

Advice for Delegations and accompanying media Visiting IDP locations in Darfur

The following recommendations apply to delegations visiting IDP locations in Darfur. Coming out of repeated incidents surrounding recent delegation visits, it is intended to minimize tension with IDPs, ensure their protection during and after the visit and maximise the security of visitors and the utility of their visits.

Preparation

- Find out from actors on the ground which sites are suitable to visit. Obviously some are geographically easier to access, but as a result these locations have received an unending stream of visitors; recognize that this raises expectations and can contribute to increased tensions. Be willing to accept their advice
- Previously discuss the visit with the organisation(s) coordinating/managing activities in the camp. If you would like to visit a particular agency's program, consult with them in advance and inquire whether media/ cameras are appropriate/ acceptable
- Minimise the number of members of the delegation. If a large delegation is unavoidable, consider splitting into smaller groups (see below)
- Discuss the role of HAC, NS and MI and their proximity to the delegation prior to visit
- Establish with HAC officials (or NSA and MI) that they are not to witness or interfere with interviewing of IDPs or other beneficiaries
- Think about security measures for IDPs and the delegation in the IDP locations. Familiarize yourself with the lay-out of the location prior to the visit

During the visit

- Try to minimize the size of visiting delegations; split up into smaller groups rather than one big one
- Do not visit controlled areas such as feeding centres, clinics or health centres without permission of the organisation in charge
- Go to less visited (remote) areas in the camps
- Try to involve as many women as possible, as men usually dominate conversation (so for example avoid gathering near a mosque). Consider measures to solicit input from particularly vulnerable populations, ie female-headed households, the elderly
- Emphasize at the end of each meeting and interview that IDPs are free to talk and should not be harassed during or after the delegation's departure
- Do not take names of interviewees unless absolutely necessary – never when MI or NSA (or HAC) are around – similarly do not ask questions which require interviewees to provide specific information related to security incidents

Crowd control

- Avoid mass gatherings/show cases which attract attention
- Try to avoid large crowds building up (change location if necessary)

Security

- Keep an VHF radio connected to an IO/INGO network with the delegation at all times
- Keep sufficient transport for all delegation members on standby
- Maintain a safe distance between the population and the delegation. Ensure that VIPs in particular are not crowded around and know your safe exit route at all times

Follow-up

- Ensure there will be a follow up the day(s) after with visit to verify that no-one was harassed or arrested

Media

- Make sure you have the proper permission from the authorities to operate cameras
- Respect IDPs wishes on whether and under what circumstances to be photographed
- Heed the advice of staff from INGOs or IOs in IDP camps when it is offered – they can inform you of potential protection concerns
- Do not take names of interviewees unless absolutely necessary – never when MI or NSA (or HAC) are around – similarly do not ask questions which require interviewees to provide specific information related to security incidents or arrangements
- IDPs may use a public event (e.g. food distribution) which is filmed to create an event – this could be harmful and should be avoided