

Why Does Media Matter?

Media coverage is a powerful tool that we can harness to pressure our elected officials into action to stop and prevent genocide.

Why is local media coverage important?

Media gets the word out to potential activists, broadening the anti-genocide coalition.

Your elected officials aren't the only ones who read the newspaper, listen to radio, or watch TV. Being featured in an article, or even writing your own letters and op-eds, can pull more people into the anti-genocide movement. The more constituents who get involved, the more interest an elected official will take in fighting genocide. So remember, when you write a letter to the editor or give an interview, always provide ways for interested people to get involved in the fight against genocide. You can't stop a genocide without knowing about it; and media allows a readership to become informed of the ongoing atrocities. The more media an issue gets, the bigger it becomes.

Media tells elected officials what their constituents want.

If constituents want something enough, an elected official will support it. Legislators often have staffers/interns who search for op-eds or letters that mention the legislator. They see an article or opinion piece in a local paper as a strong indicator of constituent opinion in their districts. Additionally, if an article is written about a rally, legislators will see about the enormous amount of people that care about an issue.

How can you use your local media to influence your elected official?

If your legislator supports anti-genocide legislation, let them know you are paying attention by writing a letter (see example). If a legislator is not supporting enough legislation, write a letter criticizing their inaction.

You can also show broad constituent support by hosting events and getting the press to cover them. Community papers love covering student events; you just have to tell them about it. Learn how to send media alerts and press releases or do follow-up calls! Easy tools like this can be extremely effective in garnering media attention. After getting coverage, what's the next step? E-mail the articles to your elected official's office! This will let them know how many constituents care about the issue!



To the editor:

Congresswoman Melissa Bean should be commended for her recent vote for the Darfur Accountability and Divestment Act (DADA). Congresswoman Bean, along with 417 of her colleagues, took a powerful step in the fight against genocide with this vote.

The legislation, the strongest of its kind to date, would provide for federal protection for divestment at the state and local level. To learn more about DADA, visit

Unfortunately, this important piece of legislation passed almost unanimously by the House is being held up in the Senate. U.S. Senators Dick Durbin and Barack Obama, already well-known for being champions of the anti-genocide movement, need to do everything they can to move DADA forward without any more delay. To find out how you can pressure the Senate to get this bill passed into law, visit www.1800genocide.com/senator.

The people of Illinois won't stand for genocide; it's good to know that our elected officials won't either.