Working in Possibly Hostile Areas

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**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 dising 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.
- **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 of 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 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**