepaid SIM card that has only a few contacts and info:

- If you enter any contacts, make sure you do so on the SIM card and not in the phone’s memory. It’s easier to destroy a SIM card than a phone, if you have to.
- To protect your contacts, use nicknames in the directory or even disguise numbers by leaving out some digits or entering them back-to-front.
- Erase your call and message logs as often as possible.
- Take extra SIM cards, especially when covering demonstrations, if you think there’s a chance they may be confiscated.

A smartphone can be treacherous. It constantly emits large amounts of data to enable it to connect to mobile networks and the Internet, which can easily be used to locate you. If it falls into unknown hands, even for just a few minutes at a checkpoint or customs post, malicious software can be installed which can transform it into a bugging device. This can make it your worst enemy.



è When you are travelling with a smartphone, turn off Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and the geolocation features of your applications, or switch to airplane mode in order to reduce the risk of surveillance. If you are going to a critical meeting, leave your phone behind or turn it off and remove the battery BEFORE you go to that meeting.

A smartphone is often chock-full of data about you. Bear in mind that, if you are abducted, and your smartphone is confiscated, all the information on it, such as photos, contacts, browsing and call history may be used against you or could put other people in danger.

**Rule 3: Use a secure method to communicate with your newsdesk.**

Exercise the greatest care when sending stories, videos, or travel information to the newsdesk.

**Assess the risks:** sometimes it is wiser to wait until you leave a high-risk area before sending any sensitive information. In other cases, it may be better to share the info quickly then delete it from your equipment immediately to avoid problems if it is seized.

**Be very brief:** It is increasingly easy to determine where a call or an Internet connection is being made, whether from a cell phone or a smartphone. A satellite connection can also be quickly triangulated by the military. Moreover, a satellite phone is easily recognisable and is seen as a typical tool of war reporters. Keep it hidden and use an earpiece, only turn it on outdoors or in a location that you can vacate easily. Be very brief – ideally less than a minute – and do not make more than one call from the same location. Switch it off and remove the battery after each use.

**Encrypt your emails.** The program Pretty Good Privacy (PGP), among others, allows email content to be encrypted before it is transmitted via the Internet. It works on the principle that the person who installs PGP has two encryption keys: a public one consisting of a unique padlock that the sender closes when sending the encrypted email, and a private one, which the recipient uses to open and decrypt the email. Before using PGP, you must obtain your own pair of keys as well as the public keys of your contacts.

**Watch out for metadata:** the addresses of the sender and recipient, the time stamp and the subject line are rarely encrypted. Be careful that these don't give you away.

➔ *A tip: make your message appear to be spam, for example giving it the heading "Miracle Diet Offer".*

#### **Rule 4: Exchange messages securely with your sources.**

To exchange messages discreetly with someone, use a "dead drop", a mailbox to which both you and your source have the password. You communicate by leaving draft messages there, without sending them via the server. You and your sources could also use an anonymous mailer or a disposable email address.

There are also other encryption tools that are simple to use, which you could encourage your sources to use for encrypted exchanges:

- Cryptocat, an application that you install on your browser, immediately encrypts conversations end-to-end and deletes them immediately afterwards. You don't need an email address to use it – a nickname and a chat name are sufficient.

- Privnote and ZeroBin are sites that create URLs linked to encrypted messages that self-destruct after they are read. Easy to install and designed for those who don't want to install anything on their own computer. You just need a means to send the encrypted message, by email or chat, for example.
- Firefox Hello, a feature of the Firefox and Chrome browsers, which allow encrypted video conversations.

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### **3. EXTREME CONDITIONS OR INTERCEPTION**

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In the heat of the action, for example during a conflict or demonstration, your goals are to stay safe and to send your story. These may turn out to be conflicting. Using a network, GPS or satellite connection may give away your position and be a source of danger. You should be aware of the risks of the various means of communication and know how to circumvent them while protecting your material.

<p><b>Rule 1: Learn how to do without your phone.</b></p>
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Favour face-to-face meetings and make sure you are not followed. Bear in mind that if the meeting has been arranged by phone or email, it may be compromised.

Remove the smart card and battery from your phone before setting off, or before meeting a sensitive source. This is the only way to make sure that your phone can't be used to monitor or locate you.

Switching it off or setting it to airplane mode is not sufficient. Be aware also that nowadays it is not possible to remove the battery from an iPhone without special tools – and patience – so consider leaving it behind.

**Rule 2: Save your skin as well as your data.**

If your main priority is to get your story out, you can film or broadcast live without keeping anything, in case you are arrested, using lives streaming on YouTube or Bambuser (widely used during the Arab Spring).

If your main priority is your own safety, and you can wait to send your story, keep your data hidden in different places, or give it to a trusted third party. Keep some innocuous memory cards that you can (reluctantly) allow to be confiscated. These should contain some content in order to be credible.

If you are under threat and in a position to do so, destroy the smart card of your mobile phone and delete sensitive data from your laptop:

- Amnesty International has developed a “panic button” for Android phones, which can be pressed to warn key contacts of anything that might endanger the safety of yourself and/or your data, for example if you are arrested or abducted. These contacts will be able to locate you and, depending on the emergency arrangements you have made in advance, delete sensitive data or change your passwords on your behalf.
- An iPhone can be configured so that all its data is deleted after a certain number of unsuccessful attempts to unlock it (see privacy settings).

**Rule 3: Keep some ultra-secure space for sensitive activities.**

For your most sensitive activities, use an ultra-secure encrypted operating system, such as Tails. It operates as a live system and is stored on a removable medium, which leaves no trace of your activities once it has been ejected from your computer. The operating system can be copied easily and distributed to your contacts. It is stored on a USB stick or a memory card, which is inserted into the computer. The device is then restarted using Tails as the operating system. All communications via Tails are encrypted and sent over the Tor network. By default the system is “amnesic” and retains no data from one session to another, leaving no trace of your activities, although you can activate a function (persistence) to encrypt and save files for future use.

If you face an imminent threat, all you need to do is eject the USB stick or the card and hide it, and your computer will retain no trace of your activities in this “parallel” space.

## ■ CHAPTER 5: BEST PRACTICES

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Increasing violence towards media workers has led news organisations to try to protect their employees working in dangerous areas as much as they can. This includes making training compulsory, providing bulletproof jackets, armoured vehicles and bodyguards, limiting or banning travel, etc.

News organisations are also increasingly turning their attention to the safety of local stringers, who often work alone in the field, sometimes in highly dangerous circumstances. On 12 February 2015, dozens of media companies and press freedom groups, including Reporters Without Borders, launched a joint appeal for observance of international safety rules for freelance journalists working in dangerous areas and for editors and news organisations that employ them. The document notes the “vital role” played by local journalists and freelancers in covering dangerous stories and urges editors and news organisations to show the same concern for the welfare of these journalists as they do for their own staffers regarding training and safety equipment, and to take the same responsibility for freelancers in the event of kidnap or injury.

Independently of this international effort, several large broadcasters and print media organisations have already enacted safety procedures to protect their journalists, both staffers and stringers. RSF has questioned AFP, Reuters, the BBC and France Médias Monde on the subject and some general “best practices” have emerged which should be encouraged, such as careful risk assessment, attention to training, supervision, post-assignment debriefing, sharing of safety information and awareness of post-traumatic stress.

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## 1. THOROUGH RISK-ASSESSMENT

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At Reuters, no one is allowed to undertake a potentially life-threatening assignment without the approval of a senior editor and the appropriate regional general manager. The France Médias Monde group has recruited an adviser specifically responsible for the prevention of risks during reporting assignments. This adviser, who formerly worked for the French ministries of defence and foreign affairs, helps journalists and senior editors weigh the news value of a story and the risks it entails.

The *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)* has also gone to great lengths in examining high-risk assignments, including sending staff to hostile areas, covert filming of dangerous groups and covering dangerous events such as terrorist attacks, natural and man-made disasters and pandemics. The BBC has created a High Risk team dedicated to assessing the risks associated with newsgathering activities and to help editors with planning and deployment.

For every assignment classified as high risk, the BBC requires:

- A detailed written assessment of the risks and the steps to take to mitigate these.
- That all those involved, whether staff, stringers, consultants or contractors, are appropriately trained and/or experienced.
- The identification of appropriate safety equipment for the teams, to include personal protective equipment, first aid / trauma packs, communications equipment.
- The appropriate level of management sign-off for the deployment based on the understanding and acceptance that the risks justify the editorial ambitions.

Staff undertake high risk work on a completely voluntary basis and have the absolute right to decline such work without penalty or any other detrimental consequence.

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## **2. RAINING AND EQUIPMENT**

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Many news organisations, including those that signed the 12 February 2015 appeal on the safety of freelancers, ensure that their journalists, both staff and freelance, working in dangerous places receive appropriate training in first aid and working in hostile environments. They are also encouraged to keep their training up to date.

An increasing number of editors provide their journalists with protective equipment such as bulletproof vests, helmets and breathing masks. Given the risk of sexual violence, France Médias Monde also provide staff on assignment with kits to use after a sexual attack, containing a morning-after pill, broad-spectrum antibiotics and a tri-therapy kit for emergency anti-HIV treatment until the victim can be given treatment in hospital.

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## **3. TEAMWORK AND SUPERVISION**

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AFP always tries to ensure that its video journalists do not cover dangerous demonstrations alone and are always accompanied by one of the agency's text journalists or photographers to watch their back. In general terms, working in teams is the rule in dangerous areas. Several newsrooms appoint a team leader who is responsible for the equipment, for making decisions on safety and to ensure that fixers and other locally hired staff have enough training and/or experience. In some cases a professional security adviser may accompany the team on assignment and offer logistical support, helping to find safe



accommodation and a vehicle, for example.

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#### **4. IMPORTANCE OF THE DEBRIEFING**

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The post-assignment debriefing provides an evaluation of what worked and what didn't during the assignment and any lessons for future missions. It also allows senior editorial staff to face up to their responsibilities as they listen to the feedback from those who return from the field. At France Médias Monde, senior news editors and all members of the team attend the debriefing, as well as a representative from the technical side. Its purpose is to sum up the problems encountered during the assignment, focusing on three aspects:

- Editorial: did the stories meet the goals that were set?
- Technical: did the equipment and feeds work satisfactorily?
- Human: was there a good understanding within the team and in exchanges with the newsdesk?

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#### **5. SHARING INFORMATION**

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“Reporters returning from a difficult location are a gold mine of information for those who follow them,” said one AFP journalist. For this reason, the agency has set up a secure blog for its staff, and also for some clients who have requested it, which catalogues the latest information and advice on current conflicts and crises, including recommendations on hotels, itineraries, etc., as well as feedback on previous crises, such as the Ebola outbreak, the attack on Charlie Hebdo in Paris, as well as practical country profiles, checklists and tutorials on what to put in your kitbag, how to put on a bullet-proof jacket, etc.

The BBC notes that the post-assignment debriefing should include a verbal or written summary of the assignment, reporters' and editors' experiences, and any relevant new information or advice that will help inform future risk assessments and improve safety procedures.

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## **6. *MANAGING PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA***

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The post-assignment debriefing is also an opportunity to detect possible signs of post-traumatic stress among journalists. Many editors encourage their journalists to seek psychological help if a story appears to have been particularly distressing. Since post-traumatic stress is still largely a taboo subject in the news business, it should be possible to request such psychological support confidentially.

At France Médias Monde, a psychologist is available at all times at the group's headquarters and may take part in post-assignment debriefings.

More broadly, managers can help prevent post-traumatic stress by keeping a watchful eye on their journalists. Some reporters say that when they return from a dangerous assignment, they would like their managers to cut them some slack for a few days, to be able to gently ease back into their routine and get rid of the accumulated stress, and also for their colleagues to refrain from making sarcastic comments (such as "how was your holiday?"). Some editors ask a colleague close to the returning reporter to keep an eye on him or her for a few weeks and to report any signs of post-traumatic stress, such as emotional fragility or unexpected introversion. These symptoms are described in more detail in the following chapter.

## ■ CHAPTER 6: TREATING PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WOUNDS

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This chapter contains basic first aid instructions that can be administered to someone who has been wounded or injured in an accident, as well as advice on how to detect and deal with psychological trauma, which may affect journalists when they work in areas of conflict or humanitarian emergency.

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### 1. *FIRST AID FOR THE WOUNDED AND INJURED*

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The security guidelines given in the opening chapters of this handbook are aimed at reducing the risks to which journalists are exposed. But accidents and injuries may still occur, so we describe here first aid procedures that can be used until expert medical help arrives. These can never be a substitute for proper first aid training.

#### ➔ **What you should know before giving first aid**

Providing emergency first aid can be traumatic, especially if severe injuries are present, patients are unconscious, or children, colleagues or friends are involved. In these stressful circumstances, your role when giving first aid is to determine the extent of the casualty's injury and their chances of survival, while bearing in mind that, to be of any use as a first aider, you must avoid becoming a casualty yourself. Also, be careful that, in your haste, you don't try and be the doctor. Some first aid procedures can be harmful if not carried out correctly.

As you approach the accident, protect yourself by assessing the scene. Look out for dangers such as fire, lack of oxygen, confined spaces, and electrical, chemical or traffic hazards. Be aware that the casualty may have an infectious disease such as hepatitis or HIV. You can reduce the threat by wearing gloves and other protective clothing.

➔ *The information below is taken from the first aid guide published by the French Red Cross. It is no substitute, however, for training in practical first aid, which is highly recommended for anyone going to a high-risk area.*

### **The four stages of first aid**

1. Secure the scene of the accident and those involved. Assess the safety conditions and make sure there is no further danger, for example from traffic, fire or electricity. Only approach the scene of the accident if there is no danger to yourself. As far as possible, ensure the casualties and others present are safe. If the situation is dangerous and you are unable take action without risk, alert the emergency services. Establish a security perimeter around the scene while awaiting help.
2. Assess the condition of the casualty. Introduce yourself and reassure them by telling them what you are going to do. Make sure they are conscious and breathing normally. A change in their state of consciousness or breathing may be a sign their condition is life-threatening and this should be passed on to the emergency team.

3. If you need assistance yourself, tell the emergency services.
4. Carry out first aid calmly and unhurriedly.

### **Dealing with an unconscious casualty**

If the casualty is unconscious and their chest is rising and falling regularly, you should free their airways and place them in the recovery position:

1. Check the casualty's responses.
2. Free their airways (see below).
3. Ensure the casualty is breathing.
4. Place them in the recovery position (see below).
5. If you are alone, ask someone to fetch help.
6. Check regularly that the casualty is breathing until help arrives.

### **✚ HOW TO FREE THE PATIENT'S AIRWAYS**

When someone loses consciousness, the muscles relax and the tongue falls to the back of the throat, blocking the airway. This can be avoided by moving the person's head back and raising their chin.

If necessary, undo their collar, tie or belt. Place one hand on the casualty's forehead and gently move their head back.

At the same time, place the tips of the fingers on your other hand on the end of the casualty's chin and raise it in order to lift the tongue away from the back of the throat and free the airway.

Do not put pressure on the soft tissue under the chin, which could restrict their breathing.

## **Make sure the casualty is breathing**

- Check that their chest is rising and falling regularly.
- Put your ear close to the person's mouth to listen for the sound of breathing.
- Try to feel their breath by putting your cheek near their mouth for 10 seconds.

## **+ HOW TO MOVE SOMEONE INTO THE RECOVERY POSITION**

1. If the casualty is wearing glasses, take them off. Make sure their legs are straight and side-by-side. If not, move them gently together so that they are in line with the body.
2. Move the arm closest to you so that it is at right angles to their body and bend the elbow, keeping the palm facing upwards. Kneel or assume a tripod position next to the casualty.
3. Take the other arm in one hand and place the back of their hand against the ear on your side of their head. Keep their hand pressed against their ear with the palm of your hand on the casualty's palm.
4. With your other hand, grab the leg further away from you behind the knee and raise it, keeping the foot on the ground. Move to a position further away from the casualty, at the level of their thorax, so that you can turn their body towards you on to its side, without moving backwards.
5. Roll them by pulling on their leg until their knee touches the ground. Gently move your hand from under their head while holding their elbow to prevent their hand from moving and thus making sure their head stays still.

6. Adjust the position of the upper leg to ensure that the hip and knee are at right angles.
7. Open the casualty's mouth with the finger and thumb of one hand without moving the head, so that fluids can drain out.

Ask someone to call the emergency services or fetch help yourself if you are alone.

Check regularly that their breathing is normal.

## **+ RECOVERY POSITION**



© *Drawing by Jean-Pierre Danard, courtesy of the Fédération des Secouristes Français Croix Blanche*

## **External bleeding**

When blood spurts or pours continuously from a wound, direct pressure should be applied to stop the bleeding:

1. If possible, avoid contact with the casualty's blood. Ask them to put pressure on the wound themselves.
2. Otherwise, press directly on the wound with your hands protected by gloves, a plastic bag or cloth.
3. Make the casualty lie down in a horizontal position.
4. Ask someone nearby to alert the emergency services or do so yourself.
5. If the bleeding continues, press more firmly. If this is not sufficient and there is massive life-threatening bleeding from a limb, consider applying a tourniquet (instructions below).
6. Maintain pressure on the wound until assistance arrives.
7. If you have to leave the scene, for example to raise the alarm, use a compression bandage in place of manual pressure.
8. Wash or disinfect your hands afterwards.

## **✚ HOW TO APPLY A COMPRESSION BANDAGE**

The bandage used instead of manual pressure must be clean and should completely cover the bleeding wound. The compression bandage should be applied as quickly as possible after manual pressure is removed. The binding must be wide enough to entirely cover the wadding and long enough for at least two turns around the affected limb. The binding should be tight enough to prevent the bleeding from starting again.



If the compression bandage does not stop the bleeding completely, apply a second wad on top of the first to increase the pressure. If this fails, resume manual compression.

## **✚ SEVERE BLEEDING AND APPLICATION OF A TOURNIQUET**

➔ *This advice comes from Christophe Talmet, in charge of training at the French Red Cross.*

Your first response when faced with major external bleeding should be to apply a haemostatic dressing. This acts as a cushion, compressing the wound, and is held in place tightly by closure strips.

If there is major bleeding from a limb which you are unable to staunch with a compression dressing, and if the injury is life-threatening and the emergency services are some distance away, in these circumstances only, you should apply a tourniquet to stop the flow of blood to the wound.

The tourniquet should be a wide binding made of strong cloth that will not break the skin but will stop the flow of blood. It should be placed just above the wound so that the area of skin deprived of blood is as small as possible.

To tie the tourniquet, form a loop in the cloth. If the wound is mid-calf, place the loop under the knee of the casualty with the two protruding ends on one side. Hold one of the strands of the loop in place, by pressing on it with your knee, for example, and pass the other strand over the injured leg and through the loop. Pull on this strand tight to

stop the bleeding. Take the other end of the binding, which you have kept in place with your knee, and tie a knot.

There is also a purpose-made tourniquet, where you just have to slip on a strap and turn the baton to tighten it.

 **NB:**

- Once the tourniquet has been applied and the bleeding has stopped, don't undo it or loosen it for any reason until the injured person is under the charge of a doctor.
- Note down the time the tourniquet was applied and display it prominently on the casualty, for example on their forehead. This is vital information for the surgeon who treats the injured person. The usual practice is to write "T" (for tourniquet) and the local time. For example if you applied the tourniquet at 2:30 pm, write T14:30.
- Don't place clothing or a blanket over the tourniquet, which could prevent it from being noticed and thus cause it to be removed too late.
- The casualty may exhibit symptoms of circulatory distress such as low blood pressure, pallor or cold sweat. Make them lie down and reassure them.
- Do not give the casualty anything to drink since they will have to undergo surgery. Moisten their lips if necessary.

## **Fractures**

In the event of a fracture when there is no assistance nearby, the main thing is to immobilise the joints above and below the break to prevent pain and further complications.

For example:

- For a fracture of the forearm, immobilise the elbow and wrist
- For a fracture of the leg, immobilise the knee and ankle

Temporary immobilisation of the limbs is necessary whenever the casualty has to be moved and other more appropriate means are not available. This can be done using:

- Clothing: if there is no equipment available, use a piece of clothing such as a shirt, sweater or jacket turned inside out pinned in place or, better still, tied with a necktie or headscarf.
- One or more blankets.
- One or more triangular bandages, made of stiff cotton, canvas or non-woven paper. It should measure at least 1.2 metres (4 feet) on its longest side.

**In the event of a fracture of a lower limb:**

- Make the casualty lie down.
- Immobilise them with care, using bandages and a splint.
- Alert the emergency services and arrange for them to be stretchered out.

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## 2. PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA: MANAGING TRAUMATIC STRESS

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➔ *This introductory guide has been prepared by the Dart Center (dartcenter.org), which supports journalists who are coping with traumatic stress.*

Journalists in high-risk areas work on stories that involve bereavement, violation and profound personal loss. Reporters may themselves witness death or be subject to attack. Awareness of the potential psychological impact of trauma is crucial to effective and free reporting. Unrecognised traumatic stress may compromise safety awareness or erode professional judgment – in extreme cases derailing careers. Some basic knowledge can both boost resilience as well as provide valuable insight into the experience of traumatised subjects and sources.

### **What is trauma?**

Mental health professionals classify an incident as traumatic when someone experiences or witnesses an event involving actual or threatened death, serious injury, or other threat to their physical integrity, giving rise to intense fear, helplessness or horror. Bombings, violent assaults, rape, torture, the aftermath of natural disasters or serious accidents – all familiar subjects to reporters - are common scenarios.

Geographical proximity is not essential: repeated exposure to images of death and injury, or discovering that a close associate or family member has met serious harm may in some cases evoke the same responses.

Trauma reactions are rooted in the biology of survival. Faced with perceived threat, the brain triggers the release of hormones, such as adrenalin. Individual responses vary, but may include:

- Increased alertness or sense of presence
- Fight and flight responses (elevated heart-rate, dry mouth, loss of bowel control, sweating, etc.)
- Numbing and disassociation (feeling psychologically separated from the event or out of one's body)
- Heightened emotionality
- These are normal responses to abnormal situations, and at times may help survival. It is useful to be in alert mode in a dangerous environment. Such reactions normally subside in a few days or weeks after the danger has passed.

But sometimes distress persists for longer and individuals may feel changed by harrowing events in specific ways, experiencing:

- Intrusive memories, ranging from nightmares and flashbacks to more subtle unwanted reminders of a horrifying event
- Arousal (elevated heart-rate, night sweats, etc.)
- Overreaction to everyday events, difficulty concentrating, irritability, unusual anger or rage
- Emotional numbing, social withdrawal, avoidance of any reminders of a distressing event or a sense of growing distance from loved ones.

When such reactions persist a month after a journalist has returned to safety, that may indicate a psychological injury. Clinicians define “post-traumatic stress disorder” as a combination of intrusion, arousal and numbing, but other changes such as depression or substance

abuse may also appear. Predicting whom this will happen to, or when, is not possible. Even journalists who have coped well during many years in the field, and who colleagues regard as emotionally robust, may experience overload at some stage. (Note that for local journalists living in situations of on-going threat, it can be hard to determine what would qualify as a month-long period of safety, in which trauma reactions might no longer be part of a survival response appropriate to that environment.)

### **Trauma and journalists**

➔ *Most media workers show remarkable resilience in the face of horror.*

Journalists usually exercise a choice when they pursue violent stories – the choice of whether to take an assignment or turn it down, the many choices involved in framing an account. This element of control – something normally denied other survivors and victims – may give a sense of mission and be in part protective, but it doesn't bestow immunity.

Indeed, recent studies show that journalists are just as vulnerable to emotional injury as soldiers, firefighters or other frontline participants in tragedy. Traumatic stress can have a particularly insidious effect upon journalists. Studies show that repeated exposure to horror – rather than being protective – may actually increase the likelihood of distress. Intrusive memories, an inability to concentrate, sleep difficulties, explosive anger, numbing and social isolation all take a toll on journalists' news judgment, capacities and relationships. The good news is that PTSD responds well to treatment, and studies show that resilience may be boosted by a range of self-care measures. But the impact of trauma should command journalists' attention and respect.

## Self-care

Traumatic stress derives from an intense emotional engagement with violence. Although different from general stress, it shares some of the same neurochemistry. This is why everyday pressures – deadlines, personal conflict, culture shock, financial uncertainty, etc. – may exacerbate trauma. There are practical measures journalists can take to safeguard their wellbeing before, during and after assignments.

### BEFORE AN ASSIGNMENT

- Training and preparation: evidence shows that people who are mentally prepared for challenging situations have greater emotional control during them. Preparation of all kinds – hostile environment training, craft skills development, research into the history and culture of an area – as well as trauma awareness can boost self-efficacy, reduce general stress and promote resilience.
- **Locate allies:** Make prior contact with others in the area so that you have a network in place. Journalists, humanitarian workers, UN staff in the region, and others can provide valuable social as well as logistical support. This may be particularly important for isolated freelancers or journalists embedded with the military.
- **Work on fitness:** Exercise builds resistance to stress.
- **Don't forget domestic matters:** Set time aside for family, friends or loved ones. Sort out your finances and make sure that your next of kin have access to your insurance details, will, etc. Worrying on assignment about having left such things undone can significantly add to stress.

Also consider tidying your accommodation before leaving. Returning to a place that feels ordered and safe may help the transition back.

- **Be sure you are ready to go:** Evidence suggests that repeat exposure to danger and trauma without sufficient downtime greatly increases vulnerability to PTSD. If you are feeling pressured to go, and it simply doesn't feel like emotionally the right time, then consider turning down that assignment.

## DURING AN ASSIGNMENT

- **Look after your body:**
  - Eat and sleep well. (Even special-forces soldiers prioritise these.)
  - Take exercise. Just stretching or walking for thirty minutes can elevate mood.
  - Drink water. Dehydration impairs brain function.
  - Watch your alcohol consumption. Too much can increase nightmares and flashbacks.
  - Be careful with stimulants. Caffeine boosts adrenalin levels.
- **Pay heed to your emotional needs:**
  - Develop simple, daily rituals that take you out of the story. Reading, doing exercise or a craft hobby, for instance, can provide respite from toxic subject material.
  - Acknowledge feelings. Talk to people you trust or try writing a journal.



- Never underestimate the importance of laughter.
- Try deep breathing, especially if distressed. (Breathe slowly into your diaphragm, pause, then breathe out on a count longer than the in-breath.)
- Try to form the habit of reframing negative situations: acknowledge what's happened, but then list any positives that still apply. Focus on future steps that you can control. Thinking obsessively about what went wrong may increase vulnerability.
- **Support others:**
  - Social connection is one of the most protective factors in the face of trauma – but that means the ability to give as well as receive support.
  - People recover better from trauma when their co-workers are positive and supportive. Be careful with attributing blame.
  - Be available to listen, but don't dig for feelings, or make assumptions about what others might be experiencing or what you think they should be feeling.
  - Be a leader. Allow yourself and your co-workers proper recovery time.
  - If somebody is finding it hard to cope, consider suggesting they concentrate on lighter practical tasks, rather than ceasing work altogether. Activity is often protective.
  - Different cultures may have different ways of handling grief and trauma. Respect this.
  - Understand your sources: Understanding how trauma affects people may also help you avoid making journalistic mistakes. Some victims may be affected to an extent that

there are factual errors in their accounts that they are not conscious of, while others may have near photographic recall.

## **AFTER AN ASSIGNMENT**

Sometimes leaving a story behind is the hardest part. Subsequent assignments may feel pointless in comparison, and some may feel there is guilt for leaving people behind to face danger or deprivation. Relating to others outside of the story can pose its own challenges. People have widely different capacities to listen to descriptions of trauma and may close down discussion or minimise what is being said; and journalists themselves may shy away from discussing topics that could cause friends and family to worry about their safety.



### **Here are some suggestions for managing the transition in and out of a story:**

1. Some journalists suggest taking a day or two of “decompression time” out for themselves before returning home. (Remember to explain to your partner or family first your reasons.)
2. Thinking about life at home can be a powerful motivator when on the road, but try and keep your expectations of return in proportion. If you have been away for a while, others may be in a different place in their lives: you may not be able to pick up from where you left.
3. Develop connections with others who have had similar experiences. Being able to talk – or just hang out – without the pressure to explain yourself may make all the difference.

4. Take stock of your mental wellbeing. It is never too late to seek help.

### **Working with traumatic imagery**

Imagery from war zones, crimes scenes and natural disasters is often gruesome and distressing. The proliferation of high-definition cameras over the last decade has significantly increased the volume and graphic nature of material streaming into newsrooms, from traditional journalistic sources and social media alike. Even when the events depicted are far away, journalists and forensic analysts, deeply immersed in a flood of explicit, violent and disturbing photos and video, may feel that it is seeping into their own personal headspace. Reactions such as disgust, anxiety and helplessness are not unusual; and the content may re-surface outside of work in the form of intrusive thoughts and disrupted sleep.



**Here are six practical things media workers can do to reduce the trauma load:**

1. Understand what you are dealing with. Think of traumatic imagery as if it is radiation, a toxic substance that has a dose-dependent effect. Journalists and humanitarian workers, like nuclear workers, have a job to do; at the same time, they should take sensible steps to minimise unnecessary exposure. Frequency of viewing may be more of an issue than overall volume, so think about pacing your trauma-image load and ensuring down time.
2. Eliminate needless repeat exposure. Review your sorting and tagging procedures, and how you organise digital files

and folders, among other procedures, to reduce unnecessary viewing. When verifying footage by cross-referencing images from a wide variety of sources, taking written notes of distinctive features may help to minimise how often you need to recheck against an original image. (And never pass the material onto a co-worker without some warning as to what the files contain.)

3. Experiment with different ways of building some distance into how you view images. Some people find concentrating on certain details, for instance clothes, and avoiding others (such as faces) helps. Consider applying a temporary matte/mask to distressing areas of the image. Film editors should avoid using the loop play function when trimming footage of violent attacks and point of death imagery; or use it very sparingly. Develop your own workarounds.
4. Try adjusting the viewing environment. Reducing the size of the window or adjusting the screen's brightness or resolution can lessen the perceived impact. Try turning the sound off when you can – it is often the most affecting part.
5. Take frequent screen breaks. Look at something pleasing, walk around, stretch or seek out contact with nature (such as greenery and fresh air, etc.). All of these can all help dampen the body's distress responses. In particular, avoid working with distressing images just before going to sleep. It is more likely to populate your mental space. (And be careful with alcohol - it disrupts sleep and makes nightmares worse.)
6. Craft your own self-care plan. It can be tempting to work twice, three times, four times as hard when working on a story with big implications. But it's important to preserve a breathing space for you outside of work.

## ➔ A NOTE FOR MANAGERS AND EDITORS

A good trauma-management plan can play a major role in safeguarding the health, wellbeing and effectiveness of staff. It is an editor's responsibility to brief themselves on trauma and to institute working structures that minimise its impact. For resources and information contact the Dart Center at [www.dartcenter.org](http://www.dartcenter.org).

# TÉMOIGNAGES

## ■ WORKING IN A WAR ZONE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW, UNDERSTAND AND BE AWARE OF

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The risks of the job are particularly serious for those journalists, whether freelance or staff, who have to travel to and survive in war zones. It is essential to prepare properly and not to underestimate the difficulties of an assignment of this kind.

Ten journalists recount their own experiences and pass on their advice.

### ➔ “PLAN EVERYTHING CAREFULLY IN ADVANCE”

**Iqbal Khattak, journalist and Reporters Without Borders representative in Pakistan**

“When leaving for any danger zone for a story, you need to have a prior permission from the media you are working for, or for which you plan to do the story. Then you need to ask yourself if are you trained enough to cope with any situation that may arise during your assignment. How familiar are you with the area? How well do you know the actors of the conflict? And what coping mechanisms do you have if you face any kind of problem? That has to be pre-arranged. It’s also very important to give your supervisor daily updates on what you are going to do during the day and how you plan to report back in the evening.

“You have to be very familiar with the traditions of the area you are going to. If you are not sensitive to the local culture, you may put yourself in serious trouble. So you should be familiar with the local dress, customs and traditions, and adapt the way you talk to people.

“If you are planning a visit to a no-go area, you need to know which group is holding the zone. Then you’d better ask the group for permission before heading there. And if there is more than one group claiming the area, you must be extremely careful because there will be inter-group rivalry and you may get caught in between.”

➔ **“DON’T TRUST ANYONE”**

**Stéphanie Perez, senior reporter for France 2 television**

“You should find out as much as you can. Call colleagues and workmates in the field who can give advice and recommend a fixer. Talk to diplomats, including those in the French embassy, who can give you an up-to-date snapshot of the country at the time you are due to travel.

“Wear clothes that are as neutral as possible: wide trousers, loose shirt or tunic, nothing that shows your figure. Stay in a group, if possible with a male colleague whose presence might deter any potential pests.

“Don’t trust anyone and always remain on guard. Even the seemingly nicest people can turn against you. Don’t tell your driver in the evening where you are going the next day, which might allow time for him to tell those around him. Wait until you are in the car before you tell him where you are going and don’t give him your itinerary for the day, only from one hour to the next. Your fixer knows the area, so you should listen to him. If he believes something is wrong and you should turn back, don’t push your luck.

“During violent demonstrations or riots, wear a helmet as protection against stone-throwing. Avoid narrow streets and make a mental note of the main roads so you can make your escape, or shops where you could take shelter if need be.”



➔ **“I ALWAYS ASSUME THAT WE ARE BUGGED AND MONITORED”**  
**Christophe Boltanski, senior report for the news magazine l’Obs**

“In any dangerous environment, your fixer is key. He will be your interpreter and can also warn you of any danger. You should choose someone you trust. It is also important to have a good driver and a decent car. A mechanical breakdown can be serious, and if this happens in the wrong place, it’s even worse. It’s best not to cut corners.

“As far as cyber-security is concerned, I always assume that we are bugged and monitored and the best thing is to keep anything potentially compromising on USB sticks which you leave at home before leaving. When you are on assignment, always keep your notebook on you. You can use code words or pseudonyms to protect your sources.

“When there is a risk of abduction, such as in Baghdad, it is advisable not to make any advance arrangements to meet people. Also, it’s best not to stay too long in one place when you are interviewing someone. Stay half an hour then leave. Sometimes you just have to rely on your gut feeling and, if you don’t feel entirely comfortable, just say “that’s enough, I must go” without making a big thing of it.

“To maintain stability in your family life whenever you are away on assignment, I believe you should talk about it with your children, reassure them, send them photos of where you are, show them your hotel, your room and the people you are with – if you are able to – to downplay the dangers.”

## ➔ “A SECRET FACEBOOK COMMUNITY FOR JOURNALISTS”

**Oksana Romaniuk, Reporters Without Borders representative in Ukraine and executive director of the Kiev-based NGO Institute for Mass Information**

“We’ve had experience with very tough protests in Maidan (Square, in Kiev). At first we told journalists to identify themselves with an orange emblem. But we soon realized that Ukrainian police officers were targeting these local journalists and their orange stickers. So we decided to make black and white stickers that read PRESS in English, for journalists to wear on their helmet or jacket.

“Then police were afraid to shoot because they could be faced with a foreign journalist and they did not want to get into trouble... We know that in some cases that helped. Identification should be removable, like a sticker, in case you’re in a crowd that’s hostile towards journalists.

“Of course, you should also wear convenient shoes, trainers to be able to run. At first we had building hats. These can protect your head once from a stone, but they fall off easily. So, with the help of Reporters Without Borders, we bought snowboard helmets.

“They are perfect – they protect you from rubber bullets and stones. We also had ballistic glasses against rubber bullets, and masks and respirators for tear gas. We used a secret Facebook community for journalists: on their mobile phones, reporters were able to check their positions, send alerts and run to help one another.”

## ➔ “NEVER TRAVEL ALONE”

**Paul-Stéphane MANIER, documentary-maker and TV journalist,  
member of the Reporters without Borders administration board**

“If I have one piece of advice, it’s never to travel alone. Always be embedded with someone who is responsible for your safety, whether it’s regular troops or a rebel group. If you feel that the authorities are doing everything they can to prevent you from going to the theatre of operations, you can take your chances and make your own way there.

“But it is a good idea to find some way of making sure the other side knows that you are going to be there, so that they don’t take you for someone disguised as a journalist who has come to deliver weapons for example.

“When your route is blocked by fighters who would kill you for your watch, you should keep a low profile and not try to be too clever. And be patient. If you are held against your will, you have no idea how long this will last.

“You should cooperate, but you must never give up the names and addresses of those who might suffer as a result. You should memorise as much as you can and only keep a few phone numbers in your address book. Leave your laptop or your smartphone behind and take hardly anything with you.

“One day, in mid-assignment while everything was going well, an alarm bell sounded in my head, telling me ‘careful – your luck might run out’. That’s when I gave up war reporting. I will never know whether my instinct was right or wrong, but I’m still here and that’s something!”

➔ **“YOU MUST BE MENTALLY STRONG”**

**Martine Laroche-Joubert, senior reporter for France 2 television**

“Most conflict zones are unpredictable places. You should travel with a photojournalist you get on well with and who has the same idea of danger as you, someone you trust and you can rely on if things go wrong. Neither should put any pressure on the other – that would be a recipe for disaster. You should have decent shoes and be fit enough to run if you have to.

“When I’m in Syria, my iPhone is turned off and I leave it outside the border, in Turkey, so that Bashar Al-Assad’s troops, with the help of the Russians, can’t use its signal to track me down. And if I contact my newsdesk using a satellite phone, it’s only for 10 seconds at a time, just to say “I’m OK” before hanging up.

“The most important thing is your state of mind. It is normal to be afraid in the face of danger. Fear can produce the right response. But you must not panic. Panic is contagious and will lead to wrong decisions. You must be mentally strong and be with people who are also mentally strong. It can happen that you find yourself having to stay in hiding for hours, unable to move. You must be able to wait it out without panicking.”

➔ **“IN CAPTIVITY, THE MAIN THING IS TO BREAK THE ICE WITH YOUR JAILERS”**

**Martin Schibbye, Swedish freelance journalist who spent 438 days in jail in Ethiopia**

“Always have a plan and prepare for the worst. When my photographer and I were arrested in Ethiopia while we were reporting on a group of rebels fighting for independence, we had set up a system whereby we reported home every 24 hours by telephone, and if we lost contact, our colleague at home would sound the alarm.

“That worked. And when she got news that we’d been arrested, she immediately changed the passwords to our email and social media accounts. That’s a good thing to do, because during a tough interrogation you might give those up.

“In captivity, the main thing is to try to break the ice and establish some kind of personal contact with your jailers and make them see you as a human being. What we did in the beginning was talk about football – that’s really the international language – talking about Sweden and Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

“Joke with people, without questioning their authority. Cooperate with them. And they may take all your clothes and humiliate you, they may torture you, but there’s one thing they can’t do and that is to take away your right to decide who you are. You’re a journalist and you can take a teaspoon of cement and think about how you would tell this story.

“Try to steal a pen and paper to take notes and hide them. And get some physical exercise in your cell, however narrow. You can jump up and down, walk in figure eight (so you don’t get dizzy), and recite poems and songs by heart to give you strength.”

➔ **“WHEN YOU ARE UNDER THREAT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT NETWORK”**

**Dina Meza, investigative journalist and Reporters Without Borders representative in Honduras**

“In Honduras, freedom of expression is fragile and journalists are repressed. The newspaper I work for is monitored. I regularly get death threats and my own family is threatened. My car has been sabotaged, our lawyer was killed, I have had to move house several times. My family spends half its budget on safety precautions. It has been difficult, but how could I leave our country to my children in this state? That’s what keeps me going.

“I protect myself by making sure I am never alone. I have armed guards outside my house. I never arrange meetings by email or telephone, I always take out my phone battery before I meet anyone and I only go when I have checked that I am not being followed.

“I only arrange future meetings face-to-face. Before I meet someone, I check their background thoroughly beforehand in order to avoid a potential trap, but also to see to what extent the person concerned is putting himself or herself in danger by talking to me. You must always be aware of the risks you and your contacts face. I encrypt my data and save them on several memory cards which I hide in safe places.

“When you are under threat, it is important for protection to have an international support network to make people more aware of you. If you feel the danger you face is too great, you should consider leaving, and also, for example, getting trained in cyber-security and finding allies so that you are better equipped to return later.”

**➔ “ALWAYS BE AWARE OF WHAT’S HAPPENING AROUND YOU”**  
**Emmanuel Sérot, technical editor in charge of security at AFP**

“There’s safety in numbers. Our trainers tell people ‘you can go faster alone but further in a group’! We generally travel in teams comprising text, photo and video journalists, with a driver and a fixer. If need be, we appoint a “go to” person for security, who is not necessarily the most experienced member of the team but someone who knows the terrain and speaks the language. In such cases, we have a security meeting every morning. The fixer gives his input and the newsdesk is informed.

“When you are approaching a suspicious-looking checkpoint, you sometimes have a brief moment when there is still time to turn round and make a getaway. This is why you should always be aware of what’s happening around you.

“Anything out of the ordinary -- for example an empty road or heavy traffic in the opposite direction, an unexpected crowd of people or stationary vehicles – could be a sign of trouble ahead before checkpoint guards have seen you. In any dangerous situation, we recommend activating the alarm on the tracking system that all our journalists working in hotspots are equipped with.

“Knowing that senior editors have been alerted can affect how we manage a difficult situation.”

## ➔ “SHOW HUMILITY AND RESPECT”

**Alain Mingam, photo-journalist and member of the Reporters Without Borders administration board**

“Journalists are merely witnesses, but also attractive targets for monetary gain and, increasingly, for political reasons. So they must be careful when using mobile phones, which can pinpoint their position quickly thanks to geolocation technology. Protection of one’s sources and encoding one’s data are therefore essential in order to avoid putting contacts in danger.

“Freelancers should be aware that the adrenaline rush they want to win recognition can put them into danger. The crisis in the media and cut-throat competition among journalists can sometimes drive them to take excessive risks and thus become more vulnerable.

“My last piece of advice is to show humility and respect, and to follow the rules of decency and the customs of the country you are in. Being patronizing and scornful will only put the journalist and all his or her colleagues in danger.”



## **APPENDIX**

## ■ APPENDIX I: PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS IN WAR ZONES

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There are specific provisions in international law to protect humanitarian workers and journalists during armed conflict. Under Article 79 of Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions, which codifies a customary rule, journalists in war zones must be treated as civilians and protected as such, provided they play no part in the hostilities.

Resolution 2222 approved by the United Nations Security Council on 27 May 2015, which extends and strengthens Resolution 1738 passed in 2006, reminds all parties in an armed conflict of their obligations to respect those who work in the media and protect them against all forms of violence.

The UN General Assembly also took up the issue in its resolutions 68/163, passed on 18 December 2013 and 69/185, on 18 December 2014, which urge member states to work together to prevent violence against journalists.

### ➔ **Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, relating to the Protection of victims of international armed conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977**

#### *Article 79 - Measures of protection for journalists*

1. Journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians within the meaning of Article 50, paragraph 1.

2. They shall be protected as such under the Conventions and this Protocol, provided that they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians, and without prejudice to the right of war correspondents accredited to the armed forces to the status provided for in Article 4 A (4) of the Third Convention.
3. They may obtain an identity card similar to the model in Annex II of this Protocol. This card, which shall be issued by the government of the State of which the journalist is a national or in whose territory he resides or in which the news medium employing him is located, shall attest to his status as a journalist.

### **➔ Resolution 2222 (2015) adopted by the UN Security Council on 27 May 2015**

#### The Security Council

... Recognizing that the work of journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel often puts them at specific risk of intimidation, harassment and violence in situations of armed conflict,

... Deeply concerned at the frequency of acts of violence in many parts of the world against journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel in armed conflict, in particular deliberate attacks in violation of international humanitarian law

... Further acknowledging the specific risks faced by women journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in conduct of their work, and underlining in this context the importance of considering the gender dimension of measures to address their safety in situations of armed conflict...

1. Condemns all violations and abuses committed against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situations of armed conflict, and calls upon all parties to armed conflict to bring an end to such practices;
2. Affirms that the work of a free, independent and impartial media constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society, and thereby can contribute to the protection of civilians;
- ... 4. Strongly condemns the prevailing impunity for violations and abuses committed against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situations of armed conflict, which in turn may contribute to the recurrence of these acts;
5. Emphasizes the responsibility of States to comply with the relevant obligations under international law to end impunity and to prosecute those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law;
- ... 8. Urges the immediate and unconditional release of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel who have been kidnapped or taken as hostages, in situations of armed conflict;
9. Urges all parties involved in situations of armed conflict to respect the professional independence and rights of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel as civilians;
10. Recalls also that media equipment and installations constitute civilian objects, and in this respect shall not be the object of attack or of reprisals, unless they are military objectives;

11. Recognizes the important role that education and training in international humanitarian law can play in supporting efforts to halt and prevent attacks against civilians affected by armed conflict, including journalists, media professionals and associated personnel;

12. Affirms that United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions, where appropriate, should include in their mandated reporting information on specific acts of violence against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situation of armed conflict;

13. Urges all parties to armed conflict to do their utmost to prevent violations of international humanitarian law against civilians, including journalists, media professionals and associated personnel;

14. Calls upon Member States to create and maintain, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment for journalists, media professionals and associated personnel to perform their work independently and without undue interference in situations of armed conflict

... 19. Requests the Secretary-General to include consistently as a sub-item in his reports on the protection of civilians in armed conflict the issue of the safety and security of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel, including the existence of measures to protect such individuals facing an imminent threat, and to ensure that information on attacks and violence against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel and preventative actions taken to prevent such incidents is included as a specific aspect in relevant country specific reports.

## **→ Resolution 69/185 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 2014, on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity**

The General Assembly

... Acknowledging that journalism is continuously evolving to include inputs from media institutions, private individuals and a range of organizations that seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, online as well as offline, in the exercise of freedom of opinion and expression, in accordance with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, thereby contributing to the shaping of public debate,

... Deeply concerned by all human rights violations and abuses committed in relation to the safety of journalists, including killing, torture, enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrest and arbitrary detention, expulsion, intimidation, harassment, threats and other forms of violence,

Expressing deep concern at the increased number of journalists and media workers who have been killed or detained in recent years as a direct result of their profession,

Expressing deep concern also at the growing threat to the safety of journalists posed by non-State actors, including terrorist groups and criminal organizations,

Acknowledging the specific risks faced by women journalists in the exercise of their work, and underlining, in this context, the importance of taking a gender-sensitive approach when considering measures to address the safety of journalists,

Acknowledging also the particular vulnerability of journalists to becoming targets of unlawful or arbitrary surveillance or interception of communications in violation of their rights to privacy and to freedom of expression,

1. Condemns unequivocally all attacks and violence against journalists and media workers, such as torture, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrest and arbitrary detention, as well as intimidation and harassment in both conflict and non-conflict situations;
2. Strongly condemns the prevailing impunity for attacks and violence against journalists, and expresses grave concern that the vast majority of these crimes go unpunished, which in turn contributes to the recurrence of these crimes;
3. Urges the immediate release of journalists and media workers who have been taken as hostages or who have become victims of enforced disappearances;
4. Encourages States to take the opportunity of the proclamation of 2 November as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists to raise awareness regarding the issue of the safety of journalists and to launch concrete initiatives in this regard;
- ... 6. Urges Member States to do their utmost to prevent violence, threats and attacks against journalists and media workers, to ensure accountability through the conduct of impartial, speedy, thorough, independent and effective investigations into all alleged violence, threats and attacks against journalists and media workers falling within their jurisdiction, to bring perpetrators, including those who command,

conspire to commit, aid and abet or cover up such crimes to justice, and to ensure that victims and their families have access to appropriate remedies;

7. Calls upon States to create and maintain, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment for journalists to perform their work independently and without undue interference, including by means of:

- Legislative measures
- Awareness-raising in the judiciary and among law enforcement officers and military personnel, as well as among journalists and in civil society, regarding international human rights and humanitarian law obligations and commitments relating to the safety of journalists;
- The monitoring and reporting of attacks against journalists;
- Publicly and systematically condemning violence and attacks; and
- Dedicating the resources necessary to investigate and prosecute such attacks and to develop and implement strategies for combating impunity for attacks and violence against journalists, including by using, where appropriate, good practices such as those identified in Human Rights Council resolution 27/5 of 25 September 2014;

8. Stresses the need to ensure better cooperation and coordination at the international level, including through technical assistance and capacity-building, with regard to ensuring the safety of journalists, including with regional organizations;



9. Calls upon States to cooperate with relevant United Nations entities, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as well as international and regional human rights mechanisms, and to share information on a voluntary basis on the status of investigations into attacks and violence against journalists;

...

## ■ APPENDIX II: BASIC DOCUMENTS ON PRESS FREEDOM

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The principle of press freedom is recognised by international law, as well as regional texts and national legislation (rights and customs, constitutions, laws and decrees).

### ➔ **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

Adopted 10 December 1948

#### Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

### ➔ **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

Adopted 16 December 1966, came into force 23 March 1976

#### Article 19

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.
2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.
3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of

this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

- For respect of the rights or reputations of others;
- For the protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals.

## ➔ **European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms**

*Adopted 4 November 1950, came into force 3 September 1953*

### Article 10 - Freedom of Expression

4. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.
5. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

## ➔ Inter-American Convention on Human Rights

*Adopted 22 November 1969, came into force 18 July 1978*

### Article 13 - Freedom of Thought and Expression

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and expression. This right includes freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing, in print, in the form of art, or through any other medium of one's choice.
2. The exercise of the right provided for in the foregoing paragraph shall not be subject to prior censorship but shall be subject to subsequent imposition of liability, which shall be expressly established by law to the extent necessary in order to ensure:
  - Respect for the rights or reputations of others; or
  - The protection of national security, public order, or public health or morals.
3. The right of expression may not be restricted by indirect methods or means, such as the abuse of government or private controls over newsprint, radio broadcasting frequencies, or equipment used in the dissemination of information, or by any other means tending to impede the communication and circulation of ideas and opinions.
4. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 2 above, public entertainments may be subject by law to prior censorship for the sole purpose of regulating access to them for the moral protection of childhood and adolescence.
5. Any propaganda for war and any advocacy of national,

racial or religious hatred that constitute incitements to lawless violence or to any similar illegal action against any person or group of persons on any grounds including those of race, colour, religion, language, or national origin shall be considered as offences punishable by law.

## ➔ **African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights**

*Adopted 12 July 1981, came into force 21 October 1986*

### Article 9

1. Every individual shall have the right to receive information.
2. Every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his opinions within the law.

## ■ APPENDIX III: DECLARATION OF RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF JOURNALISTS

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Known as the “Munich Charter”, this was drawn up and approved in Munich on 24 and 25 November 1971. It is accepted as authoritative within the profession and was later adopted by most journalists’ unions in Europe.

### *Preamble*

The right to information, to freedom of expression and criticism is one of the fundamental rights of man. All rights and duties of a journalist originate from this right of the public to be informed on events and opinions. The journalists’ responsibility towards the public excels any other responsibility, particularly towards employers and public authorities. The mission of information necessarily includes restrictions which journalists spontaneously impose on themselves. This is the object of the declaration of duties formulated below. A journalist, however, can respect these duties while exercising his profession only if conditions of independence and professional dignity effectively exist. This is the object of the following declaration of rights.

### *Declaration of duties*

The essential obligations of a journalist engaged in gathering, editing and commenting news are:

1. To respect truth whatever be the consequences to himself, because of the right of the public to know the truth.
2. To defend freedom of information, comment and criticism.

3. To report only on facts of which he knows the origin; not to suppress essential information nor alter texts and documents.
4. Not to use unfair methods to obtain news, photographs or documents.
5. To restrict himself to the respect of privacy.
6. To rectify any published information which is found to be inaccurate.
7. To observe professional secrecy and not to divulge the source of information obtained in confidence.
8. To regard as grave professional offences the following: plagiarism, calumny, slander, libel and unfounded accusations, the acceptance of bribes in any form in consideration of either publication or suppression of news.
9. Never to confuse the profession of journalist with that of advertisements salesman or propagandist and to refuse any direct or indirect orders from advertisers.
10. To resist every pressure and to accept editorial orders only from the responsible persons of the editorial staff.

Every journalist worthy of that name deems it his duty faithfully to observe the principles stated above. Within the general law of each country, the journalist recognises, in professional matters, the jurisdiction of his colleagues only; he excludes every kind of interference by governments or others.

### *Declaration of rights*

1. Journalists claim free access to all information sources, and the right to freely enquire on all events conditioning public

life. Therefore, secrecy of public or private affairs may be opposed only to journalists in exceptional cases and for clearly expressed motives.

2. The journalist has the right to refuse subordination to anything contrary to the general policy of the information organ to which he collaborates such as it has been laid down in writing and incorporated in his contract of employment, as well as any subordination not clearly implicated by this general policy.
3. A journalist cannot be compelled to perform a professional act or to express an opinion contrary to his convictions or his conscience.
4. The editorial staff has obligatorily to be informed on all important decisions which may influence the life of the enterprise. It should at least be consulted before a definitive decision on all matters related to the composition of the editorial staff, e.g. recruitment, dismissals, mutations and promotion of journalists, is taken.
5. Taking into account his functions and responsibilities, the journalist is entitled not only to the advantages resulting from collective agreements but also to an individual contract of employment, ensuring the material and moral security of his work as well as a wage system corresponding to his social condition and guaranteeing his economic independence.



## ■ APPENDIX IV: RELATIONS WITH THE ICRC

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The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It also seeks to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

Under international humanitarian law, journalists enjoy the protection granted to all civilians in armed conflicts so long as they take no part in the hostilities (see Article 79 of Additional Protocol I, 1977). Accredited war correspondents have extra protection. In armed conflicts, journalists who accompany armed forces but do not form part of them are considered to be war correspondents, provided they have permission from the troops they are accompanying. Authorised war correspondents who fall into the hands of enemy forces enjoy the status of prisoners of war and as such are protected by the 1949 Third Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war. Before falling into enemy hands, like all other journalists they enjoy the protection that applies to all civilians.

➔ *In some cases, the ICRC may give specific help to journalists:*

The ICRC hotline (**+41 79 217 32 85**) set up in 1985, is for the use of relatives and friends of a threatened journalist. The journalist's family, employer or professional organisation may ask the ICRC to intervene. The person making the call should provide as much information as possible about the case.

The primary purpose of the hotline is to enable the ICRC to take prompt and effective action, whenever possible, when journalists or their crew are arrested, captured, detained, reported missing, wounded or killed in areas where the ICRC is conducting humanitarian activities. For example, the ICRC can seek confirmation of a reported arrest or capture, and obtain access to detained journalists. Or it may be able to provide information to next of kin and employers or professional associations on the whereabouts of a sought-after journalist whenever such information can be obtained. In some cases, the ICRC can help family members restore or maintain contact with a detained journalist, or it can help evacuate wounded journalists. In worst-case scenarios, it may be able to recover or transfer mortal remains.

The ICRC can only act in places where it already has staff. It will not demand the release of a detained journalist or otherwise advocate for freedom of expression or the right to information, as this lies beyond its mandate. The purpose of the ICRC's visits to detained journalists is purely humanitarian. The ICRC assesses the conditions in which detainees are being held, and asks the authorities to improve them if necessary. It may open a dialogue with authorities in order to ensure that applicable procedural and judicial guarantees have been respected. It also provides detainees with humanitarian assistance where needed.

The ICRC deals with hotline cases in a confidential manner and expects in return that those requesting assistance will treat the information given to them with the same discretion.

➔ *For more information call +41 22 730 34 43 or contact [press@icrc.org](mailto:press@icrc.org).*

## ■ APPENDIX V: USEFUL CONTACTS

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- **Reporters Without Borders:** [www.rsf.org](http://www.rsf.org)  
Tel: (+33) 1.44.83.84.84 – Fax: (+33) 1.45.23.11.51 –  
Email: [rsf@rsf.org](mailto:rsf@rsf.org)  
Assistance/Insurance: [securite@rsf.org](mailto:securite@rsf.org)  
Secretariat: [secretariat@rsf.org](mailto:secretariat@rsf.org)  
Africa desk: [africa@rsf.org](mailto:africa@rsf.org)  
Latin American desk: [americas@rsf.org](mailto:americas@rsf.org)  
Asia desk: [asia@rsf.org](mailto:asia@rsf.org)  
Europe desk: [europe@rsf.org](mailto:europe@rsf.org)  
Iran desk: [persan@rsf.org](mailto:persan@rsf.org)  
Middle East desk: [middle-east@rsf.org](mailto:middle-east@rsf.org)  
New Media desk: [internet@rsf.org](mailto:internet@rsf.org)
- **Germany - Reporter ohne Grenzen:**  
[www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de](http://www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de)  
Tel: (+49) 30.609.895.33-0 – Fax: (+49) 30.202.15.10-29  
Email: [kontakt@reporter-ohne-grenzen.de](mailto:kontakt@reporter-ohne-grenzen.de)
- **Austria - Reporter ohne Grenzen:** [www.rog.at](http://www.rog.at)  
Tel: (+43) 158.100.11 – Fax: (+43) 148.003.95 –  
Email: [info@rog.at](mailto:info@rog.at)
- **Belgium - Reporters sans frontières / Reporters zonder grenzen**  
Tel: (+32) 2.235.22.81 – Fax: (+32) 2.235.22.82 –  
Email: [rsf@rsf.be](mailto:rsf@rsf.be)

- **Spain - Reporteros sin fronteras**  
Tel/Fax: (+34) 91.522.4031 – Email: rsf@rsf-es.org
- **United States - Reporters without borders**  
Tel: (+1 202) 256.5613 – Email: dcdesk@rsf.org
- **Finland - Toimittajat ilman rajoja ry /Reportrar utan gränser, rf**  
Tel: (+358) 50.380.7947 – Email: info@toimittajatilmanrajoja.fi
- **Sweden - Reportrar utan Gränser:**  
www.reportrarutangranser.se  
Tel: (+46) 8.618.93.36 – Email: reportrarutangranser@rsf.org
- **Switzerland - Reporters sans frontières:**  
www.rsf-ch.ch  
Tel: (+41) 22.328.44.88 – Fax: (+41) 22.328.44.89 – Email: info@rsf-ch.ch
- **Tunisia - Reporters sans frontières**  
Tel: (+216) 71.24.76.78 – E-mail: tunisie@rsf.org

**Other international non-governmental organizations specialising in press freedom and the protection of journalists:**

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- **Article 19: www.article19.org**  
Free Word Centre, 60 Farringdon Road, London, EC1R 3GA, United Kingdom  
Tel: (+44) 20.73.24.25.00 – Email: info@article19.org
- **International News Safety Institute:**

www.newssafety.org

30 South Colonnade, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5EP, United Kingdom - Email: [info@newssafety.org](mailto:info@newssafety.org)

- **Dart Center for Journalists and Trauma:** [dartcenter.org](http://dartcenter.org)  
48 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8LT, United Kingdom  
Tel: (+44) 207.242.3562 – Email: [info@dartcentre.org](mailto:info@dartcentre.org)
- **Rory Peck Trust:** [www.rorypecktrust.org](http://www.rorypecktrust.org)  
Linton House, 24 Wells Street London W1T 3PH, United Kingdom - Tel: (+44) 203.219.7860 –  
Fax: +(44) 203 219 7862  
Email: [info@rorypecktrust.org](mailto:info@rorypecktrust.org) ; [assistance@rorypecktrust.org](mailto:assistance@rorypecktrust.org) ;  
[training@rorypecktrust.org](mailto:training@rorypecktrust.org)
- **Index on Censorship:** [www.indexoncensorship.org](http://www.indexoncensorship.org)  
92-94 Tooley Street, London SE1 2TH, United Kingdom  
Tel: (+44) 20.72.60.26.60 – Email: [info@indexoncensorship.org](mailto:info@indexoncensorship.org)
- **Committee to Protect Journalists:** [www.cpj.org](http://www.cpj.org)  
330, 7th Avenue, 11th Floor, New York, New York 10001, United States - Tel: (+1.212) 465.1004 – Fax: (+1.212) 465.9568 –  
Email: [info@cpj.org](mailto:info@cpj.org)
- **International Federation of Journalists:** [www.ifj.org](http://www.ifj.org)  
IPC-Residence Palace, Bloc C, Rue de la Loi 155 / B-1040,  
Brussels, Belgium - Tel: (+32) 22.35.22.00 – Fax: (+32)  
22.35.22.19 – Email: [ifj@ifj.org](mailto:ifj@ifj.org)
- **World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers:**

<http://www.wan-ifra.org>

96 bis rue Beaubourg 75003 Paris, France

Tel: (+33) 1.47.42.85.00 – Fax: (+33) 1.42.78.92.33 – Email:  
[info@wan-ifra.org](mailto:info@wan-ifra.org)

- **Pen International:** <http://www.pen-international.org>  
Brownlow House, 50/51 High Holborn, London, WC1V 6ER,  
United Kingdom  
Tel: (+44) 20.74.05.03.38 – Email: [info@pen-international.org](mailto:info@pen-international.org)
- **International Press Institute:** [www.freemedia.at](http://www.freemedia.at)  
Spiegelgasse 2A-1010, Vienna, Austria  
Tel: (+43) 1.512.90.11 – Fax: (+43) 1.512.90.14 –  
Email: [ipi@freemedia.at](mailto:ipi@freemedia.at)
- **Media Legal Defence Initiative:**  
<http://www.mediadefence.org>  
The Foundry, 17-19 Oval Way, London SE11 5RR, United  
Kingdom- Tel: (+44) 20.37.52.55.50 – Skype: [mldi.law](https://www.skype.com/en/contacts/voice/mldi-law) –  
Email: [info@mediadefence.org](mailto:info@mediadefence.org)

#### **Other non-governmental organizations:**

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- **Amnesty International:** [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)  
1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom  
Tel: (+44) 20.74.13.55.00 – Fax: (+44) 20.79.56.11.57 –  
Email: [contactus@amnesty.org](mailto:contactus@amnesty.org)
- **Lawyers Without Borders France -**  
[www.avocatssansfrontieres-france.org](http://www.avocatssansfrontieres-france.org)

8, rue du Prieuré, 31000 Toulouse, France  
Tel: (+33) 5.34.31.1783 – Fax: (+33) 5.34.31.1784

- **International Federation for Human Rights:**  
www.fidh.org  
17 passage de la Main d'or, 75011 Paris, France  
Tel: (+33) 1.43.55.25.18 – Fax: (+33) 1.43.55.18.80 – fidh@fidh.org
- **Human Rights Watch:** www.hrw.org  
350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor, New York, NY 10118-3299,  
United States - Tel: (+1.212) 290.4700 – Fax: (+1.212)  
736.1300 – Email: HRWpress@HRW.org
- **Freedom House:** www.freedomhouse.org  
1850 M Street NW, Floor 11, Washington D.C. 20036, United  
States - Tel: (+1.202) 296.5101 – Fax (+1.202) 293.2840 –  
Email: info@freedomhouse.org
- **International Committee of the Red Cross:** www.icrc.org  
19, avenue de la Paix, CH-1202, Geneva, Switzerland  
Tel: (+41) 22.734.60.01 – Fax: (+41) 22.733.20.57

#### International governmental organizations:

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- **United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service:**  
www.un-ngls.org  
Palais de Nations, 1211, Geneva 10, Switzerland  
Tel: (+41) 22 917 2076 – Fax: (+41) 22 917 0432
- **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for**

**Human Rights:** [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)

Palais Wilson, 52 rue des Pâquis, CH-1201 Geneva,  
Switzerland - Tel: (+41) 22.917.92.20 –

Email: [InfoDesk@ohchr.org](mailto:InfoDesk@ohchr.org)

- **International Criminal Court:** [www.icc-cpi.int](http://www.icc-cpi.int)  
174 Maanweg, 2516 AB, The Hague, Netherlands  
Tel: (+31) 70.515.85.15 – Fax: (+31) 70.515.85.55
- **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:** [www.unhcr.fr](http://www.unhcr.fr)  
Case Postale 2500, CH-1211, Geneva 2, Switzerland  
Tel: (+41) 22.739.81.11 – Fax: (+41) 22.739.73.77
- **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization:** [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)  
7, Place de Fontenoy, 75732 Paris 07 SP, France  
Tel: (+33) 1.45.68.10.00 – Fax: (+33) 1.45.67.16.90



## ■ APPENDIX VI: INSURANCE VIA REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS

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Reporters Without Borders, in partnership with April International Canada, offers two insurance plans for journalists of all nationalities while on assignment out of their home country. Since this policy has been available from RSF, hundreds of journalists have benefitted from full medical coverage, including travel to war zones and high-risk countries.

The only prerequisite is membership of RSF. The policies apply:

- Round the clock, seven days a week, worldwide
- For any work assignment, short or long term
- Outside your usual country of residence
- Even if you are already on location

### **Solution 1, Basic Plan**

This provides emergency assistance protection and repatriation in cases of medical emergency. Comprehensive coverage is also available, including baggage loss and damage, flight cancellation and personal liability. War risks are covered.

Unlike the Extended Plan, this policy does not cover journalists embedded with a military or government unit during their assignment. The Basic Plan is not available to residents of Canada or the United States.

High-risk countries that are excluded from the Basic Plan: Syria, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, the West Bank, Democratic Republic of Congo (Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, regions bordering South

Sudan and Uganda), Somalia, Yemen, Georgia, and the following regions of the Russian Federation: Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia. NB the list of excluded countries is subject to change.

## **Solution 2, Extended Plan**

This plan is available to journalists of any nationality travelling outside their usual country of residence and offers the following additional benefits over and above Solution 1 above:

- Pre-existing conditions are covered, such as asthma and heart problems, if any problems resulting from these occur during your assignment
- Coverage of embedded missions with military or governmental units (land, air or naval)
- Availability of a cash benefit in case of accidental death or dismemberment during a work assignment
- All destinations are covered
- All extreme reporting conditions are covered.

The cost of the Extended Plan varies according to the destination and length of stay. RSF and April International Canada are working continuously to improve the joint insurance scheme.

For further information visit [en.rsf.org/](http://en.rsf.org/) and go to "Safety of Journalists" or contact [insurance@rsf.org](mailto:insurance@rsf.org).

## ■ APPENDIX VII: HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING PROVIDERS

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Here is a non-exhaustive list of organisations that provide training for those going to work in dangerous parts of the world.

On its website **BBC Academy**, the BBC also has training videos on first aid and advice for journalists travelling to dangerous areas.

- **AKE**  
[www.akegroup.com](http://www.akegroup.com)  
16 Swan Court / 9 Tanner Street, London SE1 3LE, United Kingdom - Tel: (+44) 203.816.9970 – Fax: (+44) 143.235.0227 – Email: [enquiries@akegroup.com](mailto:enquiries@akegroup.com)
- **BIOFORCE**  
<http://bioforce.asso.fr>  
41 avenue du 8 mai 1945, 69694 Venissieux, France  
Tel: (+33) 4.72.89.31.41 – Fax: (+33) 4.78.70.27.12 – Email: [info@bioforce.asso.fr](mailto:info@bioforce.asso.fr)
- **CENTURION RISK ASSESSMENT SERVICES**  
[www.centurionsafety.net](http://www.centurionsafety.net)  
Head Office: PO Box 1740, Newquay, Cornwall, TR7 3WT, United Kingdom - Tel: (+44) 1637.873.661 – Email: [main@centurionsafety.net](mailto:main@centurionsafety.net)
- **CHIRON RESOURCES (OPS) LTD**  
[www.chiron-resources.com](http://www.chiron-resources.com)  
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