

**Mr Li Keqiang**  
**Premier of the State Council of the**  
**People's Republic of China**  
**The State Council General Office**  
**2, Fuyoujie, Xichengqu**  
**Beijingshi 100017**  
**People's Republic of China**

**Brussels, 4 June 2014**

**Re: Concerns regarding the detention of Tang Jingling and Liu Shihui, human rights lawyers**

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 also has observer representatives from a further thirteen 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 concern over the situation of Tang Jingling and Liu Shihui, human rights lawyers, who were both detained in May 2014. On 16 May 2014 Tang Jingling was taken from his home by police in Guangzhou and detained on charges of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble". A day earlier, Liu Shihui was detained by police in Shanghai, following his sudden disappearance on 13 May 2014. Both Jingling and Shihui are Guangzhou-based lawyers whose licences to practise law have been revoked as a result of their work in defence of human rights.

According to the information that we received, police officers arrived at the home of Tang Jingling and carried out a search of his home that lasted two hours. When the search concluded, the police officers detained Jingling and confiscated a desktop computer, a laptop, three mobile phones and a number of books. Prior to his detention, Jingling had received a number of warnings from the police for his involvement in commemoration activities surrounding the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests. Jingling's licence was suspended in 2006, after which he became involved in a non-violent civil disobedience movement in China. He has been subjected to frequent police harassment and interrogation. In 2012 he was detained for five days following his work investigating the death of human rights defender Li Wangyang.

The CCBE has also been informed that on 13 May 2014, Liu Shihui disappeared after taking a bus in Shanghai. On 15 May 2014, it was confirmed that the human rights lawyer had been detained by the police and is being held in Pudong New Area Detention Centre. It is not yet known on what charges he is being detained. In April 2014, Shihui was beaten by police in Guangzhou and forcibly sent back to his home town in Inner Mongolia due to his ongoing human rights defence activities.

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 immediately and unconditionally release Tang Jingling and Liu Shihui, in order to preserve the independence and integrity of the administration of justice. The CCBE also asks the Chinese government to take all necessary measures to guarantee that lawyers in China are able to carry out their professional activities in all circumstances, without fear of reprisal, intimidation or judicial harassment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aldo Bulgarelli', with a long vertical line extending downwards from the end of the signature.

Aldo BULGARELLI  
President