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UWRF REVEALS 160+ SPEAKERS FROM 30 COUNTRIES CONVERGING FOR ITS 15TH YEAR AS SOUTHEAST ASIA'S LEADING FESTIVAL OF WORDS AND IDEAS

Ubud, Indonesia –

For its 15th year as Southeast Asia's leading festival of words and ideas, the Ubud Writers & Readers Festival (UWRF) has today announced a stellar lineup of authors, journalists, artists and activists from 30 countries. Often described as a human rights festival under the guise of a literary event, in its milestone year the UWRF promises a world of stories, ideas and solutions at a time when amplifying diverse voices and rarely-heard perspectives is more critical than ever.

From Indonesia to Ireland, Sweden to Spain, the Philippines to Pakistan and dozens of countries in between, the five-day program of insightful in-conversations, intimate literary lunches, impassioned debates and powerful performances – all held in Ubud's most magical venues – will demonstrate why the UWRF has evolved into one of the world's top writers festivals.

Following in the footsteps of his beloved grandfather, the Festival is thrilled to welcome **Ndaba Mandela**, who has taken the torch – and run with it. Mandela will share the journey that taught him the power of resistance, the spirit of endurance, the triumph of forgiveness, and the beauty of reconciliation. From seeking refuge in eight African countries to the *Oprah* stage, bestselling memoirist **Clemantine Wamariya** will ask audiences to look beyond the label of victim and recognize the power of the imagination to transcend even the most profound injuries and aftershocks.

Among the leading literary luminaries are revered British playwright, screenwriter, filmmaker and novelist, **Hanif Kureishi**, Booker Prize nominated Indian novelist, **Anuradha Roy**, one of Indonesia's best-loved and most widely translated poets, **Sapardi Djoko Damono**, twice-winner of Australia's premier literary prize the Miles Franklin, **Kim Scott**, award-winning British novelist and essayist, **Geoff Dyer**, and bestselling Italian novelist **Giuseppe Catozzella**.



They'll be joined by award-winning Pakistani author and memoirist **Fatima Bhutto**, one of the frontrunners of Indonesia's contemporary fiction scene, **Dewi Lestari**, award-winning author and medical doctor of Nigerian descent, **Uzodinma Iweala**, and beloved Indonesian writers **Leila S. Chudori** and **Aan Mansyur**.

From religious extremism to environmental justice to the recent deadly earthquake in Lombok, Southeast Asia's leading journalists, activists and political commentators will tackle the region's most alarming concerns.

Recognized authority on insurgencies and ethnic conflict, **Sidney Jones**, will be joined by former Fairfax Indonesia correspondent, **Jewel Topsfield**, moderate Islamic activist, **Yenny Wahid**, promoter of pluralism and progressive Islamic thought, **Haidar Bagir**, Founder of the Institute for International Peace Building, **Noor Huda Ismail**, Indonesian and Malaysian media expert, **Janet Steele**, Malaysian religious commentator, **Dina Zaman**, and former Beijing and Seoul bureau chief of the *Los Angeles Times* now based in New York, **Barbara Demick**.

They'll appear alongside the recipient of the 2016 Maarif Award for efforts to bring peace through literature and journalism, Moluccan poet **Rudi Fofid**, courageous Indonesian investigative journalist, **Febriana Firdaus**, and veteran journalists **Endy Bayuni** and **Putu Fajar Arcana**.

Climate and environment discussions will be led by Indonesia's maverick Minister for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, **Susi Pudjiastuti**, young Dayak leader and environmental activist, **Emmanuela Shinta**, and Executive Director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia, **Yeb Saño**.

Sharing deeply personal insights and incisive analysis is a national and international feminist powerhouse comprising former President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, **Gillian Triggs**, Walkley Award winning Australian journalist and social commentator, **Jane Caro**, fearless Indonesian novelist and filmmaker, **Djenar Maesa Ayu**, Indian author, poet and dancer, **Tishani Doshi**, Australian writer, broadcaster and public speaker, **Clementine Ford**, Balinese poet and educator, **Saras Dewi**, Australian journalist and memoirist, **Jill Stark**, and Indian social activist, **Gurmehar Kaur**.



The importance of sharing women's stories continues with London-based journalist and bestselling author, **Shrabani Basu**, whose *Victoria & Abdul* is now a major film starring Judi Dench, one of Singapore's hottest young novelists, **Balli Kaur Jaswal**, acclaimed Indonesian author, poet, curator and architect, **Avianti Armand**, much-loved Indonesian-Singaporean author **Clarissa Goenawan**, and journalist, travel writer and broadcaster **Kamin Mohammadi**, who was exiled from Iran to the UK at ten years old.

Upholding its reputation as a festival of fresh voices where audiences often discover their new favorite writers, the UWRF is excited to welcome Australian-Indonesian author and translator **Tiffany Tsao**, brave young Indonesian writer **Norman Erikson Pasaribu**, Maori novelist and poet **Apirana Taylor**, British writer influenced by Indigenous cultures, **Jay Griffiths**, Serbian-Australian New York-based writer, **Sofija Stefanovic**, and Scottish-born natural scientist obsessed with Indonesian architecture, **Tariq Khalil**.

The Festival continues to celebrate Indonesia's burgeoning film industry with a packed program led by its two most lauded recent films, **Kamila Andini's** *Sekala Niskala (The Seen & Unseen)*, and **Mouly Surya's** *Marlina si Pembunuh dalam Empat Babak (Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts)*. Andini will be joined by her father, the legendary director **Garin Nugroho**, and experimental filmmaker and novelist, **Richard Oh**. They'll be in good visionary company with renowned sculptor, **Nyoman Nuarta**, designer of the world's second tallest statue, the Garuda Wisnu Kencana.

"After 15 years, we feel our Festival has fulfilled its purpose of putting Ubud on the literary map, nationally and internationally, and sparking interest in Indonesian literature. Most visitors in the early days said they knew nothing about Indonesian writers and journalists, but this has slowly changed," commented UWRF Founder and Director, **Janet DeNeefe**.

"In 2018, we're not only celebrating our 15th year as Southeast Asia's leading festival of words and ideas. We're also celebrating the fact that Indonesia is home to world class literature, art, film and food – and finally the world is taking notice," DeNeefe concluded.

More Information

Ubud Writers & Readers Festival 2018

The 15th Ubud Writers & Readers Festival will be held from 24-28 October, 2018, in Ubud, Bali. The full lineup and Main Program is now live. The release schedule for remaining program areas is as follows:



- 21 August: Special Events, Workshops, Cultural Workshops, The Kitchen Program, Fringe Events
- 28 August: Children & Youth Program, Book Launches, Film Program, Live Music & Arts, Festival Club, Art Exhibitions

About the Festival

The Ubud Writers & Readers Festival's mission is to create a world class festival that celebrates extraordinary stories and amplifies brave voices, tackles global issues and bold ideas. The Festival brings together a diverse mix of Indonesian and international writers, speakers, thinkers, artists, advocates, commentators and activists, to create a space for cross-cultural dialogue and meaningful exchange.

The Ubud Writers & Readers Festival is one of the major annual projects of not-for-profit foundation, the Yayasan Mudra Swari Saraswati. It was first conceived of in 2002 by Janet DeNeefe, Co-founder of the Foundation, as a healing project in response to the first Bali bombing.

Testimonials

"The festival – surely the best in the world – ensures you're never at a loss for intellectual nourishment." - [Harper's Bazaar](#)

UWRF is one of Penguin Random House's [Best Literary Festivals Around the World](#)

2018 Poster

The 2018 poster was created by Balinese artist Budi Agung Kuswara, aka Kabul.

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