

## TIPS FOR GETTING MEDIA COVERAGE

*Getting your local press to cover your local lobby visit is a great way to let others know about the ongoing crisis in northern Uganda and multiply your efforts to help bring peace. If you have time, especially if you are going in a group, please take a look and spread the word to your local media.*

*The four best ways for spread the word about what you're doing and pick up coverage are:*

- 1. A local human interest story*
- 2. Opinion Editorials*
- 3. Letters to the editor*
- 4. Blog postings*

*Here's what you need to make that happen:*

### **A. Human interest story**

Local papers love to highlight action being taken by their readers, especially when the story is tied to a larger issue. But to pick up this kind of coverage, reporters in your area need to know what you're doing. The best way to let them know is by going to your local paper or tv station's website and finding the link to "submit a story." This option is usually highlighted prominently on the outlet's homepage. When submitting a story, it is helpful to include the following information:

- Type of event
- Sponsoring organization
- Name and number of person readers should contact for information. Name and number of person to contact BEFORE the event
- Name and number of person to contact AT the event
- Day of event
- Date and time of event
- Location of event
- Estimated number of participants
- Why readers will be interested in this event
- Specifics of event

### **B. Op-Ed**

Opinion editorials are a great way to inform members of your community about the conflict in northern Uganda and to engage them in efforts to help end the war. Newspapers will often run pieces written by grassroots activists if they are well-written and timely, but you should check with your paper before submitting your editorial, as different papers often have specific rules and guidelines for editorial submissions from community members. Here are a few tips for writing your editorial:

- Keep it short: Most papers will only run editorials that are less than 750 words.
- Make it relevant: The closer you can write your editorial to a community event or significant development in the conflict, the better. Newspapers publish information that they feel is pertinent to their readers, so your op-ed is more likely to be published when it is tied to a current event (ie: lobby visits, legislative development, breakthrough in the peace talk, etc.)
- Make it personal: While your op-ed should include facts about the conflict, it should also reflect your personality. The best editorials explain why the issue or topic is relevant to

both the writer and the reader. Tell your own story and why you care about what's happening in northern Uganda.

- Include information on how readers can get involved: If you're writing an op-ed near the time that the lobby visits are taking place, make sure your editorial includes information on how readers can join your efforts. Even if it's just including Resolve Uganda's website, it's important that people reading your article aren't just overwhelmed by the severity of what's happening in northern Uganda, but also see that they can play a part in bringing about peace.
- Include your contact information: Newspapers need to know how to contact you if they're going to run your editorial.

### **C. Letters to the editor**

Letters to the editor are another great way to spread awareness in your community about the conflict in northern Uganda and let people know about how they can get involved in efforts for peace. The key to getting your letter printed is making it relevant to your local community, whether that's letting readers know about the local lobby visits or asking your paper's editor to run more stories about the war in northern Uganda. Here are a few more tips for getting your letter published:

- Keep it short: Most letters to the editor aren't more than 150-200 words.
- Keep it focused: Unlike editorials, letters to the editor only allow you the space to make one or two key points. Focus on what you think is the most important thing for people in your community to know about the war and what they can do to help.
- Include your contact information

### **D. Blog postings**

Online forums are another great way to lend your voice to peace in Uganda and let your friends and family know about what's happening in Uganda. You can use your blog, myspace page, or facebook profile to not only tell people about the conflict, but also invite them to join you in your meeting with your representative. Blogs are the perfect forum to invite people into a conversation about why the war in northern Uganda is happening and what we can all be doing to help end it. You can also encourage other bloggers to link to your post.