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**100 International Writers Call for Release of Canadian-Iranian Colleague Maziar Bahari**

New York City, Toronto, July 16, 2009—PEN American Center and PEN Canada today sent an open letter signed by over 100 of the world's most prominent writers calling for the release of Canadian-Iranian journalist and playwright Maziar Bahari, who has been held incommunicado in Tehran since June 21, 2009.

Maziar Bahari, who reports regularly from Tehran for *Newsweek* and has won acclaim for his plays and documentary films, was detained while covering events surrounding the disputed presidential elections in Iran on June 12, 2009. He has not been granted access to a lawyer in the three and a half weeks of his incarceration, and no charges against him have been made known. He is believed to be held in Tehran's notorious Evin Prison.

Citing concern that Bahari's detention reflects a wider crackdown on freedom of expression in Iran, writers such as Wole Soyinka, Margaret Atwood, Orhan Pamuk, Don DeLillo, Ma Jian, Umberto Eco, and Nadine Gordimer said, "His continued detention casts serious doubt on Iran's commitment to a free exchange of information and ideas and to international guarantees of freedom of the press. We urge you to release Mr. Bahari, and all others detained in connection with their post-election reporting in Iran, immediately and without condition."

To read the text of the petition, please visit <http://www.pencanada.ca/media/Bahari-Open-Letter.pdf>.

PEN American Center and PEN Canada are among the 145 worldwide centers of International PEN, an organization that works to promote friendship and intellectual cooperation among writers everywhere, to fight for freedom of expression, and represent the conscience of world literature. For more information, please visit [www.pen.org](http://www.pen.org) and [www.pencanada.ca](http://www.pencanada.ca).