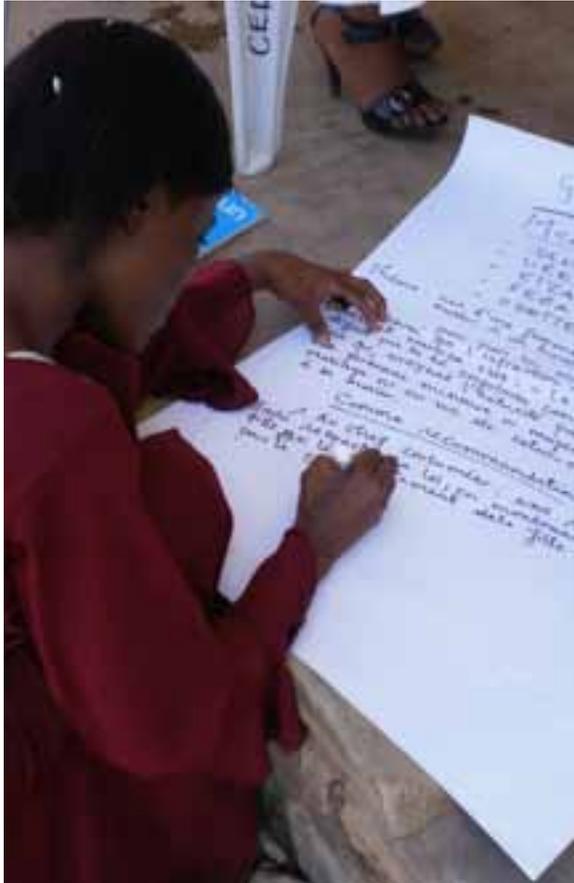


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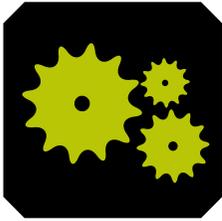
Threats Exercises



3.2 Threats Exercises



Title	Selection considerations	When to use	Timing
Example text for introducing threats	All or part of this text can be adapted by facilitators to present the concept of threats to the group, in preparation for exercises to analyse threats. However, these points can also be woven into discussions after the integrated security presentation as well.	Day One, morning or afternoon	20 minutes
Threats assessment: written exercise	This exercise should be used for groups working in depth on threats, and particularly for groups that work best with written tools. Alternately, it can be given as a hand-out for participants to take home.	Day One, afternoon, could also be used as a handout	45 minutes
Defining the threshold of acceptable risk	This is an optional exercise, for use with groups that need to go more into depth with threat assessment. It would be particularly useful for groups that tend towards a 'fatalistic' attitude towards risk.	Day One, morning or afternoon	45 minutes



EXERCISE:

PAGE 1/2

FORMAT:

PRESENTATION

Example Text for Introducing Threats

TIME: 20 MIN

REQUIRED MATERIALS: NONE

SUMMARY:

This presentation is an example of how the concept of threats and risk can be introduced to the group, facilitators should use this to develop their own explanation points.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:*Threats are Strategic:*

It is clear that there are strategies behind many of the threats human rights defenders receive. These are targeted threats.

- These are about who you are and what you do.
- There is intent to do harm, and there is an objective.
- That objective is to hinder, or stop your work. To hurt you, to discourage you.

Even though we do not always know who is behind them, these threats also *always have a source* – an individual or a group of individuals, acting alone, or as part of a sanctioned institutional policy.

Threats are Based in Fear:

There is an irony to threats, as well.

People only react when what you do attracts their attention and on some level, *threatens* them although it sounds strange, ‘threats are almost a measure of effectiveness’.

You are not normally threatened or attacked if what you are doing is ineffectual. It is when you touch on powerful interests that your opponents take notice. And get scared – of you.

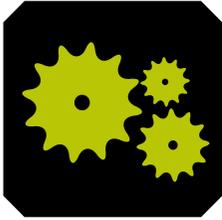
And women human rights activists do scare their opponents.

Sometimes this is simply because there is a lack of awareness or knowledge, about who you are and what you do. The media or community members might portray you as home-wreckers, wanting a world without men. Or they may call you a spy or traitor. But when they get to know you better, you can dispel these fears. People begin to understand that you want a better world for everyone.

Sometimes, though, your opponents really should fear you. Because if women activists win their battles, there will be losers. Powerful people will lose political control. Money. Freedom. Their lives.

Repressive regimes will fall. Organised criminal gangs will see their profits from human trafficking and drug-running disappear. Politicians and corporations will be exposed for corruption. Scores of people will face trial at last. Many will spend the rest of their lives in jail.

This is why so many people – politicians, paramilitaries, friends and even family members – try their best to stop you.



EXERCISE:

PAGE 2/2

FORMAT:

PRESENTATION

Example Text for Introducing Threats

Subtle Tactics:

They will use a number of different tactics to threaten you. Direct violence is one. But there are so many other ways – often more subtle.

Isolating women is a key tactic, particularly because women human rights defenders draw so much of their power – and protection – from relationships and from solidarity with others.

There are a number of ways to isolate women directly:

- cut them off from local, national and international sources of support;
- limit freedom of movement; or
- imprisonment (in jails or in their own home).

There are more indirect, but effective ways of increasing isolation as well, such as planting seeds of doubt and mistrust within communities (through defamation and slander) and even among women defenders themselves.

Another tactic is to wear women down psychologically to discourage them from continuing their work. Sometimes this is done through persistent, constant harassment – such as when the police visit and search offices daily for weeks on end.

Other times it is through ongoing surveillance intended to create a climate of fear.

Conclusion

We need to be clear about the threats you are facing – to uncover them, to extract them from this hidden, subtle, context, by:

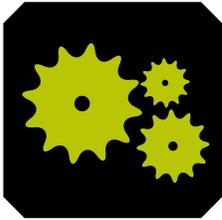
- recognising the *strategies and motives* behind the threats;
- understanding the *what, the why and the who* behind the threats;
- assessing your *vulnerabilities* – and your capacities to combat these threats; and
- determining *what level of risk a threat poses, and what level of risk is acceptable* to you, your organisation and your family.

By talking about these threats, sharing them openly, in a way, we shine a light on them.

And by seeing them together, by using tools, we can recognise and strengthen our strategies to combat them.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- Facilitators should adapt this text as appropriate to the group and the flow of the workshop, the key points can also be woven into group discussions.
- This is a good presentation, in full or adapted form, to prepare the group to discuss threats and analyse them through the threats analysis exercises.

EXERCISE:

Written Exercise: *Threats Assessment*³⁶

FORMAT:

INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP
EXERCISE

TIME: 45 MIN

REQUIRED MATERIALS: COPY OF 'WRITTEN EXERCISE: THREATS ASSESSMENT' IN APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE.

SUMMARY:

This exercise uses a written questionnaire to help participants assess the security of various aspects of their lives, including safety at home, at the office, in social environments, in their communications and documentation, safety of their family and friends, during travel and in relation to state structures. It can be used either as an exercise in the workshop, or can be a handout to take back home.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

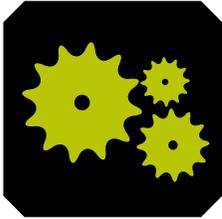
- Ask participants to fill out the written exercise, below, either alone or in pairs.
- Once the exercise is completed, facilitators can use it as a framework for a group discussion, asking questions about which sections surprised them, were difficult or unusual.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- This exercise can be very useful for more 'analytical' groups who prefer to work with written material.
- Facilitators should make sure to circulate among participants as they work on the written exercise to offer support.
- For groups that might find this exercise challenging, set up the work in pairs or triads.

Alternative option:

This exercise is also a good handout for participants to take back to colleagues and their organisation, as it offers a useful and detailed checklist of security threat considerations.



EXERCISE:

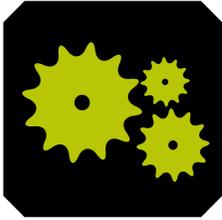
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FORMAT:

INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP
EXERCISE

Written Exercise: *Threats Assessment*

When/where	Considerations and Questions	How Secure are You? (1-10)	Threats (list most likely and highest impact threats)
At home	Consider: the characteristics of house building materials, doors, windows, cupboards. Protective barriers. Night lights. Is there a safe room in your home?	Overall:	
	Physical safety inside your house (windows, doors, entrance)		
	Around your house/immediate neighbourhood		
	Who has access to your house?		
	Who knows where you live?		
	Other _____		
At your office	Consider: are your offices open to visitors from the general public? Who knows your office location? Are there areas reserved only for personnel? Do you have to deal with unknown people who come to your place? Is there a safe room in your office?	Overall:	
	Physical safety inside your office: windows, doors, entrance, ability to screen visitors (security cameras)		
	Around your office/immediate neighbourhood		
	Who has access to your office?		
	Cash and document storage		
	Other _____		



EXERCISE:

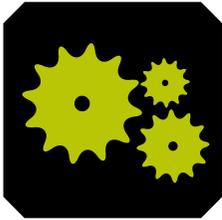
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FORMAT:

INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP
EXERCISE

Written Exercise: *Threats Assessment*

when/where	Considerations and questions	How secure are you? (1-10)	Threats (list most likely and highest impact threats)
When you travel nationally	Consider: what is your level of exposure, that is, the need to be in, or to pass through, dangerous areas to carry out normal daily or occasional activities? Do you cross checkpoints frequently? Possibility of accidents: do you wear seatbelts whenever possible? Are vehicles in good working order?	Overall:	
	a) In vehicles (your own, taxis, those of your organisation)		
	b) In public transport (buses, metro, trains, trams, rickshaws, etc.)		
	c) On foot or bicycle		
	d) Other _____		
When you travel internationally	Consider: possibility of detention crossing borders, risks in other countries, possibility of being trapped outside of your home country. Possibility of illness/medical emergency in transit.	Overall:	
	a) In transit (airports, train stations)		
	b) In foreign cities, hotels		
	c) Other _____		



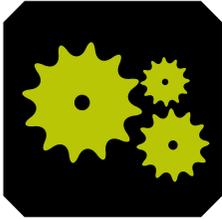
EXERCISE:

PAGE 3/8

FORMAT:
INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP
EXERCISE

Written Exercise: *Threats Assessment*

when/where	Considerations and questions	How secure are you? (1–10)	Threats (list most likely and highest impact threats)
In your paid employment (livelihood)	Consider: how reliable are your income sources? Do you support anyone else (family, friends, partner(s))? Do you have other potential sources of income/benefits?	Overall:	
	a) Your current paid job		
	b) Other income sources (part-time work, consultancies, etc.)		
	c) Your benefits (if any): health insurance, leave, pension, etc.		
	d) Other _____		
When you are out socially?	Consider: How safe are the venues and homes you visit? Who is aware of the location of these places? Do you travel there and back alone? How often do you use alcohol or other stimulants to relax socially?	Overall:	
	a) In venues (bars, clubs, cafes, friends' houses, etc.)		
	b) In transit (to and from venues)		
	c) When you drink alcohol, use stimulants		
	d) Other _____		



EXERCISE:

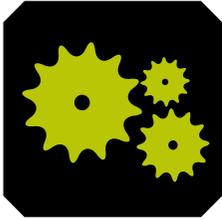
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FORMAT:

INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP
EXERCISE

Written Exercise: *Threats Assessment*

when/where	Considerations and questions	How secure are you? (1-10)	Threats (list most likely and highest impact threats)
In your relationships with family, friends and partner(s)?	<p>Consider: can you be 'yourself' in all of your close relationships – that is, do you sometimes have to hide your work or interests from your loved ones? Do you often argue? Do you ever feel physically or emotionally threatened? To what extent do you trust your partners/friends to help keep you safe and to support you?</p>	<p>Overall:</p>	
	a) With your family members		
	b) With your friends		
	c) With your partner(s)		
	d) Other _____		



EXERCISE:

PAGE 5/8

FORMAT:
INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP
EXERCISE

Written Exercise: *Threats Assessment*

when/where	Considerations and questions	How secure are you? (1–10)	Threats (list most likely and highest impact threats)
In your ability to protect your family members, friends, partners?	Consider: how safe are your family members (people you support, including children, parents, extended family members, partner)? Have they been threatened because of your work (physically, phone calls, pressure at their place of work, harassment at school)? Has the stress of your work affected them? If you were detained, arrested or hurt, have you put measures in place to support them/ protect them?	Overall:	
	a) Family members (children, parents, extended family members)		
	b) Your partner (husband/wife/girlfriend/boyfriend)		
	c) Friends		
	d) Other _____		
In your work relationships/networks?	Consider: how often do you experience conflict, jealousy, arguments, or competition with your colleagues? To what extent do you trust your co-workers to keep you safe and to support you? Do you have access to supportive allies in national and international networks?	Overall:	
	a) Co-workers in your organisation		
	b) Colleagues in other partner organisations		



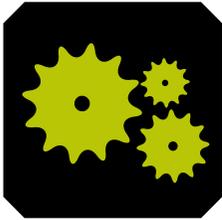
EXERCISE:

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FORMAT:
INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP
EXERCISE

Written Exercise: *Threats Assessment*

when/where	Considerations and questions	How secure are you? (1-10)	Threats (list most likely and highest impact threats)
	c) Colleagues in other human rights organisations		
	d) Colleagues in international organisations (allies, donors, etc.)		
	e) Other _____		
In your relationships with state legal systems?	Consider: can you start legal processes to claim your rights? (Access to legal representation, physical presence at trials or meetings, etc.) Can you procure appropriate assistance from relevant authorities for your work and protection needs? Are you denied legal registration or subjected to long delays? Can your organisation keep proper accounts and meet national legal standards?	Overall:	
	a) Ability to register and operate legally, to keep accounts and legal standards		
	b) Ability to claim rights and protection within the legal system (in general)		
	c) Ability to access support/claim rights in case of detention/arrest		
	d) Other _____		



EXERCISE:

PAGE 7/8

FORMAT:

INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP
EXERCISE

Written Exercise: *Threats Assessment*

when/where	Considerations and questions	How secure are you? (1-10)	Threats (list most likely and highest impact threats)
In your communications?	Consider: are telecommunication systems in place (radio, telephone, internet)? Do you enjoy easy access to them? Do they work properly at all times? Can they be cut before an attack?	Overall:	
	a) Internet		
	b) Telephone (landlines), mobile telephones		
	c) Other _____		
In your information and documentation processes?	Consider: can you keep information in a safe and reliable place? Could it be stolen? Can it be protected from viruses and hackers? Can you send and receive information safely? Do you have a safe place to back up any information (either in-country or outside).	Overall:	
	a) Information in your office (hard copies, in files)		
	b) Information at your home		
	c) Other _____		



EXERCISE:

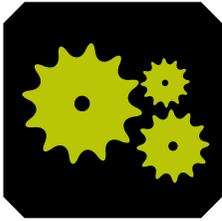
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FORMAT:

INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP
EXERCISE

Written Exercise: *Threats Assessment*

when/where	Considerations and questions	How secure are you? (1-10)	Threats (list most likely and highest impact threats)
In your support systems?	Consider: do you have a good support system, people you can turn to in times of stress – to debrief after you have witnessed violence? If you experience violence personally, do you have a network to support you a safe place to talk, to offer sensitive care (physical and emotional)?	Overall:	
	a) Coping with stress and violence as a witness		
	b) Coping with stress and violence as a survivor		
	c) Access to outlets: exercise, nature (whatever works for you)		
	d) Access to care (mental and physical) in an emergency or in case of illness		
	e) Access to spiritual/contemplative practices: to sacred places (in nature or houses of worship, or with friends/family); to spiritual leaders, teachers, guides, books, materials		
	f) Other: _____		



EXERCISE:

PAGE 1/2

FORMAT:

INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP
EXERCISE

*Defining the Threshold of Acceptable Risk*³⁷

TIME: 45 MIN

REQUIRED MATERIALS: BLANK 'THRESHOLD OF ACCEPTABLE RISK CHART' IN APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

SUMMARY:

This is an exercise that helps participants explore risk and threats in depth, and to assess their own perceptions of risk and the impact of potential threats. It can also be used on a flipchart to simply explain the concept of risk 'thresholds'.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Explain that the 'threshold of acceptable risk' was first developed by Koenraad Van Brabant in the excellent *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments*. The example shown below lists just a few of the types of threats that one might assess.
- Ask participants to list five priority threats currently affecting them as individuals.
- After each threat, write down the 'likelihood' of the threat being realised – that is, that the threat would turn into action.
- Next, after each threat, write down what 'impact' the threat would have on you if it were realised.
- Then, ask participants to complete a blank version of the 'threshold of acceptable risk' chart (or put this on a flipchart), placing the threat in the position that relates both to its likelihood and its impact. This will indicate the degree of risk posed by the threat. The degree of risk is greatest in the case of an incident that is most likely to occur, *and* that will have the greatest affect on you, your organisation and your work.
- Finally, participants should draw the line where they locate their threshold of *acceptable risk* – the point beyond which the risk is simply too high to continue an activity.

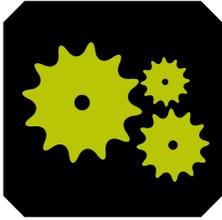
- Once each participant has completed their own chart, facilitators should lead a discussion around the concept of acceptable risk, and ask participants what surprised them in this process.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- The risks listed in the chart below are examples only. Facilitators should use examples of other challenges or threats that arise in the workshop discussion, such as: slander, serious illness, threats to family members or loss of livelihood.

Alternative Option:

- This chart can also be used in a group discussion – to introduce how risks become considered as 'acceptable' and inevitable parts of the work, without a conscious analysis of their real consequences.
- The exercise could also be used in small groups, as described above for individuals.



EXERCISE:

PAGE 2/2

FORMAT:
INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP
EXERCISE

Defining the Threshold of Acceptable Risk

