

A Joint Statement from the International PEN community

We, the undersigned, are extremely outraged at the news that Dr. Liu Xiaobo, the best-known dissident writer and one of the most renowned intellectuals in China, is to be tried in Beijing on 23rd of December 2009 solely for his writings. We strongly condemn this most recent move of Chinese regime to signify its increasing challenge to the universal values of freedom, democracy and human rights regardless of the widespread international and domestic criticisms of its ruthless violations of Chinese citizens' rights in general and continuous detention of Dr. Liu Xiaobo in particular.

Dr. Liu Xiaobo, an internationally-recognized literary critic and political commentator as well as the former and Honorary President of Independent Chinese PEN Center (ICPC), has been detained since 8th of December 2008 and was indicted a year later on 11th of December 2009 on "inciting subversion of state power" for participating in drafting Charter 08, a petition for constitutional reform in China that has been so far cosigned by more than 10,000 Chinese citizens, as well as for criticizing Chinese Communist one-party dictatorship in six articles of his publications since 2005. In the afternoon of Sunday the 20th of December 2009, Dr. Liu's defence lawyers got a short notice for him to be tried by the Beijing First Intermediate People's Court in 3 days, but his wife Mrs. Liu Xia has been informed by the court not to attend the hearing. There are also reports that more and more of ICPC members and Charter 08 signatories over the country, including ICPC Secretary-general Zhao Dagong and his deputy Jiang Danwen, have been interrogated, warned or even house-arrested by the police to prevent them from behaving possibly against the trial.

We believe that to try Dr. Liu Xiaobo is not only to unscrupulously abuse the rule of law, but also to try all of us who share with Dr. Liu the responsibility to exercise the freedom of expression anywhere in the world. Therefore, we call on other communities, institutions and individuals to join us in solidarity to press for the immediate and unconditional release of Dr. Liu Xiaobo, and for ending the harassment of ICPC members and Charter 08 signatories.

Co-signed by organizations:

Independent Chinese PEN Center
PEN American Center
Swiss German PEN
PEN Center USA
Sydney PEN
Melbourne PEN
South African PEN
Belgian Dutch-Speaking PEN
Trieste PEN
Quebec PEN
German PEN
PEN Club of Cuban Writers in Exile
Iranian PEN Centre in Exile
PEN Canada
Swedish PEN

Uyghur PEN
Basque PEN
Portuguese PEN
Colombian PEN
Sierra Leone PEN Centre
PEN Guadalajara
French PEN
Czech PEN
Norwegian PEN
Finnish PEN
English PEN.
Hong Kong Chinese PEN

Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China
Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union
Hong Kong Journalists Association
Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese
China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group
Green Radio
Christians for Hong Kong Society
Hong Kong Christian Patriotic Democratic Movement

Tiananmen Mothers Campaign
Princeton China Initiative
Support Network for the Persecuted in China
The Qi's Cultural Foundation

Vietnamese Writers in Exile Center

and by individuals:

Dr. John Ralston Saul, current international president of the International PEN
Eugene Schougin, international secretary of the International PEN
Marian Botsford Fraser, chairperson of Writers-in-Prison Committee of the International PEN
and the former President of PEN Canada
Dr. Karin Clark, former chairperson of Writers-in-Prison Committee of the International PEN
and German writer
Dr. Cecilia Balcázar, member of Colombian Academy of Letters and former Board member of
the International PEN
Kjell Olaf Jensen, former president of Norwegian PEN
Chaim Noll, German-Israeli writer born in former GDR
Dr. Antonio Della Rocca, Vice President of Trieste PEN
Job Degenaar, President of Writers in Prison Committee of The Netherlands PEN
Nguyễn Hoàng Bao Việt, Member of Suisse Romand PEN Centre and of United Nations Society
of Writers in Geneva
Lisa Appignanesi, president of English PEN
Ian Buruma, Anglo-Dutch writer and winner of Erasmus Prize (2008)

(more to join)

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