

RAN #1 January 13, 2008 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 42. Many upcoming RANS will be part of this campaign; for details see our website (www.pencanada.ca). Please participate!

CHINA: Two more activist/dissident writers detained: **Wang Dejia** (pen name: **Jing Chu**); **Hu Jia**.

Background: 1) Wang Dejia (pen name: Jing Chu), arrested December 13, 2007 at his home in Guilin in Guangxi Province on suspicion of "inciting subversion of state power" in relation to his online articles critical of the Chinese government in advance of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Wang is currently being held at the Quanzhou Chengbei police station.

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 and his wife Zeng Jinyan were placed under residential surveillance in May 2007 as they were leaving for Europe to promote their documentary "Prisoners of Freedom City". Hu Jia suffers from long-term health problems including cirrhosis of the liver. His family has been subjected to harassment and severe restrictions of movement since his arrest; there are concerns for his wife and infant, now under effective house arrest.

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 42 of our colleagues who are in prison in your country in violation of their right to freedom of expression.

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

- Writer **Wang Dejia** (pen name: **Jing Chu**), arrested December 13, 2007 at his home in Guilin in Guangxi Province on suspicion of "inciting subversion of state power" in relation to online articles critical of the Chinese government in advance of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.
- Writer **Hu Jia**, arrested on 27 December 2007 on suspicion of 'inciting subversion of state power'. Hu Jia is in very poor health and there are also serious concerns for the well-being of his wife and infant child.

I join my colleagues in International PEN in calling for the immediate and unconditional release of both writers in accordance with Article 19 of the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which China is a signatory, and on humanitarian grounds.

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.

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 all of 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:

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