

Working in Possibly Hostile Areas

Prof. Maggy Zanger
zanger@email.arizona.edu

Hostile can mean: high crime area, organized crime in operation, armed conflict zone, temporary or long-term civil unrest or general lawlessness (no functioning police or security). Or it can simply be working among a population hostile to you because of who you are: as Westerner, an American, a woman, a black person, a brown person, a white person or whatever.

General tips:

- ❑ Remember: Situational awareness! Be **alert** to surroundings! Trust your gut.
- ❑ Don't stick out; blend in.
 - This might mean not wearing expensive designer clothes and jewelry with big flashy cameras around your neck in a poverty stricken area.
 - Be aware though that you will NEVER look just like a local - you will always appear a bit different. The simple goal is to not call undue attention to yourself.
- ❑ Blending in goes to *respect*.
 - Respect the people around you: the people you are working with or reporting on.
 - No one is going to cooperate with someone they think is dissing them and field workers in a variety of situations need lots of cooperation from lots of people.
- ❑ Work in a team or in pairs.
- ❑ Know *how* to call for help and *who* to call for help. Have a charged & working phone.
- ❑ Take ER contacts and numbers with you – written down on paper.
- ❑ Tell someone when you are leaving, where you plan to go and when you plan to arrive or return. Tell them what to do if you are not back by that time (call professor, call team leader, call police). Leave them names and NUMBERS of drivers, fixers, local contacts.
- ❑ Wear shoes that cover your feet (no open-toed) so you can climb over fences, scramble over boulders or run.

- ❑ **What to take:**
 - Current passport or passport card (with copies in other places)
 - Letter of introduction
 - Addresses or maps in local language
 - Maps, camera, notebook, pen, recorder
 - US dollars or Euros and local currency, small bills
 - Cell phone that works in the area.
 - Bottled water (more than you think you will ever need)
 - Granola bars or nuts in case delayed
 - Hand sanitizer or wipes
 - Small first aid kit.
 - Sturdy walking shoes
 - Personal medications
 - Small book of local language phrases
 - Keep these things in a small, inconspicuous bag or backpack that you can hold close to you
 - Keep larger cameras and video equipment out of sight as much as possible.
 - Do not ever carry guns or ammunition
 - Do not break local laws. Do not speed, use illegal drugs, carry illegal drugs or get into a fight
 - Know your exit plan
 - ALWAYS be polite and respectful