# TABLE OF CONTENTS

2 President’s Message  
8 Executive Director’s Message  
14 Silencing Dissent: The Rise of Digital Transnational Repression in Canada  
18 Arzu Yildiz  
22 Sheng Xue  
26 Maryam Shafipour  
28 Writers in Exile Committee Report  
30 Honorary Members  
34 Released: Ashraf Fayadh  
36 Canadian Issues/Legal Affairs Committee Report  
38 Writers in Peril Committee Report  
40 Public Events & Prizes  
44 Members, Donors and Partners
This is not your conventional repression.

Digital transnational repression – or DTR – is the theme of this year’s PEN Canada Annual Report. DTR refers to how regimes have mobilized sophisticated cyber armies to spread lies and innuendo, disinformation and threats, to harass, discredit, undermine and, ultimately, silence their former citizens – writers, journalists and activists now living abroad and who face the prospect of imprisonment, and worse, should they return. The barrage of attacks is relentless. It can go on for years. Every digital channel is co-opted. The defence of freedom of expression that we uphold, and the technological means to foster open societies, are turned against them. And authorities in their adopted lands seem helpless to offer any protection.

In this report, you’ll read an insightful analysis of DTR and what steps the Canadian government should take to counter it by The Citizen Lab’s legal advisor Siena Anstis and researcher Noura Aljizawi. You’ll also read searing accounts from three women writers/activists now living in Canada who live this every day. Sheng Xue, Maryam Shafipour and Arzu Yildiz tell of how regimes, reaching across borders, have augmented conventional repression tactics with device and account hacking, faked photos and videos targeting their gender, and slanderous posts – and the very real danger that puts them in, and the toll that takes.

I want to thank Siena and Noura, for so generously offering us their expertise; Xue, Maryam and Arzu, for their relentless courage and candor in sharing their stories; and Grace and Brendan, for entrusting me with this edition.

Diana Kuprel
The world is a complicated place. As the late, great Ursula K. Le Guin wrote: “I never knew anybody...who found life simple. I think a life or a time looks simple when you leave out the details.” At PEN Canada, we do not leave out the details, and find ourselves facing complex issues. Here are some of the major issues and events we engaged with over the past year.

**DIGITAL TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION**

Let me start with the theme of the Annual Report this year: digital transnational repression or DTR. It’s our theme for a very good reason. Authoritarian states, such as China, Iran, Russia, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, increasingly target nationals who reside outside their borders. They harass, threaten, surveil and intimidate exiled dissidents in order to silence them. A March 2022 study by The Citizen Lab, at the University of Toronto, found that the repression of activists and critics by such regimes is increasingly done via digital technologies, and through threats to family members still in their home country. For immigrants to Canada, this malign foreign outreach undermines the security, rights and freedoms they came here to find. Alarmingly, members of our own PEN writers-in-exile community are vulnerable to this coercion.

While the Canadian government is focusing on threats of foreign interference in our elections, the need to protect refugees and immigrants targeted by repressive foreign governments must not be overlooked. Read more, *infra*, in the article by The Citizen Lab’s researchers Siena Anstis and Noura Aljizawi.
GRAEME GIBSON TALK: ONLINE DISINFORMATION AND THE DECAY OF OUR DEMOCRACIES

PEN’s highly successful second annual Graeme Gibson talk was held in September 2022 at the Toronto International Festival of Authors (TIFA). Introduced by Louise Dennys, the talk featured internationally renowned expert on cyber espionage and human rights, Ron Deibert, founder of The Citizen Lab, whose report I mention above. He spoke with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and author of How to Stand up to a Dictator (2021), Maria Ressa, on the subject of online disinformation and the decay of our democracies. Despite harassment and multiple lawsuits brought against her on spurious grounds by the government of the Philippines where she lives, Ressa maintains a vigorous international speaking schedule and continues to publish investigative journalism in her online newspaper, Rappler.

UBC GLOBAL REPORTING CENTRE

On a similar theme, PEN Canada has continued to sponsor a global survey and study by the UBC Global Reporting Centre called Shooting the Messenger: Credibility Attacks Against Journalists. The study examines how journalists in different countries experience and respond to threats to their credibility, such as through false or insulting claims about their conduct, gender or ethnicity. PEN Canada and the Committee to Protect Journalists continue to work with the team at the Global Reporting Centre to investigate this problem and the responses to it.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY AT RIDEAU HALL

In the meantime, even the Governor General of Canada is a target. On International Women’s Day, I was invited to Rideau Hall by Her Excellency, Governor-General Mary Simon, to participate in a round-table conversation of women leaders concerned about the vicious abuse that women face online, and to consider how to fight it. At the same time, she made public some of the misogynistic and racist comments she has received on social media as a result of her high profile.

As the conversation made clear, online abuse aims to silence targeted women, especially BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ women, to drive them out of public life. Participants urged us to demand better from the platforms and from law enforcement. Allowing online abusers free rein in the name of free speech means effectively denying freedom of expression to those who are their targets.

In that connection, PEN Canada continues to follow the development of Canadian legislation on online harms/online safety. See the Canadian Issues and Legal Affairs Report, infra, for more.
ATTACK ON SALMAN RUSHDIE

The world and the PEN community were appalled in August 2022, when a lone attacker viciously stabbed Salman Rushdie while he was onstage for a conversation at the Chautauqua Institution in upstate New York. The attack very nearly killed him. Coming decades after the 1989 fatwa by the Ayatollah Khomeini calling for his death, the murder attempt was shocking: our worst fear become fact, so close to home, and while Rushdie was peacefully carrying on an ordinary life despite the target on his back. It has shaken our sense of security in our freedoms. But it is also clarifying, because it demonstrates, at its most fundamental, what we are fighting against when we fight for freedom of expression.

Thirty years ago, in 1992, early in the fatwa, PEN Canada held a remarkable benefit in Toronto in support of Rushdie. This past fall, together with Penguin Random House, the Toronto International Festival of Authors and the Writers’ Trust, PEN held another event bringing famous writers to the stage for readings from Rushdie’s work, to stand publicly in support of Rushdie after the attack. Many of them were his friends: Margaret Atwood, The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson, John Irving, Ian McEwan, Rohinton Mistry, Deepa Mehta, John Ralston Saul, Louise Dennys and Shyam Selvadurai.

PEN also participated in a screening by the Ageless Film Festival of a 2017 documentary, Codename Sally, produced by acclaimed filmmaker Sturla Gunnarsson, assisted by past PEN vice-president Suzanne DePoe and myself, and directed by Sturla’s son, Ari. The film is about that famous 1992 PEN Benefit, when a handful of PEN Canada members in great secrecy brought Salman Rushdie out of hiding during the darkest days of the fatwa, to Toronto and the stage of the Winter Garden Theatre.

After the attack, PEN Canada urged the Canadian government to designate the 15 Khordad Foundation, an Iranian organization that for 30 years since the fatwa has offered a large bounty for the murder of Salman Rushdie, as a terrorist organization.
WAR, CONFLICT AND UPRISING

2022 also saw the beginning of the war in Ukraine, and the extraordinary efforts of PEN Ukraine and its president, Andrey Kurkov, to tell the world what was going on. Though most staff of PEN Ukraine had to flee their homes, they continued to operate in a dispersed fashion and through a makeshift office in Lviv, producing “Dialogues of War,” a series of English-language conversations between Ukrainian and international writers, one of them Margaret Atwood. In the spring, through the generosity of PEN patrons Lyndsay Green and Hank Intven, PEN Canada held an event in Victoria featuring PEN member Dr. Serhy Yekelchyk, professor of Ukrainian and Russian history at the University of Victoria. Born and raised in Kyiv, Dr. Yekelchyk laid out the basis of Putin’s animosity towards an independent Ukraine: “An independent Ukraine undermined the Russian imperial project, a separate Ukrainian identity undermined the project of the greater Russian ethnic nation, and the two democratic revolutions in Ukraine threatened Russian authoritarianism.”

Fall 2022 also marked 21 years of detention of Eritrean journalist Dawit Isaak and his colleagues, making them the longest detained journalists in the world today. Further, almost a year after Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was shot and killed while she was reporting during an Israeli military raid in the West Bank city of Jenin, wearing a blue vest with “PRESS” written on it, there has been little accountability for her death, though there is little doubt the shot that killed her came from the IDF. Shortly after the news, PEN Canada signed a comprehensive IFEX statement drafted by the International Press Institute (IPI) calling for a full investigation.

2022 also saw the courageous uprising of women of Iran in the “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement following the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, arrested in September for wearing her hijab askew. Their astonishing bravery continues to inspire us.

RECOGNIZING AN EXTRAORDINARY BENEFEXCTOR

PEN Canada received an extraordinary gift from a private trust established by Leslie Mary Coull, sister of the late Gary Coull, whose generosity was the basis of the trust. Gary Coull was founder and chairman of a prominent brokerage house specializing in Asia-Pacific stock markets who began his career as a business journalist. Honouring both Gary and his sister’s long-term commitment to journalism, and recognizing the importance of PEN Canada’s mission for freedom of expression and writers oppressed for exercising that right, their trustee directed a transformational gift to PEN Canada, with the intention to provide financial stability for PEN’s future work. We are immensely grateful.
A SHOUT-OUT, OR THREE

PEN is fortunate in its active board and volunteers, but I want to give special mention to PEN board member Karen Walton, who has gone way above and beyond her board role to take on the task of building a vibrant, timely and responsive PEN 24/7 presence on social media. Through her transformative work, we have supported PEN International and PEN centres around the world, and greatly enhanced PEN Canada’s voice and visibility. Much gratitude goes to her for this critical work.

And to Peter Showler, chair, Writers in Peril, a profound thank you for his extraordinary skill and dedication on behalf of PEN in working tirelessly to bring an at-risk Iranian feminist blogger to the safety of Canada, and for his expert interfacing with Ottawa on PEN’s participation in the Human Rights Defender Immigration Stream.

The senior volunteers of the writers-in-exile community are among PEN Canada’s most dedicated. Under the leadership of Gezahegn M. Demissie, their programs of writer support, including the Voices of Freedom reading series and a soon-to-be-published story collection, are a testament to that dedication. Again, much gratitude.

A WELCOME

We welcomed four new honorary patrons in 2022: filmmaker Sturla Gunnarsson, who gifted his film Codename Sally to PEN Canada; comedian, TV personality, political satirist and author Rick Mercer, for volunteering his time and talent to the Atwood Gibson Gala in 2019; and designers Jim Ryce and Gary Beelik, for their extraordinary gift of over 20 years of pro bono design work for PEN, helping PEN present itself to the world with style.

IN MEMORIAM

Finally, PEN Canada lost two of its giants this year, Clayton Ruby and Reza Baraheni.

Clayton Ruby was for many years PEN’s chair of legal affairs, where he oversaw seminal interventions made by PEN Canada and advised then-president Louise Dennys how to bring Salman Rushdie to Canada for the 1992 PEN Benefit and thereafter to Ottawa to pressure the government into embracing his cause and taking it to the United Nations.

Reza Baraheni, Iranian dissident, prolific author and defiant human rights activist, was president of PEN from 2001 to 2003 and a tireless fighter for the rights of imperiled writers.

We honour their memories.
“If you don’t have facts, you can’t have truth, without truth, you can’t have trust. Without these three you have no shared reality, we can’t solve any problems, we have no democracy. That’s what social media has done. It has come in, and used free speech to stifle free speech.”

Maria Ressa
Executive Director’s Message

Brendan de Caires

Last year, a friend of mine returned to a town in Chile where he had been jailed and tortured. Many of his comrades had died after similar mistreatment during the Pinochet era. He was making a documentary about the ordeal, decades later, hoping to “resignify” its memory. Awed by his courage, I remembered Milan Kundera’s aphorism that, ultimately, political resistance is “the struggle of memory against forgetting.” In this case, truth prevailed. Nearly everywhere else, it seems to be conceding.
In September 2022, we hosted Nobel laureate Maria Ressa and The Citizen Lab’s Ron Deibert at the Toronto International Festival of Authors for a discussion entitled “Dictators, Disinformation & Democracy.” Ressa has compared the civic consequences of social media to “a nuclear bomb exploding in every single mind.” In *How to Stand Up to a Dictator*, she writes: “The very platforms that deliver the news we need are biased against facts…Without facts, you can’t have truth. Without truth, you can’t have trust. Without all three, we have no shared reality, and democracy as we know it – and all meaningful human endeavors – are dead.”

The defense of a shared reality could have been the theme of PEN’s centenary congress in Uppsala that same week. At one of the opening ceremonies, Swedish writer Ola Larsmo recalled that PEN had supported writers “during the Spanish Civil war, Nazi dictatorship, communist oppression, the fatwas of the mullahs – and so on.” Mindful that he was speaking next to a local monument to Martin Luther King, he added: “We are still here. There is war in Europe, journalists [being] killed in Mexico, dictatorship in Myanmar, religious oppression in Afghanistan … but we have been here before. The moral arc of the universe bends towards justice – if we hang on to it and bend it down with our weight.” One example of what a collective effort could achieve was the successful relocation of PEN’s entire local Afghan staff, with their families – 120 people – after the US withdrew from the country.

During the congress, there seemed to be general agreement that boycotts of Russian literature ran counter to the spirit of the PEN Charter, but there was also wariness of Moscow’s bad faith. A *Foreign Affairs* essay published just a fortnight earlier contrasted the warring parties with a brilliant metaphor. “The defense of Putin’s regime,” wrote historian Timothy Snyder, “has been offered by people operating as literary critics, ever disassembling and dissembling. Ukrainian resistance, embodied by President Volodymyr Zelensky, has been more like literature: careful attention to art, no doubt, but for the purpose of articulating values. If all one has is literary criticism, one accepts that everything melts into air and concedes the values that make democratic politics possible. But *when one has literature, one experiences a certain solidity, a sense that embodying values is more interesting and more courageous than dismissing or mocking them.*” [Emphasis mine.]
Effective digital censorship rarely seeks “denial of access, which is difficult to achieve,” but aims instead at “denial of attention, focus, and credibility.”

Almost everywhere facts are under siege. As a British intelligence official has quipped: Russia may be the weather, but China is the climate. Freedom of expression’s global climate crisis was on full view at the Chinese Communist Party’s 20th National Congress last October. Xi Jinping hymned the Party’s praises, for two straight hours, extolling the CCP’s “strategy of national rejuvenation” and its “swift and steady” reforms. Without a trace of irony, he spoke of “solid progress in developing whole-process people’s democracy, and advanced law-based governance.” There was complete silence about Mao’s land reforms, his famine-inducing Great Leap Forward and the innumerable horrors of the Cultural Revolution.

Strategic silence — “officially decreed amnesia” in the telling phrase of Professor Torbjörn Lodén, head of the Stockholm China Center — has become a mainstay of CCP rhetoric. Just as the Gang of Four were airbrushed out of official photographs, so too has the People’s Republic found it prudent to overlook the repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, the erosion of democracy in Hong Kong or the disastrous economic fallout of Xi’s Zero-COVID policy. If power tends to forget, one might say that absolute power forgets absolutely.

But Maoist attitudes have also surged within democracies. Soi-disant American conservatives, hell-bent on making the country “great again,” keep trying to purge the culture of books that dwell on the legacy of slavery – the dreaded “critical race theory” – but also of writing by queer or trans authors, or indeed anything that offends their impoverished notions of Christianity. In some cases, individual complainants have forced city librarians to “review” thousands of books for problematic content, paralyzing an entire library system and all but ensuring the disappearance of other points of view. Predictably, some of this intemperance has crept north.
There now seems to be a broad cultural undertow towards censoriousness. When I joined my PEN America colleagues for their “Stand with Salman” readings last August, on the steps of the New York Public Library, every writer who spoke with the press afterwards commented on the breadth and intensity of intolerance, across the political spectrum, in the months before the attack on Rushdie. As Ressa suggests, much of the blame should fall on the technology that has overwhelmed our daily lives.

In *Twitter and Tear Gas*, sociologist Zeynep Tüfekçi writes that effective digital censorship rarely seeks “denial of access, which is difficult to achieve,” but aims instead at “denial of attention, focus, and credibility.” Enforced silence and secrecy become unnecessary if you can “produce resignation, cynicism, and a sense of disempowerment among the people.” The transnational repression that this report focuses on is part of that tendency to impose silence through weaponized disinformation and noise. PEN’s role in resisting these disempowering narratives, and resignifying our lived experience, has never been more important.

At the end of a busy year, I am more grateful than ever for the support of Theresa Johnson, whose good humour and inexhaustible optimism make her an invaluable friend and colleague. Her panoptical scrutiny of our back-office minutiae has lowered PEN’s collective blood pressure considerably. Thanks, too, to Karen Walton, who has transformed our social media presence and is always willing to help with any PEN work, large or small. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary work done by the outgoing chair of our Writers in Prison Committee, Peter Showler, and the unfailing energy, patience and commitment of our president, Grace Westcott.
ARTICLE 19

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
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.
Farah* is an Iranian-Canadian human rights defender who became a human rights activist when she was a university student in Iran. Before coming to Canada, she was arrested and prosecuted by the Iranian authorities for her efforts to promote human rights. Now, despite leaving Iran and seeking exile abroad, Farah has found little protection against the regime’s repression.

*not her real name
Farah's family back in Iran has been subjected to threats and intimidation. The Iranian authorities have shown them pictures of Farah’s apartment in Canada and other details about her life and ordered them to deliver threatening messages to her and to tell her to stop her activism. She has faced an onslaught of online threats that have intensified over time, including death and rape threats. She has been the target of smear campaigns on social media, including false allegations about her sexual life along with the circulation of fabricated videos and photos intended to defame and harm her reputation. Reporting social media posts and accounts to the relevant platform has been a draining and fruitless process.

Attempts to hack her devices and accounts have left Farah worried for the fate of the female activists she works with in Iran. A successful infiltration of her devices could result in the disclosure of the identities of undercover activists she works with, putting them at serious risk of detention and prosecution in Iran. As a result, Farah lives in a state of terror, socially isolated, both online and offline. She is afraid for her own safety, of causing harm to others, and of the potential exposure of sensitive information about other activists to the Iranian authorities.

Farah’s situation highlights an ongoing struggle for activists, dissidents and other members of civil society who face intimidation and harassment, both in their home countries and abroad. In Canada, Farah unsuccessfully turned to government bodies for help. The police said her concerns were related to a matter of “freedom of speech” and that there was nothing they could do to help her. The response of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Canada's national intelligence body, was simply to gather information from Farah without following up or offering support.

Farah is experiencing what is called digital transnational repression. Digital transnational repression arises when states use digital technologies as a means to silence or stifle dissent originating from abroad. The term captures the extension of practices of domestic digital authoritarianism into transnational spaces and into other countries where expressions of dissent are often protected, such as in Canada. Indeed, the Iranian regime is notorious for its tactics of transnational repression, which run the spectrum, from digital forms of transnational repression, such as those experienced by Farah, to outright killings.

Digital technologies and the spread of the Internet have been game-changers for social and political movements. Such technologies have facilitated borderless communication allowing people from around the globe to join in advocating for social and political change. They have provided a mechanism to organize at a mass scale and, for a time, helped those living in authoritarian countries evade systems of state control and censorship that would have prevented such powerful exercises of free expression.
Social media platforms – where so much of digital transnational repression takes place – fail at protecting vulnerable users online and lack effective reporting mechanisms.

However, once governments better understood these technologies, they also became critical tools in silencing and stifling dissent. Social media platforms are abused to undertake widespread, insidious and quiet forms of censorship. The deployment and coordination of trolls and bots on platforms like Twitter, Instagram and Facebook drown out voices of social and political dissent. Such campaigns of persistent online harassment and hate speech cause such intense psychological and emotional distress that some dissidents go silent. Others engage in self-censorship. One target described what they experienced as a form of “psychological and emotional war” leaving them caught in a cycle of “endless fear and anxiety.”

Even more intrusive tools are available: spyware, for example, can be remotely installed on a dissident’s phone to covertly gain access to all their communications, including the people they communicate with, their location and their daily thoughts and habits. Such confidential information can then be used to identify an activist’s social network or to track and kill a dissident. Friends and family members of Jamal Khashoggi, the Saudi journalist who was brutally assassinated in Turkey in October 2018, were targeted with the highly intrusive Pegasus spyware.

Many targeted individuals reside in democratic countries that have ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other human rights instruments and whose domestic laws protect human rights. Yet, they are often unable to access resources to address transnational repression, including its digital forms. For example, Chinese-Canadian human rights activists report being ignored by the Canadian government. Law enforcement and intelligence agencies in Canada have provided little support. Social media platforms – where so much of digital transnational repression takes place – fail at protecting vulnerable users online and lack effective reporting mechanisms.

While the Canadian government has developed policy around “foreign interference,” this work has primarily focused on threats from abroad to Canadian research, democratic institutions and processes, and critical infrastructure. More attention needs to be paid to the silencing of Canadian activists and dissidents, like Farah.
A starting point for the Canadian government is to adopt the language of transnational repression and publicly recognize the unique experiences of activist and dissident communities and the need to protect against such threats. Such statements need to underline that transnational repression is a violation of domestic and international law and the government needs to take concrete steps to address it, such as through domestic criminal prosecutions, targeted sanctions, the education of government officials, the development of a national reporting system to track incidents of transnational repression, and coordination with community organizations to better understand what support is necessary.

In the absence of a comprehensive response in policy and law, the so-called long-arm of authoritarianism is set to take hold in Canada, as well as in other countries that claim to protect and uphold the rights to privacy and freedom of expression.

The outcome?
Human rights defenders, journalists and other members of civil society living in exile will be silenced. And liberal democracies like Canada will have facilitated the global reach of authoritarianism.

FOR ADDITIONAL READING


ABOUT THE AUTHORS
Siena Anstis is a senior legal adviser with The Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto’s Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. Previously, she was a litigation associate at Morrison & Foerster in New York City, and clerked for the Hon. Mr. Justice Cromwell at the Supreme Court of Canada and the Court of Appeal for Ontario. She was called to the bar in Ontario in 2015 and in New York in 2014. Her scholarly work has been published in McGill Law Journal, Canadian Bar Review and Oxford Journal of Human Rights Practice.

Noura Aljizawi is a senior researcher at The Citizen Lab where she studies the intersection of technology, human rights and global security. She also serves on the board of the Center for Victims of Torture, and is a member of Humanitarian Dialogue’s expert group as well as Just Tech and Migration Community’s steering committee. Her work on Security Planner, a platform that provides peer-reviewed recommendations for staying safe online, was recognized with an Excellence in Innovation Award by the University of Toronto.
“THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT FIRST TARGETED ME FOR REPORTING ON ILLEGAL ARMS EXPORTS TO SYRIAN REBEL GROUPS AND ON HIGH-PROFILE CORRUPTION CASES. THEY CLAIMED I WAS EXPOSING GOVERNMENT STATE SECRETS. IN 2015, THEY STRIPPED ME OF MY LEGAL RIGHTS TO MY CHILDREN. THAT WAS JUST THE START.”
It was 2016. The July 15 coup attempt to topple Erdogan had failed.

I was a court reporter. The Turkish government was hunting down and unlawfully detaining civilians. They tortured them and posted the videos and pictures to frighten and pacify the populace. I took screen captures and shared them on my social media account, with the comment that torture is against the rule of law. It’s a crime against humanity. They labelled my post terrorist propaganda. I was the first journalist to be issued an arrest warrant.

The police came for me, but I wasn’t home. I knew the persecution wouldn’t stop there. I went underground with my children.

Every day of those five months was an ordeal. Every time the doorbell rang or there was a knock on the door, I thought: have the police come for me? My daughters didn’t see anyone. I knew this was not fair to them. So, I decided to escape – alone. The way was too dangerous to bring them. The police might catch me. I could not trust the smugglers. I thought, if I reached freedom, I could start a new life, and send for my children.

I was smuggled out to Greece, where I stayed in a refugee camp for 16 days. Then Paris. New York. Finally, I crossed the border into Canada and surrendered myself to the authorities, claiming refugee status. I’ve lived in Toronto ever since, and was reunited with my daughters after three-and-a-half years.

In July 2021, my name appeared on a hit list of Turkish dissidents in exile, published by a pro-government social media account called Jitemkurt – the only woman journalist on that list.

Then, on December 30, 2022, I saw my name on a terrorist ‘gray list.’ That’s a databased published by the Turkish Interior Ministry that identifies alleged terrorists and offers rewards for their capture. My name and photo also appear on their webpage.

But there is no terrorism case against me. And no legal justification to call me a terrorist.

The Turkish government claims I’m a member of the Gülen movement, which is a faith-based community persecuted by the state for standing up against corruption and injustice. But my family has never been involved in any religious group. And while I respect people’s beliefs, I don’t want to be labelled someone I’m not. The state cannot decide who I am.

They labelled me a supporter of the PKK, the Kurdish freedom fighters, because of the stories I had written about the murder of Kurdish businessmen. Yes, I support the Kurdish people’s rights, because there is no equality for the Kurds in Turkey.

And when I stood up for women’s rights on my social media accounts, I received threatening direct messages from Iran that read, “We will find you and kill you.”

People shared my photo online, without my permission – some to support me, others to target me and destroy my family. The latter are complicit with the government in the crime of slander.

I am so glad to be in Canada. I want to live a quiet life – but the Turkish regime will not let me.


But losing everything made me stronger than before. Now, when they call me to harass me, I tell them, don’t bother, because I’ve already passed that kind of exam. Nothing can scare me now.

One thing, though, I didn’t lose – and that’s my passion for justice. I will never receive justice in Turkey. So I want to be judged in a Canadian court, to clear my name.

After all, if you don’t believe in justice, how can you survive?

Arzu Yildiz is a Turkish-born investigative journalist, editor, senior reporter and author of four books. She worked at the liberal, democratic daily Taraf, where she reported on human rights issues, corruption and arms trafficking. She has lived in Toronto since 2016. She was the recipient of the 2021 PEN Canada-Humber College Writers-in-Exile scholarship.
“One thing, though, that I didn’t lose — and that’s my passion for justice. ... After all, if you don’t believe in justice, how can you survive?”
"THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO #CLEANSESNOWGLOBALLY. SNOW HAS BEEN MY PEN NAME SINCE 1985. I WON’T GIVE (IT) UP.”
I left China almost 34 years ago, in 1989, on a student visa, intending to study at Carleton University. It was a couple of months after the Tiananmen Massacre. Twenty days after landing in Toronto, I went to the CCP consulate to protest.

Ever since, I have been leading overseas human rights and democracy movements in China – and supporting the Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hong Kongers, Taiwanese, underground church people and Falun Gong practitioners. Because I want to make political change in China.

And ever since, the threats and attacks by the government have never let up – all kinds, from all sides, through every channel.

It started in 1990. I received a letter with pornographic pictures in it, threatening me with death should I betray my motherland. My phone number was written on the wall of a men’s public washroom in Chinatown, with the offer of sex services. In China, the police are tools of the communist regime to crack down on human rights, so I was hesitant to report the incidents to the authorities.

In September 1996, on the day of the Mid-Autumn Festival, I landed at Beijing Capital Airport. I was arrested immediately and asked to sign a false confession. I refused. After being interrogated for a day and a night, I was deported back to Canada because I held a Canadian passport.

In 2001, I investigated the case of Lai Changxing, who was in a Vancouver prison, accused by the Chinese government of being the biggest smuggler since 1949. When my book, Unveiling the Yuanhua Case, was about to be published, I began to receive threats. My computer was damaged by multiple attacks. Someone called me to buy the copyright “for the book never to be published,” offering me one million US dollars. I said, “I wrote it to be published.” The man swore at me and slammed the phone down. The book has been banned in China, along with all my other books.

Since then, at the dinner table, I choose to sit with my back to the wall, not the back door. When I’m out with my husband and we walk back from the garage, I ask him to walk behind me. If I’m out alone, I let him know when I’m coming home so he can unlock the door and I don’t have to fumble for keys.

Then, the digital repression started to heat up. In 2008, because of my boycott of the Beijing Olympics, hundreds of insults and threats were posted on a Chinese website in Canada. Someone wrote: “Don’t go to public places. You will be battered to death with bricks.”

In October 2013, I was organizing a conference to which I had invited politicians, scholars and human rights activists from Canada and around the world. After I stepped down from the podium, people came up to me, telling me they received my nude photo; some were laughing. My face had been photoshopped on someone else’s nude body.
From 2013 to 2017, the attacks, slander, humiliations and threats against me had reached an overwhelming level.

Tens of thousands of emails. My husband, brother, sister and uncle were all on these attack email lists and cannot unsubscribe.

Tens of thousands of posts in the comments sections of websites.

Three e-books.

Groups on WeChat, the most widely used software by Chinese at home and abroad, distributing attack content.

My Twitter, Facebook and Telegram accounts hacked; my YouTube channel permanently closed and many videos lost.

In May 2014, during an online conference marking the 25th anniversary of Tiananmen massacre, I started receiving phone calls – from Toronto, Vancouver, Chicago, San Francisco – asking, hey, how much money do you want for sex? I found online ads that claimed I was looking for a boyfriend and offering sex services and listing my landline, web phone and cell phone numbers.

I reported the incident to the police in Mississauga. The officer suggested I change my phone number. I said, “They’ll still find out my new one.” They said, “We can’t do anything.”

Later that month, I hosted a symposium commemorating the Tiananmen Massacre in the Paltalk meeting room. Paltalk’s server in the US was attacked, and the seminar had to be cancelled.

After my mother died, in Canada, they made up stories that she had loose morals when she was young, and that I am like her.

Every morning, I turn on my phone, my heart thumping about the barrage of emailed threats that are waiting.

When I thought I couldn’t take it anymore, I went to an old family friend who was a therapist here. His father had been my grandfather’s student in China. He took one look at the file I shared with him, and said, “It’s politics. I can’t help you. If you go to court, I can’t be your witness.” I drove to a McDonald’s parking lot and burst into tears.

For five months, from November 19, 2015 to April 7, 2016, a man named Zhang Xiangyang demonstrated in front of Parliament, showing my photo and labelling me a “China spy.” I went to the Ottawa police to ask if they could do something about it. They said, “Freedom of expression. Yes, he’s flirting with the edge, but he’s not threatening you, so we can’t do anything about it.”

Michael Craig, from Amnesty International Toronto, and with whom I have worked for over 20 years, helped me call the police, RCMP, CSIS – but none of them seemed to know what to do.

On April 11, 2016, Zhang Xiangyang came to a theatre show, at the end of which I was speaking about the Tiananmen Massacre. He served me legal papers, accusing me of murder and other baseless crimes. He sent the indictment to more than 600 Canadian politicians, the RCMP and government departments. I hired a lawyer and went to court to clear my name. The court officer said they couldn’t find him. Then I received notification that the judge had dismissed the case, stating Zhang was abusing the judicial system.
On July 1, 2016, Macleans Magazine published a special issue on the 150th anniversary of the founding of Canada. I was chosen as one of the 110 Canadians featured in “Canada’s Stories.” Two weeks later, pornographic pictures of me began to circulate on the Internet and in WeChat groups.

Several of my tenants admitted that the CCP coerced them into spying on me.

In April 2019, I presented on the CCP’s concentration camps on Uyghurs at the International PEN Conference in Slovenia. The chairman of PEN Turkey helped me hold the microphone while I showed pictures. I posted a photo of us on Twitter. Someone photoshopped my face on a nude body, and retweeted the photo.

In September 2022, I was interviewed about the Chinese police stations in Canada. Hundreds of people sent fake photos of me on Twitter, under my handle, and retweeted them with dirty words and threats. One person commented the police station was for people like me.

I went to the police in Mississauga again. An officer interviewed me and told me that they’ve opened a special file and service action for me.

I know that I’m not the first person who is subject to this kind of transnational repression. I won’t be the last person. But I’m in Canada. I’m lucky.

I have many friends who have been disappeared, in China, in Southeast Asia. My publisher, Gui Minhai, a Swedish citizen, was kidnapped in Thailand and taken back to China in 2015, where he was detained in a black site for five years, tortured and, in 2020, resentenced to 10 years.

So I won’t give up. It’s in my blood. I come from a family that struggled for freedom and democracy. I know the government’s logic.

I understand that when people surrender to persecution and pressure – that only adds to the power of the regime to crack down and persecute others.

When you give up, you don’t just give up one thing; you give up everything because they will come after you again, and always.

Sheng Xue is a Chinese-Canadian journalist, writer and human rights activist, and a key leader in the overseas Chinese pro-democracy movement. She is the editor-in-chief of China Spring magazine. She received the Canadian Association for Journalists Award and a National Magazine Award for The Smuggler’s Slaves, on the lives of Chinese boat refugees. In 2001, she investigated China’s most prominent smuggling case and published a book which soon became a bestseller and sent shockwaves. It was banned. She is a member of the Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Committee of Metroland Media Group, and past vice-president of the Writers for Peace Committee of PEN International. She was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012.
“THE IRANIAN REGIME HAS MOBILIZED A LARGE AND SOPHISTICATED CYBER ARMY THAT IS REACHING ACROSS THE OCEAN AND USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO DISSEMINATE LIES ABOUT ACTIVISTS AND JOURNALISTS. BECAUSE IRAN IS A PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY, SPREADING SEXUAL RUMOURS IS ONE OF THEIR MOST EFFECTIVE WEAPONS AGAINST WOMEN ACTIVISTS.”
I spent two years in Tehran’s Evin Prison, on charges of “propaganda against the regime” and “assembly and collusion against national security.” The Iranian regime tried to break me. For more than two months, I was in solitary confinement. While I was locked up, they told me my mother, with whom I was very close, had died. It was a lie.

I was released in July 2015. In August 2015, the “Noble Women’s Initiative” invited me to Canada to take part in a mentorship program as a young woman human rights defender. I have been living in exile in Toronto ever since.

Now the regime is trying a different tack to break me: a constant barrage of online abuse and innuendo. On Instagram, Telegram, Twitter and WhatsApp, there are dozens of posts with videos that tell lies about my sexual, financial and political activities.

The cyber army pretends to be regular people; sometimes they write mild criticisms against the regime, but their duty is to fight against activists and saturate cyberspace with disinformation campaigns. They know your weaknesses and use them against you.

Meanwhile, in Iran, they harass my family. They interrogated my sister and pressured her to ask me to come back to Iran, or travel to a neighbouring country for a visit. She is on a contract at the university. They suspended her for a year.

After I testified in front of the Canadian Parliament, in a campaign to declare the IRGC (Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps) a terrorist entity, they intensified attacks against all the dissidents. The attacks continued until November of 2019, when there was a huge uprising in Iran.

I’ve struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder, since my time in Evin Prison. A few weeks after the uprising, in December, my mother died. They knew that I was in a bad state and they used it against me. The online libel grew worse. Many short videos and memos circulated, calling me a spy for the regime.

During that period, they rejected my sister’s application for a visa to Canada, so I spent those dark days alone.

The regime’s aim is to isolate me from my family, from my community. Attacks go on for years.

And there is nowhere to turn, no one to get advice from. When I went to the police, they laughed at me. They told me, “People are exercising their freedom of speech about you.” They don’t have the slightest idea how to help you. And there should be education for the police. There should be an organization where you as a journalist or activist can turn to for advice and support. But there isn’t.

So you break off your relationships with family because you don’t want to put them in danger. And you can’t trust people. While I was never hacked, still someone got hold of personal photos and information. This shows the regime uses the people around you to get information and put pressure on you. And over time, you grow isolated, even from your own community, because they accept rumours against you and you have no defence against them.

I don’t know how, but somehow, I survived those dark days.

Maryam Shafipour is a human rights activist from Iran. In 2010, she was suspended and later expelled from her university for political activities including blogging, reporting for local newspapers and involvement in student movements. In 2013, she was imprisoned in Tehran’s notorious Evin Prison. After her release in 2015, she launched “In Support of Imprisoned Mothers,” with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Shirin Ebadi. She has lived in Canada since 2016, where she launched the #FreeNarges social media campaign.
Many people have appreciated the Writers in Exile readings at the Hirut Café in Toronto. Our latest one, on March 26, was particularly successful. Nevertheless, I often ask myself, how useful has our platform been beyond showcasing the writers? The question deserves consideration. At a moment when democracy and freedom are threatened and autocracy is resurgent, many writers and journalists who have sought protection in Western democracies face a different threat when they get here: irrelevance.

At our latest reading, the courageous Mexican journalist, Luis Horacio Nájera, described the obstacles that immigrant writers face when trying to pursue their livelihoods in Canada. He detailed the precarious economic conditions under which he has operated for most of the last decade, despite writing an acclaimed book and completing two graduate degrees. Last year, the only full-time job he was offered was a janitorial one. Only when a despairing tweet from him went viral did Toronto Metropolitan University’s school of journalism offer him a seasonal teaching assistant position.

Our group is grateful for the strong community at our readings and it is heartening to see a house full of writers, journalists and litterateurs discussing freedom of expression, democracy and human rights on a Sunday afternoon. Our most recent meeting hosted the Afghan writer Bilal Sarwary, the Iranian Kurd Ava Homa, Luis Nájera and the Rohingya writer John Jonaid. Each offered an imaginative glimpse of their homelands, and a clear-eyed view of its sufferings and traumas. Several also drew attention to the challenge of adjusting to their new homes.
While writing this report, I have been reading William Burrill’s account of the time Ernest Hemingway spent in Toronto (1920-24). Although he had been a cub reporter at the Kansas City Star, often filing reports without a byline, Hemingway was allowed to hone his craft in Toronto. He got to write journalism that often was closer to literary fiction than to traditional news reportage. Nearly a century later, Canada has received hundreds if not thousands of qualified journalists and writers from all corners of the world. Why, then, have so few become journalists in the mainstream media?

Today’s world is more globalized and integrated than during Hemingway’s time. As Canada’s cultural DNA adapts to this new world, our media need correspondingly diverse reporting. Sadly, this is not a reality on the ground. Highly qualified journalists like Bilal, John and Luis could easily help fill the gap in the mainstream media by bringing stories that reflect the burgeoning immigrant communities across this country — but only if they are given the opportunity to do so.

In my own homeland of Ethiopia, up to a million people have died in a civil war during the last two years. Many have been slaughtered because of their ethnic identity. Millions more have been displaced and face further violence in armed conflict. Last year, two journalists were killed in connection with the war in Tigray, and journalists have been arrested en masse. There has been no accountability. Law and justice are unknown. Situations like this place an enormous moral burden on journalists and writers. That is why our community will not stop writing against these injustices, and fighting for democracy and freedom of expression to prevail. This is why we believe that the voice of immigrant writers is important, and it is why PEN Canada works to support their voices and to give them profile.

Writers in Exile would like to thank our senior volunteers and mentors for their unreserved support and hard work, work that makes these reading events so successful: Mary Jo Leddy and Romero House, Hannah Fisher, Anneli Andre-Barrett, Margo Kelly, Paola Gomez, Joan Leishman and, for making beautiful posters and promotional materials, Amir Yazdanbod. Thanks are also due to Hirut Café, Tibeb Woldemichael and Hirut Dagnachew; our emcee and editor, Keith Ross Leckie; and Grace Westcott, Brendan de Caires and Theresa Johnson at the PEN office. I also would like thank the Toronto Arts Council for the funding which has made our readings possible. Thank you, all.
HONORARY MEMBERS

ERITREA
YUSUF MOHAMED ALI
SEYOUM TSEHAYE
MATTEWOS HABTEAB
DAWIT HABTEMICHAEL
MEDHANIE HAILE
EMANUEL ASRAT
TEMESKEN GHEBREYESUS
DAWIT ISAAK
FESSHAYE YOHANNES
SAID ABDELKADER
MEXICO
JOSÉ ARMANDO RODRÍGUEZ CARREÓN
EGYPT
ALAA ABD EL-FATTAH
IRAN
NARGES MOHAMMADI
ERITREA

In September 2001, 13 journalists were arrested after President Afeworki forced Eritrea’s independent newspapers to close. Those who remain alive, 22 years later, are now the longest-detained journalists in the world. The following are honorary members of PEN Canada: Yusuf Mohamed Ali (editor-in-chief of *Tsigenay*), Mattewos Habteab (editor-in-chief of *Megaleh*), Dawit Habtemichael (reporter for *Megaleh*), Medhanie Haile (editor-in-chief of *Keste Debena*), Emanuel Asrat (editor of *Zemen*), Temesken Ghebreyesus (reporter for *Keste Debena*), Dawit Isaak (writer and co-owner of *Setit*), Fesshaye Yohannes “Joshua” (playwright, poet and publisher of *Setit*), Said Abdelkader (writer, editor of *Admas*) and Seyoum Tsehaye (TV and radio journalist who wrote a weekly column for *Setit*). In 2007, reports indicated that Abdelkader, Haile, Ali and Yohannes had died in custody due to harsh conditions and a lack of medical attention. Yohannes was reportedly tortured prior to his death. In 2022, PEN International and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights were part of an international coalition of human rights groups that called for Magnitsky sanctions against the Eritrean officials responsible for the journalists’ imprisonment. The issue of targeted sanctions has also been raised in the Swedish and Canadian parliaments.

MEXICO

José Armando Rodriguez Carreón was a veteran crime reporter for *El Diario*, a daily newspaper based in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua state. He was shot at least eight times by an unidentified person on the morning of November 13, 2008, as he was about to drive his daughter to school. José had covered drug-related violence and organized crime in Ciudad Juárez and, after receiving death threats, had briefly left Mexico to live in El Paso, Texas. On his return, he refused to stop covering crime stories despite receiving further death threats. Shortly before his death, Rodriguez told the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ): “The risks here are high and rising, and journalists are easy targets. But I can’t live in my house like a prisoner. I refuse to live in fear.” In the weeks after his murder, several other *El Diario* received death threats, as did other media in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua. Two prosecutors in charge of investigating the case have reportedly been assassinated. On May 26, 2011, the Inter American Press Association sent a letter to President Calderón, signed by hundreds of newspaper readers throughout the Americas, calling on him to intervene in order to ensure that the stalled investigation into José’s murder moves forward and those responsible are brought to justice. There has been no progress on the case since then.
EGYPT

Alaa Abd el-Fattah is an Egyptian activist, software developer and blogger who rose to prominence during the Arab Spring. He and his wife, Manal Hassan, created the online blog aggregators Manalaa and Omraneya, the first Arab blog aggregators to not exclude writing based on its content. Abd el-Fattah has been prosecuted under every Egyptian head of state during his lifetime. He was first arrested on May 7, 2006 during a peaceful protest, and spent 45 days in jail before being released on June 20, 2006. In 2011, he took part in the Tahrir Square protests and was arrested for inciting violence. On December 13, the court dropped two of the charges against him, but detained him for 15 days on the remaining charges. Abd el-Fattah was arrested in 2013 and detained for 115 days without trial. In November 2013, he was arrested and charged for organizing a political protest without a permit. He was released on bail in March 2014, but three months later sentenced, in absentia, to 15 years in jail for violating Egypt’s Protest Law.

In February 2015, Abd el-Fattah received a reduced five-year sentence, which he served until March 2019. On September 29, 2019, he was re-arrested by the Egyptian authorities during a crackdown on ongoing political demonstrations even though he had not personally taken part in the protests and had recently been released from prison and placed on probation.

On January 17, 2020, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights released a statement calling for a Red Cross investigation into the condition of the prison in which Abd el-Fattah was being held. On April 16, 2020, Abd el-Fattah went on a hunger strike to protest the ban on family visits to Tora prison, where he was being held during the COVID-19 pandemic. The protest provoked an international backlash. A collection of Abd el-Fattah’s translated writings entitled You Have Not Yet Been Defeated was published by Fitzcarraldo Editions in October 2021. On December 20, 2021, Abd el-Fattah was sentenced to an additional five years in prison on spurious charges of “broadcasting false news” related to a social media post. On April 2, Abd el-Fattah began an open hunger strike in protest against prison conditions and to demand recourse for mistreatment and abuse. His family successfully appealed to the British government to grant Abd el-Fattah UK citizenship on April 12, and he began to ask the Egyptian government for consular visits from British officials. On May 18, Abd el-Fattah was transferred to Wadi El-Natrun prison from Tora prison, where he was allegedly tortured and beaten by prison officials.
**IRAN**

**Narges Mohammadi** is a prominent independent journalist and human rights defender who has been repeatedly targeted by Iranian authorities since 2009. Mohammadi is the deputy director of the Defenders of Human Rights Center (DHRC), which advocates for human rights reform and represents political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in legal proceedings. She is also involved in campaigning against the death penalty in Iran, and is the author of *White Torture*, a two-volume book series investigating the inhumane treatment of prisoners in Iran.

In September 2008, Mohammadi was elected as president of the Executive Committee of the National Council for Peace in Iran, a broad coalition against war and for the promotion of human rights. She is the recipient of both the Alexander Langer Award (2009) and the Per Anger Prize (2011) for her human rights work, and was one of awardees of the 2013 PEN/Oxfam Novib Free Expression Award. Mohammadi has been banned from travelling abroad since 2009 and was arrested in 2010 for her work with the Defenders of Human Rights Center. She was convicted in 2011 and sentenced to 11 years in prison, later reduced to six years. She was released on bail in 2012. She faced further charges in 2014 after a widely publicized speech criticizing the mistreatment of inmates at Evin Prison. In May 2015, Mohammadi was arrested and sentenced to 16 years in prison for spreading propaganda against the system, gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security, and membership in an illegal organization whose aim is to harm national security.

Under legislation adopted in 2015, a person sentenced to several jail terms is required to serve that with the most severe penalty — in this case, 10 years, added to her previous six-year sentence. Evidence used against her included media interviews, connections to human rights defenders and activities against the death penalty. On September 19, 2016, she attended Branch 36 of Tehran’s Appeal’s Court to appeal her sentence, but was informed that the court had already reached its verdict to uphold the sentence. Mohammadi suffers from a neurological disorder that can result in seizures, temporary partial paralysis and pulmonary embolism, a blood clot in the lung. Serious concerns for Mohammadi’s health persist following reports that she suffered several seizures in August and October 2015.

Mohammadi is the mother of twin boys, and the wife of journalist and activist Taghi Rahmani, who has spent a total of 17 years in prison. In June 2022, Mohammadi was hospitalized for arrhythmia and shortness of breath. In August 2022, Mohammadi’s lawyer reported that she was given new charges. In an interview with BBC Persian, Mohammadi’s husband said he believes the new charge was motivated by her writing in open letters.

Iran is among the world’s most restrictive countries for freedom of expression. It holds the fourth-highest number of writers and intellectuals in prison globally, according to PEN America’s 2021 Freedom to Write Index. Despite promises of expanded freedoms, Hassan Rouhani’s presidency has been marked by intensified repression and arbitrary political restrictions, preventing Iranians from having a voice in how they are governed.
ASHRAF FAYADH RELEASED AUGUST 2022 AFTER SERVING EIGHT YEARS AND EIGHT MONTHS AND RECEIVING 800 LASHES FOR BLASPHEMY-RELATED CHARGES.
Ashraf Fayadh was freed from a Saudi prison in August 2022 after serving eight years and eight months and receiving 800 lashes for blasphemy-related charges, including “insulting the divine self and the prophet Mohammed,” “spreading atheism,” “refuting the Qur’an” and “insulting the King and the Kingdom,” among other charges. Evidence compiled against him included at least 10 pages from his collection of poetry, Instructions Within, published by the Beirut-based Dar al-Farabi in 2008 and later banned from distribution in Saudi Arabia. On November 17, 2015, the General Court of Abha sentenced Fayadh to death for the crime of being an infidel (kufr) following a re-trial. The court argued that Fayadh’s repentance for the crime of apostasy was a matter of the heart and should have no bearing determining whether or not the crime had been committed. Fayadh appealed the sentence. In February 2016, a Saudi Arabian court replaced the death sentence with an eight-year prison term and 800 lashes. Fayadh received PEN Canada’s One Humanity award in 2017.
BUILDING THE COMMITTEE

In May 2022, the board approved a policy guideline developed by the chair, Michael Bookman, and the committee, on how to study cases that are making their way through the courts, and how to bring them to the board for discussion. The first part of this policy lays out the kind of issues PEN Canada should be studying. The second part describes the process by which the issue may be presented to the board, and how the board would come to a decision, intervene and retain outside counsel to assist and bring the matter forward. PEN Canada did not intervene in any court cases this year.

The committee continues to build a sustainable advisory group that will help us scan the landscape for issues, help the board develop positions on freedom of expression issues and advise the board on interventions and submissions before courts and legislative bodies.

ONLINE HARMS/ONLINE SAFETY

PEN continues to monitor the government’s efforts to introduce legislation to address misinformation and online harms. The freedom of expression issues in regulating online communications are obvious, but cut both ways. We see how bullying behaviour silences voices in the digital commons, to the detriment of free expression, but also recognize the danger of government regulation of online speech. It’s a circle not easy to square.

The Canadian government is grappling with how to deal with online harms in its long-awaited Online Safety Bill. In July 2021, the government released a Consultation Paper on Online Harms, which laid out a framework on how it might approach the issue. The framework met with strong criticism, and, if the time that has passed since is any indication, it is being reconsidered. Addressing online harms is complicated, and governments in the EU, UK, Australia and elsewhere have draft legislation or proposals under consideration. Several of them are building legislation around the concept of a platform’s “duty of care.” UNESCO also has published draft Guidelines for Regulating Digital Platforms.
For over a year, PEN Canada has been a member of the Toronto Metropolitan University’s Centre for Free Expression-led Online Harms Network, a group collaborating to track and discuss developments in the federal government’s legislative program to address online harms and safety. The group is diverse and there is no expectation that it will form a common position.

In August, PEN Canada co-signed an open letter calling on the government to protect journalists from the chilling effects of online abuse, and to urgently improve the policing of such threats. PEN believes that action is needed to address online harms which are doing so much damage to our democracy. But we believe we should move with caution, transparency and sensitivity to the public’s right to freedom of expression, to avoid threatening that which we are trying to protect.

PEN has also supported discussion of the topic in sponsored settings, notably the 2023 Digital Media at the Crossroads DM@X conference. Other sessions focused on proposed legislation regulating streaming services by the CRTC (Bill C-11) and requiring Google and Meta to support Canadian news media (Bill C-18).

**BOOK BANNING/ BOOK CHALLENGES: DEFENDING INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM**

PEN has been tracking the rise in book banning in the US and its effect in Canada. There is a sense that it is coming for us, with extremist attitudes ‘bleeding north’ over the last few years. Some of these effects are stealthy and not readily visible. As Bear Bergman put it in an article written for PEN for International Transgender Day of Visibility, “Editors looking for new books to acquire, even within Canadian publishing, will obviously have to think twice about acquiring books that can’t be sold to any institution in wide swathes of the US.” Quite apart from banning or challenging books, how many books will not be published in the first place? When censors target midlist or emerging writers who lack the resources to fend off challenges, this is, perhaps, a more insidious and pervasive form of censorship than the high-profile challenges that make headlines.

The recent spate of book banning in the US has reached the work of iconic Canadian author Margaret Atwood. During the last year, *The Handmaid’s Tale* has been banned by district school boards in a growing number of states, including Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Missouri, Oregon and Texas, all of whom join Russia in making her *persona non grata*. This is a particularly ironic development given the ban on reading (by women) depicted in that dystopian novel. Atwood commented: “I had thought America was against totalitarianisms. If so, surely it is important for young people to be able to recognize the signs of them. One of those signs is book banning. Need I say more?”

We celebrate the librarians who are on the front line of defending intellectual freedom, safeguarding the freedom to read and write by processing complaints dispassionately and professionally, reaching decisions on principle, through transparent and well-defined complaints protocols, rather than reflexively succumbing to pressure.

We see there is much work to be done to address freedom of expression issues facing Canadians in the year ahead. There are plans afoot to tackle them.
In 2015, appalled by news that 71 refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria and had been found dead, from suffocation, in the back of a lorry on an Austrian motorway, the Icelandic author, folklorist and academic Bryndís Björgvinsdóttir published an open letter to her government. “Refugees are our future spouses,” she wrote, “our best friends, our next soul mate, the drummer in our children’s band, our next colleague, Miss Iceland 2022, the carpenter who finally fixes our bathroom, the chef in the cafeteria, the fireman, the hacker and the television host – People [to whom] we’ll never be able to say: ‘Your life is worth less than mine.’” The message drew support from thousands of Icelanders and persuaded the government to increase its refugee quota.

In 2019, Canada’s Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship (IRCC) announced the creation of an expedited refugee stream for journalists, human rights advocates and humanitarian workers. The new arrangement would resettle up to 250 people each year. In September 2020, PEN Canada referred the case of an Iranian blogger to the IRCC. Eight months later, because the process had not yet been fully implemented, she was granted, for humanitarian reasons, permanent residence in Canada. Twenty-four months later, in March 2023, she reached the final stages of formally ratifying her resettlement in this country.
The time, effort and funding needed to support a single claim showed us how difficult relocations can be, even for a highly motivated NGO like PEN. While our centre has a proud history of helping exiled writers to establish new lives in Canada, we are not an immigration agency. The exertions of the last three years have underscored the value of government support for an immigration stream focused on human rights defenders. Since its inception, the stream has successfully processed hundreds of worthy cases. It is vital that the Canadian government build on this success and that it works to support local partners who have made referrals to the program.

It is easy to forget the humans entangled in these processes. They are often lonely and disoriented, struggling to adapt to new languages and cultures. Our Writers in Exile group has many stories from those who have faced, and continue to face, such challenges. In *The Burden of Exile*, a memoir by our late colleague, Aaron Berhane, Berhane recalls the moment when the UN offered him asylum in Australia, Canada, Britain or the United States. America would have been his first choice — he had many cousins and friends there — but Canada was likelier to process his application faster. Fearful that a delay might allow the Eritrean agents trailing him to catch up, he chose Canada.

Within 15 years of his arrival in Regina, Aaron learned English, moved to Toronto, started a newspaper, reunited his family and, following a successful residency at George Brown College, earned a full-time teaching position there. His trajectory could not have been better scripted by Ms Björgvinsdóttir, nor could that of PEN’s most recent writer-in-resident at George Brown, Shams Erfan. After fleeing Afghanistan at age 15, Erfan taught English to his companions at refugee camps in Indonesia and became a volunteer interpreter for a UN relief program. After eight years in this no-man’s-land, he was sponsored by a Canadian family who had read his blog about the harsh conditions in the refugee camps. Less than two years after his arrival in Canada, he had won a residency. These remarkable people will be tomorrow’s Canadians, if we do our best to welcome them.

None of PEN’s work in this area would have been possible without the expertise and unstinting labour of our outgoing chair of the Writers in Peril Committee, Peter Showler. We are all deeply grateful for his commitment to the cause.
Public Events & Prizes

LITERARY

Second Graeme Gibson Lecture: Disinformation, Dictators & Democracy | Maria Ressa in conversation with Ron Deibert

September 27

Marquee event at the Toronto International Festival of Authors (TIFA). Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Maria Ressa and The Citizen Lab founder Ronald Deibert discussed how to defend freedom of expression and human rights during a time of widespread mis- and disinformation. Conversation moderated by CBC’s Nahlah Ayed.

The Freedom to Write and to Read: Standing with Salman Rushdie

September 27

It was standing room only at TIFA in a show of solidarity with Salman Rushdie following a brutal attack on him in Chautauqua, New York. Margaret Atwood, The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson, John Irving, Ian McEwan, Rohinton Mistry, Deepa Mehta, John Ralston Saul, Shyam Selvadurai and PEN Canada president Grace Westcott read from Rushdie’s work. Hosted by Matt Galloway from CBC Radio’s The Current.

Calgary Wordfest: Superfan Showcase

October 5

A conversation between Booker and Giller Prize winners Yann Martel and André Alexis, presented in partnership with PEN Canada.
PANELS, SCREENINGS 
AND PUBLIC CONVERSATIONS

Afghanistan: The War Against Journalists*
April 6

Putin’s War on Journalists*
May 5

19th Annual Human Rights Watch Toronto Film Festival 
Free screening of Mujer de Soldado | Bloor Hot Docs Cinema 
May 28

Toronto Jewish Film Festival 
June 9-26

Press Freedom in Canada: What about student journalists?*
June 10

CFE Series: Threats to Academic Freedom – Part 1: The Study of India*
September 28

CFE Series: Ethnic/Religious Nationalism & Academic Freedom – The Study of India*
November 30

Screening of Leyla Gencer: La Diva Turca* | Toronto Metropolitan University’s Centre for Free Expression 
December 11

Canada’s War on Whistleblowers*
January 19

Digital Media at the Crossroads Conference 
January 20-21

Censorship Is No Friend of Social Justice*
January 25

Salman Rushdie’s Victory City: Online Launch 
February 9

Em Dial’s Virtual Poetry Exhibition THE BALL: Online Launch 
February 13

CFE Online: Muslims and the Media*
March 2

*Events co-sponsored by PEN Canada.
2022 RBC/PEN Canada New Voices Award
Winner: Fareh Malik, a spoken word poet from Hamilton
The jury cited Malik’s submission as an intense “portrait of what it’s like to feel othered and alienated by daily doses of hate,” and noted the poems’ “tenderness and throat-grabbing use of imagery.” The jury also praised Malik’s “wide range of voices and tones to convey a nuanced spectrum of emotions and a laser-sharp critique of Canada’s blatant and covert systemic racism.”
As part of the prize, Malik received mentorship from Sabrina Benaim, winner of the 2014 Toronto Poetry Slam, and a popular spoken word artist. There were 280 entries.

Inaugural Marie-Ange Garrigue Prize
Winner: Mariam Al Zier
The prize, created through the generosity of past president Philip Slayton and Cynthia Wine, recognizes a Canadian citizen or permanent resident who has provided significant help to a writer or journalist abroad. In its citation, the jury noted: “During the last two years, Mariam Al Zier dedicated hundreds of hours of her time to helping an exiled Iranian journalist navigate the complexities of the Canadian immigration system. She translated, interpreted, supported and encouraged, all while balancing her own family and work responsibilities. That she did so without expectation of reward or recognition seemed to us all the more reason why she should be recognized for her valuable work.”

2022 Ken Filkow Prize for Freedom of Expression in Canada
Winner: Amber Bracken, photojournalist
Amber Bracken received the prize for advancing freedom of expression through work that combines an interest in photography, journalism and public service with an emphasis on North American Indigenous communities. In its citation, the jury stated, “Amber Bracken’s ordeal demonstrates that freedom of expression, including freedom of the press, is not as sacrosanct in our country as Canadians might assume. Her courageous work as a photojournalist for The Narwhal magazine, covering the Coastal Gaslink protests in Wet’suwet’en territory, is [a timely reminder] of the need to protect these fundamental freedoms even in Canada.” Our thanks again to Philip and Cynthia for their ongoing generosity in supporting this prize.
George Brown College Writer-in-Residence
Recipient: Shams Erfan, Hazara refugee from Afghanistan

Born and raised in the Jaghori district of Ghazni province, Erfan worked as an English teacher at a local school before fleeing Afghanistan in late 2014 following direct threats from the Taliban. During his eight years in refugee camps in Indonesia, he taught English to fellow refugees and worked as a volunteer interpreter for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Writers in Exile Public Readings and Publications

Readings were held on June 1, November 20 and March 26 at the Hirut Café on the Danforth. The group also hosted a book launch on November 6 for The Burden of Exile: A Banned Journalist’s Flight from Dictatorship, the posthumous memoir of Aaron Berhane, the group’s former leader. Berhane was a beloved member of the community and a valued member of our Board of Directors who passed away due to COVID-19 in May 2021. The WriEx network will also soon publish an anthology, The Uncaged Voice, compiled by Keith Leckie with the help of writing coaches and editors. The group hosts weekly meetings and writing workshops online and is planning for more public readings in 2023.

Humber School for Writers
Writer-in-Residence
Recipient: Luis Horacio Nájera, journalist and crime analyst

PEN Canada maintained a full scholarship for a member of the WriEx network in the Humber School for Writers’ graduate certificate program in creative writing. 2022 recipient Luis Horacio Nájera built his reputation writing for the Ciudad Juárez, Mexico-based Grupo Reforma and has lived in exile in Canada since 2008. With Peter Edwards, he is author of The Wolfpack: The Millennial Mobsters Who Brought Chaos and the Cartels to the Canadian Underworld. Nájera is also an alumnus of Massey College, and a former fellow at The Citizen Lab/Canada Centre for Global Security Studies. He holds master’s degrees in global affairs and in disaster and emergency management from the University of Toronto and York University, respectively.
MEMBERS, DONORS AND PARTNERS

22/23

THIS LIST ACKNOWLEDGES THOSE INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO BECAME MEMBERS OR PROVIDED SUPPORT BETWEEN APRIL 1, 2022 AND MARCH 31, 2023
HONORARY PATRONS
Margaret Atwood
Gary Beelik
Louise Dennys
Sturla Gunnarsson
Rick Mercer
Jim Ryce
John Ralston Saul

GOLD PATRONS ($5,000-$9,999)
Katherine Govier
Peter Grant and Grace Westcott
Yann Martel
Philip Slayton and Cynthia Wine

SILVER PATRONS ($2,500–$4,999)
Linwood and Neetha Sands Barclay
Scott Connell
and Anouchka Freybe
Karen Ruddy

PATRONS ($1,000–$2,499)
Sara and Michael Angel
Scotia Bhattacharya
Randy and Anna Boyagoda
The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson
Andrew Cohen
George Galt
Anne and Nicholas Giardini
Susan Greer and Robert Hough
Hank Intven and Lyndsay Green
Nancy Jamieson
Nina Josefowitz
Alisha Kaplan
Michael Kedar and Eva Seidner
David Kendall
Andrea Lenczner
Margaret MacMillan
Ruth Mandel
JoAnn Elizabeth McCaig
Scott McIntyre
Rohinton and Freyzi Mistry
Laurence Packer
Sarah Pape
John Ralston Saul
Marcus Reid
Richard Stursberg
Jean Teillet
Simon Wallace

SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

BENEFACITOR ($50,000+)
Leslie Mary Coull Alter Ego Trust

PLATINUM ($25,000-$49,999)
The RBC Emerging Artists Project
RBC Foundation

GOLD ($15,000-$24,999)
Ontario Arts Council

BRONZE ($1,000-$14,999)
Balfour Bowen Family Foundation
Council for Canadian American Relations
Colleges Ontario & Hicks Morley Hamilton Stewart Storie LLP
Emerald Foundation
Freybe Foundation
The Gerald Schwartz and Heather Reisman Foundation
Gerald Sheff and Shanitha Kachan Charitable Foundation
Howitt Dunbar Foundation
Margaret Atwood Extra Pocket Foundation
Michael and Cathy MacMillan Family Foundation
Michael B. Decker Foundation at Toronto Foundation
Michael and Honor de Pencier Foundation
N.A. Taylor Foundation
Norman & Margaret Jewison Foundation
Penguin Random House Canada Limited
The Rotman Family
Sierra Supply Chain Services
Stonefields Foundation
Wesbild Holdings Ltd

PROGRAMMING PARTNERS
Ageless International Film Festival
Atwater Poetry Project
CBC Radio’s Ideas
CBC Radio’s The Current
Centre for Free Expression, Toronto Metropolitan University
Citizen Lab
Digital Media at the Crossroads (DM@X) Conference 2023
Fleck Dance Theatre,
Harbourfront Centre
George Brown College
Global Reporting Centre,
University of British Columbia
HotDocs
Human Rights Watch Film Festival
Humber College School for Writers
ICORN International Cities of Refuge Network
IFEX
Infoscape Research Lab, Toronto Metropolitan University
Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts
International Issues Discussion Series, Toronto Metropolitan University
Librairie Drawn & Quarterly
Literary Umbrella of Quebec
PEN America
PEN International
PEN Myanmar
Quebec Writers’ Federation
Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights
Romero House
The Shoe Project
Toronto International Festival of Authors
Toronto Jewish Film Festival
Toronto Public Library
Writers’ Trust of Canada
## MEMBERS, DONORS AND PARTNERS

### IN KIND
- Authors at Harbourfront Centre
- Babin Bessner Spry
- CNW Group
- Soapbox Design Communications
- Literary Review of Canada
- Kathy Koch

### HONORARY MEMBERS
- Alaa Abd el-Fattah
- Said Abdelkader
- Emanuel Asrat
- Temesken Ghebreyesus
- Mattewos Habteab
- Dawit Habtemichael
- Medhanie Haile
- Dawit Isaak
- Yusuf Mohamed Ali
- Narges Mohammadi
- José Armando Rodríguez Carreón
- Seyoum Tsehaye
- Fesshaye Yohanness

### MEMBERS

#### A
- Rajah al Sur
- Patricia Aldana
- Behrouz Aligholi Mayelzadeh
- Marion Allan
- Jason Anderson
- Anneli Andre-Barrett
- George Anthony
- Rick Archbold
- Bert Archer
- Sally Armstrong
- James Arnett

#### B
- Richard Bachmann
- Marsha Barber
- Deborah Barndt
- Gavin Barrett
- Jim Bartley
- Alison Bate

#### C
- Paul Bennett
- David Bezmozgis
- Andrew Binks
- Gwen Bird
- Peter D. Birt
- Ted Bishop
- Neil Bissoondath
- Robin Blackburn McBride
- Becky Blake
- Ronna Bloom
- Stephanie Bolster
- Michael Bookman
- Ali Boreyri
- Marian Botsford Fraser
- Paulette Bourgeois
- Jane Bow
- Lynne Bowen
- Kate Braid
- Niyazi Braim
- Mary J. Breen
- Max Brem
- Rebecca Brill-Argall
- Mitchell Brown
- Colin Browne
- William Bruneau
- Andrew Bryant
- William Bryant
- Mary Burns

#### D
- Susan Coyne
- Jim J. Creskey
- Alan Cumyn

#### E
- Marin Darmonkow
- Farida Darvish
- Jack David
- Gwen Davies
- Ryan Day
- Michael Decter
- Teri Degler
- Ron Deibert
- Onder Deligoz
- Gezahegn Mekonnen Demissie
- Poonam Dhir
- Marcello Di Cintio
- Em Dial
- JoAnn Dionne
- Bronwyn Drainie
- Naomi Duguid
- Catherine Dunphy
- Maggie Dwyer

#### F
- Omar El Akkad
- Taha Elkhalifa
- Jacqueline & Peter Elton
- Marina Endicott

#### G
- Kim Fahner
- Chris Faiers
- Jane Fairburn
- Marsha Faubert
- Thelma Fayle
- Rob Fennell
- Leonard Findlay
- Robert Finley
- Christine Fischer Guy
- Cynthia Flood
- Kevin Flynn
- Judy Fong Bates
- Charles Foran
Cadence Fournier
Keath Fraser
Josh Freed
Valerie French

G
Marie-Louise Gay
Paola Gomez
Ron Graham
Charlotte J. Gray
Melvyn Green
Chris Gudgeon
Jing Guo
Graeme Hamilton

H
Beth Haddon
Judith Hall
Graeme Hamilton
Don Hannah
Victor Harding
Dawn Harman
Merle Harris
Elizabeth Hay
Peter Hay
Kate Heartfield
Christopher Hedges
Dorris Heffron
Clara Henssen
Gary Heyde
Lawrence Hill
Chara Ho
Judy Holm
Carol Holmes
Lynn Horton
Louisa Howerow
Linda Huestis
Isabel Huggan
Graeme Hunter

J
Bassam Jamil
Catherine Jeffery
Maureen Jennings
Tianyang Jiang
Theresa Johnson
Elizabeth Johnston

K
Elizabeth Kaplan
Anna Ling Kaye
Janet Keeping
Richard Keith
Margo Kelly
Nancy Vernon Kelly
Michael Kennedy
David Kent
Elaine Kierans
Micah Killjoy
Camie Kim
Mark Kingwell
Josh Knelman
Brenda Koller
Sheila Koop
David Koulack
Diana Kuprel
Tanya Kyi

L
Marlene Lachcik
Andrew Lafleche
Anita M. Lahey
Bethany Lake
Bianca Lakoseljac
Fiona Tinwei Lam
Nancy Lam
Jennifer Lanthier
Cindy Lapeña
Eric M. Lax
Jason Leaver
Alexander Leggatt
Sylvia Legris
Dayna Leighton
Maria Claire Leng
Ezra Levant
Michael Levine
Amanda Lewis
Stewart Lewis
Gregory Light
Jane Lind
Dahlia Liwsze
Damian Lopes
Gloria Lorenzen
Lea Love
Ljerka Susanna Lukic
Derek Lundy

M
Christine Mauro
Christopher MacDonald
Wendy MacIntyre
Janet MacLean
Maria Maksymiw
Fareh Malik
Pasha Malla
Sara Mang
Nicole Mankinen
Diary Marif
Dina Marques
Émile Martel
Sandra Martin
Sid Marty
Michelle Mason
Nadya Masri
Abdulrahman Matar
Carol Matas
Colin McAdam
Bob McArthur
Richard McClelland
S.A.M. McCue
Hope McIntyre
Neil McKinnon
Mundy McIntyre
Stephanie McLellan
Susan McMaster
George Melnyk
Almeda Miller
John Miller
Lawrence Mirkin
Michael Mirolla
MEMBERS, DONORS AND PARTNERS

Catherine Mitchell
Jack Mitchell
Salah El Mohssein
Rebecca Morris
Elise Moser
Ezat Mossallanejad
Omar Mouallem
Rashid Mughal
Cassandra Myers

Peter C. Raymont
Philip Resnick
Pedro Restrepo
Kamel Riahi
Nino Ricci
David Rintoul
Diana Rivington
Siobhan Roberts
Brenda Roche
Ingrid Rose
Stuart Ross
Robert Rotenberg
Naben Ruthnum
Elizabeth Ryerson
Maria Helena Rykov

Maria Sabaye Moghaddam
Dr. Farshid Sadatsharifi
Hoda Karimi Sadr
Judie Sahadeo
Kerri Sakamoto
Mahdi Saremifar
Candace Savage
Denise Schoen
Anneliese Schultz
Giorgia Severini
Mel Shakespeare
Peggy Shannon
Evelyn Sharpe
Gina Shochat-Rakoff
Peter Showler
Haroon Siddiqui
Antanas Sileika
Merilyn Simonds
Marvin Singer
James and Elaine Slater
Caitlin Smith
Adam Sol
Catherine St. Denis
Hugh Stephens
Sandra L. Stephenson
Kate Story
Susan Stromberg-Stein
Rosemary Sullivan

Mark Swartz
George Swede
Joanne Szilagyi

T
Barbara E. Tangney
Chris Tenove
Tasleem Thawar
Blossom Thom
Susan Thorne
Hung T. Ton
Ziya Tong
Caroline Topperman
Venus Torabi
Andrea Torrey Balsara
Kim Trainor

U
Lawrence Uhlin
Rui Umezawa
Peter Unwin
Pablo Urbanyi

V
John Vaillant
Jacqueline Valencia
Aritha van Herk
Comfort Verissimo
Mark Vessey

W
Eleanor Wachtel
Hazrat Wahriz
Jennifer Wahriz
Bruce Walsh
Helen Walsh
David Waltner-Toews
Karen Walton
Katherine Ward
Janette Watt
Alan Whitehorn
Laurelyn Whitt
Janice Williamson
Patricia Windrim
Howard Wiseman

Q
Darlene Quaife

R
Monique Rabideau
Suman Rahman
Deepa Rajagopal
Ceta Ramkhalawansingh
Carolyn Wood
Dorothy Woodhouse
Donna Wootton

Y
Serhy Yekelchyk

Z
Chro Zand

DONORS

A
Jeff Abraham
Tom Adlhoch
William Aitken
Kathleen Alboim
Jane Anderson
Ken Anderson
Sylvia Andrews
Annick Press Ltd.
Caryl Arundel

B
Patricia Balfour
David Bancroft
Deborah Bartlett
Janice Bearg
Benevity Community Impact Fund
Steven Benstead
Rosalyn Black
Michael Brooks
Jacqueline Bryers

C
Canada Helps
Canadian Online Giving Foundation
CHIMP: Charitable Impact Foundation
The Concordian
Katherine Corrick
Geoffrey Creighton
Andrew Creskey

D
Michael Devine
Maureen Donnelly
Ian Duncombe

E
Nick Etheridge
Tawhida Tanya Evanson

F
Olga Feiguina
Elizabeth Ferguson
Flavelle Family Foundation

G
Gary Geddes
The George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation
Gordon Gibson
Evelyn Gigantes
Geneviève Goggin
Susan Goldenberg
Taylor Gordon
Bill Graham

H
Lorna Harris
Sandra Heft
Tekla Hendrickson
Amy Hutchison

I
Sue Irwin

K
Lisa Kellett
Michael Klein
Walter Korinonsky
Myrna Kostash

L
La Maison Simons

M
Bruce MacLellan
Alexandra MacLennan
Pam Marshall
Sally Marshall
August Maurenbrecher
Jennifer Mauro
Helen McDonald
Norman McLeod
Sangeeta Mehta
Naomi Mori
Cosmin Munteanu

N
Margot Northey

P
Joanne Pitkin
Barbara J. Pulling

Q
Georgia Quartaro
Kathleen Quinn

R
Sabrina Radia-Bramwell
Susan Reisler
Paul Jeffrey Richardson

S
Pierre Sarrazin
Saskatchewan Festival Of Words
Sheridan Scott
Rachelle Sender
Jafar Shaker
Leslee Silverman
David Simmons
Keisha Simpson
Glenn Smith
Roman Solonysznyj
Flora Spencer
Stephanie Stavro
Neil Stephenson
David Stimpson
W
William Wallace
Lucy Waverman
Alison Wearing
Janice Weaver
Douglas Wilson
Randy Witten
Wendy Wright

Y
Lori Yarrow

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
President
Grace Westcott
Vice President
Karen Walton
Secretary
Michael Bookman
Treasurer
Carolyn Poirier
Chair, Events
Anouchka Freybe
Chair, Fundraising
Anna Porter
Chair, Writers in Peril
Peter Showler
Chair, Indigenous Affairs
Jean Teillet
Chair, Communications
Karen Walton

MEMBERS AT LARGE
Marcello Di Cintio
Paola Gomez (until Jan 31, 2023)
Eluned Jones
Scott McIntyre
Ziya Tong
Bruce Walsh

PAST PRESIDENTS
Richard Stursberg
Randy Boyagoda
Philip Slayton
Charlie Foran
Ellen Seligman
Nelofer Pazira
Constance Rooke
Haroon Siddiqui
Reza Baraheni
Sandra Martin
Ann Ireland
Katherine Govier
Ron Graham
Nino Ricci
Marian Botsford Fraser
Alison Gordon
Louise Dennys
John Ralston Saul
June Callwood
Graeme Gibson
Timothy Findley
Margaret Atwood

ADVISORY COUNCIL
Richard Stursberg
Randy Boyagoda
Neil Bissoondath
Kristin Cochrane
Valerie Connor
Douglas Coupland
David Cronenberg
Ronald Deibert
Esi Edugyan
Omar El Akkad
Charlie Foran
Kevin Hanson
Mark Kingwell
Elana Rabinovitch
Devyani Saltzmann
Philip Slayton
Tanya Talaga
Michael Wernick
Ken Whyte

STAFF
Executive Director
Brendan de Caires
Office Manager
Theresa Johnson

VOLUNTEERS
Anneli Andre-Barrett
Mira Boyagoda
Marian Botsford Fraser
Paola Gomez
Maureen Brosnahan
Önder Deligöz
Gezahegn Mekonnen Demissie
Hannah Fisher
Margo Kelly
Keith Leckie
Mary Jo Leddy
Joan Leishman
Caroline Newton
Maria Sabaye
Alyssa Sammut
Amin Yazdanbod

SPEAKERS
André Alexis
Margaret Atwood
Nahlah Ayed
Freweini Berhane
The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson
Ron Deibert
Önder Deligöz
Gezahegn M. Demissie
Louise Dennys
Em Dial
Esi Edugyan
Omar El Akkad
Ari Gunnarsson
Sturla Gunnarsson
Ava Homa
John Irving
John Jonaid
Keith Leckie
Fareh Malik
Yann Martel
Abdulrahman Matar
Ian McEwan
Deepa Mehta
Rohinton Mistry
Luis Horacio Nájera
Deepa Rajagopalan
Maria Ressa
Pedro Restrepo
Bilal Sarwary
John Ralston Saul
Shyam Selvadurai
Isabella Wang
Grace Westcott
Amir Yazdanbod
Dr. Serhy Yekelchyk
Ric Young

IN MEMORIAM
Reza Baraheni, PEN Canada president (2001-2003)
Clayton Ruby, past PEN Canada Chair of Legal Affairs

SPECIAL THANKS
Mariam Al Zier
Theo Amory
Anneli Andre-Barrett
Lies Aris
Amber Bracken
Jess Atwood Gibson
Linwood Barclay
Gary Beelik
Dmitry Beniaminov
Dr. Carolyn Berbrayer
S. Bear Bergman
David Bezmozgis
Biblioasis
Calgary Wordfest
Mary Campbell
Canada Helps
Claudia Casper
The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson
Irwin Cotler
Marcello di Cintio
Michael Decter
Peter Donolo
Kim Echlin
Omar El Akkad
Shams Erfan
Margie Espinosa
Kathy Findlayson
Anouchka Freybe
Matt Galloway
George Brown College
Paola Gomez
Anne Giardini
Lyndsay Green
John Healy
Susan Heximer, George Brown College
Hirut Ethiopian Jazz Club
Hogg, Schain and Scheck
Ange Holmes
Siri Hustvedt
Loretta Ing
Hank Intven
John Irving
El Jones
Joshua Knelman
Andrey Kurkov
Kyra Lacaden
Mary Jo Leddy
Joan Leishman
Literary Review of Canada
Yann Martel
Dr. Trina McCrae
Scott and Corky McIntyre
Media Profile
Linda Morra
Omar Mouallem
Kari Moyer
Dr. Kristjan Mullerbeck
Luis Horacio Nájera
Zeynep Oral
Anna Porter
Deepa Rajagopalan
Jim Ryce
Maria Sabaye
Devyani Saltzman
John Ralston Saul
Peter Showler
Governor-General Mary Simon
Philip Slayton
Richard Stursberg
Chris Tenove
Ziya Tong
Toronto Foundation
Liis Truuvert
Jim Turk
University of British Columbia
  Vancouver Institute
Karen Walton
Grace Westcott
Cynthia Wine
The Writers’ Union of Canada
Arzu Yildiz
Yonge-Lawrence Dentistry
Shelley Youngblut
“In the absence of a comprehensive response in policy and law, the so-called long-arm of authoritarianism is set to take hold in Canada, as well as in other countries that claim to protect and uphold the rights to privacy and freedom of expression.”

Siena Anstis
and Noura Aljizawi