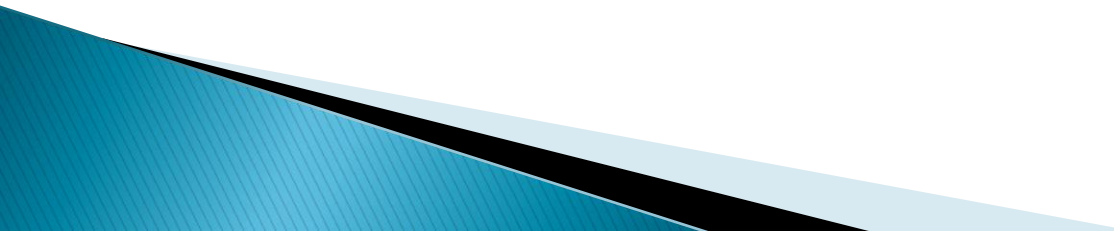


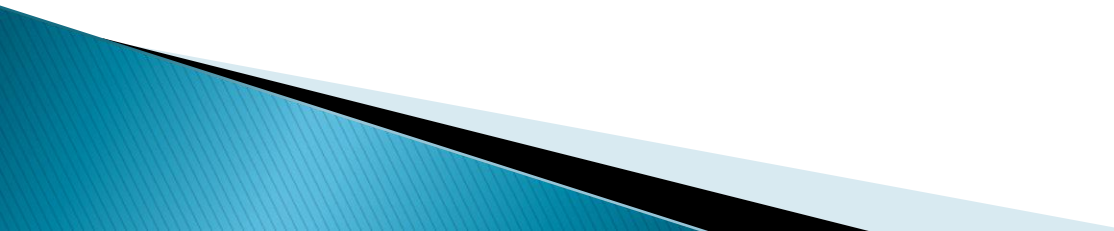
Security for Journalists Reporting In Hostile or Unsafe Environments

By
Dayo Aiyetan
Executive Director
International Centre for Investigative Reporting

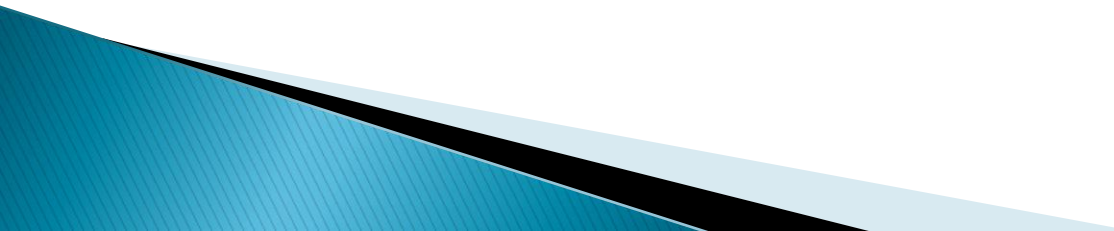
The new media ecosystem

- ▶ Globally, 9/11 has changed virtually everything in human interaction, including how we communicate.
 - ▶ Terrorist threats all over the world have also become a major threat to global peace
 - ▶ We have moved from one Cold War to many cold wars
 - ▶ The Internet – it has changed the way news is reported, disseminated and consumed
 - ▶ The Internet has also helped criminally minded persons become more efficient in committing crimes
 - ▶ In Nigeria, all these as well as growing corruption, impunity and failure of the justice system have all increased risks in journalistic practice
- 

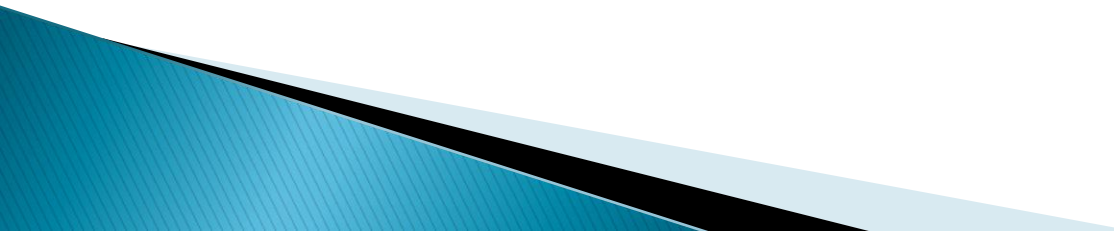
Some scary statistics

- ▶ 30 journalists are killed yearly around the world
 - ▶ 150 journalists are in jail at any given time, many without charges filed against them
 - ▶ 35 journalists in different parts of the world are missing at any time
 - ▶ Hundreds are threatened, harassed or attacked
 - ▶ Many have their phones or email addresses intercepted
- 

Basic Precautions

- ▶ First research your assignment. Do proper research before going into hostile environment. It provides you information about steps you need to take that might later save your life
 - ▶ Do a security assessment of your assignment – only then can you be prepared when risky situations stare you in the face on the field
 - ▶ Always carry a means of identification
 - ▶ If you require extra accreditation for identification, get one
 - ▶ If you have health conditions that require medication, always have enough to last you for your trip
- 

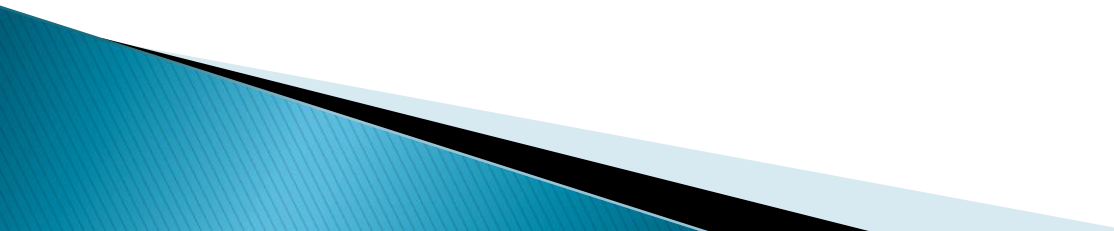
The responsibility of the media house

- ▶ In theory, a news medium has the responsibility to provide reporters basic protection when sending them into hostile or unsafe environments
 - ▶ Providing resources, tools, insurance and medical s
 - ▶ Responsibility to freelancers
 - ▶ Giving proper training to reporters about the hostile beat or risky assignment
 - ▶ The newsroom managers must make contingency arrangements for his/her reporter in case he/she gets into danger
 - ▶ Some media houses adopt pseudonyms or just use by our reporters when publishing sensitive stories
 - ▶ Deciding if a story is worth it or too risky
 - ▶ Don't keep one reporter too long on dangerous beats
- 

Useful tools / safety apps for journalist

- ▶ Reporta – a mobile app that allows you to send an sms discreetly to your editor, friend or family when under threat. It is free and can be used in iphones and android
- ▶ Hancel – an android app that allows reporters send alerts in emergencies to specific individuals and safety and press freedom organisation who can take immediate action
- ▶ Panic button – allows journalists to send sms to three contacts when faced with danger
- ▶ Red Phone – encrypted conversations and messaging

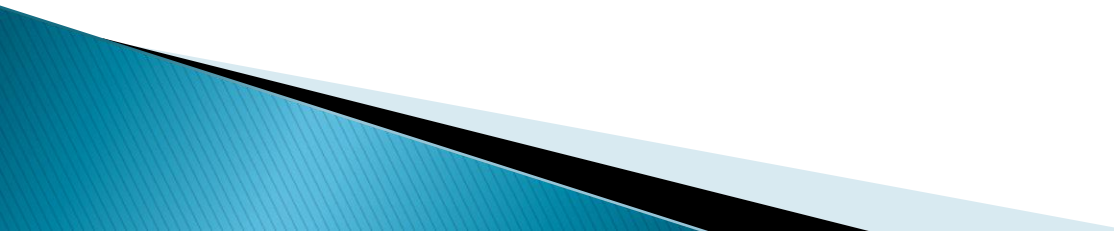
Reference: <https://ijnet-journalism-safety.silk.co/>



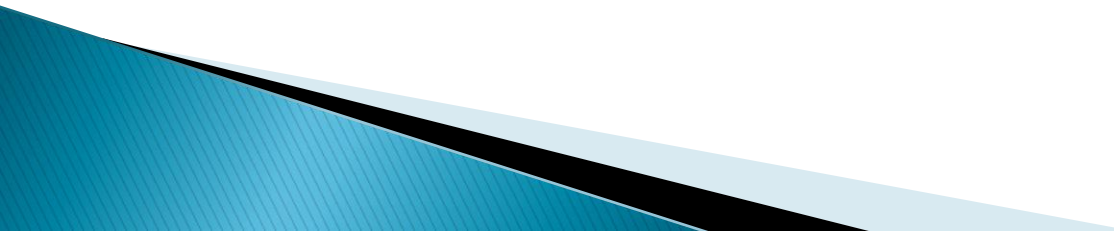
Tips on covering organised crime

- ▶ Crime and corruption are the most dangerous bits for journalists
 - ▶ 35 percent of journalists killed since 1992 covered crime and corruption
 - ▶ Research your subject(s) well. Learn as much as you can about who can help you and who might want to stop you
 - ▶ Never work alone on dangerous assignments
 - ▶ Make the subject of your investigation know that you are not working alone
 - ▶ Always keep your editor posted
 - ▶ Before going to interview a potentially hostile source, cover your back
 - ▶ Familiarise yourself with high crime areas and residences and offices of dangerous sources you want to talk to – entry and exit points etc
 - ▶ Always keep your mobile phones charged
 - ▶ In covering crime, try and cultivate a senior law enforcement agency official you can rely on for emergency situations
- 

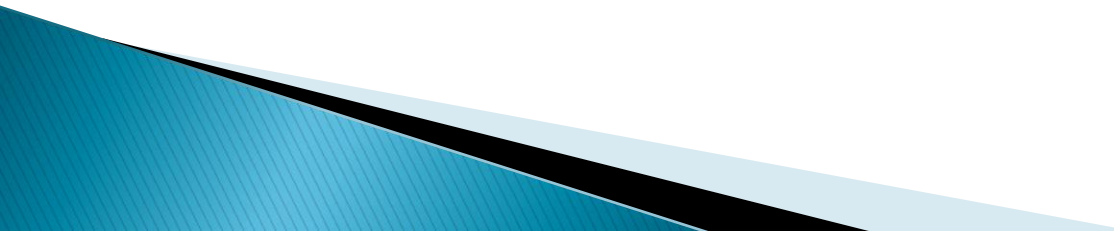
Covering terrorism

- ▶ Self protection must be your watchword
 - ▶ Have proper accreditation
 - ▶ Do not impinge on investigation by tampering with scene of a terrorist attack
 - ▶ Never quarrel with security agencies, the military, including anti terrorism squads
 - ▶ Be careful about approaching traumatised or agitated survivors
 - ▶ Be careful of a second attack
 - ▶ Don't become singled out as target
- 

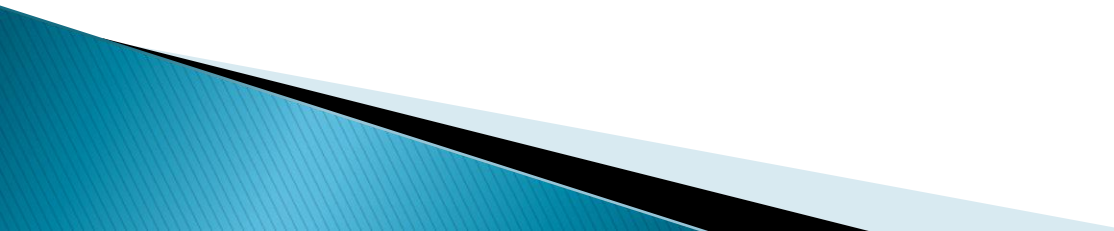
Tips on covering natural disasters, fire, accidents etc

- ▶ First responsibility for firemen, emergency agency officials, police and even journalists is to survey the scene for potential hazards such as collapsing buildings,
 - ▶ Get close enough to scene to do your story but not too close to endanger yourself or tamper with the scene
 - ▶ If there is a perimeter fence, do not bridge it. You do not have a special right or privilege different from others
 - ▶ Don't argue with the authorities or do anything that can disturb rescue or investigation. It can lead to your arrests and you can be charged with obstruction or endangering peoples' lives
 - ▶ For fire outbreaks, choose your clothing wisely. Don't wear synthetic materials that can burn easily or quickly. Also, wear shoes that make you free to move or run if you have to
- 

Covering riots, civil disturbances

- ▶ Civil disobedience and riots appear easy tasks for the journalist but statistics show that it can be very risky.
 - ▶ Committee for the Protection of Journalists, CPJ, research shows that 100 journalists were killed between 1992 and 2011 while covering violent civil disturbances.
 - ▶ In 2011 alone, all work related fatalities in the industry involved journalists covering such assignments
 - ▶ Also, you are there to report the assignment not to report rioters to the police – do not take sides
- 

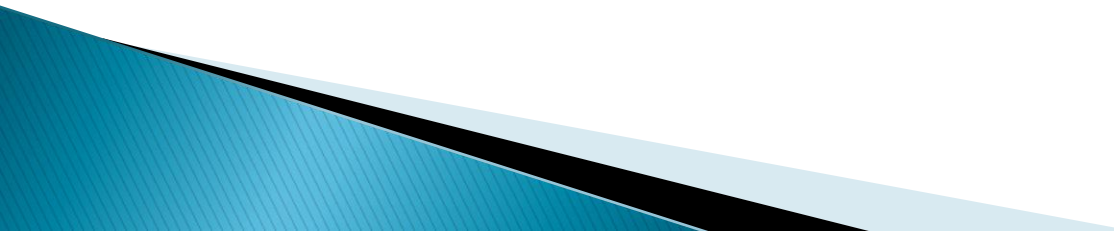
Covering riots: precautions to take

- ▶ First thing, be physically fit
 - ▶ Do a good survey of the terrain including positions of protesters and the police as well as exit or escape routes in case things get out of control
 - ▶ Never get caught between police and rioters. Also walk on the outside of the crowd, never in the mix
 - ▶ It is better to work as a team covering riots – two journalist or more and a photographer. Then they can cover each other's backs
 - ▶ Again, chose you clothes wisely. Decide if you must wear what will make you blend into the crowd or if you need both protester and law enforcement officers to distinguish you. Wear shoes that you can run in if you need to make a retreat or escape
- 

Covering riots: Precautions contd

- ▶ Decide whether to display your Press ID card or hide it
- ▶ Never join in the protest by shouting or throwing stones or other objects – the police might take you for a protester
- ▶ You might also want to consider carrying some neutralising agents – lemon and a wet towel

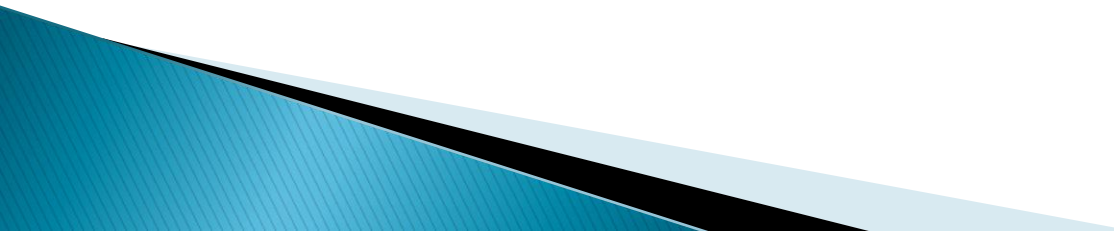
Reporting armed conflict

- ▶ Physical fitness
 - ▶ Protective gear – body armour, special vests, helmets
 - ▶ Get basic security training in combat awareness and battlefield hazards
 - ▶ Understand the rules of war
- 

Getting Embedded



Getting embedded

- ▶ Journalists getting embedded in military operations became popular during the American invasion of Iraq and it has become acceptable means of reporting news
 - ▶ When you are embedded with an army unit you agree on some basic rules, including not doing anything to jeopardise the unit's operations or disclose its locations or other operational information
 - ▶ Being embedded has its advantages and disadvantages and there are editors and media houses that will never allow their journalists to embed with a military unit
- 

Be embedded or independent

- ▶ You have exclusive access to frontline battle stories
- ▶ But you see things from a limited perspective – you cannot see the impact of war on civilians for example
- ▶ You stand the risk of being killed in battle – 9 embedded journalists were killed in Iraq between 2003 and 2009. In Afghanistan 6 embedded journalists died between 2001 and 2011
- ▶ You have a broader perspective of the war
- ▶ You can report from a safe distance
- ▶ You can, perhaps, also be more independent in your reportage because you don't feel you owe anybody a favour
- ▶ You can be charged with civilian crimes like espionage
- ▶ If you are also arrested you will be treated as a civilian and face the indignities of abusive prison conditions

Be embedded

Be Independent

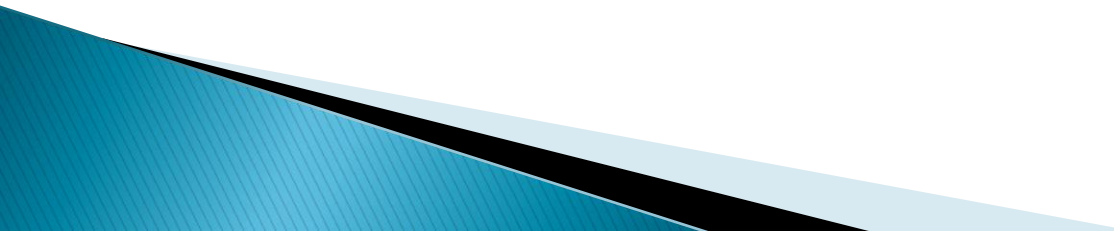
Be embedded or independent contd

- ▶ If you are in uniform, you are legally regarded as a soldier in the unit (Geneva Convention 1949)
- ▶ The opposing army can legally fire at and kill you
- ▶ You can be arrested and detained as a prisoner of war
- ▶ But then you enjoy the privileges of being a POW
- ▶ You might not have enough access to report what happens in the battle ground or the frontline

Embedded

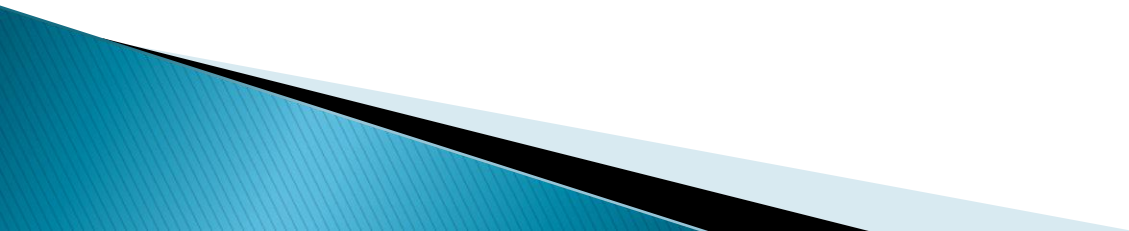
Independent

Covering epidemics

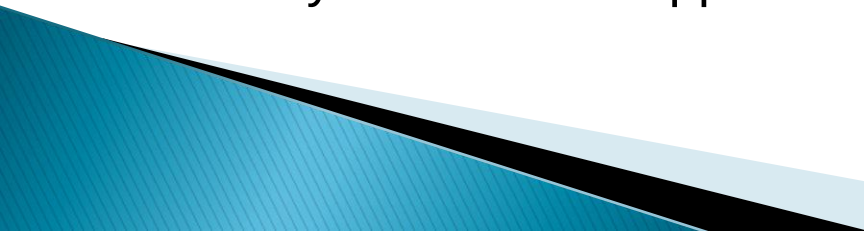
- ▶ **Precautions to take**
 - ▶ Ensure you are in robust health and that you do not have a condition that predisposed you to falling sick
 - ▶ Do your research well. Learn as much as you can about the epidemic you would be covering – mode of transmission, symptoms etc
 - ▶ Depending on the nature of the health hazard, get proper clothing, including the right accessories
 - ▶ Understand that there are some epidemics that might be too dangerous to report
- 

Dealing with sexual harassment and attacks on the beat

- ▶ Sexual violence is a real threat suffered by journalists on the job
- ▶ In a 2011 report by the CPJ nearly 50 journalists said they had been victims, some of them men
- ▶ Sadly, the fact is that some men, particularly in positions of power or authority, see women as sexual objects



What to do

- ▶ Understand the environment you work in, the cultural, social and other nuances of the people
 - ▶ Dress conservatively and abide with local dress codes dictated by custom, culture or religion
 - ▶ In some places, consider wearing wedding band whether you are married or not
 - ▶ Avoid wearing necklaces or hairstyle or clothing – anything on you that can easily be grabbed
 - ▶ On the field, avoid gorgeous dressing, jewelry and make up that might attract undue attention
 - ▶ You may consider carrying pepper spray, even body spray when going to talk to some people
 - ▶ Always work with support staff in strange places
- 

▶ THE END