

internationales literaturfestival berlin

For Freedom and Democracy in Syria Worldwide Reading against the Assad Regime on 23rd April 2012

The international literature festival berlin (ilb) invites intellectuals, authors and artists, cultural institutions, schools and universities, radio- and television channels to participate in a worldwide reading on April 23rd 2012, the World Book Day. With the reading and a minute of silence the dead shall be commemorated, solidarity with the opponents of the Assad regime shown and the hope for a free, democratic and secular Syria expressed. Especially now, after achieving a fragile truce, a noticeable sign from artists and intellectuals is more urgent than ever!

Appeal for a worldwide reading against the Assad regime, for freedom and democracy in Syria

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Content of the reading will be the diary of Syrian author Samar Yazbek, who has documented the events of the past year since the beginning of the revolt and written the enclosed plea which has induced us to write this appeal. The texts from the diary for the reading will be provided by the author through the festival. They are available in Arabic, English, French and German.

To the peaceful demonstrations at the beginning of the past year the government reacted with the militarisation of the cities, terror and murder. With this it launched the revolts within the communities and a split between society and army. Soldiers who refused to follow the command to murder civilians had to desert and founded the Free Army of Syria with the goal to protect the citizens.

For month the security forces deploy heavy artilleries for their campaign of destruction. Cities are besieged and looted, women raped and their corpses thrown into the night, young people put into prison, tortured and killed. According to human rights activists, since the beginning of the protests almost 10000 men and women have been killed. While Syria's civilisation and culture with its unique history is standing on the edge of an abyss, the world is largely contenting itself with watching TV news about Assad's campaign. The event on the World Book Day shall break this silence with a demand for the demission of Assad and a plea for freedom and democracy in a secular Syria.

The Appeal was signed by:

Abdelke, Youssef, Syria; Adamesteanu, Gabriela, Romania; Agualusa, José Eduardo, Angola; Al-Jubouri, Amal, Iraq; Aridjis, Homero, Mexico; Banciu, Carmen-Francesca, Germany; Barakat, Salim, Sweden; Basil, Priya, UK/ Germany; Benameur, Jeanne, France; Bey, Farouk Mardam, Syria; Boltanski, Christian, France; Buch, Hans Christoph, Germany; Cercas, Javier, Spain; Cheheltan, Amir Hassan, Iran; Cosic, Bora, Serbia; Dimkovska, Lidija, Macedonia; Dische, Irene, Germany / USA; Dorfman, Ariel, Chile; Dragomán, György, Hungary; Duru, Sezer, Turkey; El Rashidi, Yasmine, Egypt; Faruqi, Shamsur Rahman, India; Franz, Carlos, Chile; Gordimer, Nadine, South Africa; Guelfenbein, Carla, Chile; Gürsel, Nedim, Turkey/ France; Gustafsson, Lars, Sweden; Hart, Kevin, USA/ Australia; Hlehel, Ala, Palestine; István, Vörös, Hungary; Jelinek, Elfriede, Austria; Jerofejew, Viktor, Russia; Koury, Elias, Lebanon; Iavianos, Haris, Greece; Lebow, Alisa, UK; Lehr, Thomas, Germany; Literaturzentrum Hamburg; Macconi, Chiara, Italy; Mahjoub, Jamal, Sudan/ UK; Manea, Norman, Romania / USA; Manguel, Alberto, France / Canada; Maron, Monika, Germany; Martin-Liao, Tienchi, China/ Germany; Mastretta, Ángeles, Mexico; Militano, Carmelo, Canada; Monzó, Quim, Spain; Palmstierna-Weiss, Gunilla, Sweden; Papadopoulou, Barbara, Greece/ Germany; Petöcz, Andras, Hungary; Plessen, Elisabeth, Germany; Poets Circle Athen, Greece; Rinke, Moritz, Germany; Salamun, Tomas, Slovenia; Sansal, Boualem, Algeria; Schami, Rafik, Germany; Schindel, Robert, Austria; Schlögel, Karl, Germany; Schneider, Peter, Germany; Schulz, Hermann, Germany; Sguiglia, Eduardo, Argentina; Shibli, Adania, Germany/ Palestine; Shimon, Samuel, UK/ Iraq; Siotis, Dino, Greece; Sofsky, Wolfgang, Germany; Stead, C.K., New Zealand; Tamer, Zakaria, UK; Tamimi, Fairouz, Jordania; Teller, Janne, Denmark/ USA; Thor, Annika, Sweden; Tinos International Literary Festival, Griechenland; Vargas Llosa, Mario, Peru; Vörös, István, Hungary; Wawerzinek, Peter, Germany; Welsh, Irvine, UK; Wiesner, Herbert, P.E.N. Center Germany; Yazbek, Samar, Syria; Zeitouneh, Razan, Syria; Zivlak, Jovan, Serbia; Zoueïn, Sabah, Lebanon