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For more information contact:

Larry Siems, PEN American Center, (212) 334-1660 ext. 105, [lsiems@pen.org](mailto:lsiems@pen.org)

Isobel Harry, PEN Canada, (416) 703-8448 ext. 22, [iharry@pencanada.ca](mailto:iharry@pencanada.ca)

Yu Zhang, Independent Chinese PEN Center, +46-8-50022792, [wipc@penchinese.net](mailto:wipc@penchinese.net)

## **Chinese Journalist Sentenced, Others Prevented From Meeting U.S. Officials**

New York, Toronto, Stockholm, July 2, 2008—PEN centers expressed disappointment today over the sentencing of journalist Sun Lin in Nanjing and the detention and harassment of several writers and PEN members to prevent them from meeting visiting U.S. Congressmen this week in Beijing.

Sun Lin (pen name Jie Mu), a reporter for the overseas Chinese web site Boxun News, was arrested on May 30, 2007 after writing articles on sensitive subjects including crime and police brutality. His wife, writer He Fang, was also charged and given a suspended sentence. On June 27, 2008, during a hearing in which neither his family nor lawyer were present, Sun was handed a four-year prison sentence for “gathering crowds to cause social unrest” and “illegal possession of firearms.” Before his arrest, he had documented several instances of police harassment.

Meanwhile, several lawyers and activists were detained on June 29 during visits by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and two U.S. Congressmen—Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ) and Frank R. Wolf (R-VA). The move comes just one week after Beijing-based lawyers Li Baiguang and Li Heping traveled to Washington, DC to accept the “Democracy Award” from the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy and meet with President Bush. Lawyer and writer Teng Biao, a third recipient of the prize, was not able to travel to the U.S. because authorities had confiscated his passport. The trio and several others were invited to dine with the congressmen to discuss human rights issues in China. Li Baiguang and Teng Biao are members of the Independent Chinese PEN Center (ICPC).

Li Baiguang was reportedly detained and held in Huairou, a Beijing suburb, for three days in order to prevent him from returning to Beijing for the dinner. Teng Biao was initially detained in Huairou as well, but later returned to his home in Beijing and placed under house arrest. PEN has also received reports that several other lawyers and dissidents were harassed in advance of the dinner meeting. Writer, dissident, and former president and current ICPC board member Dr. Liu Xiaobo was among the five others warned against attending the dinner.

“We are extremely grateful to Representatives Smith and Wolf for their efforts to meet with our colleagues in Beijing, and outraged at Chinese government actions to prevent that meeting from taking place,” said PEN American Center Freedom to Write Program Director Larry Siems. “We hope that the United States will formally protest this flagrant interference with the right of China’s citizens to travel freely and share their views with international visitors, which we understand our colleagues have been told was a planned drill by police in preparation for the Olympics. China made explicit commitments to the world to secure the Olympic Games, and restricting the movements of citizens seeking to travel to Beijing and meet international visitors during the Games would clearly violate those commitments and the spirit of the Olympics.”

PEN has also received confirmation that Feng Zhenghu, a Shanghai-based rights defender, online writer and freelance journalist who was detained on June 5, 2008, was released on June 15. His detention was believed to have stemmed from a collection of articles he published and distributed alleging wrongful convictions by the Shanghai courts, along with other writings. On June 18, authorities returned his four computers and 509 copies of the latest issue of his journal, which was published on June 4.

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 44 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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