

January 5, 2016

Dear Art, Shirley and Frank:

Here are messages from eight of the thirteen freelancers who attended the five-day Hazardous Environment and First Aid Training (HEFAT) course in Northern Ireland. Their statements speak for themselves. Thanks so much to 2LIVES for making the training possible.

Unfortunately, three freelancers from Iraq, Pakistan and the Palestinian territories, were unable to attend because the UK didn't provide them with visas in time. We plan to do another training in 2016 and hope to include them. If you'd like, I can send you the bios of all thirteen freelancers who received training. Will also try to get a photo of the training as well. Thank you again!

--David Rohde

This is to sincerely THANKYOU for your support which enabled me to successfully attend a one week HET in Belfast. It was a life changing experience for me. Tell you what? Looking back at the last few years of my journalism life, i now realize how blind i was to some very vital security threats. I also need to mention that we had a very awesome group of trainers. Knowledgeable, approachable and experienced. How i wish many more freelancers could get such training. Words fail me. I don't know how to express my gratitude but for lack of a better word allow me to just say "THANKYOU" once again. God bless you abundantly.

--Leylah Ndinda (Kenya)

I am back in Sofia after an amazing week in Northern Ireland during the hostile environment training provided by Hawthorne Proactive. I am writing to thank you for the chance to participate in this special training from which I acquired invaluable knowledge about my personal security and how to work in hostile environment and war zones. Now I feel ready to undertake more difficult assignments that I was keen to do but never really felt prepared enough. Also on this training I had the chance to meet with colleague freelancers from all over the world and was able to share a lot with them about the current international situation and the most recent development and requirements of the media market. Thank you for making this possible.

-- Nikolay Doychinov (Bulgaria)

Just wanted to say thanks again for that opportunity last week. It was a terrific course with some very applicable skills. And even more importantly it was a really great group of journalists--impressive bunch of very nice people (finally got to meet Jason and Daniella at last!) I just wanted to let you know that I really appreciated the experience and couldn't say enough good things about it.)

--Bill Wheeler (Germany)

Excellent learning experience, great engagement of instructors and students, very good pace, instructors taking time to speak to students individually.

-- Piotr Zalewski (Polish journalist based in Istanbul)

Perfect pacing, mix of in-class instruction and field drills. Outstanding, Thank you all.

-- Jason Motlagh (US)

*Amazing surprising dynamics. Impressive capacity of the trainers to be/teach passionately throughout the course. Great teaching formula. Would highly, highly, highly recommend for freelance journalists.*

-- Juan Herrero (Spain)

*I will never forget to have a cover story ever again. Also very useful to hear about travel security and cyber security. Would love more time with 'Paul', the talk about PTSD/self-care (never would have sought out on my own).*

-- Daniella Zalcman (UK)

*The practice scenarios and timing with element of surprise were highly effective in reinforcing what we learned. Overall this course would be invaluable to anyone working in the field. The pace and hands-on versus classroom learning was a good balance.*

-- Clare Richardson (US based in Berlin)