

Annual Report 2022

pen
EMERGENCY FUND



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I FOREWORD

Every year we receive, from writers and journalists to whom we have granted financial support, responses like those shown below. They strengthen our resolve to continue this work.

'We received the money transfer. Thank you again for your help. It is more important than ever for the cultural figures themselves and their families. It will help them considerably, both financially and morally. It is important for them to know that the international community remembers them.'

'Thanks a lot for your support and promptness. (...) I can't describe how important this money is to me and my family right now. Now, in our country, [there is] a very difficult situation in the labor market. I and many other colleagues of mine cannot find a job either as a journalist or even as a salesman. We are very grateful for your support.'

'I would like to thank the Pen International and Amsterdam Pen team for their assistance. I'll never forget your kindness. I'd like to thank you all.'

'I sincerely thank PEN International and PEN Emergency Fund for your help in this hard times.'

'You have no idea how happy and relieved I am for this timely rescue. May you keep your door open for other people in a similar situation. Thank you and your organisation's kind heart.'

In 2022 tensions around the world rose, not least of all due to imminent and actual geopolitical shifts and the ensuing conflicts and wars. Furthermore there were, once

again, dictatorial regimes that left no room whatsoever for voices of dissent, such as the call for democracy and respect for human rights. Critical writers and journalists – but also jurists and politicians – were consequently threatened, persecuted, tortured and/or killed. In 2022 the Covid-19 pandemic also worsened the situations of writers all over the world: the virus was exploited as a means to isolate and silence writers and journalists, causing their income to vanish, and to ban demonstrations, which sometimes led to arrests, persecution, abuse, detention or worse. All of this resulted in PEN Emergency Fund providing financial assistance to fifty-five authors in need, a record number in comparison to previous years.

II OBJECTIVE

Foundation PEN Emergency Fund - also known as Stichting Fonds Schrijvers in Nood (Foundation Writers in Need Fund) - 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 desperate need and require temporary financial aid.'*

III BOARD

The fund's board has four members. The day-to-day board includes Wim Jurg (treasurer) and the undersigned (chair). When important decisions are made, regarding policy for instance, the entire board convenes. This occurs at least twice annually. The day-to-day board is in constant consultation. When necessary, advice can also be obtained from members of the Advisory Board, who 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).

IV INCOME

The fund is completely dependent on the goodwill of others. This year, again, we have not been disappointed. From the Netherlands we have been fortunate to receive, apart from considerable support from the LIRA Fonds and several Dutch publishing houses, individual gifts as well, some of them major, from members of PEN Nederland and other involved persons. Moreover, the dissolved Stichting Letterenhuis Rotterdam donated its remaining balance to our fund. Internationally, we received gifts from PEN San Miguel d'Allende (Mexico), Suoman PEN (PEN Finland), the Irish PEN Centre and PEN Suisse Roman, in addition to several individual members of PEN International. We are immensely grateful to all of these donors. Thanks to these extra contributions, the deficits have remained bearable, although the situation continues to be worrying.

V SUBSIDIES AND FUNDRAISING

For years now, structural provision of subsidies from charitable funds of the government and NGO's is a problem. This is partly due to a significant increase in requests for aid. Furthermore, a subsidy provider cannot show photographs or list names and facts in the media, seeing that our work takes place behind the scenes and must remain so, because the publication of information could put the assisted authors in immediate danger. Their cases are known only to the investigators at PEN International and to us.

VI PROCEDURE AND ALLOCATION

Almost all requests come to us via the Executive Director and the Regional Coordinators (Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, Middle East/North Africa) of PEN International, experienced researchers with whom we collaborate closely and who compile the dossiers for us. Among these requests are also those of writers awaiting long-term placement with ICORN (International Cities of Refuge Network), an organization that has more than seventy shelters for refugee writers, mainly in Western Europe.

Occasionally an author will contact the fund directly. When this happens the case is passed on, according to standard procedure, to PEN International, which finishes completing the fund's application form with the applicant and verifies it. Then the application is sent to us for possible financial assistance.

The fund grants aid to professional writers, journalists, editors and/or publishers anywhere in the world, who are in dire need as a result of what they wrote or published and urgently require money. The assistance is provided once per author. In exceptional cases a supplement can follow this, if the situation remains critical.

The construction under which the fund operates is simple, clear, inexpensive and effective. The board's work is done on a volunteer basis. No buildings need to be maintained. All of the money that comes into the fund goes to the authors in need, sometimes on the very day of a request. Due to the small number of board members, the fund is able – and that is our great strength – to act quickly.

In 2022 the awarded grants amounted to a maximum of 2000 euros per author. In a few urgent situations, a supplemental sum was granted as an exception to the principle of a one-time gift. In a considerable number of cases the authors had already fled to a safer country and needed money for medication, sometimes after physical and/or psychological abuse, and for living costs. We expect, in the near

future, an influx of writers from Ukraine, Russia and Belarus. The first request from a Ukrainian writer came to us in March 2022.

The countries of origin of the fifty-five supported authors are a reflection of problematic countries with regard to freedom of expression (which is not to say that the countries not represented are free of such problems). A grant was awarded to fifteen authors from Myanmar, for example, six authors from Ukraine, five from Turkey, four from Uganda and Belarus and three from Nicaragua. The complete list of allocations per country can be found in the specification of awarded aid in chapter XII (PEN Emergency Fund, income and expenditure in 2022).

VII TRANSACTION PROBLEMS

Relatively speaking, there were few difficulties related to financial transactions in 2022. Occasionally it took longer for the money to end up on the bank accounts of those involved. In a number of cases, monetary transactions with the countries concerned were problematic, if not impossible, and we made use of couriers who delivered the money to the people in need from bordering countries. All fifty-five authors have confirmed receipt of the financial support.

VIII PRIORITIES

As in previous years, work done behind the scenes to support writers in dire need had the highest priority in 2021. In addition to this, the distribution of information, both nationally and internationally, continued to be a major activity, the objective being twofold: to inform writers-in-need of the fund's existence and to attract potential donors. This took place at the PEN World Congress in Uppsala, at the General Members' Meeting of PEN Nederland, in public interviews and in appeals for support via appropriate media and via flyers (Dutch/English), emailings and postal mailings.

IX REPORTING ON POLICY

Due to the great number of aid grants this year, the financial provision that ensures the fund's security for the coming years has shrunk. Thanks to unexpected major gifts, however, this loss has remained limited.

During the General Members' Meeting of PEN Nederland on 8 June 2022, and at the 88th PEN World Congress in Uppsala (27 September through 1 October) we reported on the board's 2021-2022 policy, in accordance with the statutes. The 2021 Annual Report was provided in English, French and Spanish in the PEN Congress Delegate's Pack. The digital version of the annual reports appears on our website in Dutch, in compliance with the norms of the Dutch Tax Administration, and in English.

X FIVE CASES

The following examples of cases, chosen from several continents and, for security reasons, made anonymous and untraceable to the authors concerned, offer a rough idea as to the types of situations faced by the writers/journalists who rely on us. They illustrate, sometimes disturbingly, the necessity of the fund's existence.

1

A journalist/editor, specialized in cultural and economic issues, lives in a country where a terrible war is raging. Previously she worked as a journalist for a newspaper and a business news television network. She wrote articles, reviews and interviews for a women's magazine, and her television programs stood out due to her interesting topics and guests. The network had to stop broadcasting, and the magazine ended its collaboration with her because of a lack of funds. This left her with no income. Because she asked the fund for a far too modest sum to cover the cost of living and emergencies, the board decided to increase the amount. The money was delivered to the writer via a courier from a bordering country.

2

As a result of a coup carried out by an ultraorthodox group, a writer/journalist for an independent newspaper has fled, without a visa, to a neighboring country and asks for financial assistance. He works for an American institute for peace and is also a musician. His music, which conflicts with the ideology of the new rulers, had previously led to multiple threats. He went into hiding, later heard that the new regime was looking for his address and then fled to the neighboring country. The greater part of his savings went toward crossing the border illegally. He has no access to the bank account in his home country, has limited connections and, as a foreigner without documentation, is unable to travel freely and risks being deported. He urgently needs money to pay his rent and to buy fuel, food, clothing and medicine. Because sending money from abroad is impossible, he receives the fund's financial support by way of a family member living in a European country.

3

A prize-winning journalist, a correspondent on political and economic affairs, worked for various media, including several newspapers. His columns and articles frequently took aim at the economic and energy policies of his government. A number of years ago he was arrested in the aftermath of a failed coup attempt, when many journalists and other alleged suspects were arrested. He was formally charged with membership of a terrorist organization and kept in pre-trial detention for almost two years. The prosecutors made up the accusation and used, among other things, his journalistic and socially committed background as evidence against him. Sentenced to prison for many years, he was recently released after serving his severe sentence. No longer is he permitted to practice his profession. His request concerns financial support to cover the cost of living. Because he has no other source of funding, the decision was made to provide him with support.

4

An acclaimed human rights activist, a writer of short stories and a novel, continued to write critically, while in hiding, about sensitive topics in her country: she bravely denounced a recent coup and the current military junta, which routinely targets critics like herself. Following the coup, a warrant for the arrest of her husband was issued; he was charged with committing high treason, which can lead to the death penalty. Her family barely managed to escape arrest and now lives in hiding. Her husband suffers from diabetes and needs medication. Having no jobs or income, they are sometimes unable to buy medication. She now lives separately from her husband, with her son, due to their own risk of being arrested, and stays not only at her hiding place but also occasionally with friends and a family member, who try to support the family. She has requested funds for medical costs, food and various unforeseen expenses. Because she has no other financial source, she has been granted aid by the fund.

An award-winning novelist/journalist and member of a democratic opposition party writes about current social and political issues, such as corruption in his country reaching into the highest circles and about his experience in prison, including abuse by state security agents. Over the past years he has been wrongfully arrested multiple times, recently by armed security forces without an arrest warrant or any explanation. He was tortured and interrogated about one of his novels. In court, however, he was charged with violating the Covid-19 health rules, the crime being 'carrying out an act that can spread an infectious disease'. He was acquitted of this, because the representatives of the state did not appear in court. Due to his critical views and statements, he and his family have since been constantly targeted by the authorities and subject to extrajudicial supervision by people assumed to be security agents of the state. The police allege that he incites violence and promotes sectarianism. Recently he was released but had to report, on a weekly basis, to the police, located hundreds of kilometers from his home. His wife and three children, who are completely dependent on his income as a freelance journalist and writer, are in dire need of financial assistance for the cost of living, medical expenses, tuition for their eldest daughter and transport expenses for his wife to attend her husband's legal proceedings in court. Because the author has no other financial sources, the fund granted him the requested support.

XI AFTERWORD

We thank the board of PEN International, particularly Romana Cachioli (Executive Chair) and the regional coordinators, for the outstanding collaboration. Without them, careful consideration throughout our decisions to grant financial aid would have been impossible.

The moral support that donors and other involved parties also gave us this year – namely PEN Nederland, the LIRA Fonds and the Auteursbond (the latter offering us, again this year, free facilitary aid) – boosts our confidence that the fund makes an significant contribution, globally, to the improvement of the fate of writers and journalists in dire need. In October, after the PEN Congress in Uppsala, Burhan Somnez, president of PEN International, wrote to us: *'thank you very much for your crucially important work'*.

On behalf of the board, I express thanks to all those involved. We hope that our work can rely on your trust in the future as well.

Job Degenaar, chair

(February 2023)

Translation: Beth O'Brien

XII PEN EMERGENCY FUND, INCOME AND EXPENDITURE IN 2022

In euros (thousands separated from hundreds by a period)

	actual 2022 -----	estimated 2022 -----	actual 2021 -----
INCOME			
Contributions from private individuals	21.994	10.000	15.095
Contributions from organizations	48.100	25.000	20.306
Interest	39	-	-
	-----	-----	-----
	70.133	35.000	35.401
EXPENDITURE			
Financial support	88.081	60.000	53.302
Communication, representation	1.675	3.000	1.195
International consultation	3.684	3.000	-
Management costs	1.262	1.500	1.290
Office expenses, accounting, bank fees	2.068	1.500	1.316
	-----	-----	-----
	96.770	69.000	57.103
	-----	-----	-----
Balance	-/- 26.637 =====	-/- 34.000 =====	-/- 21.702 =====

SPECIFICATION

Contributions from private individuals

To a large extent, from members of PEN Netherlands.

Contributions from organizations

	actual 2022 -----	estimated 2022 -----	actual 2021 -----
Lira Fund	10.000		10.000
PEN-centres	1.369		8.500
Foundation Niks voor Niks	25.000		-
Anonymous	10.000		-
Other	1.731		1.806
	-----	-----	-----
	48.100	25.000	20.306

Financial support

In 2022 we were able to give 55 donations (as opposed to 35 in 2021).

Summarized by country:

15x Myanmar, 6x Ukraine, 5x Turkey, 4x Uganda, Belarus, 3x Nicaragua, 2x Egypt, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, Syria, Cuba, 1x Iran, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Honduras, Eritrea, Chechnya, Albania, Kenya

International consultation

In general we keep the costs as low as possible, but the nature of the work does require constant international coordination, mainly with PEN International, which includes consultation during and reporting to international conferences.

In 2022, for the first time since 2019, in person international consultation was possible again.

Office expenses, accounting, bank fees

Bank fees for transferring donations are paid by PEN Emergency Fund and can be high.

Wim Jurg, treasurer
(February 2023)

Among the supporters of PEN Emergency Fund are:

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