

8.3 Preparation and Training

For drivers and field staff

- map reading and use of compass;
- testing and training for mastering the vehicle, terrain and traffic;
- a 'get yourself home' basic car repair;
- instructions on driving discipline and convoy discipline;
- key messages about the agency and its mission in your context;
- simulation: under aerial attack; in a mined area; armed robbery on the road; checkpoint passage; journey planning; venturing into unknown territory.

For logistics managers

- knowledge of advanced vehicle repair;
- driver training skill or clear criteria to identify a good driver-trainer;
- competence in installation and use of protective devices;
- management of vehicle pool and maintenance and repair scheduling;
- simulations on journey planning;
- simulations on convoy constitution;
- security management.

For field managers

- policy on driver recruitment criteria;
- driver policy and disciplinary policy (who is allowed to drive what and when);
- passenger and accident policy (procedures/guidelines);
- simulations on convoy constitution.

9 Site Protection

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9 Site Protection

The purpose of site protection is to deter or stop intrusion, and to delay attack.

The focus of this chapter is on office and residential protection. It is also necessary to consider site security for staff in programme settings, for example, staff residing in refugee camps or in a hospital or school building/compound where your agency provides assistance. If the site is not formally under the control of the agency (the hospital or school is run, for instance, by the local administration), you will need to think about how to manage this (the requirements for a site to serve as an assembly point in times of crisis are addressed in Chapter 14 on evacuation).

Most principles can also be transposed to the protection of warehouses. This chapter does not deal with theft and pilferage from stocks which should be monitored via the normal checks and balances.

9.1 Site Selection

Site protection starts with site selection. The most common criteria are location (access/logistics), floor space and price. From a security point of view, however, you will need to take into account other criteria, such as:

- What are the known or potential natural and man-made threats?
- What are the physical strengths/deficiencies of the site from a security point of view? Which deficiencies can you live with/improve? Will physical improvements be allowed by the owner; which improvements will cost most, and are they affordable?
- What is your security strategy? If you believe an acceptance strategy will be fairly effective then you may want to reside in an area where local people live with a low profile and close contact with neighbours. If you pursue a deterrence strategy you will choose a different location – one difficult to approach and easy to defend.

In practice you will have to balance various considerations. The perfect choice will seldom exist. But consciously consider the pros and cons of every site from a security point of view, in the light of how you will be perceived, of your security strategy and your contingency planning. Identify the weaknesses in the choice you make and do something about them.

9.1.1 Environmental and Social Criteria

The neighbourhood

If you are considering a particular district check an area of at least 1.5km radius thoroughly to get a closer feel for it. Questions to explore with local residents and authorities include:

- What sort of neighbourhood are you in? Are most people local residents or does the area have quite a fluid population with workers coming in daily from elsewhere or travellers passing through on their way to other places? The more local the population in the vicinity, the more difficult it will be for outsiders to watch you and/or carry out an attack on you or your property.
- What local authority and rescue services are there in the area? Where is the nearest fire station? Where are the police posts? Where do the influential local leaders live? Find out if there is a police patrol and which are the more regularly patrolled areas.

Consider the potential vulnerabilities of the neighbourhood:

- **To military activity:** Are there military installations and government buildings and/or important socioeconomic targets?
- **To political unrest:** Demonstrations are likely to turn against government buildings. However, if foreign intervention is resented demonstrations may target diplomatic buildings; a university area may be susceptible to student unrest; a market place can be a target for a terrorist attack. In addition, a neighbourhood where a minority group lives could also be vulnerable to mob attacks.
- **To crime:** Note that the highest incidence of crime can be in the wealthier areas but could also be in poor areas. If you choose to reside in a less wealthy area you must not appear – outwardly and in lifestyle – to be attractively wealthy.
- **To flooding:** Close to the river, landslides, or avalanches, etc.

The landlord

Try to find out more about the landlord, his/her occupation, social background, possible role in the local community, political affiliation, etc. You do not want to rent a warehouse or an office from a person involved in suspicious dealings, someone who is politically prominent, or who is a leader (or close family member) of a group that is involved in the conflict. In places with a more tribal background the clan affiliation of the landlord will be important to consider. The tribal tradition that a host is duty-bound to protect his guests may come into play if your landlord sees you as guests. In other places the fact that your landlord belongs to a minority group could constitute a risk factor.

REMEMBER: Before signing a lease negotiate in detail permission to make alterations to the building to increase its security.

Case Study: A Secure Site in Ossetia

For reasons of security an aid agency decides to relocate from Ingushetia to North Ossetia. When looking for a secure site it notices that the international staff of another agency are housed in flats (it is the agency's policy for staff to find their own accommodation). It does not like the dark entrances and alleyways to the blocks of flats and it decides to search for a compound where office and residence for the international and some local staff can be combined, vehicles can be parked, and telecoms set up. First the male logistician finds what looks like the ideal place in terms of access and space. Female staff, however, notice that the neighbourhood does not look too good. Upon inquiry the agency learns that there is indeed criminal activity about. In the end a local person who had already been acting as an adviser to another agency, finds a compound on the outskirts of the city. This building has the necessary physical security requirements and is in an area where the 'newly rich' live with many guard dogs and high security awareness.

9.1.2 Physical Criteria

The perimeters

The physical strengths and weaknesses of the outer and inner perimeters are discussed below.

Concealed approaches

Avoid areas that offer many possibilities for concealed approaches and escapes, for example, areas with dense bush or a dry river bed, with narrow, dark alleyways, with factory grounds, storage spaces and warehouses that are largely abandoned at night, or with damaged and destroyed buildings.

Single or multi-tenant occupation

Consider whether to go for single or multiple tenant occupation:

- The advantage of multiple tenants is that the presence of other people around you offers additional surveillance and protection. Rent office space or a flat between the third and the fifth floors: the ground floor is more vulnerable to intruders (but also more accessible to disabled people) and the higher floors

unreachable with emergency equipment (eg, in case of fire). The disadvantage may be that it is more difficult for you to know/observe who belongs to the building and who does not, and to make overall security changes to the general access. You may also not be able to put your vehicles inside a compound. If the roof is accessible, perhaps from a neighbouring building, then do not choose the flat just under the roof.

- Whether a block of flats increases or decreases risk depends very much on the stability and social cohesion of its resident population. If this is high, you probably have a good implicit 'neighbourhood watch' scheme. If low, then there may be general lack of interest in the security of one's neighbours and strangers may have easy access to the building.
- Single-tenant sites may be more fully under your control. You could get some of the advantages of 'strength in numbers' if several agencies occupy sites close together. This will also make it easier for guards to help each other.

In general it is advisable to get to know your neighbours.

9.1.3 In a Hotel

When you have to check into a hotel in an area where you don't know the threats, do not simply accept the room that you are given. Check its location and the access points (doors/windows) from a security point of view. Factors that are likely to increase vulnerability to burglary, robbery or sexual assault are:

- a room at ground floor level, especially with a covered approach (eg, from vegetation);
- a room at upper floor level close to a fire escape or service stairs that are accessible to an intruder;
- a room at the end of a long corridor away from the main movements of hotel personnel and guests, where suspicious noises from inside are less likely to attract attention;
- a room with a door that can easily be forced and no security lock/security chain; a room with a window that is easily forced, especially when at ground floor level;
- a room without good curtains that can conceal who is inside, and without a functioning telephone to hotel security;
- a hotel without guards or poorly guarded and a hotel without night-service at the reception desk to respond to an emergency call;
- admitting into your room someone you don't know well, for example, somebody you met during the day and who drove you to the hotel, the taxi driver bringing up your luggage, or someone whom you haven't called, for

- example, a 'service staff' member bringing food or drinks that you did not order;
- single occupancy: balance your need for privacy with the need for security, perhaps sharing a room with a colleague or at least getting adjacent rooms and returning to the hotel at the same time.

If you are unhappy with the room that has been booked for you ask for another one. If you can't get another one; consider changing hotel. If you don't know the surrounding area, consider whether it is wise to go out after nightfall.

9.2 Perimeter Protection

The actual building or flat constitutes the 'inner perimeter' the compound walls or larger grounds in which it is set the 'outer perimeter'. Do some scenario-thinking and even roleplay: put yourself in the shoes of a potential attacker and study the site for its weak points.

9.2.1 The Outer Perimeter

- If the approach to the site is full of vegetation have it trimmed or removed where it offers hiding places for an assailant, or replace it with thornbushes.
- A wall at least 2.5 metres high increases the protection of the compound. You can top this with barbed wire, but that can create quite a provocative image. A more 'modest' version could be broken glass on top. If there are trees on the outside, by which the wall can be scaled, you will need to do something about the trees or the wall at these points.
- Consider the gates: high walls are little use, if the gate is a weak point because it is easy to scale or is only closed with a padlock and chain, either of which can be broken open quickly.
- If there is a risk of armed robbery in the building, or of mob violence, a second exit point is needed, apart from the main gate. The second exit point should not be a weak point for those trying to enter with malicious intent.
- Improved lighting is likely to reduce certain risks. But it may have the opposite effect and make the premises stand out in the street, and draw attention to the fact that there is something to protect. This is the constant dilemma of security measures that raise profile. Sensor lights that light up for a limited time and only when someone approaches, can solve this dilemma. The problem is that they, like any regular lighting, are dependent on the reliable availability of electricity. If lighting is installed or improved, it should be installed within the perimeter. In the absence of electricity or if there are regular power cuts, you

could consider the strategic placement of some hurricane lanterns, if there is a guard to monitor them.

- It is a contextual decision whether to put the agency logo on the outer perimeter, depending on whether in your assessment it will reduce or increase the risk.
- Dogs can be an excellent early warning help and often a deterrent. Get a proper guard dog, not a pet that sleeps all the time.

Guards

Unarmed guards are commonly used at residences, warehouses and for agency offices. In many cases, however, they are ineffective because they are untrained, poorly instructed, poorly equipped and poorly managed. It is not uncommon to find a bed in the guardhouse of aid agency compounds. This could lead to the guard falling asleep on duty. In recruiting and managing guards, the following are useful points to remember:

Guidelines: Recruiting and Managing Guards

- Select a physically fit person.
- Get reliable social references.
- Hire and deploy enough guards to challenge at least two intruders working together.
- Include contractual stipulations against the use of harmful substances (eg, alcohol) while on duty, and against additional jobs, for example, during the day, that are likely to affect guard performance.
- Provide essential equipment: rain clothes, torches, a whistle or other sound-alarm, possibly a strong stick, and a handheld radio or separate telephone in the guard house.
- Provide a logbook with instructions on keeping the log and on reporting, as well as a list of key contact numbers.
- Provide clear instructions and training on what to do/say and not to do/say with regard to visitors and their cars, 'service personnel' presenting themselves for meter readings or repairs; people asking for information regarding the whereabouts of residents; and when they discover an intruder, etc.
- Provide clear instructions about monitoring the surroundings, patrolling the compound, the rules regarding gates, doors, windows, keys, etc.

Continued...

- In areas of high risk of armed robbery, you may want to instruct guards on deployment procedures: for example, a routine inspection schedule alternated with variable timings of rounds, and especially the separation of guards. There have been instances of guards being easily overpowered, in which case they can become a liability; they may be forced to produce the keys of doors and vehicles, and may even be used to blackmail the residents into opening up, under threat that otherwise the guard will be killed. To reduce this risk, spread out the guards, with at least one in a position where he cannot be easily observed and overpowered, for example, on a roof terrace – to immediately sound the alarm.
- It is good practice to supervise the guards, including surprise spot checks. But don't get yourself shot by accident if they are armed!

Parking vehicles

Where there is the threat of vandalism, car theft, mob violence, or bombing, vehicles must be parked in the compound at all times. Make sure there is enough parking space when you select your site. Depending on the type of threat, you may have different guidelines for parking and fuel levels:

- If the threat is from car thieves breaking into compounds to steal vehicles, make sure to park the vehicles with their rear facing the exit, perhaps immobilise the vehicles at night by removing the distributor rotors from petrol engines, deflate the tyres or remove the wheels, and keep fuel levels low.
- If you need to escape quickly or carry out a rescue, then park with the front of the vehicle facing the exit, and keep fuel levels high.

9.2.2 The Inner Perimeter

Walk around the building with the eye of an intruder and look for weak spots.

- All entrance doors need to be strong. The strength of a door, however, also depends on its frame and hinges. Avoid or replace doors which have any glass, but do install an optical viewer (peephole) and a primary and auxiliary lock on outer doors. On the inside install a safety chain and a sliding dead bolt or strong bar across the door. Heavy duty padlocks on the inside, at the top and bottom of the door, are an additional means of creating a 'safe house', especially if the padlock rings are welded on.

- Windows can be protected with bars, grills or shutters, especially at ground level. Check how easy it is to reach an upper floor window, for example, by climbing on the kitchen or garage roof or a fire escape, and respond accordingly. Thick thornbushes as under ground floor windows can further impede access.
- Check whether it is possible to enter the house through garage doors or a cellar or small bathroom window.
- In case of fire, intrusion or rioting an alternative exit may be needed from the house. The escape exit should be easy to open from the inside. Rehearse an escape, thinking carefully about where you will end up when you leave the compound through this alternative exit. You don't want to be lost in a labyrinth of alleyways.
- Use of burglar alarms and closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras is not common. Both typically depend on electricity supply, although some burglar alarms work on batteries. If you're going to be robbed at gunpoint, a CCTV is little deterrent if the intruders don't know what it is and does, or if there is little chance that they will ever be apprehended.
- Don't place a panic button and the telephone close to the entrance door where an intruder could block your access to them.
- Smoke alarms are cheap and battery operated. You also need fire extinguishers: at least one in the kitchen and one on every floor. (For electric fires, you'll need a CO2 or powder-filled extinguisher, and a foam or water-filled one for other fires). Check and have the extinguishers serviced at least once a year. Identify fire escape routes and ensure that, when locked from the inside, they can be opened instantly. In larger buildings, organise fire escape drills regularly, especially if you have a high turnover of staff.
- At night, routinely close curtains to make it difficult to observe who and how many are inside. When going out, leave a light on to give the impression that someone is in.
- Regularly check that all locks and bolts, etc, are in good working order and routinely lock everything as night falls or before going to bed. Limit the number of keys available and closely control who has access to them.

A Safe Room

The Afghan conflict has multiple layers. In the 1980s it had Cold War A 'safe room' is a place where quick refuge can be found from intruders. It will be strong enough to withstand any normal attempts to break into it. It should have a reinforced door and protected windows. Ideally it will have a telephone and a list of key contact numbers, plus torchlights or candles/matches. It may not continue to offer effective protection if you rather than your assets are the target of the attackers, and no rescue party can come to your help.

The purpose of a safe room is to protect people, not assets. Although some valuables will probably be kept in it, it is not a good idea to put the office safe in it, or all your portable assets. This would frustrate most armed robbers who don't want to leave with empty hands and who therefore may take more drastic measures, such as blowing up the door with a hand grenade. As with all situations with a risk of armed robbery, let the robbers get something, if not everything.

A safe room is not the same as the bomb shelter (Chapter 7). The bomb shelter is likely to be in a cellar, which would take too long to reach in case of an intrusion by armed robbers. A safe room is also not necessarily bomb and shell proof.

- all employees wear a visible photo ID when on the premises. These are collected upon termination of contract/employment;
- all visitors show/leave an identification and possibly be given a visitor's ID or visitor's pass that is collected when they leave;
- no visitors allowed in unless there is explicit authorisation from the person they want to see or who agrees to see them;
- no visitors allowed in unless accompanied by a staff member.

Still stricter procedures would be:

- routine checking of visitors' bags;
- routine manual or electronic body checking of visitors. (Female guards and special training for all needed here.)

A visitor waiting space

This needs to be easily visible to security personnel and/or the receptionist. No uncontrolled access to the building should be possible from a toilet used by waiting visitors.

Clear policy and practical instructions for access

- **Visitors' vehicles:** Are they allowed into the compound or not; where are they to park? For example, if there is a bomb threat you will want to make sure that there are no non-agency vehicles in the compound. You should even prevent them from parking around the compound. You may instruct your guards that all vehicles need to be searched. Searching vehicles is a skilled job and guards need to be trained to do it effectively.
- **Body guards:** Should visitors who come with their own bodyguards be allowed to bring them in, and if so, with or without their weapons? Are you liable (socially/politically) in the case of an attempt on the life of the visitor whose bodyguards you did not allow in? Maybe the meeting could be in an annex of the building/on a verandah where bodyguards could be permitted.
- **Services access:** These include maintenance, repair and utilities personnel in delivery vehicles with cargo that has been ordered. Are they allowed into the premises in your absence? Can their arrival be planned and scheduled so that it is expected? Is it clear what they are supposed to do? What sort of ID do they need to provide and what is to be done if they arrive unannounced or cannot provide a proper ID? In the case of street vendors with fresh fruit and vegetables, who may be undercover 'scouts', give clear instructions to the guard and house staff to buy outside the gate.

In times of high risk, the policy should be that anyone unknown, unauthorised or unable to provide convincing identification should not be let in. If this occurs

9.3 Site Security Management

9.3.1 Managing Access

An appropriate security strategy

You will need to manage visitors to the office, residence or warehouse from a security point of view. This is delicate and related to your overall security strategy, and strongly influences how your agency will be perceived. If an acceptance strategy is adopted, you will not want a completely 'open door' but probably a 'low threshold' for visitors. With a deterrence strategy you will discourage visitors or direct them to a separate building away from the main one. With a protection strategy you will allow access, but only if it is closely controlled.

There are degrees of security control. For example, having visitors sign in and out is hardly a security measure in itself, as anyone can still get in. Stricter standard procedures would be to have:

at the office or warehouse, a supervisor can be called. If at a residence the person can be asked to come back at another time.

Keys

Locks and keys are only useful when tightly managed. The number of keys, and access to them, must be tightly controlled. If in doubt, locks should be changed! Keys should be identified, generally in code. All personnel with keys, including house staff, should be clearly instructed that:

- keys should be carried on the person and not left on desks, in cars, or in unattended coats or bags;
- keys should never be allowed to be duplicated, except under specific instruction from the agency management;
- loss of keys has to be reported immediately.

On the other hand, avoid situations where your practice of tightly managing keys gets you trapped, for example, in a building on fire because you don't have the key to the emergency exit door; in a residence where intruders have entered; or unable to respond to an emergency call from a colleague because the keys of the vehicles are locked away and the logistician lives the other side of town.

9.3.2 Suspicious or Threatening Phone Calls

Problematic phone calls can range from fairly innocent 'crank calls', to sexual harassment calls or bomb threats. Staff should be instructed that the general rule with phonecalls from people they don't know is to:

- insist that the caller identify him/herself and the precise purpose of his/her call;
- give as little information as possible about themselves and try to get as much as possible about the caller;
- give no information about their movements, when they will be in or out, and whether they are alone or not;
- request a number that they can call back;
- report all such calls to the security supervisor.

Sexual harassment calls can sometimes be stopped by having a male co-resident answer the phone. If the caller persists, change the telephone number. Female staff, in particular, (perhaps all staff), should not put their residence phone number on their visiting cards.

When a phone call contains a threat it is important to remain cool and practical, polite and courteous. Encourage staff to do the following:

- If the threat is vague and general try to elicit more detail about the reason, the precise target and whether the problem can be solved in another way.
- If there is a bomb threat ask when and where the bomb will explode and state that there are many people in and around the building who will be hurt if it does. State what the organisation is or what residence it is, and make the caller confirm that it is indeed the intended target. Ask what the reason for the threat is, and listen sympathetically.
- Try to write down exactly what is being said, or try to commit it to memory.
- Listen for any clues about the identity of the caller: male or female, tone of voice, agitated or calm, language and accent, smoking while talking or not, background noises, etc.
- Unless absolutely confident that the threat is not real, immediately evacuate the building.

9.3.3 Frontline Site Security Staff

Guards are an important part of your human security cordon. But in order to play an effective role, guards need to be fit and alert, well trained and clearly instructed, and supervised.

Even when there are guards, site security is everybody's responsibility. Everyone should remain attentive to anything unusual or suspicious and to neglect in security procedures (doors or windows left open, keys left lying around, etc). They should then take the responsibility to act directly or inform the designated supervisor.

Three other groups of people play a direct and important role in site security:

- **Receptionist/telephone operators:** These staff must monitor visitors and telephone calls with security awareness, and report on anything and anybody that could be a security threat.
- **Non-employee family members:** It is no good you being aware of residential security if your spouse and children are not, as they are likely to be at home when you are not.
- **House staff and office cleaners, including gardeners:** These too may be in the residence or at the office when no one else is. They should not let unknown people in, give information to unknown phone callers, give details about the office layout, or allow their keys to be duplicated etc. They need careful instructions about how to respond in different scenarios, and how to report anything unusual immediately.

10 Crowds, Mobs and Looting

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10 Crowds, Mobs and Looting

In tense and conflictual settings, crowds can turn menacing or violent. This can lead to the looting of assets and aggression against staff. Common scenarios involve civil unrest, ethnic or communal violence, disorder around relief distribution, and soldiers or armed fighters, who go on looting sprees – irrespective of whether they have won or lost. Such violence can erupt spontaneously; it can also be planned and instigated.

10.1 Risk Reduction

10.1.1 Situational Monitoring and Analysis

Noticing tension

Anticipating crowd and mob violence is not an exact science. However, the possibility of it occurring needs to be considered as part of your ongoing situational monitoring and analysis – at the general national level (with often a higher risk in the cities), or at the local operational level (especially in camps of displaced people or in shanty towns). Growing tension and frustration can often be picked up in advance by the astute observer. Local people, tuned into the local media and informal circuits of information, are often aware that something is brewing, although they are not necessarily better placed to predict exactly what will happen, when and where.

Vulnerability

You need to consider whether you are, or might become, a target and where you are potentially exposed. What is the cause of the tensions, and at whom is the resentment directed? Are foreigners, or aid agencies, the object? Can local authorities deflect resentment directed at them onto foreigners or aid agencies? Are some of your local staff more at risk because of their ethnic or social identity? Has there been public anarchy in the past; where did it start; how did it evolve? Is there a pattern that could repeat itself? Are you indirectly exposed, for example, because your office or warehouse is close to an area where demonstrations tend to take place, or located in a minority neighbourhood, or because you have to travel through areas that can be a flash point?

Trigger events

Tension that has been building up for a long time can suddenly escalate because of a trigger event. Potential triggers can be identified, for example, the decision by foreign powers to intervene militarily, a fairly sudden economic crisis because of international trade conditions or a government decision to cut the subsidies of essentials such as food or fuel, or to close a refugee camp before people are willing to return, etc. Others cannot be predicted but can be recognised as likely triggers, for example, the arrest or assassination of a prominent figure, the defeat of troops that held a strategic position defending the town, or an unpopular measure by an international peacekeeping force or authority.

Case Study: A Mob Against Aid Agencies

In the autumn of 1995 the war in Sri Lanka once again turned into a dramatic confrontation. Despite this the NGO Forum on Sri Lanka, a group of international and national NGOs, chose to hold its annual meeting in the country. In earlier years it had concentrated on human rights, fair elections, and issues of equity and poverty. Now for the first time humanitarian action was on the agenda. A few days before the meeting an article, triggered by an expatriate Sri Lankan organisation in London, appeared in a national newspaper. It accused the Forum of supporting the rebels and alleged that the meeting was in reality a rally against the Sri Lankan government and its war effort. The details of the meeting, and this message, were picked up by a local radio station. An angry mob of up to 3000 people came to the venue and threatened the participants. The Forum moved to another venue, but again the details were broadcast over the local radio, and violent protesters came to disrupt the meeting; they even raided the hotel in which some of the foreign participants were staying. The situation did not calm down until members of parliament and government ministers intervened. But for weeks following the incident a climate of suspicion and hostility towards NGOs was noticeable in the whole island.

10.1.2 Preventive Action

Proactive information

The more misinformation which exists, or is spread, about your agency, the greater the risk that collective frustration and anger will be directed against it.

As suggested in an earlier chapter a general acceptance-promoting approach is useful. More specifically, expectations should be managed proactively. For example, discuss with people what they can realistically expect, and inform them immediately if there is a delay or a change of plan. Sitting together to listen to criticism and search for alternatives can help to prevent frustration turning into anger. Do not just talk with a few representatives, try and make the information publicly known.

Proactive crowd control

Never encourage a crowd to gather unless you can meet their expectations. Organise in advance events (meetings/distributions) where crowds will gather. Work out procedures with local representatives. Try to avoid or minimise uncontrolled crowd movements, long queues and waiting times: multiply distribution points; schedule distributions throughout the day for different sections of the population; create waiting areas with shade and water and make those waiting sit down; provide precise information about the nature and quantity of hand-outs; designate crowd control staff who will turn back whoever does not belong there and further assist the crowd with information and movement procedures; physically channel people into a manageable queue/through small avenues; arrange for an exit route away from the entry points.

10.1.3 Protection

Reduce exposure

Consider tactics such as cutting down on movements through risk areas, relocating sites away from risk areas, withdrawing staff considered to be at risk, limiting or reducing stocks in warehouses, temporarily moving valuables such as office equipment to the residences of local staff, etc.

Reduce visibility

You could do this by removing agency logos and flags from buildings and cars, perhaps limiting the movements of international staff who will stand out among local people, and renting local cars or using taxis rather than the high-profile 4-wheel drive agency vehicles.

Reduce surprise

In a period of rising civil unrest and regular demonstrations, closely monitor the nature of the demonstrations and the direction they take.

Case Study: Monitoring Civil Unrest

Operation Desert Storm against Iraq in 1990 led to widespread daily street protests all over Pakistan as the population rallied in support of Iraq. Aid agencies, most of whom had offices and residences in the same neighbourhood, were concerned that the demonstrations might turn against them. One agency therefore deployed local staff to monitor the demonstrations constantly: their size, behaviour, the slogans they adopted and whom they were addressed to, and the attitude of the police. The monitors had hand-held radios, to give an early warning in case the demonstrations got out of hand and turned towards that specific neighbourhood. Meanwhile, the international staff did not go out unless dressed in local clothes and accompanied by local staff. Posters of Saddam Hussein had been put up everywhere in town and one agency put some on its car windows too.

10.1.4 In a Time of Crisis

If you are pursuing a deterrence strategy you will probably post more guards around your compound and/or ask for special protection from the authorities. This can be a very effective strategy if the authorities are willing and have the ability to exercise effective control over the crowds. However, this may not always be the case: police from local stations may be part of the local community and unwilling to antagonise an angry local crowd. In addition, the government may be unwilling to expend its 'political capital' by intervening too quickly or too forcefully to control a crowd that is made up of future 'voters'. On the other hand, the authorities may be willing to 'impose order' with more force than you are comfortable with. While you don't want your sites looted, you also don't want the police or army to use excessive force or even to shoot at a crowd and possibly injure or kill people on your behalf. When asking for armed protection from the authorities, make sure to discuss the rules of engagement that will be used to protect you (Chapter 6).

10.2 Crisis Management

10.2.1 Negotiation

When confronted with an angry crowd at your office you will want to try to defuse the anger. At the same time you must be prepared to protect yourself from a rapid degeneration into mob violence. Key tactics are the following:

- Seek advice from local staff who can understand what is being shouted, and who may gain an impression of who the demonstrators are as well as who appears to be controlling/driving them.
- Gain time; negotiate with the demonstrators on the basis that talks should take place with a small number of their representatives.
- Hold these talks in the compound, not in the heart of the building. Do not go out to negotiate as you may be attacked or taken 'hostage'.
- Adopt an anger-defusing negotiation strategy (Chapter 18). Listen attentively and respectfully; avoid making quick promises about the issue in contention, rather signal that you are taking note of the grievances and are willing to pursue the discussion further but not under threat or duress. In other words, try to negotiate an agreement to have talks but in a setting where the angry mob is not at the door.
- Inform the authorities of the situation, but also indicate your position with regard to the use of (excessive) force.
- Meanwhile, all employees should prepare for evacuation from the building. You will need to consider whether to take essential items with you such as vital diskettes, portable computers, satellite telephones, radio equipment and essential files. This will not be possible when you are forced to 'escape' (see below) or when, once outside, you want to blend into the local scene. Lock the doors of all rooms that are vacated; exit the compound at a place where the crowd has not yet gathered and where you are not visible to it. If safe evacuation is not possible gather all the staff in one place where there is no easy access once all doors are locked.
- If local staff believe that the crowds are being stirred up by troublemakers who are not the normal community leaders, they may contact the latter and make them come to the scene of confrontation to calm the crowd.
- Designate one person to contact immediately other agencies who might be at similar risk.

Following such an event make sure to:

- maintain heightened security alert for some days until the situation has clearly calmed down and there is no perceived risk of perhaps individual retaliation;
- consider very carefully your public relations position and messages, from contacts or not with the media, to what messages local staff may informally pass out;
- stick to your word: hold talks, even if you have now increased police protection. Don't only have talks with the formal authorities but communicate with a wider environment of ordinary people; you will need to re-establish relationships and perhaps repair your 'acceptance' in your environment.

10.2.2 Escape

A well-chosen site should have a separate emergency exit which is not visible from the main entry/exit point. You should familiarise yourself with alternative back routes in advance. It is a situational judgement whether you run and thus draw attention to yourself, or walk, pretending everything is normal.

10.2.3 Surviving Looting

Looting, not only of warehouses but also of convoys, offices and residences, is a not infrequent occurrence. Your response will depend on your situational judgement. Key principles to bear in mind are: to protect your life; to protect vulnerable staff; and to try to maintain communications.

The first two principles are the same as for surviving armed robbery. Don't resist, and try to prevent aggression against staff members by allowing the looters to take what they want. Don't show fear: signs of high vulnerability may give some looters the confidence to turn on you. Remain calm, retain your dignity, and try to defuse the anger (Chapter 18).

In general, it is advisable to leave the place being looted in case the situation escalates. This may not always be possible; it could be even more dangerous outside. This may occur in a situation of forced 'hibernation' (Chapter 14).

If this is the case, you will probably have to prepare for several hours, even days, of ongoing anarchy and widespread looting. The looters may come in waves, eventually stripping the office/residence/warehouse of its last valuable piece.

Anticipate that the risk may increase. Over time there will be fewer material possessions to satisfy the looters, and alcohol, drugs, and blood already spilled may release greater aggression.

Try to hide, and retain a means of communication. It may be possible to hide a hand-held radio, mobile phone, or satellite phone, or negotiate for one telephone to be left (if the lines are not cut). You will need to retain or re-establish contact with your colleagues as soon as possible.

Case Study: Surviving Waves of Looting

In the face of an advancing rebel force an aid agency had evacuated all non-essential staff. However, some international staff chose to stay in the office in a 'popular' neighbourhood out of solidarity. The agency's analysis was that it was unlikely that the government army, although being pushed back, would start looting, as the army patrols were composed of soldiers from the four major sections of the army, who effectively restrained each other. But a change was triggered by the assassination of the general in charge of the city's security. As a result the soldiers started looting and shooting. On the first day, it was possible to pay off those soldiers wanting to commandeer the agency car. A second group, however, were more aggressive; they fired shots into the house and stole the satellite phone and other electronics and valuables. Then civilians arrived to loot everything portable. The following day, the agency was attempting to tidy the ransacked house when a third group of soldiers entered. They mistook the cleaning up for an attempt to hide something, and became very aggressive and intimidating. It took great persuasive skill to convince them that there was in fact nothing left. Luckily staff had managed to hide a mobile phone and a hand-held radio. When staff eventually established contact with colleagues elsewhere in the city they learned that the rebels were entering the town, and also that their agency had issued an international press statement condemning the rebels for a massacre elsewhere. Having had all their clothes stolen they were left with only their agency T-shirts, which had suddenly become a liability.

11 Cash Security

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11 Cash Security

This chapter is only concerned with theft and armed robbery by persons external to the agency. Obviously external actors may have been 'tipped off' by someone among the staff. Contextual factors again play a role. The following are therefore only tips for local adaptation.

11.1 Reducing the Use of Cash

In order to reduce the use of cash, your agency could use other formal financial mechanisms:

- **Credit cards:** statements should be checked regularly as not everyone will always be discreet about your personal code.
- **Traveller's cheques:** follow the security instructions issued with them.
- **Payments by cheque and/or bank transfer:** where possible ask all staff to open a bank account as this minimises your risk. The agency could even agree to pay any costs involved.

If there is a sizeable cashflow you should inquire into the cost and conditions of insurance against loss and theft.

The agency might also use informal credit and transaction systems. In a number of places there is no functioning banking system, for example, in Somalia. Under such circumstances, traders and money suppliers have constituted a network to minimise cash transfers and the associated risks. Some of these networks may only operate locally; others may have 'nodes' with international connections. This would allow you to deposit a sum as credit in a foreign account to cover payments made locally on your behalf by a third party. The system works on trust, and increasingly by satellite telephone. Make enquiries about this with local staff, local traders, contractors, service providers.

11.2 Discretion

If you have to ask for, move and/or keep cash, communications about it should be discreet: The less people know, the less they can, intentionally or not, give away. Communications over the telephone or radio should be 'encoded' and you need to code the 'money' – the amounts and type of

currency. As with all coding systems use one that is clear and unconfusing – but not one that allows a 10-year old to understand after five minutes that you are talking about money!

If you withdraw money from the bank make sure to organise this with the bank in advance and be discreet about the transaction. If you make large payments, for example, to a supplier or contractor, do the same.

A common and sometimes unexpected problem is the actual ‘bulk’ of the money. A somewhat extreme but good example was the monetisation of many tonnes of food aid in Somalia; the resulting payment in Somali shillings took up no less than 17 cubic metres of space. More common perhaps is the volume of local currency that the bank gives you (for what is still a fairly modest amount of international currency) and which still may fill a suit case. See if you can ensure in advance that you will get higher denomination notes and hence less ‘bulk’. If there is a subsequent problem with payments in high denomination notes you will need to think of a solution for that. If there is no alternative option, you will need to reduce the visibility of the money transfer, and to protect and/or spread the ‘bulk’ size of the pile of money.

11.3 Limiting the Exposure

Reducing the amounts

It is common practice to put a ceiling on the amount that can be withdrawn, transferred and/or kept in the safe. Ceilings can differ between different transactions, in respect of the cash requirements and the potential risks. The consequence is that you may have to make more transfers. The size of your ‘vulnerability’ will become smaller but the ‘frequency’ higher.

Reducing the number of transfers

If the highest risk is during the cash transfer, rather than when the cash is in the office safe, you may want to reduce the risk by moving larger amounts of money but less frequently. This may be your choice if there are the occasional opportunities to move cash more securely, for example, by a helicopter flight or large convoy every two months.

Just-in-time payments

If the highest risk is when money is in the office then you should organise the timing of your transfers in such a way that the period the money is in the office is kept to the absolute minimum.

Transferring the risk

You could reduce your own movements of cash by making those whom you need to pay, for example, contractors, suppliers and service providers, come to collect it rather than you taking it to them. Staff in field-locations could even collect their own salaries, for example, on the occasion of a staff meeting.

To help you think through these different scenarios you could draw a flow-chart, identifying the money and cash transfers and ‘storage points’ within the organisation from your headquarters to the final payment to someone outside the organisation. Consider the respective risks and risk-reduction measures at the different nodes and transfers within the chain.

11.4 Spreading the Risk

If burglary, hold-up and robbery are risk factors then it is advisable to spread the risk: do not keep all your money in one place, though you should keep a certain amount in an obvious place so that robbers in a hurry are quickly satisfied and will not harm you in order to find out where the money is. This means having some money easily accessible on your person, in the car and at residencies, and other money better hidden.

In times of high tension when you might need to withdraw, relocate or evacuate, it is advisable to distribute cash among those leaving not only to spread the risk, but also to give them financial means in case they get isolated (Chapter 14).

11.5 Considering Predictability

Routine increases risk. Some of the more common predictable ‘money concentrations’ are:

- the monthly payroll for which cash is accumulated;
- special payments to national staff prior to evacuation;
- international staff arriving at the airport and transferring to a hotel or the office in the city (professional robbers may monitor the arrival times of international flights, and prey on official taxis and vehicles of foreigners on the main route into town);
- the accountant or finance manager going from the office to the bank and back along the same route, often around the same time.

These are high-risk moments and movements for which you want to take extra security precautions or reduce the predictability. For example:

- use an unmarked rented or local staff vehicle and/or a back route to bring staff from the airport to the office/hotel;
- change salary periods and payment times in order to reduce the predictability of the payroll;
- authorise additional staff members to go to the bank, or have the accountant/finance manager follow different routes.

11.6 Reducing Vulnerability

Ideally the safe will be anchored to the floor so that it cannot be removed. Good practice suggests that you should have two keys to open it, which are held by different people. However, if there is a risk that armed robbers will use violence against staff if the safe is not opened alternative options may have to be considered. One might be to keep money in a locked and portable box to which only the accountant has the key. In this scenario the key(s) to the safe itself are accessible somewhere in the office (or residence if staff reside in the same building where the office is). For example, an emergency key could be kept behind a glass window that has to be broken (like an emergency brake or emergency door lock). In this approach there are the normal checks and balances to opening the safe, albeit somewhat reduced (hence the second locked box). However, in a worst case scenario the safe can be opened and the violent robbers can get away with the smaller box.

When it comes to transporting cash the most common method is by car. At least two people, and possibly more than one car, should be involved. A more extreme method would be to use an armed escort and/or an armoured vehicle. The latter is clearly a 'high visibility' approach, which will attract unwanted attention; it requires a very effective deterrent capability. On the one hand, in a fairly established situation where the office has been running for some months, the meaning of two easily identifiable aid agency vehicles outside a bank is also fairly clear. An alternative option may be for trusted local staff to withdraw cash in an ordinary vehicle. It is the eternal question of what is most likely to reduce risk: high profile or low profile?

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12 Sexual Aggression

12.1 Definitions and Scope

Rape is understood here as sexual intercourse without consent and against the will of the victim. The classic understanding of rape is vaginal penetration by a penis. However, men are also vulnerable to rape. Sexual assault is an act of aggression that may be differently understood in different legal traditions, but also by different individuals in your organisation. Stripping someone naked is a form of sexual assault that falls short of rape. However, oral and anal coitus or the insertion of objects into the vagina or rectum are very likely to be experienced as rape, although they may not always be understood as such. Sexual assault and rape are usually carried out with the threat or actual use of violence. The victim is forced to submit out of fear or because s/he is physically intimidated or overwhelmed. The relationship between the victim and the assailant(s), any present or past intimate relationships, past sexual acts or behaviour, etc, do not indicate consent for current unwanted sexual involvement.

Intimidation and sexual harassment of women constitute forms of gender-based violence which have psychological effects that can turn into physical symptoms. Your organisation should have a policy on sexual harassment and make sure to apply it. This chapter, however, focuses specifically on direct assaults on the physical integrity of a person. Because the overwhelming majority of rape victims are women it is written from this perspective.

There are various reasons for sexual aggression. Those common to the environments in which aid agencies often operate include the fact that:

- certain categories of women ('Western', 'low caste', or a particular ethnic group) are seen labelled as morally loose and 'available';
- rape can be politically motivated and designed to intimidate your agency and/or international intervenors in general;
- rape and the domination of women enhance the feeling of power in the rapist. This could constitute an individually savoured feeling of power extended to the social/ethnic group to which the rapist/s belong;
- rape as a weapon of war is intended to destroy the social bonds in the 'enemy society' and undermine the determination of the men in the opposing group;
- gang rape is a 'bonding' ritual. It strengthens the sense of social cohesion and group identification among those participating in it.

Rape is about power more than it is about sex:

- power rather than sexual lust and its fulfilment is the driving motive;
- the intention of the rapist(s) is to humiliate his victim and/or the people associated with her.

Hurting and demoralising the 'enemy' by violating 'his' women is a common tactic of violence. Rape may therefore become part of a major 'protection' (security of civilian populations) concern. This is outside the scope of this manual. The extortion of sexual favours for material and physical protection often occurs when men control resources (eg, food rations, access to a safe place, or vital documents) or otherwise have power over women. Although there is not a direct threat of violence, this remains a form of 'enforced consent'. Women on the move – IDPs, returnees, those in refugee camps – may be particularly vulnerable; so too are economic migrants who are often in weak social and legal positions. Some of these may be employed by your agency. They therefore fall under your responsibility and within the scope of this manual.

12.2 Risk Reduction

12.2.1 Awareness and General Risk Appreciation

Risk reduction starts with the organisational and individual acknowledgement that rape constitutes a real risk. This is currently not the case: sexual assault and rape of aid workers are still taboo subjects and absent from most security guidelines. It is important to recognise that women of all ages can be at risk. It is also important to recognise that working in violent environments can increase the risk of particularly traumatic forms of sexual assault and rape. There may be a greater risk of gang rape or of repeated rape, for example, during a period of captivity. It is even possible for women – though perhaps more often local women than foreigners – to be abducted and forced into sexual slavery and/or enforced 'marriage' with a fighter. This could happen to a staff member.

Rape is a risk in any society at all times. However, in theory aid agencies should have a fair idea of the countries where rape constitutes a higher risk for aid workers than others: Sierra Leone and Afghanistan as compared with Sri Lanka, for example. Too often the lack of risk analysis and poor incident reporting mean that impressionistic assessments are more common than informed ones. There are, however, general contributing factors which heighten risk, even without focused inquiry: the presence of many young men with access to arms; war or

conflict in which rape has often been used as a weapon of war; in a conservative society which restricts contact between unmarried men and women, etc. Where it is common practice to extort sexual favours, the risk of rape may be reduced as certain men have other means of dominating women sexually; on the other hand, it signals a habit of abusing power to physically abuse a woman.

12.2.2 Risk Mapping and Patterns

Focused risk analysis will identify places, times, situations and categories of people that constitute a higher risk. You will also assess if there are certain groups or individuals that are more likely to commit sexual assault and rape than others. Areas of higher risk may include districts in which militia operate; the area surrounding a refugee camp or the periphery of the camp; certain neighbourhoods in the town or city; prisons (men and women detained in police stations or in prison are often the victim of rape); certain types of hotels; or private residences. There may be certain times when risk is heightened: after dark; during great festivities and celebrations; at the time of aid distributions; at the time when women go to the bush to collect water or firewood or to go to the toilet; when armed groups are fleeing in defeat; or when victorious but revengeful troops enter the town they have just captured, etc. There may also be certain categories of people at higher risk: your local staff or a certain ethnic group; local female staff who have been relocated and are living in an environment where they have few or no social ties; Western women; widows or female heads of household; teenage girls because they are believed to be less likely to be HIV-infected, and so on. Certain groups may also constitute a higher risk: the paramilitary compared to the regular police, for example; government soldiers compared to rebel movements; demobilised and unemployed soldiers; armed robbers whose primary intent is to steal but who will often rape if they find a woman in the residence.

12.2.3 Sources of Information

Rape is generally a taboo subject among local people, expatriate aid staff and rape victims alike. It is therefore not always easy to obtain reliable information. Possible sources include local female staff; local women's activist groups; human rights organisations and human rights lawyers; women's groups in refugee camps; expatriates with good contacts in the community such as religious workers or long-term aid workers; security focal points at embassies. It may not always be advisable to ask straightforward questions; rather, be sensitive and move the conversation to the subject discreetly. An informative approach would be to ask local authorities and local health centres for statistics:

their reactions will give you an indication of the sensitivity surrounding the subject; they could also lead to a discussion about legal requirements and local responses to sexual violence and set you on the road to finding out about legal and medical resources.

12.2.4 Reducing Vulnerability

Measures by the individual

The general recommendations about personal competence with regard to security (Chapter 18), ie, low profile and 'determined' appearance, are also relevant here.

Female staff should generally dress inconspicuously and adopt a low profile approach as and when necessary. However, it is also important to display clear determination, familiarity with their environment and self-confidence. This will give the impression to anyone watching the staff member that she cannot be easily surprised or overwhelmed.

Personal appearance is a sensitive issue as it is regarded as within the private realm. At the same time women's hairstyles, dress and behaviour can be misinterpreted by others in terms of being seen as overtly sexual. This happens in all societies. Both male and female staff members need to adopt a culturally sensitive approach to appearance which could be viewed as being more 'modest'. In certain cultural contexts this will make male and female staff more socially acceptable. This will facilitate their work and perhaps contribute to reduced vulnerability to assault.

In addition, a whistle or other form of personal alarm may help to deter the 'opportunistic' rapist (eg, the solitary and unarmed burglar). So too pepper spray or tear gas. But remember that these could also be used against the intended victim. Where rapists are armed and operate in numbers, such devices are unlikely to be of much help.

Measures by the organisation

Be careful about which hotels female staff stay in, insist on a room that offers maximum protection from intruders, or simply adopt a policy of lodging female staff with colleagues or in host families. Normal residence security should be observed (Chapter 9). Gender identifications (Miss, Mrs, Ms, or a recognisable female first name) should not be put outside the residence or in the telephone directory. Perhaps employ a male housekeeper to answer the door during the day. If using an answerphone, a male voice should record the outgoing message.

Women receiving anonymous calls should report this to the office. It might be a good idea to adopt an incremental strategy depending on whether or not the calls persist: have a male pick up the phone for a while; report the incidents to the telephone company; change the telephone number; change the residence.

Possible incremental policy measures could include:

- **Agency transport:** Female staff considered at risk (international and/or national) could be picked up at home and returned from work in an agency vehicle. Where a female staff member lives alone or stays in a hotel, instruct the driver or other person accompanying her to take her to the door of the residence and perhaps even to check the house or flat to make sure no intruder is waiting.
- **Constant accompaniment:** You may institute a policy whereby female staff do not move around on their own, but are either in groups or accompanied by a male staff member – both during work but also when going to or coming from the airport, when on a morning jog, or at the weekend when going shopping or going out. The accompanist could be another woman or a man. Clearly the accompanying male should be trustworthy and of known loyalty.
- **Policies to prevent isolation:** Make sure that your policies and practice are such that, in a hostile environment, everything is done to prevent a female staff member from being isolated, even for a short period of time.

Case Study: Being Aware of the Threat of Rape

During the war in Bosnia an international aid organisation helped evacuate local people from Srebrenica. As usual, all buses were checked by Serb forces. During one such inspection a young local Muslim female staff member was ordered out of the bus to 'have her papers inspected'. She returned half an hour later but had been raped. It is not known whether the international staff members on the bus tried to insist that she should not go by herself, but this would have been the recommended good practice.

- **Differential security procedures** can be adopted for male and female staff in high-risk areas. For example, no female staff should stay overnight in a project area even if the male staff do. Such measures tend to be contested as 'discriminatory'. Their intent, however, is to reduce an identified risk, not to discriminate. One perspective would hold that individuals, when fully informed of the risk, should be able to make their own decisions. Another perspective is that the repercussions of an incident go beyond the individual

and would affect the operations of the agency as a whole, which justifies the agency taking the final decision.

- Female staff could be **relocated** away from high-risk neighbourhoods or camp areas.
- There can also be **withdrawal or preventive evacuation** of female staff at times of higher risk – for example, when opposing armed groups are fighting for the control of a town where your agency has a project and where the defeated and/or the victors may engage in rape.
- In high-risk countries or areas a policy of last resort may be **not to deploy female staff members**. However, this is obviously drastic and will have serious repercussions in terms of accessing women through your programmes.

These policies can be selectively applied depending on your assessment of your vulnerability. For example, you might decide to adopt such measures for national female staff only rather than international ones, for the younger women, or for women of a certain ethnic identity, etc.

12.3 Surviving Sexual Assault and Rape

The available guidelines on this are very much based on Western psychological models. These may or may not have relevance for non-Western people. It is recommended that you discuss this with your national (non-Western) staff in a sensitive way.

12.3.1 Experiencing Sexual Aggression

Preserving life

There is no general rule on how to behave when faced with the imminent threat of sexual assault and rape. The most common reactions are:

- **Active resistance:**
 - screaming; blowing the car horn; shouting for help;
 - running away;
 - fighting back.
- **Passive resistance:**
 - talking to the assailant to try and make him change his mind (knowing a few sentences in the local language would help greatly in this regard).

What happens and what the staff member does will depend on the circumstances (if there is a gradual build-up of the threat; how many assailants there are; if they are armed; where the attack happens; if there is help nearby, etc) and on her personality and preparedness.

The key message to staff should be: Protect and preserve your life.

If there is no way out survival should be the priority, followed by minimising the physical and psychological harm that is done during the sexual assault or rape. This may mean 'accepting' that submission is forced, and not resisting.

Psychosomatic responses and survival mechanisms

The following can be discussed proactively with staff at risk:

- **Do not face the attacker:** There are two reasons for this. First, the attacker may fear later recognition and decide to kill his victim. Second, the victim may 'see' in her mind the face of her attacker for many years to come, which can make it harder to survive the event.
- **Psychological defence mechanisms:** As in other acute security situations it is likely that psychological defence mechanisms will be active. These differ between people, and frequently include:
 - dissociation: it is as if the victim is watching a film and experiences it as an observer;
 - denial: a 'this is not happening to me' message goes through the victim's head;
 - suppression: an 'it will be over in a few minutes; this is not the end of the world' message goes through the victim's head;
 - rationalisation: a 'poor characters; what a cheap way of satisfying your need to feel power to fight your little war, but you can't really hurt me' message goes through the victim's head.

While these are healthy survival mechanisms to adopt during the attack they should not mislead the victim into believing that she has not been deeply hurt.

- **Physical reactions:** There can also be physiological or psychosomatic responses during or immediately after a rape such as vomiting, hyperventilating, urinating, choking, losing consciousness, etc. These are normal reactions to the psychological and physical experience of being 'invaded' and having one's most intimate boundaries violated.

It is not recommended to discuss the fact that prolonged rape, such as a gang rape that lasts a whole night, may defeat the initial psychological defence mechanisms and stimulate a profound 'mental numbness' which is more a direct expression of deep psychological trauma. Such a message will not enhance 'preparedness' and may actually undermine the victim's ability to cope with the threat or with the occurrence. Those likely to provide immediate support, however, should be aware of it.

Report the attack

It is a common response to not want to mention to anybody that one has been sexually assaulted or raped. The survivor may feel shame and guilt and also fear the reactions of family, friends and colleagues. This is a normal reaction, and an understandable one. At the same time s/he runs medical risks and will have been deeply hurt. Not mentioning anything to anybody deprives the survivor of the possibility of getting medical assistance and psychological support, which will help recovery and start the long process of healing. If there is a persistent risk but no alert then not reporting what happened may also contribute to other women/men getting raped.

12.3.2 Witnessing a Sexual Assault

Attention also needs to be paid to the people, often men, who are forced by the assailants to 'witness' rape. This applies to civilians as well as to agency staff. Male civilians and aid workers can be forcibly prevented from stopping the rape of their mother, wife or daughter taking place in another room or in their vicinity, and can even be forced to watch it. This risk is real, and awareness and preparedness need to be created. Those who witness such an event will also require competent support.

The key message is the same: Protect and preserve life.

Staff should be advised:

- To try and make those threatening rape change their mind by talking to them, and by insisting that they cannot leave the woman alone.
- If their active or passive resistance becomes life-threatening they should not persist. No-one is helped if the witnesses are badly injured or killed; if violence is used first against male colleagues or relatives there is a greater chance that it will subsequently be used against the woman during or after the rape. Colleagues in such situations should be advised to avoid provoking the assailants into unnecessary violence, but rather focus on preparing themselves mentally to help and support the rape victim(s) when the attack is over.

- Being unable to prevent a rape is in itself a deeply shocking experience, apart from the mortal fear for the witness's own life that the situation may evoke. The witness will have to deal with his/her own emotions afterwards. As mentioned above, concentrating on how best to support the rape survivor immediately after the attack can be a strong coping mechanism during the ordeal.

12.4 Crisis Management

There are four major areas that need careful and competent management following sexual assault and rape: psychological support, medical support, legal issues, and communications. All of these need to be initiated immediately and simultaneously, which is easier when you have a prepared team of two or three.

12.4.1 Psychological Support

The key messages for those providing immediate support are: create a sense of safety, empathy and positive support. It will also be important to provide support to possible 'witnesses' and the rest of the team. The key person providing the support should be someone with maturity and sensitivity, who the victim trusts. This is not per definition the manager.

Restoring a sense of safety

A rape victim is a person who has been aggressed. It will be important to find a place where she can rest and recover with a sense of total safety and security. This sense will be influenced by physical location, which must feel secure, and by those surrounding the victim. An expatriate can be relocated in-country or to a neighbouring country. A national staff member may want, or have, to stay because of social and/or economic reasons. The person affected is best placed to indicate where she feels safest and most secure, so consult with her.

Also consult with her about companionship. She may want to isolate herself with her grief, shame and guilt. It will be important, however, to balance respect for privacy with a supportive presence in order to prevent the victim from going into a negative spiral of isolation at a time when she is highly vulnerable. Ask her whom she feels most comfortable with and trusts. This person can be in the vicinity and maintain close contact.

Try to limit the intake of caffeine and nicotine; ensure rest and good sleep, and that nutritious food is eaten and regular exercise taken. This will help restore a sense of physical balance which will aid psychological recovery. In the first few days a biological reaction, for example, to the adrenaline pumped up

during the assault, may make it difficult for her to relax. Medicine or, if nothing else is available, the controlled use of alcohol may help the victim get through the day.

Empathy

Immediate emotional responses following rape can vary. The survivor might cry a lot and suffer from feelings of acute anxiety; she could be agitated and hysterical. On the other hand, she might be very calm and apparently composed, wanting to carry on as normal as if nothing had happened.

The most common feelings following a sexual assault or rape (for men as well as women) are:

- **Fear:** of being alone and/or of being in a crowd; of reminders of the event; of men in general; of going to sleep because s/he suffers nightmares, etc.
- **Guilt:** for having 'caused' the rape; by getting into that situation; by dressing the way she did; for not resisting more or for resisting too much; for 'engaging in sex' (with someone other than her partner).
- **Shame:** feeling 'dirty'; humiliated; fearing people can 'tell' that s/he has been raped;
- **Anger:** at the assailants; at the society they belong to; at colleagues and the organisation; at herself.
- **Lack of trust:** in others in general; in men in particular; in her own ability to make judgements.
- **Powerless and depression:** loss of control over her own body; over her emotional well-being; over her life.

Each person is unique so each victim should be helped to recognise and express their feelings as they experience them.

You will need to convey that all these reactions, which can also alternate, are normal. Being supportive will mean finding a balance between calming the person down when agitated (with the message that this is something one can survive and live through) and gently refusing to go along with an attitude of denial that pretends everything is 'normal' when clearly it is not.

Positive support

Your attitude in attempting to be supportive is very important:

- Empathise with the survivor and help her identify and recognise her own emotions. However, don't impose on her.

- Avoid any statements or non-verbal communications that could imply blame or criticism. The survivor is already likely to blame herself. There is no discussion about who is to blame: the rapist(s). While the survivor may have increased her vulnerability by certain actions, she did not 'ask' to be attacked and did not consent to what happened.
- Allow the survivor to be in control as much as possible. Experiencing sexual assault and rape is disempowering, both in a physical and a psychological sense. Do not reinforce that experience and make it difficult for the survivor to regain control however much you want to protect her. Always ask, consult, and seek her consent rather than making decisions on her behalf. Do not be surprised if the survivor suddenly has an emotional outburst against you and says hurtful things that you do not deserve: you may have unknowingly put pressure on her by something you said or did. Enquire if that is the case. Alternatively it may simply be an expression of the emotions the victim feels towards others which suddenly get projected onto you. Don't take it personally.

Key Messages for the Survivors of Sexual Aggression

- The attack was not about sex but about power.
- You are not to blame, the assailant is to blame.
- You are not alone. There are people who support you and love you, and there are other people who have gone through the same experience.
- You can survive this and recover from it. This may take some time and needs attention, but this is not the end of your life or happiness.

Dealing with couples

If the survivor has a partner present in the field that person will also need to be supported whether or not s/he was present at the time of the assault. Three aspects will influence the situation and shape the support you give:

- i. the cultural backgrounds of the partner and the survivor;
- ii. the personality of the partner;
- iii. the length and strength of the relationship.

The fact that one's partner has been sexually aggressed is a very difficult experience. It can yield a variety of emotions, simultaneously or alternating: guilt for not having been able to prevent it; anger at the aggressors, but also anger at the victim for having put herself in a vulnerable position; denial and a

refusal to accept that it has happened; rejection and a wish not to continue a relationship with someone who has been 'taken' by another and who – implicitly – may have humiliated the (male) partner. Rather than facing these impulsive emotions, which are not only strong but also difficult to accept, the reaction could be, or become, one of pushing away the source of the 'problem' and unease, that is, the victim.

The couple may be from different cultural backgrounds. Whereas under 'normal' circumstances the cultural differences may not matter much, sexual violence touches upon deeper and more intimate beliefs and attitudes which are also culturally and socially shaped. Both may discover that they have different perspectives on sexuality, sexuality in a relationship, sexual violence, and dealing with traumatic events, of which they were not previously aware. The result may be different reactions and expectations, and difficulties in communication and understanding. This only adds to the stress.

The event will also prove a test of the strength and depth of the relationship. If it is a mature one in terms of the depth of commitment, mutual understanding and experience, it is more likely that the partners will be able to support each other. When the relationship is newer, less clearly committed or with less profound mutual understanding this may be more difficult, and the survivor and/or the partner may actually be more hesitant and uncomfortable about being together. The event may therefore initiate the end of the relationship.

It is important to support and manage this aspect of rape survival and recovery constructively. For example:

- ask the survivor if and when she wants to see her partner;
- you should discuss with the partner what a rape survivor is likely to experience, and what attitudes and messages can be helpful;
- you should also provide support for and/or help the partner to see clearly in his/her impulsive emotional reactions.

If the couple are close and find support in each other, you can take a step back. If, however, the event and the subsequent situation create stresses and make communication difficult between them you may have to step in and constructively manage their interaction.

Support for the rest of the team

As mentioned before, those who were present and unable to prevent the aggression will also need support. If what has happened is known to a larger

segment of the team you will have to attend to the sense of shock, disorientation, depression, anger and confusion that this may cause in the wider group. It is not inconceivable that other members of the team have been victims of rape in the past. Depending on their own healing process they may or may not be well placed to provide support for the new survivor. If the incident reawakens their own traumas they will then require support themselves.

Helping the helpers

Providing this support is stressful and demanding. Those doing so should also monitor their own emotions, which may become turbulent. They should find someone they can share their feelings with confidentially, and who has the maturity to talk the 'helper' through constructively.

12.4.2 Medical Care

A person may have suffered injury as a result of violence used by the assailant, and is further at risk from involuntary pregnancy and infectious disease. The following steps can be taken, but only after consultation with and agreement from the victim.

Post-coital contraception

Post-coital contraception (morning-after pill) can be administered within 72 hours of intercourse. The decision to take it or not rests with the person concerned but should not await the results of a pregnancy test which is generally not reliable within this short time span.

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)

Medication can be taken to prevent chlamydia, gonorrhoea and trichomonas. If it is not known whether the assailant is HIV positive you must assume he was, and care needs to be taken during the medical treatment of the survivor. The risk of contracting HIV increases if penetration was violent and caused tissue damage. No preventive medication which is 100 per cent certain exists. Some agencies offer medication that consists of a combination of AZT/3TC, to be started within 72 hours and continued for four weeks on the basis that it may help. The medication can cause side-effects such as stomach aches, nausea, headaches, liver inflammation, etc, and must only be taken under medical supervision. Medical tests for STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) and HIV have to be repeated intermittently for up to a year after the incident.

Hepatitis B

If the rape victim is not immune due to prior Hepatitis B infection, and has not received a complete Hepatitis B vaccine series, then vaccination should be offered. This is effective when started within 14 days of exposure. Additional protection can be gained from Hepatitis B immunoglobuline.

12.4.3 Forensic Evidence and Legal Pursuit

Forensic evidence admissible in court

If legal proceedings are desired, prosecution would be in the country where the assault occurred. It is important to understand that prosecution in court requires medical evidence; and to be acceptable, such medical evidence needs to be collected and handled under certain prescribed conditions.

You will need to seek a reliable and experienced lawyer in advance. The embassy may help you find one. You need to find out from the lawyer:

- i. who has the legal authority to collect forensic evidence in the case of rape;
- ii. what forensic evidence is admissible in the prosecution of a rape;
- iii. what procedures of collection, examination and storage must be followed to ensure that the evidence will be admissible.

If a recognised medical professional is required you may want to identify one (preferably a female) before any such incident occurs.

This whole process is a delicate matter and requires sensitive handling. Two key principles are:

1. Forensic evidence should not be collected *without first informing the victim fully of why it is being done and what, in practice it consists of, and without her – written – consent.*
2. Collecting the evidence as required does not commit the victim to future legal action but preserves the possibility if, at a later time, she decides to do so.

Common evidence would consist of the victim's clothes (without washing), pubic hair, evidence of genital or other injury, and semen stains. Three common problems in collecting this evidence are:

1. The victim wants to wash and change her clothes as soon as possible because she feels dirty and stained. She may want to destroy everything that reminds her of the ordeal. This does not destroy all evidence, but will make it more difficult to collect.

2. Certain evidence, such as semen stains, vaginal secretions and evidence of genital injury, may require a medically trained person and the appropriate equipment to collect.
3. The evidence has to be sealed, handled and stored in a correct and appropriate manner, for example, in paper not plastic bags, sealed and marked; some of it needs to be refrigerated. There should be a minimum of transfers and people handling the evidence and a log kept of who handled it when (the chain of custody of specimens must be preserved). Often time limits are legally imposed within which the evidence must be collected and examined if it is to remain admissible in court.

Reporting to the police

The question of whether or not to inform the police is also sensitive. Ask your legal adviser in advance what the procedures and time limits are with regard to making a declaration to the police. Inquire if it is possible (ie, within the prescribed legal time limits) to collect the forensic evidence to 'keep the options open' without immediately going to the police, thereby giving the victim more time to reflect upon the course of action she will eventually follow.

Obtaining official documentation might seem bureaucratic, insensitive and less of a priority, yet it may turn out to be important at a later stage, for example:

- if the victim decides to press charges and initiate prosecution;
- to access legal abortion;
- to obtain HIV treatment at an affordable price.

If a child is born, a record of the birth may be required to access child support services at a later date. This may be particularly relevant for staff from countries with more 'conservative' legal and social welfare systems. All documentation should be kept in a safe, locked place.

Case Study: A Second Traumatic Experience

It is not uncommon for the victim to suffer a second trauma as a result of insensitive treatment by the police. In one case a female expatriate aid worker was sexually assaulted during aid work overseas. No one in the (well-established) organisation knew what to do immediately after the incident – not her female field manager or the human resource team at headquarters. The next day she was sent, alone, to her embassy to report the incident. The embassy sent her to the local police accompanied by the embassy security officer, a national. Once at the police station, four

armed policemen interrogated her asking detailed questions about the incident. When she hesitated to answer the difficult questions they accused her of lying. During the interrogation other policemen kept coming in for a 'look' as they were curious. The police undertaking the interrogation insisted that she show them her injuries before she was allowed to leave the station. They then insisted on her taking them to the place of the incident for a 're-enactment', which they claimed was essential to the investigation. No real investigation ever took place. The assailant was never caught and the survivor learned later that is very rare for anyone in that country to be tried or convicted of sexual assault. Her experience at the police station was effectively a second assault and resulted in a second trauma.

A well-informed and trusted individual should always accompany the survivor to the police station, whether a lawyer, medical professional, or whoever. This then becomes part of the agency's 'protection' strategy to ensure that the survivor is not intimidated or further victimised at any stage, that interviews are conducted in a language that can be understood, and that the appropriate documentation and assistance are provided. It involves making interventions when the survivor's rights and dignity are not respected. The protection function is all the more important when someone in a position of authority is implicated as an assailant: a local official, an influential person, or even one of your own staff members who, for example, abused his authority over the distribution of relief supplies to extract sexual favours. It is essential that the protector assumes the identity of an organisational representative and is not perceived as acting in his/her individual capacity.

Prosecution

The decision to prosecute should be made by the survivor, who needs to be able to make an informed choice. To assist this decision making process the manager has to inquire about the practical details of an arrest and court proceedings: Will the victim have to identify a suspect before he can be charged? How does this take place in practice? Can a suspect be released on bail? Does the victim have to testify in court, possibly in front of the defendant? Can the prosecution proceed if the victim does not reside permanently in the country, or will it involve her having to return several times? What are the penalties if the assailant is convicted? Given the facts of the case, what are the chances of conviction?

As a manager you also need to consider the possible security implications for the survivor and for other staff members if a prosecution takes place – and if it

does not take place. Bringing and pressing charges may expose the survivor, her relatives, and/or those supporting and accompanying her to further threat and aggression.

12.4.4 Confidentiality and Alerting Others to the Threat

From a management point of view sexual assault and rape should be treated as a medical emergency and as a security threat.

Medical confidentiality

As a medical emergency (medical in a broader sense than purely physical), the survivor can and must enjoy medical confidentiality. This is often additionally guaranteed by law (eg, by the Privacy Act in the US). The purpose of confidentiality is to make it possible for the person seeking medical help to discuss their medical and psychological concerns and problems openly and completely. Feelings of shame, guilt, humiliation and the fear of being judged by others will play a role in terms of the survivor wanting to keep her experience as private as possible. This is a legitimate concern.

Even if it is known that someone has been sexually assaulted, the survivor will not want the details to be widely known and discussed. It will therefore be the responsibility of the whole team, the manager and the organisation, to protect the individual identity of the victim and the confidentiality of the details of the ordeal. The manager must undertake immediate action to:

- ensure that other staff members do not mention the incident. It is advisable to give them a 'standard line' that they can use if questions are asked (eg, I cannot answer this question, please contact the resident representative);
- establish a direct line of communication with a designated focal point at headquarters. Communications between the field and headquarters should be managed and controlled and should not involve a series of intermediaries or a large number of 'alternates'. The situation should not be discussed where one can be overheard;
- take proactive action towards the press if it seems that the incident will get press coverage, impressing on editors and journalists not to use the full name of the victim, at most only the initials.

It is advisable to agree upon a code name, a code word or a case number as standard reference in the conversation instead of the victim's name.

Alert to a threat

There is a common, and dangerous, confusion between rape as a medical emergency and as a security threat. This has led to the current practice in which rape incidents are simply not mentioned among aid agencies in the field. The net result can be that other women, unaware, remain exposed to high-risk and may suffer what was, in many respects, an avoidable rape.

The Obligation to Sound the Alert

A number of organisations have field offices in a city that is outside the war zone of the country but where there are tensions between the local population and the de facto authorities, who are seen as an 'occupying force'. After nearly 20 years of war many male civilians have been brutalised and are armed. One night, three armed robbers break into a residence. While there they also rape an expatriate woman while her colleague is held at gunpoint. The woman is repatriated, but in order to protect her the agency decides not to mention the incident. Three weeks later armed robbers again break into the residence of expatriate aid workers of another agency. This agency subsequently reports that the expatriate woman was threatened with rape but that one of the robbers had stopped his fellow robbers with the argument that they 'had not come for that'. The staff are shaken and the agency decides to withdraw them from the city. Only now does the first actual rape become more widely known about among a number of agencies operating in the city, and only now are steps taken to control the vulnerability of staff.

It must be understood and explained to the rape victim that failing to make any mention of the incident could actually prevent others from being alerted, and thus be a contributory factor to other women getting raped. The strategy therefore should be one in which the confidentiality of the victim is protected, while the alert is sounded to prevent others from suffering the same ordeal.

Handover: It will be important to write a full report which can be handed over to an incoming manager. The new manager may have to continue to follow the legal pursuit of the attack, and will have to deal with the longer term emotional effects that the incident has had on remaining staff.

The embassy: It is advisable to inform the embassy even if you do not seek their assistance. The embassy can be a locus of 'institutional memory'. If you do not require diplomatic or direct legal assistance from them it will be possible to report without disclosing the identity of the victim.

The family: The responsibility for dealing with the victim's family will lie with headquarters unless the victim's partner and possibly her children are also in the country of operations, as would certainly be the case for national staff. You must seek the advice and consent of the victim about this. She must be allowed to decide who will know how much, and when and who will tell what happened. In the case of a repatriation, however, a reason will have to be given to the family, and close consultation with the victim is required for this. If the press takes up the incident a more proactive approach towards the family will be required, with the organisation probably designating a contact person who relates regularly and closely with the family, as in the case of kidnapping (Chapter 13).

12.5 Recovering

12.5.1 Surviving

People recover from the experience of rape even if they never forget it. Most go through a difficult and sometimes traumatic period but eventually learn that these difficult emotions are part of their personal history and are not an obstacle to leading a fulfilling life. Recovery takes time, sometimes years, and requires personal effort and support from others. If a rape survivor continues in post, as would almost certainly be the case for national staff, it is important that the managers are aware that the experience may result in symptoms of prolonged concentration difficulties, for example.

12.5.2 Organisational Commitment

Aid organisations are often unable to provide long-term support, especially if the survivor leaves the organisation. It is the responsibility of headquarters, not of the field manager, to clarify what can realistically be expected from the organisation and what not. Sometimes former colleagues who lived through or were present at the time of the rape stay in contact and form an informal 'support group'. Otherwise there are rape survivor support groups and the organisation can help by providing information and guidance about these.

The recovery process evolves over time: the experience of the survivor will change which means that the management/support issues will also have to change. This is beyond the scope of this GPR but you should get specialist advice on it.

12.6 Cultural Differences

It is important to recognise the cultural differences in 'coping'. The Western approach is centred on the individual and on talk therapy whereby the survivor is helped to put the incident and her emotions and reactions in perspective. But people with different cultural backgrounds or worldviews may deal differently with the experience of sexual violence. For example, it may affect not only their psychological well-being but also their social future, for instance, their ability to marry or to continue life as a nun. They may seek to forget rather than 're-frame' the experience by means of acknowledging their emotions, or seek a ritual transformation perhaps with the help of a traditional healer. In addition, sexual violence, particularly in the context of wider persistent violence, may be dealt with much more from a political and social perspective rather than an individual psychological one.

What are considered as 'supportive' attitudes, therefore, may also differ culturally. In Western culture the survivor is encouraged to talk; in another culture she may be discouraged from recalling the experience by talking about it and people may actively seek to 'distract' her. You need to be open and sensitive to other ways of 'healing' when dealing with people who do not come from a Western individualistic background.

12.7 Preparation and Training

At organisational level

- An aid organisation that deploys staff in an environment where rape is a risk must be able to mobilise expert and effective support to field managers dealing with rape victims. If this expertise cannot be developed or retained in-house it must be readily accessible from external sources.
- As a matter of policy, all expatriate staff members (not only women) should be informed about the risk of rape prior to signing the contract rather than merely prior to deployment.
- Good organisational practice should include clear policy statements about what support a rape victim can expect from the organisation, and how the organisation intends to reconcile the need for the protection of confidentiality with the need to alert others to the threat. This should be specific in terms of how far the organisation is prepared

Continued...

to go: will it pay for an abortion; for a lawyer if the survivor decides to prosecute; for the travel and accommodation if a survivor returns from abroad to the country where the trial takes place etc?

- There should be detailed guidelines for field managers and, whether male or female, they should be prepared to deal with a rape situation through training and simulation.

At field level

- Managers are advised to consult and discuss with staff the threat of rape, and the basic guidelines for proper conduct as suggested in this chapter. At field level, if rape is no longer ignored or discussion of it seen as taboo, and if staff are sensitised to the risk and the requirements for proper support, it will become much easier to employ measures to handle the situation should it arise.
- It will be important to discuss with staff from other cultural backgrounds what protocol and support they find most appropriate. Local female staff may be less able to control outcomes and therefore more reticent about reporting sexual violence within the agency, and very concerned about confidentiality.
- In your senior management team discuss who can and might handle the various aspects of the immediate crisis management.
- In a high-risk area couples should be advised to discuss between themselves their understanding of sexual aggression and their mutual expectations in case it happens to one of them.
- As a rule, detailed knowledge should be sought about legal requirements and police and judicial practices and specialist medical support identified. This knowledge will then be in place if an incident occurs.
- If post-coital contraception and other specialised medication is not readily available from medical institutions in your operational area, you should ensure that these are somehow at hand.

At individual level

Individual aid workers, and especially women, need to examine their own preparedness. Women usually have a heightened awareness of the risk of sexual aggression wherever they are but it is important to note that in conflict-ridden environments there may be a higher risk of gang rape, of aggravated assault (ie, being threatened by weapons), and of HIV infection as a result of rape.

- It is important to recognise your own emotional strengths and limitations: can you cope with the risk? Would you be able to survive emotionally and recover from the experience?
- Will you be prepared to observe security measures intended to control the risk for you, even if they feel like an infringement of your personal liberty or equal rights?
- Consider, in advance, how you would deal with your partner, your family, perhaps your children, if you get raped? Could you discuss the risk and the subsequent scenario with your partner and find clarity about what you expect/can expect from each other, so that this does not become an additional worry and anxiety?
- Knowing some sentences in the local language may be critical in changing the intent of a potential assailant. Get some language training and discuss perhaps with local female staff what you could try and say or do when threatened.
- A more extreme form of preparation, as with other types of threat, would be to submit yourself to a simulated scenario (of the threat of sexual aggression) in order to gauge how you would respond and to hopefully reduce the shock of surprise and the sense of debilitating panic if you find yourself confronted with a real-life threat. Self-defence courses in Western countries are perhaps not really appropriate for the type of situation expatriates may find themselves in elsewhere. Simulations can be emotionally very powerful, and you must anticipate that you are likely to feel a sense of being over-powered and humiliated.

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13 Detention, Arrest, Abduction, Kidnapping and Hostage Taking

13.1 What Sort of Disappearance?

When one or more staff members 'disappear', the first challenge for a field manager is to find out exactly what the situation is and what type of disappearance it is. It might take hours, and sometimes days and weeks, to become clear. Terms are used in different ways, but here we distinguish between detention, arrest, abduction, kidnapping and hostage-taking. All have in common the characteristic that people are deprived of their freedom of movement and could experience anything from polite pressure to a life threat, but the nature and/or motivation of the captors will not be the same. Therefore the crisis management strategies will not necessarily be the same.

13.1.1 Detention

Staff members are kept under the control of an individual or a group. While there is no serious threat to life, there is also no clear pre-condition for release.

Detention can occur quite frequently during aid work. Agency staff can be detained by a group of villagers, a local authority, or a group of soldiers/militia. Reasons that often trigger this situation are discontent with the project/programme of the agency itself or another agency (people often do not differentiate between agencies), resentment that others are receiving project aid rather than those detaining the staff members, or a concern for the 'security' of the staff members. Although the people detained have lost their freedom of movement they are by and large treated reasonably.

13.1.2 Arrest

This term is used to describe detention by government authorities (normally the police, but also the army) or the 'presumptive authorities'. What distinguishes it from straight detention is that we are dealing with official authorities so that, in principle, the law can be invoked. The situation can be more difficult and dangerous when the government authorities arrest someone 'extra-legally', ie, secretly. They may then deny the arrest and/or refuse to reveal the whereabouts of the detainee. Alternatively the person may have been arrested by a secret

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police force, possibly operating in unconstitutional and/or illegal ways. This happened frequently during the civil conflicts in Latin America from the 1950s to the 1980s.

Case Study: Detention Because of Discontent

In west Cambodia in the early 1990s, the local driver and vehicle of an international aid agency were held by a local Khmer Rouge (KR) group. The group demanded to speak to a foreigner or they would kill the driver. The only foreign staff member in the area office was a relatively inexperienced woman. The agency had no policy for managing this sort of situation, except to follow the advice of local staff, and there was no radio link to the country office in the capital to ask for advice. The woman decided to proceed to the KR-held village. Her decision was informed by the fact that, up to that time, no foreigners had been targeted by the KR, and by the consideration that she could not risk the life of the driver (local staff had advised against contacting the government military for fear that it might lead to a confrontation and the immediate killing of the driver).

The woman set off with a VHF radio that enabled her to keep in contact with the local office of another agency. As it turned out the KR were upset about what they perceived to have been 'broken promises' about providing wells, a school and a clinic in the area under their control. These promises had been made by another agency which, in the meantime, had withdrawn without further word. The driver, the expatriate woman and two other local staff accompanying her were held for six weeks during which time they were treated reasonably. Negotiations took place between the agency and the KR, first through a monk whom both sides knew well, and subsequently over the radio. The KR opportunistically shifted their demands fairly quickly to a large amount of money. The agency remained firm that it would not pay a ransom. In the end the staff were released in return for a promise of community aid to the KR-held area on a par with what was provided to other areas.

13.1.3 Abduction

This refers to the forcible capture and removal of a person in an illegal way, but which does not lead to any demand. There can be various reasons for abduction: the Khmer Rouge and the Burmese army often abducted local people for the purposes of forced labour; young men can be 'abducted' into the army as 'forced conscripts';

young girls can be abducted and forced into 'marriage' or used as sexual slaves; or people are abducted for political reasons. In this last case they are often tortured and murdered – another frequent practice during the conflicts in Latin America.

13.1.4 Kidnapping

This refers to forced capture and detention with the explicit purpose of obtaining concessions from the captive or others associated with him/her. In this case the life and liberation of the kidnapped person is dependent upon the fulfilment of certain conditions. The concessions sought might be of a political nature (eg, the kidnap of a family member to force a politician not to stand for election, or of public figures to force a government to make legal concessions to the criminals), or they might be of an economic nature as part of an extortion tactic (eg, the kidnap of Basque business leaders who refuse to pay ETA) or simply for ransom. As the earlier example from Cambodia shows, a 'detention' can turn into a 'kidnapping'.

13.1.5 Hostage-taking

Kidnapping and hostage-taking are sometimes used interchangeably, but here the latter term is used to describe a situation of siege. In such a situation the criminals and their hostages have been located and surrounded by security forces; the criminals threaten the hostages as part of their strategy of escape. A kidnapping can turn into a hostage/siege situation when the security forces trace the kidnapers. However not every hostage situation is the result of a kidnapping. For example, criminals surprised during a robbery may decide on the spot to take some hostages to use in negotiating their escape.

13.2 Risk Reduction

In terms of reducing risk, a lot depends on the context and on where the threat comes from. Even then it is not always possible to anticipate and prevent such a situation occurring.

The type of detention referred to here can be prevented or at least quickly or fairly amicably resolved if you are aware of which areas and which groups benefit from aid and which do not and therefore might feel discriminated against, and consequently make sure that as many as possible in your areas of operations know who you are and what role you are playing. The way in which programmes are executed, and the interactional skills of programme staff, are important in this. Transparency, good communications, integrity and respectful attitudes help as well.

Abductions of social activists or perceived opposition figures, with the intention of torturing and/or murdering them, are not easy to prevent. Strategies used in Latin America often consisted of the person at risk going 'underground', staying with friends, regularly moving house, possibly changing appearance and, in extreme situations, being smuggled abroad. A less drastic form of protection consisted of constant accompaniment by foreign human rights/peace activists.

Humanitarian agency staff will not typically find themselves in this situation, though national staff may be potential targets. Abduction is a delicate issue, as the perception is that it is a political matter and aid agencies are wary of being seen to 'meddle' in local politics. This should not, however, be an argument for avoiding responsibility; a first step might be for the agency to clarify its ethical position and where it draws the line in terms of its responsibility in such a situation. The reverse can also happen: a person at risk could be recruited as a national staff member of an international aid agency as a strategy of protection. The effectiveness of this approach will depend on the perceived political importance of the person concerned and the influence or prestige of the agency's home government. In certain contexts this strategy can also be effective where categories of people rather than individuals are at risk, for example, young males at risk of being conscripted or abducted and murdered as supporters of, or sympathisers with, the 'enemy'.

The key question is whether membership of an (international) agency can override the social or political identity of the vulnerable person.

13.2.1 Strategies to Control Risk

In recent years attention has mainly focused on the kidnapping of aid workers (the situation in the northern Caucasus is a paradigmatic example). Strategies to control risk include the following:

Know the country you are going to

In the northern Caucasus, for example, kidnapping is a 'cultural tradition'. Past incidents have also revealed other countries to be higher risk, for example, Colombia, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Yemen, Tajikistan, Algeria.

Raise an immediate alert when a kidnapping is reported

Kidnapping, especially for ransom, is seen as a copycat crime; people realise that it is a quick way of making a lot of money and this leads to a rapid increase in kidnappings.

Put yourself under local protection

Foreigners may be a more desirable target for kidnapping (for ransom) because they are outside the local social system. Kidnapping a local person would mobilise large social groups into retaliation, particularly in countries/areas with strong clan or extended family dynamics and rules of collective responsibility. In environments where a host is responsible for the well-being of his guest and will mobilise his men to protect his guest as if he were one of his own, it might be a good idea to obtain local (traditional) protection. Likewise, taking respected 'elders' along when travelling may also offer a form of protection. Less drastic forms of this approach might include operating a policy of expatriate staff always having to be accompanied by a local person when they travel, and perhaps even co-residing with local staff. Only good knowledge of the context can say whether this tactic will reduce the risk rather than lead to a situation in which two or more staff members are kidnapped.

Reduce visibility

Expatriate aid workers have been kidnapped on their way to and from airports. Reducing visibility might mean staff travelling in a taxi rather than an easily identifiable agency vehicle. Of course, people have also been kidnapped by captors disguised as taxi drivers. You therefore need to make sure you have a bona fide taxi; otherwise use agency vehicles. If there is a suspicion that your radio communications can be overheard you could operate a policy of expatriate staff not identifying themselves when travelling. For example, only local staff might be allowed to talk over the radio (in their own language), as they would when travelling without an expatriate colleague. Information about movement plans, routes and travel times should be encoded (Chapter 16).

Reduce exposure

Reduction of visibility and exposure also extends to site protection measures, including avoiding a residence on the ground floor and strict rules for the identification of strangers (Chapter 9). A more drastic measure is to withdraw those staff members considered at risk. In the northern Caucasus, for example, as Chechnya became too dangerous, agencies moved their headquarters first to Nazran in Ingushetia and then even further to Vladikavkaz in north Ossetia.

Countersurveillance

In simple terms this means 'watch to see if someone is watching you'. A successful kidnapping normally needs planning, and the perpetrators will be watching the residence, office and movements of their identified target for some time before making their move. They may try to find out more about the residence by presenting themselves as a servicemen, or checking the locks of doors and windows while staff are away. They may follow you in a car to

establish your routines and identify the ideal point at which to strike. Countersurveillance means being observant of your surroundings and watching for anything unusual. Doing this effectively requires skill, but also constant attention and knowledge about the local environment to the extent that you have a feeling about who belongs in your locality and who does not.

Avoid routines

People perceived to be at risk should try and avoid routine behaviour. This is not easy to maintain and often the options are limited. They are also still likely to fall into a pattern, but a more complex one. While this offers no absolute guarantee it does make them a more difficult target. The kidnappers may therefore decide to focus on someone else.

Armed protection

This is a more extreme form of hardening yourself as a target. If you are at risk armed protection probably needs to be full-time: at the residence, office and during all movements; also during the weekend and leisure time! Be aware, however, of certain caveats: your armed guards may not turn out to be as effective as you thought – either because they find themselves surprised and outnumbered and are not ready to risk their own lives, or because they are part of a social environment in which killings between ‘locals’ lead to group mobilisation and therefore escalation, which they are not prepared to carry out on behalf of a foreigner.

Public policy of no ransom

Aid agencies are urged to make it publicly known that they will not pay ransom. It is hoped that this will act as a discouragement. However, its preventive value should not be overestimated. If business people are being kidnapped in the same environment and if the business community pays ransom, criminal gangs or so-called rebel movements may still try their chances with aid workers. Also, maintaining the policy becomes very difficult if the kidnappers are prepared to start maiming and killing their captives.

13.2.2 The Limits of Risk Reduction

Nothing short of removing those at risk from the risk environment, or possibly enlisting the protection of a very powerful local authority/social group, will provide ‘complete’ security. In the northern Caucasus even people under armed guard have been kidnapped from cars and from their residences. A well-prepared, determined, well-armed, brutal gang is hard to stop.

13.3 Crisis Management: Detention, Arrest and Abduction

13.3.1 Detention

In case of detention the key issue for those detained will be to negotiate skilfully. As situations can differ widely, no precise guidelines can be offered, but certain principles seem generally valid.

Calling upon national authorities or adopting a heavy-handed approach to this type of situation can be counterproductive, and can increase rather than decrease antagonism towards you.

13.3.2 Arrest

Guidelines: Negotiating Release from Detention

Focus on negotiating – not a settlement, but a way out.

- The objective of your negotiation should be permission for you to return to base.
- A conciliatory method of communication should be developed rather than becoming antagonistic – ie, steer the situation towards defusion rather than escalation.
- To this effect, listen to those detaining you and try to find out what really motivates them and what they want or hope for.
- Do not make promises in order to obtain a quick release, but be sympathetic to the captors’ requests and make it clear you are taking note of them and will follow them up. However, you should also indicate that you are not in a position to make final decisions or firm commitments. You can agree to meet again after you have returned to base and consulted with your colleagues.
- If the detention continues, or you cannot negotiate a way out, then make it clear that you have no decision making authority and must communicate with your headquarters. Negotiate to be able to be allowed to do this.

If a staff member is arrested and his/her whereabouts are unknown, the first priority is to establish where s/he is and under whose authority. For this you will

need to be assertive and to visit all relevant local authorities. You will also need to inform the embassy in the case of an international staff member, and to be very persistent and insistent that you must know where the person is.

When it is clear who has arrested the staff member and where s/he is, the objective of your action should be to ensure that the person's rights are protected. Insist on his/her right to be visited and to medical and legal assistance; also insist on improvements in the conditions in which s/he is being kept if these are not acceptable. People are often arrested without formal charges being brought, in which case you should focus on a charge being articulated within a determined period of time. The charge may relate to the individual (for example, the accusation that s/he has been involved in some kind of crime) or the organisation (for example, the accusation of spying under cover of humanitarian work). In the latter case you will need to refute the allegation and clear the name of the organisation, and/or argue the defence. Insist on due process of law and seek legal advice accordingly.

In the case of an arrest you will need to liaise with, and manage, the family in the way as you would had there been a kidnapping (see below). Indicate the steps you are undertaking, maintain a direct regular line of communication, remain aware of what steps the family intends or is undertaking, and advise and talk with them if you believe some of these may be counterproductive.

13.3.3 Abduction

As defined in this GPR, abduction is an extremely difficult situation: you may not know where the person is or who has abducted him/her. Moreover, even if you suspect who the perpetrators are you may have no way of contacting them, and even if contact could be established you may have no bargaining power as the staff member has not been abducted to obtain something from you.

If someone has been abducted by a(n unofficial) 'death squad', the strategy of attracting immediate high-level publicity may be tried. This will signal to the authorities that there is widespread international awareness about the fate of the person concerned and that his/her continued 'disappearance' or murder would seriously damage the (inter)national image of the official authorities who fail to establish or maintain the rule of law. This may require rapid cooperation with human rights and other advocacy organisations which are better organised to create that type of publicity. In other cases you may have little option but to disseminate information and an identification picture of the person abducted, and try to find someone who can eventually provide a lead or a contact.

13.4 Crisis Management: Kidnapping

The management of a kidnapping takes place at three levels: at the level of the individual kidnapped, at the field office and at agency headquarters. More than any other incident kidnapping requires specialised expertise. This commonly involves actors other than the agency and management beyond the moment of release.

13.4.1 Surviving a Kidnapping/Hostage Situation

Guidelines: Basic Knowledge and Key Principles for Surviving a Kidnapping/Hostage Situation

- The most dangerous moments are: during the abduction, when the abductee/s is moved hastily because the captors fear that the authorities are near, during a siege situation, and during release. At these particular times the kidnappers will feel threatened and tense and will therefore be more given to violence. Stay calm and avoid adding to the kidnappers' tension through your behaviour.
- During an abduction you will be very probably be blindfolded and sometimes beaten. This is to break down your mental resistance and signal the dire consequences of any attempt to escape or otherwise trick the captors. In addition you may be drugged. Do not resist these tactics, the purpose of which is to keep you quiet. Quietness will actually help you regain composure, pick up information about where you are and who your captors are, and adjust to the shocking change in your situation.
- The place and conditions in which abductees are held can vary widely. You may be kept in the same place or moved several times; you may be alone or with other captives. In some situations captives have walked with their captors for weeks through the bush or the mountains. Some are held in reasonable conditions, others are kept chained to a bed or a radiator. The captors may simply treat you as pawns to obtain something from someone else, or they may show strong hostility towards you and accuse you, for example, of being a spy. It is common for abductees to develop some sort of relationship with their guards and find it difficult to adjust as the guards' change. You should also expect to meet other local people and may be confined in a house where the

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owners live and bring you food. While these people may be sympathetic to you, they will not take steps to inform the authorities or aid your escape.

- Be prepared to be held for a long period. Some abduction/kidnap situations end quickly, others last for weeks and even months. You should also prepare for ill-treatment, both physically and psychologically, and sometimes consisting of false promises of imminent release and even of fake executions. It will be important to maintain an outward dignity.
- If you are in a group you should try not to be separated. Being confined with someone else in probably difficult circumstances and for a prolonged period of time creates its own pressures, but by and large the ability to share experiences with at least one other person will be a source of support. If you are kept together as a larger group identify a spokesperson, on the basis of ability rather than formal rank to liaise with the captors.
- Securing release is not your problem but that of your organisation. Remain confident that your organisation is doing everything possible on your behalf and at the same time providing support to your friends and relatives – even if you don't hear anything or your captors tell them otherwise. Do not try to escape unless you fear that your captors are planning to kill you, or when you are in good condition, have a good notion of your environment, and are fairly certain of success. Otherwise you may put your life at risk, as well as the lives of others if you are held captive in a group. Play on the fact that you are of most value to your kidnappers alive.
- Never get directly involved in the negotiations for your release. This will only complicate matters. If asked to talk on the radio, telephone or on video say only what you are asked or allowed to say and refuse to 'negotiate' even if pushed forward by your captors.

An attitude of passive cooperation

The same principles apply as for surviving an armed robbery. In other words:

- obey the orders of your captors without appearing servile;

- do not talk tough or threaten your captors; do not threaten to testify against them;
- be careful about eye contact especially during tense moments: eyes can show fear, anger or contempt which can trigger violence. On the other hand, face your captors (it is more difficult to harm someone who is facing you) but avoid making eye contact;
- avoid surprising or alarming your captors: always say what you intend to do and get permission even for something as simple as opening the window;
- keep a low profile and avoid appearing to seek clues to the identities of your captors or to be actively witnessing criminal acts;
- offer persuasive reasons why your captors should not harm you;
- adopt a calm and dignified attitude even if you don't feel that way;
- be conscious of your body language.

Building 'rapport' when the situation appears 'stabilised'

- insist on your humanitarian role, and explain the mandate and operational motives of your agency;
- do not argue politics or ideology with your captors;
- you may develop some sympathy for your captors' cause and point of view. However, remember that this does not justify your abduction/kidnapping;
- do not believe everything you are told by your captors, who will try to manipulate/destabilise you with good as well as bad news;
- try to build human rapport to generate sympathy as well as respect: do not beg, plead or cry, but do not hesitate to draw attention to human needs and ask for food, something to drink, the use of a toilet, washing facilities, a radio, things to read, etc;
- try to discuss family and children with your captors, ie, topics of mutual interest.

Maintaining physical and mental health

This is very important. You should:

- not give up your personal belongings such as clothes, wristwatch, spectacles, a ring, unless coerced to hand them over;

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- try to create 'structure' and 'order' in what will be a situation of disorientation, dependency and unpredictability: It is a good idea to organise 'living space', try to keep track of time, and try to establish a daily schedule;
- exercise daily, and stick to a daily fitness programme;
- try to maintain hygiene, stay well groomed and clean;
- maintain your strength by eating and drinking, and asking for palatable food;
- when necessary ask for medicines, books, writing paper, a radio, newspapers, etc;
- do not let your hopes soar when your captors indicate that your release might be imminent – it may simply be a lie or something may intervene;
- think positive, emphasise your values, focus on pleasant memories and scenes, recall plots of books and movies you enjoyed, etc;
- you may be deliberately subjected to humiliating or terrifying experiences such as mock executions. Try to come to terms with the fact that humiliation and fear of pain or death are very normal reactions, and that you should not lose hope.

Communicating

- be prepared to be ordered to speak into a cassette recorder, on the telephone or on the radio, and say only what you are told to say;
- ask whether you can write or send a message to your family in any other way, as well as whether you can receive messages from them;
- if you are 'shown' to one or more press people, bear in mind that the primary interest of the press is in a headline-making story and not in your release;
- avoid being drawn into the negotiation process.

The rescue operation

- try to avoid changing clothes, especially with your captors. This may put you at risk during a rescue operation;
- in the event of a rescue attempt, drop to the ground, seek cover, and keep your hands on your head;
- appropriate identify yourself and be prepared not to be immediately recognised by the rescuers who may handle you roughly until you are identified.

Case Study: Surviving a Kidnapping in Lebanon

In early 1988 an expatriate medical doctor was kidnapped from a refugee camp in Lebanon. He was released after 13 months. In the first few weeks he was treated reasonably: he was given fresh meat, a radio, and a French-language weekly. But the last six months were very difficult: he was moved to an underground cell of 2x3 meters and barely high enough to stand in; the radio and magazine were withdrawn; canned food replaced fresh food, and its quantity and quality deteriorated very much. Attempts were also made to disorient him: for two to three months he was kept in total darkness, then for a similar period in continuous light. The isolation and despair he experienced gave rise to feelings of wanting to commit suicide.

Throughout the ordeal it became personally important to him to keep track of time. This he succeeded in doing fairly well. Initially he had had the radio. Later the toilet-bucket became an aid: given his food intake it would take 10 to 11 days to fill up. Then there was the change in seasonal fruits, and the moment when a guard unexpectedly offered a few sweets with a 'Happy Christmas' in broken English. He realised this meant the end of Ramadan which in that year fell in mid-May. It also meant, depressingly, that he had already spent a year in captivity.

13.4.2 Organisational Management of a Kidnap Crisis

Managing a kidnap crisis is a dynamic process that can last from anywhere between a few hours and several years. It requires close collaboration between headquarters and the field office. Key issues are: the mobilisation of a competent crisis management team; dealing with the family, the authorities and the press; communications with the captors. This GPR highlights some major points for attention.

The critical incident report

A genuine kidnap or hostage situation cannot be managed at field level only. It requires extensive headquarters support. As soon as there is a suspicion or confirmation that a staff member has been kidnapped the field team should send a report with the information required by headquarters and others who will get involved.

Example of a Critical Incident Report Form

Information should be given on:

- the problem (person missing, confirmed kidnapped, arrested, held hostage);
- the victim (name, nationality, age, gender, position in the office, affiliation if staff of different organisations involved);
- next of kin (notified or not);
- what happened (what is known, what is speculation, what is not known);
- where it occurred, as exactly as possible;
- when it occurred, as exactly as possible;
- who did it (known, suspected, speculation, unknown);
- any contact with captors; what means of contact;
- what demands, if any;
- why it occurred (motive stated, speculation);
- who has been notified/who knows outside the organisation/who you propose to notify outside the organisation;
- what actions are under way or proposed;
- whether the press is aware of the incident;
- what the rest of the team know;
- other relevant facts, eg, the captive has an injury that prevents him from walking long distances, or can hardly see without glasses that were left behind in the flat, speaks the local language a little or not at all, has just arrived and is totally unfamiliar with local context and culture, etc;
- which channels for reliable and confidential communications are available with the field office, if any.

The crisis management teams

The field office will set up an incident management team, possibly with someone from headquarters coming down. Headquarters will also mobilise its crisis management team which has overriding authority – ie, the field team does not take decisions or initiatives without headquarters' approval. It is generally easier for headquarters to maintain a 'strategic perspective', and the withdrawal of authority from the field creates an obligatory time lag between requests from the captors and your response – a vital interval for reflection. A 'hot line' will be established between the field office and headquarters.

Kidnap crisis management is initially a full-time job. Staff involved need to be released from their other duties and shielded from unnecessary intrusions so that they can concentrate on the task. They will need their own working space and facilities. They will monitor the situation on a daily basis, and decide on and review policy towards the captors, the family, the authorities, the press, the other agencies. They will need regular rest and relaxation, and support during and after the crisis.

Note that maintaining a coordinated crisis management strategy is a major challenge – especially if people of several nationalities are kidnapped at the same time or are held by the same captors.

Chaos or Coordination in Interagency Crisis Management

Imagine a situation in which an interagency team travelling together is kidnapped. It comprises a Finnish national working for UNICEF, a Turkish national working for UNHCR, a Belgian working for MSF-Holland, an Australian working for CARE International, and a French national, seconded by the French Red Cross through the International Federation to the national Red Cross society.

Individual agency approaches clearly risk undermining each other or giving the captors room to play one off against the other. The different stakeholders must constitute one joint crisis management team (at field and HQ level). Obviously each of the relevant agencies will want to be involved. It is imperative, however, that members are chosen for their skill and competence in managing this type of incident rather than as representing their respective agencies. It is also strongly advised that outside experts not affiliated with any agency should be bought in to help the team maintain objectivity and focus.

Even if the captors make rapid contact you need to establish contact with the family and the authorities immediately, and develop a strategy towards the press. You will also need to manage the information with other agencies, and the impact of the event on the rest of the team in the organisation, in the country concerned, and elsewhere.

Managing relations with the family

Just as with other serious incidents, the family must be informed immediately. It is vital that they hear about the kidnapping from the organisation first, and not through the press or a third party, as this would immediately undermine their trust in the agency. The following is written with a focus on kidnapped international staff, but it can also apply to kidnapped national staff:

Establish and maintain trust

when the family do not trust the organisation, its competence in handling the situation, or its honesty in respecting their rights, they are likely to undertake their own initiatives and/or publicly criticise the organisation. This complicates matters for the agency.

Obtain information about the kidnapped person from the family

and perhaps from friends; general personality, mental state prior to the kidnapping; possible concerns on his/her mind; physical endurance, special needs, etc.

Develop a clear approach towards the family

you will need to balance the family's right to know and remain informed with the need to maintain the integrity of your crisis management strategy. Having an information strategy will help you to decide what to tell them/show them, and what not.

Point of contact

a senior agency staff member with good interpersonal skills should be designated as the focal point for the family. In principle, this person should be contactable directly and at all times. Maintain regular and sensible contact with the family: it is not helpful to inform them about every unconfirmed rumour, raising hopes that are dashed soon afterwards, nor is it helpful to maintain a prolonged silence for weeks on end because you have 'nothing to report'. This liaison person will also need support and occasional relief from what is a demanding responsibility.

The family will want time and attention from the agency

information; advice on what they can usefully do and perhaps should not do; and a feeling that the agency, with or without the authorities, is doing everything possible to obtain a safe release.

Expect fluctuating attitudes from the family

as the situation drags on. This is perfectly normal. They may come to voice doubts about your agency, the authorities, the strategy pursued, and so on.

Expect initiatives from the family

They will be tempted to undertake action themselves: to go to the press; to go to the country where their relative has been kidnapped; to seek to establish their own line of negotiation. The family will also be more prepared to pay the ransom and may start selling assets to collect the money. For them the life of their relative is worth more than any money; for the organisation and/or the

government, non-payment of the ransom is driven by the wish not to create a precedent and inspire more kidnappings. The family have their own right of initiative but you can advise them about the possible consequences of their actions and the risks to the ongoing negotiations.

This situation may be somewhat different when it concerns national staff. In such situations the family, because of its knowledge of the local culture and society and its own networks of contacts, may sometimes be better placed to take the lead. This may well be the case when the kidnapping is motivated by social or political rivalries between local social groups such as clans. But local people may be in no better position when a criminal gang or a politically motivated group is responsible for the kidnapping.

The family will need support

A third party close to the family, such as a friend or a priest or mullah, could play the role of close 'accompanier'. But it may be better to (also) bring in a professional counsellor, in which case it is in the interests of the agency and of the negotiations that a good relationship is developed between this person and the agency. In some cases a larger support group will materialise around the family. Become involved with them, give advice on what they can meaningfully do and what could be counterproductive.

Managing relations with the authorities

'Authorities' here refers to the host government and, in the case of an international staff member, the home government.

Invoking the authorities

In situations of detention an agency may try to solve the situation by itself. When it comes to kidnapping, however, it is generally advisable to inform the authorities at once as they will, in all likelihood, get to know at some point and will find it irritating if you failed to inform them. Even if a kidnapping occurs in an area of the country not under the control of the government, they should be informed. You will have to provide the facts about the kidnapping as well as details about the person kidnapped.

A policy towards the authorities

Headquarters and field staff will need to decide upon a policy towards the host and home governments. The national authorities may have access to information and networks that are not available to foreigners and even to individual nationals, and therefore be in the best position to secure the release of the kidnapped. At the same time their decisions may be guided by considerations other than simply the well-being of the kidnapped, for example:

- a concern to be seen to be assuming their responsibilities;
- a concern to appear, nationally and internationally, in control of law and order;
- distrust in the capacity of an aid organisation to manage a 'security' problem professionally;
- criticism of the aid agency for having failed to seek or heed guidance from the authorities regarding security;
- not wanting an aid agency to enter into negotiations with 'criminals', 'terrorists' or a rebel group (in some countries it is illegal to make and maintain contact with kidnappers);
- concern to bring the situation to a quick solution (often national authorities and national security personnel hold that this requires a combined strategy of negotiation and pressure on the captors, with the pressure coming from police search actions).

What you will want to negotiate and agree is:

- that the safety and well-being of the kidnapped should be the primary concern;
- that the authorities will refrain from a rescue attempt by force without the consent of the family and the agency;
- confidentiality vis-a-vis the media, unless a different strategy is agreed;
- involvement in the crisis management group set up by the authorities. If that is not acceptable then the involvement of an embassy official or at least an agreed framework of contact between the national authorities and the aid agency (the agency cannot abdicate its responsibility towards the kidnapped);
- an agreement on the overall strategy to be pursued;
- agreement on the choice of a communicator (see below).

You will also want to obtain advice from the embassy and their support for your relations with the national authorities. The same issues need to be discussed and ideally agreed with the home government. In the home country, collaboration will be required between headquarters and the home government regarding the relationship with the family.

Managing the press

You will need a proactive strategy vis-à-vis the press. Do not get overtaken by the media.

Guidelines for Managing the Press

Generally speaking, try to exclude the press as publicity renders the captors more nervous and suspicious and can complicate negotiations. Contact the national and international press and ask them not to report the story, or not to provide any details, as this puts the life of the captives at risk. However, there may be circumstances when you want to seek publicity: if your colleagues have been captured by a group that is concerned about its international image then a high-profile publicity campaign will help in persuading them that retaining the captives is not in their long-term interests. On the other hand an aid worker could be kidnapped with the deliberate intent of the captors getting attention from the international media. It may therefore be the captors who bring in the press. This is highly dangerous; it turns the situation into an international spectacle with the killing of the captive as a possible 'dramatic climax'. To counter this strategy you need to persuade the press not to go along with it.

If the story is out and you cannot avoid questions, limit what you say to basic, minimal facts. Always assume that the captors monitor the news and may hear what you are reported to have said in the home country, thousands of miles away. It is not advisable to try and communicate, let alone negotiate, with the captors through the public media. Media messages get distorted and undermine 'genuine' messages as well as the negotiation process. Engage with editors and journalists so that they work with you rather than against you. The family may insist on making a public appeal through the press: manage that request constructively.

There may be indications that the captives are allowed to read the newspapers or to listen to the radio or watch television. Under these circumstances you may consider using the press to try to send a supportive message to the captives. Various examples show that morale is boosted if captives hear themselves mentioned in the news.

Case Study: Irresponsible and Dangerous Press Coverage

Unfortunately not all journalists follow professional ethics, and news today is a commercial and competitive business. This can lead to unpleasant surprises as this example shows.

In 1998 a number of Red Cross workers were kidnapped at Mogadishu airport in Somalia. As their captivity continued and they were increasingly intimidated by the kidnappers, their emotions and their ability to cope became more volatile. One day the group were unexpectedly taken out of their room and forced in front of the camera of an international press agency, which must have paid the captors to be allowed to film the hostages. The hostages refused to issue a declaration. The cameraman then aggravated the situation by turning the machinegun of one of the guards towards one of the hostages to get a more dramatic pose. The guard became agitated and more aggressive and on the spot demanded US\$100,000 per person. The images caused the agency and the relatives deep distress. The event increased the risk and imperilled the ongoing negotiations.

Attending to your other staff

Internal communications with other agency staff are important and need to be proactive and well-managed. You will need to anticipate questions and maintain staff morale and confidence in the agency, while at the same time avoiding everyone else getting 'involved' and constantly commenting.

Managing relationships with other agencies

Kidnap situations carry a high-risk, are highly sensitive and need to be handled discreetly. As with sexual assault and rape, however, the need for discreteness needs to be balanced with responsibility for the security of all aid workers, including those of other agencies. Case analysis indicates that this is not generally understood.

As already noted kidnapping is a crime that inspires others to imitate the initial perpetrators. The kidnap of an aid worker signals risk for other staff members of the same agency as well as of other aid agencies. The immediate reaction should therefore entail a review of the agency's security measures as well as informing other agencies to put them on alert.

Discussions may arise between the various agencies about risk-control strategies and about aspects of the management of the situation, especially the role of the

authorities and the issue of ransom. It is difficult to be prescriptive for this type of situation, but guiding principles could include:

- Every agency remains responsible for the security of its own staff. This also involves giving staff the possibility of making an informed choice: if individuals prefer to leave a high-risk area that wish should be respected.
- What one agency does has implications for the security of all others. There is therefore a need for collective responsibility for security.
- An agency whose staff have been kidnapped retains the responsibility to choose its own approach. Yet it may be sensible to listen to advice from others with experience in the area, especially with regard to the possible security implications of certain strategies.
- In principle no ransom should be paid as this increases the general risk: while it may obtain the release of one person it certainly sets a precedent and creates the risk that many others will be kidnapped. In reality there have been instances when agencies have paid ransom and denied doing so. The reluctance to admit that ransom has been paid is understandable, but paying ransom also dramatically changes the overall situation. Even though what ultimately counts is not so much what agencies do but what potential kidnappers believe they did or will do, it is advisable to inform others in strict confidence. At the very least, if a staff member of another agency is subsequently kidnapped that agency should be informed that a ransom has previously been paid, as this will be a vital element in their analysis and the development of their strategy.

13.4.3 Communicating and Negotiating with the Captors

Communicating with the captors

Kidnapping, as understood here, is deliberate and for a purpose. Normally the captors will establish contact to make clear their demands and conditions. The following box summarises key principles for communication with kidnappers.

Negotiating with the captors

The crisis management team should retain control over the negotiations. They should not have therefore be in direct communication with the captors. The decision making power should be withdrawn from the incident management team at field level and a 'communicator' posted between the field team and the captors, the purpose being to create a time lag to allow for internal and external consultation, reflection and analysis before responding. Competent communicators and outside experts working with you will help retain this control.

Guidelines: Communication with Kidnappers

- **Logbook:** As soon as a kidnapping is suspected a logbook should be started at field level and at HQ in which full details are kept of the time and means of communication, those involved and the contents of the communications. The authorities may advise you to try to tape communications as the choice of a particular word, the tone of voice, and background noises can all provide certain insights. At the same time if the captors become aware that you are taping communications they will lose trust and may become nervous and angry. The communications logbook needs to be expanded, or complemented, with a crisis management logbook that records who agreed to follow up on what, what feedback may have been received, and what key arguments and considerations informed the decisions taken.
- **Proof of identity:** You may be approached by someone pretending to be the captor. Therefore you first need to obtain confirmation that your interlocutors do indeed hold the kidnapped person. Ask for details of proof that this is the case.
- **Proof of life:** You want to be certain that your colleague has not been killed during or after the kidnapping. A cassette with his/her voice, a picture or a video is no absolute proof as your colleague could have been killed afterwards. Check by obtaining from the family or a close friend an intimate detail that the captors cannot possibly know (eg, the name of the closest school friend of the kidnapped person during his or her teenage years, or the identification of an event during a memorable family holiday many years ago). As the situation continues you may want to check in this way regularly to remain sure that the captive is still alive. The best proof is to directly hear the person kidnapped. If no proof of identity and life is provided you should not pursue the negotiations.
- **Proof of identity of captors:** Agree a code word with the captors whereby they identify themselves so that you are sure you are continuing to be approached by the right people and not by impostors.
- **No decision making authority:** Make it clear that you have no decision making authority and need to consult with others whom you might not be able to reach immediately. You are not, therefore, in a position to agree any demands right away. This gives you time to reflect and room for manoeuvre.

- **Agree communications times:** Try to get agreement about the next contact; ask how you can contact the captors, for example through a third party or a message in a specific newspaper, etc.
- **Humanise the captives:** Always refer to the captives by name. Encourage good treatment: indicate any special needs they may have, for example, spectacles or special medical treatment. Signal their human concerns: family, children and whether a way can be found to arrange an exchange of messages.
- **Do not agree to go to a specified place for an encounter:** If there is very strong pressure to do so, insist on detailed guarantees for your own safety. You may be kidnapped as well.
- **Listen carefully to the demands of the captors, and also their style:** What seems to be the motivation behind the kidnapping, and how do the captors appear: aggressive and threatening, rational and factual, highly emotional, etc? What tone of voice and style of speech is most appropriate to defuse the situation and establish some 'rapport'?
- **Language problems and translation:** If the captors do not have a good command of English, for example, then communication will be difficult and frustrations on both sides may render the situation more tense. You will need a communicator with local language skills.

The communicators

The position of the communicator is a tactical one: he/she is the screen between the incident management group and the captors. As kidnappings can last a long time, over time you may need more than one communicator. Their task is simply to convey messages. In order to fulfil this task, however, they will need to be well prepared through, for example, simulation exercises, as inevitably there will be unexpected demands and pressures from the captors. The communicators are not party to the discussions of the crisis management team, which considers scenarios and hypotheses and formulates responses. Clearly good communicators are intelligent, verbally skilled, stress-resistant and disciplined. They should also have good knowledge of the local language (dialect) and local area.

Outside experts

'Experts' in kidnap management may present themselves spontaneously, be proposed by the host and/or home government, or sought out by the agency

which has no in-house expertise. Such ‘experts’ can play a useful role by offering an objective perspective on the analysis and the crisis management approach, by anticipating scenarios and ensuring preparedness, and by confirming that what is done is done well and that the ‘ups and downs’ are ‘normal’. However, they become a problem if they pursue someone else’s agenda rather than the agency’s, start imposing strategies, and/or force themselves onto you as ‘negotiators’. They are also a problem if they are not highly sensitive to the local context and come with ready made approaches from totally different situations and scenarios.

The ‘local’ negotiator

An intermediary can be also come forward ‘spontaneously’ from within the community, can be sought out by the agency, be proposed or approached by the authorities, or even put forward by the captors.

It is not uncommon for locally respected and influential people to get involved in kidnap-resolution. Elders have often played an influential role in Somali and Afghan society, for example. In the Caucasus, influential local business people have played catalysing roles. In a situation of high acceptance, and where the community retains a measure of influence over the captors, a trustworthy local person can secure the release of the captives. It should be made quite clear, however, that they cannot make commitments on your behalf without your prior consent. In the face of a well-organised criminal element that is more autonomous from the community, on the other hand, traditional leaders may be fairly powerless.

The question of trust is crucial, and can be a problem. There may remain uncertainty about on whose behalf the intermediary is acting? Are they on your side, or do they perhaps have hidden connections with the captors? Whose game are they playing? Who controls the negotiations?

The official negotiator

In siege situations (see below), and sometimes in the management of a kidnap, the authorities will put forward an official negotiator. The negotiator’s strategy will be to try to build up a process that moves from stabilising the situation, towards ‘rapport’, and eventually to compromise. The situation will be framed as a problem in need of solving, and the emphasis will be on reaching a solution through dialogue.

The first step will be to establish a climate for dialogue. The use of ‘we’ rather than ‘me and you’ in the conversation will be balanced with an explanation of the constraints on the agency/authorities. Initially, the focus will probably be on some minor issues on which agreement can be reached. This will establish firm ground

on which to base the discussion of more difficult issues. Throughout the negotiations it is generally advisable to allow the captors not to lose face; also when they agree to release the captives. The situation will remain delicate throughout and any sense of humiliation or defeat could trigger violence. If the negotiator is fielded by the authorities there is always the risk that other, more political, considerations than the concern for the safety and release of the captives, may influence the decisions. Sometimes a prestigious non-governmental entity may propose an envoy to try and mediate the release of the captives. A risk for the envoy/negotiator is that s/he will be lured into a trap and also kidnapped.

13.5 A Hostage/Siege Situation

As mentioned earlier it is not uncommon for the security forces to try to trace the captives and attempt either their release by force or the creation of a siege situation to try and force the captors to surrender. This is a high-risk strategy as the captives may be killed by their captors when the latter find themselves (virtually) trapped. The captors may even commit suicide, killing the captives at the same time. Alternatively one or more captives may be injured or killed in the confusion and crossfire that often accompanies a forced release. Siege situations or attempts at forced liberation should not be tried without the agreement of the family and of the agency. However, the approach should not be totally rejected: if the captors start maiming or killing captives to step up the pressure, or if there is a risk that the captives may die through weakness and exhaustion after a prolonged captivity, a rescue attempt by force may be the option of last resort.

As an aid agency representative you will generally not be allowed to be present during a siege situation. Case analysis points to a number of reasons why siege situations can go wrong. From the agency’s point of view there are perhaps three elements to watch and try to influence:

1. Whether or not those carrying out the siege have a clear overall command. If not, uncoordinated actions will occur that can imperil the lives of the hostages.
2. Whether or not the commander has a balanced attitude to the two-pronged approach of persuasion (negotiation) and pressure (threat of forceful intervention). Both build on different attitudes to the captors which can be potentially contradictory and therefore difficult to reconcile.
3. Whether or not the troops have a clear description of the hostages in order to be able to differentiate them from the captors, and whether they have been given clear instructions only to fire on those firing at them. (It is not uncommon for captors to dress the hostages in clothes similar to their own, which increases the risk of the hostages being shot during a rescue operation.)

13.6 Managing the Return of the Abducted/Kidnapped

The return of an abducted/kidnapped person also needs to be fully managed. Several competing demands will have to be taken into account simultaneously:

- the emotional and communication needs of those released, and their family and friends;
- the need for rest, tranquillity and possibly medical care;
- the wish of the authorities (host and home governments) for urgent debriefing of those released;
- the desire of the press to get hold of the story.

Other agencies also need to be informed that the situation has been resolved. These different interests can lead to conflicting pressures which might harm the released and threaten to overwhelm the agency.

Case Study: Overtaken by Rumour

During the final phase of negotiations with the kidnapers of an aid worker in Somalia the need to control rumours became a real challenge. When the situation was still tense another aid agency, without cross-checking, unexpectedly announced that the captives had been released and had left on a plane the previous day. This rumour circulated immediately within the aid community and was taken up by the local press. It took the agency two frantic hours to find out where the announcement had come from, and to issue a correction.

The crisis management teams, at both field and HQ level, therefore need to prepare themselves to:

- attend to the needs of the released, and to effect communication and, if feasible, reunion with loved ones, as a priority;
- provide accurate information rapidly to other agencies with, if deemed necessary, a request to abstain from public comment, and an indication of when further information will be provided;
- manage the press and retain control over the organisation a press conference with the released and/or the family (eg, how long the interviews last, how many questions to be allowed, etc);
- arrange for the authorities to meet and interview the released.

The needs of the released and their family must come first. But you may not be able to withhold others from seeing the released for a prolonged period of time. The situation will need to be proactively managed in consultation with the released and their family: determine the circumstances in which others can have first contact indicating, if need be, that more extended contact can follow later. At all times accompany the released and the family, including when they are interviewed by the authorities. In consultation with them intervene to conclude an encounter if it is becoming too much of a strain.

Surviving a prolonged and tense abduction and/or arrest, and certainly a kidnapping and hostage situation, is a traumatic experience. It takes a long time to 'fit' such an event into one's life experience, self-image and worldview. Survivors will need long-term accompaniment and access to professional support; so may their loved ones, who also have lived through a very anxious experience and should not be overlooked. As with rape survivors, the agency will have to find the 'right' professional counsellor. The wrong one or the wrong type of 'counselling' can itself become a stressful and disorienting experience, as some aid workers who have been kidnapped have discovered.

13.7 Preparation and Training

At organisational level

- identify who would be a competent member of a crisis management team;
- train the crisis management team, including using simulations of kidnap scenarios and involve operations, personnel, finance, press, and legal department staff as well as senior management;
- discuss with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs what help you can expect if a staff member is kidnapped overseas;
- identify qualified external expertise for the crisis management, and for post-crisis support to the family and the released;
- keep a record of all international staff involved, including the contact details of close relatives, and a record of special medical conditions/attention points;
- kidnap insurance is sometimes taken out by business corporations for top executives. It may be considered null and void if the fact that someone is insured becomes more widely known. It is probably too expensive for aid agencies;
- it should be clear who is responsible for what in case of an

Continued...

abduction/arrest/kidnapping under collaborative agreements with other agencies that involve staff secondments;

- articulate an internal policy that spells out clearly what responsibilities and obligations the agency assumes with regard to staff abducted/kidnapped or arrested and their relatives. Such a policy will not only clarify mutual understanding and expectations but also legitimise internal resource allocation and skill development and enhance accountability when an incident occurs;
- create a policy that staff should not be deployed in high-risk areas without being fully informed of the risk in advance, and without their explicit consent;
- constantly monitor high-risk zones.

At field-office level

- establish and maintain contact with the embassy and other diplomatic presence such as the UN or the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe;
- in a high-risk environment, know whom to contact in the ministry of the interior;
- identify the structure of command of the national security forces in your area of operation;
- identify and get acquainted with a reliable and competent local criminal lawyer;
- learn about the legal procedures for arrest in the country;
- learn about the government's policy on contacts with kidnappers, if any;
- constitute a competent crisis management team, and provide specialist training;
- keep a full record of staff details, including ID and family contact details;
- deploy a low-profile 'monitoring/witness car' to follow vehicles carrying persons at risk of kidnapping (to observe details during a kidnap and see in what direction the captors disappear; it should not intervene and try to prevent the kidnap or follow the captors to the ultimate hide-out as this might endanger the life of 'witnesses' and deprive you of their information).

At the individual level

- prior to deployment make sure your domestic affairs are in order. Ideally the following should be readily accessible: birth certificate; marriage/divorce record; insurance policies; medical/dental records; naturalisation papers; adoption/guardianship records; military record; power of attorney; key financial papers; list of names and contact details of doctor, lawyer and other key professionals;
- be aware of the risks and of the approaches to try and control it;
- maintain constant alertness, pay attention to small signals, to what s/he hears people talking about;
- read, and reflect for a while, on the guidelines for survival in this Good Practice Review;
- know the physical environment, carry a map if possible/appropriate, but also develop a mental map;
- carry a 'constant companion' – a list of key telephone numbers/radio frequencies of agency and other resource people; also memorise some key numbers in case of loss;
- carry a blood group card and a note on special medical requirements, also in the local languages;
- carry family pictures, including children;
- if on medication, carry a small supply; carry a spare set of contact lenses or spectacles in a high-risk environment;
- wear good walking boots;
- have a small amount of money hidden in boots/belt.

14 Withdrawal and Hibernation

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14 Withdrawal and Hibernation

14.1 Planning

14.1.1 Assumptions and Basic Scenarios

Evacuation is an important part of an agency's security planning. It is important, however, to be aware of three common but often misleading assumptions:

1. **Gradual deterioration:** Evacuation is conceived as the ultimate step in a gradual reduction of exposure – from suspension of movements of certain types of staff, to suspension of operations, to partial withdrawal of staff from a site, to total withdrawal of staff from a site, to closure of activities. This logical progression is reflected in different security phases or 'alert states'. These range from 'normal' to 'acute crisis', with full evacuation taking place in the last 'state'. Bear in mind, however, that testimony and case analysis provide ample examples of aid agencies being overtaken by events in a very rapid deterioration of the situation.
2. **Evacuation according to plan:** These assumptions lead to a concentration on and investment in detailed planning. This may also be the wrong thing to do. Testimony and case analysis indicate that not infrequently:
 - staff do not refer to the plan in a sudden and acute crisis;
 - important elements have been overlooked and not planned for;
 - things simply don't go according to plan because of external actors and factors.
3. **Evacuation possible:** This again may be a wrong assumption. Testimony and case analysis offer ample evidence of situations in which evacuation routes were blocked, where the logistical capacity for evacuation was insufficient, or where it simply became too dangerous to try and evacuate so that staff had to stay put and 'weather the crisis' (hibernation).

Certain elements in evacuation and hibernation can be systematically explored and planned:

- Where will you go to?
- Who goes and who stays?

- How will you go?
- What goes and what stays?
- Will you exit on your own or with other agencies?
- Will those who stay continue to manage the programmes and if so, how?

Other key questions, however, cannot be answered with absolute certainty. For example, whether you will be able to go will depend on situational factors not totally under your control. In addition, when you go may be a matter of very difficult situational judgement.

The three basic scenarios to be thought through are:

1. **Evacuation:** the physical withdrawal of staff from a crisis spot across an international border.
2. **Relocation:** the physical withdrawal of staff (and assets) from a crisis spot to a safer location within the same country.
3. **Hibernation:** staff staying behind in one or more concentration sites in a crisis spot because evacuation is impossible or too dangerous.

14.1.2 The Limits of Planning Through 'Security Phases'

Many agency security guidelines refer to three to five security phases or states of alert, with a number of prescribed actions to be initiated as one or the other is declared (Annex 3). A security phase may cover the whole country; alternatively different areas of a country may be given a different security phase status.

Thinking about security phases and planning mandatory action for each is a useful planning exercise. But it is important to understand the limitations of this approach as a crisis management tool. Some of these are:

Lack of linear progression

Real-life situations do not necessarily gradually deteriorate and/or gradually improve. A situation can suddenly deteriorate from conditions corresponding to Phase 1 to conditions corresponding to Phase 5 – in other words, you may be overtaken by events.

A false sense of control

Identifying what security phase you should put yourself in does not guarantee that you will be able to implement the plan, especially in more acute crisis situations.

Interpreting the situation

Even if you develop a set of indicators that signal that a certain state of alert has to be declared, incomplete information and the difficulties in correctly interpreting a messy reality may still make it difficult to decide whether you should move to a different state of alert. In short, reading risk involves interpretation and judgement, which means there may be differing opinions. Some will err on the side of caution; others will not want to 'overreact'.

Interagency differences

Different agencies may interpret the same situation differently, and consequently put themselves in different security phases with correspondingly different security measures. For example, in Angola in November 1992 when UN agencies were effectively implementing Phase 3, the UNAVEM II mission (military observer/peace keeping) was technically still in Phase 1. This sort of situation might happen for a number of reasons:

- different lines of command and decision making, leading to different speeds in switching from one phase to another;
- different interpretations of the situation and therefore different risk assessments;
- different mandates: an agency with an emergency response mandate, for example, the ICRC, MSF or UNHCR, will appreciate risk differently from a development NGO, or for example, the World Health Organisation.

Given the above, you should bear in mind the following:

- if you have chosen to be a formal part of the UN security umbrella you will be obliged to adopt the mandatory measures that come with the UN 'security phases' (Annex 3);
- evacuations in serious crisis moments usually require interagency collaboration, which may be complicated by different appreciations of the risk;
- the fact that some agencies evacuate while others do not (yet) may actually change the risk and increase the vulnerability for those remaining. There may no longer be a 'critical mass' of agencies present, and not only armed groups but also local people and local authorities may want to get hold of the assets of those remaining before they too pull out. The risk of looting, theft and attack may increase.

The politics of 'security phases'

The presence of the UN, of NGO aid agencies, and of diplomatic missions sends political signals that the security situation is tolerable and that the local and national authorities are in sufficient control to maintain security for international actors. An evacuation will obviously send the opposite signal,

something that political actors, whether the local and national official authorities or an armed rebel group, may be keen to avoid. Diplomatic missions will be very cautious about such political signals, and this may influence the nature of their travel advice and other security-type recommendations. If the international presence withdraws, this changes the overall perception and could seriously (further) destabilise the local authorities. Thus the perception of various international NGOs after the breakdown of law and order in Albania in 1997 was that the embassies had waited too long to raise the 'security alert phase', and advise evacuation. In contrast, more recently (1997-1998) international NGOs have suspected that the embassies and their home governments overstated the 'security alert phase' in Sierra Leone and Afghanistan, for example, for political reasons.

Motives other than security

Aid agencies can also hesitate to declare a state of alert that would initiate partial or total withdrawal because of considerations other than those of security. Common arguments are that they want to demonstrate solidarity with an endangered population or retain a 'monitoring' or 'witnessing' presence, or that, once evacuated, it becomes very difficult to return. The danger is that some staff remain exposed beyond the threshold of acceptable risk and/or that the situation suddenly deteriorates into one where it is no longer possible to relocate/evacuate.

14.1.3 Planning Through Scenarios

While you can develop an ideal-type 'plan A', good practice requires that you question the assumptions on which this is based and think through a number of 'what if' scenarios; and that therefore you should also prepare for 'plan B' and 'plan C'.

Case Study: Unrealistic Planning of a Withdrawal

In the spring of 1999 several aid agencies working in refugee camps in Kukes, north-east Albania, on the border with Kosovo, were concerned about cross-border artillery fire and a possible incursion from Serb security forces. Informal discussions revealed that their one crisis plan envisaged their escape by car over the main road towards Shkodre. What was completely overlooked was the likelihood that thousands of Kosovar refugees might do the same and so block the road. Alternative routes to central Albania or a safe relocation spot in the mountains outside Kukes were simply not considered.

The ideal-type plan does not automatically have to be evacuation. It is not by definition the safest option: the exit roads may be mined, the port could come under fire, and looters and bandits will anyway expect the expatriates to use the road from the city to the airport and therefore put up roadblocks. Too many 'security plans' only consider evacuation, neglect the relocation option, and fail to consider forced hibernation.

Case Study: Relocation into a Country at War

The outbreak of the Gulf War in 1991 caused great agitation in Pakistan. There were daily pro-Saddam and anti-Western demonstrations in all towns. The US, as leader of the Allied Coalition against Iraq, perceived all US citizens to be at risk and advised them to leave the country. Conversely, Scandinavian aid agencies working across the border in Afghanistan decided, by and large, to evacuate family members from Pakistan but to retain their international staff for the time being. In contrast, one French organisation decided that if Peshawar became high-risk it would 'relocate' its assets and international staff to east Afghanistan and put them under the protection of local people with whom it had close relations. Various considerations influenced this decision: the desire to maintain programme activities in Afghanistan, the perception that the roads from Peshawar to Islamabad might be cut off by violent mobs, and the knowledge that at the time the Afghans were adopting a fairly 'neutral' position despite their sympathy with the Iraqis as fellow-Muslims, because the mujahedin were very dependent on Western military and other aid. It also knew that the Pushto laws of hospitality oblige a host to take full responsibility for the security of his guests.

More flexible scenario thinking would first consider relocation and then 'evacuation' (each with different possibilities), and then 'hibernation'. Preparedness measures can thus be developed for the different possible scenarios.

14.2 Preparedness: Management and Practical Steps

14.2.1 Decision Making Authority

It needs to be clear not only under what conditions you will withdraw/evacuate, but also who has the (ultimate) authority to make that decision.

- Is it international HQ or the resident representative? What happens in the case of divergent opinions?
- Can a programme or office manager in a provincial base take the decision to withdraw without prior approval from the agency representative in the capital?
- If you rely on the UN or embassy/international government support, for example, to mobilise planes or a ship, how does this fit into your decision making?
- Is it clear to all staff that the decisions taken by management are mandatory?

14.2.2 Crisis Management Team

While a forced relocation or evacuation can occasionally take place under smooth circumstances, often it occurs in an atmosphere of crisis, chaos and confusion. Many people and tasks need to be attended to. Good practice suggests that a crisis team should be identified and tasks and responsibilities allocated in advance; also that a central coordinating function be established. Decide who, and at what point in a crisis, will be in charge of what. For example:

- monitoring situational developments via the telecom system, local and international radio broadcasts, etc;
- the logistical arrangements for, and security of, the exit;
- the assembly and organised movements of all staff to be withdrawn;
- the assets to be taken along;
- the management of financial and administrative matters;
- securing essential and sensitive documentation;
- communications with headquarters, other agencies, the national authorities and the embassy;
- public relations (communications with local people, the local and international press);
- the attempted continuation of the programme;
- the internal coordination and monitoring of the various tasks being implemented.

A crisis management team may very well include nationally recruited staff.

Note that staff turnover will require that these responsibilities are covered in a handover, or that the crisis management team as initially established will be reviewed. Note also that the crisis management team cannot include any who might be considered non-essential staff who would be withdrawn earlier.

14.2.3 Logistics and Reconnaissance

How do you get out of the danger spot? The key issues to consider are:

- the routes and means of transport under different scenarios;
- what transport you will require if you take more people and assets; alternatively who and what you take in view of the transport capacity is likely to be available?
- who provides the transport? (if it is not your own agency then you will need to discuss logistics with the organisation providing the transport.) Alternatively, if you are a potential transport provider, then you will need to discuss in advance your capacity, procedural requirements and the limits of your responsibility and liability.

Many evacuations depend upon the collaboration between different organisations. Don't draw up an evacuation plan in isolation.

In certain relocation or evacuation scenarios staff may have to drive or even walk a long distance. In others they will need to make their way from the assembly point(s) to a port or airport. Good practice suggests that you undertake detailed reconnaissance in advance using, or sketching, maps. This will probably involve exploring alternative routes if the preferred one is blocked or considered too dangerous. Good scenario thinking also requires that you consider the requirements of different routes and the potential impact of different climatic conditions. It may, for example, not be possible to drive all the way to the border, so that you may have to walk for two days. Therefore be prepared in terms of supplies and walking equipment.

14.2.4 Detailed Preparation

Sites

Assembly points

Identified sites from which those qualifying for relocation or evacuation proceed, to the (air)port, for example, or where a convoy will be constituted. The assembly point needs to be accessible, secure, large enough to accommodate many people and several vehicles, have reliable communications and emergency stocks (including medical supplies and fuel) to take along in the evacuation, or so that it can develop into a 'hibernation point' if evacuation proves impossible.

Retreat/hibernation facilities

Retreat and hibernation facilities (in plural: give yourself options and alternatives) should be identified and equipped in advance. Typical basic facilities and supplies include a stock of food, water, essential medical supplies and fuel, sleeping and toilet facilities, lighting (candles/hurricane lanterns), power supply (for the radio, and communications). In high-risk areas where evacuation is likely or has happened already, more advanced preparations can be pursued. An agency operating in Kosovo prior to the NATO action, for example, anticipated the possibility of evacuation and rented a flat, opened a bank account, and set up email in Macedonia.

Communications

The communications tree

Many people and organisations may have to be informed very quickly at a time of crisis. Rather than have one person try to do this, establish a reliable communications tree or network in which each 'node' has the responsibility to pass on information to three or four other nodes. A 'warden system', if in place, can be integrated into this. The same communications tree can function to pass on incident alerts (Chapter 16).

Crisis communications

You will need multiple channels, all of which should be constantly monitored during a crisis: one channel will be for internal, another for interagency crisis management communications. You may need a separate 'emergency channel' for acute emergency calls (Chapter 17). You will also need to agree, internally and probably on an interagency basis, code words for places, routes, actors, movements, etc (Chapter 16).

Vital documentation and authorisation

The agency headquarters, the embassy and the central logistics provider need to have accurate and regularly updated information in terms of how many of your staff (and their dependants) qualify for international evacuation. Special requirements should be indicated, for example, of a medical nature or if there are infants, etc. If it is likely that international evacuation will be to a neighbouring country, explore the possibility of maintaining valid visas for that country for all those qualifying for evacuation. All those eligible should ideally have one or more credit cards to cover initial expenses until the agency's cash flow has been re-established.

Staff matters

As the employer, you need to make clear to all staff who qualify for international evacuation or assisted in-country relocation and who do not, and what those not qualifying can expect from the agency (see below). A priority list should be drawn up which should distinguish not only between essential and non-essential staff, but also who will go first, second, third, etc, if all cannot be evacuated at the same time.

In times of forced exit qualifying individuals are typically allowed only one piece of luggage or luggage of a maximum weight. In times of high tension, such staff should always keep their 'evacuation bag' and vital documents ready. Passports should be kept with individuals, not in the office safe. If the programme continues (run probably by national staff), the 'terms of reference' for that delegated responsibility should be clarified in advance (see below).

Key records, essential and sensitive information

You will need certain essential information in terms of being able to report to donors after the evacuation and to return properly informed to your operational base when the danger period has passed. This will include inventories of assets, accounts, bills paid since the last financial report, payroll details, contracts and outstanding liabilities, memoranda of understanding, and registration and tax liability correspondence with the national authorities. What constitutes sensitive information will depend very much on the context and will be information that could be used or abused politically, thereby endangering the staff or the return of the agency. It should only be taken if there is absolutely no risk that it will be intercepted during exit, otherwise it should be destroyed (Chapter 15).

Stocks, assets and liabilities

Stocks and assets

Using different scenarios, clarify in advance which assets are to be taken and which left behind and what will be done with the remaining stock.

Liabilities

Keep track of outstanding financial obligations, for example, to landlords, suppliers, contractors, staff, owners of rented vehicles, etc, and consider the possibility of clearing these prior to exit. If this is not possible, take the up-to-date records with you for later reference.

14.2.5 Simulation and Rehearsal: Advantages and Disadvantages

A team that is prepared is less likely to undergo chaos and confusion than one that is unprepared. Even if things do not go as planned, the planning exercise will have familiarised people with the external factors to take into account and the operational principles to apply. In principle at least all senior and mid-level staff, both national and international, should participate in and therefore know about the details of plans. If properly conducted the planning exercises should have increased team cohesion and trust in the crisis management team.

The planning exercise should ideally be reinforced with an (indoor) simulation, and even with an (out of compound) rehearsal of aspects of the evacuation movements. This will increase the speed and effectiveness of implementation when the need arises. The exercises are also an opportunity to get a feel for individual competencies and therefore the strengths and weaknesses in a particular team. No less importantly, they reinforce the crisis management team's confidence.

The disadvantage of team planning and outdoor rehearsal is the loss of confidentiality: whether deliberately or accidentally someone 'in the know' may reveal your planned responses to someone else with malicious intent. Wider team planning may thus increase risk. In addition, it may alert the local authorities to the fact that under certain circumstances you may try to leave the area. This they may consider against their interests and, although generally respectful or at least tolerant of your presence, they may plan to ensure that in times of crisis they keep you where you are.

The advantages of team planning and rehearsal therefore have to be weighed against the risk of losing the element of surprise. This will be a situational judgement and will depend on the trust you have in your team members and your assessment of your operating environment.

Another possible, unintended, side-effect of an outdoor rehearsal could be to create panic as it could be interpreted by the local population as indicating deteriorating security. In some countries, for local populations the 'foreigners leaving' has become a major indicator of high insecurity. They may take your rehearsal for real and start fleeing in the belief that you know about some imminent danger. This happened in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, when the UN carried out an evacuation drill.

14.3 Preparedness: Staff Policy

Staff policy with regard to relocation and especially evacuation needs to be elaborated and communicated clearly to all in advance.

14.3.1 Essential and Non-essential Staff

In times of rising tension, and as part of the procedure associated with a specific security phase, non-essential staff should be relocated in-country or to another country. The purpose of this pre-emptive measure is to reduce overall vulnerability by reducing the number of people at risk and thereby making a crisis relocation or evacuation more manageable.

Who constitute 'non-essential staff'?

- All dependants of international staff and all international staff not in senior management positions?
- International staff not essential to the continuation of the programme? How likely is it that certain programme components, or any programme at all, could be maintained?
- Staff having difficulty coping with tension? A staff member may be in a key operational position and have important technical skills but find it psychologically difficult to deal with the rising insecurity. Maybe s/he should be withdrawn, as maintaining such people in a deteriorating situation may eventually cause more problems than their earlier departure.
- Staff at higher risk? Certain nationalities may be a potential target because of resentment over their government's international policies.

When considering relocation to a safer area, the withdrawal of 'non-essential staff' also includes national staff. This raises practical questions; for instance, where do you draw the line regarding 'dependants', where one staff member may have family responsibilities well beyond the nuclear family unit? In addition, how do you identify which national staff are at higher risk?

14.3.2 Internationally Recruited Staff

Relocation or evacuation is mandatory for all international staff. This should be clearly articulated in a policy statement, and possibly written into the individual's contract or in accompanying written agreements with the agency. An individual refusing to obey a relocation or evacuation order should be made to sign a statement to that effect, confirming that s/he understands that the agency will no longer be responsible for his/her security.

Equally clear, however, should be the right of an individual to demand to be withdrawn from a risk area for relocation or repatriation on the grounds of a profound feeling of insecurity. This too should be made explicit in the agreement between agency and prospective employee.

14.3.3 Nationally Recruited Staff

In practice, nationally recruited staff can seldom expect to be evacuated across international borders. This may mean that they remain in a danger zone. As international agencies rely increasingly on nationally recruited staff for reasons of capacity-building and cost-reduction, the question of their security will become more acute. There are no simple solutions to the gap between what an agency wants to do and what it can in practice do in view of the financial, legal and practical constraints it faces.

Nevertheless, key principles of good practice can be identified:

Distinguish among national staff

Local and relocated national staff

National staff members may be working at an operational base in a different part of the country from their district of origin and thus, in times of crisis and danger, in unfamiliar physical and social territory and without the normal support mechanisms. Relocated national staff can therefore be at higher risk. If the relocation was a consequence of employment by the agency, the agency should take responsibility for moving these staff members to a safer area. If the relocation took place prior to employment with the agency, efforts should be made in line with agency capacity.

Staff wishing to be relocated or not

It would be wrong to assume that all national staff want to leave. A number may want to stay to protect their dependants and assets. You need to ask who wants to leave, also if dependants and personal assets cannot be relocated by the agency.

Staff wishing to be evacuated

Certain staff members may genuinely fear persecution and therefore request evacuation. This should not be automatically dismissed: there are international legal instruments and national procedures to provide asylum to people with genuine fears of persecution. The UN, for example, though afforded a different international status by governments than NGOs, is prepared to consider the evacuation of nationally recruited staff if their life becomes endangered as a consequence of their employment by the UN. You may therefore find it useful to discuss this in advance with your embassy.

This issue becomes more complex when a category of people is threatened. In the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, many Tutsi and moderate Hutu staff of international agencies were killed; the international staff, far less at risk, were evacuated. In 1996 when Iraqi troops made an incursion into the northern governorates, the US government evacuated Kurds who had been working with them. Albanian Kosovars who had been working with the Kosovo Verification Mission and with aid agencies prior to the NATO attacks of early 1999 were not evacuated and subsequently found themselves targeted by Serb security forces. As the number of potential asylum seekers grows the politics surrounding this issue will become more dominant. However, this should not make you shy away from it.

Domestic staff

Are domestic staff on the agency payroll logged as 'staff' or are they contracted by individuals (mostly international staff)? There may be strong emotional ties, but what responsibility can and will the agency take?

Contractors and consultants

Again the situation may arise that you employ someone who is not on the payroll but who you have hired for a medium-term period, for example, a driver, a builder, or a local analyst. In general these people will expect you to take responsibility for their security. You should clarify what they can/cannot expect.

Local partner organisations

You may be working closely with a local organisation in a contracting or 'partnership' relationship. Again you need to clarify what you consider to be your responsibility and what people can realistically expect from you.

Allow staff to make an informed decision

The most systematic complaint and cause of resentment among national staff is that the agency does not allow them to make an informed decision. Common

causes of this resentment are: that the agency has always maintained a rhetoric of equal care for all of its staff; that the limits of responsibility assumed towards national staff are not made explicit until the last moment; and/or that international staff suddenly withdraw without advance notice, leaving national staff shocked and bewildered. None of this is necessary. Good practice requires you to discuss and clarify these issues in advance. For example, clarify:

- what the practical, financial and legal/diplomatic limitations of your agency are;
- who in principle qualifies for evacuation and for relocation;
- what is possible and not possible with regard to dependants and personal assets of national staff needing or demanding relocation;
- what the status of the contractual employment relations is after prolonged relocation or evacuation and possible suspension of operations, and for how long.

Staff should be clear what they can/cannot expect, so that they can start planning their own arrangements for their security and that of their dependants.

Provide some practical support

In most circumstances the most practical support you will be able to provide, short of evacuation/relocation, will be financial. If there is an option discuss whether the choice would be for local or hard currency or a mix of both. The calculation of a lump sum for staff who are not formally being made redundant but who will cease work because of security risks can be phrased in terms of ongoing payment during annual leave and/or 'extraordinary leave', 'severance pay' and/or extra payment 'in lieu of notice'. Depending on your means, the salary scales, and the cost of living, an amount in the order of two to three months salary will provide staff and their dependants with some financial reserves to help them find security. Alternatively, if you consider the risk to be equal, you could provide everyone with the same lump sum and not differentiate between salary scales. In order to effect these payments you may need to bring in large sums of cash, which is itself a risk (Chapter 11).

14.4 Programme Continuation

National staff can be asked to continue the programme. It is imperative that this situation is planned for in detail in advance. You will need to pay attention to the following areas:

- the allocation of tasks and responsibilities: key areas are financial management, administration, security, internal and external communications, personnel management, logistics and programme activities, etc.;
- the allocation of authority in line with responsibilities;
- the limits of responsibility: it should be very clear that staff well-being comes first and that they should not put themselves at risk in trying to protect agency assets;
- the clear demarcation of the limits of authority: can staff acting in charge purchase or sell assets; hire and fire personnel or take disciplinary action; enter into new contracts; liaise with the authorities; decide on changes in the programme, etc? What do they need prior authorisation for, and what should they do if communications are interrupted for a prolonged period of time?
- the communication of the new arrangements: as well as informing all remaining agency staff you will need to tell other agencies, perhaps the embassy, the local authorities, the bank (alterations in who is authorised to sign cheques, etc) and so on. How widely and publicly the new arrangements are communicated will depend on the context and the size and visibility of the ongoing programme. National staff may be more vulnerable to pressure, intimidation and threat, in which case discreteness might be more advisable;
- a protocol of communications with agency representatives abroad.

14.5 Crisis Management

Notwithstanding preparations, any rapid deterioration in a situation will create confusion if not outright chaos. Things never work as planned, and situational judgement and initiative will be required at all times. The following are some key areas for attention:

14.5.1 Timing

The two most difficult questions are whether to withdraw and, if so, when?

As already mentioned, relocation and especially evacuation are difficult decisions – not just from a programmatic but also from an ethical point of view. If your mission is the provision of services then a criterion will be whether you are still able to do this in a meaningful way. If your mission is also to provide a 'witnessing' role, or if solidarity and market-share considerations come into play, the hesitations about your withdrawal will only increase. On the other hand, you may be putting staff lives at risk by staying.

The temptation will be to postpone the decision until the last moment, when the situation has become so clear that there is no room for hesitation. This is a high-risk strategy as you may be overtaken by events and no longer be able to withdraw – a common occurrence according to case studies.

The 'humanitarian logic' and the 'security of staff' logic do not go easily together. This GPR urges that you err on the side of caution, as nobody is helped by aid agency staff being aggressed, wounded or killed. Good practice in this regard therefore holds that you set the 'triggers' for withdrawal before the situation 'boils over'.

14.5.2 Key Principles

In a crisis situation the key management challenge and priority will be to maintain discipline, orderly communications, and interagency coordination.

Maintaining discipline

Individual staff members may be tempted to take all sorts of unplanned initiatives and go to places other than the planned assembly points. The net effect is likely to increase confusion, delay the evacuation and heighten the risk for everybody. No individual initiatives that deviate from the plan should be taken without prior authorisation by the crisis management team.

Maintaining orderly communications

It is vital that communications with one's own staff as well as with key external actors are maintained. To this effect the allocation and preservation of a means of communication are a priority. In an acute crisis, however, the amount of information flowing from a variety of sources can be overwhelming and can contribute to the chaos. Discipline is therefore required among the information providers and receivers and any report coming in by telephone, radio, messenger, etc must be communicated in a disciplined way. In your communications be clear about:

- who reports (on behalf of whom);
- of the urgency of the communication;
- the basic facts/messages;
- on the reliability of the information (source of the information/information confirmed or not);
- planned movements of the reporting person/group (if applicable);
- planned time of next communication.

Those receiving the many reports – normally the resident representative and the crisis management team – should organise themselves so that they can maintain an overview rather than become overwhelmed by the possible bombardment of messages. A possible plan would be for some staff members to monitor telecommunications and any messages coming in, with others designated as interlocutors for people coming in person with requests for information or of another nature. In a complex operation, an additional staff member could plot the evolving situation on a map. The leader of the crisis management team is thereby screened off from the immediacy of the information flows and can keep sight of the overall picture.

Maintaining coordination

If you are involved in an interagency exit operation, there should in principle also be a central coordinating point which you will keep informed about your movements, any problems you encounter and possible changes of plan.

14.5.3 Delicate Decisions

Depending on the context, additional key decisions may present themselves:

Whether to travel high or low profile

What, during the evacuation, is likely to reduce risk most: moving in high profile with logos, flags and HF mobile radio antennae prominent, or low profile with all of these removed?

Informing the authorities

Do you inform the local authorities before exiting? If you don't they may be upset and your relationship will be compromised when you to return. If you do, they may want to stop you because of the value of your assets and your presence.

Whether or not to use an armed escort

A crisis can trigger chaos and unleash looting. Looters and even members of the security forces may try to stop you moving to your assembly point and exit point, by force. Do you ask the local police or army to provide an armed escort?

Case Study: Evacuation from Uvira

In October 1996, all remaining international staff were evacuated from Uvira in south Kivu, shortly before Burundian and Rwandan refugees were forced back from what was then east Zaire. The local authorities did not want them to leave, and delayed authorisation for a plane to land. When permission was finally granted the internationals organised an escort from Mobutu's Presidential Guard, which had been hired by UNHCR to provide security in the camps. A number of Zairean civilians put up a barricade on the exit road. The Guards opened fire and two civilians were killed.

14.6 Hibernation

Good practice recommends that you also plan for hibernation. Hibernation in a danger zone can be voluntary or forced. Voluntary hibernation is the result of your decision to stay confined in a very high danger zone on the assumption that, although violence may be unleashed around you, your staff are unlikely to get hurt. This is a very dangerous assumption. Past experience should not be taken as guidance: just because armed groups or local people have respected your assets and staff in previous crises does not mean that they will do so now. Voluntary hibernation is a decision that consciously puts staff at high risk. It cannot be imposed and requires fully informed consent. Even then, you expose the agency to serious allegations and liability claims from relatives and friends should something go wrong.

Forced hibernation, on the other hand, can result from a rapid unfolding of events that could not be anticipated, or can be imposed by external factors outside your control that make withdrawal impossible (eg, the scheduled plane does not arrive).

Forced hibernation is high-risk. It could mean that staff are confined to the same building for hours, days or even weeks on end. In Angola, for example, non-essential staff of an agency had to live for weeks in a bomb shelter in a town under artillery fire until the negotiations for permission for a plane to evacuate them finally succeeded. Anticipatory planning is required:

- **Long-term physical requirements:** food, water, medicine, fuel, lighting, cooking, sleeping, washing and toilet facilities, power supply (battery recharging), air circulation, etc.

- **Long-term psychological requirements:** books and games, daily physical exercise and also stress management, team management, and mutual psychological support.

You also need to prepare for:

- **Looting:** the most precious item to preserve is your means of communication. Hide a radio and aerial or satphone where it cannot be found, even if the whole site is being stripped down to the door frames. Negotiate to be left other vital items such as food and medicine, but anticipate waves of looters who in the end may take everything (Chapter 10).
- **Aggression against one or more team members:** with no short-term possibility of back-up and support from the agency, or the possibility of leaving the site (Chapter 12).

14.7 Post-evacuation Steps

There are a number of post-evacuation steps to be considered:

1. Contact headquarters: At the first opportunity you should provide a detailed update on staff, security, finance and expected imminent movement plan to HQ; which should immediately contact the families of all evacuees.
2. You will also need to contact officials in the country of arrival, including the embassy, the lead UN agency, and the local authorities if it is likely that you are going to stay for some time and are not merely in transit.
3. Establish or try to re-establish contact and communications with staff left behind and continuing to run the programme.
4. Consider scenarios and who can usefully stay in the region (typically in a neighbouring country) and who should go home (on 'annual leave' or 'end of contract').
5. Organise medium-term accommodation and access to finance.
6. Prepare a report for headquarters and donors with detailed updates on personnel, assets, stock and finance, outstanding liabilities, etc. at the moment of evacuation.
7. Debrief evacuated staff and provide psychological support, as evacuation is likely to give rise to a variety of disturbed feelings: emotional exhaustion, a sense of failure, anger, guilt towards those who were left behind, etc.

14.8 Exploring Return

The key question is: how are you going to find out whether it is safe enough to return, and who in the agency will take the responsibility for the decision to conduct an exploratory mission and subsequently to return all evacuated staff?

Key information for assessing the security situation for an exploratory mission can be:

- the actual security situation;
- the existing military/political situation, which may have changed;
- the status of logistics (airports, roads, etc), communications and service (banks) infrastructure following the crisis;
- the whereabouts and status of staff not evacuated;
- the status of property, assets and stocks left behind;
- the movements of local people;
- the availability of essential provisions, especially food, water, perhaps fuel.

14.9 Preparation and Training

At organisational level

Evacuation and return involve both headquarters and field-based management. Preparedness can be increased through the detailed and critical analysis of past evacuation experiences and through simulation exercises, for headquarters staff and for (prospective) field-level managers. Include exercises which alternate roles so that both sides understand each other's realities and possible functions.

Such simulation exercises need detailed preparation. They require time (easily three hours) to enact. It is also advisable to prepare simulations that, as the play unfolds, bring in various elements not anticipated by the participants and that effectively force them into hibernation. The participants need to be closely monitored by external observers who take notes. The exercise needs to be followed by an emotional debriefing and a critical review of the actions and decisions taken and responses to events.

A further step in training can be to involve field managers in the development of a simulation exercise. This gives them a more 'Olympian viewpoint' on the situation, and provides an exercise in imagining scenarios.

At field level

Ideally you will conduct simulations and possibly rehearsals at field level, but in practice the time may not be available. Good practice recommends that you devote time with a team to discussing this in some detail, using maps, possible scenarios and possible responses for your particular location and situation. It is also general good practice to give people 'tangible knowledge' of key sites or locations (eg, assembly points) and key routes likely to be used in the event of an evacuation. 'Visual memory' may be stronger than an abstract reference in a discussion or on a piece of paper. New arrivals should be briefed in detail about scenarios and plans and about their responsibilities and obligations, and as quickly as possible should become 'visually familiarised' with their new surroundings, key routes and key locations.