# Keeping Group Chats secure

This chapter is about keeping Group Chats secure. It will describe the benefits and downsides in terms of security of the different communication apps Signal, Telegram and WhatsApp as well as give guidance as to how to keep a Group Chat secure.

- Comparing Security of Signal, Telegram and WhatsApp
- Guidelines to keep the Group Chats as secure as possible

# Comparing Security of Signal, Telegram and WhatsApp

Signal

• Signal is by far the most secure encrypted channel option.

• When you use Signal, your data is stored in encrypted form on your devices.

• Signal also has disappearing messages (self-destructing messages) which the other channels do not, which are an essential security feature

• Signal is free and all you need is a smartphone.

• Unlike Telegram, which also benefits from end-to-end encryption in its "secret chats", Signal has the feature enabled by default so you won't have to take any additional steps to get this, and that is why it is used for actions over and above everything else.

Telegram

• End-to-end encryption is not automatically used on messages sent in Telegram.

• Telegram is really a social media platform and has a very 'relaxed' content moderation strategy- this means it is targeted by spammers. You have to be on top of moderating it!

• Telegram is very useful for broadcast channels (in which only admins can post). Links for these can then be shared on wider channels (eg. Rebellion Broadcast). However, widely shared links attract spammers so they need to be carefully moderated.

WhatsApp

• End-to-end encrypted but owned by Facebook therefore its privacy is not reliable. WhatsApp also collects more metadata on you than apps like Signal.

• We do not recommend that anyone uses WhatsApp for actions, even those that are 'non-spicy' just in case.

• Some groups choose to use WhatsApp as more people already have it downloaded, but due to the security issues described above we strongly recommend groups use Signal for all of their organising.

See Also

Choosing a messaging app for your XR group in the "Online Tools for Communicating with Other Rebels" book.

# Guidelines to keep the Group Chats as secure as possible

When setting up the group chat make sure you follow these rules to keep it as secure as possible

1. Make sure that you add a group description, so everyone knows why they have been added to the group.
2. In the description of the chat include a URL link to any relevant information including your group agreement and any rules for the chat.
3. In settings turn off the group link (There is no group link in WhatsApp)
4. Make sure that only admins can add members or access the invite link.
5. Make at least three trusted people admins including yourself.
6. If actions are happening soon, make sure you set disappearing messages to a day or a week otherwise 4 weeks should be fine (WhatsApp and Telegram do not have this ability)

Security on chats

1. Ideally only add people that you know well or are verified by others (trusted rebels)
2. If you are doing spicy actions make sure people use pseudonyms and burner phones if possible, and that those are added to the correct chats (Normal names and numbers removed).
3. Make sure there are separate secure chats for action days or spicy actions so that you can delete them afterwards.
4. Make sure only admins can add new members to the chat.
5. Make sure you set disappearing messages.
6. Make sure you keep the group links off.
7. Remember that many chat platforms attach media and files and links separately, so admins should regularly check that old media files and links are deleted
8. After the chat is done, and everyone has agreed that the group chat is done with, leave the group and delete the chat off your phone
9. Some members may not do this, so once the chat is done with, admins can remove members individually and then delete the chat off phones by deleting the group chat altogether - in this way people are not on lots of different chats that have ended which may cause security issues should someone's phone be seized.