Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
Zhongnanhai, Xichangan'jie
Xichengqu, Beijing Shi 100017

VOLKSREPUBLIK CHINA

Datum

**Zhang Zhan**

Dear president Xi,

*Zhang Zhan* is a citizen journalist and former lawyer active in speaking out about politics and human rights issues in China. In February 2020, *Zhang Zhan* travelled to Wuhan, which was then the centre of the Covid-19 outbreak in China. She used online platforms (including WeChat, Twitter now 'X’ and YouTube) to report on the detention of other independent reporters as well as the harassment of victims’ families.

*Zhang Zhan* went missing on 14 May 2020 in Wuhan and was subsequently revealed to have been detained by police in Shanghai, more than 640 km away. Pudong New District People’s Court sentenced *Zhang Zhan* to four years in prison on the charge of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" on 28 December 2020. According to her lawyer, she decided not to appeal. She has insisted on her innocence.

Since her sentencing, *Zhang* has carried out a partial hunger strike to protest her guilty verdict. This has had serious impacts on her health, resulting in multiple hospitalizations. According to a lawyer who spoke to her family, in July 2023 she was again admitted to the prison hospital; among other worrying long-term health impacts, such as gastrointestinal problems, the prison conditions and partial hunger strike have resulted in severe weight loss. When she was admitted to hospital in July, she weighed just 37 kilograms – half of her weight prior to her deprivation of liberty.

*Zhang Zhan* is a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for exercising her human right to freedom of expression.

In light of the above, I call for *Zhang’s* immediately and unconditionally release. Please ensure that *Zhang Zhan* is not subject to torture and other ill-treatment and that she has prompt, regular and unrestricted access to family, lawyer and adequate medical care on request or as necessary.

Sincerely,