

Press Release
Tuesday 5th April 2011

Leading Publishers join PEN International in bid for global Free Expression

On the eve of **Free the Word! 2011** (6-10 April) and **London International Book Fair** (11-13 April) three of the world's leading publishers, Hachette Livre, Penguin and Random House, have joined with PEN International to launch a new initiative - the **PEN International Publishers' Circle**. The Publishers' Circle will provide support for PEN International's work and will focus on publishing aspects of PEN's work for Freedom of Expression.

The **PEN International Publisher's Circle** invites publishers around the world, large and small, to support PEN's work developing Freedom of Expression worldwide and ensuring that publishers and writers are free to operate in all countries and readers are free to access the books of their choice. Improving Freedom of Expression for writers creates the conditions needed for a successful and active publishing industry. PEN International currently has 144 PEN Centres in 102 countries.

President of PEN International, John Ralston Saul says:

"We are launching the PEN International Publisher's Circle with the support of three of the world's most important international publishers, each with its roots in a different culture. We hope the Publisher's Circle will expand to include publishers from around the world. PEN's work for Freedom of Expression and literature touches publishers as it does writers."

Arnaud Nourry, CEO Hachette Livre says:

"PEN's efforts to promote free speech and protect free thinkers around the world is more than an honorable cause. It is an essential one, and putting our weight as a global publishing company behind those efforts is a natural extension of our commitment to our authors, and one that was long overdue. I would like to thank John Ralston Saul for giving us the opportunity to help PEN accomplish its vital mission".

John Makinson, CEO Penguin Group, says:

"The right to Freedom of Expression, which we take for granted in the literary cultures in which most publishers work, remains in jeopardy in many countries that have both a literary heritage and a vibrant creative culture. Publishers, and writers, must play their part in extending that freedom where we can."

Markus Dohle, Chairman and CEO, Random House, Inc. says:

"As longtime supporters of and participants in the activities of the PEN American Center we are privileged to be given the opportunity to extend our relationship on a global level with PEN International through our commitment to the PEN International Publishers' Circle. With Chairman John Ralston Saul, and our fellow publishers, we will offer ever-greater affirmation and urgency for our authors' Freedom of Expression worldwide."

The work of PEN International is always relevant and most recently evident across the Arab World. Tunisia PEN has been a major opposition force to the Ben Ali regime. Until the recent fall of the government, PEN members were unable to meet as they were stopped from congregating by government forces and since the revolution their members have played a prominent role in the formation of Tunisia's new civil society and government. Egyptian PEN members were active in the Tahrir Square protests with the President of Egypt PEN, Iqbal Baraka, addressing the crowds on several occasions. Afghan PEN runs the Writers House in Kabul and is one of the biggest publishers in Afghanistan, publishing and assisting in the publication of 400 books each year. PEN is active across all continents in the face of extreme oppression and supports the courage and bravery of individual writers and publishers who risk their lives for the right to express themselves freely.

Along with human rights work, PEN International is renowned for its commitment to promoting writing and a love of reading through learning and outreach programmes, supporting access to literature through international festivals, events and publications. PEN International's programmes are creating committed life-long readers and consumers of books, starting with young people and schools. Bringing writers and readers together PEN is creating a new generation of committed readers and creating new opportunities in new territories for publishing globally.

PEN International receives no regular governmental support and the PEN International Publishers' Circle contributions are essential to the ongoing success and continuation of PEN International's work.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

For further information regarding PEN International Publishers' Circle or to request an interview with John Ralston Saul, please contact: Fiona McMorrough / Jessica Axe, FMCM Associates on 020 7405 7422 email: fionam@fmcm.co.uk / jessica@fmcm.co.uk

For Corporate Communications enquiries regarding Hachette Livre, please contact Ronald Blunden, Sr. V-P, on +33 1 43 92 34 18 email: rblunden@hachette-livre.fr

For Corporate Communications enquiries regarding Penguin Group, please contact Rebecca Sinclair on 0207 010 4279 email: Rebecca.Sinclair@uk.penguin.com

For Corporate Communications enquiries regarding Random House Worldwide contact Stuart Applebaum on 001 212 782-96 23 email: sapplebaum@randomhouse.com

NOTES to EDITORS

PEN celebrates literature and promotes freedom of expression. Founded in 1921, our global community of writers now spans more than 100 countries. Our programmes, campaigns, events and publications connect writers and readers wherever they are in the world.

How do publishers get involved in the PEN International Publishers' Circle:

- **Advocacy**

The Publishers' Circle will support PEN's work defending publishers who are imprisoned or harassed because of the work which they publish. Publishers' Circle members will be informed of actions which are being taken on behalf of publishers. Publishers' Circle members will be consulted to strengthen our support of Publishers and writers under threat.

- **Developing programmes**

PEN International supports writers, publishers and readers through education, translation, and literature programmes in countries worldwide such as Kenya, Afghanistan, Bolivia and Kyrgyzstan. The Publishers' Circle supports PEN's work promoting publishing and literature in the 102 countries where PEN International works. Publishers' Circle members will be informed of programmes promoting publishing and the expertise of this group will be a valuable addition to PEN's global impact.

- **Emergency situations**

Publishers' Circle members can help PEN International to respond to emergency situations. When the fatwa on Salman Rushdie put publishers and translators in danger, a consortium of publishers came together to publish the book and ensure the freedom to write and freedom to read. The Publishers' Circle will help us all to figure out how to work together and to respond to emergency situations.

- **International Book Fairs**

To sustain PEN's work Publishers' Circle members could organize or host readings of works of imprisoned writers and publishers to promote awareness and to support PEN advocacy campaigns.

- **Newsletter and updating**

Publishers' Circle members will receive regular updates on PEN projects specifically aimed at the Publishers' Circle supporters, yearly cases list, and invitations to PEN events.

- **Acknowledgments**

Publishers' Circle members will be fully acknowledged in all PEN International communications, programmes, publications and on our web-site.