

## Reporting skills in conflict zones and non-conflict zones

### Handout by [András Földes](#)

There are no reporting skills dedicated to conflict zones, and other techniques for 'normal situations'. The basic rules and ethics of journalism are the same wherever a journalist works.

### Preparations

This is an important part of the work because any missing information or equipment can be hard to replace later on in the field.

Preparations can take even a few months.

- **Gathering practical information:**

Search information about the matter you cover

Travel information. How to get to the site, how to travel around.

Best way to travel.

What are the dangerous parts of the country?

Visa: Journalist visa or tourist visa?

Permits: Some areas may require special permits to visit.

Health information, vaccination.

Weather, climate.

- **Building network:** Contact local NGO-s, officials, journalists.

Check the Twitter accounts, or other social media platforms of journalists, experts in the field. Cross check the information that is given!

Contact ministries, most commonly the Information or Cultural Ministry deals with journalists.

- **Finding the right fixer.** Use your network, check the fixers available on the internet. Ask other journalists if they would recommend someone they know. Contact the attendants and get information from them. Take your time to choose the best.

Bargain on the price.

- **Gathering information on customs and culture:** Women rights, general attitude towards foreigners, or certain nations.  
Customs to follow.  
How institutions and state offices work.
- **Technical equipment:** Write a check list about the gear you work with, because something that is left home can be difficult to replace on site.  
Basic list: camera, phone, batteries, chargers for each device, cables, hard drive, notebook, pen.
- **Set some interviews for the first days of your trip from home:**  
You save time with this. The easiest to start with are officials, mayors, NGO people.

### **Field work**

- Work with a fixer: Consider the fact that your fixer isn't neutral.
- Never pay for information or interviews. That corrupts the given information.
- Follow local rules and customs as these help to build relations with locals.
- Take extra care when your sources are women, migrants, minorities. Marginalized people are more vulnerable, and they need extra protection.
- Take photos even if those are not needed for the article or photo report. These are perfect tools to remember certain situations and can be used later to write your piece.
- Be flexible. If you get new information or new leads allow you to alter your original plan.

### **Security**

- Have a person (your editor, family member, friend) at home who you give a call or send a message every day at a certain time. If

you might disappear your contact person can alarm the embassy or other officials.

- Don't walk alone unless it's absolutely necessary.
- Have an offline map application on your phone, where you can track where you are, if you are out on the field. (I use maps.me )
- Take plenty of cash with you as ATM-s are not always available, and bank cards are not accepted in many places.
- Keep your money in separate places, some in your purse, some in a secret belt, some in your hotel.
- Save your notes on Google drive and download your shots every evening.
- Store your shots on two hard drives that are kept separately.

### **After returning home**

- Think about the protection of your sources when you work on your piece.
- Keep your contacts alive for later work.

### **Some of my works that are done by these methods:**

- [Life on the Ukrainian frontline](#)
- [Afghanistan - Travel to the land of terror](#)
- [I was detained by armed Afghan teens and saved from the Taliban by the Taliban](#)
- [Our stop at a checkpoint in Afghanistan turned into a gun show](#)
- 
- [Video interviews with Afghan women](#)

**Good luck with your work! [foldesandras@gmail.com](mailto:foldesandras@gmail.com)**