

Security Briefs: Secure Connections – Episode 050

Part 5: Communicating During Crisis — Calm, Clear, and Controlled

Introduction

Today on Security Briefs, we continue our Secure Connections series.

So far, we've talked about everyday communication — transparency, context, storytelling, and social media.

But what happens when something actually goes wrong?

- A protest turns violent.
- A natural disaster hits.
- A teammate is detained.
- Borders close.
- Evacuation becomes possible.

In moments of crisis, communication becomes urgent. And urgency can lead to overexposure. So today, we are going to talk about communicating during crisis — in a way that is calm, clear, and controlled.

The Missionary Side

First, to our missionary friends. When crisis hits, you may feel two strong impulses at the same time. The first is to reassure supporters immediately. The second is to protect information carefully.

Both are valid.

But here is the key: crisis communication should be intentional, not reactive. Before something happens, consider drafting a simple template you can adapt quickly:

- A brief acknowledgment of the situation.
- A statement about your current status in general terms.
- A request for prayer.
- A note that more details will be shared if appropriate.

Avoid operational specifics. Avoid naming locations if that creates risk. Avoid sharing travel routes, timing, or security procedures. Avoid emotional language that fuels panic.

Remember: once something is sent, you cannot retrieve it.

Crisis is not the time to improvise your communication boundaries. It is the time to rely on the ones you already established. And whenever possible, align with leadership before sending broad updates. Unity reduces confusion. Calm communication builds confidence.

The Supporter Side

Now, to our supporters and churches. When news breaks about unrest or instability in your missionary's country, your heart may race. Your first instinct may be to post publicly: "Are you safe?" Or to share news articles with commentary.

But public urgency can unintentionally amplify risk.

Here are some simple principles:

- Pray first.
- Wait for official communication.
- Contact privately rather than publicly.
- If you can't contact the missionary, contact their sending organization.
- Resist speculation.
- If you receive an update marked limited or confidential, treat it that way.
- And remember — if your missionary is slow to respond, it may be because they are prioritizing safety, not because they are in greater danger.

Calm supporters help create calm missionaries.

There was, not long ago, a missionary who was kidnapped by an anti-Western group. Because he was serving in a restricted access context, the sending agency and most supporters went to great pains to avoid calling him a missionary. But several supporting churches, to raise prayer support and advocate for the captive, specifically spoke about his noble work as a missionary in that country. We later learned that this threatened his well-being, caused him to be mistreated much more than previously, and lengthened the time of his captivity. He was eventually released, but he could have been released much sooner and with fewer hardships had some well-meaning churches practiced better awareness and slowed things down just a little.

The Shared Principle

Proverbs tells us that "the one who guards his mouth preserves his soul." In crisis, words carry weight. They can steady. Or they can inflame. Secure connection during crisis is not about silence. It is about steadiness.

When missionaries communicate with restraint and supporters respond with patience, partnership becomes a stabilizing force instead of a multiplying stressor. And in moments of instability, stability is a gift.

Practical Takeaways

Now for some practical takeaways. **Missionaries:** Draft a short crisis communication template this week. Keep it simple. Keep it general. Keep it aligned with leadership.

Supporters: Make a personal commitment: when crisis breaks, I will pray first, post nothing publicly, and wait for clear communication.

Crisis does not suspend wisdom. It requires it. Secure connection is never more important than in moments of pressure.

Now you know.

We'll see you next time as we continue to talk about Secure Connections.