

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 19, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write to express deep concern about the ongoing detention of Pastor “Ezra” Jin Mingri and other leaders of Zion Church by the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and to urge the Department of State to press for their release.

Pastor Jin, the 56-year-old founder and senior pastor of Beijing’s Zion Church, was detained on October 10, 2025, along with nearly thirty other church leaders, on allegations of “illegal dissemination of information online.” Public reports indicate that formal indictments may soon follow, making this a critical moment for U.S. engagement on their cases. Strong and visible advocacy from the United States can help sustain international pressure, support efforts to secure their release, and show Chinese authorities that the world is watching. We urge you to seize this moment.

Pastor Jin founded Zion Church in 2007. What began as a small congregation grew to more than 1,500 members before PRC authorities shut it down and confiscated its property in 2018 after Pastor Jin refused to allow surveillance cameras to be installed in the sanctuary. Following that raid, Pastor Jin traveled to the United States with his family. His wife and three children, including two sons and a daughter who are U.S. citizens, remain here. Despite the risks, Pastor Jin later returned to Beijing to continue leading Zion Church and has remained a consistent voice for peaceful religious practice in China.

Zion Church is one of the largest unregistered house churches in China, with online prayer services that draw thousands of participants. Its growth and independence outside state control have made it a target of the PRC’s broader crackdown on Christians and other religious minorities. This campaign is part of President Xi Jinping’s effort to “Sinicize” religion and bring faith communities under government supervision.

The October 10 detentions represent the largest coordinated crackdown on an urban house church in four decades and underscore a troubling reality: the Chinese government is targeting people of faith simply for worshipping freely.

We commend your statement in support of Pastor Jin and the other detained Zion Church leaders on October 12. We urge you to follow up that statement with continued diplomatic engagement, to press your PRC counterparts to release Pastor Jin and the other detained church leaders, and to make clear that the United States will continue to speak out for freedom of belief and worship.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



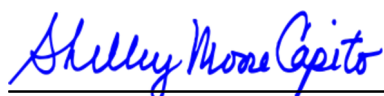
Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



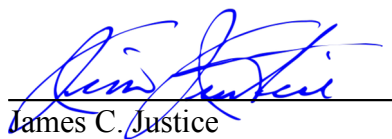
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United States Senator



Shelley Moore Capito
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Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



James C. Justice
United States Senator