
Le Président
The President

**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 human rights lawyer Mr. Chen Guangcheng

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 more than 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 you again to reiterate its serious concerns over the situation facing Mr. Chen Guangcheng, a prominent human rights lawyer in China. The CCBE previously sent you a letter dated 23/01/2009 expressing its serious concern over the arbitrary detention of Mr. Chen Guangcheng and the denial of appropriate medical care during his detention.

The CCBE is informed that new information has surfaced, following a letter which was smuggled out of Mr. Chen Guangcheng's home and discovered on 15 June 2011. The letter describes in detail a savage beating that Mr. Chen Guangcheng and his wife apparently received following the online circulation of a video documenting their on-going house arrest in February 2011.

The CCBE is informed that the letter, which was received by the US-based China Aid organisation on 15 June 2011, describes how on 18 February 2011, over 70 unidentified people stormed their home and beat and tortured the couple for over two hours. It is alleged that the group was led by Zhang Jian, the vice-secretary of the Communist Party in Shangdong Province. Mr. Chen Guangcheng's wife writes that she was wrapped in a blanket and kicked by more than ten men for half an hour, leaving her unable to see in her left eye for five days and with what she thinks is a cracked rib. Furthermore the letter describes how Mr. Chen Guangcheng was beaten unconscious following two hours of physical assault. The following day, Mr. Chen Guangcheng's wife was permitted to receive a one-off intravenous injection from the village doctor. Other than that, the couple were not allowed to receive any medical attention.

The CCBE also understands that, before the unidentified men left on 18 February, they confiscated a computer, a video camera, an audio tape recorder, chargers and torches. On 3 March, metal sheeting was placed over the windows of their home. On 8 March, Mr. Chen Guangcheng's wife alleged that Zhang Jian once again led over 40 men into their home and confiscated more equipment. When she confronted Zhang Jian, she writes that she was punched in the head. She reports that their home was stormed once again on 17 March, when up to 50 men took a large amount of their remaining possessions away, including Mr. Chen Guangcheng's blind cane.

Since 24 February 2011, the couple's five-year-old daughter has not been permitted to step outside the house. Mr. Chen Guangcheng's wife also writes that Mr. Chen Guangcheng's mother is physically monitored by three men every day and since mid-March, she has not been allowed out of the home

even to buy food. She writes that, as a result, their daily lives have become a struggle to survive and that Mr. Chen Guangcheng's health has deteriorated greatly.

The CCBE understands that the detention of Mr. Chen Guangcheng is directly related to his peaceful and legitimate work in defence of 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.

Furthermore, Article 23 states that:

Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the rights 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 organisations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organisation. In exercising these rights, lawyers shall always conduct themselves in accordance with the law and the recognised standards and ethics of the legal profession.

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges you to take immediate and effective steps to: carry out a thorough and impartial investigation into the reported assault of Mr. Chen Guangcheng; take measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Chen Guangcheng; remove all inhibitions on the free movement of Mr. Chen Guangcheng and other members of his family, and cease all further forms of surveillance or harassment against them; and guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders in China are able to conduct their professional duties without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, in order to preserve the independence and integrity of the administration of justice.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Dal', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

GEORGES-ALBERT DAL

President