

President Hu Jintao
President of the People's Republic of China
Yongdingmenjie, Beijing 100032
People's Republic of China

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my grave concern regarding the imprisonment of journalist Shi Tao who was convicted on April 27, 2005 of illegally providing state secrets overseas, and sentenced to 10 years in prison. Shi Tao's conviction results from his legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of speech and expression.

Shi Tao was convicted following a trial that violated international due process standards. His conviction also has broader implications for the independence of the media. Protecting and encouraging an independent media is one of the best ways to guarantee the right to freedom of expression and information, as enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which the PRC is a signatory, and Article 35 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

I therefore urge the PRC to immediately and unconditionally release Shi Tao and others imprisoned for the legitimate exercise of their right to freedom to expression; ratify the ICCPR, which the PRC has stated it will ratify on numerous occasions; and implement and fulfill the right to freedom of expression enshrined in the Constitution, including by instituting greater protections for members of the press.

Sincerely,