

PEN South Africa newsletter / Issue 23 2017

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SOUTH AFRICA

Write!
Africa,
Write!

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STIFLING DISSENT,
IMPEDING ACCOUNTABILITY
**CRIMINAL DEFAMATION
LAWS IN AFRICA**

PEN Report on Criminal Defamation Laws in Africa

A new report by PEN has found that many governments in Africa retain criminal defamation laws that make it a crime to say, write or publish anything that they consider defamatory or insulting. The result is a restriction of freedom of expression, open debate, political criticism and media reporting.

The report, **Stifling Dissent Impeding Accountability Criminal Defamation Laws in Africa**, focuses on the continued retention of such laws in Uganda, Zambia, South

Africa and Sierra Leone and examines the impact of the repeal of criminal defamation laws in Ghana in 2001.

PEN's research reveals that the threat of criminal sanctions deters media investigations into, and reporting of, issues considered by governments to be sensitive or embarrassing, such as high-level corruption, official malpractice or law-breaking, thereby facilitating official secrecy and undermining accountability. In many cases, where journalists, editors or publishers have refused to be cowed into self-censorship by these laws, they have been subject to arrest, detention, prosecution and long drawn out trials, and sometimes imprisonment for months or even years, leading to a culture of fear...[read more](#)

(Image courtesy of PEN International)



Raymond Louw: Criminal Defamation Laws Have No Place in Democracy

"Global writers' group PEN International is vigorously stepping up



Nooshin Erfani-Ghadimi: South Africa's Long Walk to Freedom of Expression

"In South Africa and throughout the world, the internet has allowed many

its campaign against the use of criminal defamation and “insult” laws in Africa.

The campaign, which is a few years old, is being waged by PEN SA, PEN International and PEN centres in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia." [...read more](#)

(Image courtesy of [Times LIVE](#))

UPCOMING EVENTS

See what literary events are still [coming up this year](#), including the Abantu Book Festival which starts tomorrow.

NEW MEMBERS' TITLES

people to reassert their freedom from the powerful and to shape cultural, historical and political contexts and conversations for themselves. The freedoms of South Africans are protected under the 1996 Constitution." [...read more](#)

(Image courtesy of Nooshin Erfani-Ghadimi)

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Ingrid Jonker Prize for English Poetry [...read more](#)

Caine Prize for African Writing [...read more](#)

Realness Screenwriters Residency [...read more](#)

Africa Centre's Artists In Residency (AIR) Programme [...read more](#)

CONGRATULATIONS!

Pan Macmillan South Africa have sold the Italian rights to Gail Schimmel's



Recently published books by PEN SA members include [Navigate](#) by Karin Schimke, [Indefensible: Van Breda](#) by Nick van der Leek, [Letters to My Comrades](#) which Keorapetse Kgositsile co-compiled and [Cutting Carrots the Wrong Way](#) which was edited by Kobus Moolman and features writing by Kerry Hammerton...[read more](#)

WELCOME

Welcome to new PEN SA Professional member Imran Garda and Supporter member Rachel Holmes.

AWARDS NEWS

novel, [The Park...read more](#)

Fred Khumalo, Palesa Deejay Manaleng and Megan Ross have been shortlisted for the 2017 Morland Writing Scholarship...[read more](#)

Evadeen Brickwood's book *Children of the Moon* has won the Science Fiction category in the 2017 Book Talk Radio Club Awards...[read more](#)

Zukiswa Wanner and Niq Mhlongo have been selected as JIAS Writing Fellows 2018...[read more](#)

Megan Ross will be publishing her debut poetry collection with uHlanga Press next year...[read more](#)

Ellipsis Zine have selected Richard de Nooy's flash piece "Spring Cleaning" as one of their five nominees for the Pushcart Prize...[read more](#)

Efemia Chela was a finalist for the Iceland Writers Retreat Alumni Award...[read more](#)

Mike Nicol's Revenge trilogy has been optioned for television...[read more](#)

Anirood Singh's short story "Passage

The finalists of the ImpACT Award have been announced...[read more](#)

The winners of the Morland Writing Scholarships 2017 were announced...[read more](#)

The Jacana Literary Foundation have announced the winner of the Kraak Writing Grant and explained that there won't be a Dinaane Debut Fiction Award winner this year...[read more](#)

from India" has been accepted for publication by the University of London's SAS and Commonwealth Writers for an anthology commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the end of indentured labour.

[Send us your news](#)

Had a book published recently? Attended or participated in a festival? Won an award? Achieved a personal milestone of note? We welcome any news of your activities for future issues of the PEN SA newsletter. Please let us know if your email changes so we can update our mailing list.

Please email your contributions
to communications@pensouthafrica.co.za



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