

Jose Manuel Barroso,
President of the European Commission

Brussels, 28 January 2009
Ref: B845

Dear Mr Barroso,

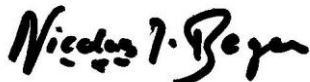
Subject: Meeting with Wen Jiabao, 30 January 2009

As the Chinese government embarks on a tour of 'confidence building' meetings in European capitals, Amnesty International is writing to urge you to place human rights at the core of a renewed relationship with China. Your meeting with the Chinese premier on 30 January takes place at a crucial moment in the EU China relationship, in the wake of tensions surrounding the cancellation of the EU-China summit in December 2008. Amnesty International supports a strong EU-China relationship to address issues of common concern. However, re-engagement with China must be on the basis of equal partnership, enabling frank discussion where there is disagreement.

China is expected to soon release its first ever Human Rights Action Plan, which, according to the State Council Information Office, will cover areas such as governance, democracy, rule of law, the rights of women, children and ethnic minorities, and include provisions for human rights education. This is an important signal from the Chinese authorities that human rights must be protected, and international human rights standards adhered to. But for China's Human Rights Action Plan to have real impact on the ground, the Chinese authorities will have to take concrete steps to address specific human rights violations such as those highlighted in Amnesty International's reports, and to undertake reforms to ensure that China's law and practices are in line with international human rights standards. In particular, China should urgently ratify the ICCPR which it signed as long ago as 1998.

On 9 February 2009, China will undergo Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the United Nations' Human Rights Council, of which China is a member. This is a rare opportunity for China's human rights record to be reviewed by international human rights mechanisms. As the attached briefing, which Amnesty International submitted for the UPR on China sets out, there remain real and pressing concerns to be addressed. Most recently, the beginning of 2009 has seen the rise of a domestic campaign for political and rights reform (Charter 08) in China. Charter 08 has been signed by many well-known academics and human rights activists, many of whom have subsequently been questioned and harassed. Amnesty International is calling for the immediate release of Liu Xiaobo, a signatory of Charter 08, currently under "residential surveillance" in China. We urge you to take the opportunity of this meeting to stress to Wen Jiabao the importance which the EU places on the UPR process achieving robust, specific and measurable recommendations aimed at strengthening the protection of human rights on the ground.

Yours sincerely



Nicolas Beger
Director
Amnesty International EU Office

CC: Baroness Ashton, Commissioner for Trade
Mikaelis Rokas, Desk Officer, China , RELEX
Serge Abou, Head of EC delegation, Beijing