

# PHILIPPINE JOURNALIST **SAFETY GUIDE**

*A handbook for Filipino journalists*





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## **Philippine Journalist Safety Guide**

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4/L FSS Bldg. # 89 Sct. Castor corner Sct. Tuason streets, Brgy. Laging Handa  
Quezon City 1104 Philippines

Editing by Nonoy Espina  
Additional editing and layout by Jhoanna Ballaran  
Written by Len Olea

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## **PREFACE**

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For over a decade now, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines has helped train colleagues throughout the country as the media community continues to seek ways to keep its members safe in what continues to be one of the most dangerous places in the world to practice journalism.

Nothing, however, is static and what we learned three or five years back may no longer apply to the current situation.

A bitter example of this would be the November 23, 2009 Ampatuan massacre, which shattered everything we believed about safety in numbers.

This is why safety protocols and even practices have needed to be adjusted with the constantly changing situation, and why journalists need to constantly review the practices and mechanisms that help them keep safe.

But reviewer courses are few and far between, not to mention expensive to regularly undertake, and printed materials can get lost and outdated.

We are therefore happy and proud to make available this Philippine Journalist Safety Guide.

Developed with the generous assistance of our partners at Internews, this online resource is a self-help guide that journalists in trouble or headed for difficult or hazardous coverage, or simply seeking basic practical knowledge on media safety, can download. And probably the best thing about it is that it can be updated as necessary.

We stress that this is not intended to replace formal training, which we strongly urge colleagues to take, and the kind of organizational support that the NUJP and other media groups offer.

Keep safe everyone.

**Nonoy Espina**  
Chairperson  
National Union of Journalists of the Philippines  
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# INTRODUCTION

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The Philippines is known as one of, if not the most, democratic countries in Asia, and its press touted as the freest and the most dynamic in the region. It has been a catalyst in many popular uprisings against corruption and wrongdoings, empowering Filipinos to uphold democracy by changing the status quo.

But for all its glory and vigor, journalism has remained a dangerous business in the Philippines. Press freedom groups Reporters without Borders and Committee to Protect Journalists have consistently ranked the Philippines among the world's most dangerous countries for journalists—lumped together with war-torn countries like Syria and Iraq—for its unabated journalist killings, with 185 people killed since the restoration of democracy



in 1986. Of this number, 32 were murdered in the Ampatuan massacre, dubbed as the single deadliest attack against journalists in history.

Sadly, the present gives us a glimpse of a dark future ahead as journalists continued to be attacked, harassed, and,

worse, killed. The past two years have shown an increase in various attacks against the media, with no less than President Rodrigo Duterte openly vilifying journalists and threatening news agencies of closure for criticizing harsh government policies, particularly its bloody campaign against illegal drugs.

The NUJP, together with press freedom groups Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, and Philippine Press Institute, have recorded 85 cases of attacks against journalists and news agencies from June 30, 2016—Mr. Duterte’s assumption to power—to May 1, 2018.

The attacks were in the form of murders, libel cases, death threats, physical assaults, online harassment, slay attempts, among others.

The forms of attacks have evolved, if not worsened, too. Women journalists have been harassed and threatened of sexual abuse online, while killings have become more blatant, with assassins murdering their victims in broad daylight. Media organizations—including the NUJP—reporting on abuse and wrongdoings have become targets of cyberattacks, with cybercriminals defacing their websites and trolls swarming their social media pages.

As of July 30, the NUJP Media Safety Office recorded 12 journalists killed under the Duterte administration. All of them were community journalists: Mindanao continues to be the most dangerous island region with seven killed, followed by Luzon with four, and Visayas with one.

They were: Apolinario Suan Jr. of Surigao del Sur; Larry Que of Catanduanes; Mario Cantaoi, Ilocos Sur; Marlon Muyco, North Cotabato; Joaquin Briones, Masbate; Leodoro Diaz, Sultan Kudarat; Rudy Alicaway, Zamboanga del Sur; Christopher Lozada, Surigao del Sur; Edmund Sestoso, Negros Oriental; Carlos Matas, Zamboanga del Sur; Dennis Denora, Davao del Norte; and Joey Llana, Albay.

The growing list of murdered journalists is alarming, but what is worse is the short record of convicted assailants, a clear reflection of the worsening impunity in the country. Of the 185 media killings since 1986, only 14 perpetrators were convicted, most of them were gunmen.

Killers will always kill, especially in a country where murderers go scot-free and impunity has become a deeply-rooted culture. And as journalists, it is crucial to keep ourselves safe from harm. This guide includes practical tips for Filipino journalists, modified for Philippine coverages and context. It also includes pointers for women, who face two-fold risks and threats when on assignment.

Remember, no story is worth your life, so do the public a favor: be safe and stay alive.

## **CHAPTER I: PREPARING FOR COVERAGE**

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Before deployment, assess yourself if you are physically, medically, psychologically, and logistically compatible for the assignment. Do not go if you are not ready and not suited for the assignment, especially in high-risk environments such as conflicts and disasters, as well as violent coverages such as drug stings and police operations.

### **Assess the risks**

Once you are ready for coverage, it is important to know the dangers you might face during assignment. You need to assess the risks and threats that may arise during assignment for you to map out an effective safety plan. This plan can help you map out your contingency measures to minimize risks during coverage.

Before deployment, accomplish this simple and handy risk assessment form from [Rory Peck Trust](#), a non-profit dedicated to support and assist freelance journalists worldwide.

Submit this to your news desk and keep a copy for yourself and your team for future use.

- Are you working on a sensitive topic?
- What is it, and why is it sensitive?
- Are you covering a high-risk location, activity or event?  
Describe the location, activity or event.
- Who will you be meeting? Are they potentially under surveillance, and might they be at risk if they talk to you?
- Is your security threatened by talking to specific people, visiting or working in a specific area?
- Circle or underline any of the following risks you may face:  
Abduction/kidnapping, violent and organized crime, abusive state security forces, corruption (bribery), riots/demonstrations, armed conflict, terrorist attack, road side bombs/IEDS/body traps, landmines and unexploded ordinance (UXO), low intensity warfare/guerrilla war, cultural hostility, petty crime/theft, car-jacking, road accidents and other transport (aircraft, boat), crossing borders/checkpoints, political instability, outbreak of hostilities, death squads, militia, gangs, natural disaster (flood, earthquake), extreme weather, environmental hazards/toxins/poisons, physical and/or electronic surveillance, infectious diseases.
- Name and specify each risk and the measures you are taking to reduce the chance and severity.
- Consider if there is an increased risk as a result of your gender, age, ethnicity, religious beliefs or nationality and those accompanying you.

## **Prepare your plan**

By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail. This old adage is resounding when going on assignments: failing to prepare opens you to vulnerabilities, which may compromise your safety once you are on the field.

But how do you know that you are prepared? Is it when your cellphones or laptops have been fully charged? Is it when you have all your tools and kits inside your bag?

It is always more than that. Veteran journalist Ed Lingao underscores the importance of knowledge of the area you are covering—from its history to its tradition and people—to help you plan your coverage and your contingency. Knowledge is power, and it can save you on instances when your tools and equipment cannot.

### *1. Do your research about the area.*

- Learn the greetings, local customs and traditions, as well as and useful words and phrases in local dialects, such as “journalist” or “press.” Know the meaning of local gestures that might be important;
- Know what is taboo for the community, particularly the attire allowed and/or prohibited in the area;
- Know the area and its community’s history, particularly the conflict that exists there—its

- beginnings and the parties involved;
- Who are the main players, leaders, and personalities?
  - What are their main issues?

## *2. Make a contingency plan.*

- Identify your exit plans. Familiarize yourself with the emergency exits of your hotel, meeting venue and the exit points of the town or area you are covering;
- Identify your rally point or a safe place where you and your team can meet;
- Identify your choke points or those areas that will put you in difficult situations;
- Know whom to call and whom not to call; and
- Inform your office and/or your local contact of this plan.

## *3. Get in touch with your network.*

- Touch base with local groups who can provide you immediate support;
- Be part of a national group, which can provide you several types of support, from professional to technical and legal aid;
- Contact fellow journalists in the area. They can help you in linking up with sources and fixers, and also



give information and tips that you may have not known during your research; and

- Know these groups and people's roles and their contact numbers.

#### 4. *Prepare your bag.*

Your location and the security situation should dictate the kind of equipment/things you should pack. Here are the most important:

- Water, container, water puritans;
- Snacks like biscuits, crackers, energy bars, and candies;
- Money, credit card;
- Basic medical first-aid kit, prescriptions, and essential medicines;
- Toiletries; hygiene products, sanitary pads for women, wet wipes, and toilet paper;
- Blanket, raincoats, and garbage bags for waterproofing;
- Laptop, recorder, USB drive for backups, multiple-plug adapter. Consider the size of your camera if you don't want attention



- Communication equipment such as mobile phone with cellphone load, charger, car charger, and power bank. Consider two-way radios or satellite phones depending on the nature of coverage and network coverage
- Multi-function tool, foldable cutlery, Swiss-style knife, strong adhesive tape, super glue, padlock
- Protective eyeglasses, lighter
- Flashlight with spare batteries
- Clothes suitable to manipulate temperature. Be mindful of partisan clothing, colors, symbols, cultural/religious aspects
- A headscarf or chador, if visiting Muslim areas
- Depending on the nature of coverage, you may bring protective equipment such as helmet, gas mask, or bullet-proof vest
- For teams, it is best to spread the resources to spread the burden and share the responsibility.



**REMEMBER:** Your office has a shared responsibility to provide safety equipment, training, and basic necessities during coverage. It has been a practice in the local industry for agencies, especially smaller ones, to send their reporters to high-risk assignments without enough preparation or briefing. It is important that you also assert for the things you need before coverage to keep you safe and secure.

### *5. Have your important documents ready.*

- Press ID and letter of assignment from your editor, government IDs such as driving license, social security ID, and passport if out of the country. Keep a copy of your passport and documents with you. Always store the originals in a safe place;
- Maps, compass;
- Written copy of essential contact numbers, including your newsdesk, hospitals, assistance organizations;
- Card indicating your blood type and any serious allergies; and
- International vaccination card.

## **Clothing**

It is important to wear lightweight, comfortable clothes when on assignment. But be mindful of partisan clothing and colors: do not wear a camouflage as it can tag you as a military or wear bright-colored clothing as it can draw unwanted attention.

Reporters without Borders (RSF) made a checklist of clothing and footwear you should use during assignment:

- Comfortable, solid and waterproof walking boots;
- Light, neutral-colored trousers (not khaki);

- Tee-shirt – for women, a long, loose-fitting shirt or tunic;
- Jacket of a neutral color (not khaki);
- Waterproof jacket;
- Scarf or head covering as a protection against sand, tear gas etc.;
- Bracelet with blood type marked on it;
- No valuable objects such as watches, gold chains or rings; and
- Whistle in case of personal attack or to indicate one's presence



## Medical Kit

- Medication; painkillers, antidiarrheals, broad-spectrum antibiotics, antispasmodics, antiallergics, antimalarials. If possible, take products that can be administered without water;
- Tourniquet to stop bleeding in an emergency. Make sure it is practical, light and can be applied with one hand, i.e. on oneself;
- Hemostatic cushion for use on hemorrhages. This should be used instead of a tourniquet where possible and can be applied to wounds to the head, neck and body.



- Antiseptic, for disinfecting wounds;
- Adhesive sutures for cuts;
- Sterile compresses;
- Microporous sticking plasters;
- Dressings that can be cut to size;
- Emergency scissors for cutting clothing or dressings;
- Compression bandage;
- Elasticated bandage;
- Gel for burns;
- Instant cold packs to relieve bruises and sprains;
- Protective breathing mask and plastic gloves;
- Saline solution suitable for use on the eyes and in the nose;
- Safety pins, tweezers; and
- Plastic bag for rubbish.

## **Health Precautions**

It is extremely important to be in top shape when traveling to a dangerous area. Plan well in advance. Reporters without Borders suggest to visit your doctor for a complete health check-up and see a dentist—it's a good idea to avoid toothache while you are in a conflict zone.

You may also need to update your vaccinations, especially when traveling to areas with known illnesses such as



malaria, hepatitis, and tuberculosis. Note them in your international vaccine card.

Keep a note of your blood type and any allergies in your identity documents. The INSI suggests to consider wearing an internationally recognized bracelet with a caduceus symbol and carry a record of allergies and your blood group.

## **Train your thoughts, yourself**

Most conflict zones require an ability at least to run, hike, and endure discomfort. If possible, go on a hostile environment training before covering high-risk environments like wars and conflicts. These seminars often include simulations, feigning possible scenarios that can happen during coverage, as well as basic first aid training and security training.

## **Before leaving**

### **Leave with a peace of mind**

Make sure you have settled personal matters, such as family and financial issues or disputes, that may affect your concentration while you are away.

## **Insurance**

Look for short-term insurance for high-risk coverage if you are a freelancer or if your office does not provide one. Check whether they are compatible with the conditions of your assignment.

Check out [this list](#) from the International News and Safety Institute for a list of insurers for freelancers. RSF also offers insurance coverage specifically tailored for journalists going on dangerous assignments, [contact them here](#).

## **Digital Security**

Always keep your digital record clean by not posting your whereabouts on social media and turning on your gadgets' location services.

Do not post personal and sensitive information online as this may be used against you by people who do not want you to access the information you need for your story.

**REMEMBER: Have the right attitude.**

- ✓ Professional attitudes matter: You are there to cover, not to push an agenda;
- ✓ Keep partisan feelings to yourself; and
- ✓ Know your rights but know your obligation too.

## **CHAPTER II: ON ASSIGNMENT**

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Circumstances vary from each and every coverage, but, as noted in the previous chapter, it is important to have the right attitude to keep yourself safe in the field.

The Reporters without Borders (RSF) notes general rules when reporting in high-risk environments. These are:

- **Be humble.** Be modest and respectful, mindful of other people and their local customs. Over-confidence can be dangerous.
- **Be prepared and anticipate the risks.** Knowledge is power—learn as much as you can about the culture of the region, its dynamics and its people. It is important to blend into the environment and not attract attention to yourself.
- **Use common sense: learn to trust your instincts.** Be careful, discreet and aware of any warning signs. Don't let adrenalin or the drive for recognition carry you away. A story or a photo is not worth your life.

It is important to assess the risks and your resources when choosing your accommodation and the right mode of travel during coverage.



We have compiled the following safety tips by the RSF, International Association of Women in Radio and Television and the [International News Safety Institute](#) (INSI) when covering wars, conflicts and other dangerous assignments, from accommodation and transportation to clothing and equipment.

## **Accommodation**

### **Mode of Transportation**

#### *1. If traveling on foot*

- Be alert of your surroundings;
- Walk confidently—do not appear like you don't know where to go
- Avoid walking alone, especially in poorly lit areas;
- If possible, try to walk close to groups of people
- Arrange to meet people in well-lit and busy areas
- Avoid carrying handbags, but if it is necessary, wear them across your body.

If you suspect you are being followed:

- Go to a busy area and attempt to lose your tail
- Contact your news desk or family member
- If you fail to lose your tail, ask for help
- Prepare spray or attack alarm.

If attacked, decide whether to run, comply, or fight. If you decide to fight:

- Use your body as weapon: hands, elbows, knees, head, feet, and teeth
- Hit where it hurts: in the groin, eyes, throat
- Follow your instinct.

In case of sexual assault, get first aid treatment from a doctor. It is important to receive birth control and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases within 72 hours of the assault for maximum effectiveness. Contact a mental health counselor.

## *2. When using hired vehicle*

- Hire a safe and responsible driver with knowledge of the local terrain and trouble spots. Consider identifying your vehicle as media unless that would attract attack
- Avoid travelling at night
- When in a conflict zone, travel with a companion and in close convoy if possible
- Do not use military or military-type vehicles unless accompanying a regular army patrol



- Make sure your vehicle is roadworthy, with plenty of fuel. In hot conditions check tire pressures regularly as a blowout can be disastrous. Know how to change a tire, and ensure the spare is roadworthy and that you have a jack
- Seek the advice of local authorities and residents about possible dangers before travelling
- Inform your headquarters and colleagues where you are going, your intended time of arrival and expected return. Check in frequently but never post this on social media
- Beware of carrying maps with markings that might be construed as military.

### *3. When using taxis or ride-hailing services*

- If using a ride-hailing services such as Grab, be extra cautious. Send the contact details of the driver to your contact person and tell him/her when you have arrived in your destination;
- Whenever possible, book a taxi or a minicab in advance. Ask for the name of the driver and confirm this when they arrive. Have their number with you;
- Insist on safe driving;
- Do not put up with intimidating behavior from taxi drivers. Get the number of the cab when you get in so you can report any disturbing behavior.

- If you feel worried, trust your instincts, and ask the driver to stop in a busy area and get out
- If the driver will not stop, use your mobile to call police and wave for help from other drivers and pedestrians
- Brief the driver as little as possible and never give personal information
- Limit conversation with anyone with you in the car. Do not talk on the phone
- Do not browse your phone while you are being driven by taxi, observe where you are being taken instead
- If alone, try not to sit in the front of the taxi. If you are in the back and being troubled by the driver, you have two doors from which to exit—but remember some cars have automatic locking when the car is moving
- Do not sit behind the driver, because he can block you by sliding back his seat. The back-right seat (diagonal to the driver) is the safest place in the car.
- Have an emergency plan in case something goes wrong



#### 4. *When using your own car*

- Drive well and safely. Most safety incidents are the results of road accidents
- If you are driving to a location that is unknown to you, plan the route, keep a map or a navigator handy so you don't have to ask for directions
- Have all essentials, such as tool box, a spare car tire, and enough fuel. Learn how to fix the car yourself
- If you suspect that a bomb may have been planted on your car, search it carefully
- Always keep the car clean to spot anything unusual
- When traveling between countries, use more than one car
- Make sure your mobile phone is fully charged in case of emergencies. Have a powerbank handy
- In multi-story car parks, make a note of where you have left your car
- Avoid poorly lit car parks

- Keep car doors locked even while driving, and keep your bag out of sight. Many thieves use traffic lights to open cars suddenly and snatch bags

#### *5. When using public transport at night*

- Female journalists should only take public transport at night if necessary
- If travelling by bus, avoid the back, and if possible, sit in a seat nearest the driver. If your stop is in a remote area, get someone to meet you or get off in a busier area and get a cab or hire a car for the rest of the journey
- If you are travelling by train late at night, remain alert. Make sure the carriage you choose is busy with people. Avoid empty carriages on trains and deserted stations at night
- Do not use your mobile phone unless necessary. Stay alert. If you need to respond to a call be brief and don't give details. Some people entertain themselves by eavesdropping on others. Avoid discussing details about yourself with people you do not know.

### **Clothing**

- In conflict areas, wear civilian clothes unless you are accredited as a war correspondent and required to wear special dress. Avoid paramilitary-type clothing.

- Consider wearing darker clothing, rather than bright colors which stand out.
- Don't take jewelry or expensive personal belongings and ensure that all your valuables are secure.

## Equipment and body armor

- Be prepared to wear flak jackets, body armor, helmets, gas masks and NBC apparel as appropriate.
- Avoid carrying shiny objects and exercise care with lenses. Reflections of bright sunlight can look like gun flashes.
- INSI's list of [equipment providers](#) is available here and you can read more about ballistic vests [here](#).



### Communications

- ✓ Be aware of your communication methods which could be used to spy against you. Consider your [digital and mobile security](#).
- ✓ If you are planning to use a GPS tracker, ensure that you are aware of the pros and cons of the device, and speak to a supplier who will give you the best advice for the current situation. Some examples of different kinds of GPS trackers [are available here](#).

## On the ground

- Meet unfamiliar contacts in public places and tell your office or a trusted colleague your plans. Try not to go alone into potential danger.

- Plan a fast and safe way out before you enter a danger zone. Get out fast when clearly threatened.
- Do not cross the battle zone. This could be very dangerous.
- Never carry a weapon or travel with journalists who do.
- Do not take obvious notes in public or pull out a microphone or notebook without permission.
- Carry picture identification. Do not pretend to be anything other than a journalist. Identify yourself clearly if challenged. If working on both sides of a front line never give information to one side about the other.
- Carry cigarettes, candies, and other giveaways as sweeteners. Stay calm and try to appear relaxed if troops or locals appear threatening. Act friendly and smile.
- Carry emergency funds and a spare copy of your ID in a concealed place such as a money belt. Have a giveaway amount ready to hand over.
- Keep emergency phone numbers at hand, programmed into satellite and mobile phones, with a key 24/7 number on speed dial if possible. Know the location of hospitals and their capabilities.
- Familiarize yourself with weapons commonly used in the conflict, their ranges and penetrating power so you can seek out the most effective cover. Know the



difference in the sounds of incoming fire compared with outgoing fire. Know what land mines and other ordnance look like. Do not handle abandoned weapons or spent munitions.

- Stay alert at all times, even after fighting or explosions have ended. Abandoned or apparently spent munitions can explode at any time. A terror bombing could be followed by a secondary device. Roadside bombs might be planted in rubbish or dead animals.

## **Working with the military**

- Many soldiers in combat are poorly trained, young, inexperienced –and very frightened. They will shoot first if they feel at all threatened. Do not assume they know who you are, where you are and what you are doing, especially in the thick of fighting.
- Consider wearing a high visibility vest.
- Do not assume they can see you clearly, especially through their sights. A camera raised to your shoulder could be seen as an anti-tank weapon. Hold cameras low when filming approaching tanks and twitchy soldiers. Some troops have been known to mistake a camera for an RPG.
- Seek the agreement of soldiers before shooting images. Know local sensitivities about picture taking.

- Be careful if you draw maps of military positions or establishments in your notebook. Be aware of showing unusual interest in military equipment as you may be seen as a spy.

## **During crossfire, shootouts**

- Take cover behind something which will protect you from the bullets like a wall (ensure it is double thickness brick), concrete blocks, thick trees or earth/sand. A hole or a dip in the ground may provide enough cover
- In a building find a room without exterior walls such as a hotel bathroom
- Do not take cover in position where someone has recently been firing
- Do not wear anything bright-colored and lessen the glare or reflection of shiny equipment as it can, in extreme levels, be intense enough to disable and reduce visibility or even block vision. It can also attract attention
- Lie flat on the ground once you are under cover. Make yourself as small a target as possible and don't look out. Immediately assess your situation and plan a route of escape

- When you decide to leave your position, run if you can (do not try to zig zag as you may fall over) and try to get beyond the effective range of the weapon.

## Checkpoints

A checkpoint is generally a road blocked by a barrier, person, mines, a gate or spikes. It may be run either legally (army, police or security forces) or illegally (criminal gangs, bandits, rebels or militia forces).



At legal checkpoints, the aim is usually to stop the vehicle and check for documents, people in the vehicle, drugs, weapons or illegal trafficking of people.

At illegal checkpoints, the aim is to extort money, steal the contents of the vehicle or carjack the vehicle and kidnap the occupants.

You may not know which type it is until you are actually in it. Try to identify clothing, uniforms and speech to determine whether it is a legal or illegal checkpoint and what political leaning or affiliation those operating it may have.

**REMEMBER:**

- The people manning the checkpoint may have been at the checkpoint for hours in a hot or cold climate with no air-conditioning or heating. They may have had no food or water. You may be the first people they have seen today.
- They may have been drinking, taking drugs or may even be children who have been taken from their families and also under the influence of drugs or alcohol. They can be very dangerous and volatile.
- The checkpoint may be in an area where security forces are being targeted and therefore those manning it may be jumpy and afraid for their lives. Ensure you do nothing to give them the impression that you are a threat to them.

**When flagged down...**

- Your behavior may directly influence your situation. Always be polite but alert.
- Avoid confrontation. You may be under time pressure but they are not. Do not pressure them just because you have a deadline.
- Identify yourself as a journalist.
- If on foot, approach the checkpoint with only necessary papers on hand.
- When in a vehicle, keep windows up, doors locked. Do not get out unless ordered to do so. Wind down the window to speak just enough to be able to look them in the eye.

- Never try to film without permission
- If soldiers or militia manning the checkpoint are hostile or nervous, you may wish to offer something to smooth things over. There is a time and place for this which you must be able to gauge. Think about water, food, sweets or cigarettes, or newspapers.
- Let them know that people know where you are and that you are expected back.
- Show them that you are not a threat. Keep your hands in sight and do not make any rash, quick movements. They may think you are going for a weapon

## **Approaching an unknown checkpoint**

- The lead vehicle should warn the remainder of convoy
- Appraise the situation and radio your position to base
- Agree on who is going to speak to those manning the checkpoint.
- Remove your sunglasses
- Slow down, preferably to first gear, with speed around 5 kph, and be prepared to stop, turn off the engine and pull on the hand brake.



## **Approaching a legal checkpoint**

The soldiers or police may do the following:

- Check ID cards or passports.
- Visual security check of the interior; take your sunglasses off to confirm identification.
- Search the glove compartment
- Search the boot/trunk
- Conduct an underneath mirror search of the vehicle
- Open the bonnet/hood and search the engine area
- Increase the search level if he/she is suspicious
- If the search is conducted using a dog, the driver should remain in the car and the vehicle doors must be kept closed.
- Keep calm and be cooperative throughout the process.

### **WHEN IN DANGER AND YOU NEED TO GET AWAY:**

- Turn around early
- If you can't turn around early, drive through
- If you can't drive through, reverse out
- If you can't reverse out, run away

## **Know your rights**

Know your rights, internationally and locally. Familiarize the Geneva Conventions and humanitarian law, which define the role of non-combatants and civilians in war zones. The INSI has [compiled a list](#) of helpful international

law provisions that can guide you when covering in war zones.

Local provisions include the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which protects press freedom and freedom of expression:

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*“Article 3, Section 4. No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances.*

*“Article 3, Section 7. The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law.”*

***1987 Philippine Constitution***

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## **Trauma**

Journalists who have endured high danger and witnessed dreadful events may experience traumatic stress in later weeks, or in some cases, months or years. Do not be embarrassed to seek counseling. You may get in touch with the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines for its peer support program.

## **CHAPTER III: COVERING CRIME AND CORRUPTION**

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Reporting on crime and corruption can be as deadly as covering wars and conflicts. In fact, more journalists in the Philippines were killed for exposing corruption and wrongdoing in the government than reporting from the warzone. Some of them expose scams and misdeeds in their columns and radio shows, just like Marlene Esperat, a columnist of Tacurong City-based Midland Review who blew the whistle on the P728-million Fertilizer Fund Scam involving former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo; and Dr. Gerry Ortega, a radio commentator and activist who exposed the supposed misuse of Palawan's share of the Malampaya funds by former Gov. Joel Reyes.

Hence, it is just as important to take precautionary and security measures when working on investigations. Here are some safety tips for covering crime and corruption culled from the Committee to Protect Journalists' Journalist Safety Guide:

### **Before investigation**

- Before embarking on any potentially dangerous story, thoroughly research news reports, public documents, and court records. Speak to colleagues experienced in



the reporting area, and trustworthy and knowledgeable local sources.

- Draw up a written risk assessment. The assessment should be accompanied by a contingency plan in case the journalist or his or her sources become endangered.
- Find and cultivate, if possible, a senior law enforcement officer to whom you or others could turn in case of emergency.

## **During investigation**

- In covering any dangerous story, keep your mobile phone charged and with you. Remember that mobile phones can be tracked by hostile subjects.
- Begin your reporting by interviewing the sources in whom you have the most trust, gradually working toward those who may be more hostile. Be aware that your questions can give an indication as to the nature of your story.
- To protect yourself and your sources, limit how much you disclose about your investigation. Be mindful about how you record and store information.
- To protect the identities of sources in your written notebooks and electronic files, you may wish to use coding or pseudonyms that you will remember but that others will not easily decipher. This is especially

important when dealing with informants who would be endangered if their identity were disclosed.

### **Approaching hostile subjects**

- Consider having a cover story to tell people, especially potentially hostile sources. The cover story should be credible and broad enough to encompass the actual investigation without giving away the specific matter under investigation.
- Assess whether pursuing the story or naming alleged perpetrators is worth the risk at all. If a decision is made to approach potentially hostile subjects, editors should know in advance and the journalist should be either accompanied by or observed by a colleague. Journalists should communicate to hostile subjects that they are speaking not just to an individual but to the news organization planning to run the story.
- Some subjects may be considered too dangerous to approach in person. In some cases, it is advisable to approach the subject's lawyer rather than the individual directly. The subject or the person's attorney should understand that the story is already planned and that you are seeking comment for ethical and legal reasons. In the absence of a defense attorney, you can assess whether it is practical or safe to communicate with the subject by phone, email, or other written correspondence.
- Communicate candidly with your editor about situations in which a subject may be too hostile to approach. Consider your safety and that of sources when considering the next step. The public record sometimes offers a means by which a hostile subject's denial or viewpoint may be derived.

- Notebooks with sensitive material should always be secured; notes with innocuous material can be left accessible in case intruders search your belongings.
- Electronic files can be made more secure through the

- use of USB flash drives, strong password protection, and remote backups, among other measures.
- You and your editor should also discuss in advance under what circumstances you might be compelled to suspend or call off the investigation. A contingency plan should be in place in the event that you or your sources may be in danger.

#### **Accessing Information**

- Obtain official document.
- Assert your right to information.
- If you must rely on sources to access government data, take precautions to avoid revealing the identity of a source who provided sensitive documents.
- In the Philippines, Republic Act 1447 amending the R.A. 53 or the Shield Law protects journalists from revealing their sources. The protection extends to online and broadcast journalists.

#### **After investigation**

- Toward the end of an investigation, draw up a separate risk assessment to help determine whether and how to approach a criminal suspect who may be a subject of the story. The assessment should include an evaluation of risk, a series of options to approach the individual, and an appraisal of the suspect's possible reactions.
- The assessment should include clear protocols to establish how and when you will communicate safely

with your editor and perhaps other trusted colleagues. This could be done through a variety of methods—from email to telephone calls—and it may involve simple code that would communicate whether you believe you are safe or in danger.

## **Dealing with surveillance and threats**

- Be alert to any form of surveillance. See the NUJP's 20 Steps to Safety on Appendix I.
- Report the incident to the NUJP Media Safety Office for immediate alert, documentation, and support.
- Assess the risks and threats. The International Association of Women in Radio and Television suggests the following:
  - 1) Establish the **facts** surrounding the threat.
  - 2) Find out whether there is a **pattern**.
  - 3) Find out the **objective** of the threat.
  - 4) **Source** - who is making the threat?
  - 5) Will the threat be put into **action**?
- Consider relocation in case of serious threats.

## CHAPTER IV: COVERING DISASTERS

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In a country visited by at least 20 storms a year, journalists regularly cover disasters and natural calamities.

The Institute for News Safety Institute listed down the following safety tips for journalists covering disasters and calamities:

- Learn as much as you can about the type of disaster (typhoon, earthquake, volcanic eruption, tsunami, chemical spill, etc.) you are going to cover. Ensure you have appropriate insurance.
- Ensure you have conducted an in-depth risk assessment and are prepared to ‘survive’ in this challenging hostile environment.



- Wear appropriate protective clothing and gear and ensure that you and your crew are adequately trained to live and work in these conditions.
- Do not get in the way of rescue and relief workers.
- Be self-sufficient and do not be a burden to an already strained system.
- Check the weather.

- Make sure the news desk knows where you are and what you intend to do. If you move locations then let them know. Ensure they have other local contacts in case you go missing.
- Make sure you take something to wash yourself if there is no water, such as wet wipes or baby wipes. Ensure you maintain your personal hygiene so you don't get sick and ensure you know the location of the nearest hospital or medical facility.

## **Clothing and equipment**

Ensure you have luggage that you can carry (rucksack) with a waterproof cover.

- Wear suitable protective clothing and ensure it is appropriate for the heat and humidity. When reporting on hurricanes or floods, ensure you have good quality rain gear that fits you and is lightweight. Wear sturdy boots or wellington boots/waders. Also ensure all of your team has reflective gear.
- Mobile/cell phones may not work or networks may be disrupted. Take several SIM cards from different providers and make sure you have a satellite phone, that it is charged and that you have a charger that can be used in the car.

- A 4x4 vehicle is preferable if there is a danger of flooding. Make sure it is fitted with an up-to-date GPS, a spare wheel and a jack, and has a first aid kit.
- Make sure you have a grab bag at all times containing a flashlight and spare batteries, or wind-up torch, warm clothing, water, water purification tablets, compass, Swiss knife and food (energy bars, dried food and freeze-dried food).
- A generator is often vital in situations where there is no power or electricity. Make sure you know how to use it and you have sufficient fuel stored in safe containers.

## CHAPTER V: DIGITAL AND INFORMATION SECURITY

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As Rory Peck Trust pointed out, “There is no such thing as an unmonitored phone or computer. Having a mobile phone in your pocket is like walking around with a tracking device.”

Surveillance happens not just online, but also offline. Digital surveillance is the monitoring of computer activity, data stored on a hard drive, or being transferred through computer networks. It is usually done superstitiously and can be done by anyone, government, corporations and even individuals.

Digital security is a growing concern. In June 2013, former National Security Agency and whistleblower Edward Snowden and *The Guardian* reported that the US NSA was collecting telephone records of tens of millions of Americans. The NSA tapped into the servers of Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Yahoo. The online surveillance program was called “Prism” and the NSA’s UK counterpart, the Government Communications Headquarters, was also accused of such.



Digital attacks are fast-changing and evolving. Hackers could hack into your system for days, months, and even years, if you're not careful.

Digital attacks could turn into physical ones. In a report by the Global Investigative Journalists Network, Vietnamese authorities have arrested increasing number of bloggers for posts critical of the regime. Blogger Truong Duy Nhat was detained—his blog was shut down after his arrest and was reactivated into a booby-trap, infecting visitors with malware.

According to Reporters without Borders, at least 65 journalists, bloggers, and social media activists in Iran have been detained in relation to their speech or writings.

### **Digital threats**

These are the following digital threats that you may face, according to Rory Peck Trust:

- *Unencrypted communication:* In this situation, anyone monitoring your online or mobile traffic can access all the information you're sending and receiving.
- *Metadata:* Many tools and services keep logs about who you're communicating with, the date and time and subject lines. Files you create, edit or share can also contain metadata about you and your work.

- *Geo-tracking*: Your mobile phone is (and your computer could be) revealing your location so long as it's turned on. Removing the battery (if possible) and letting any reserve power die out is one way to ensure your phone powers down completely.
- *Malicious software*: Your phone or computer may contain software you don't know about that's giving other parties access to it and anything stored on it.
- *Theft or confiscation of your equipment*: When it's out of your sight, someone else could be accessing your device's contents, making copies of it, or loading malicious software to remotely access it later.
- *Hacking attempts*: Network spoofing, man-in-the-middle attacks and other methods could be used to capture or redirect your internet activity and record what you're doing.
- *Mass surveillance*: Many governments and companies monitor and record online activity. Some will trade this information among allies and partners.
- *Targeted surveillance*: If you're working on a sensitive topic over a long enough time, you'll end up on an adversary's radar, and they may start trying to intercept your specific communications and find out who you're working with.
- *Your other online activity*: It may sound obvious but using social networks whilst working on something

discreet can be a bad idea. You may be unwittingly linking your work with your personal life, revealing more about yourself to potential adversaries than you should be.

- *Your contact's digital trail:* All the above items refer to areas where you can reveal your own digital trail. Even if you're practicing good digital security, your contacts may not be. Be careful how much personal information you share with them. Assess how you'll encourage them to be safer.
- Look at the possible digital threats from the perspective of what you're trying to protect. This should fall under two main headings:
- *Identity:* This could be your own, or the identities of people you'll be in contact with. Is it important that the content you're working with isn't traceable to someone's real identity? Write down the various identities of all involved and what could happen if an adversary knew they were assisting you. If you think that this could put you under threat, then you should focus on behaviors, tactics or services that offer more anonymous methods to communicate.
- *Data:* This could be text, images, video, spreadsheets or anything transmitted electronically. Could someone use this content to harm you or others, or stop your assignment before you're finished? Write down all the

ways this data could be used. If you think that it could be used against you, you should prioritize strong encryption for all your data at risk.

After identifying these risks, draw up your security plan.

## **Internet and Network Security**

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### **Email**

- Use regularly updated anti-virus software
- Google collects your data. When you use applications like ads, YouTube, etc., Google likewise stores all the information. When covering highly sensitive issues and when you need to communicate with your sources, use secure email such as Protonmail and Tutanota.
- Use a strong password or passphrase. Digital security groups like EngageMedia and Computer Professionals Union recommend using passphrase with at least one character, with at least one capitalized letter, at least one lower case letter, at least one number. You may use password managers such as KeePassX. Change your passwords at least once a month.
- Be wary of emails with links, attachments, etc. from senders you do not know. Confirm emails sent by friends or acquaintances.

- Use non-browser based email app for secure email communication such as Thunderbird.
- Use GPG encryption if you don't want your messages to be tracked or collected

## **Browser**

To avoid phishing and clickbait, secure your browser and follow these steps:

- Use a secure, open-source browser such as Mozilla Firefox
- Disable “Remember Password” in browser.
- Enable “Do Not Track” in browser
- Disable pop-up windows
- Allow browser to update automatically
- Check the URL bar if the web address is correct
- Make sure HTTPS is enabled before submitting passwords
- Test your online privacy protection. Log in to <https://panoptickick.eff.org>.
- Use VPN (virtual private network), [ToR](#) or anonymous proxies to avoid being subjected to network sniffing or surveillance

## **Mobile security**

- When meeting sources in stealth, disable the location-tracking capability of cell phones or turn it off and

remove the battery pack. You may also use tin cans or aluminum foil pouches as faraday cages to block off signals.

- For sensitive assignments, do not use a smart phone but a basic phone with prepaid SIM card/s
- Secure your device by always locking it, having a complex password and shielding your passcode
- Be careful what you share
- Encrypt sensitive data.
- To prevent malware infection, don't click on unsolicited links
- Think before downloading apps

## **Social media security**

While social media is useful, it poses threats to privacy and social networking attacks such as identity theft, spam, phishing.

NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden said that Facebook is a “surveillance company” that sells its users’ personal details, weighing in on a scandal involving a private firm that harvested data from the social media giant.

Here are some tips to help you protect yourself on social media:

- If possible, use a screen name that is not too revealing or make a separate account for professional use
- Use strong passwords and always log out
- Review social media profile for sensitive personal information
- Review privacy options
- Review timeline and tagging options
- Review ad preferences
- Think before you post. Avoid posting information including travel plans, bank account information, your full address and birth date, your children's names, school and birthdates, location information, your daily schedule. Assume anyone can read your posts, Big Brother and hackers included
- Think before you add friends. Don't make random friends.
- Think before using third-party platforms. Don't use FB as your log-in for other services.
- Use Signal as an alternative to FB Messenger for sensitive communication

## **Online harassment**

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Dart Center for Trauma and Journalism [recommends these tips](#) in dealing with trolls and cyber hate:

### **1. Get your psychological armor on**

Forewarned is forewarned, as the saying goes. Just knowing you may encounter cyberhate is helpful. And if you do end up getting trolled, keep in mind trolls are looking for your weakest point. It feels personal – but in fact it isn't. To them, it's business. They are just trying to get at you any way they can.

Be self-aware and take a mental note if the trolling is causing you to lose productivity or making you stressed. To help unravel the anxiety, ask yourself questions such as: is dwelling on the situation improving my life? Why am I still thinking about it? What could I be doing instead?

## **2. Be silent to the trolls – but not each other**

You will have heard the saying: "Don't feed the trolls." The research supports this. We know [trolls are sadists](#) – they want to hurt you and get pleasure from it. So silence is a great weapon. No reaction means they are failing. And it infuriates them. But this doesn't mean being silenced—keep doing whatever it is you are doing, just don't react to the cyberhate.

If you need support, reach out to your friends and family for support in the offline world. Debrief and get the stress off your chest.



### **3. Use the report/block/mute buttons**

Social media platforms have been notoriously lax and indifferent when it comes to dealing with cyberhate. However, the report/block/mute buttons exist for a reason. Use them. The "mute" button on Twitter is my favourite because the trolls effectively shout into the ether. (I'm not suggesting for a moment this is a total solution. It's just one tool and it's of limited effect, especially when a tsunami of hate is coming your way.)

### **4. Turn notifications off at night**

It's not realistic to stay off the Internet. However you can turn off notifications for different apps – like Twitter and Facebook – at night. You can do this on all smartphones. It means that while you're in your bedroom trying to relax, you won't be imbibing torrents of hate. For this reason, some people choose to keep devices out of their bedroom altogether.

The IAWRT recommends that if trolls have been threatening you with physical harm, go to the police and document the harassment (i.e. keep screenshots of threatening/abusive messages).

## **CHAPTER VI: TRAUMA AND STRESS**

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(A large part of this section is from the Dart Center for Trauma and Journalism.)

A potentially traumatic event (PTE) involves either experiencing or witnessing a situation that involved the threat of death or serious injury. In journalism this might involve:

- witnessing someone being assaulted or severely injured
- seeing deceased people or body parts while reporting on a motor vehicle accident, disaster or conflict
- repeated exposure to photos or videos of violence, dead bodies or body parts while editing footage for a news story
- being faced with the threat of injury or death by another person or event (e.g. disaster)

Reactions to trauma manifest in different ways. The Dart Center lists down the following:

### **Emotional reactions**

- Shock
- Irritable, impatient
- Feel overwhelmed
- Blame
- Anger and suspiciousness

- Guilt
- Anxiety and panic
- Sadness and tearfulness
- Frustration
- Emotionally numb – don't feel anything
- Helplessness
- Don't enjoy things anymore
- Difficulty feeling happy and experiencing loving feelings

### **Cognitive (thought) reactions**

- Difficulty concentrating
- Can't make decisions
- Memory problems
- Can't think straight
- Tunnel vision
- Feel spaced out
- Can't get memories/thoughts out of your head.

### **Physical reactions**

- Fatigued/tired
- No energy
- Trouble sleeping
- Heart racing – chest pain
- Feel on edge and jumpy

- Increased physical pain
- Headaches, dizziness
- Stomach aches, nausea, diarrhea
- Decreased appetite

### **Behavioral reactions**

- Lose touch with normal routines
- Lose track of time
- Work extra long hours
- Avoid work or other activities
- Unable to relax
- Overactive
- Inappropriate behavior, e.g., laughter, yelling
- Abuse alcohol and other substances

### **Improve your overall well-being.**

*Make your life enjoyable.*

- Make time for things you enjoy
- Stay connected with people who make you feel good
- Keep yourself healthy: regular sleep, healthy eating, exercise

*Reduce work stress*

- Make the most of your work breaks
- Manage your time effectively
- Don't over-commit: prioritize tasks

- Have holidays

### *Practice good coping skills*

- Ask for help when you need it
- Don't rely on drugs and alcohol to feel better
- Use the coping skills such as controlled breathing, helpful thinking to manage stressful situations

## **Self-care after a traumatic event**

If you have been affected by a traumatic event, there are several things you can do to improve your ability to cope. Even if you feel unmotivated and apathetic, try to do some of the things listed below. They will help you to cope with the stress and improve your ability to manage problems.

- Recognize that you have been through an extremely stressful event. Give yourself time and space to acknowledge what you have been through and accept that you will have an emotional reaction to it. Give yourself permission to feel rotten, but don't overreact—it is unpleasant, but you can cope with it.
- Look after yourself: get plenty of rest, even if you can't sleep, and try to eat regular, well-balanced meals. Regular exercise, like walking, cycling or jogging, is very good for reducing the physical effects of stress and trauma; try to do a little every day. Relaxing

activities such as listening to music, yoga, meditation, or taking a hot bath may also be of use.

- Cut back, or cut out, tea, coffee, chocolate, cola and cigarettes. Your body is already 'hyped up' and these substances will only add to this. Do not try to numb the pain with drugs or alcohol; this will lead to more problems in the long term.
- Spend time with people you care about, even if you do not want to talk about the event. Contact friends and, if necessary, have someone stay with you for a few hours each day. Sometimes you will want to be alone; that's OK, but try not to become too isolated.
- Recurring thoughts, dreams and flashbacks are normal. Don't try to fight them. They will decrease in time. Try not to block them out or bottle up your feelings. Confronting the reality, bit by bit, will help you to come to terms with the experience.
- Be more careful than usual, for example when cooking, driving or using machinery. Following a trauma, you may be more vulnerable to accidents and physical illness.
- Try to resume a normal routine as quickly as possible.
- Avoid making any major life decisions, such as moving house or changing jobs, in the period following the trauma. On the other hand, make as many smaller daily decisions as possible, like what you want to eat or

what film you'd like to see. This helps to re-establish feelings of control over your life.

A traumatic event can have an impact on how you see the world, your life, your goals and your relationships. Giving yourself time to re-evaluate what you think and talking to others about it may help.

## **Seek help**

Inform your newsroom. The NUJP has been advocating for newsrooms to help journalists deal with trauma.

For freelancers, you may contact the NUJP hotline at +639175155991 for possible peer-to-peer support.

# CHAPTER VII: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS...AND DUTIES

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## Know your basic rights

There are a handful of basic documents recognizing the principle of press freedom internationally and locally.

The **RIGHT TO SEEK, RECEIVE, IMPART INFORMATION** is stated in Article 19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted Dec. 10, 1948), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, ratified by 140 countries including the Philippines), the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the African Charter of Human and People's Rights.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution contains provisions protecting press freedom and freedom of expression:

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*Article 3, Section 4. No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances.*

*Article 3, Section 7. The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law.*

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Excerpts from Art. 79, Protocol 1 of the ICCPR states:

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*1. Journalists engaged in professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians...*

*2. They shall be protected ...provided they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians, and without prejudice to the right of war correspondents accredited to the armed forces to the status provided for in art. 4a of the third convention...*

*3. They may obtain an identity card which shall be issued by the government of the state of which the journalist is a national or in those territory he resides or in which the news medium is located, to attest to his status as a journalist*

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## **Other legal rights**

- Right to be free from prior restraint (Philippine Constitution, jurisprudence);
- Right to report on any legislative, judicial or other official proceedings and the statements made in those proceedings, or any other acts of public officers in the exercise of their functions (Art. 354, Revised Penal Code);
- The law mandates free public access, at reasonable hours, to the annual performance reports of offices and agencies of government and GOCCs and the statements of assets, liabilities and financial disclosure of all public officials and employees.
- (Code of Conduct of Public Officials, R.A. 6713 or SALN Law)
- Right to report on matters of public concern and the conduct of public officials and public figures (Lopez v. CA, G.R. L-26549, 31 July 1970);

- Right to protect your sources (R.A. 53 as amended by R.A. 1477).

## **Adhere to ethics and standards of the press**

The book 'Elements of Journalism' by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel reminds of the basic principles and ethics of journalism. In case of ethical dilemma, go back to these:

1. Journalism' first obligation is to the truth.
2. Its first loyalty is to citizens.
3. Its essence is a discipline of verification.
4. Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover.
5. It must serve as an independent monitor of power.
6. It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise.
7. It must strive to make the significant interesting and relevant.
8. It must keep the news comprehensive and in proportion.
9. Its practitioners have an obligation to exercise their personal conscience.
10. Citizens, too, have rights and responsibilities when it comes to the news.

## **Libel**

The elements of libel are as follow:

- An allegation of a discreditable act or condition concerning another;
- Publication of the charge;
- The identity of the person defamed; and
- Existence of malice.

Unfortunately, libel in the Philippines is still a criminal offense. The NUJP and other media organizations have been campaigning for the decriminalization as it is not compatible with ICCPR, of which the Philippines is a signatory.

Often, libel is being used by the powers-that-be to harass journalists. Examples include the P101-million libel suit filed by former President Joseph Estrada against the Manila Times in 1999 and the libel suit filed by Jose Miguel “Mike” Arroyo, husband of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, against 43 journalists.

The Republic Act 10175 or the Cybercrime Law and the proposed amendments to it endanger the journalism practice even more. The penalties to libel are harsher. Under the law, law enforcement agencies can use the

pretext of “fighting terrorism” to trample upon our privacy, communication rights, and other civil and political rights.

We must therefore continue our campaign to decriminalize libel and junk the Cybercrime Law as these violate our right to press freedom.

## **APPENDIX I: NUJP 20 STEPS TO SAFETY**

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### **As soon as you receive the threat...**

1. Document the exact wording and circumstances by which the threats, direct or veiled, were received, including time, date and persons involved.
2. Let others know – your family, friends, editors and colleagues in the media.
3. Report it to the police. It is better if you and your editor can make the report in writing, citing the circumstances and possible source.
4. Report the threat to the Media Safety Office\* of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) and International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) through the NUJP Hotline: 0917-515-5991.
5. Publicize the threats. Ask friends in media to help.
6. Take the necessary precautions (*see items 8 to 20*).
7. Consider asking for police protection if you think the threat is not coming from the members of the police. Report it also to the National Bureau of Investigation and the national PNP HQ.

### **If you have already received threats before and the threats remain unsolved, take the following safety precautions...**

8. Always keep emergency phone numbers at hand, including NUJP's hotline and the numbers of your

editors, immediate relatives, trusted police/military contacts and lawyer. Program them into your mobile phone's speed dial.

9. Inform your editors, colleagues and family where you are going, your intended time of arrival and expected return. Check in frequently.
10. As much as possible, do not travel alone.
11. Meet unfamiliar contacts in public places and tell your office or trusted colleagues of your plans.
12. Ensure that you are always physically and mentally fit.
13. Vary your routes and routines. Breaking your usual patterns makes your movement unpredictable for would-be attackers.
14. Know the different entrance/exit points of places you frequent, i.e. your station/newspaper and the offices in your beat. Study possible alternate routes.
15. Get "local intelligence", i.e. your trusted neighbor, the cigarette vendor across the street, or the guard in your building. They may have observed something that would help you.
16. Be careful with phone calls, text messages, fax, email and other forms of electronic communication that can be easily tracked. Don't keep sensitive documents or recordings in your home, car or office.

17. Identify safe havens or places where you feel you would be safe. Have them ready for emergencies or times when you feel you have to lie low for a few days.
18. Join trainings or briefings on “Risk and Safety Awareness for Journalists” given by NUJP and other media organizations.
19. Know your rights. Learn the national laws and international covenants that protect newsmen, including the Geneva Conventions as they relate to civilians in war zones.
20. Be prepared but do not be paranoid.

## **APPENDIX II: RESOURCES GUIDE**

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Download the Reporters without Borders Safety Guide for Journalists here:

<https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/2015-rsf-safety-guide-for-journalists.pdf>

Download the Committee to Protect Journalists Journalist Safety Guide here:

<https://cpj.org/security/guide.pdf>

For women journalists, download the IAWRT Safety Handbook

<http://iawrt.org/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2017/11/IAWRT%20Safety%20Manual.Download.10112017.pdf>

For freelancers, go to Rory Peck Trust for resources and advisories on safety

<https://rorypecktrust.org/Resources>

For more information on conflict reporting, check out the International War and Safety Institute website

<https://newssafety.org/home/>



For more resources about dealing with trauma, go to the website of Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma <https://dartcenter.org/>

### **Emergency assistance for journalists in distress**

Call the NUJP Media Safety Office Hotline +639175155991 or the National Office at +63 3767330

You may also email them at [safety@nujp.org](mailto:safety@nujp.org).

## **References:**

Reporters Without Borders Safety Guide for Journalists

Committee to Protect Journalist Safety Guide

IAWRT Safety Handbook - Grab bag, Travel, Assessing Threats

Rory Peck Trust – Risk Assessment

International News Safety Institute - Covering Wars and Conflicts, On Checkpoints, Covering Disasters

Ed Lingao's General Safety Training: Preparation and Planning

Committee to Protect Journalists' Journalist Safety Guide – Covering Crime and Corruption

Dart Center for Trauma and Journalism – Dealing with trolls and cyber hate