

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information contact:

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

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

Yu Zhang, Independent Chinese PEN Center, +46-8-50022792, wipc@penchinese.net

PEN Denounces Detention of Prominent Tibetan Number of Writers Imprisoned in China Rises to 39

New York, Toronto, Stockholm, April 18, 2008 – Writers from Canada, the United States, and China expressed concern today about reports that Jamyang Kyi, a prominent Tibetan writer, reporter, activist and singer, has been detained in Qinghai Province. Citing “further evidence of a deterioration of human rights,” representatives of PEN Canada, PEN American Center, and the Independent Chinese PEN Center called on the Chinese government to release Kyi and immediately end the crackdown on writers and journalists in Tibet and China.

Jamyang Kyi, a blogger who has also published articles on women’s rights in Tibet, was escorted from her office at the state-owned Qinghai TV on April 1, and has been detained since then. Her husband, Lamao Jia, says that she has not been seen since April 7. Police reportedly searched her home and confiscated her computer and contact lists.

Kyi’s arrest comes amidst a crackdown against protests in the Tibet Autonomous Region and Tibetan areas in Qinghai, Gansu, and Sichuan provinces, and at a time when the Chinese government is rigorously prosecuting writers throughout China before the Olympic Games begin in August. Writer and activist Hu Jia was repeatedly denied access to his lawyer last week and subsequently missed a deadline to appeal his three and a half year prison sentence.

“We are loathe to add yet another writer to our list of colleagues imprisoned in China,” said Larry Siems, Director of the Freedom to Write and International Programs at PEN American Center. “The rising number that PEN is charting points to ominous signs that free expression is increasingly threatened on the eve of the Beijing Olympics. With our colleagues at PEN Canada and the Independent Chinese PEN Center, we urge the Chinese government to reverse this trend and release Kyi and the other 38 writers immediately and unconditionally.”

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 39 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.

###