



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Amnesty Hosts Hard-Hitting Performances of Real Life Stories

I have been through an experience that I never thought to encounter in my darkest nightmares. Before this ordeal, "torture" was an abstract word to me. I could never have imagined that I would be its victim. - Binyam Mohamed, Rendition Monologues

iceandfire theatre have joined with **Amnesty International UK** to raise awareness about people who have suffered human rights abuses, both within the UK and abroad, in a series of free performances every Thursday night in September.

Members of iceandfire's Outreach project **Actors for Human Rights**, will perform rehearsed readings about asylum seekers in the UK, the occupation of Palestine, extraordinary rendition and political prisoners in Burma. **Each performance will be followed by a Q&A with the writer, a campaigner from Amnesty International and a person whose story is featured in the play.**

The season kicks off with **Rendition Monologues** on 3 September. *Rendition Monologues* tells the harrowing first-hand testimonies of victims of the CIA's "extraordinary rendition" program, which involves the kidnap and transfer of terror suspects to countries that are known to use torture. The play includes the story of Binyam Mohamed, who was recently returned to UK soil from Guantanamo Bay after 3 ½ years. He has never been charged with a crime. Recently performed at the Edinburgh Fringe, it received glowing reviews from *The Scotsman* and *WhatsOnStage* – which awarded it *****.

On 10 September it's **Seven Years With Hard Labour**, iceandfire's newest outreach play, commissioned by Index on Censorship – a previous winner at the Amnesty Media Awards. This play weaves together four accounts from former Burmese political prisoners now living in the UK. Through their engaging, divergent and often humorous stories, a damning picture of a ruthless military regime is painted.

Palestine Monologues (17 September) includes Palestinian and Israeli voices and explores the day to day experiences of life under occupation. It also highlights turning points individuals have had when they have seen past the dominant and conflicting narratives perpetuating the conflict.

Actors for Human Rights' flagship production, **Asylum Monologues**, is a first-hand account of the UK's asylum system in the words of people who have experienced it and has been seen by thousands of people across the UK. With personal testimony at its core combined with public opinion, political statements and statistical fact, this production disseminates what it really means to be displaced in the UK.

Speakers throughout the series will include former Amnesty International USA expert Anne Fitzgerald, Amnesty Burma campaigner Haider Kikabhoy, former Burmese political prisoner Ko Aung, Amnesty International UK's Crisis Campaign Manager Kristyan Benedict, Mike Kaye, advocacy manager for the Still Human Still Here Coalition, Congolese asylum seeker Germaine Naruhama, Linda Ramsden from the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions and iceandfire's Sonja Linden and Christine Bacon.

WHAT: Series of performances by iceandfire's Actors for Human Rights
WHEN: Rendition Monologues, 3 September @ 7pm
Seven Years With Hard Labour, 10 September @ 7pm
Palestine Monologues, 17 September @ 7pm
Asylum Monologues, 24 September @ 7pm
WHERE: Amnesty International Human Rights Action Centre
17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA
TICKETS: FREE. To book go to www.amnesty.org.uk/events

For more information about this press release or to arrange an interview, please call Charlotte George on 07954 199 307, media@iceandfire.co.uk Or Sarah Green at Amnesty International, 020 7033 1549. 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 400 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.

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Amnesty International is made up of ordinary people from across the world standing up for humanity and human rights. Their purpose is to protect individuals wherever justice, fairness, freedom and truth are denied. During much of their history, their campaigning has focused on prisoners, but they now respond to the changing patterns of human rights violations in the world.

www.amnesty.org.uk