Peace Brigades International
Security Policy

Public Version

PBI's mandate

The mandate of PBI is to create space for peace and to protect human rights.

The central focus of PBI's work is that of international presence defined as one or more of the following: physical presence, physical accompaniment, public relations, networking, observing, reporting, and building international support networks. Other methods that play a role in peace building such as peace education and mental health recovery can be undertaken by a project provided that protective presence is considered.

PBI recognises that situations may arise that require a methodology that we have not used previously. PBI's mandate is intended to allow the implementation of such a methodology after consultation with all constituencies.

PBI's principles

Non-violence: PBI is convinced that enduring peace and lasting solutions of conflicts between and within nations cannot be achieved by violent means and therefore it rejects violence of any kind and from any source. PBI aims to support the processes of building a peaceful society by encouraging cooperation between groups working in democratic ways and striving to find political solutions to conflicts by non-violent means.

International Character: PBI is a global organisation. It represents the concerns of the international community in relation to conflicts and crises. PBI respects the autonomy and the right to self-determination of all people, and sees its services as a small complementary contribution to their own efforts for peace-making. Hence it avoids imposing or interfering with their own ways of thinking and acting. As a corollary of this approach PBI goes into a situation only if requested by the concerned people of the area.

Non-Partisanship: As an international third-party force PBI acts in an independent and non-partisan manner which implies: to deal with all parties with an open mind, to report as objectively as possible, to refrain from judgemental responses and to voice concerns to those responsible without being accusative. Non-partisanship does not mean indifference, neutrality or passivity towards injustice or towards violation of human rights. On the contrary: PBI is fully committed to these values and struggles against violence - physical or structural - as a means of establishing enduring peace. Therefore the work of PBI, as a non-partisan third-party, requires that PBI teams and their members do not become involved in the work of the groups or the individuals who they assist or accompany; that they try their utmost to remain non-judgemental, despite their possible emotional identification with the oppressed or the victim; and that they do not become involved in the official politics of the host country.

Non-Hierarchical Functioning: PBI uses a non-hierarchical model of organising and decision-making, which places importance on relationships and processes and not just on outcomes.

(Please find a detailed version of PBI's principles on our webpage: www.peacebrigades.org)

1. Introduction

Peace Brigades International provides international presence in different conflict areas with the aim of creating space for peace and protecting human rights. We recognise that our work constitutes an intervention in conflict dynamics that may affect the interests of certain actors and which may subsequently create an inherent risk for our volunteers and staff. Since its early years PBI has responded to this situation of risk by establishing security measures that enable the organisation to reduce the risk to a reasonable level and to react adequately in case an emergency situation occurs.

In recent years, personnel safety has become a key concern for all non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in conflict areas. While historically NGOs used general acceptance of their neutrality as a key protection tool, a recent change in how they are perceived has affected the level of protection necessary for them to operate safely. Now NGOs often become targets and their staff and volunteers experience an increased level of insecurity, which has included NGO workers losing their lives.

Considering this tendency and having experienced serious security incidents affecting the well-being or safety of volunteers, PBI is committed to the ongoing improvement of its security management, not only at the level of field projects but also within its international structure.

2. Purpose of the Security Policy

This document sets out the policy for security of volunteers and staff in PBI's field projects by defining PBI's perspective on security and formulating basic security strategies. It defines the security management responsibilities of the International Council (IC), the field projects and the individual volunteers and staff personal. The policy also serves to increase internal understanding of PBI's international emergency response structure by outlining the functions of the IC's Emergency Response Committee (ERC).

This Security Policy serves as a framework for more detailed procedures in field projects relevant to their specific country context.

What this document is not about:

This document focuses exclusively on PBI's policy and internal structures concerning the security of volunteers and staff in field projects. It does not include safety aspects related to mental and physical health, which are covered by a PBI working group working to improve standards of volunteer support before, during and after field service.

3. PBI`s perspective on security

Our mandate: to protect

PBI's mandate is to create space for peace and to protect human rights. There are obvious links, both in moral and practical terms, between our core work of protection for local human rights defenders and the security of our personnel. From a conceptual point of view the security of PBI field teams and the protection of human rights defenders are two sides of the same coin that share common analysis and common strategies. But from a tactical point of view both require partially different approaches and procedures.

Coping with risks

PBI is aware that field teams face security risks that are directly related to our core work of protection. We are willing to face these risks in order to accomplish our mandate of creating space for peace. Risk is inevitable. However, there is much that can be done to mitigate risk or to minimise the effects of security incidents if they occur.

Duty of care for risk-prone work

We recognise that PBI's work places great demand on volunteers and staff in complex, risky conditions. We have a duty of care to ensure the physical and psychological well-being of our volunteers and staff.

Holistic security approach

PBI is aware of the interrelation between security and project planning and implementation. Consequently we use a holistic approach: Taking security measures is not an additional, inconvenient task; rather it is appropriate security management that enables PBI to provide protective presence in sensitive areas. In this sense security management needs to be practised throughout the organisation. Security management is not only preparing for the most adequate mode of response for emergency situations but also must be considered from the perspective of prevention.

4. Security strategies

PBI uses various security strategies that are closely related to the organisation's principles introduced above. In general we can refer to the following three ideal security strategies: acceptance, protection and deterrence.

An acceptance strategy tries to reduce or remove threats by increasing the external acceptance for our work in a particular context. A protective strategy uses protective procedures to reduce the vulnerability of the organisation. A deterrence strategy attempts to deter a threat by posing a counter-threat.

Acceptance Strategy

PBI aims to gain protection by having our work in conflict areas accepted and recognised by local actors. Knowing that recognition cannot simply be presumed but must be earned an important part of the field team's daily work consists of informing stakeholders and local authorities about our mandate and activities. Receiving their support and developing a shared sense of responsibility for the protection of our volunteers and staff are crucial for PBI's security management.

We try to make our work and activities as transparent as possible by maintaining continuous communication with civil society, authorities at all levels and other stakeholders. As a third-party force we deal with all parties with an open mind and report as objectively as possible *(principle of non-partisanship)*. This also implies that we voice concerns to those responsible without being accusative and always refraining from judgemental responses *(no accusation)*.

As an international third-party force, PBI acts in an independent and non-partisan manner, and as such does not interfere in the work of the groups or individuals that we accompany. Nor do we become involved in the official politics of the host country *(non-interference)*. Hence we avoid imposing or interfering with our own ways of thinking and behaviour. Furthermore, we only provide our services when requested by the concerned people of the area *(acting on request only)*.

An appropriate behaviour by PBI volunteers and staff in sensitive areas is also essential because the messages they send influence the degree to which PBI's work is accepted within the conflict context.

Protection Strategy

Using protective measures and procedures PBI's field teams aim to make a potential attack more difficult. Part of this strategy is to operate with protective measures for PBI's offices and other premises. These include rules and security standards controlling access. Certain security-relevant day-to-day activities are regulated with predefined standard operating procedures. Another aspect is the communication within PBI: Fast and efficient communication within a project and the international

emergency structure can make a potential threat to volunteers and staff less serious.

Deterrence strategy

While most organisations state that they tend to avoid using deterrence measures this strategy is of crucial importance for PBI's work. Our use of deterrence mechanisms is strictly non-violent and as such we reject any kind of armed protection as well as other activities with violent means *(principle of non-violence)*. We follow a political deterrence approach by creating political costs for perpetrators of violence with the aim of deterring them from using violence. In order to ensure political deterrence PBI maintains local and international support structures to mobilise political pressure against potential perpetrators. Moreover it is a minimum standard for every project to make sure there is realistic potential to deter violence against human rights defenders and against our own volunteers and staff using PBI's protection and security strategies.

The protective presence of PBI's field teams can only be effective if a combination of these three security strategies is applied. None of them can function as a stand-alone strategy or substitute another one.

5. Responsibilities at different levels

Creating a safe working environment requires commitment and action at every level of PBI: The international level, the project level and the personal level of every volunteer and staff person.

Emergency Response Committee

The Emergency Response Committee (ERC) was created to act on behalf of the International Council (IC) to ensure prompt and adequate response in situations of emergency and other extraordinary circumstances. The ERC is also responsible for monitoring and reviewing emergency protocols developed by all relevant PBI entities. (Please see details for ERC procedures in point 6.)

Responsibilities of field projects

A basic requirement for PBI field projects is to carry out constant political analysis including reflections on the risk level of accompanied human rights defenders and field teams. Conclusions drawn from this analysis must be used to adjust security measures, adapting work plans, security documents and, if necessary, the overall project strategy.

To put PBI's Security Policy into concrete terms and regulations all field projects must develop a security plan adapted to the specific country context. Emergency protocols should be included to prepare volunteers and staff to respond efficiently to a crisis situation by predefining communication and decision-making structures. Projects need mechanisms to update and adjust their security plan and emergency protocols, for example by drawing conclusions from risk analyses or by analysing security incidents.

All new volunteers, staff and visitors must be briefed on the current security situation and receive an orientation regarding the project's security measures. A code of conduct should explain the basic terms regarding day-to-day behaviour in the project area.

Projects must have adequate communication systems in place to ensure quick reaction at all times. The necessary technical requirements and financial resources must be provided. Projects are also responsible for further orientating and training volunteers and staff on security and protection issues.

Project coordinators have a responsibility to inform PBI's Emergency Response Committee (ERC) as quickly as possible in the event of a situation of emergency, providing the convenor of the ERC with as

much information as possible about the nature of the emergency and any steps taken to date to address the situation.

Responsibilities of volunteers and staff

Volunteers and staff of PBI's field projects must be aware of their collective and individual responsibility for the project's security management. They have an obligation to learn about and understand the security situation of the project area, to understand the security measures implemented by the project and adhere to them. Breaching the Security Policy or the security measures of field projects can cause harm and thus in case of transgression may lead to termination of a contract.

Volunteers and staff should contribute to the maintenance and development of security measures set up by PBI field projects. They should be aware of risks for the team security and report on any incidents, actions or behaviour that jeopardise the security of the field team. Volunteers and staff of field projects should be mindful of the principles and mandate of the organisation during their field service. Inappropriate or offensive behaviour can put PBI in a difficult position, and jeopardize the team security.

6. Emergency response structure

The International Council (IC) has ultimate responsibility for the overall operations of PBI including the security and protection of all PBI volunteers and staff members. However, the task of ensuring that prompt and adequate responses are given to situations of emergency that exceed the capacities of a project is delegated to the Emergency Response Committee (ERC).

Mandate of the ERC

Acting on behalf of the IC, and in close coordination with the relevant project committee, the ERC is the delegated body responsible for ensuring an appropriate response to "Emergency Situations" that may put in danger the functioning of PBI's projects and/or the International Secretariat (ISec), or the physical and mental well-being of PBI's volunteers and staff. In all cases a collaborative approach between the ERC/IC and the Project Committee (PC)/coordinator/team is the preferred way to deal with situation of emergency.

"Emergency Situations" may include the following:

I. A volunteer or staff member's security is at risk in the following example situations:
   - Death/ killing of a volunteer/staff member
   - Death threat against volunteer/staff member or team
   - Raid/attack on a volunteer/staff member or expulsion of a team
   - Kidnapping of volunteer/staff member
   - Arrest/imprisonment of volunteer/staff member
   - Evacuation or possible evacuation of team volunteer/ staff member
   - Deportation or possible deportation of team volunteer/staff member
   - Serious accusation against PBI that may place PBI members at increased risk
   - Serious attacks against a worker or members of an NGO or INGO with whom PBI works closely.

II. The physical and emotional well-being of a volunteer or staff person has been endangered, for example in the following situations:
   - Volunteer/ staff member has been a witness to a traumatic event
   - Volunteer/ staff member has been victim of an attack
   - Volunteer/ staff member has been victim of a sexual assault

III. In addition to the emergency situations described above, there may be other extraordinary circumstances such as paralysis or a high level of internal dysfunction within a project, or a legal

or financial crisis which undermines the ability to carry out work, leads to risks to volunteer or staff security, or endangers their physical and emotional well-being. In such cases, the IC or the relevant project committee may ask for the involvement of the ERC in helping to effectively address the situation in question.

Activation of the ERC

In normal circumstances, it would be the responsibility of the project coordinator to contact the ERC. However, in extraordinary circumstances only, any staff person or volunteer may also make direct contact with the ERC should the project coordinator be unable or unwilling to do so. In the unusual event that someone other than the project coordinator contacted the ERC, the Convenor would immediately contact the relevant project coordinator and project committee in order to evaluate the appropriateness of the request for ERC involvement. The decision to become involved will still rest with the ERC; however, the criteria should be restricted to situations in which the ERC believes that the project committee will not be able to implement sufficient steps to adequately deal with the matter in question.

Confidentiality

PBI respects the wishes of affected persons who may request confidentiality; nevertheless the ERC will assess the visibility that it wishes to give to the emergency situation.