

***Crisis Support Statement***  
**Macedonia World Baptist Missions, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 519**  
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**PREAMBLE**

Realizing missionaries serve in a world which is increasingly subject to acts of violence, terrorism, and political unrest, it is our responsibility as a Mission to make adequate preparation to deal with such an eventuality should it arise.

MWBM recognizes the sovereign power of God to work out His purposes even in such a situation as this, and we, therefore, affirm our unqualified trust in Him and reliance upon the wisdom and direction of the Holy Spirit in seeking a resolution of any crisis. Furthermore, we recognize the importance and the encouragement of mutual support of the sending church and co-sponsoring churches. (Philippians 2:13 *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”*)

**DEFINITION OF A CRISIS SITUATION**

For the purpose of this policy, a crisis situation shall include all cases where any MWBM missionary or the immediate family member is threatened with or suffers serious physical or mental harm, where any ministry property suffers or is likely to suffer substantial damage, or where the continuation of MWBM ministry in a particular location is threatened.

MWBM recognizes the difference between those crisis situations that develop in stages (such as political or economic crisis, civil unrest or violence, war or international tension) and crisis situations which happen unexpectedly (such as a terrorist attack, coup d’etat, natural disasters, imprisonment, kidnaping etc.) In the first case, problems should be anticipated by leadership and contingency plans developed so that members are not subjected to panic situations. In the second case, where no prior planning is possible, the mission must have the ability to act quickly to provide appropriate guidance and assistance.

**BASIC PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF A CRISIS SITUATION**

1. The crisis is to be reported to the Pastor(s) of the Sending Church(es), Field Director, and where appropriate, the relevant Embassy/Consulate.
2. The Field Director will notify the General Director, and the supporting Churches (when possible) immediately and communicate subsequent developments to them.
3. The General Director will authorize the formation of a Crisis Support Team if appropriate.
4. The General Director, in conjunction with the Sending Church, will prepare or approve an initial statement suitable for and in the form of a press release if appropriate. No person in MWBM is to use other than the approved wording of the release.
5. The General Director, as appropriate, will send out follow-up statements. In cases where a Crisis Support Team has been formed, only statements, which have been approved by the Leader of the Crisis Support Team, will be issued.
6. A final Full report will be prepared by the Crisis Support Team Leader or Senior missionary on location, and distributed to the Pastor(s) of the Sending Church(es) and General Director.
7. On the basis of the Full Report, and if necessary, the General Director may prepare a full and final statement to be released for publication through appropriate channels.

## **CRISIS SUPPORT TEAM**

The General Director in assessment of the following circumstances will approve of a Crisis Support Team:

1. When the crisis is likely to be extended in time and to demand an abnormal commitment or amount of resources.
2. When the actual or potential consequences of the crisis threatens life or the continued ministry of MWBM in a particular area.

## **CST MEMBERSHIP**

Membership of the CST will normally consist of the following:

- ◆ A Leader within MWBM Home Office Staff (CST Leader)
- ◆ The Field Director
- ◆ One member of the Executive Board.
- ◆ A Sending Church Leader, if appropriate and possible.
- ◆ A representative of the national church in the crisis area, if appropriate and possible.

In a case where a crisis victim is a member of the immediate family of any person who would normally serve on the CST, that CST member will be replaced by another person nominated by the CST Leader or the General Director.

The CST will have the power to co-opt additional members and call in outside resource people as appropriate to the situation.

If possible, the CST will assemble at a location as close to the scene of the crisis as possible while still maintaining reliable communications. Members assigned to the team are to be relieved of their normal responsibilities. MWBM realizes the expense of a Crisis Support Team; therefore, MWBM will endeavor to establish a Crisis Support Fund solicited from all supporting churches..

Upon establishment of a CST, all other members and staff of the Mission shall refer all information, suggestions or other data relating to the crisis to the CST. All members of MWBM are to refrain from taking any steps or conducting any actions relating to the crisis without specific direction from the CST Leader.

## **CST AUTHORITY**

The CST is responsible for handling all aspects of resolution of the crisis. This may include protection for members and their families, protection of facilities, information gathering, negotiations, coordination and assignment of resources, press and government relations, and both internal and external communications regarding the crisis and its resolution.

The CST will appoint a Negotiator where necessary. The Negotiator will not be a member of the CST, but will act in an advisory capacity to the CST.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the CST will act with authority of the Board of Trustees of MWBM and will endeavor at all times to maintain consultation with the General Director and President of the Executive Board.

## **KIDNAPING/HOSTAGE TAKING**

In the event of a hostage situation, the interests of the hostage and his family will be jointly considered in light of the primary objective of gaining the release of the hostage at the earliest possible time with the least disruption to his/her life, and the life of the family.

## **COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE HOME COUNTRY EMBASSY/CONSULATE**

Upon arrival in the country of service, MWBM missionaries will register their names, address, and telephone numbers with their Home Country Embassy or local Consulate office.

In Event of a crisis, MWBM missionaries should communicate directly with their Embassy or Consulate office for advisory information.

## **OUTGOING COMMUNICATION DURING A CRISIS**

During a crisis, all information to be released concerning the crisis will first have the approval of the CST. No member of MWBM (other than those specifically designated by the General Director or CST Leader) is authorized to make any statement or comment, which relates in any way to an ongoing crisis. All press inquires within the United States shall be referred to the General Director, who may serve as the spokesperson for the CST and/or may direct the inquiry directly to the CST.

## **EVACUATION**

The decision to evacuate a particular area shall be made by the General Director in consultation with the Pastor(s), and appropriate Field Director and/or Team Leader. If the emergency is sudden and normal communication with the Pastor(s) or Directors is not possible, the decision to evacuate may be made by the individual missionary, if it is felt that there is a serious threat to his/her safety.

Evacuation should always be cautious and deliberate. Personal safety is of utmost concern for the missionary and his family. At first, removal should be to other places of safety closest to their base of operation, if possible.

## **EVACUATION PRIORITY**

### **I. First Priority**

- 1) Mothers and Children (fathers too unless in an essential role)
- 2) Those with special medical care needs
- 3) Those unable to cope emotionally
- 4) Those specifically targeted for harassment
- 5) Those living in zones considered most dangerous

### **II. Second Priority**

- 1) Those with strong personal preference to withdraw
- 2) Those close to completing their term
- 3) Those who with minimum disruption can continue their work elsewhere (i.e. language study)
- 4) Those if cut off from other missionaries are likely to flounder (i.e. trying to communicate in the national language)
- 5) Those rendered ineffective or inoperative

### **III. Third Priority**

- 1) Those with restricted resident permits
- 2) Those in some major leadership role
- 3) Those involved in work perceived as essential (i.e. medical work)
- 4) Those veteran missionaries who give adequate reason to stay
- 5) Those located in areas perceived too dangerous to withdraw

MWBM recognizes the extreme anxiety experienced by abducted persons and the equally extreme anguish caused to the next of kin in the event of kidnaping and the demand for ransom.

The host government should be informed immediately of any kidnaping/hostage taking because it has responsibility for the safety of expatriates. The rights of citizenship of the abducted person(s) should be exercised in seeking the help of their respective governments.

### **RANSOM AND EXTORTION**

It is the policy of MWBM that as a matter of principle no sums of money by way of ransom or other forms of extortion will be paid.

When possible, attempts will be made to obtain the release of the victims by reasoning with the kidnappers. However, it is not always possible or desirable to establish such direct links between a mission and kidnappers; therefore, non-mission mediators may be utilized.

The CST , after consulting with the Sending Pastor(s) and General Director shall have authority to make final decisions regarding any concessions demanded by the perpetrators of a crisis situation, in a way that takes into account the best interests of the affected personnel, their sending church(es), the Mission, and that which honors God.

### **FAMILIES OF HOSTAGES**

In the event of a hostage seizure, the family of the hostage will be moved immediately to a safe location as determined by the Team Leader or Field Director. The CST will review the situation immediately when it convenes and recommend further action, including evacuation to the family's home country for emotional support if advisable, but only as a last resort.

From the time a crisis commences, a MWBM member will be assigned to work with the hostage's immediate family on a regular basis until final resolution of the crisis. This member will obtain official news and information for the family, ensure that physical, emotional and spiritual needs are being met, and take whatever steps are possible to minimize the stress and consequences of the crisis family.

MWBM, Braselton, Georgia will assure the extended family of their concern and of the practical steps being taken to secure release, and will exercise a spiritual ministry, as opportunity affords, to anxious relatives.

### **CRISIS COUNSELING**

It is recognized that all crisis situations will give rise to the need for adequate counseling and aftercare of those involved. The CST will evaluate the need for counseling and then arrange for all personnel who are directly involved in a crisis to receive counseling from a qualified counselor. These evaluations will be carried out immediately following a crisis and no more than three months later. The cost of these evaluations and any necessary treatment will be handled in such a way as not to impose financial burden on the persons involved. (See Page 2, CST Membership, paragraph 3.)

### **IMPRISONMENT**

In the event of imprisonment, MWBM will follow, where appropriate the same principles for action as a person is kidnaped or taken hostage. MWBM will find appropriate means to urge the host government to determine the reasons for imprisonment and what can be done to secure a release. In addition, MWBM will work closely with the appropriate Embassies to apply all legitimate pressure possible, unless this would negatively affect the possibility of release or the future proclamation of the Gospel.

### **GUIDELINES FOR EVACUATION**

1. If a perceived emergency situation arises, liaisons with MWBM leadership and the Home Country

Embassy/Consulate will be established.

2. In some areas of the world it would be wise to have a suitcase with necessities (including rations, baby food, etc.) Make an evacuation list of important things to take if you had to evacuate at a moments notice. Remember your weight allowance for baggage.
3. Make sure all travel documents are in order (e.g. up-to-date visa and passport)
4. Make sure advance arrangements are made for ticket payment for emergencies. Some possible options to be considered:
  - ◆ Have a US\$ dollar account on which checks can be drawn
  - ◆ Have a major credit card valid for purchasing airline tickets
  - ◆ Have a written agreement with a local airline office
  - ◆ Keep extra cash on hand
5. All property titles and legal documents with insurance policies should be copied and other originals kept in locked, fireproof containers, preferably in a bank deposit box, the copies to be sent to MWBM Home Office for safe custody.
6. All evaluations of property should be kept up-to-date, copied and handled as above.
7. Records of funds should be handled as above and some cash kept for emergencies.
8. Arrangements should be made with other expatriates or nationals to assume title to personal property that cannot be evacuated quickly and easily.
9. If evacuation is necessary, notify your Pastor and Field Director of your plans as soon as possible.
10. Determine the safest and most direct route of transportation. Try not to let emotional reactions lead you to unnecessary radical action (e.g. boarding the first plane departing which would take you far away from your primary destination.)
11. Where practical and possible, keep MWBM leadership informed while en route or immediately upon arrival at your destination.

## **EVACUATION PREPARATIONS**

### 1. Spiritual

- ◆ Major emphasis should be placed upon effecting an emergency evacuation in such a way that it will bear strong testimony to our deep love and concern for the spiritual welfare of those being left behind, especially those of the household of faith.
- ◆ Every possible effort should be made so that it will not appear as though we are more concerned in saving our lives and possessions than we are in the immediate needs and future security of the national Christian.
- ◆ We should remember that there is Biblical precedent for evacuation (Acts 8:1-5), especially as a part of God's plan to spread the Gospel. So we should be alert to nearby opportunities for alternative ministries.

### 2. Physical

- ◆ Have a location arranged to receive your family in a nearby country. The embassy's advice should be carefully considered in the case of serious emergencies.
- ◆ Evacuation action should be taken rather than risk internment.
- ◆ The Field Director shall be kept fully informed of movements of missionaries and their families when taking vacations and extended trips.

## **ASSENT BY MWBM PERSONNEL**

Before beginning a field assignment, all MWBM personnel are required to sign a **Policy statement on Suffering Loss**, acknowledging that they have studied this **Crisis Support Policy** document and agree to

fully comply with all its provisions.