

Ministry of Public Security
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Geneva, 24th of April 2017

Letter of concern with regard to our colleagues/Chinese lawyers in detention and to the situation of their relatives

Dear Minister Guo Shengkun (郭声琨),

We, the undersigned, express grave concern about the continued mistreatment of detained lawyers in China since July 2015 and the increased harassment and surveillance imposed on their relatives.

Information has been reported about sustained surveillance and continued threats that are imposed respectively on Ms. Wang Qiaoling, wife of detained lawyer Li Heping and on Ms. Li Wenzu, wife of detained lawyer Wang Quanzhang. We understand that CCTV cameras have been installed in front of their home and that they are followed wherever they go, intimidated by the police, constantly surrounded by unidentified men and threatened of being taken away. Attempts to ostracize and to crush lives of relatives of detained lawyers is of great concern to us.

In addition, we remain also preoccupied with the health condition of lawyers who remain detained since July 2015 awaiting their trial. Lawyer Li Heping and lawyer Wang Quanzhang remain without access to their family or to defence lawyers of their choice. No information about their wellbeing was communicated since their disappearance. We share similar concerns with regard to the situation of lawyers Xie Yang and Jiang Tianyong.

Reported information earlier this year about mistreatment and torture, to which detained lawyers are exposed, increases our anxiety. According to the concluding observations of the United Nations Committee against Torture which reviewed China in 2015, the “residential surveillance under a designated location” regime amounts to incommunicado detention and is unlawful. It further increases the risk of mistreatment and torture.

We call on the Chinese government to abide by its laws and Constitution as well as to its international commitments with regard to human rights obligations by ensuring that the

judicial process is conducted in full compliance with the basic principles of due process and fair trial as well as in compliance with the United Nations Convention against Torture and the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers which provide specific safeguards for lawyers when discharging their functions.

We also urge the Chinese authorities to stop harassing and intimidating family members of detained lawyers as well as their own defence lawyers.

We remain concerned about the fate of its colleagues in China and the wellbeing of their families and friends. We will continue to watch closely the development of the situation as it evolves.

Yours sincerely,

The International Observatory of Lawyers in Danger
The Geneva Bar Association
The Paris Bar Association
UIA (International Association of Lawyers)
ACAT
LAWYERS FOR LAWYERS
Institut des droits de l'Homme du barreau de Paris
Conseil des barreaux européens

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