

BY AIRMAIL

H.E. Mr. Li Keqiang
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Amsterdam, 16 February 2015

Subject: Mr. Wang Yonghang

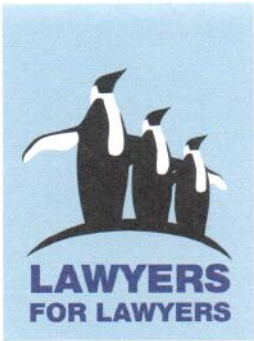
Your Excellency,

We write to you on behalf of The Dutch Lawyers for Lawyers Foundation (*'Stichting Advocaten voor Advocaten'*), an independent foundation wholly funded by donations from lawyers, which supports lawyers around the world who are not able to perform their work properly because of harassment and/or improper interference by their governments.

The reason for this letter is our grave concern about the health condition of human rights lawyer Mr. Wang Yonghang. It has come to our attention that Mr. Wang, who is currently being detained at Shenyang No. 1 Prison, is in critical health condition. Mr. Wang is suffering from symptoms of tuberculosis, pneumonia, chest congestion and a buildup of fluid in tissues around his abdomen. Mr. Wang is also suffering from a leg wound that was caused by prolonged torture in prison five years ago. Since then no sufficient medical attention has been given to Mr. Wang to attend his leg, causing a continuous seeping of water, blood and pus from the wound. This has now resulted in Mr. Wang being paralyzed from his waist down. Mr. Wang is in desperate need of professional medical care immediately. Therefore, we urgently appeal to you to release Mr. Wang immediately and give him access to the medical treatment he desperately needs.

As of July 4, 2009 our colleague Mr. Wang has been detained for practicing his profession. As an attorney in Dalian he has defended amongst others Falun Gong practitioners who were being prosecuted by the Chinese government. Because of this, Mr. Wang was sentenced in secret to seven years in prison in November 2009. As of April 2010 he is being imprisoned at Shenyang Prison. We strongly oppose the conviction and treatment of Mr. Wang Yonghang, which is solely based on him exercising his profession and that violates Chinese and international human rights standards.

The use of administrative or criminal detention of lawyers is an extremely serious threat to the rule of law, which can only function properly if lawyers are able to do their work without any improper interference or harassment by the government. The detention of Mr. Wang seems purely to be to sanction him for practicing universally recognized fundamental human rights, especially the right of freedom of religion, of speech and to hold an opinion and the right of freedom of peaceful assembly.



In this respect, we refer in particular to paragraphs 16 and 17 of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, from which it follows that governments are under an obligation *'to ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference'*. Further: *'Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities'*.

According to paragraph 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'*.

These principles are universally applicable. Therefore, the Chinese government is under an obligation to adequately protect and support its lawyers and human rights defenders. In view of the above, we therefore strongly urge the Chinese government to honor its international legal obligations and to release Mr. Wang Yonghang immediately and unconditionally. We urge your government to immediately and seriously investigate the reason for the detention of Mr. Wang, which seems to be aimed at intimidating him only. Furthermore, we urge your government to guarantee under all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Wang as well as that of all human rights lawyers and human rights defenders. We urgently request you to assure that, during his detention, Mr. Wang Yonghang, will be allowed to be visited by his family, have free choice of legal representation, obtain adequate food and are provided with any medical care he may require.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter. We are confident that the Chinese government will give this case the attention it deserves and will continue to monitor this case closely.

On behalf of the President of Lawyers for Lawyers, Phon van den Biesen,

Yours sincerely
Lawyers for Lawyers



Adrie van de Streek
Executive director