



## Sample Letter to the Editor

### SAMPLE TEMPLATE

Dear [EDITOR],

Regarding the article, “[ARTICLE HEADLINE]”, [SECTION], [DATE], [INSERT A ONE-LINE SPECIFIC RESPONSE TO ARTICLE].

It is always heartening to see the compassion that Americans show for people affected by disasters. When emergencies happen overseas, individuals, groups and communities in the U.S. are quick to organize support to help as many people as possible.

The most effective donations respond to people’s needs, which can change every day as disaster situations evolve. Collecting clothing, food, bottled water, toys and other household items may feel more meaningful for donors than monetary donations. But even small financial contributions can do more good for more people more efficiently than unsolicited material donations. For example, financial donations can support critical health and family reunification programs now, and help with rebuilding later. Food and household items can always be purchased near the disaster site, even in famine situations. Local purchases help the local economy while serving more people because of charitable organizations’ bulk buying power.

In contrast, uninvited material donations can clog supply chains, take space needed to stage life-saving relief supplies and divert relief workers’ time. Managing piles of unsolicited items adds to the cost of emergency response by forcing changes to distribution plans and requiring disposal at further expense. Internationally, if released into local markets, it can put merchants out of business, adding economic stress to already fragile conditions. And sending stuff leaves a carbon footprint every step of the way.

By giving responsibly, Americans can provide the most beneficial support to survivors and to international disaster relief efforts. Monetary contributions to trusted relief agencies already on the ground in affected areas ensure that people receive exactly what they need, when they need it. Cash donations allow relief agencies to purchase supplies that are fresh and familiar to survivors, and that are culturally, nutritionally and environmentally appropriate. No unsolicited material donation sent from the U.S. conveys all these benefits at such low cost.

People who do the most good practice smart compassion. They stop, think, and give cash.

[OPTIONAL: INSERT CONCLUDING ONE-LINE STATEMENT SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO ARTICLE].

[NAME], is a [TITLE] with [ORGANIZATION] and has been [BRIEFLY HIGHLIGHT ACCOMPLISHMENTS] for [X] years. (Note, only include year if appropriate.)

## SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR IN RESPONSE TO A SPECIFIC NEWS STORY

[Charities, Somali Community Send Food To Somalia](#), CBS Minnesota, August 12, 2011



### Charities, Somali Community Send Food To Somalia

August 12, 2011 6:59 PM

MINNEAPOLIS (WCCO) – Gathered around a massive shipment of food bound for Somalia, members of the Minnesota Somali community asked for support Friday in their efforts to feed their countrymen who are starving because of severe drought.

Hope for the City, Feed My Starving Children and other non-profits are also helping in the local relief effort.

Together the non-profits and the Somali community are sending 250,000 meals to Somalia.

“There are also hospital supplies on this container, and things they can use on the ground for wound care,” said Megan Doyle, of Hope for the City.

Qamar Hassan, a nurse and Somalia native who has lived in Minnesota for the last eight years, said that she is going to help the hungry in her homeland.

“It is very sad, especially for children and women,” she said. “I want to do everything, yet I don’t know what to do. I’m here, it’s horrible.”

If you would like to help the Somali relief effort, go to Hope for the City’s website.

Ms. Toby Collodora  
Executive Editor  
[wcconewstips@wcco.com](mailto:wcconewstips@wcco.com).

Dear Ms. Collodora,

Regarding the article, "Charities, Somali Community Send Food to Somalia", NEWS Section, August 12, 2011, I wanted to provide some information that your readers may find useful.

Americans show tremendous concern for people affected by disasters. When disaster strikes overseas, individuals, groups and communities in the U.S. are quick to organize support for saving lives and reducing human suffering. The goal is always to help as many people as possible, as quickly as possible.

The most effective donations respond to population needs, which can change every day in the early stages of recovery. Collecting clothing, food, bottled water, toys and other household items may feel more emotionally satisfying than monetary donations. But the truth is that even small financial contributions can do more good for more people more quickly and with greater efficiency than unsolicited material donations. For example, financial donations can support critical health and sanitation programs now, and help rebuild infrastructure later. Also, charitable organizations' bulk buying power greatly enlarges the good that small donations can do. A \$2 donation can often feed more people than sending canned food worth \$2, especially when transportation costs and other fees are added.

By giving responsibly, Americans can provide the most beneficial support to survivors and to international disaster relief efforts. Monetary contributions to credible, established relief agencies already on the ground in affected areas ensure that people receive exactly what they need, when they need it. Cash donations allow relief agencies to quickly purchase, organize and deliver supplies that are fresh and familiar to survivors, and that are culturally, nutritionally and environmentally appropriate. No unsolicited material donation sent from the U.S. conveys all these benefits at such low cost.

People who do the most good practice smart compassion. More information is available at [www.smartcompassion.org](http://www.smartcompassion.org)

For a list of established relief agencies already on the ground in Somalia and for more information on how to help, please visit: [www.cidi.org](http://www.cidi.org) or <http://www.interaction.org/crisis-list/interaction-members-respond-drought-crisis-horn-africa>

Sincerely,

Juanita Rilling  
Director  
Center for International Disaster Information