



BAR HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMITTEE OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

London, 2nd October 2007

Your Excellency,

The Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales (BHRC) would like to express its concern regarding the situation of Chinese human rights lawyer **Mr. Li Heping**.

According to the information received, on September 29, 2007, at approximately 1730 hours, Mr. Li was abducted in the parking lot of his law firm, after a brief conversation with the policemen who were following him. It is alleged that a dozen plainclothes men put a hood on his head, dragged him into a car with no license plate, drove for about an hour to an unknown location, and took him to a basement. There, the men reportedly took off his hood and tore off his clothes, except his underwear. Sources indicate that he was beaten with electric rods for several hours and that the plainclothes men took turns at grabbing his hair, throwing him around, verbally abusing him and ordering him to leave Beijing. He was reportedly warned to practice law "within permissible bounds" and to never tell anyone about his beating.

At around midnight, it is reported that the unidentified men placed the hood over Li's head, drove him away and left him in the woods on Xiao Tang mountain, in Beijing's suburbs. Li eventually made his way to a highway and got a taxi home. He sustained injuries all over his body and had to be taken to hospital.

When he returned home, he discovered that his lawyer's identification card and other personal belongings were missing. All the files on his laptop computer had been erased and the computer reprogrammed and thus unusable.

The BHRC notes with concern that it is alleged that several days before the attack, police from the National Security Protection Unit of the Beijing Public Security Bureau verbally ordered Li and his family to leave Beijing. Mr. Li refused and the police allegedly followed and watched him since then.

According to the information received, the men behind this attack would appear to be part of this National Security Protection Unit. They were able to drive cars without license plates and they abducted Li while the policemen assigned to monitor him were watching.

Some observers believe that this attack is part of a strategy aimed at forcing out of the city those the authorities consider "trouble makers" before the 17th CCP National Congress starts next week.

The BHRC is deeply concerned by this alleged attack and requests all relevant Chinese authorities to investigate the above mentioned allegations. The alleged facts are a violation of the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, which states in its article 11 that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to the lawful exercise of his or her occupation or profession". The BHRC also draws the attention of the Chinese authorities to paragraph 16 of the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers adopted by the UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1990, which state that "Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or proper interference".

BACKGROUND

Mr. Li was the defense lawyer of **Yang Zili**, a university student jailed for posting articles online; **Tan Kai**, an imprisoned environmentalist; and one of the leaders of the "San Ban Pu Ren" (a Christian sect) who was sentenced to death and executed in December 2006. In 2005, Li also appealed to the Beijing Bureau of Judicial Affairs on behalf of the lawyer, **Gao Zhisheng**, after Gao's license was suspended by the Bureau. He also defended people persecuted for Christian family church activities, members of the Falun Gong, victims of forced eviction, and independent writers. He is also an advisor to a number of United Nations programs in China.

Your sincerely,



Mark Muller QC
Chairman, Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales