

August 5, 2026

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

Re: The Maizhong ("Seed of Wheat") Church Case in Fuyang, Anhui Province, China —
A Request to Raise Our Case with President Xi Jinping

Dear Mr. President:

Greetings, and thank you for your continued leadership in defending religious freedom and human rights around the world.

We especially want to thank you for helping secure the release of Pastor Ezra Jin and enabling him to reunite with his family in the United States after eight years of forced separation. His release is a great victory and has given hope to many persecuted Christians in China.

We are Xu Chao, Li Yunyan, and Li Mei, the wives of three Christian leaders detained in the Maizhong ("Seed of Wheat") Church case in Fuyang, Anhui Province. Our husbands—Pastor Zhang Sen, Pastor Chang Shun, and Elder Ma Tao—have been imprisoned for more than one year since their arrests in June 2025.

Before your visit to China this past May, we wrote to you and invited you to observe the trial of our husbands. Their case is a representative example of the Chinese government's ongoing persecution of independent house churches.

Following our letter, the Yingzhou District People's Court in Fuyang held the trial on June 9–10, 2026. Our husbands were charged with the crime of "organizing illegal gatherings." The prosecution relied on the following so-called evidence:

1. Pastor Zhang Sen went to the detention center to welcome home fellow Christians who had been released after serving administrative detention for participating in ordinary worship services.
2. Pastor Zhang Sen accepted an invitation to officiate the wedding of members of our congregation.
3. We provided Christian home education for our own children.
4. Members of our church gathered in private homes to pray, worship, and encourage one another.

These peaceful activities are protected under Article 36 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, which guarantees freedom of religious belief. They caused no harm to society and violated no one's lawful rights or interests. They are simply the ordinary expressions of Christians who seek to love God and love their neighbors. That these acts have been treated as criminal offenses is both tragic and deeply ironic.

Since our husbands were arrested in June 2025, they have now been detained for more than a year. Together, our three families have nine children who miss their fathers every day.

Mr. President, we have learned that President Xi Jinping is expected to visit the United States in September and that you will meet with him. We respectfully and earnestly ask that you raise the Maizhong Church case directly with President Xi and urge the immediate release of Pastor Zhang Sen, Pastor Chang Shun, and Elder Ma Tao.

We also respectfully ask that you invite President Xi to attend an American church service on a Sunday so that he can witness firsthand the genuine life of Christian believers—how we worship God, love one another, strengthen our families, and serve our communities.

We believe that greater understanding can help dispel the Chinese government's longstanding misconceptions and hostility toward Christians. We sincerely hope that China's leaders will one day allow the country's millions of house church Christians to worship freely and peacefully.

Religious freedom is not only a fundamental human right but also a value shared by people of goodwill throughout the world. Every person who seeks to worship according to the dictates of conscience deserves respect and protection.

Finally, please know that we continue to pray for you and your administration as you work to defend religious freedom around the world.

Thank you for your consideration. May God bless you and grant you wisdom, courage, and strength.

Respectfully yours,

Xu Chao
Wife of Pastor Zhang Sen

Li Yunyan
Wife of Pastor Chang Shun

Li Mei
Wife of Elder Ma Tao