

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 19, 2021

Ambassador Qin Gang
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
in the United States of America
3505 International Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008 U.S.A.

Dear Ambassador Qin Gang,

We write with great concern regarding the safety and wellbeing of PRC citizen and professional tennis player, Peng Shuai. As you are undoubtedly aware, Peng has not been seen in the two weeks since her sexual assault allegations against former Vice Premier of the People's Republic of China, Zhang Gaoli.

On November 2, 2021, Peng posted from her social media account a detailed allegation of sexual misconduct against Zhang. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) immediately removed this post and censored any mention of the allegations and Peng's post from social media platforms. Since then, the CCP has censored broadcast reporting of Peng's allegation and reporting on her disappearance. Censorship of CCP human rights abuses is unfortunately a common occurrence.

The international community's concerns about Peng's safety are growing. Peng has disappeared from the public and has not issued an attributable statement since November 2nd. On November 17th, PRC state media published a mysterious statement which they purported to be an email from Peng repudiating her claims and attempting to alleviate concerns about her safety. The statement has been widely reported as a probable fabrication. We share the skepticism regarding Peng's freedom and whereabouts.

The CCP has a long history of oppressing athletes and coercing sports organizations. The abuse and detention of American basketball player Jeff Harper is fresh in the world's mind, as are the extensive reports of abuse at NBA training facilities in the PRC. Within the United States Congress, this behavior underscores concerns of athlete safety at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics and further discredits the PRC as an appropriate host of the Games.

The CCP has also repeatedly censored, detained, and punished women's' rights advocates, individuals involved with the #metoo movement, and those who come forward with sexual assault claims. We want to draw your attention to a sentence in Peng's original post: "I couldn't describe how disgusted I was, and how many times I asked myself am I still a human? I feel like a walking corpse." It is the responsibility of a state to protect those who fight such injustice, not to abuse them further.

We condemn the CCP's weaponization of censorship and demand a full and transparent investigation into Peng's claims. We demand proof of Peng's safety and whereabouts. Finally, if in fact Peng is being held in detention or confinement by PRC authorities, we demand her immediate release.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Waltz", written in a cursive style.

Michael Waltz
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael T. McCaul", written in a cursive style.

Michael McCaul
Member of Congress