

# GETTING MEDIA COVERAGE



*Engaging with the media is a useful tool to influence government officials to pay attention to your message, build public awareness and generate publicity for your campaign activities.*

## THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE

To be effective at communicating your message, it is important to know the media landscape. Investigate where and how people get their news. What are the main types of media at work, which are the leading newspapers or broadcasting channels? Which media outlets are influential among your audience and targets (for example, partners and politicians)? What do they use to get their messages out?

Identify the names and contact details of newspapers, wire services, magazines, blogs, television and radio stations/programs to compile your media list. Also identify influential journalists that are likely to cover your issue. Keep a list of journalists doing international politics, human rights, and religious freedom. Build your contact list (including Twitter handles), and depending on your capacity, take time to develop relationships and trust with media contacts. Learn what their interests are and when their deadlines are. Let them know you're available if they need more information on another story.



Also research and develop relationships with writers, photographers, bloggers or filmmakers who would be sympathetic to your cause. Develop relationships with high-profile people in your community who have visibility with the decision makers you are trying to influence or who can bring attention to your campaign.

## CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE FOR THE MEDIA

Your message for the media depends on your audience, but should include three parts:

- The situation or problem the campaign or action is addressing
- The solution you propose
- The action that can help solve the problem

*Your message and its three parts (problem, solution, action) should be featured in every article and interview and conversation you have.*

Your core message should also be shaped into two products:

- Talking points – These summarize your central message in three or four sentences and include your main argument and evidence to support it.
- Sound bites – These are short, memorable sentences – designed to grab an audience's attention. They are especially important for TV or radio.

## ENGAGING WITH THE MEDIA

•Proactive communication: This is when you hold an event, make a statement or organize an action to generate interest among partners and the media.

•Reactive communication: This is when you comment on an outside event or announcement or incident. It often means you have to react very quickly to respond to whatever is happening to make the most of the opportunity.

## CHOOSING YOUR MEDIA TOOLS

Getting out your message can include:

- a press release
- media advisory
- radio phone-in
- letter to the editor
- press conference
- speaking up as an audience member
- inviting a journalist to an event
- Twitter

## MEDIA ADVISORY

A media advisory is a short announcement for an upcoming event. They are sent a week before your event. Follow-up phone calls should be made a day or two before your event to remind the media of your 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 include sharing that a high level official will be attending your event.

Include contact details such as a mobile number and website.

## 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 was taken, or a reaction to a current event. Press releases are sent out on the day of your news or dated for release on the day of your news.

Journalists do not spend a lot of time reading them, so create an angle to make your release stand out, and keep it concise (one page). Use a headline that states what the story is about and grabs attention. Ensure your opening paragraph has the most important information and is engaging.

As per media advisories, include 1. What is the news? 2. When are things happening? 3. Where is the impact? 4. Who is involved? 5. Why is this important?

Use short paragraphs, short sentences and short words. The words and ideas should be easily understood by people who are not experts on the topic.

The three most important elements of a press release are the headline, the first paragraph and the quote.

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

The headline needs to be short and to the point. It should emphasize what's new and highlight 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 include a punch, interesting quote that comments on or conveys the main message of the press release.

The other paragraphs provide extra relevant information (e.g. explain why the story is important, convey your main messages, provide additional background or facts and figures, and include additional quotes from people in your organization).

The last paragraph or a notes section below the press release can include basic information on your organization.



- 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.

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.

## OPINION EDITORIAL

Opinion editorials (also known as commentaries, opinion pieces, or “op-eds”) present a more in-depth opinion on an issue. If you want your opinion editorial to be run during a specific time period, for example near an impending policy decision, contact the editor a few weeks in advance to see if they have space or interest. If you want to react to a current news event, act quickly. Including a high-profile name also helps. An opinion editorial should:

- Have a title that incorporates the main message.
- Have an engaging opening line to draw the reader’s attention.
- Clearly identify the author, including name, title and organization, as well as why he/she is qualified to comment on the issue.
- Be approximately 400-800 words (check with the media first).
- Provide relevant background information and statistics to support your opinion.
- Be a finished article – an opinion editorial differs from a press release because it is personally written, rather than a journalist’s interpretation of your story.

## MEDIA INTERVIEWS

### *When preparing for media interviews:*

- Find out whether the interview is pre-recorded or live
- Decide on two to three key messages that you want to communicate
- Know your background information
- Practice your messages with someone
- Get the questions ahead of time if possible - it’s ok to ask!
- Ask who will be interviewing you and approximately how long the interview will be
- Prepare a ‘sound bite’; a one-sentence summary that captures the essence of the message that you are trying to bring across - try to use it during the interview

### ***When being interviewed:***

- Keep calm, speak slowly and clearly, and try not to fidget
- 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, don't make it up. It is always better to say that you are not sure. Alternatively drive your answer to the message that you want to give or continue with general facts related to the question. 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
- If you are interviewed alongside someone with very differing opinions, remain courteous, positive and don't let them aggravate you
- In broadcast interviews, be ready with a call to action or information for viewers/listeners who want to get involved

It's worth spending time practicing for interviews with colleagues or on video. Don't be afraid to ask for constructive criticism on your effectiveness.

Spend time identifying your spokespeople and preparing key points, media briefings or short answers to difficult questions, so you can jump quickly when key media opportunities arise ( "reactive interviews").



**Media Advisory: July 9, 2018**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CHINA PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE RALLY**

**July 12 from 12PM – 1PM  
In front of the U.S. Capitol on the East Lawn (House side)**

Please help promote the event by using the hashtags **#changenotchains** and **#FreeLiuXia**

*Confirmed speakers include former Congressman **Frank Wolf**, Congressman **Randy Hultgren**, Congressman **Jim McGovern**, USCIRF Chairman **Dr. Tenzin Dorjee**, and Uyghur leader **Rebiya Kadeer**. Other invited speakers include Members of Congress, human rights leaders, and representatives of impacted communities.*

On July 13, 2017, Liu Xiaobo, the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, died while in detention in China. Liu Xiaobo was an outspoken critic of the Chinese government's human rights abuses and suffered greatly for his advocacy. He was imprisoned numerous times and was sentenced to 11 years in prison in 2009. He died from complications of liver cancer while still in custody.

One year later, his wife Liu Xia is still held under house arrest and is languishing without access to basic necessities and healthcare. Beyond well-known prisoners of conscience, **there are tens of thousands of individuals unjustly imprisoned in China** due to their peaceful expression of political, religious or other conscientiously held beliefs. Ranging from house arrest to imprisonment and detention camps, *these individuals deserve to be remembered*. Congress is working to do this with H.Res.750, a bipartisan resolution to establish a Prisoners of Conscience Day, *and you can take a stand as well!*

Because images often speak louder than words, **please bring a picture of someone who has been unjustly imprisoned in China**. This can be an individual you may know personally or a person from the prisoner of conscience lists provided by the following:

[Congressional-Executive Commission on China](#)  
[Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission](#)  
[United States Commission on International Religious Freedom](#)  
[Amnesty International](#)  
[China Aid](#)  
[International Campaign for Tibet](#)

**For press inquiries:**



## PRESS RELEASE

### CHINA PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE RALLY URGES CONGRESS TO STAND IN SOLIDARITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 13, 2018 (Washington, DC)

One year ago today, Liu Xiaobo, the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, died while in detention in China. His wife Liu Xia, who was never charged with a crime, was released this week after spending eight years under house arrest. "For decades Liu Xiaobo fought for free expression, justice and liberty in China and he remains a powerful symbol for all those who fight for universal human rights," said Francisco Bencosme of Amnesty International, speaking at yesterday's rally at the US Capitol to honor Liu Xiaobo and to bring attention to Prisoners of Conscience in China and around the globe.

Members of Congress, human rights leaders and representatives from impacted communities challenged Americans and fellow members of Congress to not forget, to not ignore the injustice of those falsely accused and to not let human rights defenders stand alone. Sadly, there are tens of thousands of individuals unjustly imprisoned in China due to their peaceful expression of political, religious or other conscientiously held beliefs.

"America has a moral duty to speak out against China's brazen disregard for basic freedoms," said Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi. "The most excruciating torture to those in prison is to tell prisoners that no one remembers them or why they are in prison. We know you are there. We salute your courage. We pray for your safety and we hope we can shorten the time until you are free."

Both Reps. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.) and Randy Hultgren (R-Ill.), co-chairs of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, spoke at the rally. This commission created the Defending Freedom Project in 2012, in partnership with six civil society organizations, to encourage members of Congress to select and advocate for a specific prisoner of conscience. Additionally, McGovern and Hultgren recently introduced H.Res.750, a bipartisan resolution that calls to establish a Prisoners of Conscience Day.



Former Congressman Frank Wolf of 21Wilberforce issued a clarion call: “It is important that we support prisoners of conscience. I would ask every office in the Senate and the House to adopt a prisoner of conscience. Write to them. Write to their families. And to my fellow Americans, write to your Senator or Congressman and express support for H.Res.750.”

Other speakers that encouraged the crowd to stand for human rights included Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX), Dr. Tenzin Dorjee, Chair of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, [Carl Gershman, President of National Endowment for Democracy](#), Sophie Richardson of Human Rights Watch, Pastor Wang Dao representing China Aid, and Elyse Anderson speaking on behalf of Sen. Rubio (R-FL).

To learn more about prisoners of conscience, the Defending Freedom Project or H.Res.750, contact any of the rally sponsors: 21Wilberforce, Amnesty International, the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice, Freedom House and China Aid.

[TAKE ACTION HERE](#)



**Op Ed submission**

**Date**

**Point of contact:**

### **Excluding Human Rights from Trade Talks with China Cheapens U.S. Position**

That President Donald Trump has come out swinging against China is not entirely surprising. In fact, many pundits and market watchers would say it is about time the U.S. responds to China's aggressive commercial behavior that has included cyber attacks, intellectual property theft, and unfair trade practices. As the administration constructs a sound strategy for China, a prudent consideration is not to limit the debate to steel, aluminum, or soybeans but to recognize that any trade policy will be strengthened by also including a candid look at human rights abuses.

History tells us that holding a Communist regime's economic feet to the fire is most effective when human rights, particularly religious freedom, help frame the discussion. If President Trump wishes to change Beijing's bad behavior with stiff trade measures and economic sanctions, he would do well to take a page from a former presidential playbook.

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan struck a fatal blow to the Communist government of Romania when he was persuaded to strip President Nicolae Ceausescu's murderous and morally bankrupt regime of its most favored nation (MFN) trading status. Reagan came to understand that while sanctions alone would gradually loosen Ceausescu's grip, sanctions tied to the tyrant's abysmal human rights record would mean an actual sea change in Bucharest. Indeed, the suspension of MFN cost the Romanian government about \$1 billion, and within months the Communist regime fell.

Reagan's strategy was, of course, predicated on the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. This addition to the U.S. Trade Act of 1974 made eligibility for MFN designation impossible for countries accused of human rights abuses. During the Cold War, Jackson-Vanik provided an escape hatch for thousands of soviet dissidents, mainly Jews and other religious minorities, who were persecuted and otherwise prevented from emigrating from oppressive of Soviet Bloc countries.

For years, the U.S. leveraged Jackson-Vanik and the annual MFN review process to keep China's economic ambitions and human rights policies in check. Regrettably in 2000, Congress forfeited this yearly appraisal and granted China Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR), absent preconditions. The argument was, increased trade and economic ties would help China become a more free and open society and by extension, human rights would flourish.

Sadly, those predictions have not materialized. China's economy has burgeoned, but it has been at the expense of its trading partners and even more so, at the expense of its own people.

Despite its PNTR designation, the U.S. Department of State has named China a "country of particular concern" every year since 1999 — a designation reserved for countries with the most atrocious reputations for persecution and religious freedom violations. As President Xi Jinping has systematically consolidated power, fundamental rights of conscience have deteriorated in China.

In February, China stiffened its nationwide religious policies. Violators face large fines, confiscation of property, even arrest. Religious minorities remain targets of government-sanctioned persecution: Thousands of Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns have been evicted from their homes and over 130 have set themselves on fire; religious freedom advocates and human rights defenders are routinely detained, imprisoned, tortured, or go missing; and there have been reports that Falun Gong members have been killed extra judiciously to provide organs for China's grisly transplant industry.

I have personally looked into the desperate eyes of one Uyghur Muslim grandmother as she recounted how the Chinese government rounded up every one of her grandchildren and sent them away to a "re-education" camp.

In the Chinese Christian community, unregistered churches have been demolished. Crosses have been torn down. Homes have been raided and thousands of church leaders arrested.

It is not difficult to see that China presents more than economic challenges for the U.S. We ignore Beijing's gross disregard for human rights and religious freedom at our own peril. The words of former Russian dissident and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Andrei Sakharov ring true: "A country that does not respect the rights of its own people will not respect the rights of its neighbors."

How then to deftly address pressing human rights concerns while advancing sound economic policy, as Reagan did three decades ago? The president has meaningful levers at his disposal. The first is the Global Magnitsky Act, which supplanted Jackson-Vanik in 2012. It gives the president broad powers to deny entry into the U. S., revoke visas, block property under U.S. jurisdiction, or prohibit U.S. persons from entering into transactions with foreigners identified as having been associated with an assortment of human rights violations.

Another tool available is the strengthening of the CFIUS (Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S.) mandate. In its review of national security implications of foreign investments, CFIUS should prohibit the acquisition of U.S. firms and technologies where such assets can be linked to enhancing Chinese government capabilities to limit and/or attack human rights and religious freedom. Such assets would include monitoring devices, artificial intelligence, facial recognition and other sensors, as well as crowd control devices.

Finally, the president should call on social media firms — Facebook, Google, Twitter, and the like — to adopt policies that would thwart attempts by the Chinese government to acquire data mining capabilities used to attack human rights and religious freedom.

As the Trump administration works to establish sound trade policy with China, there is an opportunity also to establish a good human and religious rights policy that will help the people of China. A mutually beneficial trade policy will be framed not only in economic terms, but also will demonstrate that human rights, particularly religious freedom, are core principles of U.S. foreign and economic policy.

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