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## **China: Human rights lawyers disbarred**

Amnesty International condemns the decision by the Justice Bureau of Beijing Municipality to revoke the professional license of human rights lawyer Jiang Tianyong. “There are only a tiny group of lawyers left in China who are brave enough to take the risk of representing victims of human rights violations. A further crackdown against human rights lawyers is a major blow not only to these legal professionals but to the human rights defence movement in China,” said Roseann Rife, Amnesty International’s Asia-Pacific deputy director. There are more than 140,000 lawyers and 14,000 law firms in China but only a small proportion take the risk of taking on cases involving human rights violations, including providing legal aid to Tibetans who were detained in connection with the March 2008 protests. Others cases these lawyers worked on involved Falun Gong practitioners, human rights defenders detained for peacefully exercising their freedom of expression and families of victims affected by the baby milk powder scandal. The Justice Bureau of Beijing Municipality issued a notice stating 53 lawyers’ licences, including Jiang Tianyong’s, were revoked in accordance to articles 23(1)(3) and 23(1)(4) of Methods for the Management of Lawyers’ Practice. The justice bureau also issued a list of 24 Beijing-based lawyers who will not have their licences re-registered. According to the list these lawyers “failed their assessments” and include prominent human rights lawyers, Li Heping, Li Xiongbing, Li Chunfu, Wang Yajun and Guo Shaofei. Without a license, lawyers are restricted in their ability to represent those seeking to obtain justice and redress for human rights violations.