

PROTECTING OURSELVES IS SAFEGUARDING OUR RIGHTS

Manual on the Protection and Safety of Human Rights Defenders

REDHAC

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Manual on the Protection and Safety
of Human Rights Defenders

Campagne et cabale Menaces Harcèlement
Viol Harcèlement Chantage Menaces
Chantage Usurpation Filature sévices corporels
Torture
Arrestations sévices corporels Filature
Cambriolages Intimidation Intimidations illicites

Network of Human Rights Defenders in Central Africa

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PREFACE

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I have the singular honor to write this preface as Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Focal Point on reprisals in Africa. This mechanism, it should be emphasized, plays a police role in the defense of human rights vis-à-vis African States. All other things being equal, it plays the role of the attorney general in the defense of human rights. It is intended to identify violations of the right to defend human rights and propose solutions by drawing the attention of governments and seeking their cooperation through the recommendations it makes to them.

In this situation, it is for me a legitimate cause of pride to preface the "Manual on the Protection and Safety of Human Rights Defenders" in Central Africa", a work of the Network of Human Rights Defenders in Central Africa (REDHAC) that I commend.

This effective tool will allow the reader to get an idea of the difficult task of defending human rights in this often hectic Region of Africa (restriction of civic space, freedom of expression flouted, contested elections, suppression of demonstrations, etc.).

This task, noble as it is, is nonetheless dangerous for the defenders themselves and their relatives. Indeed, human rights mean something only when they can be defended. Otherwise, they remain state benefits, left in the sovereign hands of rulers. Africa must not witness an involution (regressive development) in this area, this continent, which has, for centuries, known crimes against humanity, in the African sense of ubuntu; and in the sense of Humanity, of the Universe, of the World.

Our Humanity is once again at a crossroads. Mutating. Violence against humans is resurfacing everywhere. There are several forms of violence against men and drastic cuts in the spheres of expression of personal autonomy. Faced with this, it is necessary to give content to the concepts of promotion and protection of human rights, duties that the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights exercises in collaboration with African civil society which

REDHAC is one of the essential components.

This is not without provoking other fundamental questions, namely how to protect those whom, by virtue of their commitment and sense of responsibility, think they owe a duty of humanity in defending all those who are victims, in one way or another, of harassment, violations, arbitrary arrests or detentions, repression, simply for trying to exercise their fundamental rights and enjoy their liberties?

The first defense rule of human rights defenders is the denunciation of the violence they themselves endure in defending the rights of third parties. To denounce is also to make public, to categorize crimes against defenders.

It is in respect of this responsibility that REDHAC embarked on this work. It only introduces readers to an area where there are still avenues to explore. Without no doubt, subsequent editions will be holistic from this point of view. I take this opportunity to urge other networks of human rights defenders to do the same in the coming days and allow us have a snapshot of the defense of human rights across the continent.

In any case, the defense of human rights will never be a crime. Human rights activity is not included in the States Penal Codes as an

offense. Defenders are regulators, vigils, watchdogs charged with reminding men of the respect for humanity, regardless of class, gender, race or religion.

The work of REDHAC is timely to illustrate with concrete cases the content of the law of human rights defense, a discipline still under construction.

INTRODUCTION

THE MANUAL: A DEFENSE TOOL

This manual is intended for use by human rights defenders, human rights activists and journalists who, by reason of their activities or functions, face direct, indirect or imminent threats of violence, arrest, reprisals, intimidation, assault or online insecurity. In a word, a threat or a violation of their rights.

At the origin of the preparation of manuals for the protection and safety of human rights defenders, is a shared idea of Hina Jilani, former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the situation of human rights defenders (2000-2008), who stated:

"During my work as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Human Rights Defenders, I have noted with deep concern the increasing reporting of serious abuses against defenders and a visible change in the severity of the violence from intimidation

and harassment to more serious abuses such as attacks and threats against the physical integrity of the defenders.

It is clear that the obligation to protect human rights defenders rests primarily with governments, as set out in the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

However, the seriousness of the risks faced daily by human rights defenders is such that their protection could not be reinforced in additional strategies. Many human rights defenders are dedicated to protecting others to the point of forgetting their own safety. It is essential for us who work for human rights to be aware of our own safety and that of the people with whom we work. "

As a result of this memorable stance, numerous manuals to help understand the concepts and methods of protection and the safety of human rights defenders have been published.

Among others, we can mention:

- ***Peaces Brigades (2005);***
- ***Protection International (2008);***
- ***FrontLine Defenders (2011);***
- ***Security Manuel Defend Defenders (2017);***
- ***Facebook-Redhac Internet Security and Physical Protection Manual (2019).***

But the first manuals edited by the different organizations that wrote them are more of a theoretical and philosophical utility, justified by the genesis of the approach. In fact, they were designed to put the protection and safety of defenders in a frame, aimed at consolidating their prerequisites, arming them with conceptual tools and leading them to understand and interpret the society in which they live to better transform it. These manuals offer exer-

cises in this direction and underscores the quest for a psychological balance to de-stress.

However, these manuals seem too far from practice and do not give human rights defenders prevention and fighting techniques so they can act in an operational, fast and efficient way, whatever the context.

With this new Manual, REDHAC provides human rights defenders with didactical (ie. learning) elements, tools for action and pedagogical lessons, so that in turn they can pass them on to others.

This Manual aims to provide human rights defenders, human rights activists and journalists with counseling and strategies to identify, assess and deal with the physical or online risks they may face as part of their work, their personal lives and those of their relatives, both activities (work, personal life and those of relatives) having no real border in their specific case. More concretely, this manual proposes some guidelines to take into account, such as:

- *Make sound security and protection decisions*
- *Evaluate the risks*
- *Understand and evaluate threats*
- *Understand and evaluate a security incident*
- *Identify vulnerabilities*
- *Know and develop your abilities*
- *Preventing aggression and dealing with it*
- *Develop a global safety strategy*
- *Prepare a personal or collective security plan*
- *Improve safety at work and at home*
- *Secure your data*
- *Improve online presence and social networks.*

CHAPTER ONE

POLITICAL BACKGROUND AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

SECTION 1. POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The background to the development of this Manual is characterized in Africa by:

- A democratic deficit due to weak institutions, resulting in the confiscation of power by a caste in an apparent democracy (frequent but contentious and contested elections, based on non-consensual electoral laws, organized and sanctioned by institutions with questionable neutrality) and the socio-political crises it engenders (Cameroon and Togo since 2018, Benin, Algeria and Sudan since 2019, to name only the most recent situations);

- Civil wars (Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo for at least three decades);

- The security challenges posed by terrorism, notably from AQIM in the Sahel (Algeria,

Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad) and Boko Haram around Lake Chad (Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon).

The specific case of Cameroon, a country presented as Africa in miniature, harbors precisely on its territory a compendium of all the crises and conflicts in Africa, notably:

- Since 2012: in the east of the country, frequent incursions of Central African rebels (Seleka);

- Since 2013: repeated attacks by the Boko Haram terrorist sect in the Far-North of the country. The situation appears to be under the control of the Cameroonian defense and security forces, but, as reported by NGOs, at the cost of numerous abuses and human rights violations;

- Since 2016: the socio-political crisis in the

North-West and South-West regions (NOSO) because of the frustration of the English-speaking populations who reject the unitary state system in force since 1972 and the decentralized unitary state since 1996, populations whose majority of the moderates claims a return to federalism and the hard liners (the secessionists) the creation of an independent state.

While it began with a simple corporatist claim of lawyers and teachers who asked for better working conditions, this socio-political crisis that turned into a civil war, enters 2019 in its third year and the situation seems to be worsening.

This Anglophone crisis has been exacerbated by the arrest and sentencing of some leaders of the self-proclaimed Republic of Ambazonia, assassinations of military men, gendarmes, police officers, religious and administrative authorities, summary and/or extrajudi-

cial executions, disappearances, many internally displaced persons and refugees.

These two crises left at least 1,600,000 people food insecure, hundreds of thousands internally displaced, and refugees;

- Since October 2018: the post-electoral and socio-political crisis that has crystallized by dragging Cameroon into a bipolarity that does not, however, reflect the complexity of the balance of power and the commitment of actors for change;

- Kidnapping, in the Adamaoua, Northwest and Southwest regions, religious, traditional and administrative authorities, elements of the defense and security forces, politicians, livestock breeders, teachers, followed by the requests and payment of ransoms.

This is the quasi-apocalyptic landscape in

which human rights defenders, activists and journalists strive. A context dominated by the restriction of the civic space, characterized by reprisals, threats, arbitrary arrests and detentions, kidnappings, forced disappearances, summary and extrajudicial executions, media lynching, online surveillance.

To achieve this restriction of civic space, the Government has put in place a national legal framework that is sometimes in total contradiction with the international and regional human rights and human rights defenders instruments yet ratified by Cameroon. Human rights defenders therefore strive in a political environment that is unfavorable to the exercise of their activities and to the protection of their own security and that of their relatives.

SECTION 2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Many legal instruments have been adopted to ensure the protection of human rights

defenders. It should be noted, however, that despite all these legal instruments, violence and violations of rights persist against human rights defenders.

The legal framework for the protection of human rights defenders is constituted at three levels: international, regional and national.

1. AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

There are several legal instruments aimed at protecting human rights defenders.

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948¹;
- The Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, in short UN Declaration on Human Rights Defen-

ders of the United Nations of December 1998²

- United Nations Resolution 68/181 on the Promotion of the December 1998 Declaration;
- The Resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council of 5 July 2012 on the promotion, protection and exercise of human rights on the Internet;
- The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of 18 December 2000;
- The European Union Guidelines for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders of 2008.

2. AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

The African Union - via the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) - has adopted several legal instruments and resolutions for the protection of defenders, activists and journalists. Worth citing are:

- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights³;
- The Great Bay Declaration in Mauritius, 1999⁴;
- The Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, Declaration and Plan of Action, 2002⁵;
- The Kigali Declaration, 2003⁶;
- The ACHPR Report on Female Human Rights Defenders, 2013 and Recommendations for their protection;
- Resolution 69 of the ACHPR on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Africa, 2004⁷;
- Resolution 104 of the ACHPR on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in Africa, 2007;
- Resolution 275 of the ACHPR on Protection from Violence and Other Human Rights Violations on the Basis of Their Identity or Real or Assumed Sexual Orientation, 2014;
- Resolution 336 of the ACHPR on Measures to Protect and Promote the Work of Female Human Rights Defenders in Africa, 2016;
- Resolution 362 of the ACHPR on the Right

to Freedom of Information and Expression on the Internet in Africa, 2016⁸;

- Resolution 376 of the ACHPR on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in Africa, 2016;
- Resolution 381 of the ACHPR on the Appointment of a Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Focal Point on reprisals in Africa, 2017;
- Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Meeting, 2017.⁹

3. AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Cameroon has ratified texts of binding effect which are ipso facto integrated into its internal legal arsenal, texts which, together with the Cameroonian Constitution, promote and protect human rights and, consequently, the protection of human rights defenders.

However, certain provisions of the laws adopted by the two Houses (National Assembly and Senate) of the Cameroonian Parliament

and promulgated by the President of the Republic are contradictory. For example, some of the provisions of:

- **Law No. 2014/028 of 23 December 2014 on the Suppression of Terrorist¹⁰ Acts;**
- **Law No. 2010/012 of 21 December 2010 on Cybercrime and Cyber Security;**
- **Law No. 2016/007 of 12 July 2016 on the Penal Code.**

1

<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>

2

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/RightAndResponsibility.aspx>

3

http://www.achpr.org/files/instruments/achpr/achpr_instr_charter_fra.pdf

4

<http://www.achpr.org/fr/instruments/grandbay/>

5

<http://www.achpr.org/fr/sessions/32nd/resolutions/62>

6

http://www.achpr.org/files/special-mechanisms/death-penalty/kigali_framework.pdf

7

<http://www.achpr.org/fr/sessions/35th/resolutions/69/>

8

<http://www.achpr.org/fr/sessions/19th-eo/resolutions/336/>

9

https://www.ishr.ch/sites/default/files/documents/guidelines_on_foaa-french.pdf

10

<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/NegativeEffectsTerrorism/FIACAT.pdf>

CHAPTER II

PROTECTION, SAFETY OF DEFENDERS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

SECTION 1. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROTECTION AND SAFETY OF DEFENDERS

Human rights defenders work to monitor human rights situation: monitor the enjoyment of human rights so that they are not violated (by state agents, armed groups, multinationals) or abuses and, when they are violated or abused, denounce them, monitor the adoption and application of remedial measures to compensate victims or restore their rights and human dignity, monitor the level of risk of recidivism of new violations or abuses of rights so that they are reduced or annihilated.

Personal safety and that of closed ones, whether physical or online, is essential for human rights defenders' organizations that defend the rights of others. Even if the risk or danger is inherent to their activity because they work on the front line in areas that impede

many holders of public authority or strategic information (defending the rights of others, including freedom of expression and information specifically for journalists), they know that the continuation of their activity is only possible if they remain alive.

Ensuring their physical or online safety, as well as that of their loved ones, is therefore crucial for them and for all those exposed to the violation or abuse of their fundamental rights and freedoms.

Even though the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders states that the protection of human rights defenders is the primary responsibility of the state, we know that states do not always have the means or the will to put this concern at the top of their agenda. Human rights organizations must therefore put in place their own strategies to ensure the safety of their members.

The rights of defenders, human rights acti-

vists and journalists who are regularly threatened, violated or abused are numerous. They include:

- the freedoms of the person (such as the right to life, the right to privacy, the right to respect for human dignity);
- the freedoms of the citizen (such as personal liberty, in particular the right to safety and freedom of movement, the right to nationality);
- freedom of thought (including freedom of expression, freedom of information);
- collective freedoms (such as freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly and demonstration, freedom of association and the right to strike);
- economic rights (freedom of enterprise, property rights).

It is therefore the fundamental rights and freedoms of defenders, activists and journalists as recognized by the various international, regional and national legal instruments that are threatened or violated and justify new strategies being devised and implemented to protect them and ensure their safety.



SECTION 2. KEY ELEMENTS OF PROTECTION AND SAFETY

Academic safety and protection manuals for human rights defenders use concepts to help them organize their protection strategy.

Although this manual has no academic claim, it is useful to specify the meaning of some keywords usually encountered, the links that are established between them, how they interact. The most common terms are: risk, threat, security incident, vulnerability, capabilities.

Risk is the probability of occurrence of an event that could cause harm. Example: the risk of assault or hacking of your data online.

A **threat** is an indication that an action may occur that will infringe a fundamental human right. The threat may result from criminal

activity or armed conflict, or be directly related to the work of the human rights defender.

A **security incident** is anything that could affect your personal safety or that of your organization or your family.

All threats are security incidents, but not all security incidents are threats.

EXAMPLES OF SECURITY INCIDENTS:

- A vehicle is parked for several days or a person is stationed for several hours near your office.
- Someone harasses you on the phone or calls you on the phone but does not speak.
- Your house is burglarized.
- You are told that a stranger asked for information about you.

- You are being harassed on social networks by someone who uses a fake profile.
- Your e-mail box no longer opens or you receive a very idyllic e-mail message. Your email inbox is hacked.
- The security guard of your building or the call-box operator besides your office is helpful, but may have been placed or turned to intelligence agents for the police or attackers.

These security incidents are not threats but can become threats if there is a link between them and the will to violate your fundamental rights as a defender or journalist or human rights activist, as in the last two examples above.

Vulnerability is a factor that may make the occurrence of an assault more likely or aggravate the damage as a result of an assault. Thus the vulnerability of a human rights defender will

be greater if he or she does not have an effective and secure means of communication, a safe means of transport, a security system that is safe for access in his or her office or home, a network of people who can be alerted quickly in case of threat or attack.

Capabilities are the assets or resources available to a person to deal with a threat or assault or to enhance his or her security. The measures taken to reduce the vulnerabilities mentioned above are capabilities: to have efficient and secure means of communication, safe means of transport, a reliable security system for access in his or her offices or home, a network of people who can be quickly alerted in case of threat or attack.

The level of risk a person faces increases with the threats he or she receives or is likely to receive and his or her vulnerability to these threats. On the contrary, it decreases according to the means of protection the person possesses. The risk is highest when the vulnerability is

highest and the protection capacity is lowest. In a nut shell, to better protect yourself, you must:

- **reduce threats;**
- **reduce the vulnerability factors;**
- **increase the protection capacities.**

A human rights defender or activist or a journalist can have an impact on his or her vulnerabilities and protective capabilities.

As examples, in the protection of the right to life or the right to privacy, the human rights defender or activist will strengthen his or her protection capacities and, at the same time, reduce his/her vulnerabilities :

- **by taking measures to avoid being attacked: to strengthen his or her guard, not to move**

alone;

- **by observing the behavior of his or her neighbors;**
- **by having people monitor persons he or she suspects are spying on him or her;**
- **ensuring that he or she has safe and effective means of communication;**
- **ensuring that he or she has a safe means of transport to quickly get out of a danger zone;**
- **ensuring that he or she has a robust security system for access to his or her home or office;**
- **by ensuring that he or she has a network of people to quickly alert in case of threat or aggression or to inform before leaving for a risk area (lawyer, doctor, police, family).**

But reducing vulnerabilities and increasing protection capabilities does not reduce threats.

An immediate impact on threats can only be achieved by careful analysis of all security incidents that occur that could pose threats.

In most cases, it is difficult to have a direct and immediate impact on the threats because

they emanate from an external environment.

For example, should be considered as long-term fights that will generally produce effects only over time, to:
menaces.

- **build trust with the authorities or the police to help them understand the role of human rights defenders and activists as well as journalists;**

- **increase the pressure on the authorities likely to violate human rights or on private persons or groups likely to abuse them;**

- **Advocate for strengthening the rule of law.**

CHAPTER III

CATEGORIES OF SPECIALLY EXPOSED DEFENDERS



Beaten woman



Migrants in the ocean

Due to the nature of their activities, human rights defenders are necessarily exposed to threats, intimidation, abuse and other types of human rights violations as human beings and defenders of human rights of others. Some categories of defenders are, however, more exposed than others. These include female human rights defenders (Section 1), defenders, activists and journalists relocated temporarily or in forced exile or migrants (Section 2) and defenders of sexual minorities rights (Section 3).

SECTION 1. FEMALE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Women have always been important players in the defense and protection of human rights. But their role is not always recognized. They work alone or collaborate with men to defend human rights.

Unfortunately, women too often face violence related to their status as women outside their organization, but also to prejudice and discrimination within human rights organizations. It is in this context that special provisions must be articulated to defend women's rights and define a specific strategy for the protection of female human rights defenders.

At the legal level, there are instruments little known by the defenders' associations themselves, such as:

« The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993),¹¹ which, in its article 1, provides: "For the purposes of this Declaration, the term" violence against women" refers to all acts of violence directed against the female sex, and causing or potentially causing women physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including the threat of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether in public life or in private life ».

There is a double constraint in the struggle of female human rights defenders:

- **that which concerns the specific status of women because of cultural and religious prejudices and violence against them;**
- **that which concerns female human rights defenders who are at the same time victims of all threats, insecurity, harassment, abuses, etc. suffered by other female defenders and what they suffer as women.**

This section of the Manual focuses on the response, the combat strategy that must, more than for other actors, be known to female human rights defenders. Knowledge of the field and the choice of partners are crucial to reduce vulnerability, threats, abuses, violations and abuses of rights and security incidents.

But there are structural threats against women that need to be identified:

- **Male or marital physical and psychological violence;**
- **Rape during arrests and detentions by security agents and armed groups, especially in conflict zones;**
- **Violations of privacy rights;**
- **Sexual harassment and blackmail;**
- **Forced exile.**

These five types of violation of their rights require female human rights defenders to practice regular physical activity, including a

combat sport of their choice and initiation to self-defense techniques.

Any organization that includes female human rights defenders must introduce them to combat techniques and self-defense.

They must know the techniques of tactful concealment, smartness and avoidance to face hand-to-hand combat. However, in case of **"full contact"**, they must use the usual combat techniques.

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<https://www.ohchr.org/FR/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ViolenceAgainstWomen.aspx>

SECTION 2. HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS, ACTIVISTS OR JOURNALISTS RELOCATED TEMPORARILY OR IN FORCED EXILE OR MIGRANTS

Several defenders are forced to leave their country, city, home, leaving everything behind to avoid reprisals and threats in their country or region, either by the state or by armed groups or multinationals.

Far from his/her loved ones, the relocated or forced to exile defender finds him/herself in a vulnerable position because, very often, the visa never exceeds six months and when it expires, he/she becomes an "illegal migrant" and then begins the risks of repatriation, isolation, homelessness and joblessness.

He/she cannot go home for several reasons. For example:

- the socio-political situation has not stabilized or the desired democratic change has not occurred;
- there are no longer any links with his community or the family has been dislocated (divorce).

This situation certainly places the relocated or in forced exiled human rights defender under very precarious material, financial and psychological conditions.

To face this situation, it will be necessary for him or her to be a credible defender who can count on the network of sympathizers developed beforehand.

SECTION 3. DEFENDERS OF SEXUAL MINORITIES (LGBTI) RIGHTS

Very often assimilated to the people they defend, defenders of sexual minorities are

exposed to several abuses and violence as well as stigmatization. These can come from state or non-state agents and affect either their person, their relatives, their workplace or their activities.

Several human rights defenders have been forced to separate from their families for their protection. Others were victims of spying, burglaries, telephone threats, mail hacking, difficulties in obtaining the declaration of association receipt, difficulties in secure funding for their associations, etc.

In the absence of a statute regulating the activity of defense of the rights of sexual minorities, which fall under Article 347(1) of the Criminal Code and Article 83 of the Law on Cyber security and Cybercrime in Cameroon. Defenders are also victims of physical, moral and psychological violence.

As seen in the case of Eric Ohena Lembembe (Cameroon), one of the founders of the

CAMFAIDS association, who was found tortured and murdered at his home, the perpetrators of this crime have never been investigated or the case of the ADEFHO association (Cameroon) which, since its creation in 2003, has still not obtained from the Senior Divisional Officer the receipt of declaration of association which is worth authorization.

CHAPTER IV

DIGITAL AND ONLINE SECURITY

The principles of digital and online security for human rights defenders and their relatives are similar to those of physical protection.

However, due to rapid technological advances, increasingly sophisticated online surveillance, data piracy, cyber security, there are more attacks targeting mobile devices, human rights defenders, activists and journalists.

SECTION 1. DIGITAL SECURITY

Digital security refers to everything related to the use of computer equipment. We can cite:

- laptops;
- desktops;

- tablets or pads and mobile phones;
- software;
- USB keys.

Malware and viruses are software developed by hackers, malicious programmers and some governments. Their purpose is to steal information from computer hardware, damage or "crash" our computer, steal (hijack) confidential information from our computers, have access to our private computers or network. These viruses usually come from USB drives, site downloads, emails, Bluetooth, memory cards, social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.

The most known malware is the **computer worm** and **phishing**.

The **computer worm** is a malicious software that reproduces itself on several computers using a computer network like internet.

A computer worm, unlike a computer virus, does not need a host program to reproduce itself. It uses various resources of the computer that hosts it to reproduce itself: its purpose is to spy on the computer wherever it is, to offer hackers access to the computer, to destroy the data on the computer wherever it is, to saturate the internet server by constantly sending numerous requests and messages. The direct consequences are the slowness of the infected computer and the crash of operating systems (Chrome, Safari, Google).

Phishing is a malicious software that can control your webcam, send GPS coordinates to those who want to track you, have access to your emails. It is found especially when using

video calls via Messenger and other social networks.

To be protected from such, here are some practical tips:

- ***Make regular physical maintenance of computer equipment;***
- ***Search for a long, alphanumeric but unique password for each case;***

For the specific case of the mobile phone:

- ***Avoid long and strategic conversations outside encrypted applications;***
- ***Have different chips that correspond to each conversation;***
- ***Give priority to physical encounters and notebooks for sensitive information;***

- Save sensitive information in different places by including paper backup.

In order for the defender to protect himself, his/her collaborators and relatives, he must install firewalls and antivirus and especially make updates regularly.

As firewalls and antivirus, we can mention:

- **Araser**, to permanently erase the history of messages and calls;
- **Master Clean**, to clean temporary files;
- **Orbot**, to prevent others from seeing what you are doing, to ensure anonymity;
- **Psiphon**, for the security of the phone against anonymous intrusions;
- **Avast**, a powerful antivirus for computers and phones;
- **App lock**, which blocks all applications and requires the mandatory use of a password.

All of this software can be downloaded

and installed for free using PlayStore.

In addition to these tools, human rights defenders, activists and journalists can use the Panic Button software to alert three contacts in case a defender, activist or journalist is in danger. After installation, simply press the ignition icon several times and the phone automatically triggers and sends to the three contacts entered for this purpose.

For all the tips suggested above to work, you must:

- **have Wi Fi or enough credit on an Android phone;**
- **be able to connect to a GPS;**
- **have sufficient battery life for the installations.**

SECTION 2. SECURITY AND ONLINE MONITORING

"Our lives have simply become digital by default", says James Chapell, co-founder of Digital Swadows, a cyber security company.

The natural consequence is that cyber-crime is on the rise as well as online surveillance. As a human rights defender, it's good to know what are the threats to our online presence and the risks incurred in carrying out our work.

Threats are in different forms:

- **fake profile of opponents to damage your reputation;**
- **hate speech to destabilize defenders;**
- **identity theft by a third party (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram);**
- **hacking e-mail accounts and social networks;**
- **harassment on social networks.**

The risks are many:

- **loss of important data;**
- **damage to the reputation of the defender, activist or journalist;**
- **prosecutions by the courts using the laws on cybercrime or terrorism.**

To face it, some practical advice:

- **learn about community standards of social networks (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp);**
- **regularly change the passwords of your e-mail accounts and social networks;**
- **disable comments after each conversation;**
- **On a public computer, never check the "remember me" box, because this option allows you to stay connected even when you have closed the browser window;**
- **think carefully before allowing any third**

party application;

- systematically erase doubtful electronic messages;

- refuse unknown contacts and ignore their messages;

- encrypt e-mails: you can download Thunderbird-fr.exe: it is a software that allows you to hide your e-mails. It is very easy to use;

- protect your privacy by refusing to publish information about your family members;

- protect your identity by limiting the creation of multiple email accounts and profiles;

- assign roles to better manage publications and data security (administrator, editor, moderator, advertiser, analyst).

CHAPTER V

PRACTICAL CASES

SECTION 1. GENERAL

Here are some cases of pains that can be inflicted on a person in violation of his right to life, respect for his physical integrity, dignity of his person, prohibition of slavery and forced labor, right to non-discrimination:

- **Arrest**
- **Arbitrary detention**
- **Torture and bodily harm**
- **Rape**
- **Unlawful intimidation**
- **SMS of intimidation**
- **Tracking**
- **Death threats on his/her person or on his/her relatives**
- **Threats to his/her collaborators**
- **Burglary of offices or home**
- **Violations of privacy**
- **Slander**
- **Blackmail**
- **Media lynching**
- **Fake news and defamation on social**

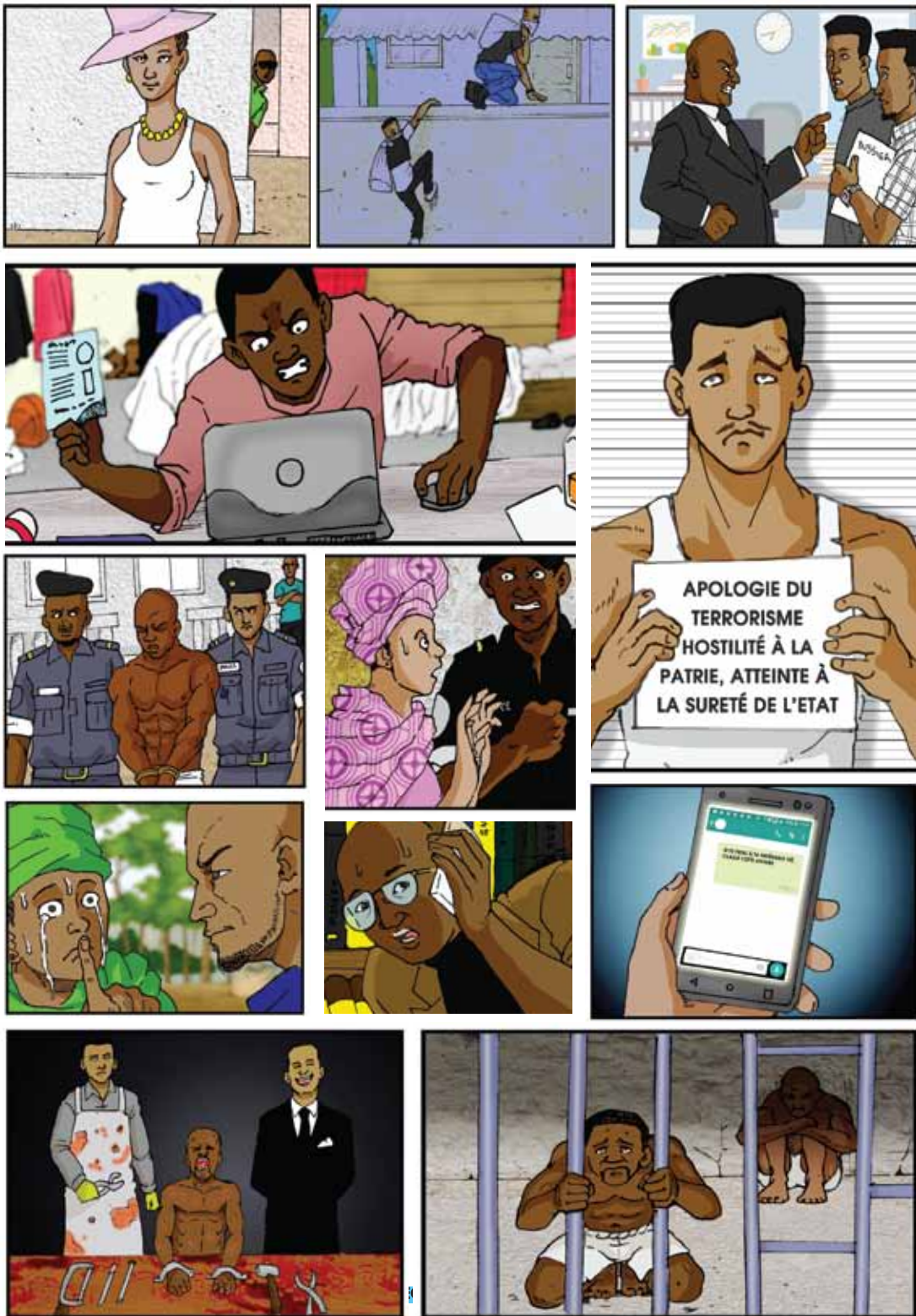
networks

- **Slanderous accusation**
- **Slanderous and Cabal Campaign**
- **Impersonation**
- **Intimidation**
- **Burglary**
- **Online harassment**
- **Judicial harassment.**

The person physically, psychologically or morally tortured suffers the consequences of his activism and this in total violation of the right to respect for human dignity yet enshrined in international legal instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 5) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 7).

The cases of intimidation, burglary and harassment call for clarification:

Intimidation is a means of disturbing



someone by causing him/her fear, apprehension.

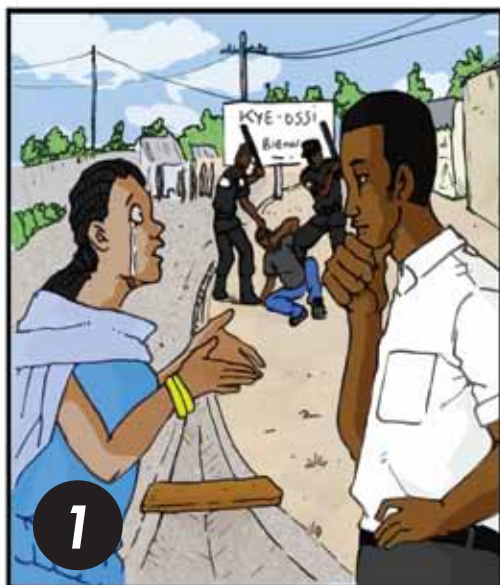
Burglary is a method consisting of stealing, robbing premises after breaking and entering, climbing, or using false keys.

Harassment refers to torment caused by endless case files but insignificant taken separately.

SECTION 2. ILLUSTRATION OF CASES BY A STORY

Each of the following seven cases illustrated by a story and drawings refers to one or more rights normally guaranteed to human rights defenders, activists or journalists.

1. ONLINE HARASSMENT AND MONITORING



1 Georges Ebene is an activist, human rights defender of an association that campaigns for the rights of immigrants settled in the border town of Kye-Ossi in southern Cameroon. Informed of the bodily ill-treatment of certain illegal immigrants by elements of the Cameroonian security forces

2 Georges made a case via internet for the denunciation of the said abuses, their perpetrators and the conditions of detention of illegal immigrants.

3 In a very short time, George's call recorded a great success. Disciplinary measures were taken by the authorities against the elements of the security forces in question and the conditions of detention of illegal immigrants were substantially improved.

4 Our activist then, via his email, his WhatsApp and Messenger accounts became the subject of anonymous threats on his physical integrity as well as those of his family members. Sometimes later, Georges is summoned to the police and then remanded in custody. During his hearing, the police officers present him messages from his e-mails and Facebook account, which they term an "insurrectional attempt".

2. VIOLATIONS OF THE PRIVACY OF A FEMALE DEFENDER



1 Mrs. Bayoï is a human rights defender. She has worked on the ground for the protection of minors enlisted in gangs and other mafia groups in the city of Douala.

2 She carries out her duties so well that she hits headline news.

3 She is received by administrative authorities, traditional rulers, parliamentarians and even heads of diplomatic missions accredited to Yaoundé.

4 As a result, Lady Bayoï's mailbox is the subject of malicious intrusions, her phone is regularly tapped. Her home becomes the target of unidentified people who do not hesitate to climb the wall, to ring the bell at undue hours, to use the surrounding fruit trees to have the best possible view of what is happening day and night in the home of this human rights defender.

3. VIOLATIONS OF PRESS FREEDOM



1 Fotso Silas is a cyber journalist-reporter based in Douala and very famous for the quality of his reports, which have earned him numerous awards both within national borders and internationally.

2 A few weeks ago, he began a trip to the South West region of the country to feel for himself the reality of the CDC Company whose activities have been stopped because of the Anglophone crisis.

A few meters after the bridge over the river Moungo that separates the English-speaking region from the French-speaking region, Silas was stopped by heavily armed soldiers.

3 He is quickly whisked out of his car and taken to a secret place where he is kept for 13 days, after which he is presented to the attorney general who questioned him, in the absence of his lawyer.

4 At the end of an expeditious trial which his lawyer does not attend, he is sentenced to 17 years in prison for "abating terrorism, hostility to the fatherland, undermining State security".

4. FORCED DISAPPEARANCE



1 Onana Kamdem Jules, a documentation officer in an association, is involved in documenting cases of human rights violations in the fight against terrorism in the Far North region.



2 He had already been the subject of anonymous calls in these terms: "We ask you to give up otherwise you will pay dearly".



3 Jules undermined these calls until the day when, during one of his missions, he was abducted and has never resurfaced.



4 Despite the urgent and incessant appeals of the Cameroonian civil society associations and international organizations, the offices of the Special Rapporteurs of the ACHPR and the United Nations, the authorities have not only never communicated on this forced disappearance, but worse, no one has opened any investigation.

5. VIOLATIONS OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND DEMONSTRATION, THE RIGHT TO RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY, THE RIGHT TO SAFETY, THE RIGHT TO ASYLUM



1 The Hassa community suffers from the activities of a multinational company which is exploiting its mineral resources in the eastern region of Cameroon. The Hassas have complained many times to the Divisional Officer of the locality against this multinational which exploits their resources without compensation for the local populations whereas the specifications provided for the construction of a health center, a primary school and a road.



2 Faced with the silence of the Divisional Officer, they organized themselves into an "Association for the safeguarding of our resources". Miss Samisa, an energetic young lady and human rights defender, was appointed advocacy coordinator.



3 But Ms. Samisa is regularly threatened with arrest by the authorities if she continued her work.



4 And by the local director of the multinational who, after trying to corrupt her, unsuccessfully, made death threats against her.



5 A week after these threats, her association decides to organize a peaceful demonstration to demand the implementation of the specifications signed by the multinational.



6 But as soon as the declaration of demonstration is submitted in the Divisional Office, Samisa is arrested, interrogated in the absence of a lawyer, tortured, thrown in prison without judgment. A few days later, after pressure from all sides, she is released but is forced to leave the country to settle in another African country.



7 Since that day, Samisa no longer talks about the promotion and protection of human rights. In spite of this, to date, in her host country, she still has not obtained relevant documents to stay in that territory.

6. ONLINE HARASSMENT



1 A human rights organization uses its Facebook page to make vulnerable women aware of the many forms of discrimination and social violence.



2 People are invited to share their stories in order to raise awareness, support the cause, and organize campaigns to assist these women.



3 This immediately provoked the wrath of Mamadoukir, who, many times, made derogatory comments on their page and in this case, began harassing and threatening others who shared their stories.



4 The human rights organization believes that it cannot be unsubscribe nor block Mamadoukir as it would violate his right to freedom of expression and could provoke protests.

7. STIGMA, PHYSICAL VIOLENCE ON LGBTI DEFENDERS



1 Bernard Mbappe goes to the hospital to be consulted following the appearance of pimples on the body.



2 At the reception, nurses suspect him of being homosexual and begins to murmur and pointing scornfully at him.



3 Once in the medical laboratory, he is asked to do an HIV test, because as it transpires: "people like you, we must really be wary".



4 Panicked, Bernard calls Magdala Fonyuy, a female human rights defender, member of an organization for the defense of sexual minorities.



5 Once on the scene, Magdala wants to understand what is happening, but she is confronted by nurses and other caregivers who starts assaulting them and saying "they are people like you who import deviant characters from whites to mislead our youth in Cameroon and Africa". "You will get what you deserve", they added.



6 They were only rescued by the presence of a law enforcement officer who, fearing to be indicted in a murder case, removed them from the claws of the staff of the hospital.

CHAPTER VI

STRATEGIES AND WAYS OF PROTECTING DEFENDERS

As it turns out to be the human rights defenders "disturb" because of their activism, their denunciations and others, they upsets the order of things, create uncertainties, bring disorder in a hitherto unchangeable situation. They can therefore be the subject of a number of threats, the main ones were listed in the previous chapters.

We will now propose to readers of this Manual, the procedure to adopt in case of threat (Section 1), the legal frameworks that can be used in case of need (Section 2), some tips to adopt before law enforcement officials when they are reluctant to play their statutory role (Section 3) and available strategies beyond classical legal frameworks (Section 4).

Faced with all these situations, strategies are proposed hereby, to defenders to defend themselves, anticipate in order to continue working for the promotion and protection of human rights.

SECTION 1. THE PROCEDURE

The procedure to be implemented in case of threat is as follows:

- **Define a combat strategy;**
- **Boost psychology;**
- **Develop a robust organization.**

1. DEFINE A COMBAT STRATEGY

In his/her strategy, the human rights defender must arm himself/herself with a strong mindset, a fighting spirit and a good knowledge of the legal environment. For example, we can draw on:

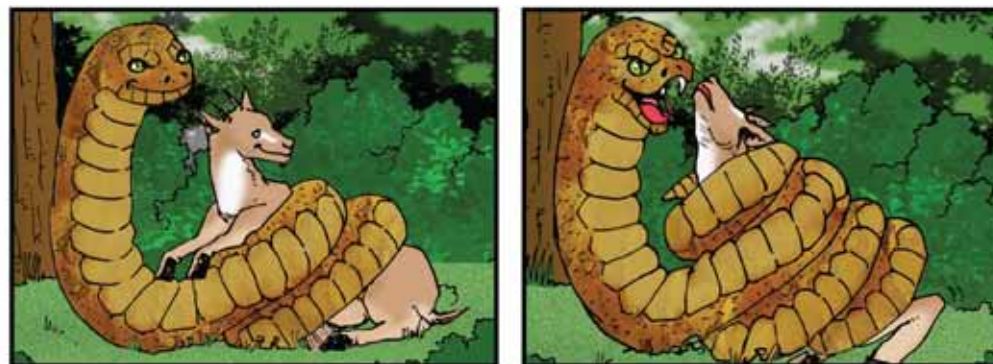
The spider technic

The spider weaves its web patiently, starting from a central point and bit by bit builds a shelter and well couched safe exit. The webs are so interconnected and only relevant in this configuration of the "spider's web".



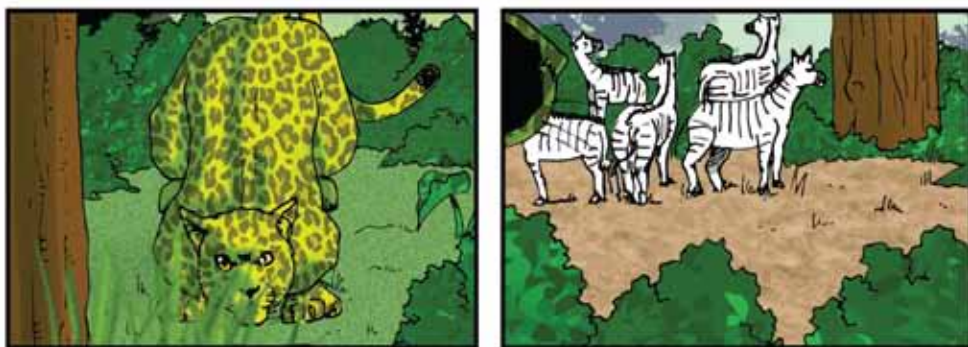
The boa tactics

The boa approaches its prey, gives the impression of taking care of the subject and then wraps around it, stronger and stronger until suffocation.



The cunningness of the panther

Vigilante, on the lookout, the senses trained to sniff out the danger, the panther can give the impression of turning away from adversity, disappear, to better trap its prey.



2. BOOST PSYCHOLOGY

The human rights defender can also rely on combat sports to forge a mindset and always psychologically be ready for the fight.

Drawing inspiration from karate, for example,

he/she can focus on the following principles:

- **Thwart all attempts to take the initiative by the opponent.**

When facing a smart player, a strategy that can be used is to try to torpedo all initiatives taken by the opponent by avoiding any risk when the opponent attacks. The opponent can lose confidence in such attacks and become more hesitant, especially if he/she in return faces effective counter-attacks.

- **Mentally weaken the opponent. Bring pressure to bear on the spirit of the opponent to cast down his/her confidence**

When one feels in front of a fearful adversary, one can impose his/her mental strength to dominate him/her. It is an energy that is projected on the opponent, showing him/her that you are superior.

- **Create unpleasant situations for the opponent**

It is possible to try to create situations that one does not imagine to be in favor of the adversary. It is possible to give the opponent a false opening to incite him/her to attack and to take advantage of this moment to get him/her. The opponent is very vulnerable when he/she makes the decision to undertake something. At that moment, his/her mind is "tied up" and he/she is therefore more vulnerable.

When you intentionally create an opening, it becomes a trap to attract the opponent and incite him/her to make a mistake. We must be vigilant so that this false opening does not become for us a real source of danger.

- **Simulate a false vulnerability. Be unpredictable**

The opponent can be made to believe in a false vulnerability. For example, we can make

him/her believe that we are pushed to a tight corner and take the opportunity to surprise him/her with something. In other words, one can simulate a moment of distraction to induce the opponent to compromise.

3. MUST HAVE A ROBUST ORGANIZATION

An association of human rights defenders is an organization that functions as an enterprise. In this light, it is a system, with an organizational structure. In this system, things such as decision rights (or the identity of decision makers) as well as the flow of information must be clearly spelt out.

By decision rights we mean the sources of power and the weight of decision makers.

The status of the decision makers, their authority and the information system determine the cohesion, or even the coherence in the work of the human rights defenders.

Solidarity and team spirit are all values that must make the structure work without subjection or servile obedience.

Decision rights and information flows are powerful drivers of efficiency.

In the work of human rights defenders, the combat dimension is important to integrate into communities where the understanding of rights is far from a duty and even less a unanimous one, given that human societies, especially African societies, are complex.

Under these conditions, the system of organization that the human rights defender must put in place, is naturally the network, identifying which are the actors of the network while clearly defining its objectives.

Also, the organization system centers around two levels with different targets:

- Explain, raise awareness and gain public support for the cause of human rights defenders (advocacy);
- Take concrete action to prevent the arrest

of human rights defenders, work for their immediate release if they are still arrested.

It is also imperative to define the roles of everyone in the set up to make sense in the protection and safety of human rights defenders.

For this, the organizational structure as well as the system of the association must obey strict rules such as those in production units.

Despite the militant dimension, a certain professionalization is essential with a clear definition of tasks.

SECTION 2. USING THE LAW, RULES AND REGULATIONS

The human rights activist and the Cameroonian journalist who read this manual will have noticed the almost permanent reference to legal instruments, whether regional or international.

This omnipresence of the international legal instruments falls under the express provision of the Constitution of Cameroon for which treaties and conventions duly signed and ratified have primacy over the laws, under certain conditions.

This choice was made by Cameroon in the early hours of independence. Article 45 of the Revised Constitution, promulgated on 18 January 1996, states that "Duly approved or ratified treaties and international agreements shall, following their publication, override national laws, provided the other party implements the said treaty or agree-

ment".

Thus, the Cameroonian activist has the opportunity to rely both on the vast legal arsenal in force at the national level and all the international treaties and agreements that bind Cameroon.

SECTION 3. THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST AND THE JOURNALIST FACING SECURITY AND LEGAL AUTHORITIES

It sometimes happens that the human rights activist or the journalist suffers, very serious threats from people hidden in the shadows and obviously unknown to him/her as a danger, but persons acting in the names of legal institutions and empowered to exercise the monopoly of legitimate physical coercion on behalf of the

State. These are police stations, gendarmerie brigades and courts authorities.

If these cases occur, the human rights defender:

- ***Must refer to a summons from a security or judicial authority only after having received the summons duly endorsed by the convening authority and who is actually vested with such authority.***
- ***Must demand at the outset, that the convening authority specifies very clearly the reasons for the summons.***
- ***Must request to be accompanied by his/her lawyer.***
- ***Must inform his/her entire network and his/her family of the summons, the place, the day and the time of the appointment, the name of the***

person responsible for the summons and the service.

- ***Must respect the secrecy of investigations.***

SECTION 4. DEVELOPING A DEFENSE SYSTEM AND A PROXIMITY TACTICS

Despite national legislation and international legal instruments that offer many opportunities for the human rights activist and the journalist, because of the complexity of the threat, the treachery of action against human rights, these laws, treaties and conventions may not be able to ensure the physical or online safety of the activist or journalist. Therefore, each activist or journalist, in his/her environment, must develop original strategies to get by in case of threat. These original strategies could be the following:

- **The building of an extensive network of defenders**

The human rights defender must not live in isolation. He must not be alone. It is necessary for him/her to network - if one already exists - with other human rights defenders living in the same area or elsewhere. If this network does not exist, the human rights defender must strive to build it patiently, because within it, will circulate information on possible threats identified on areas and people at risk. The network will thus implement an early warning system that can mobilize national and international public opinion should a human rights activist or journalist be threatened and/or reported missing.

- **Have a rich address book**

The human rights activist or journalist should not wait to be worried before thinking of what leverage to use to get out of trouble. The address

book is a wonderful means to break the isolation, build trust and especially mobilize in his favor in a short timeframe. In this perspective, it is always good to have among its relations, magistrates, lawyers, officers and non-commissioned officers of the gendarmerie, police officers, journalists, politicians of all works of life, economic operators, churchmen, opinion leaders, members of diplomatic representations. The address book is the first defense against arbitrary arrest, ambush, violence and others. It could also be used to find a hideout, to build a corridor to exit quagmires.

- **The choice of a home**

Whenever possible, one should avoid occupying an isolated home because isolation is a serious advantage to those who are determined to destroy anyone who prevents them from indulging in what they want. The best idea here could be to live in a housing estate.

- **Attitude towards social networks**

Discretion, restraint, circumspection must be the watch words. In concrete terms, the invitation of a stranger must only be accepted after having inquired about the traceability elements of the person, that is to say, identifying common friends, regular and relevant publications.

Also know how to take care of yourself and take time off when you feel your strength is diminishing.

- **In his/her immediate surroundings (neighborhood, professional circles)**

Avoid very noisy places, reduce to the basic minimum, circle of friends people who do not share the same humanistic values.

- **In the family**

Be deeply involved in all family activities, without forcing everyone into the fight for human rights.

- **Avoid blackouts**

CONCLUSION

A didactic manual can never pretend to be exhaustive, nor revolutionary. This Manual aimed to identify some basic principles for empowering human rights defenders and journalists for their protection. But it goes without saying that the fight takes place more on the political, cultural, sociological and anthropological space. Indeed, all causes of inequity, injustice, discrimination and the root of evil must be permanently reduced. We have to fight the substance, not just the form, the procedures. We must broaden the meaning we give to human rights while looking at the consequences of their extension on public freedoms.

Abuses are structural, linked to a system based on violence. However, the fight for human rights is above all a school of tolerance, humanism and dialogue. This is why any combat-like terminology must be considered for what it is: a way of naming things, a designation, a formulation without "intent" to harm.

The didactic aspect, in the sense of setting rules for learning to defend oneself, has been circumvented to prefer giving advice, given the environment in which this teaching is done.

POSTFACE

Michel Forst,

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of
Human Rights Defenders

On 9 December 1998, the international community enshrined the right to defend human rights and made a commitment to protect the countless women, men and children who commit to our rights and freedoms every day. A few months ago, during the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, we recalled the essential role played by these ordinary citizens.

Although it rests primarily with states, the responsibility to protect is nonetheless collective. It relies in part on the mobilization of civil society, the community of defenders and their ability to recognize, train and support each other. It is one of the greatest forces defenders can count on to break the isolation and to face the terrible attacks trying to silence them.

I am pleased to see more resources and tools to strengthen the work of those who advocate for

human rights. In March 2016, I submitted a report outlining a number of existing good practices in the area of defender protection. A tool of this kind was lacking in Central Africa, but thanks to REDHAC's committed work, activists in the region now have their own handbook. A manual inspired by the daily practice of activists and issues of the region.

Desmond Tutu said, "It means a lot for oppressed people to know they are not alone. Never let anyone tell you that what you are doing is insignificant."

This Manual reminds us of the importance of mobilizing for peace, democracy and human rights. It reminds us that defenders are not alone and that they are part of a community that is built, enriched and strengthened daily. As such, it will become, I am sure, an essential tool in the service of defenders.

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