

RAN #46 December 14, 2007

CHINA: 40:242: We are Ready for Freedom of Expression

BACKGROUND: On International Human Rights Day, December 10, PEN Canada, the Independent Chinese PEN Centre (ICPC) and American PEN launched **40:242**, a countdown to the opening of the Olympic Games in Beijing on August 8, 2008. That is 242 days, and on December 10 there were 40 writers in Chinese prisons who are International PEN WiPC cases (nine are PEN Canada honorary members). The elements of the campaign are on the PEN Canada website. In support of the campaign, we ask you to please send the letter that follows to the Chinese authorities. (A signed and translated version of this letter (with details of the 40 cases) was sent on December 10, signed by the presidents of the three centres.)

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

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

Excellencies:

As a member of PEN Canada, I join writers from the community of International PEN, the worldwide association of writers, in urging you to release 40 of our colleagues who are in prison in your country in violation of their right to freedom of expression.

Last August, China launched a publicity campaign proclaiming "We Are Ready" to host the Olympic Games in August 2008. We challenge you to demonstrate that China is ready not just to stage the Olympics, but to acknowledge, protect, and celebrate the full rights of its citizens.

PEN believes the following writers and journalists are imprisoned in your country for exercising their right to speak and write freely, as guaranteed under Chinese and international law:

CHEN Shuqing
CHING Cheong
Dawa GYALTSEN
Tashi GYALTSEN
Jampel GYATSO
GUO Qizhen
HADA
HE Depu
HU Shigen
HUANG Jinqiu (aka Qing Shuiju)
Korash HUSEYIN
JIN Haike
KONG Youping
LI Changqing
LI Zhi

LU Gengsong
LU Jianhua
LU Zengqi
NING Xianhua
Abdulghani MEMETEMIN
QI Chonghuai
SHI Tao
TAO Haidong
Tohti TUNYAZ (pen-name MUZART)
WANG Xiaoning
WU Yilong
XU Wei
XU Zerong
YAN Qiuyan
YAN Zhengxue

YANG Maodong (aka Guo Feixiong)
YANG Tongyan (aka Yang Tianshui)
YANG Zili
Nurehamet YASIN
YU Huafeng

ZHANG Honghai
ZHANG Jianhong (aka Li Hong)
ZHANG Lin
ZHENG Yichun
Dolma KYAB

We entreat you to review the information sent to you by International PEN and to intervene in these cases to facilitate immediate releases.

In addition, in order that these colleagues are not simply replaced by others and that writers and journalist 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.

The continuing detention of writers and journalists damages China’s image abroad and undercuts its ambitions to develop a dynamic and competitive economy and culture. 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 our colleagues have been released.

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

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
E-mail Address: chinaemb_ca@mfa.gov.cn

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

The Hon. Maxime Bernier
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Lester B. Pearson Building, Room A-10 125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa ON K1A 0G2
Fax: (613) 996 3443
Email: maxime.bernier@international.gc.ca

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 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