

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: ASA 17/018/2010  
21 April 2010

### China: Ensure rule of law by ending harassment of lawyers

Escalating harassment of Chinese lawyers as they carry out their work is seriously undermining the rule of law, and risks further lowering public trust in the Chinese legal system.

Two prominent rights defense lawyers, Liu Wei and Tang Jitian, risk having their licenses revoked this week for allegedly “disrupting courtroom order and interfering with the regular litigation process.”

On 12 April 2010, the lawyers received a notification from the Beijing Municipal Judicial Bureau telling them the bureau received a complaint from the Luzhou City People’s Intermediate Court in Sichuan Province, and that their case would be reviewed on 22 April 2010.

Liu Wei and Tang Jitian in return filed a complaint on 18 April 2010, stating that during the 27 April 2009 trial of a Falun Gong practitioner in the Luzhou Court the judge violated the *Court Rules of the People’s Courts of the People’s Republic of China*.

According to the two lawyers, irregularities during this trial and repeated interruptions by the judge were meant to intimidate them and interfered with their defense. The two lawyers told Amnesty International: “We were not even able to file a complaint at the time as there is no clear complaint procedure. You need to write letters to all legal and government departments and stay there to follow them up. It takes a lot of time but may not have any result. Such intimidation has become so common, some lawyers may not even bother to protest.”

Amnesty International urges the Chinese Ministry of Justice to carry out an impartial and independent investigation into these allegations and resolve the case according to Chinese law and international legal standards.

Amnesty International continues to receive reports of lawyers being interrupted or harassed to prevent them representing their clients and otherwise interfering with their work. Intimidation of lawyers has been widely reported by local and international media in legal cases involving Falun Gong practitioners, Tibetans, Uighurs and other cases where defendants have been prosecuted for peacefully exercising their freedom of expression.

In March 2010, Chang Boyang, a lawyer representing Tibetan Film maker, Dhondup Wangcheng was threaten with the closing of his law firm if he did not drop the case. Previously, lawyer Li Dunyong was also threatened with his firm’s closure and loss of his license if he did not drop the case. Dhondup Wangcheng, was sentenced to six years’ imprisonment for “inciting separatism” for making a documentary, *Leaving Fear Behind*, which features a series of interviews with Tibetans, all of whom voice skepticism about the Chinese authorities’ promises of greater freedom in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics. Amnesty International believes he was detained for the peaceful

exercise of his right to freedom of expression and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

During the past year, the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) judicial bureau and other officials have prevented several lawyers from working on the case of Uighur Christian Alimjan Yimit. Other defendants in cases related to the 5 July 2009 unrest in the XUAR have had their lawyers rejected. Court appointed lawyers have had to agree to plead guilty and not to challenge the political judgment in these cases.

Amnesty International is very concerned about these increasing reports of harassment from lawyers in China and urgently requests China to allow lawyers to carry out their work in accordance with the *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 Havana, Cuba, 1990 and relevant domestic law including the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Lawyers*.

ENDS/

Public Document

\*\*\*\*\*

For more information please contact Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566 or [press@amnesty.org](mailto:press@amnesty.org)

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

For latest human rights news view <http://news.amnesty.org>