

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Sweden
Lidovägen 8
115 25 Stockholm

Regarding the Swedish journalist and publisher Kurdo Baksi

The signatory organizations has noted that the Chinese embassy on August 17 sent an email to the Swedish journalist and publisher Kurdo Baksi and Swedish media. As organisations highlighting and fighting for human rights and freedom of expression on a daily basis, we are the first to point out that journalists should always be prepared for being questioned. The fact that the embassy choses to comment on Kurdo Baksi organising a demonstration in support of the kidnapped Swedish publisher Gui Minhai is however something we must comment and react on.

We find it unacceptable that the Chinese embassy choses to criticize Kurdo Baksi and to portray him as a liar instead of responding to the clear human rights message communicated by the demonstration "Free the Swedish citizen Gui Minhai". The embassy insinuates that Kurdo Baksi is lying about the case of Gui Minhai even though human rights organizations and governments all over the world agree that China has violated Swedish and international law by kidnapping a Swedish citizen in a third country. According to the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chinese action took place in violation of common international law on consular assistance. The current situation raises many questions about the application and violation of the rule of law, including the prohibition of arbitrary detention. We stand with the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and demand that our colleague and fellow citizen be given the opportunity to meet Swedish diplomatic and medical staff and that he will be released so that he can be reunited with his daughter and family

Our organisations are known for defending and protecting the freedom of expression in all situations just because the principle is so important for our democracy. We will not stand and watch when the right to freedom of expression that we fight for is used to pursue something resembling a smear campaign against a journalist and publisher. Kurdo Baksi is not only a journalist and publisher, he is also a person known for his strong engagement in protecting human rights by highlighting cases where colleagues are imprisoned for criticizing governments – colleagues such as Gui Minhai. Therefore, we condemn the Chinese Embassy's claims against Kurdo Baksi.

Stockholm August 19, 2021

Robert Aschberg, President of the Swedish Club of Publicists

Jesper Bengtsson, President of Swedish PEN

Erik Halkjaer, President of Reporters Without Borders Sweden

Ulrika Hyllert, President of the Swedish Union of Journalists

Jesper Monthán, President of the Swedish Publishers' Association

Grethe Rottböll, President of the Swedish Writers' Union