

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release
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Burmese Stories Coming to Sheffield

"The command came. The machine gun blew her off the armoured car. I ran to her body and she was already dead. 3000 people were killed on the streets that day. And I said, whatever I face, I have to stay alive to fight this."

**WHAT: Sheffield premiere of *Seven Years With Hard Labour*
Scripted by Christine Bacon and Sara Masters**
WHEN: Tuesday 6th July @ 7:00pm
WHERE: Library Theatre, Surrey St, Sheffield S1 1XZ
TICKETS: Free!

As part of Sheffield's Summer of Sanctuary, **iceandfire** theatre are presenting ***Seven Years with Hard Labour***, performed by professional actors who are members of their outreach network, Actors for Human Rights.

This performance will be the Sheffield premiere of this script, which weaves together four accounts from former Burmese political prisoners now living in the UK, including Sheffield resident Khun Saing. Through their engaging, divergent and often humorous stories, a damning picture of a ruthless military regime is painted.

Khung Saing, who was imprisoned three times for his political activities in Burma and whose story features in the play, will be part of a post-show Q&A on the night.

This script was commissioned by Index on Censorship and launched at the Global Forum on Freedom of Expression in Oslo in June 2009. It received its UK premiere in London in August 2009.

In the script, **Khung Saing** describes some of the ways he endured the harsh prison conditions:

"I learnt a lot from the older prisoners and I passed on my experience. How to prepare before you went on hunger strikes. Or, if you go against the prison authorities you must wear at least two sarongs and two shirts for eventually they will beat you. Two sarongs are better than one!"

Clea Langton, iceandfire's Sheffield-based Regional Co-ordinator, says:

"As actors we can give faces and voices to the unseen and the unheard. We try to redress some of the misconceptions about asylum seekers and refugees with more accurate information and personal stories that will appeal to many people in Sheffield."

Khun Saing and Clea Langton are all available for interviews along with Christine Bacon, co-writer of ***Seven Years with Hard Labour***.

iceandfire will also stage their flagship production, ***Asylum Monologues***, as part of Sheffield's Summer of Sanctuary on **13th July at the Library Theatre**. This script is made up of first-hand accounts of three individuals who have been through the UK's asylum system, including a new story of a twelve year-old girl who has been detained twice in a UK immigration detention centre.

These performances are being supported by Sheffield City Council, as part of Summer of Sanctuary. Any money raised from the shows will be donated to the Karen Community Association and Burmese Political Prisoners (6 July) and ASSIST (13 July).

For more information about this press release or to arrange interviews, please call Charlotte George at iceandfire, on 07954 199307, media@iceandfire.co.uk
www.iceandfire.co.uk

Background Notes:

iceandfire explores human rights stories through performance. Over the last seven years we have become a theatre company with a distinct, contemporary voice creating work of excellence across our four work strands: production, outreach, education and participation.
www.iceandfire.co.uk.

Actors for Human Rights is iceandfire's national outreach network, made up of over 500 professional actors who are dedicated to drawing public attention to a range of contemporary human rights concerns. The performers involved donate their time and their profile to encourage public acceptance of human rights and to give voice to people whose basic human rights have been violated.

www.iceandfire.co.uk/afhr