

## Personal Safety Tips - A Soldier's Perspective during the Sri Lanka War

- Authorities / Police have shown animosity towards visiting journalists recently. You may need to get permission to cover anything related to military/police;
- Obtain a journalist visa so that you can obtain a local media accreditation ID from the Information department;
- Visitor visa is available on arrival, but visitor visa may not give permission to cover anything officially; and
- There are high security zones gazetted (notified by the government) and non-gazetted in many places, where photography is completely prohibited.

### TRAVEL SECURITY

- Keep your colleagues/local media watch dog organizations informed of your itinerary;
- Avoid crowded areas and public events as much as possible
- Amend your journey plan to avoid main intersections wherever possible as roads may close for VIP traffic;
- If your vehicle is parked at a public place, inspect your vehicle before you move;
- Display your contact no by pasting it on the front sun visor of your vehicle enabling police or security personnel to contact you in case of an emergency if your vehicle is parked in a public area;
- Keep your radio on when driving/traveling; and
- Keep in mind that you may be followed and land lines phones may be tapped.

### HEALTH:

- Make available your emergency contact no, blood group and Rh code (attach with the ID card); and
- Keep a brief summary of your medical history and allergies to medicines if any.

### PLACES TO AVOID

- Avoid areas where politicians & high ranking military leaders live when traveling;
- Avoid heavy traffic and have an alternative route plan;
- Avoid traveling close proximity to VIP motor vehicles and military vehicles; and
- Be conscious of unattended parcels and advice security personnel of such items.

### **COVERING WAR ZONE:**

- Both sides have not allowed journalists to cover the war from frontlines;
- LTTE held areas are almost closed for journalists by the government, including stores which offer instant cash loans to operators. These are generally for emergency funds only;
- Government military controlled areas are partially open for media;
- No foreign journalists have been allowed to cover Jaffna independently for about a year or ;
- Journalists may need MOD permission to cover Military controlled areas;
- Embedded journalism is not practiced by military in Sri Lanka; and
- Mobile phones networks are switched off in North and East of the country without any prior notice by the government.