

Safety and Security Policy

Introduction

The main mission of Conciliation Resources is to provide practical support to help people affected by violent conflict achieve lasting peace. In fulfilling our mission we will find ourselves working in insecure environments that may expose staff to great personal risk. As a responsible employer we will strive at all times to minimise and manage these risks, to ensure that none of our staff are exposed to unacceptable levels of risk and to take all reasonable steps to ensure staff security¹. At the same time, reducing risk and managing security is an individual responsibility as well as an organisational one.²

The policy covers:

- Security issues, defined as threats to staff and assets from intentional violence
- Safety issues, that is accidental hazards such as car accidents or medical risks

Purpose

This document sets out the policy for security and safety by defining basic security and safety principles, applicable to all Conciliation Resources staff, consultants, board members and volunteers, at all times. Operational Guidelines for implementing the policy are contained in a separate document and include a framework for developing location-specific security plans.

Our Security Management Approach

Security must be managed, not just planned for, and should be fully integrated into programme management. Security operational guidelines are considered to be the key tool for managing staff security, but security management is more than just a document or plan. Guidelines are the documented product of a process of analysis of the context, the threats and vulnerabilities, the consideration of appropriate security strategies and the development of appropriate and effective measures to reduce and manage risks. Although plans and procedures are designed as preventative measures, incidents may still occur and staff will have to use common sense and judgement to deal with situations they face.

Principles

1. Our Guiding Principle

People are central to the achievement of our work³. We recognise that the effectiveness and success of our operations depend on the contributions of all permanent or contract staff, and volunteers working closely with our partners. In turn, we recognise that our staff need the reassurance that Conciliation Resources, through policy and practice, is doing all it reasonably can to ensure staff security and wellbeing.

¹ People in Aid Code of Best Practice, Principle 7.

² Operational Security Management in Violent Environments, Koenraad Van Brabant, ODI GPR 2000

³ People in Aid Code of Best Practice, Guiding Principle

2. Priorities

2.1 Personal security and safety of our staff is of higher priority to Conciliation Resources than the protection of assets, including vehicles, cash, and office equipment or programme materials.

2.2 Security is a collective responsibility and is best ensured when all staff take responsibility for it.

2.3 Whilst this policy does not and cannot extend to our partners, Conciliation Resources expects all staff to be mindful of the personal security and safety issues facing our partner organisations and to avoid undertaking actions or interventions that they know might heighten or transfer risks or otherwise compromise the security and safety of partners.

2.4 This policy does not supersede the laws of the UK or any country in which Conciliation Resources is operating. Conciliation Resources will always seek to work within the law. Conciliation Resources staff and consultants should not knowingly break the law in the course of their work.

2.5 Conciliation Resources recognises that there are gender issues related to security⁴. Men and women are likely to experience, express and respond to insecurity in different ways. Being a man or a woman can bring different advantages or disadvantages, real and or perceived, in high-risk environments⁵.

3. Responsibility

3.1 Organisational: the Director of Operations is responsible for leading on the development, monitoring and implementation of policy and for advising the Executive Management Committee on security matters. Permission to adopt practices that exceed the policy can only be granted by the Executive Management Committee. Likewise, health and safety and or security provisions for locally employed staff that will exceed the available and agreed programme budget must have prior approval from the Executive Management Committee.

As part of policy implementation Conciliation Resources, through the Executive Management Committee, will ensure that:

- All staff are made aware of the Safety and Security Policy and that its principles are duly followed in operational planning and implementation.
- A policy monitoring group or designated individual is assigned to regularly monitor the Policy to assess how well it is meeting the organisational, programme and staff needs.
- Valid and appropriate comprehensive travel and medical insurance cover is provided for each staff member undertaking assignments outside of the UK.
- Regular medical check-ups and pre-travel briefings and inoculations with a Conciliation Resources-designated health organisation are provided for all staff undertaking overseas assignments, at Conciliation Resources' expense.
- Pre-trip security discussions and post-trip debriefings are held between individuals and their line-managers for each assignment on the basis of Programme and or Project Security Plans.
- Professional counselling and or relevant training such as in First Aid, Protection in Hostile Environments, Security and Risk Management, may be made available to staff working in conflict-affected areas, if it is required.

⁴ And that gender is a social and cultural construct that expresses itself in role behaviour and relationships.

⁵ Gendered roles may make it particularly hard, or impossible, for a man to admit feelings of fear for example; or for a woman to have her security assessment taken seriously by male colleagues. See: Operational Security Management in Violent Environments, Koenraad Van Brabant, ODI GPR 2000

- Programme Directors develop a Programme Security Plan for the regional, sub-regional, or country context they are responsible for. In the case of thematic work conducted in locations not covered by a Programme Security Plan, the Programme Director concerned will develop Context-specific Security Plans for each location.
- Time is allocated in Programme Directors' work-plans for security management and planning.
- Programme budgets are designed to meet the costs of operating in specific insecure contexts including for example, insurance premiums for travel to countries listed by the FCO as unsafe for travel, special communications equipment if required, local (unarmed) protection, special training.
- When the Executive Director travels outside of the UK, he will nominate another Executive Management Committee Director to be on-call in case of emergencies. In an emergency this person will initially assume the Executive Director's full responsibilities as outlined in the Safety & Security Operational Guidelines until the Executive Director is contacted.

3.2 Management: Each Programme Director is responsible for the security of the staff they manage, and reports on this to the Director of Programmes who in turn reports to the Executive Management Committee. This responsibility follows the line management structure. Programme Directors are responsible for managing staff security and safety in a programme in accordance with the points in 3.1 above and in addition:

- Ensuring a Programme Security Plan is developed in accordance with the Safety & Security Operational Guidelines and followed for each country, regional or thematic programme.
- Ensuring that where a programme employs local staff a National Programme Safety and Security Policy is in place as part of or in addition to a Local Staff Terms and Conditions of Employment Policy.⁶
- Ensure all local staff are made aware of the National Programme Safety & Security Policy, and what their individual responsibilities are in each different situation. Copies of the documents will also be held in Conciliation Resources' London office.
- Inducting or briefing all new staff and consultants or visitors on the security situation and security measures.
- Assessing and addressing staff training needs relating to security and safety.
- Even in secure conditions, stay informed of staff overseas work travel plans and up to date contacts at home and in country.

3.3 Individual: each member of staff is to be aware of their individual responsibility to manage their own safety and well being by contributing to security planning, following security guidelines, procedures and protocols. Each member of staff is obliged to:

- Actively participate in and contribute to maintenance of security measures, awareness of security risks and where relevant, team security.
- Understand and adhere to security measures.
- Understand what impact Conciliation Resources' actions and or presence in a specific situation or at a certain time may have on the security and safety of Conciliation Resources partners.
- Be responsible for their own security and the security of any staff they manage.
- Obtain line-manager authorisation prior to travel across borders.
- Accept that there is no organisational liability for the security and or safety of a Conciliation Resources partner, but that all staff are should avoid behaviour, actions or interventions that could jeopardise the security and or safety of such partners.
- Report any security incidents to their line-manager and Executive Management Committee Director immediately, or as soon as physically possible.

⁶ The document sets out the scope and limitations of medical cover that is provided by Conciliation Resources and the extent of Conciliation Resources' responsibilities in the event of kidnap, evacuation or displacement. Under Terms and Conditions for local staff a section will cover staff benefits in the case of contract termination due to no fault of the employee i.e. severance pay. Where possible Conciliation Resources will seek parity with the terms and conditions offered by other agencies operating in the same environment.

- Ensure that they do not undertake a trip or overseas assignment when an aspect of their health and condition at the time would invalidate the conditions of Conciliation Resources' travel and medical insurance. For female staff this includes travel during the final trimester of pregnancy.
- Behave as a positive representative for Conciliation Resources.
- Report any actions or behaviour that breaches policy or jeopardises individual, team or partner security. Breaches in security policy may be considered a disciplinary offence that may lead to action being taken up to and including dismissal.

4. Right to Withdraw

Irrespective of a line manager's judgement of risks in a particular situation, every staff member has the right to either leave a programme area or decline to travel to an insecure area if they feel that the risk to themselves has become or will be too great. The staff member must inform their manager without delay if they reach such a decision.

If the level of risk a staff member is exposed to and considers unacceptable is found to be constant, an independent assessment will be carried out to establish whether the programme of work as currently planned can or cannot be carried out as a result of these risks. In consequence of this assessment continuation of these plans will have to be reviewed, including consequences for employees' tasks and contractual relationship with Conciliation Resources, in line with organisational procedure.

5. Programme Security Planning and Management

Security management is an ongoing activity with a Programme and/or Project Security Plan developed in accordance with the format provided in the Safety & Security Operational Guidelines, for each insecure context in which Conciliation Resources staff and consultants are expected to work. The Plan may cover a region, sub-region, country or more specific location, as appropriate. Projects and trips to countries not already covered may require individual security plans to be drawn up for each specific insecure context to be visited. Such plans need to be reviewed and updated at least annually and revisited prior to each visit. The relevant line manager must approve the plan. All relevant staff and consultants must be made aware of the contents, practical application and authority of the plan and must sign to indicate that they have read and hold a copy.

6. Incident Reporting and Analysis

All security and serious safety incidents affecting Conciliation Resources staff must be reported immediately to both your line manager and Executive Management Committee Director, if different from your line manager, and a Critical Incident Report filed and copied to the Executive Director. Serious incidents affecting Conciliation Resources partners and other agencies operating in the same location should also be reported to your Executive Management Committee Director as these may have a bearing on Conciliation Resources' programme and staff security. Information about serious incidents affecting an individual staff member may need to be shared with others in the organisation. Staff should be discrete with information disclosed to them and respect the feelings and privacy of the person concerned.

7. Serious Security Incidents

Kidnap/Abduction: In the event of a member of staff or consultant being kidnapped or abducted, the Executive Director will assume ultimate decision making authority, treat it as top priority and work with the Executive Management Committee, and others, in formulating and implementing an appropriate response. Conciliation Resources' policy is not to pay any ransom to kidnappers or abductors but every effort will be made to secure the safe release of our staff. Conciliation Resources will continue to pay a staff member's salary while they are abducted. Conciliation Resources will make funds available to relatives to travel to appropriate foreign ministries etc, if such action might assist in the release process.

For other similarly serious security incidents, the Executive Management Committee which will take appropriate action on various issues including contacting next of kin, handling the media, gathering information, contact point for external communications, etc.

8. Involvement with Arms

- Conciliation Resources staff and consultants may, in the course of their work, be in the company of people who are armed. Programme Security Plans need to include an assessment of the risks posed by this possibility and detail the security measures that will be taken.
- Conciliation Resources staff and consultants must not carry or take up arms under any circumstance whilst in the employment of Conciliation Resources. Nor knowingly employ or otherwise engage armed personnel for personal or material protection. This excludes situations in which Conciliation Resources staff find themselves travelling in the company of armed people, who would play a protection role if it came to it.
- Conciliation Resources premises and Conciliation Resources-owned vehicles are arms-free zones; those carrying arms will be expected to disarm before entering or using Conciliation Resources premises and vehicles.

Where prevailing circumstances are such that a staff member or consultant believes it is necessary to go against any aspect of this policy, for example to use or hire armed personnel, approval must first be sought and obtained from the Executive Director. To proceed with the use or hire of armed personnel without the Executive Director's approval will lead to disciplinary action upto and including dismissal. Staff who face refusal of those who carry arms to disarm when using Conciliation Resources premises or vehicles should seek advice from their line manager or member of the Executive Management Committee as soon as possible on how to proceed in that moment or how to handle this issue in the future. Where it is not possible to enforce these rules (for example some roads can only be travelled in military convoy – and armed personnel may be posted onto vehicles) the Executive Director, or a member of the Executive Management Committee, should be informed as soon as possible.

9. Involvement with Armed Forces

In pursuance of its conflict transformation aims Conciliation Resources does, at times as part of strategic interventions, engage with armed forces (including national and international authorities as well as non-state armed groups). Engagement must be carried out in a way that does not undermine Conciliation Resources' identity as an independent actor. And guidance must be sought from the Executive Management Committee, particularly the Executive Director, Director of Programmes or the Director of Policy, Practice and Communications, in specific cases of potential involvement.

Conciliation Resources staff and consultants planning and or undertaking engagement with armed groups must, in the Programme Security Plan and pre-engagement preparations, assess the personal security risks involved and detail the security measures that will be taken to minimise these risks. In addition, planning needs to include measures to prevent engagement being seen as Conciliation Resources supporting the group's use of violence.

10. Information and Communication Management

As a general rule Conciliation Resources expects to operate with openness and transparency about its programmes of work but recognises that in certain circumstances openness about some details such as travel plans may jeopardise staff and or partner security. In such situations information deemed 'sensitive' may have to be encoded and or managed strictly on a 'need to know' basis. Programme Directors are responsible for information and communication management as it relates to their individual programmes. Hence they have primary responsibility for deciding, in consultation with a member of the Executive

Management Committee, when and how encoding needs to be put in place, what information is 'sensitive' and under what circumstances open communication could be resumed.

11. Evacuation

Planning and preparation for evacuation is an integral part of programme and context-specific security planning. Preparation should also be made for 'hibernation' – a situation when it is safer to stay in a location than to attempt to move or when an evacuation is not being considered.

In an evacuation Conciliation Resources aim is to return staff to their home base, or place of safety. Notwithstanding legal obligations, Conciliation Resources will endeavour to move staff to a place of safety if they are at risk directly as a consequence of their job with Conciliation Resources; whether risk arises from their nationality, their ethnic origin or other context-specific factor or they are subject to a particularly serious or targeted threat. All staff should be made aware of their own and Conciliation Resources' responsibilities, and limitations, in advance as set out in each Programme Security Plan.

12. Authorisation to withdraw

Authorisation to withdraw from an area, to suspend operations or to temporarily close an office for security reasons, can be given by the local manager, where relevant, with immediate effect and is binding on all staff. The Executive Management Committee may direct a team to withdraw, suspend operations or close an office and may override a local manager's decision to stay, or to continue the programme or for an office to remain open, but cannot override a local manager's decision to leave, suspend or temporarily close. Conciliation Resources staff have no right to remain in a location, if they have been directed to withdraw by their line-manager or member of the Executive Management Committee. To do so means they are effectively operating outside of their contract with Conciliation Resources and contravening Conciliation Resources' Security Policy. The individual(s) employment with Conciliation Resources would be suspended and they may, in the judgement of the Executive Management Committee Director, be considered to have effectively ended their employment with Conciliation Resources.

Context specific programme security planning needs to include directives on this issue in relation to local staff.

13. Authorisation to return

Authorisation to return to an area or resume visits after evacuation or programme suspension can only be given by the Executive Management Committee who will reach their judgement after consultation and with relevant external persons having knowledge of the context. A comprehensive review of security must be undertaken by the relevant Programme Director; this will include reviewing and updating the Programme Security Plan. A written summary of the review's conclusions, plus the updated Programme Security Plan, must be submitted to the Executive Management Committee before the final decision can be taken.⁷

14. Travel safety

It is the individual's responsibility to ensure that they take all safety and security precautions possible when travelling. Seatbelts must be worn when travelling in vehicles. Where they are not available or are available but not working Conciliation Resources staff are expected not to travel and alternative travel arrangements should be made. Conciliation Resources staff should not travel in the back of open pick-ups or lorries. Where

⁷ The review should reconsider and revise the existing context and risk analysis, the appropriateness of security strategies and security plans. Particular emphasis should be placed on how the situation may have changed, how Conciliation Resources security measures will reflect the new situation and on how security will be managed. Reference must be made to advice sought from on-the-ground Security Advisers such as within the UN system, the extent to which advice has been accepted or the rationale for not accepting the advice.

alternatives are available Conciliation Resources staff should avoid using flight carriers with poor safety records⁸.

Programme Directors are responsible for ensuring that individual Programme Security Plans include maps and set out security and safety guidelines on travel particular to each context in which Conciliation Resources staff and consultants operate.

15. Staff Dependants

Conciliation Resources is not responsible for dependants of staff or consultants except where responsibility has been agreed through a specific contractual arrangement made at the time of recruitment or subsequently. In such cases, the scope and limitations of Conciliation Resources' responsibilities in relation to safety and security will be set out in the individual contract. Responsibility, and the modalities it might take, for a staff person's or consultant's dependants can only be contractually agreed with prior approval from the Executive Director or Director of Operations.

16. HIV and STDs

In many conflict-affected contexts incurring any form of bodily injury, including from assault, accident or clinical treatment, and independent of the need for immediate medical attention, may place the injured person at increased risk of contracting HIV or STDs. In the case of its staff, Conciliation Resources takes responsibility for raising awareness about HIV and other STDs, preventative steps and response protocols within the areas staff are expected to travel. Prior to commencing employment with Conciliation Resources new staff will be asked to read and acknowledge they have read a copy of the details in this part of the policy.

Conciliation Resources will treat a medical and or security emergency in which there may be a risk of HIV transmission in the same way as any other emergency for the purpose of ensuring that the individual(s) concerned receives appropriate care and attention within the shortest possible timescale.

For most cases in which Conciliation Resources staff may be exposed to the risk of HIV and other STD infections outside the UK, Conciliation Resources' UK insurers (and most worldwide) do not meet claims resulting from STDs or HIV related diagnoses.⁹ Notwithstanding our insurers' position, Conciliation Resources will consider meeting the emergency medical costs arising from an injury or exposure incident regardless of whether or not a positive STD or HIV diagnosis results. Conciliation Resources' provisions include meeting the cost of HIV testing, post-exposure treatment and counselling, should this be required. Where an HIV or other STD infection has been contracted by accidental injury or intentional violence endured in the course of working for Conciliation Resources, the organisation will seek to help the individual to obtain all necessary treatment. Conciliation Resources is unable, however, to make an open-ended commitment to meeting long-term treatment costs where the individual is not entitled to UK NHS treatment. Such situations will be dealt with sympathetically, on a case-by-case basis and with reference to relevant medical and legal professionals.

⁸ The EU produces a list of airlines that have poor safety records and should be avoided – please see http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/safety/air-ban/doc/list_en.pdf for further information. The information is also available via http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_air_carriers_banned_in_the_European_Union.

⁹ Amongst the compounding limitations of the policies are: the burden of proof being required from the claimant to show that the infection was not contracted prior to the incident in question, very restrictive time limits within which the incident has to be reported, and geographical limits within which the policies would protect the claimant, i.e. UK and/or EU countries only, and the latter still with exceptions.

17. Medical Emergencies

In all locations where Conciliation Resources staff work, the Programme Director must formulate a Staff Health Protocol as part of context-specific security planning. The protocol should include a procedure for medical emergencies following the relevant aspects of Conciliation Resources' insurance policy (for international staff). Where relevant, the procedure for medical emergencies involving local staff should be outlined.

18. Recruitment

Conciliation Resources ensures that staff job descriptions, person specifications and interviews draw applicants' attention to personal security risks posed by the environment in which they would be expected to operate, some or all of the time. Likewise, Terms of Reference for consultants include reference to the personal security context.

19. Cash Security

Conciliation Resources seeks to work transparently in compliance with the laws of the territories in which staff work. Wherever possible Conciliation Resources uses insured and safe methods of transferring cash, including Western Union and Global Currencies, and will continue to make direct financial transfers, use travellers' cheques or other forms of payment to ensure that staff and contractors do not normally carry with them sums of cash larger than those needed to meet their own needs and not exceeding sums larger than our insured ceiling of £3,000 (which, under special arrangement, can be increased at additional cost, if necessary).

Programme Directors will inform donors of the specific risk issues related to possible cash transfers and will include in their budgets either contingency lines to cover the eventuality of theft or loss over and above sums insured or the costs of the relevant supplemental insurance. In the unlikely event a donor does not choose to accept this risk and a transfer is considered urgent and essential, the Executive Management Committee may elect to meet the costs of the relevant supplemental insurance from strategic funds.

20. Operational Guidelines

Details and guidance on implementing these policies can be found in the accompanying document: **Safety and Security Operational Guidelines** which can be found on the Conciliation Resources intranet and the BreatheHR Information System.

Endnote

This policy has been drawn up with reference to relevant sections of the *People in Aid Code of Good Practice in the management and support of aid personnel* (2003) and *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments*, Koenraad Van Brabant, Humanitarian Practice Network Good Practice Review, ODI 2000.

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