

Conflict Zone Civilian Safety

Protecting yourself and your family during shelling, air strikes and fighting.

Prepare now

- ☐ Know where the nearest shelter is from home, work and school, and a second option
- ☐ Choose the safest place inside your home (see below) and keep water, light and a first aid kit there
- ☐ Keep a go-bag and documents ready by the door (see Evacuation pack)
- ☐ Keep phones and power banks charged; save numbers on paper
- ☐ Agree with your family what to do when the alert sounds

When the alert sounds

1. Go to shelter immediately. Do not wait to see or film what happens.
2. Take your go-bag, phone and any medicines you need.
3. Stay in the shelter until the official all-clear.

If there is no shelter: the safest place indoors

- Basement or the lowest floor. Avoid the top floors.
- Use the 'two-wall rule': at least two walls between you and the outside, such as a corridor, bathroom or stairwell.
- Stay away from windows, glass and outer walls. Close curtains or blinds to reduce flying glass.
- Sit or lie low against an inner wall. Protect your head and neck.

If you are caught outside

1. Lie flat on the ground, face down.
2. Cover your head and neck with your hands; keep your mouth slightly open to protect your ears and lungs from blast pressure.
3. Use any cover: a ditch, a hole, behind a solid wall or a curb.
4. Move to a safe building when there is a pause.

After an explosion

WARNING Further strikes may follow. Do not gather at the site. Move away from damaged buildings, fallen power lines and the smell of gas.

- Help the injured only if it is safe: stop heavy bleeding first (see First Aid pack).
- Hearing loss, ringing ears and confusion are common after blasts and usually improve.
- Do not move people with possible spine injury unless they are in danger.

Unexploded bombs, shells and mines

DANGER DON'T TOUCH. MOVE BACK the way you came. **MARK** the place if you can do it safely (without touching anything). **REPORT** it to authorities.

- Never pick up, kick or move unknown objects, including toys, cans, bags or pieces of weapons.
- Watch for warning signs (red triangles, skulls, tape), disturbed ground and wires.
- Stay on paths that are used by many people. Avoid fields, forests, abandoned buildings and front-line areas.
- Teach children: if you see something strange: stop, do not touch, walk back, tell an adult.

Fire and smoke

Stay low under the smoke. Cover your nose and mouth with a cloth. Feel doors with the back of your hand before opening. If hot, use another exit.

Staying safe day to day

- Follow official instructions, curfews and alerts from trusted sources.
- Do not photograph or film military positions, vehicles or damage sites. It can put you and others in danger.
- Avoid crowds near potential targets. Limit travel and tell someone your route.
- Fear and stress are normal reactions. See the Psychological First Aid pack.



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Sources:

- ICRC: Restoring Family Links (familylinks.icrc.org); civilian safety guidance
- UNMAS / ICRC: Explosive ordnance risk education
- IFRC: International First Aid, Resuscitation and Education Guidelines 2020

Important: General information only. Not a substitute for trained medical help or official instructions. Always follow local authorities and emergency services.

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