



MEDIA RELEASE

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iceandfire and Amnesty International on the Hunt for Human Rights Stories

Amnesty International UK and **iceandfire** are joining forces to discover the best new plays exploring human rights issues from around the world through their script initiative, **Everyone has the Right**. The project will launch on the 10th December 2009 at the London School of Economics (LSE) as part of an event with the Centre for Human Rights. Tickets are free and no pre-registration is required. The evening starts at 6.30pm.

With the aim of providing a home for the most exciting, dynamic theatre bringing human rights stories to life **Everyone has the Right** will be an open programme, accepting scripts on a rolling basis.

But how can human rights be translated from formalised, aspirational ideals to real, breathing things that affect peoples' lives in profound ways? Sara Masters, Co-Artistic Director of iceandfire theatre, says that human rights stories can range from dramatic headlines like torture in Guantanamo or the plight of asylum seekers to everyday occurrences that erode or infringe peoples' fundamental rights.

"We're excited about finding new ways of telling human rights stories – finding unusual parallels and different perspectives. It could be that writers examine the concept of human rights: exploring what it means to have them and whether they have achieved their purpose? Human rights should be questioned and interrogated, they are not just a uniform good but are nuanced and layered."

Writers are invited to submit scripts that they believe fulfil the aim of **Everyone has the Right**. These scripts will be read by a member of the iceandfire team who will provide written feedback to the writer. The best plays will receive professional rehearsed readings at Amnesty International UK's Human Rights Action Centre, in London, or a partner theatre. Those writers that would benefit from longer-term development will be paired with a dramaturg for more in-depth work on their script and potential full production.

Playwright Steve Waters, author of *The Contingency Plan* and *After the Gods*, says that this project provides an incredible opportunity for both new and experienced writers:

"Everyone Has the Right is a crucial project. This thrilling collaboration between iceandfire and Amnesty International offers an opportunity for writers to look out into the world and bring us the stories we need to hear right now. Theatre, as a medium, has an intimacy and immediacy that makes it the perfect artform to explore important issues and explore the characters and drama behind the concept of 'human rights'."

Script submission is open from December 10th 2009. All scripts should be sent to:

Everyone has the Right, iceandfire, Toynbee Hall, 28 Commercial Street, London, E1 6LS, with a coversheet (downloadable from iceandfire's website).

For more information about this new service, please go to www.iceandfire.co.uk/everyonehastheright



Background Notes:

iceandfire explores human rights stories through performance. Over the last six years we have become a theatre company with a distinct, contemporary voice creating work of excellence across our four work strands: production, outreach, education and participation. www.iceandfire.co.uk.

Amnesty International is a movement of 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. During much of Amnesty's history, our campaigning has focused on prisoners, but we now respond to the changing patterns of human rights violations in the world. www.amnesty.org.uk

Everyone has the Right has emerged from iceandfire and Amnesty International UK's **Protect the Human** playwriting competition, designed to provide a platform for new writing that explored human rights issues. Over the subsequent two years the competition attracted over 500 plays that dealt with issues as far ranging as the right to life, Iraq war and sex tourism. Shortlisted plays were given rehearsed readings at the Soho Theatre, London, with winning plays also receiving platforms at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Birmingham Rep, and Theatre Royal Plymouth.

"The Protect the Human award is not about lecturing but about sowing the seeds for powerful theatre that grapples with necessary issues; it reminds people there are things we need to think about and talk about." *The Guardian* on Protect the Human 2008.

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