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**Forced Marriage Initiative**

# SAFETY PLANNING FOR TRAVELING 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, it may be even more difficult for you to get assistance abroad.
- Little things like making a phone call or getting a taxi can be challenging or impossible depending on local laws and whether or not you speak the local language, and you may have a great deal of difficulty getting to the embassy to ask for help. These challenges increase in more remote locations.
- **Use every opportunity to avoid traveling.** For example, you could set off the security alarms at the airport and ask for help, ask someone for help in the bathroom at the airport, or plan with an advocate a way to run away at the airport.

## 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.
- 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.
- Try to obtain some local currency to bring with you overseas. If this is not possible, try to bring some U.S. cash and keep it in a safe place along with the emergency contact information.
- 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 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.

## 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 safely, 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** — choose a code word that only you and your advocate know. This prevents others from pretending to be you over the phone 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 are not heard from, 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; wait another 24 hours before taking action; or do nothing at all?
- **Remember to delete all traces of communication with advocates after your message has been successfully sent.**

## Keep a list of overseas resources with you at all times.

Write this information on a small piece of paper and keep the paper in your sock or bra 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 traveling. You can find this information here: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>
- **U.S. Office of Overseas Citizens Services**: call **1-202-501-4444** between 8 AM—8 PM EST or **1-202-647-4000** after-hours and ask to speak with the OCS duty officer.
- The phone number for the Tahirih Justice Center **Forced Marriage Initiative**: **571-282-6187**.
- **Americans Overseas Domestic Violence Crisis Center**: a toll free hotline for women from the U.S. facing domestic violence overseas: **855-786-9453**.
- The number for **emergency help** in the country you are travelling to [the 911 equivalent].
- Contact information for some **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.



**Use this worksheet to safety plan with a client 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 service seeker's country of origin):
  - ◆ City:
  - ◆ Street address:
  - ◆ Nearby landmarks (shopping center or market, monument, religious center, distance from airport, etc.):
3. 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?
4. 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:
5. When will the travel take place?
  - ◆ Date of departure:
  - ◆ Date of return:
6. Have you lived in/traveled to this country before?
7. What is the local language and do you speak that language?
8. Who will accompany you on this trip?
  - ◆ Name:
  - ◆ Relationship to you:
9. Do you have any trusted allies or friends on the trip or at the final destination?
  - ◆ Name:
  - ◆ Relationship to you:
  - ◆ Contact information:
10. 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?
11. 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:
12. 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.
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 over 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?
16. Remember to set up a code word and a check-in schedule!

**\*See other side for information about the risks of traveling overseas and safety planning tips for travel abroad**

