**CHECKLIST FOR DOCUMENTING CORPORATE HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACTS**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR NGOS AND COMMUNITY-BASED GROUPS**

**Note: the checklist is provided below**

**Q. Why document?**

1. Documenting a human rights abuse involving a company or companies can be an important first step that informs and enables further efforts to change the company’s actions or hold it accountable.

Once documentation is available, it can then be used for further advocacy, including: linking affected communities with other organizations that can provide support and advice; media outreach or online campaigning; or legal action, for example.

If the documentation is made publicly available, that helps expose the company’s actions and can increase the pressure for it to change.

**Q. How can the checklist help?**

1. The checklist aims to help local groups document the key aspects of a human rights situation involving a company/ies. Human rights documentation can be a complex process: the checklist does not aim to create complete documentation of a situation, but ensure that key elements are registered and the process is underway, so that communities and the organisations they work with can identify next steps.

We will be adding guidance and examples to each question on the checklist: the checklist will be continually refined, improved, and adapted on the basis of cases that have been documented with it.

**Q. What type of case can the checklist be used for?**

1. It can be used for a single incident, such as a factory fire, a threat against a human rights defender, or a chemical spill into a water supply.

It can also be used to document broader/ongoing human rights situations that have multiple individual incidents of abuse, for example a forcible relocation of a community followed by intimidation of protestors and restrictions on access to water.

**Q. What if it’s not available in the locally-spoken language?**

1. We encourage translations of the checklist into local languages, and documentation in any language.

**Q. Do we have to answer all the questions?**

1. No. In many cases, there will not be enough information available to answer all the questions: it is fine to indicate ***“not known”*** by some of them.

The first three questions are sufficient to capture the detail of the incident; questions 4-6 are additional and helpful, and might need to be completed with the involvement of a supporting NGO.

**Q. Can we include photographs and video?**

1. Yes, these can be an important addition to the documentation: where possible/safe to do so they should be accompanied by details of who took them, when they were taken, what they show.

**Q. What will happen once the checklist is completed?**

1. Please send completed documentation to Tatiana Bejar at [tbejar@escr-net.org](mailto:tbejar@escr-net.org)  and Annabel Short at [short@business-humanrights.org](mailto:short@business-humanrights.org).

We will then be in touch to clarify any details and discuss next steps. These might include:

* Connecting the community/organization with relevant advocacy organizations
* Seeking a public response from the company/ies to the case
* Publishing and disseminating the documentation on [www.business-humanrights.org](http://www.business-humanrights.org) and through other channels.

**Q. Will the checklist answers be made public?**

1. Only with the consent of the documenting group/individual. The idea is that the checklist will lead to documentation that will be publicly available but we recognize that there may be sensitivities with publishing the information.

**Q. What if some of the people involved in the situation are at risk?**

**A.** This should be indicated clearly on the checklist, and information should only be provided with the consent of the parties at risk.

1. **What are the longer-term plans for this project?**
2. To bring the checklist and documentation generated by it alongside other documentation initiatives globally, to build an online community of practice and learning on documenting corporate-related human rights abuses. Also to enable communities to upload their own responses to the checklist / documentation online.

The aim is for communities and local groups everywhere to have the means to document corporate-related human rights abuses; which in turn helps push for change.

**Q. Who can we contact with questions?**

Tatiana Bejar at [tbejar@escr-net.org](mailto:tbejar@escr-net.org)  and Annabel Short at [short@business-humanrights.org](mailto:short@business-humanrights.org)

See next page for the checklist.

**Checklist to initiate documentation of a case of alleged human rights abuse involving corporate actors**

**Security notice:** Only answer the questions that you feel safe or able to do so, and that will not pose a risk to others.

**Name:** [If you wish to provide it]

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**Organization:** [If you wish to provide it]   
  
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**Affiliation to the incident or situation:** [If you wish to provide it]

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The idea of the checklist questions below is that the answers will be public; if there are any answers that you do not wish to be made public, please indicate. Questions 1-3 are sufficient for a local community to conduct initial documentation of an incident or situation. Supporting organizations may wish to also complete questions 4-6.

**1. General details about the incident or ongoing situation**

***Note: This could be a single incident, a series of incidents, an ongoing situation(s) or a combination of these.***

1.1. *Nature of the incident or situation*: Describe what happened, or what is still happening (if an ongoing situation).

1.2. *Timeframe*: When did this happen, or when did it begin (if an ongoing situation)?

1.3 *Location*: Where did this occur / or where is it occurring (if an ongoing situation), e.g. name of village, town, country, significant landmarks.

1.4 *People affected*: How many people are affected?  How many people could potentially be affected?  Say a bit about the people affected (e.g. characteristics of the community, or, if an individual, relevant history).

**2. Actors involved**

2.1 *Business:* Name of the company or companies involved in this incident or ongoing situation, and nature of their involvement, if known.

2.2. *Government:* Were / are local or national government officials or security forces involved as well?  If so, what specific actions or role did they play, if known?

2.3  *Others:* If you are aware of any other actors involved in this incident or situation, please describe (e.g. foreign aid agencies, international banks).

**3. Current and potential threats or danger**

3.1 Are there any threats or danger to you, to other stakeholders, or to any advocates who are working on behalf of those who have been harmed?  Please describe the nature of these threats.

3.2 Is there any concern that there may be additional harm in the imminent future?

**4. Desired outcomes**

4.1 *Aim:* What outcome are you hoping to achieve, through documentation followed by further steps that are taken?

4.2. *Obstacles:* What are the main obstacles or barriers to achieving this aim?

**5. Existing documentation**

5.1 Have any written reports or visual material produced or published about the incident or ongoing situation?  *[please include hyperlinks if possible]*

**6. Previous steps and communication**

6.1 *Communication with business and government:* Have you already communicated with the company or government about this situation, and if so what was the response?

6.2 *Communication with outside groups:* Have you communicated about the incident with any additional outside individuals or groups?  If so, whom and what was the response?

6.3. *Actions (including legal):* Has any action already been taken to address this situation, or is any action underway or planned?  If so, please explain what was done, any obstacles encountered, and any outcomes so far.  (Examples could include legal action, community organization, media outreach or others)