

Dear Sirs/Madams

I sincerely ask you to ensure that this message below is received by Chief Procurator of Shanghai People's Procuratorate Zhang Bencai.

Dear Chief Procurator Zhang

I am writing to express grave concern for the life of citizen journalist Zhang Zhan (张展), who has been on partial hunger strike to protest her incarceration. A prisoner of conscience imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising her right to freedom of expression when she reported about COVID-19, Zhang Zhan should be released immediately and unconditionally.

It is extremely alarming to learn that, due to her dire health condition, Zhang Zhan's family do not expect her to live through the winter and have been calling the authorities to release her on medical grounds. Recently it is reported that she is feeling incredibly weak, has no energy to walk nor raise her head and, with yellowed skin, looks to be suffering from a life-threatening condition.

For your information, her family submitted a medical bail application on 15 November to Shanghai's Women's Prison and have not received a response yet. The application was submitted pursuant to the criteria listed in the "Notice of the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate, the Ministry of Public Security, and Other Ministries on Issuing the Provisions on Temporary Service of Sentences Outside Prisons" (最高人民法院、最高人民检察院、公安部等关于印发《暂予监外执行规定》的通知) where a prisoner can apply for medical bail when he/she is facing critical health condition.

It is further worrying that Zhang Zhan still does not have regular access to her family members and lawyers and there is no way to for them to further verify her health and wellbeing.

There is an alarming pattern of deaths of imprisoned Chinese activists, either in detention or after being belatedly released on medical parole. To ensure that no one else dies while in your detention facilities, I urge you to:

Pending her release, accept the medical bail application for Zhang Zhan;

Pending her release, ensure that Shanghai Women's Prison immediately accepts and processes the medical bail application for Zhang Zhan and she receives urgent, regular, and adequate medical care, including a full body / medical check-up.