

THE FREELANCE JOURNALIST SAFETY PRINCIPLES

FOR
**FREELANCE
AND LOCAL
JOURNALISTS**
ON DANGEROUS ASSIGNMENTS:

All journalists¹ should **plan and prepare** in detail an assignment taking into account digital, legal, physical and psychological safety dimensions before, during and after publication.

Journalists should **prepare and use risk assessments that take into account their personal profile and identity**, and communication plans that consider surveillance capabilities of those on the ground. Communication plans should ensure key contacts have clear instructions and action plans in case of arrest, injury, disappearance, kidnapping or death, and include next of kin details.

All journalists are encouraged to **complete relevant safety training and stay up-to-date on standards of care and safety**, including digital, legal, physical and psychological aspects. Journalists operating in dangerous environments should endeavor to complete an industry-recognized safety or hostile environment course and first aid course, and carry a suitable first-aid kit.

Journalists should **seek relevant safety equipment** appropriate to their profile and assignment either through their employer, contract, or independently.

Journalists should **seek adequate insurance** either through their employer, contract, or independently. Journalists should assess what type of insurance they need based on the risks associated with the assignment, and understand the limits of each policy.

Journalists should work closely with their news organization, or, if undertaking an assignment independently, colleagues in the industry, to **understand the risks of a story**. In doing so, they should seek and take into account the safety information and advice of professional colleagues, local contacts and security personnel. Likewise, they should share safety information with colleagues to help them avoid harm. Journalists should advance awareness of safety among their colleagues and professional communities.

Journalists should work with news organizations in **assessing the risks associated with bylines** and establish whether crediting any of the journalists involved in the story could endanger anyone.

Journalists should work with colleagues on the ground and with news organizations to **measure the journalistic value of a story against the risks**.

¹ Including visual journalists, investigative journalists, filmmakers, local producers, stringers and those engaged as fixers.

² News organizations interact with freelancers and local journalists through their editors, producers, reporters, lawyers, finance staff, safety experts, and others, all of whom share the news organization's responsibility to maximize the safety of freelancers and local journalists. We also include here non-for profit news organizations and other initiatives commissioning or funding stories.

FOR
**NEWS
ORGANIZATIONS
COMMISSIONING**
JOURNALISTS IN DANGEROUS ENVIRONMENTS:

01 News organizations² recognize that local journalists and freelancers play an increasingly vital role in independent journalism and appreciate that **safety is a prerequisite for independent and professional journalism**.

02 News organizations should **stay up-to-date on standards of care and safety**, including digital, legal, physical, and psychological aspects, and consistently advance awareness of safety standards among staff and freelance contributors.

03 News organizations should **share information and resources that impact journalists' safety** among professional communities.

04 News organizations should **show the same concern for the welfare of local journalists and freelancers** as they do for staff.

05 News organizations should **endeavor to provide appropriate equal treatment with regard to insurance, safety training, digital security, first aid and safety equipment** to staffers and freelancers throughout the course of their assignments. The additional costs of these measures should be factored in their budgets, particularly on assignments that may put journalists in harm's way.

06 News organizations should **recognize the importance of timely advance payments when making assignments** as part of promoting safety. News organizations should endeavor to provide agreed-upon expenses in advance and pay for work completed in a timely manner. They should specify explicitly before any assignment the amount, timing, and other conditions of payment, as well as reimbursement of expenses.

07 News organizations should work with journalists in **assessing the risks associated with bylines** in any story and establish whether crediting any of the journalists involved in the story could endanger anyone.

08 In making assignments in a conflict zone or dangerous environment, news organizations should be prepared to take comparable responsibility for the freelancer's and local journalist's well-being in case of kidnapping or injury as they do for staffers, and should endeavor to support their families in case of death. **News organizations have a moral responsibility to support journalists to whom they give risky assignments**, as long as the journalists comply with the rules and instructions of the news organization.

09 In conclusion, we, the undersigned, encourage all news organizations to **participate collaboratively and proactively in a shared commitment to the safety and well-being of all journalists** on the ground, be they staff or freelance.