



BRIEFING NOTE

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ACTIVISTS FROM THE FRONT LINE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Activists from the frontlines of the battle to defend human rights will be available for interview on May 12/13 either in person at the London press conference, via Skype or by satellite link.

Their stories provide powerful testimony of those working in human rights fight for freedom of expression in the face of repression from the authorities.

- **Syria: Haytham Al Hamwi**

As part of a loose network of people inspired by Islam and non-violent action, Haytham Al Hamwi was arrested in Syria after participating in a silent march against the invasion of Iraq, helping establish a free library, cleaning up his town and discouraging bribery and smoking American cigarettes. He was sentenced to four years imprisonment after a grossly unfair trial before a secret field military court and was tortured and ill-treated while in prison. He now studies in the UK but his father, Muhammad Yassin Al Hamwi, a 65 year old shopkeeper, was arrested from his home in Daraya, near Damascus, early on the morning of Sunday 1st May 2011 and has not been seen since.

- **Zimbabwe: Daves Guzha**

The director of a Zimbabwean theatre company called Rooftop Promotions whose work focuses on social protest, highlighting the problems in Zimbabwe today. Daves Guzha and members of the cast have been arrested and faced trial on charges of "criminal nuisance" while on tour in Zimbabwe. Their most recent play, Rituals, is showing at the Edinburgh festival this year.

- **Cuba: Pablo Pacheco**

Pablo Pacheco is a Cuban activist who worked for the Avileña Co-operative of Independent Journalists before being imprisoned for seven years for his human rights work. He was considered an Amnesty International prisoner of conscience and was released in July 2010 on condition that he move to Spain.

- **Guatemala: Claudia Samayoa**

A Guatemalan human rights activist, Claudia Samayoa works with a Guatemalan human rights organization that monitors and investigates threats and attacks against human rights defenders, and lobbies for better protection to enable them to continue their work.

- **Belarus: Irina Bogdanova**

Sister of Andrei Sannikau, one of the opposition candidates in the 2010 presidential elections in Belarus who was imprisoned following protests against rigged elections.

By Satellite from Cairo:**▪ Egypt: Khalid Abdalla**

A British-Egyptian actor and producer famous for, among other things, his roles in the films United 93, The Kite Runner and Green Zone. Coming from a family with three generations of activism, Khalid Abdalla has been part of the protest movement in Egypt since demonstrations began, taking part in Tahrir Square sit-ins from January until April. He is a partner and co-founder of Zero Production, a film and documentary production house based in Cairo. His next film, "In the Last Days of the City", was filmed during the last two years of Mubarak's government, and he is currently involved in setting up an alternative media centre in Cairo, "Mossireen", a play on the Arabic words for "Egypt" and "Determined" - that aims to support citizen journalism in Egypt.

By Skype:**▪ India: Dr Binayak Sen**

An award winning human rights defender, doctor, public health specialist and activist, sentenced to life in prison in December 2010, following a politically motivated trial for sedition and conspiracy charges. He was granted bail by India's Supreme Court in April 2011 granted bail after 100 days in prison. Dr Binayak Sen is the national Vice-President of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL).

▪ Azerbaijan: Adnan Hajizade and Emin Milli

Bloggers, Adnan Hajizade and Emin Milli, were imprisoned on falsified charges of hooliganism but mainly for their work championing freedom of expression in Azerbaijan. They have been released on probation and are currently in Baku.

For more information or to arrange an interview with an Amnesty International spokesperson, or with one of the human rights activists, contact the Press Office on +44 20 7413 5566 or press@amnesty.org.

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