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## CHINA | Lawyer Highlighted on Crackdown Anniversary

CSW is calling for the release of Wang Quanzhang and those who are still detained following a spate of arrests of human rights lawyers across China, which began July 9, 2015.

Over 300 lawyers, human rights defenders and their colleagues and family members were detained, interrogated, or imprisoned in what is known as the “709 crackdown.” Many of those still detained have spent years defending religious communities and other “sensitive” cases. As a result, they have been harassed, arbitrarily detained, threatened, imprisoned and physically assaulted.

Three years after the start of the crackdown, most of those affected have been released, but with news of their release have come numerous testimonies of physical and psychological torture, including frequent beatings, sleep deprivation, forced medication, violent threats, and prolonged isolation. Some were only released after making televised “confessions” under duress; additionally, many detained under the crackdown have lost their license to practice law. A number remain in prison after being convicted of ‘subverting state power’ and other crimes.

Lawyer Wang Quanzhang, who disappeared into detention in July 2015, has still not been tried or released. He has reportedly been charged with “subversion of state power” but has had no contact with his lawyers. His wife, Li Wenzu, has repeatedly requested information about her husband, whom she has not seen for over 1,000 days.

CSW’s Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, “China’s ongoing crackdown on human rights lawyers is a blatant violation of international law and China’s own constitution. The Chinese government should be celebrating and supporting lawyers who put themselves on the front line of upholding rule of law, justice and human rights. Instead, human rights lawyers, including those defending religious communities, are subject to appalling abuses against themselves and sometimes their families. We call on the

Chinese government to release lawyer Wang Quanzhang, and all those detained in connection with their defense of fundamental human rights.”

Initially, during the crackdown, a number of lawyers were held in residential surveillance at a designated location (RSDL). Under this measure, an individual can be held in a “police-designated” location for up to six months. Individuals held under RSDL report having no contact with family or access to legal representation. Under these conditions, torture is unlikely to be investigated and much more likely to occur in the first place.