

Amnesty International

IMPRISONED WRITERS



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

Monday 20 August

BRAVE: Human Rights Defenders

Today's readings:

Bonface Massah is a person with albinism in Malawi. As a person with albinism himself, Bonface risks his life to travel to communities across Malawi, seeking to educate them about the condition, debunking myths about the magical powers of the body parts of people with albinism, and fighting for the rights of people with albinism to access education, employment and healthcare.

Elected to the Rio de Janeiro city council in 2016, **Marielle Franco** was known for defending women's rights, with a particular focus on the black women's struggle, as well as LGBTI rights, and for denouncing police abuses and extrajudicial executions, particularly in the favelas. Marielle and her driver were shot dead while driving through Rio's Estacio neighbourhood after participating in a public debate on 14 March, 2018. Today's reading was written by her friend, and director of Amnesty International Brazil, Jurema Werneck, a month after the assassination.

Sakris Kupila is a 22-year-old medical student, youth activist and a defender of transgender rights. Sakris is being denied legal gender recognition because he refuses to fulfil the requirements of Finland's current, humiliating process – which requires a diagnosis of mental disorder and enforced sterilisation. Because of his work advocating for the rights of trans people, Sakris has faced harassment, intimidation, threats of violent beatings and open hostility, forcing him to take a year away from his education.

Tep Vanny is a Cambodian land rights activist known most prominently for her work surrounding the housing community in what used to be the Boeung Kak Lake area in central Phnom Penh. She has been in prison since her arrest on 15 August 2016, at a 'Black Monday' protest on a charge of 'incitement to commit a felony'. Tep Vanny was freed from prison TODAY, August 20, after a pardon from the King.

Today's readers:

Yaba Badoe is a Ghanaian/ British documentary filmmaker, fiction writer and journalist. Her debut novel is *A Jigsaw of Fire and Stars* which she will be discussing tomorrow afternoon. It was shortlisted for the Branford Boase Award this year.

Christopher Edge is an award-winning children's author. His latest novel *The Infinite Lives of Maisie Day* was recently chosen by The Times as their Children's Book of the Week, whilst his other books include the critically-acclaimed *Twelve Minutes to Midnight* series.

Stuart MacBride is a Scottish Crime-Thriller author. His latest book is the 11th in the Logan McRae series, *The Blood Road*. He will be discussing the book with Stephanie Merritt later tonight.

Zaher Omareen is a Syrian writer and researcher based in London. His most recent published work is in *Banthology*, a collection which brings together specially commissioned stories from the original seven 'banned nations' of President Trump's January 2017 executive order. He is participating in our 'Words that Burn' event at 7.30pm today in the Garden Theatre.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALL TO ACTION:

Ask President Al-Sisi of Egypt to drop all charges against Azza Soliman.

Azza has been persecuted by the Egyptian authorities for almost 30 years simply for standing up for the rights of women. Her freedom is severely limited by an asset freeze and travel ban. President Al-Sisi could drop the charges and restore Azza's freedom. <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/azza-soliman>