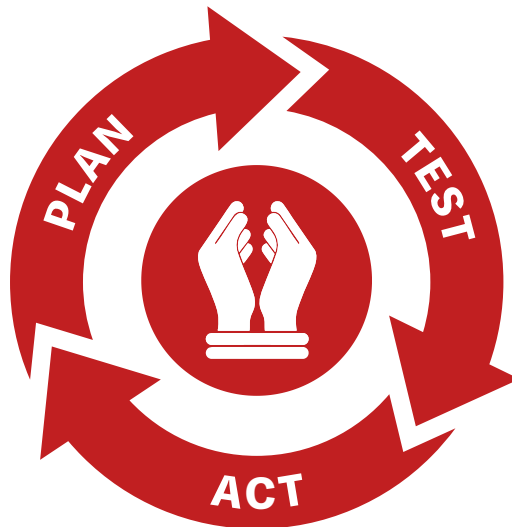




VITAL VOICES
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

KIDNAPPING SAFETY PLAN FOR WOMEN LEADERS





**This toolkit was created by Vital Voices Global Partnership
in collaboration with women leaders globally.**

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from the Vital Voices Crisis Response Team,
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PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

Now that you have gone through the entirety of the Crisis Readiness Toolkit, it is time to apply your learnings to a safety plan. Identify an incident, consider the details, and expand upon the following prompts to create a detailed safety plan.

How to use this tool: Women leaders facing crises should use this tool to plan for how to prepare and respond to potential threats to their safety. Leaders should create a security plan for each individual incident/ threat they are facing.

INCIDENT

Examples: Arrest, Natural Disaster, Online Threat

Kidnapping/ Threat of Kidnapping

LIKELIHOOD

High, Medium, Low

Medium to High, depending on recent activities or threats received, profile of leader, nature of their work, motivations/capabilities of adversaries

IMPACT

High, Medium, Low; Individual, Team, Organization Impact

**Refer to Risk Assessment in Toolkit*

High

WARNING SIGNS

Signs you might be in danger

Tip: Think through scenarios with others, like your team, if a sign occurs what action will we take?

- Unknown individuals soliciting personal information from you
- Major data leak where personal information has been compromised
- Working with unvetted or unverified suppliers, vendors or partners
- Grievances held by colleague or partners that become retaliatory
- Observing someone frequently watching or following you/your team or your premises
- Noticing unfamiliar individuals loitering around your home or workplace
- Receiving explicit threats through verbal, written, or electronic communication
- Seeing unknown vehicles parked near your home or workplace for extended periods

RESOURCES

Consider resources you either currently have or need in order to action your plan below. These resources could be training, funding, capabilities or skills.

	RESOURCES I HAVE	RESOURCES I NEED
1	Examples: Personal security devices, Secure communication tools, Supportive network of family and colleagues	Examples: Additional legal advice, Emergency funds, mental health support
2		
3		

THREAT ACTORS

Think of potential perpetrators and what would motivate them to threaten you.

	WHO	MOTIVATION	CAPABILITIES	PREVIOUS TARGETS	FREQUENCY OF KIDNAPPING
1	Example: Armed militia group	Example: Financial gain	Example: Hold individual for ransom	Example: Human rights defenders	Example: Weekly
2					
3					

TRUSTED CONTACTS

Think of dependable people or organizations upon whom you can call during an emergency.

	CONTACT	CONSIDERATIONS	RESOURCES PROVIDED
1	Examples: Security professional or consultant, Close family member, Trusted colleague or friend	[Mobile: Insert here] [E-mail: Insert here] [Signal/Whatsapp: Insert here]	Examples: Safe house, emergency funds
2			
3			
4			

ACTION PLAN

Expanding Your Safety Plan

Fill this out with actions you need to take to prepare yourself for potential incidents and respond if they occur. Consider the timeline for each action, as well as considerations. Mark off actions as you complete them.

READY:

Actions to take prior to an incident occurring

	INDIVIDUAL ACTION	STATUS	TIMELINE	CONSIDERATIONS
1	If a threat is detected, keep a low profile and remove any office signage		Immediate	Avoid drawing attention to the workplace
2	Conduct security risk assessment of activities and movements		Immediate	Kidnapping threats are highest during movements (e.g., community visits, physical meetings)
3	Conduct security risk assessment of physical locations (home/workplace)		Immediate	Identify vulnerabilities such as blind spots, entry points, visitor protocol, lighting, perimeter walls, use of guards / CCTV
4	Set up encrypted communication channels for sensitive conversations		Immediate	Secure messaging apps should be used for all critical communications
5	Establish a trusted contact network focused on individuals that can respond quickly		Immediate	Includes family, legal representative, colleagues. Timelines are crucial for kidnappings

Ready continued on next page

READY (CONTINUED)

	INDIVIDUAL ACTION	STATUS	TIMELINE	CONSIDERATIONS
6	Train in security awareness and self-defense (kidnap avoidance and survival)		Immediate	Enhances situational awareness and response to threats
7	Set aside an emergency fund or special insurance in case ransom is needed		Immediate	Ensure accessibility by a designated contact
8	Prepare an emergency response kit		Quarterly	Should include a phone charger, emergency contacts, essential documents, first-aid
TRANSPORTATION AND MOVEMENT				
9	Vary routines to prevent tracking		Immediate	Take different routes to work and office, at different times
10	Keep vehicle doors locked while traveling		Immediate	Avoid night travel or exposed locations
11	Do not walk or travel alone in a vulnerable location		Immediate	Pre-plan routes and inform your team
12	Establish a comprehensive check-in process with trusted contacts		Immediate	Share travel itinerary, confirm departure and safe arrival, periodic check-ins, agree on escalation if check-ins are missed

Ready continued on next page

	INDIVIDUAL ACTION	STATUS	TIMELINE	CONSIDERATIONS
DIGITAL & INFORMATION SECURITY				
13	Remove or hide high-risk online information		Ongoing	Reduce visibility of affiliations that may increase "value" to kidnappers, or disclose locations
14	Prepare Proof of Life Form		Immediate	Needed in advance to support establishing proof of life if kidnapped.
15	Safeguard sensitive information that could be exploited in a kidnapping		Immediate	Includes home/work addresses, travel plans, and program details

RESPOND – INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS

Actions to take once an incident occurs. Individual actions and Team actions are separated to indicate the responsibility of each

	INDIVIDUAL ACTION	STATUS	TIMELINE	CONSIDERATIONS
ACTIVE THREAT				
1	Report unusual activity to designated contacts		Immediate	Keep logs of suspicious incidents
2	Provide critical details about last known whereabouts		Immediate	Stay aware of surroundings if being transported to a secondary location
3	Monitor digital footprint and assess online exposure and potential threats		Within 12 hours	Reduce public attention if it escalates risk

Respond continued on next page

RESPOND – INDIVIDUAL ACTION (CONTINUED)

	INDIVIDUAL ACTION	STATUS	TIMELINE	CONSIDERATIONS
DURING KIDNAPPING				
4	Assess the situation and decide whether to comply or resist based on risks		Immediate	If resistance is necessary, attempt early escape before captors establish full control. If compliance is safer, remain calm and cooperative
5	Eat and drink when offered, maintain hygiene, keep track of time, maintain physical / mental activeness (if possible)		Ongoing	Ensure that food and drink offered are safe to consume
6	Use active listening techniques to empathize with the hostage-taker		Ongoing	Use intelligence to inform negotiation strategy. Identify captors' key influences and rapport-building opportunities
7	Observe and remember details about the captors, location, and potential escape routes		Immediate	This can help law enforcement later or be useful if an escape becomes possible
8	Avoid aggressive confrontation		Ongoing	Reduces potential harm to hostages
9	Observe captors' behavior and patterns to assess potential risks and opportunities for emotional de-escalation		Within first 12 hours	Watching for mood shifts, group dynamics, and signs of tension among captors can provide critical survival insights. Avoid direct confrontation and gather information passively
10	Offer small, non-threatening concessions like engaging in calm conversation or showing empathy		Within first 24 hours	Prevents rapid escalation of demands; minimizes risk of aggressive demands or actions from the captors
11	Communicate legal risks carefully, avoiding antagonistic language		Within first 24 hours	Be mindful of risks such as illegal ransom payments, or negligence claims by family members

Respond continued on next page

RESPOND – INDIVIDUAL ACTION (CONTINUED)

	INDIVIDUAL ACTION	STATUS	TIMELINE	CONSIDERATIONS
POST-RELEASE AND RISK MITIGATION				
12	Prepare for reintegration post-release		Before	Consider logistics, accommodation, money, medical care, documentation, and family needs
13	Keep personal decision logs during captivity (if possible)		Ongoing	Logs should be stored securely to protect personal identifiable information (PII)
14	Identify ongoing dangers for colleagues, family members, or allies		Within first 24 hours post-release	Assess potential threats based on risks, location, vulnerabilities, and activities

RESPOND – TEAM ACTIONS

	TEAM ACTION	STATUS	TIMELINE	CONSIDERATIONS
ACTIVE THREAT				
1	Contact law enforcement (if trusted) and a trusted lawyer		Immediate	Keep logs of suspicious incidents
2	Gather and document last known location, recent communications, and potential risk factors		Immediate	Stay aware of surroundings if being transported to a secondary location
3	Utilize cybersecurity tools to assess threats and remove vulnerable online information		Within 12 hours	Reduce public attention if it escalates risk

Respond continued on next page

RESPOND – TEAM ACTION (CONTINUED)

	TEAM ACTION	STATUS	TIMELINE	CONSIDERATIONS
HOSTAGE NEGOTIATION				
4	Appoint a skilled negotiator and establish a clear chain of communication		Immediate	Avoid international involvement if ransom is a factor
5	Monitor health concerns and plan for potential medical needs		Ongoing	Ensure that food and drink offered are safe to consume
6	Establish and maintain secure communication channels with captors		Ongoing	Use intelligence to inform negotiation strategy. Identify captors' key influences and rapport-building opportunities
7	Be mindful which external parties (INGOs, local organizations) can provide meaningful support		Immediate	Reduces ability for captors to make unpredictable demands
8	Develop compliance strategies and maintain a non-threatening stance		Ongoing	Reduces potential harm to hostages
9	Analyze demands with negotiation team to determine intent and leverage		Within first 12 hours	Understanding motivation helps guide negotiation strategy
10	Identify safe concessions that won't compromise negotiation objectives		Within first 24 hours	Prevents rapid escalation of demands; minimizes risk
11	Develop a messaging strategy considering legal implications and minimizing risks		Within first 24 hours	Be mindful of risks such as illegal ransom payments, or negligence claims by family members

Respond continued on next page

RESPOND – TEAM ACTION (CONTINUED)

	TEAM ACTION	STATUS	TIMELINE	CONSIDERATIONS
POST-RELEASE AND RISK MITIGATION				
12	Provide psychosocial support, medical care, financial assistance, and time off work		Before	Consider logistics, accommodation, money, medical care, documentation, and family needs
13	Maintain confidential logs of negotiations, communications, and key developments		Ongoing	Logs should be stored securely to protect personal identifiable information (PII)
14	Conduct a security assessment and update safety protocols		Within first 24 hours post-release	Assess potential threats based on risks, location, vulnerabilities, and activities

RECOVER

Actions to take after an incident occurs

	INDIVIDUAL ACTION	STATUS	TIMELINE	CONSIDERATIONS
1	Relocate to a safe location if required		Immediate	Ensure access to necessary resources and support during relocation
2	Conduct health and psychological checks		24-72 hours	Ensure mental and physical well-being
3	Provide psychological and medical support to hostages		24-72 hours	Seek a trusted professional for trauma recovery and reintegration

Recover continued on next page

RECOVER (CONTINUED)

	INDIVIDUAL ACTION	STATUS	TIMELINE	CONSIDERATIONS
4	Assess effectiveness of security protocols		Post-incident	Conduct a debriefing session with all relevant stakeholders and document findings
5	Prepare a summary and action items from the debriefing session		1-2 weeks post-incident	Identify gaps in response strategy and improve future protocols
6	Provide legal and advocacy support, if necessary		Post-incident	Engage with legal representatives to ensure justice and protection
7	Monitor for any ongoing threats or retaliation risks		Ongoing	Stay alert for potential repercussions and adjust security measures accordingly
8	Reinforce protection for immediate family and colleagues		Ongoing	Evaluate any residual risk to linked individuals and provide necessary security adjustments
9	Regularly update the security plan based on new threats and experiences		Ongoing	Schedule periodic reviews and incorporate stakeholder feedback
10	Support reintegration into work/life safely		As needed	Slowly reintegrate the individual with proper safeguards in place