

Amnesty International

IMPRISONED WRITERS



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

Tuesday 21 August

Putin's Power: Rights Eroded

Today's readings:

Maria Alyokhina – *Riot Days* In 2012, Maria Alyokhina was one of the members of the art collective Pussy Riot arrested for performing one of their songs, a 'punk prayer', in Moscow's Christ the Saviour Cathedral. Together with fellow Pussy Riot member Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Maria was imprisoned and only released towards the end of 2013. In today's extract from her memoir, '*Riot Days*' she describes a visit from a human rights organisation whilst she was being held in pre-trial detention at the notorious 'SIZO No. 6' in Moscow after the punk prayer arrests.

Masha Gessen – *Gay Propaganda* In the run up to the 2014 Sochi Olympics, journalist Joseph Huff-Hannon approached Masha Gessen, a Russian journalist, author, translator and activist whose work had included criticism of Vladimir Putin and the harassment of journalists, to work with him on a collection of testimonials about living as gay, lesbian or transsexual in a Russia where it was being made impossible for queer people to demand equal rights. A married gay woman with three children, today we hear Masha's response.

Anna Politkovskaya – *Putin's Russia* Politkovskaya was assassinated in the lift of her apartment block on October 7 2006, Putin's 54th birthday. Today's readings include an extract from the final chapter of her 2004 book, *Putin's Russia* as well as a tale of the impact of Putin's policies.

Internationally admired for her reporting, especially on the Chechen wars, she took advantage of her privileged vantage point at the heart of Russian current affairs and set about to dismantle both Putin the man and Putin the brand name, arguing that he is a power-hungry product of his own history and so unable to prevent himself from stifling civil liberties at every turn.

Today's readers:

Steven Camden, aka Polarbear, is one of the most respected spoken word artists in the UK. He will be contributing to 'The Wellbeing of Men' discussion in the Garden Theatre later tonight and will be discussing his new book for young adults *Nobody Real* with Melvin Burgess and L J MacWhirter on Wednesday evening.

Pádraig Kenny is an Irish writer from Newbridge in County Kildare. He has worked as a freelance arts journalist, and as a scriptwriter he has written drama and comedy for radio and screen. *Tin* is his first novel.

Ali Smith has won numerous prizes for her work, including the Baileys Prize and the Goldsmiths Prize for *How to be Both*, which was also shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. Her latest novel, *Winter*, is the second in the Seasonal Quartet and was longlisted for the Orwell Prize.

Before becoming a writer, Glaswegian **Martin Stewart** was a caddie, barman, university lecturer, and English teacher. *The Sacrifice Box*, his new novel, is set in 1986 and comes complete with a Spotify playlist. He will be reading from and talking about his book on Saturday afternoon.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALL TO ACTION:

Call on the Russian authorities to immediately disclose Victor Filinkov and Yuliy Boyarshinov's fate and whereabouts: See over for full details.

URGENT ACTION: FEARS FOR TWO DISAPPEARED RUSSIAN PRISONERS

The fate and whereabouts of IT specialist Victor Filinkov and civil society activist Yuliy Boyarshinov remain unknown. They were last seen on 28 July, in a detention centre in Yaroslavl, Russia but are now believed to be in transit to an undisclosed location. There are grave concerns for their safety.

IT specialist Victor Filinkov and civil society activist Yuliy Boyarshinov were last seen on 28 July in a detention centre in the city of Yaroslavl, northeast of Moscow. The two men have been held by Federal Security Service (FSB) operatives in St. Petersburg since January 2018 for their alleged participation in the “terrorist” organization Network. Both men allege they were subject to ill treatment and Viktor Filinkov to torture by FSB operatives who wanted them to “confess” to their own participation, and incriminate others, in the “terrorist” organization Network. Victor Filinkov “confessed” but later withdrew his statement as he alleges it was made under duress. Yuliy Boyarshinov says he was pressured to incriminate himself and/or others but refused. Members of the Public Monitoring Commission for Oversight of Places of Detention (ONK) examined Victor Filinkov on 26 January 2018 and confirmed that his body displayed visible signs of torture, including by an electric shocker. Victor Filinkov also told the ONK that one of the FSB operatives who tortured him warned that if he withdrew his “confession” he would be tortured again by “professionals” when in transfer.

On 20 July, it was reported that Victor Filinkov and Yuliy Boyarshinov had been transferred to an undisclosed location, believed to be the city of Penza – about 1,400 km from St Petersburg – where the investigation into the “Network case” is ongoing. As is common practice in the Russian penal system, neither Victor Filinkov and Yuliy Boyarshinov’s families nor their lawyers were informed about their transfer. On 25 July, it was reported that they were being held in a pre-trial detention centre in Yaroslavl. Their lawyer visited the Yaroslavl detention centre on 28 July and confirmed their location. According to the lawyer while both men were well and did not report of any new incidents of torture or other ill-treatment, they complained about poor conditions in transit, including overcrowding, and in detention in Yaroslavl. Since 28 July, all subsequent efforts to locate Victor Filinkov and Yuliy Boyarshinov have failed; it is unclear whether they remain in Yaroslavl detention centre or are again in transit. A lack of information from the authorities on Victor Filinkov and Yuliy Boyarshinov’s fate and whereabouts creates serious concerns that the two men are at grave risk of torture and other ill-treatment, particularly while in transit. Nondisclosure of their whereabouts can lead to a situation that amounts to enforced disappearance.

Please write immediately in Russian or your own language calling on the Russian authorities to:

- Immediately disclose Victor Filinkov and Yuliy Boyarshinov’s fate and whereabouts, ensure that they are held in official places of detention and their families and lawyers have access to them and are fully informed of their location at all times;
- Ensure that they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment both in transit and in detention and that a prompt, independent, effective and impartial investigation is conducted into their allegations of torture and ill treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 SEPTEMBER 2018 TO:

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation

Yuriy Yakovlevich Chaika
Prosecutor General’s Office
ul. B. Dmitrovka, dom 15a
Moscow GSP- 3, 125993, Russia
Fax: +7 495 987 58 41 / +7 495 692 17 25
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

Director of Federal Penitentiary Service

Gennady Kornienko
Federal Penitentiary Service
119991 Moscow
Ul. Zhitnaya 14
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 799 3240
E-mail: udmail@fsin.su
Salutation: Dear Director

And copies to:

Director of Federal Security Service

Aleksandr Vasilievich
Bortnikov
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