



BJMP-NHQ
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES
Number 2010-03

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**GUIDELINES IN THE CONDUCT OF
MEDIA INTERVIEW/PRESS CONFERENCE WITH INMATES**

I. RATIONALE

In order to balance the constitutional rights of the accused/inmates to freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, and the equally important role of the Jail Bureau to ensure public safety, this SOP is hereby issued.

II. PURPOSES/OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure that proper safeguards are in place in the grant of media interview/press conference with inmates.
2. To have a uniform policy on media interview/press conference with inmates.
3. To provide guidelines to be followed by jail authorities, media personality and inmates before, during and after the conduct of media interview/press conference.

III. SCOPE OF COVERAGE

This SOP shall apply only to media interview/press conference initiated by inmates and/or media practitioners.

IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Any requesting party whether media personality or inmate must secure the following requirements:
 - a. Clearance from the Chief, BJMP/Regional Director;
 - b. Clearance from the Court/s where the case/s is/are pending.
2. All requests and clearances must be in writing stating therein the purpose/s of the interview/press conference.
3. The inmate must give his/her consent for the interview/press conference.
4. Identities of media personalities should be properly ascertained/verified before the start of the interview.
5. Requests must be made at least three (3) days before the actual interview/press conference to allow time for security preparations and/or adjustments in the schedule of regularly conducted jail activities.
6. Media personalities must be briefed on the rules and regulations concerning security procedures in the conduct of interview/press conference.

7. Duration of interview/press conference shall not last more than twenty (20) minutes and shall be immediately terminated upon the lapse of allotted time.
8. Deviation from the topic of interview, unruly conduct of media personalities, or imminent threat to the security of both media personality and inmate shall warrant termination of interview/press conference.
9. Inmates charged with crimes against national security, violation of human security act and those whose detention involves national interests shall not be allowed to undergo live televised interview/press conference.
10. Interview/Press conference shall be documented at all times by the Warden or his duly designated representative.

V. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

BEFORE INTERVIEW

1. Inmate must be briefed of the topic/s intended for interview.
2. Inmate must be reminded of his/her right not to answer questions, or at the most, terminate the interview if/when he/she might incriminate himself/herself.
3. Inmate must be made to wear the prescribed attire prior and during the interview.

DURING INTERVIEW

1. Inmate shall not be allowed to stay outside his/her cell during interview, except upon impracticability due to security reasons. A secured area within the jail facility shall be assigned for the conduct of the interview.
2. For phone interviews, inmate shall be brought to a secured area and shall be closely monitored by the designated jail officer.
3. The warden, or his/her designated representative shall, at all times, be present while interview is ongoing.

BEFORE PRESS CONFERENCE

1. Topics or issues for the press conference shall be determined and agreed upon between the inmate and the moderator.
2. Topics or issues agreed upon shall be expressly mentioned in the invitation to the media or media advisory.
3. If an inmate requested the press conference, he/she shall be responsible for inviting the media, either through his/her legal counsel or relatives.
4. The warden, or his duly designated representative, shall determine whether the topics/issues intended for the press conference necessitate such event, or a press release will suffice.
5. The warden shall designate a skilled moderator who will referee the proceeding. He shall also designate a close-in security for the inmate to preempt unwanted attempts at disrupting security procedures during the press conference.

DURING PRESS CONFERENCE

1. A safe distance shall always be maintained between media personalities and the inmate. Not at any point during the press conference shall the close-in security be away from the inmate.
2. At the start the moderator shall remind media personalities about the terms and conditions of the press conference, emphasizing the need to limit questions to the pre-arranged topics/issues.
3. Moderator shall limit the number of questions a reporter may ask, always mindful that only important issues are discussed. If the moderator finds out or is convinced that all areas have been covered, he/she can terminate the press conference even before the allotted time is exhausted.

AFTER INTERVIEW/PRESS CONFERENCE


1. The Jail Bureau must be provided with the unedited copy of the interview/press conference material for reference.
2. Debriefing shall be conducted on all involved personnel to evaluate the process and result of the interview/press conference.
3. The warden must submit an after-activity report to the Chief, BJMP, thru the Regional Director.

VI. RESCISSION

All previous issuances or policies not consistent with this SOP are hereby rescinded or modified accordingly.

VII. EFFECTIVITY

This SOP shall take effect immediately.


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Chief, BJMP