

# Get noticed

Making the most of the media



**AMNESTY**  
INTERNATIONAL





# Amnesty event supports women

AMNESTY held an early Mother's Day event in Hobart yesterday to support domestic workers in Indonesia.

Yabbo Thompson, from Amnesty International Tasmania's women's rights while Austr celebrasian often

abusive conditions. Amnesty collected signatures for a petition asking the Indonesian Government to ensure legal protection for women in these types of jobs.

Tasmania's anti-



A FOUNDING member of Amnesty International Australia will speak in Mt Waverley today for the organisation's 50th anniversary of activism.

John Anderson, who has lobbied against human rights

the world and I'll stick with it until I can no longer hold a pen," Ms Head said.

"As Amnesty International reaches its 50th anniversary, it is a moment to look back at how much individuals working

The first Australian candle became the symbol of the movement.

The candle was lit by the first Australian candle

# Amnesty acknowledges asylum seekers

CHINA SWAIN

The grave plight of international asylum seekers languishing in detention centres across Australia is not lost on the people of Maitland.

On May 28, members of the Maitland Murrumbidgee Amnesty Group will acknowledge the desperation of refugees fleeing persecution, torture and death with a taste of freedom candlelight dinner.

The event will also celebrate the 50th anniversary of Amnesty International.

"This was a very trying time across to find it isn't illegal to seek asylum, no matter how you come here," Maitland Murrumbidgee Amnesty Group member Anne Horndon said.

"Australia has signed the

Ratification Convention so we have an obligation to take people, yet we're the only country that indefinitely detains asylum seekers."

Ms Horndon said the dinner will also highlight Amnesty International's concerns about asylum seekers who might be sent to Malaysia.

"Malaysia, like Indonesia, has not signed the Refugee Convention. Conditions in detention centres are very grim and even after they have been given refugee status, people have no official status," she said.

"They can still be arrested and deported, and ending is a common punishment."

The Maitland group, which started nine years ago, has also taken up the case of Nobel Peace winner Lin Xueyi, detained in

China for criticising government policy.

An essential part of the candlelight dinner will be the Toast to Freedom, marking the moment 50 years ago that started the Amnesty International movement.

In 1961, British lawyer Peter Benenson wrote an article in a newspaper after hearing about two Portuguese students imprisoned for raising their glasses in a toast to freedom.

He called on people everywhere to join a mass letter-writing campaign to pressure governments to set the prisoners free.

The Maitland Murrumbidgee Amnesty Group will be held at St James Hall, Maitland at 7.30pm.

Phone Anne Horndon on 49338432 or RSVP



## Call for more compassion

I READ the article about asylum seekers numbers with interest and wonder why these figures are reported with such importance?

It almost gives the reader a feeling we are being invaded by huge numbers of asylum seekers, when Australia actually receives only a small number.

According to Amnesty International, the world's most respected human rights organisation, the vast majority of asylum seekers who arrive by boat are found to be genuine refugees. Only half of these who are other means are not, they may not have the paper

work to prove they have been persecuted in their own country and it may take some time for authorities to verify these facts. In such cases they need to be housed in the community and not the infamous detention centres we have.

These people have endured much to reach our shores and to be treated similarly to criminals is a affront. It is wakening to think that even though we are a democratic country and are so fortunate we don't extend a hand to others not so fortunate.

J. Parker, Blacks Beach

## ART WITH HEART

Bright young sparks from across Perth have once again joined forces to present the ARTISTRY Youth Arts Festival, an Amnesty International initiative that helps raise funds and awareness for human rights issues. Running from Wednesday, December 1, to World Human Rights Day on Friday, December 10, the festival will be jam-packed full of performances and exhibitions that carry important messages.

On Sunday, December 5, the ARTISTRY crew will team up with Cottonmouth for an evening of spoken word exploring basic freedoms such as freedom of speech, association and assembly. Artists and performers will call for the prisoners in Burma and will speak out against repression. To set to take place at The Bird at 1 Northbridge. Entry is \$10 and all go straight to Amnesty Internet.

A visual exploration of human rights issues by local artists. Mosaic work of creatives who seek to about poignant issues, such as December 10, Friday, December 10 in Victoria Park. Head along, catch live music from Rabbit in from guest speakers.

Set to take over the bamBOO stage on Tuesday, December 7, Lapse is a multifaceted event that will feature a range of performance styles, with composers, filmmakers, actors, dancers and videographers all getting in on the act. Performers were only given 24 hours to devise their pieces, which were inspired by the latest Amnesty International human rights campaign. Head on down to bamBOO at 7pm on Tuesday to see what they came up with. Tickets are on sale bamBOObamBOObamBOO.com.

The Festival will come to a close on Friday

# Day to focus on human rights

TERRY COLLINS

AMNESTY International will celebrate Human Rights Day with a day of music and art at the Rhythm Hut, Erian St, Gosford, on Sunday.

Convenor Howard Bell said the day would recognise the way in which Central Coast young people had engaged in human rights over the past year.

"This will be a day of celebration with music from the band Azadcoats, which is made up of refugees from various parts of the world," he said.

"Lead singer Robin Zirwanda will tell his story which is quite fascinating."

"There will be culture, music and dance with the Temple Gypsies and refugee artworks on show."

Also on show will be contributions to the painting held at this year's Gosford Show.

"We asked youngsters, some as young as two, to depict in art what human rights, love, kindness and



Robin Zirwanda of the group Azadcoats will tell his

peace meant to them," Mr Bell said.

"Some of these paintings and drawings are beautiful."

Guest speakers will include Gosford councillor Vicki Scott and University of New England professor of peace studies Helen Ware.

Those attending will have the chance to vote for the people's choice award in the inaugural Beryl

Collier human ri competition.

Mr Bell said it would provide rights information on summer festival including the Peel Music and Arts Festival at GI Valley.

The group will also out an interactive rights information the Gosford water Australia Day. Inquiries 0808 2

## Taste of freedom

"Better to light a candle than curse the darkness. Fifty years of Amnesty International."

On May 28, 1961, an article appeared in London's Observer newspaper telling the story of two students in Portugal who raised a toast to freedom at a dinner party.

What happened next is very hard for people living in Australia to understand. The two students were hailed away by the authorities and thrown into jail, all for toasting an ideal that millions of people around the world take for granted.

The article was *The Forgotten Prisoners* written by English lawyer Peter Benenson. Against the latest assault on the students' liberties, Benenson called upon people everywhere to consider the plight of those imprisoned, tortured or executed because of their beliefs - innocent people whom he dubbed "Prisoners of Conscience".

The article received great support and was reprinted in numerous international newspapers. Suddenly people's natural - yet seemingly powerless - indignation at human rights injustices was transformed into a unified force with real potential to exact change.

Benenson's appeal to the people quickly became a movement and Amnesty International was born the same year.

South Australia has a history of involvement with Amnesty International, with South Australians writing letters to "Prisoners of Conscience" as early as 1961. By the mid-60s there were enough local supporters for South Australia to have its own internationally recognised group.

During the late 60s and early 70s, Amnesty International SA continued to grow as a completely volunteer-based organisation with no fixed premises. The cause resonated as a four-drawer filing cabinet that had to be moved with a trailer every time the group secretary retired. Meetings were held in the homes of the volunteers and correspondence with the International Secretariat in London was conducted via telegrams.

It wasn't until 1975 that SA became one of the first Australian groups to register as an incorporated body, the South Australia section of Amnesty International.

The passing of fifty years has seen Amnesty International's core ideals evolve considerably. Originally existing to campaign for the release of "Prisoners of Conscience" and then later the abolishment of torture, fair trials and an end to arbitrary detention, Amnesty International now advocates for the indivisibility of human rights. The organisation strives to ensure every human enjoys all of the rights they inherently deserve. This year Amnesty International has the support of three million voices and artists around the globe.

"Amnesty International represents hope," says Naomi Vaughan, Community Campaign Coordinator for South Australia and the Northern Territory. "It represents a community of people committed to ensuring that



*Only when the last prisoner of conscience has been freed, when the last torture chamber has been closed, when the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a reality for the world's people, will our work be done.*

**Peter Benenson, founder of Amnesty International**

This guide provides the essential tools and tips for using media effectively in your activism.

The media is an essential tool for taking human rights messages to wide and diverse audiences. Engaging with the media can determine the success of a campaign and can help influence community attitudes and perceptions.

Our media and public affairs team offers training and other information that can be used alongside this handbook. For enquiries, contact your local action centre (details on page 20).

## CONTENTS

Getting started	2
Getting into the media	4
Creating a scene	6
Writing a media release	8
Writing a letter to the editor	12
Being effective online	14
Giving the all-important interview	16
Knowing our facts and positions	19
Communicating your success	20

Cover: Street action for Amnesty International's 50th Anniversary, Berne, 28 May 2011.  
© Susanne Keller

Left: Local newspapers have often featured Amnesty International events throughout the years.

# GETTING STARTED

By engaging with the media, you are following in the footsteps of our founder, Peter Benenson. In 1961 he launched Amnesty International with an article in *The Observer* newspaper that was replicated around the world. Since then, media has been integral for spreading human rights messages to communities around the world.

Through the media it is possible to reach large numbers of people, to influence public and political opinion, and ultimately to bring about change.

Local media in Australia is essential, as people often care most about what is close to home and get their news from local papers or radio stations. They are also more inclined to trust their local media too.

## Have a designated media volunteer

A working knowledge of your local media is important and can be quickly developed. If you are a member of a group, offer to become the action group media volunteer and take responsibility for getting to know the local press, as well as leading your group's media work. You will benefit from building up good contacts.

Alternatively, if you have a good working knowledge of the media, let your local branch know you are interested in being a media volunteer in the action centre and help become the eyes and ears in your region for Amnesty International.

## Talk to us

If you are interested in approaching the media, publicising an event or are looking for advice on how best to engage locally with the media, contact your local action centre and speak to your community campaigner. They will be able to offer you practical assistance and put you in touch with the media team for further help.

## Why contact local media?

It generates support for Amnesty International's campaigns

It attracts new members

It raises funds

It brings human rights issues to the attention of the people who might not hear about them through the national media

It spreads the work of Amnesty International throughout the whole country

It injects important human rights messages into local debate and helps change community attitudes and perceptions

*Local media takes us to the heart of our communities – to our homes and our workplaces. It's where we can give global issues a local resonance... and local issues a face and a story.*

**Denise Skiffington, South Australia and Northern Territory Branch President**

Right: The media film NAGM delegates taking part in the Lumina procession at the Festival of Voices, Hobart, 2010.  
© Richard Barren/AI







# GETTING INTO THE MEDIA

Doing local media work is a valuable part of campaigning. You can use your imagination to come up with an interesting event, stunt or photo/filming opportunity to generate media coverage for an Amnesty International campaign.

Because it's the quality of the creative idea that counts, spend time thinking about an idea that will make journalists think, "That's interesting! I'll call to find out more". To come up with a creative idea, ask yourself a few basic questions:

## **Why are you doing this?**

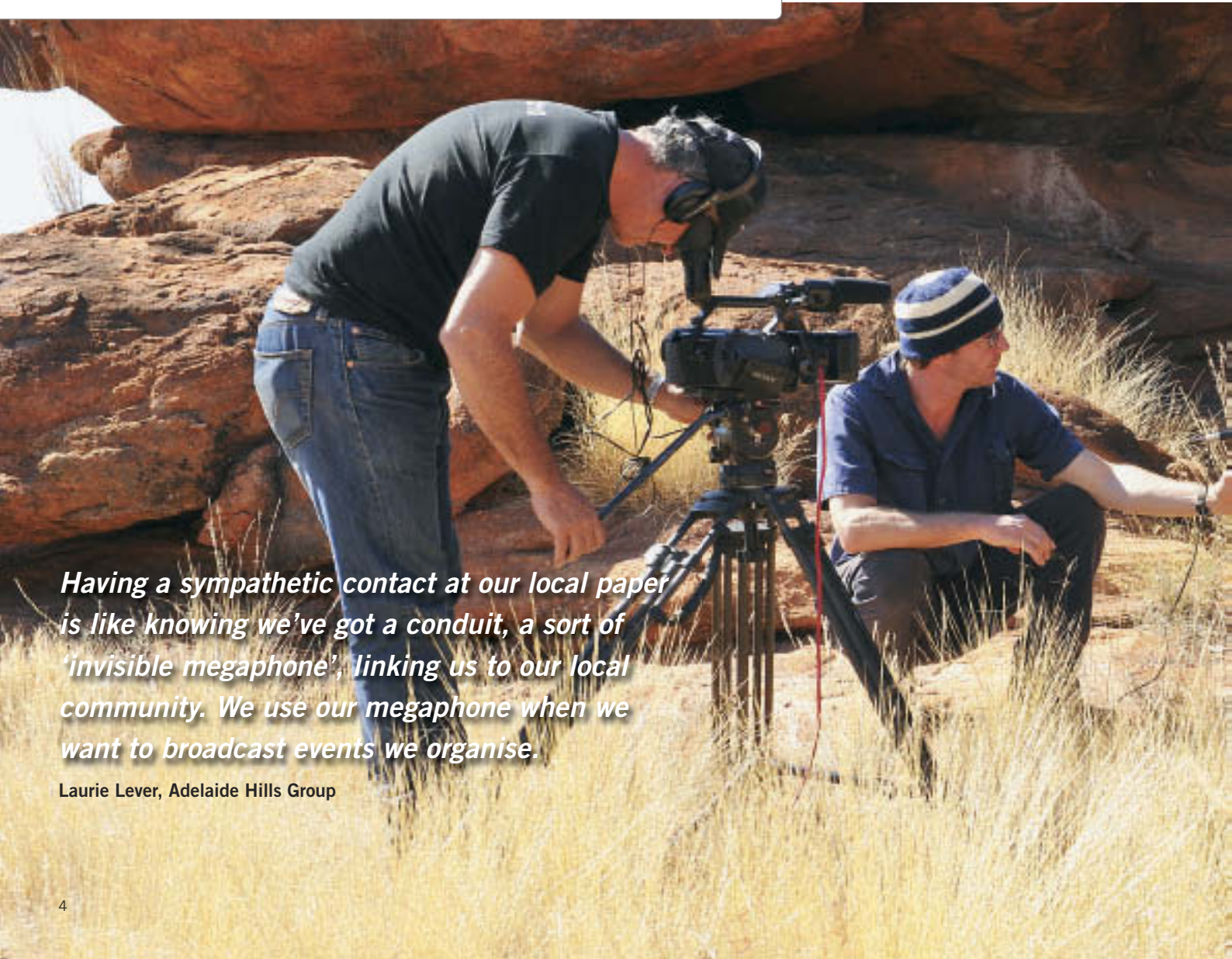
What is your key message? Do you want people to take action?  
Do you want them to come to a rally or an event?

## **Targets: who do you want to reach?**

Do you want to have your story told to the public or to decision-makers?  
This might influence the type of media you target and what your message is.

## **Is there a link between your story and your local community?**

Does this issue or campaign impact on local people? Are local companies, universities or politicians implicated? Amnesty International's issues are often international but the fact that the local Amnesty International group is doing something can be enough of a local angle.



*Having a sympathetic contact at our local paper is like knowing we've got a conduit, a sort of 'invisible megaphone', linking us to our local community. We use our megaphone when we want to broadcast events we organise.*

Laurie Lever, Adelaide Hills Group



## WORKING SUCCESSFULLY WITH THE MEDIA

Here are some basic tips for getting into your local media.

**Be easy to contact** by email or telephone; if possible be available by phone 24 hours before and after an event to assist with enquiries.

**Always respond** to calls and emails in a timely fashion.

**Be familiar with Amnesty International's** history, policies and current campaigns, so you can feel comfortable discussing issues.

**Get to know the media** you are working with. Spend time listening to the radio or reading the papers. Get to know the audiences of different media types.

**Get to know the local journalist** and build up a good relationship. Use events and meetings as a basis for relationship-building.

**Be reliable and trustful;** keep promises made to journalists. Ask for a deadline, it makes it easier to be reliable.

**Be newsworthy and write newsworthy.** Know what journalists will write about.

**Be accurate,** know your facts. Do not exaggerate.

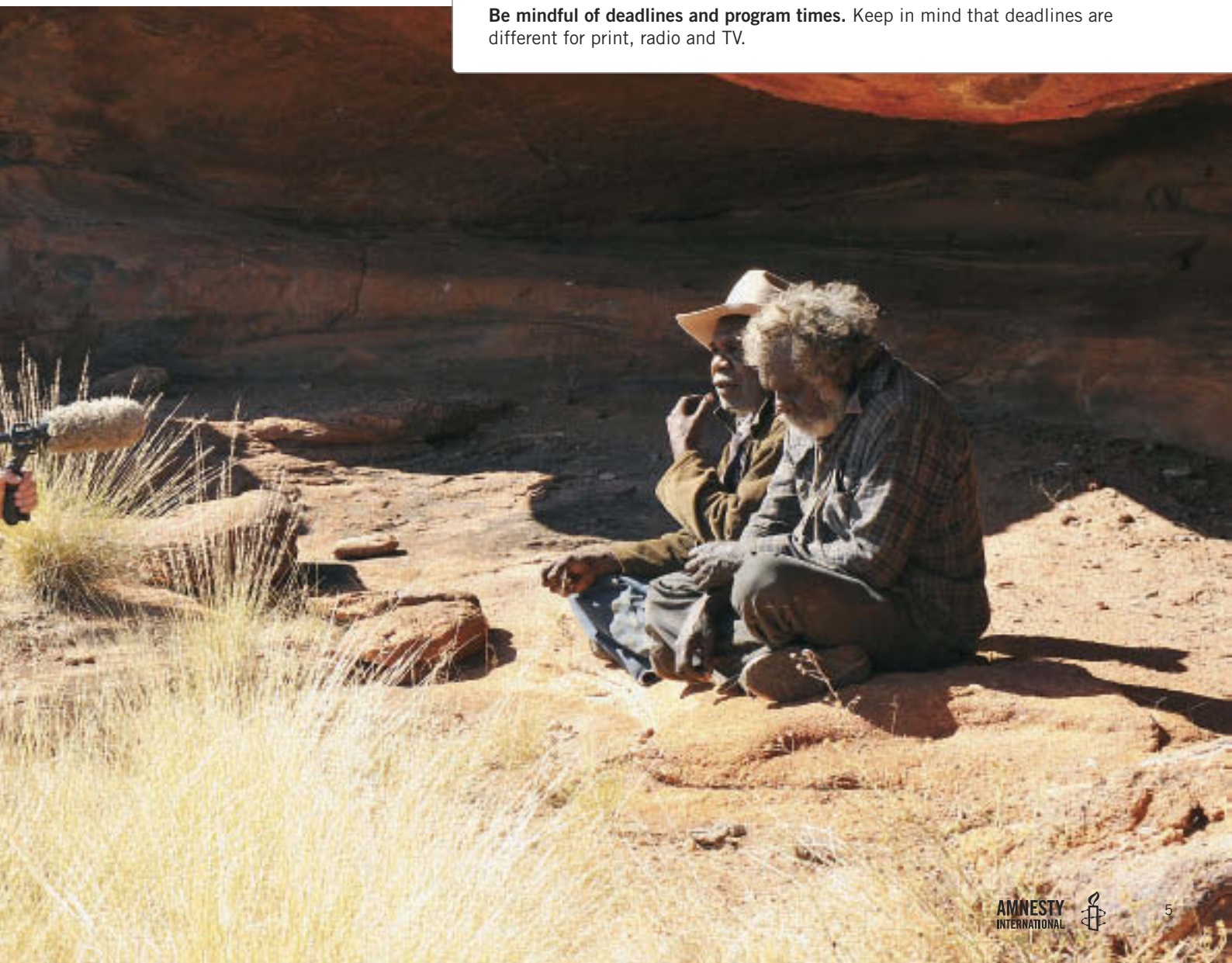
**Provide helpful service** and useful information. Provide information in the appropriate style for the type of media and their audience and keep it brief.

**Do not beg** or lecture. It works against a good relationship and don't forget, journalists always have another story.

**Plan ahead,** being prepared is essential.

**Be mindful of deadlines and program times.** Keep in mind that deadlines are different for print, radio and TV.

Filming on the Utopia homelands,  
Northern Territory, 2011.  
© April Pyle/AI



# CREATING A SCENE

A well-considered image or photo opportunity can transform your event into an eye-catching, crowd-gathering occasion that helps you attract media coverage and make a bigger impact.

## When thinking of an image or photo opportunity

- Ask yourself if it will work as a photo in the paper. Take note of the photos published in the local paper so you know what interests them.
- Make it relevant to your story.
- Include Amnesty International's name and logo in the picture (e.g. people wearing T-shirts or holding banners).
- Include people in the photo – 90 per cent of pictures in local media have local people in them. (Remember, if they're children you must have their parent's permission).
- Have a practice run – take photos and work out how you can improve them. A close-up of one person can be very effective.

## Examples of events with likely photo opportunities

- Birthday cakes for anniversaries
- Marches or rallies
- Anything big, colourful or unusual

## Celebrity power

The support of a local celebrity (member of parliament, actor, sports personality, musician) can often increase the likelihood of getting media attention. Events that you would like to invite celebrities or high profile people to participate in should be discussed with the local community campaigner and the media office first, to check if there are similar invitations already made to them and to ensure that there is no conflict of interest. After establishing this, make sure the celebrity is briefed on Amnesty International and the specific issue you're highlighting. If the communication is clear, everyone wins – it will reinforce our campaign messaging and there is less likelihood they will say something that accidentally contradicts Amnesty International's message.

## Timing

Journalists are always looking for timely events, so this will make your story more newsworthy. For example: hold an event to raise awareness about refugees and asylum seekers to coincide with Refugee Week.

Alternatively, tie an event or photo opportunity with appropriate dates in your local community, such as show day or local elections.

Some key dates include:

- International Women's Day
- Human Rights Day
- Amnesty International's 50th anniversary
- World Refugee Week
- World Habitat Day.

## TIPS FOR EVENTS

Make sure there's an Amnesty International spokesperson available before, during and after the event to give quotes and interviews to the media. It is essential that the spokesperson is identified early in the planning stages.

Have your own professional photographer at the event in case the local paper can't send their own – they'll often publish your pictures.

The best time for a media event is around 10.00 am – 11.00 am on a weekday. Fewer journalists and photographers work weekends or evenings.

Weekly local papers will have a deadline day. Find out what days they are so you can fit in with their schedule.

TV will want a sense of movement and theatre.

Local events are a good opportunity to show the work of Amnesty International in the community. The media office is available to provide the latest key messages, materials, advice and contacts to maximise coverage of such events.

NAGM delegates attract media coverage as they send a message to China with a "freeze" action, Federation Square, Melbourne, 2008. © AI





**UNCENSOR  
CHINA**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL** 

# WRITING A MEDIA RELEASE

Media releases are used to announce a news story, give Amnesty International's position on an issue or promote an event. They are generally the first point of contact with the media.

Local media are keen to cover events concerning local people. But beware: your media release has about 30 seconds to grab the attention of an overworked journalist. So make sure you:

- Put the most interesting, attention-grabbing information in the first paragraph and you have an eye-catching headline.
- Send the media release two days before the event for local radio and TV.
- Follow-up by phone to check if the media release has been received.
- Stress the local angle when you enquire if they will be covering your event.

## FORMATTING THE MEDIA RELEASE

Always date your media release.

Always write and send a media release on Amnesty International letterhead paper. It makes it look official and professional, and immediately shows the addresser.

Start with an informative and catchy headline (two lines maximum). Journalists will use this to decide whether to read on.

Use one side of A4 paper only.

Avoid long paragraphs and sentences.

Stress the local angle – make it clear why local people will be interested in your event.

If there is a 'photo opportunity' state this clearly, with date, time and location.

Always put at least one contact person on the release and make sure to include when that person is available.

Always spell-check and proofread.







Above: Photos including people and activity are best, like this Burmese student listening to a radio delivered during Amnesty International's three freedoms campaign. © AI

Left: An exciting event needs an equally exciting media release, such as this Iran global day of action where Amnesty International's Sally Sami is interviewed, July 2009. © AI

## WRITING THE MEDIA RELEASE

Media releases should be written in a certain style. This style mirrors the way journalists write a news story.

### KISS – Keep it short and simple

To make sure that your story will be read and understood by everyone, a media release must be written in a 'short and simple' format.

- Stick to a maximum of one or two sentences per paragraph and about 25 words per sentence.
- Write as if the audience knows nothing, or very little, about the issue or reason you are writing.

### The inverted pyramid

Generally, journalists are taught to write using the inverted pyramid. The inverted pyramid means the most important information is at the top of the story, and the least important information is at the bottom. Take a few minutes to think about what the most important and what the least important details of your issue or event are and then write them down as a basis for your media release.

### The five Ws

The five Ws reveal the main facts of your story and can be used as a part of the inverted pyramid. If possible, put them in the first paragraph, as they are the most important details of the story. The journalist will then easily know what the story is about.

- **WHO** is doing it?
- **WHAT** is happening?
- **WHERE** is it happening?
- **WHEN** is it happening?
- **WHY** is it happening?

### Pictures

Pictures are of great value to the media because they may not be able to send a photographer to an event. Providing photographs for local papers can almost ensure a story will be published, because they can be short on interesting photos to fill space and break up text. Make sure the photos you provide are high quality (300 dpi resolution) and interesting. The best photos are ones that include people and activity, like signing letters or lighting candles.

### Sending the media release

Many local weekly papers go to print on Monday or Tuesday (and appear on a Thursday). Make sure your press release reaches the journalist the previous Thursday or Friday. If you want a journalist to come to your event, give them a week's notice.

If you are not sure who to send your media release to, or you have not developed your list of local media contacts, contact your community campaigner. They will be able to provide you with a contact list – but be sure to give them at least one week's notice.



A vigil for Van Tuong Nguyen, created by artist Jorge Pujol. Parliament House, Canberra, 2005.  
© Bob Givens

## QUICK SUMMARY

### STEP 1

Write your media release.

### STEP 2

Get your media release approved and media contacts from your community campaigner.

### STEP 3

Work out who you should send your media release to and how.

### STEP 4

Make sure you get the timing right.

### STEP 5

Send the release by email or fax.

### STEP 6

Make a follow-up phone call.

#### Date

Vital

#### Headline

Make the heading interesting, give it a bit of kick, add a bit of creativity. Keep it short and clear. Put the headline in bold to make it stand out.

#### Lead

Once the headline has got the media interested, you then need to win them over in the first paragraph. Make the first sentence interesting. If you do not hook the journalist's attention immediately, they will not read on. Include the five Ws in this paragraph.

#### Body

If you didn't put all of the five Ws in the lead, make sure you put them in the 'body' of the release. Keep in mind the inverted pyramid and write the details down in this way. Use active language and keep it short and simple. You should include a few short quotes from a local spokesperson on what the purpose of the event or action is and why the issue being highlighted is relevant to the community. For inspiration, visit [www.amnesty.org.au](http://www.amnesty.org.au)

#### Footer

At the end of the media release you must include contact details. Name the contact person for the issue or the event, with full name, telephone number and email address. If the contact person is only available at certain times, including a second person is also useful, and when they are available.

#### About Amnesty International

Include a short explanation of what Amnesty International does. Local groups should add details of their meetings to attract new supporters.



## MEDIA RELEASE

Amnesty International Australia *[insert region]* Branch  
*[insert date]* 2011

### Amnesty International sinks refugee myths

Members of *[name of area]* local Amnesty International group are holding an *[insert name of event or action]* to help dispel the myths around refugees by promoting facts and sharing personal stories.

*[Provide a brief description of the event or action – include location, day of week, date, month]*

“In Australia, the debate around refugees has been largely framed by myths and misconceptions. The common belief that refugees are ‘illegal’ simply isn’t true. Seeking asylum, even by boat, is legal under Australian and international law, and the vast majority of boat arrivals are found to be genuine refugees,” *[insert name and group title]*.

“We know that people in *[name of area]* are compassionate and we want as much help as possible to spread the facts about refugees.

“Refugees are ordinary people. They are doctors, teachers, artists, mothers, fathers, children, who have been forced to leave their homes to escape persecution, unfair detention, torture, or even death.

“We should be proud that Australia can offer protection to this small group of desperate people who are running for their lives,” said Amnesty International *[name of area]* group member *[insert name]*. *[OR insert your own personal story/connection with the issue]*

Members of Amnesty International *[name of area]* group are among a growing number of Australians who are working to expose the facts around refugees and asylum seekers as part of Amnesty Internationals’ Rethink Refugees campaign.

For more information, go to [www.rethinkrefugees.com.au](http://www.rethinkrefugees.com.au)

*[Insert final event/action information here i.e. date/time of event]*

### ENDS

*[Be sure to include a photograph of your group with Amnesty International T-shirts, conversation booklets or anything else to give the photo context.]*

For information about the event, please contact:

#### Media enquiries

*[name of contact]*

*[daytime phone number]*

*[after hours phone number]*

Amnesty International is a worldwide movement of people campaigning to protect human rights. We have a vision of a world in which every person enjoys all of the rights stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

EXAMPLE ONLY

# WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Letters to the Editor page is often the most well-read and talked-about section of a newspaper. Getting a letter published is a good way to explain the need for attention on a particular human rights issue.

Before you start writing your Letter to the Editor, read the letters in prior editions and pay attention to the types and styles of letters that are published. You will soon get a feel for the features of the letters that are published and the language used in them. Make sure you check the guidelines for letters of your target newspaper, including word count. Then deliver your letter according to the details provided by the paper.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR TIPS

**Keep it short.** 150 words is ideal. Keep it to the point.

**Keep it clean.** By all means be clever and use your words in attractive or emphatic ways. But don't be abusive or crude.

**Stick to the message.** Ensure you are following Amnesty International messaging on the issue. If you need clarification on the most up-to-date Amnesty International position, speak to your community campaigner or check the Amnesty International website.

**Break it up.** Compose your letter in short paragraphs. This gives the reader visual breaks, making it easier to read and easier to understand.

**Keep it newsy.** Most published letters are in response to issues the newspaper has raised or stories it has run. If there is a story or issue that is relevant to your group, respond quickly.

**Keep it simple.** Remember that even if you know all about the subject, the general readership may not.

**Include contact details.** Always put your full name, address, phone number, email address and if relevant, your position and workplace. It is best to write your letter as a member of the public and not to include your affiliation with Amnesty International. It is more likely to get published this way.

**Be picky.** Don't write in every day or respond to every issue. Pick your issues and make sure they are relevant to your group and Amnesty International.

**Revise and edit.** As with any written items that are for public consumption, you need to read, re-read, revise, tighten and focus your letter on the messages you want to get across.

*Working with your local media can be easier than you think, because local print and radio are always on the lookout for local content.*

Jane Cipants, Wollongong Action Group

Amnesty International Secretary General Salil Shetty addresses the media during his high level mission to Australia. Parliament House, Canberra, October 2011.  
© AI/Andrew Taylor



Dear Editor,

Recent research by Amnesty International has found that the unsympathetic views of many Australians towards asylum seekers are not racially motivated or due to a lack of compassion. Instead, they are shaped by both major political parties, which emphasise the belief that those who arrive by boat are breaking the rules.

Here are some important facts that need to be considered when determining our views:

1. Under international law, it is not illegal to seek asylum, no matter how you arrive.
2. Almost all who arrive by boat are found to be genuine refugees.
3. Asylum seekers arriving by boat make up less than two per cent of our annual immigration intake.
4. There is no official queue that refugees can join.

To put this into context, 8,427 people sought asylum in Australia in 2009 – 2,728 of these arrived by boat, the rest by plane. More than 90 per cent of boat arrivals were found to be genuine refugees.

All of us may have different reasons for our attitude towards asylum seekers but at least let us debate on the facts, not misinformation.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

EXAMPLE ONLY



# BEING EFFECTIVE ONLINE

Online news websites, opinion forums and blogs are often where human rights issues are debated most passionately. Making your contribution to the debate online is vital if you want your message to resonate.

The quicker you publish your comment, the more people will read it and react. However, the comment thread conversation can last for days after the article is published, so you can take your time.

## HOW TO GET YOUR POINT ACROSS

**Be concise and clear.** Don't get into a long argument, try to state your point of view in one short paragraph.

**Be polite and calm.** Always be passionate rather than angry, and firm rather than abusive. It's easy to dismiss people who get carried away, no matter how correct their argument is.

**Be factual.** Don't get carried away and make things up!

**Be personal.** State how this issue affects you on a personal level. What values do you hold that make you passionate about the issue?

## SOCIAL NETWORKING

Try to promote everything you do through your Facebook page, linking to your website or to [www.amnesty.org.au](http://www.amnesty.org.au) blogs, press releases, reports and so on whenever appropriate. Similarly, tweet messages about forthcoming events, new initiatives, messages and fundraising. Become Facebook friends with local journalists and follow them on Twitter.

Our media and public affairs office also has a twitter feed where it sends all the latest media releases to journalists. You can follow @amnestyoz for general news and information and retweet releases to your networks.

If you're keenly interested in engaging with the media, follow @amnestyoznews for alerts to media releases, reports and available spokespeople on a range of domestic and international human rights issues.

## A WORD OF WARNING!

Many public figures in Australia and internationally have suffered embarrassment due to an ill-thought-out tweet message. Please be careful to only say things in line with Amnesty International's policy on an issue. Personalise and condense the language but do not say anything inappropriate or at odds with Amnesty International's actual position.

## WHERE

### Mainstream news outlets

[www.theaustralian.com.au/news/opinion](http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/opinion)

[www.nationaltimes.com.au/](http://www.nationaltimes.com.au/)

[www.heraldsun.com.au/opinion](http://www.heraldsun.com.au/opinion)

### Mainstream with a twist

[www.thepunch.com.au/](http://www.thepunch.com.au/)

[www.abc.net.au/thedrum/](http://www.abc.net.au/thedrum/)

### Alternative/independent news sites

[www.crikey.com.au/](http://www.crikey.com.au/)

[www.onlineopinion.com.au/](http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/)

[http://newmatilda.com/](http://http://newmatilda.com/)

### Influential blogs

[www.mamamia.com.au/](http://www.mamamia.com.au/)

Victorian Branch Vice President Tony Bergen being interviewed as he stands behind bars in solidarity with more than 2,200 political prisoners in Burma, calling for respect for the three freedoms of expression, association and assembly.  
© Michelle Tyrrell/AI







**WHILE BURMA'S  
NOT FREE,  
WE'RE NOT FREE**

**AMNESTY  
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# GIVING THE ALL-IMPORTANT INTERVIEW

Interview requests are often made as a result of a media release or an event. Giving interviews and providing quotable comments are the most common way for Amnesty International to appear in the media – voices are so important.

If a journalist requests an interview, ask them the following questions to prepare yourself:

- **Identify source** – are they from a TV or radio program, or newspaper?
- If radio or television, is it **live or pre-recorded**?
- What specifically do they want to **focus on**?
- **Who** else have they spoken to?
- **What** have they said/written on the issue?
- **What else** have others written/said on the issue?
- What is the **deadline**?
- Ask about **time and place**.

You should never agree to an interview on the spot, unless you are very well prepared or very experienced. If a journalist calls in regards to a media release you must be prepared to provide information at this time. However, if the call is unexpected you may ask if the journalist is on a deadline and if not, ask if you can call back. This will give you time to prepare or find a more appropriate spokesperson from Amnesty International if the journalist wishes to cover unfamiliar topics.

The media interviews speakers at a Sydney rally showing solidarity with the people of Egypt, February 2010.  
© Hamish Gregory/AI



## PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

**Check that you have the latest information.** Check with the media and public affairs office or the website to find out the latest news. Look through the day's newspapers to see if there is any relevant information that may come up.

**Make sure** you know Amnesty International's **messaging** on the issue.

**Determine the audience.** Who is the audience and how can you best communicate your message so they can relate to it?

**Anticipate questions and practise answers.** A mock interview with a colleague can build confidence and clarify how Amnesty International's position should be presented.

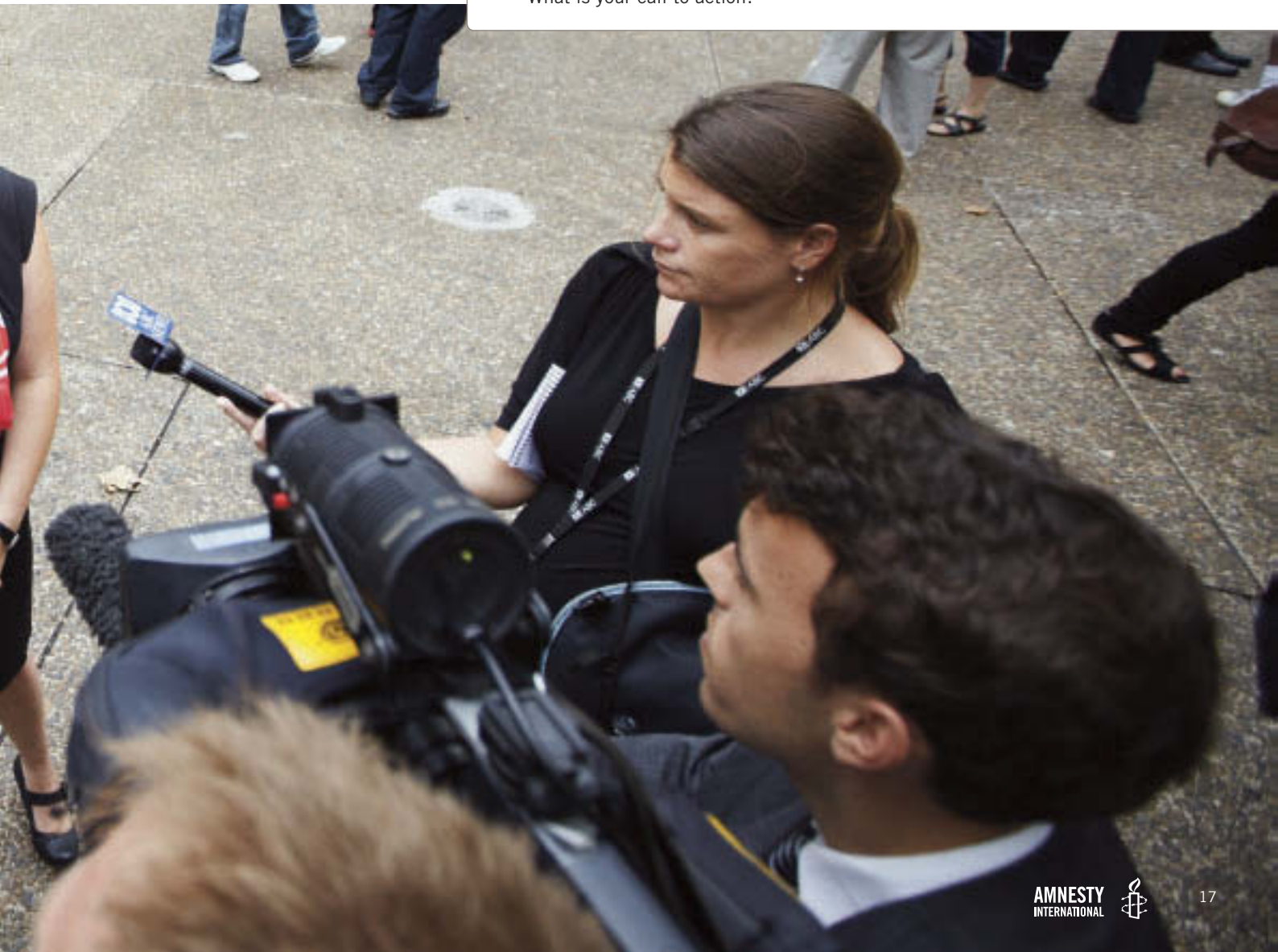
**Think of one or two 'grabs'.** A grab is a sound bite or statement that the journalist listens out for in your answers. It is catchy, evocative and encapsulates the message. Example:

*Amnesty International is concerned about ...*

*Amnesty International is calling on ...*

### Planning your message

- What do you want to happen as a result of this interview?
- What do you want people to think, feel or do?
- Are you raising awareness or reinforcing a perception?
- Be specific and use positive terms.
- What do you need to say to motivate your audience to achieve your aim?
- What are the best words to use?
- What is your call to action?





## CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

**Have conviction.** Deliver your messages with enthusiasm.

**Be specific.** Brief, positive statements of one or two sentences.

**Use everyday language.** Avoid jargon, particularly Amnesty International terms such as 'extrajudicial executions'; instead say 'political killings'.

**Outline the issue.** What is Amnesty International calling for and what is your group doing?

**Take your time.** Don't speak too fast.

**Speak in short, complete sentences.** Journalists need complete sentences that encapsulate your key messages. Repeat major points.

**Be anecdotal.** Tell some stories; use some analogies to illustrate your key point. Describe the case of an individual to highlight abuses in a country.

**Speak at your own pace.** Do not get sidetracked.

**If a reporter cuts you off,** go back to the point you were making, and then acknowledge and/or answer the journalist's next question.

**Remember.** Amnesty International avoids comparisons between countries' human rights records.

**Don't worry.** Interviews are not to be feared and certainly become easier with practice. Imagine the interview is like a conversation with a friend or family member – this can help with nerves.

### Things to avoid

- Saying yes and no at the beginning or end of an answer. It can be edited out of context.
- Saying 'firstly', you may never get to 'secondly'.
- Playing the 'What if' game. You should answer these questions by saying that Amnesty International does not speculate about the future.
- Remember, nothing is ever really off the record.

Afghan refugee Chaman Shah Nasiri is interviewed at Scotch Oakburn College, Launceston, Tasmania, 2010. © Kylie Jury/AI



*Media plays a crucial role in promoting a culture of human rights.*

**Senthouran Raj, NSW Branch President, Amnesty International Australia**



# KNOWING OUR FACTS AND POSITIONS

## Find important facts and figures in:

The Amnesty International Report  
<http://thereport.amnesty.org/>

Amnesty International Australia's annual report  
[www.amnesty.org.au/about/comm-ents/21684/](http://www.amnesty.org.au/about/comm-ents/21684/)

Latest news  
[www.amnesty.org.au/news/](http://www.amnesty.org.au/news/)

Here is some general information when preparing for an interview and possibly for including in your media documents.

- Amnesty International is a worldwide movement of people campaigning to protect human rights. We have a vision of a world in which every person enjoys all of the rights stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.
- When those human rights are violated, we:
  - search out the facts
  - expose what is happening
  - mobilise people to put pressure on governments and others to stop the violations.
- Amnesty International has over 3 million members and supporters in more than 200 countries and territories.
- Amnesty International highlights and works to end abuses committed by governments and armed opposition groups. It is independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion.
- Amnesty International works by lobbying governments and officials, by supporting individuals and their families, by organising initiatives with other organisations, by operating education programs and through a wide range of campaigning activities.
- Amnesty International campaigns on behalf of prisoners of conscience and women's rights and to end torture, the death penalty and human rights abuses that keep people in poverty.
- Some of Amnesty International's main achievements in the last 50 years include:
  - Successfully campaigning for the release of tens of thousands of prisoners of conscience.
  - Helping to make torturers international outlaws through numerous campaigns and our leading support for the establishment of the 1984 Convention against Torture.
  - Helping to end the untouchable status of powerful leaders who commit the most horrific crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes by offering key support to the establishment and effective working of the International Criminal Court.
  - Pushing governments to abolish the death penalty (87 countries have abolished the death penalty since Amnesty International was founded).
  - Helping to stop the irresponsible trade in arms, munitions and equipment that inflicts misery and carnage on hundreds of thousands of people every year. With our partners in the Control Arms campaign we have built support for an Arms Trade Treaty from just a handful of governments to almost unanimous support at a series of key UN General Assembly votes.
  - Pushing human rights up the political agenda in many countries and within some corporations.

# COMMUNICATING YOUR SUCCESS

## Need more training?

Your action centre can organise:

- Workshops for action groups to learn about current campaigns and human rights issues and help put ideas into action.
- Introductory media training for activists.
- Spokesperson training for people who have a proven track record working with Amnesty International.

### NSW Action Centre

Level 1, 79 Myrtle Street Chippendale NSW 2008  
Telephone: (02) 8396 7670  
Fax: (02) 8396 7677  
Email: [nswaia@amnesty.org.au](mailto:nswaia@amnesty.org.au)

### ACT/Sth NSW Action Centre

Lower Ground Floor, 33–35 Ainslie Place Canberra City ACT 2600  
Telephone: (02) 6202 7500  
Fax: (02) 6202 7508  
Email: [actaia@amnesty.org.au](mailto:actaia@amnesty.org.au)

### QLD/Nth NSW Action Centre

Level 1, 354 Brunswick Street Fortitude Valley QLD 4006  
Telephone: (07) 3136 6400  
Fax: (07) 3216 0235  
Email: [qldaia@amnesty.org.au](mailto:qldaia@amnesty.org.au)

### SA/NT Action Centre

Ground Floor, 14 Grote Street Adelaide SA 5000  
Telephone: (08) 8110 8100  
Fax: (08) 8110 8101  
Email: [sant@amnesty.org.au](mailto:sant@amnesty.org.au)

### TAS Action Centre

First Floor, 130 Macquarie Street Hobart TAS 7000  
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Email: [tasaia@amnesty.org.au](mailto:tasaia@amnesty.org.au)

### VIC Action Centre

Suite 8, 134 Cambridge Street Collingwood VIC 3066  
Telephone: (03) 9412 0700  
Fax: (03) 9412 0720  
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### WA Action Centre

Suite 70, City West Centre Plaistowe Mews West Perth WA 6005  
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## Media and public affairs office

The Amnesty International media and public affairs office is based in Sydney. The team works with national, metropolitan and international media and liaises with journalists on a daily basis, covering national and international human rights issues in the Asia Pacific region and around the world. They are the link to the International Secretariat in London as well as the contact for arranging spokespeople on the full range of Amnesty International's campaigns.

The media office is a general resource, available for advice, information and up-to-the-minute briefings on the latest Amnesty International positions.

Telephone: 1300 300 920  
Email: [media@amnesty.org.au](mailto:media@amnesty.org.au)

## CONGRATULATIONS!

You will now have the chance to make a real difference to human rights and a real impact in your community.

## LET US KNOW HOW YOU GO!

Send copies of any media exposure you receive or phone or email your action centre. We love to hear about all the great work you are doing to promote human rights around Australia.

A man celebrates Hosni Mubarak's resignation, Sydney, February 2010. © Al/Hamish Gregory.

Congratulations  
EGYPT  
never underestimate  
People Power





