

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, 23rd January 2009

**Re: Concerns regarding the case of Human Rights Lawyer Mr. Chen Guangcheng**

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. Chen Guangcheng as from 11<sup>th</sup> March 2006 over his activity against extensive violence by the authorities in relation to birth control policies. We have written letters about him to the Chinese government on three previous occasions, on 15 November 2005, 27 July 2006 and 13 November 2006.

The CCBE understands that Mr. Chen Guangcheng has been denied appropriate medical care during his detention, despite his serious health problems. It seems that he does not have access to clean water inside the jail and has a diet restricted to thin rice gruel.

The CCBE is alarmed by this serious event occurring against a human rights lawyer in China, which indicates a repressive environment for human rights lawyers. 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. Chen Guangcheng in order to preserve the independence and integrity of the administration of justice, 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