

FAQ ON THE NATALIA PROJECT

I NEED AN ALARM FOR MYSELF/MY WIFE/HUSBAND/CHILDREN/COLLEAGUES ETC. – WHERE CAN I GET IT?

The manufacturer of the hardware in the Natalia Project bracelet is a company called PFO (www.pfotechnologies.com). PFO has a personal alarm available for the commercial market with a similar appearance as the bracelet in our pictures, but without the same security features and protocol, etc., as the equipment used in the Natalia Project. I suggest that you consult them to see if your demands can be met; gabriella.carlsson@pfotechnologies.com.

The Natalia Project is directed towards the world's human rights defenders, and the bracelet, together with the organisation around it, is customized to fit the difficult circumstances these people work under, and to ensure local and international reactions when an alarm is triggered.

I AM A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER AND I NEED THE ALARM – WHERE DO I APPLY?

Obviously we would like all human rights defenders at risk to have this alarm, but building a security program around each individual, which matches the specific needs of that person, is a complex process, and unfortunately we have no possibility to facilitate your request at this moment.

Though this is not the answer you might have hoped for, please understand that we are in the build-up phase of a new initiative. We need to fine-tune the system and make sure that we have considered the most important aspects before we enter into possible partnerships with external actors.

Right now, we are building the program for the first 30 people who will get the alarm, and by the end of 2014 we are hoping to have equipped 55 human rights defenders in total. Needless to say, it takes a lot of time and effort to get an alarm up and running to ensure maximum protection 24/7 365 days a year.

The Natalia Project is one component in a comprehensive security program to protect human rights defenders at risk. The purpose of the alarm is to alert Civil Rights Defenders and the person's colleagues of the time and place of an attack. For this reason, the human rights defenders protected within the Natalia Project will to a large extent be individuals from the most repressive societies in the world, and within our existing networks.

However, the manufacturer of the hardware in the Natalia Project bracelet (www.pfotechnologies.com) has a personal alarm available for the commercial market with a similar appearance as the bracelet in our pictures, but without the same security features and protocol etc. as the equipment used in the Natalia Project. I suggest that you consult them to see if your demands can be met; gabriella.carlsson@pfotechnologies.com.

WHY CAN'T MORE PEOPLE GET THE ALARM?

Obviously we would like all human rights defenders at risk to have this alarm, but it costs a lot both for the alarm itself and to build an organisation to respond to the alarms, to train the wearers of the alarm and to develop the individualized security protocols.

We decided that we would start rollout of the program immediately as soon as we had a working solution. We will start with a small group, but our goal is to equip 55 people with the alarm within 18 months.

CAN'T POTENTIAL KIDNAPPERS CIRCUMVENT THE ALARM?

Yes, it is possible to circumvent the alarm. However, doing so presents attackers with a lot more difficulty than attacking someone who doesn't have an alarm. The Natalia Project isn't a guarantee against attacks. Defending human rights against oppressive regimes will always be very dangerous. As a complement to our comprehensive security program to protect human rights defenders at risk, we believe the Natalia Project is a significant step forward though.

DOESN'T THE ALARM POSE POTENTIAL PHYSICAL DANGER TO THE WEARER IN THE EVENT OF AN ATTACK?

Much as we would like to, the Natalia Project isn't a guarantee against attacks. Defending human rights against oppressive regimes will always be very dangerous.

The Natalia Project is one component in a comprehensive security program to protect human rights defenders at risk. The purpose of the alarm is to alert Civil Rights Defenders and the person's colleagues of the time and place of an attack.

Having this information within seconds of an attack is a huge step forward compared to the situation up until now, when we sometimes don't know of an attack until hours or even days later, let alone where it has taken place.

The wearers of the alarm have received training in how to use the alarm so as to minimize the risk to them, including how to take off the bracelet if necessary, for instance if faced with the threat of having their arm chopped off (like many people have suggested). For safety reasons we can not disclose all the details around alternative ways to notify us and the person's colleagues in case of an attack.

I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE ENOUGH TO SUPPORT ONE ALARM, HOW MUCH WOULD THAT COST?

It is difficult to set an exact cost for having one human rights defender equipped with an alarm adjusted for him/her specifically, trained and monitored 24/7 365 days a year, and to have the staff resources necessary to be able to act immediately on a national and international level - to put pressure on governments and other authorities when an alarm has been triggered.

Also, in the initial phase we have set-up costs, which makes it more expensive to monitor the first 55 people than it will be for the next group. We are currently calculating on this. The personal alarm itself, while necessary, is actually the least expensive part of the system.

HOW MUCH DOES THE ACTUAL WRISTBAND COST?

The model of the wristband used in the Natalia Project is not a commercial product. For commercial stand-alone-products feel free to contact our technology provider PFO: gabriella.carlsson@pfotechnologies.com.

Sounds like a great idea, but it will not be the best solution in all cases!

We understand this. The alarm is not a guarantee against attacks nor will it always be helpful, but in some cases it will. The main benefit of the alarm is that we will find out within seconds that an attack has taken place - and where. This will enable us to act very fast, which has not been the case up until now.

CAN IT BE ACTIVATED BY ACCIDENT?

In theory yes, but it is not that easy to activate the alarm by accident. And even if it is activated by accident, all that happens is that the person's shields and we get the alarm, we call the person with the alarm to check if he/she is ok and that's it, the alarm can be deactivated.

I WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO NATALIA PROJECT WITH TRAININGS, TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT OR INITIATE A PARTNERSHIP TO DISTRIBUTE THE ALARM TO MORE PEOPLE.

Thank you for your kind offer. We appreciate this very much. Right now we are in the build-up phase of a new initiative. We need to fine-tune the system and make sure that we have considered the most important aspects before we enter into possible partnerships with external actors.

However, please join the Natalia Project at nataliaproject.org to be sure to get all the updates, and feel free to contact us again within a couple of months - when things have hopefully calmed down a bit.

WE WOULD LIKE TO TEST THIS PRODUCT; CAN YOU PROVIDE US WITH A SAMPLE?

Thank you for your mail. Please feel free to download the press kit from nataliaproject.org. As for providing a sample product, I am afraid that we will not be able to do that. I hope that you will understand our concern regarding having the bracelets come into the wrong hands. It is a matter of security, not to reveal too many details about how they work.