

Amnesty International

IMPRISONED WRITERS



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

Sunday 19 August

Women Empowering Women *with* Freedom from Torture

Every survivor of torture has a different story and different needs. Freedom from Torture offers counselling, group and creative writing therapy in centres around the UK. <https://edinburghfft.org/>

Today's readings:

Haydeh – *Flying the Flag for Freedom* Haydeh was born in Iran and studied Sociology at the University of Tehran. She was involved in the 1979 revolution and, as a supporter of the 'Fadaaieaan Organisation', was arrested in 1983 and spent over five years in Evin Prison. Having partially recovered from the mental and physical harm of her incarceration, Haydeh emigrated to Britain in 1991. She took an MA course in Social Policy and a postgrad in teaching in London, where she currently teaches in a primary school. In 2010 with friends, Haydeh established the 'Association in Defence of Political Prisoners in Iran', and is active with many socio-political issues – human rights, civil and children's rights. She is grateful to be able to concentrate on writing about her life, and now her prison experiences.

Elif – *My Interview Story* Elif Kapar is from Turkey. She was in prison for 9 years. She is a member of Write to Life, Freedom from Torture's creative writing and performance group. Elif is a vegan animal lover, and a person who doesn't give up. She starts each day by sending love to somebody who's been annoying her, and thinking of ten things for which she's grateful. She believes that there will always be good people in the world, and says this is how she has survived

Kayitesi – *The Last Time I Saw You* My name is Kayitesi. I am from Burundi. I was tortured, beaten and gang raped by Tutsi militia. I had to run into hiding in the bush hoping I would find safety there. I met a stranger who offered to help me flee the country; but I ended up locked in a house in London for three and half years before I escaped. In 2010 I was detained in Yarl's Wood Removal Centre for six weeks. I became more traumatised, depressed, stressed and suicidal. However, I do thank FFT especially Write to Life, which gave me moral support to become who I am now. Write to Life and its volunteers help people like me with their new life in London, and to feel comfortable in their homes. We meet every two weeks and share our experiences through poems and other writing. When I joined the group at least my tears stopped, though sometimes they still fall. I have been in the UK for more than 15 years, still waiting to get my refugee status.

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>

Soraya Moham - *The Voice that Changed My World: My Voice* As I look back, a piece of paper and my old fashioned pen have always made me calm, and when my emotions have been injured they still did well. Especially when I did not want to disclose my feelings to others, I just wrote them down then buried them under lots of crosses. Still it was good. When I had lost the way home, I arrived in a land where the pen went differently. But still the same old-fashioned kind of pen embraces my fingers; just to wriggle them proved another sign of the life in me to others. Write to Life is a big incentive not to break apart from my emotions. To keep them alive, and in touch with the aura of sunshine. But there is still a big gap, a wound that needs to be healed by the words coming out to describe the pain. Write to Life is the treatment I need to stay alive.

Today's readers:

Lin Anderson is a Scottish crime-fiction author, best known for her Rhona MacLeod series. Her latest book is the 13th in the Rhona MacLeod series, *Sins of the Dead*.

Mary Lynn Bracht is an American author of Korean descent living in London, who grew up in a large ex-pat community of women who came of age in post-war South Korea. Her first novel, *White Chrysanthemum*, was published earlier this year.

Sue Purkiss is a former English teacher turned author, writing novels for children and young-adults. Recent publications include *Emily's Surprising Voyage*, which was set on the SS Great Britain, and a short story in an anthology called *Daughters of Time*.

Antti Tuomainen is an award-winning Finnish crime-fiction author. His latest novel is *Palm Beach, Finland*.

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