



## Guide to Taking Photographs in the Field

### Who are the Omega Research Foundation:

We are an independent UK-based research organisation. We are dedicated to providing rigorous, objective, evidence-based research on the manufacture, trade in, and use of, military, security and police (MSP) technologies. See [www.omegaresearchfoundation.org](http://www.omegaresearchfoundation.org) for further details.

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### What to photograph:

All types of MSP equipment – especially useful are photographs that show serial numbers or company logos.

### What to do with the photograph:

Email images to [info@omegaresearchfoundation.org](mailto:info@omegaresearchfoundation.org) or tweet @omega\_rf. We can then help identify the weapons.

### Of specific interested are:

- Ammunition / canisters – including spent casings, headstamps, lethal and less lethal (e.g. tear gas)
- Small arms / less lethal launchers
- Electric shock equipment – e.g. stun batons / guns, Tasers and other projectile electric shock equipment.
- Vehicles – especially riot control vehicles with mounted water cannon / vehicles with uncommon weapons platforms / capabilities / accessories

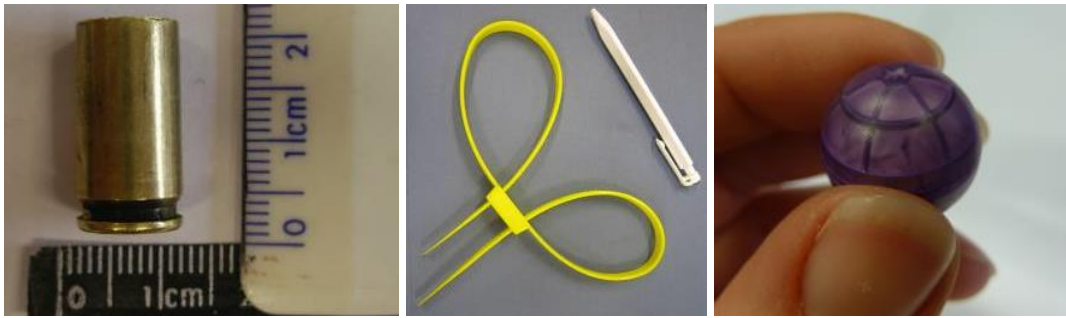
### Recording MSP Equipment

What to look out for / record:

- Colours / Shape(s)
- Size / dimensions / calibre
- Markings – names / logos / codes / serial numbers / headstamps (if necessary, take a series of photographs to capture all the markings)



Examples: Scale



The importance of providing an indication of scale:



It is always a good idea to transcribe fully the markings onto a piece of paper in case your image is lost / blurred.



## Examples: Markings

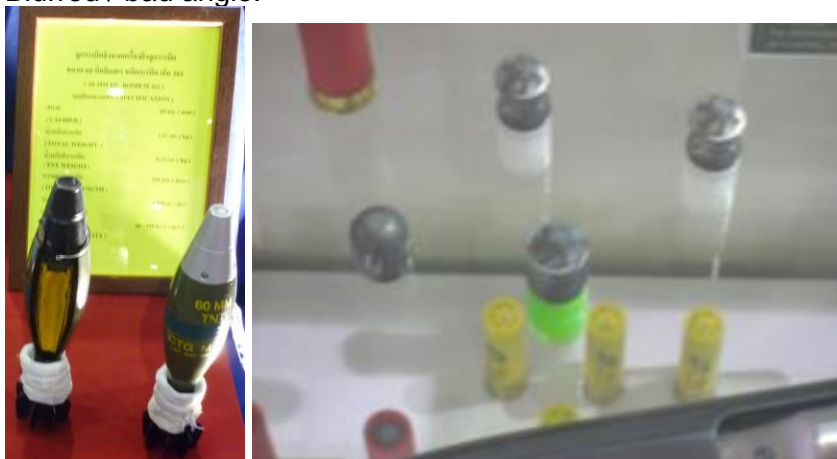


## Examples of Less Useful Photographs

Unable to read the markings:



Blurred / bad angle:



## Documenting Use

It is important to record how a piece of equipment is being used as this may vary from its recommended use, for example, photographic evidence in the past has shown:

- Security forces beating people with the butts of their rifles / grenade launchers.
- Vehicles incl. large water cannon being driven directly into crowds of people.
- Tear gas sprays being sprayed at close range and for extended periods into the faces of individuals.

If you are at the scene of a protest / human rights violation which involves the use of lethal or less than lethal projectiles (e.g. live ammunition, tear gas, rubber baton rounds etc.), when safe to do so try to take photographs which allow you to:

- Assess the distance between the protestors and the police. Wide-angle shots can be useful.
- Assess the positions of the protestors and the police.
- Assess where the firing came from.
- Assess how the projectiles were fired i.e. weapon launched, hand-thrown, vehicle launched.

## Checklist

The following checklist may come in useful when documenting the use of military, security and police equipment as a reminder for things to record.

1. **Date / Time**
2. **Location** i.e. country / town / city / street,
3. **Environment** i.e. inside / outside / police station / street, where are the users of equipment in relation to the "victims"?
4. **Equipment:** What equipment can you see? What is in use? What is available for use? How is it being used? Is it being misused?
5. **Actors x1:** Who is using the equipment? (e.g. security forces / police etc.) What are they wearing? Do they have any insignias? What language are they speaking?
6. **Actors x2:** Who is the equipment being used against? (e.g. group / gender / ethnicity / religion etc.) What are the actions of this group? (e.g. peaceful protest / stone throwers etc.)
7. **Notes**

## Warning

**Certain types of MSP equipment can be dangerous.**

- **Always assume that weapons are loaded and that ammunition and ordnance is 'live' and could cause injury.**
- **Do not take unnecessary risks trying to handle arms and ammunition.**
- **Unless you know what you are doing, leave the items alone and simply observe from a distance**
- **If possible take photographs or write detailed descriptions or make drawings of the equipment found.**