TV INDUSTRY HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM

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

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Executive Summary

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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.

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.

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

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

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 and 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	
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	
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	