



FREEDOM NOW

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MEDIA RELEASE

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DISAPPEARED CHINESE LAWYER GAO RECEIVES ABA'S INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER AWARD

The American Bar Association selected Freedom Now pro bono client Gao Zhisheng to receive its prestigious International Human Rights Lawyer Award at its annual meeting Friday, August 6, 2010.

This honor is presented to a distinguished foreign human rights lawyer who suffers persecution as a result of their professional activities. Gao, who is known as the "conscience of China" for his legal work on behalf of persecuted religious minorities and victims of corruption, among others, has been repeatedly imprisoned and tortured by the Chinese government. Most recently, Gao was disappeared by Chinese security agents in February 2009. He was briefly released on March 28, 2010, but was again disappeared on April 20, 2010. The government is holding him *incommunicado*.

Glenn Hendrix, chair of the American Bar Association's Section of International Law, said, "in bringing attention to Gao Zhisheng's case, we show that the world is watching. Hopefully this will help protect other courageous lawyers who are promoting the rule of law in China."

"It is my hope that the award will help compel the Chinese government to release my husband," said Gao's wife, Geng He, upon hearing that Gao was selected to receive the honor. "How much longer can it disappear him when it knows the whole world is watching?"

Gao's daughter, Grace, age 17, will accept the award on Gao's behalf. The award will be presented at the ABA's annual meeting on August 6, 2010, at 1 pm at the JW Marriott Hotel in San Francisco. Members of the media are invited to attend.

Gao's high-profile legal team of international human rights specialists includes Jerome A. Cohen, Irwin Cotler MP, Albert Ho, David Matas, David Kilgour, and the NGO Freedom Now.

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