



**GUIDELINES FOR THE COLLECTION AND USE OF AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL**

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## Introduction

Images and film are important to MSF – they help us raise awareness about medical emergencies; about the plight of the people with whom we work (patients and communities) and they inspire people to come and work with us. Collecting and using audio-visual material of patients, often in distress or pain, brings up questions on the best practices to apply and how to go about it in an ethical manner – to protect the dignity of our patients (and staff) and to ensure the safeguard of their private data.

This document is a must-read for all communications MSF staff who produce and/or use images and film, including contracted photographers and film crew. It is intended to offer guidance on the use of audio-visual material and to help MSF staff use images in a truthful way. This guide encourages ethical behaviour when producing and using images at or for MSF.

No set of guidelines can anticipate every situation, and an element of self-regulation and common sense is required. However, the advice given in this document is intended to guide MSF (communications) staff and commissioned photographers towards best practice in both production and use of images, and to avoid exploitation, offence or harm.

## Definitions

### **Audio-visual material**

For easier readability, the term “audio-visual material” is used throughout this document. However, it should be noted that it encompasses:

- Photos
- Videos
- Sound clips
- Written testimonies

### **Media Database**

MSF’s international Media Database (MDB) is the sole intersectional audio-visual tool used across the MSF movement to manage and curate our vast audio-visual collection and is the repository for all our audio-visual material. Material collected in MSF’s field programmes is uploaded, categorised and disseminated from the MDB across our offices in the world.

### **Photographer and Audio-visual Producer**

The terms ‘photo’ and ‘photographer’ are often used in the document but also refer to moving images, cameramen and camera crews.

The term ‘MSF audio-visual producer’ refers to photographers and videographers both those employed and those commissioned by MSF.

## Principles to follow

1. **Respect and courtesy:** MSF audio-visual producers always conduct themselves with tact, sensitivity and professionalism towards medical staff, operations personnel, public authorities as well as at all times towards patients and members of the public. Always identify yourself and announce your intention to gather material.
2. **Do no harm:** MSF audio-visual producers are mindful of the potential consequences of their coverage and don't seek to expose or put patients, MSF staff, or the organisation itself, at risk through the collection and/or dissemination of audio-visual material and private data associated.
3. **Fairness:** MSF photographers do not pay their sources for information or the subjects of their photography or video. Furthermore, MSF employees will use their position to favour sub-contractors or provide access to projects for financial (or equivalent) gain.
4. **Sensitivity:** Some activities may be considered too sensitive (abortion, prostitution) to be filmed or photographed. Military installations are usually off-limit. Ask before you start your assignment.
5. **Necessity:** When collecting and uploading audio-visual material take what is necessary, what illustrates the story you wish to highlight. We have a tendency to collect hundreds of photos or hours of footage which serve no purpose. Before uploading on the MDB ask yourself what material is necessary to share. Delete the rest.
6. **Privacy:** The medical condition of a patient is often a vital piece of information for the communications staff to use the image in a more effective way. However, medical confidentiality about a patient's health should always be paramount so MSF staff should not give out medical and personal information to the photographer if the patient does not agree.
7. **Accuracy:** Audio-visual producers should be accurate and honest in the information they provide and portray a specific situation as it is and avoid sensationalist shots.
8. **Taste and decency:** Through its audio-visual material, MSF seeks to show dignified human beings, not helpless objects of pity. Showing gratuitous suffering is not necessary and audio-visual producers should seek to show patients, whenever possible, under a positive light. Would you accept to see a member of your family in the shot you are about to take?
  - a. Patients: show they are cared for, accompanied, touched. This is especially important when the subject is a child. Show children in their parents' arms, not on their own. Nudity can be a problem in some home societies, be aware of it and offer alternative shots/footage.

- b. Staff: our teams are composed of dozens of different nationalities. Our medical staff is far more diverse than only coming from what we traditionally call the “West”. Capture them in their daily work, providing care or else.
  - c. Suffering: MSF works in some terrible places where we bear witness to a lot of suffering. While sometimes we want to alert the public or donors on what is happening, we need to be careful not to show MSF as the saviour without which the communities we work with are helpless.
  - d. Images of victimhood should be avoided, preferring instead a mixture of images including MSF teams (national and expat staff) in action, capable people helping themselves.
9. **Limited post production:** MSF audio-visual producers provide truthful, accurate coverage. Post production image manipulations should be kept to a minimum and should never affect the integrity of an image. (see Post-production on page 13 for more info).

## Collecting Audio-visual material

There are five main ways in which MSF acquires AV material:

### 1. Photographer or videographer under contract

MSF requests a free-lance professional to take a photo/video report for MSF. In such an agreement, the photographer is given a formal contract for the work and is paid by MSF. The photographer should adhere to MSF rules and regulations and get a full security briefing by the Head of Mission or Project Coordinator. Depending on situation, the photographer will receive an MSF ID card and will perform his/her work while wearing an MSF T-shirt or vest. The agreed work of the assignment must be set out in a Terms of Reference document. Cooperation should be based on mutual goals and agreement.

### 2. Partly assigned photographer or videographer

MSF requests a professional freelancer to make a report while he/she is carrying out work for other client(s) in the same region. The same rules apply as those mentioned above, but only for the period in which the photographer is working on the MSF assignment. At the same time, it must be made clear to the photographer that although he/she will be working for MSF for only part of their visit, he/she will be associated with MSF for the duration of their trip within the same context and therefore the photographer should always respect our basic principles. For example, if the visa was obtained with the help of MSF, it means that for the authorities, the photographer will remain linked to MSF. The Head of Mission and Project Coordinator should be very clear with the audio-visual producer on the do's and don'ts within specific contexts. Communication department staff should also warn the photographer about these issues in advance of his/her departure for the field.

### 3. MSF buys images from a freelance producer who has visited our projects or context where we work

Since the images acquired are part of a report produced outside of any agreement with MSF, there is no direct implication for us. However, this does not mean we aren't concerned about the ethical considerations of the photographer. It is good practice to check the source of material, the previous publications, verify the context in which the work was produced or who commissioned the original work. If the images/footage acquired contain portraits and personal stories, it is best to check the procedures that were followed to obtain consent. If the information is considered sensitive, it is advised to get a copy of the release forms, or to sign a contract/waiver so MSF cannot be held responsible.

#### 4. When MSF facilitates access to our projects for a freelance photographer or videographer

In this type of agreement, MSF's work is simply used to tell part of the story they are following. The photographer and MSF will work together to get a story out into the public domain where it suits MSF communication, fundraising or advocacy purposes. This arrangement requires more freedom of movement and interpretation for the photographer in order to report and tell a balanced story. However, the photographer should realise his/her activities can have consequences for MSF. If he/she is biased in the visual interpretation of a situation or MSF's position toward parties involved in a conflict, it could have a negative impact for MSF<sup>1</sup>. These issues should be discussed with the photographer before they begin their work either by staff from the communications department or by the Head of Mission/Project Coordinator. In very precarious situations, it might be preferable to work with photographers who have already worked successfully with MSF.

#### 5. MSF staff and volunteers take photos or videos showing our projects or the context where we work

MSF staff and volunteers should adhere to MSF rules, regulations and the security briefing, as already given by the Head of Mission or Project Coordinator. MSF staff and volunteers should agree the scope of photographs and ensure that data is collected to accompany them. Everyone is a photographer nowadays, and therefore all MSF staff and volunteers are recommended to read this 'Best Practices' document and the Ethical Guidelines to alert them to concerns – ethical, practical and legal- of taking photos of our work and patients.

Protection of the patient remains the priority while ensuring good practice and obtaining consent for any images/footage taken, as outlined below.

#### **A note on buying images from image banks e.g Shutterstock**

When communicating about MSF's work, it is preferable to use our own images sourced from one of the methods mentioned above. However, it can be that you may need to buy images from an image bank (in emergency situations where we have no presence for example) or from newswires.

For example:

An image showing a girl being rescued out of the water was used in an MSF appeal for the earthquake in the Sulawesi region of Indonesia. It gave the impression that MSF was operational in the area and providing rescue support to people. The problem is a) MSF was not yet on site, b) MSF does not provide emergency rescue support, c) the rescuers were not MSF staff.

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, MSF had to postpone activities in Bunia, DRC when a photo was published showing MSF bringing medical aid to armed Lendu warriors. The Hema fighters saw the pictures, they accused MSF of showing partiality in the conflict.

Consider the following when using image banks:

- Image banks are great for context images i.e showing the devastation of a natural disaster.
- Be aware that images of people in action, in distress, can be misleading i.e that MSF is assisting in an environment we are not present.
- The price of images is determined based on the intended use of the image – i.e for use in an e-newsletter for distribution to 5000 donors. The image cannot be used for any other purpose. It generally makes more sense to buy images when there is a clear return on investment, ie fundraising.
- There is no such thing as exclusive use. The same image could well be bought and used by anyone else such as UNICEF, Oxfam, and the local Red Cross.

## Permissions

**Obtaining relevant permissions:** MSF is not generally the “owner” of the medical facility in which we work – often the structure belongs to the Ministry of Health or local community authority. It is vital that the audio-visual producer gets permission from the necessary authorities running the facility before starting to work.

## Obtaining proper consent (including withdrawal of consent)

**Obtain an *informed, freely-given, specific* consent:** MSF audio-visual producers always collect freely given, specific, *informed* and unambiguous consent (written or video) of subjects to appear in audio-visual material.

An informed consent can be said to have been given based upon a clear appreciation and understanding of the facts, implications, and consequences of an action. Adequate informed consent is rooted in respecting a person's dignity To give informed consent, the individual concerned must have adequate reasoning faculties and be in possession of all relevant facts. (source : Wikipedia).

[\[LINK TO ILLUSTRATED CONSENT FORM\]](#) (in development, Q1 2020)

In all cases, each patient should have a real choice, not feel compelled to consent and understand that their refusal to take part in a photo/video or any other audio-visual material will not affect the medical care they receive from MSF. This consent must be **documented and stored on the Media Database**.

### Consent considerations:

- The AV producer needs to clearly identify themselves.
- Consent negotiations must be carried out in the subject's native language.
- Acknowledge the right of individuals to be un-identifiable and provide them with the means to do so.
- Explain any possible uses of the photo including on the internet, internationally and in their home country. If a patient is concerned, offer solutions to film in a way that keeps the patient anonymous.



- Explain that the right to be forgotten may not be fully enforceable, we may not be able to withdraw all images already published.
- In many cultures, family consent is required even for subject who are over 18 and still living with their family.
- In the case of minors, always seek out a parent or responsible guardian to inform them and obtain consent to photograph or film the subject.
- Some situations make it hard for patients to give meaningful consent to be photographed or filmed. For patients who are mentally ill, unconscious, in great pain or distress, in a state of shock, a caregiver or close relative should be asked for consent on their behalf.
- Consent should be requested by the AV producer (not medical or operational staff).

#### Written consent

Collected using this [standard consent form](#) (other languages added as they become available).

#### Use when:

- Patients and subjects are fully literate and able to sign their name
- The image/film is intended for use in a formal medical journal (*The Lancet*)
- Leave a copy and receipt with the patient where the information for withdrawal of consent is written.

**Important note:** in some contexts, filling out a consent form and leaving a copy with the patient can put them at risk. In such cases, using a different approach for gaining consent is recommended.

#### Audio/video consent

Collected using this [standard video script](#) for audio/video consent.

#### Use when:

- Patients and subjects who are illiterate or illness prevents them from signing their name
- In emergency and crisis photo response environment
- In context where signing a paper form can be (perceived as) a risk

In the case of **crowd** and **general scenes**, where no single person is the identified subject of a photograph, the AV producer is required to ensure that every effort has been made to:

- identify himself/herself to the people who may be photographed/filmed;
- take into consideration the potential repercussions to individuals identified within a crowd on their safety, privacy and right to remain anonymous;
- Ask the crowd if anyone is against being pictured/filmed (show of hands).

The AV producer is nevertheless required to document that people were informed and asked for consent, and which method was used. For example: “The translator informed people in the local language, that we would be taking images for a donor magazine. Every person who did not want to be in the photo was given the chance to leave the room.”

### Staff consent

We tend to take for granted that MSF staff can be photographed/filmed without asking for their consent. Most MSF staff don't have an issue with it but in light of new private data regulations MSF also needs to have their consent. The same process as described above is recommended for MSF staff.

### Withdrawal of consent from patients and staff

In accordance with privacy data regulations, a person has the right to remove consent for future use of their image. MSF has to respect this and record that consent has been removed. Anyone wishing to remove consent can send their request to [dataprotection.io@geneva.msf.org](mailto:dataprotection.io@geneva.msf.org), or use the process described on the copy or receipt they got from the AV producer. The material will therefore be removed from the media database.

## Child protection considerations

Images of children are particularly prone to causing distress or offence and careful thought should go into the production of such images.

- Consent of child and caregiver: always get informed consent from the child and the parent/responsible guardian
- Nudity: While babies are born naked and many of our younger patients, happily run around with no clothes, it is not appropriate and illegal to show a child's naked genitals.
- Vulnerability: It is extremely important that MSF images do not twist reality. For example, a child's mother should not be cropped out of a picture in order to make a baby look more helpless.

## Information to be provided with the material

### Photo captions

Writing a clear caption is part of good practice. Without clear, accurate notes or captions photographs are, at best worthless, and at worst potentially harmful.

Photographs without clear, informative captions will NOT be permitted to be stored for extended periods of time or released to the MSF network via the MDB.

If the responsibility of collecting a good caption lies with the MSF audio-visual producer harvesting content – the Audio-visual Editor will ensure that adequate captions are included with the correct material on the media database.

Each photo should have a unique caption, including the following key elements:

- Description of WHO is in, or WHAT is happening in the photograph;
- Date of WHEN the photo was taken;
- Location region/town and country WHERE the photo was taken;
- Name of the photographer.

Note: in the case where the photographer is a freelancer contracted by MSF this needs to be specified in the contract.

**Caption example:**

*Monga NGO, 8, waits her turn at the MSF measles vaccination project with her mother Kumuimba at the MSF-run hospital in Juba, South Sudan. 02 April 2014 PHOTO: Anna Surinyach/MSF*

A **supplementary caption** may be included separately that expands on the background story common to a series of images taken in the same place or a collection of many images from different sources brought together to tell a common story.

The Supplementary caption may also be used for including translated multilingual versions of the main image caption.

Supplementary photo caption example:

*In March 2014 MSF launched a vaccination campaign targeting more than 100,000 of those most at risk from measles following an outbreak of the disease earlier in the year.*

## The role of the commissioning editor and hiring photographers

The commissioning editor is the only person who can hire photographers and commission filming/photography assignments. Generally, the commissioning editor is the full-time professional audio-visual editor working out of one of the five operating centres or from a section's office. This person should be the exclusive point of contact for the assignment, and it is they who must be responsible for securing the best deal for MSF with regard to fees, image licensing rights and permissions for use of commissioned work.

The commissioning editor at MSF is responsible for:

- a) The assignment for collecting audio-visual material - MSF communications staff or professional freelancer;
- b) The agreement of contracts and fees associated with the assignment prior to it starting (in the case of a freelancer);
- c) Determining the Terms of Reference for the assignment including the usage rights of images;
- d) Receiving, checking, editing, uploading and distributing the gathered audio-visual material.

Other communications staff, including but not limited to, Directors of Communication, Communications Advisors, Operational or Medical staff, will not commission or agree licensing or usage terms with audio-visual producers/freelancers directly without the participation and agreement of the photo editor/AV manager responsible for the project.

It is crucial for MSF field and communications teams in headquarters to discuss, agree in advance, and produce in writing a clear terms of reference (ToR) document that helps avoid unpleasant misunderstandings later. In some cases, the Head of Mission may be the best person to have this discussion with the photographer/AV producer. Often the project coordinator may do this. The person may vary depending on the operational section. The ToR should be the basis for the project. A [sample ToR](#) document can be downloaded from the media database.

Subjects to be addressed with the AV producer:

- Before commissioning or agreeing to help facilitate an external AV producer, always check their name and credentials with other commissioning editors in the MSF network.
- Security considerations: a good knowledge of the context is needed to make proper choices concerning safety and security. A good briefing and clear explanation of MSF's operational rules in the field is mandatory.
- Travel and accommodation: is the AV producer permitted to travel in an MSF vehicle? Will they be hosted in the MSF house? If so, are they expected to contribute payment towards food and drink? If so, how much?
- AV producer's agenda: Find out what story angle is pursued and how the medical/humanitarian angle provided by MSF will fit into this. Check whether they already have agreements to publish their material in any given media or for any other organisations (e.g. human rights organisations).
- What is the producer's perceived link with MSF? In some contexts, it may be deemed undesirable for an AV producer to be seen as 'working for MSF'. In such cases, it might be decided not to let the person travel in MSF vehicles or stay in the MSF compound.
- Discuss medical ethics
- Discuss MSF's data protection
- This AV Guidelines document should be read by the AV producer and signed - to confirm they have understood them.

## Post-production

Every image stored in the MSF photo database or in any other location has undergone some changes at some point. When the original was a slide or a negative, it was scanned and most likely adjusted in hue or colour balance. Digital images are rarely untouched. What can be considered a manipulation of an image is subject to interpretation, but some points are worth considering regardless of personal opinion on authorised or non-authorised manipulation.

### Image processing

Image processing must conform to the basic rules of acceptability. In this regard MSF conforms to the accepted good journalistic practices of international news wire service agencies, and reproduces here, for MSF's own good practice guide, the Agence France Presse rules and guidelines from 2016.

The rules are:

- No additions or deletions to the subject matter of the original image (thus

- changing the original content and journalistic integrity of an image);
- No excessive lightening, darkening, or blurring of the image (thus misleading the viewer by disguising certain elements of an image);
- No excessive colour manipulation (thus dramatically changing the original lighting conditions of an image).

The guidelines are:

- Only minor Photoshop work should be performed in the field, especially in bad lighting conditions;
- When editing under prime conditions, some further minor photo-shopping (performed with the above rules) is permitted.

This includes basic colour correction, subtle lightening and darkening of zones, sharpening, removal of dust and other minor adjustments that fall within the above rules. Photographers should understand the limitations of their laptop screens and their working environments. MSF photographers should trust their photo editors to carry out the basic functions to prepare their images for the MSF Media Database.

### Changing colour

The most common visual elements to get tweaked are colours and the removal of dust and scratches. Colour corrections are required to assure a good rendering of the image in print or web publishing. Conversion to black and white can be necessary when a publication is printed in black and white. All of these things should be done by professionals. Tweaking colours requires a good, calibrated screen and knowledge of the publishing medium (e.g., type of paper, web, print size). Changing colours on a regular MSF screen will most likely ruin the image file.

### Cropping

Cropping (or cutting out parts of an image for size or other considerations) is common in all media, and this is no different within MSF. It's hard to draw the line on what is acceptable or 'good practice' and what is beyond that. Cropping pictures is considered a fundamental right by the editor of a web/printed publication. However, it is a sensitive issue with professional photographers. Many do not want their images cropped and they will mention specifically when delivering their photos.

It is important to bear in mind the integrity of the photographer's work and cropping should not alter the content and atmosphere shown in the image. Sometimes there is no other way than to crop a certain page, but the picture could be repeated in its 'full' form on another page. For example, the homepage of a website could promote an article using a cropped version and then use the full image on the main page of the article.

### Enhancement

Digital photography has opened the door for more 'enhancements'. It has never before been so easy to remove a red-eye effect or facial blemish. However, think very carefully before modifying an image to create what might be seen as the perfect picture. For example: "How about taking out the fly on this little boy's cheek? Isn't that a bit too much for our donors?", "Can't we take out that military guy with his Kalashnikov in the background? It's really ruining this great image". Many will agree this is a step too far, but when one is getting desperate to find the right image, the limits of good practice tend to change.

Consider the necessity of manipulating the image and MSF's integrity. Does MSF need to do this to get a point across? MSF still maintains a certain credibility, one that it relies on when speaking out and showing the world what is happening in a given place or situation. Any digital manipulation will damage the credibility of the images MSF uses.

### Transposing

This should not take place as it does not represent the image that was taken.

### Camera-phones

Camera phones and other mobile devices may in some circumstances provide an additional atmospheric and/or speedy way to tell and disseminate photographs for a story. Special attention should be given to the metadata of these images and a note about the source of the images (eg: low resolution from a mobile phone) should be included in the image caption and metadata.

### In-camera effects

In-camera effects such as multiple exposures, colour shifts, tilt-shift focus should be explicitly detailed in the image caption and drawn to the attention of the photo editor before validation.

### RAW-files

MSF does not process RAW files from commissioned photographers and does not archive RAW files on the media database.

## Delivery of images and film

High resolution files are expected as standard. Image sizes vary by camera model and chip configuration; however, it should be taken as standard that within the limitations of the camera used, MSF expects to receive the highest resolution of the audio-visual material for its archive and use.

Photographs should be supplied with the following metadata either embedded in the image file (in the relevant IPTC field) or in an accompanying text document:

- Image capture date;
- Photographer credit;
- Copyright information;
- Caption description;
- Country of origin;
- Usage rights;
- Consent status (the consent form/audio/video should be sent to the Photo Editor for uploading on the Media database)

### Delivery time

Photographs and video footage from an assignment must be submitted to the commissioning editor as soon as is practically possible or as specified in the contract.

For professionally commissioned assignments, and as specified in the contract, the MSF AV Editor reserves the right to request to see and select from ALL the photographs and footage shot by a photographer whilst on a paid assignment from MSF.

Photographers or videographers who have not submitted work one week or more after an assignment has concluded are considered to be in breach of contract unless other exceptional terms have been agreed prior to the start of the assignment.

### Embargoes

In exceptional circumstances usage rights other than the full distribution licence above may be negotiated and agreed in advance with the audio-visual producer (as part of the assignment contract) where the granting of a lesser licence to MSF is not detrimental to the value of the assignment as a whole and is not designed to provide the photographer or their agent with exclusivity for private sale of the work undertaken on paid assignment for MSF.

The commissioning editor may agree to embargo distribution of photographs from an assignment and defer to the audio-visual producer (or their agency) for the initial distribution of the work. This arrangement will only be made in exceptional circumstance and where it is clearly designed to help guarantee usage by an approved external media client.

The potential additional commercial benefit to the producer from third party royalty payments must not be considered as an incentive to impose embargoes on MSF commissioned photography.

### Emergency and crisis response

A major part of MSF operations are in response to emergencies. Production of audio-visual material during an emergency can often be chaotic and fragmented with MSF Operational Centres seeking access to coverage and communications staff swamped by requests for access by professional photographers (with or without an assignment guarantee from a publication).

The MSF audio-visual editors and communications staff agree that in emergency situations a single intersectional emergency AV editor is designated as the sole commissioning editor. The intersectional emergency AV editor will represent the interests of all the OCs and sectional audio-visual requirements and be the focal point to represent these needs to the operational and medical directors of the emergency mission.

The Directors of Communication, Communication Advisors, Operations Managers and Emergency coordinators will recognise and support the role of the Intersectional Emergency AV Editor and will include him/her in all discussions and planning of media coverage for emergencies.

## Distribution and use of AV material

### Who is responsible for the use of images?

Every employee can get access to view and download the content on [media.msf.org](http://media.msf.org), so each employee with an account has a responsibility to only select appropriate images for the intended use.

In many cases, the decision to use an image rests within each MSF section and is therefore the responsibility of the Director of Communications or the Director of Fundraising who has been delegated this responsibility from their General Director. When a MSF section circulates or uses highly questionable images (difficult to define until complaints are made) in public communications, then that section can be held accountable for use of the image by the wider movement.

### Fair use of photos, videos

MSF must represent patients fairly. If someone were suffering from one disease (e.g. malaria), it would be wrong to use his or her image to illustrate an article about a different disease. If a child is not an AIDS orphan, (e.g., his parents died in a car crash), it would be wrong to describe him as one.

### Appropriate audiences

MSF trusts that communications and fundraising staff around the movement will choose different images according to the audience they are targeting. For example, a graphic photo of childbirth may be used in a midwifery magazine, but not in general donor material. When visual material is used without accompanying context information or text (social media, posters, TV spots, fundraising brochures), audio-visual producers should be particularly careful as the images will carry the whole message. Consider the following:

- General public: be careful not to use an image purely for shock value. Careful thought should be given before using images of:
  - Severely emaciated children
  - Serious medical conditions such as open wounds, ulcers, eczema
  - Large quantities of blood
  - People in great emotional distress
- Medical audience: Pictures of critical medical conditions may be acceptable for a medical audience.
- MSF internal training: The pictures selected should provide an appropriate preparation for the conditions the expat might find. Upsetting pictures might be appropriate to use if the right kind of context information is provided.

### Internal distribution - the MSF Media Database (MDB)

The Media Database is the primary means of distributing images within MSF. It is the only approved intersectional asset management and storage system for MSF audio-visual material. All MSF photo and video production should be archived on the media database and made available, according to individual licence and validation, to the internal network of MSF sections and offices worldwide.



Audio-visual producers working across the MSF movement should only keep local archives of materials downloaded from the MDB if their storage complies with the sections' national data protection policy.

Each category of content is assigned to a usage right (for example, publications, digital, all uses, social media advertising) and linked to user access (for example, MSF employees, external clients with limited access).

Each audio-visual item is uploaded with its corresponding consent. This consent (audio, written or video) is only accessible by the super admins but the status (e.g. include status types here) is visible to all MDB users via a "tick box" and special instructions section.

### External distribution

The best practice is to share links with download options directly from the MDB for a safe and quick dissemination capability. Links to specific images and videos can then easily be shared externally by creating a temporary access link with download options. You will need to have additional rights on the MDB to make such links. Contact the administrators to upgrade your profile.

It is considered bad practice for any MSF staff (communications or otherwise) to download images from the MDB and distribute them directly to the press or to store them in a sharable cloud folder as a means to provide media to external clients.

Images of patients/local populations in the country where they were photographed or reside  
Patients and other people photographed are more likely to experience negative consequences from use of their image in their own country than abroad.

MSF staff should be aware and careful about the images we use. Images that are not intended for local use, can end up being available locally. Therefore, we should be pay particular attention to the usage information included with each image on the media database to avoid unnecessarily putting people at risk.

Images of patients/local populations on websites, international media and social media

The use of the internet has had a huge influence on the reproduction of images around the world and is a very common tool in many countries. Publishing images on social media means giving up some control over the spread of images. This means that once an image is published, there is no going back. MSF has to be aware of the potential harm and the legal consequences of using images with this medium.

## Appendices

**Further reading:**

[MSF's Public Communications in the Digital Age - Dircom5 and CoCo Platform](#)

[AFP Editorial Standards and Best Practices](#)

(12 Apr 2016) – section 8 – Images: graphics, photos and video

**Reference guides:**

[MSF Comms Toolbox – AV Content](#)

[\*\*Collection of Audio-visual and Branding Guidelines\*\*](#)