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**Amnesty International**

**Reading Group Newsletter**

**February 2013**

**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.*

**Forthcoming events**

* **Next group meeting** – Thursday 14th March at 8pm at RISC – AI:UK’s North Africa co-ordinator, Hugh Sandeman, joins us for the meeting to update us about women’s rights in the region
* **Barn Dance –** Following our brilliant Barn Dance last year, we are delighted that the Scamping Rogues will be leading us in dance again next year.
* Saturday 2nd March at 7pm
* The Warehouse, Cumberland Rd, Reading, RG1 3LB.
* Tickets £10 including fish & chip supper, £5 entry for children Year 6 and under - Vegetarian food available on request when booking
* Bring your own bottle – no bar
* For tickets, contact [amnesty.reading@googlemail.com](mailto:amnesty.reading@googlemail.com)
* **AI:UK National Conference – 13th/14th April, Warwick University – book by 1st March** [**http://www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=10159**](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=10159)
* **WOMAD** – 25th- 28th July 2013. Our annual presence at the wonderful WOMAD festival is getting organised so do get your ticket now!! <http://womad.co.uk/charlton_park/>

**ACtions**

Please click the link or scroll to the end of this document or follow the links for actions you can take to support issues that the Reading Group follows closely.

* **Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias**, Cuban journalist, imprisoned in relation to his work
* **Magamed Abubakaro**, Lawyer working in Chechnya, receiving death threats

**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>
* NEW facebook page –search for Reading Amnesty International – Town Group = <http://www.facebook.com/groups/187525074719402>
* twitter = @amnestyreading

***MEETINGS:***second Thursday of each month at 8pm. All are welcome. **All 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@o2.co.uk*.

Amnesty Reading Newsletter editor Helen Ball- email: helenball03@yahoo.co.uk

TO: FROM:

**Raúl Castro Ruz**

Head of State and Government

Presidente de la República de Cuba

La Habana

Cuba

Fax: +41 22 758 9431 (Cuba office in Geneva);

+1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN)

Email: [cuba@un.int](mailto:cuba@un.int) (c/o Cuban Mission to UN)

Date:

Your Excellency,

**Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias**

I am very concerned to hear that the independent journalist, Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias, has been detained since September 2012 in Cuba in relation to his work, investigating allegations that medicine provided by the World Health Organization to fight the cholera outbreak (which began in mid-2012) was being kept at the airport instead of being distributed.

It would appear that when complaining in his cell at the Santiago de las Vegas police station about his detention, he was beaten and pepper-sprayed in his eyes. Neither he nor his lawyer – who has not been allowed access to his casefile – have been informed of any official charges against him.

I am calling on the Cuban authorities to release Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias immediately and unconditionally, as I believe he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.

I would also urge the authorities to remove unlawful restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly in Cuba.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to hearing from you on this urgent matter.

Yours truly,

Copies to:

**General Abelardo Colomé Ibarra**

Interior Minister

Ministro del Interior y Prisiones

Ministerio del Interior,

Plaza de la Revolución,

La Habana, Cuba

Fax: +1 212 779 1697 (via Cuban Mission to UN)

Email: [correominint@mn.mn.co.cu](mailto:correominint@mn.mn.co.cu)

**Her Excellency Esther Armenteros Cárdenas**

Cuban Ambassador

Embassy of the Republic of Cuba

167 High Holborn,

London WC1 6PA

Fax: 020 7836 2602 [embacuba@cubaldn.com](mailto:embacuba@cubaldn.com)

FROM:

TO:

**Dr. Darío Delgado Cura**

Attorney General

Fiscal General de la República

Fiscalía General de la República,

Amistad 552, e/Monte y Estrella, Centro Habana

La Habana,

Cuba

Date:

Dear Attorney General,

**Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias**

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**Her Excellency Esther Armenteros Cárdenas**

Cuban Ambassador

Embassy of the Republic of Cuba

167 High Holborn,

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Minister of Internal Affairs

Sergei Valentinovich Vasilyev

Minister of Internal Affairs of the

Kabardino-Balkaria Republic

ul. Kuliev, 10a

360000 g. Nalchik

Kabardino-Balkaria

Russian Federation

Dear Minister

**Re:  Lawyer received anonymous death threats**

We write to express our grave concerns over death threats received by Magamed Abubakarov, an *advokat* from Chechnya currently working in Kabardino-Balkaria. Mr Abubakarov is well respected for his advocacy on sensitive cases in the North Caucasus involving abductions, torture and fabrication of evidence by law enforcement officers.

As you will know, this is not the first time that Mr Abubakarov has been threatened because of his work as an *advokat*. He received threats in 2007 at the same time as he began work on the case of Rasul Kudaev, a former Guantanamo prisoner. In December 2011, after his car had been stopped by armed masked police in Nalchik another car drove into him and badly injured him. The police did not investigate the incident.

In June 2012, another lawyer from Nalchik reported he, too, had received a death threat from a senior police official and the authorities subsequently refused to open a criminal investigation.

Criminal defence lawyers working in the North Caucasus on cases involving suspected membership of armed groups are particularly vulnerable to human rights violations by law enforcement officers. Omar Saidmagomedov was one such lawyer killed by security forces in Dagestan.

We therefore call on the Russian authorities to investigate Magamed Abubakarov’s complaints about the anonymous death threats he has received, and identify and prosecute those responsible.

Furthermore, we call on the Russian authorities, including members of law enforcement agencies, to ensure criminal defence lawyers working in the North Caucasus are able to discharge their functions without hindrance, intimidation or harassment.

We look forward to your immediate and constructive response to our requests.

Yours sincerely