



a joint programme
OMCT **FIDH**
The Observatory
for the Protection
of Human Rights Defenders



China Labour Bulletin



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

China: Massive crackdown on human rights lawyers continues

Geneva-Paris-Hong-Kong, July 16, 2015 – *The Chinese authorities must end the widespread crackdown against lawyers, and immediately and unconditionally release the lawyers and human rights defenders throughout China who have been arrested or disappeared, said the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights defenders along with FIDH member organisations, China Labour Bulletin and Human Rights in China.*

Beginning on July 9, 2015, with the disappearance of prominent human rights lawyer Ms. **Wang Yu** and her husband Bao Longjun and their son, Chinese authorities have systematically rounded up and detained at least 177 lawyers and rights defenders. The unprecedented crackdown has targeted a committed group of rights defense lawyers working throughout the country, including key members of the Fengrui law firm. Mr. **Zhou Shifeng**, Director of Fengrui, and 14 other lawyers including Meses. **Li Shuyun** and **Wang Fang**, and Messrs. **Wang Quanzhang**, **Huang Liquan**, **Sui Muqing**, **Xie Yang** and **Liu Sixin** remain detained or missing as of this writing. Furthermore, Fengrui's premises were searched on the afternoon of July 10, 2015, with three computers being seized.

Other human rights defenders and civil society actors have also been targeted through summons, detention or interrogation in at least 22 provinces and municipalities across China directly under the control of the Central Government, with 17 individuals still detained or missing. For more information on the ongoing crackdown, see Human Rights In China's resource page [here](#).

Our organisations recall that the targeting of human rights lawyers is an alarming illustration of the deteriorating situation of human rights in China. When those who speak out for the rights of others are systematically targeted for carrying out legitimate and peaceful activities, the future of rule of law in China is grim.

While no formal charges have yet been filed against those who were targeted over the past few days, some have reportedly been detained on suspicion of “illegally organising paid protests,” “inciting subversion of State power,” and “fabricating rumours on the Internet to sway court decisions.” Furthermore, State-run media have characterised the targeted lawyers as “a major criminal gang,” accusing “radical human rights lawyers” of “stirring up several serious public opinion issues” and “disrupt[ing] the legal process.”

Our organisations call on the Chinese authorities to immediately disclose the whereabouts of the detainees, ensure their right to access to a lawyer and respect their rights including those stipulated in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (OBS) was created in 1997 by FIDH and OMCT. The objective of this programme is to intervene to prevent or remedy to situations of repression against human rights defenders.

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