**DEALING WITH THE MEDIA GROUPWORK**

**Facilitators notes**

**GROUP 1**

*You are the remote crisis management team of a local organization operating in Syria.*

Two hours ago, at 8.00 am in the morning, an armed group entered the field office of your organization in Idlib governorate. They looted the office, destroying technical equipment such as laptops and printers and taking prepositioned food supplies from your warehouse. All staff are scared but remain unharmed. You had planned to distribute these supplies tomorrow, but now have to cancel it.

You are convening a first meeting of the crisis management team in your Aleppo office. You haven’t received any media calls yet, and so far nothing has been published in the media nor could you find any news relating to this incident on Twitter or Facebook.

*Ask yourself: How would you handle potential media requests?* *What is your media strategy: active or reactive?* *What would you say in a press statement?* *How would you handle social media?*

*-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------*

**For the facilitator**

*Debrief questions: Would you consider keeping this silent? Would you prepare a statement but not send it out? Who would monitor social media (and which (social) media would you monitor?*

*Recommendations: Prepare statements and talking points, highlight humanitarian aspect (these were supplies for people in need!), but don’t break this news unless it will be published. Inform staff not to mention this on social media channels and not to talk to media. Inform beneficiaries that distributions have been cancelled.*

**GROUP 2**

*You are the remote crisis management team of a local organization operating in Syria. You also have an office in Hatay, which manages many of your projects and coordinates with international NGOs.*

Two hours ago you received the news that one of your staff (Syrian, male, age 35 from Aleppo) has been abducted while driving back to Aleppo after a distribution. Members of an armed group just contacted you to demand ransom.

You are convening a first meeting of the crisis management team in your Aleppo office. A journalist has just called you, asking for more details about the staff and she wants to publish an article within the next hour. Another staff member, who is a close friend of the affected colleague, just posted the news on his private Twitter account.

*Ask yourself: How would you handle media requests?* *What is your media strategy: active or reactive?* *What would you say in a press statement?* *How would you handle social media? How would you coordinate media work with the team in Hatay?*

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**For Facilitators**

*Debrief questions: Did you inform staff of how to use/not to use social media (social media policy)? Do you have the log-in details of the affected staff member? Who would monitor social media (and which (social) media would you monitor? How would you handle the media request? What would have happened if the staff would have been international?*

*Recommendations: Inform staff ASAP not to mention this on social media. Ask journalist for understanding and hold off publication until you have all details verified. Prepare a statement to be send to local media as soon as incident has been confirmed. Focus on humanitarian aspect of your work, on your neutrality as NGO and that you are helping people in need. Show sympathy with family. Inform partners on your approach. Avoid mentioning the ransom, if possible. Determine spokesperson and rehearse statement with him/her. Develop talking points. Monitor media. Inform family ASAP. If you have, close social media account of affected staff (ask family for permission).*

**GROUP 3**

*You are the remote crisis management team of a local organization operating in Syria. You are partnering with a well-known INGO, which has offices in 70 countries around the world.*

This morning, the BBC published an online article claiming that the several tons of food supplies delivered by NGOs in Aleppo have been discovered in the warehouse of a rebel group. The BBC writes that this is a common practice to negotiate access to areas where humanitarian needs are greatest, and they mention the name of several NGOs, including yours.

You know from a recent evaluation that this has indeed happened, but not to the large extent the BBC claims. You have already improved your monitoring and evaluation systems and you have canceled the contract of one staff member involved in the aid diversion.

You are convening a first meeting of the crisis management team in your Aleppo office. Several local and international journalists are calling you to ask for more information and the topic is widely discussed on several Twitter accounts.

*Ask yourself: How would you handle media requests?* *What is your media strategy: active or reactive?* *What would you say in a press statement?* *How would you handle social media? How would you handle media coordination with your INGO partner in Hatay?*

**For Facilitators**

*Debrief questions: Have you considered contacting the other NGOs to send out a joint statement? Would you go for transparency or ‘hiding’? Did you inform staff of how to use/not to use social media (do you have a social media policy)? Who would monitor social media and which (social) media would you monitor? How would you handle the media request? Given this is the BBC, you can expect headquarters of all your INGO partners calling and asking for information! What would you do if the accusations were wrong?*

*Recommendations: Answer media requests using prepared talking points, ensure that everyone speaks with the same voice. Determine spokespersons and rehearse statement with him/her. Inform staff ASAP not to mention this on social media. Inform partners on your approach and coordinate messages with other involved NGOs. Monitor media. Don’t publish a statement (you would do that if accusations were wrong).*