

THE
ENGINE
ROOM

Assessing Risk in Campaigns: Claim Safer Spaces

TBTT's Feminist Learning Circles

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Me / Paola



Me / Barbara



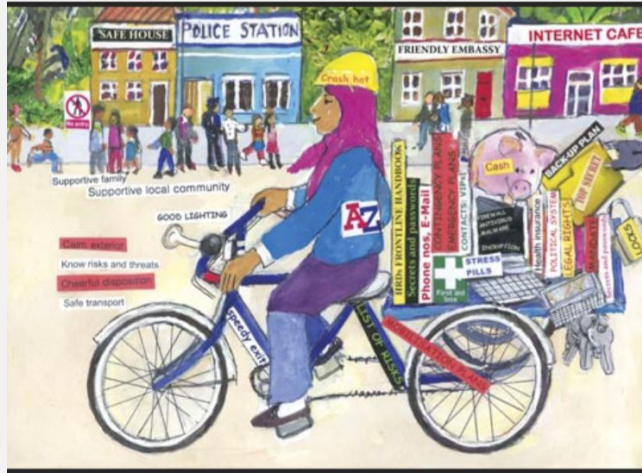
Today, we'll share..

- + **What** are risk assessments and **why** are they important for your work
- + **Key concepts** to reflect on when conducting a risk assessment
- + **Tools** to prioritise action plans and to perform context analysis

Share your **questions** with us on the
chat :)

WORKBOOK ON SECURITY:

PRACTICAL STEPS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AT RISK



f FRONT LINE
DEFENDERS

This presentation is
largely based on:

Front Line Defenders
'Workbook on Security:
Practical Steps for Human
Rights Defenders at Risk',
available in French, Spanish,
Russian, Arabic, Portuguese,
and Chinese.



Why conducting a risk assessment?

- Human rights defenders all over the world may face risks because of the work that they do.
- Risks are diverse and vary depending on the context, campaigners identities, and the work they are doing, among others.
- By conducting a risk assessment, we will be able to **see a breakdown of our own context** and **localize our strategies**.



Why conducting a risk assessment?

- Many campaigners and human rights defenders have a very high workload, and limited resources.
- Though many of them express that investing time and energy in developing the capacity to manage their security can reduce the threat of human rights work being disrupted and because it reduces stress.
- Developing a plan **will help us reduce threats and mitigate the impact of potential attacks.**

A photograph of a crowd of people at what appears to be a protest or demonstration. Many individuals are wearing red balaclavas (hugoboss-style masks) that cover their faces, leaving only the mouth and eyes visible. Some masks are plain red, while others are decorated with colorful patterns, beads, or paint. One person in the foreground is wearing a black balaclava. The person in the center foreground, wearing a red mask, has their mouth wide open in a shout or yell. The background is filled with other people, some also wearing masks, creating a sense of a large gathering. The overall tone is one of intense expression and collective action.

Talking about risks is
talking about
capacities
& how to
strengthen them



What is a risk assessment?

- Defenders in many countries throughout the world face risks because of their work.
- The challenge is to be able to **assess – as far as possible – the degree of risk, and take actions to minimise this risk.**



What is a risk assessment?

- **Risks will differ** according to the context of your country, the patterns of threats and attacks, the perpetrators, the degree of impunity, and the individual's identity, profile, activities and location.
- In many countries, women human rights defenders and LGBTI defenders are more at risk than others; in many cases, this is also true in online spaces.

The Risk Formula

$$\text{Risk} = \frac{\text{Threats} + \text{Vulnerabilities}}{\text{Capacities}}$$

Defini- tions

- + Risk: The possibility of events that result in harm.
- + Threat: Declaration or indication of an intention to inflict damage, punish or hurt (recent or immediate).
- + Capacity: Any resource (including abilities, contacts or networks) which improve security.
- + Vulnerability: Any factor which makes it more likely for harm to materialise or result in greater damage.

The Risk Formula

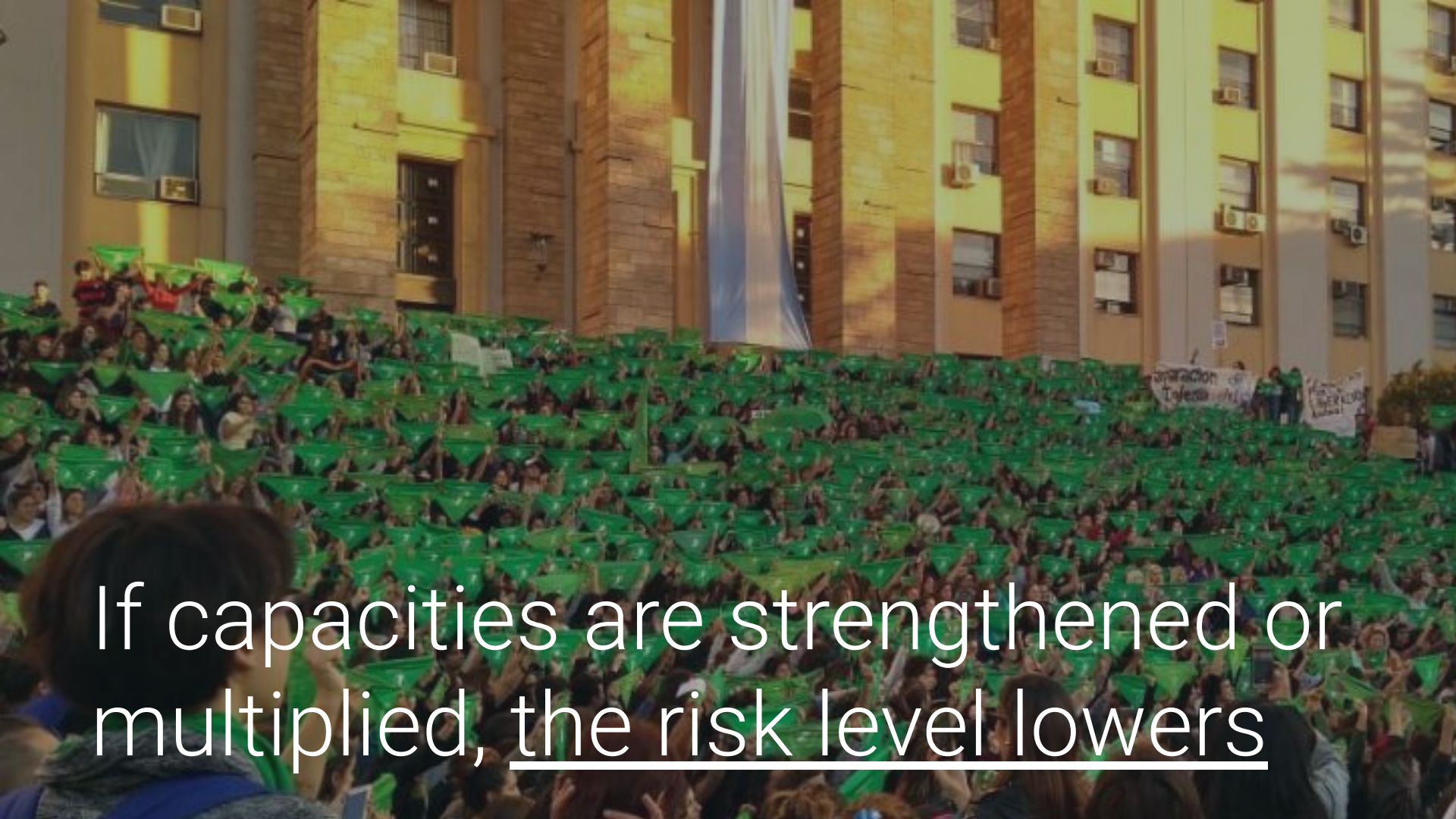
$$\text{Risk} = \frac{\text{Threats} + \text{Vulnerabilities}}{\text{Capacities}}$$



If one item changes, it will
affect the level of risk...

A low-angle photograph of three people at a protest, their faces partially covered by green and white patterned scarves. They are raising their right fists in a gesture of solidarity. The background shows dark, leafy trees against a pale sky. The overall tone is somber and determined.

If vulnerabilities are reduced,
the risk level lowers



If capacities are strengthened or multiplied, the risk level lowers

Any questions so far?

Activity: Personal reflection

My Assessment of risks,
vulnerabilities and capacities



Activity: My Assessment of risks, vulnerabilities and capacities

- + Get comfortable. If you need to move around, do some stretching, get water or tea, please do so.
- + Draw in a paper sheet the table that we'll be sharing next.
- + Spend 15 minutes reflecting, based on what we've shared during this presentation.
- + Write down on the table.
- + We'll open up space for a couple of sharebacks, if someone feels like sharing*.



Activity: My Assessment of risks, vulnerabilities and capacities

Risks	Vulnerabilities	Capacities existing	Capacities required



Example

Risks	Vulnerabilities	Capacities existing	Capacities required
Social media account is 'seized'	Working from different places, moving around	Strong password, no one else knows it	Using a password manager to store it, 2nd-factor authentication



How to prioritize what risks to focus on?

- A way to prioritize on where to start thinking and planning an action plan is reflecting on:
 - what is the **probability** of this risk occurring?
 - what will be the **impact** on me if this risk happens?
- This analysis will be subjective, though you will base it in your understanding of the context and the actions that have occurred in the past to defenders or campaigners in a similar situation than yours.

My Risk Matrix

Impact

5 Very high

4 High

3 Medium

2 Low

1 Very low

1 Very low


2 Low

3 Medium

4 High

5 Very high

Probability

A photograph of three women in the foreground, all with their mouths open as if shouting or chanting. The woman on the left is wearing large, white, triangular earrings and a dark top. The woman in the middle is wearing a colorful, patterned headscarf and a dark top with a white geometric pattern. The woman on the right is wearing a colorful headscarf and a dark top. In the background, other people are visible, some wearing similar headscarves. The text "Know your context: Tools to support your analysis" is overlaid on the image in white, sans-serif font. The word "your" is underlined.

Know your context: Tools to
support your analysis



Tools to support context analysis

- We'll go through two tools for context analysis – Context Analysis Questions and an Analysis of Actors.
- Another way to analyse context is by conducting a SWOT Analysis, meaning you'll list and analyse: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.



1. Context analysis guiding questions

1. What are the **key issues** which impact on human rights in the country? (Consider political, economic and social issues)
2. **Who are the main actors** on these key issues? (Consider powerful individuals, institutions, local, national, regional and international organisations, business and other states)



1. Context analysis guiding questions

3. How might **our human rights work negatively or positively affect the interests of these key actors** – how have they responded already?
4. **When are HRDs most likely to be attacked** (verbally or physically)? (Eg prior to or during elections, after publishing reports or naming key figures publicly, demonstrations, anniversaries, high-level visits, events etc)



2. Analysis of actors

- This analysis can help you deepen your understanding of those who have a **negative or positive interest** in and impact on your security.
- It will help you to identify the **interests and conflicts**, and lead you to develop insights into potentially **relevant relationships**.
- Consider for example, media; commercial enterprises; international NGOs; national NGOs; foreign embassies; community leaders/elders or relevant communities.



3. Analysing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

- The strengths and the weaknesses are ‘internal’ (within your organisation) and the opportunities and threats are from the external environment in your region or country.
- After listing each of them, consider which are the items to be prioritised and develop concrete action plans relating to these priorities.



3. Analysing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

Strengths (in relation to security)	Weaknesses (in relation to security)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committed staff• Senior staff are experienced in dealing with threats• Some influential contacts in Government• Independent media supports our work• Good contacts with regional and international Human Rights organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge about how to deal with threats is not shared in a uniform way• No security plan for office and activities• Poor relationship with Ministry of Defence (which is responsible for the army)• Government-controlled media does not cover our activities
Opportunities (in relation to security)	Threats (to security)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other local NGOs working on human rights: advocacy; legal issues; and psychological support• European Union Guidelines on HRDs - we can approach Embassies to assist us	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Army and armed opposition group both issue threats to NGOs working on human rights• Potential legislation to control activities and funding of human rights NGOs

Example



Some last notes to keep in mind

- After listing and prioritising risks you face, you can create personal **security plans** stating actions for the risks that are most likely to happen.
- A similar, though more complex analysis, can be conducted with your organisation to develop security plans and protocols, which is highly recommended.
- Consider ways to reduce your stress and strengthen your wellbeing, as it will help you assess your needs and follow your protection plan

Any final questions?

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Reach out to us!

Keep the conversation going & get advisory through
our Light Touch Support program

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