

# **Public Advocacy and the Role of the Media**

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# Freedom of Expression

- Fundamental and elite human right
- Two-fold aspect in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:
  - the right to hold opinions without interference
  - the right to receive any information



# NHRIs must:

- Advocate for a free press
- Work on state censorship or government interference in the press
- Promote access to alternative media



# Media can expose abuses of human rights





Media can hold those  
responsible accountable





**In June 2005 video evidence emerged and caused public outrage in Serbia. Soldiers identified on the video were arrested.**



Children and young people take up new media technology faster – implications for media use in human rights education



# Media mobilises public opinion about poverty and hunger





# Media are not perfect.... NHRI advocacy needed

- To ensure media report fairly and accurately and do not reinforce prejudice by omission
- To ensure media do not allow majority elites to dominate public debate without balance



But NHRIs can only perform advocacy if they are media literate and are confident in both praising and criticising the media



# NHRIs can:

- Work with academics and researchers who monitor news coverage
- Audit specific issues coverage (such as indigenous rights)
- Tackle the press about non-coverage of women, ethnic minorities
- Complain about negative and inaccurate reporting



# NHRIs can:

- Invite the press to run human rights campaigns in partnership
- Use the media proactively to promote human rights progress
- Provide positive feedback to the media where appropriate.



# Discussion:

What are the barriers faced by your NHRI in using the media to further public knowledge and understanding about human rights?

