

**His Excellency Mr. Xi Jinping,
President**
The State Council General Office
Zhongnanhai
N°174 Xi Chang'an Jie
Beijing 100017
People's Republic of China

10th December, 2018

Petition letter: immediate release of lawyer Wang Quanzhang

Your Excellency,

As a group of various lawyer's associations from around the world, we are deeply concerned about the physical and mental health situation of our fellow colleague, lawyer Wang Quanzhang.

According to our sources, lawyer Wang Quanzhang was seized by police on 3 August 2015 in the context of the '709 crackdown' and was charged in January 2016 for allegedly '*subversion of state power*'. At the time of writing, he has been held incommunicado for over three years without any form of due process, and risks further deterioration of his health condition while in detention.

In particular, we understand that lawyer Wang Quanzhang was not given access to an independent legal counsellor of his choosing. He has been denied access to his family lawyer, who was allegedly intimidated into withdrawing from his case. We remain concerned about risks of exposure to torture and ill-treatment as reported by the United Nations Committee against Torture during their review of China in October 2015.

In addition, we understand that no evidence of any form or shape has substantiated the charges put against him. As practicing lawyers, we reiterate that this would be the basis of any proper prosecution. We further understand that, despite the fact that lawyer Wang Quanzhang had no medical conditions at the time of his disappearance, he has been made to take medication to treat high blood pressure. We are worried about the deterioration of Wang's health due to forced medication based on the past experience of 709 victims suffering from the same problem.

Lastly, we express our concern with regard to measures of intimidation and harassment imposed to his wife, Li Wenzu and to their child. Since his arrest, they have been denied the right to visit him and have been subject to pressure from local authorities.

We understand that, among the 321 lawyers, rights activists and their family members affected in the context of the 709 crackdown, lawyer Wang Quanzhang is the only one who has been neither tried nor released. His wife Li Wenzu has filed 30 suits against the court demanding a trial for her husband, in line with Chinese law, but to no avail.

We are profoundly concerned about lawyer Wang, and all the other lawyers who face continuous harassment simply for the exercise of their mandate as legal professional and defenders of the basic rights of citizens.

We would like to draw your attention in particular to the 1990 UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1990, that have a normative value under customary international law, and should be respected by China, which was present at the Congress and voted in favour of their adoption.

The latter states that the relevant authorities of all UN member States have an obligation to ensure that all persons arrested or detained, with or without criminal charge, shall have prompt access to a lawyer, and in any case not later than forty-eight hours from the time of arrest or detention (Principle 7).

Furthermore, it states that UN member States have an obligation to ensure that lawyers can perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference and that they do not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution for any action taken while carrying out their duties (Principle 16).

Therefore, we, the undersigned groups, call on the Chinese authorities to comply with the standards set forth by the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, to abide by its international obligations and to:

- **Release without delay lawyer Wang Quanzhang and those being held for exercising their fundamental human rights or for defending the exercise of such rights by others;**
- **Stop any form of harassment against Li Wenzu and their child, and condemn any future harassment of families of detained lawyers by local authorities.**
- **Ensure due process and fair trial for all detained lawyers, and recognize publicly the important work they carry out in defending the basic rights of Chinese citizens, mostly economic, social and cultural rights;**
- **Protect Wang Quanzhang and all human rights defenders in China against any present or future harassment, intimidation and/or reprisal in the exercise of their profession and of legitimate human rights activities;**
- **Cooperate meaningfully with relevant international experts, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of**
- **Judges and Lawyers, to amend all laws and policies that restrict the ability of lawyers to freely and effectively exercise their profession with the aim of bringing them into compliance with international norms and China's international obligations and commitments.**

We thank you for your attention to this very serious and urgent matter. We will continue to closely monitor this case.

Respectfully yours,



Lionel Halpérin
Chairman of the Geneva Bar Association

Other signatories:

International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)

International Association of Lawyers (UIA)

Association of the Bar of the City of New York

Barra Mexicana, Colegio de Abogados (Mexican Bar Association)

The Swedish Bar Association

Commission des affaires européennes et internationales du Conseil National des Barreaux français

The Commonwealth Lawyers Association

The Law Society of England & Wales

Lawyers for Lawyers

Progressive Lawyers Group Hong Kong

China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group

Human Rights Committee of the Taipei Bar Association

Judicial Reform Foundation Taiwan

Taiwan Support China Human Rights Lawyers Network

Deutscher Anwalt Verein (German Bar Association)

Colegio de Abogados de Costa Rica

Ankara Bar Association

Orde van Vlaamse Balies (Belgian flemish bar association)

The Bar Council of England and Wales

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