



**BY PRIORITY AIRMAIL**

His Excellency  
Mr. Xi Jinping  
President of the People's Republic of China  
The General Office of the State Council  
2 Fuyoujie, Xichengqu Beijingshi 100017  
People's Republic of China

Amsterdam, 4 November 2020

Subject: arrest of human rights lawyer and defender Chang Weiping

Your Excellency,

Lawyers for Lawyers is an independent and non-political foundation that seeks to promote the proper functioning of the rule of law by pursuing freedom and independence of the legal profession.

China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group is an independent and non-political organization founded by lawyers, legislators and academics in 2007 in Hong Kong to support human rights lawyers in Mainland China.

Lawyers for Lawyers and China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group are concerned about the arrest of human rights lawyer and defender Chang Weiping (Mr. Chang).

According to our information, on 22 October 2020, Mr. Chang was taken away by the Baoji City Public Security Bureau in absence of any documents. Since then, he has been held in an undisclosed location and has been denied access to lawyers. Mr. Chang's wife received calls from a national security officer who stated that Mr. Chang was taken away for allegedly "endangering national security". Mr. Chang's arrest occurred six days after he spoke publicly about torture he suffered at the hands of local police between 12 and 21 January 2020, when Mr. Chang was held under Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location.

Furthermore, we were informed that on 26 October 2020, Mr. Chang's father went to the Gaoxin District Branch of the Baoji Public Security Bureau accompanied by two lawyers, to seek additional information, request a meeting with Mr. Chang, present paperwork for legal representation, and submit an application for bail. The police did not allow the lawyers to meet Mr. Chang and refused to disclose any information regarding his arrest other than that he has been placed under Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location.

Lawyers for Lawyers and China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group fear that the arrest of Mr. Chang is connected to, and serves to curb, his legitimate activities as an attorney.

We would like to draw your attention to the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers<sup>1</sup>, and more in particular Article 7, 16, and 23, which read:

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<sup>1</sup> The UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers provide a concise description of international norms relating to the key aspects of the right to independent counsel. The Basic Principles were unanimously adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in Havana, Cuba on 7 September 1990. Subsequently, the UN General Assembly "welcomed" the Basic Principles in their 'Human rights in the administration of justice' resolution, which was adopted without a vote on 18 December 1990 in both the session of the Third Committee and the plenary session of the General Assembly.



*7. Governments shall further 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.*

*16. Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (...) and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.*

*23. Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the right 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 organizations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organization. In exercising these rights, lawyers shall always conduct themselves in accordance with the law and the recognized standards and ethics of the legal profession.*

In view of the above, Lawyers for Lawyers and China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group respectfully urge you to immediately:

- Release Chang Weiping, drop all charges unless credible evidence is presented in proceedings that respect fair trial guarantees, and put an end all acts of harassment against Chang Weiping, including at the judicial level;
- Guarantee in all circumstances that all lawyers in the People's Republic of China are able to carry out their legitimate professional activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter. We are confident that the government of the People's Republic of China will give this case the attention it deserves and we will continue to monitor this case closely.

Yours sincerely,

Lawyers for Lawyers

China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group