



Guide for Journalists on
**How to Document
International Crimes**



CENTRE FOR LAW
AND DEMOCRACY

NEWS MEDIA EUROPE

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Executive Summary

The business of journalists is first and foremost to inform the public. However, journalists covering conflict zones in some cases become first-hand witnesses to crimes, including international crimes such as systematic killing of civilians, serious acts of torture and mass sexual violence. As such, they are in a unique position to document crimes not only for journalistic purposes but also to ensure that evidence is preserved in such a way that it might later be submitted to a court.

This Guide¹ aims to provide simple, accessible advice to journalists (and editors) who capture information which appears to be evidence of international crimes. It does not aim to transform readers into investigators or experts on the law of evidence. Instead, the Guide offers to support journalists when they happen to become engaged in events which may involve international crimes. Often very simple steps can substantially enhance the evidentiary value of information. While the focus of this Guide is on international crimes, the same information may also be useful in providing evidence of human rights and other types of abuse.

The guide starts with a discussion on why it is essential that journalists do not compromise in any way their independence and role as journalists. In addition, the nature of their rights to protect confidential sources and to testimonial privilege is also elaborated. To protect the integrity of the work of journalists, international law normally provides for confidentiality of sources to prevail over exposing sources to collect information which may be relevant to the investigation of international crimes.

After defining different international crimes, the Guide discusses how to preserve information that journalists may have, typically in the form of images, testimonies and documents, so that it might be presented as evidence in court. This notably involves enhancing the reliability of the information, for example through preserving metadata about it and maintaining a secure chain of custody over it (ie. who has been in possession of it). A number of resources which are openly accessible to journalists and which are designed to help with this are listed in the resource section.

Interviews with victims and witnesses can provide key information about the commission of crimes. It is crucial to obtain informed consent before conducting interviews. Normally, this means that the person understands who you are, how the interview will be used and who will see it, and any potential risks. A simple signed consent form from the person is best, although a live recorded oral consent can also suffice. It should be noted that anonymous information cannot be accepted as evidence in courts.

It is very important to keep physical and digital information secure, in particular when the government is hostile to the prosecution of international crimes or media freedom. There are several ways to minimise security risks, such as: storing the information in encrypted format; deleting or concealing files on your device; encrypting, anonymising or deleting the names of contacts; and archiving evidence securely. Several resources openly accessible to journalists under the resource section can help with this.

¹ This guide was prepared by the [Centre for Law and Democracy](#) in partnership with [News Media Europe](#), in the hope of making a contribution to journalism. It follows from our recognition of growing interest expressed by news organizations in better understanding how to document war crimes.

Introduction

The core business of journalists is to investigate what is going on in society and to report back to the public about it. In carrying out that core business, journalists may discover information about crimes, including international crimes, especially where they are reporting on or working in conflict zones, whether those are international or internal conflicts. Beyond reporting that is often of very high-value information to the public, journalists may also be able to preserve that information in such a way that it might be submitted to a court as evidence of crimes in individual cases. The purpose of this Guide is to help journalists understand what information may represent evidence of the commission of international crimes, and then to secure and preserve that information so as to enhance the possibility that it might be able to be presented as evidence in court.

Journalists are not police or criminal investigators and there are risks associated with their getting engaged in the collection of information about criminal behaviour. While it can be very important for journalists to contribute to this activity, that should not become so onerous that it diverts them from their core work of journalistic reporting or undermines their journalistic independence. Equally important, if their work in this area becomes publicly known, they can become targets of attack by those who are responsible for the crimes, who obviously do not want to be prosecuted and who have already demonstrated that they are capable of engaging in criminal activities.

This Guide aims to provide simple, accessible advice to journalists (and editors) who are on the ground and capture information which appears to be evidence of international crimes. It does not aim to transform readers into experts on the law of evidence, which is an extremely complicated area of law and which, furthermore, varies from one legal system to another. Neither is this necessary; official criminal investigators, lawyers, prosecutors and ultimately judges will decide whether information is admissible in court. But this Guide does seek to help journalists understand what sort of information may be useful in secure a conviction – and thereby limit the collection of irrelevant information – as well as how to take some simple steps to enhance the chance that the information may be admissible as evidence in court.

Often very simple steps can substantially enhance the value of information. For example, a picture of a pile of rubble may not prove much, but stamping that picture with geolocation data so as to show that it is where someone's home used to be is quite another matter. Similarly, a picture of a dead body lying on a street may be inconclusive, but time-stamping the picture so that it is clear it was taken just after an armed group moved through that area is different.

Every country has a very long list of crimes. The focus of this Guide is on serious international crimes, as defined by the [Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court](#) (Rome Statute), of which the three core crimes are the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

For the purposes of this Guide, the term “journalists” is used broadly to include not only individuals who work regularly for professional news media outlets but also freelancers, bloggers and a range of others. Indeed, the advice contained in this Guide can also be useful for citizen journalists, should they happen to come across information that appears to disclose evidence of an international crime.



The reasons why it is important for journalists to collect this sort of information are fairly obvious. Due to their professional focus, journalists may be in a position to collect evidence which would not otherwise be available to prosecutors. This, in turn, can help in two key ways. First, it may help establish that a crime has been committed in the first place, as well as to identify likely guilty parties, based on which professional criminal investigators can collect further information. Second, it may help establish the core elements of crimes, including the actions which constitute those crimes and who perpetrated them, thereby helping to secure convictions.

While the focus on this Guide is on international crimes, the same information may also be useful in providing evidence of human rights and other types of abuse, which is often very important to chronicle for the historical record, for purposes of reconciliation or to secure reparations, or to help societies come to terms with the past.

It should be noted that a lot of support is being provided by different international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to help secure information that is being collected by laypersons. This includes authentication techniques – for example using information which is available publicly to show where and when evidence was captured (see codastory.com/newsletters/war-crimes-in-digital-age/) – and helping to store information securely, including to ensure that it is not tampered with. At the end, this Guide provides a list of resources that journalists can utilise, including relevant digital apps to assist in capturing and storing quality information and organisations which can assist journalists in documenting international crimes.



1. Protecting the Independence and Role of Journalists

Independence and Preservation of the Journalistic Role

It is very important for journalists to maintain their editorial independence and objectivity when reporting on events in society, as well as to maintain the perception by society of that independence. The actual loss of independence may introduce biases into reporting by a journalist, while a perception of a loss of independence can undermine audience trust. Both can be threatened if journalists collect information about international crimes and especially if that takes on an important role in their work. This includes independence from parties to a conflict, the police and other law enforcement actors, as well as other state actors. This can be difficult when collecting information about international crimes which, by definition, are serious and often gruesome abuses not only of the criminal law but also values that all societies hold dear.

Journalists may be subject to formal systems and rules relating to independence, depending on what sort of media they work for. In many countries, systems of self-, co- or statutory regulation are in place which impose codes of conduct or ethics on the media they cover, which in turn may include deontological standards which relate to independence and balance in reporting. Public media in liberal democracies are also subject to strict rules of independence and impartiality, including from the government and other political actors.

Beyond just independence and perceptions thereof, it is important that journalists do not let any role in collecting information about international crimes undermine their core role as journalists, especially if they work in the area of news. The public still need to receive timely and high-quality news content and diverting journalists' attention to criminal prosecutions could undermine this. This role is particularly important for journalists reporting on armed conflicts, which are often part of the context in which international crimes perpetrated.

The importance of the public receiving accurate, timely information in such situations is self-evidently extremely high. And yet structural factors undermine this function, including the dangerous nature of reporting on conflicts and the fact that parties to such conflicts often actively seek to hide important information from the public, while also seeking to control the narrative, frequently through disseminating disinformation. Indeed, independent media reporting is essential to counter the frequently very dominant false narratives of governments and other combatants.

This was recognised by the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia, in the case of *Prosecutor v. Radoslav Brdjanin and Momir Talic*, where both the Trial and Appeals Chambers recognised, “that war correspondents ‘play a vital role in bringing to the attention of the international community the horrors and reality of conflict’”.²

² Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991, Decision on Interlocutory Appeal, 11 December 2002, Case No. IT-99-36-AR73.9, para. 36, <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/brdjanin/acdec/en/randall021211.htm#30>.

A slightly different issue is the need for journalists to protect their own safety. Documenting criminal behaviour can be dangerous, including because guilty parties do not want to be brought to justice and they may be willing to engage in further criminal behaviour, including retaliation, to avoid being caught. It is important for journalists to understand the wider context in which their activities to document crimes is taking place. Security risks can be particularly elevated when the government in power is either complicit in the crimes or has a structural interest in hiding them.

Protection of Confidential Sources and Testimonial Privilege

The right of journalists to refuse to disclose the identity of their confidential sources of information is protected under international law and in many national legal systems, often constitutionally and/or legally. Professional codes of conduct for the media often also impose an obligation on journalists not to disclose their confidential sources of information. The core rationale for this is to protect the right of the public to receive public interest information from sources through the media since sources may not come forward in the first place if they are not convinced that their confidentiality will be protected.

Like the core right to freedom of expression from which it is derived, this right is not absolute under either international law or most national legal systems, although the former places strict conditions on when it may be overridden. Journalists should always be aware of the status of this right – both legally and in practice – in their own countries, so as to be able to offer promises of confidentiality to sources that they can keep. And, in making such promises, journalists should always make sure that sources are aware of any conditions or limitations on those promises.

Collecting information about international crimes may raise special issues relating to source confidentiality. Specifically, while journalists can report on incidents in a way that does not expose confidential sources, to use information as evidence in court often requires the provision of more detailed background and metadata about that information. Courts may even require individuals to testify before them to verify information or to allow claims to be probed through cross-examination by lawyers representing accused persons. Furthermore, in many countries, the investigation of serious crimes is one of the grounds for overriding source confidentiality.

As a result, it is important for journalists to be very careful, when confidential sources are involved, when providing information about international crimes not to expose sources either willingly or inadvertently, including by putting themselves into a position where a court may decide to override their right to protect their confidential sources and require the disclosure of those sources to the court. When faced with a choice between protecting a confidential source and supporting an international criminal investigation, journalists should almost invariably opt for the former, including to protect the editorial integrity of journalistic work.

A slightly different issue, albeit largely based on the same rationale of protecting the flow of information to the public, as well as ensuring the security of journalists, is the question of whether journalists may themselves refuse to testify before a court. To the extent that they are protected against having to testify, this may also affect their right to protect their confidential sources of information.

In the *Radoslav Brdjanin and Momir Talic* case, the Trial Chamber took the position that while journalists reporting on conflict should not be “subpoenaed unnecessarily”, once material had been published



and the source identified, the risk testifying posed to news gathering and reporting was minimal and it was thus sufficient if the evidence was “pertinent”.³ The Appeals Chamber differentiated between journalists in general, and war correspondents as a particular category of journalists, focusing its decision only on the latter group. It recognised that even where a source had been exposed and information published, issues such as the independence and safety of war correspondents continued to be relevant considerations when it came to compelling them to testify, especially if such practices became routine. In light of that, the Appeals Chamber proposed a two-part test for deciding whether it was legitimate to require a war correspondent to testify:

*First, the petitioning party must demonstrate that the evidence sought is of direct and important value in determining a core issue in the case. Second, it must demonstrate that the evidence sought cannot reasonably be obtained elsewhere.*⁴

Much of the specific reasoning of the Chamber revolved around the special role and activities of war correspondents, so that it is unclear how far this approach would apply to other journalists. Much may depend on the specific circumstances of each case. The Chamber also held that the original published article would be admissible, depending on its relevance and other related considerations.

³ *Ibid.*, para. 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 50. The Chamber’s full reasoning on this issue is contained in paras. 34-51 of the decision.

2. Definition of Core International Crimes

As noted above, the focus of this Guide is on serious international crimes, as defined by the Rome Statute. Article 5(1) of that Statute defines four types of international crimes, namely the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression. However, various conditions were placed on the last of these, which only apply to senior individuals directing military action, so that it is less relevant to journalists working in the field. As a result, this Guide will focus on the three other crimes.

Genocide is defined in Article 6 of the Rome Statute as “any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such”. The article goes on to list five specific acts, namely killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members, inflicting on the group conditions designed to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, measures aimed at preventing births within the group and forcibly transferring children to another group.

Crimes Against Humanity are defined in Article 7(1) of the Rome Statute as “any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population”. This is followed by a list of 11 specific and serious crimes, such as murder, torture, rape, enslavement, deportation, enforced disappearance, persecution (against an identifiable group) and other “inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health”. Several of the terms used in Article 7(1) are further defined in Article 7(2). These acts may qualify as crimes against humanity whether they are committed against civilians in an armed conflict or in time of peace. Defining features here are that the acts must be widespread or systematic and directed against civilians. At the same time, the list of acts very broad. Thus, in the case of *Prosecutor v. Nahimana, Barayagwiza and Ngeze*, the Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda held that hate speech could, of itself, constitute persecution, one of the acts which makes up crimes against humanity.⁵

War Crimes are defined in Article 8(2) of the Rome Statute as encompassing four main categories of acts, namely: (1) “[g]rave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949” (8 specific acts listed); (2) [o]ther serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in international armed conflict (26 specific acts listed); (3) for non-international armed conflicts, “serious violations of article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949” (4 specific acts listed); and (4) again for non-international armed conflicts, “[o]ther serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in armed conflicts” (12 specific acts listed). A defining feature here is that the violations be “serious” or “grave”. The lists of specific acts include serious crimes against persons – such as murder, torture, rape or outrages upon personal dignity – attacking protected objects – such as buildings carrying “the distinctive emblems of the Geneva Conventions or dedicated to religion, education or art – pillaging or destroying property without any military purpose, and engaging in prohibited forms of warfare – such as using poison or certain types of prohibited bullets, or using civilians as shields. Once again, the scope of acts covered is very broad.

⁵ Judgement and Sentence, 3 December 2003, Case No. ICTR-99-52-T, para. 1072, <https://ucr.irmct.org/scasedocs/case/ICTR-99-52#eng>.

The aim of outlining very briefly here the essence of the core international crimes covered by the Rome Statute is not to try to provide readers with a precise understanding of their scope. Rather, the aim is to give a general sense of the types of acts that might constitute such crimes. The main takeaway for journalists is that international crimes are defined very broadly.

It is possible to talk here about base crimes – ie. the underlying acts covered in the lists for each of these crimes – and then what is needed to translate them into international crimes (such as being widespread or systematic or committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a relevant group). It is probably not very important for journalists to worry too much about this; instead, it is useful to collect information that may represent evidence of any of the base crimes being committed and then let others, such as professional investigators or prosecutors, decide whether they represent international crimes.

Each crime can be broken down into specific elements (or parts), each of which needs to be proven to secure a conviction. For example, consensual sex is not rape so one element to be proven for that offence is the absence of consent. Very importantly, every crime involves proof both that the accused committed each physical element of the crime (or act) and that the accused was mentally guilty (broadly, that he or she intended to commit the acts). Various factors may go to proof of intent. For example, the fact that a civilian was shot in the back of the head in an area and at a time when no active combat was taking place may help prove intent to murder, as opposed to just an incident of collateral damage. In many cases, proof of intent is the most challenging issue for the prosecution so where information which may tend to show intent is present, it is important to try to capture it.

3. General Issues Regarding Evidence

For purposes of this Guide, the term “evidence” or “admissible evidence” may be distinguished from information by virtue of the fact that the former may be presented in court as part of the information that goes to prove either the guilt or the innocence of the accused. Evidence can be broadly broken down into three main types, namely direct – showing that a crime has been committed (a picture of a dead civilian showing they died from a bullet wound) – linkage – pointing to who is responsible (eye-witness testimony about who fired the gun which shot the bullet) – or contextual – helping to understand the wider issues in the case which help interpret other evidence (satellite images showing that no enemy soldiers were present in the area at the time the bullet was fired).

Evidence, like the information from which it is derived, takes different forms, of which some of the more relevant for present purposes are: images (photo or video); testimony (eg. of victims or witnesses, which may be signed documents or audio or video tapes); physical evidence (eg. bullet shells); documentary evidence (eg. a signed letter); and expert evidence (eg. forensic analysis of a picture to identify what it shows). Journalists will normally focus on the first four and mainly on the first two. The capture of evidence may be direct (eg. through taking a picture of a crime scene) or indirect (eg. through interviewing a victim or witness).

Broadly speaking, three key elements must be present for information to be treated as evidence (ie. to be able to be presented in court). Even if information does not meet all three of these elements, it might still be relevant for administration of justice actors. For example, information lacking some of these qualities may still be sufficiently pertinent to trigger a formal investigation or even an arrest.

1. Relevance

Relevance refers to the tendency of the information to prove one of the elements of the crime or, to put it another way, making the “existence of a fact at issue more or less probable”.⁶ Often, evidence needs to be corroborated by other evidence. The fact that information does not single-handedly prove or disprove an element of a crime does not mean it is not relevant. But it does need to materially support the proof or otherwise of an element of a crime, even if only in a contextual way. Ultimately, investigators, prosecuting and defence lawyers and judges will decide on relevance. But the elaboration of the core international crimes, above, is intended to help journalists focus on information which is more likely to be relevant.

2. Reliability

Reliability refers to information having the qualities which courts need to allow it to be admitted as evidence. As such, this is for our purposes the most important of the three elements, and the one where the specific actions of journalists in relation to information can have the most impact.

⁶ Nikita Mehandru and Alexa Koenig, “Open Source Evidence and the International Criminal Court”, (2022) 35 Harvard Human Rights Journal, <https://harvardhrj.com/2019/04/open-source-evidence-and-the-international-criminal-court/>



Reliability, in turn, can broadly be broken down into three sub-qualities:

- **Verifiability:** the information is what it claims to be. A number of features go to this, among which metadata – eg. showing the location, date and time the information was captured – can be very important.
- **Authenticity:** the information has not been tampered with. Several features are relevant here, among which being able to demonstrate a trusted chain of custody over the information can be important (ie. so that it is clear who had access to the digital files).
- **Credibility or the weight to be assigned to the information.** This again depends on a number of factors such as the source or author of the information and how determinative it is of facts at issue in the case.

3. Absence of prejudicial effect

Information may be excluded or deemed to be inadmissible if it is likely to create a prejudicial effect, with a particular focus on prejudice against the accused, which would breach the presumption of innocence. For example, even information which is reliable may be misleading or be likely to create emotional bias or unfairly sway a decision-maker, ie. a judge or a jury. For example, a live, gory video of a bullet hitting the head of a civilian may evoke a strong emotional reaction while a still picture of the head of the civilian showing a bullet hole may have the same evidentiary relevance but not have significant emotional impact. A video of an accused person acting aggressively and swearing at police, although they are charged with an entirely different offence, might also be deemed to be prejudicial. As a practical matter, the best way for journalists to try to avoid having information excluded on this basis may be to try document evidence in several formats if possible.

4. Gathering Evidence

This section of the Guide provides very practical advice about how to gather information so as to increase the chance that it may be admitted as evidence in court. It goes without saying that, if operating in a conflict zone, especially at time when the conflict is active, journalists need to take appropriate precautions, for example by wearing protective equipment.

Capturing Information Directly

The basic goal when recording information directly – whether by photograph, video or audio recording – is to capture as much supporting information, including metadata, as possible so as to establish where and when the information was collected, who or what it relates to and so on. Many modern devices can automatically attach date, time and location information to recordings and a number of apps – such as those provided by eyeWitness and InformaCam, a joint project of The Guardian and WITNESS (see below, under Resources) – can also do this. Capturing external sources – such as a clock, street sign or picture of that day’s newspaper – as part of the recording is another way of doing this. Establishing supporting information in more than one way is always helpful. Corroboration of the substance of your recording with eyewitnesses is very useful when this is possible.

Supporting information can also be provided alongside the recording, for example by providing it in audio format as part of the recording or on a signed document. It is always useful to keep a separate written summary of both the relevant metadata and a description of what exactly was captured, by whom, and any additional supporting information (“I entered this street shortly after it had been the site of active combat and active shooting could still be heard nearby.”) This not only helps verify the recorded information but it can also be helpful to refresh your memory should you be called upon to testify in court about the information later on.

Where information – such as a recording, a document or physical evidence – is provided by a third party, it is important to document who provided it to you and also relevant metadata relating to it (where and when did they obtain it).

In terms of the scope of information to capture, think about the types of crimes that appear to have been committed and what information may help establish that a crime was committed, who did it and what intent was involved. Interviewing victims, eyewitnesses and potentially even parties who were involved can be an extremely powerful way of expanding the scope of information captured.

Interviewing Victims and Witnesses

As noted just above, interviews with victims and witnesses can provide important corroborating information or direct information about the commission of crimes. The points made above about supporting information and the scope of information to obtain apply here just as they do to the direct capture of information.

It is very important to get informed consent from a potential interviewee before actually interviewing them. The concept of “informed consent” is rooted in four fundamental principles: prior disclosure to them of the purpose and intended use of the interview, voluntariness (ie. the absence of undue pressure to consent to the interview), comprehension on their part about how the interview will be used, and competence on their part to give consent. Normally, this means that the person understands who you are, where the interview will be shown/used and who will see it, and any potential risks associated with giving the interview.

The best way to demonstrate consent is to get a simple signed consent form from the person, although a live recorded oral consent – video is better than audio – can also suffice. Although non-recorded oral consent is still consent, it can be difficult to prove later on that it was given, should the need arise.

Note that anonymous evidence is not admissible in court, so you will need to disclose the name of anyone providing an interview. An interview may be directly admissible in court as evidence or the court may require the person providing the interview to be available for cross-examination by lawyers for the defence.

Note that it is important to try to be as professional as possible when conducting an interview. It is important not to let any assumptions you might have about what happened creep into the interview. For example, if you ask very leading questions which influence the answers and perhaps also the thinking of the interviewee, that interview may not only be inadmissible in court later on, but it may also “corrupt” the interviewee so that even a subsequent interview of the same person by a professional criminal investigator may be deemed to be inadmissible. If your questions convince the interviewee that something happened, their attesting to it may no longer be accepted as independent evidence.

The credibility of the interviewee is also an important consideration. A number of factors go to this, such as the coherence of their interview both internally (ie. they do not contradict themselves) and with other evidence (i.e. they do not contradict what others had said). The extent to which they have direct knowledge of the events in question is also important. As the interviewer, you should try to stick to the facts they have direct knowledge of and avoid questions which elicit opinions, and instead focus on factual issues.

Keeping Information Secure

It is obviously very important to keep both physical and digital information secure. This can be particularly important when the government is likely to be hostile to the capture of information about international crimes. In this case, security of information is important both to preserve it and potentially for your own safety.

There are a number of ways to minimise security risks, such as: storing the information in encrypted format; deleting/concealing files from/on your device; encrypting/anonymising/deleting the names of contacts to protect them; archiving evidence securely, ideally on an external hard drive and/or in cloud storage; and keeping your information organised (see WITNESS’ Activists’ Guide to Archiving Video in the Resources section). Using the apps developed by international civil society groups can also help here. For example, the eyeWitness app automatically deletes copies from your phone as soon as information is uploaded to their server and the app is camouflaged on the phone’s home screen.

Proven Chain of Custody

An important part of verifiability for digital information is maintaining the chain of custody over the digital files containing that information. Otherwise, intervening parties who “touch” the files could alter them. Maintaining the chain of custody over the files helps show that the information remains free of any manipulation or adaptation. It is also very important to avoid any form of file corruption due to other reasons, such as harm to the device storing the files. In most cases, courts will require proof of how a digital file got to the courtroom.

The apps developed by international groups all maintain custody after the files are transferred. A secure cloud storage option should do the same. There are also ways to protect your device against unauthorised access and tampering.

Tips

This section of the Guide includes a number of practical tips which aim to reinforce the points made above:

- Try to include visuals in videos to help viewers understand the wider context for the information. For example, try to provide 360-degree views or multiple angles, longer and shorter range, and so on. Capture the wider area in which the information was captured with any relevant landmarks if possible.
- Use the automated metadata features on your device if it has them (for example phone GPS services).
- Use basic filming techniques and do not break the sequence of filming unless you have to.
- Keep the original file in a secure way, in addition to uploading it to a cloud or international organisation’s system.
- If you use the eyeWitness app, they can help verify the authenticity of photos and videos. The eyeWitness team analyses and catalogues footage before creating dossiers for submission to tribunals such as the International Criminal Court.⁷
- Adhere to professional journalistic standards at all times.
- Record in colour if possible and use higher quality recordings as far as possible (for example, at least 4 mega pixels for photos).
- Use strategies like a measuring tape or fixed size image (such as a hand) to show scale where relevant.
- Capture information as soon as possible as quality can deteriorate with time.
- Try to capture faces, subject to the rules on consent, where possible.

⁷ See International Bar Association, “Russia-Ukraine war: eyeWitness to Atrocities app captures potential evidence for trials”, 18 March 2022, <https://www.ibanet.org/Russia-Ukraine-war-eyeWitness-to-Atrocities-app-captures-potential-evidence-for-trials>.

5. Resources

Apps for Journalists

- [eyeWitness](#): App that records and embeds metadata to facilitate authentication of footage and its use by courts
- [CameraV and the InformaCam system](#): App that helps capture verifiable photo and video proof securely & privately (see [here](#) for more information)
- [Taggly](#): App for Apple and Android devices that will imprint footage with a metadata watermark
- [Storymaker](#): Android app with training and templates to help journalists capture evidence
- [BoxCryptor](#): Encrypts files before exporting them

Written Material

- [Field Guide for Civil Society Documentation of Serious Human Rights Violations](#), Public International Law and Policy Group
- [Video as Evidence Field Guide](#), WITNESS
- [Amnesty International Evidence Lab](#)
- [Canada's War Crimes Project](#)
- [Justice Info Map](#)
- [International Bar Association War Crimes Committee](#)
- [One-page overview on crimes](#), eyeWitness
- [Activists' Guide to Archiving Video](#), WITNESS

NGOs

NGOs Supporting Journalists to Capture War Crimes Evidence:

- [EyeWitness](#)
- [Free Press Unlimited](#)
- [WITNESS](#)
- [Clooney Foundation](#)
- [The Centre for Civil Liberties](#)
- [Truth Hounds](#)

Organisations conducting investigations with a Ukraine focus:

- [Bellingcat](#)
- [Global Diligence](#)
- [Ukraine 5am Coalition](#)
- [Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group](#)



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