



## **PEN Perth**

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# **PEN Perth AGM 2026 Writers in Prison report**

The Writers in Prison program remains at the heart of PEN Perth's advocacy work. Throughout the past year, we have continued to support imprisoned writers and journalists via public awareness campaigns, social media, newsletters, website updates and collaboration with PEN International.

During the year, we reviewed our list of adopted writers to ensure our advocacy focused on writers who would benefit most from ongoing international attention. This resulted in several positive changes, including celebrating the release of three long-supported writers and adopting new cases from across the Asia-Pacific region.

## **Releases**

### **Hany Babu (India)**



Linguistics professor, writer and social activist Hany Babu was granted bail after spending almost five years in detention on charges widely criticised as politically motivated. His release marked another encouraging outcome for sustained international advocacy.

### **Alaa Abd El-Fattah (Egypt)**



British-Egyptian writer, blogger and democracy activist Alaa Abd El-Fattah was released following a presidential pardon in September 2025 after years of imprisonment on politically motivated charges. His release came after sustained international campaigning by PEN International, human rights organisations, the United Nations and his family, including his mother Laila Soueif's prolonged hunger strike. His release was welcomed as one of the year's most significant victories for freedom of expression.

### **Amanda Echanis (Philippines)**



Human rights defender, writer and peace consultant Amanda Echanis was released during the year after several years in detention. Her release was welcomed by PEN Centres internationally.

These three writers have now been removed from our list of adoptees, and while this is excellent news, we will still be monitoring their ongoing status in their origin countries as writers are often re-incarcerated. Outcomes such as this remind us that even though progress may be slow and complicated, international advocacy can make a huge difference to the lives of writers at risk.

## Changes to our list of adoptees

Following consultation with Michael Rosen-Lupu, the Asia-Pacific Writers in Prison representative from PEN International, PEN Perth reviewed its adopted writers to better reflect current priorities in the Asia-Pacific region. Our current list allows us to focus on writers with less visibility.

### Current adoptee list

#### Yang Hengjun (China/Australia)



Australian writer, blogger and democracy advocate who remains imprisoned in China after receiving a suspended death sentence in 2024. His deteriorating health continues to be of serious concern, and his case remains one of Australia's highest-profile imprisoned writer cases.

#### Pham Doan Trang (Vietnam)



Writer, journalist and democracy activist serving a nine-year prison sentence for peaceful expression. Despite international recognition, including winning the PEN/Barbey Freedom to Write Award, she remains imprisoned and continues to symbolise the struggle for freedom of expression in Vietnam.

#### Narges Mohammadi (Iran)



Writer, journalist, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and human rights defender. Although she has received temporary medical leave from prison, she continues to face imprisonment, additional charges and ongoing persecution for her advocacy for women's rights and democracy in Iran.

#### Nguyen Vu Binh (Vietnam)



Vietnamese journalist Nguyen Vu Binh, from a Nov. 2, 2020 post on Binh's Facebook page. (Nguyen Vu Binh via Facebook)

Independent journalist and blogger sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for allegedly spreading anti-state propaganda. His imprisonment reflects Vietnam's continuing crackdown on independent journalism and freedom of expression.

#### Frenchie Mae Cumpio (Philippines)



Independent journalist and community broadcaster who has remained in detention since 2020 on charges widely regarded by international media organisations as politically motivated. Her case highlights the risks faced by journalists reporting on human rights and marginalised communities in the Philippines.

## Wai Moe Naing (Myanmar)



Writer and pro-democracy activist imprisoned following Myanmar's military coup. His case represents the ongoing repression of writers, journalists and peaceful political activists under military rule.

## Advocacy throughout the year

Throughout the year PEN Perth has:

- monitored developments affecting our adopted writers
- shared regular updates through committee reports, newsletters, social media and our website
- supported PEN International campaigns calling for the release of imprisoned writers
- promoted Writers in Prison during major advocacy events, including the Day of the Imprisoned Writer, using Empty Chairs for writers at risk
- worked to raise public awareness of freedom of expression issues throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

## Looking ahead

In the coming year, we hope to strengthen the program by:

- encouraging greater member participation in letter-writing campaigns
- profiling our adopted writers more regularly through newsletters and social media
- strengthening collaboration with PEN International and neighbouring PEN Centres
- highlighting Writers in Prison at public events throughout the year
- encourage engagement from our members to attend, like, follow and share our activities.

PEN Perth acknowledges the courage and resilience of the writers, journalists and human rights defenders we support. Their commitment to truth, literature and freedom of expression, often at enormous personal cost, reminds us why the work of PEN Perth remains important.