

TV INDUSTRY HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM



Respecting human rights in the security practices of broadcasters for documentary making, news and sports

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Disclaimer

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Introduction

About the research

Purpose of the research

This research aims to explore the human rights risks in relation to the security practices of broadcasters to support documentary making, news and sports broadcasting. The findings are aimed at broadcasters with good practice recommendations for teams with responsibility for security practices and for editors, producers, journalists and crew in documentary making, news and sports broadcasting.

A Human Rights lens

Using a human rights lens to look at security practices enables us to rely on an international framework, including:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The ILO Fundamental Conventions
- The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights
- The International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers

The framework helps us to identify issues that are risks to people and locate them in international standards. It also enables a framing which shows that broadcasters have a responsibility towards all those individuals impacted by the making of their news, sports, and documentary productions, regardless of whether they are directly employed or not.

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights are explicit in identifying a corporate responsibility to respect human rights and this responsibility does not stop at a legal agreement or by being outsourced to another provider.

Importantly, the human rights framework enables an understanding of how a broadcaster should take steps to mitigate risks and remediate human rights it has caused, contributed to or to which it is directly linked.

Security and human rights

Filming and broadcasting in high-risk contexts have particular security and human rights challenges. Security is about protecting people, locations, and equipment and may be carried out by public security providers, such as law enforcement agencies, or private security providers. Poor security practices risk the right to life and the right to health, which includes mental health. Security practices can also impact on other rights such as the right to family life and freedom of expression, which includes media freedom. The way that security personnel are deployed can impact rights to dignity and equality, non-discrimination and to just and favourable working conditions.

About security

The term 'security' in relation to documentary making, news, and sports broadcasting covers a wide range of roles and aspects. In relation to personnel, security can include:

1. Static guards – usually low paid; often required as part of insurance policy
2. Backwatchers – a member of the production or security team who guides the camera operator and looks out for potential hazards
3. Close protection – e.g. provided to an individual or camera crew; the priority is the principal
4. Security consultants and advisors – likely to be more experienced and higher paid; may conduct risk assessments, reconnaissance, training; often linked to an insurance company
5. Law enforcement professionals – police, army, national intelligence operatives

In terms of the aspects covered, security includes:

| Aspects | Description | Associated risks |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Physical security | Protecting people physically from harm – usually through planning, preparation and evacuation. Protecting premises and equipment from intruders. | Physical assault Abusive behaviour Crime (pickpocketing, spiked drinks, thefts) Sexual assault Kidnapping Terrorism Conflict Road safety |
| Digital security | Looking at the online footprint and social media profiles associated with those involved in documentary making, news, and sports broadcasting. | Abusive behaviour Threats of violence to self or families Doxing Harassment Mental health |
| Cyber security/surveillance | Where state actors or others may be conducting surveillance of journalists and media workers, or seeking to hack their devices. | Human rights defenders Rule of Law Press Freedom |
| Psycho-social safety | Mental health preparation and remediation when facing (potentially) traumatic issues. | Trauma PTSD |

Issues explored in this research in relation to the use of security include:

- Security risks in documentary making, news and sports broadcasting
- Types of security providers and how broadcasters work with them
- Mitigations that broadcasters use to address security risks
- Remediation of adverse human rights impacts related to security practices

Methodology

The report was developed in parallel with a second report entitled “[Respecting human rights in the use of media support workers for documentary making, news and sports](#)”. It draws on the same interviews, deep-dive assessments, and other sources.

The research involved desk reviews of academic and grey literature, including articles, blogs, reports, news items and parliamentary submissions. A full bibliography of references is provided in Appendix B.

To supplement the available literature, the researcher conducted 25 interviews with 26 key stakeholders between May and August 2021, including 17 men and 9 women. She also built on previous research conducted for the TV Industry Human Rights Forum, including interviews that took place in 2019 and 2020. The interviews included:

- 7 representatives from broadcaster security teams
- 1 sports producer
- 2 heads of production operations
- 2 documentary makers
- 3 academics who were formerly investigative journalists
- 1 regional news journalist
- 3 organisations concerned with journalist safety (Committee to Project Journalists; National Union of Journalists; ACOS Alliance)
- 8 suppliers, including 3 security companies and 2 insurance providers

As well as stakeholder interviews, the researcher conducted deep-dive assessments into the work of two broadcasters in specific areas: outside broadcasts in the UK and preparations for covering the Euro 2020 football tournament.

Finally, to reach more media support workers directly, the researcher also sent a short survey out which was completed by six fixers who are members of the World Fixer database. This included 2 women and 4 men, with a range of experience in news, sports and documentaries.

Executive Summary

Security practices are not simply mitigations for safety and security risks. They also give rise to risks of their own – to the teams that depend on them, to the individuals providing security, and to those who may come into contact with the team. Human rights risks related to security practices have been well documented in other industry sectors. This report begins the process of identifying those risks in documentary making, news and sports broadcasting, with recommendations to address them.

Firstly, there is an argument that security practices and their human rights implications should be considered in every situation, not only those that fall into the category of high risk. It has become increasingly apparent that any situation can become high risk and there are no neat distinctions. Instead, security should be central to preparation and planning for any assignment, with journalists and producers working in partnership with security specialists, viewing security practices as a mechanism for capturing the story, rather than a barrier.

Secondly, there needs to be careful consideration in relation to security providers. Public security, such as police, military, and intelligence services, can be responsible for human rights abuses and it is essential to understand and address the risks involved in working with them. Private security, which includes static guards, close protection officers and security advisors, can also perpetrate human rights abuses, especially if providers are not adequately vetted, licensed, and trained. Static guards are also at particular risk of poor working conditions and mistreatment, especially if they are viewed as little more than a tick in the box for insurance purposes.

Thirdly, the research concludes that there needs to be a re-think of the security practices used to mitigate unsafe situations, from policy to training, risk assessment to insurance, personal protective equipment (PPE) to communications. Good practice exists but is often not applied to all those supporting a news, sports, or documentary team such as fixers and drivers, who may find themselves untrained, uninsured and without adequate safety equipment. Even where there is good practice, there are systemic challenges. The whole security industry is dominated by ex-military and ex-law enforcement personnel, mostly male, with a particular approach to addressing and managing risks. This research has identified gaps in the way these practices handle diverse identities and in the way that risks and threats to others, who may come into contact with the news, sports and documentary teams, are considered.

Finally, there is a need for broadcasters to consider how they will remediate human rights risks from security practices that materialise, building this into scenario-planning and budgets. In the worst cases, when security practices go wrong, people can lose their lives.

Summary of Human Rights Risks

| Potentially affected group | Nature of potential risk | Human rights at risk of violation | Potential causes |
|--|--|---|--|
| Journalists / crews | Physical safety of journalists from members of the public, security guards and police | Right to life Right to health Freedom of expression | Political rhetoric Small crews with no backwatchers or security support Lack of a safety mindset |
| Journalists | Abusive treatment from members of the public online | Right to family life Right to health Freedom of expression | Political rhetoric Lack of training to deal with harassment and abuse Online abuse seen as inevitable |
| Those working for broadcasters (talent, crew, drivers, local freelancers etc.) | Poor, ineffective, or inappropriate security practices | Right to life Right to health | Lack of training Low wages leading to poor quality staff |
| Female / BAME/ LGBTQ journalists / crew | Security risk assessments may fail to take into account specific risks faced by individuals or, conversely, assess them as too high risk as a result of their innate characteristics | Right to non-discrimination Right to health | Lack of diversity in security teams Fear of raising concerns |
| Journalists, crews, fixers, translators, drivers | Surveillance and harassment from states – against media workers and their families | Right to privacy Right to health Freedom of expression Right to family life | Lack of press freedom Limits to the rule of law |
| Local crews, fixers, translators, drivers | Safety and security | Right to life Right to health Right to family life Right to just and favourable conditions of work | Lack of policies within news organisations for local crew Lack of resources within news organisations Increased reliance by news organisations on freelancers Lack of preparation and safety training Lack of safety mindset |
| Security personnel (especially static guards working alone) | Safety and security | Right to life, Right to health | Seen as part of the security apparatus rather than also in need of security Inadequate vetting and training |
| Security personnel (especially static guards) | Poor working conditions, including excessive working hours and lack of facilities (e.g. toilets or power to heat their vehicles) | Right to health Right to dignity Right to rest and leisure Right to just and favourable conditions of work | Seen as a tick in the box for insurance purposes Seen as the responsibility of a third-party vendor and therefore not taken into consideration |
| Security personnel | Mistreatment of third-party workers by others | Right to dignity Right to non-discrimination Right to health Right to just and favourable conditions of work | Hierarchical cultures Seen as the responsibility of a third-party vendor and therefore not taken into consideration |

Findings

There are a range of security needs related to documentary making, news and sports broadcasting, which vary widely in terms of the story or sport being covered, the location of the filming and the access rights of the team involved. These all have human rights implications.

Security risks

Security planning for broadcasters has traditionally focused on high-risk contexts, such as conflict zones and other hostile environments. Broadcasters have teams of people to support high-risk assignments, with policies and protocols in place.

However, it appears that the distinction between high risk and low risk is no longer always clear and may inhibit a recognition that security planning should be a core aspect of every assignment. In 2020, a significant majority of media workers that have died doing their jobs did so in peace time and most journalists who are killed are local, not sent abroad.¹

The implications of that blurring are that assignments not considered high risk initially can bring the most challenges, as a result of inadequate preparation. As one security lead said, “the worst situations are those that are initially risk assessed as a one out of five, but which develop into a five out of five. The preparation is not there, and teams may be reluctant to recognise the need for more than a minimum” (Broadcaster security team). Another interviewee commented that, “It’s the lower risk places where things happen”.²

There are several reasons for a blurring between high risk and low risk that include:

1. Changing perceptions of journalists and the media
2. Shrinking newsrooms and budgets leading to an increased use of freelancers
3. The digital realm that has turned low-risk topics into high-risk ones
4. Diverse identities of teams involved in news, sports and documentaries

Perceptions of journalists

In 2014, the International News Safety Institute (INSI) found that, “Journalism has never been more dangerous, and journalists say they have never felt so unsafe doing their jobs.”³ This trend seems to have continued with respect for, and trust in, journalists falling,⁴ which increases the risk that they will be harassed by the public, law enforcement, private security, government actors and online trolls.

During the Covid 19 related lockdowns throughout 2020/21 the number of threats of attacks against journalists increased in the UK; several government ministers verbally

¹ Reporters without Borders (RSF) (2020), *RSF’s 2020 Round-up: 50 journalists killed, two thirds in countries “at peace”*

² Interviews 2021

³ Clifford, L. *et al.* (2015) “Under Threat: The Changing State of Media Safety”, *International News Safety Institute*

⁴ Dr Toff, B. *et al.* (2020) “What we think we know and what we want to know: perspectives on trust in news in a changing world”, *Reuters*

attacked journalists,⁵ and the police physically assaulted a journalist in Bristol.⁶ One interviewee went to an active crime scene in the UK in 2021 and, having identified himself as a journalist, found that the crowd became threatening towards him, and he felt obliged to leave.⁷

Several interviewees reported that the US had become much more dangerous for journalists and those working with them. One explained that journalists have become targets in the US, particularly from alt-right groups.⁸ Another said that many reporters sent out to cover the many protests in summer 2020 did not have the proper training or resources. There were almost 500 press freedom incidents in the US, the vast majority of which involved law enforcement and the situation was exacerbated by the anti-press rhetoric.⁹

“Politicians have a responsibility to set the mood music and they’re doing it badly.”¹⁰

The perception of journalists also impacts those that work with journalists who can be targeted as part of a broadcast team, or who might be seen as ‘traitors’ in facilitating access.

Shrinking newsrooms

Broadcasters are cutting back on international news bureaux and with fewer teams on the ground, journalists that are sent out to cover breaking news may go at short notice with little preparation. Anecdotally, the number of permanent staff in newsrooms is declining, meaning that more freelancers and local journalists are used who tend to have less access to security advice and resources. This puts their physical safety, mental health and privacy at risk.

“I’m amazed at how many freelancers exist even in sensitive jobs.”¹¹

At the same time, technology advances mean that fewer people are needed to deliver live broadcasts. Sports coverage increasingly involves fewer people travelling, a trend accelerated by the pandemic. In news, teams have dwindled even further. One interviewee said that when the sound recordist stopped being used as standard, this was seen as dangerous as they were the backwatcher for the camera crew and journalist. With the self-held cameras now available, it is possible for journalists to film themselves without camera crew. Although efficient and economical, it is while concentrating on the barrel of a camera lens that the journalist is likely to be most visible and vulnerable to physical assault.

Where good practice was identified during the research, it was in those broadcasters that were risk averse and well resourced. For example, one security lead at a broadcaster said that in the US from March 2020 to when the final Capitol riots stopped, she had supported over 2,000 crews with around 4,000 security agents.¹² A representative from an

⁵ Sharman, D (2021) “Editor hits back as ministers and MPs attack daily over accurate story”, *Hold the Front Page*; Walker, P (2021) “No10 defends minister who criticised HuffPost journalist on Twitter”, *The Guardian*; Morris, N (2021) “Downing Street rebukes Jacob Rees-Mogg for attack on journalist – but stops short of an apology”, *I News*

⁶ Blackall, M & Gayle, D (2021), “Police under fire for ‘assault’ of journalist at Bristol protest”, *The Guardian*

⁷ Interviews 2021

⁸ Interviews 2021

⁹ Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) (2020), *Reported press freedom violations in Black Lives Matter protests near 500*

¹⁰ Interviews 2021

¹¹ Interviews 2021

¹² Interviews 2021

organisation working on journalist safety said that, “people that have good practices have more money and really come through for local crews.”¹³

Good practice for broadcasters

- Ensure adequate resources for security

Digital realm

The rise of the digital realm has made a broader range of topics potential lightning rods for online harassment. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) listed environment, sports and entertainment journalism as among those subject areas which previously might have been deemed less controversial but which can now generate high levels of abuse online.¹⁴ Online abuse can have significant impacts on mental health, and it can also escalate into offline threats and reputational, financial and physical attacks that target individuals and their families.

“You can’t necessarily compartmentalise online and offline safety... We found that whatever you covered you got abuse.”¹⁵

“Online abuse is still not properly discussed and difficult to understand if you haven’t experienced it directly.”¹⁶

“The internet is a really difficult place to operate. Anything you say or you report on can put you at risk... Threats can escalate very quickly into physical threats. You need proper risk assessment and mitigation plans in place.”¹⁷

As well as general harassment, broadcast teams must also be aware of risks around hacking and state surveillance, ensuring that they have sufficiently protected themselves, their sources, and any of their interview subjects. The recent revelations that Pegasus spyware has been widely deployed against journalists the need for high levels of vigilance.¹⁸

International Press Institute – 4-step Framework for newsrooms to better protect journalists from online harassment:

1. Creating a culture of safety within the newsroom around online abuse and establishing clear channels to report it
2. Assessing the risk that the online abuse represents for the targeted journalist and media outlet alike
3. Implementing support and response measures, ranging from digital security support to legal support to emotional and psychological support, as well as online moderation to limit the impact of harassment
4. Tracking cases of online harassment to assess how effective the support and response measures have been

<https://ipi.media/ipi-launches-new-protocol-for-newsrooms-to-address-online-harassment/>

¹³ Interviews 2021

¹⁴ Interviews 2021

¹⁵ Interviews 2021

¹⁶ Interviews 2021

¹⁷ Interviews 2021

¹⁸ Willsher, K. (2021) “Pegasus spyware found on journalists’ phones, French intelligence confirms”, *The Guardian*

Diverse identities

The security industry is dominated by men with a background in the military, police, or intelligence services. Consequently, security frameworks and approaches tend to follow similar patterns and norms. Such norms do not appear to be particularly good at catering for security risks to women, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ or people with disabilities, tending to bolt on additional considerations rather than fundamentally rethinking the approach. However, those working on documentaries, news and sports broadcasts are diverse and the inability of standard security practices to cater well to diverse identities presents a range of problems.

Female interviewees talked about wanting to minimise their differences and feeling a need to prove themselves, sometimes leading them to agree to high-risk situations against their better judgement. One documentary maker said that it was only since she has become senior enough and reached director level that she has felt able to challenge plans and security arrangements, “but not before – I didn’t want it to be another thing that made me not look competent”.¹⁹ Another interviewee commented that it tends to be women past mid-career who are prepared to speak out about safety, not those at entry level who have less power or early career freelancers. “They don’t have power at work to resist requests to do something iffy”.²⁰

Women’s approach in minimising and under-playing gender appears justified by the reaction to female journalists experiencing sexual assault when reporting from Tahrir Square in 2011. Reporter Lindsey Hilsum was one of those who responded to calls for female reporters to be withdrawn with frustration that she has “seen no evidence that female foreign correspondents are at greater risk than women in any other walk of life”.²¹ She went on to point out that being a female reporter gives you access to people and places that men cannot get, particularly in conservative societies, so that hiring women should be seen as an opportunity, not as an additional security burden.

In writer/actor/director Michaela Coel’s 2018 McTaggart lecture, she pointed out the lack of consideration given to ethnic minorities in risk assessments and planning: “The producers saw shooting in ‘that place’ as a low-cost haven. They didn’t consider the experiences of the brown and black cast to meet the morals of their diversity compass, because they didn’t think to see things from our point of view.”²² One interviewee for this research admitted that she hadn’t always known how to broach subjects of race and ethnicity sensitively with team members and consequently used to avoid asking. She has since learned how to have these conversations and ensure that concerns and risks are adequately represented in security planning. The sense of discomfort around such discussions was also apparent in other interviews with security team representatives.

One security team that did have diverse representation within it reinforced the importance of encouraging people to raise risks related to their identity and discuss them with the team. This means that everyone understands how different situations might affect their colleagues and enables them to consider tactics and scenario planning in advance. Understanding identities in their possibilities, rather than simply as a complication in terms

¹⁹ Interviews 2021

²⁰ Interviews 2021

²¹ Hilsum, L. (2011) “Equality on the front line is the only way”, *The Independent*

²² Broadcast Now (2018) *Michaela Coel: MacTaggart lecture in full*

of existing security practices, enables a more nuanced approach. It empowers individuals to raise concerns without fear that it makes them look harder to employ and ensures that the security team are sensitive in their planning: “If someone is covering an alt-right Nazi militia story, I would be hesitant to send certain people there. Mostly I want people from a local community that are familiar and can be eyes and ears in so many ways and know which streets to go down.”²³ (Broadcaster security team)

Attention to diversity also has positive implications for private security providers. Few interviewed for this research reported employing female security guards, but one company that did highlighted the positive benefits, saying that women are “A great tool for defusing situations. Angry men get put off their stride by women. Eight times out of ten, a female can defuse a situation better than a bloke.”²⁴ (Security company owner).

Good practice for broadcasters

- Improve the diversity of security teams or actively seek diverse inputs to security conversations so that risks faced by different groups are not simply bolted on to existing approaches or overlooked altogether
- Support security teams and those responsible for completing risk assessments to have open conversations about identities
- Provide forums for people to discuss and share concerns and issues in supportive environments so that they do not have to underplay their identities
- Ensure that everyone in broadcast teams raises issues related to their identity to ensure that each team member is aware of situations that may affect their colleagues and to discuss in advance what actions they will take

²³ Interviews 2021

²⁴ Interviews 2021

Security providers

Private security providers cover a wide range of specialisms and services for broadcasters from static guarding to event security, close protection, crisis management, medical evacuation, cyber support and digital security. For example, static guards are used to protect outside broadcast trucks and equipment for sports and large live news events. Embedded security advisors support planning for teams preparing to cover events. Close protection security protect journalists, crew and talent covering news and sports broadcasts.

Broadcasters use these security providers in a range of different ways, sometimes commissioned directly and sometimes through third-party companies or fixers. Some security companies are large and work with a wide range of subcontractors. Others are smaller and more specialised.

There are many ways that private security providers may infringe on human rights, and these have been widely documented by the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF).²⁵

Risks will vary by country and include:

- Private security providers may not adequately pay their employees or provide safe working conditions.
- Private security personnel may lack adequate training to respect human rights in their day-to-day security duties.
- Non-local private security providers may be unaware of or lack training in the culture, traditions and values of the local community. This may result in security practices that could be considered culturally inappropriate or disrespectful, leading to increased risk of conflict.
- Private security personnel may not always have equipment that allows for a graduated use of force or may carry inappropriate weapons and firearms.
- Public security personnel may work for private security providers when off-duty. This may create confusion over roles and responsibilities, which may lead to inappropriate practices, particularly in terms of the use of force, apprehension and detention.
- Companies working with both public and private security may face multiple lines of communication, poor communication, inadequate coordination and resulting difficulties in investigating human rights abuses.
- Private security providers may have to act as first responders in high-risk situations or to otherwise deal with situations that are normally the responsibility of public security forces.²⁶

Public security providers include police, other law enforcement agencies and military. They tend to support broadcast teams at some sporting events, and they may also coordinate with news teams covering other types of events.

²⁵ DCAF Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (2020), *2020 Annual Report*

²⁶ Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Toolkit v3 (2014), *Addressing Security and Human Rights Challenges in Complex Environments*

- Broadcasters may be ‘obliged’ to work with public security...without knowing in advance the numbers and operational capabilities, as well as the rules and restrictions governing public security forces assigned to their area of operations.
- Public security forces may suffer from insufficient human resources, low salaries, inadequate training and poor equipment. This may increase the risk that they engage in criminal activity or human rights violations.
- If payments (cash and in-kind) to public security forces in exchange for their services are not transparent, this may raise suspicions of corruption.
- Public security forces protecting broadcaster personnel and assets may risk prioritising the security of the broadcaster’s operations over the security of the local population.
- Public security forces may be unprepared and untrained to use force appropriately.²⁷

Public security providers can also create risks for broadcasters where they are present and may be responsible for assaults on journalists and their teams. One sports producer reported being kettled, and having guns pulled on her by police several times in the course of her work.²⁸

Security needs

The security requirements for documentary making, news and sports vary and there is an argument for broadcasters to ensure that there are security specialists embedded in each area who can familiarise themselves with the detail of each genre. This supports a partnership approach with security practitioners, which many interviewees raised as the ideal model.

For example, sports events are known about well in advance and security can be integrated into the planning process. However, it can take, according to interviewees, considerable time for security experts to understand the working practices of sports broadcast teams and vice versa. For major tournaments, there will be a range of skills needed in security personnel from close protection to crisis response, vendor management, corporate engagement, managing medical incidents and advice on policies and procedures.

Documentary teams may work with a security advisor from the broadcaster to advise on risk and then may deploy someone from a local company who has the relevant local knowledge. One interviewee complained about the cavalier approach to safety taken by documentary teams, where commissioners had not costed in security or where normal procurement routes were avoided. He warned that there was a greater likelihood of being tripped up by local regulations or being in the wrong place at the wrong time in medium risk locations. In addition, if there is a high-profile presenter fronting their documentary, thought needs to be given to the right style of close protection.²⁹ One interviewee warned against the use of visibly large or ‘secret-service style’ close protection for talent as it creates an identifiable target. Instead, security teams need to blend in with the environment and look like crew or bystanders.³⁰ This point was echoed by another interviewee who described a challenging

²⁷ DCAF-ICRC Toolkit v3 (2014) *Addressing Security and Human Rights Challenges in Complex Environments*

²⁸ Interviews 2021

²⁹ Interviews 2021

³⁰ Interviews 2021

event covered in Times Square, New York, where they hired a security guard to look like a tourist and create a “human fence”.³¹

News teams may have significantly less time available to plan and prepare their security. There are good examples of broadcasters with retained security who can support with planning so that before a reporter has stepped off the plane, they know the route through the airport, where vehicles are parked, which route to go to the hotel, whether the vehicles have been safety checked and how to respond to certain situations. However, given the speed at which teams may need to respond to news, sometimes crews will be in the air and on their way to a destination before the security advisor has been notified. There are, however, still opportunities for partnerships: “If you look at war correspondents, CPOs are recurringly the same people because they build confidence. A good security company is about partnership.”³² (Broadcaster security team)

Vetting

Vetting is an important element in ensuring that private security teams have the skills, experience and behaviours to provide the right service in a way that does not infringe on the human rights of others. DCAF good practice recommends obtaining documentation on the past performance of the provider, as well as service and criminal records of its employees. However, it may not always be realistic to obtain these and international providers may not meet the same standards in all local contexts.³³

Broadcaster security teams suggested that good providers:

- Are dressed to blend into the background (unless providing visible static guarding)
- Are focused on getting people out of situations
- Have contingency plans in place to remove the principal/team and keep them safe,
- Are focused on de-escalation
- Carry out advance planning – arriving early to check vehicles and plan routes (e.g. from airport to hotel)
- Build partnerships with productions and/or broadcasters

The type of criteria that broadcasters reported using to identify providers includes:

- Access and contacts
- Client list
- Whether they appear trustworthy
- Having the right insurance in place
- Speed with which they can get teams together

Where third parties are responsible for identifying security providers, practices ranged considerably. One insurance provider was described as having a long and costly on-boarding process for security vendors with extensive checks on data, standards, training and certification.³⁴ Other large companies working with local partners had less extensive standards and requirements.

³¹ Interviews 2021

³² Interviews 2021

³³ DCAF-ICRC Toolkit v3 (2014) *Addressing Security and Human Rights Challenges in Complex Environments*

³⁴ Interviews 2021

No security team or large provider interviewed for the research reported using the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers in their vetting processes.

Where vetting is dependent on a third party, there is a risk that standards and expectations are not replicated. One interviewee pointed out the safety issues with “relying on an unvetted individual to provide unvetted individuals to provide security to your people in an environment that could be hostile”.³⁵ He also said that working through a third party, such as a fixer, might bring additional risks in terms of bribery, corruption and money-laundering.

Another security lead for a broadcaster said that at first it was easier to go to a large company for all security needs as a one-stop shop. However, it became apparent that often the work was outsourced to third party vendors and there was not enough oversight of the people doing the security role, including whether they were properly licensed. This broadcaster now works with a range of security providers, although a barrier for some of the smaller outfits is the need for the right levels of insurance.

The International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA)

- ICoCA is a multi-stakeholder initiative formed in 2013 to ensure that providers of private security services respect human rights and humanitarian law.
- It serves as the governance and oversight mechanisms of the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers (the ‘Code’).
- The Code articulates responsibilities of private security companies under human rights and international humanitarian law to ensure the responsible provision of private security services, particularly when operating in complex environments.

Content from <https://icoca.ch/about/>

Good practice for broadcasters

- Give preference to ICOCA Member or Affiliate companies and encourage other security providers to join ICOCA
- Ensure a constant process of assessment through feedback from crews and dialogue with security providers
- Build strong relationships with security providers so that they understand requirements and are able to share concerns and issues at an early stage
- Avoid third party vetting if possible and require providers to seek permission before outsourcing

People involved in the security apparatus

Where individuals are seen as part of the security apparatus, their own security and safety may be overlooked. For example, security personnel guarding outside broadcast trucks are considered part of security mitigations, but their own safety may not be part of risk assessments and there may be incorrect expectations of their role as a result. Such security guards are often seen as a ‘tick in the box’ for insurance purposes rather than individuals who are also at risk, although security companies providing guards may have their own guidelines such as requiring them to retreat to a safe location if under threat.

The risks to such security personnel were highlighted at the fan riot at Manchester United’s stadium in May 2021, where equipment ended up damaged. The role of the security guards was to manage the compound and check accreditation, not to actively defend property and

³⁵ Interview 2021

take on intruders as some may have expected. Indeed, previous research conducted for the TV Industry Human Rights Forum found that security personnel are often mentioned in risk assessments as part of the mitigations of subcontractors working in TV production but are rarely told of these expectations and may not be able to fulfil them anyway.³⁶

This issue extends beyond security personnel to fixers, who are also regularly viewed by broadcasters as an important component of security measures. “Hiring news fixers as a basic safety measure is an established practice in foreign reporting, and it is not uncommon for correspondents to conceptualize a ‘good’ fixer in terms of safety and security.”³⁷ Palmer argues that as fixers are seen as part of the security apparatus, there is no separate security infrastructure built for the fixers.

Broadcasters and their employees may fail to recognise the need for those helping with security to have security for themselves. For both security guards and fixers, it appears that some internalise the disregard for their own safety and see it as less important than that of the individuals or equipment they are responsible for.

Good practice for broadcasters:

- Consider the safety and security of every individual involved, including those providing security
- Ensure everyone is clear about the role of security personnel and whether they are expected to engage or not

Working conditions

The working conditions for many of those working in security for news, sports, and documentaries do not appear to present particular risks. Embedded security consultants and those providing close protection are usually reasonably well paid and are included as part of the team with meals and accommodation provided where necessary. Like the crew, they may do long hours but should have appropriate breaks and rest factored in.

The exception to this is for security personnel providing static (sometimes called ‘manned’) guarding. These roles, which may include guarding vehicles, equipment, and entry points, are usually low paid and may involve excessively long shifts, during which guards may not have access to basic facilities. Security companies providing these services to broadcasters in the UK have reported downward pressure on pay rates. And those involved in guarding outside broadcast trucks overnight reported shifts of up to 48 hours at a time. One interviewee said, “Long shifts is when things go wrong...12 hours is more than enough.”³⁸

Research in the UK found that it is common for guards to be self-employed, giving them few employment rights whilst on low wages.³⁹ For example, requirements on minimum wage and holiday pay do not apply to self-employed workers. In addition, if they are not set up correctly as self-employed and not paying national insurance and tax, then they may not be able to access a state pension on retirement and may face large tax bills in future.

³⁶ TV Industry Human Rights Forum (TVIHR) (2020) *Research into the labour rights of ancillary workers in UK TV production*

³⁷ Palmer (2019), *The Fixers*, p.142

³⁸ Interviews 2021

³⁹ Interviews 2021

The role of static guards is one that our research found was often under-valued and under-resourced. As a result, guards may have no access to toilets, hot drinks or power to heat their vehicles and may end up in freezing conditions. One security company owner said, “I’m disgusted by what some of the facilities companies view as acceptable”, while another said, “[A few] people treat us like dirt and think if you’re security you must be thick”.⁴⁰ As well as being undignified, this can have extremely serious consequences. In January 2018, a security guard working on a wind farm in Scotland died after suffering from hypothermia. Both the construction company and the security firm were investigated and admitted failing to provide a reliable source of heating at the site.⁴¹

Working conditions case study⁴²

A facilities company acting on behalf of one of the major terrestrial channels booked a security guard for a location in London for a 12-hour overnight shift in September 2021. Upon arrival at the premises, the guard was greeted by the Unit Manager, but was told that he could not have access to the premises, and he would have to sit on a public bench overnight to look after the premises. When he asked about toilet facilities, he was advised that he could "pee in a bush". As well as breaching HSE working practices, suggesting a guard urinate in a public place is both inappropriate and unlawful.

This is not an issue confined to the UK. For example, one interviewee based in the US found that companies being used for overnight truck watch paid static guards \$10 an hour without the right clothing or a vehicle to sit in⁴³. Static guarding is widely used globally with people in those roles often having to work outside in all weathers and usually for very low pay.

Good practice for broadcasters

- Set minimum standards in contracts with private security providers or with intermediary companies that employ them (such as outside broadcast companies)
- Check the pay and working conditions of security guards, whether directly contracted or not, and assess whether they are fair and appropriate
- Ensure there is adequate budget allocated for static guards to receive fair pay
- Remind crew to treat security guards with dignity and respect

⁴⁰ Interviews 2021

⁴¹ Rutherford, N (2021) “Wind farm firm admits safety breaches over worker who froze to death”, *BBC*

⁴² Received by email – September 2021

⁴³ Interviews 2021

Security mitigations

There are a wide range of mitigations used by broadcasters to mitigate risks to security. These are both strategic and tactical to individual assignments. They include policies and protocols, training, insurance, risk assessments, personal protective equipment (PPE), use of weapons, communications and ensuring everyone has the ability to recognise and raise security concerns.

Policies and protocols

Security practices need to be governed by the right policies and protocols. This research has identified several informal practices that may work well until those who understand them leave the organisation. The practical recommendations set out here need to be embedded in policies and protocols in order to be sustainable.

The types of policies that broadcasters referred to, which might need to be reviewed and updated to incorporate good practice include:

- Hostile Environment Policy
- Travel Policy
- Risk management provider policy
- Harassment processes for threats against staff
- Duty of care to contributors

Importantly, each policy needs to be supported by a detailed set of guidance that covers expectations of the way private security providers implement standards set out in contracts. Editor Nic Dawes said in an article that, “Our responsibility to cover dangerous places is in tension with our responsibility for the safety of our people. The only way we can manage that tension is with the help of a clear set of guidelines governing conflict coverage, backed by adequate resources.”⁴⁴

For the broadcasters interviewed, some had clear policies in place, while others identified gaps where the approach was more informal or where teams sometimes ignored the procedures in place, with excuses such as “we don’t have time”.

Good practice for broadcasters

- Review and update relevant policies to ensure that they address the human rights risks outlined in this report
- Ensure that policies are complemented by clear guidance, that there are consequences for not following them and that informal arrangements are not relied upon

Training

Training is an important mitigation for teams covering news and sports to ensure that they know how to protect themselves and others. However, the research found notable limitations to the training that is most used and to those who receive it.

⁴⁴ Dawes, N. quoted in Hilsum, L. (2016) “Behind the Lines: Should reporters still be heading into warzones”, *Index on Censorship: A Voice for the Persecuted*

Training schemes mentioned during interviews included:

- Public disorder training for those covering protests or likely to be in crowds,
- Situational awareness and verbal de-escalation,
- Hostile Environment First Aid training (HEFAT).

Broadcasters often require individuals that may deploy to high-risk situations to undertake Hostile Environment First Aid training (HEFAT). As one provider's website puts it, "The training ranges from staying safe during travel and in your hotel room to dealing with the aftermath of a full-scale terrorist event with the full spectrum of situations in between".⁴⁵ There are examples of some news outlets in France requiring journalists to experience full SAS-style kidnap training.⁴⁶ Most trainers are themselves ex-military or ex-intelligence services.

The focus on 'threat management' centres the person doing the training, while not necessarily considering how their actions create issues and threats for others. There is also a risk that this type of training reinforces the sense that high-risk situations are macho environments that need military training to navigate. And although HEFAT includes valuable information, it does not really address the diverse identities raised above or build an understanding of threats from different perspectives or in different contexts. While the trainers remain in a particular mould of security risk management and the training itself focuses on such an approach, this will be challenging to change.

There is perhaps scope for new providers to enter the market who provide security training from a different perspective, with a focus on cultural awareness, local knowledge, blending in, building trust rapidly and avoiding unsafe situations. One interviewee also raised the need for psycho-social safety awareness to help prepare teams for witnessing or becoming involved in traumatic scenarios.

*"All journalists, including those back at headquarters, must be properly trained for the work that they do. The stresses they face must be fully acknowledged. All media owners and publishers must get on board about safety. It is unacceptable to send journalists into the field without proper equipment, training and insurance. It is also unacceptable for journalists to leave universities without a proper awareness of the importance of safety."*⁴⁷

Another challenge is that locally employed people, including fixers and drivers, usually do not get the HEFAT or any other training. One member of a broadcaster's security team justified this by saying that the lack of training was "mitigated by the fact that they know the situation and what to look out for" and further that "Fixers would be swept up by the fact others have received medical training."⁴⁸ This admits that medical training is mainly about being able to help others, rather than yourself, so by not training local staff, it reduces the number of people in the team who know how to respond to an incident.

Fixers themselves have highlighted the lack of training as problematic, particularly as their situation may be made more hostile by their association with a journalist or broadcaster, or

⁴⁵ Hostile Environment (2021) *Hostile Environment First Aid Training – HEFAT*

⁴⁶ Interviews 2021

⁴⁷ Clifford, L. *et al.* (2015) "Under Threat: The Changing State of Media Safety", *International News Safety Institute*

⁴⁸ Interviews 2021

by the places or tasks involved in the assignment.⁴⁹ The training provided is not inherent knowledge that comes automatically to people who live in more hostile environments. NBC Universal is one broadcaster that pays for regular freelancers from high-risk countries to travel to the UK for HEFAT training.

Insurance

Insurance is a key theme in relation to security, mitigating risks to people and equipment. Buying insurance means that if something goes wrong, there is a system in place to support broadcast teams. It can cover everything from crime and medical incidents to crisis response.

Retained security advisors may be linked to insurance providers and be a requirement under the insurance policy. One such advisor described his role as managing the interface between underwriter, client and security vendors to look at a client's approach, practices and procedures. For example, if there was a kidnapping of a crew member while filming overseas, the broadcaster client would contact their insurance company who would work with a security consultancy on resolving the situation.

The presence of static guards is often a requirement under an insurance policy for valuable equipment or for public liability. However, as previously discussed, such guards are often seen as a tick in the box rather than a valued colleague providing an important service.

Insurance premiums can also provide leverage for positive change in the industry. For example, one interviewee explained that when she started in TV, young runners were expected to drive expensive equipment around in large vehicles or to drive through the night to get tapes back from a shoot. Such practices could be considered exploitative and put young workers at risk. However, there were so many accidents that it became increasingly expensive to insure young runners and this practice is much less common now.

In documentary making, news and sports broadcasting, not everyone in the team may be included in insurance policies. For example, fixers are usually freelancers based in another country and are often not covered by the broadcaster's insurance. This means that if they have an accident or are injured as a result of their work, they may not have their medical or legal bills covered. If they are killed, their families may be left without compensation and potentially without a valuable breadwinner as well. In worst case scenarios, uninsured team members may be left dead or injured at the site of an accident while their insured international colleagues are retrieved and supported by the insurance company.

One challenge is the feasibility of insuring someone who is a national in one country via an insurance policy based in another. Since 2020, it has been possible for broadcasters to buy insurance easily for all those working on their assignments in any country of the world. Insurance for Local Media⁵⁰ enables companies to set up an account, pay a deposit upfront and retrospectively to send in details of who was employed on which day. The system recognises that news reporting has to respond to changes at short notice and that a driver booked for two days might suddenly be required for four. This enables local media support workers to have insurance that covers them in the event of injury or death. Unfortunately,

⁴⁹ Palmer, L. (2019), *The Fixers*

⁵⁰ Insurance for Local Media. Available at <https://insuranceforlocalmedia.com/>

there is still no insurance available to cover such individuals for other issues they may face as a consequence of working with a broadcaster, including disease, ill-health, kidnap, arrest and detention.

Those who do not have access to insurance are dependent on the support of not-for-profit organisations. For example, the CPJ has a journalist assistance team which provides journalists with financial or non-financial support if they are in distress, for example if they need to flee their home or leave their country. This includes money, advocacy to help them cross borders, identification of secure safe havens, finding medical providers and covering medical bills, providing psychological and legal support, helping their families to visit them if they are in prison and working with technology companies to secure their information if needed. The Journalism Distress Network comprises 18 international organisations that provide similar types of support and enables a comprehensive and specialised response to situations.⁵¹

Good practice for broadcasters

- Insure everyone working on behalf of a documentary, news or sports team, including fixers, drivers, and translators
- Conduct scenario planning for crisis management
- Remind teams to treat all those working to support their productions with dignity and respect
- Support not-for-profit organisations that provide additional services to media workers

Risk assessments

An essential aspect of security practices is the risk assessment. Done well, this can help to forge a dialogue between the editorial team, security team, international crew and local team, as well as setting clear parameters that ensure everyone is prepared, understands the risks and knows what to do in different situations. Interviewees agreed that it is not something that should be outsourced to a third-party provider or be the responsibility solely of a security person deployed with a team but owned and understood by everyone involved in a documentary, news or sports broadcast.

“Everyone needs to understand who is with you and what the risk profile is because if you’re stopped and the driver has been posting one-sided stuff on social media, it gets everyone in trouble.”⁵²

For high-risk environments, several interviewees suggested that news teams should always question whether the risk is worth it and consider pooling resources to reduce the number of people sent into a particular context.

While risk assessments often seem to be done well for high-risk assignments, interviews from organisations dealing with journalist safety argue that they should be incorporated into every story or assignment and become second nature to the teams involved.⁵³ To do this well requires open conversations about risks and risk mitigations. NBC Universal is an example of a broadcaster that is making this an intrinsic part of how it reports the news.

⁵¹ Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) *Journalists in Distress (JID) Network*

⁵² Interviews 2021

⁵³ Interviews 2021

“Reporters aren’t allowed to pitch directly to programmes, they come to us first and we establish whether what they want to do is practical, safe and doable. The security team do a properly researched risk assessment and we also give the team that wants to travel a questionnaire – Do you know who the driver is? Who has hired them? What is their name and phone number? What is the itinerary? And so on. Then we have a conference call to go over everything step by step and decide at that point to sign off or not.” (Broadcaster)⁵⁴

“You can’t have editors separate from the security team - it needs to be a three-way conversation, because editors are then able to make a nuanced decision. There may be a way to tweak the way you’re reporting the story [as a journalist] to make it safer and still report the story.” (Broadcaster)⁵⁵

The ACOS Alliance supports this approach and points out that such conversations can be an opportunity for finding ways to tell a story, not simply a process to limit the journalistic endeavour. What is needed is a mindset whereby journalists own security as they own the story.⁵⁶ For example, one documentary-maker explained that going to a dangerous part of Mexico became possible as the fixer’s input to the risk assessment identified when and where to drive and which hotels to use. It set the parameters to make the shoot safe and therefore possible.

“The whole process [of risk assessment] is definitely one of the most useful things when planning a shoot and the earlier you do it the better.” (Documentary maker)⁵⁷

Centre for Sport and Human Rights - www.sporhumanrights.org

The Centre for Sport and Human Rights works with stakeholders involved in sporting events, including broadcasters, “to advance a world of sport that fully respects and promotes human rights by generating awareness, building capacity and delivering impact”. This includes helping organisations to identify, assess and address human rights risks related to their involvement in sport. Several major UK broadcasters are members of the Geneva-based organisation, and it is a useful resource for developing an understanding of specific risks in specific locations for specific events and then to put effective mitigations in place.

Where the research identified poor practice in relation to risk assessments was where situations were deemed low risk. A female documentary maker described visiting the US in 2019 and because it is English speaking, the team decided she did not need a fixer and could drive herself. She ended up driving a hire car for three hours after an international flight to a mid-West motel that did not feel safe⁵⁸. The risks around driving had been seen as the “copy and paste” part of the risk assessment and the risks of the motel to a lone female had not been identified at all.

In the worst examples, risk assessments are seen as a tick box exercise and copied and pasted across events, with incorrect information as a result. For example, one outside broadcast risk assessment showed Liverpool’s parking plan on Manchester United’s stadium. This is a particular issue in relation to static guarding, where security guards may

⁵⁴ Interviews 2021

⁵⁵ Interviews 2021

⁵⁶ Interviews 2021

⁵⁷ Interviews 2021

⁵⁸ Interviews 2021

feature on other organisations' risk assessments but are rarely told of this. One security provider representative said that "when you question inconsistencies, you are chastised for being inconvenient"⁵⁹.

Good practice for broadcasters

- The risk assessment should be a dialogue between editors, journalists, their teams and advisors
- Make risk assessments an early, central and fundamental part of every assignment and an active iterative process
- Anyone being deployed should have a clear understanding of risks and give their active consent to deployment
- Involve fixers in discussions about safe and unsafe practice in a particular locality and involve them early
- Include psychological and mental health in risk assessments
- There should be a clear process of review and sign off and no one should sign off on their own risk assessment
- Consider pooling resources with other broadcasters and news organisations to avoid sending multiple teams into dangerous contexts

The **Committee to Protect Journalists** provides a safety toolkit with clear safety information to help complete risk assessments and to have conversations around them:

<https://cpj.org/reports/2012/04/journalist-security-guide/>

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment (PPE), including protective vests, helmets and gas masks, is another important mitigation tool for broadcaster crew. However, it is not effective on its own and should be viewed as a last line of defence rather than the main means of protecting someone⁶⁰.

The research found different attitudes to PPE at different broadcasters. One said, "There's no choice and they [the crew] are used to it. There's no pushback. If you've been gassed enough times, you realise you need it."⁶¹ However, another said that "the PPE requirement can be overruled by either individuals or producers as 'looking inappropriate'. This is a problem...journalists and reporters should have suitable PPE for the work they're being asked to do".⁶²

The issue, though, is complex. In some environments, wearing PPE can make someone more of a target, either for physical attack or kidnap for valuable ransom. Bulky body armour may not be appropriate for the story being covered and may carry political risk in its implications. However, one security lead questioned whether reporters and crew should be in such situations at all, "If the risk is that they become a target because they're wearing protective equipment, should they be there in the first place? There are unrealistic expectations around press reporting. If you're insisting on going somewhere, you're putting others at risk."⁶³ (Broadcaster security team)

⁵⁹ Interviews 2021

⁶⁰ Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), (2015), *Hierarchy of Controls*

⁶¹ Interviews 2021

⁶² Interviews 2021

⁶³ Interviews 2021

Ill-fitting, poorly maintained or expired PPE can be just as dangerous as not wearing anything at all. There is also a risk that wearing PPE gives crew a false sense of confidence that puts them in worse situations. PPE can also cause someone to feel less able to push back when told to stand somewhere unsafe by a producer, such as between police and a crowd. As one interviewee said, “if we give them the PPE, it’s not so that they can stand somewhere dangerous; it’s to help them get out of there”⁶⁴ (Broadcaster security team).

Access to PPE can also be an issue. Broadcasters may ensure sufficient supply for their own teams, although shipping it at short notice can be challenging and in some countries that classify body armour as for military use only, there are restrictions on accessing it.⁶⁵ However, fixers and other local crew may struggle to have the right equipment. For example, one Syrian fixer reported that she had tried to get herself a flak jacket but at c.USD\$1,000, it was prohibitively expensive.⁶⁶

Good practice for broadcasters

- Ensure available PPE is well fitted to different body shapes
- Ensure that those using PPE are trained in their correct wear and use
- Use the risk assessment to weigh up the need for PPE and to ensure it is not the only mitigation
- Ensure that local crew and fixers have access to the right PPE

Armed support

Armed security poses significant human rights risks as lethal weapons may end up being used. It can also make crews more of a target and therefore less safe. There is an important distinction to make between the risks posed by armed **public** security and that posed by armed **private** security.

In some situations, armed public security is unavoidable, such as for many sporting events and news events involving crowds or the potential for violence. For example, one broadcaster explained that covering the cricket in Pakistan usually involved substantial increases in police and military resources, with the authorities keen to make the event successful.

This becomes an issue if public security forces are underprepared, lack adequate training on use of force, or if they use their weapons inappropriately, causing harm to broadcast crews, crowds or bystanders.⁶⁷ As part of risk assessment preparations, broadcasters should check the reputation of public security forces for use of force practices, respect for human rights, compliance with international humanitarian law and whether they have a record of acting with impunity.⁶⁸ If there are concerns, then the broadcaster should seek to raise these directly or through bodies with the right leverage and engagement, such as sports federations.

Crews may also find that private security providers carry weapons, either as standard practice or as an option. In some countries, off-duty officers may provide private security to

⁶⁴ Interviews 2021

⁶⁵ Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), *The Best Defense - Threats to journalists' safety demand fresh approach*

⁶⁶ Palmer, L. (2019), *The Fixers*

⁶⁷ DCAF-ICRC Toolkit v3 (2014) *Addressing Security and Human Rights Challenges in Complex Environments*

⁶⁸ DCAF-ICRC Toolkit v3 (2014) *Addressing Security and Human Rights Challenges in Complex Environments*

supplement their income and may bring their own weapons, firearms or ammunition (this may even be a requirement for off-duty police). Broadcasters should be clear on national legal requirements in relation to private security providers, including equipment licences. Some interviewees said that they always request unarmed security. One said that if it is likely that arms will be present anyway, then they stipulate that anyone armed cannot travel in the same vehicle as the crew and cannot engage.

Another interviewee said that armed security was “absolutely necessary” in certain locations but that it should always be in accordance with the risk assessment and individuals must be properly trained and licensed. For example, in some locations the principal may travel in one vehicle with a driver and close protection officer with sidearm. A following vehicle with protection detail would carry long arms to protect the group. When interviewing people on the ground, security arrangements would probably need to be more discreet.

*“In procurement stage, I want to see training records and to what standards; to make sure they are safe and that they understand the rules of engagement and de-escalation.”⁶⁹
(Broadcaster security team)*

Armed security case study

In October 2020, the security guard for a TV news crew shot and killed a man at a protest in Denver, US.⁷⁰ The guard had been subcontracted through major private security provider Pinkerton’s (via Isborn Security Services). It turned out he was not licensed to work as a security guard in Denver⁷¹ and did not have the additional licence required to carry a firearm.⁷² This indicates a failure of due diligence by the broadcaster, Pinkerton’s, and Isborn Security Services, all of whom should have had better checks in place.

The DCAF-ICRC toolkit specifies that “weapons and firearms should only be authorised if their use reduces the risk of violence”.⁷³ And ICOC Member or Affiliate companies are expected to “require their Personnel to take all reasonable steps to avoid the use of force”.⁷⁴ In some cases, having weapons and firearms available may increase the risk that they are used. In addition, “In nations where law enforcement is weak, some journalists under threat have chosen to carry a weapon. In making such a choice, you should consider that carrying a firearm can have fatal consequences and undercut your status as an observer.”⁷⁵

“I don’t want our crews to be in the middle of protests – I don’t want you somewhere where you need to be armed; you need to be out of that area. Our crews now are not in the middle.” (Broadcaster security team)

“I say where possible people shouldn’t be armed because of the brand and reputational issues if people are even carrying the firearm. It comes back to the necessity. We’re talking

⁶⁹ Interviews 2021

⁷⁰ Sky News (2020) *Denver TV news crew's security guard arrested after man shot dead at protests*

⁷¹ Fitz-Gibbon, J. (2020) “Accused Denver shooter was a sub-contractor, not employee: Pinkerton”, *NY Post*

⁷² Schmelzer, E. (2021) “Denver revokes Pinkerton’s license to operate as a security company in connection with fatal rally shooting”, *Denver Post*

⁷³ DCAF-ICRC Toolkit v3 (2014) *Addressing Security and Human Rights Challenges in Complex Environments*

⁷⁴ International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA)

⁷⁵ Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) (2012) *Assessing and Responding to Risk*

about sports production. If it needs armed guards, it should be provided by government. We shouldn't be looking at private security for this.” (Broadcaster security team)

Resources on the use of force

- UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms:
<https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/BASICP~3.PDF>
- UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials:
<https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/CODEOF~1.PDF>
- International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers:
<https://icoca.ch/the-code/>
- UNODC Handbook on the Use of Force for Private Security Companies:
https://www.unodc.org/documents/Maritime_crime/19-02086_Private_Security_Company_Handbook_Maritime_Crime_ebook.pdf

Good practice for broadcasters

- Check performance record of public security forces
- Carry out continuous education of law enforcement and private security providers on the role of the press
- Rely on public security for armed response wherever possible
- Stipulate no armed security with private security companies
- If arms likely to be carried anyway, stipulate that they do not travel in the same vehicles; stipulate that they cannot engage
- Adopt the ICOC and make it a standard part of contracts for private security providers
- Require providers to have provided adequate training to their security personnel on use of force and firearms, de-escalation techniques, human rights, and international humanitarian law (See DCAF-ICRC toolkit for details of what that training should include)
- Require that individual private security staff are screened appropriately
- Exclusion criteria for private security forces should include failure to share valid equipment licences and evidence of training; conviction of the company or management for conduct related to excessive use of force; proven breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law; independent reports of abuses or proceedings before international bodies
- Grievance mechanisms should be accessible to crew, private security personnel and others who may be affected by their presence (e.g. local communities)

Communications

Clear communications are a key component of good security. Good security providers are in regular communication with their personnel and with other security providers to share insight and information about evolving situations. One broadcaster shared the importance of being in constant direct communications with security personnel in order to inform decision-making about whether and when to move crew away from dangerous situations.

In some situations, it will be the fixer who has responsibility for safety and security and Palmer reiterates the importance of communication in this role. “The work of safeguarding the journalist cannot happen without proper communication, and this communication is a two-way street. On the one hand, the fixer must clearly inform the client of the potential danger. On the other hand, the client must trust the fixer and listen to this important media employee’s advice”.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Palmer, L. (2019) *The Fixers*

It is essential that all crew members are clear about how to communicate on security issues. One challenge identified by a security provider related to a team covering a large sporting event. Everyone had different preferences for communications platforms, ranging from WhatsApp groups, to talkback radio systems, to text message. Different levels of seniority in the business used different communication forums which may have presented problems in the event of a security incident or crisis response.

One provider of static guards reported that bad practice is largely based around communication, such as when requirements change and no one informs the security provider, or where information is incorrect. For example, “I had my operations person turn up at a racing event and the course was shut. The event sheet said that he should be there so he rang the Unit Manager and it turned out the date was wrong and he was a day early.”⁷⁷ This is frustrating and inconvenient for security personnel, who may have travelled significant distances only to find they do not have paid work that day. Interviewees suggested that it was more likely to happen where security guards were seen as a ‘necessary evil’ rather than as a valued team member. Static guards also need to be able to communicate with other parts of the security apparatus but may not have the means to do so, such as access to radios.

Good practice for broadcasters

- Ensure communications are part of the security planning process
- Agree in advance which communication platforms will be used for incidents and crisis response
- Ensure static guards can link up with venue security via radios where appropriate

Raising concerns

Of fundamental importance in managing security risks and their associated human rights risks is the ability of everyone involved to raise concerns. They need to know what constitutes a risk and how to raise concerns, as well as needing confidence that those concerns will be dealt with appropriately and that they will not face retaliation.

The CPJ surveyed 500 photographers across the world and found that while 90% have worked in high-risk environments, only 25% had ever completed a risk assessment.⁷⁸ A safety lead at one broadcaster said that, “the industry is full of people who will cut corners for the sake of saving money on productions with a ‘show must go on’ mentality that makes them prepared to break internal regulations and sometimes the law.”⁷⁹

An ongoing challenge across TV is the widespread use of freelancers who feel unable to raise concerns because they are not protected by employment law and are dependent on word-of-mouth recommendations for their next job. One interviewee said that, “They’ve self-perpetuated a bullying culture because they’re terrified of reporting anything. They have no line manager and no way of raising issues short of walking off the set and then they’ll never work again.”⁸⁰ This fear is compounded for women and for those with diverse identities, because they do not want to be seen as weaker and want to be taken seriously.

⁷⁷ Interviews 2021

⁷⁸ CPJ (2018) *Safety in Focus: Personal Safety for Photojournalists*

⁷⁹ Interviews 2021

⁸⁰ Interviews 2021

“If you are inside the tent, you are terrified you will be banned from the tent, so you shut up and don’t say anything.”⁸¹ (Broadcaster security lead)

The same goes for companies supplying the industry. One interviewee said that, “I think a security person would raise the issue if they were treated differently but probably not if they witnessed [mistreatment of] a third party. The vendor might not say anything because they would be afraid of losing their next job.”⁸²

There is a need to empower people to ask for change, although practically this is extremely challenging and requires an industry culture shift, where management from the top down are absolutely clear on standards and prepared to take action to uphold them. The NUJ pointed out that it is also important to use collective power as individuals, both employees and freelancers, simply do not have the power to create change on their own.

Good practice for broadcasters

- Set the right tone with crews and suppliers from the outset, ensuring they know the standards the broadcaster expects, making it clear that it is important they raise any concerns and explaining the channels available for them to do so
- Where concerns are raised, ensure that they are responded to speedily and appropriately and, if possible, share the outcomes in order to encourage others to raise concerns
- Encourage employees and freelancers to join trade unions

⁸¹ Interviews 2021

⁸² Interviews 2021

Remediation

Much of the good practice outlined in this document focuses on mitigation of human rights risks and prevention of human rights impacts related to security practices. However, adverse human rights impacts may still occur and it is important that broadcasters recognise their responsibility to provide or support remediation in those cases.

Access to remedy is the third pillar of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), which state that: “Where a business enterprise has caused or contributed to an adverse human rights impact, it should be actively engaged in its remediation, by itself or in cooperation with others. Where adverse human rights impacts are linked to a business enterprise’s activities, it is not required to provide remediation itself, *though it may take a role.*”⁸³

Remediation can take a variety of forms and will depend on the nature of the impact and what is appropriate to victims. For the most severe adverse human rights impacts, such as someone losing their life, remedy could include:

- Compensation to family members
- Formal acknowledgement and apology from senior representative at accountable organisations
- Fact-finding to document what happened
- Putting effective measures in place to ensure the situation could not reoccur
- Memorialisation of person or people affected
- Holding people to account for actions that caused the death or providing legal assistance to family members to pursue court action
- Providing medical or psychological care for those affected

However, it is important to consider remedy for less severe impacts that are nonetheless problematic and could be precursors for something worse. For example, interviewees who had experienced poor treatment and working conditions did not necessarily expect remedy for their past experiences but wanted the situation to change for future.

That said, one security provider of static guards provides a ‘hardship’ allowance of £50 for anyone who finds themselves having to put up with working in poor conditions that the company had not been expecting.⁸⁴ This approach recognises the need for remedy (although it is not articulated in the same language) and is perhaps a cost that should be covered by the direct client, who has a responsibility to ensure adequate and appropriate working conditions.

Good practice for broadcasters

- Carry out scenario-planning in relation to remedy
- Factor remedy into response plans for addressing human rights impacts, including budgeting adequately

⁸³ United Nations (2011) *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*

⁸⁴ Interviews 2021

Conclusion

There are well-documented human rights risks related to security practices. However, broadcasting has not yet made much use of the human rights lens to review its approach. Doing so brings into question some of the standard security practices, such as the inclusivity of risk assessment processes, the effectiveness of training and the treatment of those providing security services.

There is a strong argument that security planning needs to be embedded into every assignment, whether initially considered high risk or not, and that broadcasters need to work closely with security providers in partnership to achieve this effectively. Journalists, producers, editors, and crew need to recognise the centrality of safety and security to their work and develop a mindset that incorporates attention to such issues as a matter of course. This would also help to address some of the challenges faced by security providers who might otherwise be ignored, overlooked or, in the worst cases, maltreated by team members who do not understand their role or relevance.

To challenge the standard security practices (which do not always meet the needs of diverse teams involved in documentaries, news, and sports), broadcasters should consider working to improve the diversity of their own security teams and fostering dialogue and discussion among colleagues to explore best practice mitigations for individuals in different contexts.

Appendix A: Good practice checklist for broadcasters

| Recommendation | In place? Yes, partially, no |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Security Risks | |
| Ensure adequate resources for security | |
| Improve the diversity of security teams or actively seek diverse inputs to security conversations so that risks faced by different groups are not simply bolted on to existing approaches or overlooked altogether | |
| Support security teams and those responsible for completing risk assessments to have open conversations about identities | |
| Provide forums for people to discuss and share concerns and issues in supportive environments so that they do not have to underplay their identities | |
| Ensure that everyone in broadcast teams raises issues related to their identity to ensure that each team member is aware of situations that may affect their colleagues and to discuss in advance what actions they will take. | |
| Security Providers | |
| Give preference to ICOCA Member or Affiliate companies and encourage other security providers to join ICOCA | |
| Ensure a constant process of assessment through feedback from crews and dialogue with security providers | |
| Build strong relationships with security providers so that they understand requirements and are able to share concerns and issues at an early stage | |
| Avoid third party vetting if possible and require providers to seek permission before outsourcing | |
| Consider the safety and security of every individual involved, including those providing security | |
| Ensure everyone is clear about the role of security personnel and whether they are expected to engage or not | |
| Set minimum standards in contracts with private security providers or with intermediary companies that employ them (such as outside broadcast companies) | |
| Check the pay and working conditions of security guards, whether directly contracted or not, and assess whether they are fair and appropriate | |
| Ensure there is adequate budget allocated for static guards to receive fair pay | |
| Remind crew to treat security guards with dignity and respect | |
| Security Mitigations | |
| Review and update relevant policies to ensure that they address the human rights risks outlined in this report | |
| Ensure that policies are complemented by clear guidance, that there are consequences for not following them and that informal arrangements are not relied upon | |
| Ensure everyone working on behalf of a documentary, news or sports team, including fixers, drivers and translators | |
| Conduct scenario planning for crisis management | |
| Remind teams to treat all those working to support their productions with dignity and respect | |
| Support not-for-profit organisations that provide additional services to media workers | |
| The risk assessment should be a dialogue between editors, journalists, their teams and advisors | |
| Make risk assessments an early, central and fundamental part of every assignment and an active iterative process | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Anyone being deployed should have a clear understanding of risks and give their active consent to deployment | |
| Involve fixers in discussions about safe and unsafe practice in a particular locality and involve them early | |
| Include psychological and mental health in risk assessments | |
| There should be a clear process of review and sign off and no one should sign off on their own risk assessment | |
| Consider pooling resources with other broadcasters and news organisations to avoid sending multiple teams into dangerous contexts | |
| Ensure available PPE is well fitted to different body shapes | |
| Ensure that those using PPE are trained in their correct wear and use | |
| Use the risk assessment to weigh up the need for PPE and to ensure it is not the only mitigation | |
| Ensure that local crew and fixers have access to the right PPE | |
| Check performance record of public security forces | |
| Carry out continuous education of law enforcement and private security providers on the role of the press | |
| Rely on public security for armed response wherever possible | |
| Stipulate no armed security with private security companies | |
| If arms likely to be carried anyway, stipulate that they do not travel in the same vehicles; stipulate that they cannot engage | |
| Adopt the ICOC and make it a standard part of contracts for private security providers | |
| Require providers to have provided adequate training to their security personnel on use of force and firearms, de-escalation techniques, human rights and international humanitarian law (See DCAF-ICRC toolkit for details of what that training should include) | |
| Require that individual private security staff are screened appropriately | |
| Exclusion criteria for private security forces should include failure to share valid equipment licences and evidence of training; conviction of the company or management for conduct related to excessive use of force; proven breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law; independent reports of abuses or proceedings before international bodies. | |
| Grievance mechanisms should be accessible to crew, private security personnel and others who may be affected by their presence (e.g. local communities) | |
| Ensure communications are part of the security planning process | |
| Agree in advance which communication platforms will be used for incidents and crisis response | |
| Ensure static guards can link up with venue security via radios where appropriate | |
| Set the right tone with crews and suppliers from the outset, ensuring they know the standards the broadcaster expects, making it clear that it is important they raise any concerns and explaining the channels available for them to do so | |
| Where concerns are raised, ensure that they are responded to speedily and appropriately and, if possible, share the outcomes in order to encourage others to raise concerns | |
| Encourage employees and freelancers to join trade unions | |
| Remediation | |
| Carry out scenario-planning in relation to remedy | |
| Factor remedy into response plans for addressing human rights impacts, including budgeting adequately | |

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