

Amnesty International

Reading Group

# NEWSLETTER



1<sup>st</sup> November 2015

## PROTECT THE HUMAN

*We are ordinary people from across the world standing up for humanity and human rights. Our purpose is to protect individuals wherever justice, fairness, freedom and truth are denied.*

We have had a very busy summer and autumn this year. Reading activists have had stalls at WOMAD, Reading Pride and an Amnesty screening at the Vue cinema. We've joined in with a demo in London and organised an excellent event as part of Reading's International Festival. All this as well as our monthly meetings. Take a look at our photos below and follow the links to take action on these important issues.

## London Demo to demand our government to act #refugeeswelcome



Members of the Reading group joined thousands who marched through the streets of London to demand the government welcome more refugees to the UK.





You can still take action by emailing your local MP – please keep up the pressure so they take real action to support the thousands in need.

<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/refugees-welcome-UK-email-MP>

## READING INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

Thanks to everyone who made our event 'If Not Here Then Where' such a success, especially to the panelists Kristina Saroy from Amnesty, Nigel Varndell (Embrace the Middle East) and Nick Harborne (Reading Refugee Support Group). The collection at the end raised nearly £150, and 26 people signed our letters to local MPs. If you missed the event, you can see the film by following this link.

<http://thedublinpitfall.tumblr.com/about>

Unfortunately we forgot to take any photos, so you'll just have to believe us when we say you missed a great event!



## Shaker Aammer released!

After more than 13 years held without charge or trial, **Shaker Aamer** has finally been released from Guantánamo Bay detention centre. Thank you for your petition signatures, emails, and letters

<http://amn.st/6182BPEdg>

## READING PRIDE 2015

We had one of our most successful Pride's ever this year. Over 400 postcards were signed for Ihar Tsikhanyuk from Belarus and raised £134.68!

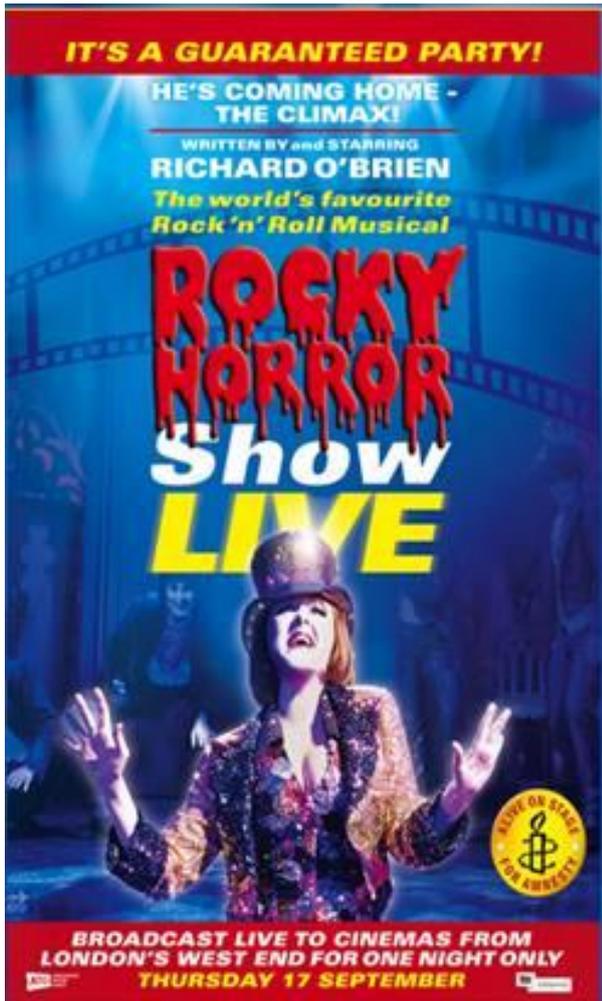
Ihar Tsikhanyuk is a gay man living in Minsk, Belarus. When he tried to set up a gay rights organisation, the police beat him. When he complained, they said they'd beat him again.

Ihar said that the attack left him humiliated and empty. But he also told us that he gets strength from knowing that people around the world know about his case, and the situation around LGBTI rights in Belarus. Our action is now closed, but we are still campaigning for Ihar and keeping a close eye on his case. <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/justice-ihar-tsikhanyuk-beaten-police-being-gay-belarus#.VjPmFrhDIU>



## Amnesty International's Gala Performance of "The Rocky Horror Show"

We had a last minute opportunity to have a stall at Reading's Vue cinema in September. The Rocky Horror Show Live was broadcast live to cinemas around the UK. The gala event was in aid of Amnesty International. We added to our actions for Ihar and raised a little bit of money. A big thanks to the Vue staff who were so welcoming.



# WOMAD 2015

## Taking action to End the Segregation of Roma Children in The Czech Republic



Romani children in the Czech Republic are not getting the same education as other children. They're bullied just for being different, kept separate from other pupils and even placed in schools for children with learning disabilities. It means they can't fulfil their potential and build a better future – for themselves, their families and communities, and Czech society.

The European Commission has criticised the government for failing to tackle this discrimination.

Our group asked WOMAD festival goers to fill in an action cards and draw a "mini me" to add to a giant visual petition to hand into The Czech Republic embassy. The visual petition had about 330 little folk on it by the end of the weekend.

You can take action by signing the petition online or scrolling below to see the letter to the Prime Minister of The Czech Republic.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/action-roma-czech-discrimination/>

**Channel 4 News's Jon Snow supports our campaign.**



**FORTHCOMING MEETINGS – always 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 8pm at RISC, Reading**

- **November 12<sup>th</sup>** – **Cuba update** from AI:UK's Country Coordinator, Cuba & English Speaking Caribbean, North America & Caribbean Team Leader and group member, Sue Bingham. Great to have such an expert in our group, so do come along and learn more about the developments in this fascinating country. Follow her on Twitter **@sue4cuba**
- **December 10<sup>th</sup>** – Amnesty's annual **Write for Rights** campaign. Please do take some time to send a greeting card or two as it makes such a difference to those receiving cards from all over the world. Take a look at the link to get information about this annual campaign and suggestions on what to write.

<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/write-rights-2015#.VjPaArfhDIU>

**Don't forget to keep up to date with our group's news, frequently updated with photos and updates:**

- Website = <http://www2.amnesty.org.uk/groups/reading>
- Facebook page –search for Reading Amnesty International – Town Group = <http://www.facebook.com/groups/187525074719402>
- twitter = @amnestyreading
- Our Prisoner of Conscience, Filep Karma, has a website where you can keep up-to-date with latest developments - [www.freefilepkarma.org](http://www.freefilepkarma.org)
- And a facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/253959534694499/>

**MEETINGS:**

- **Second Thursday of each month at 8pm**
- **All are welcome**
- **upstairs at RISC, 35-39 London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS**

**ALSO:** We raise funds for Amnesty International, and can provide speakers about Amnesty and human rights issues for local organisations: contact our secretary Anne McFarlane, [ammcf@btinternet.com](mailto:ammcf@btinternet.com)  
Amnesty Reading Newsletter editor Helen Ball- email: [helenball03@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:helenball03@yahoo.co.uk)