

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP) CAMP VISITS IRAQ

The purpose of the present SOP is to ensure coordinated camp visits that provide visitors with factual briefings as well as interactions with camp residents. The SOP outlines procedures to ensure the respect, safety and dignity of residents with minimal disruption to daily life and camp activities.

1. COORDINATION WITH CAMP MANAGEMENT

When organizing a visit, the first point of contact is always the Camp Management. Visits must aim to be scheduled on days when distributions or any other major activities are not taking place. Visits of any sort can result in large groups of people gathering within the camp, and thus proper coordination between the organizer of the visit and Camp Management will allow Camp Management to prepare in advance for crowd control.

Visits should aim to last under an hour so as to allow visitors to get a full impression of the camp yet not cause prolonged disruption. Moreover, visits are not encouraged on Friday, given the need to respect the religious significance of the day.

The agency organizing the visit will be held responsible for the planning and communication with Camp Management and Camp Management will be responsible for facilitating and guiding the visit.

1.1. VIP Missions

VIP missions may include heads of governments, ministers, head of agencies, high level donor delegations (donor directors, ambassadors), UN Agency headquarter missions, INGO headquarters staff (directors), and thus strict protocol must be observed.

- Briefings should be held in Camp Management office or in a space large enough to accommodate the group of visitors,
- Camp Management to ensure local authorities are informed and ready to receive visitors;
- Protocol dictates that the Governor of Erbil (and or his representative) welcomes the delegation accompanied by an official from the camp lead agency, and provides an initial briefing;
- Camp lead agency to provide overview of the situation;
- Camp Management to then provide general briefing of the camp with the camp lead agency ensuring time management of the visit.

Following the above, a short tour of the camp should be conducted, stopping at one or two key locations (i.e. child friendly space, distributions sites, etc.) and facilitating a short discussion with a family.

It is important that the route through the camp be decided upon in advance. This route must be planned in such a way that the privacy of camp residents is not disrupted (i.e. no pauses taken at latrines and showers, no pauses in small spaces where cooking may be taking place).

1.2. Other Missions

Other missions include other staff from UN Agencies and I/NGOs, journalists, researchers, among others. For such missions, there is no strict protocol to be observed and the visit will be planned according to the purpose of the mission. The following should be respected:

- Camp Management has to be informed in advance. If support from Camp Management is required, it should be indicated in advance so Camp Management can confirm whether it will be able to support and organize the visit accordingly;
- Visitors should pay a courtesy visit to Camp Management upon arrival to the camp;
- During the visit to the camp, the route must be planned in such a way that the privacy of camp residents is not disrupted (i.e. no pauses taken at latrines and showers, no pauses in small spaces where cooking may be taking place).

2. INTERACTION WITH CAMP RESIDENTS

2.1. General

For all missions, the camp visit should aim to minimally impact the daily lives of camp residents. In order to facilitate this, visits are requested to be as informal as possible, such as simply speaking to camp residents that are willing to be involved in the visit. No pre-selection of any sort will take place, unless a specific request for a vulnerability criteria has been expressed in advance and agreed on.

During a visit, at no time should visitors make promises or comment on services in which they are not responsible. This is to avoid false expectations being created, potentially resulting in unrest in the camp after the visitors departure.

2.2. Photography and videography

Photography and videography is allowed in the camps, with permission from both the Camp Manager AND all the residents being filmed or photographed. Verbal consent (at a minimum) is required and visitors are requested to clearly explain the purpose of their visit and documentation. If close-up videos or photography are to be taken, written consent is required as per annex 1.

Camp residents should always be given the opportunity to decline participation, without any impact on their ability to receive assistance or equal treatment in the future. Use of photography and videos must always be clearly explained to persons being photographed and consent given prior to photographs or videos being taken. For children, consent must be obtained from parents or adult guardian.

The right to anonymity for highly-vulnerable people and people with acute protection concerns must be respected by all visitors. Even with consent (see annex 1), pictures must be taken from the back or faces blurred out. For published interviews, the names of highly-vulnerable people and all children must be changed.