



WRITERS'
CENTRE
NORWICH

**Press Release
For Immediate Release**

20th September 2012

Campaign launched for a prominent Chinese writer with Norwich links who has been arrested after criticising the Chinese government online

Writers' Centre Norwich joins the The Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC) of PEN International in condemning the arrest of writer Dr Jiao Guobiao a prominent writer and journalist. We would like anyone who feels similarly to join us in calling for his immediate and unconditional release, and that of all those currently detained in the People's Republic of China for peacefully expressing their views.

Dr Jiao Guobiao was a guest writer of Writers' Centre Norwich in 2008, staying as a City of Refuge writer in residence after he was forced to leave China due to suffering repeated harassment.

According to PEN's information, Dr. Jiao Guobiao was arrested on 12 September 2012 on charges of 'suspicion of inciting subversion of state power' following the publication of an article on the Chinese-language web site Boxun.com on 11 September 2012. The article criticised the Chinese government's policies, including the territorial dispute with Japan over the Daioyu Islands.

Dr Jiao was placed under strict house arrest and surveillance on 6 September 2012, and was banned from travelling to the 78th PEN International Congress in Gyeongju, South Korea. On 12 September 2012 PEN International sent a letter to the Chinese authorities protesting the travel ban but news of his arrest was not disclosed until 17 September. Jiao Guobiao is currently detained in Beijing's Haidian District Detention Centre.

Dr. Jiao Guobiao is based in Beijing and is a former associate professor at Beijing University's College of Journalism and Communications. He is a prominent journalist who worked for the Chinese Cultural Newspaper from 1996-2001, and has published widely on the issues of press freedom and human rights in China. He is internationally known for his journalistic writings and commentaries, and from 1998-2006 published seven major collections, many of which have been translated into English and Japanese. He was suspended from his teaching duties in March 2005 following the online publication of his critical article entitled 'Denouncing the Central Propaganda Department', published in March 2004, which promoted press freedom. He has since been subject to heavy surveillance and harassment, and left China for Germany in November 2006, fearing arrest. In February 2008 he was invited to be Writer in Residence on the Norwich City of

Refuge Programme. He returned to China at the end of the residency. For more on Jiao's story and the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN) see here: <http://www.icorn.org/articles.php?var=111>

Please send appeals:

- Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of writer and ICPC member Dr Jiao Guobiao, who is detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to free expression
- Expressing alarm at the crackdown on dissent in which writers, journalists and human rights defenders are amongst those to have been targeted
- Reminding the Chinese authorities of their obligations under Article 35 of the Chinese constitution and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which it is a state party

Send appeals to:

His Excellency Hu Jintao
President of the People's Republic of China
State Council
Beijing 100032
P.R. China

Notes on appeals:

- There are no fax numbers for the Chinese authorities. WiPC recommends that you copy your appeal to the Chinese embassy in your country asking them to forward it and welcoming any comments.
- You may find it easier to write to the Chinese ambassador in your own country asking him or her to forward your appeal. Most embassies are obliged to forward such appeals to the relevant officials in the country. A letter or petition signed by an eminent member of your Centre may give make it more likely for your appeal to be considered. Similarly if your appeal is published in your local press and copied to the Chinese ambassador, this too may have greater impact.
- ****Please contact the PEN WiPC office in London if sending appeals after 20 October 2012****

For further information please contact Cathy McCann at International PEN Writers in Prison Committee, Brownlow House, 50/51 High Holborn, London WC1V 6ER, Tel. + 44 (0) 20 7405 0338, Fax: +44 (0) 20 7405 0339, email: cathy.mccann@pen-international.org

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Editor's Notes

Norwich City of Refuge and Writers' Centre Norwich

In June 2007 Norwich became the UK's first City of Refuge, thereby signalling its commitment to free speech and anti-racism. Norwich is now joined to a network of cities around the world through ICORN (the International Cities of Refuge Network). All the cities have signed up to offer residency to politically exiled writers and promote tolerance and understanding in their home communities. The Norwich City of Refuge scheme runs through Writers' Centre Norwich. Find out more here:

<http://www.writerscentrenorwich.org.uk/norwichcityofrefuge.aspx>

About Writers' Centre Norwich

Writers' Centre Norwich seeks to lead on the exploration of the artistic and social power of creative writing through pioneering and collaborative projects with writers and other partners, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Contacts

For further information about WCN and the City of Refuge scheme please contact:

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or Richard White on 01603 877177 richard.white@writerscentrenorwich.org.uk

For further information about the PEN appeal

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