

# WORKBOOK ON SECURITY: PRACTICAL STEPS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AT RISK



## APPENDIX 6

### Check list: Home Security

This check list is not intended to be a blueprint for security. Your own context is the key determining factor. Consider the risks and threats you face, and any vulnerabilities you have in order to supplement and personalise this list.

- Use the best protection measures you can afford and those which are normal in your community – if you have unusual security measures you may make others more suspicious of you. Consider: locks, bars, gates, fences, spyhole, alarms, CCTV, good lighting around your house etc
- Keep emergency numbers by the phone – police, ambulance, fire services, and also the numbers of colleagues / allies to be called in an emergency
- Have fire alarms, fire extinguishers and first aid kit available
- Have separate entrance and emergency exit if possible
- Consider the safety of our car parking area - could anyone plant a surveillance or explosive device? If yes, you need to have a checking routine
- Tell family members and any staff not to accept unexpected packages in case of explosives
- Invest time and effort in developing good relations with your neighbours. Trusted neighbours could alert you to anything suspicious in the neighbourhood (cars, people asking questions about you etc) and give you an escape route through their property
- Discuss with your family as far as possible what the risks are: have plans in place for what to do in case certain risks materialise
- Spouse: some HRDs tell their spouse everything about the risks they face (and what the spouse should do in different security situations); some tell them nothing, believing that ignorance of the risks will protect the spouse. Consider what is best for you – secrecy can damage relationships
- Children: consider what you can tell them and how you can prepare them in a way which will keep them safer but not scare them - include telling them not to talk to strangers - including those asking questions or go with any strangers
- Consider having a code for a sudden danger such as “go and play with your [name of toy]” means ‘run to your auntie’s house.’
- Teachers: develop a good relationship with your childrens’ teachers and tell them that only authorised people can pick up your children
- Staff (domestic worker, driver, guard etc): only hire trusted people and train them to
  - report anything suspicious – unusual vehicles or people in the area
  - not to let any person into your home without your permission
  - to check (by phoning the office) of any repair workers who say they need access to the premises, eg phone repairs, electricity, water. Do not let such people out of their sight whilst on the premises
- Consider having a simple Emergency ‘Traffic Light’ system to code the situation:
  - Green = normal
  - Amber = heightened risk where special precautions are taken, eg children are taken to and from school, a guard is hired
  - Red = high risk where appropriate action is taken, eg family to relocate to a pre-arranged place
- Do not leave sensitive documentation at home
- Avoid taking work home if the content is sensitive
- Ensure you obey laws and regulations, eg personal taxation, rules of the road etc
- If you are invited out, do not accept drinks or food from unknown people (in case they are drugged)