

RAN #3/08 January 25: CHINA

Please note: On December 10, 2007 PEN Canada launched a Countdown to the Olympics. On that day (242 from Olympics opening) there were 40 writers in prison. Today there are 41. Many upcoming RANS will be part of this campaign; for details visit www.pencanada.ca. Please participate!

CHINA: Wang Dejia (pen name: Jing Chu) released under dubious conditions; Hu Jia's family harassed. (This RAN is an update to RAN #1/08)

Background: 1) Wang Dejia (pen name: Jing Chu), arrested December 13, 2007 on suspicion of "inciting subversion of state power" was released on January 12, 2007, "pending trial for one year" and only because he agreed not to write about the government or the Olympics.

2) Activist and dissident writer Hu Jia, arrested December 27, 2007 on suspicion of "inciting subversion of state power." He is known for online activism on environmental and AIDS issues. Hu Jia suffers from long-term health problems including cirrhosis of the liver. His family, wife Zeng Jinyan and baby are under effective house arrest. (This case is garnering much attention in China, and on Internet, which is why we are sending this second letter.)

Please note: there are no fax numbers for Chinese authorities. We recommend that you mail your letter to the President of China in P.R. China, and send your appeal to the Chinese embassy in Ottawa asking them to forward it to other authorities in China and welcoming any comments.

His Excellency Hu Jintao
President of the People's Republic of China
State Council
Beijing 100032
People's Republic of China

Excellency:

As a member of PEN Canada, I once again join writers from the community of International PEN, the worldwide association of writers, in urging you to release our colleagues who are in prison in your country in violation of their right to freedom of expression.

In particular at this time, I again draw your attention to two recent cases:

- writer Wang Dejia (pen name: Jing Chu), arrested December 13, 2007, released on January 12, 2007, "pending trial for one year" and under conditions that he not write anything "attacking the leadership of the Party and State," "inciting subversion of state power," or any "political commentary."
- writer Hu Jia, arrested on 27 December 2007 on suspicion of 'inciting subversion of state power'. Hu Jia is in very poor health. His wife Zeng Jinyan and infant child are under virtual house arrest, cut off from telephone and Internet, and prevented from receiving essentials for survival.

China promised an improved human rights climate and freedom of the press when awarded the Olympics, and yet there are still at least 41 writers, journalists and cyber-dissidents in prison. And removing a writer from prison and then prohibiting him from writing certain things does not honour China's promises to the world and to the International Olympic Committee.

In addition, in order that these writers are not simply replaced by others and that writers and journalists are not imprisoned in violation of their right to freedom of expression in the future, we respectfully request that the Chinese government:

- Abide by its pledge that "there will be no restrictions on media reporting and movement of journalists up to and including the Olympic Games";
- End internet censorship and reform laws that are used to suppress the free exchange of information and ideas on the internet.
- Not impose conditions of censorship on writers who are released.

China's citizens are ready to exercise the rights they are guaranteed under their constitution and under international law, including the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

With all eyes on China this year, we look forward to the good news that all of our colleagues have been released and that no restrictions have been imposed upon their freedom to write.

Sincerely,

[your signature and name and address]

Copies (care of the Chinese Embassy in Ottawa) to:

Procurator General Mr. Jia Chunwang
Supreme People's Procuratorate
Beiheyuan Street 147
100726 Beijing
P.R.China

Governor of the Zhejiang Provincial People's Government
LU Zushan
Zhejiangsheng Renmin Zhengfu
9 Shengfulu
Hangzhoushi 310007
P.R.China

Chief of the Zhejiang Provincial Prison Management Bureau
GE Bingyao
Zhejiangsheng Jianyu Guanliju
110 Tianmushanlu
Hangzhoushi
P.R.China

President of the Zhejiang Provincial High People's Court
YING Yong
Zhejiangsheng Gaoji Renmin Fayuan
5 Machenglu
Hangzhoushi 310012
P.R.China

H.E. Lu Shumin
Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Canada

Huang Huikang
Political Counsellor and Deputy Chief of Mission
Embassy of the Peoples Republic of China
515 St. Patrick Street, Ottawa, Ont. K1N 5H3
Fax: (613) 789-1911
Email: chinaemb_ca@mfa.gov.cn

Please also send copies of your appeal to the following Canadian authorities:

Robert Sinclair
Deputy Director, Human Rights Division
Foreign Affairs Canada
Email: robert.sinclair@international.gc.ca

Robert Wright
Ambassador
Embassy of Canada
19 Dongzhimenwai Dajie
Chao Yang District
Beijing 100600 PRC
Email: beijing-pa@international.gc.ca
Fax: (011 86 10) 6532-5033

Toby Schwartz

Desk Officer, China
Foreign Affairs Canada
Email: toby.schwartz@international.gc.ca