

CRISIS RESPONSE CHECKLIST

Community Protests at Mining Sites

A Field-Ready Framework for the First 72 Hours

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CORE PRINCIPLE

The goal of crisis response is STABILIZATION, not resolution. You cannot negotiate comprehensive agreements while people are grieving, while facts remain unknown, while adrenaline dominates. Focus on stopping immediate harm, establishing communication, and creating breathing room for eventual resolution.

This checklist provides a sequential framework for crisis response. Address elements in order, as each builds on the previous. Use this document in the field, at 3 AM when the phone rings, whenever crisis strikes.

Quick Reference: The Five Elements

#	ELEMENT	FOCUS
1	IMMEDIATE SAFETY	Prevent harm, address security posture
2	COMMUNICATION CHANNEL	Connect decision-makers directly
3	INTERIM AGREEMENT	48-hour pause, reciprocal, specific
4	INFORMATION TRIAGE	Essential facts, manage rumors
5	STAKEHOLDER MAPPING	Key players, spoilers

ELEMENT 1: IMMEDIATE SAFETY

PRIORITY

Address BEFORE any dialogue about underlying issues. Safety concerns override all other considerations. You are not a security professional, but you may be the only person who can see beyond the immediate conflict to identify safety priorities.

Physical Safety Assessment

<input type="checkbox"/> Is there ongoing violence or immediate threat of violence? <i>If yes, this must be addressed before any other action</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Are security forces confronting community members? <i>Armed security presence almost always escalates tension</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Are weapons visible on either side? <i>Insist on withdrawal or concealment before proceeding</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there a physical standoff at a choke point (gate, road, bridge)? <i>Crowds at choke points create dangerous compression</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Are injured people present? Are they receiving medical attention? <i>Ensure emergency services have been called</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there ongoing environmental harm (spill, contamination spreading)? <i>Document extent and ensure containment efforts underway</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Are there structures at risk of collapse or other hazards? <i>Clear the area if structural danger exists</i>

Security Posture Actions

<input type="checkbox"/> Request withdrawal of armed security from visible positions <i>"They are creating the danger you fear"</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure security personnel remain inside compound, out of sight <i>Physical distance reduces confrontational dynamics</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Remove any vehicles, barriers, or equipment that appear threatening <i>Even non-weapon equipment can be perceived as intimidating</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Establish clear physical separation between company and community <i>Neutral buffer zone reduces accidental escalation</i>

Your Personal Safety

<input type="checkbox"/> Identify your exit route before engaging <i>Know how to leave quickly if situation deteriorates</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure someone knows your location and expected check-in times <i>Have a backup contact ready to act if you go silent</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Position yourself where you can see both parties <i>Never let yourself be surrounded or cornered</i>



Have communication device charged and accessible
Phone, radio, or other means to call for help

If immediate safety cannot be established, you cannot proceed to mediation. Insist on safety measures before engaging in any other work.

ELEMENT 2: DIRECT COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

PURPOSE

Crises escalate when each side responds to their imagination of what the other is doing rather than to reality. A direct communication channel interrupts the spiral of assumption and reaction.

Identify Company Decision-Maker

<input type="checkbox"/>	Who can actually make binding decisions right now? <i>May not be site manager; may be someone more senior dispatched for crisis</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do they have authority to commit resources, pause operations, make offers? <i>Authority must be real, not nominal</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are they on site or reachable immediately? <i>Remote decision-makers create dangerous delays</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do they understand the situation on the ground? <i>Brief them quickly on what you observe</i>

Company Decision-Maker Identified:

Name:

Role:

Direct Contact:

Identify Community Leader

<input type="checkbox"/>	Who is actually leading the community response right now? <i>May not be traditional chief or usual liaison</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who has the energy, anger, or credibility to mobilize people? <i>Crisis often elevates new, informal leaders</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do they speak for the broader community, or just one faction? <i>Understand their actual constituency</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there multiple leaders who need to be involved? <i>Competing leaders create implementation problems later</i>

Community Leader(s) Identified:

Name:

Role/Position:

Direct Contact:

Establish the Connection

<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrange brief face-to-face meeting in neutral location <i>Not to negotiate, just to meet and humanize</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exchange direct contact information (mobile numbers) <i>"When something happens, call each other first"</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree on communication protocol <i>Who calls whom, under what circumstances</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish you as intermediary if direct contact too volatile <i>Be prepared to shuttle messages if needed</i>

The communication channel does not need to be warm or friendly. It just needs to exist. When parties can ask each other what is really happening rather than assuming the worst, fear diminishes.

ELEMENT 3: INTERIM AGREEMENT

PURPOSE

Create breathing room through a simple, short-term commitment. This is NOT comprehensive resolution. Nothing about compensation, blame, or the future. Just a pause that allows everyone to step back from confrontation.

Essential Characteristics

<input type="checkbox"/>	TIME-LIMITED: Set a specific duration (48-72 hours ideal) <i>Open-ended commitments create anxiety</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	RECIPROCAL: Both sides give something and get something <i>One-sided commitments build resentment</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	SPECIFIC: Clear, concrete commitments with no ambiguity <i>"Security will remain inside compound" not "reduce presence"</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	INCLUDES NEXT STEP: When and where will parties meet again? <i>A pause with no plan just postpones crisis</i>

Typical Interim Agreement Components

Company may agree to:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Pause disputed operations for defined period
<input type="checkbox"/>	Withdraw security to inside compound, out of sight
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide immediate information on specific concerns
<input type="checkbox"/>	Allow independent access to site or affected area
<input type="checkbox"/>	Release specific resources for immediate community needs

Community may agree to:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Remove road blockade or allow limited access
<input type="checkbox"/>	Suspend protest actions for defined period
<input type="checkbox"/>	Designate specific representatives for next meeting
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refrain from media escalation during pause
<input type="checkbox"/>	Allow company personnel safe passage

Document the Agreement

Date and Time: _____

Duration: From _____ to _____

Company commits to: _____

Community commits to: _____

Next meeting: Date _____ Time _____ Location _____

Witnessed by:

Why 48 hours? It is long enough for initial shock to subside and for parties to begin thinking rather than just reacting. It is short enough that neither side feels they are conceding the war.

ELEMENT 4: INFORMATION TRIAGE

PURPOSE

Gather the most critical information while resisting the temptation to wait for complete understanding before acting. You cannot know everything. But you need to know some things.

Essential Information for Stabilization

How many people are injured or affected?	
Is the incident/situation contained or ongoing?	
Where are people gathering? (locations)	
What are the immediate demands?	
Who has authority to make decisions? (both sides)	
What triggered the current escalation?	
Are there immediate health or environmental risks?	
What resources are needed right now?	

Managing the Rumor Mill

Rumors in crisis spread rapidly and can trigger dangerous responses. Do not argue against rumors directly. Instead, ask for specifics:

<input type="checkbox"/> "Who saw this happen?" <i>Demand firsthand witnesses</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> "Can you tell me the names of the people involved?" <i>Specifics expose rumors without evidence</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> "When exactly did this occur?" <i>Timeline inconsistencies reveal fabrication</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> "Where can I verify this information?" <i>Redirect to fact-checking</i>

Information Honesty

<input type="checkbox"/> Be explicit about what you know and what you do not know <i>"I do not yet know what caused this. What I do know is..."</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Do not speculate or repeat unverified claims <i>Your credibility depends on accuracy</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Update parties as new information becomes available <i>Information sharing builds trust</i>



Document sources for all key facts
You may need to defend your information later

Key Rumors Circulating (Document and Address)

1. _____

Verified? Y / N Source: _____

2. _____

Verified? Y / N Source: _____

3. _____

Verified? Y / N Source: _____

ELEMENT 5: STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

PURPOSE

Rapidly identify the key players. In normal mediation, you would conduct thorough mapping before beginning. In crisis, you need a compressed version that identifies who matters now.

Company Side

ROLE	NAME	AUTHORITY	CONTACT
Site Manager			
Crisis Decision-Maker			
Security Lead			
Community Relations			
Other Key Person			

Community Side

ROLE	NAME	AUTHORITY	CONTACT
Traditional Leader			
Protest Leader			
Youth Representative			
Women's Representative			
Other Key Person			

External Actors

<input type="checkbox"/>	Government officials involved or monitoring? <i>Names:</i> _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	NGOs present or active in community? <i>Organizations:</i> _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Media on site or covering story? <i>Outlets:</i> _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Security forces (police, military) present? <i>Commander:</i> _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other companies or industries affected? <i>Names:</i> _____

Potential Spoilers

Who might benefit from continued conflict or undermine resolution?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Political figures who see opportunity in the crisis?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Competitors (business or political) who benefit?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Internal rivals who want current leadership to fail?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ideological actors who view compromise as betrayal?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Economic beneficiaries of ongoing dispute?

Identified Spoilers:

1. _____

Interest: _____

2. _____

Interest: _____

3. _____

Interest: _____

DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES

REMEMBER

De-escalation does not mean resolving the conflict. It means reducing intensity, slowing spirals, and creating conditions where constructive engagement becomes possible.

Manage Yourself First

You cannot help others regulate if you are dysregulated. Before engaging:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Take 30 seconds for deliberate slow breathing <i>4 counts in, hold 4, out 4</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Feel your feet on the ground <i>Physical grounding interrupts stress response</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Notice your body: release tension in shoulders, jaw, hands <i>Tension in you transfers to others</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cognitive reframe: "These are people in pain, not enemies" <i>Your interpretation shapes your response</i>

Immediate Techniques

CREATE SPACE	Call a break. Move to different location. Slow the pace. Sometimes the most effective intervention is simply stopping.
ACKNOWLEDGE EMOTIONS	"I can see you are very angry about this." "This has clearly caused real pain." Validate experience without agreeing with positions.
SLOW DOWN	Speak slowly. Pause before responding. Lower your voice. Refuse to match escalatory energy. Model the pace you want.
SEPARATE PARTIES	When direct interaction produces escalation, meet with each side individually. Let them vent without triggering the other.
FOCUS ON CONCRETE IMMEDIATE ISSUES	Abstract historical grievances are harder to de-escalate. Narrow to something specific and addressable now.

Structural Strategies

ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS	Regular meetings, designated liaisons, established check-in times. Structure contains conflict.
INTRODUCE NEUTRAL PARTIES	Third parties absorb relational tension and provide face-saving paths to de-escalation.

CREATE JOINT PROJECTS	Collaboration on non-contentious issues rebuilds working relationships and shifts perceptions.
STANDSTILL AGREEMENTS	Pause escalatory actions on both sides. Neither concedes, but both step back from confrontation.
GRADUATED RECIPROCATION	Small gestures, if reciprocated, begin positive spirals. Start low-risk, build toward larger moves.

The Power of Acknowledgment

Not apology. Not admission of liability. Just acknowledgment that experience is real.

Sample language: "I know this company has not always kept its promises. I know you have reason to be skeptical. I am not asking you to trust us, but I am asking you to test us."

WHEN TO USE SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY

Shuttle diplomacy (meeting separately with each party) is appropriate when:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct interaction is too volatile or counterproductive
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parties refuse to be in the same room
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any statement by one party is immediately rejected by the other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional intensity remains extremely high
<input type="checkbox"/>	History includes violence or serious harm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trust is so low that direct dialogue creates more damage

Shuttle Diplomacy Guidelines

<input type="checkbox"/>	Spend roughly equal time with each party <i>Perceived impartiality requires balanced attention</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Never carry information without explicit permission <i>"Would you be comfortable if I shared that?"</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Present proposals without revealing source when helpful <i>"I have been thinking about a possible approach..."</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Test reactions before formal offers <i>Gauge response to hypotheticals first</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Allow face-saving by attributing ideas to yourself <i>Parties can accept without appearing to capitulate</i>

RECOGNIZING SUCCESSFUL STABILIZATION

How do you know when crisis response has succeeded and longer-term mediation can begin?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Parties can have a conversation without it escalating <i>Still angry, but can express emotions without losing control</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parties are thinking about the future, not just the past <i>"What happens now?" instead of only "Who is to blame?"</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct communication channel is being used <i>Calling to check facts rather than assuming the worst</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical indicators of crisis are subsiding <i>Crowds dispersing, security relaxing, normal activities resuming</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	You can raise difficult topics without triggering walkout <i>Engagement is possible even on hard issues</i>

These indicators do not mean the conflict is resolved. They mean the acute crisis has passed and you can begin the longer work of actual resolution.

MEDIATOR SELF-CARE

WARNING

Crisis work extracts a toll. You absorb fear, grief, and rage. You make decisions under pressure with incomplete information. This work is not sustainable without attention to your own wellbeing.

During Crisis Response

<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain basic physical needs (food, water, rest) <i>Your effectiveness degrades without self-care</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Take brief breaks even when it feels impossible <i>Five minutes of stepping away preserves capacity</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stay connected to someone outside the crisis <i>Brief check-in calls maintain perspective</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Notice your own emotional state <i>Self-awareness enables self-management</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set boundaries on your availability <i>You cannot be on call 24/7 indefinitely</i>

After Crisis Response

<input type="checkbox"/>	Debrief with a supervisor or peer <i>Processing difficult cases protects mental health</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Allow time for physical and emotional recovery <i>Do not immediately jump to next crisis</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Engage in activities unrelated to conflict <i>Remind yourself of ordinary life</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Watch for signs of secondary trauma <i>Intrusive thoughts, sleep problems, emotional numbing</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Seek professional support if needed <i>There is no shame in getting help</i>

"The light that burns constantly eventually burns out. The keeper who never rests eventually cannot keep."

QUICK REFERENCE: THE TRIAGE CHECKLIST

Print this page and keep it accessible. Address elements in order.

	IMMEDIATE SAFETY
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Violence/threat assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Security withdrawal <input type="checkbox"/> Medical needs <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental containment
	COMMUNICATION CHANNEL
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify company decision-maker <input type="checkbox"/> Identify community leader <input type="checkbox"/> Connect them directly <input type="checkbox"/> Establish hotline
	INTERIM AGREEMENT
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Time-limited (48 hrs) <input type="checkbox"/> Reciprocal commitments <input type="checkbox"/> Specific terms <input type="checkbox"/> Next meeting scheduled
	INFORMATION TRIAGE
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Casualties/affected <input type="checkbox"/> Contained or ongoing? <input type="checkbox"/> Immediate demands <input type="checkbox"/> Counter rumors with facts
	STAKEHOLDER MAPPING
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Who has authority? <input type="checkbox"/> Formal + informal leaders <input type="checkbox"/> External actors <input type="checkbox"/> Potential spoilers

Remember: The goal is STABILIZATION, not resolution.

Stop the bleeding first. Then begin the longer work of healing.