



**PHILIPPINE
JOURNALISTS'**

SAFETY GUIDE



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COVER PHOTO:

Journalists take pictures from the roof of a bullet-riddled building in Mapandi, Marawi City on September 27, 2017, the 100th day of fighting between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the ISIS-inspired Maute terrorist group. The five-month long conflict flattened the Philippines' Islamic City and displaced over 350,000 people.

(Photo by: Richel V. Umel, BenarNews)

Philippine Journalists' Safety Guide

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PREFACE



For more than a decade now, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) has been helping train colleagues throughout the country as the media community continues to seek ways to keep its members safe in what remains one of the most dangerous places in the world to practice journalism.

However, as the situation constantly changes, lessons from a few years back might no longer apply.

A painful example would be the November 23, 2009 Ampatuan massacre, which shattered everything we once believed about safety in numbers. More recently, the weaponizing of technology and the digital realm by the enemies of freedom of the press and of expression has given rise to new and insidious cyber threats.

This is the reason we constantly need to review and adjust our safety protocols to adapt to the ever-changing milieu.

Admittedly, training and review courses are expensive to mount regularly.

This is why we have developed the Philippine Journalists' Safety Guide.

Journalists can download and refer to this online resource when they find themselves in trouble, heading out on hazardous assignments, or just to update their practical knowledge of media safety. This was developed with the generous assistance of our partners at Internews and further developed under the Initiative for Media Freedom (IMF), a project supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

And because it is online, it can be easily and regularly updated as well.

However, we stress that the Safety Guide is not intended to replace formal safety training, which we strongly urge colleagues to take, and the organizational support the NUJP and other media groups offer.

Keep safe everyone.

Nonoy Espina

Chairperson

National Union of Journalists of the Philippines

INTRODUCTION

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 (RSF) and Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) 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 188 journalists and media workers 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 continue to be attacked, harassed, and, worse, killed. The past four 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 (CMFR), Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), and Philippine Press Institute (PPI), have recorded 171 cases of attacks against journalists and news agencies from June 30, 2016—Mr. Duterte's assumption to power—to April 30, 2020.

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 various attacks, including threats, harassments, cyberattacks, lawfare, and delegitimization.

As of June 2020, the NUJP Media Safety Office recorded 16 journalists killed under the Duterte administration. All of them were community journalists: Mindanao continues to be the most dangerous island region with eight killed, followed by Luzon and the Visayas with four each.

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 188 media killings since 1986, only 42 perpetrators were convicted, according to the NUJP Media Safety Office—28 of which were those involved in the Ampatuan massacre—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.

It is divided into eight chapters, each one detailing practical steps and procedures based on actual experiences and practices to ensure your personal safety and security. While it is largely drawn from protocols developed in the context of hostile environments around the world, it offers valuable lessons that can be adapted for local conditions and realities.

Chapter I: Preparing for Coverage – this chapter underscores the need for risk assessment and developing a safety plan before going on assignment especially to danger zones or where personal safety and security might be compromised.

Chapter II: On Assignment – outlines some rules to observe when on actual assignment including preparations and having the right attitude.

Chapter III: Covering Crime and Corruption – far more Filipino journalists investigating and reporting crime and corruption have been killed than those covering wars and conflict. Find out how to develop and observe organizational and personal safety measures.

Chapter IV: Covering Disasters – follow steps and procedures on how to keep safe while preparing for and covering human-induced disasters such as wars, localized armed conflict, chemical and oil spills and natural calamities such as typhoons, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.

Chapter V: Covering Pandemics and Infectious Diseases – the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has drastically changed how journalists cover and produce news. Learn tips on covering an entirely new phenomenon in this chapter.

Chapter VI: Digital and Information Security – with digital attacks against journalists and activists in the Philippines increasing alarmingly, the importance of observing and practicing digital security protocols could not be overemphasized. This chapter illustrates practical how-to measures to enhance your digital security.

Chapter VII: Trauma and Stress – how does one know if she or he is suffering from stress and trauma? This chapter presents steps in identifying symptoms and undertaking self-care, something that journalists often overlook or ignore.

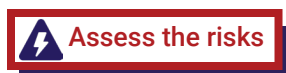
Chapter VIII: Know Your Rights and Duties – one of the more important protection measures that journalists can adopt is having at least a basic knowledge and understanding of their rights as well as responsibilities as enshrined in Philippine and international documents on press freedom and expression principles. Find out more in this chapter.

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

CHAPTER I: PREPARING FOR COVERAGE

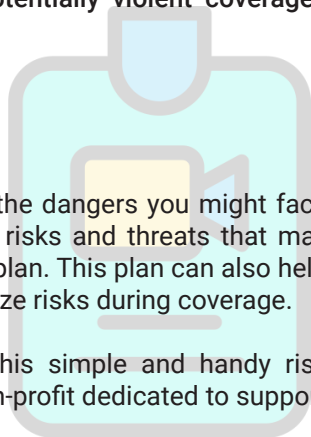


Before deployment, assess yourself if you are physically, medically, psychologically, and logistically prepared for the assignment. Do not go if you are not ready and not suited for the assignment, especially in high-risk environments such as armed conflicts, natural calamities, infectious disease outbreaks as well as potentially violent coverages such as police anti-drug operations.









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

Before going on assignment, 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 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/improvised explosive devices (IEDs) booby 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.



Always plan ahead. Failing to prepare opens you to vulnerabilities, which may compromise your safety once you are on the field.

Veteran journalist Ed Lingao underscores the importance of knowledge of the area you are covering—from its history to its traditions, cultural beliefs and practices, 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.



Research the area



Learn the greetings, local customs and traditions, as well as 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?



Have contingencies



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 who to call and who not to call; and



Inform your office and/or your local contact of this plan, which should be done in every coverage.



Get in touch with your network

- Touch base with local groups (e.g. local NUJP chapters, people's organizations or faith-based groups) who can provide you immediate support.
- Be part of a national group like the NUJP, which can provide you several types of support, from professional to technical and legal aid.
- Contact fellow journalists in the area, and for members, contact the NUJP local chapters. They can help you in linking up with sources and fixers, and give information and tips that you may have not known during your research.

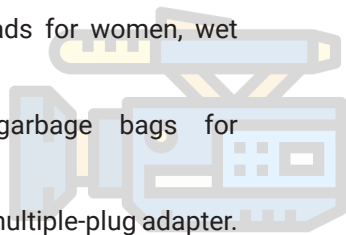
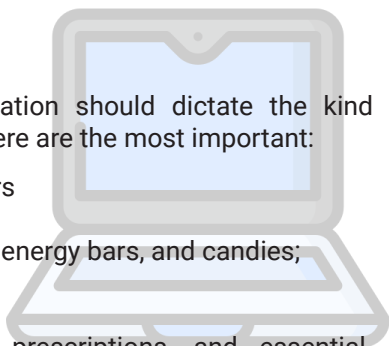
Know these groups and people's roles and their contact numbers.










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 purifiers
- 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
- Microfiber 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, door wedge
-  Protective eyeglasses, lighter
-  Flashlight with spare batteries
-  Clothes suitable to manipulate temperature. Be mindful of partisan clothing, colors, symbols, cultural/religious aspects
-  For women, 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 share burden and 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 your right to the equipment, basic necessities and training you need before coverage to keep you safe and secure.



Bring important documents

-  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;
-  Traditional or offline maps, compass









-  Written copy of essential contact numbers, including your newsdesk, hospitals, assistance organizations and emergency response agencies;
-  Card indicating your blood type and any serious allergies; and
-  International vaccination card.



On Clothing and footwear

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

RSF made a checklist of clothing and footwear you should use during assignment in danger zones:

-  Comfortable, solid and waterproof walking boots;
-  Light, neutral-colored trousers (not military colors);
-  T-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 First Aid Kit

- Medication, painkillers, antidiarrheals, =broad-spectrum antibiotics, antispasmodics, antiallergics, antimalarials. If possible, take products that can be administered without water.
- Hemostatic cushion or pads 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;
- Triangular 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;
- Plastic for burns;
- Garbage bags for clothes.



Know what's inside your first aid kit and how to use them. It is also important to undergo basic first aid and life support exercises as part of your safety training.



Health Precautions

It is extremely important to be in top shape when traveling to a dangerous area. Plan well in advance. RSF suggests 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, especially during an extended-period assignment.

You may also need to update your vaccinations, especially when traveling to areas with known illnesses such as malaria, hepatitis, and tuberculosis. While this generally applies to international assignments, some areas in the Philippines still have cases of communicable diseases. Check with the Department of Health (DOH) or Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) for current hotspots.

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



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.

(See more on Chapter V: Digital and Information Security)



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 obligations too.

CHAPTER II: ON ASSIGNMENT

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, especially during hostile situations.

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.
-  **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.



PHOTO BY: GABRIEL PANCHO

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 (IAWRT) and the INSI when covering wars, conflicts and other dangerous assignments, from accommodation and transportation to clothing and equipment.



Accommodation







If you will use a hotel, know the emergency exits and keep the numbers of authorities handy (local chief of police, barangay officials, and nearest clinic or hospital). Check if the windows are blocked and if the locks are working properly.

Make sure you know and trust your host.








Mode of transportation

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 (whistle)
-  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 to a safe place, call a person you trust and report what happened. You may also seek help from authorities, if appropriate, or a local health facility that can provide care for survivors.
- 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.




When using hired vehicle

- Hire a safe and responsible driver who knows the local terrain and trouble spots. Consider identifying your vehicle as media unless that would attract unwanted attention
- Avoid traveling 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. As much as possible, do not hitch a ride on military or police vehicles.
- Make sure your vehicle is in good condition, 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.









Avoiding road crashes

Road crashes remain as one of the top causes of deaths in the world, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), and journalists are vulnerable to this as they are always on-the-go. Here are additional reminders when using vehicles:

-  Remember to wear seatbelt at all times.
-  Secure all gears with bungee cords or on the floor. In a road crash, the gear that we bring will harm us as it flies around at great speeds.
-  Keep a three-second distance from the vehicle in front when speeding at 60 to 80 kph. Study shows that this is the maximum time a driver reacts and steps on the brakes during emergency situations.

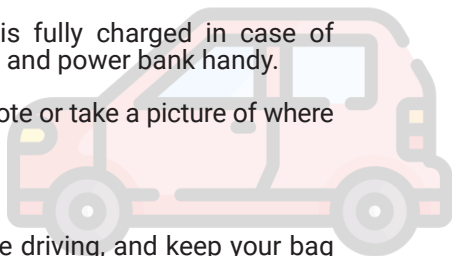
When using taxis or ride-hailing services

-  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 are expected to arrive at 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
-  Have an emergency plan in case something goes wrong.



- 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 at 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 is the safest place in the car.

When using your own vehicle

- Drive well and safely. Most safety incidents are the results of road crash.
- 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 for it carefully
- Always keep the car clean to spot anything unusual.
- Make sure your mobile phone is fully charged in case of emergencies. Have a car charger and power bank handy.
- In multi-story car parks, make a note or take a picture of where you have left your car.
- Avoid poorly lit car parks.
- Keep car doors locked even while driving, and keep your bag and equipment out of sight. Many thieves use traffic lights to open cars suddenly and snatch bags.







When using public transport at night

-  If travelling by bus, avoid the back. And if possible, take the seat nearest to 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 another mode of transportation for the rest of the journey.
-  Do not use your mobile phone unless necessary. 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.
-  Use a comfortable and durable pair of shoes.
-  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 as appropriate. Avoid carrying shiny objects and exercise care with lenses. Reflections of bright sunlight can look like gun flashes.

Ask your employer to provide you with safety equipment or gear.



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 Global Positioning System (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.









On the ground in a conflict area or war zone

- 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 notes 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.








PHOTO BY ERWIN MACARIÑAS

-  Carry cigarettes, candies, and other sweeteners as giveaways. 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 when forced to.
-  For photographers, keep several memory cards including spares that can be surrendered when demanded by security forces or armed non-state actors.
-  Keep emergency phone numbers at hand, programmed into your 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 young and inexperienced, and may easily be 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 permission 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.



Embedding with the military




This is highly discouraged as it often provides an unbalanced view of a conflict and may put one in the direct line of fire. Yet many journalists resort to embedding for accessibility and practicality.

If you have no choice but to embed with the military, it is important to clearly identify yourself as a journalist by wearing an identification card and wearing attire different from that of the combatants.



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 a 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.



When a gun is pointed at you

During raids or crossfires, journalists can be mistaken by authorities as enemies. When this happens:

-  Get rid of anything you are holding and raise your hands
-  Establish eye contact to personnel pointing their guns at you, firmly say you're a journalist over and over
-  After establishing contact, say out loud you have an identification card for them to confirm, and wait for them to acknowledge
-  Slowly show them your press card and politely ask for their team leader.



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 could be to extort money, steal the contents of the vehicle or steal 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



Always be polite but alert.



Avoid confrontation.



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 at eye level to speak.



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 like 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.
-  If you feel you are in danger, call your emergency contact and place your mobile phone in an area where the microphone can pick up the conversation.





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 yourself with 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.

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



1986 Philippine Constitution

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.

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 NUJP for its peer support program. For more information on stress and trauma please check out Chapter VII.




CHAPTER III: COVERING CRIME AND CORRUPTION

Reporting on crime and corruption can be as deadly as covering wars and conflicts. In fact, more journalists in the Philippines have been 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, 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 CPJ's 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 to 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.


 Be careful of using hidden cameras as unauthorized use of it may compromise ethical standards. As much as possible, never use hidden cameras and never record audio without permission.




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 IAWRT 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

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

The INSI 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.
-  Conduct an in-depth risk assessment and prepare for a hostile environment.
-  Wear appropriate protective clothing and gear (e.g. protective helmets, life vests, or N95 masks), and ensure that you and your crew are adequately trained to live and work in these conditions.








PHOTO BY ERWIN MACARIÑAS

-  When covering fire or accidents, stay at a safe distance.
-  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.
-  Send them your coordinates using an offline map application in case cellular signal gets cutoff later.
-  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 Subscriber Identification Module (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.



On interviewing victims and first responders

Be sensitive in asking questions. Be patient and do not rush; don't just shove a microphone into someone's face and expect an interview. Try to offer help and support when the interviewee is in obvious distress.

CHAPTER V: COVERING PANDEMICS AND INFECTIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAKS

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has drastically changed the way journalists gather information, cover and report the news.

As the health crisis worsened by the day, journalism, by delivering timely and accurate information, helped contain the spread of the disease by combating ignorance, fear, and panic, as well as misinformation and disinformation. And journalists have and continue to place their lives at risk to do this.

Thus, Filipino journalists and other media practitioners working in the frontlines to gather first-hand information should observe the following health, safety and security protocols in covering stories.



PHOTO BY ADRIAN PUSE



Before coverage

- Assess the health, safety and security conditions of the area assigned to cover - quarantine zones, lockdown areas, hospitals or isolation facilities. You have the right to refuse an assignment if you believe it will put you and your colleagues at risk.
- Before going on an assignment, plan with your superiors and team. Adopt contingencies.



During coverage

- Wear proper identification at all times.
- Ensure you have adequate protection against infection. Have alcohol and/or hand sanitizer on hand at all times. Follow DOH guidelines.
- Always wear protective gear such as face masks or full protective suit if necessary, especially in places with confirmed coronavirus cases, hospitals, and isolation centers.
- Implement the buddy system, if possible.
- When covering a quarantine zone, hospitals, wet markets or farms, know the hygiene and safety protocols imposed by authorities. Different areas adopt specific measures.
- Do not touch or leave equipment and other things on surfaces as these may be contaminated. Remember, the coronavirus can be transmitted thru surface contacts. It is carried by droplets when an infected person sneezes or coughs.
- Always bring water, sufficient funds, flashlight, power bank/s, batteries, extra cellphone cords or chargers, whistle, and other personal essentials.
- Observe social distancing at all times, in crowds and queues. Maintain a safe and secure distance when a crowd turned into an angry mob.
- Always be aware that the situation could suddenly turn hostile in places where people converge, such as groceries and markets. Be on the watch for racist attacks and assaults against media workers.

- Avoid covering wet markets or farms in an infected area as much as possible. Stay away from animals and avoid animal droppings and other objects that may be contaminated.
- If stopped at checkpoints, be courteous but firm. Know and assert your rights as a journalist and a citizen.
- Have important numbers (editors, colleagues, police contacts, family members, health emergencies) on speed dial. Keep the national hotline number of the NUJP (+639175155991) handy.



After coverage

- Disinfect thoroughly. Remove personal protective equipment (PPE) or hazardous materials (hazmat) suit properly and discard them in a safe manner. When using re-usable PPEs, place them in a plastic bag and wash immediately.
- Wash your hands regularly and properly for at least 20 seconds using water and soap. Dry your hands using clean towels.
- Use a hand sanitizer or alcohol if soap and water are not available. Experts recommend using alcohol with 70 percent solution to get rid of the bacteria and virus.
- Log all your activities for each day with all the people you get in touch with. This will help with contact-tracing should the need arise.
- Observe digital security: Cellphones and laptops are our means to find or receive information and messages, and to send stories back to news desks. Many sites are hacked or faked, and corrupted information can be passed through email or social media platforms. Avoid immediately opening messages from suspicious sources using your gadgets or laptop devices.

CHAPTER VI: DIGITAL AND INFORMATION SECURITY

Digital surveillance is the monitoring of computer activity, data stored on a hard drive, or being transferred through computer networks. It is usually done surreptitiously and can be done by anyone, government, corporations and even individuals.

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.”

Digital security is a growing concern, especially in the Philippines.

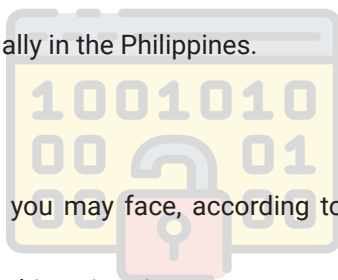










Digital threats

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.

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







-  **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.



Internet and Network Security



Mail

-  Use regularly updated anti-virus software.
-  Google and most mobile phone applications and websites like Facebook and Twitter collect your data. When covering highly sensitive issues and when you need to communicate with your sources, use secure email such as ProtonMail and Tutanota. Use search engines that do not track personal information like DuckDuckGo.
-  Use a strong password or passphrase. Digital security experts 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; they may contain malware that can be used to hack into your device. Confirm emails sent by friends or acquaintances.
-  Use non-browser-based email app for secure email communication such as Thunderbird.
-  Use GNU Privacy Guard (GPG) encryption if you don't want your message to be tracked or collected.

Browser

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

- Use secure, open-source browsers such as Mozilla Firefox, Brave, or ToR Browser
- 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 or financial information
- Test your online privacy protection. Log in to <https://panopticlick.eff.org>
- Use Virtual Private Networks (VPN), The Onion Router (ToR) or anonymous proxies to avoid being subjected to network sniffing or surveillance



Mobile Security

- Always remember that your smartphone contains a lot of information about your personal lives and your work (contacts, addresses, locations, emails) which can place you or your contacts in danger. Your mobile phone encryption, if activated, only works when you turn it off before it is taken.
- 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.

US National Security Agency (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 Facebook as your log-in for other services.
- Use Signal as an alternative to Facebook Messenger for sensitive communication.



Online harassment

Dart Center for Trauma and Journalism recommends these tips in dealing with trolls and cyber hate:



Get your psychological armor on

Forewarned is forearmed, 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?



Be silent to the trolls – but not each other

You should have heard the saying: “Don't feed the trolls.” 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.



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.



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 VII: TRAUMA AND STRESS

According to 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 to a person or persons. 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.

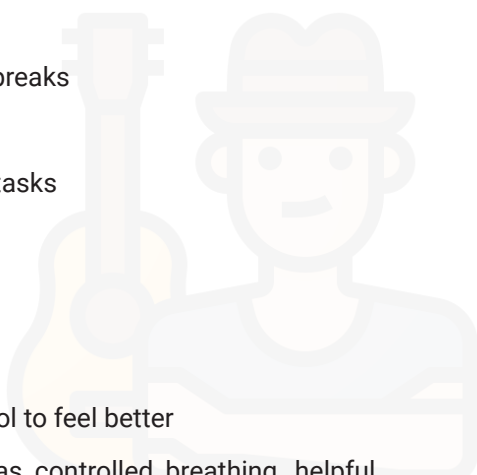
- Make time for things you enjoy
- Stay connected with people who make you feel good
- Keep yourself healthy: regular sleep, healthy eating, exercise

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 or email safety@nujp.org for possible peer-to-peer support.



CHAPTER VIII: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND DUTIES

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:



1986 Philippine Constitution

"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."



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






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

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...

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.



Other law-protected 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 government-owned and controlled corporations (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 the Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth 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’s 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.

You may also refer to the Philippine Journalists’ Code of Ethics:

1. I shall scrupulously report and interpret the news, taking care not to suppress essential facts nor to distort the truth by omission or improper emphasis. I recognize the duty to air the other side and the duty to correct substantive errors promptly.
2. I shall not violate confidential information on material given me in the exercise of my calling.
3. I shall resort only to fair and honest methods in my effort to obtain news, photographs and/or documents, and shall properly identify myself as a representative of the press when obtaining any personal interview intended for publication.
4. I shall refrain from writing reports which will adversely affect a private reputation unless the public interests justifies it. At the same time, I shall write vigorously for public access to information, as provided for in the constitution.

5. I shall not let personal motives or interests influence me in the performance of my duties; nor shall I accept or offer any present, gift or other consideration of a nature which may cast doubt on my professional integrity.

7. I shall not in any manner ridicule, cast aspersions on or degrade any person by reason of sex, creed, religious belief, political conviction, cultural and ethnic origin.

8. I shall presume persons accused of crime of being innocent until proven otherwise. I shall exercise caution in publishing names of minors, and women involved in criminal cases so that they may not unjustly lose their standing in society.

9. I shall not take unfair advantage of a fellow journalist.





10. I shall accept only such tasks as are compatible with the integrity and dignity of my profession, invoking the “conscience clause” when duties imposed on me conflict with the voice of my conscience.

11. I shall comport myself in public or while performing my duties as journalist in such manner as to maintain the dignity of my profession. When in doubt, decency should be my watchword.

Approved by the Philippines Press Institute, the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines, and the National Press Club in 1988.



The elements of libel are as follows:

-  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

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: +639175155991.
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

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 Security Guide here:

<https://cpj.org/reports/2012/04/journalist-security-guide>

For women journalists, download the IAWRT Safety Handbook

<https://www.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/freelance-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/>

Here are other resources you may visit:

“Safety Kit”; Committee to Protect Journalists ;

<https://cpj.org/safety-kit/>

“Digital security doesn’t have to be difficult – if you follow our new guide!” ; The Rory Peck Trust ;

<https://rorypecktrust.org/resources/Digital-Security-Guide>

“Security Compromises in Journalism” ; Martin Shelton ;

<https://medium.com/@mshelton/security-compromises-in-journalism-4cc32ba0709d>

“Digital Self-Defense for Journalists: An Introduction” ; Martin Shelton ;

<https://source.opennews.org/articles/digital-self-defense-journalists-introduction/>

Freedom of the Press Foundation ;

<https://freedom.press/training/>

Security in a box:

<https://securityinabox.org/en/>

United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/official_documents/UN-Plan-on-Safety-Journalists_EN_UN-Logo.pdf

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/safety-of-journalists/>

Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN)

<https://gijn.org/safety-and-security-organizations/>

Internews Journalist Safety and Security

<https://internews.org/impact/safety-security>

SpeakSafe: Media Workers' Toolkit for Safer Online and Mobile Practices

<https://internews.org/resource/speaksafe-media-workers-toolkit-safer-online-and-mobile-practices>

SaferJourno: Digital Security Resources for Media Trainers

<https://internews.org/resource/saferjourno-digital-security-resources-media-trainers>

Emergency assistance for journalists in distress

Call the NUJP Media Safety Office Hotline +639175155991

You may also email us at 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

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