# Concerns Arise Over Whereabouts of Chinese Journalist Zhang Zhan Following Scheduled Release



On May 13, 2024, concerns arose regarding the whereabouts of Chinese citizen journalist Zhang Zhan, whose release from Shanghai Women’s Prison was expected but unconfirmed. Zhang, a 40-year-old former lawyer from Shanghai, was arrested in May 2020 after reporting from Wuhan about the COVID-19 outbreak. In December 2020, she was convicted on charges of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble," commonly used in political cases in China.

Zhang traveled to Wuhan in early 2020, sharing firsthand accounts of the pandemic's impact through social media, which contrasted with official reports. Her work included images and stories from hospitals and deserted streets during the initial outbreak. Her health reportedly declined significantly while imprisoned, due to a prolonged hunger strike, leading to forced feeding as her condition worsened.

As of her scheduled release date, Zhang's lawyers and family had not confirmed her freedom, nor could they establish communication with her. Activists attempting to verify her release and whereabouts faced obstacles, including interceptions by authorities.

The international community, including the advocacy group Reporters Without Borders, expressed concerns over potential intimidation by Chinese authorities towards those advocating for Zhang's case internationally.