

Write for Rights 2017

Media Guide

Working with your local media is a great way to increase the impact of your Write for Rights event by telling your community about the human rights cases you care about and spurring others to take action. This guide offers some quick tips and materials to help you get the attention of local media.

Quick Tips:

Let your Local Media know about your Event: included in this package is a template of a Write for Rights press release to help you inform your local media of your event. Make sure you customize it to let them know what makes your event unique – do you have a personal connection to a human rights issue? Are you a life-long human rights defender? Is there something creative and interesting about your Write for Rights event? Make sure you include that in your pitch: journalists want to know what makes your story special and different.

Think Local: with over 1700 Write for Rights events in Canada last year, not everyone can make it to the front page or into the national news. By standing up for human rights around the world, you are doing something of tremendous importance in your community, so try to share it with them. Your best bet is to focus on local and community media – they have a major impact!

Be Polite and Provide Advance Notice: the human rights cases you are writing about are extremely important and deserve lots of attention. But journalists are incredibly busy and it can be hard to get their interest. When you contact your local media, try to send them your press release about 4-5 days in advance. It's OK to follow up on your initial email, but keep in mind that chasing them too much usually doesn't help get more coverage.

No Luck with Media? No Problem: getting media attention is not easy and sometimes it just doesn't work out. The good news is there are lots of other ways to spread the word. Are you part of a community, student, faith or social group? Do they have a newsletter, website or social media page? Are you on Facebook or other social media? These are also great ways to share your passion for human rights and engage others in the Write for Rights campaign.

No Pressure: a lot of people are nervous, too busy or don't like to work with media and that's absolutely OK. By taking action with Write for Rights, you are already making an incredible difference – thank you for your valuable support!

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Media support - here to help

The Amnesty International Canada media office works with journalists every day and they can be a resource to you. However, with so many supporter and groups taking action with Write for Rights, and all of the human rights issues in the world, they can't help with everything all the time. Here are the key areas where they can help:

- 1- **Contact Information for your Local Media:** Most people don't have their local newspaper on speed-dial, but the Amnesty International Canada press office does! If you want to get in touch with local media but don't know how, send us an email and we'll send you a list of contacts.
- 2- **Press Release Template:** Included in this package is a template for a Write for Rights press release. The more you personalize it, the better it will work. Make sure to follow the quick tips for some guidance on the best way to reach out to media.
- 3- **Help with Tough Questions:** What do you do if a journalist wants to know more about Amnesty International or about specific human rights issues and you don't know the answer? No problem - just refer them to the AI Canada press office. Just give them our contact and a media officer will follow up with them directly.

Contacting the Amnesty International Canada Press Office

The Amnesty International Canada press office has two media officers – Beth Berton Hunter and Jacob Kuehn. The best way to get in touch is by email. Beth's contact is BBerton-Hunter@amnesty.ca and Jacob's is jkuehn@amnesty.ca. Send an email to both of them and one will get back to you.

Thank you and good luck!

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Write a Letter! Change a Life: Local group takes action with Write for Rights campaign

When: Date & Time

Where: Location and Address

In [your town], [your title / name of group] is standing up for human rights and inviting the community to join in by participating in Amnesty International's annual Write for Rights campaign. It is a global letter-writing campaign offering the opportunity to engage with world leaders and demand meaningful change on behalf of people and groups whose human rights are being violated. Last year, more than 3.7 million messages were sent to world leaders demanding human rights progress. This year, activists are aiming to replicate that success, focussing on ten critical human rights cases in ten countries where peoples' rights are being violated and action is urgently needed.

[Personal quote: why have you decided to participate in Write for Rights? What makes you passionate about human rights advocacy? What makes your event different, special or unique?]

For the first time ever, the Write for Rights campaign also includes a Canadian human rights case: the construction of the Site C dam in northeast British Columbia's Peace River Valley. The hydro-electric mega-project would flood more than 100 kilometres of the Peace River Valley and its tributaries, which include lands vital for First Nations in the area to exercise their cultures and subsistence. Canada has allowed construction to continue, despite an ongoing court challenge from two First Nations who stand to be severely affected by the project. Other actions include a call to pardon American whistle-blower Edward Snowden, an appeal to end the trade in human body parts of people living with Albinism in Malawi, and calls for release of prisoners of conscience unjustly detained in Egypt, Iran, China, Azerbaijan and Cameroon.

"When hundreds of thousands of people around the world get together and send a clear message demonstrating they will stand by a person or group whose human rights are being violated, the impact is huge. It gives people the strength to keep going." says [your name]. "It also sends a message to those who are violating human rights, that they cannot keep their crimes secret because the world is watching. Every letter, email and petition signature chips away at the problem."

A full list with more information about the ten cases featured in this year's Write for Rights campaign is available at writeathon.ca.

For more information about the Write for Rights event in [your town] please contact

- ➔ Name of your spokesperson
- ➔ Contact information – email and phone number