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Dear Secretary Rubio,

I write to commend you and the State Department (“Department”) for the October 19th, 2026, update to the Department’s advisory statement for Americans considering travel to the People’s Republic of China (“PRC”). The Department’s new guidelines emphasize the Chinese Communist Party’s (“CCP”) appalling record of arbitrary and unlawful detention of Americans and detail how the PRC’s sweeping national security laws give the CCP “broad discretion to detain or interrogate foreign nationals” and the ability to place exit bans on Americans “without fair and transparent processes under the law.”¹ While I applaud this update, I respectfully urge for you to elevate China’s Travel Advisory to “Level 3: Reconsider Travel” and formally list Mr. Min Zin and Dr. Youlin Chen as clear cases of unlawfully detained Americans on the website.

Countering the PRC’s state repression tactics is a critical component of my agenda as the Chairwoman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee’s East Asia and Pacific Subcommittee. On September 16th, 2026, my Subcommittee hosted the hearing, “Lives, not Leverage: The Long Arm of China and North Korea’s Repression” to expose both regimes’ human rights abuses and discuss improvements to the federal government’s approach towards PRC detentions.² During the hearing, I asked Jamestown Foundation President Peter Mattis whether the State Department should change the PRC’s travel designation from “Level 2: Exercise Increased Caution” to “Level 3: Reconsider Travel.” Not only did Mr. Mattis agree, but he also argued that it would be useful for those travel advisories to explicitly give examples of detention.

Mr. Min Zin and Dr. Youlin Chen are Americans who have been formally designated by the Department as wrongfully detained by China. Chinese authorities detained Mr. Zin, executive director of the think tank ISP-Myanmar and a scholar from the University of California, Berkeley, on June 3rd, 2026, following his arrival in China for an academic conference. Similarly, Dr. Chen is an American seismologist who has been detained by the CCP since November 2024. An August 20th, 2026, statement from Assistant Secretary of State Dylan Johnson noted that the

¹ <https://travel.state.gov/en/international-travel/travel-advisories/china.html>

² <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/committee-activity/hearings/lives-not-leverage-the-long-arm-of-china-and-north-korea-s-repression>

State Department will continue to call for the release of both men³, making them important additions to the travel advisory.

I also strongly encourage the State Department to consider raising the PRC travel advisory from Level 2 to Level 3. The State Department's travel advisory is explicit: "Americans are at serious risk of wrongful detention by the Government of China." Unlike the non-state risks in other nations that fall into the Level 2 category – including allies Italy, Germany, and the United Kingdom – the risk of traveling to China is the state apparatus itself, making the risks constant and country-wide. Further, the change would institute a formal, semiannual review of China's travel status, reflecting the heightened vigilance which the State Department advises American citizens to exercise.

Americans must be aware that traveling to a key adversarial nation comes with serious risks and potential consequences. Adopting these recommendations would immensely benefit how Americans approach travel to the PRC, and I hope you will take them into serious consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Y. Kim', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Rep. Young Kim
Member of Congress

³ <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesman/2026/08/statement-from-assistant-secretary-dylan-johnson-on-wrongful-detention-designation-for-u-s-citizen-min-zin/>