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Internews

EMPOWERING ACTIVISTS

CHOOSING THE RIGHT DOCUMENTATION TOOL

A guidebook based on research with Tool providers

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Guide compiled by Purpose+Motion

Purpose +Motion

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We thank all the people interviewed for this research.

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ABOUT

GREATER INTERNET FREEDOM

The Greater Internet Freedom (GIF) project is a four-year, $22M, USAID-funded initiative, run by Internews. The GIF project advances Internet freedom in the countries in which it works by ensuring that digital security capacities, data awareness, and activism on behalf of an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet are available, adaptive and integrated into the operation of independent media and civil society.

Purpose +Motion

Purpose+Motion is a Berlin-based transformation agency that works with NGOs, social businesses and individuals to co-create - through coaching, consultancy, facilitation, training and research - a regenerative future where we live within our social and planetary boundaries.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

In moments where violations and injustice occur - where protests explode and are violently repressed; where elections are tampered with; where workers' rights are violated and hidden; where war crimes are committed – **some people, like you, turn towards the uncomfortable truth.** You are standing up to document, save, understand and communicate the injustices, the violations and the complexity that is behind these acts – maybe hoping that by doing so, others will mobilize to act, to change these situations, to together contribute to a more just, more peaceful, and more regenerative world.

There are apps and tools which can support you in doing this. We, Internews and Purpose+Motion, have built on previous research done and on conversations with the providers of these tools to guide you to the best possible tool for you in your specific situation and with your specific goals in mind. Of course, many of these tools can be adapted and used in different ways - **in this guide we try to highlight what they are BEST at doing in their current state in August 2024**, rather than all they are capable of doing. We know also that these tools are in constant development and that we only have a partial understanding of the tools from the interviews and experience we have with them – therefore we are aware that some of our recommendations may not be perfect. That being said, we hope this guide helps you and saves you valuable time and resources to redirect to your crucial work.

In section 1, below, we provide an **"at a glance" overview of the recommendations for choosing the right tool.** In section 2, you can get a **snapshot of each of the 6 tools**, and in section 3 an **overview of all 6 tools**. Then, in section 4, you can **dive deeper into the recommendations** we've overviewed graphically in this first section.

TEST

CHOOSING THE RIGHT HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTATION TOOL

For each question, note which tools fit your needs. Whichever answers most of your needs, should be your choice. (NB: you may want to use a combination of tools, where possible)

Save (by Open Archive)
KoboToolbox (by HURIDOCS)
Tella (by Horizontal)
Uwazi (by HURIDOCS)
Ushahidi (by Ushahidi)
Bayanat (by SJAC)

1. What type of data am I mostly going to be gathering?

Audio-visual (photos, video, sound)	Text based (surveys, forms)	SMS/ WhatsApp/ emails messages about incidents and events at locations	Which tool(s) best fit my needs?

2. What am I aiming to do with the documentation tool?

Secure the documents for long-term storage (possible future uses of Transitional Justice, etc.)	Analyze, make sense, identify trends of large amounts of text-based information	Analyze, make sense, identify trends of large amounts of text-based information	Analyze, make sense, identify trends of large amounts of text-based information	Which tool(s) best fit my needs?

3. What type/level of risk am I facing?

High risk of physical attack on documenter	Medium to low risk to documenter	Which tool(s) best fit my needs?

4. What level of technical knowledge/resources do I/my organisation have about archive management + hosting?

Limited/ basic technical ability (i.e. can use a phone, laptop and cloud/ hosted storage)	Capacity to install software; Linux based server; etc. (or to get such support)	Which tool(s) best fit my needs?

5. What level of technical knowledge do those documenting using the tool have?

Limited/ basic ability to use a phone with SMS or WhatsApp	Ability to use smartphone with simple app functions	Ability to use advanced app functionalities	Ability to set up forms + use phone or laptop to fill in	Which tool(s) best fit my needs?

6. What am I aiming to do with the information I have gathered and analyzed?

Gathering evidence: use in legal action/ international or national court cases	Media action/ communication/ visually representing violations/risks/issues	Use for advocacy/ lobbying/ UN mechanisms/ legislative change	Which tool(s) best fit my needs?

7. How stable/constant is my internet connection?

Limited/irregular/interrupted	Stable/constant	Which tool(s) best fit my needs?

Which 1-2 tools best fit your needs?

2. SNAPSHOT OF THE 6 TOOL

2.1 Save

by OpenArchive

Type of tool:

Mobile app for secure collection, verification, and long-term preservation of mobile multimedia including images, audio, video, text, pdf, and other formats to various storage options including the Internet Archive, Nextcloud, Decentralized Web backends, and Google-Drive. Available for iOS and Android.

Purpose of the tool:

OpenArchive designed Save with and for human rights defenders (organisations and individuals), archivists and librarians, journalists, and academic institutions to safely verify and preserve mobile evidence. Save is an easy-to-use mobile app designed to leverage privacy and usability to help you securely send, add a Creative Commons license, verify via Proofmode, and archive mobile media while protecting your identity.

Deployment of tool:

Download and setup Save within minutes.

Costs of using the tool:

Free.

Open Source:

Save's code is open source.

Internet connection needed:

Media collection offline; upload requires an internet connection.

Hosting options:

You can host your archive by using your own accounts on the Internet Archive, Nextcloud, the decentralized web, or GoogleDrive.

Situations which the tool is best for:

- If you have evidence on your phone and need to securely preserve it and use it for Transitional Justice.
- Any circumstance where you need to safely share, archive, verify, and encrypt it to a server/storage you control without fear of censorship, surveillance, or retribution.
- If you are a non-profit, academic, or archival organisation with your own archives and want to manage incoming mobile media.
- Or if you want to upload your content to custom, open source backends that are WebDAV-compatible like Nextcloud; to the Internet Archive; to decentralized backends that further verify and ensure chain of custody documentation like FileCoin, iroh, or to Google Docs for ease of use.

Situations which the tool is not best for:

- If you want a platform that also provides media storage to host your archive, we recommend using Tella, Ushahidi, KoboToolbox, or Uwazi.
- If you are working mainly with forms and text, we recommend you use Ushahidi, Bayanat, KoboToolbox, or Uwazi.

Security Features:

- Can lock with passcode.
- InApp Capture so nothing ends up on your camera roll.
- Secure transfer of data using TLS on all platforms and Tor for Android and iOS.
- Allows for pseudonymous submission to backend storage.

Compatibility/connections with other tools:

Can be connected to Nextcloud, Internet Archive, Google Drive or various decentralized web backends such as Filecoin and iroh for secure and verifiable storage and data analysis.

Languages the tool is available in:

English, Ukrainian, Turkish, Arabic, Spanish (Latin America), German, Persian, French, Russian, Italian, Portuguese (Brazil), Dutch, Chinese, Swedish, Chinese (Taiwan), Chinese (Hong Kong), Chinese (Simplified), Spanish (Spain), Tibetan, Kurdish, and Sinhala.

Support available:

OpenArchive provides instructional guides (on website) and videos on YouTube; direct support (accompanying deployment, training, help with technical or user experience issues) is offered to groups setting up a self-hosted or cloud-based secure archive.

2.2 Tella

by Horizontal

Type of tool:

Mobile App (web-platform to store data also available) for gathering (especially audio-visual or form based) information. Available on iOS and Android.

Purpose of the tool:

In challenging environments, with limited or no internet connectivity or in the face of repression, Tella makes it easier and safer to document human rights violations and collect data.

Deployment of tool:

Download and set up of App within minutes.

Costs of using the tool:

Free.

Open Source:

Tella's code is open source.

Internet connection needed:

Media collection offline; upload requires an internet connection.

Hosting options:

Self-hosted or Horizontal can support you with hosting Tella Web.

Situations which the tool is best for:

- If you are under big threats of physical danger (harassment, arrest, detention, disappearance, confiscation, raids) against you for documenting or gathering data, and you are documenting photos, images, videos, audio, and documents, Tella is very appropriate.
- If you are doing election monitoring, documenting human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity, illegal corporate practices and working conditions, protests and military violations.
- If you are working with Uwazi and need a mobile app to securely collect data, including offline.

Situations which the tool is not best for:

- If you are working in a language which Tella is not available in, check some of the other tools (or get in touch with Horizontal, to see if they can translate).

Security Features:

- Encryption "at rest" on the user's device until app is unlocked and encryption in transit using Transport Layer Security (TLS).
- Lock: Password, Pattern and PIN and define how quickly Tella will lock when not in use; Restrict unlocking attempts.
- Camouflage of the App icon (as calculator or other app) – only on Android.
- Quick Delete button.
- Camera silent mode.
- Screenshots and screen recordings from inside the phone are blocked.

Compatibility/connections with other tools:

Can be connected to KoboToolbox, GoogleDrive, Nextcloud, iCloud, Uwazi or ODK for the storage and analysis of data.

Languages the tool is available in:

Arabic, Belarusian, Burmese, English, Indonesian, Jingpho, Kannada, Karen Sgaw, Kurdish, Malayalam, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Vietnamese.

Support available:

Tella provides general documentation (on GitHub), video tutorials, user guides, monthly community meetings, as well as direct support to partner organizations. Support can include server installation, training, and technical or user experience issues.

2.3 The Ushahidi Platform

by Ushahidi Inc.

Type of tool:

Web app accessible via Mobile and Desktop for gathering, managing and mapping (especially text based) information. Available on iOS, Android and web.

Purpose of the tool:

The Ushahidi Platform helps communities turn information into action with an intuitive and accessible crowdsourcing and mapping tool, enabling the rapid collection, management and analysis of crowdsourced information.

Deployment of tool:

download and set up of platform within minutes.

Costs of using the tool:

Free version, and paid plans.

Open Source:

Ushahidi is open source.

Internet connection needed:

Mobile version of the tool (web app) supports offline data collection, but otherwise requires a connection.

Hosting options:

Self-hosted or Ushahidi can host data.

Situations which the tool is best for:

- If you are documenting and mapping election violations (holding governments accountable); carrying out humanitarian and disaster relief efforts, and aim to enable first responders to coordinate + act effectively; working on climate issues, actions and (mitigation, adaptation and response) measures, or Human Rights violations.
- If you are a documenter from a disenfranchised community (e.g. women, youth, people with disabilities or limited literacy) who has low/ no technical capacity, as you can use SMS, USSD or WhatsApp.

Situations which the tool is not best for:

- If you're under high levels of risk, especially of physical risks to documenters (arrest, confiscation, etc.) we recommend using Tella or Save.
- If you're mainly documenting audio-visual materials, we recommend using Tella or Save.

Security Features:

- Access Controls can be applied to ensure that data access is strictly controlled and limited based on the role of the individual.
- Encryption of data both at rest and in transit to protect sensitive information against unauthorized access.
- Usage of secure communication protocols such as HTTPS, SFTP, etc., for transferring data.
- Can use WhatsApp to send the report rather than SMS so it is encrypted.
- All data is anonymized on the backend, so it doesn't identify anyone; numbers and names are not appearing.
- Access to the backend is limited to deployer organizations; and even amongst deployers, different access levels.

Compatibility/connections with other tools:

Can be connected to HotOSM for mapping where there are no maps.

Languages the tool is available in:

Available in 17 languages.

Support available:

Manuals available; maintaining infrastructure, updates and upgrades, security checks + role out support; Support team to respond to queries.

2.4 Uwazi

by Huridocs

Type of tool:

Web app for storing, organizing, analyzing and publishing collections of data or information (PDFs, text, videos, images, geolocation, etc.)

Purpose of the tool:

Uwazi is a web-based tool designed for managing your data in one easy-to-search place. This open-source database application allows you to capture, organize and make sense of a set of facts, observations, testimonies, research, documents and more.

Deployment of tool:

Huridocs' team generates empty Uwazi database at no cost but can support in the configuration of the database based on needs/ goals. For self-hosting, code can be downloaded and tool configured directly in separate servers. We recommend hosting with Huridocs, as self-hosting requires technical knowledge, and updates are not automatically implemented.

Costs of using the tool:

Free - support from Huridocs in database configuration comes at a cost based on project scope.

Open Source:

Uwazi is open source.

Internet connection needed:

Uwazi requires an internet connection.

Hosting options:

Huridocs can host data (highly recommended).
Self-hosting (not recommended).

Situations which the tool is best for:

- If you are gathering and analyzing human rights law documents and libraries, and would like the support of machine learning algorithms for large collections.
- If you are monitoring and documenting ongoing Human rights violations (witness testimonies, etc.), and need a safe place to hold the documents; analyzing to inform policy lobbying, hold corporations accountable, report on patterns and trends.
- If you are preserving and archiving evidence of violations, for long-term transitional justice, submission to international courts (needs to be evidentiary, etc.).
- If you work for a national human rights institution doing complaints management or lawyers doing case management for strategic litigation or advocacy.
- If you are assessing progress around human rights related policies i.e. UPR recommendations.
- If you require rapid response documentation – when all of a sudden protests / conflict erupts, and you are facing an immense amount of information about what is happening which you very quickly need to store in a safely, need a "lean set up", to get the data in a secure database.

Situations which the tool is not best for:

- If there are high threats and risks to documenters in the data collection process, we recommend using the Tella app (which can be connected to Uwazi) or Save.

Security Features:

- If you have no constant access to internet, we recommend you use Tella, Save, Kobo, Bayanat or Ushahidi.
- Two-factor authentication.
- Account locking after multiple failed attempts.
- SSL protocols that protect the data in transit.
- Permission levels: users-levels/groups, admin users.

Compatibility/connections with other tools:

Can be connected to Tella for gathering of data in secure and easy way.

Languages the tool is available in:

Multiple languages

Support available:

Needs assessment (identifying what exactly you need); support in deployment + data migration; user onboarding, tool maintenance + post-project support. User guides available.

2.5 Bayanat

by SJAC

Type of tool:

Open-source web-based application for managing and analyzing all types of data, including but not limited to audio-visual information. Accessible from any device with a web browser.

Purpose of the tool:

Bayanat enables you to gather, store and analyze large amounts of data (images, interviews, videos, documents, 1st and 2nd hand data) using an easy-to-use interface, with powerful collaborative team features, advanced search, revision control, and multiple languages.

Deployment of tool:

Download and set up within minutes (requires some technical capacity).

Costs of using the tool:

Free.

Open Source:

Bayanat is open source.

Internet connection needed:

Only installation requires an internet connection. Bayanat can be used as an offline application.

Hosting options:

Self-hosted.

Situations which the tool is best for:

- If you are facing very large amounts of data that you need to make sense of, and you require a secure, scalable solution for long-term data storage and analysis.
- If you aim to present information as evidence to courts, ensuring a chain of custody and no tampering.
- If you are conducting open-source investigations or managing open-source information involving different types of data simultaneously, Bayanat offers a relational database capable of managing and connecting diverse data types.
- If your project involves collaboration among multiple stakeholders or teams who need real-time access to shared data.

Situations which the tool is not best for:

- If you only have small amounts of data, we recommend using KoboToolbox or Uwazi
- If you are mainly wanting to record/ store data, we recommend using KoboToolbox or Uwazi (for mainly text-based data), or Save (for mainly audio-visual data)

Security Features:

- Safe HTML generation, sanitized inputs, hashed/ salted passwords, encrypted communication.
- User permissions are applied on both the front and backend.
- Two-factor authentication and can be configured to utilize Google OAuth 2.0 (sign in with Google accounts). You can also use biometric (via phone) to login.
- Administration of security settings – password length, enforce no double log-in, physical security key, etc.
- Complex administrator rights and managing during use – force all to log off, force everyone to change passwords, etc.

Compatibility/connections with other tools:

No integrations currently available.

Languages the tool is available in:

Arabic, Ukrainian, English, Spanish, Persian, Russian, French, Traditional and Simplified Chinese.

Support available:

- User guide is available, step-by-step setup instructions are available on the website or in the README file, and the source code is documented with best practices in mind.
- Provide basic free support to anyone who wants to install Bayanat, especially through GitHub.
- A community website for people to get support, and possibly to share amongst users.
- Based on certain criteria and assessments, SJAC offers various types of training and support, including: special customization of Bayanat, ongoing technical support for maintenance and troubleshooting, assistance with data migration to Bayanat, and training in data analysis as well as OSINT (Open Source Intelligence) training.

2.6 KoboToolbox

by Kobo

Type of tool:

Mobile App (KoboCollect, for Android) and Web platform for collecting, managing, and visualizing data, especially text-based forms.

Purpose of the tool:

In challenging contexts (conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian crises), KoboToolbox enables the documentation violations and the impact of conflict or crises.

Deployment of tool:

Download and set up of tool within minutes.

Costs of using the tool:

Free version (plans for storage).

Open Source:

Kobo is open source.

Internet connection needed:

Internet connection needed: Media collection offline; upload requires an internet connection.

Hosting options:

Self-hosted or Kobo can host data.

Situations which the tool is best for:

- Documenting and gathering data, especially using forms, in challenging contexts.
- For larger human rights, humanitarian response, development and environmental and climate NGOs; as well as multilateral organizations, such as UN or public health organizations.

Situations which the tool is not best for:

- If there are high risks and threats, we recommend using Tella (which can be connected to KoboToolbox) or Save.
- If the aim is to do in depth analysis of the data and use before courts, we recommend using Uwazi or Bayanat.

Security Features:

- Encryption “at rest”, in transit and in storage.
- Physical access control to storage implemented by Amazon Web Services.
- Electronic Access Control through complex password protection, encryption of data at rest (disk level encryption) and in transit. Can also have data-level encryption.
- Internal Access Control through user rights and access administration, use of secure shell public key authentication, two factor authentication; logging of all activity on server; protection against brute-force attacks.
- Daily backups of all databases to a separate remote location.

Compatibility/connections with other tools:

Can be connected to Tella.

Languages the tool is available in:

User interface in multiple languages and forms can be translated into 100s of languages using artificial intelligence (AI).

Support available:

- Community forum (users and Kobo staff answer questions).
- For the paid plans, there is individual support, including chats, calls, etc.
- Depending on what level of support users need and then they offer different packages (see website).

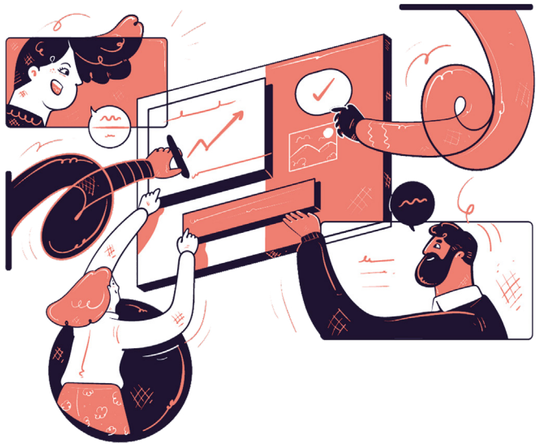
3. OVERVIEW OF ALL TOOLS

	Save	Tella	Ushahidi	Uwazi	Bayanat	KoboToolbox
Type of tool	Mobile App for data collection, verification, and preservation of multimedia	Mobile App for data collection (web-based repository for documentation available)	Mobile and desktop platform for collection, storing, analysis + displaying (esp. mapping) data	Web platform for collection, analysis, and communication of (especially text based) data	Web platform for collection, analysis of large amounts of data	Mobile App and desktop platform for collection, storage and analysis of data
Situations tool is BEST for	Medium-high risk situations; collecting esp. audio-visual data	High risk situations; collecting audio-visual, data, basic forms; offline data collection	Low-medium risk situations; collecting data of many users; analyzing and mapping	Low risk situations; collecting, storage and analysis of esp. text-based data	High-medium risk situations (war zones) analysis of large amounts of data	Low-medium risk situations; storing and managing information
Situations tool is NOT best for	If working mainly with forms/ text-based collection	If your language is not supported	If high risk, or mainly audio-visual	If high risk or no / poor internet access	If small amounts of data	If aim is to make sense of / analyze data
Deployment time	Minutes	Minutes	Minutes	“lean” within a day; normal a few weeks	Less than an hour	Minutes
Costs of using	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free version; Professional version $159/m
Open Source?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hosting options	Can send media to the Internet Archive, Google Drive, or options such as Nextcloud, Filecoin.	Can self-host or connect to cloud services (Google Drive, Nextcloud, Dropbox, iCloud)	Can self-host or have hosted by Ushahidi	Can be self-hosted (not recommended) or hosted by Huridocs	Must be self-hosted	Can self-host or have hosted by KoboToolbox
Internet connection needed	Collection can be offline; transfer needs internet	Collection can be offline; transfer needs internet	Collection can be offline; transfer needs internet	Internet required to use; (collection with Tella can be offline)	Collection and transfer can be offline	Collection can be offline; transfer needs internet
Security Features	• Encryption on device + in transfer (TLS + Tor) • Lock with passcode • In App Capture no media on camera roll / gallery	• Encryption on device + in transfer (TLS) • Quick delete; lock; timeout • Camera silent mode; camouflage of App icon • In App Capture No media in phone gallery	• Secure data transfer using SSL/TLS between the browser and the Ushahidi server	• 2 factor authentication • Administrator and user rights/ permissions	• Access + administrator rights • Safe HTML generation, sanitized inputs, hashed/salted passwords, encrypted communication	• Data in transit is encrypted • Administrator and user rights/ permissions • HTTP access logs stored on the server include the authenticated user
Compatibility with other tools	Can be used to send media to the Internet Archive, Nextcloud, DWeb Storage, Google Drive	Can be integrated to Uwazi, KoboToolbox, ODK, Nextcloud, Dropbox, Google Drive, iCloud	No integrations at the moment, (can migrate data from other tools)	Can integrate with Tella for data collection and migrate data from other tools	No integrations at the moment (can migrate data from other tools - import data from Excel, etc.)	Can integrate with Tella for data collection and migrate data from other tools
Languages available	21 Languages	17 Languages	17 Languages	Multiple languages	Multiple languages	Multiple languages
Support available	Documentation + videos; quarterly training workshops; direct support	Documentation + videos, monthly community meetings, direct support	Documentation, direct support on migration + deployment	Documentation, direct support depending on needs	Documentation, direct support; community	Documentation, direct support on plans

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT TOOL

In this section, we provide more details on our recommendations for choosing the right tool – summarized in a graphic form in section 1 of this guide. As we mentioned before, many of these tools can be adapted and used in different ways: **in this guide we try to highlight what they are BEST at doing in their current state in August 2024**, rather than all they are capable of doing.

This section is organized around questions the tool-builders often ask potential users to help users in their decision-making. You may find that one tool can answer most or all of your needs, and it is also possible that you may want to use a couple of these tools. For example, you may use one for the documenting and gathering of data (such as Save or Tella), and another for the collecting, safeguarding, analyzing and communicating of the information (such as Uwazi, KoboToolbox, Bayanat or Ushahidi).



What type of data am I mostly going to be gathering?

Audio-visual (photos, video, sound)

- If you will mainly be gathering audio-visual data such as photos, videos, sound recordings, especially of events happening live, using your mobile, we recommend using Save or Tella. These two Apps are especially designed to collect such media in a as safe as possible way, and transmit it to safe storage.

- Bayanat and Uwazi are also good at working with Audio-Visual content when it comes to analysis, but they don't protect the collector of content as carefully as Save or Tella.

Text-based (surveys, forms, text messages)

- If you will mainly be gathering written testimonies, having documenters fill in forms, or gather written data, we would recommend using KoboToolbox, Uwazi, Ushahidi or Bayanat. These tools are specialised in creating forms - going from very simple to highly complex - which enable users to quickly and effectively gather the needed data.

- KoboToolbox has particularly strong options to have the forms translated into 100s of languages, and the user interface is also available in dozens of languages.

- Tella can be used as a mobile tool to collect data on KoboToolbox and Uwazi.

SMS/ WhatsApp/ email messages about incidents and events at specific locations

- If you will mainly be using the tool to gather short text messages with information about incidents or events at specific locations (with the aim of then mapping these out), we recommend you use Ushahidi.

What am I aiming to do with the documentation tool?

Secure the documents for long-term storage (possible future uses of Transitional Justice, etc.)

- If you will be gathering documents and data for long-term storage, possibly to use for Transitional Justice, international jurisdiction or other work with the international mechanisms, we recommend you use KoboToolbox, Save, Uwazi, or Bayanat, as these have excellent options to follow the “Chain of Custody” (i.e. showing how the information was gathered, and what happened to it since then) as well as if there has been any tampering.
- KoboToolbox and Uwazi are able to host your data on their servers, whereas Save or Bayanat requires you to host your own data on your or a third-party server.
- Ushahidi also provides long term data storage as part of their deployments, however without a specific Chain of Custody function available.
- Tella is also often used together with other tools (Uwazi, KoboToolbox, or TellaWeb) to gather documents for long-term storage.

Analyze, make sense, identify trends of large amounts of text-based information

- If you aim to collect large amounts of documents, text-based forms and information, and analyze these to find the connections, trends and make sense of them, we recommend you use Uwazi, Ushahidi or KoboToolbox. These have excellent data analysis tools and options, though mainly for text-based data and documents. KoboToolbox also has the ability to analyze text-based information with the support of independent AI.
- Analyse, make sense, identify trends of large amounts of mixed data (audio-visual + text based)
- If you aim to collect both text based and audio-visual media to analyze these to find the connections, trends and make sense of them, we recommend you use Bayanat. This tool has a strong ability to create a methodological framework for managing unstructured data (various types of videos, images, unscripted interviews, and different types of documents) through a three-layered approach: structured forms for capturing structured data, labels for identifying common themes, and a free-text description field for detailed, unstructured information.

Communicate information, media and data securely to others

- If you need to transmit information securely to others, we recommend you use Save, Tella or KoboToolbox, as all have state of the art secure transfer technology.

What type/ level of risk am I facing?

High risk of physical attack on documenter

- If you are documenting under high risks of arrest, confiscation of the device, going through check-points and your devices being searched, we recommend using Tella or Save. Both tools have many measures to ensure your device is very difficult to access, doesn’t store any evidence of your documentation, is camouflaged, encrypted or immediately emptied if there is a risk.

Medium to low risk to documenter

- If the risk to the documenter is not so high we recommend using Ushahidi, Bayanat, KoboToolbox, or Uwazi. All of these have some security features to ensure information is secure, but these are less developed than those used by Save and Tella.

What level of technical knowledge/ resources do I/ my organisation have about archive management + hosting?

Limited/ basic technical ability (i.e. can use a phone, laptop and cloud/ hosted storage)

- If you or your organisation have basic technical capabilities for managing an archive and hosting option, meaning that you can use a smartphone, laptops with Mac or Windows OS, and cloud storage such as Google Drive, we recommend you use Save, KoboToolbox, Uwazi or Ushahidi.
- Save is designed to allow users with basic technical ability to host and control their own archives, especially as it can connect to the Internet Archive, Google Drive, or Nextcloud, which are widely used and very user-friendly. On the Internet Archive, users can host their archives both publicly or privately. They can host secure archives remotely in the Nextcloud cloud or locally via an air-gapped Nextcloud server, which are both highly secure options. If choosing to upload to Google Drive, this will be less secure than privately hosted servers such as Nextcloud.
- Kobo, Uwazi and Ushahidi are all able to host your data on their own servers, and provide you support in deploying your tool. Tella can be connected to Kobo or Uwazi to collect data, or you can set it up with TellaWeb as a repository.

Capacity to install software; Linux based server; etc. (or to get such support)

- If you have a more advanced level of technical capacity, then you can use most of the tools. In particular Bayanat requires enough technical ability to set up a Linux server.

What level of technical knowledge do those documenting using the tool have?

Limited/ basic ability to use a phone with SMS or WhatsApp

- If those documenting with the tool have basic technical capabilities, for example are able to use SMS or Whatsapp to write messages and send information, we recommend you use Ushahidi. This tool is specifically designed for users to send short text messages with information and locations of incidents and events, for this to be then mapped out and shown in different ways for those needing an overview to get this in a visually effective way.

Ability to use smartphone with simple App functions

- If users of the tool are able to use a smartphone and simple App functions, we recommend you use Save. This tool is both very secure and user-friendly and made to easily connect to well-known storage backends such as the Internet Archive, Google Drive, or Nextcloud. Save has also made using security features like Tor and verification features like Proofmode extremely easy.

Ability to use advanced App functionalities

- If your users have the capacity or can be trained to use advanced app functionalities, we would recommend using Tella. This tool requires more technical ability to use in a secure and effective ways, setting up the storage and securing the data in the right way.

- While still designed with usability at its core, the DWeb backends of Save require greater technical knowledge. Those wishing to use secure decentralized storage for heightened security and verifiability via enhanced chain-of-custody, can connect to Filecoin or a peer-to-peer DWeb backend via Save.

Ability to set up forms + use phone or laptop to fill in

- If your users (or your team) are able to set up forms, use laptops and phones, we recommend using Uwazi, KoboToolbox and Bayanat. These require the creation of forms and structured methodologies for organising, storing and analyzing the data.

What am I aiming to do with the information I have gathered and analyzed?

Gathering Evidence: Use in legal action/ international or national court cases

- If you are gathering evidence for use in legal action and international or national courts, we recommend you use KoboToolbox, Uwazi, Tella or Bayanat, as these have excellent options to follow the “Chain of custody” (i.e. showing how the information was gathered, and what happened to it since then) as well as if there has been any tampering.

Media action/ communication externally

- If you are planning on communicating the trends and connections which you have found in the data, or providing a visualization of the data you have gathered, we recommend you use Uwazi or Ushahidi. These two tools have advanced displaying and visualization capabilities, including in the form of maps.

- Save and Tella are often used by journalists and activists as a safe way to gather and communicate publicly events happening live.

Use for advocacy/ lobbying/ UN mechanisms/ legislative change

- If you are planning on using the information gathered for writing reports, drafting communications to UN mechanisms, lobbying for legislative change, we recommend you use Bayanat or Uwazi. These two tools have excellent capabilities for analyzing, developing trends, and creating strong data/ evidence-based arguments for reports or lobbying.

- Ushahidi has also been used by organizations working for legislative change and systemic change, though the analysis options are less developed than those offered by Bayanat or Uwazi.

How stable/ constant is my internet connection?

Limited/ irregular/ interrupted

- If you have limited or irregular internet connectivity, you can use any of the tools except Uwazi which requires a stable and constant internet connection. A good solution in this case is to use Tella for the data collection, and then connect to Uwazi when you have an internet connection.

Stable/ constant

- If you have a stable or constant connection, you can use any of the tools.

5. BACKGROUND TO THE GUIDEBOOK

5.1 The Guidebook initiators: Internews Greater Internet Freedom project

The Greater Internet Freedom (GIF) Initiative was a four-year (2020-2024), consortium-based, global program run by Internews that centered regional and local organizations at the forefront of the fight to preserve an open, interoperable, reliable and secure Internet. By extension this protected the citizens, civic actors, journalists, and human rights defenders who rely on the internet to realize fundamental freedoms.

GIF aimed to advance Internet freedom (IF) in the countries in which it worked by ensuring that digital security capacities, data awareness, and activism on behalf of an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet are available, adaptive and integrated into the operation of independent media and civil society. Internews' deep commitment to trust and local capacity building formed the core of their technical approach and informed every aspect of project implementation and management.

5.2 Why a Guidebook on HR documentation tools?

Regularly over the past 4 years, whenever major protests, coup-d'états, conflicts, natural disasters or wars broke out, the GIF team would receive requests from activists, journalists, human rights defenders or Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) asking for **advice on which technology to use** to document, save, analyze and communicate the incidents, violations and issues happening. People were not asking "which is the best tool", but "**what documentation tools best fit us, in our particular situation, to achieve the specific goals we have set ourselves?"**

From these requests, emerged the need to develop a practical, user-friendly guide for those brave activists and organizations to have a quick and well researched answer to their questions.

It was also clear that this guide would be helpful to many of the tool providers (those who have developed and maintain the apps and platforms for documenting human rights violations) who often receive the same requests and questions and use valuable resources on supporting organizations to answer these. We hope this guide can help "the right" potential users of these tools to find "the right" tool for them, and thus liberate resources used on redirecting users to more productive uses.

It was encouraging to see how grateful and supportive providers of these tools were of the creation of this guide, many saying it would help them with this redirection, but even help them be clearer what other tools do and don't do, so they can coordinate and be clearer in each of their own specific added values. Indeed, as one interviewee highlighted, "in the end, we are all aiming for the same thing: that those documenting violations and blowing whistles are as safe, supported and effective as possible! And there needs to be as many options for them to get the right support that fits them in their situations as possible, so anything which helps us work better together, is awesome!"

5.3 What methodology was used to compile this Guidebook?

This guide was created based on online research about human rights documentation and about the specific tools, as well as on conversations with the providers of these tools. Interviews were held with each of the 6 tool providers, and the draft guide was reviewed by all providers (except for KoboToolbox) before publication. The research for this guide did not include testing each of the tools nor research (surveys or conversations) with users of these tools.

This guide would not be possible without the incredible resources already developed by many others and made available publicly. In particular, the research done by Huridocs, TheEngineRoom and PILPG in 2020 and 2021, and the websites and tables summarizing the results of this research were invaluable.

We hope that this guide will help activists and human rights defenders to navigate the wealth of information provided by the previous research carried out. We are however aware that the tools described in this guide are constantly evolving and being upgraded, therefore the information in this guide can only be taken as the state in August 2024 of these tools.

5.4 Which Human Rights Documentation Tools and why these?

Following review of mappings of all documentation tools and platforms available, it was chosen to focus on the 6 tools most widely used by those in Internews' networks and, which fit the key criteria important to Internews (based on the criteria developed by Huridocs, TheEngineRoom and PILPG for their research in 2020).

Therefore, all 6 tools in this guide fulfill the following criteria:

1. The tool has been intentionally designed to address the needs of civil society documenters working in a human rights or social justice context.

2. The tool's business model is non-exploitative (in that their underlying business models do not make money through collecting data or locking organisations into ongoing, prohibitive charges).

3. The tool was developed with input and feedback from documenters themselves.

4. The tool is free and open source (i.e. anyone can download the code and set up their own instance, and/ or anyone audit the code to see how well security has been implemented.).

The 6 tools included are:

Save developed and maintained by OpenArchive

Tella developed and maintained by Horizontal

The Ushahidi Platform developed and maintained by Ushahidi Inc.

Uwazi developed and maintained by Huridocs

Bayanat developed and maintained by SJAC

KoboToolbox developed and maintained by Kobo

We are aware that some of these tools and platforms are very similar, and we feel that's actually a good thing, as it's good that there are alternatives and redundancies (rather than monopolies) including, in case anything happens to one of the apps/ tools or their providers: then users still have options!

5.5 The Guidebook compilers: Purpose+Motion

Purpose+Motion (P+M) is a Berlin-based transformation agency which works with NGOs, social businesses and individuals to co-create a regenerative future where we live within our social and planetary boundaries. P+M does this by supporting Gamechangers leading these organisations to develop their purposes and strategies, define and monitor the impact they aim to have and are having, and integrate this as learnings within their organisations. P+M help organisations develop their leadership capacities, their team structures and cultures, and raise the support and funds for their mission. P+M do what is needed to ensure those brave Gamechangers who are challenging the status quo, holding those in power to account and standing up to injustice can do their work in the best conditions possible.

P+M has been working with Internews since 2022, facilitating the GIF team and consortium members to work well together, learn from their work and grow the impact of the GIF project. In May 2024, P+M and Internews GIF teamed up to carry out the research and drafting of this guide.

Further information can be found on their website https://purposeandmotion.com

6. CONCLUSIONS

In an ideal world, neither this guide nor any of the tools it presents would be necessary. We may yearn for a world where injustice, corruption, violence, war, disaster and ecological crisis are no longer issues. Until such a world is the norm, these 6 tools (and many more which this guide doesn't cover) will be there to accompany the brave people (like you) documenting, questioning and disrupting the status quo, speaking truth to power, keeping alive the memory of injustices so that one day there can be justice, or mapping the crises which our climate, eco-systems and biosphere is experiencing.

We hope that this guide enables you to quickly come to a decision about which tool will best accompany your specific work, and thus allow you to spend more time doing your important work.

We are deeply grateful to the providers of these tools, firstly for their hard work to create and maintain these crucial assets in the journey towards a regenerative world, and secondly for their collaboration and support in creating this guide. We hope the guide simplifies the responding to the many requests you receive from potential users, thus enabling you to focus more on those whose needs best fit your tools unique strengths.

ANNEX 1:

LIST OF FURTHER RESOURCES

Index of references by HURIDOCS
https://huridocs.org/resource-library/monitoring-and-documenting-human-rights-violations/

Practical guide for monitoring human rights violations in the time of crisis (CRD)
https://crd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/210224_Vodic_ENG_Final_WEB.pdf

Berkeley Protocol on Digital Open Source Investigations (Human Rights Center | UN)
https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/OHCHR_BerkeleyProtocol.pdf

Building Capacity for Monitoring and Document Human Rights Violations During Internet Shutdowns - Zimbabwe
https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7151138286382559233/

Website summarizing results of research about Documentation Tools:
https://documentation-tools.theengineroom.org/

Includes:

- **o Google Spreadsheet with all tools "compared" (Prepared by PILP, Engine Room, HURIDOCS)**
  https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1DbUDYRqJwi1Yz0PGTWqj6Y9SVBiMP9ak2l7j85hRYVw/edit?gid=0#gid=0

- **Tech tools for human rights documentation (PILP, Engine Room, HURIDOCS)**
  https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5900b58e1b631bffa367167e/t/60538cde03064b3485dd0f19/1616088288032/Tech+tools+for+human+rights+documentation+-+A+snapshot+of+the+landscape-1.pdf

Tech Tools for Human Rights Documenters (prepared by The Engine Room)
https://www.theengineroom.org/tech-tools-for-human-rights-documenters/

AUGUST 2024

Guide compiled by Purpose+Motion

Purpose +Motion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