

PEN International's Oral Statement at the 57th CSW Session

PEN International is the world's leading association of writers. We work to defend freedom of expression and to promote literature. Our global network of 145 Centres is active in over 100 countries and our Women Writers Committee works directly with writers including journalists, poets, novelists, translators and bloggers.

Women Writers and Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression as elaborated under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil Political Rights is a fundamental human right and the cornerstone of a democratic society. Women writers, through their promotion of the freedom of ideas, opinions, and information, play a crucial role in advancing plural, inclusive and equal societies. Their reporting on all human rights issues, including violence against women, is essential to the promotion of women in society and to the protection of their rights. PEN International's research, however, demonstrates that too often women writers are subject to violence from both State and non-State actors in an attempt to punish and deter them from carrying out this critical work.

Violence against women writers is a truly global concern. From Russia, where justice remains long overdue for the murders of journalists Anna Politkovskaya and Natalia Estemirova; to Pakistan, where 11 year old blogger Malala Yousafzai was shot by the Taliban for her writings promoting girls' education; to Liberia, where Mae Azango, reporting on Female Genital Mutilation, received threats that she herself would be "cut" to make her "shut up"; to Mexico, where investigative journalist Lydia Cacho

President / Président / Presidente
John Ralston Saul

International Secretary / Secrétaire
International / Secretario Internacional
Hori Takeaki

Treasurer / Trésorier / Tesorero
Eric Lax

Executive Director / Directrice Exécutive
/ Directora ejecutiva
Laura McVeigh

Presidents Emeritus / Présidents
Emérites / Presidentes Eméritos
**Homero Aridjis, Jiri Gruša, Ronald
Harwood CBE, György Konrád, Mario
Vargas Llosa, Per Wästberg**

Vice Presidents / Vice-présidents /
Vicepresidentes
**Margaret Atwood, Niels Barford,
Andrei Bitov, Alexandre Blokh,
J.M. Coetzee, Georges Emmanuel
Clancier, Moris Farhi MBE, Gloria
Guardia, Nadine Gordimer, Nancy Ing,
Lucina Kathmann, Kata Kulaykova,
Joanne Leedom-Ackerman, Predrag
Matvejevic, Toni Morrison, Boris A.
Novak, Michael Scammell, Eugene
Schougin,**

The Board / Le Comité Exécutif /
El Consejo
President / Président / Presidente
International Secretary / Secrétaire
International / Secretario Internacional
Treasurer / Trésorier / Tesorero
**Sylvestre Clancie, Markéta Hejkalová,
Philo Ikonya, Lee Gil-Won, Yang Lian,
Haroon Siddiqui, Elizabeth Hiester,
Antonio Della Rocca**

International PEN is trading as
PEN International.
International PEN is a company
registered in England and Wales
with registration number 05683997.
International PEN is a registered
charity in England and Wales
with registration number 1117088.
International PEN's registered office
is Brownlow House, 50/51 High
Holborn, London, WC1V 6ER, UK.

was attacked and forced into hiding for her work exposing child abuse and sex-trafficking.

Sadly, these examples represent only a fraction of the shocking number of instances of such violence

Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. We are eager to engage with partner organisations and intergovernmental bodies concerning the protection of women writers.

Mr Chair and members of the Committee, Women writers face extraordinary risks due to their work for the promotion of freedom of expression. On the occasion of the 57th CSW, PEN calls upon all parties to join us in celebrating women writers' vital contribu33.89pTc 0 -2(2t)-2(bl).89pTlie8 Tm .3 Td [(c)rp5 0t mc