



Training workshop on Physical Protection and digital security of human rights defenders, activists and journalists working in most at risk regions of Cameroon

HDRs Security Training Facilitation Guide
Module I

By

DR. KELLY NGYAH
CEO OF MAHSRA



Module 1:

Risks Evaluation against Threats, Vulnerabilities and Capacities of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists

Objective:

Assess HRDs and journalists prior knowledge on risk elements and build their understandings on inclusive risk factors.

Expectations:

1. Participants gain knowledge and are able to apply risk context analyses in practical situations.
2. Participants gain knowledge and are able to apply risk assessment methodologies in practical situations.
3. Participants gain knowledge and are able to make individual assessments on risks elements such as threats, vulnerabilities and capacities in real life situations.

A. Prior Assessments

Approach 1:

Participants Understanding on Human Rights Security (IOMINS)

Approach 2:

Theoretical Context on Human Rights Security (IOMINS)

- At the highest level, article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) duly guarantees everyone's right to life, liberty and security of person. Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 19 December 1966 also recognizes same, with emphasis that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. Article 6 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights adopted on 27 June 1981 also cites in line with the UDHR.
- The UN office of the higher commissioner of human rights (OHCHR) operating from Geneva uses the term "Human rights defender" to describe people who, individually or with others, act to promote or protect human rights. This also refers to professional and non-professional activities of individuals and groups at various levels, in collecting and disseminating information on violations, supporting human rights victims, securing accountability to end impunity, supporting better governance and government policies, contributing to the implementation of human rights treaties and providing human rights education and training.
- Human rights defenders security therefore becomes a merger of the above 2 points towards ensuring that the defender's person benefits from evaluated security considerations that arise in the course of their human rights duties.

NB. The OHCHR also emphasizes that actions taken by human rights defenders must be peaceful in order to comply with the Declaration on human rights defenders (Article 12).

B. Human Rights Security Elements of Concern

The most pertinent thought about security management is understanding the risks that one faces in order to counter-act probable insecurity challenges. Human rights defenders across the world face diverse and complex situations of assessable risks in the course of performing their duties, depending on the country in which they are working. With the approach of security that is attached to the concept of risks, several groups have asked whether security should be the absence of risks or just being able to manage risks.

The important thing to understand is that human rights defenders have an obligation to themselves and the communities or individuals on whose behalf they work to pay attention to their security. Therefore a defender's security consideration is not a question of self interest but that of ensuring the continuation of his or her works on behalf of others. The Human Rights Defenders of Europe support this position by saying that, ensuring the security of defenders, is about caring for the victims even more and that “it's not a luxury, it's a necessity”.

(IOMINS)

These elements are reflected within diverse situational concepts:

- 1) Context Analysis
- 2) Risk Assessments
- 3) Risks Analysis (threat, vulnerabilities and capacities)

I) Context Analysis

This reflects safety thoughts in line with our human rights activities. Depending from which country or community we are operating from, the safety thoughts may be very different. However, general contextual tendencies require reflections on the PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental and/or SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) elements.

Approach One:

Participants discuss examples of challenges they have faced during the course of their human rights activities. Practical case studies are noted from the examples.

(45MINS)

Approach Two:

Participants use pieces of papers to write down factors that make them feel insecure and the papers are pasted on the walls.

(10MINS)

Participants use pieces of papers to write down factors that can make them feel secure and the papers are pasted on the walls.

(10MINS)

Approach Three:

Participants use pieces of papers to write down what they expect to benefit by the end of the workshop.

(10MINS)

2) Risk Assessments

The activities of human rights defenders (HDRs) and journalists can challenge some very powerful persons and thus, put them at great risks. In order to keep safe, HRDs need be able to assess as far as possible, the degree of risks involved in their actions and take necessary measures to avoid or prevent them. Risk assessment is contextual and depends on the socio-political environment an HRD works in.

Approach 1:

Participants identify possible risks involved in their work with reflection on the PESTLE and the facilitator notes them on a white board. **(10MINS)**

The PESTLE and SWOT Reflections for Addressing Risks



Facilitator and participants discuss SWOT options for identified risks. **(15MINS)**

Risk Assessments Continues...

Approach 2:

The Risks Formula

(IOMINS)

$$\text{RISK} = \frac{\text{THREATS} \times \text{VULNERABILITIES}}{\text{CAPACITIES}}$$

@Frontline: The following definitions are attributed:

❖ **RISK** → : The possibility of events that result in harm

❖ **THREAT** → : Declaration or indication of an intention to inflict damage, punish or hurt (recent or immediate)

❖ **CAPACITY** → : Any resource that can improve security or minimize risks (including abilities and contacts)

❖ **VULNERABILITY**: Any factor which makes it paves the likelihood for harm to occur or materialize in greater damage.

The advantage of measuring risks is such that the HRD can produce a contingency plan.

Risk Assessments Continues...

Approach 3:

Evaluating Risks towards Contingency Planning (15MINS)

This is a model of risk impact against probability matrix that can assist HRDs manage expected eventualities in the course of their work.

@Frontline: example of an HRD's risk matrix:

IMPACT					
5. Very High					
4. High					
3. Medium					
2. Low					
Very Low					
	1. Very Low	2. Low	3. Medium	4. High	5. Very High
PROBABILITY					

3) Threat Assessments

Approach One:

Participants provide their definition of threats.

(10MINS)

Based on our current context in Cameroon, I presume a threat is an indication through verbal or written forms that has an intention hurt any HRD or journalist because of the work he or she does.

This could be a direct indication against the HRD victim, or a family member, or the HRD's organisation.

Participants discuss examples of threats they faced and how they reacted to such.

(15MINS)

Approach Two:

(6MINS)

Whenever we feel threatened as HRDs and journalists, we need to be able to assess if such threats can be materialised. If so, then we setup appropriate contingency plans. Some of the questions we should have in mind are:

- What are the facts surrounding the threat?
- Are there preceding instances of threats in a similar direction?
- What can be the objective of the threat?
- Who can be the one behind the threat?
- How feasible can the threat be materialised?
- What can I do to counteract the threat?

4) Vulnerability Assessments

With respect to our current context, vulnerabilities can be defined as those physical and psychological issues make HRDs and Journalists susceptible to be exposed to insecurity or harm.

Some examples of psychological vulnerabilities stemming from stress include:

- Body wellbeing
- Mood
- Behaviour

Approach 1:

Participants discuss examples of their psychological vulnerabilities (IOMINS)

Examples of physical vulnerabilities include:

- Body health (physique)
- Working conditions
- Place of residence
- Friends and family members
- Transportation means etc.

Approach 2:

Participants discuss examples of their physical vulnerabilities (IOMINS)

5) Capacities

In our current context, capacity relates to HRDs and journalists' resources and opportunities that can help reduce their work risks and increase their security.

Some examples include but are not limited to:

- Ability to manage stress
- Belonging or having access to strong national and international defensive networks
- Having a solid security management plan
- Having supportive human and financial resources
- Sourcing adequate and accurate information etc.

Participants discuss examples of their capacities

(IOMINS)

Day 1 Group Work

Facilitator and participants revisit context analysis case studies of HRD activities and chose 3 cases

Group one:

Identify and present the threats involved

Group two:

Identify present the vulnerabilities involved

Group three:

Identify and present the capacities involved

Allocated time:

(30MINS)