Supplemental Resources – Lebanese Universities (English Version)

Module 1: Journalism Safety: Developing Safe Habits
"The Media, Civil and Political Freedoms Scene in Lebanon: Report 2022" *Maharat* (February 2023)
https://maharatfoundation.org/media/2357/_report-the-media-civil-and-political-freedoms-scene-in-lebanon-eng.pdf
Maharat, a women-led, Beirut-based organization, works as a catalyst, defending and advancing the development of democratic societies governed by the values of freedom of expression and respect for human rights. This report provides an overview of events and developments related to press freedom in Lebanon. Examining this report offers an opening to explore the importance of journalism safety as students embark upon their future career.

> **Discussion Questions**
> 1. What prompted many journalists to leave local media organizations?
> 2. How do students view the ability to exercise their freedom of speech, particularly as aspiring journalists?
> 3. What types of safety risks do journalists face? How does the current environment encourage or discourage journalistic work?

"How Arab Spring Changed Culture of Journalist Safety" Sirwan Kajjo, Ezel Sahinkaya, & Namo Abdulla, *VOA* (April 2021) https://www.voanews.com/a/extremism-watch_how-arab-spring-changed-culture-journalist-safety/6204884.html
This article, which notes how the Arab Spring impacted the media community, mentions the murders of James Foley and Steven Sotloff in Syria (2014) and the deaths of Tim Hetherington and Chris Hondros in Libya (2011). These deaths, coupled with the rise of ISIS, highlighted the increasing dangers journalists face and changed the way that news organizations and media groups approached journalist safety. For instance, A Culture of Safety Alliance (ACOS) was formed to tackle this issue. The objective of ACOS and like-minded organizations is "to change the culture among journalists, editors and newsrooms."

> **Discussion Questions**
> 1. Search the **ACOS website.** What is the objective of ACOS? What are the ACOS principles?
> 2. Why is it important for all journalists – and especially aspiring journalists – to consider safety as an important part of being a journalist?
> 3. For class discussion: What concerns do students have about the risks and dangers journalists may confront?

"In Middle East and North Africa, a drop in attacks on journalists belies dire state of press freedom" Sherif Monsour, *Committee to Protect Journalists* (December 2021) https://cpj.org/2021/12/in-middle-east-and-north-africa-a-drop-in-attacks-on-journalists-belies-dire-state-of-press-freedom/

This article mentions specific threats journalists in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region face. While there was a drop in the number of journalists jailed in the MENA region, other disturbing trends developed. There is concern about governments authorizing and utilizing "censorship, surveillance, and the criminalization of journalism" to quiet outspoken reporters. This article provides a good starting point to discuss the importance of thinking about the relationship between safety and journalism.

Discussion Questions
1. What are some risks and threats journalists working in the MENA region face?
2. Considering the threats members of the media face, how can journalists prepare themselves to practice their craft safely?

Module 2: On Assignment – Mitigating Risk

"Ten years after the Arab Spring, the region's media faces grave threats. Here are the top press freedom trends" Justin Shilad, Ignacio Miguel Delgado Culebras, & Sherif Mansour, *Committee to Protect Journalists* (January 2021) https://cpj.org/2021/01/ten-years-after-arab-spring-media-threats-press-freedom-trends/

This article examines how the MENA region has grown more dangerous and deadlier for journalists during the past 10+ years since the Arab Spring. The *Committee to Protect Journalists* (CPJ) has identified the following trends that have led to the silencing of journalists: (1) Imprisonment; (2) Censorship; (3) Criminalization; (4) Creating a deadly reporting environment; (5) Targeted murders with impunity; (6) Detention/Killing by non-state actors; and (7) Increased surveillance. To develop safe habits, aspiring journalists must be aware of the various threats that may face. If journalists know the risks, they can better prepare themselves to mitigate the dangers. In this article, CPJ also highlights specific cases that relate to each trend.

Discussion Questions
1. What are the seven trends that CPJ is tracking? Which of these trends do your students consider the most threatening?
2. How can awareness of these trendlines help journalists mitigate risk?
3. What steps can journalists take to mitigate these risks?

"Safety of Journalists Covering Protests" Frank Smyth, *UNESCO* (2020) https://globalfreedomofexpression.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/374206eng.pdf

Frank Smyth, journalist safety and press freedom expert, authored this piece for the UNESCO series: *World Trends in Freedom of the Press During Times of Turmoil.* Smyth examines the various reasons for increased protests around the globe and the threats journalists face when covering these events. Smyth points out the majority of attacks against journalists have been committed by police / security forces. In addition to police actions, this brief covers international and domestic (US) law, non-lethal and lethal rounds used against reporters, behavior of protesters towards journalists, gender and diversity factors, and good practices for all parties involved in civil unrest, including good practices for journalists.

Discussion Questions
1. Why do protests (civil unrest, civil disobedience) take place around the world? Why do protests take place in the MENA region? List and compare.

2. **Who has committed the majority of attacks against journalists? How does this impact the role of journalism? What, if anything, can be done about this situation?**
3. **What are some good practices for journalists covering protests?**
4. **How does gender and diversity factor into safety when covering protests?**
5. **What steps does Smyth recommend for media outlets? How would these recommendations impact media outlets?**

Module 3: Understanding Journalists' Rights

"Coalition to Defend Freedom of Expression: Authorities must respect freedoms of the press and legal profession and fundamentally amend defamation laws" *MENA Rights Group* (April 5, 2023)
https://www.menarights.org/en/articles/coalition-defend-freedom-expression-authorities-must-respect-freedoms-press-and-legal
"As part of the Coalition to Defend Freedom of Expression in Lebanon, MENA Rights Group condemned the authorities' attempts to restrict freedom of expression by summoning journalists for investigation."
In this statement, the Coalition to Defend Freedom of Expression condemns different authorities' attempts to restrict freedom of expression and to stop summoning journalists for investigations.

Discussion Questions
1. **What are the rights of journalists in Lebanon?**
2. **How are the actions of different authorities limiting freedom of expression?**
3. **How are these authorities manipulating the law to intimidate media members?**
4. **According to the coalition, what steps should Parliament take? Why?**

Module 4: Working with Sources

"Tips for Interviewing Victims of Tragedy, Witnesses, and Survivors" Marcela Turati, *Global Investigative Journalism Network* (March 16, 2021) https://gijn.org/2021/03/16/tips-for-interviewing-victims-of-tragedy-witnesses-and-survivors/
In this article, Marcela Turati draws on her experience interviewing victims and survivors of traumatic events, including violence, crime, disasters, and accidents. Turati acknowledges there is not an infallible method to conduct these difficult interviews; instead, Turati offers these 15 steps as a roadmap.

Discussion Questions
1. **Before interviewing somebody who has experienced trauma, what is the first thing journalists should reflect upon, and what questions should they ask themselves?**
2. **Discuss the 15 tips that Turati offers. Which steps are the most important? Which might be the most difficult?**

"How to protect your sources' identities?" from the Journalist Survival Guide, *SKeyes Foundation* (2013)
https://video.skeyesmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Animation-2.pdf
In this PDF (the accompanying video is no longer accessible), *SKeyes* tackles the importance of protecting the identity of sources. As *SKeyes* notes, protecting the identity of sources "is one of the most serious decisions a journalist can make." Sources can potentially put themselves in danger, physically and mentally, by speaking with journalists. Knowing this, journalists must do everything they can to protect the identity and safety of their sources.

Discussion Questions
1. **Before an interview takes place, what should a journalist do to establish terms?**

2. **Where and how is the best way to conduct an interview? Why? How should a journalist prepare for an interview?**
3. **What techniques can a journalist use if a source requests anonymity? Are there additional ways to protect the identity of confidential sources?**

Module 5: Reporting on – and during – the Covid-19 Pandemic
"How civil unrest and COVID-19 have shaped local reporting in the Middle East" Fatma Katr, *International Journalists Network* (October 2021) https://ijnet.org/en/story/how-civil-unrest-and-covid-19-have-shaped-local-reporting-middle-east
Press freedom around the world has worsened over the last decade. Journalists face increased risks and more and more governments have worked to stifle and silence the media. This article points out how economic struggles, including in Lebanon, have faced mounting pressures in pursuing their craft as resources dwindle. The article explores the changing face of the media with the rise of citizen journalism and multimedia reporting.

Discussion Questions
1. **How has the role of the media and traditional journalism changed in recent years? What impact does social media play?**
2. **What is the role of the journalist in this changing media environment?**
3. **Does the increasing number of citizen journalists impact the safety and/or credibility of traditional journalists?**
4. **Where is journalism heading in the future? Can press freedom be ensured in this changing landscape? Why or why not?**

Module 6: Photojournalism – Staying Safe
"Hezbollah supporters beat Lebanese video journalist Hussein Bassal covering elections" *Committee to Protect Journalists* (May 17, 2022) https://cpj.org/2022/05/hezbollah-supporters-beat-lebanese-video-journalist-covering-elections/
This article discusses the assault of video journalist Hussein Bassal by members of Hezbollah and requests a transparent investigation. Bassal was wearing his press permit and called his news outlet to let them know what was transpiring. While not explicitly mentioned, this article can lead to a discussion about the particular risks that video journalists and photojournalists face.

Discussion Questions
1. **Recently, there has been conversation about how explicitly journalists should identify themselves as members of the media. What are the laws in Lebanon regarding members of the press identifying themselves as such? Does wearing badges or clothing with media logos or marked with "PRESS" put journalists at more risk?**
2. **What specific risks do video journalists and photojournalists face? Students might consider the equipment needed, the lack of peripheral vision when filming / photographing, and/or any other concerns they can identify.**
3. **What actions likely saved Bassal from a worse assault and possibly even death? What could Bassal have done differently?**

Module 7: Running a Newsroom – Creating a Culture of Safety
"You want viability? You need a culture of safety!" Elisabet Cantenys of the *ACOS Alliance*, *DW Akademie* (March 5, 2021) https://akademie.dw.com/en/you-want-viability-you-need-a-culture-of-safety/a-57336645

Elisabet Cantenys, executive director of *ACOS Alliance*, argues about the importance of creating a culture of safety within news organizations and for journalists. This article, part of a larger study by *DW Akademie*, considers journalism safety in various locations, including Lebanon, Mexico, Burkina Faso, and the Philippines. Cantenys identifies ways that news organizations can be prepared for new safety challenges and how an investment in safety policies helps protect journalists, physically and mentally, and can contribute to the health of journalism, in general.

Discussion Questions
1. **Cantenys is concerned that danger and threats are reduced to a focus on physical safety. Why does Cantenys argue that the reality of safety concerns is more complex?**
2. **Cantenys suggests the Mexican publication, *Noroeste*, is a good example of a news organization addressing safety holistically. Why? How can the steps taken by *Noroeste* be employed in newsrooms in Lebanon? What would work and what would not work?**
3. **Why does Cantenys argue news organizations should implement changes now?**

"Challenging the establishment: How alternative media is promoting a democratic dynamic in Lebanon" Clément Gibon, *The New Arab* (November 4, 2021)
https://www.newarab.com/features/alternative-media-and-democratic-dynamics-lebanon
Clément Gibon explores how the Lebanese media landscape has transformed over the last several years. This transformation has been both positive and negative. On the positive side, this new influence allows for a new media narrative; on the negative side, Ayman Mhanna of the Samir Kassir Foundation notes that many "journalists simply act as spokespersons for groups or individuals within the political elites."

Discussion Questions
1. **According to Media Monitor Ownership, what percentage of the Lebanese media is politically affiliated? Why is this a concern when thinking about press freedom?**
2. **According to this article, what is the impact of alternative media in Lebanon?**
3. **What is the difference between traditional and alternative media? How does the alternative media contribute to democratic contributions?**
4. **Will the rise of alternative media impact the traditional newsroom? Discuss.**

Module 8: Diversity in the Newsroom & the Targeting of Female and Minority Journalists
"Journalist Reem Abdellatif on the risks facing female reporters who cover the Gulf" Ignacio Miguel Delgado Culebras, *Committee to Protect Journalists* (March 2021) https://cpj.org/2021/03/journalist-reem-abdellatif-on-the-risks-facing-female-reporters-who-cover-the-gulf/
In this article / interview, Reem Abdellatif recounts the various threats and online harassment she has received while reporting in the Gulf. Abdellatif notes how the harassment she receives, including the derogatory names, differs from the harassment male colleagues would receive. Abdellatif points out that the attacks against her "are illustrative of the backlash against reporters who cover women's issues in the Gulf" and are directed at her due to systemic racism. These threats highlight the challenges women reporters in the MENA region face.

Discussion Questions
1. **How does Abdellatif describe the experience of being a female journalist in the MENA region? For discussion: What can newsrooms do to support female journalists?**
2. **Class discussion: Why is it important to have a diversity of voices in the newsroom?**
3. **How does fear of authority lead to the increased threats that female journalists face?**

4. **What does Abdellatif suggest can be done to improve the situation for female journalists in the Gulf? What role can journalists – both male & female – play in improving this situation?**

Module 9: Digital Security

"Digital Safety Helpdesk Expands Beyond West Asia And North Africa" *SMEX*, https://smex.org/digital-safety-helpdesk-expands-beyond-west-asia-and-north-africa/
According to the *SMEX* website, "The Digital Safety Helpdesk supports activists, journalists, bloggers, marginalized groups and human rights defenders who have been affected by cybersecurity incidents and online threats in Arabic-speaking countries. Our main aim is to elevate the capabilities of the online civic space through digital safety tips, rapid response to digital attacks, and threat mitigation." This article examines security incidents based on platforms used while also noting that "most cases that require complaints be referred to a higher level are primarily those targeting journalists, members of the LGBT community, and activists." Lastly, the article notes that males account for more complaints despite the fact women typically face more harassment and gender-based violence.

Discussion Questions
1. **How and when can journalists, bloggers, and other alternative media members contact the Digital Security Helpdesk? What topics can the helpdesk assist with?**
2. **Why might there be more complaints filed by men than women when women often face more harassment and gender-based violence?**
3. **Class discussion: Why is it important to share these concerns with the helpdesk?**

Module 10: Dealing with Online Harassment and Cyberbullying

"How to Dox Yourself on the Internet" Kristen Kozinski, Neena Kapur, & Floyd Muir, *NYT Open* (February 2020) https://open.nytimes.com/how-to-dox-yourself-on-the-internet-d2892b4c5954
This article from *NYT Open* examines doxxing (online attacks that expose personal information). Doxxing, or doxing, can intimidate and silence journalists. *NYT Open* offers ways for journalists to proactively limit the amount of personal information available on the internet. This includes identifying steps "doxxers" take to find personal information and then offers "a formal program that consists of a series of repeatable steps that can be taken to clean up an online footprint." *NYT Open* has publicly released this program, free of charge, for individuals to promote general online hygiene.

Discussion Questions
1. **What is "doxxing"? How is doxxing used to silence and intimidate journalists?**
2. **What steps do "doxxers" take to expose their targets?**
3. **How can this free, publicly available program from *NYT Open* help journalists limit their online footprint and dissuade doxxers?**
4. **Ask your students to utilize this program to identify their online footprint. Did they find it valuable? Will they utilize it moving forward? Why or why not?**

Module 11: Self-Care – Addressing Emotional Trauma

"Mental Health Safety Among Journalists in the Middle East" Dr. Khaled Nasser, *Rory Peck Trust* (December 2020) https://rorypecktrust.org/news/mental-health-safety-clinic/
This brief article introduces preventive mental health safety for journalists. Dr. Khaled Nasser notes:

It is therefore essential to provide journalists in the MENA region with preventive mental health awareness workshops, as well as corrective interventions, both one-on-one and through workshops. Without such essential measures, we will end up with one of two scenarios:

1) Journalists leaving their field and retreating from the world around them, which creates a brain drain of people who may hold powers in the region accountable;
2) Traumatised journalists who will suffer and make their families and the people around them suffer in the process.

One cannot overstate the importance of mental health interventions for the future of journalism in the MENA region.

This is an important starting point for young journalists to practice self-care and to protect their mental health. It is okay to not be okay after covering traumatic events.

Discussion Questions
1. **In addition to physical safety, why is it important for journalists to consider their psychological safety?**
2. **Class discussion: How are journalists similar to first responders (police, firefighters, etc.)?**
3. **What type of person does Dr. Nasser suggest is drawn to journalism? Do students agree? How can covering difficult/traumatic stories put a journalist's psychological safety at risk?**
4. **How can a healthy newsroom support the mental health of journalists?**

Module 14: Covering Natural Disasters and Weather-Related Events
"In Lebanon's first ever climate journalism courses, young reporters learn how to convey the urgency of a warming planet" Elizabeth Zach, *DK Akademie* (March 27, 2023) https://akademie.dw.com/en/in-lebanons-first-ever-climate-journalism-courses-young-reporters-learn-how-to-convey-the-urgency-of-a-warming-planet/a-65069366
This article focuses on two young journalists, Karem Monzer and Feryal Dakkak, and how their work in covering climate change. As noted in this article, Dakkak explores "the connection between climate change and life in Lebanon itself." For Monzer, reporting on climate change required him to participate in lectures and instruction from climate scientists. The article also notes that environmental topics are not a mainstream topic in the Lebanese media.

Discussion Questions
1. **One of the codes of journalism is to "do no harm." Considering this, how does reporting on climate change connect with safety issues?**
2. **What responsibility do journalists have when reporting on a scientific issue such as climate change?**
3. **What are some risks/threats journalists reporting on climate change may face?**