

Safety Management Operations Conducted Overseas

Developing countries are commonly confronted by poverty issues, which in turn can give rise to the increased incidence of crime. Some countries face political unrest, the possibility of a coup d'état, and the burden of long-running civil wars. In post-conflict countries facing public security issues as well as the aforementioned political unrest, many parties are active in peacebuilding processes. In this regard, JICA undertakes those safety measures and risk management initiatives outlined below, in an effort to support parties engaged in international co-operation to act and work in safety.

Pre-Departure Training and Seminars

JICA conducts pre-departure safety measure training for involved parties including experts, volunteers and their families. Training focuses on such topics as region-specific crime, the selection of housing, dealing with local residents, the protection of valuables as well as hold-ups or car-jacking. In general terms, information is provided from the standpoint of crime prevention and emergency response.

An orientation is organized for newly-posted arrivals through JICA's overseas offices. Topics covered include information on current public security conditions and crime prevention measures. Driven by JICA's overseas offices, affiliated parties convene Public Safety Report Councils once a year for the purpose of sharing pertinent experiences and providing local safety information. Through these Council meetings, individuals living and working in the same environment reveal and share their practical expertise on safety measures accumulated through day-to-day experiences.

Stationing of Security Management Clerks

To strengthen local safety measures, JICA employs personnel with expertise in public security as "security management clerks." These officers undertake the collection and dissemination of public security information, and are charged with the responsibility of responding to such wide-ranging incidents as residential crime and traffic accidents on a 24 hour a day basis. Security management clerks draw upon their extensive knowledge

of both local crime patterns and Japanese behavior patterns to provide the appropriate guidance on safety.

In countries without overseas offices, JICA may employ personnel to collect local information.

Construction of Emergency Contact Networks

In each country of operation, JICA builds communication systems that encompass all relevant parties in the event of an emergency. Means of communication naturally include the telephone, cell phones, satellite phones and radio equipment. Recognizing the essential nature of information transfer and confirmation in emergency situations, JICA positions the construction of emergency contact networks as a vital pillar of its safety measures.

Dispatch of Security Confirmation Missions to Prepare Appropriate Safety Measures

With regard to countries presenting particular issues in terms of safety, JICA dispatches security confirmation missions to assess local conditions, and to then construct specific safety measures. For example, JICA analyzes the state-by-state public security condition of a particular country and then makes appropriate decisions on the range of affiliated party activity. In this context, modifications are made to the methods by which JICA responds to aid needs.

In countries with a high occurrence of crime, JICA dispatches a security advisory missions to provide direct safety guidance to locally stationed parties, covering such topics as the prevention of residential crime and actions to be taken when dealing with armed crime.

Bearing the Expense of Crime-Prevention

JICA bears such expenses as alarm systems, the hiring of guards and the installation of crime prevention equipment for the residences of its experts and volunteers. As one example, JICA may arrange for the construction of raised fences, the installation of steel gratings and the reinforcement of doors and window frames as and when considered necessary.

24-Hour Crisis Management

JICA's Headquarters remains on a 365-day, 24-hour standby status to respond to overseas emergency situations.

Anti-Terrorism Measures

The steady increase in the number of countries and regions prone to terrorism is a cause for concern. While terrorism was once represented by Cold War-era communist activity and incidents involving bombings throughout the world, it is more recently characterized as the work of Islamic fundamentalist radicals, such as the international terrorist organization Al-Qaeda. In order for the relevant JICA-affiliated parties to perform their duties free from the fear of terrorist acts against American and European interests that occur in such regions as the Middle East, South Asia and Africa, JICA makes every effort to ensure the safety of individuals working in high-risk areas through briefings on practical cautionary measures during pre- and post training.

Safety Measures in Reconstruction Assistance Regions

JICA conducts programs in post-conflict countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and the Palestinian Authority, as well as in regions of ongoing conflict. Drawing on the activities of United Nations organizations and other agencies active in the relevant region, JICA routinely monitors volatile political and public security situations, carefully surveys regions of activity and deploys necessary safety equipment such as radios and armored cars in the ongoing conduct of its projects. As JICA increases its participation in the peacebuilding arena and in reconstruction assistance projects, a focus on such safety measures and a high state of readiness become ever more vital.

Given the nature of unpredictable events such as kidnappings, coup d'état, riots and terrorism, practical know-how in dealing with inherent dangers is of the utmost importance. To that end, JICA has instituted Emergency Training both in Japan and overseas in conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) e-Centre from 2003.