

## 12/ Security Concerns Related to In-Person Meetings

### *Things to consider*

- In-person meetings with civil society may have a number of security implications, particularly in an environment where authorities are hostile to such contact.
- The risks attached to in-person meetings vary significantly depending on the **context**.
- In certain contexts, explicit contact between embassy staff and civil society offers **visibility and legitimacy** to the work of HRDs and provides protection as a result.
- Surveillance of meetings can take place through **observation** from a distance, public **CCTV**, **directional microphones**, third parties **eavesdropping** (e.g. in public places, taxis, etc), or **mobile phone** surveillance, for example.
- In certain cases, **direct interference or harassment** may also occur. While diplomatic staff are less likely to experience this, the possibility should be kept in mind while working with local staff and HRDs.

### *Protection tactics*

- **Consider the particularities** of the context you are in and the best mix of transparency and visibility versus discretion and privacy. Speak to appropriate embassy staff, civil society partners, or another trusted contact to assess the risks involved.
- If meeting in a **public place**, take into consideration the possibility of **surveillance** via proximity, CCTV, or other means.
- Consider what to do with **mobile phones** and other devices during the meeting.
  - Leave them in another room **out of earshot** to decrease the threat of surveillance. Use a **Faraday case** to block the radio frequency signals from electronic devices such as mobile phones, car keys, or laptops.
- Remember that offline eavesdropping tactics are still used, so be **aware of your surroundings** and people potentially within earshot of the meeting.
- Report every **security incident** that takes place before, during, or after a meeting, such as suspicious behaviour and anything out of the ordinary (someone watching, taking pictures, etc.) and encourage others to do the same.

