Photography, Videography and Livestream

This book is about creating and sharing visual media, for both professionals and amateurs.

There are two ways to contribute your photos to XR UK, directly to the XR Media Library ‘Picture Desk’ or via XRUK Live Action Content Telegram channel. Please avoid using Google Drive, Dropbox etc.. as the team doesn't have the capacity to download, upload and manage your submissions for you.

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Photography at Actions

If the media attend your actions they won't rely on you to get images. In case they don't, make sure to provide them with a few great shots.

- Consider also what content we can produce that the media would not have access to. The behind the scenes of the action is as interesting at the action itself.
- Think about how the content will be useful on your platforms and on the XRUK social media channels. Again, how can we think beyond just showing what happened? Is there a deeper, richer story to be told through our images?
- We are trying to put storytelling front and centre. To platform diverse voices. Photographers might be interested in capturing both images and words, such as a quote from a subject as to why they are there.

You will probably be taking photos for 2 main outlets - Press and Social media. Photos/video may also be useful for defence if a rebel is taken to Court.

Briefing for photographers

Make sure to give a phone number that the M&M team can use to speak with you on the day, and that you know how to contact the M&M lead in case you have an issue with the folder / chat. If you have a media team working remotely don’t leave until you’ve checked they’ve got everything they need.

Make sure you have agreed with the M&M team how they're expecting you to share your content with them.

If you want crediting, identify your photos; & how you want to be credited. Organise this in advance. If no credit is necessary, M&M should use a credit, eg. “credit XR Nottingham”.

Sharing content with your M&M team

Ideally, your M&M team will set up a folder (and maybe a chat) where you can 'dump' all your photos.

All photographers should use ONE Google Drive folder and ONE Signal/Telegram channel or group chat (ideally the Live Action Content Telgram channel).

The **Live Action Content Telegram** is the default way to share your photos if you're at an action and there is no specific chat or folder to send your images to. Click here to join it and see here for

instructions for uploading.

Practice uploading to the folder / chat BEFORE the action.

Watch this tutorial to learn how to use Google Drive on your phone.

Tips for getting good shots

Set your camera to it’s highest video and camera quality (1080p is best). Check you have enough storage space, battery power & a clean lens.

For early morning / late night actions - use flash to get images of faces.

Landscape video and landscape photos are best

For more detailed guidance, read this page

For Press

Speed is EVERYTHING. Send photos urgently to the M&M team. More beautiful / better resolution / tweaked photos won’t be used if they come in too late - send good, raw images as fast as possible.

Get images that:

- Have the message of the action (eg. on-message banners, placards with good facts)
- Have the call to action, eg. web addresses or hash tags etc on placards
- Tell the story
- Have as many faces as possible all in one shot (the "wedding shot")
- Show the rebels who have given a quote
- identify the town / area / target the action is taking place at (eg. recognisable place / logo of the target company)
- have explicit permission to be used if they contain members of the public or children (ideally including name, age, area they live, job/role in the community)
- have content the media would not have access to, e.g. behind the scenes of the action

Send photos of people with details if possible: name, age, area they live, job/role in the community.

For arrestees

- Take photos / video of police actions, including arrests. If there is any chance of arrest, don’t leave until the rebels / police do!

For fundraising

TBC

For social media

- You can take a bit more time with these images. Press may well use video if it can be edited very quickly (ie. top and tail).

How to take great photos

Content

In a great image, a viewer can immediately get the message you want them to understand without reading any supporting text.

What story does your image tell? What energy does it convey, what emotion? Think of these elements when taking photos.

Top Tips

- Clean the lens on your mobile phone/camera!
- Decide whether you are taking a photo of a person or a scene. If a person, get in close. If a scene, try to include something that shows the location to the viewer, e.g. a group photo that also shows some detail of the court building.
- If lots of people, try to capture the scale of the action. Move somewhere higher to get a shot of a long march, or big occupation.
- Try not to be in too-bright light that’s casting shadows over people’s faces.
- If you are photographing an individual, where are they looking? What is the mood?

Messaging

Is there a placard or banner that conveys the central message of the action? Make sure it's readable, get close enough for it to be a strong element in the photo, check for shadows, don't cut the last letter off the banner.

Make sure there is nothing that conveys a message you don't want to put across - beware offensive t-shirt slogans, branded clothing that doesn't support our message, or words/gestures/activities in the background that detract from what XR is trying to achieve.

Arrangement of elements

Do some directing - can you rearrange the scene to get placards/banners facing camera, matching coloured flags. If many flags and no wind ask people to gently wave the flags to capture the XR logo. Perhaps take time to set up a posed group photo, giving more time to control the shot.

Distractions

Watch out for distracting elements coming into the frame such as other people's limbs or overpowering architectural features. Look at the whole frame when taking the shot. What story does the background tell? Does it distract from your subject?

Everything in the photo potentially conveys a message and even a simple thing like a disposable coffee cup has led to criticisms of Rebels. Yes, these criticisms are unfair but they are also easily avoided and distract from conveying our message.

Quality or quantity?

Take more photos than you think you'll need - BUT only upload the good ones to Telegram and Pics.io.

One great shot is worth one hundred mediocre images, so be judicious in your selection!

Image quality

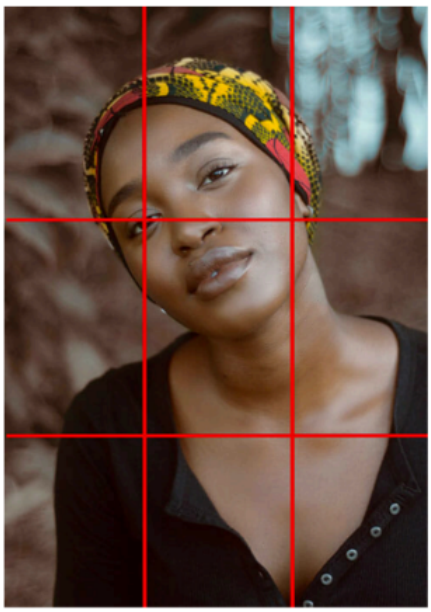
Set your camera or phone to shoot the highest quality at 300 dpi (if the option is available, not all phones have in-depth settings for photography).

Use the format you want to shoot, but make sure to convert your photos to JPEG (if they are not already) before sharing them with others (Telegram or Pics.io).

Composition

Rule of thirds

One popular guide for thinking about composition is called the 'rule of thirds'. The frame is divided into three parts horizontally and vertically so we get a grid as below:





Where the lines cross are ideal placement points for the subject/person you want the eye to be drawn to.

You can place your subject along one of the thirds, so place a person being photographed to the right or left, not the centre.

If something in your photo makes a horizontal line such as a horizon, make it level with one of the horizontal lines.

It looks better to the eye than if it goes across the centre of your image.

Examples





Background

Plain backgrounds rarely look best. Pull the subject away from the background where possible.

You can blur the background using the "portrait mode" on your phone. Don't abuse it as it works better on some photos than others (you can see below that it's not blurry between the arms of the subjects for example so keep this option for a subject who is standing still).

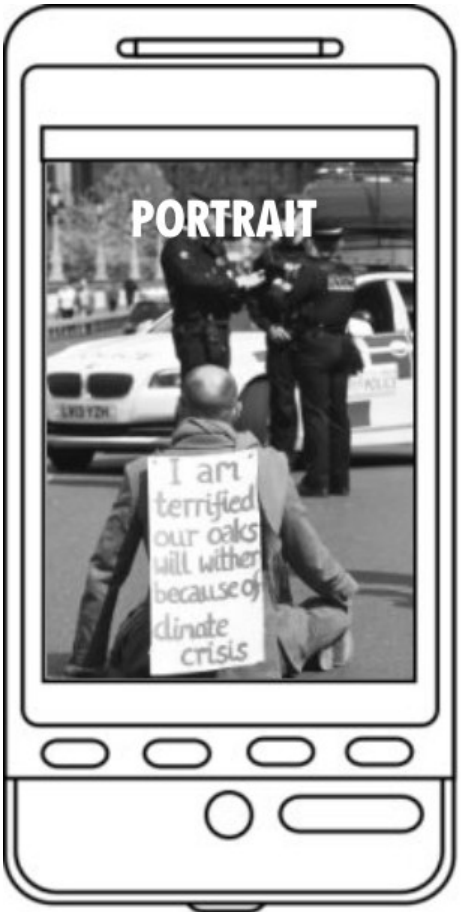


Photos against a wall look better at a 45degree angle:



Portrait or landscape?

As these terms are not self-explanatory for everyone, here's a graphic:





When in doubt, take your pictures in landscape format as they can easily be cropped in portrait format should you need it (for social media for example).

Share your photos

There are two ways to contribute your photos: direct to the XR Media Library ‘Picture Desk’ **or** via XRUK Live Action Content Telegram channel.

Professionals and competent amateurs should upload directly to the XR Media Library - 'Picsio'.

Less confident amateurs should upload to the XRUK Live Action Content Telegram Channel instead, following the instructions on this page.

Live Action Content channel

This channel is for those who are unable to operate Pics.io and anyone who'd like to share photos of their actions with the rest of the movement.

1. Join the Telegram Channel on desktop or your phone.
2. Read the pinned posts for guidance on protocols.
3. Select a maximum of 10 of your best photos (less is more).

Best practice is to upload a batch of photos together with the date, name of action, your name (if you want credit), the name of the XR Local Group (or other groups involved) and a brief description.

To do this make your selection (option click on desktop or individually from a phone library), then make sure ‘Group Items’ tick box is ticked and ‘Compressed’ is unticked (otherwise it will clutter the feed with a long string of low-res photos instead of a box set of hi-res ones).

⚠ Please note that this channel is for breaking news and sharing photos of actions, not to promote future events or to have conversations.

Pics.io

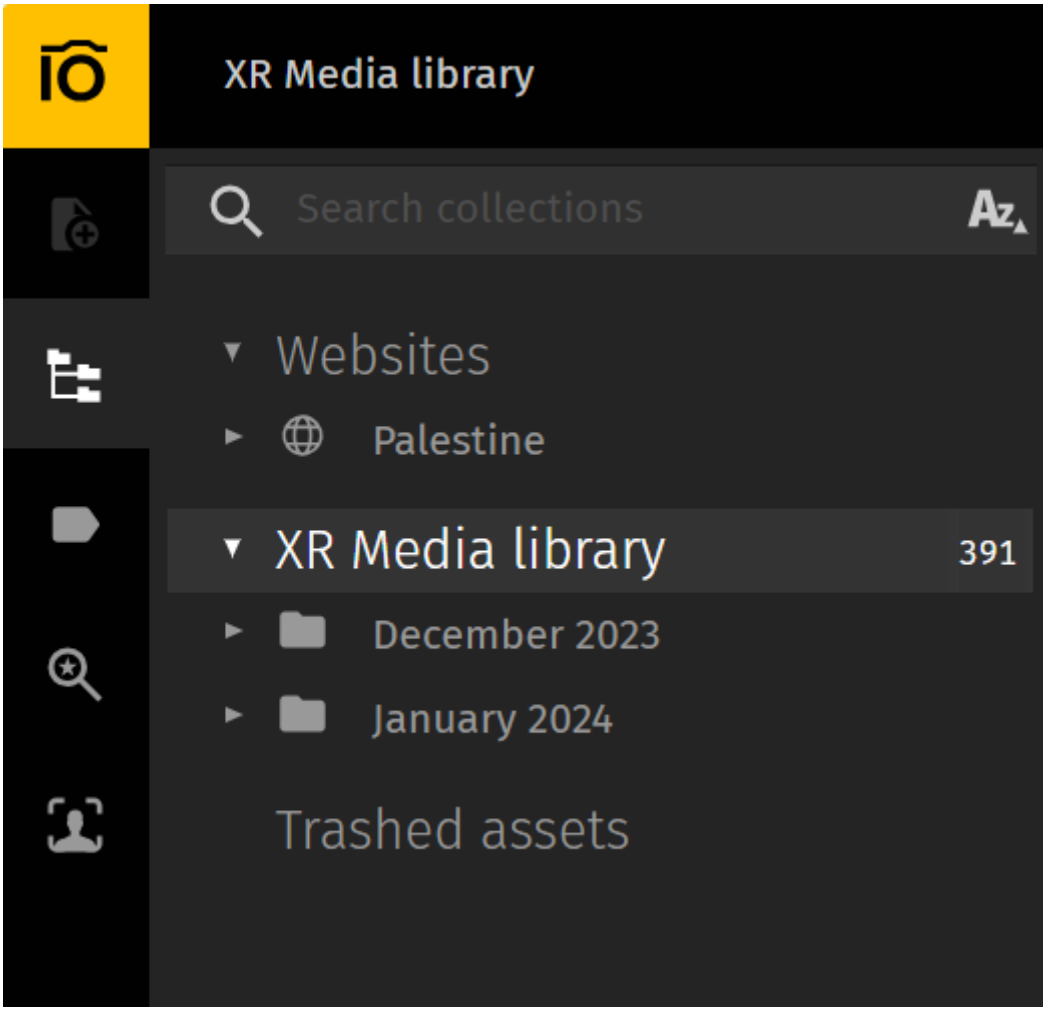
Upload from a desktop

Please try to upload a few early action photos wherever possible, you can edit a fuller selection later and upload again. Select up to 30 of your best photos. If you are able, title your photo with

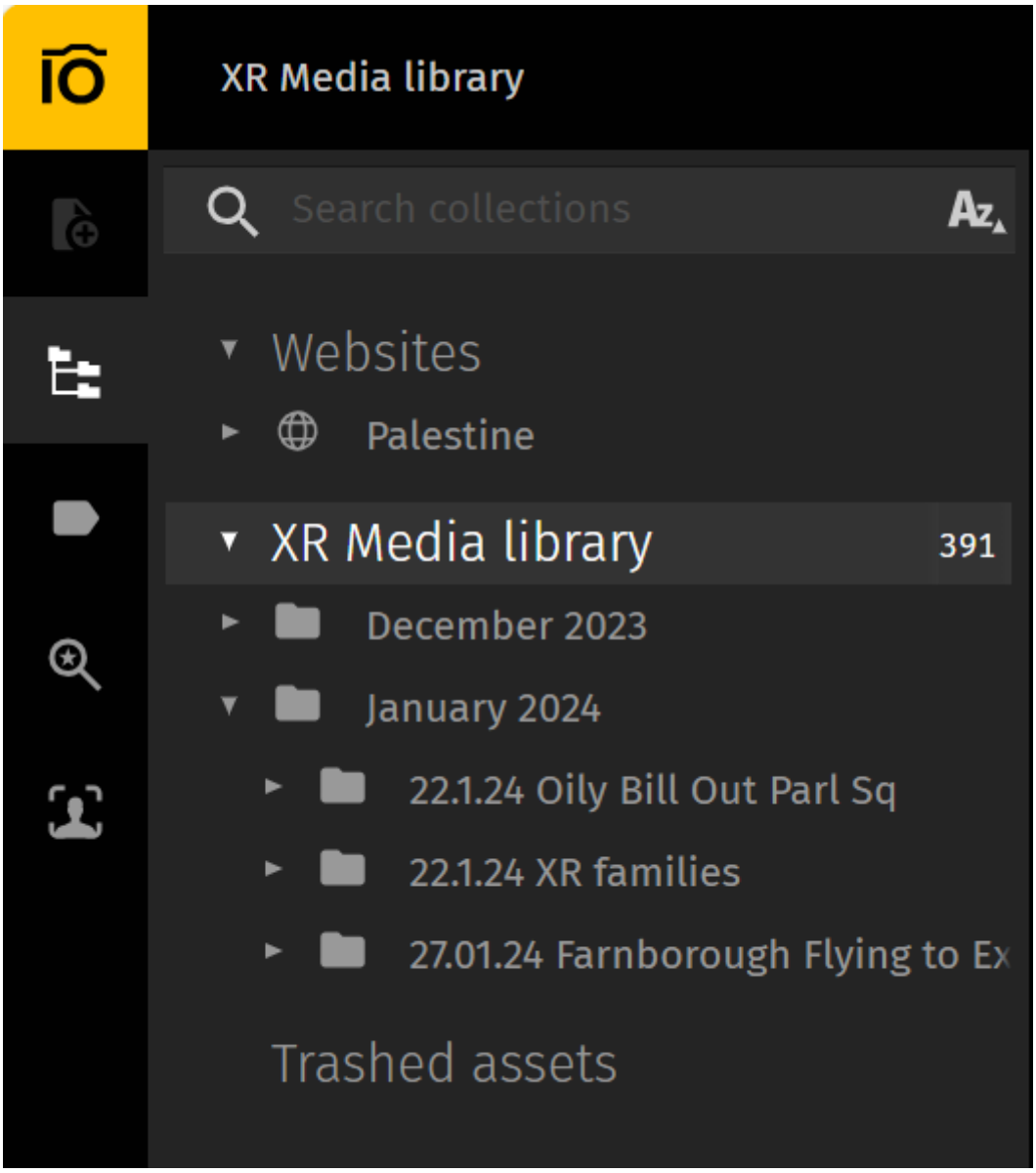
date_name of action_your name (or pseudonym)_Image number.

1. To get started, go to pics.io
   Log in user: **xrphotolibraryuploads@protonmail.com**
   Password (type it don't cut and paste): **Rebelsnappers1!**

2. You will see on the left side a series of folders with year & month. As you roll your mouse over the folder names a series of buttons will appear:

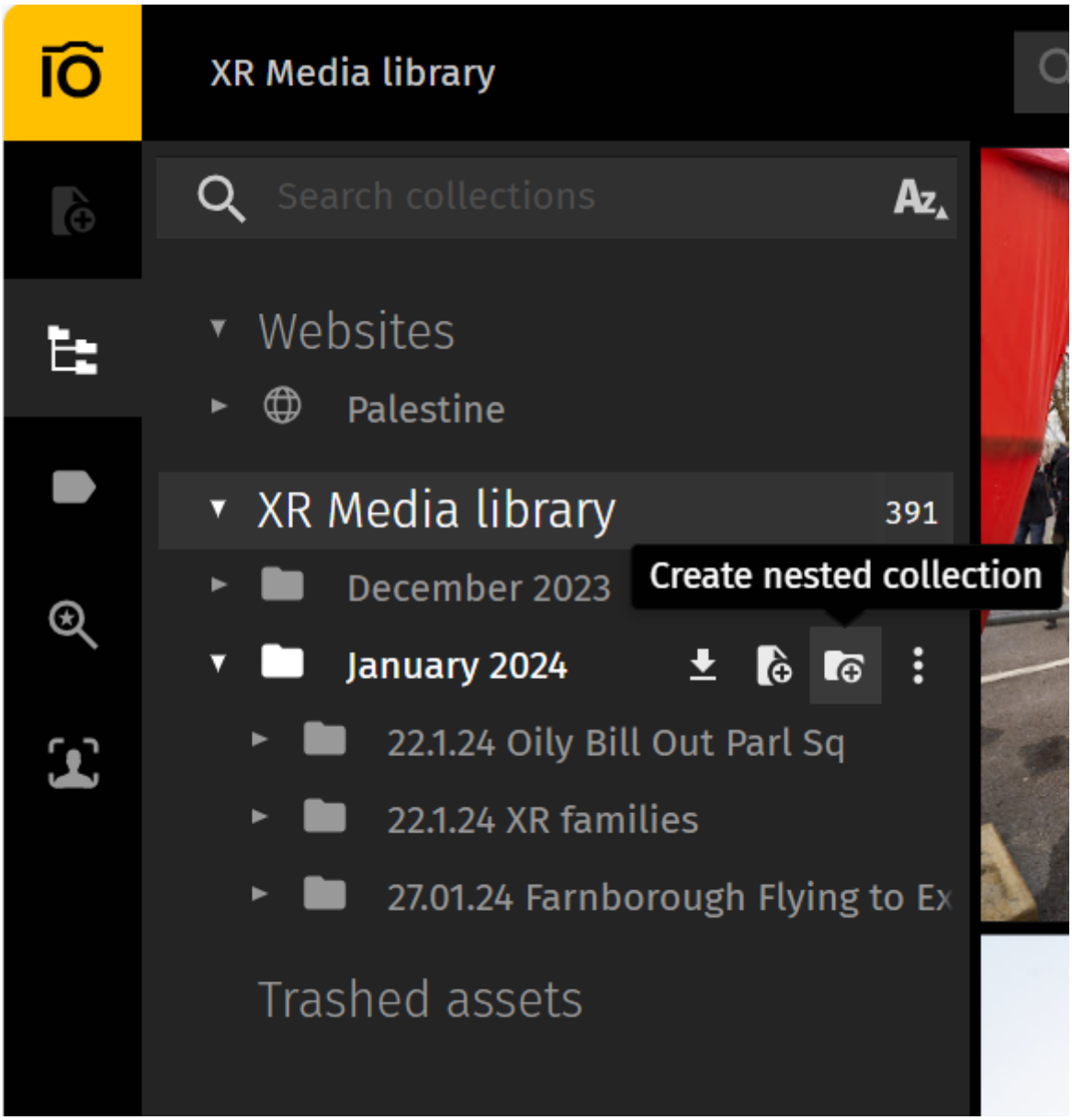


3. Select the folder for the correct month by clicking on it:

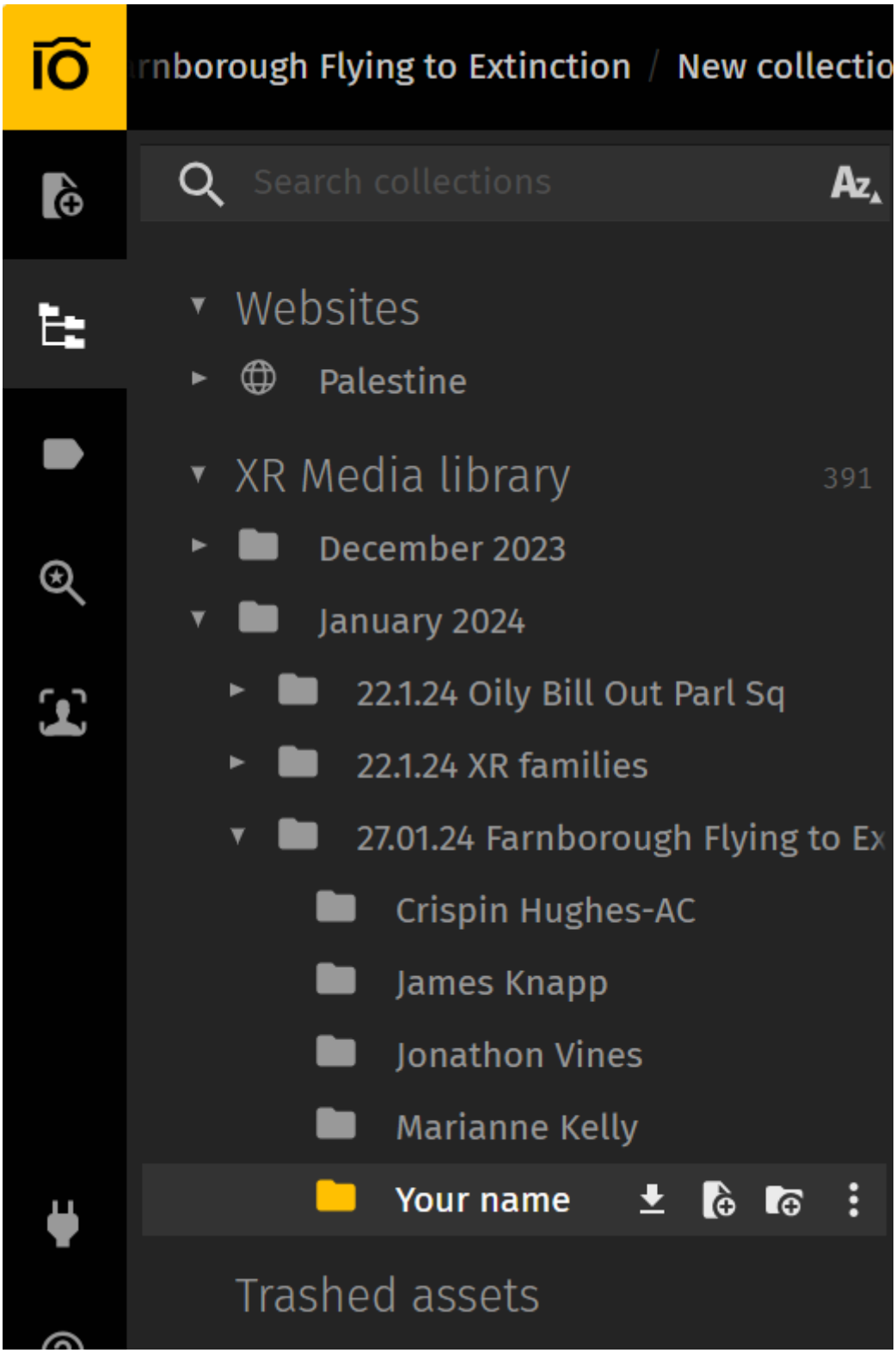


If your Region has its own folder, e.g. North, scroll down to there, then click on the appropriate year and month.

4. If a master Action folder hasn’t already been created, make a new folder using the button menu that appears on the same line as the folder, new folder button is called "create new collection"). Title the new folder with the date and name of the Action:



5. Create a folder within the main Action folder with the photographer’s name, if known:



6. Click Add Asset, Upload Folder or Upload File and select your folder or photo (or use the Drag & Drop option); this will add your files to the upload queue.

7. On the right is a column titled ‘Add metadata for 1 asset’. This is where you can add details to help searches locate your photos more easily:

- Title
- Description
- Keywords

- Photo Credit (If you need the photo to be credited to the photographer, Click on ‘Choose Custom Fields’ then scroll down and select ‘Copyright Notice’ or ‘Credit’).

8. Press Import.

9. When the upload is complete, copy the URL of your folder from the main title bar.

10. Join the XR Media Library PICSIO WhatsApp Group.

11. Post the URL link in the group chat with date, name of action, your name or pseudonym, brief description and if possible a thumbnail photo. For local or regional actions, it’s really important to add a hundred words or so of description so other people who may help distribute the story know what the action was all about.

This Picsio WhatsApp group is for the media upload URL links and tech support questions for the Picture Desk crew only, not chat. (It’s an open channel for anyone with the group link so keep it technical).

We have a team of photo editors, collectively called the ‘Picture Desk’ who curate collections of the best photos into Press Selection albums for distribution. By posting in the WhatsApp group they are alerted to your upload. If you don’t post in the chat, your photos may be overlooked.

Upload from a phone (iPhone or Android)

The upload procedure using the App is the same as above for desktops except you can’t copy the URL of your new folder.

Please also join the Picsio WhatsApp Group and create a post with the date, name of action, your name or pseudonym, brief description and if possible a thumbnail photo.

- Download the relevant App from App store or Google play (search for pics.io)
- Select up to 25 of your best photos (less is more)
- Log in user: xrukmediacontributor@protonmail.com
- Password (type it don’t cut and paste): Rebelsnappers1!

Download the app and set up your log in BEFORE shooting an action, don’t leave it until you’re in the middle of it.

Global Media Library

The XR Global Media Library is at https://show.pics.io/xr-global-media-resources.

It has sections on:

- audio
- graphic design & artwork
- guides
- photography
- video

Documentation for the Global Media Library is available in the library itself, under "Guides".

There is another Media Library for Breaking News at https://show.pics.io/xr-global-media-breaking-news. This is where photos from the UK are usually posted.

How to take great videos

Basic principles

Videography follows many of the same principles as photography, but you might vary how you do it depending on what the video is being used for.

Audio is important - Try to get a quiet location or use headphones with a microphone to get better quality audio without a lot of background noise. This is especially important for live-streaming. Phones prioritise audio from the front-facing camera when live-streaming!

Video in landscape - again, this can be cropped by video editors if necessary and is almost always the best way to give maximum versatility - compilations with both portrait and landscape video look clumsy and unprofessional. Filming at a higher frame rate will mean you can slow videos down for dramatic effect - this will increase file size though.

Tiktok/Reels - TikTok is the world's fastest-growing social media app and is almost entirely portrait (vertical) oriented. This is important to remember if making videos for Tiktok.

- Filming to upload immediately? Film in Portrait.
- Filming to edit for multiple platforms including TikTok? Film in landscape and crop for TikTok during editing.

Facebook/Instagram stories. These can handle both portrait and landscape videos but the screen will not rotate when viewing.

Camera movement

Camera movement is an essential part of filmmaking, but it does mean having additional technical things to combat. The majority of modern mobile phones now include camera stabilisation (to stop camera shake) but this is never flawless!

It is recommended to use a camera gimbal if you're going to be doing a lot of filming - OR if you're joining the XRUK live-streaming team. These are now significantly cheaper than they used to be.

Settings

If you record video at a higher frame rate, you'll be able to create a smoother effect by slowing the footage down during editing. This is not always possible - especially if you want to use live audio! You cannot slow standard footage (25/30fps) down as it will go jittery and will look awful.

Recommended settings are: 60fps (frames per second) and 4k video. Occasionally, if low light is an issue, this will not work as effectively and frames may be dropped. Filming in good lighting is really crucial where possible!

Editing

iMovie is a free and intuitive editing tool on iPhone. You can add titles, music and cut videos to length using this app. Example video filmed and edited entirely on iPhone.

For computers and Android phones, Filmora is a good option.

YouTube is your friend - watch tutorials and learn how to get the best out of your device! It's free!

Things to avoid

- **Transitions**: These can make your videos look really dated. iMovie automatically adds these - please remove them.
- **Zoom**: We can physically move the camera closer or further away, but zoom effects either on the device or during editing will look clumsy and reduce image quality!
- **Famous songs**: Either filming or editing using songs that are not "royalty free" will mean your video is likely to be muted or even removed by social media platforms. It's tempting to use Bowie's "Rebel Rebel" - but don't! iMovie does provide soundtracks that can be used AND it automatically edits these to fit the movement and length of the video - very clever.
- If you can avoid **using photos in videos**, do. It's not a crucial rule but current trends tend to avoid this.
- Try not to add **portrait clips into a landscape video**. This totally throws the whole thing.
- Use the XR fonts if you add text to your video.

The best advice is to practise! Just give it a go!

Resources

A short video to learn the basics of video-making.

A guide to make video content for XR (some of it is a bit outdated and will be reviewed).

Check this folder as it contains archives that can help you if you edit videos for XR.

Livestreaming

How to livestream

Start here if you want to learn how to livestream an action!

Get started

Here are a few questions to ask yourself before visiting our other pages on the subject.

□□ When?

- When is the action?
- When does it need to be livestreamed? (for example: a specific speech or the whole shebang)
- How long will it last?

□□ Where?

- Where is it happening and where do you need to go?
- Where are you ABLE to go? (if part of the action is inside a building you might not have a connection and you'll have to remain outside, or record the action on your phone instead of live streaming it)
- On what platform(s) will you live stream? Do you have access to these platforms? (admin rights, passwords...). Are the apps installed on your phone?

□□ Who?

- Is it an XR action? Are other groups involved?
- Who/what is the target?
- Who is willing to speak on camera about the action?

□□ What?

- What is the action about?
- What material will you need on the day?

but also:

⚠ What are the risks for you?

- A spicy action is generally less risky for a livestreamer (they don’t want to arrest you while on camera but it doesn't mean it can't happen)
- Will you be able to walk away if you don’t want to be arrested?
- If you’re ok with being arrested, is your phone secure? Can you use a burner phone to livestream instead?

Technicalities

Screenshots coming soon! You can see them here in the meantime (activate slideshow mode on the top right corner)

Checklist

- ☐ Switch off WiFi
- ☐ Switch to "do not disturb" or switch off the notifications
- ☐ Switch on the automatic rotation of your screen
- ☐ Copy the blurb
- ☐ Install your phone on a stabiliser if using one
- ☐ Plug everything you need (headphones, battery pack...)

Livestreaming

Get people to watch your livestream

A blurb is a short description of what is happening on your livestream to get people to watch it.

You need to prepare it in advance, save it on your phone (notes app, as a text message...) so when you're ready to go live, you'll only have to copy and paste it.

Templates

Facebook

LIVE from XXX Location

Today we are targeting XXX because XXX What & Why

Support the action: comment, like & share.

Visit this link for more information: XXX or any relevant call to action

#hashtag #hashtag @tagsomeone (example: for Restore Nature Now, use #RestoreNatureNow)

Twitter / X

Say you’re live + use the headline + hashtags as you only have 280 characters available

Instagram

Live from XXX Location for XXX name of the action

Examples

1

LIVE: Protestors in Milton Keynes douse Boris Johnson in Oil!

Whilst visiting the site of a proposed new oil shaft in Milton Keynes, Extinction Rebellion rebels surprise Boris Johnson and cover him in "oil". Don't worry though, it's vegan and eco-friendly! We are even offering to pay his dry cleaning bills. (He didn't accept).

We're doing this because despite committing to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 (which in itself is too late) the Prime Minister Mr. Johnson just gave the greenlight to four new oil drilling operations on UK soil, with plans to pour it over indigenous communities. Extracting and burning fossil fuels increases greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which directly leads to global overheating and catastrophic climate change.

We're asking Boris Johnson to cancel all fossil fuel extraction operations now. Please sign our petition here: + link.

#SoilNotOil #ActNow

2

LIVE:

Extinction Rebellion, Stay Grounded and Scientist Rebellion blockade Farnborough Airport in protest against the airport's expansion and the polluting private jet industry.

This action is part of the #MakeThemPay campaign, uniting citizens and scientists from around the globe behind three demands: Ban Private Jets, Tax Frequent Flyers and Make Polluters Pay.

Aviation as a whole is the pinnacle of climate injustice, with 1% of the population being responsible for 50% of its emissions and 80% of the world population never having set foot on a plane.

A report by @Oxfam highlighted that the richest 1% grabbed nearly two-thirds of all new wealth worth- $42 trillion- created since 2020, almost twice as much money as the bottom 99 percent of the world’s population.

#BanPrivateJets #MakePollutersPay #TaxFrequentFlyers #Farnborough #ExtinctionRebellion

Material for livestreaming

Technically, you only need a phone. But we're going to explain how you can make the whole experience more comfortable, especially if you're planning on livestreaming full days of action.

Phone

Before the action:

- install all the updates
- make sure you're logged into all the apps you'll need on the day
- fully charge your phone
- make sure you have enough data (or upgrade your plan), you'll roughly need 1GB per hour of stream
- charge your battery pack(s) and make sure your cables work

Headphones / Microphones

You don’t have to use headphones or a microphone, but the sound might be better with them.

Use earphones with built in mic (when doing interview you can pass on the bit with the mic to the person you interview).

You can also use a microphone:

- A long cable one is a good option for interviews so you can be farer away from the person you’re interviewing and still frame bits of the action
- Make sure to have a “windsock” to put on top and have a better sound (especially if it's windy where you are!)
- Test it at home before you go!

Gimbal / Stabiliser / Monopod

Not essential but can make the experience more comfortable and the image more stable.

Always try your material and train with it before the action (also make sure it’s properly charged and that you have a spare battery pack for it if you’re planning a long livestream)

Comfort

Having trousers or a jacket with pockets is super helpful to store your battery packs, cables, headphones... so they are easily accessible.

Check the weather in case you need a rain jacket or even an umbrella (not the most convenient but you don’t want your phone to drown).

Bring some snacks and drinks.



On the photo above, you can see that the livestreamers have different levels of equipment, from a simple phone plugged into a battery pack, to a more professional setting with both a phone and a GoPro! What's important is having working order gears you know how to operate to show the world what XR is up to!

Content for livestreaming - What to talk about?

Before the action

Take some notes on a very small piece of paper (you don't want to read from it, just write a few bullet points):

- What do you want to talk about?
- Have a few facts ready

During the action

□□ Introduce yourself

You can start in 'selfie mode' (if you're comfortable showing your face) then switch to your front camera (practice beforehand so you'll know where the options are)

□□ Facts

Share your facts sporadically (nobody will remember anything if you dump facts on them, have 2-3 facts ready that you can repeat & comment regularly during the livestream)

□□ Describe the action

- What's happening? Where? Why?
- What happened before (if you didn't start the livestream at the start of the action, and also to let people who just joined the livestream know).
- Comment, use humour, but don't go off topic.

□□ Interview

Interview people taking part. See this page to learn about interviews technics.

□□ And repeat the whole process (for the viewers who missed the start of the livestream).

Etiquette

No swearing No jargon (or explain it) Non XR people will watch so try to have a ‘neutral approach’ Remind the watchers to share, comment, like

Content for livestreaming - What to show?

Capture the action: banners, show number of people, try different points of view of the action if possible (but move slowly to avoid having a shaky image).

If you are filming speeches, go to the front to film.

Avoid filming the public faces (go behind them if possible).

Watch out for the drummers (if they are here): they are loud! So stay clear of them if possible. It's almost impossible to live stream (or at least record an interview) while they're playing because the sound is going to be awful (unless they are far away).

Make sure you know in advance if they are going to be here and what time. You can coordinate your livestream with the band so they start once you're done (eg if you're planning a 30 minutes live stream, tell them, and maybe you can conclude your livestream by "That's all from us here for now, we will end this livestream by listening to a bit of music" and film the drummers for a few minutes before ending the livestream).

Livestreaming

Interview & Presentating skills

Get ready to present a livestream and interview participants with these slides.

Livestreaming

How long should a livestream be

Minimum 30 minutes

Go live for 30 minutes minimum. It will give people time to connect and follow the action.

Most social media platforms will send out a notification to tell your followers you're going live. But the platforms don't like lots of consecutive streams as they think you're trying to spam people with notifications, so they stop sending out notifications…

No maximum time, apart from your own endurance (you can also plan to have someone to relay you: in that case, use a burner you can hand over to the person instead of your personal smartphone!)

XRUK Livestream Team record was a 9 hours live during the April Rebellion in 2022, which was made possible thanks to multiple experienced livestreamers. No one expect such a long live from a local group action □□

Engage with your audience

Your audience will have more time to figure that you are live and click on the video to watch it.

Especially if you wrote a cool blurb!

That will give you more time to tell the whole story (and repeat it once in a while for late viewers).

If you do a short livestream (less than 10 minutes), then another one just a few minutes later, your audience might think that the livestream has ended and won't watch the next bit.

So make sure to plan your livestream when something exciting is happening, take your time to show the whole action, talk about it and interview people.

Thirty minutes is actually no much time to do all that!

Share the link of your livestream

Doing one big livestream instead of multiple ones means you'll have a unique livestream link to share around to encourage people to watch.

If you have someone at home, this person can send this link via email to your local group's mailing list and ask people to watch, engage with the live or even join you in the streets.

You can also share the link on Twitter/X, in Instagram Stories, on various Facebook pages and groups, in chats etc.

Using Photos Legally

Overview

On multiple occasions, XR UK has been fined by copyright agencies for using photos without permission. These agencies can and do trawl through entire websites searching for images in breach of copyright.

If you're using photos or artwork on a website, poster, flyer or leaflet, even for internal training purposes like Rebel Toolkit, please ensure you find out who owns them before you publish them. Once you have found out who owns them, you must get their permission. If you can't find out who owns them or you can't get their written consent then **do not** use them, as the rights to use photography/artwork can be expensive and soon mounts up.

If you have previously been responsible for adding content and are uncertain of the owner of any images you've used, please remove these images.

Resources:

- XR pay for a Global Media Library and the photograhers who upload images here have given their permission for them to be used.
- There are also a folders for Breaking News and a 2018-2020 archive.
- Pixaby.com has millions of royalty free images that can be downloaded.

If you have any questions about copyright please email xr-legal@riseup.net.

Annual Local Group round-up video

This yearly video round-up has been edited for the list few years (see video's below).

Share your videos

The 'XRUK Live Action Content Channel' channel is the place to share your video clips.

1. Join the Telegram Channel on desktop or your phone.
2. Share video clips- in landscape orientation and 10 seconds to 1 min long preferable.
3. Include the name of the XR Local Group(s) involved, date of the action and name of action and/or a brief description.

2025

https://www.youtube.com/embed/iuJQzI5OAPI?si=zfMHYPvLLC1CACCO

2024

https://www.youtube.com/embed/6QQ_Q4H3scw?si=y4bKL0Pf7e1JUSeF