

# **PEN International's campaigning handbook**

## **A guide to defending writers at risk**



**pen**  
INTERNATIONAL

# JOIN THE CAMPAIGN



This handbook has been written primarily for PEN members and supporters campaigning for the right to freedom of expression and supporting writers at risk. It should prove useful for new members as well as those who have been a part of the PEN movement for some years and might want to refresh their approach to their work.

Campaigning for change is at the core of PEN International's work. This handbook will provide PEN members and supporters with key elements necessary to any campaign strategy and enable them to mobilize for action through a range of techniques and resources (including letter-writing, public events, advocacy, media and publicity work).

These guidelines are based on PEN International's Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC) handbook, first put together in 1998 at the request of many PEN members worldwide, who sought guidance to help them with their campaigns and activities protecting writers' right to write and to freedom of expression. The WiPC handbook was subsequently updated in 2009. PEN International wishes to thank all PEN members and staff who have contributed to these guidelines throughout the years.

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[www.pen-international.org](http://www.pen-international.org)

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# 1

# An introduction to PEN International

## What is PEN International?

PEN International promotes literature and freedom of expression. It is a forum where writers meet freely to discuss their work; it is also a voice speaking out for writers who have been silenced. Founded in London in 1921, PEN International connects an international community of writers from its Secretariat. Governed by the PEN Charter, it operates across five continents with over 130 Centres in over 90 countries.

PEN stands for poets, playwrights, essayists and novelists and is the largest international association of writers. Arthur Miller, Svetlana Alexievich, Toni Morrison, Octavio Paz, Margaret Atwood, Heinrich Böll and J.M. Coetzee are among the thousands of authors, poets, editors, journalists and translators who have made PEN International the unique organisation that it is.

Every year, PEN members campaign and lobby governments to uphold civil and political rights – for the respect and protection of writers' right to freedom of expression, protection from intimidation and harassment, release from prison, and for investigations into cases of torture and killings. PEN International and PEN Centres also advocate for systemic change to restrictive laws and practices,



PEN International has been promoting literature and defending freedom of expression worldwide since 1921.

including by submitting concerns and recommendations about freedom of expression issues to various international and regional human rights bodies.

Solidarity is one of the biggest strengths of the PEN movement. Scores of writers have been released or have seen their situation improved in part due to our work. Through writing to imprisoned writers, when possible, or to their families, PEN members provide encouragement and hope.

The dedication of the PEN membership is a continuous source of inspiration and motivation. In the words of Orhan Pamuk, PEN International Vice President and winner of the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature: *'When another writer in another house is not free, no writer is free. This, indeed, is the spirit that informs the solidarity felt by PEN, by writers all over the world.'*

## The PEN Charter

PEN International is guided by the ideals of the PEN Charter, which expresses every member's commitment to protecting the free exchange of ideas and promoting the value of literature.

### The PEN Charter affirms that:

- ▶ Literature knows no frontiers and must remain common currency among people in spite of political or international upheavals.
- ▶ In all circumstances, and particularly in time of war, works of art, the patrimony of humanity at large, should be left untouched by national or political passion.
- ▶ Members of PEN should at all times use what influence they have in favour of good understanding and mutual respect between nations and people; they pledge themselves to do their utmost to dispel all hatreds and to champion the ideal of one humanity living in peace and equality in one world.
- ▶ PEN stands for the principle of unhampered transmission of thought within each nation and between all nations, and members pledge themselves to oppose any form of suppression of freedom of expression in the country and community to which they belong, as well as throughout the world wherever this is possible. PEN declares for a free press and opposes arbitrary censorship in time of peace. It believes that the necessary advance of the world towards a more highly organised political and economic order renders a free criticism of governments, administrations and institutions imperative. And since freedom implies voluntary restraint, members pledge themselves to oppose such evils of a free press as mendacious publication, deliberate falsehood and distortion of facts for political and personal ends.

The PEN Charter was approved at the 1948 PEN Congress in Copenhagen, and has guided, unified and inspired its members ever since.

## PEN International's Committees

### PEN International works through five standing Committees:

- ▶ The Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC), established in 1960
- ▶ The Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee (TLRC), established in 1978
- ▶ The Writers for Peace Committee (WfPC), established in 1984
- ▶ The Women Writers' Committee (WWC), established in 1991
- ▶ The Young Writers Committee, established in 2024

PEN members who are part of these Committees meet regularly, holding discussions on the specific issues they are concerned with and developing actions aimed at supporting persecuted writers, promoting peace, linguistic and translation rights, defending freedom of expression and promoting literature throughout the world.

## PEN International's funding

PEN International relies on donations and member contributions to be able to perform its functions and deliver its projects. Our strategy includes the safeguarding of PEN's mission by creating long-term financial sustainability, through diversifying our supporter base, to mitigate the risk of over-reliance on a small number of longstanding supporters.

We are immensely grateful for the vital support of Sida, Fritt Ord, UNESCO, Cornish Foundation, Hawthornden Foundation, Charlotte Aitken Trust, Writers Circle members, Publishers Circle members, Viv Groskop, Eric Lax, Anne & Michael Golden, Moomin, Sven & Lilly Murmann, Evan Cornish Foundation, Elizabeth McCance, the Souter Foundation, Yann Martel, Jonathan Beck, Andrea Gessner, Clarissa Palmer, and Nali Dinshaw, amongst others.

In 2023 we also ran our first crowdfunding campaign, which raised significant unrestricted funding for our core work.

We will continue to research and approach potential donors, individuals, trusts and companies, as well as cultural and governmental institutions. We are committed to raising additional unrestricted funding through voluntary donations from our [Publishers Circle](#) and [Writers Circle](#): we see these funding streams as a primary area of growth in the coming years. In 2023, we also established a Philanthropy Advisory Board with members including book industry experts, helping us find new support from the publishing industry and beyond.

Last, to widen our support base and encourage inclusivity, we are promoting a Regular Giving campaign whereby anyone anywhere can become a '[Friend of PEN International](#)' for as little as £5 per month.

## PEN International's mandate

PEN International works on behalf of those who are detained or otherwise persecuted for their opinions expressed in writing, including writers who are under attack for their political activities or for exercising their profession, provided that they did not use violence or advocate violence and hatred.

### WHO DOES PEN INTERNATIONAL WORK FOR?

PEN International works to protect all persecuted writers, journalists, publishers, poets, editors, translators, playwrights, songwriters, editors, bloggers – anyone who works with the written word. Support for writers at risk for reasons other than writings can include those who have come under attack for their peaceful political activities, have supported minority rights or have taken part in advocacy for others whose rights have been abused.

### PEN INTERNATIONAL DOES NOT WORK FOR

Broadcast journalists (such as radio or television), performers, noneditorial staff of newspapers and publishing houses, technical and other support staff. PEN International works closely with other media rights organisations whose remits include broadcast journalists and staff. PEN Centres interested in campaigning on non-print writers/journalists are directed towards these organisations.

## PEN International's research methodology

**Informed consent is paramount to PEN International's research, campaigning and advocacy work on behalf of persecuted writers.**

PEN International will only take on cases of persecuted writers when we can secure consent for action (including campaigns, solidarity actions, direct appeals to the authorities – amongst other things). PEN International has a team of experienced researchers with proven country, regional and language expertise, and an in-depth knowledge of freedom of expression issues globally. PEN International gathers its information from a wide variety of credible sources and seeks to confirm its information through at least two independent sources, which include family members, lawyers and friends, PEN members, press reports, reports from individuals in the region in question, reports from other human rights groups, embassy officials and academics. All individual casework is undertaken in the context of PEN International's wider research documenting violations against writers worldwide and is informed by an expert knowledge of freedom of expression issues.





# Strategic campaigning

In December 2022, PEN International, English PEN and the Frontline Club hosted IMPRISONED NOT SILENCED: an evening of solidarity with writers at risk. With writer and activist Ahdaf Soueif, lawyer and human rights defender Stella Assange, writer and PEN Eritrea director Awet Fissehaye, and writer, translator, and activist Hanna Komar. Moderated by PEN International board member and writer Salil Tripathi. Credit: Jujuwandere

**This chapter aims to provide PEN Centres with a common understanding of what PEN International means by campaigning and key elements necessary to any campaign strategy.**

**Campaigns aim to change undesirable conditions or aspects of our world. This change is conceptualised around a specific concern or problem and by a campaign goal. In campaigning, we have to be able to see this end point from the very beginning, with everything we are doing working towards making this goal happen. We might try to reach this goal by changing people’s hearts, minds, and behaviours; changing the resources or tools people have available to them; changing legislation; or by addressing structures or spaces, all with the belief that changing an element will bring us closer to our overall goal (the change we seek). The actions taken are our tactics and when we achieve change through our tactics, we can coherently group them together as milestones: steps on the way towards achieving our goal. Our campaign strategy links all of our tactics together in a way that is strategic.**

## Theory of change

A theory of change lays out the changes we want to see – both long-term and short-term – and how we expect to achieve these changes.

### Simple steps to create a theory of change:

1

What is the change that we want to see? (often the expected end result/s)

2

What needs to happen to make this change? (key assumptions and steps required to reach the end results)

3

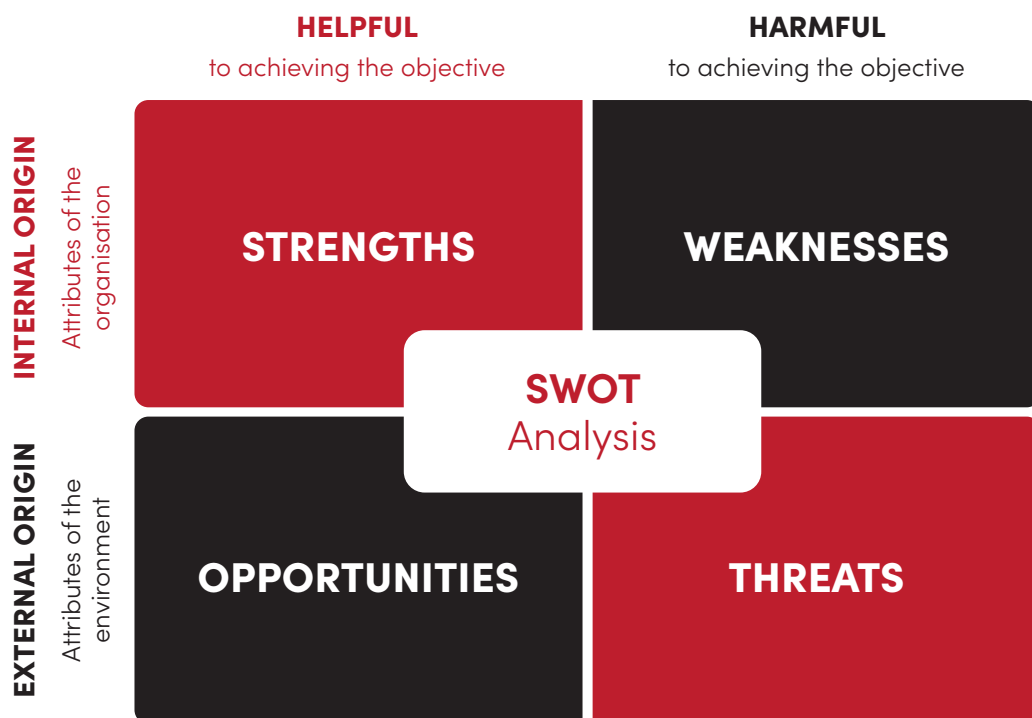
What can we do to influence change? (activities we intend to carry out as part of the campaign and keeping track of progress)

## Situational analysis

Many strategic planning tools have been developed to facilitate strategic thinking and planning. The most frequently used are SWOT and PEST analyses (commonly together called the situational analysis).

**SWOT ANALYSIS:** A SWOT analysis identifies and examines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Your strengths and weaknesses are internal. The opportunities and threats come from outside.

- **Strengths:** things over which you have control. An effective analysis of your strengths takes careful stock of the skills, knowledge and resources that you already have readily available to be built on. This includes past work and experience, the relationships and networks you have, capacity and funding, and existing knowledge and information.
- **Weaknesses:** negative factors that you want to mitigate or eliminate. After taking stock of what you already have, the next step is to identify what you haven't (yet) got. This means looking at relationships that need to be built, and understanding the capacity for lobbying, media, research and funding that are crucial to any campaigning effort. Take your weaknesses into consideration in your strategy development. Try to address them wherever possible and seek further support as required.
- **Opportunities:** external factors that provide us leverage. External conditions always influence your strategy and course of action. You need to be aware of what is happening around you and identify factors and events that can play to your advantage.
- **Threats:** some external conditions can hinder your strategy or even prevent you from achieving your objectives. Aim to identify these in advance wherever possible and to act to minimise the possible impact on your plans and objectives.

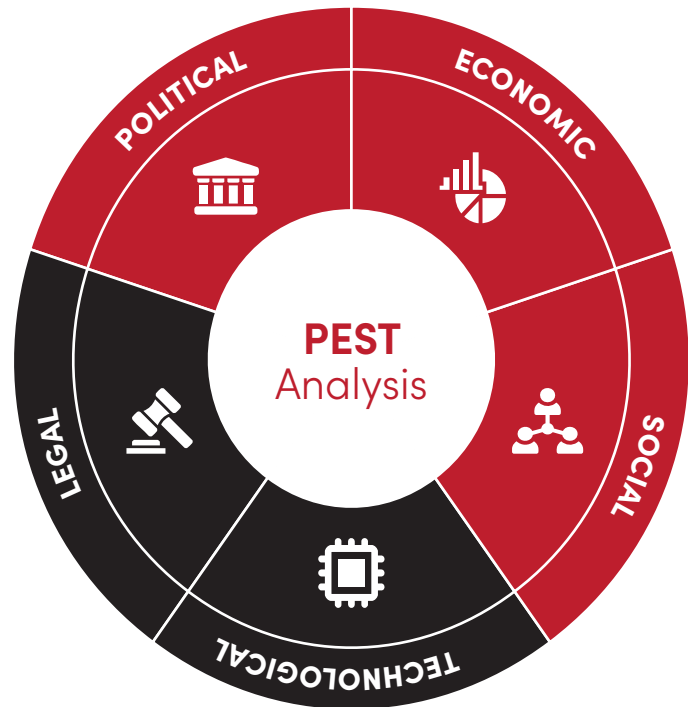




**PEST ANALYSIS:** PEST stands for Political, Economic, Social and Technological. Issues to include are external, and outside your direct control. You will need to consider:

- ▶ Legislation
- ▶ Public opinion
- ▶ The demography and geography of the area you serve
- ▶ Technical and technological advances or limitations
- ▶ Your external funders and other resources – their plans and policies
- ▶ The plans and policies of other agencies – competitors or partners
- ▶ The performance of the economy in the country/region you are working on
- ▶ Cultural and social trends/developments
- ▶ Developments in the media

Your SWOT and PEST analysis should be seen as living documents, central to the evolution of the campaign's implementation. There should be a continual review process throughout the campaign. The internal and external environment is always changing.



## Campaign objectives

After going through your SWOT and PEST processes, you will need to decide on your campaign objectives. Once you have formulated your campaign objectives, you may wish to measure them using a 'SMART' criteria:

### SMART

- S** **succinct/specific** – Is your objective detailed, well-defined, unambiguous and action-oriented?
- M** **measurable** – Can you track progress, change and success? If so, how?
- A** **achievable** – Can it be done in the proposed time-frame with the resources that are available?
- R** **realistic** – Is it attainable and is it relevant to your work and your overall goal?
- T** **time bound** – Is there a clear timeline?

## Stakeholders mapping

Once you have developed your SMART objectives you need to identify what needs to be done to plan for them: who are you going to engage and who has influence over the specific decision makers you want to reach.

Stakeholder analysis is a technique to identify and assess the importance of key people, groups of people, or institutions that may significantly influence the success of your Campaign (decision-makers and influencers).

Stakeholders include those who are affected by a particular issue or system, and can be groups of people, organisations, institutions or individuals. Primary 'stakeholders' are usually thought to be survivors of human rights abuses, or those at direct risk of particular abuses. Stakeholders are also those who have influence on policies, decision or actions, so can include media, governments and the international community. Consider categorising 'positive and negative' stakeholders as they can influence tactical choices in a campaign.

## Campaign implementation and evaluation

### PREPARATIONS

- ▶ Ensure you secured informed consent prior to action
- ▶ Choose a launch date most likely to generate media attention for your campaign
- ▶ Create a campaigning calendar of key moments within the campaign
- ▶ List the tools (always bearing in mind your target group and their lived realities) that you aim to use/produce to assess the budgetary implications

### MESSAGING

- ▶ Should be consistent, but may be segmented depending on intended audiences
- ▶ Should be neutral/non-judgemental (and not overly emotive)
- ▶ Should provide a clear understanding of context
- ▶ Have a simple campaign title that conveys the nature of your campaigning

### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- ▶ Should be integrated into your project cycle (including planning and implementation) to take place at regular intervals
- ▶ Aimed at refining your objectives, strategy and tactics
- ▶ Helps you ascertain whether your activities are in line with your objectives and campaigning timeline

### THREE UNIVERSAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

Are we doing what we said we would do?

[Internal validity]

Are we making any difference?

[Impact]

Are these the right things to do?

[Strategic relevance and learning]

# 3 Campaigning techniques and resources

**PEN members are encouraged to check PEN International's website for information about new campaigns, updates on cases, and other areas of our work such as literary events and international programmes.**

**PEN members may also sign up to PEN International's newsletter that is sent once per month (the signup form can be found on our website). The more information you have about the work of the worldwide community, the easier it will make your work at a national and international level, in cooperation with the Secretariat and sister Centres worldwide.**



*War, Censorship and Persecution, PEN International's Case List 2023/2024*, documents 122 cases of persecuted writers worldwide.

## The PEN International Case List

The PEN International Case List has been in existence since 1961. It is a yearly document of violations against writers: what happened, where, and by whom. Rather than attempting to duplicate the work of its media rights colleagues, the Case List features cases that are either unique to PEN International and are not within other organisations' remit, such as writers of literature and poets, or where there is a crossover between journalism and literature. Writers are frequently also journalists and media commentators, and vice versa, so PEN International will also include a person on the list whose primary role is as a writer, but who may be under pressure for their journalism. A journalist who is threatened for writing a

book may also become a PEN concern, such as where crime reporters publish books based on their investigations into criminality. Similarly, PEN International will on occasion take up visual artists, including filmmakers and cartoonists. Crucially, PEN International secures consent on behalf of the writers featured in the Case List.

It should also be noted that the Case List can only provide a snapshot of what is likely to be a larger phenomenon: offences are often not reported, writers may self-censor, and other obstacles arise in terms of documenting the silencing of writers. This is more likely to be the case for women writers as the full extent of censorship of women must be seen within the wider context of gender-based violence, and lack of access to education, civil, political, and cultural rights.

The Case List is intended to provide an overview of regional and global trends. It is a guide to the type of challenges writers face, in which countries, and the kind of actions that other writers are taking in support of their peers. It is a powerful reminder of the risks faced by writers around the world for their peaceful expression. Current and previous instalments of the Case List can be found on PEN International's website at the following link: <https://www.pen-international.org/case-lists>.

Each year, PEN members play an important role in promoting the Case List with their diplomatic and media contacts and become an effective voice for change.

## **CAMPAIGNING**

PEN members are encouraged to mobilize on behalf of the persecuted writers featured in the Case List, including by sending appeals to the authorities, electing them as Honorary Members, taking part in solidarity campaigns and protests, coordinating petitions, translating, publishing and promoting their writings, organising events and taking part in social media actions, amongst other things and as appropriate (see below). However, in a world saturated by NGO campaigns, it is always good to bring in creativity and innovation – bearing in mind your target audience. Please liaise with PEN International staff to ensure that informed consent is secured for campaigns and actions, as well as for advice and updates, and to keep them informed of your activities.

## **ADVOCACY**

PEN members are advised to share the Case List with their diplomatic and government contacts, such as their Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Culture, urging them to raise cases and concerns in bilateral fora. PEN members are further encouraged to reach out to their diplomatic representatives in countries of concern. PEN Centres with dedicated country programmes or countries of focus may also wish to share the Case List with diplomatic representatives in their own country and ask for a meeting (please see Chapter 4: Advocacy).

## **OUTREACH**

PEN members are encouraged to publish articles and opinion pieces on the Case List and the writers featured within it, and to promote the report on their social media channels. PEN members are further encouraged to promote audiovisual materials developed by PEN International to mark the launch of the Case List, including virtual launch events and social media graphics.



## Congress resolutions

Congress resolutions are approved by the PEN International Assembly of Delegates at its annual Congress in order to alert the PEN membership and public to serious violations of freedom of expression or other threats to rights defined within the PEN Charter and mobilize them into action. In 2019, PEN International introduced a resolution submission form, detailing how resolutions would be used to carry out advocacy, campaigning, and media work, and has been working with the standing Committees to present one resolution per Committee per year. For more information on how to submit resolutions, please contact PEN International.

PEN members are encouraged to promote Congress resolutions by publishing them on their respective websites, translating them when possible, and integrating them into their activities, including case work as well as national, regional and international advocacy to generate change.

Congress resolutions can be found on PEN International's website in English, French and Spanish at the following link: <https://www.pen-international.org/congress-resolutions>.

## Statements and Rapid Action Network Alerts

PEN International regularly issues statements to alert PEN members about worldwide developments affecting the welfare of writers and freedom of expression. PEN Centres are encouraged to raise awareness of the situation by publishing such statements on their respective websites, by translating them when possible, and by promoting them with their members as well as their diplomatic and media contacts.

Rapid Action Network alerts (RANs) and other calls to action encourage PEN members to respond to urgent developments on a case by writing an appeal and communicating the information on to relevant contacts. A typical development that requires a RAN action would be a report of a writer being tortured in prison

or falling critically ill through state neglect. RAN actions have also addressed such news as arrests, death sentences, death threats and disappearances. As we continue our mainstreaming lens on gender and diversity, we will increasingly be extending our lens to gender specific forms of discrimination.

### HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- ▶ You can decide to work only on those in countries that you have an interest in or have a bilateral connection with, or you may want to limit your responses to a level that you can manage.
- ▶ The first few hours of detention are the most critical and it is at this stage that prisoners are most likely to suffer different forms of abuse and ill treatment, so it is important that you act as quickly as possible. Each RAN also includes an 'act by' date, which is given at the end of each alert (usually two months after the alert has been issued) to enable us to systematically understand the impact of our (time specific) actions across the regions.
- ▶ Send a copy of your appeal to the embassy of the country in question and to your own country's diplomats in that country.
- ▶ Alert your country's media who you know follow events in that country, as they may be interested in your information.
- ▶ The more PEN members who send RAN appeals, the more effective it is. PEN Centres may also place RAN alerts on their websites and invite people who are not PEN members to send appeals as well.
- ▶ All RAN alerts are public documents and can also serve as press releases. They can be distributed to your media and to other interested individuals and organisations.

Remember to send any replies that you receive or any information about the case to PEN International. This critical feedback will help strengthen the broader campaign in support of the persecuted writer as other Centres may also be working on their case. Please see Annex 1 for more information.

## WRITING OFFICIAL APPEALS

There will be occasions when you will need or want to write official appeals to governments, such as responding to RAN alerts. One principle always applies; however terrible the human rights abuse, you should always remain polite.

### Recommended information to include:

#### (a) Cite relevant articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

For example, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration is as follows: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.'

Other relevant articles of the UDHR are:

- ▶ Article 5 No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.
- ▶ Article 9 No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile.
- ▶ Article 10 Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal.

Articles from other core international human rights treaties of the United Nations, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, can also be cited in circumstances where the country in question has signed or ratified the relevant treaty. Where relevant, region-specific treaties should also be cited.

#### (b) Quote International PEN's own charter

'PEN stands for the principle of unhampered transmission of thought within each nation and between all nations, and members pledge themselves to oppose any form of suppression of freedom of expression in the country and community to which they belong, as well as throughout the world.'

#### (c) Refer to the UN Standard Minimum Rules for Treatment of Prisoners

These include the following universally accepted rules:

- ▶ Access to legal counsel
- ▶ Availability of medical care
- ▶ Family visitation privileges
- ▶ Freedom from unnecessarily cruel treatment and punishment
- ▶ Adequate leisure, rest, diet and space
- ▶ The right to receive and send mail

#### (d) Form of salutation and closing; opening and ending your letters

The RANs will usually specify the proper form of address for a particular government official. Otherwise, you can safely use one of the following:

- ▶ 'Your Excellency' for heads of state, governors, ministers and ambassadors
- ▶ 'Dear Sir' or 'Dear Madam' for local authorities, prison commanders or police chiefs
- ▶ 'Your Honour' for judges
- ▶ 'Dear Admiral', 'General' or 'Captain' etc. for military officials

Closings or endings of your letters should be polite:

- ▶ 'Yours sincerely'
- ▶ 'Respectfully'
- ▶ 'Yours faithfully'

**(e) Content**

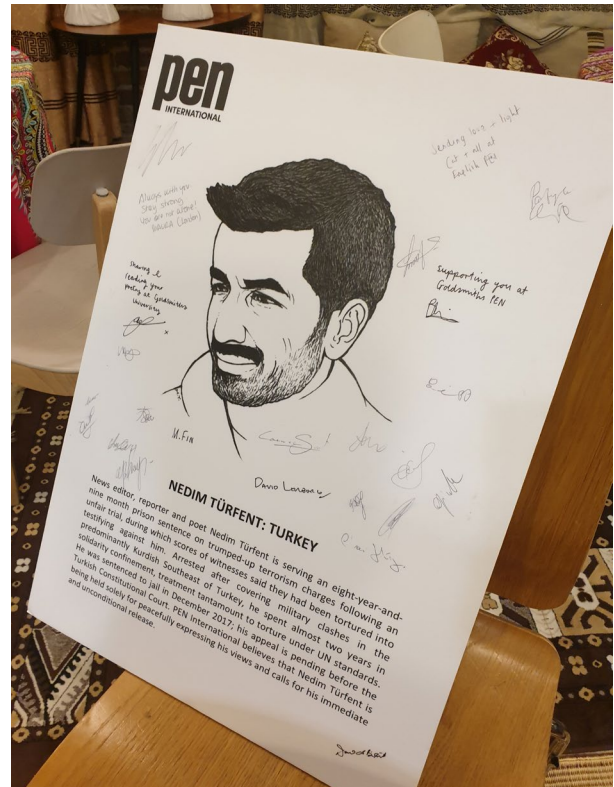
A good model for a letter or email is to:

- ▶ Explain your connection to PEN International and our commitment to promoting the internationally recognised right to freedom of expression.
- ▶ Include the relevant details of the case you are writing about and a statement about why you are writing at this time.
- ▶ State why you believe this case undermines human rights standards and ask for the body to exercise appropriate authority in investigating the matter, including where relevant for it to be corrected. If there have been any recent positive developments in the country, welcome these as well as requesting further positive moves.

**(f) What to do with your letter**

- ▶ Maximise your letter’s impact by simultaneously sending copies to sympathetic media, which can often help publicise cases.
- ▶ Invite internationally famous writers who live in your country to sign the letter. Engagement from a writer who has resonance in your region, or is internationally known, can often lead to officials taking more notice.

*Please see Annex 2 for more information.*



English PEN and PEN Melbourne elected Kurdish news editor, reporter, and poet Nedim Türfent as Honorary Member, notably coordinating letter-writing campaigns and appeals and translating and publishing his poetry. Solidarity event held by PEN International and English PEN in London, November 2019. Credit: Jwslubbock

**Honorary Members**

One of the WiPC’s most tested and successful tactics has been the election of imprisoned writers to Honorary Membership of a local PEN Centre. This method of highlighting a particular case can give the chosen writer a tremendous morale boost.

**CHOOSING YOUR HONORARY MEMBER**

Depending on the size of your Centre, you could decide to have more than one Honorary Member if there are enough PEN members to share the work, which is detailed below. The Case List provides a useful starting point to select Honorary Members. Go through the entire Case List carefully, searching for possible cases where you think your Centre could have particular impact, maybe because of links between your country and theirs, or if you have members who have useful contacts or relevant language skills. Here are the main points to bear in mind when making your selection:

- ▶ Take up only cases where the abuse is long term, such as a long prison term or a consistent pattern of harassment including attacks/threats over a prolonged period. In some cases, the harassment a writer faces may be temporary and not part of a longer or larger pattern of attack. You should focus on those cases where the situation has not been resolved or is unlikely to be resolved soon.
- ▶ Think about your country's relationship with the country in question. Sometimes this relationship might be a good reason to take on a case, sometimes not. Usually where relations are bad, you should avoid taking on a case. However, if relations are good – perhaps a new trade partnership has been established, or there are historical links between the two countries – this is usually a good indicator for taking on a case. The government of the country in question will have an interest in maintaining good relations and may be more willing to listen to your appeals. These factors should already be identified in your PEST analysis, providing you the necessary context to enhance your approach.
- ▶ Think about the expertise of your own membership. If a member has lived in a country, speaks the language and understands the local politics, this is a good reason to take on a new Honorary Member.
- ▶ Consult PEN International before you make a final decision on initiating a campaign. There could be updates to the case that you are unaware of, for example the person has been freed since the last Case List was published. PEN International will ensure that the writer or his family gives consent to proceed. Should that be the case, PEN International will make a note of the fact that you have chosen the Honorary Member and will keep you informed of any developments and connect you to other PEN Centres working on the case or others in the same country.

## APPOINTING PEN MEMBERS TO WORK ON A CASE

- ▶ Send new Honorary Members an official letter to let them know about your decision. If you have them, enclose one of your PEN Centre's membership cards. This small token of your regard can mean a huge amount to writers in trouble.
- ▶ Where the addresses of your Honorary Members are not known – because they are in an unknown place of detention or have disappeared – or where letters from abroad may be unhelpful to their situation, you may have to send the card and letter to the family, a friend or their lawyer.

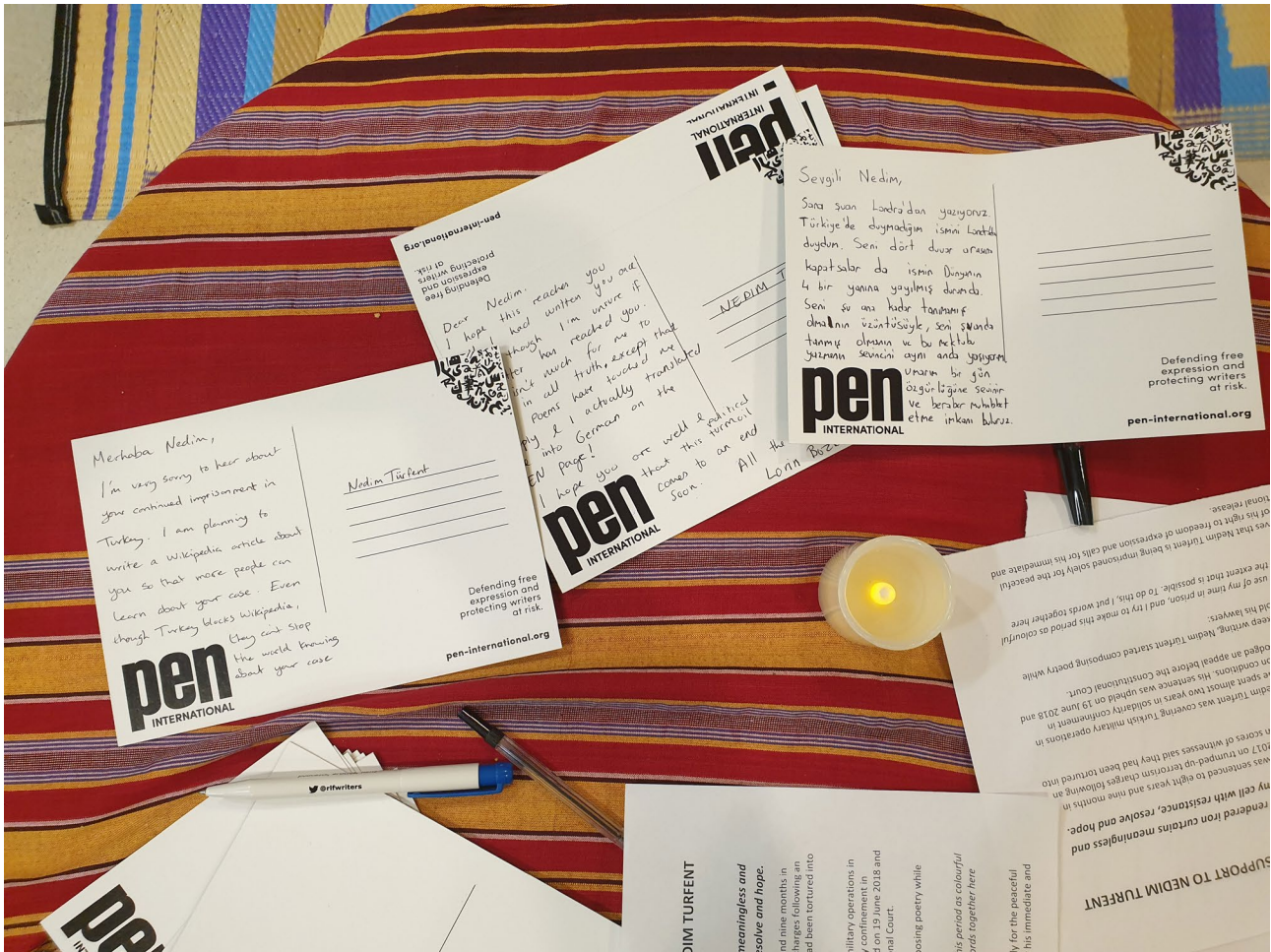
## DEVISING YOUR ACTION PLAN

Create an 'Action Plan' and think about what you want to achieve. It might look something like this:

- **GOAL ONE:** Make contact with the prisoner.
- **GOAL TWO:** Alert your government to the case and find out their official position.
- **GOAL THREE:** Write or secure an article about your Honorary Member in a major national newspaper.
- **GOAL FOUR:** Persuade the embassy of the prisoner's country to meet with you.

Some of these goals may be easier to achieve than others. Be realistic about what you want to achieve, and you may find you have a positive impact on what may at first seem like a challenging situation.





PEN members and supporters writing postcards for Nedim Türfent at a solidarity event held by PEN International and English PEN in November 2019. Credit: Jwslubcock

## WRITING TO YOUR HONORARY MEMBER

### Establishing Contact with your Honorary Member

If you have a prison address, and the country in question is reasonably open, you could make

contact with your Honorary Member right away. However, very often the writers that PEN International supports are unable to freely receive letters from abroad or without some kind of interference. Sometimes it is may also present risks to those closely associated with them (such as the family, friends, other members of civil society) – or there may be no address available. Please contact PEN International for advice.

### Correspondence

It is up to you what sort of correspondence you want to have. Here is some advice as to how to write:

- ▶ At the beginning, keep your letters brief and not too personal but write often. You want to express support and solidarity but not raise unreasonable expectations.
- ▶ Work with another PEN member and share the letter writing. It helps you to make sure the letters to the prisoner are regular.
- ▶ Make sure you do not make promises that cannot be fulfilled even if you do build a good friendship.

Remember that there will be cases where, although a prison address is available, correspondence is not permitted. Many PEN Centres find such cases difficult. However, several prisoners, after their release, informed PEN International that they had been aware of PEN members' letters coming into the prison, because a prison guard or family members had told them of their existence. It is worth sending short letters with your good wishes, even when there is little hope of a reply.

### **GETTING YOUR HONORARY MEMBER'S WORK TRANSLATED AND PUBLISHED**

#### **Step One: How to find a translation**

Provided you have consent to do so, it is a good idea to try to find and translate the writings of your Honorary Member. This helps when publicising their cases. It can be difficult if the writer is banned as their work may never have been seen or read by anyone; or it may be too much of a risk for friends to smuggle the work out of the country.

- ▶ Check to see if any translations of your Honorary Member's work already exist in any language.
- ▶ Find someone who is visiting the writer's country of origin and may be able to find the work in a library or bookstore. Are there family members safely outside the country who could help you? Or specialist academics who have literary works of writers from the country? Or other PEN Centres with specialist knowledge?

#### **Step Two: How to translate the work**

- ▶ Find a translator whose mother tongue is that of the language into which the work is to be translated.
- ▶ If the work is poetry, try to find a poet; if fiction, somebody who writes fiction. The translator will select as well as translate the work. Sometimes the quality of the writing may not be high. But the translator will make sure their work does not distort the words of the writer and change the meaning of what has been written.

#### **Step Three: How to get the translation read and heard**

- ▶ Read the translation at an event or approach a famous writer or actor in your country who could read the material, perhaps on camera, for social media, or on a popular radio show.
- ▶ Offer it to a literary magazine in your country, contingent to consent.
- ▶ Important: make sure that the translator and any original publisher are fully credited. If the publication offers payment, however small, reimburse your translator if you were not able to pay them and send a payment to your Honorary Member or their family.
- ▶ Send an extract from the published piece to everyone on your contact list: government officials, diplomats, local human rights groups, journalists, members of your PEN Centre and so on.



During our 90th PEN International Annual Congress an empty chair was provided for Palestinian author and poet, Refaat Alareer alongside PEN International President, Burhan Somnez. Credit: Roberk Brooks

## Readings and other events

Many PEN Centres have held very successful public readings of works by their Honorary Members or other imprisoned writers. These readings are held to raise public awareness, attract media attention, raise funds or put pressure on governments. Sometimes readings do all of these at once. There is a lot of work to be done to find readers, find an affordable space and to advertise the event. Venues have varied from PEN offices, private homes, pavements outside embassies, student lecture rooms or public theatres. It is important to be realistic about the audience you think your event can attract and choose an appropriate location. It is better to under-estimate and have standing room only, than to over-estimate and have rows of empty seats.

### EMPTY CHAIR

Some PEN Centres have used such events to place an empty chair on the stage, as a way of powerfully reminding the audience that one person – the imprisoned writer in question – is unable to attend. A photo of the prisoner may be placed on the chair.

## Day of the Imprisoned Writer and other international days

### 15 NOVEMBER: DAY OF THE IMPRISONED WRITER

Throughout the year, PEN Centres mark special times by sending appeals, making public statements and taking part in other activities celebrating writers working under difficult circumstances. Among them is PEN International’s Day of the Imprisoned Writer, held every year on 15 November. Established in 1981 by PEN International’s WiPC, the Day of the Imprisoned Writer is an opportunity for the PEN movement to take action on behalf of selected writers and ensure that they and their families feel supported and not forgotten.

PEN Centres and members worldwide advocate for these cases, with activities ranging from letter-writing and panel discussions, to press conferences and publishing the work of imprisoned writers. PEN supporters engage in activities such as raising awareness of their situation and taking action on social media. Writers send solidarity letters to their colleagues in prison or under threat. For many PEN Centres, this is the most important day for their work, and events and activities take place around the world.



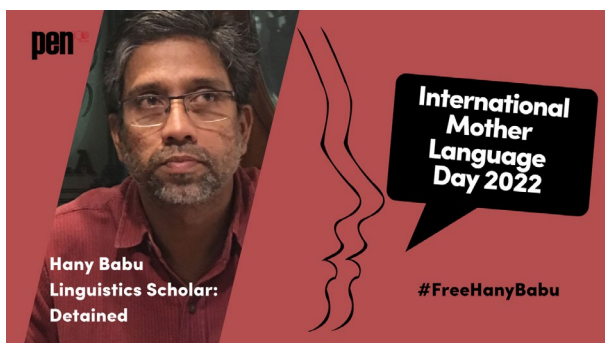
In May 2023, the Court of Appeal in Harare, Zimbabwe acquitted Tsitsi Dangarembga – who featured in the 2022 Day of the Imprisoned Writer campaign – of all the charges used to sentence her to a six-month jail term and a fine, suspended for five years on condition that she does not repeat the same ‘offence’.



## SEASONAL GREETINGS

In November/December each year, PEN International prepares a list of writers in trouble where contact is possible and invites PEN members to write seasonal greetings cards to as many of the writers on the list as they can. PEN Centres are advised to send non-religious messages so that they are suitable for recipients of all faiths. PEN International has received many reports from writers who have found these greetings enormously supportive.

The Turkish Armenian editor, Hrant Dink, was included in the 2006 Greetings Cards List. A few months later, in January 2007, he was assassinated. For many weeks after his death, PEN members received thank you notes written by Dink shortly before his death, with the bittersweet message 'Life is Precious'.

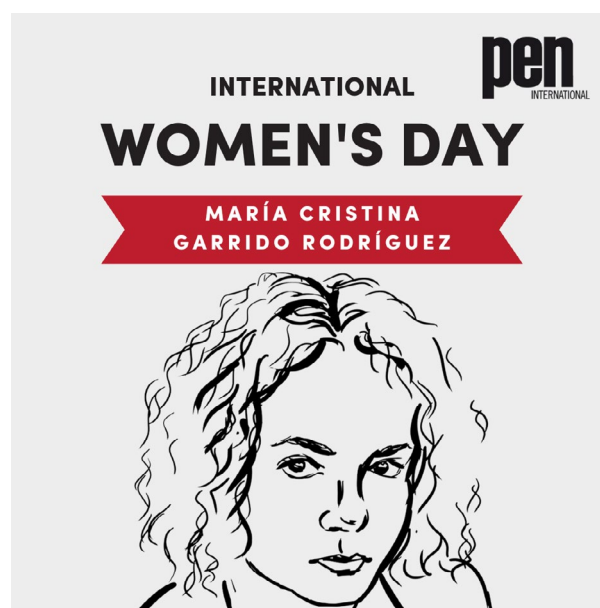


On International Mother Language Day 2022, PEN International campaigned for the release of linguistics scholar and activist Hany Babu from India.

### 21 FEBRUARY: INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

Held every year on 21 February, International Mother Language Day is observed to promote linguistic and cultural diversity, and multilingualism. On that day, PEN International highlights the case of a writer who is at risk because of their peaceful promotion of multilingualism and greater linguistic rights protections. In recent years, PEN International and PEN Centres notably mobilized on behalf of Belarusian writer, human rights defender, Nobel Peace Prize winner and PEN Belarus member Ales Bialiatski (2023), and linguistics scholar and activist Hany Babu from India (2022).

In 2020, PEN International's TLRC launched its 'Video Poem Marathon', a project aiming to give visibility to the work of writers expressing themselves in indigenous or minoritised languages. Starting on 21 February (International Mother Language Day), and until 21 March (World Poetry Day), the TLRC publishes poems written and recited in a variety of incredibly rich world languages.



To mark International Women's Day 2023, PEN International featured the case of Cuban poet and activist María Cristina Garrido Rodríguez, imprisoned since July 2021 for her criticism of the Cuban authorities.

### 8 MARCH: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Every March, PEN International issues an action highlighting women writers who are subjected to gender specific discrimination (including harassment, attack etc.) encouraging PEN members to send appeals calling attention to their cases. Some women who have been the subject of PEN International's International Women's Day actions include sociologist, writer, feminist, and PEN Türkiye member Pinar Selek (2024), Cuban poet and activist María Cristina Garrido Rodríguez (2023), as well as Kurdish writers from Türkiye Gulgeş Deryaspî and Meral Şimşek (2022).



**21 MARCH: WORLD POETRY DAY**

UNESCO’s World Poetry Day is a good opportunity to raise cases of poets under attack. Some countries have national poetry days on other dates during the year that PEN Centres may find more relevant. In 2023 and 2024, PEN International published its annual Case List of persecuted writers on World Poetry Day, thus highlighting the plight of poets and writers facing persecution solely for peacefully expressing their views.

PEN Protest – Day of the Dead is a campaign by PEN International and PEN Centres in Latin America to commemorate journalists killed in retaliation for their work.



In May 2023, PEN International marked the 30th anniversary of World Press Freedom Day by urging the release of journalist, media publisher, activist and writer, Jimmy Lai, imprisoned in Hong Kong. Credit: Mark Simon

**3 MAY: WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY**

Proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993, World Press Freedom Day recognizes the fundamental principles of press freedom, including the importance of defending the media from attacks on their independence and of paying tribute to journalists who have lost their lives while exercising their profession. Media freedom organisations worldwide mark this day with publications and events. In recent years, PEN International called for the defence of press freedom amidst Israel’s bombardment of Gaza (2024), urged the release of journalist, media publisher, activist and writer, Jimmy Lai, imprisoned in Hong Kong (2023) and mobilized on behalf of imprisoned Egyptian journalist Ismail al-Iskandrani (2022); al-Iskandrani was released seven months later.

**2 NOVEMBER: DAY OF THE DEAD CAMPAIGN**

In 2013, the United Nations General Assembly adopted its first resolution on the safety of journalists and impunity for crimes against them and proclaimed 2 November as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. Since then, human rights groups globally have urged states to prevent attacks, ensure justice, and protect journalists’ independence.

With its annual Day of the Dead campaign, PEN International honours journalists killed in the Americas targeted specifically for their work and urges governments to end impunity for these crimes and ensure justice. Events and actions coordinated by PEN Centres take place across the region. In 2023, the campaign featured nine journalists killed since 2 November 2022: four in Mexico, two in Colombia, one in the United States, one in Paraguay, and one in Haiti.

**THE WiPC CALENDAR**

PEN Centres are encouraged to select their own day to commemorate the right to freedom of expression, which they would celebrate annually. That day should be of particular significance to your local context, such as the killing or death of a writer. Please inform PEN International and the WiPC of your choice and annual commemorations, as the main objective of the WiPC’s calendar is to foster cooperation between PEN Centres. For instance, PEN Centres may wish to amplify colleagues’ activities, send solidarity messages to fellow Centres on their national freedom of expression days, or promote translations of selected works in a bid to strengthen our collective efforts to uphold the right to freedom of expression.



In 2017, PEN International conducted a high-level mission to Türkiye, protesting the heavy-handed crackdown against free expression in the country.

## PEN network products

While all PEN Centres adhere to the ideals of the PEN Charter, each has its own priorities. Some focus on campaigning for freedom of expression, others on education and literacy programmes. Some champion their national literatures, or work on promoting writing from different cultures and languages. The unifying thread is that all PEN Centres use their strength to support writers facing persecution and defend freedom of expression; it creates and strengthens the global solidarity to drive changes for writers at risk.

The PEN network is rich in resources (including skills) that can be used by all PEN members in campaigning for change, including reports, case sheets, newsletters, magazines, podcasts, letter-writing – to name a few. Please make sure to consult their websites and social media accounts. Many PEN Centres produce materials to help publicise their Centres and campaigns. These include:

- ▶ Posters and postcards. Something as simple as a postcard with a printed message, the address of an embassy or government minister and the option for your PEN Centre members to sign and post it can be very effective and a way for everybody to unite quickly behind a campaign.
- ▶ T-shirts, pens and tote bags.

International meetings, including Congresses and Committee meetings, are ideal places for PEN members to share their experiences and expertise. For PEN Centres' contact details, please visit PEN International's [website](#).

## Trial observations and other missions

In recent years, PEN International coordinated in-country missions to Mexico (2015), Guatemala (2017), Türkiye (2017), Hungary (2018), Venezuela (2018), the Russian Federation (2019), Honduras (2022 and 2023) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (2023). When possible, PEN International seeks to observe trial hearings to express solidarity with persecuted writers and nurture relationships with partner organisations and local media.

Some PEN Centres who have the financial resources have sent special missions, dispatched trial observers or published in-depth reports on specific situations. PEN International encourages PEN Centres to inform the Secretariat of any such plans so as to best support them and make sure efforts are not duplicated.

# Working with others

## WORKING WITH OTHER PEN CENTRES

Many PEN Centres work together to stage joint actions. PEN International facilitates a number of 'Country Action Groups'. Information and campaign ideas on specific countries are exchanged with PEN Centres who join the groups because of their specific interest or expertise in the region. Current networks exist on Belarus, China, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, Palestine and Türkiye, and are a good way of sharing ideas and coordinating activities. Please contact PEN International if you wish to join a 'Country Action Group'.

The number of PEN Centres has quickly expanded in recent years, and we would encourage cooperation, including between more established PEN Centres and our newer Centres. International meetings are good places to establish friendships and look at how you can work with other PEN Centres. Once you return to your own communities, try to sustain the link. In this way, some exciting new partnerships between PEN Centres can be made, PEN International's growth can be supported, and the internationalism of the movement strengthened.

## WORKING WITH OTHER NGOS

There are many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working against abuses of freedom of expression and other human rights that operate internationally, regionally and nationally. They are good sources of information and PEN International frequently exchanges information with them and works together on joint campaigns. PEN Centres are encouraged to work with national NGOs in their own countries to stage joint events and share media campaigns. Please make sure that you do not find yourself sharing a platform or being a guest of an organisation that does not share PEN values (see Chapter 1: PEN International's mandate). If in doubt, contact PEN International.

## WORKING WITH WRITERS IN EXILE

PEN International has been working at a grassroots level to protect, shelter and resettle writers at risk globally since the Second World War. PEN Centres worldwide have always welcomed as members writers who have fled their countries and provided essential support and advice as well as a community in which these exiled colleagues can continue to write despite often difficult circumstances. Each country has different asylum laws and provides different levels of support for exiles on arrival. Few PEN Centres have organised writers in exile programmes, but many have significant diplomatic leverage in their own countries that can be used to create practical solutions for writers at risk, as well as small emergency grants and local grassroots support networks.

PEN International provides support for writers in need of urgent relocation or in exile. This can include:

- ▶ Letters of support in cases where the writer is well known to PEN International; letters that can be used, for instance, in applications for asylum.
- ▶ Emergency aid – recommending individuals to the PEN Emergency Fund (see below) and other funds to cover emergency needs such as travel, living costs and resettlement.
- ▶ Recommendations to suitable residency and fellowship programmes.

As well as practical support, it is important that PEN centres engage in PEN International's ongoing campaign advocating for an effective and enabling visa framework for writers at risk, in which the international community, relevant bodies and all states understand access to emergency visas as being a necessary part of security strategies. Please see Annex 3 for PEN International's 2024 Congress resolution on protection mechanisms for writers, which includes a detailed list of recommendations.



## The PEN Emergency Fund

Founded in 1971 and based in the Netherlands, the PEN Emergency Fund works with PEN International to provide humanitarian assistance to persecuted writers from all over the world. The Fund can provide writers and their families with a one-off allowance of up to €2000 for a range of urgent needs such as safe passage, medical assistance and general support towards living expenses. Should you wish to recommend a writer in need to the PEN Emergency Fund, please contact PEN International. Visit the PEN Emergency Fund's [website](#) for more information on its history, coordination and impact.

## Centres raising funds alongside campaigns and other communications activities

When campaigning or communicating with their networks, some Centres may wish to consider including a call for donations. Centres may wish to specify what the donations will go towards – general costs; a specific event, publication or campaign; or to support focused advocacy and solidarity efforts.

Centres will need to decide how to process donations in the easiest and most efficient, cost-effective way. The most internationally recognized platform for processing donations is [JustGiving.com](#). It is recommended that Centres also research options, as there might be more suitable platforms in the region.

It is important that Centres make themselves aware of any local rules and charity legislation around public fundraising. Crucially, PEN International adheres to a policy of ethical fundraising that by extension is expected of Centres. If you intend to speak about specific cases in your fundraising, it is imperative that you attain consent from the person or persons being profiled, or their representative such as their lawyer or family member.

For specific tangible projects (like a short-term practical intervention, capital items, an event, or focused campaign), Centres could also consider running a crowdfunding appeal.

Again, Centres should research local options and consider the pros and cons of different platforms (for instance, GoFundMe is US-based and has stringent rules, but charities receive all donations even if target is not raised, whereas other providers return the donations to donors if the target is not achieved). A good place to start is [Crowdfunder.co.uk](#). [Kickstarter](#) is also a popular choice for creative projects.

Centres may wish to consider expanding their membership criteria as a way to diversify and widen their networks and support possibilities. Although PEN membership is primarily for writers, some Centres are able to broaden their audience to raise issues and generate much-needed income through opening up their membership to other interested parties, such as students, community groups, or anybody who is an invested reader and therefore a key stakeholder for freedom of expression and for PEN's values. Centres are encouraged to explore the possibility of peer support from Centres using these models and which are successful in raising funds in other ways.

Methods of engaging with donors and prospects include a dedicated newsletter or a call for voluntary contributions in regular newsletters, surveys, or events at which audiences can be inspired to support your work and the PEN cause. Centres with websites should include an opportunity for online visitors to make a donation.

Centres who wish to strengthen their fundraising should research local businesses and trusts/foundations, and bigger international entities that might have local offices and devolved corporate social responsibility (CSR) budgets. You might wish to produce a leaflet to leave with bookshops and others. A QR code is a good way to make it easier for people to make a donation. As well as asking for one-off gifts, consider asking for a small monthly gift using standing orders/direct debits. Consider having a recognition scheme for different supporters to bring them closer to your work, such as a Patrons, Sponsors, Friends, or Benefactors, and celebrate their support on your website, social media, and other communications.

Some charitable organisations are able to raise funds through community events, such as talks, sponsored walks or other activities, book sales, coffee-mornings, or cake-bakes, for example.





# 4 Advocacy

PEN International frequently submits reports and recommendations on key cases and concerns, including submissions to the UN Human Rights Council's Special Procedures and its Universal Periodic Review process. Credit: Ludovic Courtès

## What is advocacy?

Advocacy is all communication that is intended to persuade or produce a particular change in action or behaviour. Advocacy can take the form of a single meeting or a series of meetings, confidential or public discussions, direct or indirect communication through intermediaries, written correspondence, public statements or reports, and so on. All require regular follow-up action.

PEN International has, throughout its history, always tried to talk directly to governments wherever possible. Meetings at all levels have occurred – from PEN members and staff members talking to junior ministers and civil servants through to meetings between Heads of State and Secretary Generals of the United Nations and PEN International Presidents and International Secretaries. On some occasions, these dialogues have directly resulted in improvements: the release of a prisoner or a relaxation of the conditions of imprisonment. Sometimes, the dialogues have seen no immediate results, other than inform the ministers of its existence, mandate and its concern, which can have longer term dividends when this relationship is sustained.

## National level advocacy

Intervention with the authorities with a view to corrective action is one of the most effective human rights protection strategies available to a PEN Centre. It consists of interactions with State officials – based on verified and corroborated information about individual human rights violations or broader human rights concerns. The purpose is to address individual cases, patterns of violations, structural causes of violations or the general human rights situation, and to make the authorities commit to acting on the information provided, including to carrying out their own investigations and to remedying human rights violations or problems.

## Using situational analysis in advocacy

Situational analysis in advocacy helps find solutions by mapping out the anatomy of cause and effect. This brings several advantages:

- ▶ The problem can be broken down into manageable and definable chunks. This enables a clearer prioritisation of factors and helps focus objectives.
- ▶ There is more understanding of the problem and its often interconnected and even contradictory causes. This is frequently the first step in finding win-win solutions.
- ▶ It identifies the constituent issues and arguments and can help establish who and what the political actors and processes are at each stage.
- ▶ It can help establish whether further information, evidence or resources are needed to make a strong case or build a convincing solution.
- ▶ Present issues – rather than apparent, future or past issues – are dealt with and identified.
- ▶ When carried out by all members working on a campaign, the process of analysis can often help build a shared sense of understanding, purpose and action.

## Stakeholder analysis

A stakeholder analysis helps establish who and what the political actors are at each stage of advocacy. Proper analysis and actor mapping will help you understand how different actors relate to influence each other. The process further enables the strategic identification of other individuals and organisations with influence over decision makers.

## Building the advocacy strategy

Building relationships with national actors is key to establishing influence. Key steps in advocacy strategies include: (a) Identify the target audience; (b) Coordinate interventions; (c) Plan meetings; (d) Design messages; (e) Conduct meetings; (f) Evaluate the outcome and ensure follow-up; (g) Consider alternative or complementary strategies. The stakeholder analysis will help you identify 'key actors' with a role or influence in relation to the advocacy issue, such as policymakers, leaders, the media, community-based organisations etc. Understanding the wider stakeholder influences is crucial.

## Coordinating interventions

PEN Centres are encouraged to identify other national and international organisations to ensure there is no unnecessary duplication of efforts or conflicting approaches. You may build support and coordinate advocacy and follow-up actions with other organisations on the basis of individual mandates, capacities and tactics. As a rule of thumb, the wider the coalition, the greater the chances of success. Make sure to assess and clearly divide capacity of each actor. Coordinating joint and separate interventions will be key to achieving impact.

# Preparing the advocacy meeting

Effective advocacy requires clear message based on thorough analysis of the situation. Please consider the following key questions:



Who are you trying to reach with the message?



What do you want to achieve with the message?



What action do you want the recipient of the message to take?

## a) Objective and desired outcome of the meeting

- ▶ In preparing for meetings, PEN Centres should identify the different issues they wish to raise and the order in which they wish to do so. They can consider the following questions:
  - *What is the precise objective of the visit?*
  - *What is the desired outcome of the meeting?*
  - *What specific information or undertaking is sought from the authority?*
- The substantive elements must be carefully considered and prepared. This implies not only gathering detailed information about the human rights issue to be raised, but also reviewing pertinent national legislation, policies and programmes, and the applicability of international human rights treaties and standards. If available, previous recommendations from regional and international human rights bodies or special procedure mandate holders should also be taken into account. You may wish to seek advice from law and policy experts or contact PEN International for support.

## (b) Timing

- ▶ PEN Centres should consider the optimal timing for a meeting, since there may be pressing issues or other pressures affecting the counterpart and this could have an impact on the outcome from the meeting. Whenever possible, it is best to approach people when they are in a good position to listen, rather than when they are distracted by other matters.
- ▶ Furthermore, PEN Centres must always consider whether their intervention could potentially harm or endanger anyone, or contribute to a deterioration of the human rights situation, especially if external tensions are running high. Nevertheless, urgent situations may require immediate intervention.

## (c) Nature of the counterpart, context and sensitivities

- ▶ Available information on the authority and its institutional role are important for preparations. Information about its sensitivities, interests and concerns can help PEN Centres establish a rapport or provide an opening to discuss sensitive topics without prompting defensive reactions.
- ▶ PEN Centres should anticipate as far as possible the issues and counterarguments that the authority may raise.
- ▶ To better prepare, they should always review notes of any past meetings with the same actor and talk with colleagues who attended such meetings.
- ▶ PEN Centres should always consider the political context in which the counterpart operates. Perhaps the counterpart has concerns about the meeting. For example, reform-oriented individuals in a state administration may themselves be in danger if seen or perceived to be collaborating or aligning themselves with the human rights field presence. This analysis helps us gauge what can realistically be achieved. Knowledge of the context will also bolster credibility.

#### (d) Perception of PEN and its work

- ▶ How is PEN perceived by the government or partner organisations?

#### (e) Selection of the team attending the meeting

- ▶ It can be good to draw on a wide range of the membership for this – find out who will work best.
- ▶ Be tactful in selecting who attends – ensure good, credible representation. PEN Centres should endeavour to control the environment or setting of a meeting to the extent possible.

#### (f) The setting

- ▶ Some meetings may be more effective if held in PEN's offices, others not. Some meetings may require privacy, and care must be taken when unexpected guests are brought in.
- ▶ Efforts should be made to ensure that sufficient time is set aside for a meeting. When setting up meetings, especially with government officials, it is useful for PEN Centres to know in advance how much time is available for the discussion, as your strategy will depend on this.
- ▶ Nonetheless, PEN Centres should take advantage of opportunities for accessing key contacts in unexpected situations or informal gatherings even if the setting is not optimal, such as official ceremonies, embassy parties, etc. These informal encounters, which may not offer sufficient privacy or be long enough, will require a communication strategy appropriate to the particular setting and circumstances and will need to be followed up to make what has been discussed tangible.

## Running the meeting

Introductions set the tone. You may recap on introducing your PEN Centre and its work and any previous work or meetings with the government. Clearly explain the reason for the visit and avoid getting side-tracked. Pursue your arguments firmly but without arrogance or provocation. Make sure to support your issue with illustrative cases and to welcome any positive changes. You should close the meeting by restating and clarifying any commitments and establishing follow-up.

It is important that you, or a companion, take notes of the answers. This shows the officials that you are serious and provides important information for the rest of the movement. However, if the official says they want to talk without you taking notes, make sure that all notetaking has stopped and respect their request not to publicise their comments.

## Counter-arguments

Anticipate the sorts of objections that the authorities are likely to raise and think of how to counter them:

- ▶ Using relevant national or international human rights and humanitarian law standards. You may wish to seek guidance from PEN International.
- ▶ Showing that it is in the interest of the government official to cooperate.
- ▶ Politely giving counterarguments.
- ▶ Restating the question or the point to show that you cannot be diverted from the objective; or
- ▶ Indicating that it may be necessary to take the issue higher.



## Evaluate the outcome and ensure follow-up

- ▶ Did you obtain the expected reaction from the authorities?
- ▶ Did the outcome of the meeting contribute positively or negatively to the planned strategy?
- ▶ Is there a need to change elements of the strategy and do you need to review its entirety?
- ▶ Were specific commitments made? If so, which ones? What is the timeline? How will these commitments be communicated and reaffirmed between yourselves and the authorities and also integrated into your Centre's discussions going forward?
- ▶ Is there any particular follow-up to commitments needed?
- ▶ Was the relationship with the authority strengthened or weakened? If so, why?
- ▶ What lessons can be learned (e.g. mistakes)?

## Consider alternative or complementary strategies

Consider the following question: how can you maximize the impact of your interventions, not only during the meeting but in the long run? There needs more than a single meeting – follow up is essential. If a particular official is unresponsive, please try others. You may also explore alternative methods of addressing the issue, such as media interviews, opinion pieces, or approaching different government institutions.

## Risk analysis and mitigation

What (if any) are the risks your Centre may face through this work? How can we mitigate these risks? Risks come in many different forms. At all times the campaign will be immersed in risk mitigation strategies but those incurring personal harm are the most serious and require specific approaches.

### (a) Knowing when to attract attention and when to avoid it:

- ▶ Risk refers to the possibility of events, however uncertain, that will result in harm. In order to develop and implement protection strategies, Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) must analyse what levels of risk they face. Threats are indications of intent to harm somebody else's physical or moral integrity or property through purposeful and often violent action. Vulnerability refers to the factors that can make it more likely that a HRD or a group will suffer an attack or will suffer greater harm as a result of an attack. Capacities are the strengths and resources a HRD or a group can access to improve their security and/or survive an attack.

### (b) Threats or exposure to threats can be reduced by:

- ▶ Increasing the political cost of carrying out such threats, for example, through publicising the threat extensively by generating a response by domestic and increasing the perception that an attacker might be caught and punished.
- ▶ Increasing the perception that the political cost of acting openly against a writer/ HRD far outweighs the benefit.
- ▶ Persuading powerful interests that respect for international human rights standards is desirable and that the State has a duty to protect.
- ▶ Increasing lobbying and advocacy for the strengthening of the rule of law necessary to fight impunity.
- ▶ Developing, in appropriate cases, contacts with the authorities, police, army etc.
  - *NB: This last point has its own pros and cons. Advantages could be early warning or dissuasion – disadvantages could be allegations of compromising security, leaking, being untrustworthy – also authorities/security.*

## NATIONAL ADVOCACY STRATEGY TEMPLATE

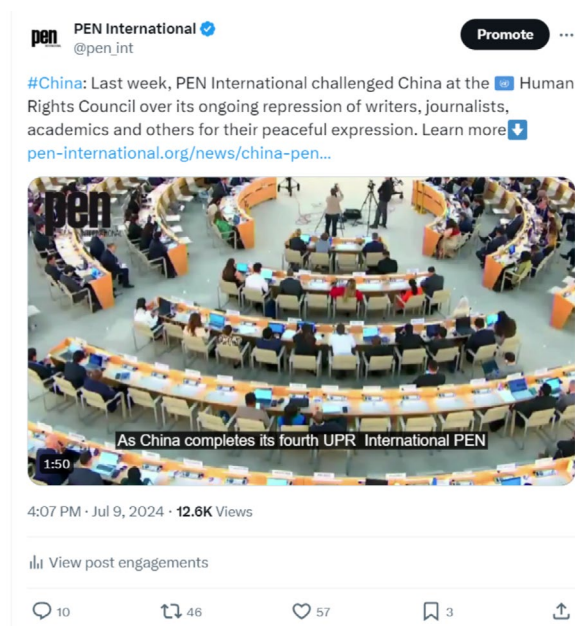
- **Country**
  
- **Advocacy issue/problem**
  
- **Advocacy aim**
  
- **Relevant stakeholders and key messages**  
*Please try to find out the names of the most relevant individuals who can significantly influence or are important to the success of this campaign.*
  
- **Advocacy targets and key messages**
  
- **The names of individuals and their institutions who can significantly influence or are important to the success of an activity.**
  
- **Potential partners in advocacy**  
(NGOs, parliamentarians, donors etc) and roles
  
- **Completed and proposed advocacy meetings (including timeline)**
  
- **Media Strategy**  
*Please detail which media you are engaging/will engage.*
  
- **Additional support required from PEN International**

## Approaching intergovernmental organisations

Another opportunity for reaching governments is through Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs), for example the United Nations (UN), and particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR), the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe (CoE). PEN International works closely with PEN Centres to lobby their own countries' delegates to these bodies to ensure that our concerns are raised.

In coordination with the relevant PEN Centres, PEN International submits reports and recommendations, including submissions to the UN Human Rights Council's Special Procedures and its Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. Through the UPR, PEN International provides the UN with the latest research on freedom of expression and writers at risk in countries of concern. PEN International also holds advocacy meetings with writers and other members of civil society from countries under review ahead of the UPR, to ensure that freedom of expression and writers at risk are prioritised.

PEN International is a partner of the Council of Europe's Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists. The Platform reports on serious threats to the safety of journalists and media freedom in Europe in order to reinforce the Council of Europe's response to the threats and member states' accountability. PEN Centres may subscribe to the *Safety of Journalists Weekly updates*, consult the latest threats to media freedom reported on the Platform and read the annual reports prepared by the Platform's Partner Organisations.



On 4 July 2024, during the outcome of China's fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the United Nations Human Rights Council, PEN International delivered an oral statement that heavily criticised the government's worsening crackdown on dissent.

**If your PEN Centre would like to lobby IGO mechanisms, please contact PEN International for more information and advice.**

# 5

## Media strategy

la Repubblica

### Imprisoned and Tried Around the World: The Report on Writers and Poets Persecuted by Regimes

by Gabriele DiDonfrancesco



*In the last year alone, 122 cases have occurred. This is certified by Pen International*

MARCH 21, 2024 AT 10:00 AM

2 MINUTE READ

The launch of PEN International's Case List 2023/2024 was covered by several international media outlets, including la Repubblica.

**Media coverage is one of the tools you can use to ensure your campaign work is a success. A good media campaign can reach many different audiences, publicise the work and raise the profile and reputation of an organisation, influence and mobilise public opinion and force debate, and expose freedom of expression issues that address and pressurise governments and governmental policy to effect change.**

**It is always advisable to design a communications strategy for your work before you begin contacting the media. This will include deciding which audience you want to reach (and aligning this with your strategic goal), who you want to influence and what sort of media coverage you would like. It will ensure that you have a number of ways to measure whether or not your campaign is successful and what you can use again in future media work.**

**Considering the following questions will help you build your strategy:**



## What are your campaign objectives?

Try to think about two or three key aims that you would like to achieve. For example, these could be to provide support to persecuted writers in a particular country or region through letter writing and promotion of their writings, or calling for an end to censorship of particular writers or writings.

## What do you want to achieve from a media strategy?

Your media objectives should support the overall goals of your campaign. For example, if your campaign objective is to highlight the persecution of writers and journalists by state authorities, your supporting media campaign goal could be to put pressure on these authorities through high-profile and visible media coverage. Another media strategy aim could simply be to build stronger relationships with particular journalists who may have an interest in your work.

## What are the key messages that you want to communicate?

Here you should consider the parts of your campaign that you think are most important to be heard. These messages should be very clear and simple. For example:

- ▶ Writers are being held in country x solely for having expressed their views, despite the country having signed on to international agreements that protect freedom of expression.
- ▶ Individuals issue death threats against writers forcing them into hiding, with little government action being taken to protect them, suggesting that there may be some complicity.

## Who are the key people/ organisations/bodies you want to influence? What change do you want to take place?

Consider your media goals and your key messages and decide who you want to make sure hears your voice. For example:

- ▶ **POLITICAL** – governments, embassies, foreign ministries
- ▶ **CULTURAL** – cultural institutions, high profile writers
- ▶ **SOCIAL** – general public, other human rights organisations

## What are the key actions you can take?

Make a list of the type of publicity you would like to secure. For example:

- ▶ A news feature in a leading newspaper.
- ▶ A member of your PEN Centre in a radio show about the issues of your campaign.
- ▶ If you hold a demonstration outside an embassy or a government building on behalf of a writer, you could make sure the media know so that they can send photographers or journalists.
- ▶ Offer quotes or to write a blog piece for a newspaper or magazine's website.
- ▶ Ask a high-profile writer who is a member of your PEN Centre to offer quotes or write a piece about your focus cases.

## Who are the key media that will enable us to do this?

Make a list of all the key media that you could approach and who might be interested in your work.

## Who will be our spokespeople?

- ▶ Make sure you identify these people and their availability from an early stage and find out what their contribution will be make (sometimes, lending their name to the campaign may be sufficient). Ideally, they would be high-profile writers with high number of social media followers.
- ▶ A high-profile writer might not have time to commit to interviews or write a piece but might be prepared to write a quote that you could use in a press release. If not, offer to write it yourself and share for review and approval before using it.
- ▶ Provide your spokespeople with brief with clear information about the campaign and the messages that you want to make sure is communicated. Train them in media and speaking techniques as needed.

## What are the key tools we need to implement a campaign from a media perspective?

Think about the materials you will need to make the campaign a success. These could include:

- ▶ A press release
- ▶ Background information on your campaign
- ▶ Images (provided you have secured consent. Always respect sensitivities about visual content)
- ▶ Video and audio recordings and information about your PEN Centre
- ▶ Key messages and quotes for media queries and interviews
- ▶ Key contact information, for further queries and interviews

These tools will make the journalist's job easier and make them more likely to respond to your request for a news feature or story about your campaign.

## How to drive media engagement?

- **RESEARCH JOURNALISTS:** develop strong relationships with individual journalists to achieve media coverage and publicity for your work.
- **IDENTIFY KEY MEDIA:** determine the key media outlets in your country, including widely circulated newspapers, popular TV channels or programmes, radio programmes, news websites, specialist magazines, and literary journals, and those that resonate with the campaign.
- **BUILD A TARGET LIST:** create a comprehensive list of key media targets. Ensure it includes a range of journalists and editors with interests in news, politics, arts and culture, social issues, environmental issues, and legal matters.
- **UNDERSTAND INTERESTS:** depending on your capacity, research the specific interests of relevant journalists and editors at each publication. Identify who would be most influential and interested in your story, whether it is news journalists, political reporters, arts and culture writers, or social, environmental, and legal issue correspondents.
- **FAMILIARISE WITH THEIR WORK:** review recent articles, watch TV programmes, and listen to radio shows to understand how to effectively approach and communicate with each journalist.
- **UTILISE SOURCE DATABASES:** Leverage journalist and media databases to create targeted media lists and build impactful public relations.
- **EXISTING NETWORKS:** leverage your connections to identify media contacts and secure introductions. Personal connections can lead to more receptive responses from journalists.
- **CONTACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES:** monitor social media platforms to connect directly with journalists. Conduct advanced searches and explore relevant hashtag.

- **IN-PERSON EVENTS:** attend industry events to connect with journalists. These gatherings often include press panels where journalists express their interests. Focus on building relationships, which can lead to future media coverage.
- **VIRTUAL PRESS BRIEFINGS:** organise virtual press briefings or media roundtables to provide journalists with exclusive access to your Centre's leadership, writers at risk, or subject matter experts. Virtual events are cost-effective and allow for global participation without travel expenses.
- **MEDIA EVENTS:** launch targeted media events featuring high-profile writers around key advocacy initiatives, global events, and awareness-raising efforts. Host press conferences, briefings, and media roundtables to provide journalists with exclusive access to PEN's work and spokespeople.
- **STRATEGIC WRITING:** tailor pitches, press releases, and story ideas to align with the interests and editorial focus of target media outlets. Ensure to include the five Ws: who, what, where, why, and when. Highlight newsworthy, human-interest stories that are rich with layers and emotional depth, showcasing our impactful work. Avoid redundancy; focus on captivating, emotionally impactful content tied to global events like World Press Freedom Day. Craft a concise, creative subject line that summarizes our main message effectively.
- **COLLABORATE WITH PARTNERS:** build strategic alliances with other NGOs, advocacy groups, and literary associations to enhance media outreach and pool resources.
- **DISTRIBUTION LISTS:** use online distribution services to send press releases, reaching a wider audience of journalists and bloggers. While these platforms may not ensure mainstream media coverage, they can boost visibility and online presence.
- **OPTIMAL TIMING FOR PITCHING:** send press releases early in the week (Tuesday to Thursday) and during morning hours (9:00 AM to 11:00 AM) to enhance the likelihood of attracting journalists' attention.
- **FOLLOW-UP STRATEGY:** after sending a press release, follow up a maximum of twice, ensuring the recipient is the right fit for our pitch. Limit follow-ups to between 8:00 AM and noon.
- **EXPERT COMMENTARY:** position PEN members as spokespersons for journalists seeking insights on freedom of expression issues and literary trends. Provide exclusive interviews, opinion pieces, and guest contributions to global media outlets to share valuable perspectives.



In July 2024, PEN International partnered with West End production of Martin McDonagh's play *The Pillowman* to host live Q&A's featuring acclaimed writer and activist Mona Arshi and member of PEN International's Writer's Circle Ben Okri. Moderated by journalist and podcaster, Hattie Crisell. Credit: Roberk Brooks

## How will we rate our success?

Decide what you want to measure; will it be bringing your work to the attention of the general public by securing a number of articles in national and international media, or persuading a well-known writer to speak with the media about your campaign?

## What legacy do we want this campaign to have? How can it continue beyond this year?

National and international news focuses change rapidly and with the advent of citizen journalism and digital environments, within minutes. It is important that you have some ideas for ensuring your story is still pertinent to the media even if their main priority has moved elsewhere. Think about how your story fits into current debates in your country and internationally. Also think about other ways in which to laterally place your story in the media; perhaps by organising an event or debate, a letter to the editor of a newspaper, commenting on blogs set up by major newspapers, or working more closely with the student press as well as the national media. This will make sure that your voice does not disappear among other stories. A legacy for your campaign might be simply that you have built strong relationships with a group of journalists. This would be a big achievement as it will always help you in the future.

In addition to a well-thought-out media campaign, a successful strategy must include a carefully planned email and social media approach (please see Chapter 6: Social media).





# 6 Social media

**Social media platforms are a powerful tool when used correctly. These spaces can be utilised for, among others: shaping public thinking, raising awareness about freedom of expression and other issues, promoting campaigns, events and other activities, increasing brand awareness and visibility, as well as for membership and donor acquisition. It can help you reach a vast number of people around the world while exposing freedom of expression issues and burgeoning solidarity for writers at risk.**

#### **Top tips when using social media:**

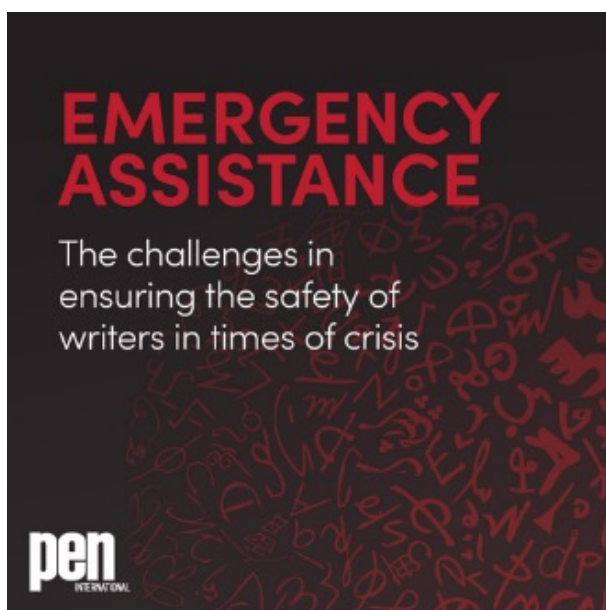
- ▶ Set goals. Figure out what social media means to your project and what added value you seek from connecting with users in social media spaces.
- ▶ Choose your social media platform carefully so that you are able to engage the right people and reach your goals. Think about who you are trying to reach and which social platforms they are using the most (See Target Audience for more information).
- ▶ As you begin planning your platform, come up with a list of accounts you can start tagging to share your message. This could be PEN Centres or other people/organisations working within a similar sector.
- ▶ Have a look at what similar accounts are doing. A lot of social media planning is formed around what others doing similar work are doing on their own platforms. Before you get started, select five organisations working in similar fields and consider: what are they doing well? Which posts have got the best engagements (likes, shares, comments)? What does not work so well?
- ▶ Keep up with the latest social media trends. Social media is constantly changing and adapting. Keep up to date with the latest social media trends via useful articles such as this one.

## Branding

Brand consistency is one of the most important things to consider before you begin posting on social media. This adds professionalism to your platform and secures the visual identity of your page. Essential branding includes:

- LOGO
- FONT
- BRAND COLOURS

Here are some recent examples of our visual identity:



### When creating your brand, think about:

- ▶ Who are my target audience? (see Target Audience for more info)
- ▶ What kind of information am I putting out? Is it informative or casual? The branding should correspond.
- ▶ What kind of visual identity is PEN International using? Have a look and try to align with PEN International's identity, so that we can speak with one voice.

### Here are some useful tools to help you develop your branding:

- ▶ [Google Fonts](#) has a vast range of free fonts available to use straight away.
- ▶ [Canva](#) is a fantastic tool to help you with all your visual needs (we will go into more details in the Graphic Design section). On Canva, you can upload your organisation's branding and use it for any designs.

## Target audience

Understanding who your target audience is, is an essential part of getting your social media strategy to the right people. It will help you when considering which social media platforms to use, what kind of content to share, what language to share it in, etc.

### When defining your target audience, think about:

- ▶ Are they a specific age group?
- ▶ Or a specific gender?
- ▶ Where are they based geographically?
- ▶ What are their interests (e.g. literature, freedom of expression, geopolitics, human rights)?

### Have a go at answering these questions to help you figure out:

- ▶ Which social media platform is my target audience using the most?
- ▶ What kind of content are they consuming – is it text, image, or video?
- ▶ How are other organisations getting the information across? Which are their biggest social media platforms?

## (Easy) graphic design

Whether you are using X, Instagram, or any other social media platform, having a strong visual is essential for capturing your audience's attention (and the algorithms prefer it as well). While this can seem daunting, luckily there is a fantastic tool called Canva that can help you develop your visuals easily.

Using Canva, you can:

- ▶ Get templates to design your image / video
- ▶ Choose from a variety of fonts and colours (as well as uploading your own)
- ▶ Get access to stock images, videos, and illustrations
- ▶ Easily export to share on your social media
- ▶ Make presentations and all other sorts of designs



An example of easy graphic design created on Canva, using brand colours and logos for impact and coherence.

To learn more and get started, watch this useful [introduction video](#).

## Images

The use of good, high-quality images is an important component when using social media. However, keeping in mind the copyright of each image is essential. Please review your country's domestic copyright legislation, but as a rule of thumb, when using images, you must obtain permission from the owner of the image and fully acknowledge the rights-holder. Relevant image caption should reiterate any copyright statement or licence terms indicated at the source. Please note that acknowledging who has provided the picture is not enough, as the person who has provided the image may not be the author of the image.

There are several image websites where users can find images which are free to use (please note that the copyright text must be copied):

- [WIKI COMMONS](#)
- [CREATIVE COMMONS](#)
- [PIXABAY](#)
- [UNSPLASH](#)

## Specific social media platforms

### X (FORMERLY TWITTER)

X is a popular social networking and microblogging website. Users can 'follow' other users to receive short updates that contain no more than 280 characters, including hyperlinks, hashtags and X handles. If you purchase a premium account, you can compose longer tweets and videos.

#### X is good for:

- ▶ Mobilising followers to take action quickly
- ▶ Breaking news
- ▶ Situating yourself within a conversation or debate
- ▶ Interacting with supporters
- ▶ Reaching key influencers (media, writers, celebrities, activists, etc)
- ▶ Reaching new supporters

#### Best practices:

- ▶ Compose short, to the point messages on X.
- ▶ Test the best times to send out tweets depending on where you are posting from/where your target audience is.
- ▶ Particularly when uploading an image/infographic with a tweet, make sure to tag key people/organisations.
- ▶ Do not use more than three hashtags, making sure these are not too long. Check with hashtags are already being widely used (especially by other human rights NGOs and/or PEN Centres) on the case you want to tweet about.
- ▶ Share news articles from across X that are of interest to your followers/related to your region/area of work and look out for trending topics that are relevant to you.
- ▶ Tweet at supporters, writers who are backing our work, and other organisations who share our values.

- ▶ While a tweet must be 280 characters or shorter you can, however, build 'threads', which will allow you to share more information in one tweet.
- ▶ Strong visuals/video help to capture the interest of your audience.
- ▶ Access X analytics to review progress and see what content does the best.

To get started on X, watch this useful [video for beginners](#).

### FACEBOOK

Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages, check and track events, participate in group discussions, watch live events and keep in touch with friends, family, colleagues and other networks.

#### Facebook is good for:

- ▶ Reaching wide audiences through its easy sharing tools.
- ▶ Generating discussion and obtaining feedback from your followers.
- ▶ Sharing audio-visual material.
- ▶ Hosting and planning events.

#### Best practices:

- ▶ Do not re-write or summarise the article you are sharing in a post. Your post should be a specific statement or call, more along the lines of a headline. Aiming for a few short sentences is recommended.
- ▶ Get the balance right – do not post too much or too little. Approximately two posts a day is recommended, up to a maximum of four.
- ▶ Try to post consistently, vary content between images, videos, and Facebook live events.
- ▶ Mobilise people to take action quickly. Engage people through discussions, news stories, videos and actions.
- ▶ Images are much more effective for getting your message across, so attach a good image with posts where possible.



- ▶ Ensure to tag all relevant individuals / organisations to encourage others to share your posts.
- ▶ Access Facebook analytics to review progress and see what content does the best.

To get started on Facebook, watch this useful [video for beginners](#).

## INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a social media platform used to communicate mainly through audio-visual materials. Users can post their photographs and cards in regular square feeds, post reels (vertical short videos), or stories (that last 24 hours). Users can also interact with posts, send messages, and call each other. Instagram is moving towards video – making video posts and reels to engage and reach new audiences.

### Good for:

- ▶ Using light and creative or artistic content.
- ▶ Engaging young audiences.
- ▶ Creating Visual Stories, i.e. cards, photos, reels and short videos.
- ▶ Reaching key influencers (artists, celebrities, activists, etc).
- ▶ Creating Takeovers (events where a person takes over the Instagram account to post certain agreed content).
- ▶ Cross-posting with other organisations to reach one another's audiences.
- ▶ Sharing links to your website through stories and your link in bio.

### Best practices:

- ▶ Create a strong and harmonious visual identity (see Branding section).
- ▶ Add no more than one feed post and a few stories per day.
- ▶ Add highlights at the top of your page to talk about who you are and what you do.
- ▶ To find new audiences, create reels with audio and captions if there is speech.

- ▶ Use portraits of people to get the most engagement.
- ▶ The algorithm tends to dislike calls to action e.g. 'Buy Now', 'Available Now' etc. so be clever with your wording,
- ▶ When in doubt, refer to similar organisations' profiles – see what has been successful and why.
- ▶ Access Instagram analytics to review progress and see what content does the best.

To get started on Instagram, watch this useful [video for beginners](#).

Please note that social media platforms have different regional resonance and require different approaches in relation to format and content but also security.

## Newsletter

One of the very best ways to develop your platform is through establishing a good mail list. Across your social media and website, ensure that encourage people to sign up to your mail list. The reason it is so important is that those who sign up are your core supporters who actively want to learn more about the work that you do.

Depending on the volume of your work, send regular newsletters to your mail list keeping them informed of your latest work. Newsletters can also be a valuable way of gaining donors.

As you get started, think about any newsletters you subscribe to. Do you find them interesting – if so, why? What names you continue reading a newsletter? What makes you click a link to find out more?

## Best practice when using social media

### **Copyrights and legal considerations:**

please respect intellectual property, copyright, trademarks and other relevant laws. Retweeting or sharing a post, or a link to an article that contains an image, or a video does not breach any of the above mentioned laws. By contrast, when posting an image or video, make sure you have permission from and credit its author (attribution, in copyright law, is acknowledgement as credit to the copyright holder or author of a work). Failing to do so could be the cause of legal action from the creator. As a rule of thumb: if it is not yours and you do not have permission to post it, do not do it!

**Captions:** make sure you provide descriptive captions for images. Captions are important as they convey information about who is doing what, when and where. Good use of captions alongside interesting photographs can trigger a reader's interest in a full-text story. Without captions, people will draw their own conclusions about an image.

**Sharing and liking content:** sharing and liking posts can be a great way to add value to your social feed without creating new content. When sharing a post, always credit the users whose posts you share by tagging them.

**Language:** make sure that the language used in a social media post is in line with the content and wording used in the material, campaign, or event, the post is meant to promote. Use plain language that is easy to understand, avoiding jargon and acronyms. Do not make assumptions about people's gender, ethnicity, religion and other grounds of discrimination, making sure your language is inclusive.

**Respectful tone:** ensure you do not post any material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libellous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or embarrassing to any person or entity.

**Confidential information:** do not disclose any sensitive and confidential information online.

## Useful platforms to get started

- **CANVA** GOOD FOR SOCIAL MEDIA DESIGN
- **HOOTSUITE** ALLOWS YOU TO SCHEDULE SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT
- **MAILCHIMP** GOOD FOR SENDING NEWSLETTERS AND MANAGING MAIL LISTS
- **YOUTUBE** AN EXCELLENT RESOURCE FOR FINDING FREE TUTORIALS TO HELP YOU DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING!
- **GOOGLE FONTS** GIVES YOU ACCESS TO MANY FREE FONTS
- **WIKI COMMONS** FREE IMAGES
- **CREATIVE COMMONS** FREE IMAGES
- **PIXABAY** FREE IMAGES
- **UNSPLASH** FREE IMAGES
- **CAPCUT** VIDEO EDITING SOFTWARE



# 7

## Glossary, contacts and annexes

## Glossary of common terms

<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CoE</b>	Council of Europe
<b>ECHR</b>	European Convention on Human Rights
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>HRD</b>	Human Rights Defender
<b>IACHR</b>	Inter-American Court of Human Rights
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>OSCE</b>	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
<b>PEST</b>	Political Economic Social Technological
<b>RAN</b>	Rapid Action Network
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats
<b>TLRC</b>	Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee
<b>UDHR</b>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review
<b>WfPC</b>	Writers for Peace Committee
<b>WiPC</b>	Writers in Prison Committee
<b>WWC</b>	Women Writers Committee





Sociologist, writer, feminist, and PEN Türkiye member Pinar Selek. Credit: Patxi Beltzaiz

## ANNEX 1 Rapid Action Network (RAN)

### RAPID ACTION NETWORK

20 FEBRUARY 2023

RAN 01/2023

#### Türkiye: End the decades-long judicial harassment of PEN member Pinar Selek

Sociologist, writer, feminist, and PEN Türkiye member Pinar Selek has been on a decades-long trial over a 1998 explosion that killed seven and injured 127 in the Istanbul Spice Bazaar. Selek has been acquitted of all charges four times – in 2006, 2008, 2011 and 2014 – due to the testimony of expert witnesses that confirmed that the cause of the explosion was a gas leak rather than a bomb. However, the courts ordered retrials after each of these acquittals. On 21 June 2022, Türkiye's state-run news agency announced that the Supreme Court had overturned Selek's fourth acquittal. A first hearing before the Istanbul Criminal Court has been set for 31 March 2023. Selek is the subject of an international arrest warrant and faces life in prison without the possibility of parole.

PEN International believes that Pinar Selek's prosecution is linked to her work as a sociologist focusing on minority rights and Kurdish communities in the mid-to-late 1990s, and that she is being pursued through the courts as a means of penalising her for her legitimate research and commentary. PEN International calls on the authorities of Türkiye to end their decades-long harassment of Selek and to unconditionally drop all charges against her.

#### TAKE ACTION: Please send appeals to the authorities of Türkiye

- ▶ Expressing concern that another trial has been opened against Pinar Selek on charges of which she has already been acquitted by courts of law four times;
- ▶ Urging that the charges against Selek are dismissed;
- ▶ Calling for the decades-long judicial harassment of Selek to end once and for all.

Send appeals to:

Bekir Bozdağ

Role: Minister of Justice

Address: Ministry of Justice, Adalet Bakanlığı, 06659 Ankara, Türkiye

Contact: [info@adalet.gov.tr](mailto:info@adalet.gov.tr)

Send copies to the Embassy of Türkiye in your own country. Embassy addresses may be found here: <https://cd.mfa.gov.tr/mission/mission-list?clickedId=3>

Please reach out to your Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic representatives in Türkiye, calling on them to raise the case of Pinar Selek in bilateral fora.

\*\*\*Please send appeals immediately. Check with PEN International if sending appeals after 30 April 2023. \*\*\*

Please inform PEN International of any action you take and any responses you receive.

#### PUBLICITY

##### PEN members are encouraged to:

- ▶ Publish articles and opinion pieces in your national or local press highlighting the case of Pinar Selek and the state of freedom of expression in Türkiye;
- ▶ Share information about Pinar Selek and your campaigning activities via social media.

Please keep us informed of your activities.

Pinar Selek's support committee is also encouraging supporters to observe her trial hearing in Istanbul on 31 March 2023. For more information and to take part, please click [here](#).

## BACKGROUND

Pınar Selek, born on 8 October 1971, is a sociologist, writer, feminist and member of PEN Türkiye. She has written extensively about the plight of women, the poor, street children, the LGBTI community and the Kurds in Türkiye. She is one of the founding editors of *Amargi*, a Turkish feminist journal. Her latest book *Azucena ou Les fourmis zinzines* was published in April 2022. She has been living in France since 2012 and holds French–Turkish citizenship.

Pınar Selek was arrested on 11 July 1998 over an explosion that happened at the Istanbul Spice Bazaar two days earlier, a tragedy that led to the deaths of seven people and injured 127 others. At the time, Selek had been working on an oral history of the banned Kurdistan's Workers Party (PKK) and talking to some of PKK members to find out why they had chosen armed violence. Selek reported being tortured under investigation, in an attempt to make her divulge the names of the individuals she had interviewed as part of her research. She was charged with membership of a terrorist organisation on 28 July 1998. Shortly afterwards, another suspect confessed that the two had carried out the Istanbul Spice Bazaar bombing together, although he later recanted his testimony, saying it has been extracted under torture. Selek was nevertheless charged with the bombing and spent two and a half years in Umraniye prison, Istanbul. She was freed on 22 December 2000 after a team of experts concluded that the explosion had not been caused by a bomb, but by the accidental ignition of a gas cylinder.

Despite these findings, the case continued and in December 2005 a new trial was opened against her, ending with an acquittal six months later in June 2006. In April 2007, the Court of Appeals requested a review of the case and reversed the acquittal. This went to consideration, and in May 2008 Selek was acquitted for a second time. In 2009, the Court of Appeals reversed the acquittal again, and sent the case for review once more. The lower court refused to conduct a review on the grounds that the acquittal was legitimately and fairly given, and upheld Selek's acquittal in February 2011 for a third time. However, at a November 2012 hearing, the lower court

decided to drop its refusal and proceed with reopening the trial against Selek. Her fourth trial resulted in a conviction in January 2013 when Selek was handed an aggravated life sentence, although this conviction was overturned by Türkiye's Supreme Court of Appeals in June 2014 on procedural grounds. The 15th High Criminal Court in Istanbul subsequently acquitted Selek of all charges in December 2014. On 21 June 2022, Türkiye's state-run news agency announced that the Supreme Court had overturned Selek's fourth acquittal. A first hearing before the Istanbul Criminal Court has been set for 31 March 2023.

The situation for freedom of expression in Türkiye remains a grave concern. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 40 journalists were behind bars as of 1 December 2022. In September 2022, the Assembly of Delegates of PEN International notably adopted a resolution on the repression of Kurdish language and culture in Türkiye, which called on the authorities to end the prosecution and detention of writers on the basis of the content of their writing – including in support of Kurdish language and culture – and to immediately release all those held for peacefully expressing their views.

PEN International and PEN Centres have long supported Pınar Selek, by notably observing her trial hearings and campaigning for all charges against her to be dropped. Selek is a former resident of German PEN's Writers-in-Exile programme. For more information, please click here.

For more information about Pınar Selek and actions by her support committee, please click here.

The RAN is available on PEN International's website here.



Rwandan poet Innocent Bahati. Credit: Adrea Grieder

## **ANNEX 2**

### **Rwanda: Open letter to President Paul Kagame on the disappearance of Innocent Bahati**

**7 February 2022: Burhan Sonmez, Ben Okri, Margaret Atwood, Gioconda Belli, J. M. Coetzee, Ma Thida and Salman Rushdie among hundreds of acclaimed writers, artists and poets urging Rwandan President Kagame to intervene in the case of disappeared poet Innocent Bahati.**

Dear President Paul Kagame,

We, the undersigned writers, poets, and artists from Africa and around the world, would like to jointly express our grave concern about the life and whereabouts of Rwandan poet Innocent Bahati, who has been missing since 07 February 2021. Bahati is a well-known poet who, before disappearing, has published poetry on YouTube and Facebook and has regularly performed at poetry events in Rwanda. At the time of his disappearance, he was a teacher at the Green Hills Academy in Kigali.

We write in support of previous calls by [PEN International](#), the world association of writers and other freedom of expression organizations, to urge you to intervene in the case of Bahati and in the interest of his right to life, liberty, and wellbeing.

We understand that Bahati was last seen at a hotel in Nyanza district, in the Southern Province of Rwanda, where he had reportedly gone to meet someone whom he had spoken to on the phone earlier. When Bahati failed to return to Kigali as expected, individuals close to him tried to reach him on his mobile phones without success. Bahati's phones appeared to be switched off and have remained so ever since.

According to media accounts, on 9 February 2021 a report was made to the Rwanda Investigations Bureau (RIB) about the disappearance of Bahati. Soon after, a spokesperson of the RIB publicly stated that Bahati was not in the agency's custody. He further said that an investigation was ongoing and that the RIB would not reveal any information at the time.

We are bringing this matter to your attention, with a plea for urgent action because, one year later, Bahati is still

missing and his situation unknown. We note with concern that the Rwandan authorities are yet to disclose any progress or outcome of investigations on his case.

As writers, poets and artists, we have legitimate reasons to believe that Innocent Bahati's disappearance is in relation to his poetry and critical expression on issues affecting Rwandan society. We are aware of reports that he similarly disappeared in 2017 after he had posted a critical comment on Facebook, only to reappear in police custody after several days. Although he was not charged for any offense, he was imprisoned without trial for three months and only freed after a court order.

Further, we have seen [media reports](#) attributed to a speech made on 21 March 2021 by the Rwandan Secretary of State in charge of culture Mr. Edouard Bamporiki, on the use of poetry, as follows: "...one who has nothing to lose may cross the lines, and the one who has no guard will get off the right track. When poetry loses its way, it can mislead the public. It is for this reason that I ask you to forget the difficulties that Rwandan poetry community has known in recent times, but rather to do our part to advise and reprimand those amongst who stray from the right path..."

Coming shortly after the disappearance of Bahati in 2021, these chilling remarks by an official of your administration are hardly coincidental. They suggest a pattern of intolerance to free poetic expression by officials, and they legitimately raise suspicions that Bahati may have been disappeared in relation to his poetry. We believe that someone within the Rwandan administration knows about the whereabouts or fate of Bahati.

Rwanda's constitution guarantees freedom of expression, with sufficient safeguards against arbitrary use of state power to suppress this right. Rwanda is also obliged under International Human Rights law and standards, to guarantee the right to freedom of expression, including artistic freedom.

Poetry is not a crime. The world awaits to hear the voice of Innocent Bahati, again.

We look forward to your positive intervention, Mr. President, in the interest of justice.

The letter and full list of signatories can be found on PEN International's website [here](#).

## ANNEX 3

# PEN International's resolution on protection mechanisms for writers

**The Assembly of Delegates of PEN International – meeting at its 90th annual Congress in Oxford, UK, 23rd – 28th September 2024 – concerned at the evolving impact of tightening restrictions on the right to freedom of expression globally – also notes the increasing number of writers at risk, forced to flee in the absence of accessible and ready emergency protections.**

The acute deterioration in freedom of expression and shrinking of civic space globally – noted by international human rights organisations as well as international bodies alike – has forced growing numbers of writers, journalists, human rights defenders, creatives, and academics – persecuted for their expression, into seeking urgent and immediate humanitarian pathways for temporary relief. This mounting repression, through law, policy, and practise, has compelled PEN International into employing multifaceted strategies to secure the safety of its members and writers at several critical junctures over the last five years.

PEN International's humanitarian efforts have revealed the particular vulnerabilities and risks posed to writers, whose writerly output jettison them onto the frontline – akin to those working in the defence of human rights or those who pursue their journalistic or creative work. It is the ability of writers and cultural actors to hold states accountable through their writing, whether it be extracting meaning, intellectually challenging normative constructs, exploring hidden oppressions as well as proffering ideas, which keeps them under pernicious state scrutiny. And it is the inherent nature of this writing – enduring beyond all political upheaval – which exacerbates this lens.

Our humanitarian relief efforts have also underscored the critical interdependence and universality of rights necessary to the protection and promotion of their writerly expression. Most writers often work alone, in the absence of institutional protections,



where avenues of support are often driven by personal networks extracted from individualised interactions such as literary events. Marginalised writers who lack access to mainstream spaces, are additionally disadvantaged when their writing brings them under state scrutiny. This vulnerability can be further heightened when they engage in the defence of women's rights, or those of sexual minorities – tackling issues such as bodily autonomy – commonly construed to be a threat to acceptable cultural and societal norms.

However, our institutional capabilities – necessary in proffering tangible, and vital protections – have faced considerable hurdles. They have been deeply impacted by the lack of public and institutional understanding of the vital role writers play in enabling critical, vibrant dialogue and upholding fundamental values, in which the harassment of writers frequently acts a tactical precursor of growing repression – symptomatic of a states' tightening hold over the realm of the public imagination. When subjected to these concerted attempts to restrict their expression, the impact on writers (and creatives) can be disproportionate, who face some of the same threats, are often targeted by some of the same actors, very often prompted by some of the same motivations, but operate without the same protections available to other at-risk groups.

## **THE ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES OF PEN INTERNATIONAL:**

Reiterating the fundamental belief that debate, and discourse can only thrive when it is truly equitable, diverse, inclusive, and safe.

### **Premise of our recommendations:**

- ▶ Reiterating the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and one of its primary objectives, which reaffirms the link between culture and development of all countries and recognizing the true value of this link.
- ▶ Reiterating the call of UNESCO to value culture as a global public good.
- ▶ Reiterating the recommendation of the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights, in pursuing cultural development as a pillar of sustainable development on par with social, economic, and environmental pillars.

### **To the international community:**

- ▶ Calling on the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, and UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression to conduct studies into the issues restricting the mobility of writers and artists who face distinct and potentially disproportionate impact because of defence of human rights through their writing.
- ▶ Set up monitoring mechanisms to assess the compliance of states with their international commitments in relation to both enabling positive obligations and handling of negative breaches in relation to the right to mobility for writers (and creatives).

### **To all states:**

- ▶ Create a favourable environment for freedom of expression and in doing so, afford and ensure writers and creatives a broad scope of protection fundamental to the pursuit of their activities.
- ▶ Recognize and create consistent policies and guidelines to acknowledge the rights of writers and other groups of targeted creatives to access relevant emergency protections including humanitarian/ emergency visas.

- ▶ Extend and align existing guidelines (to its Embassies, Consulates and relevant others) – used in facilitating emergency assistance to other expressors (such as journalists, human rights defenders) – also to writers and creatives as they play a crucial role in defending human rights and upholding fundamental rights worldwide (with special attention paid to those facing gender specific discrimination and harassment).
- ▶ Where necessary, create a specific facilitated procedure for writers and creatives within relevant Visa Codes, setting common criteria and defining the elements of such procedure.
- ▶ Ensure those who are specifically designated to assess visas for human rights defenders, to also be tasked and trained with the verification and certification of applications for visa, border, and migration entry – from creatives and writers (with special attention paid to those facing specific forms of gender and sex discrimination and harassment).
- ▶ Where passports or other travel documents are denied by national governments, enable protocols to ensure provision of replacement travel documents or enable the use of a valid ID document issued by the country of origin.

#### To civil society organisations:

- ▶ Deepen and where necessary initiate collaborations between organisations working to safeguard the rights of all expressors with a specific focus on protecting and promoting the right to mobility for all expressors.
- ▶ CSOs, academic and other hosting organisations, and donors to extend support and funding for fellowships or residencies for writers at risk.

#### Cultural actors:

- ▶ In framing their pillars of business, publishing and relevant literary institutions should scrutinise their mission statements, values, and programs to consider where and how they can support persecuted writers.

# Contacts

**To get in touch with a PEN Centre** directly, please refer to the PEN International [website](#) for details of contact names, phone numbers, email addresses and websites.

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