

# Amnesty International

## IMPRISONED WRITERS



DAILY READINGS: TOP AUTHORS READ FROM WORK THAT HIGHLIGHTS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES & RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Wednesday 15 August

Writers at Risk *with* Scottish PEN

### Today's readings:

**Amanuel Asrat - *War's Curse*:** In July 2001, the Eritrean government embarked upon a campaign to silence its critics, arresting opposition politicians, students and a number of journalists. As part of the resultant crackdown, Asrat was arrested on along with the editors of all privately owned newspapers who were arrested on the same day. It is believed that 11 of these journalists are still detained. The limited information available suggests that Asrat was detained in the maximum-security Eiraeiro prison. According to unverified information leaked in February 2016, he was then allegedly transferred to an undisclosed location along with other inmates.

**Irina Ratushinskaya – *Poems from the Small Zone*:** For her advocacy of human rights Irina was sentenced to serve seven years in a labour camp; she was released in 1986 after serving almost four years. After she left the country, her citizenship was revoked. While in prison Ratushinskaya wrote some 250 poems, first scratching them into bars of soap and then, after memorising them, washing them away.

**Liu Xia – *One Bird after Another and Empty Chairs* & Liu Xiabo - *Untitled*:** Liu Xia is a highly regarded poet, artist and human rights defender in China. She was placed under house arrest in Beijing by Chinese authorities in October 2010. She was finally allowed to leave China and travelled to Germany in July this year. Her husband, the writer and activist **Dr Liu Xiaobo** was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. He was the first Nobel Peace prize winner to die in custody.

**Mahvash Sabet – *Lights Out*:** Mahvash Sabet was one of a group of seven Baha'i leaders known as the 'Yaran-i-Iran' – 'Friends of Iran' – detained in 2008 for their faith and activities related to running the affairs of the Bahá'í community in Iran. Sabet was arrested on 5 March 2008 while on a trip to Mashhad to visit family. On 18 September 2017, Sabet was the first of the group to be released from prison, having served almost a decade in detention. Following her release, she has issued a public call for the release of her six fellow detainees.

### Today's readers:

**Maimouna Jallow** is a producer, author and journalist. Her latest project, *Re-Imagined*, is an online contest inviting African writers to imagine the traditional folktale for today's youth.

**L J MacWhirter** is an author and award-winning copywriter. Her debut novel, *Black Snow Falling*, is an Elizabethan Fantasy aimed at young adults, was published earlier this month.

**Chitra Nagarajan** is an author and activist, primarily focused on the promotion of human rights and peace in Nigeria.

**Teresa Solana's** novel *A Not So Perfect Crime*, her first novel, won the 2007 Brigada 21 Prize for best noir in Catalan and *A Shortcut to Paradise*, her second, was short-listed for the 2008 Salambó Prize for best novel in Catalan.

### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALL TO ACTION:

Photojournalist Shawkan has been locked up in a brutal Egyptian prison for over four years. Tell the Egyptian authorities to drop the charges and release Shawkan immediately.

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/egypt-journalism-not-crime>