

# Safety Planning for Travel Abroad

**TRY TO STAY IN THE UNITED STATES! ADVOCATES SIMPLY CANNOT ASSIST YOU AS WELL FROM ABROAD.**

- While the U.S. State Department (the U.S. embassy in the country you are visiting) may be able to provide some help if you get taken overseas (such as applying for travel documents and booking flights back to the U.S), the level of help they can provide varies by country and is usually only available to U.S. citizens. If you are a minor (under age 18), it may be even more difficult for you to get assistance abroad.
- Little things like sending an email, making a phone call or getting a taxi can be challenging or impossible depending on internet access, local laws and whether or not you speak the local language. You may have a great deal of difficulty getting to the embassy to ask for help. These challenges increase in more remote locations and in countries where the U.S. does not have a presence due to active conflict.

**Even at the airport you can still avoid travelling** - For example, you could discreetly ask security for help or work with an advocate on a plan to safely run away at the airport – for example going last through TSA checkpoints and turning around after family has gone through.

**IF YOU THINK YOU WILL BE FORCED TO TRAVEL ABROAD AND CANNOT AVOID TRAVEL, PLAN FOR THIS WITH AN EXPERIENCED ADVOCATE.**

- Alert those you trust here in the United States and provide them with information about when and where you will be travelling. Include the location and contact details of where you will be staying and all of your flight and travel details, especially your expected date of return back to the United States.
- Make a copy or take a photo of your passport—give it to your advocate or trusted contact and save it in a safe place such as a confidential email account or secure cloud based service.
- Try to bring cash and keep it in a safe place along with emergency contact information for the U.S. embassy or consulate closest to where you will be staying as well as your U.S. based advocate.
- If you are a U.S. citizen, use a safe device or computer in a secure location (such as the library, school, or work) to register with the State's Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program: <https://step.state.gov/step/>. This provides the U.S. government with information about you and your travel plans and may make it easier to assist you while you are abroad.

**TIP:** Use old fashioned paper and pencil to write down contact information and keep this in a safe and secure place so that even if your device gets taken away you still have it.

**IT MAY BE HARDER FOR YOU TO COMMUNICATE SAFELY WHILE YOU ARE OVERSEAS— PLAN FOR THIS WITH YOUR ADVOCATE.**

Think about how you will communicate with others while overseas—if it is possible to do so, bring a safe and secret phone that is able to make calls or access the internet overseas. Together with your advocate, you should also:

- **Agree on a code word:** chose a code word that only you and your advocate know which you will use to initiate conversations while abroad. This prevents others from pretending to be you and claiming everything is fine.
- **Set up a check in schedule:** determine a way in which you will let your advocate know that you are safe and still planning to return (this can be a quick email or text containing the code word), and a plan for your advocate in case they do not hear from you. For example, if 48 hours go by and you have not made contact, what action should your advocate take? Should they contact another friend or ally to see if they have heard from you; contact the State Department and request a visit to your home in order to allow you to speak with their staff about your fears and ask for help returning home; or do nothing at all?

**TIP:** Remember to delete all traces of communication with advocates after your message has been successfully sent.

**KEEP A LIST OF RESOURCES WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES.**

Write this information on a small piece of paper and keep the paper in your sock or another place where no one will be able to find it. Remember that your phone can be lost, out of battery, or taken away from you. You should write down:

- The phone number and address of the **U.S. embassy or consulate** nearest to where you are travelling. You can find this information here: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>
- **U.S. Office of Overseas Citizens Services:** call +1-202-501-4444 or +1 (888) 407-4747 to speak with an OCS duty officer.
- The phone number for the Tahirih Justice Center **Forced Marriage Initiative:** 571-282-6187.
- The number for **emergency help** in the country you are travelling to [the 911 equivalent].
- Contact information for **NGOs or shelters** near to where you will be traveling. Work with your advocate to identify some trusted resources. If these are not immediately available, set up a way for your advocate to try and find this information and get it to you before you travel.

Please see next page for **Key Questions** to ask when working with someone who is unable to avoid travelling overseas.

## USE THIS WORKSHEET TO SAFETY PLAN WITH SOMEONE WHO IS UNABLE TO AVOID TRAVELING OVERSEAS.

1. Do you have any reason to believe or suspect that your travel plans could be related to being introduced to potential marriage partners or getting forced into marriage or engagement?
2. Where will you be traveling to? Gather as much information as possible including:
  - Country (note that this may be different from their country of origin):
  - City:
  - Street address:
  - Nearby landmarks (shopping center or marker, monument, religious center, distance from airport, etc):
3. Do you have any trusted friends or allies [here](#) that you plan to stay in contact with while you are abroad.
  - Name:
  - Relationship to you:
  - Contact information:
4. Will you be passing through any other countries on your way to your final destination? If so, do you know where and if you will be staying there for any amount of time, or will you just be passing through the airport?
5. If you do not know the location of where you will be traveling, tell me about who you might be visiting overseas:
  - Relative's name:
  - Relationship to you:
  - Address/location information:
6. When will the travel take place?
  - Date of departure:
  - Date of return:

*Note: If travel dates are unclear or unknown consider that a red flag, particularly if the service seeker is uncomfortable asking for that information.*
7. Do you know if plane tickets have been purchased? If so, can you safely take a picture of your ticket and share it with me?
  - If the service seeker does not have flight information, explore whether they know which airline their family usually uses. If so, they may be able to call the airline to find information or a reservation confirmation that may be in their name.
8. Have you lived in/traveled to this country before?
9. What is the local language and do you speak that language?
10. Who will accompany you on this trip? List all.
  - Name:
  - Relationship to you:
  - Contact information:
11. Do you have any trusted allies or friends on the trip or **at the final destination**?
  - Name:
  - Relationship to you:
  - Contact information:
12. Will you have a phone or other device that would allow you to communicate with advocates or allies while abroad? If yes, what apps or email addresses will you be using while overseas?
13. Do you have a photo of the relatives that you will be visiting abroad? If so, can you safely take a picture of it and share this with me?
14. Do you have your passport information?
  - Country of issue:
  - Passport number:
  - Name on passport:
  - Date of issue:
  - Expiration date:
15. Do you currently have personal control or access to your passport?
  - If yes, can you take a picture and share it with me via email?
  - If no, are you able to safely ask about your passport so that you might be able to take a photo?

*Note: If service seeker does not have access to their passport and cannot safely ask to see it, consider this a red flag for risk.*
16. **Remember to set up a code word and a check-in schedule!**