
Le Président
The President

**Mr. Wen Jiabao,
Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China,
Guojia Zongli, The State Council General Office, Fuyoujie, Xichengqu, Beijingshi 100017,
People's Republic of China**

Re: Concerns regarding the disappearance of Li Xiongbing - Chinese human rights lawyer

Your Excellency

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 1 million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it has also observer representatives from a further eleven 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 disappearance of human rights lawyer, Mr Li Xiongbing, who is known for his involvement in human rights cases and promoting the rights of people living with HIV/AIDs.

The CCBE is informed that over the past few years, Li Xiongbing has been subjected to various forms of police harassment, including surveillance, house arrest and travel restrictions.

It is reported that on 3 May 2011, Li Xiongbing received a phone call from the Public Security Bureau National Security Police to say that he should prepare himself to be taken and that he should leave his mobile on 24 hours a day. Two days later, at 9am, Li Xiongbing left his home in Beijing. Throughout the day, members of his family and friends were unable to reach him by telephone. At approximately 5pm, Li Xiongbing's wife received a call from her husband saying that he would not be home for a number of days.

The CCBE is informed that the disappearance of Li Xiongbing is the latest in a series of targetings of China's human rights defenders.

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 release Mr Li Xiongbing unconditionally as it is believed that his detention is solely related to his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights and the practice of his profession as a lawyer. The CCBE also requests that you guarantee the free exercise, independence and integrity of the legal profession and administration of justice in China and ensure that human rights lawyers are able to carry out their professional duties without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Dal', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

GEORGES-ALBERT DAL

President