: CHAPTER 1 :

CRS Security Management:
Key Concepts and Guidelines

: NOTES :

CRS Security Management: Key Concepts and Guidelines

The safety and security of all CRS staff, their families, our partners and beneficiaries, is of paramount concern to the agency. While no one has a crystal ball to be able to predict what will happen tomorrow, next week, or around the bend in the road, there are some basic principles and a framework for mainstreaming security management into our everyday program quality and management quality approaches that can considerably reduce the risk of an unfortunate security event.

CONCEPT

Security management is a system, not a document. It starts with each and every individual within the organization, maintaining high levels of awareness to our operating environment and to how our own behaviors, actions, and communications contribute to an improved security posture or to the contrary places oneself and the larger agency at risk. A persevering challenge to good security management is complacency. Our security management system is a living system—it must be continually fed with refresher training, orientation, collection and analysis of the latest information, an active network of relationships on the ground that can continually contribute to keeping us safe on a daily basis.

Staff safety and security is an important parameter for all countries where CRS supports operations—whether the program involves an emergency response or long-term development programming, from the initiation of a new program to its closure, from the site security assessment when identifying office space to negotiating with a warring faction for access to a population in need. Recent studies have reported a sharp increase in the absolute number of major acts of violence committed against aid workers since 1997[1]. The same studies show, however, that due to the increasing number of aid workers in the field over the same period, the risk to any one aid worker of encountering a violent security event has probably only slightly increased. National staff comprise the majority of aid worker victims of violent incidents (78%), with relative risk to nationals apparently on the rise while the global incidence rate for internationals remains stable or even declines. These statistics underscore the need to increasingly focus on and manage risks incurred by our national staff as well as international staff. It should be noted from the outset, however, that in most countries where CRS operates, traffic accidents and tropical diseases present more prevalent risks to staff than those posed by armed conflict and armed criminals. Precautions should be taken to ensure staff safety from all identified risks, ranging from malaria to aerial bombing.

The following program quality statement articulates the CRS vision, principles and operating guidelines for security management.

Vision

CRS minimizes the risk of harm to all staff through the implementation of comprehensive security procedures. CRS also seeks to protect material resources (commodities, equipment and buildings). CRS provides funding necessary to meet staff security needs.

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1 Abby Stoddard, Adele Harmer, and Katherine Haver, "Providing Aid in Insecure Environments: Trends in Policy and Operations. Summary of Quantitative Analysis." A project of the Center on International Cooperation, New York University in collaboration with the Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute: December 2006.

> **POLICY:** CRS recognizes that our work often places great demands on staff in conditions of complexity and risk. We take all reasonable steps to ensure the security and well-being of staff and their families. (POL-HRD-INT-0005)

Operating Guidelines

- The Country Representative is responsible for security management within the country program. CRS utilizes a system of five Security Levels (I-Normal to V- Under Siege) to communicate the security environment, and to manage accordingly.
- Country programs develop and regularly update Field Security Plans using CRS guidelines. Full participation of national and international staff in the development of Field Security Plans ensures that country programs have standard operating procedures that reflect the unique threat, vulnerability and risk environment in their country context.
- All staff contribute to security risk reduction by maintaining personal awareness, participating in CRS security meetings, appropriately representing the agency, reporting security incidents, and following security policies and procedures.
- The Country Representative or his/her designate ensures that all staff receive appropriate briefings and training on security management relevant to the local context.
- CRS works collaboratively with other members of the humanitarian aid and development community to advance common security interests.
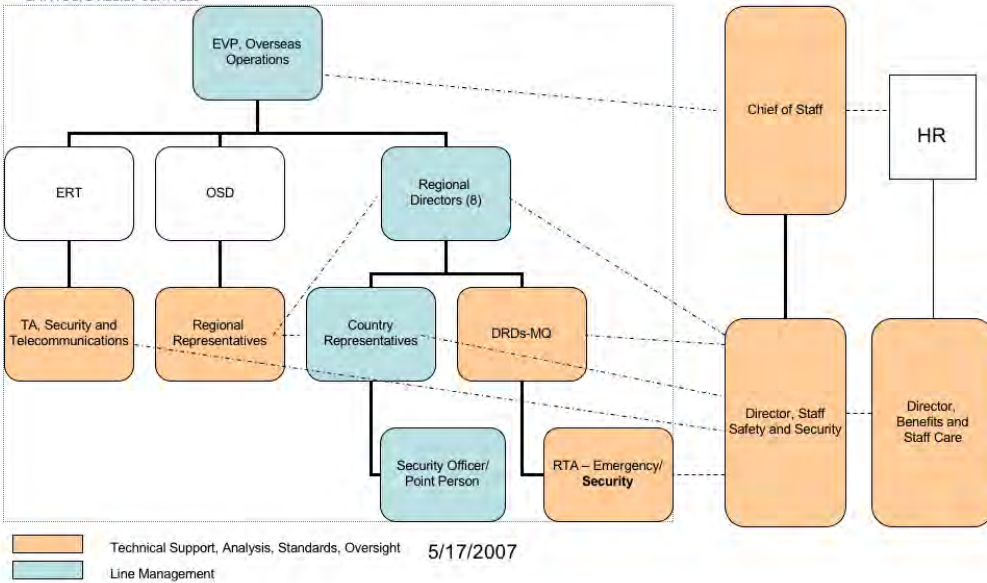
Roles And Responsibilities

CRS has a defined management structure which includes security management roles and responsibilities. Good security management begins with the individual. Each individual staff member has a responsibility to be aware of their surroundings and to take actions that keep themselves safe, to behave in a way that does not negatively affect the image of the organization, and to contribute actively in the organization's system of collecting and analyzing information that could have an impact of the safety and security of the agency's staff or assets. Non-compliance with CRS security policies may result in disciplinary action, even dismissal.

The basic unit of management overseas is the country program. The Country Representative therefore plays a critical role in security management decision-making for those countries he/she oversees (including outreach countries), in close collaboration with the Regional Director.

> **POLICY:** The Country Representative is responsible for country program security management, per Security and Staff Safety Guidelines for CRS Field Workers. Any issues with country security should be raised with the CR. Security incidents must always be reported to the CR, no matter how potentially embarrassing to an individual or the Agency. (POL-HRD-INT-0005)

Security management responsibilities are integrated into our field program line management and support structures, and should be specified in job descriptions and performance plans as relevant. Some standard language for job descriptions:

Country Program

At the level of the country program, the Country Representative (CR) is responsible for overall security management systems, policies and decision-making. When not in country, the CR will ensure that a back-up for security is in place. In addition, each country program should also have a point person for security designated by the Country Representative. In most locations, the security point person responsibility is not a full-time position; in other higher risk locations a full-time Security Officer may be warranted.

Security Point Person (not full-time):
- Ensures that information on the Safety and Security Portal is current.
- Ensures that the safety and security portion of the written Visitor Briefing document is kept current.
- Conducts security briefings for new staff as part of the on-boarding process and ensures that visitors receive both a written and oral security briefing.
- Ensures that safety and security incident reports are submitted in a timely manner to regional management and HQ via the CR.
- Facilitates, at a minimum, annual updates of field security planning documents, including analysis of prior period's safety/security incidents.
- Represents CRS in local forums for NGO security coordination.

Security Officer (full-time):
- Responsible for all of the responsibilities of the Security Point Person with the following additional responsibilities.
- Plans/facilitates regular refresher training on relevant safety/security topics, including drills of FSP contingency plans.
- Coordinates with fleet managers to authorize travel following route security protocols, and ensure compliance with vehicle safety procedures.
- Supervises office and residence guards.
- Oversees radio operator(s), ensures training and compliance with communications protocols by all staff.
- Recommends shifts in Security Level, changes in Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) or policies to CR based on regular analysis of the security environment.
- Oversees implementation of additional preparatory steps as the Security Levels document indicates.

Country Representatives/Managers/Heads of Office:
- Responsible for staff safety and security management at the country office level.
- Ensures compliance with all agency policies related to staff safety and security.

Overseas Regions
CRS Country Programs and outreach countries are organized into regional management units, each led by a Regional Director (RD) and his/her regional management team. Regional Directors may delegate security management support responsibilities within their regional management team as they see fit. As a general rule, however, technical assistance and training in security management at the regional level might correspond to the Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) for Emergencies/Security, who generally reports either to the Deputy Regional Director for Management Quality (DRD/MQ) or Deputy Regional Director for Program Quality (DRD/PQ). The DRD/MQ generally oversees the security management aspects that relate to compliance with policies and procedures, as well as allocating necessary regional resources to invest in maintaining security management standards across the region. Depending on the nature of the security environment and resources available, the region may decide that a full-time Regional Security Officer is warranted.

Regional Director (RD):
Responsible for staff safety and security management within region of oversight, ensuring compliance with all agency policies related to staff safety and security.

Regional Technical Advisors (RTAs) for Emergency/Security and/or Deputy Regional Directors (DRDs)/Management Quality (MQ):
- Advises RDs on key security management decisions/policies.
- Provides technical assistance to CPs on security management decisions and processes, including conducting security assessments and workshops with staff to update field security planning documents.
- Reviews/approves field security plans.
- Provides regional-level analysis on at least an annual basis of safety and security incidents in order to inform regional investment decisions in training, equipment purchases/ transfers, staffing, other budget items, etc. related to security management.
- Fulfills a "broker" role in terms of identifying gaps in security management capacity within the region and seeking extra-regional sources of technical assistance to request via the RD.

- If relevant/appropriate, represents CRS regional management concerns to Regional Combatant Commands.
- Conducts training, including Training of Trainers with Security Point Persons on basic security management modules.

Regional Representatives (Overseas Support Department):
- Serves as primary point of contact with RDs and CRs for information regarding contextual developments (including security), analysis, and impacts on CRS staff, programs, partners, etc.
- Represents CRS at Inter Action Working Groups and other NGO-donor forums around broad issues (including security/emergencies) occurring within their countries of coverage.

Director, Staff Safety and Security (Executive Office): This is a full-time position.
- Develops and implements CRS' strategy for staff safety and security.
- Maintains operational standards for safety and security throughout CRS and assists in their implementation via the Regional Directors and Country Representatives.
- Conducts security assessment visits.
- Ensures good collaboration throughout CRS with regards to security matters, and also with peer agencies, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), international and national NGOs, departments of the United States Government and the United Nations, and official and non-official military and security groups in countries where CRS operates.
- Provides analysis and recommendations to the ELT on agency security risk management.

Technical Advisor, Security and Telecommunications (ERT, E-Ops): This is a full-time position, based in Nairobi.
- Deploys as rapid response team member in emergency response capacity, with specific expertise in security management, telecommunications, and logistics.
- Advises and develops guidelines on best practices and standards in the areas of security, telecommunications and logistics at the agency level.
- Supports CPs and regions to build staff and partner capacity in these areas.
- Conducts security assessment visits to directly support CRS efforts in risky environments.

Executive Vice President (Overseas Operations):
Responsible for staff safety and security management in all overseas regions; authorizing sponsor for all agency-wide security management initiatives; enforces compliance with all agency policies related to staff safety and security.

Chief of Staff (Executive Office):
Supervises the HQ-based Director of Staff Safety and Security, which involves the oversight and authorization of agency-level security management initiatives that improve communication, staff training/preparedness, coordination across divisions, and coordination of executive-level decision-making and crisis management around staff safety and security issues.

Director, Benefits and Staff Care: (HQ, Human Resources):
- Administers medical evacuation insurance policy benefits.
- Ensures access by international staff to post-incident trauma counseling services, via the Employee Assistance Program, as well as other service providers.
- Provides training on Staff Care and Stress Management to field staff.
- Represents CRS in Staff Care-related NGO networks (i.e. Helper's Fire).

Personal Awareness

Excellence in agency security management begins with each individual—employee, dependent, and visitor—understanding clearly their rights and responsibilities with respect to safety and security while in the country where they are posted or are visiting.

The principal responsibility for everyone is to maintain high levels of awareness :
- What are the norms and cultural expectations where I am?
- What are the potential security threats in this environment?
- What are the CRS security policies in effect here?
- What do I do if there is a security incident?
- What are those guys doing hanging out by my car?

Attention to individual conduct should be paid when in the field since individual action will be interpreted as CRS' action. In most countries, foreigners are welcome. However, there will occasionally be those who resent foreign presence. Appropriate dress and behavior, and a willingness to learn the local language in order to communicate, at least at a very basic level, will minimize the risk of offending host country individuals because of cultural differences. At a basic level, each individual must take responsibility for their own safety and security, or CRS' efforts to keep staff safe will not be effective.

TIPS

Some basic rules of conduct:
1. While in any country be informed. Visitors are subject to all local laws.
2. Dress should indicate respect for the local culture and convey a positive message about how you expect to be treated.
3. Make sure you understand the ground rules for personal relations between men and women, and between expatriates and local people.
4. Alcohol is illegal in many Muslim countries. Be aware of what behavior is expected socially for non-Muslim foreigners.
5. Ostentatious display of possessions may make one a target for theft.
6. Drive slowly, respect traffic rules and pedestrians. This is both a safety and an image issue.
7. Be observant. If you see crowds begin to congregate, or if you notice others watching you, calmly head the other direction, towards a safe place.
8. Communicate. Let others know where you are going. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, or experience even the smallest or embarrassing incident, report it.
9. Familiarize yourself as soon as possible with the local security environment, no-go zones, common threats and how to best minimize the chance that those threats will happen to you.
10. Always have a means of communication and in-country contact info with you.

Above all, a common sense approach that demonstrates respect for local culture and customs will lead to good relations in general. Ask local staff questions about the dos and don'ts in country.

Relations With Other Actors

All international staff will be in contact at one time or another with government officials, local authorities, partner organizations, local Church leaders and other NGO/UN/Embassy staff. The following recommendations intend to ensure good relations between CRS and other actors:
- Be diplomatic and respect local traditions.

- Be aware of your audience when speaking about politics or religion.
- Reaffirm CRS' impartiality, independence and accountability.
- Never make promises you won't be able to keep, especially in terms of program commitments.
- Avoid sarcasm as it may be easily misinterpreted.
- Always have an attitude of respect regarding behavior and dress.
- Maintain a team spirit.
- Be available to authorities and maintain contact as necessary.
- Inform authorities about CRS activities as appropriate.
- Never ask for favors, but insist on your rights.
- Respect movement procedures by notifying the proper authorities regarding trips to the field, relief convoys, etc.
- Respect radio communications SOPs.
- Reaffirm that CRS security is a fundamental factor of our work.
- Explain how security decisions are made within CRS, where appropriate.
- Don't criticize the government or other humanitarian actors.
- Uphold transparency with other humanitarian actors and beneficiaries.

Summary Of Seven Key Concepts

CRS' approach to security management emphasizes seven key concepts that are summarized here below, and further developed in later chapters.

1. Acceptance

CRS generally employs a combination of all three security strategies: acceptance, protection, and deterrence.[2] Our security posture must reflect our identity as a Catholic organization with a mission to promote the dignity of life and holistic development of people. CRS approaches security management through activities that emphasize the promotion of acceptance of the agency by the general population, the local government, belligerents etc. Our most treasured security management resource is a positive image and network of relationships on the ground that help keep us safe.

2. Proactive Management

Proactive Management means that staff safety and security is integrated into the overall quality management approach, with an emphasis on prevention, preparedness and mitigation. Situational awareness should be maintained at all times by continuously observing changes in the security environment and updating standard operating procedures as necessary and appropriate.

3. Staff Preparation

The Country Representative or his/her designate should conduct complete briefings on the security context and relevant standard operating procedures to all staff at all levels as well as to visitors as a matter of routine. The importance of understanding the context, personal awareness and appropriate behaviors should be emphasized with all staff and visitors as the starting point for the safety and security of all. New employees, or staff new to an insecure operating environment, may also require a briefing by the CR on some of the agency's broader security-related policies and practices, such as: Civil-Military Relations, Armed Protection, Evacuation, and Acceptable Risk Threshold.

Information should be readily available to staff in briefing format prior to deployment as well

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2 See Chapter 2 for additional information on security strategies.

as throughout an assignment. Ideally all staff, but particularly those posted or serving on TDY to insecure environments, should also be de-briefed upon departure from the assignment which should include a reflection on the security situation and SOPs.

Accepting a post in a high-risk environment must be an informed, individual decision and managers must respect an individual staff member's perception that a given post or action is too risky for him/her personally to accept. Relevant safety and security training should be prioritized in staff development plans in accordance with the requirements of the staff person's current position, the local operating environment, and future career development plans.

4. Field Security Plans
Each country office including all sub-offices should possess a written Field Security Plan based on the analysis of data collected through threat, vulnerability and risk assessments. The existence of such a plan will facilitate staff orientation and training with regard to standard operating procedures (SOPs) and rules to be respected to reduce the security risks.

All Field Security Plans should define standard operating procedures, security levels and contigency plans as an integral part of the overall plan. Contingency plans include such events as medical evacuations, procedures in case of death of a staff or dependent, etc.

Security management concerns everyone in a CRS office. Participation of all staff in critiquing standard operating procedures, participating in security meetings, reporting security incidents and following security guidelines, is essential to the security not only of individual staff members but the entire staff. The actions of one person in some situations can affect everyone since individual action/behavior is often interpreted as CRS' action/behavior.

5. Staff Health
Individuals are responsible to safeguard their own health by ensuring that their vaccinations are up to date, that they take precautions in high risk environments (use mosquito nets, safe water and food practices, etc.) If there is no medical staff in CRS, someone (Country Representative, Team Leader) should be given the responsibility of addressing health issues for country program staff by identifying in-country and regional resources for health care referral. Staff health includes both physical and mental health. CRS management maintains a strong interest in Staff Care, which involves promoting and modeling positive self-care, stress management initiatives, psycho-social counseling, R&R and vacation policies, etc. in an attempt to minimize, if not eliminate the negative effects of cumulative stress and burnout.

6. Communication
Exchange of information related to security should be organized: within the team in the field; with other humanitarian agencies; with local actors; between base and field offices; with the Regional Director; and with HQ. Standardized means of telecommunications should be used to ensure staff safety and information sharing. Backup means of communications should exist in all operational environments considered Security Level III environments, or those at Security Level II which tend to flash to III from time to time.

7. Road Safety
Internal statistics show that the toll of road traffic injuries and deaths is very high for CRS staff and third parties, especially cyclists and pedestrians. However, most deaths and injuries from road crashes are completely preventable. Applying robust road safety management is necessary to reverse the current toll. The responsibility lies with all CRS staff, not only drivers.

Vehicle passengers have the obligation to ensure that road safety measures are applied; otherwise they must voice concern to the driver.

Sound road safety management requires:
- All CRS staff and drivers MUST wear safety belts at all times.
- All drivers need to adhere to local laws and CRS regulations.
- Recruiting safe, competent drivers who show care for other road users, especially pedestrians and cyclists.
- Knowing, complying with and enforcing road safety rules, including defensive driving (maintaining vigilance at all times).
- Applying professional vehicle fleet management (preventive checks and regular maintenance services).
- Rewarding careful drivers, while applying disciplinary actions in case of crashes caused by reckless driving.
- Creating an agency culture of road safety through multiple innovative activities.

Acceptable Risk Threshold
The Threshold of Acceptable Risk is defined as "the point beyond which you consider the risk too high to continue operating so that you must withdraw yourself from the danger zone; influenced by the probability that an incident will occur, and the seriousness of the impact if it occurs."[3]

This threshold will vary from organization to organization operating in the same environment and within the same organization depending upon the organization's risk assessment in different operating environments. While not the only factor, the decision to stop or continue activity in a highly insecure environment is taken in large part by weighing humanitarian needs against the risks posed to CRS and counterpart staff, programs and property. In general, however, CRS will not likely accept risks assessed higher than *medium* for an average country program. If however the humanitarian mandate is such that CRS' withdrawal could cause harm or significantly place in jeopardy the lives of the people we serve in a given location, CRS would consider accepting a higher level of risk to its own staff and property in this case.

3 Koenraad Van Brabant, "Operational Security Management in Violent Environments: A Field Manual for Aid Agencies." Good Practice Review (GPR) 8, Humanitarian Practice Network, Overseas Development Institute, London: 2000, pg. xiv.

COUNTRY A: CRS implements agriculture and water programming in an area of the country increasingly inaccessible due to road banditry by armed criminals. Armed groups are increasingly hostile to the presence of international organizations, and have repeatedly abducted NGO staff in our operational area; incidents have resulted in serious injury and trauma to staff members. CRS might consider withdrawing from such an operational area due to safety concerns, if the local program feels that there is nothing more it can do to guarantee the safety of staff traveling to affected program areas.

COUNTRY B: CRS is the only WFP partner operating in an area of the country affected by civil conflict. Civilian populations are frequently displaced by conflict, and access to displaced communities is often hampered both by armed parties to the conflict as well as pervasive criminal activity. Assuming that CRS has well developed information/analysis networks and contingency plans in place to be able to constantly monitor the volatile security environment, and to respond when security incidents do occur, the organization would be amenable to accepting a risk environment assessed as *high* because the presence of CRS programming in these areas is determined to be keeping thousands alive.

(Refer to Chapter 5: Field Security Plans for more in-depth guidance to country risk assessments.)

Evacuation
Evacuation of field staff is one of the most difficult decisions to make in the CRS world. Evacuations, and the events leading up to and immediately following an evacuation, are fraught with strong feelings such as fear, despair and abandonment by both those who are evacuated and those who are not. It is extremely important that CRS staff consider the conditions that would necessitate an evacuation and how an evacuation would be conducted long before such an event occurs. (Specific guidance for the development of country-specific evacuation plans can be found in Chapter 5: Field Security Plans.)

Criteria for Evacuation (Security Level IV)
Specific criteria should be developed for each field program based on a risk assessment of the local context. Potential triggers for when a country program would take the decision to evacuate should be thought through in advance and defined in the program's Security Levels document (see Chapter 5 for additional guidance on Security Levels).

The following lists potential trigger indicators for Evacuation, or Security Level IV:
- CRS is directly or indirectly targeted.
- The threats of heavy fighting, attacks, looting etc. interrupt program operations or expose staff to unreasonable risks.
- CRS has no access to program beneficiaries, i.e. the program cannot be implemented.
- An individual expresses his/her personal desire to evacuate.
- Essential staff of other NGOs depart for security reasons.
- Essential U.S. Embassy staff or UN personnel depart for security reasons, particularly if this will affect CRS' evacuation capacity. Keep in mind that there are often political implications that factor into both the USG and UN decisions to order evacuation of personnel; as such CRS will often call for evacuation prior to the U.S. or UN announcing their own evacuation decision.

Several types of evacuation are possible:

1. Organized Evacuation or Pre-emptive Withdrawal: Early decision to evacuate allows the evacuation plan to be implemented. This type of departure is possible when the situation permits an early order to evacuate. CRS should consider a pre-emptive evacuation or withdrawal of non-essential staff and dependents if:
   - There exists a great deal of uncertainty about what might happen (conflicting rumors, unprecedented event, major controversial electoral process), but the costs of staying and "getting caught" if the worst case scenario comes to pass are significant.
   - Sheer numbers of staff and dependents would complicate CRS' capacity to evacuate if the environment were to deteriorate significantly.
   - Limited evacuation routes and options diminish in a quickly deteriorating situation.

2. Sudden Evacuation: Departure Is Sudden
   - The most important priority is to leave the location in the fastest way. CRS assets and personal belongings are not priorities.
   - However, the evacuation plan should be followed to the greatest extent possible.

3. Partial Or Total Staff Evacuation (Both Organized And Sudden)
   - In the case of partial evacuation, a limited team stays to continue priority activities. It is important to have discussed this beforehand so there is no question when the time comes how the decision will be made as to who will stay and who will leave.
   - In the case of a total international staff evacuation a series of administrative tasks that have been outlined by the country program in their evacuation plan, should be undertaken (if possible) before departure. This should be included in the Field Security Plan.

4. No Evacuation/Siege Situation (Security Level V)
   - Evacuating may in some cases jeopardize the security of the team. For example, means of transport may be unreliable or dangerous, information may be insufficient to analyze the situation or fighting may be too close to safely move.
   - If unable to evacuate and under siege, certain actions must be taken immediately:
   - Suspend all program activities.
   - Gather all evacuating staff at a selected place (residence, office, shelter).
   - Keep radio/phone contact with other NGOs, UN agencies, Embassies, Regional Director, and HQ to the extent possible while not compromising safety.
   - If appropriate, clearly identify the site as a CRS office or residence.

Duration Of Evacuation

An evacuation is often for an indeterminate length of time. The decision to return will depend on:
- Assessment of humanitarian needs and determination of appropriate response.
- A return to a reasonable level of security.
- Reasonable assurances of staff security by the local actors.
- CRS personnel who are willing and prepared to reinstate program activities.
- Approval by ELT and the Regional Director for a return after an evacuation.

Decision To Evacuate
- The decision to evacuate from a given area to the local base office or from one country to another may be made by a Field Coordinator or Country Representative, respectively.
- Whenever possible, the decision should be approved by the next level of management. Regional Directors and the Executive Leadership Team may also order evacuations. Each decision is taken after a dialogue between the different levels.

POLICY: If a situation arises which places CRS employees or their dependents in danger, they are authorized to leave their area of assignment as soon as possible. Advance approval is not required. If employees are told to evacuate by their supervisor, CR, RD or a member of the Executive Leadership Team, this must be done immediately. Refusal to leave could be cause for dismissal. Once the decision to evacuate has been taken, the decision for staff to return to their post must be endorsed by the ELT. (POL-HRD-INT-0007)

It is essential to coordinate the evacuation, when possible, with other NGOs, UN agencies, embassies, etc. The special cases of non-American international staff and their families should be taken into consideration long before evacuation conditions occur. For example, if CRS international staff plan to be evacuated by the U.S. Embassy there may be no guarantee that non-American third country nationals will be included in that evacuation. This is a very serious issue and all possible alternatives should be explored by the country program long before they are faced with this situation. Evacuation options should ideally be considered in staff/tdy composition for tense environments.

National Staff
CRS generally does not evacuate national staff unless they are at personal risk due to their affiliation with CRS, they are clearly targeted, or they have been assigned to sub-offices away from their official residence. The site of "official residence" must be clearly established by the country program and the staff member at the time of hiring. For example, if CRS hires a national staff person in town X and it is clearly established that town X is the staff person's official residence, and this person is then assigned to work in a CRS sub-office in town Y, CRS has a responsibility in the event of an evacuation to evacuate that person back to town X.

There are several important risks to consider when analyzing the agency's ability to evacuate national staff:
- The evacuation may be interpreted as a political act and put all concerned at greater risk.
- Inability of CRS to ensure national staff safety at checkpoints and border crossings.
- National staff do not enjoy the protection attributed to foreign nationals by the UN, international embassies, and, often, by the combatants themselves.
- Insufficiency of logistical means to support the number of people to be evacuated (staff and family members).
- Ethical dilemmas regarding who would be evacuated (just the staff person, his/her immediate family, extended family members?).

CRS' inability to guarantee national staff evacuation does not preclude its moral responsibility to assist national staff with other measures to protect their safety under evacuation conditions.

The Country Representative is responsible to meet with national staff to discuss options for CRS to support them to the extent possible in the case of an evacuation. For example, CRS could provide some amount of cash for them to use to evacuate themselves and their families if this is an option or a safe house could be identified and stocked with some basic food and non-food supplies. Most importantly, the various scenarios and options should be discussed with staff long before such an event may occur.

Civil-Military Relations

CRS increasingly works in close proximity to military actors[1]—not only in places affected by conflict or natural disasters, but also in relatively stable and secure environments. The potential for working alongside military actors has expanded for several reasons, including the emergence of integrated foreign policy approaches, which combine security, political and development instruments, the changing nature of conflict and peacekeeping, and the U.S. administration's global war on terror. Within the shrinking humanitarian space, blurred boundaries between civilian and military actors undermine the humanitarian principles of independence and impartiality, jeopardizing the safety and security of staff, partners and beneficiaries.

Independence and impartiality serve as the basis for our acceptance by local communities, local government, and belligerents. Remaining impartial allows CRS to provide assistance on the basis of need alone, regardless of origin, race, creed, ethnicity or political affiliation. Where military actors, such as the U.S. military, are engaged in the battle for hearts and minds, assistance is often provided with sole consideration for the local population's strategic value to the military mission. Maintaining independence, acting outside the control or authority of military actors, allows CRS to conduct development and humanitarian assistance in a manner consistent with our guiding principles and our commitment to alleviating human suffering. Association with military actors can lead to the loss of our independence and impartiality. If there is resistance to our presence and role in any operating environment, that resistance may create resentment and potential threats.

Country programs require flexibility to make appropriate judgments about relations with military actors based on local political, socio-economic and cultural realities. CRS prefers to work with local Church partners, local and international non-governmental organizations and host country governments to address humanitarian and development needs. CRS sometimes concludes that relations with military actors are necessary to provide safe access to vulnerable populations or to protect CRS staff and partners, particularly in the aftermath of natural disasters or during political conflicts when civilian capacity is overwhelmed. Engaging with the military is viewed as an option of last resort.

As outlined in the *Guidelines on Relations with Military* Actors, CRS must meet three criteria and consider Catholic and humanitarian principles prior to determining that relations with military actors are appropriate. One of the criteria concerns staff safety and security. Country programs must be satisfied that association with military actors does not lead to unacceptable risks that compromise the safety and security of staff, partners and beneficiaries. Acceptable risk should be defined according to locally-appropriate security indicators, as outlined in security plans for country programs.

CRS AFGHANISTAN: Working with military actors, who are directly engaged as a party to active conflict, presents challenges to maintaining staff safety and security.

In Afghanistan, for example, the military's use of quick impact projects aimed at winning hearts and minds challenges the distinction between military and humanitarian action. Under such conditions, CRS cannot assume that our presence will be welcomed and that as a U.S. based NGO we will be perceived as impartial.

CRS can manage staff safety and security by distancing itself from all parties to the conflict, including the U.S. military, Coalition militaries and insurgents, thus controlling the perception that CRS supports military objectives and leading to greater acceptance by the general population, local government and other parties to the conflict.

While local acceptance has been essential to the protection of some international NGOs, including CRS, from insurgent attacks in Afghanistan, increasing skepticism among the Afghan population regarding the U.S. role, in particular, threatens the space traditionally reserved for humanitarian actors. Regardless of our declared or actual position, some may perceive that CRS is aligned with the belligerent donor and, thus, become a target for opposing parties to the conflict.

In Afghanistan, to avoid the perception that CRS supports military objectives, CRS rigorously upholds the principles of impartiality and independence. CRS limits interaction with the military to the receipt of security updates, which allow the country program to make informed decisions about travel in the country.

TIPS

1. Working alongside military actors during political conflicts may pose the greatest safety and security risk to staff, partners and beneficiaries. However, though the operating environment in one country may be conducive to relations with military actors, country programs must consider the possibility that relations in one country may create unwelcome and uncomfortable consequences in another country where CRS and partners work.

2. Decisions to form relations with military actors depend on prevailing conditions in the country, and these conditions will change. For this reason, CRS must consistently reevaluate decisions to work with military actors. As conditions change, CRS may decide to increase, modify or cease relations with military actors.

3. Where relations with military actors jeopardize staff safety and security, our ability to serve local populations is diminished. Threats impede our ability to gain access to beneficiaries and deliver humanitarian and development assistance.

4. Acceptance among local communities is possible, in part, through our reliance on national staff. However, this shifts the burden of risk to national staff. In fact, national staff represents the majority of victims of violence in all countries, and their risk relative to international staff is increasing in the most violent contexts[2]. When determining appropriate relations with military actors, CRS must pay attention to the particular risks faced by national staff.

Armed Protection

CRS maintains a preference for the strategy of acceptance[4] when deciding on what kinds of security measures will be taken to protect agency personnel, assets and operations. While CRS in fact employs a mix of acceptance, protection, and deterrence security strategies, the use of armed protection (a deterrence strategy) in particular requires serious consideration and analysis prior to implementation. While these guidelines focus on contexts of civil conflict situations (particularly in situations where the U.S. government is considered a party to the conflict), certainly some of the principles are relevant for all contexts. Nevertheless, CRS recognizes that armed guards for site protection at a warehouse in a context of high crime presents a different cost-benefit scenario than armed militia escorting CRS staff to a community torn by civil conflict. For the purposes of this guidance, armed protection means that CRS is contracting, hiring, or accompanied by, official military forces or other military actors (as defined by IASC and utilized in CRS' Civil Military Relations Guidelines)[5] for the express purpose of securing CRS personnel, assets or programming.

If CRS finds itself in an environment where armed protection seems to be the only strategy that could reduce the risk of harm to personnel or prevent the loss of assets, the option to withdraw or suspend operations in that environment must be carefully examined, as it indicates that we may have reached our threshold of acceptable risk. (See section earlier in Chapter 1 on CRS' Acceptable Risk Threshold).

> **POLICY:** CRS staff must not bear firearms. (POL-HRD-INT-0005 Overseas Safety and Security) Firearms are not permitted inside CRS offices, residences, vehicles or any other enclosed space where staff, partners or beneficiaries would be at risk of an accidental shooting.

> **POLICY:** CRS does not engage armed protection services as a general rule. Exceptions to this policy are vetted through the Regional Director and Director of Staff Safety and Security, and approved by the EVP, Overseas Operations. (POL-HRD-INT-0005)

Under exceptional circumstances CRS may authorize the use of armed protection (by third parties) for the protection of sites, convoys or vehicle movements. In some cases, armed protection will be mandated by local authorities or UN officials in order for CRS to be able to access certain routes or destinations, and the humanitarian mandate for reaching those destinations may, in certain circumstances, trump the objections to armed protection. CRS local partners should be consulted prior to any decision made regarding use of armed protection. Exceptions to the "no armed protection" rule must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Regional Director and authorized by the EVP, Overseas Operations.

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4 See Chapter 2 for additional information on security strategies and CRS' Option for Acceptance.
5 Military actors: Includes official military forces, as well as non-state armed groups, private military, private security companies and mercenaries. Official military forces include forces of a state or regional- or inter-governmental organization that are subject to a hierarchical chain of command. This includes a wide spectrum of actors such as the local or national military, multi-national forces, UN peacekeeping troops, international military observers, foreign occupying forces, regional troops or other officially recognized troops (Inter-agency Standing Committees' Civil Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies: An IASC Reference Paper, 2004).

There are three general areas of consideration around the armed protection decision:

Questions Of Image:
- Armed protection is an implicit recognition that an "acceptance" security strategy is not enough to reduce the risk of harm to CRS personnel and assets to "acceptable" levels. Is CRS' presence justifiable given the agency's conservative risk threshold and nature of programming?
- Armed protection may undermine CRS' ability to operate according to the principles of impartiality and independence. In situations of armed conflict or presence of other "politically-motivated" threats, it becomes particularly important to maintain a posture of impartiality and a non-combatant image.[6] Will the use of armed protection diminish the concept of humanitarian space and use of "acceptance" strategies in the future?
- Is CRS propagating a culture of violence by contracting armed protection, and using donor contributions to do so?
- How do local (Church) partners feel about the presence of armed protection forces?
- How commonplace is the use of armed guards for site protection, i.e. will CRS sites be more conspicuous (and become prime targets) if they do *not* have armed protection?

Questions Of Effectiveness:
- Does armed protection reduce or increase the risk of violent escalation?
- Is it more likely that armed protection will provide an effective deterrent or more likely that due to lack of training, proper equipment, etc., that someone might accidentally get hurt?
- What are we protecting? Is the value of what's being protected worth the fallout from either an intentional or accidental shooting?
- Are we engaged in life-saving programming, and is an armed escort the last resort option that will permit access to beneficiaries?
- Does the armed protection place staff/beneficiaries at greater or lesser risk?

Questions Of Management:
Who is providing the armed protection: a "legitimate" security force with an internationally recognized mandate to provide for the safety of humanitarian workers (e.g. UN, host government security force providing armed escort for convoys); a contracted service for protection (e.g. guards for premises); or an "illegitimate" armed group? In particular, consider:
- Political affiliation of the provider.
- Public perception and reputation of the provider.
- Overall mission/objective of the provider. Does their mission complement or contradict CRS' mission/objectives?
- How professional is the provider? Look at training and equipment.
- How much management control does CRS need and/or want over the provider?
- Does CRS have command and control over the armed protection force and the internal management capacity to manage this (contractual) relationship?

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6 Impartiality: In accordance with CRS' core principles, impartiality means that humanitarian assistance should benefit people regardless of their origin, race, creed, ethnicity or political affiliation. Neutrality: Neutrality means not taking sides in hostilities or engaging at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature. While CRS is non-partisan, the agency is not necessarily neutral in that it maintains a preferential option for the poor.

The decision to use armed protection will be context specific. However, the following criteria should be met before affirming the need for armed protection.

✓ Large number of lives depend on CRS accessing their location.
✓ There is a direct and obvious threat to the safety and security of CRS staff.
✓ Large numbers of lives depend on CRS accessing their location.
✓ The threat is banditry rather than political in nature.
✓ All other security strategies have been explored.
✓ Evacuation and/or suspension of operations in high-risk locations have been considered.
✓ The provider is acceptable (i.e. responses to the above "legitimacy" and "command and control" criteria are favorable).
✓ The deterrent can be effective.

If the use of armed protection is authorized in accordance with policy, CRS country program management should seek to manage provision of armed protection services, taking into consideration the following and including all agreements in written form, where possible:

CONTRACTUAL STIPULATIONS
✓ History of performance.
✓ Training.
✓ Guard Selection criteria: age, health, literacy, no use of alcohol or drugs, no other job.
✓ Minimum supervision standards.
✓ Minimum standards for recruitment and training.
✓ Termination of Contract: Ensure that CRS maintains the ability to terminate on short notice any contract or individual guard who violates guidance.
✓ Liability in the case of an exchange of gunfire leading to injury or death.
✓ Payment Terms and Conditions for guards (what percentage of what CRS pays goes to guard salaries, does provider pay a "fair wage?," when/how will pay be delivered, does CRS have ability to supplement guard wages).
✓ Quick Reaction force access terms and procedures (if applicable).

Command And Control
The question of command and control must be addressed both when employing a private security company and when assistance is requested from external security forces. CRS should in every case ensure that guards receive a thorough briefing on who CRS is, what CRS does (and doesn't do) and are clear on messages that CRS wishes to send to local population who might approach guards to ask about the organization. Also, CRS should ensure that all CRS staff is appropriately oriented to the roles and responsibilities of guards, building access procedures, and incident response procedures. CRS country program management must seek a clear understanding of:

▪ To whom are private security guards answerable—the security services provider or CRS management?
▪ What is CRS' recourse in case of dissatisfaction with guard performance?
▪ In the case of external security forces, what is the relative authority of their military commander versus the CRS manager?
▪ Who determines the rules of engagement and ensures that armed personnel understand them?

Be aware that even within a multinational peacekeeping force, for example, different armed

personnel from different nationalities will have different approaches to "command and control," "rules of engagement," and different definitions of "appropriate" versus "excessive" force. Detailed consultation with individual field commanders is required to reach a common understanding between CRS and the provider of armed protection. Similarly, different units of a national army will have different interpretations. Where possible, procedures and approaches should be agreed upon and documented in advance.

Weaponry And Equipment

Agreement should be reached between CRS and the provider of armed protection on:

- Weaponry: Who provides ammunition and ensures that weapons are well maintained? Where are weapons and ammunition stored?
- Additional equipment: Who provides additional equipment such as waterproof clothing, flashlight/torch, baton, whistle, boots, etc.?
- Vehicle use: Are there any circumstances under which armed guards would be permitted to use/ride in agency vehicles?

Rules of Engagement And The "Minimum Use of Force" Principle

Similar to command and control, CRS needs to understand the rules of engagement under which military actors are trained to operate. Rules of Engagement (ROE) outline the circumstances under which armed personnel are permitted to resort to the use of force to achieve their objective. The basic principle behind ROE should be the *minimum use of force.* Using force can range from a guard ordering an individual to leave the premises to opening fire.

> **THE PRINCIPLE OF MINIMUM USE OF FORCE MEANS CHOOSING TO APPLY THE MINIMUM FORCE NECESSARY TO PREVENT SOMETHING FROM HAPPENING. FORCE SHOULD NOT BE USED TO RETALIATE OR PUNISH FOR SOMETHING THAT HAS ALREADY HAPPENED.**

(Endnotes)

1 Military actors include official military forces, as well as non-state armed groups, private military, private security companies and mercenaries. Official military forces include forces of a state or regional- or inter-governmental organization that are subject to a hierarchical chain of command. This includes actors such as the local and national military, multi-national forces, UN peacekeeping troops, international military observers, foreign occupying forces and regional troops.

2 Stoddard, Abby, Adele Harmer and Katherine Haver (2006). Providing aid in insecure environments: trends in policy and operations. Overseas Development Institute: London.