

NOTE: There will not be a weekly RAN over the summer. We will send out an appeal if there is a case of great urgency. Thank you for your thoughtful feedback on the RANs and for your ongoing support of the work of PEN Canada.

BACKGROUND: On December 10, 2007, International Human Rights Day, PEN Canada, in collaboration with the Independent Chinese PEN Center (ICPC) and American PEN, launched **We Are Ready for Freedom of Expression: A Countdown to the Olympics**. On that date, there were **42 writers** in prison; since then some writers have been released, new writers have been arrested. Today, the number stands at **44 writers**, imprisoned for exercising their right to speak and write freely, as guaranteed under Chinese and international law. Many are cyber-dissidents, and most are charged with "inciting subversion of state power."

Despite official pledges to respect essential rights in this Olympic year and despite an apparent relaxation of restriction of movement for journalists immediately following the earthquakes in May, Chinese authorities continue to harass and detain writers in violation of their right to freedom of expression.

See details of the campaign on our homepage: www.pencanada.ca

Please send your letter to:

The Hon. David Emerson
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Lester B. Pearson Building
Room A-10 125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa ON K1A 0G2
Fax: (613) 996-3443
Email: david.emerson@international.gc.ca

Dear Mr. Emerson,

As a member of PEN Canada, the Canadian centre of the international writers' organization, with 145 centres in 110 countries around the world, I join with my colleagues who, at the annual general meeting of PEN Canada on June 19, 2008, passed unanimously the following resolution:

WHEREAS

China made promises to improve the human rights of its citizens in securing the Olympic Games, and specifically declared that "there will be no restrictions on media reporting and movement of journalists up to and including the Olympic Games;"

The practice of detaining, harassing, and censoring writers and journalists in China has not only persisted but has in fact accelerated in the past several weeks;

The members of PEN Canada at the 2008 annual general meeting

appeal with urgency (in the time remaining before the Olympics begin) to the government of Canada:

to formally address with the Government of China concerns about the human rights record in the lead-up to the Olympic Games;

in particular, to raise the cases of more than 44 writers arrested and in most cases imprisoned for "acts of subversion" taking the form of cyber-dissidence;

to make every effort to re-convene the suspended bilateral human rights dialogue with China, following the recommendations of the Canadian Coalition for Human Rights in China that the dialogue be made meaningful, that there be follow-up from year to year, that NGOs be invited to participate, and that the Chinese government be held accountable for their human rights obligations under domestic and international law.

Yours truly,

[your name and signature]

Please also send copies of your appeal to the following officials:

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

Leonard Edwards
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa ON K1A 0G2
Tel: (613) 944-4911
Email: leonard.edwards@international.gc.ca

Robert Wright
Ambassador, Embassy of Canada
19 Dongzhimenwai Dajie, Chao Yang District
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Email: beijing-pa@international.gc.ca
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