



SOUTH AFRICA

**THE SOUTH AFRICAN CENTRE OF
PEN INTERNATIONAL**

A World Association of Writers

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To: PEN SA Members

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Etisalat Prize for Literature for debut fiction

The winners of the main prize, Etisalat Prize for Literature for debut fiction will be announced on Sunday, 22nd February 2015. In the running are PEN SA member Nadia Davids (*An Imperfect Blessing*), Songeziwe Mahlangu (*Penumbra*), and Chinelo Okparanta (*Happiness Like Water*). Good luck Nadia!

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February PEN SA letter by President, Margie Orford, 17/02/2015



Dear Colleagues

This year got off to a difficult freedom of expression start at home and abroad.

In January there was the horrific massacre at *Charlie Hebdo* cartoonists' and other staff office followed by the murders on a kosher deli in Paris. Last week a similar attack took place in Copenhagen at a café in which a discussion on free speech, blasphemy and art was being conducted. The target seems to have been the Swedish cartoonist, Lars Vilks, who escaped unharmed. The right to say and draw what one wishes is fundamental to an open democratic society. Often what is said causes offence, but to quote Voltaire "I do not agree with what you have to say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it."

There are, however, broader and more complex issues at play. These attacks are taking place within a context of rising Islamophobia in Europe and rising brutality by groups affiliated with the so-called Islamic State. This polarization makes debate, compromise and the finely attuned listening that is essential in a society committed to freedom of expression very difficult but all the more important. PEN South Africa, along with other PEN centres from Japan to the Honduras, will have to think and act deftly and with compassion to find a way of navigating a world that seems increasingly set on diminishing its citizen's rights to free thought and free expression whether by the murders and anti-Semitic attacks we saw in Paris and Copenhagen, the mass surveillance we have seen perpetrated by western states, and the ongoing conflict in Syria and Iraq.

PEN International's Writers in Prison Committee Meeting will be in Amsterdam this May. These issues will, no doubt, be the focus of this meeting, in addition to the threats faced by writers from Mexico, the Honduras, Russia, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, to mention just a few. The annual PEN International Congress will be held in Quebec this year.

Things have been difficult closer to home. The disastrous events that unfolded during the State of the Nation address in parliament last week brought a couple of key freedom of expression issues into focus. The use of cell-phone jamming devices inside parliament was counter to all principles of open government. The deployment of hard-to-identify security personnel to evict protesting EFF MPs was chilling, as was the use of force on the streets outside Parliament. We join PEN Afrikaans in condemning these acts and have added our own thoughts to their excellent statement – see further on in this newsletter.

You will all know that long time PEN member André Brink, who has 'written' South Africa for more than fifty years, passed away on a flight home from Belgium earlier this month. We received this news, as I am sure all of you did, with great sadness and a sense of loss. He was busy writing...it was too soon. Our thoughts are with his wife, Karina Magdalena Szczurek, and the rest of his family. PEN South Africa hopes to pay tribute to André and his work in due course. Your memories of André, suggestions and tributes will be most welcome.

The next PEN SA board meeting will be held next month. There are several new faces who have recently been co-opted onto the committee: Gabeba Baderoon, Nooshin Erfani-Ghadimi, and Mike van Graan. Good news is that we will be sharing space with the African Arts Institute which is housed

by the Homecoming Centre in Buitenkant Street. The Fugard Theatre is part of the building – I look forward to seeing how we grow into this space. There is an increasing amount of work to be done and we are managing (well) with frugal resources. Currently we are working on a fundraising strategy and campaign in order to continue our work and expand in the face of increasing threats to the democratic principles we share. We will also be expanding our media, and particularly social media, presence to ensure that PEN's voice is heard loudly and clearly.

On a personal note, I will soon be in England, where I will be writer in

residence at York University. After that I have creative writing residencies in Scotland and then Italy. This feels like an astonishing gift – or sheer undeserved luck – but I will continue as president in absentia. You will, however, be in the excellent, sure and experienced hands of the board, executive vice president, Mandla Langa, and vice presidents Raymond Louw and Geoff Haresnape. Deborah Horn-Botha will continue with her able and angelically patient management.

Warm wishes
Margie Orford
President, PEN SA

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PEN SA Statement - State of the Nation address

PEN Afrikaans issued a statement in response to the events that took place during the State of the Nation Address in Parliament on the 12th of February 2015: Go to <http://us3.campaign-archive1.com/?u=65844b233a341dae63aae17ec&id=fbb5e9d00e> (or see the English translation further on in this newsletter).

The South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) has, along with many other concerned citizens and civil society expressed their outrage. Go to http://www.sanef.org.za/news/entry/Sanef_Media_Statement_on_the_violation_of_Media_Freedom_in_Parliament/

PEN South Africa has this to add in support:

Even more disgraceful – indeed unheard of wherever a democratic parliament has convened – is the manner in which a law passed by the South African Parliament and gazetted in 2002 and reaffirmed by the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) in 2012 was broken by that parliament by the jamming and blocking of cellphone and radio signals and communication. The law that was so shamefully broken is the Electronic Communications Act which mandated ICASA to prevent any harmful interference with radio signals. ICASA spelled out the application of that law in its report on the findings and conclusions of the inquiry on mobile telephone blocking devices which was gazetted in November 2002. In 2012 ICASA issued a statement which again stated with emphasis that “no organisation is allowed to jam cellular signal and any device which is used to jam signal is illegal.”

Here is a clear case of Parliament and its officials breaking a law which it passed a few years earlier. In addition to the investigation into this illegality there should be a further investigation into the conduct of the security authorities in allowing such illegal equipment into Parliament.

This illegality was compounded by the illegal conduct of security police in using force to remove EFF politicians from parliament, beating up some of them and other opposition members as well as at least one woman radio reporter in the process.

Further investigation is required into the manner in which the Parliamentary cameras were directed away from the violent events in the chamber and were steadfastly focussed on the Speaker thus preventing the public at large from viewing what was actually happening in Parliament.

While condemning the outrageous conduct of those conducting the administration of parliament, PEN South Africa directs further condemnation at the manner in which the leaders of the Economic Freedom Fighters party showed excessive belligerence in making interventions while the President was attempting to present his State of the Nation Address's and in their highly discourteous attempts at overriding the Speaker's rulings and attempts to call for order. These disorderly tactics were compounded by a stubborn refusal to leave the House when ordered to do so by the Speaker, precipitating the descent into near chaos. Whether the Speaker's orders were right or wrong was not an issue for refusal to obey nor an excuse to try to debate the issue in the Chamber. The channels for such protest are through the relevant Parliamentary committee.

PEN's final observation is to condemn the conduct of President Zuma who sat silent throughout the turbulence and when requested to resume his interrupted State of the Nation Address stood up and chuckled before reading from his script, creating a chuckle that will go down in history as signifying the absence of concern about the serious deterioration in governance and Parliamentary process in SA.

Signed by Margie Orford (President), Mandla Langa (Executive Vice President) and Raymond Louw (Vice President) of PEN SA. 16/02/2015

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PEN AFRIKAANS condemns the violation of press freedom at State of the Nation Address 2015

Afrikaans version available at: <http://us3.campaign-archive1.com/?u=65844b233a341dae63aae17ec&id=fbb5e9d00e>

English translation: The violation of press freedom and free expression at President Zuma's State of the Nation Address, Cape Town, 12th February 2015

PEN Afrikaans expresses shock and indignation at the way in which the rights of journalists and MPs were violated before the start of President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address in South African parliament yesterday evening. Scrambling cell phone signals was a blatant form of censorship infringing on the press freedom of journalists, as well as the right of the public to know what takes place and is said at an open session of parliament. MPs were also thus prevented from communicating with their constituencies and other party members. We urge the Speaker to investigate the scrambling of cell phone signals and to swiftly prosecute those responsible.

This kind of cowardly behaviour reminds one of the reprehensible tactics employed by the police state that was Apartheid South Africa. A party/government who fears freedom of speech and the opinion of its people to such an extent that it scrambles the cell phone signals of members of the press and parliament, does not show any

respect for democratic principles and cannot be trusted to govern and take care of a free South Africa for all.

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SANEF media statement on the violation of media freedom in Parliament, 14th February 2015



The South African National Editors' Forum is outraged by the shocking, illegal clampdown on freedom of expression in Parliament during the State of the Nation address on Thursday night. We believe these unconstitutional actions were an attempt by both the legislature and the executive to prevent journalists from telling the nation the full version of Thursday nights' events.

- 1) In an unprecedented move, cellphone scrambling devices were installed in Parliament to block any communication from inside Parliament. We have reason to believe that the executive, particularly the security agencies of the country, took the unlawful decisions to block the signal in contravention of the Electronic Communications Act.
- 2) Parliament refused to show the eviction of members of parliament by security officials who were called in by Speaker Baleka Mbete. Sanef previously wrote to the office of the Speaker and met with officials from her office to request that the coverage of proceedings should not be limited to what parliament regards as the "business of parliament", but broadened to show the South African public everything that happens in the house, in accordance with the constitutional principle of openness, transparency, accountability and the right to know.
- 3) Sanef is further outraged by the intimidation of journalists and attempts by security officials to prevent reporters from conducting interviews with MPs who had just been ejected from Parliament. Journalists were threatened with arrest and withdrawal of their accreditation.

Sanef has decided at its council meeting today to initiate the following actions in response to this despicable, shocking and unprecedented assault on our freedoms and rights.

- We will approach the courts to prevent any future attempts by state security agencies from unlawfully blocking communications signals aimed at interfering with journalist's constitutionally protected rights and freedoms.

- We also want the courts to compel Parliament to allow broadcasters to install their own TV cameras in Parliament to cover the proceedings fairly and openly. This after parliament refused our request to do so.
- We will challenge the refusal by the office of the speaker to provide unedited footage of the proceedings of Parliament.
- We demand a meeting with the speaker and President Jacob Zuma, as head of the executive, for a full explanation, an investigation and an assurance that the rights and freedoms of the media and the public shall not be violated again.

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“Barkis is willin’”: André Brink 1935-2015



By Geoffrey Haresnape, Emeritus Professor of English, UCT, & Vice President PEN SA

The literary community is feeling the loss of an outstanding South African writer and academic figure. André Brink was born in Vrede in the Orange Free State in 1935. By the time that he matriculated in Lydenburg (old Transvaal) in 1952, the National Party was established in power and putting into effect its blueprint for a white Afrikaner dominated South Africa. At the University of Potchefstroom he specialized in Afrikaans and Dutch literature, and — significantly—in English literature as well.

The 1960s proved to be a vital decade in his development. On his first visit to Europe, Brink felt the cultural blinkers dropping from his eyes. In his own words, “I was born on a bench in the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris in the early Spring of 1960”. Like JM Coetzee, who drew on his years in the US of A to change the face of South African English fiction, Brink capitalized on his French experience to enlarge the scope of Afrikaans writing. At first he wrote only in Afrikaans — novels that outraged conservative Afrikaners with their sexual and political outspokenness.

A *jeu d’esprit*, *Orgie*, derives from this period. Together with poet Breyten Breytenbach, André joined the *Sestiger* movement. This was a group of courageous younger writers, loosely bound together; their project — *épater le bourgeois*. Brink was, in short, into brinkmanship.

His meeting in April 1963 with the young poet, Ingrid Jonker, was a significant moment. If he thought he was ‘cool’, Ingrid, who was in conflict with her conventional NP father, took matters a whole lot further. Examining Brink through the lens of Jonker’s poetry, one realizes how difficult it was for white Afrikaner writers to stand out against their ‘tribe’. Fearing lack of support, she defiantly invokes isolation. “I want to be myself travelling with my loneliness/like a walking stick.” Brink, too, must have felt at times that he had burned his boats. Both needed to come out from under the shadow “of the soldiers/on guard with rifles, Saracens and batons.” Jonker’s untimely death in 1965 foregrounded emotional complications and spoke of danger. A love triangle had ended in disaster.

Back in Paris, Brink got caught up in the student revolution of 1968. His political education at this time took him right outside the ambit of white South African concerns and he was in a position to ally himself with the Struggle for a fully democratic South Africa. His 1974 novel, *Kennis van die Aand*, was promptly

banned by the apartheid regime. An English version, *Looking on Darkness*, was published overseas and placed him on the map internationally. Thereafter, Brink honed his bilinguality and wrote each subsequent novel simultaneously in Afrikaans and English.

A Dry White Season (1979) is one of his key texts. The development of the hero replicates Brink's own journey from a small Free State town on to a world stage. For his title, Brink drew upon a line in *Tsetlo* by the black South African poet, Mongane Serote: "it is a dry white season, brother." By so doing, he was identifying with a black stance on white South Africa. In *Yakhal'inkomo* Serote wrote: "White people are white people./They must learn to listen." From then on Brink was going to follow Serote's advice by listening to the heartbeat of the nation through the problematic 80s and into the political transition.

He published many further contriving to stay abreast literary world. His output in his long lifetime to some the change in his erstwhile Professor of University, applied in the professorship in the at UCT. JM Coetzee, later for literature, was well time. He, together with his was clearly in favour of When asked at a collegial Department whether he do routine administrative quoted the words of the Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*: "Barkis is willin'."



books, always of relevant issues in the was prolific, amounting 40 titles. It is a sign of positioning that the Afrikaans at Rhodes early 1990s for a Department of English to be a Nobel Laureate established there at the partner, Dorothy Driver, Brink's appointment. meeting of the would be prepared to work if required, Brink old transport driver in

His response was intended to raise a laugh, but in actual fact contains a serious resonance. Brink proved willing to take on the burden of cultural leadership for all the years that remained to him in the new South Africa. At the time of his death he had further unpublished books ready to go to press and was still living in the deep southern city of his adoption. For poet Antjie Krog he exhibited the quality of "attentive grace." The novelist and former Vice Chancellor of UCT, Njabulo Ndebele, has spoken of Brink's "independent and courageous stand on many issues that have challenged South Africa, both during apartheid and afterwards."

Together with JM Coetzee, Brink proved to be powerful draw card for the newly created Centre of Creative Writing at UCT. Although he did not rise to the apex of literary acclaim by winning a Nobel Prize, he was recognized with a sheaf of writing awards and honorary degrees. When Coetzee pulled up his South African roots and transplanted to Australia, Brink was arguably left to share with Nadine Gordimer the role of senior white South African English novelist resident in the country. Gordimer's death last year left him uncontested in that position.

Unlike Laurens van der Post, an Anglicized Afrikaner and Free Stater who lived in a penthouse in Chelsea with a bird's eye view into Buckingham Palace garden, Brink was enlarged by — but not overtaken by — Europe. A high flyer, he not inappropriately received the final call at 10,000 metres on an aircraft between Amsterdam and the Cape. Ingrid Jonker's 'Homesickness for Cape Town' contains lines which may suggest his heart's truth in those final moments: "She shelters me in

the fullness of her lap./She doesn't know I am afraid./She is my mother/And her hands are cool as spoons."

10/02/2015



It was with a sense of great sadness that we learnt of the untimely death of André Brink. A quintessentially considerate and polite man, André also participated in non-literary events that coalesced to shape the new South Africa. In the celebrated encounter between a delegation of mainly Afrikaner writers and exiled writers and scholars, which took place at the Victoria Falls, from 8 to 12 July 1989, André made a memorable impact. Those of us who were there remember André's unassuming manner, where he was authoritative without the unseemly bombast that characterised some of the exiled writers, and never lecturing. My last - and lasting memory of him was when we were at the Hong Kong literary festival in February 2010, where his warm and solicitous bearing endeared him to the organizers and the students in the various institutions we visited. He was a star that sought at all times to elevate others and to celebrate the achievements of younger people, advising and never lecturing.

His death is a tragedy in a country which should spur us, the living, to emulate him in his relentless search for truth.

May his soul rest in peace.

Mandla Langa
Executive Vice President, PEN SA
09/02/2015

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André Brink tributes.

By PEN Afrikaans – Go to <http://www.litnet.co.za/Article/huldeblyk-pen-afrikaans-oor-andre-p-brink>

By Helen Moffett – Go to http://helenmoffett.bookslive.co.za/blog/2015/02/07/andr-the-magnificent/?utm_source=Books+LIVE+Newsletters&utm_campaign=88a644470a-BL_Newsletter_Feb_2015_3_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e680b06f77-88a644470a-257356649

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International Mother Language Day event, 21st February 2015, Cape Town

Venue: Iziko South African Museum, TH Barry Lecture Theatre
Date: Saturday, 21st February 2015
Time: 11h30 – 14h00
Fee: Free
R.S.V.P.: A.S.A.P.

Iziko will be hosting its annual International Mother Language Day event in close collaboration with PanSALB and the event is scheduled for 11h30 a.m. The event will take place at Iziko Museum's TH Barry Lecture Theatre in Cape Town.

International Mother Language day is a UNESCO initiative that is celebrated every year on 21st February. The founding purpose of this global initiative is to promote multilingualism, encourage and create awareness of the usage and preservation of our rich and diverse linguistic heritage across the globalizing world.

The programme is the first of a series of "Conversations at Iziko" that will unfold at our sites throughout 2015. These "Conversations" will create a public platform for discussions to generate ideas, share perspectives on a range of topical issues.

Under the theme "*Museums as Catalysts of Freedom: Realizing the Promises of the Freedom Charter*", the programme locates the role of museums as spaces of engagement and reasoning in an effort to create a socially cohesive society, as envisioned in the Freedom Charter and the Constitution. This public discussion draws inspiration from Nelson Mandela's observation when he stated that: "without language, one cannot talk to people and understand them; one cannot share their hopes and aspirations, grasp their history, appreciate their poetry, or savor their songs."

It also builds on the successful conference, "Promotion of Mother Tongue Languages in Policy Making" that Iziko held to mark twenty years of our democracy in 2014.

The conversation brings together linguists, scholars, historians, heritage practitioners, policy makers and the public into a space of dialogue to talk about the importance of safeguarding our linguistic heritage in the difference processes of nation building and social cohesion. Museums play an important role in collecting, conserving, safeguarding and connecting people to our cultural heritage (tangible and intangible).

Your presence and contribution will be highly appreciated.

Due to limited seating we request that all interested persons R.S.V.P. to Wandile Goozen Kasibe, Public Programmes Coordinator, Iziko Museums of Cape Town, wkasibe@iziko.org.za

Ed's Note: PEN SA members will be participating in this event.

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PEN INTERNATIONAL statement - Journalists on the front line: Brutal murder of Kenji Goto illustrates dangers faced by journalists and other writers around the world

(London, 2nd February 2015) PEN International is appalled by the murder of Japanese journalist Kenji Goto, 42, by the rebel group, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The group released a video showing the beheading of veteran war journalist and writer Goto, who was captured in October 2014 after he travelled to Syria to try and secure the release of security consultant Haruna Yukawa, who was also being held by ISIS. Several other journalists have been killed by ISIS in recent months including Iraqi journalist Mohanad Al-Aqidi and American journalists James Foley and Stephen Sotloff.

President of Japan PEN, Jirō Asada said: *'PEN Japan condemns the brutal murder of Kenji Goto in the strongest terms. We send our deepest sympathy and condolence to his family and call for peaceful dialogue even in such difficult circumstances.'*

PEN International Secretary Hori Takeaki said: *'The safety of journalists must be respected no matter what the situation and any action that endangers their work or their lives is entirely unacceptable. Japan PEN calls for those responsible for the death of Kenji Goto to be immediately brought to justice.'*

Syria has been one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists since the beginning of the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad's government in the spring of 2011, now a fully-fledged war. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, at least 80 journalists have been killed whilst covering the conflict and more than 90 journalists have been kidnapped in Syria.

PEN International President John Ralston Saul said: *'The brutal murder of Kenji Goto is another tragic reminder of the dangers facing journalists and others around the globe who risks their lives just to exercise their basic right to free expression. Sadly, the murder of Goto is not unique as journalists and others are increasingly living and working in an oppressive landscape for free expression across large parts of the world.'*

Journalists and other writers are being killed at an alarming rate around the world. Less than three weeks after the attack in Paris on the office of French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, in which 12 people were murdered, the decapitated body of newspaper editor Moisés Sánchez Cerezo was discovered after his abduction from his home in the state of Veracruz, Mexico. Moises Sanchez Cerezo was abducted on 2nd January 2015, and was found dead by police several weeks later, on the 25th January. Sanchez was a social activist and the publisher of *La Union*, a weekly report on political corruption and violent deaths in the area. A police officer confessed to taking part in the killing, which he claims was ordered by a local mayor, who has denied any involvement in the crime.

Working as a journalist in Mexico is fraught with danger as the country faces spiralling levels of violence, much of it stemming from drug cartels and the government's armed offensive against them. At least 67 print and internet journalists, bloggers and writers – including Sánchez – have been murdered in the country since 2004.

The danger faced by writers worldwide is varied and growing in both conflict and non-conflict situations, with at least 35 killed between 2nd November 2013 and 2nd November 2014. Since that list was compiled, PEN International has learned of the deaths of freelance journalist Aung Kyaw Naing, (known as Par Gyi) at the hands of the military in Myanmar, following his arrest; Luke Somers, a US freelance journalist held hostage by al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula who was killed during a failed rescue attempt on 6th December; MNV Shankar, a part-time correspondent of *Andhra Prabha* in India was beaten on the head with iron rods by unknown attackers on 25th November, and died shortly afterwards, and Marcos de Barros Leopoldo Guerra in Brazil on 23rd December 2014; a link with articles critical of local authorities on his blog is being explored by police.

PEN is deeply concerned about the safety of journalists across the globe and will continue to promote freedom of expression worldwide and defend the right of journalists and other writers to carry out their work without fear of reprisal.



PEN South Africa deplores the murder of Kenji Goto by the rebel group, ISIS, and offers condolences to PEN Japan and Mr Goto’s family and friends.

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January letter from John Ralston Saul, International PEN President, to the PEN membership

January 27, 2015

Dear PEN Members, Dear Friends,



Last week in Paris I went to the site of the *Charlie Hebdo* murders with Emmanuel Pierrat of French PEN, Jarkko Tontti, Carles Torner and Sarah Clarke from our Secretariat. We

placed flowers and a message on your behalf. We then took part in a large emergency meeting of journalists, editors and others pulled together by UNESCO.

Beyond condemnation of the violence and solidarity, there was already confusion over what happens next. Can journalists be better protected? How are we to deal with the differences of culture over the shape of satire, even within Europe. After all, nothing is a local as humour. And what does local mean in an era of intense communications and immigration?

As one of the opening speakers – and the only one from a grassroots and international organization of writers – I put forward PEN’s views. These seemed to find a lot of support.

The biggest risk today is that many people – political, security and others – are already trying to take advantage of the shock and fear; to use the situation to their advantage. Security

services are lined up for more money and power; lobbying for more surveillance powers. Extremists on all sides are agitating for hatred and various types of violence.

This is exactly the kind of atmosphere that obscures reality. For example, of the 200 or so journalists killed every year, the vast majority die for reasons that have nothing to do with religious extremism, Islamic or other. Most journalists and other writers are assassinated or imprisoned for offending power – state, criminal or corporate, or a combination of the three. Sometimes power hides behind faith. But corruption – the outcome of alliances between the state, criminals and corporations – is a bigger problem than religion.

As for hands on protection, journalists aren’t in government. They don’t work in groups or in state buildings. They don’t travel in protected convoys. Investigation, reporting, stating opinions, mocking power, is all about being on a risky front line.

The single most important cause of danger to writers is impunity. Most people who kill journalists are not investigated, tried or imprisoned. Punishment is so rare around the world that impunity amounts to incitement to murder.

In most countries this situation could be changed – Mexico, Russia, Honduras, Brazil, for example. When it comes to prison, think of Turkey or China. All these countries have

political, economic and/or military partners who turn a blind eye when it comes to free expression. That is a conscious choice. A cynical and, frankly, cowardly choice.

The first way to protect journalists and other writers is through a serious push against impunity. That means honest and effective police and court systems which follow broad standards of free expression set by treaties.

As for the obsessing of security forces with the continual expansion of their surveillance rights, this has more to do with their own power and their discomfort with human rights regulations, slowly put in place over 150 years, than it does with protecting citizens.

There is no reason to be surprised by this sort of posturing. Shocked perhaps, but not surprised. For example, we all saw the front rows of the massive march in Paris. The march itself was remarkable for the way in which citizens of all backgrounds and beliefs came together in solidarity. Many members of French PEN were there, as was Per Wästberg, one of our Presidents Emeritus. But those first few rows included many representatives of regimes which play a central role in violence, imprisonment and impunity when it comes to writers.

One example: Saudi Arabia was there, among the most important international missionaries of religious extremism. And, for precisely anti-free expression reasons, that government is currently flogging Raif Badawi every Friday, fifty lashes at a time, until 1 000 have been suffered. This brutality may well be a sentence to death.

Among the more troubling reactions in the West has been the political and populist desire to declare war on religious extremism. It sounds so simple. So logical. Except that a few decades ago the same set of countries

declared war an organized crime. It was worse than a failure. Then they declared war on drugs, which turned into a tragicomedy. After the horror of September 11th, they declared war on terrorism, which has been a counterproductive failure. Perhaps the biggest outcome has been the explosion in security services everywhere in the world. The practical outcome has been a continuing reduction in the free speech of citizens living in democracies – a remarkable victory for the terrorists.

Already there are calls for more laws. More limitations. More money for security walls and surveillance. And, as has been noticed throughout Africa, a few days later, there was virtual indifference in the West to the Baga Massacre of hundreds of innocent people by Boko Haram.

The most encouraging difference this time is that more and more people, including writers, are asking fundamental questions about causes and about the sort of solutions which involve social reforms, a rethinking of education structures, the isolation of immigrant communities. All reasons for alienation.

None of which lessens our sense of tragedy and outrage, our sense of irredeemable loss after the Paris murders. What we know, from our experience around the world, is that we must insist on a calm, tough, careful response, which focuses on the reality of causes, on hypocrisy in public policy and on the large problems – such as impunity – which must be addressed.

* * *

Let me rapidly add that Jarkko, Carles and I have just been in Germany with Regula Venske, Secretary General of German PEN to see German Foundations. We also had a wonderful evening in Berlin with members who had belonged to the old

East German Centre. German PEN President, Josef Haslinger was with us.

We were also in The Hague with PEN Nederland for the opening of the *Writers Unlimited Winter Nights literary festival*. This was the 20th Anniversary of its founding by Ton van de Langkruis. He is still very much in charge!

The opening evening is mainly devoted to our *Free The Word!* theme. It took place in a large and jammed hall. Karl Ove Knausgård gave the FREE WORD LECTURE. He delivered a balanced and sophisticated message, examining how the walls of free speech have moved over time. And these changes come with mayor risks if we do not understand what is happening. I again spoke of the Paris events. With Farah Karimi of Oxfam Novib, we gave out the Oxfam Novib PEN Awards to Razan al-Maghrabi of Lybia, Abdelmoneim Rahama of Sudan, Jila Bani-Yaghoub and her husband Bani-Yaghoub of Iran. Razan spoke movingly, as did Manon Uphoff, the new President of PEN Nederland.

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The last part of 2014 was very intense for PEN. Marian Botsford Fraser and Carles were in Tunis for a meeting of Maghreb writers. Seven of our African centres (Afrikaans, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, South Africa and Zambia) gathered in Johannesburg for training sessions at the University of Witwatersrand. They also used this opportunity to discuss strategy for the PEN African Network (PAN). Ghanaian PEN President and Chair of PAN, Frankie Asare Donkoh led this process. There was also a literary event celebrating Masande Ntshanga,

winner of our first PEN International New Voices Award a little over two years ago. He has now published his first novel – *The Reactive* – to great reviews. A number of the other finalists from the first two competitions are also published or soon will be.

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Finally, in late November, early December, I was in Bangladesh to help open the Hay Dhaka Festival. There are growing freedom of expression problems in this enormous country where there are elections, but increasing questions about its democracy.

I met a large number of worried writers and academics. They were waiting for the judgment in the David Bergman case, and I was able to sit down with many of those concerned. PEN is now involved. The ruling came shortly after I left, and was interpreted by many as a warning signal that worse is to come. I met with our PEN Centre and its President Farida Hossain. Many more writers are eager to join the centre and to work with them on the country's situation. A few of us had a meeting with the country's Prime Minister.

There is a remarkable writing and journalistic community in this country of 160 million. Virtually any literate Bangladeshi knows by heart the most famous verse of their national poet, Kazi Nazrul Islam: "*I am a Rebel*." It is curious how authorities can recite these lines without understanding that they have become part of the same problem Kazi Nazrul Islam was addressing 90 years ago.

Best wishes to you all,
John Ralston Saul
International President

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Joint press release - Archbishop Tutu condemns denial of education to Baha'is of Iran & screening of *To light a candle*, 27th February 2015, Johannesburg



(Cape Town, 11th February 2015) 'Our bitter experience of apartheid demonstrates that discrimination of all types hurts us all.' These were the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the South African social rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, when he added his voice to the chorus of condemnation of the denial of the right of Baha'is to higher education by the government of Iran in a statement published on 30th January.

Posted on the Desmond and Leah Tutu Foundation website, the statement reads: "The Iranian government says that education is a crime for Baha'is. But I want to tell you that we can change that – we can give voice on their behalf. We can tell the government of Iran, and the world, that banning the Baha'is or any group from higher education is hurting Iran and the Iranian people. Iran's government is denying its own people the services of thousands of Baha'i engineers, doctors, and artists, who could help Iran, Iranians and the world."

The statement was made as part of the Education is Not a Crime campaign, which began in November 2014, following the release of the film *To Light a Candle*, a documentary by Mr. Maziar Bahari, an acclaimed journalist and filmmaker and a former *Newsweek* correspondent in Tehran.

Johannesburg will host a national premier of the film on 27th February 2015 at the Chalsty Centre at Wits University at 19:00. **PEN South Africa, Baha'i Office for Public Discourse, Wits Film Society and Wits Baha'i Society are proud to host this event as a means of raising awareness about this injustice.**

The Education is Not a Crime campaign has gained the support of numerous prominent individuals from around the world. Among these are Nobel Laureates – Ms. Mairead Maguire, Dr. Shirin Ebadi, Ms. Tawakkol Karman, and Ms. Jody Williams. Mr. Mohsen Makhmalbaf, an Iranian filmmaker, Dr. Mohammad Maleki, former president of the University of Tehran, and Ms. Azar Nafisi, an Iranian writer and professor have also expressed their support.

The film highlights the constructive resilience of Iran's young Baha'is who, in the face of systematic attempts by the Iranian regime to debar them from access to higher education, developed an informal arrangement through which they could have access to university-level studies. The campaign features voices of support from around the world for the Baha'is in Iran and will include a global day of action on 27th February.

"The right to education is a human right which should not be denied to any human being", said the statement of Dr. Maleki, published on the website of Education is Not a Crime. "It is not acceptable to deny any one this right on the account of belief, religion, sex or any other criteria."

The Baha'is in Iran have faced systematic and ongoing persecution in their homeland since the Islamic Revolution in 1979. In line with its intention to eradicate the Baha'i Faith as a viable entity, the government in that country has denied them even the most basic rights. In addition to the right to enter universities, Baha'is are banned from working in the public sector and are repeatedly obstructed from earning a livelihood. Over the years, hundreds of Baha'is have also been illegally detained and imprisoned solely because of their beliefs.

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Joint press release - "Education is not a crime" gains momentum & screening of *To light a candle*, 27th February 2015, Johannesburg



(Johannesburg, 11th February 2015) Education is not a Crime, a worldwide campaign drawing attention to the constructive response of the Baha'i community to the Iranian government's systematic denial of university education to young Baha'is, is gaining momentum as it nears its global day of action, 27th February.

The campaign's website highlights the breadth of efforts by authorities in Iran to persecute the Baha'is there, and it provides historical context.

Calling on people around the world to participate in the campaign, the homepage states, "Education is a crime in Iran. But we can change that".

Launched in November 2014, the campaign organized by Maziar Bahari, an Iranian-Canadian journalist and filmmaker who was himself imprisoned in Iran in 2009, was inspired by the film *To Light a Candle*, a documentary made by Mr. Bahari. **PEN South Africa, Wits Baha'i Society, Wits Film Society and Baha'i Office for Public Discourse** have partnered in support of the campaign by hosting a national film premier on 27th February 2015 at Chalsty centre at Wits at 19:00. It will be accompanied by poetry readings from "*Prison poems*", a transcript of poetry dangerously smuggled out of Evin prison in Iran.

The film uses interviews, personal stories, and archival footage— often smuggled out of Iran at great personal risk—to explore how the Baha'is in Iran, in the face of ongoing oppression, have found creative ways to respond to injustice. In particular, it highlights the constructive resilience of Baha'i youth who have expressed their desire to pursue their education by developing informal arrangements through which they could have access to university-level studies.

A significant element of this campaign is the support it has received from across the world. Especially notable is that a growing number of Iranians have decided to defend the rights of the Baha'is, against decades-long efforts by authorities and religious leaders in Iran to misrepresent the Baha'i community.

"Many people are learning from the Baha'is," Mr. Bahari said during the premier of his film in London this past September. He added that, in the past, Iranians "were indifferent to the fate of the Baha'is. We didn't care to care."

"Most young Iranians today have Baha'i friends despite the fact the government continues to harass them and portray them in the same negative light," Mr. Bahari said.

The Education is Not a Crime campaign has been endorsed by many prominent individuals. These include Noble Peace laureates such as Archbishop Tutu, Shirin Ebadi, Tawakkol Karman, Jody Williams and Mairead Maguire. In addition, it has won the support of a number of other artists and intellectuals including Nazanin Boniadi, Abbas Milani, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Azar Nafisi, Omid Djalili, Eva LaRue, and Mohammad Maleki, former president of the University of Tehran, and others.

A section of the campaign's site has been devoted to providing information on how individuals can become involved in the initiative. In addition, numerous videos have been posted, both on the website and the Facebook page of the campaign, by people around the world who have sent messages supporting the right of the Baha'is in Iran to study. "Education is a basic human right," says an individual in his video posted on the website. "It's like...the right to livelihood, safety or work, right to shelter. It's a basic human right, it's not a crime. Deprivation of it is a crime." For more information, go to <http://educationisnotacrime.me> or www.bic.org

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Book Launch – Girl on the Edge by Ruth Carneson, 25th February 2015, Johannesburg

Mandla Langa in conversation with
Ruth Carneson, about her memoir...

girl on the edge

girl on the edge
a memoir

Wednesday, 25 February 2015
6.00pm for 6.30pm
LOVE BOOKS
The Bamboo Centre, 53 Rustenberg
Road (cnr 9th Street), Melville
RSVP: kate@lovebooks.co.za or
011 726 7408

ruth carneson

Ruth's life was turned upside down when at four her father was arrested for high treason. At fourteen she left South Africa for England, a new world where she struggled to reconstruct a life fractured by fear. With an artist's eye for detail, Ruth recalls her life with unflinching honesty. Heart-wrenchingly sad at one moment, bursting with life and vigour the next, *girl on the edge* allows us to look deep into one woman's life and travel with her to the brink and back again.

LOVE BOOKS

face2face

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ACT | UJ Arts & Culture Conference, 8th to March 2015, Johannesburg

The programme of the 2015 ACT | UJ Arts & Culture Conference is focussed around the theme *Creatives Make It Happen*. The Conference is presented by the Arts & Culture Trust, University of Johannesburg Arts & Culture and British Council Connect ZA, with support from the SAMRO Foundation, Pro Helvetia and Business and Arts South Africa (BASA); and media partner *Classicfeel* magazine. To stay up to date with information and opportunities, visit www.creativeconference.co.za. Tickets are now available at www.webtickets.co.za.

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Forthcoming events

- ❖ ACT | UJ Arts & Culture Conference - **8th to March 2015, Johannesburg.**
www.creativeconference.co.za
- ❖ Woordfees – 6th to 15th March 2015, Stellenbosch.
www.sun.ac.za/afrikaans/woordfees/
- ❖ Knysna Literary Festival – 18th to 22nd March 2015.
www.knysnaliteraryfestival.co.za

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Had a book published recently? Attended or participated in a Festival? Won an award? Achieved a personal milestone of note? The compiler would welcome any news of your activities for future issues of the PEN SA e-newsletter. Please e-mail your contributions to rudebs@icon.co.za.

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Please note that PEN SA Newsletters are available to members and to the public on the PEN SA website at <http://www.sapen.co.za/newsletter-archive>