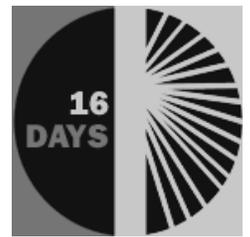


16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE

November 25 - December 10, 2009



Media Tools

PRESS RELEASE

Write a press release about the 16 Days Campaign and your calendar of events. Try to focus on a unique aspect of your campaign, as journalists are more likely to run the story if you make it particularly interesting to the general public. Be sure that it is brief and answers the questions who, what, where, when and why:

- ▶ WHO: Organizations involved and individuals quoted (with full name and position)
- ▶ WHAT: Name the activities taking place
- ▶ WHEN: Give the full date and time (specify A.M. or P.M.)
- ▶ WHERE: Provide the exact location of your event, including directions or other relevant instructions
- ▶ WHY: Explain why the event is happening and why it is important - catch the reader's attention
- ▶ WHO CARES: Describe what impact this issue or event has on your community

(Adapted from Amnesty International Canada's ["How to Write a Press Release"](#))

FORMAT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information

(Name, Title, Address, Phone Number, Email)

Release Date

Headline (highlight most important information in 10 words or less)

LOCATION (CITY, District/State/County, etc.), Date: The first paragraph should provide all of the key information you wish to convey. Be sure to present the information in an interesting, catchy way so that the reader is interested enough to read the rest of the news release. Make your most important points early and use subsequent paragraphs to embellish these points.

End with #30#, which is a symbol that journalists use to mark the end of the release

#30#

TIPS

- Avoid using fancy or overly-technical wording or long sentences
- Keep the release professional: try not to use exclamation points and write in third person
- Try to limit the press release to one page, but if it is longer, be sure to include the contact information and headline on any subsequent pages
- Double-check all information about names, dates, times, addresses, etc. to ensure that the details are accurate
- Include clear, concise, and strategic quotes from someone working on the issue
- Remember to include a description of your organization and its work
- Have someone else read over the release to make sure it is easy to understand and interesting to someone unfamiliar with the issues
- Finish the press release with a line about where individuals can get more information (e.g. a contact person, a website, a report, or an online resource)

DISSEMINATION

Fax, mail, or hand-deliver the press release to the (one) appropriate reporter, editor or producer at each news outlet. Make sure that the intended release date is clearly marked so that the information is disseminated to the public at the appropriate time. You should follow up with the media a day or two before your event is scheduled to take place.

INFORMATION ADAPTED FROM:

- "How to Write a Press Release" in Amnesty International Canada's *Tools for Activists* at: http://www.amnesty.ca/members/tools_for_activists/how_to_write_press_release.php
- The SPIN Project. (2007) "Writing for Communications." <http://www.spinproject.org/downloads/WritingForComms.pdf>
- eHow.com. (2006) "How to Write a Proper Press Release." http://www.ehow.com/how_8793_write-proper-press-release.html

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR & OPINION/EDITORIALS

Write a Letter to the Editor or an Opinion/Editorial (Op-Ed) piece during the 16 Days Campaign to help draw attention to the issues or a particular gendered media bias.

◆ **Letters to the editor** are short (150-200 word) responses or comments intended to correct inaccurately reported information, note biased or simplistic coverage of an issue, or praise good journalism. If you believe that a media outlet has not been sensitive in its reporting on issues related to violence against women or women's human rights, the 16 Days of Activism might be a good time to voice your concerns. On the other hand, if a media outlet has done a good job reporting on the 16 Days Campaign, you could write a letter to the editor to complement their work. NOTE: If you face any risk of threats or harassment you can write in anonymously or use fictional names.

◆ An **Op-Ed** is a longer (500-800 words) personal story or personal opinion piece that is tied to a larger, contemporary (and sometimes controversial) issue. For example, a survivor of violence might share her story, or a service-provider could highlight statistics on violence against women in the community and discuss the quality of services available to victims. These personal stories could then be linked to a discussion of a particularly prevalent violation of women's human rights in your country. You may find it useful to refer to other information in the 16 Days Take Action Kit to help you frame your piece.

Include your calendar of activities and ask them to publish it, or pay for an advertisement. See the website of FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) for a guide on how to communicate with the media: <http://www.fair.org/activism/communicate.html>.

INTERVIEWS

Be prepared to give an interview about the campaign and your activities, either live or as background information for a future story on television, on the radio or in the newspaper. See "How to Give an Interview" in Amnesty International (Canada)'s *Tools for Activists* at: http://www.amnesty.ca/members/tools_for_activists/how_to_give_interview.php. For a list of community radio broadcasters, visit <http://www.amarc.org/>.

NEW MEDIA

The internet provides endless opportunities for information-sharing. Most websites and online communities simply require that you create a user profile with a valid email address. However, remember to be careful about how and where you share personal information on the internet. Be sure to check the website's privacy policies before signing up.

- ◆ **Blogs:** A type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Two examples of popular blog sites where you can set up a free blog are WordPress (<http://wordpress.com/>) and BlogSpot (<https://www.blogger.com/>)
- ◆ **Video-sharing website:** Websites like [YouTube](http://www.youtube.com/user/CWGLRutgers) allow you to upload and share videos. For example, CWGL has a YouTube page where it has posted some videos about violence against women that were filmed at a strategic conversation meeting in July 2009. <http://www.youtube.com/user/CWGLRutgers>
- ◆ **Social networking sites:** Create fan pages, event announcements, and link to other groups working on similar issues on websites such as Facebook (www.facebook.com) and MySpace (<http://www.myspace.com/>). Link to The Official 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign [Facebook fan page](http://www.facebook.com/16daysagainstgender).
- ◆ **The HUB:** An interactive community for human rights where you can upload videos, audio or photos to share information about your advocacy and campaign initiatives. You can create a group or connect with other groups on the Hub. <http://hub.witness.org/>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- United Nations Development Fund for Women (2003) *Making a Difference: Strategic Communications to End Violence Against Women*. Available at http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/MakingADifference_eng.pdf
- Gender Media Monitoring Project. "Mission Possible: Gender and Media Advocacy Training Toolkit: <http://www.whomakesthenews.org/tools/mission-possible-a-gender-and-media-advocacy-training-toolkit.html>
- The Women's News Network Video collection on VodPod: <http://vodpod.com/womennewsnetworkvideocollection>
- The Women's Media Center: <http://www.womensmediacenter.com/>