This overview document presents incidents where aid workers were reportedly arrested or detained by state or non-state actors ('authority action').[1] The report is based on incidents identified by Insecurity Insight's monitoring of open sources and reported by Aid in Danger partner agencies using the Security in Numbers Database (SiND).

In 2017, 136 aid workers were arrested or detained in 76 incidents in 27 countries. For full figures by month and country see **HDX Insecurity Insight**.

In just over half of reported incidents there was no indication that the arrest or detention was directly related to the agency, its identity or its primary activity of aid delivery. Instead, the detention or arrest was related to personal behaviour or general administrative procedures.

Over a fifth of incidents were directly related to an agency's or an individuals position on a particular issue or its core values, or the type of aid delivered. In a quarter of the incidents, the circumstances are unclear from the available information.

Personal behaviour or profile[2]

- Accusations of **offensive or criminal behaviour** included the arrest of an NGO national staff member for unspecified cyber crime offences in Tanzania and the detention of an NGO security guard for alleged drug use in Ethiopia.

- Arrests or detentions related to **personal profiles** included the detentions of an NGO national staff member for military conscription in Syria.

Administrative procedures[3]

- Most involved **documentation checks** at airport immigration, during random stop and searches at checkpoint, and at hotels.

- Seven NGO staff members were detained and questioned at airport immigration control in Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Turkey and Yemen.

- Four NGO staff members were detained at checkpoints in Yemen and South Sudan, during hotel raids in Turkey, and at project sites in Lebanon.

- Four incidents were related to **abuse of power** in the form of payment demands by state authorities in return for detainees' release in South Sudan, the DRC and Yemen.

- In the DRC, an NGO staff member was arrested by the police for documentation checks and asked to pay a penalty.

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💬 Political position[4]

- These incidents involved **positions on the death penalty** and the **rights of specific groups,** and **accusations of political activities**.

- A Bangladeshi NGO staff member was detained at airport immigration after having attended a conference on the abolition of the death penalty in Malaysia.

- Two staff members were arrested after staging protests against the government-led peace initiative in South Sudan.

- Two staff members were arrested on allegations of involvement with opposition demonstrations in Senegal and Sudan.

🌐 Work the agency performed[5]

- The arrests followed the questioning of staff about **NGO activities** and **accusations of diversion of aid** to specific communities or aid provision by a **specific donor**.

- In the Kurdish region of Iraq an NGO staff member was detained and questioned over the NGO's activities.

- In Israel, immigration officials detained an NGO staff member and questioned her about the NGO's activities.

- In Yemen, six national NGO staff members and a contracted driver were detained by Houthi rebels for allegedly accepting and distributing aid from the Saudi-led coalition.

[1] **Authority actions:** Direct or indirect actions taken by a state or non-state actor that impede the delivery of aid. Includes: Arrest: Deprivation of liberty following accusations of or being charged with a crime. Detention: Keeping a person in custody prior to official charges or without any official charges; includes temporary detention for hours or days.

[2] **Personal behaviour** includes drunken and disorderly behaviour, disputes, illegal weapon or drug possession, fraudulent activity, sexual offences, cyber crime, arrest following a road traffic accident incident, or accusations of offensive social media activity. Personal profile includes an individual's identity, physical appearance, ethnicity, sexual orientation, refusal of military service, or other.

[3] **Administrative procedures** include abuse of power (demands for payments in return for release/corrupt activity by the arresting body) and the application/implementation of regulations (searches in hotels or other locations usually focused on the identification of the individual).

[4] **Political activism or political activities** by an agency or individual include positions on the death penalty or the rights of specific groups; accusations of political activities by an agency or individual (including membership of alleged terrorist or opposition groups), which are denied by the individual or organisation; or social media activity considered by state authorities to be encouraging opposition sentiments.

[5] **Aid work-related** incidents include being questioned on agency activities and accusations about aid delivery or the diversion of aid to specific communities or aid delivery by specific donors.