

# MS 466 Kidnapping of Volunteer/Trainee

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**Responsible Office:** Office of Safety and Security

**New Manual Section**

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## 1.0 Purpose

In accordance with National Security Presidential Directive 12 (NSPD-12), this Manual Section establishes Peace Corps policies related to the kidnapping of a Volunteer/Trainee (V/T).

## 2.0 Authority

National Security Presidential Directive 12, *United States Citizens Taken Hostage Abroad* (February 2, 2002).

## 3.0 Definitions

**3.1 Volunteer/Trainee:** For purposes of this Manual Section, the term V/T includes dependants of V/Ts who are living with them.

**3.2 Kidnapping:** The term kidnapping refers to the unlawful seizure or detention of a V/T against his or her will. There is no requirement that a demand for ransom be made. Kidnapping includes hostage taking of a V/T where there is a seizure or detention of a V/T by an individual or group and whose release is contingent upon one or more demands being met, regardless of whether the motive is financial or political gain.

## **4.0 Policy**

It is the policy of the Peace Corps to work cooperatively with Department of State, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other U.S. Government agencies in the event there is a kidnapping of a V/T. Under the provisions of NSPD-12, the U.S. Government will work with the host country to secure the release of any U.S. citizen or contractor kidnapped overseas, with the Department of State coordinating activities and the FBI serving as the lead investigative agency. As a result, the U.S. Government is committed to the safe and rapid recovery of private U.S. citizens and, in certain situations, U.S. Government contract employees.

### **4.1 Coordination with U.S. Mission**

Under U.S. Government policy, the Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy will serve as the primary on-scene crisis manager for the U.S. Government in the event of a kidnapping of a V/T. In most circumstances the Regional Security Officer (RSO) at the U.S. Embassy in the country where the Peace Corps post is located will be the primary on-scene coordinator with host country law enforcement and the FBI. The Peace Corps will coordinate with the U.S. Mission in the event there is a kidnapping of a V/T.

### **4.2 Communications**

A kidnapping incident is an extremely sensitive situation and the Peace Corps will carefully coordinate with the FBI and Department of State before releasing any information to family members, the media or the public.

## **5.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Office of Safety and Security**

In the event of a kidnapping of a Volunteer or Trainee, the Associate Director for Safety and Security is the day-to-day crisis manager at Headquarters for the incident and serves as the chief point of contact for Headquarters personnel who are participating with the post in responding to the event. The Associate Director for Safety and Security is responsible for ensuring that the Peace Corps is prepared to respond to a kidnapping incident.

The Office of Safety and Security is responsible for:

- (a) Assessing the risk of kidnapping in the countries where Peace Corps operates;
- (b) Developing, in cooperation with other offices, as appropriate, an overall agency kidnapping response plan;
- (c) Developing specific plans for particular kidnapping risks or for particular host countries;
- (d) Developing and implementing programs to mitigate the risk of kidnapping;

- (e) Including kidnapping risks and the agency kidnapping response plan in the safety and security program for Volunteers and Trainees and other actions taken under MS 270; and
- (f) Coordinating with FBI, Diplomatic Security at the Department of State, Department of Defense and other government and law enforcement agencies, as appropriate.

## **5.2 Office of Global Operations**

The Associate Director for Global Operations, through the Regional Directors and Country Directors, is responsible for ensuring that posts are properly prepared for a kidnapping incident in accordance with the agency kidnapping response plan.

### **5.2.1 Country Director**

The Country Director (CD) is the on-scene crisis manager for the Peace Corps during a kidnapping incident and will collaborate with the Chief of Mission (and other agencies in the host country, as appropriate) in efforts to secure the release of the kidnap victim.

The CD is responsible for:

- (a) Reviewing the Hostage Annex of the U.S. Mission Emergency Action Plan and discussing with the RSO on how the Peace Corps should be engaged in an incident involving Peace Corps Personnel, and
- (b) Ensuring that the post is properly prepared as required by the agency kidnapping response plan.

In the event that a V/T is kidnapped, the CD is responsible for:

- (a) Immediately notifying the RSO and Chief of Mission;
- (b) Immediately notifying Peace Corps/Washington by phone (202-692-1470) in accordance with the Consolidated Incident Reporting Guide;
- (c) Serving as Peace Corps' on-scene crisis manager and coordinating with the Chief of Mission and other agencies as appropriate;
- (d) Providing timely updates and notifications to Peace Corps/Washington as required by the agency kidnapping response plan;
- (e) Assessing the impact of the incident on Peace Corps operations and Volunteers and Trainees and making recommendations to Peace Corps/Washington;
- (f) Filing the necessary incident report and updates as required by the Consolidated Incident Reporting Guide; and

- (g) Maintaining a detailed chronological record of all actions taken in-country from the time the incident is first reported to the point the situation is resolved.

### **5.3 Counseling and Outreach Unit**

The Director for Counseling and Outreach Unit is responsible for ensuring the provision of mental health support in response to a kidnapping incident. The Director is responsible for developing a mental health response plan that addresses:

- (a) Coordination with FBI and/or Department of State with regards to providing support for the family of the victim;
- (b) Provision of support to the Volunteers and Trainees at post; and
- (c) Provision of support to the victim upon release, including a strategy for reintegration.

### **5.4 Office of Communications**

The Office of Communications is responsible for all messaging and external communication. The Director of the Office of Communications is responsible for developing a communications response plan that addresses:

- (a) Coordination with the FBI and Department of State regarding release of information related to the incident;
- (b) Development and distribution of internal and external talking points;
- (c) Response to media inquiries; and
- (d) External messaging including information posted on the Peace Corps website.

### **6.0 Effective Date**

The effective date is the date of issuance.