

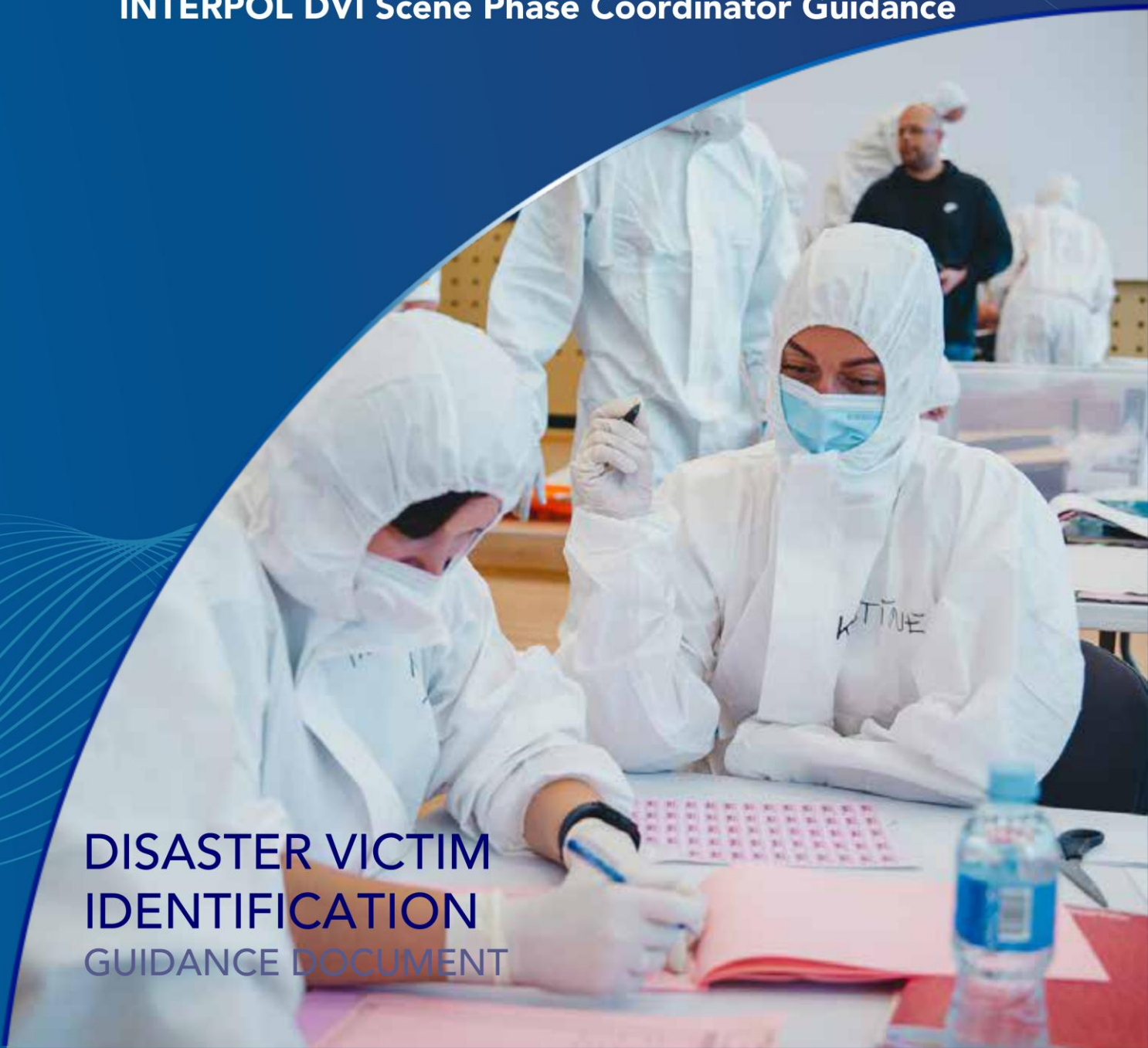


INTERPOL

INTERPOL DVI - MEDIA MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

INTERPOL DVI Scene Phase Coordinator Guidance

DISASTER VICTIM
IDENTIFICATION
GUIDANCE DOCUMENT



INTERPOL DVI - MEDIA MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

Purpose

To establish procedures for managing media interactions during Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) operations, ensuring:

- Respect for and protection of the dignity, privacy, and emotional well-being of victims' relatives and victims.
- Protection of operational integrity and personnel.
- Accurate, timely, and controlled dissemination of public information.

Scope

This protocol applies to all DVI operations conducted under INTERPOL coordination or in alignment with INTERPOL DVI standards, including national DVI teams, national contact points, partner agencies, and on-site personnel where media interest exists.

Note: Implementation must comply with applicable national laws, judicial authorities, and data protection frameworks in the country of operation.

Guiding Principles

These principles are aligned with the INTERPOL DVI Guide.

1. Respect for human dignity and post-mortem integrity – No media access that compromises privacy or respect for the deceased.
2. Information accuracy – Avoid speculation or premature release of names before formal identification and family notification.
3. Controlled access – Media interaction only via authorized spokesperson(s).
4. Safety – Prevent interference with DVI operations or intimidation of staff and relatives.
5. Controlled transparency – Transparency must not compromise identification processes, judicial investigations, or the rights of families.

Roles & Responsibilities

All media communications must be validated through the DVI Command structure and, where required, national judicial or governmental authorities.

Media Liaison Officer (MLO)

- Appointed for each operation.
- Sole point of contact between the DVI operation and the media.
- Coordinates press releases and briefings with operational command and legal teams, and official government communication authorities.

DVI Commander

- Ensures physical and procedural measures are in place to protect personnel and relatives from media intrusion.

All DVI Personnel

- Refrain from speaking directly to the media unless authorized.
- Report any media interference to the MLO or command immediately.

Physical Media Control

- Establish secure perimeters around recovery sites, mortuaries, and family briefing centers.
- Use privacy screens, tents, or vehicles to block unauthorized photography of remains or distressed relatives.
- Assign security or police presence at entry points to family support areas.

Measures must comply with national public order laws and be proportionate to the operational context.

Communication with the Media

- Centralized messaging: Only the MLO or designated spokesperson gives statements.
- Coordination with authorities: Align all public messaging with government media offices or official spokesperson(s) to ensure consistency.
- Scheduled briefings: Provide regular, pre-planned updates to prevent speculative reporting.
- Content control: No release of victim names until confirmation and family notification.
- Tone: Professional, empathetic, and factual — avoid sensational language.

No information shall be released that could:

- Interfere with ongoing investigations;
- Compromise identification processes;
- Violate confidentiality or data protection laws.

Protection of Families

Family engagement must follow internationally recognized humanitarian practices, including those regarding missing persons and family liaison.

- Offer private entrances/exits for relatives visiting viewing areas or briefings.
- Provide escort services for families if media presence is heavy.
- Educate families on their rights to decline interviews.
- Offer safe waiting areas where media access is prohibited.

Handling Aggressive Media Behavior

- If media violate agreed rules, issue a formal warning through the MLO.
- In cases of persistent harassment, involve law enforcement to enforce trespass or public order laws.
- Keep incident logs of aggressive or obstructive media conduct.

Note: Actions must respect national legal frameworks governing press freedom and public order.

Digital and Social Media Considerations

Digital and social media environments present significant risks for the dissemination of unverified information, unauthorized imagery, and content that may compromise the dignity of victims, the rights of families, and the integrity of DVI operations.

Wherever operationally feasible, monitor social platforms for leaked images, misinformation, or emerging rumors, in compliance with applicable national laws.

Rumor management process:

Establish a structured information verification chain prior to any public response, including:

- Identification and assessment of circulating information;
- Internal verification of facts with DVI operational command;
- Evaluation of legal and operational implications.
- Prioritize official communication channels to counter misinformation and ensure consistency of messaging.
- Issue corrections promptly and proportionately through authorized channels when false or misleading information is identified.
- Report and, where legally possible, request takedown of unauthorized victim imagery or sensitive content that compromises dignity, privacy, or ongoing operations.

Training Requirements

- All DVI personnel to be trained/briefed in media avoidance techniques and safe communication.
- MLOs to be trained in crisis communications and de-escalation with press representatives.

Training/briefing aspects should consider:

- Legal awareness (data protection, confidentiality);
- Ethical communication in mass fatality incidents;
- Psychological sensitivity in interactions involving bereaved families.

Annex A: Media Access Rules for DVI Sites

- Strict policies must be implemented regarding the use of personal mobile devices, including prohibition of unauthorized photography, recording, or data sharing.
- No interviews in family briefing centers.
- All questions routed to MLO.
- No entry into operational zones without escort.

Annex B: Sample Media Briefing Script

- Situation overview.
- Operational status update.
- General victim statistics (no personal identifiers). Language is also important when providing figures to the media: what does the term “casualty” mean? If the number of deceased persons is known and verified, it should be made clear in any briefings. A distinction needs to be made between deceased persons (confirmed and verified), missing persons and those who are categorized as injured.
- Reassurance on dignity and identification process.