

**Fighting for Rights Continues Even as Persecution Escalates**  
**——A human rights attorney's experience and perseverance**

Tang Jitian

My name is Tang Jitian. I am male of Han nationality. I was born in Jilin, China, on September 1, 1968. I am currently residing in Chaoyang District, Beijing Municipality, China. I started practicing law in 2005 and relocated from Guangdong to practice law in Beijing in 2007. I am now a practicing attorney with Anhui Law Firm of Beijing.

Since August 2008, my normal law practice has been seriously interrupted. At the beginning, I was notified several times by my former law firm (Beijing Haodong Law Firm) that my contract would be terminated ahead of schedule or I should cease my practice. The reason was that the Beijing Municipal Judicial Bureau and Beijing Lawyers Association were infuriated by my and other colleagues' call for direct election of Beijing Lawyers Association. I found my current law firm before my contract of employment expired, but during the course of transfer, my case was unreasonably delayed for nearly twenty days by the judicial administrative department and Beijing Lawyers Association. (The processing clerk said in private that the same thing happened to all those on the blacklist.) Since June 2009, the government has again, in a disguised form, deprived me of my right to practice law. But I have not committed any violation of law or regulations. And my work as an attorney has never been criticized or complained about by my clients. On the contrary, many people, including my clients, often spoke to me directly or on the phone or in their letters about my work, praising me for defending human rights in accordance with law. They encouraged me to overcome the pressure and oppression from the government by giving me their support. They, of course, also felt worried about my situation.

The reason I was suppressed and persecuted by the government is that as an attorney I was involved in quite a lot of work defending human rights. About a week before I was forced to stop practicing law, a police officer named Wang from the General Domestic Security Protection Squad of Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau called to make an appointment for a talk with me. His demand was rejected by me. (In April, Wang, together with Sun Di, head of the Domestic Security Department and a police officer surnamed Han, had already talked with me regarding the issues such as Charter 08, representation of cases, and the direct election of Beijing Lawyers Association.) After that, Sun Di again called me, demanding that we have a talk. After he was rejected by me, he threatened me by saying that he could find me through other methods.

Soon afterwards, after six o'clock on the morning of June 3, 2009, under the pretext that we needed to cooperate with an investigation of a case of so-called burglary that had taken place, Attorney Lan Zhixue and I were first prohibited from going out freely. Then we were taken to the Sijiqing Police Station in Haidian District, Beijing Municipality. After they had interrogated me and taken a written record, the police officers at that station unreasonably and illegally

detained me till eight o'clock in the evening. That night when I was on my way back to my residence, I was followed and stalked by police officers Lu Yonghui and Zhang Jian from the Domestic Security Protection Squad of Public Security Branch of Haidian District, Beijing Municipality as well as police officers Li Jing and Shi from Sijiqing Police Station. This continued till dawn on the 4th. Later, these police officers sent for additional police officers. Blocking attorney Dong Qianrong, who was with me, they forcibly pushed me into the car and drove me to their secret detention spot. (It is now known that this place is called Kao Fu Te Sports Training Center and is in the vicinity of the Linglong Bridge in Haidian District.) In the few days that followed, they arranged police officers and security guards to keep watch over me, forbidding me to contact the outside world. Furthermore, I was not allowed to step out of the room at all. During my detention, Lu Yonghui from the Domestic Security Protection Squad and the police officer named He who later joined him held several rounds of what they called exchange of communications, asking me not to get involved with human rights cases (such as the cases of Falun Gong), and not to demand rights from the Judicial Bureau and the Lawyers Association, and not to take part in any social affairs that will irk the government. They stated several times that if I did not cooperate, I could have trouble living and working in Beijing. On June 6, I was transferred to a hotel (I later learned that it was called Dong Lun Xin Xing Hotel) in Chaoyang District where I was held in custody till the evening of June 7 when I regained my freedom. In the past few days, at the request of the police, the owner of the house that I have been renting has asked me to move out and relocate somewhere else.

Over the past few years, as an attorney I have been mainly engaged in defending citizens' right to freedom of expression, right to freedom of religion, right to housing, right to land, and other fields of human rights. It is exactly for these works that I was repudiated and treated with hostility by the government. These works include legal defense for persecuted believers such as Falun Gong practitioners, representation of Wang Zhaojun whose right to freedom of speech and expression was infringed upon by Sina.com (Wang's blog site was shut down by Sina.com because he published 'A Letter to the Chinese People'), and advocacy of the rights of the farmers who have lost their land as well as advocacy of the right to equal employment.

With regard to defending our own rights as attorneys, my efforts focusing on pushing for direct election of Beijing Lawyers Association have also become one of the major reasons why some officials have identified me as a "non-mainstream" attorney.

Since April 2009, making illegal use of the annual evaluation, Beijing Municipal Bureau of Justice and Beijing Lawyers Association have instructed the Judicial Bureau of Chongwen District several times to have the law firm under its jurisdiction fire me, stating that if attorneys like me were not fired, then the law firm would be subject to rectification and reform indefinitely.

As of today, there has been no change whatsoever in my situation where the government, by

subjecting me to an illegal annual evaluation, has in a disguised form, deprived me of my right to practice law.