

PEN Canada calls for end of ‘Ford freeze’

December 12, 2011 — Toronto — Today PEN Canada expressed concern that an impasse between a major Toronto newspaper and the mayor’s office has created a chill on media freedoms.

For more than a year, Mayor Ford’s office has withheld official notices and public announcements from the *Toronto Star*, and the mayor himself has indicated that this arrangement will remain in place until the newspaper publishes an apology for a perceived slight in its reporting during his mayoral campaign.

The chairman of Torstar, the corporate parent of the *Star*, recently called the “Ford Freeze” a “blatant attempt by the mayor to block the flow of public information to one newspaper.” Torstar has also filed an official complaint with the city’s integrity commissioner.

“Unflattering press coverage is a fact of public life,” said Charlie Foran, President of PEN Canada, “and should never be used to justify restrictions on a free press. The mayor doesn’t have to like what the newspapers say about him, but elected officials have no business settling private scores at the expense of the public interest.”

PEN Canada urges the mayor’s office to resume a working relationship with the *Toronto Star*, to ensure that it receives full access to information on all relevant public matters, and to dismiss the idea that any public servant – municipal, provincial or federal – is entitled to penalize the media for exercising its Charter rights to freedom of expression.

For more information:

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