

Appeal for a worldwide reading in solidarity with Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Platon Lebedev and all political prisoners in Russia

The international literature festival berlin (ilb) launches an appeal to artists and intellectuals, schools and universities, radio and TV stations, theatres and other cultural institutions to participate in a worldwide reading in solidarity with Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Platon Lebedev and all political prisoners in Russia. The reading will take place on Friday, **25 October 2013**, the tenth anniversary of the detention of Michail Khodorkovsky.

In two doubtful trials Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the former Director of the Yukos oil company, and his business partner Platon Lebedev were sentenced to many years of prison. Amnesty International has recognized them as political prisoners since 2011. The importance of the case goes far beyond the personal destiny of the two men. Their detention in 2003 is typical for the action Putin's regime undertakes against dissenters, and for the violation of fundamental and universal principles of the rule of law, the Russian Constitution, and human rights.

Since the protest against the vote-rigging during the Duma elections in December 2011 and the presidential elections in April 2012, the government has proceeded relentlessly against civil society. Several repressive laws, arrests and excessive court decisions have spread fear into Russian society.

In an act of solidarity with Khodorkovsky, Lebedev, and all political prisoners in Russia we want to read on 25 October extracts from Mikhail Khodorkovsky's final speech in the second trial, from his correspondence with Lyudmila Ulitskaya and Boris Akunin, and articles he has written in prison about his life in a detention camp and his fellow prisoners. The texts will be available on the ilb website (www.literaturfestival.com) in English, French, German, Russian, and other languages from 30 July 2013.

If you want to participate in the reading, please let the ilb know the details of your event by 30 September 2013, if possible, via the following address:
worldwidereading@literaturfestival.com

We would be glad, if you could pass on this appeal to other institutions, friends and acquaintances.

Cordially
Yours

Ulrich Schreiber