

HANDOUT 9: IN HARM'S WAY — WHO CAN ASSIST YOU?

HOTLINE FOR JOURNALISTS (ICRC) (www.icrc.org)

Media professionals are often exposed to serious danger when reporting from war zones or other areas associated with armed violence.

The ICRC operates a hotline which can be used to request assistance for journalists who are captured, arrested, detained, kidnapped, missing, wounded or killed.

There are different ways to report this type of situation to the ICRC and/or to ask for help:

- call the Hotline on **+41 79 217 32 85**. An ICRC staff member based at the organization's headquarters in Geneva will answer and record the information. English is the language.
- send an e-mail to press@icrc.org, the address of the ICRC's public relations unit at Geneva headquarters. English is the language.
- contact the closest ICRC office, by phone or by mail: a list of addresses of ICRC delegations worldwide is available on <http://www.icrc.org/eng/who-we-are/contacts/index.jsp> (section: worldwide). English and Local language spoken.

Requests for assistance should always include personal details (name, nationality, employer, etc.) and information about the circumstances of the event, if known.

The information provided will be forwarded as quickly as possible to the ICRC delegation in the country or region concerned, provided the organization is present and operational there.

The ICRC can act more rapidly if it is given full details as quickly as possible.

If the ICRC is present and already working in the area where a journalist has reportedly been arrested, it will make every attempt to make contact with the authorities concerned to obtain confirmation of the arrest, obtain access to the journalist, provide information on his or her whereabouts for the employer and relatives, and help the journalist contact family members.

The ICRC will not comment on the reasons for an arrest or detention, or on the circumstances in which it took place, nor can it demand the release of a detained journalist or otherwise advocate for freedom of expression or the right to information, as this lies beyond its mandate and authority.

In general, the ICRC will deal with each case submitted to it in a confidential manner. It expects in return that those requesting its assistance will treat the information given them with the same discretion. Furthermore, the ICRC will not participate in press campaigns or other public initiatives concerning the journalists it is assisting. This policy is dictated by the principle of neutrality that has always governed the ICRC's activities.

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This brochure explains how to get in touch with the ICRC and how the organization might be able to help: (<http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/publication/p0394.htm>)

A number of media organizations provide assistance, training and support for journalists on dangerous assignments. Among them:

REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS (RSF) (www.rsf.org)

RSF is a non-governmental media organization that defends journalists and other media workers imprisoned or persecuted for doing their job. It works to improve the safety of journalists, especially those reporting in war zones.

Useful tools relating to safety matters produced by the RSF include:

- a Press SOS hotline number (+33 1 47 77 74 14) through which journalists in danger can quickly reach an RSF representative, who will give them advice and contacts;
- the "Charter for the Safety of Journalists Working in War Zones or Dangerous Areas" (http://www.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/charter_en.pdf) that spells out eight principles that, if complied with by media managers, should help ward off or reduce the dangers to which media workers are exposed;
- a "Handbook for Journalists" (http://www.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/RSF_GUIDE_ANGLAIS_INTERIEUR_bd.pdf) for media personnel going to dangerous parts of the world, setting out international norms protecting them and containing practical advice on how to stay alive and safe;
- training, which the RSF provides together with the French-speaking section of the Belgian Red Cross, for journalists going on dangerous assignment with a focus on safety and stress management and respect for IHL.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS SAFETY INSTITUTE (INSI)

(<http://www.newssafety.org/home/>)

INSI is a coalition of news organizations, journalist support groups and individuals exclusively dedicated to the safety of news media staff working in dangerous environments. INSI's purpose is to create a global safety network of advice and assistance for journalists and other news gatherers who may face danger covering the news on international assignment or in their own countries. It raises funds to provide safety training free of charge to journalists around the world who need such training and cannot afford it on their own. INSI promotes measures to improve safety understanding among news organizations, military forces, governments and international bodies.

Store these numbers in your mobile:

ICRC Hotline:

+41 79 217 32 85

RSF Press SOS Hotline:

+33 1 47 77 74 14

Bookmark these on your laptop:

www.icrc.org

www.rsf.org

www.newssafety.org

www.cpj.org

www.ifj.org

www.trust.org/alertnet

www.dartcenter.org

www.rorypecktrust.org

www.unesco.org

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Useful tools relating to safety matters produced by the INSI include:

- a "Safety Code" to eliminate unnecessary risk (<http://www.newssafety.com/safety/index.htm>) and
- a list of "Safety Tips" (<http://www.newssafety.com/safety/tips.htm>) for media professionals on dangerous missions.

COMMITTEE TO PROTECT JOURNALISTS (CPJ) (www.cpj.org)

CPJ promotes press freedom worldwide and defends the right of journalists to report the news without fear of reprisal. CPJ ensures the free flow of news and commentary by taking action wherever journalists are attacked, imprisoned, killed, kidnapped, threatened, censored, or harassed.

Useful resources relating to safety matters produced by the CPJ include:

- Journalist Security Guide: Covering the news in a dangerous and changing world (<https://cpj.org/reports/2012/04/journalist-security-guide.php>) for journalists reporting in hazardous situations
- Global Safety Principles and Practices for freelancers, outlining safety measures freelance journalists and news agencies employing them to take
- CPJ's Journalist Assistance program (<https://cpj.org/campaigns/assistance>), which supports journalists in distress worldwide through a combination of financial and non-financial assistance. The program provides legal, medical, and relocation assistance to journalists at risk, along with support for families of slain and imprisoned journalists.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF JOURNALISTS (IFJ) (www.ifj.org)

The IFJ promotes international action to defend press freedom and social justice through strong, free and independent trade unions of journalists. It promotes human rights, democracy and pluralism. The IFJ is opposed to discrimination of all kinds and condemns the use of media as propaganda or to promote intolerance and conflict. The IFJ also monitors press freedom violations and campaigns for greater safety and for a focus on the in-country journalists and freelancers who are at greatest risk and who have the least protection.

Useful tools relating to safety matters produced by the IFJ include:

- "A Survival Guide for Journalists" (<http://ifj-safety.org/en/contents/international-code-of-practice-for-the-safe-conduct-of-journalism>) and an International Safety Fund for journalists in need (www.ifj.org/en/pages/safety-fund)

ALERTNET (www.trust.org/alertnet)

AlertNet is a free humanitarian news service run by Thomson Reuters Foundation covering crises worldwide. It provides trusted news and information on natural disasters, conflicts, refugees, hunger, diseases and climate change.

Useful tools relating to safety matters produced by AlertNet include an e-learning module on "Coping with stress and trauma" (<http://www.cic-learning.co.uk/Alertnet-trauma/login>).

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DART CENTER FOR JOURNALISM AND TRAUMA (www.dartcenter.org)

The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, a project of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism advocates ethical and thorough reporting of trauma, compassionate, professional treatment of victims and survivors by journalists, and greater awareness by media organizations of the impact of trauma coverage on both news professionals and news consumers. The center educates journalists and journalism students about the science and psychology of trauma and the implications for news coverage. It provides a professional forum for journalists in all media to analyze issues, share knowledge and ideas, and advance strategies related to the craft of reporting on violence and tragedy and creates and sustains interdisciplinary collaboration and communication among news professionals, clinicians, academic researchers and others concerned with violence, conflict and tragedy.

See more at: <http://dartcenter.org/mission>

RORY PECK TRUST (www.rorypecktrust.org)

The Rory Peck Trust was established in 1995, two years after freelance cameraman Rory Peck was killed while filming in Moscow. It was set up by his wife, Juliet, and close friends to provide the help for freelancers and their families that nobody else would give.

The principal objectives of the Trust are to provide practical assistance and support to freelance newsgatherers and their families worldwide, to raise their profile, promote their welfare and safety, and to support their right to report freely and without fear. The Trust also plays a role in promoting good practice in behalf of freelancers and their right to work safely, with adequate support and protection. Its activities include giving charitable grants to freelance newsgatherers in need, and to the families of those who have been killed, injured or persecuted as a result of their work. It provides training bursaries to enable freelancers, who otherwise could not afford it, to undertake hostile environment training. The trust promotes good practice in behalf of freelancers working in the newsgathering industry and their right to work safely and in freedom. It provides information and advice on insurance, training, trauma counselling, safety and other issues to freelancers around the world.

UNESCO (www.unesco.org)

For several years now, UNESCO has been supporting independent media in conflict and post-conflict situations to enable them to gather and disseminate non-partisan information. In this respect, the assistance provided to independent media in South East Europe, Angola, the Great Lakes Region in Africa, the Middle East, East Timor, and Afghanistan has contributed to peace building and reconciliation processes.

UNESCO's action in this area includes the promotion of dialogue among media professionals in zones of conflict and the outside world and provision of advice to the authorities of countries in post-conflict situations in drafting new media legislation, which enhances the development of freedom of expression.

See more at:

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=18538&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html