# Chinese Officials Attempt to Block Australian Journalist Cheng Lei from Press Conference, Heightening Tensions



Chinese officials attempted to block Australian journalist Cheng Lei from appearing on camera during a press conference at Canberra's Parliament House on June 17, 2024. The event featured Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Chinese Premier Li Qiang, marking the first visit by a Chinese premier to Australia in seven years.

Despite polite requests from Australian officials, an embassy official repeatedly positioned himself to obstruct Lei, who was released from a Chinese prison last year after being detained on charges of “illegally supplying state secrets overseas.” Australian officials eventually physically intervened to shield her view.

Lei described the actions of the Chinese officials as going to "great lengths" to hide her from cameras, calling it a "bad look." Australian officials defended her position, ensuring she was visible during the press conference. The incident coincided with rival demonstrators outside Parliament House, comprising pro-China groups and supporters of Tibetan independence, resulting in heightened tensions.

Prime Minister Albanese, who did not witness the incident, emphasized the importance of allowing full participation in such events. This encounter underscored ongoing tensions and efforts to stabilize the relationship between Australia and China.