

# Certification *Profile*



**Beverly Toomer, CPP,** knows about risk—and risk management. As a security advisor for non-governmental agencies,

Toomer has worked in various high-risk assignments since 2004 in places such as Darfur, Ivory Coast, Haiti, Kenya, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda. She has been in Afghanistan for nearly two years, working as the chief field security advisor for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

A native of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, Toomer joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1977. While serving, she attended the Royal Military College of Canada, received her bachelor's degree in history, and graduated as an Army intelligence officer.

After retiring from the military in 1998, Toomer pursued a certificate in occupational safety and health while working as a human resources manager at a U.S. publishing house in Poland. While studying for this certificate, she became interested in emergency and disaster management.

"I looked for a place where I could utilize all the skills and experience that I had the opportunity to gain over the years and found myself working in security management in conflict regions," she says. "The satisfaction that comes with enabling sometimes lifesaving program delivery is immeasurable. To find creative and safe mechanisms to deliver needed programming, despite the presence of high risk, provides an exceptional sense of accomplishment."

A typical day for Toomer usually involves ensuring that UNDP personnel outside Afghanistan's capital, Kabul, are following

movement regulations. She provides security briefings for new staff members and coordinates with project managers on security issues. She also advises staff on all issues concerning security and oversees security management for UNDP. The most intense moments she recalls, have included responding to incidents, such as the Serena Hotel bombing and the bombing of the Indian Embassy.

During the Serena incident, Toomer had to account for more than 500 Kabul-based staff members. While the incident was occurring, she was in communication with an extraction team and with the UNDP staff members who were inside the hotel.

In the Indian Embassy bombing, two of her offices had windows blown out and doors damaged. "Accounting for staff and ensuring the provision of counseling as soon as possible afterwards are critical in events such as these," Toomer says.

And she offers this safety tip: "Blast film saved lives of our staff in the Indian Embassy incident. The cost is insignificant compared to the benefits it provided."

An ASIS member since 2006, Toomer earned her Certified Protection Professional® (CPP) designation this year. She says certification in any field lends credibility both to the holder and to the profession, ensuring continued development of high standards. "I decided to pursue CPP certification both to demonstrate to myself and others that I strive for excellence," she explains, "and also to make sure that I am constantly endeavoring to keep current in professional matters."

—Profile by Vicki Moeser, ASIS public relations manager