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**PEN: Signs “Discouraging” for Post-Olympics Human Rights Improvements in China
New Report Details Actions Against Writers, the Press**

New York, Toronto, Stockholm, October 17, 2008—As the temporary regulations for foreign journalists working in the People’s Republic of China expire today, three International PEN centers issued a report highlighting the vulnerable position writers and journalists are in two months after an Olympics that was supposed to usher in greater freedoms and human rights in China.

According to the report, **Beyond the Olympics: The Freedom to Write in China**, available at www.pencanada.ca:

- Foreign journalists in China were routinely prevented from reporting freely on various issues throughout China in the run up to and during the Olympics, despite regulations that supposedly guaranteed this freedom;
- Domestic journalists were never afforded the press freedom protections put in place for foreign journalists;
- China continues to exert blanket censorship of controversial issues in its domestic media;
- At least 12 writers were detained in China in the 8 months leading up to the Olympics;
- There are now more writers in prison than there were at the beginning of the year—44 writers in prison today, four more than there were a year ago;
- Writers and dissidents have been subject to intensified harassment, house arrest, and detention. Their activities and conversations are closely monitored, including online conversations on Skype.

The report specifically highlights the high price PEN members in China have paid over the past year for their activism. The **Independent Chinese PEN Center (ICPC)**, a center of International PEN composed of 250 leading dissident writers inside and outside China, faced increased restrictions on its activities and members. At least 12 ICPC members were placed under house arrest, prevented from traveling outside of their home cities, or prevented from entering China because of the Olympics.

Concluding that “our colleagues, and China’s citizens as a whole, have yet to see evidence of the human rights improvements their government pledged in order to secure the Olympic Games,” the report calls on the Chinese government to:

- Extend and make permanent the temporary press regulations established for the Olympic Games and include domestic journalists within these guarantees;
- Release all writers and journalists currently imprisoned and stop detaining, harassing, and censoring writers and journalists;
- End Internet censorship, and reform laws used to imprison writers and journalists and suppress freedom of expression.

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 cooperation among writers everywhere, to fight for freedom of expression, and represent the conscience of world literature. For the “Beyond the Olympics” report and more information on PEN’s efforts to free writers imprisoned in China, please visit www.pen.org/china2008, www.pencanada.ca, and www.chinesepen.org.

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