

Chief Procurator Zhang Bencai
Shanghai People's Procuratorate
648, Jianguo West Road,
Xuhui District, Shanghai Shi 20000
People's Republic of China

Dear Chief Procurator Zhang:

I am writing to express my grave concern for citizen journalist **Zhang Zhan (張展)**, who has been detained by police in Shanghai and is currently being held at Pudong New District Detention Centre. She is being arbitrarily detained simply for exercising her human right to freedom of opinion and expression, as enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights .

Zhang Zhan travelled to Wuhan in February 2020 to report on the COVID-19 outbreak there. She reported on the detention of independent reporters, as well as the harassment of victims' family members. She was indicted on 15 September on charges of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" (寻衅滋事罪), for which she faces up to five years in prison. I find it deeply disturbing that she is facing such punishment merely for reporting news about a matter of public interest.

Zhang Zhan has chosen to be on hunger strike as a way of protesting her detention and asserting her innocence. Despite her intention to continue, the authorities in the detention centre have reportedly force-fed her against her will. She is also made to wear leg shackles and her hands have been restrained 24 hours a day for more than three months. These actions imposed on Zhang Zhan violate the absolute prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment, which is a violation of China's obligations under international human rights law. I am extremely worried about the impact these actions have had on Zhang Zhan's health, which has deteriorated rapidly since September, and have grave concerns for her health and well-being.

I therefore call on you to:

- **Release Zhang Zhan immediately and unconditionally, unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that she has committed an internationally recognized offence and is granted a fair trial in line with international standards;**
- **Respect Zhang Zhan's right to health, autonomy and expression, stop force-feeding her unless medically necessary and legitimately carried out, and ensure that she has prompt and regular access to medical attention and adequate health care.**
- **Pending her release, ensure that Zhang Zhan has regular, unrestricted access to family and lawyers of her choice and is not subject to torture or other ill-treatment;**

Yours sincerely,