



Time to Flee Exercise

Task:

In groups of 4, you will perform a role play exercise about a family who have to flee their home and country because of **religious persecution**.

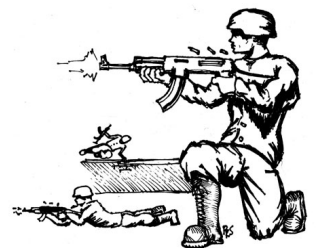
In the family there is: Mum, Dad, a child of school age, and Uncle Ali. Each group should have a pen and a "Decisions" sheet.

Setting the scene:



Dad works as an office administrator for the local Church. Mum works part-time as a youth worker for the same Church. Uncle Ali, who is very religious, was a political prisoner for a number of years. Now he cannot get work. He walks with difficulty and has had a limp since his time in prison. The whole family are well known in the community as members of the Church. The situation in the country has been changing quite dramatically recently.

Two months ago a military coup took place. There was a lot of gunfire on the streets. Tanks and armoured cars were everywhere. A lot of people were killed and others arrested, even women and children. Lots of others have simply "gone missing". The military rulers have taken over the radio and the TV, it is very hard to know what is going on. What should the family do?



Last week a local newspaper published a long list of people in the town that it says are "enemies of the state", this includes religious leaders and members of the clergy. Both Dad's name and Uncle Ali's appeared on this list.

Four days ago it was announced that religious services or meetings were banned, and the local priest and some members of the family's Church were arrested

Yesterday an unsigned letter was pushed through the door of the family home. It was made of letters cut out of newspapers and pasted onto a sheet of paper. The letter said "tonight's the night", "you need to move fast" and had words like "family", "children" and "stabbing" all together. There was a drawing of a skull, a target and a gun. It was signed "Friends of the Motherland"

Today there has been the sound of gunfire in the main square and trucks full of soldiers have been arriving in front of the Town Hall. There are roadblocks stopping all cars. Trains are being searched. The family meet together to have a hurried



discussion. **What are they going to do?** Mum says she thinks Dad and Ali are in particular danger and that the family should flee, and seek political asylum abroad as refugees in

another country. It takes under an hour to the border by car, but that would be very risky. By foot would mean a whole week's journey through the desert and then the high forest across the dangerous country to the frontier.



Now they hear that their neighbourhood is starting to be searched by the military.

They have 10 minutes to make up their mind, to get organised and get out.

Each group must discuss what they should do. Use the **Decisions** sheet to help you make up your minds