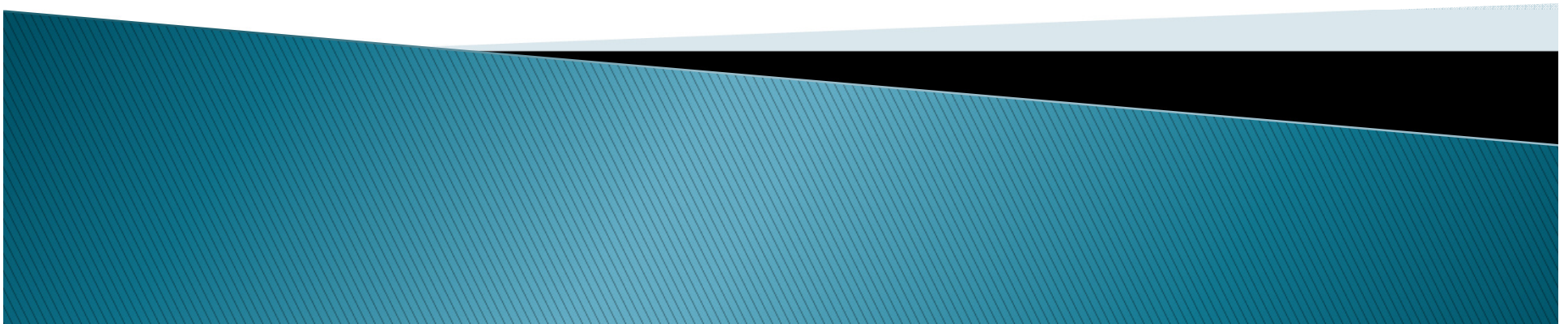


Documenting religious freedom violations

Documentation: principles, aims and practical steps

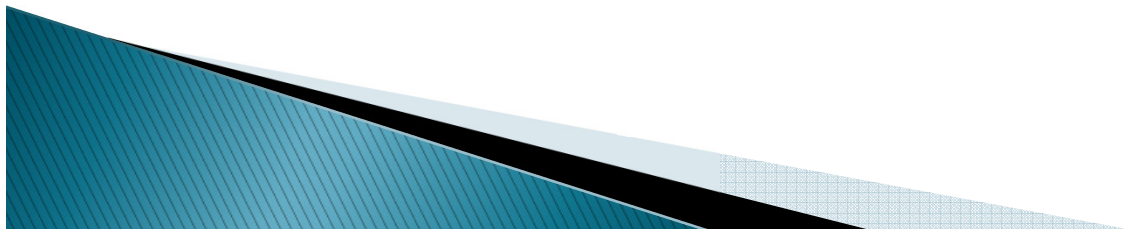


Documenting religious freedom violations

What is advocacy?



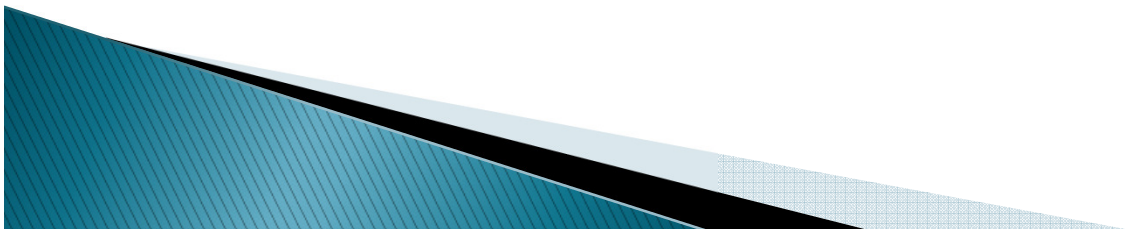
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Advocacy depends on documentation

- ▶ Documentation is the collection of key facts and evidence that present the case or issue.
- ▶ It is important both for you and for the people you are asking to be involved in your advocacy.
- ▶ It is often essential in deciding how to respond to the problem itself.
- ▶ Basic facts, and an understanding of the context, are essential tools for advocacy.

Documentation is the foundation of all advocacy



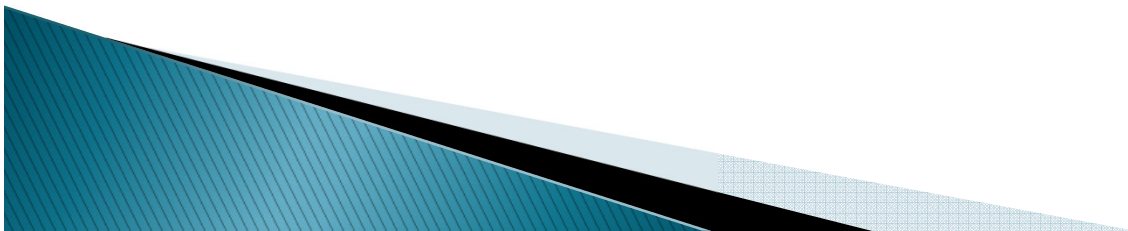
Action and outcome

ACTION: send information to the UN Special Rapporteur (SR) on freedom of religion or belief

- Part of the SR's job is to examine religious freedom violations and recommend solutions
- The SR invites organizations, religious groups and individuals to submit reliable information about violations

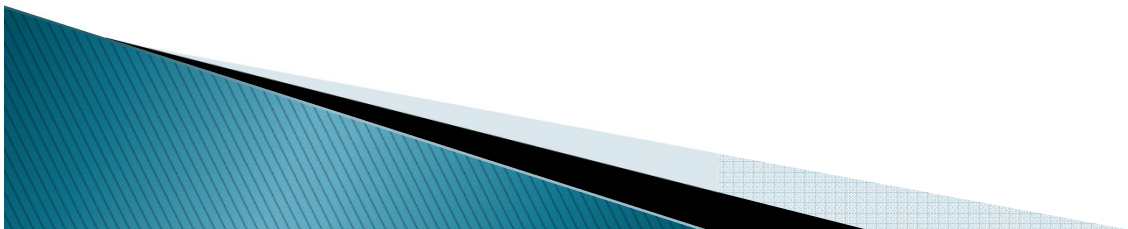
OUTCOME: When he receives the information, he may request the governments to make observations and comments on the case

There is a model questionnaire for sending information
(see more later)




Assess risks

- ▶ What are the risks for the person/s concerned (victim/s) when meeting with you?
- ▶ What are the risks for you when gathering information?
- ▶ What are the risks for you when passing on the information (via email, phone etc.)?
- ▶ What are the risks for the victim/s if the information is made public?
- ▶ How can you minimize all these risks?

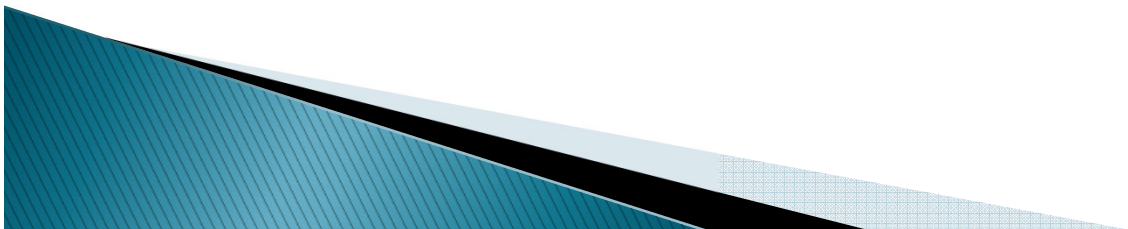


Informed consent

- ▶ Where possible, get permission from the victim to share the information – this is something the SR's staff will need to know
 - ▶ If it is not possible to do this, get permission from someone close to the victims, for example a church leader
 - ▶ Make sure the person knows how you are going to use the information and what the risks are (informed consent)
 - ▶ If the victim is unwilling to give their permission, you should respect their wishes
 - ▶ **Never say you have consent if you don't!**
- 

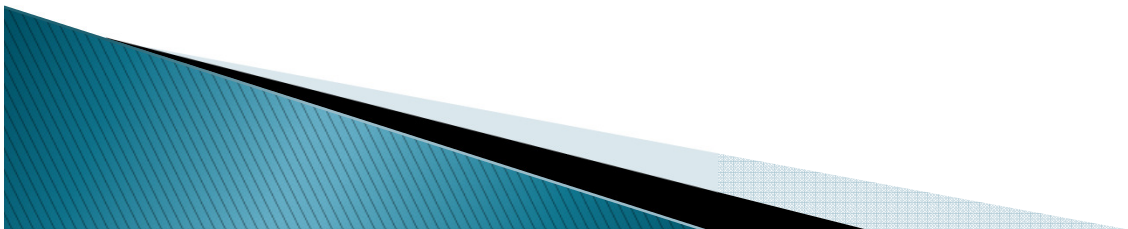
Anonymity/Confidentiality

- ▶ To avoid risk, it may be necessary for you and/or the source to be anonymous
- ▶ Make sure your source understands that this is an option
- ▶ When you send information, make it clear if you and/or your source want to be anonymous
- ▶ If there is any information which should be kept confidential, mark “CONFIDENTIAL” beside the relevant text



Verifying sources

- ▶ Consider any bias your source may have – perhaps because of a personal dispute?
- ▶ Has the victim or their religious group ever been involved in any violence?
- ▶ If you can, cross-check the information with another independent source
- ▶ If some details are unclear or missing, make this clear when you send the information

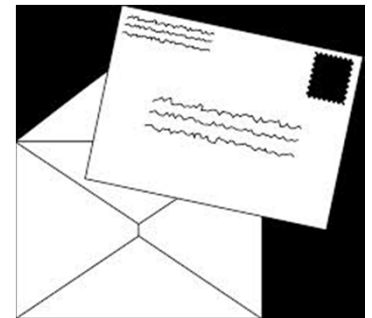


Documenting religious freedom violations

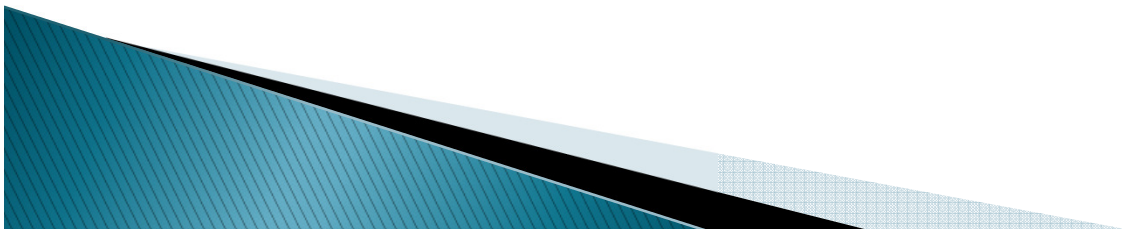
Source checklist

Are your sources:

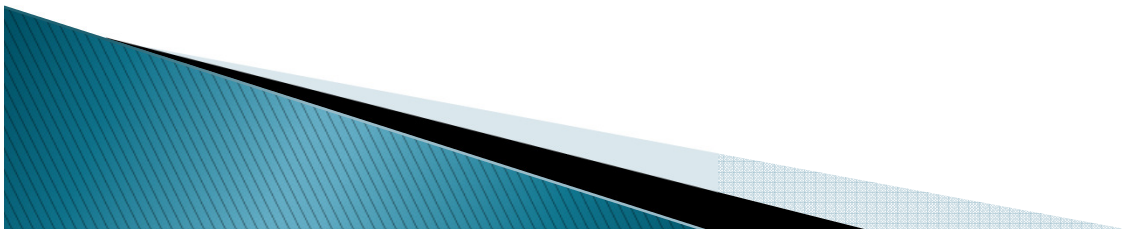
- ▶ reliable?
- ▶ objective?
- ▶ consenting?
- ▶ cross-checked?



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- ▶ Exercise: In the example case, what potential problems are there with the source?
- ▶ Discussion point: what kinds of questions should you ask about your source when collecting information?



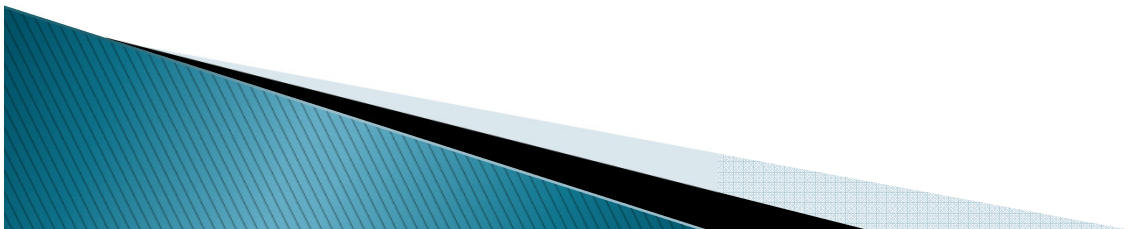
Useful questions

WHO – WHAT – WHEN – WHERE – WHY

WHO: Who is involved in the case? In an attack, who is the victim? Who is the perpetrator? Who were the witnesses? Was anyone else involved in any way that could be important? Collect full names.

WHAT: What exactly happened? Break down each situation so that if you are questioned about it you are able to reply in detail.

WHEN: When did the event take place? Give exact dates if possible. If the event is ongoing, give its start date and specify for how long it has continued. If there is a series of events give the dates for all.

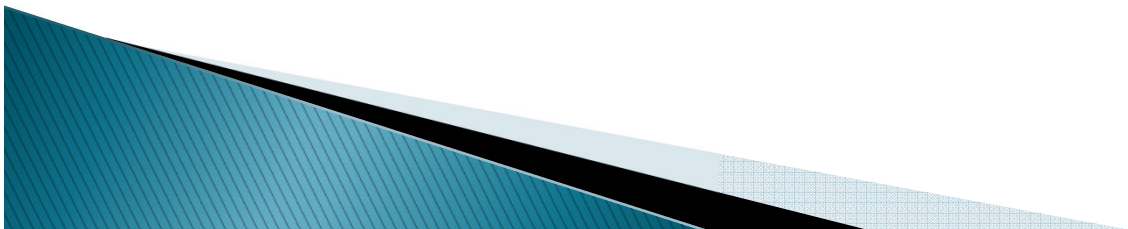


Useful questions

WHERE. Where did the event take place? Be as specific as possible. It may be useful to attach a map or an explanation.

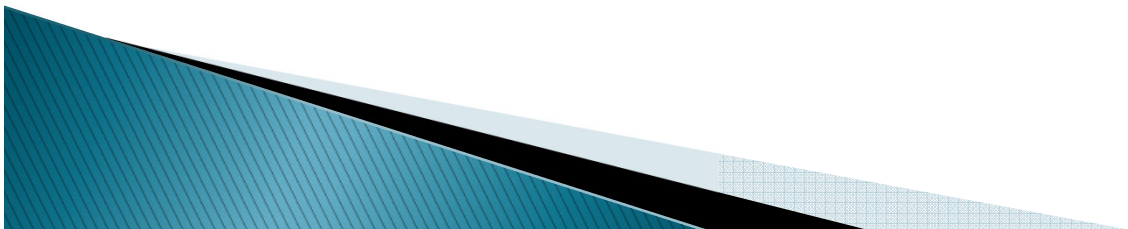
WHY. Why did this event occur? Were there any other events that led up to it? Provide facts that can show the reasons behind what happened.

If in doubt, always include more detail
rather than less!



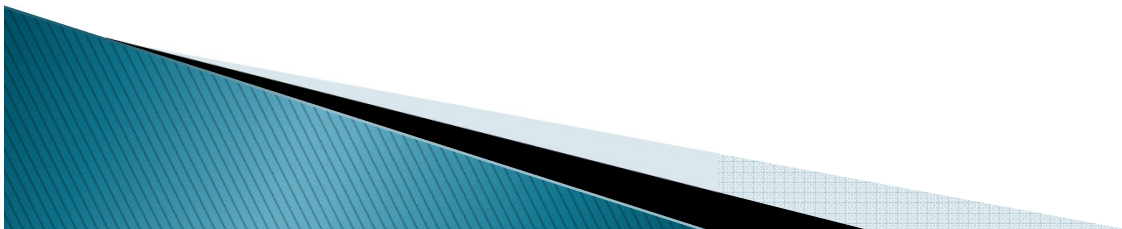
Testimonials

- ▶ first-hand interviews with victims, families, witnesses
- > consider:
 - confidentiality
 - consent
 - possible trauma of “retelling”



Other types of evidence

- ▶ Photographic
- ▶ Video
- ▶ Audio recording
- ▶ Maps
- ▶ Police reports/Indictments
- ▶ Medical reports
- ▶ Government/army orders
- ▶ Court judgements



- ▶ Exercise: In the example case, briefly answer the 5 questions: where, when, who, what, why
- ▶ Discussion point: what kinds of evidence might you be able to find to support your case?

