

ADDING ESSENTIAL INFORMATION TO VIDEO



Filming for human rights can be dangerous. It can put you, the people you are filming and the communities you are filming in at risk. Carefully assess the risks before you press “record”.

Do your best to implement the guidance below, but understand that nothing stated in this guide is absolute and you should modify the practices to fit your needs. When possible, seek support from local experts. Even if you cannot fully implement this guidance, your footage may still provide valuable information that could lead human rights organizations and advocates to answers and, in turn, to the protection of our basic human rights.

FILMING

INTRODUCTION

To be evidence, investigators, analysts and lawyers must be able to prove:

- When: The date and time of the filming
- Where: The location
- What: That the content in the video is, in fact, what it says it is and if safe,
- Who: The person that captured the footage on camera

Adding this information to a video will make it much easier for reviewers that were not at the scene of the human rights incident to verify the content. Easier verification means there is a better chance that the video will be useful to secure justice. By adapting the steps and script below to fit your situation and security limitations, you can enhance the evidentiary value of video you take the time and risk to collect.

KEY DECISION POINT: SAFETY

Filming for human rights can be dangerous. Your safety, and the safety of the individuals and communities you are working to protect, is always more important than capturing footage. Before you film, be sure to carefully consider:

- Whether filming is an appropriate documentation tool or not?
- If so, ask yourself whether it's safe to disclose your identity and the identity of others on scene or whether you should film anonymously and hide the identities on those you film?

If you decide it's safe to film, disclose your identity and the identities of other individuals on scene, then here some ideas on how you can add essential information to your video using narration or a written camera slate.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If safety and security requires that you film anonymously, see [Techniques for Filming Anonymously](#).

TAKE HOME POINTS

FOUR STEPS: IN SHORT

If you have determined it is safe to include essential information then, use the camera microphone or a piece of paper to add the following information:

STEP 1

Who, When, and Where: Introductory Information

Begin by recording your name, contact information, date, time, location and the names and contact information of other individuals that may have information about the incident.

STEP 2

How: Orient Your Viewers by Describing How You Will Film

While filming, clearly state how you are filming the scene – from north to south, from above the scene, etc.

STEP 3 (optional)

WHAT: Factually Describe what the Video Documents

If appropriate for your situation, add a concise and factual description of the human rights content the viewer sees to the recording.

STEP 4

Wrap Up Filming

End by stating the time you completed filming.

- Adapt as necessary to fit your situation.
- Provide only factual information.
- Leave out unsupported opinions.
- If you need to film anonymously, see Techniques for Filming Anonymously.

FILMING



FOUR STEPS: A DETAILED SCRIPT

If it is safe to record your voice and provide contact information, adapt the script below to fit your security situation.

STEP 1

Who, When, and Where: Add introductory information

Begin with:

WHO?

My name is _____ [full name]. I go by _____ [any aliases].
I can be contacted via _____ [organization if you have one and full contact information].

WHEN & WHERE?

This video footage was filmed on
_____ [day] _____ [month] _____ [year]
at _____ [time] [am or pm]
at _____ [specific location]
in _____ [city] _____ [state/province] _____ [country].

Who?



When?



Where?



WHO ELSE?

Other people who are here on scene with me and who may have relevant information about the incident are:

_____ [full name] _____ [full contact information]
_____ [full name] _____ [full contact information]

Plus others ...

FILMING

STEP 2

HOW: Orient Your Viewers by Describing *HOW* You Will Film

While filming add:

I will film _____ [describe how you will film the scene before or while you are filming]

Examples:

“I am beginning filming ...

... in the northeast corner of the square and will then move clockwise around the scene.”

... along the west bank of the river and then walk along the south along the river bank.”

... at the main entrance to the hospital located on the south side of the building along Main Street.”

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KEY DECISION POINT

Next, you will need to decide whether or not you are going to describe what the viewer sees in the video while filming or not. There is no right answer. Here are two scenarios - of many - to consider:

SCENARIO 1: You are working along side a team of lawyers as a legal observer documenting a protest. After the protest is over, you bring your footage along with a written report documenting what you saw to the lawyers for safe-keeping and for their review. In this situation, it's generally best to speak a little as possible adding only who, when, where and how you are filming.

SCENARIO 2: You are filming in a mass atrocity situation. There is no functioning legal system. There is no safe place to bring your video. And there are thousands of people capturing thousands of videos of the human rights violations that occur every day. In this situation, it's generally best to add factual information about what the viewer is seeing so that investigators and analysts who are far away from the incident scene, sifting through the hours upon hours of video, can more quickly identify video footage that might be helpful in the justice process.

TAKE HOME POINT: Whether you only add the who, when, where and how or provide additional factual descriptions of the content while filming will depend on the situation.

STEP 3

(optional)

WHAT: Factually Describe what the Video Documents

If you decided to describe the content in the video, add the following to the beginning of your video, as applicable:

If filming in **ANTICIPATION** of a human rights incident add this:

The video footage captured here documents _____ [describe the footage we are about to see].

Examples:

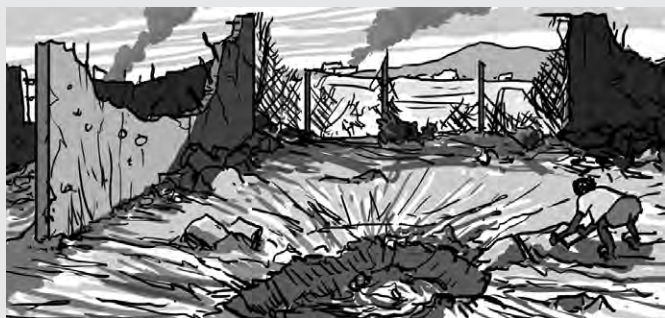
“The video footage captured here documents ...
... all the schools in Homs, Syria in anticipation of airstrikes.”
... streets where a protest is expected to take place tomorrow.”
... the community of Largo do Tanque before the forced evictions began.”
... the Alabama coast near prior to the oil from the spill reaching it.”

FILMING

School Before



School After



If filming **DURING** and/or **AFTER** a human rights incident add this:

The video footage captured here documents an alleged _____ [describe the possible violation and the footage we will see].

Examples

“The video footage captured here documents the alleged ...
... use of excessive police force.”
... burning of a village by the militia.”
... detentions at military checkpoints.”
... unsanitary conditions at the refugee camp.”

STEP 3

continued

If, after considering all the pros and cons of filming an INTERVIEW for legal evidentiary purposes, you decide that video is the best option to record testimony then modify this.

I am about to interview _____ [full name] about _____ [factual description of the incident you are about to discuss with the witness].

I am speaking to _____ [full name so long as safety and security allows] because he/she _____ [describe the witness' role asking, Was he/she injured in the incident? Does he/she know someone who was injured or killed? Does he/she have relevant medical expertise? Relevant military expertise? Was it his/her property that was impacted?]

Examples:

"The interviewee sustained injuries when he was pulled out of the car by the military police at a checkpoint."

"The child killed in the attack was the interviewee's son."

"The interviewee is a medical doctor that specializes in documenting sexual violence. She examined ten of the victims."

"The interviewee previously served with the U.S. military and did two tours of duty in the Middle East."

"One of the homes bulldozed was owned by the interviewee."



FILMING

FOR MORE INFORMATION

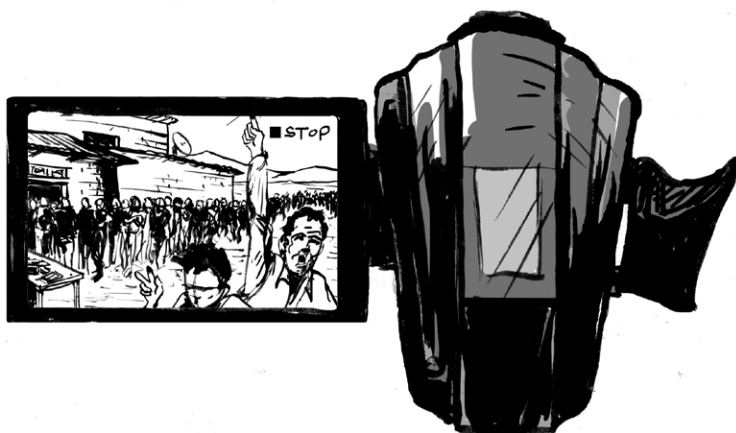
See Interviewing for Legal Evidentiary Purposes

STEP 4

wrap up filming

End with:

I completed filming at _____ [time].



6 VIDEO AS EVIDENCE: ADDING ESSENTIAL INFORMATION TO VIDEO

KEY POINT: INCLUDE ONLY FACTS. LEAVE OUT UNSUPPORTED OPINIONS.

If you decide to include key factual information that will assist the viewer in understanding the footage (see above) then, approximations and educated guesses are okay and can be helpful but do not include firm conclusions, unsupported opinions, exaggerations or misinformation.

It is hard to set opinions aside when documenting human rights incidents because the situations you are documenting are heartbreaking but try. Try because unsupported opinions can sometimes make a video “prejudicial”. And if a video is prejudicial, it may not be allowed in court as evidence.

On December 27, 2008, there was an explosion outside of an elementary school in eastern Kabul, Afghanistan. The account below has been adapted from a news article about the bombing for illustrative purposes only.

DO

- This footage documents an alleged attack near an army post and primary school located in eastern Kabul. According to witnesses, tribal elders were meeting at the post.
- The alleged bombing took place around 3 pm on December 27, 2008. Witnesses told us that the children were gathered in their classrooms to receive end-of-year certificates when the explosion happened.
- According to witnesses, the blast was detonated by a suicide bomber.
- I do not know the exact count but it looks like approximately 10-15 children were killed. The young victims look to be between the ages of 8-10 years old. This makes sense since the blast impacted an elementary school. It also looks like another 50 or so people were injured.
- I am now going to film close up shots of text books and shoes at the blast site..

DON'T

- This is footage of one of our schools. As you can see, it has been violently bombed in an act of terrorism by our enemies who seek to kill innocent children.
- Our enemies attacked just as the children were receiving their end-of-year certificates.
- Our enemies committed this horrific attack using a bomb detonated by a suicide bomber to directly target children.
- So many of our children are dead. So many have been violently injured in this inhumane attack. It is one of the deadliest strikes in months.
- As you can see from this video, the children's text books and shoes are covering the ground, bloodied by this brutality and blatant disregard for human life.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about “prejudicial” see All About Evidence but in short, if a video is deemed prejudicial, it simply means the video is thought to be biased and will not be considered by a court of law.

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE

My name is Morgan Wells. I work for the organization EVIDENCE and can be contacted at morgan@xxxxx.com or +1 111.222.3333. This video footage was captured on January 25, 2015 beginning at 10:08 am at 800 Wall St., New York, NY, USA.

Other people who are here on scene with me and who may have relevant information about the likely arrest at the corner of Wall Street and Pearl Street in New York are:

- John Smith, 800 Wall Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY, USA, john@xxxxx.com , +1 111.222.3333; and
- Jane Williams, 800 Wall Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY, USA, jane@xxxxx.com , +1 111.222.3333

The footage is captured from a 5th floor window located on the southeast corner of the building. I am filming from the window looking down onto the scene on the street at the corner of Wall St. and Pearl St. This was the only vantage point from which I was able to film.

OPTIONAL: The video captured here documents an alleged use of excessive force by the New York Police Department against an African American man who appears to be in his early 20s. No protests were taking place at the time and I do not know what sparked the incident.

I completed filming this incident at 10:30 am.



FILMING

TEST YOUR SKILLS

After reviewing the guidance here, practice by creating a mock crime scene. Then, using the camera microphone, record yourself as you document the scene. Turn the page to find out what to pay attention to when you review the footage?

A SLATE TO ADAPT

If you would prefer not to record your voice for safety and security reasons, then consider whether you could create a 'slate' that you can fill out and hold up in front of the camera when you first begin filming. If safe, here's an example to either print out and use or to modify.

Incident	Date/Time
Specific Location (with GPS Coordinate if Available)	
ONLY WRITE DOWN AND RECORD INFORMATION THAT YOU CAN SAFELY INCLUDE	
Videographer Name & Contact Information	
Investigator Name & Contact Information	
Comments including names and contact information of others who may have information about this incident	

If you don't have a piece of paper, get creative by filming anything that has a reliable date on it such as:

- The front page of a newspaper
- Your cell phone screen
- Your watch

Then film visuals that will verify your location such as:

- A street sign
- A landmark
- The skyline if it has identifiable features such as mountains

FILMING

TEST YOUR SKILLS

Once you completed the exercise on the previous page, play the footage back paying special attention to whether you included only objective information or unsupported opinions. If you only included factual information, yours skills are solid. If you included unsupported opinions try again!

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**PRINT OUT THE MINI GUIDE BELOW AND CARRY IT
WITH YOU FOR EASY REFERENCE.**

ADDING INFORMATION

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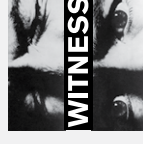
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