



2024 PEN America Annual Report





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INTRODUCTION

In 2025, PEN America is poised to be a leader in efforts to combat the coming deluge of censorship, whether in the form of overt, intensified book and DEI bans, or the more insidious form of what experts call “obeying in advance.”

Our work in 2025 will build upon our analysis of [Project 2025's](#) threats to free expression, our deep wellspring of expertise, our history of programmatic success, and our experience navigating a constituency fractured by the Israel-Hamas war, including some criticism of our own work. While this criticism resulted in the cancellation of two of our flagship events, we continued our critical work: advocating for writers and their allies worldwide in the face of increasing threats, including book bans, curricular restrictions, attacks on journalists, rampant misinformation and disinformation, while also providing support, training, and a platform for a diverse range of writers.

In late October, **Clarisse Rosaz Shariyf**, Chief Literary Program Officer, and **Summer Lopez**, Chief Free Expression Program Officer, took the helm of PEN America following the departure of **Suzanne Nossel**. We are grateful to Ms. Nossel for her eleven years of dedicated service.



Clarisse Rosaz Shariyf
Chief Literary Program Officer and PEN
America Interim Co-CEO



Summer Lopez
Chief Free Expression Program Officer and
PEN America Interim Co-CEO

LITERARY PROGRAMS

Our literary programs celebrate writing and literature and support artists at all stages of their careers through fellowships, workshops and awards.

In 2024, we continued to celebrate literature, support the literary community, and amplify a range of voices. That included delivering funds to Palestinian writers while also responding to deep fissures within the writing community related to the Israel-Hamas war.

CULTIVATING AND AMPLIFYING DIVERSE VOICES

Fifteen fellows were selected for the second annual Los Angeles-based Emerging Voices Workshop, a cohort of early-career writers from communities that are traditionally underrepresented in the publishing and media industries. The selected fellows represented varied ages, identities, geographic locations, and backgrounds. Their work explored issues and ideas including disability, acceptance, immigration, resistance, sex, gender, colonialism, industrialization, surveillance, exile, and belonging, among others. On December 6, 2024, each fellow participated in an in-person, public reading of works-in-progress sharing works of fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction.



Emerging Voices Workshop in-person, public reading of works-in-progress

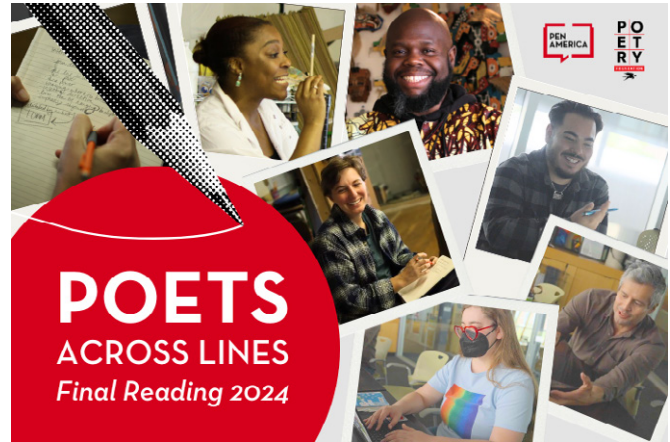
The DREAMing Out Loud program seeks to change the narrative surrounding immigrant communities in the U.S.—a long-standing challenge in public life that was heightened during the contentious election year—by amplifying the voices of the next generation of immigrant writers. The 2024 DREAMing Out Loud cohort worked through five weeks of workshops and presented their work at La Mama Club & Community Arts Space on May 10 through two separate readings. The first reading showcased eight fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction writers who read in front of an audience of 84. The second reading featured the work of four

student playwrights, who saw their work performed live for the first time by professional actors before an audience of 68.

POETS ACROSS LINES

[Poets Across Lines](#) was a cross-regional poetry writing program held in Birmingham, AL, and Tucson, AZ. Four poets, two in each city, wrote poetry that tells the story of their communities' joys, challenges, and resiliency. Through instructor-led writing workshops, cohort convenings, and guest speaker sessions, Poets Across Lines fostered a space that nurtured community and coalition building. During a final reading held virtually on December 12, the four

poets of the inaugural cohort—**Arlo Pate** and **Kevin L. Tarver** in Birmingham and **Kevin Sanchez** and RuthAnn in Tucson—read poems created during the program. Their poems center around the themes of housing, immigration, and LGBTQIA+ identity, amplifying poetry and poets from communities underserved by the traditional literary establishment.



PRISON AND JUSTICE WRITING

The annual [PEN America Prison Writing Awards](#) are a staple of our advocacy to support and uplift incarcerated writers around the country. Established in the aftermath of the Attica Prison Riots in the mid-1970s, the PEN Prison Writing Awards continue to recognize exceptional writers working within the genres of poetry, fiction, essay, memoir, and drama. With the help of the PEN America Prison Writing Committee, prizes of \$300, \$200, \$150, and \$75 are awarded for first, second, third place and honorable mentions in each genre. The winners were announced in October and will be published in our annual anthology of submissions from incarcerated writers.



More than any other, the PEN organization gives voice to the voiceless, and notifies the world that incarcerated people have redeeming value through the written word.

— John Corley, 2024 PEN America Prison Writing Awards poetry winner, in [The Lens](#)

The annual PEN Prison Writing Mentorship Program commenced in October as well, during which mentors and mentees began correspondence.

ELEVATING AND AWARDING EXCEPTIONAL WRITING

In January, PEN America presented a conversation with the renowned visual artist and activist **Ai Weiwei** about *Zodiac: A Graphic Memoir*, his first graphic nonfiction book. Over the years, PEN America has come to **Ai Weiwei's** defense, as his art and criticism of the Chinese Communist Party have brought him under attack by the Chinese government, including detention. Nearly 700 attendees joined the event at New York City's famed venue, The Town Hall.

Authors, translators, and performers from seven E.U. countries convened in New York City in October for the annual European Literature Night. Hosted by the Ukrainian Institute of America, the event featured inspiring multilingual readings, Q&A sessions, panel discussions, and musical performances. This year's program explored a range of contemporary writing, from the intimate stories of **Franz Kafka** and post-Soviet autofiction to travel journals and anthropological essays, all reckoning with the past and future in front of nearly 150 attendees.

As addressed further below, following the conscience-based decision of some of our constituents not to participate in our literary programs, we made the difficult decision to cancel our 2024 Literary Awards Ceremony and 2024 World Voices Festival. Given this decision, we redirected resources from those programs toward our programming centered on cultivating and amplifying diverse voices.



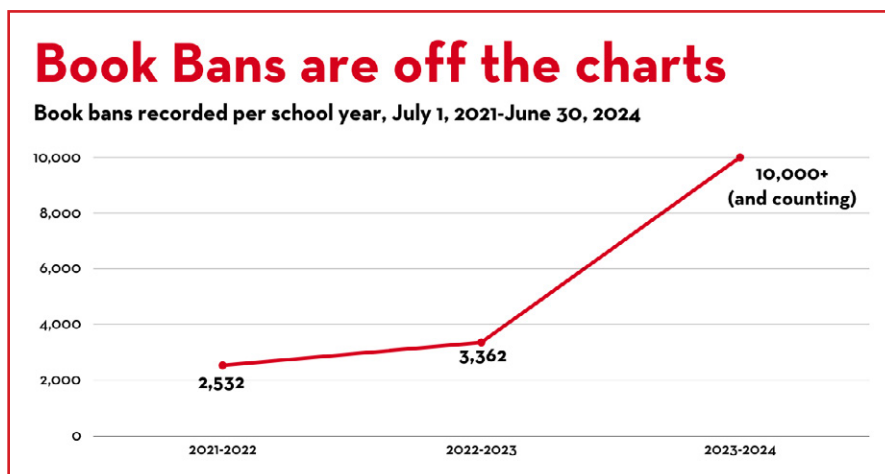
PEN Out Loud with Ai Weiwei and Mira Jacob; European Literature Night featuring authors, translators, and performers from seven E.U. countries.

FREE EXPRESSION PROGRAMS

PEN America’s Free Expression Programs (FEP) advocate in defense of press freedom; undertake research and publish reports on urgent threats to academic freedom, including book bans and attempts to prohibit certain kinds of curricula; and campaign on behalf of individual writers under threat.

Our training and resources equip writers and journalists to defend themselves against and respond to the threat of online harassment; identify and defend against disinformation; and offer guidance to college leaders on how robust protections for free speech can be reconciled with the need to forcefully address the rise of hateful speech and incidents of bigotry on campus.

After the 2024 U.S. presidential elections, PEN America is preparing for a dizzying array of free expression challenges. As outlined in our analysis of [Project 2025](#), we anticipate threats to [Freedom of Expression](#) as well as [Freedom to Read, Learn, and Teach](#). Over the years, FEP’s advocacy has created and protected the environment fundamentally necessary for our diverse cadre of authors to work—setting us up to rapidly escalate our defense of free expression.



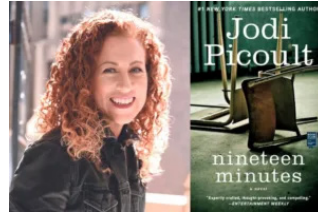
Data from PEN America Index of School Book Bans.

FREEDOM TO READ

PEN America’s Freedom to Read program combats book bans through research, on-the-ground coalition building, and public awareness raising. Since 2022, we have published [annual reports](#) tracking instances of book bans in public schools, and have mobilized authors and readers to push back directly on these censorship campaigns at local, state, and federal levels. We have been at the forefront of documenting and raising public awareness through authors and their fans, media engagement, and coalition-building in the library and K-12 education sectors.



Having the most banned book in the country is not a badge of honor - it’s a call for alarm.



– Jodi Picoult, PEN America Board Member and author of *Nineteen Minutes*

With the support of PEN Across America, we held 2024 Banned Books Week events across the country September 22–28. From an [art exhibit](#) of paper weavings created by the pages of banned books in Tulsa, OK, to a discussion of how library advocates are handling legislation in Utah, we united activists, educators, students, and parents against censorship. In addition, our Freedom to Read Program Director **Kasey Meehan** discussed our research in outlets such as [Book-a-holic](#), the [Los Angeles Times](#), and [The New York Times](#).



2024 Banned Books Week Events in Dallas, Los Angeles, Austin, and Tulsa. Tulsa photo courtesy of Ellis Angel

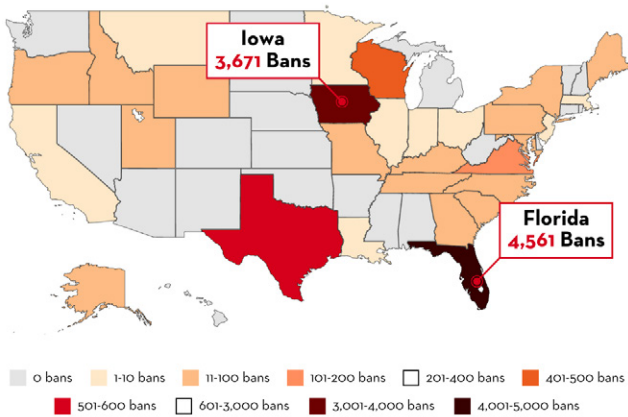




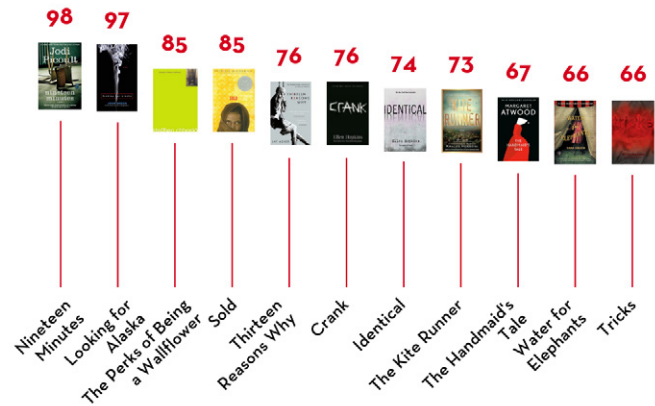
In November, we released [Banned in the USA: Beyond the Shelves](#), which serves as an analysis of the common themes, identities, and stories targeted by the wave of book bans. By observing the trends of the most commonly banned books from the 2023-24 school year, we confirmed some of our initial findings published in 2021 and 2022: the books primarily targeted for banning are books with BIPOC and LGBTQ characters and stories of those that address race,

gender, sex, or sexuality. Our analysis is the most comprehensive of its kind completed to date and serves as a vital resource as we continue to mobilize authors and their allies against this attack on public education.

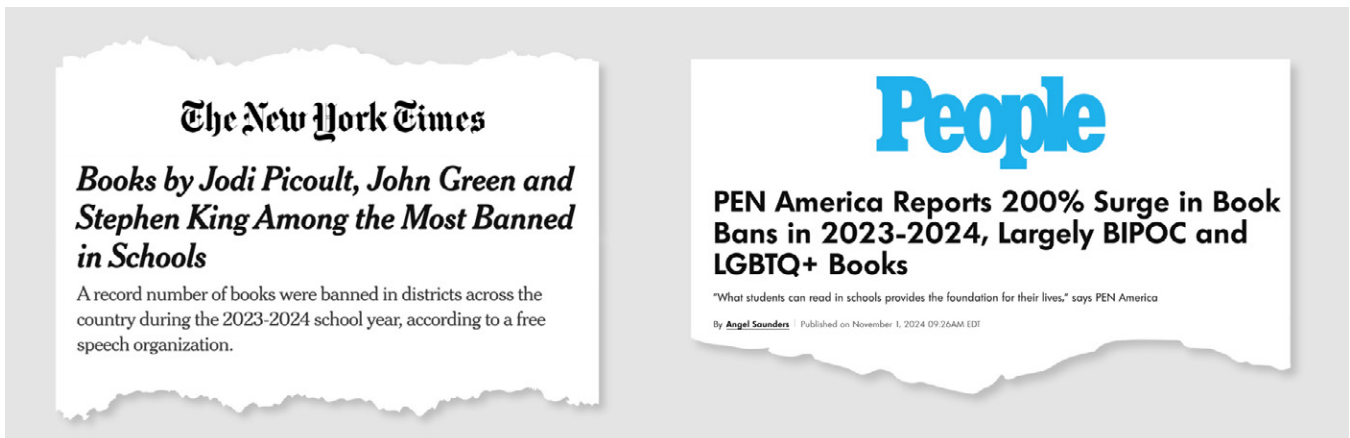
Florida and Iowa recorded the highest number of school book bans during the 2023-2024 school year



Most banned books of the 2023-2024 school year, by District



Graphs from *Banned in the USA*. Data from the PEN America Index of School Book Bans.



Coverage of *Banned in the USA* in People and The New York Times.

FREEDOM TO LEARN



PEN America's Freedom to Learn program continued combatting government censorship in higher education; PEN America's [America's Censored Classrooms 2024 report](#) revealed the ways higher education censorship policies went underground in 2024—and became even more dangerous. By tracking and analyzing the educational censorship laws introduced and passed in the 2024 legislative sessions, we found that supporters of

censorship largely abandoned open calls for restricting faculty speech. Instead, they disguised educational censorship laws by attaching them to other popular goals; expanded their targets to undermine the broader system that sustains academic freedom, such as shared governance, faculty tenure, and accreditation agencies; and bullied universities into adopting restrictions without a law.

Despite the increasingly opaque nature of their censorial work in 2024, state governments enacted eight bills or policies that PEN America defines as educational gag orders—direct restrictions on educational speech in the classroom. Nonetheless, resistance to censorship continues to grow, and we are heartened that our research and the [public conversation](#) it is driving are making a difference: both legal challenges and activism have been successful, and educational censorship laws have been revealed as unpopular, forcing supporters of censorship to change their approach radically.



Coverage of *America's Censored Classrooms* in Inside Higher Ed and Forbes.

CAMPUS FREE SPEECH

Since the escalation of the Israel-Hamas conflict, questions surrounding freedom of speech on college and university campuses surged into the forefront of public consciousness. Our [Campus Free Speech](#) program helped campuses grapple with the conflict through robust public programming and online resources. Since April 2024, we presented at 13 different campuses, four different higher education service-adjacent organizations, and in total presented 41 workshops and programs across all of these organizations. In 2025, we will focus on development of digital and teaching resources.



Harvard College and PEN America Intellectual Vitality and Free Expression Student Summit.

During PEN America’s 2024 Free Expression Advocacy Institutes, students attended presentations on topics such as artificial intelligence, educational censorship, book bans, and protest rights. They also heard from guest speakers including Ugandan playwright **Achiro P. Olwoch**, Egyptian writer **Ahmed Naji**, Vietnamese singer/songwriter **Mai Khoi**, and deputy director of the ACLU Speech, Privacy, and Technology Project **Esha Bhandari**. Attendees worked in small groups to create mock advocacy campaigns for free expression issues of their choosing. In 2024, 264 students participated in workshops: 167 in Miami, 38 in Los Angeles, 44 in New York City, and 15 in Washington D.C.



Los Angeles Free Expression Advocacy Institute and Freedom to Read Student Summit at A C Bilbrey Library, Los Angeles

JOURNALISM: DISINFORMATION AND ONLINE ABUSE

The tsunami of disinformation flooding so many aspects of public life has compromised reporters' and newsrooms' ability to do their work effectively, thereby weakening a fundamental pillar of a free and open democracy. That same deluge has made it harder for individuals to find trustworthy information they can rely on when making critical decisions. In response, PEN America has been on the ground, working to fortify journalists and community stakeholders against this onslaught of falsehoods.

In 2024, [we offered journalists the tools they needed](#) to identify, counter, and report on disinformation. Through monthly webinars, [published tipsheets](#), and [resources](#), we trained more than 3,000

journalists in more than 100 newsrooms. We brought our trainings on how to spot, report on, and fight back against disinformation campaigns to some of the largest and most influential newsrooms in the country, such as **NBC**, **Forbes**, **Telemundo**, and **PBS**, as well as smaller outlets like **100 Days in Appalachia**, **Wisconsin Watch**, **The Haitian Times**, and local outlets in the Report for America network. These smaller outlets serve audiences and combat disinformation in their communities, many of which are in small towns and rural areas.

PEN America has trained more than 3,000 journalists in more than 100 newsrooms.

In recognition of the 2024 election and the unprecedented rhetoric undermining journalists and their work, our experts designed tailored trainings and workshops, both in advance of and following November 5th. Our Online Abuse program organized the "[U.S. Election Safety Summer](#)," a free training series designed to prepare journalists for covering the election and related events. Attended by over 350 practitioners with more than 600 video views, topics included assessing risk, bolstering digital safety, ensuring physical safety, understanding the legal rights of journalists, and addressing psychological safety and mental health. More than two hundred people registered for our webinar series which featured top journalists and other disinformation experts on the trends they found most alarming, including AI, social media's capacity for viral spread, and how we can respond.

Launched on election day and running through the inauguration, our digital safety team was tapped to operate the Election Urgent Care Safety Helpline, a real-time resource for U.S.-based journalists seeking digital, physical, legal, or psychosocial safety. Partners included the [Knight Election Hub](#), advisors **Yemile Bucay**, **Jeje Mohamed**, and **Ramy Ghaly**, experts from the Committee to Protect Journalists, the International Women's Media Foundation, the Freedom of the Press Foundation, the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, and the Aegis Safety Alliance.

PEN America empowers and trains local leaders and key community members to identify and successfully defuse false information, so they can return to their networks and provide reliable news. In Dallas, Miami, and Phoenix, we trained emergency room nurses, teachers, librarians, radio hosts, faith leaders, community organizers and others to have hard conversations with their networks and guide them toward fact-based information. Working with churches, libraries, bookstores, colleges, and teachers' unions, we trained more than 150 people to serve as trusted messengers in their communities leading up to the elections.



“This training gave me the tools to not approach it from a place of ‘you’re wrong, I’m right,’ but come from a common place of needing to rely on facts.”



Trusted Messenger Workshops in Texas and Arizona

FREEDOM TO WRITE CENTER

PEN America's [Freedom to Write Center](#) supports and advocates on behalf of writers and intellectuals around the world who are at the forefront of opposing authoritarianism and defending each individual's right to free expression.

We do this by nurturing the global network of PEN Centers, advocating on behalf of imperiled artists, developing uniquely compelling advocacy tools, and providing critical protection resources and training to keep them safe when and where their expression endangers them.

The top 10 countries that jailed writers in 2023

Rank	Country	Number of Writers Jailed
1	China*	107
2	Iran	49
3	Saudi Arabia	19
	Vietnam	19
5	Israel**	17
6	Belarus	16
	Russia	16
8	Türkiye	14
9	Myanmar	12
10	Eritrea	7

*Including autonomous regions
**Including the Occupied Palestinian Territory
Data from the Freedom to Write Index 2023

Data from the 2023 Freedom to Write Index. PEN America found that 339 writers were jailed in 2023.

The Freedom to Write Center maintains the [Freedom to Write \(FTW\) Index](#), the only global count of writers in prison. The index draws attention to the countries where writers are at greatest risk and analyzes the reasons and ways they are targeted. [This year's publication](#) found that in 2023, 339 writers were detained or imprisoned around the world for their writing or otherwise exercising their freedom of expression—a 9% increase from 2022. While men make up the majority of jailed writers, Iran and China collectively

imprisoned half the women writers listed in the Index. As in 2022, Iran held the most women writers (15) behind bars, reflecting the continued crackdown on women during and after the “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests and broader movement.

PHAM DOAN TRANG: 2024 PEN/BARBEY FREEDOM TO WRITE HONOREE

The Center engages in advocacy on behalf of individual freedom fighters. Included in this group is [Pham Doan Trang](#), a Vietnamese writer, publisher, journalist, and pro-democracy activist. Vietnam, currently third on the FTW Index with the number of writers in prison having nearly doubled in the past four years, is imprisoning Trang because of her writing, which bravely speaks out on behalf of human rights. The Center’s advocacy for Trang has spanned years, focusing on defending and celebrating Trang’s spirit. In the spring, the Center organized two days of meetings in D.C., including meetings with the State Department and with six Congressional offices—including with two Members themselves, **Congresswoman Michelle Steel** (R-CA-45) and **Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren** (D-CA-18). The advocacy trip resulted in strong commitments and opportunities to connect with other civil society partners, as a means of ensuring her story remained a priority in the field. At the 2024 PEN America Gala, Trang was awarded the PEN/Barbey Freedom to Write award in absentia.

This past November, Vice-President of the Board, **Dinaw Mengestu**, hosted a virtual conversation with two of Trang’s friends and colleagues, **Trinh Huu Long** and



PEN America Board Vice-President Dinaw Mengestu with Pham Doan Trang’s friend, Quynh-Vi Tran (co-founder and executive director of Legal Initiatives for Vietnam) and Trang’s lawyer Dang Dinh Manh, both of whom accepted the Freedom to Write award on Trang’s behalf at the 2024 PEN America Gala.



I don’t want freedom for just myself; that’s too easy.

I want something greater: freedom for Vietnam.

It might seem like some grand goal, but it’s totally possible—with your support.

—Pham Doan Trang, 2024 PEN/Barbey Freedom to Write Honoree

Tran Quynh Vi, who joined her in founding Legal Initiatives for Vietnam and its related projects, including Luat Khoa Magazine. The conversation, held in advance of the Day of the Imprisoned Writer, offered our Members, writers, human rights defenders, and other constituents an opportunity to learn more about Trang, her work, and her dedication to human rights from people who knew her personally—all in service of keeping her story alive, and ensuring people were willing to fight on her behalf and on behalf of human rights in Vietnam.

FREE EXPRESSION DURING THE ISRAEL-GAZA WAR

With regard to the Israel-Gaza war, we have raised free expression concerns. We condemned threats to access to information about the war and criticized Israeli efforts to suppress media freedom and independence. We decried the catastrophic cultural destruction in Gaza and called for the protection of journalists, especially in light of dangerous rhetoric from the Israeli government. Additionally, we signed a joint letter to **President Biden**, ahead of **Prime Minister Netanyahu's** address to Congress, urging the United States government to pressure Israel to ensure international media access to Gaza, protect the lives of journalists, and hold those responsible for targeted attacks on journalists accountable.

FREE NARGES CAMPAIGN



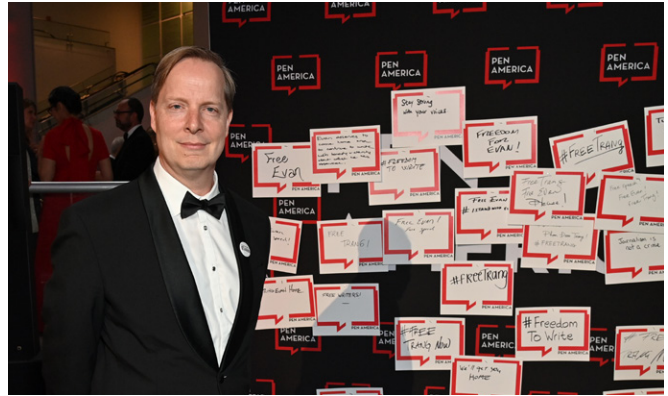
Photo of Narges Mohammadi, the 2023 PEN/Barbey Freedom to Write Award honoree, after being granted a temporary release from prison.

On October 19, Nobel Peace Prize winner and PEN/Barbey Freedom to Write Award honoree [Narges Mohammadi](#) was sentenced to an additional six months for “disobeying and resisting orders.” Already serving a 13-year sentence beginning in November 2021 and with her health deteriorating drastically, the [Free Narges Coalition](#) condemned the additional sentence and demanded her “immediate

and unconditional release” to allow her to access medical care. We were thrilled to learn that on December 4, a [temporary release was granted](#). Though her doctors have recommended a longer furlough, this is “an important and necessary first step in her recovery.” The Coalition will continue to advocate that her health concerns are fully addressed.

2024 LITERARY GALA HONOREES

At the 2024 Literary Gala, PEN America honored Dow Jones CEO and The Wall Street Journal publisher **Almar Latour** with the [2024 Business Visionary Award](#). A journalist-turned-business leader, Latour was at the forefront of efforts for more than a year to secure the release of reporter **Evan Gershkovich** from a Russian prison. In his acceptance speech, Latour reminded the audience that while The Wall Street Journal was focused on Evan, he is by no means the only one: “... Our moral obligation goes beyond [Evan]. What about **Alsu Kurmasheva**? What about **Antonina Favorskaya** and **Olga Komleva**?...The grim reality is that there are Evans everywhere.” When the [news broke on August 1](#) that Evan and Alsu were among journalists released as a part of a prisoner swap, PEN America was overjoyed at this seminal step.



2024 Business Visionary Award honoree Almar Latour at the PEN America Gala; 2024 PEN/Benenson Courage Award honorees Ruby Freeman and Shaye Moss with Tyler Perry at the PEN America Gala.

PEN America also honored Fulton County, Georgia election workers **Ruby Freeman** and **Shaye Moss** with the [PEN/Benenson Courage Award](#) for their remarkable willingness to face adversity, risk, and personal sacrifice to defend free expression. Freeman and Moss successfully sued to vindicate their reputations after being vilified and falsely accused of election-related malfeasance in 2020.



We have the resources to make the future a better place. Art is a weapon of peace. When we meet again in 50 years, there will be some other American tune that describes a more optimistic time in our country. That will be your legacy.

– Paul Simon, *PEN/Audible Literary Service Award honoree, at the 2024 PEN America Literary Gala*

NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

PEN Across America, Membership, and National Engagement

PEN Across America, our nationwide chapter initiative with 10 locations across the U.S., engages our members and allies to lead efforts promoting informed debates, defending press freedom, engaging in literary advocacy, and facilitating dialogue across barriers of all kinds. With support from our New York City headquarters, our chapters—in Arizona, Austin, Birmingham, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Denver, Detroit, Miami/South Florida, the Piedmont Region of North Carolina, Tulsa, and Utah—are run by volunteer members of the local literary community.

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership comprises a nationwide community of novelists, nonfiction authors, journalists, editors, poets, screenwriters, essayists, playwrights, publishers, translators, agents, and other literary professionals, alongside a larger network of devoted readers and supporters.

Together, they advance PEN America’s mission. In addition to benefits including discounts on events and publications and opportunities to convene with

others in the industries, PEN America members get exclusive access to conversations with preeminent writers discussing the intersection of consequential topics with their literary careers. In 2024, conversations included award-winning author of nearly 100 children’s books, comics, graphic novels, and memoirs **Rex Ogle** and Tony, Obie, and Pulitzer Prize nominee and Tony Award-winning playwright **David Henry Hwang**.

Each year culminates in PEN America’s Annual General Meeting, a signature event where writers and thinkers navigate complex topics by listening, engaging, and learning across differences. This year’s theme was The State of the Nation, the State of Free Expression. PEN America Board of Trustees **Marie Arana**, **Tom Healy**, **Dinaw Mengestu** and **Allison**



Tabling at the New York Public Library for the Freedom to Read Day

Markin Powell joined in conversation with **Jonathan Friedman**, PEN America’s Sy Syms Managing Director of U.S. Free Expression and Education Programs, and Interim Co-CEOs **Clarisse Rosaz Shariyf** and **Summer Lopez** to reflect on how we can navigate our current political climate and strengthen our mission to defend the liberties of writers.

LOS ANGELES



PEN Out Loud with Steph Cha and Venita Blackburn in Los Angeles

To kick off the year, [PEN America Los Angeles](#) held its annual New Year, New Books event, celebrating new works by local PEN America members. Held at the Sean Kelly Gallery in Hollywood, the event drew over 125 attendees and featured an honorary host committee of local writers, screenwriters, and journalists, as well as “literary luminaries” whose works

were published in the previous year. In October we expanded our Banned Book Week programming to include a month of programming, highlighting the impact of censorship on underrepresented and marginalized authors. The PEN Out Loud series in Los Angeles continued another successful year of conversations amplifying diverse voices and convening vital conversations with authors, poets, journalists, artists, and activists. Featured authors included **Viet Thanh Nguyen**, **Venita Blackburn**, **Justin Torres**, and **Safiya Sinclair**.

FLORIDA

This July, PEN America [Florida](#) held its first annual Unified Voices Summit: Protecting Educational Freedom to celebrate our educators, protect public education, and speak out in one voice to defend free speech and free expression rights. The conference was held in Orlando and featured keynote speaker #1 New York Times bestselling author, **Jodi Picoult**. The panel included a wide range of individuals committed to ending educational censorship



Unified Voices Summit in Orlando, Florida; PEN America’s legal team joined by author George M. Johnson and Escambia resident plaintiffs on the steps of the Fifth Circuit Federal Courthouse.

and book bans, and supporting teachers, public education and core constitutional liberties: **Dr. Marvin Dunn, Pamela Burch Fort, Karla Hernandez-Mats, Lauren Groff** and **James Ponti**.

In October, PEN America celebrated a victory for the freedom to read and our lawsuit, [PEN America vs. Escambia County School District](#), when the Florida county’s school board was ordered to return 24 previously restricted books to school library shelves. The lawsuit was initially filed in May 2023 after discriminatory challenges resulted in over 150 books being restricted in Escambia County public school libraries during the 2022-23 school year.

WASHINGTON D.C.

By engaging with federal government officials, PEN America’s [Washington, D.C. office](#) plays a critical role in our Free Expression advocacy work. The team elevates all of our work, ensuring that the full range of free speech challenges addressed throughout the organization—internationally and in the U.S., at the state and local levels, from higher education and K-12 classrooms to digital threats and compromises to journalists and newsrooms—are all on the radar of key federal stakeholders.

Highlights of 2024 include: briefing the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, **Farida Shaheed**, on our work fighting book bans, prohibitions on higher education curricula, and other drives toward censoring teaching and learning, linking our national and international work; our Managing Director **Hadar Harris** testified at the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission in the U.S. House of Representatives, arguing that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a form of culture erasure; and co-convening a meeting for civil society organizations monitoring and tracking autocracy in the U.S., where our disinformation experts presented our model for combatting falsehoods via training trusted community leaders.



Visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education at PEN America’s DC office.

Finally, since last spring, we have been undertaking an initiative wherein we convened over 60 civil society organizations, partners and allies to discuss pre- and post-election threats to democracy and discuss common concerns and complimentary responses. These organizations were not connected before our efforts, but are now. Conversation topics included, but were not limited to: Monitoring and Tracking of Autocracy in the US and Abroad (co-convened with the Brookings Institution and the German Marshall Fund); Higher Ed and Democracy; and Press Freedom Policy (co-convened through the Freedom of the Press Foundation Policy listserv).



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