

Law Council deeply concerned with 'crackdown' against lawyers in China

The Law Council of Australia has expressed deep concern at reports of a “major crackdown” in China, resulting in the mass arrest and detainment of lawyers, law firm staff, and activists.

Many of the lawyers apprehended, such as Wang Yu (王宇), Li Heping (李和平), and Sui Muqing (隋牧青), are well-regarded for their human rights work.

The US State Department has condemned the detentions, and expressed concern that China's new national security laws were being used as a “facade to commit human rights abuses.”

Law Council of Australia President-elect Stuart Clark said lawyers must be able to practise without fear of retribution for carrying out their professional duties.

“The reports we are getting from China are deeply disturbing,” Mr Clark said.

“An independent legal profession is fundamental to the promotion and protection of the rule of law. No lawyer should have to face intimidation, hindrance or improper interference in their work.

“All lawyers, regardless of the country in which they work, should be treated in a manner consistent with international human rights law and the [United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers](#).

“The Australian legal profession has a responsibility to monitor and promote the rule of law in the region, as reflected in the Law Council's [Rule of Law Principles](#).

“On behalf of lawyers in Australia and our colleagues across the region, the Law Council of Australia will continue to monitor these events carefully and will consult with the Australian Government and our counterparts globally,” Mr Clark concluded.

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