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## **HOW TO GUIDE FOR GETTING MEDIA ATTENTION**

- ✓ When & why to engage the media
- ✓ What kind of media exists
- ✓ Questions to answer in your media plan
- ✓ The “Big 4” media tools & when to use them
- ✓ Interview strategies

## WHEN & WHY TO ENGAGE THE MEDIA

In the movement to ban cluster bombs and other initiatives where we are trying to effect social change, engaging the media can be a useful tool to:

- Build public awareness about the issue and the change we are looking to achieve;
- Pressure our government to pay attention to our message by having it broadcast broadly in various media; and
- Generate publicity for public events and fundraisers.

## WHAT KIND OF MEDIA EXIST

There are many kinds of media you can access to spread your message:

- Television (national networks, local stations, cable networks)
- Radio (national networks, local stations, university or college stations)
- Newspapers (national dailies, local dailies, community and special interest publications)
- Internet sites for organizations, clubs, news, or local event information
- Blogs
- Newsletters (electronic or hard copy)
- Magazines

## QUESTIONS TO ANSWER IN YOUR MEDIA PLAN

- **Purpose:** What exactly are you trying to communicate? Do you want people to come to your event? Give an opinion on a current event? Communicate a message or action to the public or government?
- **Audience:** Who is your message aimed at? Local or national audience? Depending on your target audience, make a list of the media that would be most interested in covering your story by looking to see if they have covered similar stories in the past. Is it a news story? A story of something that is happening in the community? Entertainment story?
- **Timing:** Is your news time sensitive or event-based? If you are advertising an event, you will want to start contacting the media a few weeks in advance. If it is news-based, you will want to contact the media closer to the day of your news.

## THE “BIG 4” MEDIA TOOLS & WHEN TO USE THEM

### 1) *Media Advisories*

Media advisories are used to alert the media to an event. A good media advisory will let the media know:

- **What** the event is and any interesting photo opportunities
- **When** it will take place
- **Where** it is
- **Who** will be involved in the event (e.g. experts, local personalities, groups) and available for comment

- **Why** the event is important and should be covered by the media

Media advisories should be sent out to the media a week before your event. Follow up phone calls should be made to the media soon after it has been sent out to ensure they have received it and a day or two before your event to remind them.

Sample media advisory:

### **MEDIA ADVISORY**

#### **NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION AGAINST CLUSTER MUNITIONS & LANDMINES**

**Ottawa – February 25<sup>th</sup> – March 3<sup>rd</sup>** marks the 8<sup>th</sup> annual national **Canadian Landmine Awareness Week (CLAW)**. CLAW is dedicated to celebrating the achievements made both by Canada and the global community in achieving a comprehensive ban on antipersonnel landmines called the Ottawa Convention, which became international, binding law on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999. Despite tremendous progress made by the Ottawa Convention, landmines and cluster munitions continue to menace communities by making simple everyday tasks like pursuing a livelihood or going to school extremely dangerous. As part of CLAW this year, Canadians from Victoria, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Montreal, Halifax and many other places will be taking part in a **National Day of Action Against Cluster Munitions and Landmines on Thursday, March 1<sup>st</sup>**. Actions include building shoe piles representing all the lives and limbs lost to these weapons and collecting signatures for a petition to urge the Canadian government to step up and be a leader in stopping the unacceptable human suffering caused by cluster bombs.

Photo and interview opportunities in Ottawa on March 1<sup>st</sup> include:

- **Press Conference, 11:00am, Charles Lynch Room, Center Block, Parliament Hill**  
Following a briefing to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, MAC and the three Co-Chairs of the international Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC), will hold a press conference on the **National Day of Action**. Speakers will also provide a first-hand assessment of the outcomes of the first official negotiations for a new treaty on cluster munitions, which took place in Oslo from February 21-23<sup>rd</sup> at which all were in attendance as part of the official civil society delegation. In addition to MAC, speakers include:
  - **Steve Goose, Executive Director of the Arms Division of Human Rights Watch (HRW)**, had a lead role representing civil society in the successful negotiation of the Ottawa Convention and is considered the preeminent NGO expert on global production, trade, stockpiling and use of cluster munitions;
  - **Grethe Østern, Policy Advisor for Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)**, works for the largest humanitarian demining organization in the world and has been the lead negotiator with the Norwegian government on clusters resulting in Norway's decision to lead a new process for negotiations on a cluster munition treaty; and
  - **Simon Conway, Director of Landmine Action (UK)**, was a soldier in the British military and has been involved in managing numerous humanitarian demining operations in some of the most mine-affected countries in the world. In September 2006, he conducted field research into the effects of cluster munitions in Southern Lebanon.
- **Shoepile Demonstration and Rally, Parliament Hill in front of Center Block, Parliament Hill**  
In conjunction with Handicap International Canada, a symbolic shoe pile memorial will be built by local youth and volunteers. Shoe pile will be built from 11-1pm. Rally will take place with guest speakers from 1-1:30pm.

For further information on events visit our website at [www.minesactioncanada.org](http://www.minesactioncanada.org). For interviews, contact Joe Smith, at (613)222-3777.

## **2) Press Release**

A press release is used to let the media know of something new that is happening. This could be a new development on an issue, a new action that has been taken, a statement or reaction to a current event.

Media get dozens of press releases every day, so it is important that your press release be clear, concise and to the point – so they should not exceed one page.

At most, your release will have about 20 seconds to capture someone's attention, so the most important information should be at in the first paragraph of the release and highlighted in your headline. The remainder of the release should include background and factual information to support your message including a quote from a relevant spokesperson and links to further information.

Press releases should be sent out on the day of your news or dated for release on the day of your news.

Important questions to ask yourself about your press release include:

- **Is the headline catchy?** Most releases will be trashed by editors or set aside for a more detailed read based solely on the headline. Spend some time on this. Does the headline clearly show how this story will be of interest to the editor's audience?
- **Does the first paragraph have the most important information?** This is the most important part of the story. It summarizes what is new, most interesting and most important. It decides whether the audience will pay you any attention. Never bury the lead halfway through the story. The audience will not hang around that long!
- **Is the release concise?** Short is beautiful! Try to keep the release on one page. Longer may mean you are not clearly focused on the essential points of the story. Shorter means more readers. Reporters can always call for additional detail if they read the release.
- **Is the release complete?** The release must cover the essentials: the 5 W's (who, what, when, where, why, how and how much). Does it explain complex terms and acronyms? Would your neighbour understand it at first glance? Double check your facts and your spelling!
- **Is your organization prominent throughout the release?** The name of your organization (and its perspective) should be featured from the start. Your role is to publicize your organization. Don't overdo it, but no one expects you to be objective.
- **Is opinion separated from fact?** The release should present your organization's viewpoint. But opinion and conclusions or judgments should be attributed. Write them as quotes and then check with the person being quoted.
- **Is it easy to read and understand?** Use the rule of one idea per sentence. Keep sentences

short and direct. Any sentences longer than 3 lines require editing. Short paragraphs make the release more appealing visually.

- **How can the media get additional information?** Ensure the contact information at the bottom allows them to reach the right person easily. Ensure that follow up calls will be handled promptly and thoroughly.

Sample press release:

## **PRESS RELEASE – For release March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007**

### **CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS ASK CANADA FOR IMMEDIATE MORATORIUM ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS ON ANNIVERSARY OF OTTAWA LANDMINE TREATY**

**Ottawa** – International experts from Canadian Red Cross, Human Rights Watch and Landmine Action (UK) provided testimony today to pressure Canada for more active leadership in the new negotiations on a cluster munitions treaty committed to by 46 states last week in Oslo. The briefing to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development was organized by Mines Action Canada (MAC) as part of a ***National Day of Action Against Cluster Munitions and Landmines*** in Ottawa and across the country.

“While we were pleased that Canada finally decided to endorse the Oslo Declaration committing to a new treaty on clusters by 2008”, said Paul Hannon, MAC Executive Director, “we feel that the next logical step for Canada is to declare an immediate moratorium on the use, production, transfer and procurement of cluster munitions until this treaty is in place. This should be a very easy way for Canada to demonstrate leadership as we have never used or tested cluster munitions and announced last week plans for the destruction of the remainder of our stockpiles.”

Canada led the world in bringing about the Ottawa Convention banning landmines despite opposition from some of the world’s biggest super powers. In the fight against cluster munitions, however, Canada’s performance has seemed more lackluster than trailblazing. “The Oslo initiative on cluster munitions follows in the footsteps of the Ottawa process that led to the international ban on landmines,” said Steve Goose, Director of the Arms Division of Human Rights Watch and Co-Chair of the Cluster Munition Coalition. “By working together to develop a new treaty, governments and civil society have a chance to save countless lives from the terror of cluster munitions.”

Fired, launched or dropped by aircraft or land-based artillery, cluster munitions disperse bomblets over a wide area, often resulting in very dense contamination. Cluster munitions have a failure rate ranging from 5 – 30%. The duds that do not explode on impact become de facto landmines. Over 73 countries stockpile cluster munitions and it is estimated that these stockpiles contain over a billion submunitions. Cluster munitions have most recently been used in Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel and Lebanon. Ninety-eight percent of recorded casualties of cluster bombs are civilian; 27% are children.

Members and supporters of the campaign gathered on Parliament Hill today for a rally and shoe-pile demonstration as part of activities for the 8<sup>th</sup> annual ***Canadian Landmine Awareness Week*** (February 25<sup>th</sup> – March 3<sup>rd</sup>) celebrations. Signatures are also being collected on a petition calling on the Government of Canada to actively engage and support the negotiation of new international law that will eliminate the human suffering caused by cluster bombs. People can sign the petition at [www.minesactioncanada.org](http://www.minesactioncanada.org).

For further information on events, clusters or the petition, visit our website at [www.minesactioncanada.org](http://www.minesactioncanada.org). For interviews, contact Joe Smith at (613)241 2222.

### **3) Letters to the Editor**

Letters to the editor are a great tool for spreading your message. They are read by a large audience; can provide a perspective not given in a news article; and are often read by elected officials.

You would write a letter to the editor if:

- You **disagree** with an article, editorial or comment covered in the newspaper;
- If there is **good news** like thanking the paper for its coverage of cluster bombs or to praise a government official for support for a ban;
- There are relevant links to **international news or events** like the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty or World Refugee Day, which provides an opportunity to write about the effect of cluster bombs returning refugees.

Letters to the editor should be sent in as close in time to the day the article you are commenting on appeared.

Keep letters short as most newspapers have word restrictions of between 150 and 200 words.

#### Sample letter to the editor:

It was heartening to see the article by the Nobel Women's Initiative on the urgent need to ban cluster munitions ("Ban the bomblets", November 15, 2006). I am currently in Geneva at the third Review Conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) where momentum for negotiations of an international treaty on cluster munitions has grown exponentially. More than twenty-five states, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Secretary General of the United Nations all support a freeze on this unreliable and inaccurate weapon because of its devastating humanitarian impact. Remarkably, however, Canada is *not* among these states. Our official position is only for continued discussions within the CCW, a forum that has been unable to respond to the consistent and predictable pattern of harm from cluster munitions. Given Canada's leadership on the Ottawa Convention banning landmines and the recently approved United Nations doctrine on the responsibility to protect, this position is truly puzzling and is antithetical to our commitment to human security. Canada must join the states working to create a new treaty on cluster munitions, and declare a moratorium on the use, production, trade, transfer, or procurement of cluster munitions until the humanitarian concerns about them are addressed. The time for talk is long over; the time for action is long overdue.

Paul Hannon  
Executive Director  
Mines Action Canada  
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### **4) Opinion Editorials**

Opinion editorials are a good tool to use if you want to express a more in-depth opinion on a particular current event topic or issue. For example, a development in the negotiations for a new clusters treaty, an important date like the December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007 commemorating the 10 year anniversary of the day the world came to Ottawa to sign the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty, etc.

A good opinion editorial should:

- Have a headline that speaks to its main message and its link to current events
- Clearly indicate the author
- Be approximately 400-800 words
- Provide the relevant background information and statistics to support your opinion

If you want your opinion editorial to be run during a specific time period (e.g.. December 3<sup>rd</sup> Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty anniversary), it is best to contact the editor a few weeks in advance and see if there is space available during that time and if there is any interest in your article.

Sample opinion editorial:

### **START NEGOTIATIONS ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS NOW**

As recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, we have been shocked by the extensive use of cluster munitions during the 33-day conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in July and August of this year. The unnecessary civilian deaths and injuries from cluster bombs and their lasting impact on attempts to rebuild shattered lives and communities will continue long after the conflict has faded from the front pages of our newspapers. We have watched this predictable and preventable situation unfold with deep dismay.

The appalling violence on both sides of the conflict and deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure in both Lebanon and Israel almost defies our imagination. While other weapons were also used indiscriminately during this war, cluster munitions are of particular concern because of the deadly legacy they leave in their wake -- a legacy like that of antipersonnel landmines. Submunitions released from the cluster munitions that fail to explode on impact, "duds," are little different than antipersonnel landmines – except all too often they are much more lethal.

According to the UN, Israel used cluster munitions which released up to four million submunitions over southern Lebanon; the overwhelming majority of those were used in the last 72 hours of fighting before the ceasefire took effect. Three civilians are still being killed or injured every day by these lethal bomblets. Beyond the deaths and injuries of men, women and children, the contamination by an estimated one million submunitions that failed to explode on impact means people's lives will not return to normal in southern Lebanon for years. Israel also reports casualties as a result of Hezbollah's use of more than one hundred Chinese-manufactured clusters.

This most recent use of these horrific weapons weighs heavily on our minds, but it is not the first such use – cluster munitions have now been used in 22 countries by 13 governments and several non-state armed actors. The United States used them decades ago in its war in Vietnam and has used them much more recently in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. The Soviet Union used them in Afghanistan and Russia in Chechnya. With over 70 countries stockpiling billions of these weapons, we are deeply concerned that cluster munitions will increasingly be used in conflicts and that this latest war in the Middle East may mark the beginning of a frightening proliferation to non-state armed actors.

How can the world stand by mutely and watch the use of clusters become commonplace as happened in the 1970s and 80s when landmine use proliferated in conflicts around the world. It took tens of thousands of civilian deaths and injuries and the contamination of massive tracts of land before the international community

finally took action and banned antipersonnel landmines in 1997. Governments must not make the same mistake with cluster munitions.

Do we passively watch the suffering from cluster munitions in Lebanon today -- just another human tragedy that we can do nothing about? Or do we take action to create the political will necessary for our governments to change their policies on this humanitarian issue. As ordinary women who have made a difference to peace through dedicated action, we know such changes can and do happen. In fact, a group of individuals and organizations came together in 2003 to form the Cluster Munition Coalition and work to stop yet another humanitarian disaster in the world – this time from cluster munitions. And their work is bearing fruit: So far Belgium has banned the weapon, Norway has recently made its temporary moratorium on the use of clusters permanent until an international treaty is negotiated and a growing number of other countries and political leaders are calling for negotiations to address the humanitarian concerns caused by cluster munitions.

As governments meet in Geneva for the Third Review Conference of the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), they have a chance to start work on a new international treaty addressing cluster munitions. As activists for peace, we call upon the governments there to seize the opportunity and not let it slip through their fingers as they did with landmines – at an earlier review conference in 1996 where they proved incapable of banning landmines through the CCW. Then, just as now, the commitment from civil society was clear. Now, it is up to governments with a genuine concern about the protection of civilians in armed conflict to show responsible leadership and negotiate a ban on unreliable and inaccurate cluster munitions.

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The Nobel Women's Initiative was established in 2006 by Nobel Peace Laureates Jody Williams (USA, 1997), Shirin Ebadi (Iran, 2003), Wangari Maathai (Kenya, 2004), Rigoberta Menchú Tum (Guatemala, 1992), Betty Williams (Ireland, 1976) and Mairead Corrigan Maguire (Ireland, 1976). These six women - representing six of the twelve women in history that have been recognized with the Nobel Peace Prize - decided to bring together their extraordinary experiences in a united effort to meaningfully contribute to building a culture of peace defined by a commitment to equality and justice- a democratic world free of physical, economic, cultural, political, religious, sexual and environmental violence and the constant threat of these forms of violence against women – and, indeed against all of humanity ([www.nobelwomensinitiative.org](http://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org)).

## **INTERVIEW STRATEGIES**

While preparing for interviews:

- Get the questions ahead of time if possible
- Decide on 1-2 key messages that you want to communicate
- Practice your messages with someone

When being interviewed, remember:

- Keep calm
- Find a way to give the important information first
- Give short, concrete answers
- Tell the truth
- Use simple, clear language avoiding jargon, acronyms or technical words
- Know your background information
- Be yourself

