

**“Written Testimony submitted to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission on the rule of law in China”  
By Mr. Jiang Tianyong on Oct 29, 2009 Cannon 210 HOB**

Dear members of U.S. Congress, ladies and gentlemen:

How are you? My name is Jiang Tianyong and I come from mainland China. I am an attorney and most of the cases I take on involve religious belief, and are usually referred to as “sensitive cases.” I am also a Christian and as such a person, I need to worship God in gatherings with my brothers and sisters in Christ. I am going to discuss three things, and I hope I can give you an idea of the actual status of the rule of law and religious belief in China.

The first one is an event I would like to share: On the afternoon of Mother’s Day of May 13, 2007, I was praying and singing hymns of God with my brothers and sisters in Christ gathering. It was in a private large room in Beijing. Suddenly, several dozen people broke into the room. Only about a dozen of them were wearing uniforms and the rest were in plain clothes. One of them forced us to stop our activities and to remain still where we were. We were not allowed to leave the place. The intruders claimed that they were law enforcement officers from the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Religious Administration. They said that our gathering was an illegal one and abolished it immediately! They sealed our donation box and took videos and photos of many of us. They also recorded the identification information of every one of us. After that, they conducted a long interrogation. It was after 1 AM that I left the site. Between that day and July 2009, I had no place where I could meet with my fellow Christians in a gathering. This is my experience in China as a Christian.

The second event occurred on April 16, 2009. Attorney Li Fangping and I became the defense counsels for the living Buddha from Burongna Convent in Tibet that day. The living Buddha is the abbot of Burongna Convent and Ya-tseg Convent in the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Ganzi of Sichuan province. He was charged with weapons possession and functionary embezzlement. However, after a detailed investigation, we found the living Buddha was actually charged for some other reasons. After the March 14 Incident in 2008, people in the Tibetan prefecture were organized by the government to engage in a “Campaign of Education in Patriotism.” Monks and nuns were forced to study in the convents and were kept there for a long time. What, then, was the content of their education? They were commanded to criticize the Dalai Lama and to call him a jackal and to break away from him. Every one of them was commanded to trample on the portrait of Dalai Lama and spit on the portrait before he or she was allowed to pass the test. Given such a situation, over 200 nuns from Burongna and Ya-tseg Convents could no longer endure this, and they finally broke out of the convents on May 14, 2008 and went to protest in the streets, demanding religious freedom. As the living Buddha was the leader of these two convents, he was arrested. His case was tried on April 21, 2009 and both of the attorneys and the living Buddha denied the charges. There is still no result from the case, but we worry about the fate of the living Buddha.

The third piece of evidence I would like to share is that starting from 2008, I began to defend Falun Gong practitioners in nearly 20 Falun Gong cases. I have found that the crackdown on Falun Gong is indeed a serious human rights disaster. My clients were arrested simply because of the practice. They were tried simply because they gave practice books to others. Some of them were sentenced to imprisonment just because they distributed materials that expose the facts of persecution. They often face torture and there are special funds, special locations, special people and special tools in torturing Falun Gong practitioners. When Huang Cheng from Jinzhou, Liaoning province was tried in court, everybody could see the scars on his body; Chen Xinye from Shenyang, Liaoning province suffered a bone fracture in the beatings; they poured mustard water into the nostril of Li Zhigang from Harbin, Heilongjiang province; Zhou Huimin from Chengdu, Sichuan province was beaten to death.

When it comes to Falun Gong cases, the law is often trampled and it is hard to safeguard the defendant’s right to defense. Sun Feng from Tangshan, Hebei province was deprived of his right to meet with his attorney; Ge Hefei

from Handan of Hebei province was sentenced while his attorney was forbidden to intervene. In Falun Gong cases, attorneys are forbidden to defend their clients on the proper application of law or the nature of the incident. They are forbidden to talk about the Constitution or human rights. They are only allowed to say whether the defendants did something or did not do something.

I and other human rights attorneys in China are suffering an increasing level of harassment, suppression, and persecution [by the government], because we serve as defense counsels in cases of safeguarding the freedom of religious belief.

Respectively in 2006 and 2008, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Justice intentionally fabricated complications in the annual inspection and registration of my attorney's license. On July 9, 2009, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Justice announced that my attorney's license was revoked. We [human rights legal defenders] are often stalked, harassed and threatened by the secret police from Domestic Defense Protection Squad. On special occasions or when foreign leaders visit China, we are often forbidden to leave our residences. For example, when President Obama visits China next month, I will be forced to stay at home. My family members are also often harassed and people from the Bureau of Justice often come to talk with us and forbid me to get involved in some cases. Because our landlords can't endure the pressure from the secret police, they refuse to renew our leases, and therefore we often are forced to move out.

Because we handle cases involving religious belief, Li Heping, Li Xiongbing, Wang Yajun, Tang Jitian, Liu Wei, Wen Haibo, Xie Yiming, Wei Liangyue, Zhang Xingshui, other attorneys and I have still not passed the so-called "annual inspection." Therefore, there is no way we can continue to work as attorneys at this time.

However, legal professionals, including attorneys, members of house churches and other religious believers, have not abandoned their rights in face of the crackdown. The civil society in China is growing and will become more mature. I think all of you present here today should keep your confidence in this. We also need the attention and support from all of you present here today, and the U.S. government.

I propose the following:

1. We recommend that you pay more attention and give more support to the non-governmental forces in China, such as the US State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program, so that more human rights attorneys can participate in the program;
2. We recommend President Obama and other government officials meet with human rights defenders and attend gatherings of house churches during their visit to China;
3. We recommend President Obama can talk with President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao and restore the freedom of Liu Xiaobo, Chen Guangcheng, Hu Jia, Guo Feixiong and Guo Quan. We also hope that with President Obama's visit, we will be able to know the whereabouts of Attorney Gao Zhisheng;
4. We recommend officials in the U.S. Embassy in China make contact with human rights defenders and dissidents more often and more widely, and invite them to attend some activities held at the embassy.

Thank you!

Jiang Tianyong