



LAWASIA STATEMENT OF CONCERN AT TREATMENT OF LAWYERS IN CHINA

LAWASIA, the Law Association for Asia and the Pacific, notes its considerable disquiet at media and other reports of a significant number of recent arrests and interrogations of lawyers in the People's Republic of China.

Wide spread news reports indicate that police have arrested and detained a number of lawyers known for their involvement in "rights" cases.

As a body that represents the legal profession of the Asia Pacific region, LAWASIA will always have concern at such reports, especially noting Article 1 of the *United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*, which provides that:

1. *All persons are entitled to call upon the assistance of a lawyer of their choice to protect and establish their rights and to defend them in all stages of criminal proceedings.*

and to Article 16 which provides that:

16. *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.*

LAWASIA, noting that the independent functioning of the legal profession is a crucial factor in maintaining the rule of law, calls upon the government of the Peoples' Republic of China to observe and give effect to these *Principles* and to refrain from any and all action that would be or may be construed to be in violation thereof.

Isomi Suzuki

PRESIDENT

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