

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

TAKEAWAYS

- Video footage captured by citizens and activists can do more than expose injustice. It can also serve as evidence in the criminal and civil justice processes.
- In many situations, citizens and on-the-ground human rights activists and advocates are better positioned to collect evidence of human rights abuse than professional investigators because investigators almost always arrive after-the-fact when evidence has deteriorated or is gone.



Video captured by citizens and on-the-ground human rights activists can be instrumental in drawing attention to human rights abuse. But many filmmakers want their videos to do more. They have the underlying expectation that footage exposing abuse can help bring about justice. And it can.

It can because in many situations, citizens and on-the-ground human rights activists are better positioned to collect evidence of human rights abuse than professional investigators because investigators almost always arrive after-the-fact when evidence has deteriorated or is gone. However, the quality of citizen video and other content rarely passes the higher bar needed to function as evidence in a court of law.

This Guide provides basic and advanced practices activists can use to increase the likelihood that their footage can serve as evidence in the criminal and civil justice processes. This *Field Guide* serves as a reference manual for citizen witnesses and human rights activists as they seek to use video not only to document abuses, but also for the ambitious end goal of bringing perpetrators to justice and freeing the falsely accused.

WHY A FIELD GUIDE?

The goal of the *Field Guide* is to provide methods for filers to use so that their videos can be as valuable as possible in exposing abuse and bringing about justice. This resource will help ensure that more cameras in more hands can lead to more exposure and greater justice.

Activists producing footage that they hope will be used not only by journalists but also by investigators and court rooms must consider these fundamental questions: Is it clear where and when the video was filmed? Can this video be verified? Has it been tampered with or edited? Is the footage relevant to a human rights crime? Can the video's chain of custody be proved? Would its helpfulness in securing justice outweigh its potential to undermine justice?

These are some of the issues we explore throughout the guide while providing practical guidance on addressing them.

ABOUT

WHO'S IT FOR?

The Guide's primary audience is people working in the field who are or will potentially film human rights abuses. These may be citizen journalists, activists, community reporters, and human rights investigators. If you are already filming abuses, the Guide can help enhance the evidentiary value of your videos. And if you are already investigating human rights abuses by traditional means, this Guide can help to strategically incorporate video into your human rights investigation so that it enhances your evidence collection.



WHAT'S INSIDE?

The guide covers:

- **The Law: Where Video and Law Intersect** - Basic legal principles and processes.
- **Filming for Evidence**: Practices for capturing video with enhanced evidentiary value.
- **Sharing and Using Eyewitness Video in Reporting and Advocacy** - Guidance on verifying and curating eyewitness video in a safe and ethical way.



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