



2018 Annual Report

FOREWORD

It pleases us that, despite the reduction of our own funds in 2017, PEN Emergency Fund has been able, once again in 2018, to grant financial support twenty times to writers/journalists who were in distress and very urgently requiring aid, usually due to the immediate need of medication following persecution and/or imprisonment, or because they needed financial assistance when fleeing and seeking relief in another country. For the monetary means involved, we owe great thanks to the individuals and organizations actively supporting the fund, namely Lira Fonds, Democracy & Media Foundation, a number of dedicated members of PEN Nederland, Finnish PEN and PEN San Miguel d'Allende. We are also grateful to PEN Slovenia, which held a fundraising campaign among its members, and to publishers, authors and individuals in the literary environment, both national and international, who provided us with a great boost in 2018 and in 2019. Last but not least I should like to thank the Authors' Union, which lent 'pro bono' bookkeeping support and offered the option of using its channels for a donation appeal in December.

OBJECTIVE

The foundation PEN Emergency Fund - also known as Stichting Schrijvers in Nood (Writers in Need Foundation) - aims to *'grant monetary support to writers/journalists, anywhere in the world, who for political or ideological reasons have been robbed of their physical freedom or are otherwise in dire circumstances and need temporary financial assistance.'*

BOARD

The board consists of three volunteers. Serving on the Executive Committee are Wim Jurg (treasurer) and the undersigned. The assistance of René Appel, the third board member, is called upon when important decisions need to be made, as for instance with policy matters. The entire board of the foundation meets twice annually; the Executive Committee holds ongoing consultations. Should it be necessary, advice can be obtained from the Advisory Board, whose members include Eric Lax (USA), Joanne Leedom-Ackerman (USA), Larry Siems (USA), Eugene Schoulgin (Sweden/Turkey), Tienchi Martin-Liao (China/Germany), David Van Reybrouck (Belgium) and Rudolf Geel (Netherlands).

The work of the fund is a continual process; it doesn't stop during holidays or vacations. Its structure is simple, clear, inexpensive and effective. The Executive Committee can, if necessary, act immediately; and no costly buildings need to be maintained. All of the money contributed to the fund goes to the authors in dire circumstances, sometimes even on the day of the request.

INCOME

Since 1971 the fund has been built primarily with the contributions of Dutch PEN members – of this we are proud – then by those from international PEN centers, via bequests and long-term grants by organizations such as Oxfam Novib, Democracy & Media Foundation and Lira Fonds. Together they have been able to give the fund, for decades, a stable financial capacity. The customary annual appeal to members of PEN Nederland and other fund-raising activities have led to several wonderful gifts.

SUBSIDIES AND FUND-RAISING

For years now we have noticed – as stated in previous annual reports – a downward trend with respect to the granting of subsidies. This is partly the consequence of a marked increase in requests being submitted to charitable funds. Furthermore a fund such as PEN Emergency Fund is cursed with the shortcoming that it cannot allow a subsidy-granter to 'score points' by way of photographs, names and facts, since its work takes place behind the scenes. The publication of information could, in fact, pose an immediate danger to the lives of authors whom we help. Their cases are known only to the investigators at PEN International and to our organization.

In 2018 Democracy & Media Foundation and Lira Fonds were the main granters of subsidies. Unfortunately, despite its enthusiasm about our activities, Democracy & Media Foundation has had to decide to end, as of 2019, its many years of lending financial support to our fund, due to their wish to allow room for other initiatives related to freedom of expression. We are continuing unabatedly to seek new sources of long-term financial

support.

PROCEDURE AND GRANTING OF AID

PEN Emergency Fund collaborates closely with the research department of PEN International in London, known as the Protection Team Writers at Risk, which compiles the dossiers for us. For some authors, emergency aid suffices; others are able to seek follow-up assistance via organizations such as ICORN (International Cities of Refuge Network), the international union of cities offering relief to refugee writers. In the Netherlands the cities Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Leiden belong to this. From this point of view, the fund could be compared to an ambulance and ICORN to a hospital.

The world's problems haven't become any less serious in 2018. Even so, the fund did not need to dip into its reserves, due to a decline in the number of requests for aid in 2018 and thanks to donations. The gifts granted to authors amounted to a maximum of 1250 euros per author. In two urgent cases, as an exception to the principle of a once-only gift, a supplementary sum was granted to an author who had previously come to us for help.

In 2018 the fund supported, as mentioned, twenty authors (see also: the financial report). The distribution according to country of origin reflects where writers and journalists mainly had difficulties in 2018. Four authors came from Turkey, three from Syria, three from Bangladesh, two from Eritrea and then one author from Egypt, from Iran, Cuba, Afghanistan, Russia, Zambia, Ethiopia and Vietnam.

PRIORITIES

One of the priorities set by the board in 2018 was to develop the fund's publicity. In January our bilingual website, www.penemergencyfund.com, went online. Here all relevant information is available to those who wish to support the fund. The fund was also given a distinct logo which, due to our close collaboration, is consistent the logo of PEN International. On the website of PEN International, the fund has been given its own page: <https://pen-international.org/supporting-writers-in-exile/pen-emergency-fund>. The dissemination of information has furthermore taken place via lectures, media and word of mouth.

In 2018 the continuation and reinforcement of our relations with PEN International has also been a priority.

ACCOUNTABILITY

In accordance with the statutes, an explanation of decision-making policy in 2017 and the first half of 2018 was provided during the Assembly of the World PEN Conference (Pune, India, 25-29 October) and at the General Meeting of PEN Nederland (Amsterdam, 23 November).

THREE CASES

The following three examples of cases, made anonymous for the security of the authors concerned, offer a view of the types of situations faced by the writers/journalists who come to us and why they badly needed the fund's support.

Case 1

In late December 2017 the fund received, from PEN International, a request for the financial assistance of a journalist from an African country. He had been working for a government department and a prominent newspaper for many years. A totalitarian regime seized power in his native country. He decided, in response to this, to dedicate himself to the democratic opposition party and wrote many articles about the history of his country and the situation there with respect to human rights. Due to relentless threats being directed at the newspaper, his boss made sure that he and his colleagues were constantly guarded. As a result of his articles, he moreover ended up spending several months in prison a few times.

He then decided to flee to a neighboring country, where he nonetheless ran a risk due to his membership in a religious community that was banned there. Forced to return to his native country, he again faced threats. At this point he found himself in a refugee camp. From there he fled to the Middle East, where he now continues, in exile, to carry out his non-violent journalism in order to support political reforms in his country. He lives in a ghetto of a large city, where he feels unsafe in his immediate surroundings due to gangs and drug-related crime.

He suffers from a number of psychological problems and needs money to cover his basic living costs, to pay his rent and to buy medication. Via the account of a friend, who lives in a neighboring country in the Middle East, a grant of 1250 euros was transferred within several days by means of our bank. The author expressed his thanks by e-mail shortly afterwards.

Case 2

In late October 2018 the fund received a request from the Protection Team Writers at Risk concerning financial assistance for a journalist from a country in Central Asia. This writer, academic and human-rights activist, who has published dozens of books and a great many articles, has been granted many awards for his writings. He has also worked as a journalist for radio, obtained a PhD and taught at universities in a neighboring country. Various books of his, in which he exposed the abuse of segment of the population, led to persecution by the government. Since then he has been receiving death threats from those whom he accuses, and he cannot return to his home. Although he denies involvement in a number of broadcasts that exposed human-rights issues in his country, an official investigation of his involvement was nevertheless started and he was warned that he could be arrested. His latest book, about massacres and those responsible for them, led to a rise in threats against him. Because of threats to the publisher, the book was withdrawn from the market.

People tried to force their way into his house at night. Thanks to the intervention of neighbors, he escaped serious injury. His defiant attitude toward his country's leadership led to more threats on social media, especially when local and international media posted this news. He also signed an international petition calling for a halt to the killings of **his(?)** people. For some weeks he lived in hiding at successive locations, under constant stress. Fearing further death threats, he wished to flee to a neighboring country with his wife, who was also in danger, as were his

parents and three other family members who are financially dependent on him. In recent years he has not been able to work and has had serious financial troubles. He needed money for an airline ticket, for living expenses and for the rental of a house in the new country. Several days after his emergency appeal, PEN Emergency Fund was able to grant him an allowance of 1250 euros for his flight to a foreign country and for initial subsistence costs. He is now awaiting long-term relief elsewhere in the world.

Case 3

An author from the Middle East, who had received a monetary contribution from the fund several years ago, wrote to thank us (in Dutch!) and began with: 'For more than three years I have been wanting to write you a letter of thanks.' This is an author who was pursued by the intelligence service of his country due to his criticism of the regime. He was deprived of his citizenship. He had no nationality, no identity, passport or bank account; and his life was at great risk. He sought contact with PEN International. PEN Emergency Fund granted him, via the bank account of a friend, a subsidy that allowed him to flee to a European country, where he is now in the process of developing a major, internationally oriented literary career. His epistle ends with: 'I cannot forget the help you gave me, so again I wish to thank you.'

TO CONCLUDE

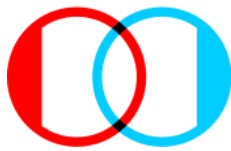
Jennifer Clement, president of PEN International, recently wrote the following about the fund: 'The (PEN) Emergency Fund continues to be of

great importance to PEN both in practice and symbolically'. May this remain the case, for years to come, where aid to authors in distress is concerned.

Job Degenaar, chair

(February 2019)

Among the supporters of PEN Emergency Fund are:



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