

Words that Burn - Stand up for Human Rights through Poetry

SPEAK OUT FOR SARAH AND SEÁN

In Greece, you can go to jail for trying to save a life. It happened to Sarah Mardini, 24, and Seán Binder, 25, when they volunteered as rescue workers for an organisation in Lesbos. Their job was to spot boats in distress at sea and help refugees.

They are accused of spying, people smuggling and belonging to a criminal organisation. If found guilty, Sarah and Seán could go to prison for 25 years.

They have already spent more than 100 days in prison before being released on bail in December 2018.

Seán, now in Ireland, says the scariest thing about what happened to him "is not that it put me in jail, it's that this can happen to anyone". It happens when governments make criminals of people who try to help refugees instead of doing more to protect a refugee's right to find a safe place to live. When people need to escape conflict, torture or other abuses in their countries, they often have no option but to make highly dangerous journeys to reach safety.

Sarah, now in Germany, knows all about such dangers. In 2015, she



fled Syria's war, crossing the Aegean in a

dinghy which nearly sank. When the engine of the dinghy they were in failed she and her sister towed the boat to the Greek shores of Lesbos, saving the lives of everyone on board.

REFUGEE RIGHTS

Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to seek, and to enjoy in other countries, asylum from persecution.

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (the Refugee Convention) builds on this and calls countries that have ratified the Refugee Convention, including Greece, to protect refugees that are on their territory.

Encourage students to consider the treatment of refugees from a different perspective:
amn.st/exist

MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN A MINUTE

Take the 'Make a Difference in a Minute' challenge and write a poem that you can perform in one minute or less. It can be:

- **A solidarity poem for Sarah and Seán showing your support for them and the refugees they have fought so hard to help.**
Or
- **An appeal poem to tell the Greek authorities to drop all charges against Sarah and Seán**

You can send your appeal poems to us addressed to the Minister of Citizens' Protection, Michalis Chrisochoidis or tweet him @chrisochoidis using the #wordsthatburn

Inspire your students to think about refugees Using Valerie Blooms poem A Baby's Shoe

<https://vimeo.com/358040147>

You can [submit your poem](#) in written form, as an audio clip or as a 1-minute video. As well as submitting your poem to Amnesty International UK, **please share it on social media, using the hashtag #WriteforRights #WordsthatBurn.**

Some poems will be showcased on the website and we will let you know

if your poem is selected for this. We

Watch Sakris Kupila talk about the impact of Words That Burn poems:

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/your-poetry-lgbti-rights>

will also send your poem to Sarah and Seán if it is a solidarity poem and to the Greek authorities if it is an appeal poem.

Find out more about the Words That Burn project:

www.amnesty.org.uk/wordsthatburn

Find out more about the Write for Rights Campaign:

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-rights-getting-started>