



Social and environmental justice campaign asks authors and illustrators to THINK TWICE about attending the Emirates Airline Festival of Literature in Dubai

Today author Jonathan Emmett¹ and book blogger Zoe Toft² are launching the THINK TWICE campaign to highlight ethical concerns about the sponsorship of the Emirates Airline Festival of Literature³ in Dubai. The campaign encourages authors and illustrators who care about free speech, human rights and climate change to think twice about attending the festival.

The Emirates Airline Festival of Literature is an international literature festival held annually in Dubai. The festival is sponsored by Emirates Airline which is wholly owned by the Dubai government⁴, part of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The campaign encourages authors and illustrators to boycott the airline's festival on the following grounds:

- **FREE SPEECH:** UAE citizens calling for greater democracy and government accountability are persecuted and imprisoned by the airline's owners⁵.
- **HUMAN RIGHTS:** Women's, LGBT and migrant workers' rights are ignored and abused under the rule of the airline's owners⁶.
- **CLIMATE CHANGE:** The airline's international passenger flights already generate more CO2 than any other airline⁷ and the airline has recently announced plans to double the size of its fleet⁸.

By publicly pledging their support for the campaign, authors and illustrators can send the message that:

- The Dubai government must stop suppressing free speech and treat people fairly and without discrimination, regardless of their sex, sexuality or status.
- Emirates Airline and the rest of the aviation industry must help to tackle climate change by reducing their CO2 emissions.

This year's Emirates Airline Festival of Literature starts on Tuesday 1 March.

Full details of the campaign can be found at:

<http://eafolthinktwice.org.uk/>

Jonathan Emmett said: *"The Emirates Airline Festival of Literature is helping to give a sheen of respectability to an oppressive government and a company that is actively undermining critical efforts to tackle climate change. We hope that this campaign will help authors and illustrators to see the bigger picture."*

Zoe Toft said: *"I'm proud to be part of a community which has a history of standing up for others - with campaigns to support victims of Typhoon Haiyan and the Syrian conflict, as well as boycotts of book awards on ethical grounds. I hope this campaign will encourage more discussion and engagement with social and environmental issues."*

Notes for editors:

1. Jonathan Emmett is a children's author who has written over 50 books. <http://www.scribblestreet.co.uk/>
2. Zoe Toft blogs about children's books and the play they inspire in her family at Playing by the Book <http://www.playingbythebook.net/>
3. <http://emirateslitfest.com/>
4. <http://www.ibtimes.com/emirates-airline-eating-all-other-airlines-lunch-it-here-stay-1472912>
5. http://www.amnesty.org.uk/sites/default/files/mde_25.018.2014_-_there_is_no_freedom_here_-_silencing_dissent_in_the_united_arab_emirates_uae.pdf
6. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23381448>
<http://www.refugeelegalaidinformation.org/united-arab-emirates-lgbti-resources>
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/united-arab-emirates>
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7. <https://www.iata.org/publications/pages/wats-passenger-km.aspx>
8. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-06-09/emirates-riding-growth-surge-sees-airline-able-to-double-in-size>

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