

Conflict sensitive journalism: best practices and recommendations



Посольство
Великої Британії
в Україні



Організація з безпеки та
співробітництва в Європі
Координатор проектів в Україні

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Conflict sensitive journalism: best practices and recommendations

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BUROMENSKY Mykhailo, SHTURKHETSKY Serhiy, BEALS Emma, KAZANJI Zoya, BETZ Michelle, SCHUEPP Chris

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This handbook is a compilation of recommendations for media professionals on how to cover conflict and its consequences. The book includes several sections highlighting such topics as journalists' safety in a conflict environment, international standards and practices of conflict-sensitive journalism, tips on working with conflict-affected groups, etc.

The book is designed for journalists, freelancers, fixers, editors, university professors and students – all those interested in conflict-sensitive journalism.

The publishing is made within the project "Supporting Conflict-Sensitive Journalism in Ukraine" implemented by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine with the financial support of the British Embassy in Kyiv.

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www.mediasupport.org



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AUTHORS

Mykhailo Buromensky

Mykhailo Buromensky is JD, Professor at the International Law Department, National Yaroslav Mudry Law Academy. Mr. Buromensky has authored over 180 academic articles, monographs, manuals in international law, the most significant ones being “Ukrainian Doctrine of Correlation between International and National Law” (2013); “Ukraine’s International Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Crime” (2013); “Theory and Practice of International Criminal Law Formation and Ukrainian Criminal Legislation” (2012); “Implementation of the International Law Provisions in Ukraine’s Constitutional Law” (2011); “European Convention on Human Rights: Key Provisions, Case Law, Ukrainian Context”; “Social and Legal Challenges to Prevention of Immigration-related Crimes”; “Compatibility of Ukrainian Law and Practices with the Requirements of the European Convention on Human Rights (Articles 3,5,6, 10, 13 and 1 and 3 of Protocol #1” (2001); “Political Regimes of States in International Law (Influence of International Law on States’ Political Regimes)” (1997); “Fundamentals of the International Law Concept of Democracy” (1995); “Human Rights” (co-author, 1997); “International Law. Handbook” (2005, 2009); “International Protection of Human Rights and Rights of Refugees. Handbook” (2012); “International and National Protection of Human Rights and Rights of Refugees” (2004).



Mr. Buromensky has cooperated as an international or national expert with various international organizations (UNDP, UNHCR, WHO, EU, OSCE). As a UN legal expert he participated in the UN Mission to Georgia (Abkhazia) – UNOMIG. In 2009-2013, Mr. Buromensky represented Ukraine in the European Court of Human Rights as an ad hoc judge. In 2006-2012 he was a member of Ukraine's delegation to the Council of Europe Group of States against corruption – GRECO, and from 2007 to 2013 – of the Special ad hoc Group of Experts on navigational and hydrographical support to navigation during negotiations between Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

He has regularly chaired steering committees and working groups of researchers and experts to support and promote the legal and judicial reforms in Ukraine. Mr. Buromensky is an active member of the Constitutional Commission.

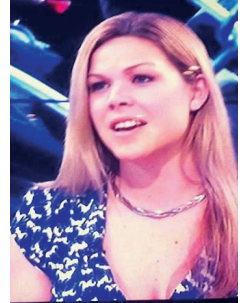
Serhiy Shturkhetsky

Journalist and media expert, Serhiy Shtirkhetsky is a member of the Independent Media Trade Union of Ukraine, member of the Journalist Ethics Commission, and Associate Professor of the Journalism Department at the National University of Ostroh Academy. In journalism since 1999, he has worked as a newspaper deputy editor-in-chief and author of television programmes. For more than 10 years he has been dealing with journalist safety, for the last two years – at the Joint Journalist Safety Centre, where, assisted by the International Federation of Journalists, he has trained over 200 journalists to work in extreme conditions. He has co-authored 5 training manuals for journalists and numerous training programmes. He undertook internships in the US, UK, Poland, Germany, Russian Federation, Belgium, and Slovakia.



Emma Beals

Journalist/freelancer from New Zealand/UK, Emma Beals spends most of her time in Southern Turkey, focusing on Syria. Emma has worked as a freelancer since 1998, successfully combining it with the job of a UK Government consultant on media relations (2005 through 2011) and being active in the sphere of journalist safety development. It all started with the establishing of a Frontline Freelance Register. The organisation helped more than 500 journalists to advance their professionalism, and built their capacity to work safely in hot spots. Miss Beals' main focus has been the world's hottest spots – Syria and Iraq. She has been actively covering conflict development in these countries since 2011, cooperating as a photographer and journalist with the Guardian, USA Today, Al Jazeera English, VICE, The Daily Beast, Foreign Policy, Fairfax NZ, Grazia Magazine, Newsweek, The Atlantic, National Post, Arab News, and Huffington Post, and as a special live reporter for the Yahoo News, HuffPost Live, Arise News, TV3 Frontline, and Radio New Zealand. This experience has prompted Emma to help other journalists and staff of humanitarian organisations – she participated in the search for all the journalists taken prisoner in Syria.



Today, Emma continues working on journalist safety and helps to provide information and develop operational plans for addressing crisis situations in Egypt, Central African Republic, Ukraine, and Syria. In 2014, Emma co-founded ACOS Alliance designed to develop training programmes on safety and conduct conferences on enhancement of standards in journalism.

Zoya Kazanji

Journalist and communications expert, Zoya Kazanji has worked in the media for over 20 years. She has made her career from a reporter to the editor-in-chief of a weekly newspaper. She has got experience of working in the government institutions related to communications. Now she is a communications consultant within a programme implemented by the Communication Reform Group (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine).



Since 2003 she has worked as a media trainer and media consultant. Zoya has developed two training curricula on media content, PR and government communications.

Ms Kazanji authored and published three methodology guides – two on interactive trainings in journalism, and one on communications in central public agencies and local self-governments.

Ms Kazanji studied at Kyiv Taras Shevchenko National University, Institute of the World Bank with financial support of the British Ministry for International Development, Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR).

In 2014-2015, she worked as an advisor to the Head of Odessa Oblast State Administration, focusing on communications and humanitarian policies. Odessa oblast was the first to face the problem of accepting and integrating IDPs from the Crimean Autonomous Republic, including military personnel and their family members. At that time, Ukrainian authorities and society lacked understanding of the scope and nature of the problem at hand, formal approaches to addressing it, necessary resources and regulatory framework. All these things had to be learnt in the process – from setting up reception centres, to databases of needs and capacities, and control systems.

While working on the project of reforming government communications, Zoya took part in a Situation Room designed to deal with IDPs' issues. Ms Kazanji actively contributed to various programmes of analysing needs of and providing support to IDPs.

Michelle Betz

Michelle Betz is a senior media development consultant with more than 20 years of experience as a journalist, educator and international media development consultant. Her areas of specialism include the role of media in conflict, peace building and conflict resolution. She is an active researcher and is a co-author of numerous books.



After six years of teaching at the University of Central Florida, where she also launched and managed an award-winning radio station, Ms Betz moved overseas to pursue media development and spent most of the past ten years in Ghana, Egypt and Austria. She recently moved back to the United States.

Ms Betz has consulted for OSCE, UNESCO, the U.S. State Department, International Media Support, Open Society Institute and numerous other organizations. In 2003, Ms Betz was awarded a Knight International Journalism Fellowship and spent four months working with journalists in Rwanda. Ms Betz was awarded a second Knight International Press Fellowship in 2005 and spent five months in Morocco training journalists.

Ms Betz received a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada (1990). She then achieved a Master of Journalism from Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada (1994).

Chris Schuepp

Chris Schuepp studied journalism in Dortmund (Masters Degree in 2000), worked as a journalist for TV and radio stations before joining the International Media Support NGO as Country Director in Kyrgyzstan (2000/2001). He worked as a consultant for UNICEF on youth and media issues, as participatory story-telling trainer and social media manager from 2002 to 2015. Mr Schuepp organized and facilitated media workshops with children and young people on children's issues and development issues in 50+ countries worldwide, including Afghanistan, South Sudan and Bangladesh. He worked as Humanitarian Liaison Officer with Internews in Ukraine from September 2015 to March 2016, bringing together the international humanitarian sector and the local Ukrainian journalists to improve information for the conflict-affected population in Eastern Ukraine. Now he is back with UNICEF as Youth Empowerment Consultant in Eastern Ukraine. Speaks German, English and Russian.



INTRODUCTION

You can only hope to find a lasting solution to a conflict if you have learned to see the other objectively, but at the same time to experience his difficulties subjectively.
Dag Hammarskjold

In countries affected by conflict and severe human insecurity, such as Ukraine, the media have an important role to play as an active promoter of human rights and democratisation, as well as a facilitator of conflict reduction and resolution through the gathering and dissemination of non-partisan information.

The traditional role of “good” journalism is to enable the public to make well-informed decisions. However, good journalism is difficult work at the best of times. In a society threatened by violent conflict, journalists face much greater difficulties. They operate in a climate of fear and threats and with opposing sides seeking to control the media.

But covering a conflict is also when good journalism is most important. In conflict situations, the role of the media is critical in providing the public with full, reliable and non-partisan information. The approaches and methods of conflict sensitive journalism allow the media to provide the public with more comprehensive, neutral and accurate information on the conflicts.

Ultimately, our job as journalists is to tell stories: stories of people, real people who are often living in horrific situations. But how can we do so in extremely

challenging, emotionally and dangerous contexts? What international standards and best practices exist for journalists covering conflict?

Many of these standards are based on the most essential of journalism ethical standards such as accuracy, impartiality, fairness and balance while others have grown from an increasing awareness of the tenets of conflict sensitive journalism. Good journalism should be accurate, impartial, balanced and responsible so that: *Accuracy + Impartiality + Responsibility = Reliability*. Reliability comes down to our own credibility. Our **credibility** as media during conflict is our currency...if we destroy that credibility we have nothing and may as well stop doing our jobs. We need to earn that credibility and then maintain it.

Conflict sensitive journalism empowers reporters to report conflicts professionally without feeding the flames of conflict. Conflict sensitive journalism means that we report in depth, cover all sides and allow for an opportunity for those involved to ventilate all issues related to the conflict. In his important work on conflict sensitive journalism, Ross Howard outlined the responsibilities we, as journalists have, in reporting conflict.

They include:

- Duty to understand conflict
- Duty to report fairly
- Duty to report background and causes of conflicts
- Duty to present the human side
- Duty to report on peace efforts
- Duty to recognize our influence

Ross Howard, Conflict-sensitive journalism. International Media Support (IMS) and IMPACS: <http://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/ims-csjhandbook-2004.pdf>

How to cover the battlefield responsively, remembering about safety of your team, your own as well as that of your sources?

How should a journalist work with communities that suffer as the result of the conflict, and how to interview vulnerable groups such as internally displaced persons, children, etc.?

How a journalist can help to find and distribute important humanitarian information?

How to avoid manipulations in your work, and how to avoid being manipulated?

In this handbook we try to look at best international standards, and practices that are applied in Ukrainian realities.

SECTION 1

SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS WORKING IN CONFLICT- AFFECTED AREAS AND COVERING COMBAT OPERATIONS

*Authors:
Serhiy Shturkhetsky,
Mykhailo Buromensky,
Emma Beals*

1.1. International Standards and Practices

In a time of armed conflict, whether international or local, the media has got a crucial role to play. Given that in wartime there are practically no operational civil society organizations to control public authorities and armed forces, journalists become the main (if not the only) source of unbiased and objective information. As a result, a lot of journalists today practice military journalism - a dangerous occupation that requires being in the centre of events connected with deaths, violence, risk to their own lives. An international organization "Committee to Protect Journalists" keeps sad statistics on media professionals killed on duty. In 2014, the majority of such cases were registered in Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, Israel, Somalia, and Pakistan.

Although in the armed conflict zones journalists are protected by international and national law, one should not rely solely on this protective mechanism. Protection could be guaranteed only if the conflicting parties adhere to the internationally recognized rules of warfare – which is not always the case. One should also consider psychological and mental condition of the armed persons engaged in the conflict. At the same time, the importance of the international humanitarian law must never be underestimated, because it stipulates the journalists' rights and protects them in the armed conflict zone.

Journalists' rights and duties in the armed conflict zones are laid down by the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) (or International Law of Armed Conflict) recognized, for the most part, by all countries of the world. The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907 (the so-called Hague Law), the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and the 1977 Additional Protocols to it (Geneva Law), pertinent UN General Assembly Resolutions are key documents in this domain. In a broader sense, the Hague Law addresses the rules and customs of warfare, and sets restrictions to the use of weapons. The Geneva Law establishes protections for those who are in and around a conflict zone, but do not participate in the conflict – civilian population, the wounded, prisoners of war, etc. Of special importance is the customary international humanitarian law, the main provisions of which were collected in a study sponsored by the International Committee of the Red Cross in 2005:
https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/ukr-irrc_857_henckaerts.pdf

Journalists' rights in the armed conflict area are specified in the 1907 Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, the 1949 Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, and in the 1st Additional Protocol to the Geneva Convention relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts:
http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_222;
http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_199.

There are three categories of journalists who can work in the armed conflict areas and who are protected under the international humanitarian law:

- [War correspondents](#);
- [Journalists on dangerous professional missions in armed conflict zones](#);
- [Journalists who are embedded with military units](#).

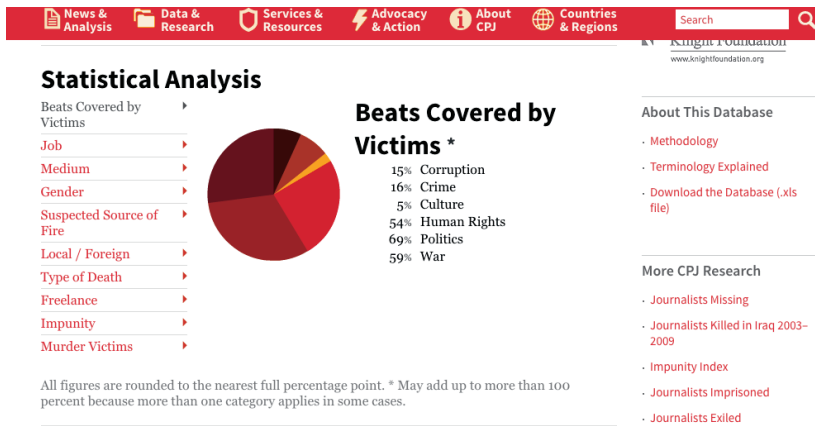
According to the 1st Additional Protocol to the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, the document that attests to an individual's status as a journalist is a press card issued by the government of the State of which the journalist is a national or in whose territory they reside or in which the news medium employing them is located.

According to Article 4 A (4) of the 1949 Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War [1], **war correspondents** are representatives of the mass media who have accreditation with the armed forces, accompany military formations without actually being members thereof. The legal status of war

correspondents is special in that they accompany military units in this official status, which is certified by the accreditation document. By issuing this document, the government takes up the responsibility to ensure the journalist's safety as long as the latter observes the accreditation rules. The accreditation document also stipulates the military commander's obligation to cooperate with the journalist exercising their professional duty.

As per the 1st Additional Protocol to the Geneva Convention, in the case of capture, war correspondents enjoy all the rights of prisoners-of-war (POW), due to their formal right to accompany military formations. Should any doubt arise as to the status of a person claiming the POW status, such persons should enjoy the protection of the international humanitarian law until such time as their status has been determined by a competent tribunal (1949 Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, Article 5).

The concept of a **journalist embedded with a military unit** is very similar to the one mentioned above. This concept is believed to have emerged during the 2003 Iraqi War, though it has not yet been clearly defined in legal terms. In fact, it is just a means to get the war correspondent status, i.e. to be accredited and, thus, entitled to protections under Article 4 A (4) of the 1949 Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War.



Screenshot of the website "Committee to Protect Journalists". Sad statistics on the journalists who died on duty during 2014. <http://cpj.org/killed/2014/>

The 1st Additional Protocol of 8 June 1977 to the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts treats **journalists on dangerous professional missions in the armed conflict areas** as civilians in the context of Paragraph 1, Article 50 thereof. As such, they are protected under the Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, provided they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians, i.e. do not participate in combat operations, do not use weapons, and do not engage in intelligence activities. However, even if a journalist turns out to be involved in such activities, it does not mean that they acquire a status of “combatant” – “the one who fights”. Strict requirements to combatants are clearly specified in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and 1977 Additional Protocols. Most probably, such activities would lead to lifting the journalist’s protection under the international humanitarian law for the period of their engaging in such activities. They could also be accused of committing a crime since, according to the international humanitarian law, only combatants may participate in combat operations.

The international humanitarian law makes no provisions regarding individuals who are not employed by any media agency and work as freelancers, although it does not explicitly prohibit freelance reporters to work in conflict zones. Presumably, by virtue of their profession, freelance journalists also may enjoy general protections applicable to civilian population in the combat zone.

Importance of accreditation. It is advisable to have accreditation for working in the Anti-terrorist Operation (ATO) zone. Ukrainian legislation does not require mandatory accreditation in the armed conflict zone, but it would be too difficult to work in the conflict zone without it. Journalists should better get accredited for security reasons as well. The authority in charge of journalist accreditation in the ATO zone is the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU).

Of late, it has been a growing trend for governments to toughen their accreditation requirements. For example, the US armed forces introduced stricter rules during the 1990-1991 Gulf War, which in a way restricted journalists’ work, but as a result not a single media professional was killed then, in contrast to the Vietnam War. On the other hand, there should be a reasonable balance between satisfying the wartime needs and observing the norms that guarantee proper fulfilment by the media of its functions in a democratic society. Strict terms of the press accreditation imposed by military commanders make it very difficult for the journalists to cover the conflict from the standpoint of their professional culture and ethical standards.

Article 15 of the Law of Ukraine “On State Support for the Media and Social Protection of Journalists” (<http://zakon0.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/540/97-bp>) and Article 25 of the Law of Ukraine “On Information” (<http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2657-12>) have similar provisions entitling media agencies to send journalists “to the zones of armed conflicts, terroristic attacks, liquidation of dangerous criminal groups”, and stipulating the journalists’ obligations regarding the use of information obtained in such zones, namely:

non-disclosure of special forces' plans or pre-trial investigation data; avoiding propaganda of terrorist and other criminal groups' activities and statements specially designed for the media; never acting as an arbitrator or intruding into an incident; never creating artificial psychological tensions in the society.

The media agencies that have sent journalists to the conflict zones or got them embedded with military units bear full responsibility for them, which however does not deny the journalists a right to act on their own initiative.

NB: The Ministry of Defence of Ukraine in cooperation with the Ministry of Information Policy is currently running an «Embedded Journalists» programme. The journalists are attached to certain military units. The programme covers 4 locations with weekly rotation. Both Ukrainian and international journalists can apply for participation.

<http://www.mil.gov.ua/news/2015/06/25/minoboroni-prodovzhuyut-proekt-embedded-journalists--11119/>

Issues Related to Journalist Protection

While the Red Cross Committee considers that journalists are fully protected by the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols to it, a number of experts and media-protecting NGOs – e.g. Committee to Protect Journalists, International Federation of Journalists, Reporters Without Borders, International Press Institute, etc – insist on the necessity to set up separate provisions to ensure media professionals' protection in the combat operations zones. They have put forward a number of proposals aiming to set up better safety standards, and to ensure a more efficient enforcement of relevant provisions of the Additional Protocols. No agreement on this matter has been reached so far.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that infringement on life, health, freedom and property of the civilian population (including journalists) in an international or non-international armed conflict is a gross violation of the international humanitarian law. If intentional, such actions could be deemed tantamount to war crime. Should Ukraine recognise the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court and ratify the Rome Statute, there will be a real chance for that Court to consider allegations that such crimes were committed in Ukraine.

There are two disputable issues regarding the IHL definitions. First, some experts would argue that Article 79 of the 1st Additional Protocol, which is the principal document specifying measures or protections for journalists who work in the conflict zone, stipulates that “journalists shall be considered as civilians”, whereas they are civilians in the conflict. So the above language nuances do not allow for any preferences for journalists as the IHL provides

for the two distinct categories: combatants and non-combatants (including civilians).

Second, they would maintain that in the absence of a clear definition of the term «journalist», the scope of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols becomes vague. Indeed, given the ever growing numbers of public journalists and bloggers, as well as the opportunities provided by the social media, it is very hard to determine who is a journalist and who is a media-active citizen. After all, it does not matter much from the humanitarian law perspective as it treats the media professionals, with the only exception of war correspondents enjoying a special status, as falling within the category of civilian population. Therefore, this debate would become really important and meaningful only if the journalists obtain a special status, different from that of the other civilians.

1.2. Specifics of Journalists' Work in the Conflict Zone: General Rules and Recommendations

The main recommendation is «Come back alive!»

Only if a journalist returns alive from the assignment, will they be able to make a good report or material. It seems natural and logical, but for a lot of media people there is no hard and fast answer to the question: **which is more important – your life or your report?**

“Not a single report is worth the journalist's life,” – these are the opening and/or the closing words of every safety-training workshop hosted by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Ukrainian creative and professional associations, other organisations that have abundant experience of training journalists to work in “hot spots”.

From the personal safety standpoint, the statement “journalist's work is to head for trouble” could be applied to any type of journalism. Therefore, risk assessment is a key concept in journalism given that no single news coverage is worth the journalist's life.

Yosri Fouda, “Al-Jazeera”



Photo credit: Vitaliy Grynov

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What a Journalist Should Know about War

To be against war is the same as to be against a hurricane
To be against war is the same as to be against a hurricane

In modern conflicts, the information component has acquired a special significance, which is a fairly logical result of shifting from an industrial to an informational society. Therefore, the role of journalists and information in general has grown considerably.

Journalists may influence the process of stopping a war by reporting facts of violence and humanitarian disasters or by attracting the international community's attention to the acts of war. Similarly, journalists could be used to escalate a conflict. Often there are no rules or moral restrictions in manipulating the journalists in this regard. Information could be "fed" to journalists to misguide the public opinion, or some intelligence information could be "extracted" from the journalists. The journalists' life gets reduced to collateral damage – from banal ransom payment to demonstrative shooting for the sake of terror.

Very often all the other components of the so-called "hybrid war" are subordinated to the information component. During the active confrontation phase in Eastern Ukraine, locals provided evidence about the cases when shelling of the peaceful areas started after cameramen had arrived at the site. As a result, locals are fearful of or even hostile towards journalists. Too often have the journalists' identity cards been used to hide other type of activities – and therefore the military are also very suspicious when they see journalists.

In the interconnected world of today, conflicts seldom remain local for a long time, very quickly growing into global ones. Therefore, journalists could be interested in conflicts occurring quite far away from their potential target audience – by highlighting an event for their spectators/readers the journalists prove the "nearness" of that problem and the necessity to solve it. The conflicting parties, in their turn, may treat international journalists as a channel through which they can promote their agenda to the international community and shape the global audience's perception of the conflict, as well as of the parties involved.

Work in a “Grey Zone” and the Necessity to Rely on Oneself

When you look through the camera lens, at some point you get a feeling that you are watching a movie, and once you switch off the camera, everything will stop. As if you control the situation.

Very often you may see journalists who run towards shootings covering themselves with the camera as a shield or with the tag “press” on their front/back. The understanding that you are just an “actor” in somebody else’s movie, the script of which has been written by fate, comes later. The next bullet could be yours. There is no frame, which could be worth your life.

Yefrem Lukatsky

One should be ready to accept the fact that usual norms and rules do not apply in the armed conflict zone. One should not rely on unconditional observance of the national legislation and international law. At the same time, it does not mean that we should not know those norms. Sooner or later wars come to an end and war crimes get investigated, and those who are found guilty are prosecuted. It is worth keeping that in mind.

Military commanders are not always capable of ensuring journalists’ safety on territories that are hard to control. The government may not always use its diplomatic or other potential to protect its nationals in another country, let alone in situations where the use of official channels is impossible or extremely difficult. The latest developments have demonstrated that such skills and competences as swift and responsible decision-making; clear, unbiased and critical thinking; ability to adequately respond to the situation, self-reliance in critical situations, are especially relevant for modern journalism.

The new International Declaration on the Protection of Journalists published in December 2015 in Geneva by 70 media organisations – including Al Jazeera Media Network, Article 19, Associated Press, Association of European Journalists, BBC, BuzzFeed CNN Committee to Protect Journalists, Dart Centre, Ethical Journalism Network, Institute of Mass Information, Ukraine OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, UNESCO Division on Freedom of Expression and Media Support – introduces a new approach to responsibility for journalists’ safety, and emphasises the importance of raising awareness of journalists, editorial boards and media organisations of the best practices related to safety, policies and mechanisms aimed at assessing and managing risks faced by journalists.

<http://ipi.freemedia.at/safety-of-journalists/international-declaration-on-the-protection-of-journalists.html>

Before the Assignment

Planning the activities before going to a High Risk Zone (HRZ) is an extremely important element of the journalist's work because this is probably the only way, in which you can manage risks of travelling to the high risk zone. For Western journalists, preliminary planning is often a mandatory precondition to get an insurance policy or their honorarium.

Although Ukrainian journalists treat the planning exercise with a certain degree of scepticism, we encourage you to dedicate some time to planning before the travel. International companies that conduct trainings on the safety of journalists working in conflict zones advise to plan the trip using the following algorithm:

- Climate and fauna specifics;
- Specifics of combat operations conducted by the conflicting parties;
- Types of machinery they use;
- Diseases and medication;
- Religious and cultural differences.

Each conflict zone has its own unique set of risks, and it is a matter of common sense to consider those risks when preparing for the assignment. For every situation one should also have a contingency plan (or plan "B"), because in the conflict zone the situation may change any time.

NB: In the end of our handbook you can find templates and forms. Rory Peck Trust experts recommend to fill before going to the dangerous assignment: risk assessment, communication plan, proof of life.

Ranking Risks (illustrative example)

The best way to rank the risks is to draw a matrix with the likelihood of an event (ranging from "very low" to "very high") shown on the Y (vertical) axis, and the impact of different risks (ranging from "very low" to "very high") – on the X (horizontal) axis. Looking at a specific geographic area, one can see in what risk zone – "red", "orange" or "green" – it is in respect of a certain risk or set of risks. Thus one can decide whether or not to go on a mission to that very area. In assessing the risks, one should use one's own information sources, open sources, news agencies' report data so as to ascertain if there has been any shelling lately, with what intensity, with what weapons, etc.

Description of Safety Conditions

Presence of all major threats
Constant multiple threats
Frequent multiple threats

Safety Level

6 – extreme
5 – high
4 – considerable

Occasional multiple threats	3 – medium
Occasional limited threats	2 – low
Rare limited threats	1 – low

Safety experts also advise to include the following stages into the planning process:

1. Research (historical, geographic, cultural and political data about the country/territory);
2. Review of the conflict history; study of cultural and religious specifics; gathering up-to-date information about the current situation;
3. Map study (including the location of hospitals, schools, administrative buildings; note that it is common practice to have mobile hospitals in conflict zones);
4. Planning logistics (routes and road conditions, places to spend nights, a place for the “base” and a meeting point if anyone gets lost, etc.);
5. Contact information (list of phones of everyone with whom you will be in contact);
6. Full medical examination: if you travel to the conflict zone sick, you jeopardise your co-travellers. You must know your own and your teammates’ blood type, allergic reactions, chronic diseases, high/low blood-pressure levels, etc.;
7. Packing right clothes: suitable for the weather and climatic zone! Avoid synthetic fabrics (they are highly inflammable) and camouflage (you may be mistaken for a combatant);
8. Keeping your passport and permitting documents in a place where they will not be lost but will be easily taken out per the armed military request. The package should be formed as recommended by the accrediting agencies (in Ukraine, it is the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU));
9. Preparing technical equipment and protective gear

Risks should be assessed and reassessed on a regular basis!

Digital Security and Social Media Behaviour

The social media does not only provide an opportunity to communicate with your colleagues, target audience, and develop your own journalistic reputation, but it is also a very convenient way to access information. At the same time, your account could be a source of information for a dossier on you, your preferences and even your travel history. Through the social media it is easy to identify your relatives, friends, people you are in communication with and your preferred communication channels. The social media may provide data on your telephone numbers and addresses, and the physical coordinates of your colleagues and friends. Your posts and opinions could be the reason for your detention or even for a manhunt on you.

At the same time, a journalist cannot avoid publicity. Publicity is a natural environment for media professionals, therefore everyone should decide for themselves how to use social media.

Recommendation: create a “working” and a “private” accounts, maybe even under different names, to have access to the news and to communicate with your friends.

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Working in the Zone of Combat Operations: Practitioner's Advice

Emma Beals

From 2011, Emma works in Syria and Iraq as a photographer and a journalist for the Guardian, USA Today, Al Jazeera English, VICE, The Daily Beast, Foreign Policy, Fairfax NZ, Grazia magazine, Newsweek, The Atlantic, National Post, Arab News, Huffington Post, and also as a special correspondent to Yahoo News, HuffPost Live, Arise News, TV3 Frontline, Radio New Zealand. This experience lead Emma to help other journalists and humanitarian workers – she assisted in search for journalists kidnapped in Syria.

Working in an active conflict is hard. It is no place to hone your journalistic skills. The best advice and first rule is always this: practice your craft elsewhere, before heading into a conflict situation. Trying to perfect your shutter speeds or interviewing skills while trying to also keep yourself and your team safe is far from ideal.

The first question to ask yourself when going to work in an active conflict zone on any given assignment is that of risk versus reward. The risks involved in getting the story must be outweighed by the story itself and the journalistic rewards you will reap from the work. We all wish to cover the important stories of the day, and never more so than in an active conflict, where the public has an urgent need to understand what is happening. But we can't report if we are detained, injured or dead, and so we must put our own safety first. It might be entirely appropriate to cover the frontlines and push into conflict areas for a breaking news story or one of national significance, but it may not be appropriate to go into the same area for a "lighter" story.

If you can tell the story without taking the risk, or in a different way, it might be better. Going into a warzone to prove yourself, simply to make money, to impress or look tough or any other reason that is not a well-considered journalistic weighing of the story versus risk, will increase the chances of you making bad decisions and taking stupid, fatal risks. Really think through why you are going.

Once you have decided to cover a story, the first thing to do when working in active warzones is to prepare. Prepare yourself with the relevant hostile environment and first aid training as well as risk assessments, communications plans, equipment checks, and so on and so forth. These things, planned in advance, can save your life.

First aid and hostile environment training are an important part of preparing. Making sure you get the right training before you go. Refreshing it every few years if you continue to work in the field is important. This first aid training

covers everything from CPR to combat injuries, while the hostile environments training covers scenarios and planning for the kinds of events you will face in the field. It helps to cover in advance things that might happen, so when they occur in the field, you can refer back to the teaching and respond quickly.

In training, I've been taught how to deal with being detained or questioned in a hostile manner. This enabled me to think quickly when this happened to me in the field. At one late night border crossing, I was forced off a bus and detained for no reason. The training helped me think fast and ensure the bus drivers stayed outside and did not leave me behind. It also meant I thought to jam the door with my foot when the male guards tried to take me into a bathroom to search me, talking loudly so the others who were waiting for me knew I was there. I was then sure I didn't want to give them my passwords or information about sources that they asked for. I stood my ground and ensured I had allies waiting for me and eventually, after a couple of hours, they let me go as they realized they could not make trouble for me without making more trouble for themselves in the process by causing further incident. I don't think I would have been so calm if I have not worked through some of those things in scenarios beforehand so I was very grateful for my training.

On any particular assignment, prepare by understanding the risks you might face intimately. Speak to colleagues who have reported in the same area recently, ask them for the most up-to-date information they have on what you might face once you arrive. You don't want to be taken by surprise. Using this information to put together a risk assessment is key. Rather than simply another form or piece of boring administrative jargon, a risk assessment is an essential document that allows you to understand, and then, most importantly, to mitigate the risks you might face on the assignment. The mitigation aspect is the most important part.

Mitigating risk can be done in many ways. You'll never mitigate away all of the risk. The only way to do so would be to stay home. Once you have decided to go, ensuring that you minimize and/or prevent as many of the risks as possible is key. This mitigation is done in different ways for each risk, but some examples are:

- **If the risk is kidnapping:** you would avoid using social media while in the area, especially posting photographs and location check-ins, since these could be used to build up a map of where you are, who you are with, and where you are going next; you might dress in a way that makes you blend in with the population to avoid an opportunistic crime against an obvious outsider; only stay in each area for a short time (45 minutes to 1 hour) so that mobilising people to come and kidnap you is difficult; and have a frequent and clear check-in protocol with a contact who has a list of VIPs to start contacting if you miss a check-in, so that in the event of kidnap a team can be deployed as fast as possible and extract you before the situation gets more difficult.
- **If the risk is firearms-related:** take the correctly weighted PPE with you (do not forget it back at base!) and wear it at all times; ensure you and your

- team know combat first aid; embed with a military group that observes some minimum safety standards because a group that rushes you to the frontline without much preparation on their end is probably not going to have a plan to get you to safety if things go south once there; find out where the most active frontlines are and limit your time at them; ensure you understand the weapons being used and their range; ask locals for where snipers or similar are and avoid sniper alleys or vantage points; and stay only as long and as close as absolutely needed for your work.
- If the risk is illness: make note of local medical options in the event of a crisis; any shots or pills you might need to get or take while there should be researched in advance; have a medevac plan even if there is a low risk of contracting some known disease endemic to the place like malaria or dysentery – the flu, kidney stones, sprains or breaks, severe food poisoning, appendicitis, etc. etc. can occur without warning and you don't want to be laid up.

On a job in Karachi, we did risk assessment and realized that one of the major risks we faced was a petty crime gone wrong. A simple robbery or carjacking could turn fatal if they saw a van of journalists with expensive equipment and presumed we had cash as well. We decided to mitigate the risk by carrying our equipment in another car while driving, so we could ensure that in case of robbery, the thieves took the equipment or our personal belongings on-hand, but not both at the same time. We also took burner phones and fake wallets with small sums of cash in them, which we kept handy, hiding larger sums of money and our more expensive phones with contacts in them so they wouldn't get taken. Then we could confidently offer up some money and electronics in the event of a robbery to prevent us stalling and escalating a simple crime into something more violent. Fortunately we didn't face any robberies, but we were prepared and assured in our own minds, should anything have occurred. We were mentally prepared for the possibility of losing (sacrificing) some of our gear in order to prevent escalation.

Also, when carrying advanced communications gear with you, including satellite phones, be aware of any local laws about their use and/or registration. Pakistan, for instance, has some restrictions about the importation of satellite phones and their use on counterterrorism grounds. You should be aware of permit requirements for your media gear, and also for body armour where applicable.

Once you have prepared for the risks, you need to plan for what will happen back at "base" in a crisis situation. One thing I have learned the hard way is how important it is to have a good team behind you. This is as true for conflict as it for slightly less dangerous stories where you are in the field and could become increasingly vulnerable if action isn't taken swiftly to alleviate the danger or crisis you find yourself in.

It is hard to overstate the importance of identifying the people who will be in charge of things if something goes wrong for you in the field. So often

we don't have a clear idea of who that is and what rights and responsibilities we may have bestowed on them by choosing them. You should pick someone yourself, in advance, rather than hoping someone steps in. The person should be an editor or friend, colleague or family member you trust. It is good to have an idea of how they cope under pressure and how well they understand your job and the area you are working in. Sometimes parents and romantic partners don't make the best decisions when you are in trouble because they are so worried, or because they work in another field and do not know your job and it takes a long time to understand the issues at play. Think about how long it took you to become an expert in your area and how much time you spend each day reading about and talking to people to understand the conflict situation you're working in, then imagine your contact person trying to do that but with the added stress of knowing you're in trouble. That should give an idea of the sort of person you're after.

Speak very frankly with your contact person about the risks you are facing and your views on what to do in a crisis. As well as furnishing them with your contacts and risk assessment, also give them a sense of whether you believe in blackouts for kidnap or publicity for a detention or arrest, how much risk you're happy for others to take to secure your safety and other things that might come up. Also, even though it's uncomfortable, give them your social media passwords, they may need to scrub or shut your accounts because some kidnappers will get those off of you and use them to learn your sources or even try to entrap others by posing as you. Help them to help you.

There is no set definition for what kind of contacts you should have, but it is ideal to have people who are well-connected locals like fixers. It is good to know the names and contact details of the heads of the local bar and journalists' associations, since they have the connections, knowledge, and legal expertise to help you in case you are detained. If you have relatives in the country, consider if it is worth involving a cousin or an aunt as an emergency contact who you may not know very well, and who might not understand your work. It is also good to have "outsiders" with connections based in your area of operations: other reporters in the place, your home country's embassy there, reliable NGO workers, etc. etc. They may not be as networked in as some of the locals, but have some protection from the local security forces on account of their foreign passports. This is where you must again consider who, how, and to what extent you will put your emergency VIPs at risk to get you out of a jam. Will they risk expulsion from their post if they are called upon, or is this something they do all the time? Will they likely face worse than that – perhaps even jail time and harassment – for stepping up to help you when you call for aid? People who are at high risk of such treatment may not make good VIPs in an emergency because of the risks to their own safety. And calling upon them could backfire on you, the reporter, with the bad guys using your association with them to trump up charges or vilify you in public.

Having the right person in play, furnished with the right contacts, will save time and energy if something goes wrong. They will be able to quickly identify

the trouble you're in and send the right help. I often help other colleagues out by performing this role and it has meant we have been able to get them out of prison fairly quickly by seeking legal counsel and keeping the arrest under wraps or help to smuggle them over a closed border by calling in the right authorities. A great communications plan between yourself and your contact person, or someone who will inform them if you miss a check-in, will ensure this person is of most use and can mobilize quickly if you run into trouble. Also, do note the time zone differences in play (if any): 24/7 coverage is ideal so someone is awake and ready to act even at 3AM local time when you yourself are sound asleep.

Now that all your safety and security concerns are taken care of, there are some things to remember when reporting in conflict.

Remember that in a conflict, truth is the first victim. For obvious reasons, tensions are high. People pick sides. You can ask three people what happened somewhere and get three different answers – more if you go back and ask them again later. As a journalist this can be tough. It is tough to do your job properly and it is tough personally because you have to establish a sliding scale for when and how you can trust a source on certain things (and perhaps, not others). Fighting for your right to be impartial can compromise your safety and security, personal relationships and even your freedom as a conflict grinds on. Being mindful that you're likely not getting the whole story is so important. Understanding the point of view of the people you're talking to can help you to empathize but also can mean you become biased. This is especially true when you are working constantly in the same conflict, you are embedding with troops with whom you have become friendly, or the conflict has personal ties. We begin to undergo a process of "identifying" with those in the conflict, or essentially becoming a player in the conflict ourselves. Resisting this can be very difficult.

In Syria, this was especially difficult, as we often had to embed with one side or the other in order to report and some of the groups were hostile to one another, even some nominally on the same side of the conflict. Remember that there are opportunity costs when you embed with one group and not another. Consider if those costs will include outright hostility from some groups directed against you, either in public statements – i.e., being denounced as a "shill" or falsely labelled a spy – or actual physical incidents and travel bans. All of my safety and security concerns were in the hands of the people I was reporting on and while living with them and working with them, their concerns became my concerns. It is very difficult to push hard on the ethical decisions or skills of the military commander who is making sure you are safe and getting you access to a frontline. Reporting on this becomes trickier. Sometimes this means you aren't able to access all the information from both sides, but have to qualify that in your writing and seek additional viewpoints once you are in a safe place.

The people you embed with will feed you propaganda and it takes many forms. Controlling what you can report, giving you inflated successes or

deflated death tolls, giving quotes that are racist or antagonistic or that talk about “the enemy,” and performing functions for the camera only are all forms of propaganda. As journalists, it is our job to try to wade through this propaganda and find the truth, or at least qualify when we have struggled to find the truth in a story by being transparent about the fact the information is hard to verify due to the reporting circumstances. Ensuring we don't become simply a conduit for propaganda is difficult.

Reporting on some of the battles in Syria between the Kurdish forces and the Islamic State has been an excellent example of this. Many times we weren't able to access the battles themselves and the social media information coming from each side gave contradictory information that couldn't possibly all be true. Military and territorial successes were vastly inflated on both sides and deaths were inflated and deflated, depending on whether they were talking about themselves or the other side. For much of the Battle of Kobane, it was very difficult to clarify who controlled which areas over the course of the battle in real-time. Social media verification was very important, as was making contact with as many activists and civilians outside of the military apparatus as it was possible, and looking at as many sources of information as possible to weigh up what was most likely. Then we had to be transparent about the fact a finite answer about progress was almost impossible. Cutting through this “fog of war” is one of your main jobs reporting on conflicts.

And make sure to explain to the people you are a journalist who has ethical standards to meet and the responsibility to be impartial and fair in your reporting. Practice this in the way you interview people and the reports you write. Stay as independent as possible and firmly explain that that's your job when challenged. It is not always easy, but if you're consistent it is simpler to follow this ethical line and journalistic responsibility.

The language you use in reporting can also have an influence on the impartiality of your reporting. Calling lands “occupied” or “liberated” has a connotation. Calling someone an enemy outside of a quotation has an impact. Using sensational or antagonistic language also has an impact. As a journalist you should try to report the facts and not add to the story with your reporting methods. This is especially true in a conflict where things are heated already.

When you are reporting on conflict, looking after yourself is number one. Whether it is by keeping yourself safe and preparing properly, or by taking other steps once you are in the conflict and afterward, it is the top of the agenda.

Making sure you don't stay too long can help in this process. Being in active conflict for long periods is very stressful. You need time to decompress in between trips. Keep up relationships with your friends and family and people outside of what is going on. Take time to keep doing the things you love, listening to music, cooking, walking, whatever it is. Don't lose yourself. And take care of your mental health. You'll see lots of things that are upsetting and making sure you can process them properly will help you in many ways. But you'll

also help avoid PTSD or bad decision-making that can lead you into trouble in a dangerous environment. Self-care is massively important for journalists working frequently in conflict situations. It's so easy to forget when you are in the moment, working hard or when you compare yourself to those you see who are suffering, but it is an essential element.

Self-care is also one of the hardest lessons to learn. Of all the methods I have described here, it took me the longest to understand! When I started reporting on conflicts, it was exciting and all-consuming and I wanted to go back time and time again. I didn't decompress and began to neglect relationships with friends and family and to forget about old pastimes. It took a few tragic events to shock me out of this, but not until I had made some bad decisions because I was too focused on the job and not looking after myself. Now I try to factor in holidays and breaks between field reporting, I make more of an effort with friends and family who aren't involved in conflict reporting and I try to take more care of my mental and physical health. Rotate yourself out of the line of fire.

This self-care also extends to care for the people you are interviewing, especially in a conflict situation where they may be innocent victims of conflict, be it injured civilians, IDPs and refugees or traumatized individuals. Sometimes you need to make a judgement call about the appropriateness of speaking to someone at that time about what they have endured, especially questions of physical and sexual assault. Try not to re-traumatize them. Also, try not to put them in further danger by pressing for details that could cause future problems. If identifying them will endanger them, maybe you can hide their identity or obscure who they are, and get the news out without placing your interviewees at further risk.

Be honest in what you can do for them. Giving someone the impression that speaking to you will end the war or gain them justice in a direct manner can be misleading and is unfair: you yourself cannot actually do these things. Be clear and realistic about what an interview may achieve. They may simply want people to know what has happened and to be heard. When interviewing them, be sensitive to their feelings and needs. A lot of what happens to the victims of war is hugely traumatizing: earn their trust and be kind and considerate in your approach. Try to finish in a positive way and don't leave them visibly upset with no support. Sometimes having a support person nearby during the interview to help them after you have gone can be beneficial.

Female journalists have it easier and harder in the field, depending on the situation. There's so much to consider. For most of us, being singled out for our gender is uncomfortable, so we make allowances for it and work harder to prove it's not a problem. Especially in conflict, where it's a bit of a boys club sometimes. There are certain risks and considerations we as women should take into account though. For many female journalists, assault and harassment comes with the territory. This isn't okay. Sometimes we are shy to report these things for fear we won't be assigned to the next job or we will be seen as lesser,

or more vulnerable, than our male counterparts. Assault is never an acceptable reality, whether it's online harassment, verbal harassment, sexual harassment or physical abuse.

There are many guides for female journalists working in the field. We don't have to reiterate that absolutely no one asks or deserves to be sexually or physically harassed, but the sad and horrible truth is that sexual violence and harassment against female journalists is a real and present risk in conflict zones. This is often an intimidation tactic or more broadly an underlying societal problem. Some pragmatic advice that may be helpful in protecting yourself when on assignment:

- Know if sexual violence is a risk in the areas you are working, and prepare accordingly. This includes notifying your editors of the risk and pushing them to provide you with proper protective resources.
- Take self-defence training.
- Crowds can be especially dangerous for sexual violence. Be aware of this at all times, always make sure that you are constantly aware of your surroundings/if anyone is watching or following you. Always have a plan of escape and how to exit the area if need be.
- In areas risky for women in this regard, try to never work alone. Try to have a "bodyguard" figure with you, including male colleagues, etc.
- Mace, power knives, and stun guns can be tempting to have but consider carefully whether they are appropriate. Self-defence weapons like these can easily be taken and used against you, or confiscated by security forces. Prioritise investment in physical self-defence skills and maybe a personal alarm. If you do take self-defence paraphernalia, be sure to find out the local laws about possessing such gear.
- Wearing extra layers might help buy you some time to get away from assaulters.

As a female journalist, or a male journalist, the help and support of your fellow journalists is going to be hugely important, especially in a conflict situation. Being able to share safety information and detailed up-to-date intelligence about hot spots will mean you are safer. Being able to share information about who is paying and who is not is especially vital for freelancers. Having colleagues who understand what you are going through to talk through journalistic or ethical issues with is an irreplaceable resource. Joining a press club or creating informal or formal journalist associations or groups can really help you cope with the struggles of reporting in a conflict.

A few years ago I helped start the Frontline Freelance Register, <http://www.frontlinefreelance.org/> which allows us, as freelancers working in risky environments outside of our home countries, to share all of this intelligence and even just to meet up for drinks. Though you should absolutely, always decompress with people outside of your conflict reporting circle, it is also good to decompress within that circle sometimes – but not solely, as bad experiences and personal problems recounted by others can feed into your own and each other's. This, along with my own local journalists' union and some

more informal online security groups, has enabled me to get the support I need to do my job. I know for a fact I wouldn't have been able to do the work I do or help colleagues and friends without these networks.

Talking to your editors and support teams in the office can really help as well. If your desk doesn't normally cover large or dangerous events and you're off to a conflict zone, give them some reading. Make sure they understand the dangers you face and the risks you're running to get the news. Push them to adequately equip you to do your job safely and effectively by giving you protective gear, insurance, communications equipment, and if possible support staff back home to be on call. Ensure that they're not pushing you too hard or too far and that you're getting time off between conflict assignments.

Reporting on conflict can be greatly rewarding and meaningful if you do it in a considered and sensible way. This information is just a primer for you, the reader. There are so many resources available out there and I'd advise you to keep learning and keep improving your craft.

1.3. Journalist Ethics and Combat Operations

Freedom of speech disappears when journalists become
“combatants of the information war”

Maxim Eristavi, co-founder of Hromadske International

In any armed conflict, the issue of complying with ethical and professional standards gets especially topical and complex for the journalist community. It took the international journalist community hundreds of deaths and thousands of war injuries to fully appreciate the value of following these standards, particularly in times and conditions of conflict.

In this section, we make an overview of the generally accepted journalistic standards and analyse how they are applied in times of war – sometimes following the standards of journalism may protect the journalist’s life much better than international conventions and body armour.

The main international instruments spelling out these standards are: the IFJ Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists (available at: <http://www.ifj.org/about-ifj/ifj-code-of-principles/>) and the International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism (available at: http://ethicnet.uta.fi/international/international_principles_of_professional_ethics_in_journalism).

The principles declared in the above documents lay the foundation for the Ukrainian Code of Journalist Ethics. They are as follows:

- Balance of opinions;
- Timeliness of information

NB: : Some experts suggest that the timeliness standard is more applicable to the news reporting than to analytical publications or feature articles, because the latter require a more detailed fact-checking and in-depth study of an issue, which affects the promptness of response.

- Authenticity of information (verifying information and referencing the sources);
- Separation of facts from comments;
- Accurateness and fullness in presenting facts and information about an issue at hand.

Important aspects of journalists’ ethical professional behaviour are non-discrimination and clarity of presentation as a courtesy to their audience.

Media expert Igor Kulyas explains the specifics of applying major standards of journalism in his article “Standards and Ethics in Times of Undeclared War”, available at:

http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/ethics/standards/standarti_y_etika_zhumalistiki_v_umovakh_neogoloshenoi_viyni/ (UKR only)

Timeliness of information. In the combat environment, information about certain events may become known much later than the day of the event. Under the standard of timely presentation, information should be presented when it becomes known. It is necessary to make it clear for the spectator that the event occurred earlier than the day of reporting, and that it just became known on that day. When reporting about a past event, the journalist should do their best to find out the exact date and time of the event with the help of its participants and witnesses. When this is not possible, they should at least try and determine the approximate time period when the event could have occurred, and make this fact known to the audience.

It could be problematic for ENG crews to work in the combat operation zone, with the reporter having no opportunity to go on the air for a long period of time. In this case, as soon as the reporter gets a chance to broadcast live, they could cover all the events that have happened on the ground since their last session, indicating clearly the date and time of each of those events.

Information authenticity (verifying information and referencing the sources)

In their reports, journalists should provide information the origin of which they know, clearly indicate their information sources and name the experts who made comments or provide details of the research/investigations mentioned in the report and verified for their authenticity.

Where journalists have no direct access to the events in the combat zone, factual information should be sought from their participants or witnesses. The journalists should do their best to interview as many participants and witnesses as possible to collect facts and impressions of a specific event. The more people can confirm the fact, the more authentic the information about the fact is. At the same time, one should not ignore the evidence that runs counter to that provided by most people involved. In such cases, different versions of the same fact/event should be offered, with mandatory referencing to their sources.

IMPORTANT: When informing the audience about the events connected with the occupation and combat operations, it is essential to protect the information sources that could not be disclosed for safety reasons. Under the circumstances, identifying the information source could have more fatal implications than in a usual peaceful environment. Whereas in peaceful conditions the information source could risk losing their job, in the conditions of occupation or combat operations their life could be jeopardised. Yet one should bear in mind that the common practice would be to provide a full and clear reference to the information source. The journalist should analyse the information source's desire to remain anonymous and decide whether it could be put down to their natural fear or to their intention to spill non-authentic or distorted information.

The main journalistic rule is to check all the information and diversify its sources. It is considered sufficient to check information with two independent

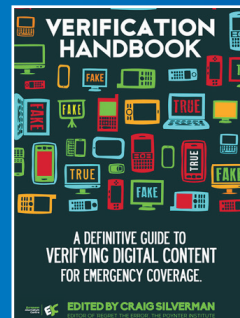
sources. During combat operations, their direct participants could be such sources (even if a journalist is in the rear, they may ascertain which of their fellow countrymen is in combat at that time and set contact with them), as well as other journalists, who may be in the conflict zone on either side.

Information from official authorities. News reporters could present information provided by officially authorised public agencies or their authorised representatives. However, it does not mean they should not seek alternative evidence to confirm or disprove that information by talking to direct participants or witnesses of the events. One should remember that, for different reasons, official agencies often provide edited or not quite accurate information.

Authenticity of pictures from a conflict zone. When using somebody else's pictures of the events in the conflict zone, the journalists should do their best to verify their authenticity – did the event really happen in that place and at that time as claimed by the authors of the picture or those who shared it? It is also a must to clearly indicate the source, from which the picture was borrowed.

European Journalism Centre developed a Verification Handbook – an innovative tool for journalists and media organisations. The handbook includes a step-by-step instruction regarding the ways, in which journalists can work with the content obtained from a wide circle of people, as well as recommendations on how to organize a newsroom to work in emergencies.

http://verificationhandbook.com/book_ua/



Information about the killed, wounded, gone missing and taken hostage

Information about the people who were killed or wounded, went missing or were taken prisoners should be verified with special care and exclusively from the competent sources. These are, first and foremost, direct participants or eye-witnesses of the event who were present on the ground with the person in question.

One should be aware that false information on what happened to a certain person could do serious and irreparable harm to the person's friends and family; that publicised specific details could be detrimental to the people in captivity. One should also realize the consequences of giving away specific names.

This can only be acceptable when the reporter is 100% sure the information is accurate and authentic (coming from a reliable and competent source) and the person's identification will not put this person at risk in their current circumstances. In many countries journalists follow the rule whereby relatives of the killed person are entitled to learn about their loss from official sources rather than from news releases. Thus, the media agencies and reporters refrain from identifying the killed: showing their bodies and naming them.

Information about a specific wounded person can only be released with their consent. If a wounded person is not capable of giving conscious consent or does not give such consent, their story should be anonymous, and the reporter should make sure the person's identity cannot be established from the broadcast picture.

Using video-archives

It is strictly forbidden to use archive pictures as illustrations for reporting on current events in the combat operations zone or on the occupied territory. If you need to show a previously shot picture to illustrate today's event because it was shot at the same place or engaged the same people you are featuring at the moment – voice-over should be used to explain that the picture is of the same place but shot some time ago, or the "Archive" sub-title should appear on the screen.

Anonymity of the participants and witnesses of events in a conflict zone

It is very important to understand that people in the conflict zone are extremely vulnerable, and they may be or, in fact, are in real danger. Showing and identifying these people by name in the situations of exposure (e.g. interviewing a civilian when passing a checkpoint or queuing to receive humanitarian aid, etc.) is unacceptable unless you are sure their lives and the lives of their relatives would not be endangered even more.

Specifics of using the standard of presenting balanced information

Representatives or leaders of terrorists or occupants, as well as their supporters should not be given a voice in the media to justify their actions in violation of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Moreover, any promulgation of separatist ideas, propaganda of violence and war or inciting of mutual hatred should be banned from the media. Promoting such opinions in news reports should be deemed a gross violation of international and Ukrainian law. So the representatives or leaders of terrorists or occupants, and their supporters can only be given an opportunity to speak to provide factual data.

At the same time one shouldn't forget that a significant number of civilians

who are not combatants and are not involved in the armed conflict support the ideas promoted by the occupants. The opinions of such people should be reported, albeit with great caution. It will take years to achieve national reconciliation. Yet we have to begin somewhere – these people would not watch the news if they are not given any voice at all.

Accuracy and fullness of presenting facts and information about an issue

The international Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists stipulates the journalist's duty to respect the right of the public to know the truth. According to Paragraph 6 of the Ukrainian Code of Journalist Ethics, journalists writing on any topic should provide a full range of related facts and opinions. It is the journalist's task to get them from competent sources (<http://www.cje.org.ua/ua/code>). For the online media, the absence of background information in the news report is considered substandard.

It is important to understand that truly full coverage of certain events in the conflict zone could be unachievable due to military secrecy considerations.

Journalistic reports on combat operations should not disclose the following information: exact data on deployment and movements of the troops or their units; number of military personnel in different combat sectors; exact data on types and number of weapons in specific units; information about commanders' plans and about combat tactics, etc.

When filming locations of military units, journalists should remember not to shoot panoramic views or to show staging posts of manpower and machinery. They should be careful not to film signposts that can help identify the location of checkpoints. Sometimes it is better not to shoot weapons or machinery to avoid exposing availability of some specific types of armament. The servicemen have complained about such news broadcasts and standuppers, which undermine their trust to the media.

A way to avoid mistakes could be showing all the filmed material to the unit commanders and cut out frames they consider unacceptable: sometimes seemingly innocent frames could be potentially damaging. Moreover, one should always be attentive to soldiers' requests if they ask not to show their faces (it is a rule and good practice for the cameraman to get permission from all servicemen they are going to film. Oftentimes, the military who do not want to be in the frame move away or simply ask not to film them).

SECTION 2

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)

Author – Zoya Kazanji

2.1. Background

According to international standards, internally displaced persons are defined as people or groups of people who have been forced or compelled to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.

<http://unhcr.org.ua/en/2011-08-26-06-58-56/news-archive/2-uncategorised/1293-vnutrishno-peremishcheni-osobi>

Due to the armed conflict and occupation of a part of the country, Ukraine has been confronted with new challenges and issues that have affected various processes inside the country and the lives of a great number of people.

Conflict coverage has always been a challenging task for journalists as it requires special approaches, special training and humane attitude, on top

place of habitual residence to avoid negative consequences of an armed conflict, violence against them or their family members or other forms of persecution or real threat of persecution based on citizenship, race, ethnicity, religion, language, as well as belonging to a particular social group or political affiliation that have given rise to hostile campaigns against this specific person or group of people, mass unrest, violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms; or because of famine, epidemics, or natural or man-made emergencies.

Under the circumstances provided for in paragraph 1 of this Article, an Internally Displaced Person shall be:

1. a citizen of Ukraine forced to leave their place of habitual residence in a foreign state and having arrived in Ukraine;
2. a citizen of Ukraine forced to leave their place of habitual residence in one region of Ukraine and having arrived in another region of Ukraine;

Internally Displaced Person shall also be a foreigner or a stateless person who permanently and legally resides in Ukraine and has changed their place of habitual residence in Ukraine due to the circumstances provided for in paragraph 1 of this Article.”

Journalists should use generally accepted terminology to avoid ambiguity and contextual inconsistency in their coverage of the topics that immediately concern IDPs or are relevant to them.

The journalist’s main working technique is asking questions, finding facts and getting information. In the times of conflict, their work becomes a lot more complex and demanding as it requires responsible and thorough attitude both to information and to the facts that confirm or refute it.

German social psychologists have come up with recommendations that help to understand public policy on IDP integration and non-discrimination. These recommendations can also be of use to the mass media in terms of comprehending the government’s strategic approaches to resolving its citizens’ problems:

1. Citizens should have a clear understanding of what is going on and what plans the government has for the future. Uncertainty breeds mistrust, anxiety and resentment;
2. Political parties should not be allowed to exploit this sensitive subject, use it for egoistic purposes or incite antagonism;
3. The discourse of confrontation between IDPs and hosting communities and vying for access to resources (housing, medicines, subsidies, schools or kindergartens, etc.) should be avoided, as it will invariably lead to the growth of tensions, struggle and, eventually, hatred.
4. In the mid-term and long-term perspective, an acute issue of today could be the key to addressing other serious issues. In the case of IDPs, it allows obtaining a new quality of the new labour force and eliminating the shortage of qualified workforce in different sectors;

5. People are afraid of the unknown, different, unusual. Direct contacts with the "others", or "aliens", help to relieve tensions and overcome prejudice;
6. Damaged social cohesion in communities affects local environments and undermines readiness to help one another. It is necessary to jointly seek solidarity, to unite and find solutions to problems.

Internally Displace Persons need information of two types:

1. Practical life-saving information
 - passes;
 - checkpoint crossings;
 - safe exits and roads;
 - new legislation;
 - contacts (persons and organisations) of those who can help with leaving;
 - experience of those who have already left.
2. Practical resettlement information after displacement:
 - contacts (of a person and organisation) to approach for first aid;
 - registration and informing on the rights;
 - legal aid of all kinds;
 - all information on receiving humanitarian aid – from sanitation items to food, clothing and furniture;
 - information on accommodation and employment;
 - inquiries about lost persons – how to find relatives, friends and neighbours.

Understanding of IDPs' information and communication needs helps the media to contact and interact with them more efficiently.

It is advisable to know the sources of information available to citizens of Ukraine in the temporarily occupied territories (not controlled by the government) and in the territory of Ukraine.

People living in the territory uncontrolled by the Government of Ukraine receive information:

- by word of mouth – from their neighbours, relatives and friends;
- via mobile telecommunications;
- from the local mass media published by the territorial authorities;
- from social media;
- from news sites;
- from Ukrainian radio and television if broadcast in these territories;
- from international and Ukrainian humanitarian missions.

In the other part of the country, the most common sources of information include:

- people who previously left the temporarily occupied territories;
- volunteers who work in the sphere of IDP assistance and help them settle down;

- hotlines established specifically to inform and help IDPs;
- social media and specially established web-pages of the groups that assist IDPs;
- churches and religious institutions;
- local television channels;
- local news sites;
- national television channels;
- national news sites;
- NGOs that provide targeted help to IDPs and assist them in addressing various issues;
- international and Ukrainian charity funds.

It has been noted that with time the mass media interest in the IDP-related subjects subsides.

The mass media mainly focuses on the following:

- statistical data in different interpretations;
- statement of IDPs' problems;
- politicisation of the issue and its active exploitation by political leaders, especially on the eve of elections at all levels;
- extremes in the IDP life description – the broadcast images are those of either victims or loafers;
- stereotypes in relation to IDPs – e.g., “they are all separatists and traitors, but claim the same social benefits as others”, “the state spends a lot of money on the displaced persons; because of them urban residents cannot find work and rent housing”;
- prejudices that a lot of IDPs do not want to work, wishing to sponge on the state and other people, although in fact they often cannot find work due to the need of job retraining.

In these circumstances, journalists often practice:

- the use of lexical manipulation, banal archetypes;
- describing predominantly tragic stories of individual IDP groups – children, women;
- the use of inadmissible and insulting language;
- carelessness in selecting visual images;
- little respect for legal standards when covering topics on children, especially in conflict situations.

2.2. Things to Remember when Covering IDP Issues

Language matters

It is correct to refer to the people who were forced to move from one part of Ukraine to another as IDPs, not as refugees. IDPs are citizens of Ukraine. We all have equal rights. Internal displacement is a tragedy for everyone who was forced to move. It is a very painful experience, and the victims need comfort, support and understanding.

The Ukrainian media, when writing on IDP-related topics, tend to use the following definitions: migrant, emigrant, immigrant, refugee, asylum seeker, displaced person, internally displaced persons and exile.

Sometimes facts are intentionally distorted to create a negative image and attribute bogus traits and stereotypes to some people. Artificially coined definitions are manipulated so as to split the society: e.g., interpretation of “patriotism” based on the place of birth; speaking of “true” and “false” Ukrainians.

Safety and privacy are above all

An interviewee may not realise the consequences: they may not be fully aware of the situation and incapable of appreciating the level of danger. Many of those who fled for safety still have relatives residing in the temporarily occupied territories. Journalists’ press or television reports are also read and watched by the people who can later inflict harm on the civilians who stayed behind.

Do not increase stigmatisation and do not discriminate

The mass media should not increase but rather reduce stigmatisation, i.e. social and psychological discrimination of a group of people. Distorted description of the IDPs’ problems or life typically misrepresents the state of affairs and, thus, discriminates against people involved in them. Avoid pitting IDPs against locals as this inflates discriminatory attitudes in the local environments.

People can become hostages to certain circumstances

The state of mind of a person who was forced to leave their place of habitual residence is that of a tragedy and trauma. Do not view the people who had to flee their homes urgently under the pressure of circumstances as the ones who “invited the war” and “did nothing”.

Every human story is individual

Do not use clichés like “supporters of Russia”, “pro-Ukrainian displaced persons”, “latent separatists” etc. Every story of the people who left the occupied territories under the pressure of circumstances or direct threat to their life is singular. It would be a mistake to paint everyone with the same brush. During armed conflicts, the media makes active use of fairly trite images in such situations: the Hero, the Traitor, and the Victim.

Do not facilitate political manipulations around the subject

There is nothing new in the fact that the situation with IDPs becomes a bargaining chip in political struggle and is used by politicians of different level to achieve their political goals. When covering the subject of IDP support by charity funds established by politicians, one should be mindful of it, and view their activities through the prism of the benefactors’ political interests. The mass media should not contribute to political promotion or buffing up politicians’ image. The mass media role is to inform, rather than be a PR tool.

All the parties should have a say

When the mass media covers a conflict, the floor should be given to all the parties involved and an “above-the-fray” posture should be taken. One should be very thorough when describing a conflict – words and definitions should be selected carefully. Of course, the facts supplied by the conflicting parties should be carefully verified.

Do not oversimplify or overgeneralise

IDPs do not form a homogeneous group. There are inherent feelings in all the people who find themselves in a difficult situation: fear, anxiety, frustration, resentment, etc. Yet people’s characters and needs (such as, for instance, religious needs and property interests) are different for each individual. When speaking of IDPs, the mass media should not oversimplify, trying to present IDPs as a homogeneous mass, with exactly the same needs, requirements, wishes, and values. One should not extrapolate individual citizens’ actions or words to the entire group. Everyone has a different life story, experience, education, level of knowledge, behaviour model, responsiveness to challenges, fears, illusions and so on. Overgeneralising is unacceptable.

Do not distort reality for the sake of a nice picture and sensational text

Journalists can offer no justification for twisting the facts, inventing inexistent things, or using footage that does not reflect the reality.

Think about the consequences of your materials

Always try to estimate the social consequences that your material is likely to have. If you describe a negative situation featuring an IDP, do not overgeneralise and do not draw far-fetched analogies. Sometimes journalists make unfounded conclusions. Featuring a crime story, for example, they would underscore that “an IDP from Donetsk robbed a car”, without mentioning that on the very same day “native residents of Kyiv robbed 10 cars”. Does it really matter that the crime was committed by a “Donetsk IDP”? Would we write in the same manner of a suspect from Kharkiv or, say, Lviv?

Speak about issues from specific people's perspective

In the information space, there are very few materials about what happened and continues happen to the IDPs' lives. Look for real people and let everybody hear their voices.

Explore subjects ignored by other media channels

IDPs have virtually no access to the local community decision-making. Nor do they have any information about these decisions. This situation is of special concern to the categories of citizens without access to the Internet. One should understand that the displaced persons and long-time residents of Ukraine have similar problems and face similar challenges, such as poor living standards, limited access to healthcare and education, underdeveloped infrastructure, safety of business operations and corruption. One should find subjects that unite rather than stir up dissension. Journalists are more willing to describe tragedies that to draw attention to the humanitarian crisis. They rarely write on IDPs' rethinking themselves, reconsidering the state, their role or a change in their values. There are few materials with examples of social solidarity, combining the government's capacities with public initiatives along these lines.

Do not point fingers

IDPs are made responsible for all the mishaps in the country and in its local territories: the armed conflict, a drop in the quality of life, labour market competition, increased housing rent, etc. There are few materials on IDPs' successful social adaptation.

Remember about possible personal tragedies of those who did not leave

One often comes across materials, in which Ukrainian citizens who have not fled from the temporarily occupied territories are called traitors, their

authors appearing to ignore the circumstances that prompted those people to stay behind. Citizens of Ukraine had to stay in the occupied territories for various reasons. Some had to go through personal tragedy unable to leave sick parents or other relatives behind. Among other reasons are: fear of going into the unknown, loss of relatives during hostilities, financial considerations, poor health, hope that the conflict was short-termed, fear of being despised or condemned, confidence that one has to stay in the occupied territories to see everything with one's own eyes and bring the victory closer.

Personal stories help to understand one another

There is a need for a lot of everyday personal stories with a good deal of detail, various situations, and vented ideas. Do not embarrass your characters. Do not show them in situations of weakness.

Do not promise what is beyond your control

Never promise that the material will be published or aired. It is up to your editor to decide. Trying to establish a contact, never promise to solve the concerned IDP's problems or facilitate assistance. Never do that, unless you can actually be of help. Differentiate between what you promise as a journalist and what you can offer as a private person, therefore –

Help whenever you can

One of the key advantages of the journalist profession is possessing information, and often you can help a person by sharing it. Contacts of a humanitarian mission representative interviewed by you while preparing the material, shelter location where medication or humanitarian aid can be obtained, or the news on relevant decisions of government agencies could be of help. Always, when you have a chance, inform the public authorities or NGOs on the IDP-related issues. It is advisable to notify those who can assist in addressing these issues.

Cover sensitive topics only if you know why you are writing about them

Sensitive topics – sexual abuse, suffering of children and women, distressful situation of the elderly – can be easily used to manipulate audiences, usually, to foment hatred towards a party in the military conflict. During conflicts, the level of violence in general, and sexual violence in particular, goes up. To emphasize the sufferings of the civil population in the armed conflict area, the media often uses emotionally loaded language and similar footage, instead of providing information that will help people survive or protect themselves.

Do not go to extremes when describing life in the occupied territories

The Ukrainian media, often for objective reasons, offers virtually no balanced and truthful reports on the life of people who have stayed in the occupied territories. There is more coverage on Crimea but almost no coverage (for various reasons) on the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions. It is important to understand what is happening there to those people, what they are thinking about, how they live, what access to health care and education they have. One should bear in mind that the closer the conflict area, the fewer people are ready and willing to discuss things openly, let alone pose for pictures or videos.

Do not forget about useful news

IDPs want to get useful news that will help them find their way around, integrate, and see prospects.

Let the voices of those who say “uncomfortable” things be heard

The media allows for extreme points of view, however, independent voices of those who are not mainstream, who can raise new subjects and give differing examples are not heard. These voices, if carefully listened to, can help journalists, as well as their audiences, to get a holistic picture of what is actually happening in such environments.

Do not evaluate everything from the standpoint of your own preferences

It is unprofessional for journalists to evaluate people subjectively, based on their own feelings, emotions or knowledge, relying on impressions, comments and assessments rather than on facts.

Verify everything that can be verified

Verify even if you think there is no point doing it, even if everything seems clear and unambiguous.

Do not engage in propaganda

Propaganda is often based on true facts; it does the trick by enhancing the desired characteristics and belittling the unwanted ones. Trust reliable neutral sources. Speak to people in the street and to officials.

Do not get emotionally skewed

It is very easy to step up the intensity in the IDP-related materials. It is easy to knock together people with different, often opposing views. It deepens the rift.

Hate speech is a mark of unprofessionalism

Hate speech can never be the language of objective statement of facts. Therefore using negativism, especially towards a certain group of people with shared characteristics (IDPs, an ethnic or religious group, women, LGBTI, etc.) immediately turns a journalist into a propagandist.

Do not search for confirmation of your own opinion

Try to hear and understand someone else's opinion to get nuggets of truth from there. Take any information with a pinch of salt.

Follow the IDP-related news

If you cover the IDP-related subjects, follow everything you can. Being in the picture is not a whim, but an element of your job security and a guarantee that you will be able to produce a high-quality text.

Do not disseminate myths

Each journalist has a great deal of information sources and communicates a lot. Beware of hearsay and myths; do not let them become your point of view, opinion or conviction.

Help society understand the nature of the conflict

Journalism is a quest for truth. Search for the truth and tell the truth. Remind your audiences about the causes of the conflict.

SECTION 3

JOURNALISTS' INTERACTION WITH CONFLICT-AFFECTED GROUPS. HUMANITARIAN COMMUNICATIONS

*Authors:
Chris Schuepp,
Michelle Betz,
Serhiy Shturkhetskiy*

3.1. How to Interview a Person Affected by the Conflict – Tips from Psychologists

It is important to understand how to interview people who suffered from serious trauma – wounded and maimed soldiers, people who survived captivity, families of the killed or refugees. It is hard for them to talk about their experience. And it is hard for journalists to write about such things. Very often, journalists are the first people who question the victims and the first to hear their stories.

The best thing to do is to let a person you are going to interview to select a place and time for the interview. Probably, you should better not start asking questions right away. Invite the person to discuss what they want. Several meetings could be required. Please, remember that the person might have lost confidence in people and may need to learn anew how to trust people, including journalists. Do not appeal to justice, do not promise that after the broadcast everything would be settled and the guilty would be punished, etc. If you do that, you may inflict even more trauma on the person. Do not give idle promises unless you are sure you can deliver. Do not let your emotions have command over you.

It is better to interview people not immediately after the experienced trauma but after some time, because the person's mental health might not have recovered yet. The person may have problems remembering things that happened to them as their mind might not have adopted the traumatic experience. Be careful when "digging" too deep: the person might not find an appropriate answer and make things up in order to meet your expectations. Be attentive. Ask yourself whose the ultimate responsibility for the interview is – yours (as a journalist who will narrate the story) or the interviewee's (given their mental condition some time ago).

It is important to structure the interview. For example, if you talk about a fire, then you'd better ask about the person's life before the fire first: general things like where the person studied, what they did for a living. This is a safe springboard for the interview. Then you may pass over to the traumatic events: "What exactly happened on that day? What did you see?"



Photo: Yevgen Maloletka, for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

Do not ask too many questions. It is better to formulate questions in a simple way: "Tell me, please, about..." And then you would let a person talk. When you want to stop, bring the person back from their memories to the present day reality. Ask how their life goes now, what the person is going to do next week or something like that.

Do not ask: "How did you feel then?" but rather: "If you could cast your thoughts back on that day and recollect what you felt then..."

Psychologists working with people who suffered in a conflict give the following advice:

1. Find the right words to describe things that people have difficulty expressing. A journalist must describe what the victims cannot. Yet you, the journalist, should differentiate between your own emotions and those of the people about whom you are reporting – it will enable you to analyse the situation. Emotional involvement with the subject of your material would narrow your perspective. How can this be achieved? Ask yourself what your material would be about. What is the goal? What message are you going to convey? Describe what you see, not what you feel about the things you see and hear. Give space to the people's stories, let them talk but do not make them describe from the outset what they feel or remember.
2. Before asking questions, think what you are going to communicate to your readers or listeners. Very often journalists make mistakes asking questions for their own sake, trying to understand the situation better. Psychologists who work with the military and journalists pay attention to such aspects. The servicemen who had been in action, under fire or in captivity were thrown off center with journalists' questions like: "Did you have to kill people? How did you feel about it?" It took them huge effort and willpower to curb reactive aggression. Of course, killings may occur during an armed conflict but one should not focus on the subject in chase of sensation or emotional news report.
3. Be compassionate. When preparing for the assignment, think what feelings you may encounter (grief, pain of loss, sadness, fear, helplessness, etc.). It is important to keep distance and realise that the sufferings are not yours but somebody else's. Show empathy but not pity. You have to hear the person, not pity them. You will be able to hear them only if you separate your emotions from those of your interviewee. You should be prepared for the situations when you can get emotionally engaged, because we all have our own stories with traumas that may get reactivated while working with the sufferer. Therefore, the media management should be careful not to send to an emotional assignment connected with human losses the journalists who suffered a personal tragedy (loss of a relative or a friend, etc.) in the near past.

Remember: the better you understand your emotions, the better you can control your journalistic work.

4. Communicating with people who suffered from violence is always very difficult. Generally, journalists have a higher level of stress after interviewing such people than when they deal with “distressing” news in the newsroom.

The reality is complex and ambiguous. Working with traumatic stories, the journalist also works with the perception of that story by the survivor. Hence a risk of relying on one person’s “truth” (semi-truth), of missing the opportunity to analyse. It is dangerous to think in black-and-white and create stereotypes. Adopting the war psychology – i.e. dividing the world into black and white, foe and friend, just and unjust – the journalist risks to start taking sides.

5. Journalists tend to look for ideal victims: someone who suffers extremely badly, or who managed to overcome grief. However, people who suffer do not always perceive themselves as victims. Heroes very often do not consider themselves heroes. For instance, those who saved many of their friends in combat may feel guilty for failing to save more of their comrades in arms. Real human stories are not as simple as they may seem. A story of an ordinary person who survived shelling or any other threat to their life, or witnessed the killing of other people could be as interesting and worthy of attention as the story of a hero.
6. Appearance may be deceitful. One should never judge a book by its cover. Even people who look strong could lose their temper because of a wrong question or a slightest hint. Psychological trauma is about losing control of the situation. It is about helplessness. If you want to hear the person’s story, give them a choice, let them control the story. In fact, fear, powerlessness, frustration, aggression are normal reactions. And once we start thinking what has happened to us, start naming our emotions with words and telling somebody our story, it means we can control those emotions as we control the process of storytelling, we have managed to take an active stance on the traumatic event, which helps to overcome it psychologically.

3.2. Useful Tips from Bruce Shapiro, Executive Director, Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma, Project of Columbia Journalism School (who continues working as a journalist):

<http://nmpu.org.ua/2015/12/9032/>

1. Each case should be presented in a wider context than the story. It is worth tracing a trend; understand why exactly that story would be important for the community. It would differentiate a well-prepared, meaningful material from usual breaking news or sensations.
2. A violence victim, despite all things that happened to them, should look dignified in a journalist text. One should remember that the sufferers used to live a usual life – work, colleagues, friends – before the emergency or disaster. Their lives would continue after the traumatic event and after the publication of your material.
3. When you start describing the crime against the person, think twice how many details to include in your material. Consider if those details would be important to support the message you want to communicate. Too much detail of a homicide or atrocities could have excessively traumatising impact on certain members of your audience. You have to be extremely attentive when describing suicides, because a detailed story could be provocative and perceived by somebody as guidance.
4. Generally speaking, interview with traumatised people and further preparation of the material is a big challenge for journalists, therefore one should be very attentive to those people's feelings and careful in expressions.
5. People who have suffered from stress connected with the armed conflict in Ukraine grow in number. Each of them has their own tragedy, which eventually could become a global stress disorder for the whole society. Therefore, journalists should cover the war through the prism of human stories.
6. Always consider the consequences of the events you report. You may treat the occurring events as the first act of a drama. Usually, journalists do not go any further, recounting just this first act – a fire, accident, earthquake, war. But you have to understand that there will be a second act, and sometimes we have to bring that second act to the front page. If the journalist fails to think about traumas, the war would be the generals' story. But if you consider the associated traumas, the war then would be a story of numerous veterans and civilians, and their stories would continue long after the hostilities cease, that is, long after the first act is over.

3.3. Advice for Journalists Reporting Hot News

Do not show dead bodies and blood. Explain what has happened. If possible, do not even use the word “corpse”, replacing it with “the killed” or “bodies”. Concentrate on human stories. Show what is being done to save people, report about survivors and let people speak: tell their stories of how they got saved, what helped them to survive. Show what is being done to avoid similar things happening in future, it should not be repeated. First of all, talk about life, in which, naturally, there is room for sufferings and death. It is important to provide hope for people.

Cover sparingly the burial of the killed unless it is a public memorial service for the victims or for a prominent public figure. We could condole with the relatives upon their loss; but if we cannot help and the report bereaves the audience of hope, think if it is worth broadcasting at all.

Do not show the combatants’ faces, even if they say they are not afraid of being filmed. In your reports, never give the numbers or names of military units, especially do not reference them to specific locations.

Our experience proves that hope for future gives people strength to overcome stress with less pain. We can all contribute to that: public authorities and diplomats, journalists, photographers, TV cameramen or editors.

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3.4. Working with Children Affected by the Conflict

Ukraine, like almost all countries in the world, signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC). On 27 February 1991, the Parliament of Ukraine ratified the Convention and it took effect on 27 September 1991. In 2003 and 2005, two Optional Protocols to the UN CRC (“on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography” and “on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict” – were ratified by the Parliament of Ukraine and thus became integral parts of Ukraine’s national legislation.

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, every person under the age of 18 is considered a child. Under the UN CRC, children have special protection rights and special participation rights. It means they should be given special protection from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and at the same time they enjoy special participation rights enabling them to play an active role in their communities and societies. Children have the right to their own opinion including the right to voice these opinions in the media.

For any publication of materials identifying a child, you are required by law to get a permission from their parents or legal guardians. While it is sometimes difficult to obtain this permission, especially in writing, it is nevertheless always part of the journalist’s responsibility to do their best to inform the parents/guardians of the interviewed child about the purpose and the content of the interview.

In addition to this, the best interests of the child should always have the highest importance. If the interview and/or the publication of the pertinent materials (print, photo or film) have any potential of jeopardising the child’s



Interview with Alina, a Ukrainian IDP girl, for Hromadske Donbas in Sviatohirsk in November 2015 – @ Chris Schuepp / 2015

physical or psychological well-being, the journalistic ethics forbids holding the interview and/or publishing the material.

Children in conflict regions are especially vulnerable. They may be traumatised and psychologically unstable and the interviews, especially when the topic of the interview is the conflict and how they witnessed it, should be very well considered. Ask yourself if it is necessary to ask these questions of the children. Could an adult give you the same answers instead? If so, why expose the children to these questions? Sensational reporting, showing children as victims or vulnerable “objects”, should be prevented by all means.

When there are no formal or ethical barriers to speaking with the child, make sure that you meet the child on eye-level. Treating children as equals and listening carefully to what they have to say is the most effective way of understanding their opinions.

Save the Children has published a guidebook “Interviewing Children” that gives detailed instructions on how journalists should approach children.

The main guidelines can be summarized as follows:

- Put yourself in the children’s place and treat them with respect.
- Explain how you will use the material and what you are going to ask them.
- Be honest about your plans and don’t raise expectations (money, food, medical help, etc.).
- Find a suitable place for the interview; try to make the child feel as comfortable as possible. If necessary, interview a group of children rather than a single child to boost their confidence.
- Allow yourself and the children extra time; don’t rush through the interview. Don’t interrupt the children too often; let them tell their stories in their own words.
- Use easy language, but don’t try to sound childish or patronising.
- Ask open questions and avoid “yes/no” questions.
- When you realise that the children feel uncomfortable or you touch upon an issue that is too sensitive, stop the interview or divert their attention to less sensitive matters.
- Always finish the interview on good terms and thank the children for their time and their efforts. Assure them that you will incorporate their views in your reports.

FURTHER LINKS / REFERENCES

UN CRC in Ukrainian:

http://www.unicef.org/ukraine/ukr/convention_small_final.pdf

UN CRC in English:

[http://www.unicef.org/ukraine/ukr/crc\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/ukraine/ukr/crc(1).pdf)

UN CRC in Russian:

http://www.unicef.org/ukraine/ukr/ru_ru_childrights_190707.pdf

The media and child rights (UNICEF & MediaWise)

In English:

http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/The_Media_and_Children_Rights_2005.pdf

In Russian:

<http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/mediachildrightsrussian.pdf>

Interviewing children – Save the Children guidebook for journalists and others:

<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/interviewing-children-guide-journalists-and-others>

http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/content/files/deti_v_media_web_new.pdf

3.5. Facilitating Effective Communication: Rules and Guidelines

Facilitating effective communication during conflict and post-conflict and ensuring and protecting our credibility as reporters mean that it is imperative for journalists to understand what conflict is and what causes conflict. We as journalists need to be well grounded in conflict theory as it touches on almost every aspect of our work. Journalism is always about change and the impact that change has on individuals, groups, nations, the economy and the environment. These changes seldom happen without conflict as people seek to meet unfulfilled needs, enhance their influence, defend their identities, increase their access to resources, and reduce inequalities and injustice.

Conflict is a situation where two or more individuals or groups try to pursue goals or ambitions which they believe they cannot share. As Howard writes, “not all conflict is violent. Conflict is normal when there is change. Some people want change, but others disagree. If their disagreement or their conflict is managed peacefully, it can be a positive process. But when conflict is not managed properly, it becomes violent. In violent conflict, people fear for their safety and survival. When we say conflict, we are usually referring to violent conflict.”

There are many causes of conflict. They are varied, and often it is not simply one cause or one reason for a particular conflict; conflicts are often multi-faceted. Some causes include:

- Resources are scarce or not shared fairly, as in food, housing, jobs or land.

- There is little or no communication between the two (or more) groups in conflict.
- The groups have incorrect ideas and beliefs about each other.
- There exist unresolved grievances exist from the past.
- Power is unevenly distributed.

Reporting on conflict, one should carefully examine the perceived, possible and real causes of the conflict, for such examination and discussion will enable those affected and those in a position to bring about change to communicate effectively with their various opponents.

We as journalists tend to tell the story of conflict as a zero-sum game with only one winner. But such reporting is dangerous and often means we have only done a part of our job, for we cannot forget the context of the conflict (be it history, the environment, etc.) or the players and the actors involved.

We also must not forget that peace may not necessarily be the objective, because the term itself is fluid and suggests a process just as conflict is a process or a cycle. Whose peace are we talking about? What does it mean to each side? Finally, if peace ensues it is not necessarily good for the news cycle, so what can the media do to serve both the interests of facilitating peace and doing its job at the same time?

So what are the rules and guidelines to facilitate effective communication? We first need to identify who we are communicating with – is it our audience? Our sources? The military? Government? In some cases when we talk about facilitating effective communication we need to recall that we, the media, are mediators in a sense. For more discussion of this very particular role, see section 3.4.

- In general, we can facilitate effective communication by ensuring that we:
- Seek out other parties and other points of views, which should not simply repeat old grievances by the old elites.
 - Examine what the various parties to the conflict or affected by the conflict are seeking.
 - Examine the various possibilities for withdrawal, compromise or resolution (whatever that might look like) and write about these various possibilities.
 - Resist the temptation to report the conflict as a zero-sum game.
 - Are aware of the critical language we both receive and disseminate.
 - Remember that we as media have the power to set the tone, to legitimize or delegitimize and influence public opinion simply by the words we choose.

3.6. How to Avoid Being Manipulated

We as journalists covering conflict face many challenges, not least of all that of being manipulated either by our sources or by various parties to the conflict. First we need to understand how we might be manipulated. There are numerous techniques used by governments and those with agendas, which include:

- Paying journalists to promote certain issues without the journalist acknowledging this, or without the media mentioning the sources <http://original.antiwar.com/justin/2005/01/28/payola-pundits-for-war/>;
- Governments and individuals contracting public relations firms to sell the war or various issues associated with it <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2004/06/07/the-manipulator>
- Providing disinformation or partial information to journalists who then report this as news or fact without attributing sources that might be questionable;
- Fear mongering or intimidating journalists so that they will self-censor;
- Using smear tactics to discredit or destroy the reputation of someone, including journalists.

So how do we avoid such manipulation?

- Don't accept payment or in-kind favours from anyone. Not only will this make you prone to manipulation (even if you think you can resist) but, perhaps, more importantly it could create the perception of manipulation.
- Ask questions. Be sceptical and never take anything at face value. Ask the questions everyone else is afraid to ask or believes it unpatriotic to ask. That is our job. To ask questions!
- Understand what you are covering.
- Avoid self-censorship. Often when we are afraid of something we will self-censor.
- Maintain distance from politicians so that you can do your job effectively.

3.7. 7 Journalist as Mediator

In addition to reporting responsibly and telling the real people's stories, we need to be particularly conscious of the fact that our audience is filled with policy-makers. As such, we journalists often play an unconscious role of a mediator. What does that mean? It means we need to understand what diplomats and negotiators are trying to do and report it reliably. It means we need to recognise the fact that policy-makers watch our coverage and read our paper to see what "the other" side is saying and doing and they will respond or react accordingly. As such, we need to get it right! We need to verify information. Social media is fine for leads but we need to follow those leads to the end and confirm and double-source them. We must not report rumours as others may act on this information as fact. This will only exacerbate the conflict.

We must also understand that the media's role today extends beyond serving as the means of communication between the government and the governed. Boundaries have extended and, in fact, the media no longer operates from within clear boundaries, largely thanks to various technologies. As a result, "when nations are themselves parties to a conflict, the content of one nation's media systems sometimes becomes part of the content in the media system of the other nation... Communication directly between governments is still of primary importance, but public participation through mass media is becoming more and more an important factor in international conflict management."¹

During periods of armed conflict, as governments make decisions affecting war and peace and people's lives, the media plays a role in shaping these decisions. The media is often able to cut through bureaucracy and reach government leaders directly with information about the situation at hand and, in so doing, can affect official priorities and help mobilise public opinion. The media thus acts as a vital channel of communication and thereby often serves, unwittingly, as mediator.

Whether we like it or not, we as journalists need to understand that the government leaders rely on our reporting and the information we share. Reportage has become a factor in decision-making as extensive and instantaneous coverage is not part of the decision environment for a variety of interests and audiences. We no longer simply report but, in fact, we act as a conduit or even a participant.

Ultimately, the news media plays numerous roles in serving as an important channel of communication. The media helps to build confidence among antagonists; correct misconceptions; identify underlying interests, provide an emotional outlet and encourage a balance of power.

But to do this effectively we also need to understand the other side. We need to make a concerted effort to give a comprehensive picture of those involved in the conflict and to accurately represent them and their opinions, even if that entails stepping out of our comfort zone.

Finally, in this age of ever changing technology environment, which includes drones, the Internet and social media, we as media practitioners need to understand and adapt to our changing role, given these changing technologies. While the traditional role of reporting may not change, there will be ample opportunity for new techniques to be used and how we choose to do this is perhaps more important than ever as people are inundated with more information than ever before and so need the media to mediate, to tell them what is important and what is not.

1 A. Arno & W. Dissanayake, eds., *The News Media in National and International Conflict*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1984. P.11.

3.8. Media Manipulations (how journalists are manipulated and how journalists manipulate)

"A classic journalistic conflict ... is the clash between a reporter's duty to learn what he can about a story and tell it, and the danger of being used as a propaganda tool."

There is also the issue of media manipulation, which takes several forms: journalists may be manipulated by sources such as the government and the military while the media themselves may also choose to manipulate what and how they report due to a sense of patriotic duty or self-censorship. But it is also important to remember that manipulation may also come in the form of human rights violations, which are common in conflict or post-conflict countries. Journalists therefore need to know about their rights and means of protection, and the safety of journalists must also be addressed by international organizations. On the other hand, journalists often support hatred propaganda and war journalism, which ignores ethical and independent reporting. They are part of corruption in the media and do not stick to an ethical code of conduct for journalists.

Conflict coverage often reduces the number of parties to two, so anyone who is not friend is automatically the enemy. Such coverage requires clear winners and losers and ignores or conceals peace initiatives from the other side or third parties, particularly any option for a non-violent outcome, which does not give total victory to its own side. Ethical reporting of conflicts does not only question the possibility of "objectivity" of journalism, but underlines the positive role journalists can play in order to prevent violent conflicts and to promote peaceful settlements and reconciliation.

During conflict, journalists face the possibility of manipulation on a number of fronts. On the one hand, the military tends to have a policy of withholding information in hopes of not only maintaining secrecy about their operations but to garner a certain amount of support for their military operations, which can also lead to a sense of patriotism on the part of the journalist reporting. It is important to note that the military maintains the belief that without support at home military actions are surely doomed.

It is often said that the first casualty of war is truth. Accurate, impartial media reports conveyed from conflict zones serve a fundamental public interest: in the information era, images and news can have a decisive impact on the outcome of armed conflicts. As a consequence, the obstruction of journalistic tasks in times of armed conflict is alarmingly frequent. The spectrum of interference is wide: it ranges from access denial, censorship, disinformation and harassment to arbitrary detention and direct attacks against media professionals.

On the other hand, there is the media. Not unlike the military, the media too has its own interests to promote. Most journalists strive to seek out the truth

and satisfy what they feel is the public's right to know. But the media is also driven by commercial pressures to increase circulation and audience figures and to beat the competitor to the story. Indeed, much of what happens in the news industry is based on a narrative of conflict.

The nature of the media today means that we are preoccupied with images, soundbites and brief 140-character narratives. Government leaders consequently have come to rely on pictures and emotions rather than argument, and thoughts are expressed in soundbites while rational discourse is avoided. Information is moved but rarely explained or analyzed. There is an abundance, perhaps an over-abundance, of messages making it that much more challenging for policy-makers to make their way through the fray.

As such, it is incumbent on journalists to ensure they are not subject to manipulation but also must ensure they present clear, factual information to their communities. Although the media's job is to cover conflict, the circumstances of the conflict are making it hard for the media to do its job. Crossing through checkpoints can take hours longer than necessary, entire regions are blocked off at times, and governments are not transparent with information. Ultimately, such limiting (and manipulative) conditions should be challenged.

3.9. Journalistic Taboos or What Journalists Should Never Do in a Post-conflict Environment

Covering conflict and post-conflict environments are fraught with danger both physical as well as that tied to implications of your reporting. As such, there are a number of tips that every reporter should bear in mind, what we'll call here "journalistic taboos". Perhaps the most important point here is that no story, absolutely none, is worth losing your life.

In his manual on conflict sensitive journalism, Ross Howard provides a number of such journalistic taboos when it comes to covering conflict. They include:

- Avoid reporting a conflict as consisting of two opposing sides. Find other affected interests and include their stories, opinions, goals.
- Avoid defining the conflict by always quoting the leaders who make familiar demands. Go beyond the elites and give to ordinary people who also have a stake in this conflict.
- Avoid only reporting what divides the sides in conflict. Ask the opposing sides questions that may reveal common ground. Report on interests or goals they may share.
- Avoid always focusing on the suffering and fear of only one side. Treat all sides' suffering as equally newsworthy.
- Avoid words like devastated, tragedy and terrorised to describe what has been done to one group. These kinds of words put the reporter on one

- side. Only quote someone else who uses these words.
- Avoid emotional and imprecise words. Assassination, for example, is the murder of a head of state and no one else. Massacre is the deliberate killing of innocent, unarmed civilians.
 - Avoid words like terrorist, extremist or fanatic.
 - Avoid making an opinion into a fact. If someone claims something, state their name, so it is their opinion and not your fact.
 - Avoid waiting for leaders on one side to offer solutions. Explore peace ideas wherever they come from. Put these ideas to the leaders and report their response.

But there are others as well:

- Avoid the tendency to favour official (government and military) sources.
- Avoid finding the point of coverage that fits only one side's narrative. Cover the conflict in its entirety and all its complexity.
- Avoid inserting opinion into news coverage. News should present information that then allows the public to decide how it feels. Inserting opinion only serves to fuel distrust, misunderstanding, and resentment toward the media and between those involved in the conflict.
- Avoid oversimplification. Every conflict, even those between siblings, usually has some kind of history. Ensure that you and/or your media outlet provide a variety of coverage that can illustrate the bigger picture.
- Avoid resorting to mostly human interest stories that rely on emotion to illustrate weighty issues, or using a zero-sum debt approach that ignores the complexities of the situation.

<https://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/ims-csj-handbook-2004.pdf>

SECTION 4

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN DISTRIBUTING VITAL HUMANITARIAN INFORMATION

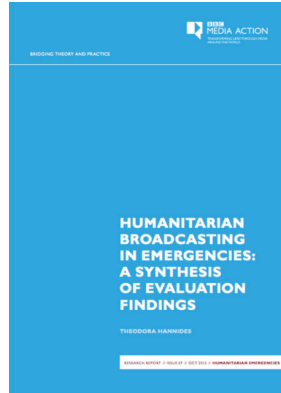
*Authors:
Chris Schuepp,
Michelle Betz*

4.1. Definition and Classification of Humanitarian Information

For decades, humanitarian organisations around the world have almost completely neglected communications in their response to humanitarian disasters. Their focus was always on search and rescue as well as on short-term emergency aid, recovery and resilience-building mechanisms. Only recently has the international humanitarian community understood how vital communication is in the response to natural and manmade disasters.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/publications-and-resources/research/reports/Humanitarian-broadcasting-in-emergencies-synthesis-report-2015>

In October 2015, the BBC Media Action published a research report *Humanitarian Broadcasting in Emergencies: A Synthesis of Evaluation Findings*. The 65-page strong report acknowledges that “*recognition of the need for critical information and communication in crisis came out of costly learning about what happens in its absence. A lack of information, as well as poor or non-existent communication with beneficiaries and between aid agencies, has resulted in poor or inappropriate delivery of aid that has harmed local people and systems.*”²



There are, according to the above-mentioned research report, different labels that exist today for communication in crisis such as “beneficiary communication”, “communicating with communities” and “community engagement”. In an attempt to find more accurate and more elaborate explanations, the report draws upon the definitions of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The IFRC makes a distinction between beneficiary information and beneficiary communication:

“Beneficiary information (one-way) can also deliver content using a range of channels. This information contains messages that suggest protective behavioural change, or safety warnings. (...) Beneficiary information does not generally engage beneficiaries in a process of consultation.” Since the definition of communication always includes a two-way traffic of information, the IFRC describes beneficiary communication as “*communication (two-way) delivered through a number of different channels, which should prioritise feedback from the beneficiary. Most importantly, beneficiaries participate in the process of improving their situation. Beneficiary communication or two-way communication engages communities in dialogue, by managing the information both sent to and received from beneficiaries and integrating beneficiary feedback into the decision-making process of programmes.*”³

IFRC, Beneficiary Communication and Accountability A responsibility, not a choice, Geneva, 2011, - http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/94411/IFRC%20BCA%20Lesson%20Learned%20doc_final.pdf

In simple words: any humanitarian organisation active in an emergency

- 2 Hannides, Theodora, BBC Media Action, October 2015, *Humanitarian Broadcasting in Emergencies: A Synthesis of Evaluation Findings*. Page 9
- 3 IFRC, Beneficiary Communication and Accountability: A responsibility, not a choice, Geneva, 2011, page 8, http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/94411/IFRC%20BCA%20Lesson%20Learned%20doc_final.pdf (10 December 2015)

should have mechanisms in place that allow them to communicate with their beneficiaries in both ways. They should incorporate the beneficiaries' feedback, concerns and suggestions into their work and should shape their humanitarian response accordingly. Informing beneficiaries about your humanitarian work is one thing, but communicating with them successfully is another thing.

The aim of beneficiary communication therefore is, according to IFRC, *"to save and improve lives through the provision of timely, relevant and accurate information and support an environment of transparency and accountability through the creation of feedback mechanisms."*

Responsible for all these forms of communication that take place between the humanitarian organisations and the beneficiaries are, in the first place, the humanitarian organisations. However, they could and should be supported by local and regional media, given the humanitarian organisations have established direct contacts with them.

As a result of this conclusion, it is vital for all humanitarian organisations to first analyse the communication structures in a country. When talking about Ukraine, the aid organisations active here have to identify the region they work in, the demographics of the people they want to target with their help and then find out exactly how they can be reached. In many villages in the buffer zones of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, for example, there are many elderly people who do not have access and/or the skills to gather their information from the Internet. In this case, using social media and websites to inform or communicate with beneficiaries is likely to be of limited success only.

As Jacobo Quintanilla from the ICRC puts it in his blog for the Humanitarian Practice Network: *"Understanding local information ecosystems includes understanding what people want to know about, what communication channels they currently use and trust, how they use them and how information flows. It also requires understanding how the local media and telecommunications infrastructure are coping. How are women or the elderly accessing information? How much access to technology do they have?"*

Quintanilla, Jacobo, Ten lessons on communicating with communities in complex emergencies, 23 October 2015, Humanitarian Practice Network - <http://odihpn.org/blog/ten-lessons-on-communicating-with-communities-in-complex-emergencies/>

4.2. The Role of the Media in Distributing of Important Humanitarian Information

A comprehensive and thorough analysis of the information ecosystem requires local experts on the ground who speak the language of the beneficiaries and understand how they communicate. Only with these simple preconditions met, a humanitarian organisation will have the necessary depth of understanding how to reach out to the people. At this stage, the media can be of critical support to the humanitarian organisations.

People in Ukraine receive their information through different channels. There are several (central) national TV stations, there are national, regional and sometimes even local radio stations and there are many print publications (daily national and mostly weekly local and regional newspapers) as well as hundreds of local, regional and national news websites.

In addition to this, word-of-mouth should not be neglected in this context, since it is a form of communication that has become very important in the country, especially in the last two years through the emergency in eastern Ukraine and the interruption of vital communication lines due to the conflict. Newspapers have suffered tremendously because they have been physically and economically disconnected from their old printing presses and have to pay higher prices for lower quality now, on top of increased transportation fees. In villages without stable supply of electricity and telecommunications, information through websites and social media as well as television and radio is virtually impossible. All these factors have to be considered when designing a communication strategy for humanitarian organisations.

The media can and should support the humanitarian sector wherever they can. Providing accurate and timely information is at the core of what journalists should do. In an emergency, this coincides with one of the guidelines put out by the IFRC for communicating with communities: *“Communication with beneficiaries is more effective when the information is relevant, accessible, clear and timely.”*⁴ Basically, this means that the media and the humanitarian actors share a common desire to inform the people in an accurate and timely manner. Therefore it seems only logical that the media and the humanitarian sector work together and help each other in delivering these vital messages.

The media have different options for their involvement in humanitarian reporting. They can simply inform their audience about what the humanitarian sector does, who the actors are and why and how they deliver the aid to their beneficiaries. As an example, local newspapers could simply use the press releases they receive from the different humanitarian organisations active in their local communities to create informative content. This would multiply

4 IFRC, Beneficiary Communication and Accountability: A responsibility, not a choice, Geneva, 2011, page 18, http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/94411/IFRC%20BCA%20Lesson%20Learned%20doc_final.pdf (10 December 2015)

the outreach and would inform a potentially large audience. Press releases are therefore an important tool for the aid organisations to reach out to the people. The media in this case function as the vehicle to transport the information.

Journalists could also report about upcoming events and therefore directly support the humanitarian organisations in their “beneficiary information” (see *Definition and Classification of Humanitarian Information*).

And thirdly, the media could provide necessary feedback for the humanitarian organisations by communicating with the beneficiaries through interviews and investigative journalism. Wherever humanitarian support is delivered in Ukraine, a local journalist should be present to observe the process, speak to the people and to the humanitarian aid providers and should report on this through the local media. This will inform the general public and also the humanitarian organisations on how their aid was delivered, who was served by it and whether or not there are issues that need to be solved or mechanisms that need to be improved.

When these different communication lines are linked, they actually lead to a communication cycle initiated by the humanitarian sector and facilitated and enhanced by the media with the beneficiaries (i.e. the population) at the centre of attention.



Source: *Internews*

It is also necessary to take a look at the different responsibilities and approaches of international versus local journalists. Internews explain in their publication “Reporting on International Crises: A Manual for Trainers & Journalists and an Introduction for Humanitarian Workers” it as follows: “The roles of local media and international media in an emergency response, while they overlap in some areas, are for the most part radically different.

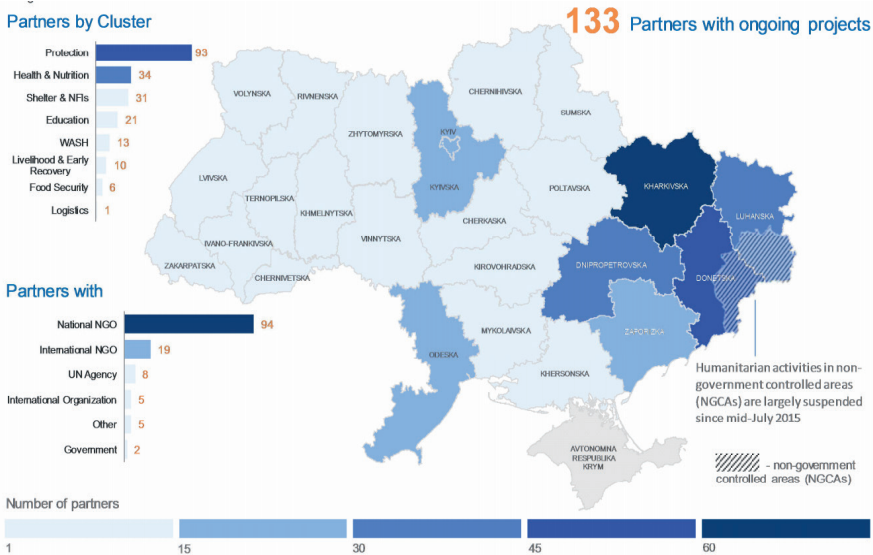
International media serve international awareness, telling audiences across the world what has happened and what the impact has been on the local population. Pictures and testimonies from the ground thus help aid organisations to raise the profile of the crisis and to garner funding for the response effort. There are many studies and commentaries on how well, or how poorly, international media fulfil this role.

Local media, in contrast, must meet the immediate, detailed information needs of local audiences – the very people who have been affected by the emergency, including neighbouring communities close enough to deliver immediate help. Where local media perform this role effectively, they can save lives and help local recovery take place much faster.”

https://www.internews.org/sites/default/files/resources/IN140220_HumanitarianReportingMANUAL_WEB.pdf

4.3. How to Find and Distribute Humanitarian Information

Information about humanitarian organisations and their interventions in Ukraine is readily available online and through direct communication with the many active organisations. Most international and national NGOs have their own websites and a simple *Google* search will lead journalists in the right direction in most cases.



Ukraine: 3W Overview by Partners as of 16 November 2015

However, journalists should always make sure they double-check the information found online directly with the respective organisations so there is a guarantee that the information they pass on to their audience is accurate and up-to-date.

In Ukraine and in several other countries with humanitarian emergencies, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) leads the coordination of the humanitarian response. Most of the content in their [information portal](#) is open to public and can therefore be accessed by journalists who wish to use the materials posted on the website in their journalistic work.

There are hundreds of documents, maps, infographics and datasets that can be used and the only precondition is that the source has to be credited. The materials are frequently updated and give a very comprehensive overview of what is being done by the UN and its partners in Ukraine.

Additionally, the NGO Forum, a network of national and international non-governmental organisation active in Ukraine, can be contacted to establish contacts with the member organisations.

It should be noted in this context that the relationship between journalists and humanitarian actors can vary a lot “from close collaboration on shared mandates (in rare cases), to mutual ignorance or misunderstanding of each other’s work (which is more common), to outright hostility and suspicion, particularly in locations where disasters take place within a political conflict”.

https://www.internews.org/sites/default/files/resources/IN140220_HumanitarianReportingMANUAL_WEB.pdf

Social media have become extremely important in Ukraine in recent months. Dedicated groups on Facebook, vKontakte and Odnoklassniki have in some places gathered numbers of people much higher than the number of users of the local websites. Just to give an example of the numbers: the vKontakte group Typical Kharkov - https://vk.com/only_kharkov has more than 176,000 followers as of December 2015 while the number of daily visits on the leading local news website <http://www.057.ua/> is around 30,000.

Social media therefore are a great place for journalists to do story-mining. When people have local knowledge about humanitarian needs and/or humanitarian services, they usually share this knowledge online. Social media are an essential part of social networks these days and are the virtual extension of the more traditional word-of-mouth communication between people. To inform the population but also to communicate with them and to get information from them, journalists need to be active in the social media sphere.

For those journalists who want to dig deeper and find more information,

5 Ukraine: 3W Overview by Partners as of 16 November 2015. Humanitarian Response. <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/infographic/ukraine-3w-overview-partners-16-november-2015> (10 December 2015)

especially in social media, *Global Voices* offers an *Open-Source Research Guidebook* that is full of good advice for journalists on how to fact-check and story-mine in the Russian-language Internet sphere.

<https://globalvoices.org/specialcoverage/how-to-conduct-open-sourceresearch-on-the-russian-internet/>

4.4. Things to Consider during the Dissemination of Humanitarian Information

In the current political situation in Ukraine, any information has to be handled with care. There is a lot of false information and straight-out propaganda spread by different actors, especially on the Internet. Since journalists are responsible for their publications, fact-checking is even more important in emergencies and conflicts than in times of calm and peace.

Information coming from humanitarian organisations is generally trustworthy since most humanitarians work under the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief* <https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-1067.pdf>

and follow the four basic humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM-humanitarianprinciples_eng_June12.pdf

The Code of Conduct of the IFRC also has a separate section on information that puts emphasis on the human dimension of communication. *“In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects. Respect for the disaster victim as an equal partner in action should never be lost. In our public information we shall portray an objective image of the disaster situation where the capacities and aspirations of disaster victims are highlighted, and not just their vulnerabilities and fears. While we will cooperate with the media in order to enhance public response, we will not allow external or internal demands for publicity to take precedence over the principle of maximising overall relief assistance. We will avoid competing with other disaster response agencies for media coverage in situations where such coverage may be to the detriment of the service provided to the beneficiaries or to the security of our staff or the beneficiaries.”* <https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-1067.pdf>

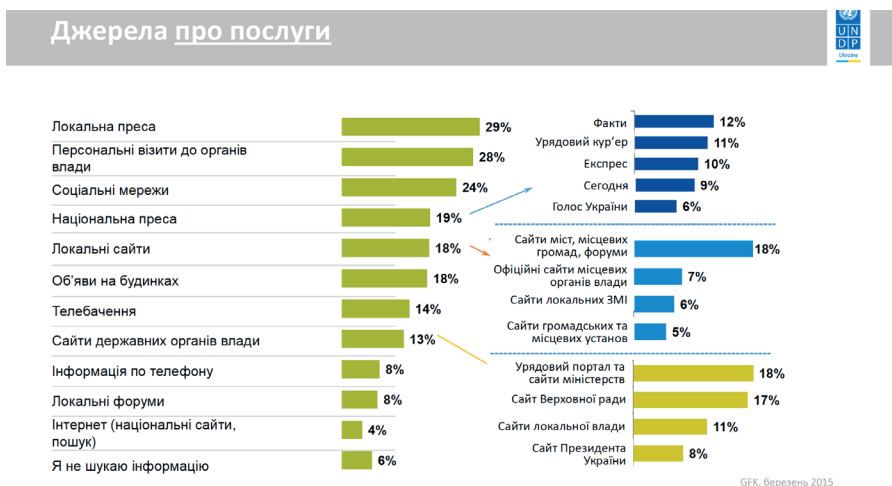
While the signatories of this Code of Conduct are mainly humanitarian organisations and not the media / journalists, most of the points should also be obeyed by journalists and are reflected in the Code of Ethics of Ukrainian journalists. http://ethicnet.uta.fi/ukraine/code_of_ethics_of_ukrainian_journalists

There are several humanitarian organisations that choose not to work with journalists in order not to put their mission in jeopardy. The main focus of humanitarian organisations is always on their beneficiaries and anything that puts them under threat or at danger needs to be prevented. Therefore, journalists should accept a humanitarian organisation's choice not to communicate through the media and act accordingly.

However, the vast majority of NGOs, volunteer organisations and UN agencies welcomes media interest in their work and will be happy to coordinate their efforts with journalists. When communicating with humanitarian organisations, journalists should always try to build trust and understanding between both parties so future communication is easier and mutually beneficial.

Not only journalists are trying to find the right approach to the developing situation of the country. As of mid-2015, UNDP and the government of Ukraine have been jointly working on the design of a national communication strategy to address the situation of the IDPs in Ukraine. In a recent analysis of media and communication, UNDP found that word-of-mouth and social media are the most important ways of communication in Ukraine today.

Further into the details of this UNDP presentation, local newspapers, face-to-face communication with service providers and "social networks" are identified as important means of getting vital information about local services and humanitarian support to the population.



Source: UNDP in Ukraine

However, communication in this case again means two-way communication and answering people's questions in the social media is of critical importance. Whenever people ask a question, they demand and deserve an answer. Any unanswered question will result in frustration and distrust, which are counter-productive, especially in times of emergencies. This is true for both humanitarian organisations and the media.

A very important responsibility of journalists that is frequently neglected is to quote the source of information. In the given circumstances in Ukraine this is even more important since many pieces of information get forwarded by word-of-mouth and can hardly be verified. When journalists use information received from humanitarian organisations, they should quote their sources and thus make sure that the audience has a chance to see where the information comes from. This includes also the date/time when the information was obtained, e.g. *"Source: Press release from ICRC, sent to Vesti via email on 5 December 2015"*. In this case, the beneficiaries not only know who initiated the communication but also when. This special focus on accuracy and timeliness of the information builds trust and gives the potential beneficiaries of the humanitarian aid security in times of uncertainty.

Internews outline the main reporting skills and principles in a set of handout materials that go with their *"Manual for Trainers & Journalists and an Introduction for Humanitarian Workers"*. These skills and principles are basically the same as in regular journalism and urge the media to cover the 5 Ws. *"For example, a story aimed at affected communities immediately after a crisis should be able to respond to these questions on the story topic, whether that topic is health care, food aid, shelter, and so on:*

- *What do people need to ensure safety for themselves and their families?*
- *Who is delivering that assistance (i.e. government / humanitarian agencies / others)?*
- *Why is this assistance being delivered in a particular way? (For example, food may be distributed by vouchers, cash may be given for work, women may have separate health services; the reasons are important to understand.)*
- *Where can people seek that assistance?*
- *When can they go and get it?"*

An additional question should be asked (and answered):

- *"How can they get it (e.g., do they need to register, and how do they do that)?"*

Internews. Reporting on International Crises: A Manual for Trainers & Journalists and an Introduction for Humanitarian Workers, Manual handouts (written by Jacobo Quintanilla, Jesse Hardman, Matt Abud, Alison Campbell and Deborah Ensor). 2014. – https://www.internews.org/sites/default/files/resources/IN140220_HumanitarianReportingHANDOUTS_WEB.pdf

The Internews handout for journalists also stresses that *“in a humanitarian crisis, when the situation is urgent and many people are suffering, ethical treatment of stories becomes especially sensitive.”*

This said, it must also be stated that there are massive challenges journalists in emergencies have to deal with. In the Ukrainian context that has, in the first place, been the physical danger of being killed during combat situations. Since the focus of the reporting in the country has continuously changed from the mere war reporting to crisis reporting and humanitarian reporting, this difficulty has moved to the background, but for those who still report from the conflict line, it remains unchanged. Taking sides in a conflict situation should be avoided by journalists by any means, but when, for example, on assignment as embedded journalist with the Ukrainian forces, there are limitations to the coverage that come naturally with the circumstances. Another challenge is that the situation in a conflict environment can change quickly. Access problems are preventing journalists from entering the non-government controlled areas in the east of Ukraine, permits have to be obtained for certain regions and the procedure for this also changes periodically. Word-of-mouth due to incorrect or incomplete information can lead to the spreading of rumours, which in turn can create panic and fear among an already traumatised population.

Journalists also need to take conflict-sensitive reporting guidelines to heart in order to minimise the conflict potential that their articles or reports might hold. The responsibility of the media and every single journalist cannot be mentioned often enough and their role in the distribution of humanitarian information should certainly not be underestimated.

In a handbook for journalists on conflict-sensitive reporting, *IMPACS* and *International Media Support* call this the *“unconscious role of the journalists”*. They can channel communication, they have the power to educate, they can build confidence by debunking lies and rumours and they can correct misperceptions and get rid of stereotypes. And further: *“The media can provide important outlets by allowing both sides to speak. Many disputes can be fought out in the media, instead of in the streets, and the conflict can be addressed before it turns violent.”*

Good journalistic work should suggest alternative solutions and contribute to the improvement of the situation. In Ukraine, this also includes conflict-sensitive reporting about IDPs and host communities to break down barriers and improve the integration of the many people who have lost their homes.

Main takeaways for journalists for successful information gathering and distribution of humanitarian issues:

- Establish direct links with humanitarian organisations (communication officers or other staff responsible for PR/communications).
- Keep contacts updated, i.e. schedule frequent “housekeeping” exercises to maintain your list of contacts.
- Frequently re-visit news sources and websites of humanitarian

organisations relevant to your region.

- Subscribe to newsletters and email-list on websites relevant to your work.
- Keep professional accounts in social networks (Facebook, vKontakte, Odnoklassniki, twitter) and use them actively (two-way communication).
- Always try to verify your information. Trace information back to its source before forwarding it any further.
- Quote your sources and make it possible for the public to trace the information back to its source.
- Add more details on the background of the information: who sent it to whom and when?
- Imagine yourself in the position of your audience: what kind of information would you like to receive if you were them?
- Do no harm. Stay neutral, stay objective, do not take sides.
- Search for alternative solutions and success stories. Communicate good news whenever you can.

Fictional article.

IDPs from Avdeevka left out in the cold

Красноармійськ, 27 листопада 2015 р. – 120 ВПО з Авдіївки сьогодні Krasnoarmiisk, 27 November 2015 - 120 IDPs from Avdeevka arrived in Krasnoarmiisk today to receive cash funds from the international NGO Helping for all. At the cinema “Mir” they had to stand in line for several hours at freezing temperatures and complained about the process of the humanitarian aid distribution.

Mariya Kravchuk, 67, from Avdeevka: “We had to take the elektrichka in the morning from Avdeevka. We read about the *Help for all* event here today on the Internet. We think we will be given cash funds, but we don't know yet. We cannot get inside, the door is too small, there is no order here. And they close at 2 pm. We don't even know if we can get in before that. Why don't they keep it open longer so we all can get in?”

Oleg Petrov, 57, also from Avdeevka, added: “When we get money, we can go straight to the pharmacy and buy medicine because we are all getting sick. It's freezing cold, but at least it doesn't rain. And by the way, why do we have to go here in the first place. Can they not come to Avdeevka?”

According to the IDPs waiting outside the cinema, the information about the event was spread a few days ago on Моя Авдеєвка в огні (<https://ok.ru/moyaavdeev>), one of the main portal sites for Avdeevka on Odnoklassniki. The administrator of the site, when asked by our newspaper, confirmed that all the information they post is taken from official news sites or the official city council portal website <http://avdeevka.dn.ua>.

We approached the *Help for all* office in Kyiv with the comments made by the IDPs from Avdeevka and received the following answer: “*Help for all* tries to make the aid distribution to IDPs in Ukraine as convenient for the people as possible. Unfortunately, the security situation at the moment does not allow us to do the distribution in Avdeevka, so we cooperated with a local NGO in Krasnoarmiisk. We were overwhelmed by the amount of people coming to the aid distribution and were only given the entrance hall of the cinema “Mir” for a few hours. We will work with the local NGO and the city council to make sure that in the future, our aid distribution will take the complaints of the population into account. We sincerely regret the inconvenience and hope that all those IDPs who came out to Krasnoarmiisk were able to receive the funds they had lined up for.”

The communication officer for *Help for all* also mentioned that she will send a short letter to the city council in Avdeevka so they can inform the public about the changes that will be made in the future.

The next aid distribution for IDPs from Avdeevka will take place in Krasnoarmiisk again next week. More information on eligibility and all details on time and venue will, according to Help for all, be posted on <http://avdeevka.dn.ua> in the next couple of days.

Egor Kravets, freelance journalists, Novosti Krasnoarmiiska

Note: This is a fictional article. Some of the background and the websites mentioned are real, but the names and the letter from the NGO are all fictional.

Explanation:

- Firstly the article gives answers the to 5Ws and the H (how?):
- What happened?
- Who was there?
- Why did it happen?
- When did it happen?
- Where did it happen?

Moreover, it gives a voice to the people. The journalist went to the scene of the action and got a first-hand impression of what was happening and how things were handles. He asked people questions and then he went to find the answers for them. He did research on how the communication lines from the NGOs to the IDPs were established and what went wrong. The main NGO involved was given a chance to reply and their answer was given space in the article.

In short: the journalist facilitated the two-way communication between the people and the NGOs and also mentioned the responsibility of the city council to find a better venue for the next round of aid distribution. He reported, he looked for answers, he contacted the right people, received answers and forwarded them through the article, giving all parties involved the opportunity to reflect upon what happened and to make adjustments and improvement for the future.

SECTION 5

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

International armed conflict means an armed attack and warfare of one state on the territory of another. According to the Additional Protocol of 8 June 1977 to Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, national liberation wars and wars for self-determination are also considered international armed conflicts. For an international armed conflict to be recognised as such, it is not necessary for its parties to declare a state of war. Nor is it necessary for all parties to the conflict to admit there is a state of war. The duration of conflict and the number of victims do not matter. All parties to the international armed conflict shall adhere to the norms of international humanitarian law, in particular the internationally recognised rules and customs of war.

State of war means a nature of relations between states, which are parties to the armed conflict, obliging them to adhere to the norms of international humanitarian law, in particular internationally recognised rules and customs of war. The state of war is determined by factual circumstances as, in legal terms, it might not be declared. For example, the start of Russia's aggressive war against Ukraine on 20 February 2014 resulted in the state of war between the two states, even though the war had not been declared and neither party imposed martial law in its territory. Generally, a state would have special national legislation in place to determine specifics of exercising state power and local governance under conditions of announced martial law. In Ukraine, it is the Law of Ukraine "On Martial Law".

Self-defence means an unalienable right of each state to put up armed resistance against its aggressor. The right to self-defence is stipulated in Article 51 of the UN Charter. Self-defence can be individual (the state resists the attack

independently) or collective (other states help to meet the aggression based on special international agreements or upon request of the state targeted by aggression). The state shall inform the UN Security Council about the armed attack on its territory; according to the UN Charter, the Council is authorised to apply sanctions against the aggressor. The right to self-defence does not belong to the aggressor when its victim uses force against it.

Aggression means illegal direct or indirect use of armed forces by one state against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another state. According to the international law, the act of aggression is an international crime and must result in international law liability both for the aggressor state and the politicians who started the aggressive war. The territory and property of the state and citizens suffering as the result of aggression are under protection of the international law. All acquisitions of the aggressor state as the result of aggressive war are considered unlawful according to the international law.

The ban on aggressive warfare is included in a range of international agreements, first and foremost, in the UN Charter: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations." (para. 4 of Article 2, UN Charter). The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines aggression as "one of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole." The crime of aggression will fall under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court starting from 2017 after the final approval by the states, which are parties to the Statute.

The most respected internationally recognised definition of aggression is contained in Resolution #3314 of the UN General Assembly of 14 December 1974; it includes but is not limited to the following:

(a) The invasion or attack by the armed forces of a State of the territory of another State, or any military occupation, however temporary, resulting from such invasion or attack, or any annexation by the use of force of the territory of another State or part thereof,

(b) Bombardment by the armed forces of a State against the territory of another State or the use of any weapons by a State against the territory of another State;

(c) The blockade of the ports or coasts of a State by the armed forces of another State;

(d) An attack by the armed forces of a State on the land, sea or air forces, or marine and air fleets of another State;

(e) The use of armed forces of one State which are within the territory of another State with the agreement of the receiving State, in contravention of the

conditions provided for in the agreement or any extension of their presence in such territory beyond the termination of the agreement;

(f) The action of a State in allowing its territory, which it has placed at the disposal of another State, to be used by that other State for perpetrating an act of aggression against a third State;

(g) The sending by or on behalf of a State of armed bands, groups, irregulars or mercenaries, which carry out acts of armed force against another State of such gravity as to amount to the acts listed above, or its substantial involvement therein.

Non-international armed conflict means all armed conflicts happening on the territory of any state “between its armed forces and dissident armed forces or other organized armed groups which, under responsible command, exercise such control over a part of its territory as to enable them to carry out sustained and concerted military operations and to implement this Protocol.” (Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II)).

Actions causing the situation of internal tension, internal riots, certain sporadic outbreaks of badly organized groups are not armed conflicts (non-international). The stay of “insurgents” on the occupied territory if they are maintained by the aggressor state in the conditions of continuing international armed conflict questions the nature of such armed conflict as non-international. Non-international armed conflicts are, for example, civil wars. In the conditions of non-international armed conflict, the civil population remains under the same international law protection from the consequences of the conflict as in the conditions of international conflict.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is a non-governmental humanitarian organisation registered in Geneva, Switzerland. According to the ICRC Statutes, the goal of the organisation is to maintain and disseminate the fundamental principles of the Red Cross movement (humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality), to undertake the tasks incumbent upon it under the Geneva Conventions, to work for the faithful application of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts, to ensure the operation of the Central Tracing Agency, to work for the understanding and dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts among concerned ministries and agencies. ICRC is the founder of the Red Cross Movement, the main objective of which is to ensure the execution of the 1949 Geneva Conventions provisions on protection of victims of international conflict and Protocols Additional thereto by parties at war.

The mandate of the International Committee of the Red Cross during armed conflicts is stipulated in the international humanitarian law. ICRC provides protection and assistance to the victims both among the military and among the civil population, in particular it has the right to initiate and facilitate activi-

ties of the Central Tracing Agency, to visit all places where prisoners of war and persons under protection are staying, to transport and to distribute packages and other humanitarian aid, to help the creation of sanitary and safe zones and locations, to protect the victims of non-international armed conflicts, to offer goodwill services, and to perform the functions of the Protecting Power.

The Hague Conventions on international humanitarian law are international agreements on laws and customs of war adopted at the 1st (1899) and 2nd (1907) peace conferences in The Hague. In total, 16 conventions and 4 declarations were approved; they serve as the foundation of international humanitarian law for regulating warfare.

The following international conventions were approved: Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes; Convention with respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land; Convention for the Adaptation to Maritime Warfare of the Principles of the Geneva Convention of 22 August 1864; Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes; Convention respecting the Limitation of the Employment of Force for Recovery of Contract Debts; Convention relative to the Opening of Hostilities; Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land; Convention relative to the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in case of War on Land; Convention relative to the Legal Position of Enemy Merchant Ships at the Start of Hostilities; Convention relative to the Conversion of Merchant Ships into War-ships; Convention relative to the Laying of Automatic Submarine Contact Mines; Convention concerning Bombardment by Naval Forces in Time of War; Convention for the Adaptation to Maritime Warfare of the Principles of the Geneva Convention (of 6 July 1906); Convention relative to Certain Restrictions with regard to the Exercise of the Right of Capture in Naval War; Convention relative to the Establishment of an International Prize Court; and Convention concerning the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers in Naval War.

At the peace conference in The Hague, the following declarations were adopted, which are still valid today: Declaration concerning the Prohibition of the Use of Projectiles with the Sole Object to Spread Asphyxiating Poisonous Gases; Declaration concerning the Prohibition of the Use of Bullets which can Easily Expand or Change their Form inside the Human Body such as Bullets with a Hard Covering which does not Completely Cover the Core, or containing Indentations.

Geneva Conventions on international humanitarian law are international agreements on protection of victims of armed conflicts adopted at the Diplomatic Conference in Geneva on 12 August 1949. In total, 4 conventions were adopted, which are an integral part of international humanitarian law: Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field; Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea; Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War; and Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. In 1977, at the Diplomatic Conference in New York two

Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions were adopted: Protocol I relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts and Protocol II relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts.

Combatants are persons who are part of the armed forces of international armed conflicts and directly engaged in warfare. According to the 1949 Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War and to the Additional Protocol of 8 June 1977 to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 Relative to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, combatants include: members of the armed forces of a party to the conflict as well as members of militias or volunteer corps forming part of such armed forces; members of other militias and members of other volunteer corps, including those of organized resistance movements; crew members of commercial ships and civil aviation helping parties to the conflict; civilians taking up arms seeing the approaching enemy, if they bear arms openly and abide by laws and customs of war.

In conditions of armed conflict, only combatants have the right to directly participate in warfare (part 2, Article 43 of Additional Protocol of 8 June 1977 to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 Relative to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts). A captured combatant has the rights of a prisoner of war.

Non-combatants are persons who are members of the armed forces of parties to the international armed conflict but do not participate in the warfare directly. Non-combatants include war correspondents, chaplains, military doctors, supply officers, etc. A non-combatant has the right to carry own arms for self-defence; their use is not considered direct participation in the armed conflict. International humanitarian law prohibits attacks on non-combatants and violence against them. If a non-combatant starts directly participating in warfare, they acquire the status of combatant exclusively during the warfare.

If captured, non-combatants have the rights of prisoners of war. An exception is made to medical staff and chaplains who “using the benefits and protection” of the 1949 Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War “will continue to exercise their medical and spiritual functions.”

International Criminal Court (ICC) is the first permanent international court institution for imposing international criminal liability on persons guilty of the most severe international crimes. Currently, the court is authorised to review cases initiated upon accusations of three types of crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. Starting from 2017, ICC may include the crime of aggression onto this list.

Genocide is an international crime involving actions with the intention to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such. The features of genocide are stipulated in Article 2 of Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (9 December 1948) and in Article 2 of the Rome Statute of International Criminal Court (17 July 1998).

Examples of genocide include the extermination of Jews (Holocaust) and Roma by Nazi Germany; extermination of Armenians in 1915 by the Turkish authorities; extermination of Ukrainians in 1933-1934 (Holodomor) by the USSR authorities; mass killing of Cambodians in 1975-1980 by the Khmer Rouge authorities (Cambodia); extermination of Tutsi people by Rwanda authorities in 1994.

International Criminal Court Statute (Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court) is an international agreement concluded on 17 July 1998 at the Diplomatic Conference in Rome (entered into force on 1 July 2002). As of 2015, the Statute was ratified by 125 countries. On the basis of this Statute, the International Criminal Court was created. The Statute determines the legal status of the Court, its jurisdiction, the laws it applies (in particular, general principles of the criminal law), procedural regulations used during investigation and court trials, the procedure for enforcing Court rulings, terms of cooperation with international organisations and states, terms of financing, etc. The Rome Statute is one of the principal legal acts guiding the International Criminal Court proceedings.

Crimes against humanity are international crimes that are especially dangerous due to their mass nature. Crimes against humanity can be committed both in the times of peace and during armed conflict. In the ICC Statute, a “crime against humanity” means any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack: murder; extermination; enslavement; deportation or forcible transfer of population; imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law; torture; rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity; persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the Court; enforced disappearance of persons; the crime of apartheid; other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.

War crimes are violations of laws and customs of warfare (international humanitarian law) regulating the behaviour of parties to the armed conflict during the war. The contemporary interpretation of “war crimes” notion is based on The Hague (1899, 1907) and Geneva (1949) Conventions, as well as on the ICC Statute (1998).

According to part 2, Article 8 of the ICC Statute, war crimes include:

(a) Severe breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, namely, any of the following acts against persons or property protected under the provisions of the relevant Geneva Convention:

- (i) Wilful killing;
- (ii) Torture or inhuman treatment, including biological experiments;

- (iii) Wilfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or health;
- (iv) Extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly;
- (v) Compelling a prisoner of war or other protected person to serve in the forces of a hostile party.
- (vi) Wilfully depriving a prisoner of war or other protected person of the rights of fair and regular trial;
- (vii) Unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement;
- (viii) Taking of hostages.

(b) Other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in international armed conflict, within the established framework of international law, namely, any of the following acts:

- (i) Intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities;
- (ii) Intentionally directing attacks against civilian objects, that is, objects which are not military objectives;
- (iii) Intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units or vehicles involved in a humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping mission in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as long as they are entitled to the protection given to civilians or civilian objects under the international law of armed conflict;
- (iv) Intentionally launching an attack in the knowledge that such attack will cause incidental loss of life or injury to civilians or damage to civilian objects or widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment which would be clearly excessive in relation to the concrete and direct overall military advantage anticipated;
- (v) Attacking or bombing, by whatever means, towns, villages, dwellings or buildings which are undefended and which are not military objectives.

Besides, Article 3 of the Geneva Convention also applies to non-international armed conflicts.

The State-parties to the Convention undertook an obligation whereby, in the event of non-international armed conflict within their territory, each conflicting party should apply at least the following provisions:

1. The persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed *hors de combat* by sickness, wounds, detention or any other cause, shall be entitled to humane treatment without any discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion or faith, sex, origin, material standing or any other similar grounds.

To enforce this, the following actions against the above persons are and will

always be prohibited:

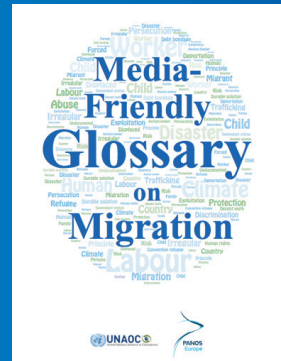
- a) violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture;
- b) taking of hostages;
- c) committing outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment;
- d) passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgement pronounced by a regularly constituted court, affording all judicial guarantees which are generally recognized as indispensable.

2. The wounded and sick will be taken care of and provided assistance.

Due to their exceptional danger, crimes against humanity are not covered by the statute of limitations.

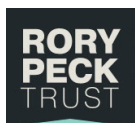
SEE ALSO:

http://www.panoseurope.org/sites/default/files/production_files/UNAOC-Panos-Europe-Institute_Media-Friendly-Glossary-on-Migration.pdf



ANNEXES:

ANNEX I



RISK ASSESSMENT FORM-Template

Confidential – Guidance only

Date of Risk Assessment

COUNTRY:

Name

DATES OF TRAVEL/ASSIGNMENT:

Dates

[Refer to [Risk Assessment Notes 1](#) on our site for the following]

ASSIGNMENT OUTLINE:

Include a travel plans, interviews, story outline

LOCATIONS AND BRIEF SCHEDULE

Provide your information here.

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

(Give specific details of what you intend to cover to complete your assignment)
Provide your information here.

PROJECT SPECIFIC RISKS

(Name and describe main risks)

1. Are you working on a sensitive topic? Yes/No. What is it, and why is it sensitive?
2. Are you covering a high risk location, activity or event? Yes/no. Describe the location, activity or event.
3. Who will you be meeting, are they potentially under surveillance, and might they be at risk if they talk to you?
4. Is your security threatened by talking to specific people, visiting or working in a specific area?

Circle or underline any of the following risks you may face: abduction/kidnapping, violent and organized crime, abusive state security forces, corruption (bribery), riots/demonstrations, armed conflict, terrorist attack, road side bombs/IEDS/body traps, landmines and unexploded ordinance (UXO), low intensity warfare/guerrilla war, cultural hostility, petty crime/theft, car-jacking, road accidents and other transport (aircraft, boat), crossing borders/checkpoints, political instability, outbreak of hostilities, death squads, militia, gangs, natural disaster (flood, earthquake), extreme weather, environmental hazards/toxins/poisons, physical and/or electronic surveillance, infectious diseases.

Details on risks you may face: Create as many entries as you need. Each should cover the following:

1. Name and describe the risk
 - a. How serious is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely serious
 - b. How likely is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?
2. Name and describe the risk
 - a. How serious is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely serious
 - b. How likely is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?
3. Name and describe the risk
 - a. How serious is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely serious
 - b. How likely is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?
4. Name and describe the risk
 - a. How serious is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely serious
 - b. How likely is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?
5. Name and describe the risk
 - a. How serious is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely serious
 - b. How likely is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?

Continue adding as many risks as you can think of in this format.
[Refer to [Risk Assessment Notes 2](#) on our site for the following]

PASSPORT, VISAS, PRESS ACCREDITATION AND COVER STORY

Passport

Passport number:

Date of issue:

Expiring date:

Country of issue/Nationality:

Visa information

Provide details here, and attach relevant documents and correspondence to this document.

Press accreditation and/or cover story

How will you obtain this?

If you are travelling undercover or as a tourist, give details of your cover story.

TRAVEL RISKS: What are the risks involved in your travel arrangements?

1. Name and describe the travel risk
 - a. How serious is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely serious
2. How likely is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - a. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?
3. Name and describe the travel risk
 - a. How serious is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely serious
 - b. How likely is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?
4. Name and describe the travel risk
 - a. How serious is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely serious
 - b. How likely is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?

Continue adding as many risks as you can think of in this format.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL

1. Do you need to take any vaccinations?
 - a. Which vaccines do you need?
 - b. What are the risks in not having them?
 - c. Where have/will you get them?

You may want to attach copies of any vaccine files to this document.
2. Do you (or anyone else on your team, if relevant) have any medical condition that you and others need to take into account and/or pose a risk? List each medical condition:
 - a. What are the risks of travelling with each medical condition?
 - b. How severe are the risks?

- c. How likely is it?
- d. What are you doing to reduce the chance and severity of the risk?
3. List any prescription medication you must take
 - a. Medication name:
 - b. Dosage amount and frequency:

List as many items here similar fashion. You may want to attach copies of prescription information or related medical details to this document.

4. Would you have access to a hospital with international standards?
 - a. How far and how difficult it would be for you to reach this hospital?
5. How will you be evacuated in an emergency?
 - a. From where to where, by whom and at what cost?
 - b. Does your insurance provide cover for this?

INSURANCE

Do you have insurance that covers you while on assignment? Yes/No
What kind (s) of insurance cover to you have? Give the policy name and a description here for each:

Who is/are the insurance provider (s)? For each, give the provider's name, address and contact details here:

Give details about what each insurance policy covers:

You may want to attach copies of relevant insurance papers to this document. It may be helpful to consult the Insurance resource at www.rorypecktrust.org.

[Refer to [Risk Assessment Notes 3](#) on our site for the following]

PROFILE RISKS: Is there an increased risk as a result of your gender, age, ethnicity, religious beliefs or nationality? How about those accompanying you?

1. Name and describe the travel risk
 - a. How serious is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely serious
 - b. How likely is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?
2. Name and describe the travel risk
 - a. How serious is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely serious
 - b. How likely is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?

Continue adding as many risks as you can think of in this format.

FIXERS AND OTHER LOCALLY HIRED FREELANCERS

1. What are the risks related to your locally hired professional support?
2. What are the credentials and experience of local fixer/driver/translator that make them suitable for this assignment?

3. Name and describe another risk in this area:
 - a. How serious is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely serious
 - b. How likely is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?

Continue adding as many risks as you can think of in this format.

EQUIPMENT AND CARNET

What professional kit are you taking with you? List it here. (consider and adapt to your specific needs and potential risks)

What are the import regulations/restrictions in your destination country? List them here.

Do you require a carnet?

Provide a detailed equipment list with serial numbers here:

1. Item:
 - a. Make and model:
 - b. Serial number:
2. Item:
 - a. Make and model:
 - b. Serial number:
3. Item:
 - a. Make and model:
 - b. Serial number:

Continue adding as many risks as you can think of in this format. Consider attaching relevant equipment receipts or other information to this document.

What are the risks related to the equipment you need to take?

1. Name and describe the risk
 - d. How serious is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely serious
 - e. How likely is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - f. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?
2. Name and describe the risk
 - g. How serious is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely serious
 - h. How likely is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - i. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?
3. Name and describe the risk
 - a. How serious is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely serious
 - b. How likely is it? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?

Continue adding as many risks as you can think of in this format.

PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT

1. What safety equipment do you need? (flak jacket, tear gas goggles, helmet, etc)
2. How will you obtain it?
3. Can you get this equipment to the location? How will you do so?
4. What is the risk of travelling with this equipment?
 - a. How likely is it that a problem will arise? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - d. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?
5. What is the risk of obtaining this equipment at the location?
 - a. How likely is it that a problem will arise? Not very/Somewhat/Extremely likely
 - b. What measures are you taking to reduce the chance and severity?

List any other risks here in a similar fashion.

RUSHES/RECORDINGS/NOTES AND MATERIALS

1. How will you store information and /or your material?
 - a. What are the risks in doing this?
 - b. How likely are the risks?
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chances and severity of the risks?
2. Would loss or confiscation put you or other people at risk?
 - a. How likely is this risk?
 - b. What measures are you taking to reduce the chances and severity?
3. How will you get your material out of the country/Location?
 - a. What are the risks in doing this?
 - b. How likely are the risks?
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chances and severity of the risks?
4. What data-wrangling and back-up regime will you be operating?
 - a. What could go wrong?
 - b. How likely are the risks?
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chances and severity of the risks?

ACCOMMODATION

What are the main risks related to your lodging (s)?

1. Name and describe the Risk
 - a. How likely would the risk be?
 - b. How serious would the risk be?
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chances and severity of the risk?

2. Name and describe the Risk
 - a. How likely would the risk be?
 - b. How serious would the risk be?
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chances and severity of the risk?

3. Name and describe the Risk
 - a. How likely would the risk be?
 - b. How serious would the risk be?
 - c. What measures are you taking to reduce the chances and severity of the risk?

List any other risks here in a similar fashion.

A checklist about your lodgings. Answer the following:

1. Are there already some security measures in place (e.g. guards)?
2. Who else is staying there (e.g. diplomats, other journalists, tourists)?
3. How close are you to potential terrorist targets (e.g. embassies, tourist destination, barracks, etc.)?
4. How might your accommodation affect your profile?
5. How easy would access and egress be in the event of an emergency?
6. How able is the building to withstand attack, do you need to tape the windows, is there a basement?
7. Does the building, area, have a history of problems/incidents?

COMMUNICATIONS

This section will be helped by completing your Communications Plan.

How will you communicate with your safety contacts, sources, colleagues and others? Email? Mobile? Land line phone? Postal system? Voice over internet or online chatting? Filesharing?

Could any of these methods be compromised or compromise your safety and/or that of others?

Go through your communication methods below:

1. Type of communication:
 - a. The potential risks of this method:
 - b. The likelihood of this risk happening: (not likely/somewhat likely/Extremely likely)
 - c. The severity of this risk: (not very/somewhat/extremely severe)
 - d. What steps are you taking to reduce the chance and severity of the risk?

2. Type of communication:
 - a. The potential risks of this method:
 - b. The likelihood of this risk happening: (not likely/somewhat likely/Extremely likely)
 - c. The severity of this risk: (not very/somewhat/extremely severe)
 - d. What steps are you taking to reduce the chance and severity of the risk?

3. Type of communication:
 - e. The potential risks of this method:
 - a. The likelihood of this risk happening: (not likely/somewhat likely/Extremely likely)
 - b. The severity of this risk: (not very/somewhat/extremely severe)
 - c. What steps are you taking to reduce the chance and severity of the risk?

List as many items as you need here similar fashion. You may want to refer to the Digital Security resource at www.rorypecktrust.org for ideas.

How will you be able to reassess your main risks while on assignment?

Include here how you plan to assess changes in the situation and communicate them to your safety contact (s).

CLOSING

This document and all its attached files should accompany your Communications Plan and Proof of Life documents. These should be kept with reliable contacts who will be available to you and will have your contact details.

The Risk Assessment, Communications Plan and Proof of Life Questions are the key documents for your **Emergency File**, a folder that contains important personal safety information like copies of your passport and visa and a copy of your vaccination book. Your risk Assessment will also contain personal information such as your blood type and any other relevant medical information like allergies and medical conditions, insurance policy details, flight details and your itinerary/schedule.

<https://rorypecktrust.org/resources/safety-and-security/risk-assessment/Risk-Assessment-Notes-1>

ANNEX II



PROOF OF LIFE Template

Confidential – Guidance only

Date goes here

Write down four questions known only to you or someone close to you

Question 1:	Answer 1:
Question 2:	Answer 2:
Question 3:	Answer 3:
Question 4:	Answer 4:

Personal details

Name	Surname
Maiden name (s)	Nick names
Place of birth	Town and country
Nationality	Religion
Home phone number	Mobile number
Email address and password	Home address

Personal Procedures

Personal emergency contact (first person to be contacted in case of emergency, not necessarily NOK)

Name

Surname

Relationship

Home phone number

Mobile number

Email address

Home address

Which family member should be contacted first and by whom?

Provide details here.

Any special requests or instructions for the family?

Provide details here.

<https://rorypecktrust.org/resources/safety-and-security/risk-assessment/proof-of-life>

ANNEX III



RISK ASSESSMENT FORM-Template

Confidential – Guidance only

Date goes here

This is the communications plan for staying in communication with your key safety contact (s). You and your contacts should agree to the information you've provided here and stick with it.

How often do you need to be in touch with your key contact?

Through what methods? (be as specific as possible)

Failure to do so:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5) etc.

Failure to make contact and confirm you and your team are fine will result in emergency preparations being considered, after **XX** hours, and activated, after **xx** hours.

Emergency Communications Plan:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5) etc.

Emergency Contacts List:

Name

Role / Relationship

Contact Details

Location

Time zone

Phone number (include dialling code and language instructions)

Name

Role / Relationship

Contact Details

Location
Time zone
Phone number (include dialling code and language instructions).
Create as many of these as you need in this format

PERSONNEL DETAILS

(Form needs to accommodate one set for each person on location)

Name Position
Mobile phone Home phone number
Address
Email Skype
DoB Blood group
Personal circumstances and dependents
Name of partner (with details)
Next of keen (with details).

Brief biography (credentials and why are this person is suitable for this assignment)

If you're travelling with others, create this for each person.

Itinerary/Schedule

Give details of travel, vehicles and departure and arrival times, routes and anything else necessary.

Communications Code

if communications are monitored or compromised, come up with a pass code that will alert the other person. Create pass codes for different kinds of information that you may need to communicate.

<https://rorypecktrust.org/resources/safety-and-security/risk-assessment/Creating-Your-Communications-Plan>

За цим кодом міститься:

Список додаткових ресурсів



Список відеоджерел до перегляду



