

OFFICIAL REACTION TO APPEAL**STERN STATEMENT****FROM THE BEIJING LAWYERS ASSOCIATION REGARDING THE APPEAL BY A SMALL NUMBER OF LAWYERS FOR SO-CALLED “BEIJING LAWYERS ASSOCIATION DIRECT ELECTION”¹**

To All Beijing Lawyers and Law Firms:

Recently, a small number of lawyers jointly signed and published online a document titled, “Keep Pace with the Course of History, Implement Lawyers Association Direct Election: An Appeal to All Beijing Lawyers, the Municipal Bureau of Justice, and the Municipal Lawyers Association.” In the name of promoting democracy, the appeal directly challenged the lawful status of the Beijing Lawyers Association. Soon afterwards, some Beijing lawyers began receiving text messages from a small number of lawyers, who, with the lure of reducing membership fees and changing the system of tax collecting, were inciting a great number of lawyers to support the so-called “Beijing Lawyers Association Direct Election.”

The Beijing Lawyers Association hereby emphatically states: the Beijing Lawyers Association is a lawfully-established social organization, and a self-regulatory organization of the Beijing legal profession. It represents the interests of all lawyers in Beijing and manages the Beijing legal profession according to the *Lawyers Law* and the Charter of the All-China Lawyers Association. The Beijing Lawyers Association listens to opinions and suggestions of its members through means such as correspondence to the President and Secretary, a reception day with the board of directors, and a system of proposals by representatives, and, in keeping with the rules of the profession, it practices democratic policy-making, democratic management, and democratic supervision. Any individual who, in the name of promoting democratic elections, uses text messages or websites to privately link up with other members of the Beijing Lawyers Association, publishes inflammatory speeches, starts rumors among Beijing lawyers and poisons their minds, and attempts to rope in unsuspecting lawyers to support the so-called “Beijing Lawyers Association Direct Election,” is violating the law. They are using the [upcoming] new term of the Beijing Lawyers Association as an opportunity to exploit the enthusiasm of some lawyers for participating in the professional management of the Beijing Lawyers Association. Under the banner of “Democratic Management of the Lawyers Association,” these lawyers are essentially attempting in vain to break away from the supervision and guidance of the judicial administrative organ and the professional management of the Lawyers Association, and to utterly reject our country’s current management system for the legal profession, judicial system, and even political system.

Beijing lawyers must keep a clear head, and recognize the truth behind the “promotion of the Beijing Lawyers Association Direct Election” by a small number of lawyers. From the standpoint of upholding the correct political direction of the Beijing legal profession and safeguarding its good social image, you must be conscientious in resisting the false talk of a small number of lawyers and not be used by them.

This year, there will be a new term of the Beijing Lawyers Association. To insure the smooth transition of the Lawyers Association to a new term, the Beijing Lawyers Association is already energetically preparing for the election. Through the election, it will listen to the opinions of a great number of lawyers and continue to improve the Lawyers Association’s various duties in serving its members and protecting their rights and interests. It will elect representatives who will truly represent the rights and interests of the great number of Beijing lawyers, and guarantee the healthy development of Beijing’s legal profession.

—*Translation by Human Rights in China*

1. Beijing Lawyers Association [北京律师协会], “Beijing shi lüshi xiehui guanyu shaoshu lüshi huyu suowei ‘Beijing lüxie zhixuan’ de yanzheng shengming” [北京市律师协会关于少数律师呼吁所谓“北京律协直选”的严正声明], Shoudu Lushi [首都律师], September 5, 2008, http://www.bmla.org.cn/bjlawyers2/news/show_content.jsp?infold=IC02000024280.