

## **HRC55 – STATEMENT FOR ID OF UNSR ON TORTURE**

### **CONTRIBUTION TO DEBATE ON BEHALF OF INTERNATIONAL PEN**

Mr President, we thank the Council for the opportunity to address the UNSR on behalf of International PEN about the use of torture in China.

PEN believes in everyone's freedom to write and read, wherever they are in the world. Since it was founded in 1921, PEN has supported and campaigned on behalf of writers imprisoned and persecuted for their work, and it is a leading international expert group on freedom of expression.

China has a shameful history of targeting writers, journalists, media owners and human rights defenders, and subjecting prisoners to torture or ill-treatment, despite China having ratified the UN Convention against Torture in 1988. Family members and colleagues are pressurised to "confess" to crimes and implicate loved ones and co-workers. The use of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, and other coercive techniques, including the use of fixed restraint 'tiger chairs' have been well-documented.

The case of media owner and writer Jimmy Lai in Hong Kong is a chilling example of torture in mainland China tainting legal processes in Hong Kong, undermining the idea of 'One Country, Two Systems.' It is alleged that a key prosecution witness against Jimmy Lai was subjected to torture during his detention in the Shenzhen prison in mainland China; was coerced to "confess" to collusion with Jimmy Lai; and the witness is now in a psychiatric facility in Hong Kong. Special Rapporteur, we thank you for your work on this deeply concerning case.

International PEN calls on the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities to comply with their obligations under international law, cease all use of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment, and never rely upon evidence procured through torture in their trials.