



July 15, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

We write to request that American citizen Min Zin be officially designated by the State Department as wrongfully detained by the Chinese government and make his immediate release a diplomatic priority and a necessary precondition for any additional summits with Chairman Xi Jinping. Min Zin, who runs a policy think tank, was lured to China at the invitation of a Chinese academic institution under the pretext of speaking at an academic conference. On June 3, the Chinese government arrested Min Zin on bogus espionage charges, and he has been held ever since.

Under the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act, which you signed into law in your first administration, there are eleven criteria used to determine whether the State Department should designate someone as wrongfully detained, including:

- the detention appears to be because the individual sought to obtain, exercise, defend, or promote freedom of the press, freedom of religion, or the right to peacefully assemble;
- independent nongovernmental organizations or journalists have raised legitimate questions about the innocence of the detained individual; and
- United States diplomatic engagement is likely necessary to secure the release of the detained individual.

In Min Zin's case, these criteria are clearly met. Multiple independent nongovernmental organizations and news outlets have questioned the legitimacy of Min Zin's detention. Min Zin's detention is connected to his exercise of his unalienable rights in pursuing academic research that includes analysis of China and Chinese malign influence in neighboring Myanmar. Furthermore, direct engagement by the United States government will be necessary to secure his release because China sees Min Zin and his research as a threat. As part of their analysis, Min Zin and his organization have highlighted China's hypocritical meddling in Myanmar, [conducting](#) a survey in which a majority of respondents noted "China's interference in Myanmar's internal armed conflicts and security sector as the greatest challenge in bilateral relations." They also have analyzed connections between China and massive online scam operations that defraud Americans and others of billions of dollars a year.

We are grateful for your actions to secure the release of Pastor Ezra Jin, something that has been likened to a diplomatic miracle. Min Zin also faces a difficult road to freedom, but as an American citizen, it is critical that the United States government act in this case as well. It would set a dangerous precedent if China can arrest American citizens simply for doing research, and it is a violation of the May summit agreement which seeks "strategic stability on the basis of fairness and reciprocity." It is therefore in America's strategic interests to make clear to Chairman Xi and the Chinese Communist Party that this behavior will not be tolerated.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

****Organizations are listed for identification purposes only and do not imply endorsement***

Elliott Abrams
Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations

Robert Wilkie
Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs;
Chair of American Security, America First Policy Institute

Matt Pottinger
Former Assistant to the President;
Former Deputy National Security Advisor

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Cc: Secretary of State Marco Rubio



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China Coordinator and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs Joshua Young