

**Mr. Wen Jiabao,  
Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China,  
Guojia Zongli, The State Council General Office,  
Fuyoujie, Xichengqu, Beijingshi 100017,  
People's Republic of China**

**Re: Concerns regarding the detainment, serious assault and disappearance of Chinese human rights lawyers**

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents around 1 million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it has also observer representatives from a further eleven European countries' bars.

The CCBE, through its Human Rights Committee, places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE writes to express its serious concerns over the detention, serious assault and disappearance of several prominent Chinese lawyers who have been active in defending human rights. Mr. Jiang Tianyong, Mr Teng Biao, Mr. Tang Jitian, and Mr. Liu Shihui are among the lawyers who have fallen victim to these targeted attacks.

We have previously sent you two letters dated 1 October 2009 and 30 April 2010 regarding Mr. Tang Jitian and the deprivation of his right to exercise the legal profession.

The CCBE is alarmed to learn of the wave of detentions and harassments which have been carried out by the Chinese authorities against more than a dozen prominent human rights lawyers, in an apparent attempt to block anti-government demonstrations inspired by protests across the Middle East.

We are told that on 16 February Mr. Jiang Tianyong was assaulted by police. An officer held him by the neck and threw him against a wall, shouting: "You just wait!" On 19 February, Mr. Tianyong was reportedly taken from his brother's home in Beijing by police, who later returned to the house to confiscate his computer. Mr Tianyong has not been heard from since.

We are told that on the same day, human rights lawyer and scholar Mr. Teng Biao went missing following a lunch with other lawyers in Beijing. On 20 February, police searched his home and confiscated items including two computers and a printer. In December 2010, Mr. Biao was detained, assaulted and severely threatened by police officers.

We are additionally informed that Mr. Tang Jitian was arrested and seized by police following this lunch. The police took him from his home after smashing the lock, breaking down the door and taking him away. Several other lawyers who attended this lunch have been detained.

Furthermore, we are informed that on 20 February human rights lawyer Mr. Liu Shihui was brutally attacked by a group of unidentified men as he made his way to a protest site in the city. He was

hooded, beaten and stabbed in his legs before being left bleeding by the roadside. He reportedly crawled back to his home from where he called for help.

The CCBE condemns such targeted attacks and harassments against Mr. Jiang Tianyong, Mr Teng Biao, Mr. Tang Jitian, and Mr. Liu Shihui, which seem to us aimed at sanctioning their professional activity defending human rights.

In this context, the CCBE wishes to draw to your attention the following Articles of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

*Article 16 states that:*

*Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economics or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.*

*Article 23 states that:*

*Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organizations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organization. In exercising these rights, lawyers shall always conduct themselves in accordance with the law and the recognized standards and ethics of the legal profession.*

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges you to take immediate and effective steps to guarantee the safety of lawyers in order to preserve the independence and integrity of the administration of justice in, and to ensure that all attempts to discredit lawyers for the legitimate exercise of their professional duties are promptly and effectively stopped.

Yours sincerely,

GEORGES-ALBERT DAL

President