

Hands Off Iraqi Oil – local media guide

RULE #1 – do not be intimidated by all this info and have fun! Good luck!

Press releases

General

- **Please make sure you fill in all the key information of town/city/action/contacts as marked on the draft press release before it is sent. If you miss one out it will seem unprofessional**
- Always use the template provided when sending a release
- Make sure you keep notes of who you have contacted for future actions/campaigns

Local papers

- Daily papers are usually compiled between 3:30 and 5:30 in the afternoon so the worst time to send out a release is in the afternoon. Try to send it in the morning
- Try not to call journalists at lunch time or in the afternoon
- Evening dailies have morning deadlines
- Weekly local papers usually go to press 2-3 days before they appear at the newsagents so keep that in mind when sending out a release
- These are only guidelines – call your local paper and find out what is the best time to send releases/photo-call info to them!

But please also keep in mind that there is competition...

- Journalists get sent many press releases, most of which are irrelevant and get thrown out. So make yours clear and exciting!

Emailing press releases:

- **Never** send out press releases as attachments – journalists want things to be easy and simple and attachments may be blocked by certain servers so cut and paste neatly into the body of the email and **do not** attach a logo/picture on the press release. Make sure you have a snappy, catchy heading in the email subject line.
- If you are sending to more than one journalist, make sure you bcc i.e blind copy, although it is better to send emails individually. You must not disclose the email addresses you are sending to – it will irritate who ever you are sending it to.
- Make sure you check your email/phone frequently after the release is sent as if your lucky a journalist will get in touch!

Release follow up – ringing after you've sent the release

- Have the release in front of you and any other info (see www.handsoffiraqoil.org for extra information and contact numbers of people to call if you are unclear about any of the facts) before you call
- If you have the name of the journalist who covers these sorts of stories in your local paper (you can usually guess from looking at back issues), but don't have their number, always ask for their direct line, when you ring up a paper.
- Don't leave voice mail messages unless you know the journalist well....
- Think through what you are going to say – practise it a few times and be brief.
- If you don't have a name of a journalist when you ring up, ask for the best person to speak to

Example script for phone call

- "Hi, my name is xxxxx xxxxxx and I am calling to follow up on a press release that was sent out this morning. It was about [place] Hands Off Iraqi Oil campaigners staging a demonstration/stall/action to protest the theft of Iraqi oil by BP and Shell"

- “Did you receive our release?”
- “Do you have any questions?”
- (if relevant) Will you be sending a photographer along?”
- (if you have someone taking pics that you KNOW are high quality and can be uploaded straight after the event) ” which email address shall I send pictures to?”
- “Thank you for your time....again my name is xxxx xxxxxxxx and you can reach me on xxxxxxxxxxxx

NB – when following up, never ask a reporter to alert you when a story is printed/send you copies etc. Its your job to check if the story/pics have been published or not!!!!

Broadcast – TV -Radio etc

- If a journalist is interested in interviewing you, or running the story on TV, radio or any other medium, don't panic! Please ring Nadia at War on Want on 0207 549 0590 nidle@waronwant.org who will put you in touch with our media team who can give you lots of helpful advice!

If you need any more media advice do get in touch with Nadia @ War on Want at the email/number above.

Good Luck!