

Chief Prosecutor
Li Jun
Suzhou City People's Procuratorate
No. 388 Jiefang East Road
Gusu District, Suzhou City
Jiangsu Province, 215000
CHINA

December 2024

Yu Wensheng (余文生) and Xu Yan (徐艳)

Dear Chief Prosecutor,

I am deeply concerned about the case of human rights lawyer Yu Wensheng (余文生) and his wife Xu Yan (徐艳), who have been sentenced to three years and one year and nine months in prison respectively for "inciting subversion of state power". The couple were taken into police custody while en route to a meeting with the delegation of the European Union to China in Beijing in April 2023. They have been sentenced solely for the exercise of their human rights, and their prison conditions are dreadful.

Xu Yan has reportedly lost 14kg since being detained and the conditions of her detention in Beijing may have amounted to torture or other ill-treatment. They have now been transferred to Suzhou Detention Centre in Jiangsu province, some 1000km away from their Beijing home. Their 19-year-old son, who now lives alone, has faced a serious deterioration of his mental health over the years due to his parents' imprisonment.

I therefore urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Yu Wensheng and his wife Xu Yan, as they have been convicted solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression. Pending their release, please ensure they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment and are given unrestricted access to their family members as well as adequate medical care. In addition, please ensure that all human rights defenders in China are protected, and that any defender who engages with diplomats and the United Nations human rights mechanisms may do so free from reprisals or intimidation.

Sincerely,