

PEN South Africa newsletter / Issue 03 2017

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State of the Nation Address and the Repression of the Media

On 9 March 2017, the President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, delivered the annual State of the Nation Address in Parliament. Leading up to the SONA, there were reports of repressive measures implemented by Parliament to restrict media access. PEN SA made **an urgent appeal** to the Secretary of Parliament, Gengezi Mgidlana, in which we expressed our objections to the media coverage restrictions.

On the day of the SONA, despite the urgent call to the Secretary of Parliament and

further condemnation from the Parliamentary Press Gallery Association (PGA), it appears that the repression on the media was carried out by the South African Parliament.

The South African National Editors Forum, **has strongly condemned** the treatment of journalists in parliament on Thursday night. According to SANEF, there was a “heavy security presence consisting of members of the SAPS, SANDF and SSA – that included heavily armed military police – which created a climate of intimidation”.

SANEF further listed a number of cases in which the freedom of the media was repressed. These include journalists that were intermittently prevented from doing their jobs, camera persons and journalists restricted from freely moving through parliamentary corridors and journalists based at Parliament’s media offices being hampered from leaving and returning to their offices as a line of riot police blocked off the access road.

PEN SA supports SANEF’s call to Parliament’s political and administrative leadership to review the progressive heightening of security measures and securitisation at Parliament.



US President Trump's Policies a Threat to Freedom of Expression

PEN International and PEN America have shared their concerns about new US President Donald Trump's ban on nationals of seven countries from entering the United States. "As an organisation which works to protect writers at risk, we are profoundly concerned about the impact of the ban on many refugees who are writers and, in particular, translators, who were due to be resettled in the United States" said PEN International's Writers in Prison Committee Chair, Salil Tripathi in a [PEN International statement](#).

"In the eleven days since the executive order was issued, PEN America's Artists at Risk Coalition has recorded at least 27 cases of artists who have been negatively affected by the immigration ban...These are a just a small subset of the multitude of immigrants, refugees, and visitors whose lives have been upended by this order, but the loss of their creative contributions to our shared cultural wealth is of particular poignancy" [PEN America has written](#). The Centre has also published a series titled

Read "Patriot Points" by Lauren Beukes

"Congratulations! You've been selected to sign up for the voluntary Patriot Points program that rewards YOU for being a proud American."

- PEN SA member Lauren Beukes was one of the ten writers invited by Slate to take part in [The Trump Story Project](#), imagining a dystopian future of Trump's America. Click through to read [Beukes' story "Patriot Points" here](#) and take a look at the other participating writers' stories as they come out [here](#).

(Image courtesy of [Lauren Beukes](#))

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Koffi Addo Writivism Prize for Creative Non Fiction...[read more](#)

Wilbur Smith Adventure Writing Prize and Author of Tomorrow Award...[read more](#)

Howard Frank Mosher Short Fiction Prize...[read more](#)

["Surviving Autocracy: Lessons from Russian Writers"](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Take a look at the literary events still [coming up this month](#) and see what's on in March...[read more](#)

PEN SA AFRICA PULSE

PEN SA Africa Pulse is a new feature that we will be running this year. It's a weekly round-up of news concerning cases of freedom of expression and the freedom of the press in Africa.

One of the SABC 8 journalists was shot with a pellet gun, the Libyan police have seized books they claim are against Sunni values, Somali journalists at risk and journalist Ahmed Abba was arrested in Cameroon...[read more](#)

PEN SA and parliamentary journalists expressed their concerns leading up to the State of the Nation Address, a Kenyan High Court Judge has ruled that a [Kenyan criminal libel law is](#)

Mslexia Women's Short Fiction Competition...[read more](#)

Submissions open for The Masters Review Anthology...[read more](#)

Stella Kupferberg Memorial Short Story Prize...[read more](#)

Kenneth Branagh Award for New Drama Writing...[read more](#)

Nelligan Prize for Short Fiction...[read more](#)

Calibre Essay Prize...[read more](#)

Summer Literary Seminars Fiction and Poetry Contest...[read more](#)

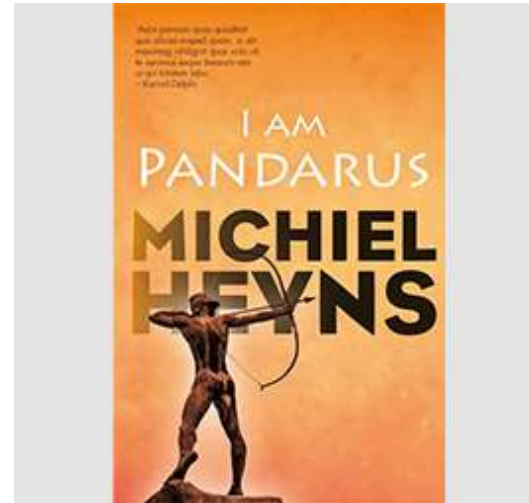
Thresholds International Short Fiction Feature Writing Competition...[read more](#)

NEW MEMBERS' TITLES

[unconstitutional](#), an Algerian blogger has been arrested over an interview he conducted with an Israeli official and civil society organisations have written an open letter about the ongoing Internet blackout in anglophone regions of Cameroon...[read more](#)

WELCOME!

Welcome to new PEN SA Professional members Bontle Senne, Ameera Conrad, Martinique Stilwell and Alastair Bruce.



PEN SA member Michiel Heyns' novel [I am Pandarus](#) will be published early this year and [This Crazy Paradise](#) by member Aziza Eden Walker will be published this month. Older titles by new PEN SA members include [Boy on the Wire](#) by Alastair Bruce, [Thinking Up a Hurricane](#) by Martinique Stilwell and [Shadow Chasers - Book 1](#) and [Book 2](#) by Bontle Senne...[read more](#)

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 email your contributions
to communications@pensouthafrica.co.za



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