

MEDIA RELEASE**For Immediate Release****18 May 2009****Actors call for inquiry into 'extraordinary rendition'**

iceandfire have joined with Reprieve to spread the word about those who have suffered torture and abuse under the CIA's counter-terror method known as 'extraordinary rendition'. The two organizations have jointly released a viral video campaign to encourage people to find out more about the practice and to call for full inquiries from both the UK and US Governments.

You can see the video online now, at www.renditionmonologues.org.

Extraordinary rendition is the kidnapping and illegal transport of terrorism suspects and others for interrogation in countries with a reputation for torture. A long list of nations, including the UK, has colluded in these rendition flights.

iceandfire's outreach play *Rendition Monologues*, which is being performed in London on 24 May, tells the harrowing first-hand testimonies of victims of this practice, including the story of Binyam Mohamed, who was recently returned to UK soil from Guantanamo Bay. The video campaign uses a two-minute segment of this script, with the actors speaking directly to the audience, through the camera, about the way in which they were snatched by the CIA.

Christine Bacon is the co-Artistic Director of iceandfire, and the Director of their outreach project Actors for Human Rights. She compiled the script using material available on the public record, including testimonies from four men who are victims of extraordinary rendition. She says:

"Because of the secrecy surrounding this issue, it tends to be cloaked in a conspiracy-theory haze. With this campaign, as with the live *Rendition Monologues* show, we want to remind people about the human beings behind the headlines and contribute to a full reckoning of the human rights abuses committed in the name of the 'War on Terror'."

Clive Stafford Smith, Director and Founder of Reprieve, says that the issue of rendition cannot be swept under the carpet:

"If anyone doubts the shocking reality of rendition, they should see this video. The word 'rendition' sounds innocuous enough, but what it actually means is kidnapping and torture, without any kind of legal process whatsoever. Reprieve's client Binyam Mohamed – one of several prisoners whose stories are brought to life in *Rendition Monologues* – knows all about rendition's true face."

Bisher al-Rawi, another former Guantánamo prisoner along with Binyam Mohamed, saw one of the first performances of *Rendition Monologues* in London in June. He was deeply affected:

"Really, I am almost lost for words. The show was really very moving, scarily so. The performance really brought it home. I was almost living through their experiences and mine as well."

Despite the election of Barack Obama and the control of Congress by the Democrats, Ms Bacon says the United States must do more to bring the perpetrators of extraordinary rendition to justice:

“Even though President Obama has made some progress in outlawing torture and acknowledging the CIA’s crimes, we need to ensure these stories are not forgotten. Pressure must be brought upon the US Government, and any other Governments which have colluded with them, to conduct a full investigation into the crimes committed.”

For more information about this press release or to arrange an interview, please call Charlotte George on 07954 199 307, media@iceandfire.co.uk www.iceandfire.co.uk/afhr

Background Notes:

iceandfire explores human rights stories through performance. The company was founded in 2003 by playwright Sonja Linden inspired by her seven years as writer in residence at the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture. Over the last six years they 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 300 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

Reprieve uses the law to enforce the human rights of prisoners, from death row to Guantánamo Bay. Reprieve prioritizes the cases of prisoners accused of the most extreme crimes, such as acts of murder or terrorism, as it is in such cases that human rights are most likely to be jettisoned or eroded. The prisoners that we assist typically cannot find advocates elsewhere. We focus on cases involving the world’s most powerful governments, especially those that should be upholding the highest standards when it comes to fair trials.
www.reprieve.org.uk

The viral campaign is also available on Youtube,
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmZJT02fzY>