

President Hu Jintao
People's Republic of China
c/o Embassy of the People's Republic
of China
463 Avenue de Tervuren
1160 Auderghem

Brussels, 30th March 2009

Re: Concerns regarding the case of Human Rights Lawyer Mr. Wei Liangyue and his wife Du Yongiing

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 arbitrary detention of Mr. Wei Liangyue and his wife Du Yongiing. Mr. Wei Liangyue has been practising law for more than 21 years and has often provided legal aid to local people who face human right abuses. We understand that they were detained on 28 February in the city of Harbin, reportedly for attending a Falun Gong meeting. We further understand that the authorities have warned the family not to discuss the case publicly and not to hire a lawyer to represent them. The CCBE was informed that Mr. Wei Liangyue is held under investigation on suspicion of "gathering a crowd to disturb social order" and Mrs. Du Yongiing is held under investigation on suspicion of "using a heretical organization to undermine implementation of law".

We are concerned that they may be at immediate risk of torture and ill treatment in the prison where they are detained.

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. Wei Liangyue and his wife Du Yongqing in order to preserve the independence and integrity of the administration of justice, to release them immediately and unconditionally if they are 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,



Anne Birgitte Gammeljord
President