

FIRST STEPS

GUIDELINES FOR KIDNAP VICTIMS

Should you become a victim of kidnapping, there are a number of actions you can take to try and make your situation as tolerable as possible. It is important to be as proactive as is allowed in order to maintain your emotional, mental and physical well-being. Those recommendations include:

- Passive cooperation is the safest approach. Even if violence is used in response to the passivity, any resistance may result in serious injury or death.
- Remain calm and alert.
- Try to establish some kind of rapport with your kidnapper(s). Family is a universal subject.
- Avoid discussing sensitive topics (i.e. politics, religion).
- Mentally prepare yourself for a lengthy stay. This will help guard against constant disappointments regarding your release.
- Maintain your physical and mental health. Eat the food that is provided in order to preserve your strength. If the food or the water is likely to cause infection or illness request cleaner, better food and water, pointing out that if you become ill it will be a problem for your kidnapper(s).
- Ensure that you request any vital medication that you require.
- In anticipation of a lengthy captivity discipline yourself: divide the day up into: periods for exercise, washing, prayer, meditation, mental exercise, etc.
- If held in restrictive confinement, divide the cell into areas for sleep, exercise, washing, etc.
- Establish exercise and relaxation programs. Exercise produces a healthy tiredness and gives you a sense of accomplishment.
- Take note of the characteristics of your kidnapper(s) and surroundings: their habits, speech, contacts between each other, any exterior noises (typical of city or country) and other distinctive sounds. This information could prove very valuable later.
- Keep track of the passage of time. Kidnapper(s) may attempt to confuse your sense of time by taking your watch, keeping you in a windowless cell, or serving meals at odd hours. Maintain your dignity and self-respect at all times.
- Build relations with fellow hostages and the kidnapper(s) if possible. If hostages are held apart, devise ways to communicate with one another.
- NEVER LOSE HOPE! Remember that your family and friends are working hard to ensure your safe release but that this may take time.