

INTERNATIONAL PEN

FOUNDED 1921

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The Assembly of Delegates of International PEN meeting at its 76th Congress in Tokyo, Japan, 25 September – 1 October, 2010,

Welcomes the releases of ZHANG Jianhong, WANG Rongqing, LI Zhi, WEI Zhenling, and Fan Yanqiong either on medical parole or due to the reduction of their sentences, since the last Congress of International PEN in October 2009.

Considering the continuous suppression of the right to freedom of expression throughout China, from its capital city of Beijing to the inland province of Sichuan and Henan, to the coastal province of Guangdong and Fujian, to the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macao, the Autonomous Regions of Tibet, Xinjiang Uyghur, and Inner Mongolia.

Alarmed by the relentless harassment of and attacks against Chinese intellectuals, particularly the arbitrary arrests of Internet writers and journalists, over 40 of whom are currently imprisoned, making China one of the largest jailers of writers and journalists in the world.

Disturbed by the continuous use of administrative detention, including the infamous “Re-education Through Labour” (RTL) system, to jail dissident writers for up to 3 years without the due process guaranteed under its own laws. For instance, LUO Yongquan, a freelance writer and poet in Guangdong Province, was sentenced to two years RTL for two poems which authorities alleged attacked the Communist party and government and which were broadcast overseas.

Further Disturbed by the increasing misuse of China’s Criminal Law to arbitrarily charge dissident writers, outspoken journalists and independent publishers with criminal offences to suppress freedom of expression and the press, in particular “endangering the social/national security”, “(inciting) subversion of state power”, “illegally holding/leaking state secrets” and “illegal business practices”, and charging with criminal defamation those who criticise government institutions and accuse officials of corruption and injustice, leading to sentences of up to 3-years’ imprisonment.

Worried about the growing censorship of the Internet throughout the country, in which thousands of websites are blocked, popular Chinese Internet forums discussing sensitive issues closed, and online writers and journalists harassed and imprisoned for their publication of critical reports and commentaries on overseas websites, including the sentencing of HUANG Qi (3

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years), and TAN Zuoren (5 years), Hailaite Niyazi (aka Hairat or Gheyret Niyazi (15 years) as well as the prosecutions and trials of HUANG Xiaomin, LIU Yonggen, and ZUO Xiaohuan.

Shocked by the increasing persecution of Independent Chinese PEN Centre (ICPC) members, including the ongoing imprisonment of SHI Tao (10 years), YANG Tongyan (12 years) and DU Daobin (3 years), and especially and most recently Dr. LIU Xiaobo, former and Honorary President who was sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment on Christmas Day, 2009; the interrogation, harassment, threats, attacks, brief detentions, meeting and travel restrictions, passport rejections, and the work and life interruptions of more than 50 members, including ZHAO Shiyong, Board Member and Secretary-general who was detained for two weeks in January 2010 and who is still unable to travel.

International PEN therefore urges the government of the People's Republic of China to:

- Stop the harassment and persecution of ICPC members, and lift all restrictions on their freedom to exit and enter mainland China, particularly to attend International PEN conferences and to return home;
- Cease its efforts to censor cyberspace and to immediately release all Internet writers jailed for peacefully expressing their opinions;
- Release all prisoners in the autonomous regions of Tibet, Xinjiang Uyghur and Inner Mongolia who have been detained in violation of their right to freedom of expression, including Tibetan writers and journalists Dawa Gyaltzen, Dolma Kyab, Kunchok Tsephel, Paljor Norbu, Tashi Rabten, and Kunga Tseyang, Uighur writers Abdulghani Memetemin, Nurmuhemmet Yasin, Mehbube Ablesh and Hailait Niyazi (aka Hairat or Gheyret Niyazi), and Mongolian writer Hada;
- Release all imprisoned writers and journalists in China, including LIU Xiaobo, SHI Tao, YANG Tongyan, DU Daobing, HUANG Jinqiu, ZHENG Yichun, KONG Youping, XU Zerong, XU Wei, JIN Haitao, LU Jianhua, WANG Xiaoning, YANG Maodong, LU Gengsong, HU Jia, QI Chonghai, CHEN Daojun, YUAN Xianchen, ZHANG Qi, HUANG Qi, and TAN Zuoren.
- Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which was signed by the People's Republic of China in October 1998;
- Engage in a complete and meaningful reform of the Chinese legal system in accordance with international standards and its own Constitution to guarantee fair trials, the full rights of defence and appeal, the legal practices of attorneys, and a prison system that ensures the health and safety of inmates; particularly to cease the practice of using the charge of "subversion" against writers and of "holding/leaking state secrets" against journalists; and to abandon the infamous RTL system.