

Mutli-National Forces – Iraq (MNF-I)

Combined Press Information Center

International Zone, Baghdad, Iraq

As of: 20 NOV 07

NEWS MEDIA GROUND RULES (IAW Change 3, DoD Directive 5122.5)

Ground Rules Agreement

The following is a listing of ground rules that have been developed to protect members of the Armed Services from the release of information that could potentially threaten their security or safety during combat operations. These ground rules recognize the inherent right of the media to cover combat operations and are in no way intended to prevent release of embarrassing, negative or derogatory information. During an operation, specific information on friendly force troop movements, tactical deployments, and dispositions that would jeopardize operational security or lives will not be reported. This would include unit designations, names of operations, and size of friendly forces involved, until released by the operational unit or Multi-National Forces - Iraq.

Acceptance of these ground rules is an agreement between you and the granting commands. You agree to follow the ground rules and the command will provide support, access to service members, information, and other privileges. Violation of ground rules may result in the revocation of your credentials.

These ground rules apply to media reporting with MNF-I, to include Iraqi Security Forces under operation control of the Coalition.

(1) All interviews with service members will be on the record unless otherwise stated by the designated PAO.

(2) At MNF-I tactical or field locations and encampments, a public affairs escort may be required because of security, safety and mission requirements as determined by the host commander. Media will remain with military escorts and follow instructions regarding their activities at all times, until released.

(3) Media must be physically fit and able to carry their own equipment/gear. If, in the opinion of the commander, a media representative is unable to withstand the rigorous conditions required to operate with the forward deployed forces, he/she will be medically evacuated out of the area.

(4) Possession of weapons while embedding or reporting is not authorized. This includes any sharp objects that can be used as a weapon.

(5) Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages while embedded or reporting is not authorized.

(6) Possession of pornographic material while embedded or reporting is not authorized.

(7) Filming of MNF-I security badges is not authorized.

(8) While in transit to and from an embed or unit visit, the media cannot act in a news gathering capacity. Filming, interviewing or photographing on any installation or transportation assets is not authorized unless approved and escorted by a public affairs officer responsible for that area.

(9) Reporting inside of the International Zone is not authorized without approval and escort by CPIC personnel, to include interviews, news gathering, filming and photographing.

(10) Media pool products will be made available to all accredited media (U.S. and others) on an equitable, no-fee basis. Media pool coordinators and bureau chiefs will be responsible for distributing media pool products.

(11) Media will not be prohibited from covering casualties provided the following conditions are adhered to:

(a) Names, video, identifiable written/oral descriptions or identifiable photographs of wounded service members will not be released without the service member's prior written consent. If the service member later becomes a KIA, Rule 11(b) applies.

(b) DOD will release names of KIAs. In respect for family members, names or images clearly identifying individuals "killed in action" will not be released prior to notification of next of kin and in accordance with current legislation. Names of KIAs may be released after the DOD announcement has been made – journalists may check the Defenselink.mil Web site for those announcements.

(12) Light discipline restrictions will be followed. No visible light source, including flash lights and television lights, will be used when operating with forces at night unless specifically approved by the on-scene commander.

(13) While covering an MNF-I unit, reporters may inadvertently be exposed to classified material. Security at the source is the primary method of maintaining operational security and is the responsibility of unit commanders. It is incumbent on the unit commander to identify to the reporter which material is classified. The media will adhere to the following guidelines to ensure operational security.

(a) Media who are inadvertently exposed to classified information during the process of covering stories shall be informed immediately by the chain of command of the restrictions on the use or disclosure of such classified material.

(b) Embargos may be imposed to protect operational security and future operations.

(c) If a reporter gains access to classified material, the media will ensure no classified information is inadvertently released.

(d) Disagreements shall be referred to the next level of command and editors for resolution.

(14) The following categories of information are not releasable by the media since the publication or broadcast of such information could jeopardize operations and endanger lives.

(a) Any specific numerical information on troop strength, aircraft, weapon systems, equipment or supplies to include amounts of ammunition or fuel moved. Unit size may be described as

“company size” “multi-battalion,” “naval task force,” or “carrier battle group.” Number or amount of equipment and supplies may be described in general terms such as “large,” “small,” or “many.”

(b) Information that reveals details of future and/or ongoing operations.

(c) Information, photography or imagery that would reveal the specific location of military forces or show the level of security at military installations or encampments.

(d) Details of rules of engagement or force protection measures.

(e) Information on intelligence collection activities, including targets, methods and results.

(f) During an operation, specific information on friendly force troop movements, tactical deployments and dispositions, to include unit designations, names of operations, tactics and size of friendly forces involved, until released by the appropriate general officer level command.

(g) Location of mission aircraft points of origin, other than “land based” or “carrier based.” Number and type of aircraft points of origin, other than “land based,” “many,” “few,” “fighters” or “fixed wing.”

(h) Information on effectiveness of enemy techniques, tactics and procedures including camouflage, cover, deception, targeting, direct and indirect fire, intelligence collection, security measures, electronic warfare and improvised explosive devices.

(i) Information on missing or downed aircraft or missing ships while search and rescue operations are planned or underway.

(j) Information on special operations units, to include their operations, methodology or tactics.

(k) Information on operational, tactical or support vulnerabilities that could be used against MNF-I and/or Iraqi Security Forces to include improvised explosive devices.

(l) No photographs or other visual media showing detainees’ or prisoners’ recognizable face, nametag or other identifying feature or item.

(m) No demeaning photographs or visual media will be taken of detainees in a manner that makes the individuals an object of public curiosity or subject to public ridicule.

(n) No interviews with detainees are authorized.

(o) Any tactics, techniques and procedures witnessed during operations unless released by a field grade commander, to include improvised explosive device (IED) defeating tactics, techniques and procedures.

(15) Additional guidelines and/or ground rules may be imposed by the local command to protect tactical security.

Agreement of Reimbursement

1. I understand that covering combat and other military operations may require that I be provided certain items not

locally available or convenient due to combat conditions. These items may include, but are not limited to, meals, lodging and air travel into and within the theater of operations.

2. I agree to reimburse the Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNF-I) for any items it may provide me while I am in the area of operations (if deemed necessary).

3. I understand that my agreement to this statement is a condition of being credentialed to cover MNF-I Military operations and receiving assistance for that coverage.

Hold Harmless/Release From Liability Statement

1. I realize that covering security and security operations carries with it certain inherent risks to life, limb and equipment.

2. I recognize that MNF-I forces in pursuing the successful accomplishment of their missions, cannot guarantee my personal safety or the safety of my equipment.

3. In my capacity as an authorized representative, I understand and agree that I, and the business, company or enterprise that I represent, will indemnify, defend, and hold harmless and release, acquit and forever discharge the MNF-I Forces of any liability for any injuries I may suffer or any damage to any equipment that may occur as a result of my presence in the Iraqi theater of operations.

Name _____

Job Title _____

Employer _____

I have read the aforementioned media ground rules and agree to abide by them. I also understand that violation of these ground rules may result in suspension or revocation of my MNF-I media credentials and expulsion from MNF-I operational areas and installations. I further understand that if I violate these terms, the media organization I am representing may be held accountable for my actions, which could include forfeiting the privilege of sponsoring media for MNF-I press credentials in the future.

Signature _____

Date _____

CPIC Staff _____
Signature _____

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