

TAKE ACTION: Please cut and paste this letter onto your personal or Institutional letterhead calling for the release of poet and Internet writer Shi Tao.

1 December 2006

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

Excellency,

I wish to add my name to this appeal from PEN Canada, the Canadian centre of the international writers' organization, International PEN. PEN Canada is calling for the release of poet and Internet writer **Shi Tao**.

According to information recently made available to us, following a November 2006 prison visit Shi Tao's mother reported that her son was in decent physical shape and that a skin disease from which he had been suffering had been mostly cured by medicine that his family was supplying. However, Shi Tao was still doing forced labour in prison, which included assembling stone beads as well as cleaning. He also has restricted access to reading material and is only permitted to write letters to his family.

Officials from the Changsha security bureau detained Shi Tao near his home in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, on 24 November 2004. This came several months after he e-mailed notes detailing the propaganda ministry's instructions to the media about coverage of the anniversary of the crackdown at Tiananmen Square. Authorities confiscated his computer and other documents and warned his family to stay quiet about the matter. On 14 December, authorities issued a formal arrest order, charging Shi with "leaking state secrets." On 27 April 2005, the Changsha Intermediate People's Court found Shi guilty and sentenced him to a 10-year prison term. On 2 June, the Hunan Province High People's Court rejected Shi's appeal without giving the journalist a hearing.

Shi Tao worked for the Changsha-based daily *Dangdai Shang Bao* (Contemporary Business News) until May 2004, when he became a freelance journalist and writer. He is a published poet, and is known for his social commentaries published on overseas Chinese-language media such as Democracy Forum (www.boxun.com). He is a member of the Independent Chinese PEN Centre.

PEN Canada believes that Shi Tao has been convicted in clear violation to his fundamental right to freedom of expression, as guaranteed by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We call for his immediate and unconditional release.

Sincerely,

[Your name and address]

Copies to:

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Procurator General Mr. Jia Chunwang
Supreme People's Procuratorate
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Also c/o:

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

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