



Public Statement

The Law Society of Upper Canada expresses grave concerns about the detention of human rights lawyer Wang Qiushi in China

TORONTO, ON — The Law Society of Upper Canada expresses grave concerns about the detention of human rights lawyer Wang Qiushi in China.

Wang Qiushi is a Heilongjiang-based human rights lawyer. He often defends clients who are involved in politically sensitive cases: in April 2015, he represented Wei Tingting, one of five feminists arrested for planning anti-sexual harassment demonstrations. Wang Qiushi also defended fellow human rights lawyer Wang Quanzhang, who has been held in detention since 10 July 2015.

The Law Society voices its concern as a result of reports that Wang Qiushi disappeared on 9 January 2016 after being summoned by police for questioning.

On 12 January 2016, his family was informed that he was being held by the authorities at an undisclosed location. His family has not been given any reasons for his detention.

A number of organizations have reported on the arrest and detention of human rights lawyers in China. The Law Society is concerned that the arrest and detention of these lawyers is directed at preventing them from carrying out peaceful human rights activities.

The Law Society of Upper Canada urges the government of the People's Republic of China to comply with Articles 16 and 23 of the United Nations' *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*.

Article 16 states:

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, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

Moreover, Article 23 states:

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.

The Law Society urges the government of the People's Republic of China to:

- a. release Wang Qiu Shi immediately;
- b. provide Wang Qiu Shi with regular access to his lawyer and family;
- c. guarantee all the procedural rights that should be accorded to Wang Qiu Shi and other human rights lawyers and defenders in China;
- d. put an end to all acts of harassment against Wang Qiu Shi as well as other human rights lawyers and defenders in China;
- e. guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Wang Qiu Shi; and
- f. ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments.

The Law Society of Upper Canada is the governing body for more than 50,000 lawyers and 8,000 paralegals in the province of Ontario, Canada. The Treasurer is the head of the Law Society. The mandate of the Law Society is to govern the legal profession in the public interest by upholding the independence, integrity and honour of the legal profession for the purpose of advancing the cause of justice and the rule of law.

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