

GETTING COVERAGE: A PRACTICAL MEDIA GUIDE FOR CMC & ICBL CAMPAIGNERS



Contents

1	Why engage with the media?	3
2	What kinds of media exist?	3
3	When to engage with the media?	3
4	What to tell them?	4
5	How to reach them?	4
6	What tools to use?	5
7	Examples	9
	i Media advisory	9
	ii Letter to the editor	9
	iii Press release	10
	iv Short biographies.....	10
	v Story angles	11
	vi International news agencies.....	11
	vii International/regional broadcasters.....	11

1] Why engage with the media?

In our collective efforts to ban cluster bombs and landmines, we are trying to effect social change and influence government policy. Engaging with the media can be a useful tool to:

- **Pressure governments** to pay attention to our message by having it broadcast broadly across various media
- **Build public awareness** about the impact of cluster munitions and landmines, and the need for their eradication
- **Generate publicity** for your organisation, public events, popular campaign actions and fundraisers.

2] What kinds of media exist?

To be effective at communicating your message, it is important to assess the media landscape in your country. Investigate where and how people get their news – what are the main types of media at work, and which media outlets are influential among politicians and decision-makers?

Types of media include:

- **Newspapers:** international, national, local, community
- **Radio:** regional, national, local, students' radio
- **Television:** international/regional networks, national, local
- **Magazines:** monthly, weekly, specialized trade journals
- **Websites** for organisations, clubs, news, or local event information
- **Online & social media:** blogs by influential individuals (journalists, academics, students, etc.), Twitter, Facebook, etc.

3] When to engage with the media?

In general, there are two types of media engagement:

- **Proactive communication** is when you hold an event, make a statement or organize an action to generate interest among partners and the media. Proactive communication is normally easier to plan than reactive communication, but both are essential tools.
- **Reactive communication** is when you comment on an outside event, announcement or incident. Reactive communication often means you have to react very quickly to make the most of the opportunity – sometimes a call to the relevant journalist is enough, as at times a press release takes too long, though press releases are always useful as they remain on record.

Here are examples of when the media could be interested in publishing a story with your help:

- International, regional, or national conferences you participate in
- Problems such as new mine laying or new use of cluster munitions, or a mine/submunition incident
- National events such as a government announcement on joining the Convention on Cluster Munitions, completing clearance and becoming mine-free, starting a new victim assistance program, etc.
- Local events such as a practitioners' workshop, the releasing of cleared land to a community, a fundraising event, a religious ceremony, etc.
- The launch of a new program by your organisation, such as vocational training, a day camp for young survivors, peer-to-peer counselling, a data collection project, etc.
- Release of the annual *Landmine Monitor* or *Cluster Munition Monitor* reports
- Country visit by ICBL or CMC staff or representative, or by a Monitor researcher
- Anniversaries such as entry into force day (1 August for the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and 1 March for the Mine Ban Treaty)
- International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action (4 April), International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December), or even other days such as Children's Day, Women's Day or Earth Day

Even if some of these events are not news *generated by* your organisation, journalists may be interested in hearing your reaction to or comments about the events.

For small events that do not have national impact, you may get coverage in smaller media such as a local radio station or newspaper. This is also great because such media are often really appreciated and well-followed in the community.

4] What to tell them?

Journalists cover a multitude of stories and have little space for anything, so you need to help them understand why your story is important and should be covered. For journalists to quickly understand why it would be interesting to cover your news, story or message, let them know:

- **Who** you are or who is commenting
- **What's** going on and what you think about it
- **When** it happened or is happening
- **Where** it happened or is happening
- **Why** it is new or significant
- **How** it will affect:
 - 1) your community or an individual (the human story)
 - 2) the government decision that you agree or disagree with (the political story)

Remember to **keep it simple**. Stick to the 2-3 key messages you want to convey.

5] How to reach them?

You need a list of media contacts, which will include:

- name of media outlet;
- name of journalist;
- phone number and mobile number;
- email address;
- fax number; and
- (if relevant) language spoken, specific interests.

The person who decides which stories will be covered is often called a “news editor”, “assignment editor”, or “editor”. Your list has to include such people, in addition to reporters.

Tips to start developing your list of media contacts:

- Write down the media you know. Try to cover a variety of media.
- Start with this list and find their phone number on the internet. Ask to talk to the news editor or bureau chief, introduce yourself briefly and ask them who would cover the cluster munition and landmine issues, and the disability issue. If they are not sure, you can ask who would cover defence & security, peace & reconstruction, international politics, health, or social issues.
- Search the internet to find out which journalists have covered these topics in your country.
- Ask partner organisations to share their list of contacts.
- Search the internet for journalists’ associations or foreign correspondents’ associations in your country.

At the end of this guide, you will find examples of international news agencies, radios and televisions.

Tips to maintain your list of media contacts and your relationship with journalists:

- Write a note on your list when a journalist calls you or writes an article on your topic. This way, the next time you talk to the journalist, you can thank them for their article and follow up with your new story.
- Keep expanding your list with new contacts and entering updates. Foreign correspondents in particular tend to move around quite a bit, so it is good to update your contact lists constantly.

- During press conferences or other media events, circulate a sheet of paper where journalists can write their contact details. This will help you find new contacts.
- Answer media requests without delay, and make it clear to the journalist that answering him/her is a priority for you. Check when their deadline is so that you can get back to them on time if you need to give them further information.
- When you talk or write to a journalist, conclude by reminding them that you are available for more information or for another story.
- To react to breaking news, just pick up the phone, call the news desk and ask to speak to the reporter covering the issue. Be brief and polite.
- Develop a few key contacts whom you know by name and voice, and whom you can invite to your office or for lunch, or with whom you can share information.
- There are easy things you can do to position yourself as a helpful “entry point” on the cluster munition and landmine issues:
 - offer put the journalist in contact with interesting people available for interviews: campaigners, mine clearance operators, survivors, youth campaigners, etc.
 - provide him/her with quick facts from *Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor*
 - offer to host a visit to a project, clearance site, etc.
 - when possible, offer him/her high-resolution photos to illustrate their piece. (You can contact the CMC or ICBL for photos).

6] What tools to use?

Media advisory

A media advisory is a short announcement for an upcoming event. It includes information on:

- What the event is
- When it will take place
- Where it is
- Who will be involved in the event and available for interviews such as: experts, local personalities, groups
- Why the event is interesting for the media or how it relates to a current event or news trend

It can also mention any photo opportunity. It must include your contact details! If additional information is available on a website, indicate the address. If the media are only invited for a specific part of the event, for example the opening ceremony, make that clear.

Media advisories are sent out to the media ideally a week before your event. Follow-up phone calls should be made a day or two before your event to remind them and to check if they are coming.

At the end of this guide, you will find an example of a media advisory.

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, or a reaction to a current event.

Journalists get dozens of press releases every day, and they cannot spend a lot of time reading them. So the most important information in your press release should be in the first paragraph and highlighted in the title (called a “headline”). The vocabulary and ideas should be easily understood by people who are not experts on the topic, and your main messages should be clear and concise.

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

Elements of a press release:

The three most important elements of a news release are the headline (title), the first paragraph and the quote. If you get them right, the rest will be easy.

- On top of the page, write: Press Release – For Immediate Release, or Press Release – Embargoed Until [Date & Time]

- The *headline* is short and to the point. It emphasizes what's new and highlights your main message.
- The *first paragraph* summarizes what is new, most interesting and most important, in one or two sentences. It starts with your city and the date.
- The *second or third paragraph* should be a quote. If punchy and interesting, it will draw a journalist into the release. A journalist is much more likely to pick up your quote word for word than any other part of your press release. A quote can only come from one person; it should give the title of the person and comment on the findings or convey the main message of the press release. A quote is an opportunity to express an opinion or say something emotional and human. Quotes should not introduce statistics, legal background (such as what the various conventions say), or other new material. When writing a quote, pause and say it out loud – pretend you are explaining the main point of your press release to someone who is not familiar with the subject. Will they understand what you've said?
- The *other paragraphs* explain why the story is significant, convey your main messages, provide additional background or facts and figures, and include additional quotes from people in your organisation. At the CMC and ICBL, we make sure to have a gender balance in the quotes (we quote women and men), and we make sure to quote survivors when we speak about victim assistance.
- The *last paragraph or a notes section below the press release* can include basic information on your organisation and on the Convention on Cluster Munitions or the Mine Ban Treaty.
- At the *end* of the press release, write the word END, and put your contact details. If journalists want additional information or interviews, they will contact you. If you do not access your emails several times a day, write only your mobile number and keep your phone with you at all times.

After you've finished drafting your press release, read through it again to check for spelling mistakes or missing information. If possible, it's always good to have another person check over it too.

After you send a press release out, it helps to follow up with phone calls to see if journalists received it and are interested in covering it, as well as to offer your help if they need more information or want an interview. This also makes sure that your press release does not get dumped in their spam folder.

At the end of this guide, you will find an example of a press release.

Media kit

Media kits provide information to help journalists understand your messages and write interesting stories. They can include:

- short factsheets with basic facts and figures
- a list of people available for interviews, with short biographies that show their specific knowledge or personal story (2-3 lines)
- story starters or story angles: short examples of what subjects the journalist can write about
- high-resolution photos available online or by email

At the end of this guide, you will find an example of short biographies and story angles.

Interview

While preparing for interviews:

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

When being interviewed:

- Keep calm
- Give the important information first
- Give short answers and examples
- Be yourself

- Use simple language, avoid acronyms or technical words
- If you don't know the answer, it is fine to say you are not sure and to continue with general facts related to the question or with your main message. If relevant, you can offer to find out the answer and get back to the journalist before his/her deadline.
- Remember that everything you say can be used by the journalist, even things you say after the interview is over. If you think you need to correct something you said, it is fine to come back to the question and correct your answer.

Press conference

A press conference or press briefing is appropriate when your organisation wishes to make an especially important announcement, such as launching a new campaign or releasing a report. For general statements or responses to current events, it is better to send a press release and follow up with phone calls to key journalists.

Tips for press conferences:

Before

- Schedule it in the morning so journalists have the rest of the day to write their article.
- Announce it one week in advance with a media advisory and make calls a day or two before to remind journalists.
- Pick a central, easily accessible venue – possible venues include hotels, press associations or NGO offices. Check on the location that works best for local media.
- Try to have no more than four people on your panel; fewer if possible. Each speaker should cover a different aspect of the issue. Try to ensure diversity in the speaker line-up: women, men, practitioners, survivors, etc.
- If the room is large, you will need microphones.
- Hang visuals, such as campaign posters or a banner from your organisation, behind the speakers. This will enhance any photographs taken at the press conference.
- Place a card in front of each speaker with his/her name clearly visible to those attending the press conference.
- Have enough copies of your press release and media kit. Include any additional relevant materials, such as recent reports or pamphlets by your organisation.

During

- Greet journalists when they arrive and introduce the people available for interviews.
- You need to have a facilitator to introduce speakers and make sure the questions and answers session goes smoothly.
- Try to limit speeches to five minutes per speaker, and keep time for questions at the end. The entire press conference should not last more than 45-60 minutes.
- The order of speakers varies from country to country. This is especially important if you are doing a panel with a government official. In some countries, the most senior/important person goes first, in other countries they go last. If you are not sure of the order, you can check with the government official's office.
- Allow some extra time for media to arrive and settle, before you start the press conference. (Cultural norms will dictate how long is acceptable to wait – check with local partners if you are unsure.)
- Circulate a sheet of paper where journalists can write their contact details. This will help you find new contacts.

After

- Plan time after the press conference for radio and television journalists to do individual interviews with the speakers.
- Evaluate how the press conference went and use your learning points for future.

Letter to the editor

Letters to the editor are a great tool for spreading your message and engaging in substantive debate on an issue. 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
- You want to thank the paper for its coverage of cluster bombs or to praise a government official for support for a ban
- You wish to offer expert opinion or additional information on something published
- You wish to express your opinion about a current news event, such as a treaty anniversary or an international day related to cluster munitions or landmines.

Letters to the editor should be sent as soon as possible after the publication of the article you are commenting on. Keep letters short: 150-200 words. Call the publication and ask to speak to the “letters to the editor” department and find out how long the letter should be, the name and title of the person in charge, and how the letter should be sent (email, online submission, fax or post).

At the end of this guide, you will find an example of a letter to the editor.

Opinion editorial

Opinion editorials (also known as commentaries or “op-eds”) allow you to express a more in-depth opinion on a current event or issue. If you want your opinion editorial to be run during a specific time period, for example for a treaty anniversary, 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. Including a high-profile name as an author also helps. Ask in advance how long it should be. An opinion editorial should:

- Have a title that speaks to its main message and links it to current events
- Clearly identify the author, including name, title and organisation, as well as why he/she is qualified to comment on the issue.
- Be approximately 400-800 words (check with the newspaper first, as they differ in their requirements).
- Provide the relevant background information and statistics to support your opinion.

Online & social media

Increasingly, public opinion and key stakeholders can be influenced through a savvy use of online social media. Blogs and micro-blogging sites such as Twitter are now the first place some journalists and decision-makers look for breaking news and the latest trends in current events. Having an active Facebook group or community page for your organisation can also help you maintain a dialogue with your membership, interested members of the public and the media.

You can enhance your organisation’s online presence and increase the audience for your message by signing up for a free account on social networks like Twitter (<https://twitter.com/signup>), Facebook (www.facebook.com), or Orkut (www.orkut.com). To make the best use of these networks, you should be sure to frequently update your status by adding new posts. But don’t flood people with irrelevant or lengthy messages or they won’t follow you anymore. Examples of these online updates include:

- short statements reacting to breaking news or new developments, with a link to relevant information
- information on events your organisation is planning
- links to online actions your organisation is sponsoring
- links to relevant media coverage of your work or issues
- links to the complementary work of other organisations

The most powerful aspect of using online social media as a communications tool is its interactive nature. Anyone who joins your network not only has the possibility to read passively, but they can also act on and react to your posts, extending the reach of your message.

Mashable is an online guide that provides additional information and tips on how to make the best use of social media: <http://mashable.com/>

7] Examples

[i] Media advisory

Media Advisory – 2 October 2009



REGIONAL MEETING ON LANDMINE BAN TREATY Governments and Campaigners from South-Eastern Europe and Caucasus Expected to Attend

WHAT *The Tirana Workshop on Achieving a Mine-Free South Eastern Europe*

The workshop will focus on clearance of mined areas, victim assistance, cooperation in the region, as well as challenges for joining the Mine Ban Treaty.

WHEN 7-9 October 2009 Members of the press are welcome to attend the entire meeting.

- **Field visit** to victim assistance facilities at Kukes Regional Hospital, with presentations on mine clearance and victim assistance by Albanian Mine Action Executive: 7 October, 7:00-18:00
- **Launch** of the victim assistance global progress report *Voices from the Ground*: 8 October, 18:00

WHERE Tirana International Hotel, Skanderberg Square 8, Tirana, Albania

- WHO**
- Government representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey, as well as Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are expected to attend;
 - Donor countries, United Nations, international organisations involved in mine action;
 - Civil society campaigners and landmine survivors from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Kosovo, Serbia and more.

ICBL CONTACT Ms Anila Alibali, Illyricum Fund. Mobile: + 355 (0)68 20 27 813; email: anila@icbl.org

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

Ms. Tamar Gabelnick (English, French)

Treaty Implementation Director for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Ms. Gabelnick has in-depth knowledge of the status of the Mine Ban Treaty implementation worldwide, including political and financial challenges associated with mine clearance, victim assistance, and other treaty obligations.

Mr. Jonuz Kola (Albanian, English)

Mr. Kola is the Executive Director of the Albanian organisation ALB-AID (former Victims of Mines Kukes Association), which provides mine-risk education in affected communities and supports the socio-economic reintegration of mine victims through vocational training and economical opportunities such as animal husbandry.

Ms. Eva Veble (Bosnian, Croatian, English, Serbian, Slovenian)

Head of the Mine Action Unit at DanChurchAid, Ms. Veble has extensively engaged in mine action in South-Eastern Europe, on advocacy for a ban on landmines and cluster munitions, and in mine clearance and victim assistance programme implementation.

[ii] Letter to the editor

Geneva, November 19, 2006

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 Tel: +1 613 241 3777**

[iii] Press release

Press Release – For Immediate Release

CAMPAIGNERS START COUNTDOWN TO CLUSTER BOMB BAN **Convention on Cluster Munitions due to take effect on 1 August 2010**



(London, 23 April 2010) – Campaigners worldwide are stepping up pressure on governments to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions in the final 100 days before it becomes binding international law, the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) said today as it launched a countdown to 1 August, when the treaty enters into force.

“With just 100 days left before the Convention on Cluster Munitions takes effect, we are calling on all governments to seize the opportunity to get on board the cluster bomb ban by signing and ratifying the Convention,” said Laura Cheeseman, Campaign Manager of the CMC. “Around the world, campaigners are drumming up support through a range of actions aimed at counting down to entry into force, when we will celebrate a momentous humanitarian achievement.”

Hundreds of civil society organisations are expected to participate in the 100-day countdown, carrying out campaign actions to urge governments to sign and ratify the Convention, and to raise awareness about its potentially profound impact on civilians and affected communities. Activities include press conferences, workshops, marches, exhibitions, and creative outreach. Many actions include the central theme of drumming to make some noise about the entry into force of the most significant disarmament and humanitarian treaty in more than a decade.

The Convention comprehensively bans the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions, requires clearance of contaminated land within 10 years, destruction of stockpiled cluster munitions within eight years, and includes groundbreaking provisions for victim assistance. Since it was opened for signature in Oslo in December 2008, a total of 106 countries have signed the Convention and 30 have ratified – among them are former users, producers and stockpilers of cluster bombs, as well as countries affected by the weapon.

“With so many states already on board this treaty, cluster bombs have been stigmatised to the point where nobody should ever want to use them again. There’s really no excuse for countries not to join,” said Youen Sam En, a Cambodian who lost his eyesight and both of his hands in a cluster bomb incident near the border with Lao PDR. “Affected countries like Cambodia have a special incentive to join, because it will mean that communities affected by these weapons get the help they need and the land gets cleared of unexploded bombs.”

During each week of the 100-day countdown, CMC campaigners will conduct targeted actions urging specific non-signatory countries to sign the Convention. Current plans are to start with Cambodia on 26 April, followed by: Tajikistan (3 May), Vietnam (10 May), Brazil (17 May), Jordan (24 May), Argentina (31 May), Serbia (7 June), Grenada (14 June), Bangladesh (21 June), Papua New Guinea (28 June), Sudan (5 July), Slovakia (12 July), Morocco (19 July), and Thailand (26 July).

After 1 August, treaty obligations become legally binding for all states that have ratified, and campaigners will urge as many governments as possible to participate in the First Meeting of States Parties from 8-12 November in Lao PDR, the most cluster bomb-contaminated country in the world. All states are welcome to attend this meeting, regardless of whether or not they have signed or ratified the treaty.

END

CONTACT:

In London, Conor Fortune (English, Spanish): +44-(0)20-7820-0222; or +44-(0)75-1557-5174 (mobile); or conor@stopclustermunitions.org

[iv] Short biographies of people available for interviews

Margaret Arach Orech – A landmine survivor herself, Arach Orech founded the Uganda Landmine Survivors Association that carries out advocacy and victim assistance programs. She was appointed ICBL Ambassador in 2006. Language: English

Richard Moyes – Moyes is Director of Policy and Research at the British NGO Action on Armed Violence, and is one of the Co-Chairs of the Cluster Munition Coalition. Prior to that he has managed programs for Mines Advisory Group and has conducted research on risk-taking behavior in communities affected by landmines and cluster munitions. Language: English

[v] Story angles

The United Kingdom – Thumbing its nose at its clearance obligations

The United Kingdom is responsible for clearing 117 mined areas in the Falkland Islands. Over the last nine years, not a single mined area has been cleared. A joint UK-Argentine feasibility study, the plan for which was first announced in 2001, was conducted in 2007. The UK is now asking for a 10-year deadline extension, without setting any date for starting demining operations. Environmental challenges and the cost of clearance are cited as causes for delay.

The minefields are well known to the locals and have not injured or killed anyone yet. But the message sent by the UK is clearly that they intend to pick and choose which treaty obligations they intend to abide by in good faith, and which they will brush aside. The example set for other States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty is a major concern.

Colombia – Hosting the Second Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty

Colombia has suffered four decades of internal conflict, and non-state armed groups continue to produce antipersonnel mines and improvised explosive devices and to use them on a regular basis. According to Landmine Monitor, Colombia is the country where the highest number of mine and explosive remnants of war casualties were recorded in 2008.

The ongoing conflict poses serious challenges to humanitarian mine action. Mine survivors are facing serious difficulties and obstacles in accessing the services they have the need for and right to. Colombia acknowledges that survivors have limited opportunities, limited access to high-quality assistance, do not know their rights and have difficulties obtaining them.

The Second Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty brings the spotlight on the many challenges faced by the country.

[vi] Examples of international news agencies

Associated Press (AP), www.ap.org
Agence France Presse (AFP), www.afp.com/afpcom/en
Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), www.dpa.de
EFE, www.efe.com
Inter Press Service (IPS), www.ips.org
ITAR-TASS, www.itar-tass.com/eng
Kyodo News, <http://home.kyodo.co.jp>
Reuters, www.reuters.com
United Press International (UPI), www.upi.com
Xinhua, www.chinaview.cn

[vii] Examples of international/regional news broadcasters

Radio

BBC World Service, www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice – 32 languages
Deutschewelle, www.dw-world.de – 30 languages
Radio France Internationale, www.rfi.fr – 12 languages
Radio Free Asia, www.rfa.org/english – 10 languages
Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, www.rferl.org – 28 languages
Radio Netherlands, www.rnw.nl/english – 10 languages
Radio Vatican, www.radiovaticana.org – 38 languages
Voice of America (VOA), www.voanews.com – 53 languages

Television

Al Jazeera International <http://english.aljazeera.net>
BBC World Service, www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice
CNN International, <http://edition.cnn.com>
EuroNews, www.euronews.net

Cluster Munition Coalition

5th Floor, Epworth House
25 City Road
London EC1Y 1AA
United Kingdom

Email: info@stopclustermunitions.org

www.stopclustermunitions.org

International Campaign to Ban Landmines

7-9 rue de Cornavin
CH-1201 Geneva
Switzerland

Email: icbl@icbl.org

www.icbl.org