

Pre-Deployment Safety and Security Handout

PLSO NIGERIA

This pre-travel safety and security handout is provided for implementing partners as part of the USAID *Partner Liaison Security Operations* [PLSO] project in Nigeria. This handout is part of an overall package of briefing documents, 'Know-B4U-Go' videos, in-person briefings and training courses available through this project. You are encouraged to engage with the PLSO team in Abuja for further support.

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Pre-Travel Planning Measures

The following considerations are offered for pre-trip planning:

- Seek medical advice and make sure you are medically and dentally fit for travel.
- Put your personal business in order before you travel. Paying bills, making arrangements for personal business to be taken care of in your absence, and making a Will should all be completed before departure.
- Check the expiration date of your passport as some countries will not allow you to enter unless you have a certain amount of time remaining on your passport.
- Scan your passport, visas and airline tickets electronically and email them to yourself, your employer, and a friend or family member in case these are lost or stolen.
- Register with your embassy if they have a Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).
- Essential or high value items should also be placed in your carry-on bag; this includes important documents and prescription medicines.

Personal Security and Safety

The following may help you to reduce the risk of criminal incidents occurring:

- Research the area you are visiting so you understand the risks you may face¹.
- Do not display wealth or carry large amounts of money.
- Avoid areas prone to crime, or where you might stand out.
- Do not travel alone if possible, especially at night.
- Avoid accepting invitations by strangers and be aware of your surroundings.
- Do not accept drinks from strangers, or leave drinks unattended.
- Do not leave your personal possessions unattended.
- Look for suspicious people paying unusual attention to you, or who might be following you.
- Lock your car doors, and keep your car windows up when travelling.
- Ensure your residence or hotel doors and windows are locked.
- Ensure your phone is always charged and with sufficient credit.
- Avoid flags and symbols on your clothing and baggage.
- Ensure emergency phone numbers are loaded into your phone, or are printed and readily available.
- Consider your religion, nationality and sexual orientation in terms of local legal and cultural risks.

¹ The PLSO team provides an arrival safety, security and cultural awareness briefing in Abuja.

Hotels and Guesthouses

When selecting and staying in a hotel or guesthouse the following considerations are suggested:

- Request a room between the 3rd and 5th floors and facing away from main roads, or other places that allow vehicular access to the hotel.
- Physically walk the route from your room to the fire exit(s).
- If the room is provided with a wall safe then it should be used to store passports and valuables.
- When not in the room you may wish to place a “do not disturb” sign on the door and turn the television on to a local channel and at a volume to suggest that someone is still in the room, in order to deter criminals.

Cultural and Social Awareness

You should research the cultural and social norms and laws of the country before you travel, including:

- The appropriate dress codes for Nigeria – including for specific areas.
- How women are treated in the country regards gender equality and social practices (including in the event of a sexual assault).
- The cultural norms and laws regarding the LGBTQIA community in Nigeria.
- Politically motivated laws regards freedom of speech and taking photographs of infrastructures and people.
- Any hand gestures and body language which might inadvertently cause offense.
- The laws relating to alcohol.

Actions on Fire

Emergency Response Drills:

- Shout “FIRE, FIRE, FIRE!!!” and press fire buttons, or the break glass on fire alarms.
- Feel the door near the top with the back of your hand. If the door or knob is hot, do not open it. If it is cold, open it slowly and be prepared to shut it quickly if smoke pours in.
- If possible evacuate the building, closing all doors behind you, but do not lock them.
- Do not use the elevator and stay low to avoid poisonous smoke.
- If you cannot leave the room then signal for help: try to telephone, or hang a sheet out of the window.
- Fill the bathtub with water – it can be used for fire-fighting. Wet towels and sheets and stuff them around cracks in the doorway and any place smoke can seep into your room.

Actions on Robbery

Emergency Response Drills:

- Hand over all items without resistance and be respectful and polite – try to be confident.
- Always have some money on you to give to the criminal.
- If you are alone explain that you are expecting several people at any moment.
- Avoid staring the robber in the face.
- If carjacked and in significant danger – then ensure your seatbelt is fitted and crash the vehicle in order to injure the robber, while allowing you to escape (**only as a last resort**).

Actions on Demonstrations and Civil Disturbances

Emergency Response Drills:

- Seek to distance yourself quickly from the crowd, finding a safe place to wait until the gathering moves on.
- Do not show fear as vulnerable people are more likely to be attacked or robbed.
- Avoid remaining in the area to watch events as this will expose you to avoidable risks.
- Lock external gates and doors, as well as internal doors and windows.
- Vehicle doors should be locked and the windows rolled up when moving through a crowd.

- Stay away from windows or balconies, and close curtains and turn off any lights.
- Watch the television or listen to the radio to track events.
- Track social media alerts for information.
- Do not confront responding security forces – they might use tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition!

Actions on Arrest and Detention

Emergency Response Drills:

- Do not argue or fight when being detained – be polite and respectful.
- Do not offer bribes, but consider paying fees associated with an “offence”.
- Instruct others to report your arrest to the Embassy (if you are a foreigner).
- Ask to ring the Embassy or Consulate – seek their advice and assistance.
- Stay calm, maintain your dignity and do not do anything to provoke the arresting officer(s).
- DO NOT admit anything or volunteer any information which could incriminate you.
- Do not sign anything until you have a lawyer or an embassy or consulate representative present.

Actions on Suspicious Objects (explosive devices)

Emergency Response Drills:

- Do not touch the object.
- Move people away from the object (ideally 300 to 900 feet in line of sight, or behind hard structures).
- Do not use portable radio equipment or cell phones within 100 feet of the suspicious object.
- Immediately notify the police of the threat.

Actions on Active Shooter and Armed Aggressor

You should **Stop, Think** and then **Act**. You have 3 basic options available in terms of your actions:

- You have the option to **RUN**, IF you have identified the source of the threat and are able to evacuate from the area along a safe route.
- If you cannot run then find somewhere to **HIDE**. Close doors, remove ‘do not disturb’ signs from hotel doors, turn off radios and television sets, put your phone onto vibrate (and tell others to do the same), and move away from windows and doors so that you are not in the direct line of fire from guns. Barricade rooms and notify the police of your location and the situation.
- As a last resort, and only if your life depends on it – then **FIGHT**. If you fight, then commit 100% and use any object (phones, laptops, chairs) to distract or injure the aggressor. Go for their hands and hold on so as to stop them from using weapons. Use your teeth to bite, fingers to claw, or your head to head butt. Do not hold back until they are no longer a threat.

Actions on Earthquakes

Emergency Response Drills:

- If indoors then you should drop to the ground and take cover under a sturdy piece of furniture, and hold on until the shaking stops.
- If there is no cover nearby then cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- You should position yourself away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls.
- You should only use a doorway for shelter if it is in close proximity, and if it is strongly supported.
- If outdoors stay outside and move away from buildings, streetlights and utility wires until the shaking ceases as the greatest danger is from falling debris.

- If you are in a moving vehicle at the time of the earthquake then you should stop as quickly and safely as possible, and stay in the vehicle.
- You should avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses and utility wires.
- Turn off any gas and electrical supplies if in your home or an office.
- Once the shaking has stopped you should proceed cautiously, avoiding roads, bridges, or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake.

Actions on Floods

Emergency Response Drills:

- Avoid crossing running water as you may not be able to identify how deep the water is, and you may not be able to see any underway obstacles or hazards.
- Look for fallen power lines which might have electrified the water.
- Be aware that water might be contaminated in terms of drinking, as well as infecting any wounds you have.
- Find high ground, or move to the upper floors of a building.
- Hang sheets out of windows to indicate to rescuers your location.

Actions on Storms

Emergency Response Drills:

- During a storm you should avoid windows, skylights and glass doors as debris and strong winds may shatter such structures.
- You should move to a safe area - such as an interior office or room, or a closet or bathroom.
- In case of flooding then electricity should be turned off at the main breaker.
- If the facility loses power then major appliances should be turned off - such as the air conditioner and water heaters so as to reduce damage.
- You should not leave a safe location when in the eye of the storm, but must wait until the storm has passed since there will be a short period of calm followed by a rapid increase in wind speed.

Actions on Forest or Bush Fires

Emergency Response Drills:

- Monitor local radio stations in order to understand where the fire is located, and which areas are affected by the downwind effects in terms of smoke hazards, as well as the direction in which the fire is moving.
- Prepare to evacuate along prescribed escape routes once the location and direction of the fire is known.
- Be aware that fires may leap ridge-tops or rivers, and may travel at such speeds as to overtake pedestrians and moving vehicles.
- In some instances fires can melt the tarmac on roads, making routes impassable with fallen trees.
- Close all doors in the residence or facility, shut off gas valves and pilot lights, and remove flammable curtains, awnings or other window coverings.
- If sufficient water is available then turn sprinklers on to wet the roof and any water-proof valuables to reduce the risks of ignition.
- Limit the time spent out-of-doors until conditions improve so as to avoid breathing in harmful smoke.
- Turn off air exchange units that bring air in from the outside if they are worsening the indoor air quality.