

# Write for Rights 2021

## Media Guide

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

### Quick Tips:

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

**Think Local:** With over 200 Write for Rights events in Canada last year, not everyone can make it to the front page or into the national news. By standing up for human rights around the world, you are doing something of tremendous importance in your community, so try to share it with them. Your best bet is to focus on local and community media – they are an important voice!

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

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

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

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## Media support - here to help

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

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

## Contacting the Amnesty International Canada Press Office

The Amnesty International Canada press office is represented by media officer Lucy Scholey. The best way to get in touch is by email at [lscholey@amnesty.ca](mailto:lscholey@amnesty.ca).

**Thank you and good luck!**

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## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ADVISORY

**Twenty years of pens, postcards, and human rights: Community group to put a stamp on milestone Write for Rights letter-writing campaign**

**When: Date & Time**

**Where: Location and Address**

In **[your town]**, **[your title / name of group]** ] is penning postcards – and changing lives – as part of Amnesty International’s 20th annual Write for Rights campaign.

Write for Rights is a global letter-writing event offering the public the opportunity to meaningfully support individuals and groups facing human rights violations and hold governments to account. Last year, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, Amnesty International supporters took more than 4 million actions for Write for Rights, such as writing letters and signing petitions. This year, activists are aiming to replicate that success, focusing on 10 critical human rights cases in 10 countries where peoples’ rights are being violated and action is urgently needed.

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

Among the 10 cases selected this year, Amnesty International is highlighting the case of Bernardo Caal Xol, a Q'eqchi' Maya Indigenous leader who was unjustly imprisoned for protesting the construction of hydroelectric power plants in Guatemala. Another case is that of Zhang Zhan, a citizen journalist who is facing a four-year prison sentence in China for reporting on the Covid-19 outbreak in Wuhan. Wendy Galarza is yet another case, a childcare worker and feminist activist who was shot after police opened fire on a crowd of people protesting violence against women in Mexico. Those suspected of criminal responsibility for the shooting have yet to be brought to justice.

Write for Rights, the world’s largest letter-writing campaign, is now calling on people across the world to write a letter – and change a life. In some cases, participants are encouraged to show their solidarity through social media posts.

“Not even a global pandemic can stop Amnesty supporters from picking up their pens for human rights,” said **[your spokesperson’s name]**. “We are calling on our community to join us in sending clear messages of support to those who are facing human rights violations – and to call out those who are violating human rights. Every letter, email, and petition matters.”

A full list with more information about the 10 cases featured in this year’s Write for Rights campaign is available at [writeathon.ca](http://writeathon.ca). For more information about the Write for Rights event in **[your town]** please contact:

**Name of your spokesperson**

**Contact information – email and phone number**