

Ambassador Yi Xianliang
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
PO Box 4058 AMB
0244 Oslo

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my concern about Zhang Zhan, a Christian activist, human rights defender and former lawyer. She has been imprisoned since May 14th when the police detained her after she reported about the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan. She is detained at Pudong District Detention Centre in Shanghai, accused of “picking quarrels, disturbing social stability and creating problems of public order”.

Your Excellency, I hear worrying reports that Zhang's health is deteriorating. In the beginning of summer, she started a hunger strike to protest against her detention. Consequently, the staff force-fed her. I draw your attention to the Malta Convention ratified by UN Member States, which determines that force-feeding is equal to torture and is against human rights. The UN Convention against Torture, to which China is a party, prohibits any use of such degrading treatment.

Your Excellency, Zhang has only practiced her right to freedom of expression and peacefully defended basic human rights. The videos she released were of public concern. Therefore, I kindly request that the authorities reconsider her case. She may face a sentence of up to five or six years for reporting on Covid-19, asking relevant questions about the government's management of the pandemic. She is now facing persecution for rightfully using her freedom of expression. I hope the Chinese authorities will be compassionate and graceful in their treatment of Zhang Zhan.

I, therefore, humbly petition your intervention to ensure that:

- Zhang Zhan is immediately released from detention and transferred to a safe health institution according to her will;
- awaiting her release, due process and fair trial are ensured, including protection
- Chinese human rights defenders and activists are protected and ensured freedom
- of speech

Yours sincerely,