

4pm

McDonald ad backs whaling ban

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Sir Trevor McDonald is voicing a hard-hitting TV ad campaign to persuade Caribbean nations not to support Japan's plans to resume commercial whaling.

The TV ad campaign, which uses the strapline "Tell Japan we'll keep the ban", will air in six Caribbean nations and features the voice of Sir Trevor, the Trinidad-born former News at Ten presenter.

It graphically depicts a child playing in blood-red Caribbean surf, in a scene intercut with footage of whales being slaughtered, and will screen around 1,000 times throughout May on TV across the region.

The £500,000 ad campaign has been devised and funded by Lord Ashcroft, the deputy chairman of the Conservative party. It will be shown in the island nations of Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Lord Ashcroft is aiming to garner public support to persuade each of the Caribbean islands to vote against Japanese-led plans to overturn the ban on commercial whaling at the International Whaling Commission meeting which begins in Alaska at the end of May.

He argued that the six island nations have "succumbed to overtures" of financial assistance from the Japanese government in return for pro-whaling votes.

"We must persuade our Caribbean friends to resist the Japanese bribery and to vote in favour of the whales and a continuation of the ban," said Lord Ashcroft.

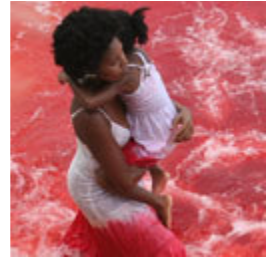
The campaign is being run in conjunction with the UK- and US-based campaigning group the Environmental Investigation Agency.

Mr Ashcroft has also published an open letter to six nations calling on their support and looking at possibilities like cash-generative alternatives such as whale watching tourism.

The ad was produced through independent TV and multimedia company Glashead.

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Anti-whaling ad: funded by Lord Ashcroft and the Environmental Investigation Agency