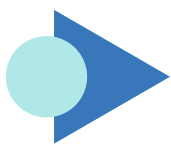**ROGER WARWICK**

(CEO e Founder Pyramid Temi Group)

How to predict, manage and mitigate travel risks

Protocols, procedures and the ISO 31030 standard

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**Ebook developed by Pyramid Temi Group
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An initiative of

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Introduction

The challenge of preparing for constantly evolving situations

While the global reality is dynamic, our focus on Duty of Care and Travel Risk Management never changes; however, as situations worldwide become more complicated, our protocols and procedures require constant attention and new measures introduced. Whatever developments emerge during the coming year, our focus has to remain on correctly monitoring emerging situations and adapting to them in the most appropriate manner.

In this booklet we will highlight and address a selection of challenges to our Travel Risk Management capabilities. The focus is not on where and when any particular threat may arise, but on what organisations will need to take into consideration in order to successfully mitigate the challenges and, should it be necessary, manage incidents related to the threats considered in this booklet.

The booklet does not set out to be a comprehensive analysis of threats to business travel or the **considerations necessary to successfully anticipating, mitigating** and managing the multitude of risks that business travellers may encounter.

The challenges addressed in the booklet are not listed in any specific order of likelihood or impact on an organisation's interests and are outlined with the intention of raising attention to the actions that an organisation should consider.

The booklet will be followed-up by a series of in-depth analyses of the single challenges raised in the publication. With a specific focus on the activities of Italian organisations, we have identified a selection of critical issues that stakeholders need to be aware of, potential threats that those responsible for **Travel Risk Management** may have to deal with and therefore need to plan for.

While there is no doubt that the year ahead will be characterised by the ongoing complications of the global Covid pandemic, a situation that has accentuated existing risks and introduced new challenges that organisations will have to identify and define robust strategies to mitigate against, in this booklet we will focus more on the indirect consequences of the pandemic as it would be unwise to offer specific advice in regards to a situation that continues to change on an almost daily basis.

The publication of **UNI ISO31030** represents a major turning-point in Travel Risk Management and in this booklet we will make **reference to the standard in the context of the individual risks that we have chosen to highlight.** Preparation is the key issue in any risk scenario and represents the baseline that allows organisations to pursue opportunities. We hope that you find this booklet useful in identifying those risks that your organisation will need to prepare for.

— Roger Warwick (CEO e Fondatore Pyramid Temi Group)

CIVIL UNREST AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY

One of the most immediate consequences of the global Covid-19 pandemic has been a rise in poverty levels, a situation that has led to civil unrest and political instability in a number of countries.

Currently there is no indication that the situation will change in the short-term and as a consequence of this, greater unrest and instability is to be expected.

There are a number of examples of the pandemic's impact on already stagnating economies that are of particular interest to Italian organisations, particular attention must therefore be reserved to the correct management of activities in these countries.

It is to be expected that the impact of the pandemic, such as greater poverty and a lack of faith in a government's ability to correctly manage the emergency, are factors that have the potential to create periods of increased tension. This risk will be accentuated during political elections and it is therefore of particular importance that these occasions are correctly monitored.

Political elections are not the only potential triggers for unrest, as the recent events in Kazakhstan have demonstrated, the implementation of controversial government decisions can have an immediate and devastating impact on stability.

The role of intelligence is key to the correct management of travel risk analysis, organisations should ensure that they have access to reliable, updated information on in-country scenarios and have the capability to transform this into actionable intelligence that can represent a baseline when evaluating risk.

Travel Security Managers should have clear ideas as to current and emerging situations and use this information to correctly manage activities in countries and regions that present the potential for a rise in political tensions or the risk of civil unrest.

Section 4.4 of UNI ISO31030 Travel Risk Management clearly states that: "There can be occasions where the level of risk is unacceptable and the travel should not take place."

It is therefore fundamental that travel risk intelligence and qualified risk consulting services play their role in assisting organisations in the decision making process.

CRIMINALITY AND VIOLENT CRIME

While criminality and violent crime have been a constant threat in a number of countries and regions throughout the world, the impact of the global pandemic has accentuated the risk of travelling employees becoming victims.

The risk in criminal activities can in many cases be ascribed to greater poverty, a direct consequence of the current pandemic.

There are no fixed rules, in fact very often crime is determined by opportunity and it is therefore of particular importance that those travelling internationally do not inadvertently put themselves at risk.

A number of basic rules should be applied as should particular attention to an awareness of an individual's surroundings.

This implies that travellers participate in Travel Risk Awareness training programmes and are fully briefed on local scenarios in advance of their departure. While the risk of opportunistic crime cannot ever be fully eliminated, there are a number of ways in which the risk can be reduced.
Travellers should receive instructions in regards as to how to maintain a low profile, how not to attract attention to themselves and how to organise their movements appropriately.

Risk avoidance is addressed in section 7.2 of UNI ISO31030, the issue is particularly complicated and requires a detailed analysis of situations and the potential risks associated with these scenarios.

Qualified assistance should be sought before travellers depart in order to correctly prepare the individuals in question for the situations that they will have to operate in.

It is of equal importance that organisations ensure access to local support in order to correctly manage any situations that might arise.

EVACUATION

The requirement to evacuate personnel can derive from a number of diverse scenarios that range, for example, from heightened political instability to civil war, and from medical emergencies to natural disasters.

There is no such thing as a single evacuation policy or operative procedure, each scenario presents its own specific context and related difficulties, some situations can be anticipated, others, such as natural disasters cannot.

It may be necessary to implement a medical evacuation of a single individual following an accident or illness or to evacuate a group of persons due to an epidemic.

Employees may need to be evacuated from a country which has become unstable, on occasions this might present additional challenges due to extremely adverse conditions such as those recently witnessed in Afghanistan. On other occasions there will be a gradual build up which will allow organisations to implement the necessary actions before the situation degenerates into chaos.

Certain circumstances will benefit from the support of local authorities, others will not. Organisations have to plan for scenarios in which borders are closed or the local authorities prohibit single or mass evacuations, for example in the case of an epidemic.

It is essential that organisations plan in advance for the eventuality of having to deal with an evacuation. While the timing of an event may remain impossible to predict, the protocols and procedures for dealing with the emergency should be developed in advance according to the risk assessment.

In the case of evacuations that are not necessitated by **unforeseen natural disasters or medical emergencies**, the procedures generally follow an escalation process and to this end one of the first considerations is that of possessing a robust understanding of red flags and red lines. These signals can only be captured if an organisation has the ability to monitor and evaluate evolving situations. Again, access to reliable intelligence is key.

Currently there are a number of countries that present situations that could degenerate and give cause for the evacuation of staff members, some of the questions that an organisation should ask itself are *if these scenarios are being correctly monitored, does the organisation have a robust action plan, and have the staff members involved been briefed in regards to these procedures?*

Section 7.4.15 of UNI ISO31030 addresses the issue of evacuation planning. While the guideline does not go into great details, the considerations raised emphasise the complexities of planning for an evacuation and some of the major challenges that an organisation will have to resolve.

CYBER SECURITY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Nobody travelling internationally does so without carrying mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets and laptop computers. They are essential to conducting business and remaining in contact with the business traveller's organisation.

Each country presents its own particular risks, in some cases a traveller's mobile devices might be inspected upon arrival, in others attempts may be made to access data via methods not noticed by the business traveller.

Cyber risk should not be underestimated and thus the rule of the thumb should always be that of travelling with the minimum amount of data possible.

Robust procedures should be developed and implemented, these procedures should not be overly complicated and should not impede the traveller's ability to conduct their business.

In addition to the considerations regarding the means via which a business traveller connects to wi-fi or corporate networks and the considerations regarding where and how to store mobile devices, the issue of social media should also be taken into consideration.

Travellers should avoid making any form of comment online that could be considered as offensive to or in a host country. The business traveller should remain neutral categorically avoiding any comments in online debates that could jeopardise their positions while travelling.

Social media profiles are very easy to examine and offer a quantity of information that can shape the perception of a traveller's position or interests, to this end organisations should make their travelling populations aware of the fact that their digital footprints cannot be removed and therefore extreme care and attention should be placed on avoiding any element that might jeopardise the business traveller's position.

Travellers should be aware of the heightened risks inherent to working in a specific sector, defence or artificial intelligence for example, and how this can determine surveillance on the part of state and non-state actors.

Section 7.4.6 of UNI ISO31030 addresses the issue of information security and privacy protection, the section raises a number of issues that all organisations should take into consideration.

KIDNAPPING

In many countries the risk of kidnapping is a very real threat and has been accentuated by the impact of the current pandemic, as such organisations must take the eventuality into serious consideration.

This implies first and foremost that mitigation measures must be identified and implemented, equally important are staff training programmes and emergency response procedures.

While threat levels and modus operandi differ from country to country, as do motivations and actors, any form of kidnapping is a highly traumatic experience for the individual directly involved as well as for their family members, friends and colleagues as well as their organisation.

The classic kidnapping scenario in which an individual or group of individuals are held in exchange for a ransom or specific request is the example that is generally the first to come to mind, however, express and virtual kidnappings are ever more common.

Kidnappers may be criminal gangs, terrorist organisations or rebel movements. Their motivation can be financial or political and negotiations can last for days, weeks, months or even years. Kidnappers' demands are often backed by threats to the victim's life.

The kidnappers may have targeted an individual and studied their habits over time or, on the contrary, the kidnapping has been casual inasmuch as the victim was abducted because the conditions to do so existed, quite simply they were kidnapped because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Section 7.4.14 of UNI ISO31030 states that "Where appropriate, the organisation should ensure that kidnap and ransom is incorporated in incident management planning." While the issue of ransom payments is a legal question governed by the legal frameworks of individual countries, the basic measures that all organisations should prepare remain the same.

Specialist advice is strongly recommended as most organisations will require expert support in developing and implementing the measures necessary to mitigating and responding to the risk of kidnapping.

MEDICAL HAZARDS

Accidents, health, disease and epidemics are all medical threats that an organisation has to take into consideration and each requires a specific approach to mitigation and incident response.

One of the most common risks to any traveller is that of being involved in an accident, this can be a road or transport incident, a fall, or an injury determined by an unforeseeable factor.
The common denominator is that of being able to respond to the incident in an efficient manner, a capability more often than not determined by access to local support.

Health risks also require the appropriate level of support, should, for example, an employee require emergency treatment while travelling, it is essential to not only provide for the necessary medical assistance itself, but also for the management of the associated problems.

Local support should not be limited to assistance within the walls of a medical facility, but, for example, should provide for translation services and support in dealing with administration.
Disease and epidemics may require emergency evacuation, again, local assistance is key to successfully managing this eventuality.

In all cases, organisations should make appropriate risk assessments and plan for the potential worst case scenario. Procedures should be in place to manage a medical incident and all eventualities and support mechanisms considered and organised.

As specified in section 7.4.11 of UNI ISO31030: "Incident management measures should be based on risk assessment and should be appropriate, proportionate and dependent on location."

While accidents cannot be predicted, changes to the health scenario in a country can be monitored and the appropriate actions taken.

At the very least an organisation should have a firm **understanding of local health risks and the red flags** that signal a deterioration of the situation. By monitoring the situation actions can be taken in advance. This is of particular importance in countries where the Covid pandemic has led to a worsening of the health service situation.

Intelligence from qualified suppliers greatly assists organisations in making predictive calculations.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The consequences of climate change can be divided into two distinct categories: natural and social. In the first case, short-term predictions are hard to make, while in the second, forecasts can be reliable. Climate change also regards health by impacting the spread of existing hazards and facilitating the diffusion of new problems.

As climate fragility afflicts more and more countries around the world, organisations have to make a greater effort to identify risks and understand their potential impact on travellers.

Flooding and fires are well documented risks, however, droughts also represent a risk factor as they have a direct impact on the availability of food and water and thus on the overall security situation.

Food insecurity, water scarcity and resource competition disrupt livelihoods and can spur migration to urban areas leading, in some cases, to social instability and greater crime.
It should be noted that almost half of the most climate-fragile countries are currently facing conflict and crises, situations that in many cases are destined to deteriorate.

It should also be noted that climate change is playing an increasingly central role in many of today's emerging conflicts.Once again the requirement for reliable, updated intelligence cannot be stressed enough.

it is essential to understand how the effects of climate change have impacted the security situation in the urban and extra urban areas that our travellers may be visiting.

Only a firm understanding of the current risk factors will allow for the implementation of the necessary mitigation mechanisms.

DYSFUNCTIONAL AND VULNERABLE STATES

It is an undeniable fact that the number of countries that can be considered dysfunctional or vulnerable is increasing.

There are many reasons for this including the situation caused by the impact of the Covid pandemic which has weakened a number of states' ability to function and absorb internal and external shocks.

While there are numerous means of measuring dysfunctionality and levels of vulnerability, a simple score or rating is not sufficient for any meaningful travel risk analysis.

First and foremost dysfunctionality is rarely total and is manifest in a number of diverse manners, for example a country may have a totally dysfunctional health service and transport infrastructure network but possess the ability to maintain stability via a functional police force.

Weak and vulnerable states tend to have dysfunctional legal systems that provide little protection for individual rights while protecting political or economical interests. In many cases this has led to situations where the risk of civil unrest or outright revolt is only slightly under the surface.

An organisation must make a determined effort to analyse local situations and identify those elements of dysfunctionality that pose the greatest risks to the business traveller.

Certain dysfunctionalities are relevant while others far less so, a postal service may leave a lot to be desired but is not of particular importance while a state's ability to guarantee a decent level of law and order is an entirely different question altogether.

As per every other travel risk management analysis, reliable and updated intelligence is the key element that will allow the organisation to develop the most

appropriate procedures for mitigating risks and successfully managing eventual incidents.

It has to be remembered that the global response to the Covid pandemic has been unequal and therefore there are a number of countries where the risk of a further deterioration of the internal situation is cause for serious concern. Organisations must factor this consideration into their risk analysis and risk management procedures.

TERRORISM

Terrorism can be defined as the calculated use of violence by non-state actors against state or civilian targets to advance an ideological cause by influencing a wider audience through intimidation.

Acts of terrorism assume many forms but typically include bombings, shootings, assassinations, and hostage-taking. Attacks can be well planned or opportunistic and can target local people or focus specifically on foreigners.

The threat posed by terrorist activities has to be analised in the context of the country or area to be visited, different realities present different threats and each has to be considered in detail.

From bombs to kidnappings, terrorist events are hard to predict, however, they can on occasion be forecastable but rarely with any great level of precision or accuracy.

Some terrorist actions are aimed directly at foreigners, others are indiscriminate and result in the traveller simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Expert advice can identify the most likely target preferences of a specific threat group and therefore identify the locations and moments that pose the greatest risks. Intelligence is key to decision making, if there is an increased likelihood or specific threat then an organisation may wish to delay a business trip.

At the very least, the business traveller should be briefed on areas or specific premises to avoid. The traveller must also receive training in regards to the most correct behaviour to assume in public spaces

In the event of a terrorist incident it is of fundamental importance that an organisation knows the exact location of its employees and is able to contact them to verify their situation and offer support and advice. To this end specific protocols have to be developed in order to give the necessary support.

The terrorist threat is not limited to a set list of countries or regions, incidents can take place in the hearts of European cities in the same way as they can take place in more remote destinations. While orga-nisations may tend to focus on preparing incident management procedures for employees travelling to particularly at-risk areas, it would be an error to ignore also doing so for those travelling in countries considered as being at a lower risk level.

CONCLUSIONS

HOW TO PREDICT, MANAGE AND MITIGATE TRAVEL RISKS

The global threat landscape is dynamic, the situations in countries or specific regions considered as low risk can change rapidly and therefore it is fundamental that organisations remain updated.

Organisations should ensure that adequate local support is available in the event of an incident involving a staff member. Local support can greatly increase the capability to successfully manage and resolve an incident be it a medical recovery following a minor road accident or assistance in dealing with an arrest or legal matter.

Training is key to raising the business traveller's awareness of security risks, to this end both staff and management should receive specific training and, prior to departure of the traveller, specific briefings on the situation that they will have to operate in once they arrive at their destination.

Preparation is key and should take into consideration worst case scenarios and the organisation's ability to deal with them. Very often this will depend on access to local support and to this end a relationship with a global provider of local assistance should be sought.

Organisations must monitor the situations in the countries that are of interest to their activities, this implies having access to reliable, updated intelligence, however, information is not enough, it has to be backed up with the capability to offer the correct advice. Intelligence is fundamental but it is of little use unless supported by a mitigation and reaction capability.

While advances in technology have created a range of extremely valid proposals and solutions, it is extremely important to remember that technological devices and systems are not stand-alone, they only fully valid solutions if they are part of a robust process.

By definition technology is not entirely reliable, a GSM network can fail and internet connections can be interrupted thus procedures should also take into consideration the eventuality that communications with a traveller result as being extremely difficult or impossible. This eventually has to be factored into emergency procedures.

Pyramid Temi Group - PTG

Pyramid Temi Group (PTG) is the preeminent provider of Travel Security and Risk Management services. With over 40 years' experience, we are the trusted supplier of best practice worldwide Travel Risk Management services to major large and small exporters.
We are committed to our clients providing quality, experience, competence and reliability.

Travel for business - TFB

Travel for business (TFB) is a leading Italian consulting company specialised in developing, managing and optimising travel programmes and corporate mobility.
We assist our clients to achieve the best results through our optimum strategies for purchasing, spend management and the streamlining of time and costs optimisation processes.
Our experts play a fundamental role in the development, management and monitoring of travel to and from place of work, in compliance with the Italian legal requirements for organisations with over 100 employees.

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