

### Threat brainstorm

**Purpose & Output** This exercise is a first attempt at identifying the threats to yourself, your group or organisation and your work in defence of human rights. This initial list of threats can then be refined so as to focus in more depth on the threats which are most likely or potentially most harmful.

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**Input & Materials** Inputs: this exercise will be easier if you start with:

- your analysis of the ongoing political, economic, social and technological trends in your context
- a list of the activities or types of work you carry out in order to achieve your objectives
- your actor map, particularly the opponents
- a list of security indicators you have observed in your previous work.

Suggested materials:

- **If alone:** a sheet of paper or some other materials for writing.
  - **If in a group:** a large sheet or flip-chart and writing material.
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**Format & Steps** Consider and write down all the potential threats to yourself, your organisation and your work. It may be helpful to categorise them beginning from each of your activities or areas of work. Remember: a threat is any potential event which could cause harm to ourselves or our work. Don't forget to consider potential threats to your information security and threats to your well-being, political or otherwise.

Create a list of these threats. If you find it difficult, consider your opponents and the ways in which they have acted against other human rights defenders in the past. Analyse your security indicators and consider whether they represent a concrete threat.

**Format &  
Steps**

Observe any patterns that emerge in the threats you identified: do they relate primarily to certain activities of yours, or originate from certain opponents? This will be useful when it comes to security planning (i.e. by planning particularly for certain activities, or dedicated plans for engagement with some actors).  
Keep this list for analysis in the following exercises.

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**Remarks &  
Tips**

If the list is somewhat long, it may be overwhelming to consider these potential threats. It may also be a challenging exercise as we may not know how realistic we are being.

It's important to remember that political threats always originate from a certain actor or set of actors who see their interests potentially threatened by you and your work. In a sense, threats are a sign that your work is effective and that your opponents fear your work. While it may be a moment which inspires fear, clearly recognising the threats you face should also be a moment of empowerment. Acknowledging these threats and the likelihood of their occurrence allows you to better plan for and potentially mitigate the damage caused to you or your work, should one of them occur.

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