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Chinese Writer Re-Arrested as Crackdown Continues

New York, Toronto, Stockholm, July 21, 2008—Less than three weeks before the Olympic Games open in Beijing, Chinese authorities have re-arrested writer, former political prisoner, and PEN member Du Daobin and filed formal charges against writer and human rights activist Huang Qi. PEN centers inside and outside China denounced the moves, and called on the international community to pressure the government to end its “blatant attacks against free expression.”

Du Daobin, a writer and member of the Independent Chinese PEN Center, was arrested today at the Healthcare Reform Office of Yingcheng City, Hubei Province, where he works as a professional clerk. Later, as many as eight police officers from the Public Security Bureaus of Xiaogan City and Yingcheng City searched his home and confiscated computers and written materials, including the letters some individuals had written to Du’s family during his detention more than four years ago. Du was convicted on June 11, 2004 of “inciting subversion of state power” for 175 words in 26 of his articles, and was handed a three-year sentence with an additional four years’ probation and two years’ deprivation of political rights. He served seven and a half months of his sentence before being released.

Except for a list of confiscated items, the police have not presented any official documents for Du’s arrest, instead declaring that he has been re-arrested to serve the remaining two years and four months of his sentence. He is apparently accused of violating the terms of his sentence by publishing more than 100 articles on the Internet, leaving the city, and receiving guests without permission from the police. His whereabouts are currently unknown.

Du’s arrest follows the news that formal charges have been pressed against human rights activist and writer Huang Qi. Huang, the director of the Tianwang

Human Rights Center, was detained on June 10, 2008. On July 18, when his family arrived at the Chengdu Public Security Bureau's Wuhou Sub-division looking for information about his situation, they discovered that he was being formally arrested for "illegal possession of state secrets." Huang is being held incommunicado at the Chengdu City Detention Center, where he is being denied legal counsel on the grounds that his case involves "state secrets."

On July 8, PEN American Center, PEN Canada, and the Independent Chinese PEN Center issued a report, **Failing to Deliver: An Olympic-Year Report Card on Free Expression in China**, which finds that the climate for freedom of expression in China has measurably deteriorated over the past year, in full view of the international community. According to the report, not only are there more writers in prison than there were seven months ago, but there are serious restrictions placed on writers' movements and on their ability to speak and publish freely. **Failing to Deliver** recommends that the Chinese government live up to its pledges to improve its human rights record by releasing all writers imprisoned in China and lifting restrictions on freedom of expression, and urges all nations participating in the Olympics to hold China accountable to these pledges. A copy of the report can be found on the home page of www.pencanada.ca.

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. 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 45 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, www.pencanada.ca, and www.chinesepen.org.