

HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT AWARENESS TRAINING (HEAT)



HELSINKI ESPAÑA

**INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR
PEACE
MISSIONS**

Centro
Internacional
Universitario para
Misiones
de Paz

HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT AWARENESS TRAINING (HEAT)

ABSTRACT:

The HEAT program is a five-day training course where participants will learn how to effectively manage critical or emergency situations while deployed in hostile environments, through realistic simulations.

This training will fulfill the following **objectives**:

- Equip participants with **essential skills** to operate in hostile environments, including **risk identification, decision-making** in crisis situations, and the application of **personal security protocols**.
- Enhance the ability to **prevent, manage, and respond** to security incidents such as attacks, kidnappings, ambushes, or emergency evacuations.
- **Strengthen emotional** resilience ensuring participants can perform effectively under pressure while safeguarding their well-being and that of their teams.
- Improve **self-defense capabilities** to preserve physical integrity and enable a swift and effective response to threats.
- Foster **self-confidence** in critical situations, empowering participants to take control, make informed decisions, and act decisively in emergencies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- **Demonstrate Practical Field Competencies:** Apply hands-on safety, survival, and emergency response skills through realistic simulations designed to prepare participants for the physical and operational challenges of working in hostile and high-risk environments.
- **Understanding and Maintaining Security in High-Risk Environments:** Develop a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between physical and mental security in high-risk environments, with a focus on maintaining both under pressure and through crisis situations.
- **Early Detection, Risk Assessment, and Management:** Gain expertise in the early detection and evaluation of risks, and learn to anticipate, tailor, and manage strategies effectively to address the unique challenges posed by hostile settings.
- **Acquisition of Tools and Techniques for Crisis Management:** Acquire practical tools and techniques to ensure physical safety and manage mental health during crises, enhancing the ability to respond effectively in high-risk scenarios such as attacks, abductions, or emergency evacuations.
- **Building Resilience and Readiness through Experiential Learning:** Build the capacity to react confidently and competently to emergencies by leveraging the experience of simulated high-risk scenarios, fostering resilience and readiness for real-world challenges.
- **Improve Communication and Coordination in Crisis Situations:** Develop strategies for clear and efficient communication during emergencies and coordinate effectively with local and international actors in armed conflict and crisis settings.

HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT AWARENESS TRAINING (HEAT)

CONTENT:

- Awareness of Threats and Risk Management
- Operational Safety Planning
- Self-Defense Tactics
- Response to Sexual Assault Attempts.
- Robbery Prevention and Response.
- Tactical First Aid
- Casualty Evacuation
- Emotional Regulation, Stress Management and Resilience
- Conflict Management: Persuasion, Negotiation and De-escalation
- Orientation, Map Reading and GPS Navigation
- Checkpoint and Roadblock Navigation: Managing Vehicle Inspections
- Mines, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)
- Hide, Run, Fight (Active Shooter Response)
- Travel Security: Protection and Safety Procedures for Vehicle Transport
- Residential Security: Personal Safety and Protection at Accommodation
- Managing Threats in Crowds, Demonstrations, Protests and Riots
- Kidnapping and Hostage Survival

All course content is tailored to strengthen the safety, preparedness, and operational effectiveness of professionals working in international development, humanitarian assistance, human rights, and the non-profit sector in complex and high-risk environments



INSTRUCTION TEAM

Our HEAT is delivered by a multidisciplinary team of highly qualified professionals who have built their careers in some of the most demanding environments within the fields of security, emergency healthcare, and crisis management.

Our instructors include **security professionals, healthcare practitioners, and trauma psychology specialists**, all of whom bring extensive operational experience from both civilian and military settings. In addition, they have significant experience training and preparing humanitarian personnel, understand the challenges faced by those working in the field, and tailor training exercises and scenarios to the operational realities of humanitarian and non-profit organisations.

- **Security and Risk Management:** led by professionals from elite military units and security services with experience in special operations, international deployments, and complex high-threat environments. Their backgrounds include assignments in different regions of the world, as well as the protection of senior government officials, institutional representatives, political leaders and business executives. This expertise is adapted to the operational needs of aid workers, humanitarian personnel, and professionals working in challenging field environments.
- **Healthcare in Hostile Environments:** delivered by healthcare professionals with first-hand experience in emergency medical services, disaster response, mass-casualty incidents, and humanitarian crises. Their practical expertise ensures that participants learn procedures and protocols drawn from real-world emergency situations.
- **Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience:** delivered by a trauma psychology specialist with experience supporting professionals exposed to critical incidents and high-pressure environments. The training provides practical tools to strengthen resilience, manage stress effectively and maintain operational performance under pressure.

The combination of operational experience, technical expertise, and instructional capability ensures practical, up-to-date training based on lessons learned from real crises, emergencies, and hostile environments.

METHODOLOGY

The training combines a theoretical foundation with practical field exercises, focusing on real-life scenario simulations through role-playing and drills.

- **75% of the course is practical**, while 25% is theoretical.



PARTICIPANT PROFILE

This training is designed for individuals who, due to their professional duties or personal circumstances, may find themselves exposed to hostile or high-risk environments.

The course is especially useful for:

- **Humanitarian and international cooperation personnel**, particularly those working in rural areas or regions with the presence of armed actors.
- **Journalists** covering territorial conflicts, organized crime, illegal mining, environmental crises, or social protests.
- **Public officials and community leaders** involved in human rights defense or land restitution processes.
- **Staff of grassroots organizations and local NGOs**, especially in hard-to-reach areas.
- **Environmental and land defenders** operating in regions affected by illegal economies.
- **Members of international missions, diplomatic personnel, and human rights observers.**
- **Emergency response, disaster management and risk reduction teams.**
- **Populations exposed to political, social, or economic vulnerabilities**, including displaced persons or those at risk of socio-political violence.
- Individuals involved in **contexts impacted by organized crime, political unrest, or environmental conflict.**

This course is also recommended for **young professionals or students preparing to work in the field or in conflict-affected areas.**

REQUIREMENTS

- Good physical condition
- Ability to work under pressure
- Teamwork and adaptability.
- Commitment and proactive attitude

REGISTRATION PROCESS

- HEAT registration form
- CV
- Passport-size photo



LOCATION	LANGUAGE	COURSE DURATION
Spain	English Spanish	5 days 45 hours. Residential course.

DIPLOMA:

Participants who successfully complete the training will receive a **HEAT diploma** from the **International University Center for Peace Missions** in HELSINKI ESPAÑA.

The Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT) certificate is widely recognized and accepted by international organisations, NGOs and UN-style missions as valid preparation for deployment in high-risk and hostile environments.

PRICE AND CONDITIONS

The course fee is **€2,100 per person**.

INCLUDES

- Full training: classes, field activities, equipment, simulations.
- PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).
- Civil liability insurance during the course.
- Full-board accommodation for the participant.
- Activity photos.
- Certificate of completion.

Cancellation / Refund Policy

The organizers reserve the right to postpone or cancel the course if the minimum number of participants is not reached, or if the instructors are unable to attend due to force majeure. In such cases, a full refund will be issued to registered participants.

If a participant cancels their registration, no refund will be issued (including in cases related to visa issues). However, if the cancellation is made more than 20 days in advance, the amount paid may be used as credit for a future edition of the course.

Visa Application for Foreign Participants

HELSINKI ESPAÑA will provide full support during the visa application process, including guidance, an official invitation letter, and assistance with the necessary steps to help obtain the visa. However, the responsibility for securing the visa lies with the participant, not with HELSINKI ESPAÑA. Participants from non-European Union countries are strongly advised to apply for their visa well in advance, as processing times may extend over several weeks.





Claudia Edwards

Mexico. Animalist.

In an increasingly uncertain world, being prepared for the unexpected isn't just an advantage, it's a necessity. The HEAT course not only provided me with tools to act in extreme situations, but also taught me practical skills that I apply in my daily life. Every lesson is useful from day one; you don't need to wait for a crisis to put what you've learned into practice. This training transforms you, gives you confidence, and prepares you to face any challenge with greater security and awareness.

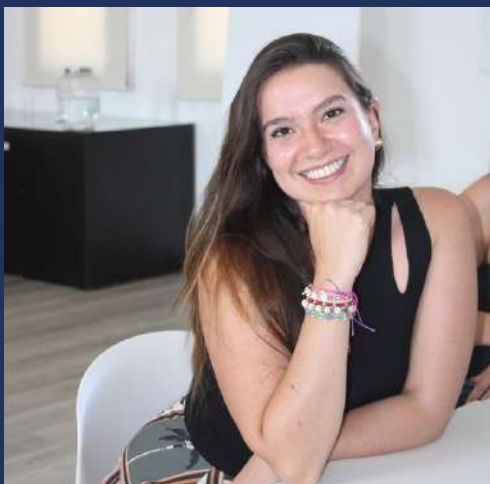


Natalia Scopetta

Argentina. Aid worker.

The **HEAT** training in **Helsinki España** was an exceptional experience – practical, intense, and deeply relevant to the realities we face in the field. It gave me concrete tools to navigate complex, high-risk contexts safely, and left me with a renewed sense of readiness to face challenging humanitarian settings.

I especially want to highlight the outstanding work of the trainers and the coordination team, whose professionalism and commitment made this a truly high-quality learning experience. I highly recommend it to anyone working in the humanitarian sector.



Guadalupe Orjuela

Colombia. Aid worker.

Nothing fully prepares you for an emergency, or for conflict. But as civilians, HEAT is the closest thing to experiencing it without crossing that line. It trains you to think when everything is screaming, to care for others without putting yourself at risk, and to move strategically amidst uncertainty. It reminds us that, in volatile contexts, preparedness is not optional: it is the ethical and operational foundation for continuing to do our work without becoming part of the risk.

TESTIMONIALS



Jiayue Qian

China. Student

I really appreciated the immersive and hands-on experience during the HEAT course. Everything felt incredibly real, and I gained valuable practical knowledge. After this training, I feel more prepared both mentally and technically, for real-life fieldwork. I'll carry the lessons and emotions from HEAT with me, and constantly reflect on safety protocols and stress management techniques when facing emergencies.



Alejandro Dib Parada

Mexico. Entrepreneur

Through the **HEAT course**, we learned how to effectively respond to critical and emergency situations during humanitarian missions in hostile environments.

The training covered a wide range of essential topics for fieldwork: threat and risk assessment, first aid, navigation systems, off-road defensive driving, high-stress negotiation, drone support, safe passage techniques, evacuation and escape protocols, survival strategies in cases of kidnapping or attacks, threat management during riots, and much more.

Many thanks to **Helsinki España and their team!**



Jose Miguel Vera

Mexico. Photojournalist

An incredible, transformative experience, but above all, extremely useful for the challenges in our field. A privilege to share with such outstanding professionals in what they do.

TESTIMONIALS



Benjamin Hindrichs

Germany. Journalist

In times of increasing hostility towards and violence against journalists, it's crucial to be prepared and learn how to navigate high risk environments, whether at home or abroad. As someone who covers far right extremism and frequently works on cross-border investigations into human rights violations, migration or militarized conservation, Helsinki España's HEAT course has been extraordinarily useful for me, equipping me with the practical and theoretical tools that every journalist – whether freelance or staff – should have when working in challenging environments.



Sofía Herra Vargas

Costa Rica. Animalist

I can't begin to describe how grateful I am for having taken part in the **HEAT** (Hostile Environment Awareness Training) program by Helsinki España. It was an incredibly challenging week, both physically and mentally, but without a doubt, one of the most profoundly human experiences I've ever had.



Yoko Kojima

Japan. Student

HEAT by Helsinki España has given me one of the most valuable experiences in my learning journey of international development. It filled the gap I was feeling in my master's degree in international development in the classroom by offering hands-on field training on hostile environment including how to deal with kidnapping, carjacking, sexual assault situations, and most importantly how to prevent ourselves from getting into such a hostile situation in the first place. The contents and exercises covered, and the field teachers were excellent. The highlight was the interactions we had with other participants from all around the world who are engaged in humanitarian work on the ground.



Michael Minassie

Etiopía. Periodista

El curso HEAT me permitió adquirir habilidades para lidiar con situaciones extremas como secuestros, emboscadas o incendios a los que estoy expuesto por mi trabajo. Agradezco a Helsinki España por la organización de este curso impartido por profesionales de alto nivel con diversos orígenes y que reunió a alumnos de muchos países, enriqueciendo así la experiencia.



Stéphanie Bouriel

Austria. Emergency Coordinator

One of the most impactful aspects of this experience was the intentional effort to bring together people from diverse backgrounds, many of us coming from countries affected by different forms of violence. This diversity enriched our discussions and allowed for genuine, cross-cultural learning that extended beyond the classroom. I am especially grateful to the team for opening spaces for dialogue and shared learning, where our different realities, professional fields, and lived experiences became a powerful complement to one another. Through this approach, each participant was not only a learner but also a contributor, and the collective knowledge we built together reflected the richness of our unique perspectives.



Juan Camilo Pinzón

Colombia. Analyst

HEAT is a hands-on training program which provided me with solid skills on how to work in real life situations while being deployed in the field. With the vast knowledge of the trainers, the activities helped me to undertake and perform professionally during hostile and risky situations. A comprehensive and challenging week of training



Lois Fielder

UK. Emergency Coordinator

The experience was both challenging and incredibly rewarding as I was equipped with practical skills and knowledge that will be invaluable when working in complex and unpredictable environments.

What made the course particularly impactful was the quality of the instructors. Learning from professionals with extensive real world experience meant that every lesson was grounded in real life application rather than just theory alone. The willingness of the trainers to share their personal experiences, lessons learned, and best practices means that I have invaluable insight into the realities of working in challenging environments.



Guedany Figueiras

Mexico. Human Rights defender

To defend human rights, preparation and prevention are key.

HEAT is essential training for strengthening our capacities in risk management, field security, and strategic intervention as humanitarian personnel.

Having access to tools of this caliber not only strengthens my professional profile, but also enables me to carry out human rights advocacy work in a safer, more responsible, and more effective way in the areas where it is most needed.

Continuous training is the path toward continuing to build more just environments with a real and sustainable impact.

CONTACT



Helsinki España
iucpm@helsinkiespana.org
☎ **+34 915335455**
+34 629544873

Helsinki España - Dimensión Humana
Calle de Santa Cruz de Marcenado, 11, 2º A,
Madrid, C.P. 28015
SPAIN



@helsinkiespana



helsinkiespana



Helsinki España Training



Helsinki España

