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## **Crackdown Intensifies in China During Olympic Torch Relay Writer Chen Daojun Detained in Chengdu**

New York, Toronto, Stockholm, May 12, 2008—Chen Daojun, a freelance writer and journalist, has been detained on suspicion of “inciting subversion of state power,” the second writer jailed on subversion charges in a week in what PEN is calling “an intensified effort to silence dissent” as the Olympic Games approach. His arrest brings the number of imprisoned writers in China to 41.

Chen was detained on May 9, 2008 as part of a crackdown against citizens protesting the building of chemical plants in Pengzhou, 39 km away from Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province. He is the only protester facing subversion charges, most likely because of an article he published on May 5 on an overseas Chinese Web site, China E-Weekly, describing the dangers of the project and supporting a boycott. In practice, the charge of “inciting subversion” has often been used to convict dissident writers and journalists on sentences of up to 10 years in prison.

Chen Daojun, aged 40, is an essayist and former journalist at several provincial newspapers from 1998 to 2002, when he resigned from his post as a Communist Party official. In recent years, he has also published many essays and articles in overseas Chinese media, particularly on the Internet, on sites such as Fire of Liberty, China E-Weekly, Democratic Forum, New Century News and Boxun Newsnet. It is believed that Chen was targeted not only because of his role in the environmental protests but also because of his critical stands on several sensitive issues, including his support of Tibetan rights and his opposition to the politics of the Beijing Olympics.

PEN believes his arrest is part of an intensifying crackdown against dissent as the Olympic torch weaves its way through China. On May 3, writer Zhou Yuanzhi was detained in Zhongxiang City, Hubei Province and also reportedly will be tried for subversion.

On May 5, Chang Ping was dismissed from his post as deputy editor of the daily “Nanfang Dushi Bao” (Southern Metropolis Daily) after he published several editorials about Tibet that did not toe the party line.

In addition, writer and Independent Chinese PEN Center member Li Jianhong was allowed to leave China to accept a fellowship in Stockholm, Sweden only after signing a statement agreeing not to return to China, a move PEN likened to deportation or banishment. Her application for the fellowship was accepted by Stockholm in December 2007, but Chinese authorities had confiscated her passport, preventing her departure. Finally, on April 28, 2008—a week after she was threatened with detention if she remained in China and required to agree in writing that she would neither harm China’s image and interests abroad nor return to China—authorities drove her to the airport and saw her to her plane.

PEN American Center, PEN Canada, and the Independent Chinese PEN Center are among the 145 worldwide centers of International PEN, an organization that works to promote friendship and intellectual co-operation among writers everywhere, to fight for freedom of expression, and represent the conscience of world literature. On December 10, 2007, the centers launched We Are Ready for Freedom of Expression, an Olympic countdown campaign to protest China's imprisonment of at least 41 writers and journalists and to seek an end to internet censorship and other restrictions on the freedom to write in that country. For more information, please visit [www.pen.org/china2008](http://www.pen.org/china2008), [www.pencanada.ca](http://www.pencanada.ca), and [www.chinesepen.org](http://www.chinesepen.org).

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