



88th PEN International Congress 2022 – Uppsala, Sweden

WiPC Meeting

27 September 2022

- Began with overview presentation, including of Writers in Prison Steering Committee (WiPC-SC) strategy report
- **Kaiser (Uyghur PEN)** accused WiPC-SC of not prioritising PRC during its presentation. This was rejected by the panel.
- **Karin (PEN America/ WiPC SC)** seeking external collaboration across network
- **Brendan (PEN Canada):**
 - Highlighted need to increase contact with inactive PEN Centres
 - Extra mile needed
 - Is there a mechanism that can facilitate it?
- **Thida (PI WiPC Chair):**
 - Raised need for individual PEN Centres to engage with secretariat
 - Noted that some cases are given outsized priority
 - Noted that absence of PEN Centres in particular countries and regions create gaps in secretariat
- **Froukje (PEN Netherlands)**
 - Requested newsletter/ bulletin from WiPC-SC
- **Thida (PI WiPC Chair):**
 - Requests that PEN Centres now provide very brief updates to WiPC-SC
- **Moheuddin (PEN Bangladesh):**
 - Suggests that members follow WiPC on social media
- **Alix Parodi (PEN Suisse Romand):**
 - Highlights lack of communication from other PEN Centres when taking on cases
 - Refers to a case in Greece as example
 - Notes that as writers, many do not have competency needed for casework

- Collaboration is key
- **Eugene Schoulgin (PEN Norway):**
 - States that PEN Centres should create regional networks; intensify collaboration to develop solutions
- **Astrid (PEN Germany):**
 - Introduces PEN Germany's Writers in Exile program, notes that fellow member Cornelia is also in attendance
- **Zhang Yu (ICPC):**
 - Challenges policy on HK, says risk is minimal to PEN HK members and advocacy should resume
- **Ross Holder (PI):**
 - Responds to Zhang's comment
- **Tsutomu Ide (Japan PEN Club):**
 - Highlights Centres focus on Asia-related issues, including Myanmar
 - Toru Kubota case
 - Issued statement with consent
 - Highlights importance of consent
 - However speed also necessary
- **Karin (PEN America):**
 - Reads Pham Doan Trang (Vietnam) empty chair
- ***Two Centre update-related questions are displayed on screen; panellists realise that questions were not shared with attendees prior to session***
- **Kaiser (Uyghur PEN):**
 - Highlights list of over 300 cases of Uyghur writers and intellectuals detained, along with 80 journalists (list likely taken from RFA, which likely sourced data from UHRP/ Abduweli Ayup)
 - Notes scale of crisis (gives figure of 3 million detained)
 - Highlights Perhat Tursun case
 - Urges for ongoing work on Xinjiang
 - Recounts personal story
 - Left son in Xinjiang as young child, now likely not to recognise him
 - Brother jailed for communicating with him
 - Asked whether XJ is a priority
- **Zhang (ICPC):**
 - Notes centre's two prizes for writers in China
 - Liu Xiao Bo Courage to Writ Award
 - Lin Zhao Memorial Award
 - ICPC states that its work has not caused the imprisonment of over a dozen ICPC members, does not feel that HK writers are at risk
- **Elisabeth Lofgren (PEN Sweden):**

- Notes Centres heavy involvement with WiPC
- Highlights need to improve Case List (photo access, correspondence addresses, etc.)
- Need for greater efficiency and better comms
- **Astrid (PEN Germany):**
 - Writers in Exile program has supported individuals from countries including Afghanistan, Uganda, Belarus and South Sudan
 - Also publishes books featuring writers, etc.
- **German Rojas (PEN Chile):**
 - Notes centres heavy involvement in cases across LATM
- **Alix Parodi (PEN Suisse Romand):**
 - Focused on PEN International campaigns
 - Speaks to lack of engagement with Swiss-French media
 - Highlights need to find younger writers
- **Vladimir Kartsev (PEN Kazakhstan):**
 - Notes 172 FoE violations in country
- **Alicja Gescinska (PEN Belgium-Flanders):**
 - Uses Empty Chairs for literary events – has been well received
 - Includes writing from Empty Chairs and correspondence address
 - Engages broader public
- **Mille Rohde (Danish PEN)**
 - Focus on Afghanistan
 - Develop working group structure for WiPC work
- **Froukje (PEN Netherlands)**
 - Needs specific supports
 - Issue with navigating Russian and Ukrainian representation
 - Wants online program to discuss issues
- **Unknown (PEN Turkey)**
 - Argues that Turkish cases should not be ethnicised
 - States that other cases should be highlighted in addition to long-standing cases
- **Caroline Stockford (PEN Norway)**
 - Responds to points raised
- **Ostap Slyvynsky (PEN Ukraine)**
 - Responds to Froukje’s comment on the need for Russian/ Ukrainian dialogue
 - Notes that many Ukrainian writers will no publicly participate with Russians
 - States that Ukrainians are a traumatised society
 - States that PEN Ukraine does not deny contacts with Russian writers
 - Notes that it is a personal matter
- **WiPC-SC Panel:**

- Notes that there is no more time for centre updates (16:25)
- Cuban resolution approved
- Assange resolution approved
- Comments for FoE & Civic Space Resolution
- **Finnish PEN:**
 - Finds following wording vague “Russian federation, independent voices have come under pressure”
 - Seeks stronger language when describing ‘fake news’, in order to reference the imprisonment of those who criticise the war
- **Brendan de Caires (PEN Canada)**
 - Suggests “Demonstrably false charges, individuals have been imprisoned”
- **Elisabeth Lofgren (PEN Sweden)**
 - Suggests removing “fake”
- **Unknown**
 - Suggests adding “Algerian” after “Moroccan” in point #5
- **Lan (Vietnamese Abroad PEN Centre)**
 - Calls for less argument between PEN Centres
 - Translates WiPC outputs into Vietnamese
 - Looks for assistance from WiPC to assist with funding
- **Brendan de Caires (PEN Canada)**
 - Seeks replacement of “brutal murder” with “killing”
- **Mina Thabet (PI)**
 - Responds to Brendan’s suggestion, highlighting that PEN Centres in MENA region believe use of term “murder” is appropriate given scepticism over legitimacy of investigation
- **Unknown**
 - Seeks to add “Iraq” to point #5
- **Thida (WiPC Chair):**
 - Moves discussion to Strategic Plan document
 - Highlights need to institutionalise cooperation, particularly for resolutions
 - Need to make Case List more digestible for a general audience
 - Notes lack of media impact
 - Stresses need for PEN Centres to engage with local partners
- **Brendan de Caires (PEN Canada)**
 - On centre updates – notes issue of duplication between PEN Centres
 - Commends Alicia for lobbying governments
 - Highlights need to increase focus on UN UPR mechanism and to deepen research on thematic issues
 - Suggests scheduling resolutions alongside country UPRs

- Need to move towards more fulsome campaigns that allow PEN Centres with minimal staff to mount effective campaigns (highlights DoIW as example)
- **Mansour Razaghi (PEN Sydney)**
 - Need for greater processes on case selection
 - Larger Centres need to support smaller, more regional Centres
- **Unknown (PEN Turkey)**
 - Case List reform speaks to number of Turkish writers on Case List
 - Asks how cases are prioritised
 - States lists have bn sent to PEN International multiple times
- **Cornelia Zetzsche (PEN Germany)**
 - Highlights difficulty in understanding who to communicate with
 - Notes difficulty in communicating with other writers
- **Deniz Yücel (PEN Berlin)**
 - Questions practice of resolutions
 - Views supporting emergency relocation as key issue
 - Raised Assange case as international scandal
- **Cornelia Zetzsche (PEN Germany)**
 - Highlights PEN Germany's support of Meral Şimşek
- **Deniz Yücel (PEN Berlin)**
 - Accuses PEN Germany of not supporting Meral quick enough
- **Mina Thabet (PEN International)**
 - Highlights issue of capacity and use of emblematic cases on Case List – not designed to be exhaustive list
- **Karin Karlekar (PEN America):**
 - Highlights PEN America's shift to online database, encourages PEN Centres to submit cases
 - Highlights need for more communication
 - Turkey Action group as a good model
 - Formalist available protection resources between PEN Centres
 - Piloting PEN America's provision of emergency grants, states that PEN Centres can approach them
- **WiPC-SC Panel:**
 - Need to identify root problems that exist on regional level
 - Highlights November deadline for discussion of strategic plan
 - Need to get visa requests for WiPC meeting ASAP