

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 10, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

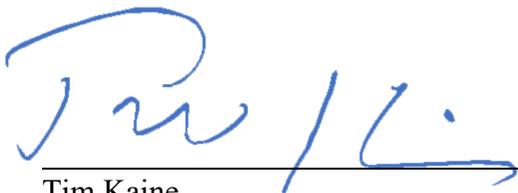
Seventy-three years ago today, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and since then, the world has recognized December 10<sup>th</sup> as Human Rights Day. We write on this Human Rights Day to voice our concerns regarding the mistreatment of detained Chinese lawyer and independent journalist Zhang Zhan, and to urge you to continue to advocate for her safety and swift release during your discussions with the authorities of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

As you know, PRC authorities detained Ms. Zhang for documenting their repressive and dishonest response to the initial outbreak of COVID-19 in Wuhan, and for highlighting the suffering of ordinary Chinese citizens during the early stages of the pandemic. Her reporting contradicted the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) efforts to downplay the severity of the outbreak and paint their response to the spread of the novel coronavirus in Wuhan and beyond as efficient and supported by the Chinese people. For Ms. Zhang's actions in publishing the truth, PRC authorities mistreated her before sentencing her to four years in prison for "picking quarrels and provoking trouble." She remains imprisoned, where her health is in serious jeopardy as a result of the abuse she has endured and her ongoing hunger strike.

We applaud the Department of State for public statements calling for Ms. Zhang's release from prison, and encourage you to continue to prioritize her case during bilateral talks with the PRC government. Her case is indicative of the CCP's intolerance of dissent, which harms the people of China, and in the case of COVID-19, people around the world.

As Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee responsible for human rights, we look forward to working with you on this and other critical human rights issues in China. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Marco Rubio  
United States Senator