

President Hu Jintao People's  
Republic of China c/o Embassy of  
the People's Republic of China  
443-445 Avenue de Tervuren  
1150 Woluwe Saint Pierre,  
26 August 2009

**Re: Concerns regarding the case of Human Rights Lawyer Mr Wang Yonghang**

Dear President,

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 700,000 European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it has also observer representatives from further ten 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 of Mr Wang Yonhang. We are informed that Mr Wang Yonghang had his licence to practise law revoked in May 2008 after the local judicial authorities failed to renew his licence. He has, however, continued to provide legal advice to Falun Gong practitioners and represented them in court. By law, any Chinese citizen can act as a legal representative. On 16 June 2009 he represented a Falun Gong detainee at court. Police then followed him and told him to drop his involvement in the case.

We are informed that he was taken into custody on or shortly after 4 July 2009, which is why we are writing to you.

His rights to meet his lawyers were denied in violation of article 33 of the Law on Lawyers of the People's Republic of China which provides for lawyer-client meetings in detention facilities as long as lawyers bring with them an appointment letter establishing client representation, their own professional licence and a certification document issued by the law firm which employs them.

We are concerned that he may be at immediate risk of severe torture and ill treatment.

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 guarantee the safety of Mr. Wang Yonhang in order to preserve the independence and integrity of the administration of justice to release him immediately and unconditionally if he is not to be charged with a recognisable crime and to ensure that all attempts to discredit lawyers for the legitimate exercise of their professional duties are promptly and effectively stopped.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Anne Birgitte Gammeljord', written in a cursive style.

Anne Birgitte Gammeljord  
President