

URGENT ACTION

YOUNG STUDENT TARGETED FOR PEACEFUL ACTIVISM ABROAD

Zhang Yadi, also known as Tara, went missing in Yunnan Province in southwest China on 31 July 2025. She had returned home following university in France, where she was involved in human rights advocacy and volunteered with networks bringing together overseas Chinese students. Reports indicate she was taken away by state security officers and is being held incommunicado on suspicion of “inciting separatism”. If convicted, she could face up to five years in prison, or more if deemed a “ringleader” or if the offense is considered “serious.”

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Minister Chen Yixin,
Ministry of State Security
No. 14 East Chang'an Avenue, Dongcheng District,
Beijing, 100006
People's Republic of China

Copy to: Chinese Embassy in Your Country

Dear Minister Chen,

I am writing to express my grave concern for young Chinese student **Zhang Yadi (张雅笛)**, also known as Tara, who is reportedly being held at the Changsha State Security Bureau detention centre on charges of “inciting separatism” (煽动分裂国家罪). Her detention and the charges brought against her appear to stem from her peaceful volunteer activism.

My distress is heightened by concerns that the efforts by her family to arrange a lawyer have been unsuccessful. On 16 September, prominent human rights lawyer Jiang Tianyong traveled to Changsha to offer legal assistance in Zhang Yadi's case. He was taken away by local state security officers after meeting with Zhang Yadi's mother at a café, and later released. To date, all requests for Zhang Yadi to meet with a lawyer have been denied.

At just 22 years old, Zhang Yadi had planned to begin her Master's degree in Anthropology at SOAS University of London in September 2025. Instead, she is now being held incommunicado at a detention centre and faces serious risk of torture or other ill-treatment. I am deeply concerned for her safety and well-being.

I therefore call on you to:

- **Release Zhang Yadi immediately and unconditionally;**
- **Pending her release, ensure that Zhang Yadi's rights are fully protected, and in particular that she is not subject to torture or other ill-treatment and that she has regular, unrestricted access to her family and lawyers of her or their choosing;**
- **Cease harassing and threatening Zhang's family members, legal support and individuals who are supporting this case.**

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Zhang Yadi, also known as Tara, went to France in August 2022 to pursue her university studies. While abroad, she was actively engaged in public affairs concerning both China and global issues. As a dedicated volunteer, she participated in various civic initiatives.

Before she was taken into custody, Tara had recently returned to China after graduating from university in Paris, France. She had been awarded a master's scholarship to pursue a Master's degree in anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, starting in September 2025. According to reports, she is now being held incommunicado at the Changsha State Security Bureau Detention Center

Tara turned 22 in July. She has a French-Tibetan partner and a white cat, both of whom are still in France, waiting for Tara to return home and be reunited with them.

The fact that Tara's peaceful volunteer work has been cited as evidence of criminal activity and the use of vague charges like "separatism" or "inciting separatism" are deeply concerning. Yet this is not an isolated incident. Tara's case is part of a broader pattern of violations targeting those who advocate for human rights, both within China and abroad. Amnesty International documented numerous cases in the 2024 report [On my campus, I am afraid](#) detailing how the Chinese authorities have systematically harassed and targeted overseas youth activists and their families.

The Chinese government has recognised that international academic exchanges contribute to China's economic and social development. However, many international students from China are living and studying with the constant fear of being targeted under China and Hong Kong's national security and intelligence laws and regulations, or otherwise being subjected to surveillance, harassment or intimidation by Chinese authorities or their agents in connection with the exercise of their human rights. Chinese authorities' efforts to curtail academic freedom and other rights beyond China's borders is part of a phenomenon increasingly referred to as "transnational repression", which refers to Chinese authorities' actions to silence, control or deter dissent and criticism by overseas Chinese students and others, in violation of their human rights.

In recent years, many of these overseas students have taken part in public criticism of the Chinese government, including through international solidarity activities with the anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, 2019 pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, and the 2022 "Sitong Bridge" and "White Paper" protests in mainland China. Their participation has drawn the attention of – and often repercussions from – Chinese authorities, such as the harassment and intimidation of the students' family members based in China, as well as state surveillance of student activities overseas and censorship of their online expression.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English or Chinese

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 28 February 2026. Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Zhang Yadi (She/her - Zhang is her surname, Yadi is her given name)