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Hon. Chrystia Freeland
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne
Minister of International Trade

November 30, 2017

Re: John Chang and Allison Lu

Dear Ministers,

We write today with urgency regarding the consular case of Canadian citizens John Chang and Allison Lu, a case which also has serious implications for Canadian trade with China. On the eve of the Prime Minister's visit to China, we request the government negotiate the release of Mr. Chang and ensure the immediate return of the couple to Canada.

As you know, this consular case has been ongoing since John Chang and Allison Lu were detained in China in March 2016 under charges of under-reporting the value of wine they export from Canada. Mr. Chang is still in Chinese custody and Ms. Lu's Canadian passport has been seized, barring her from leaving China.

The last judicial hearing on this case was held in May 2017 and there has been no decision on Mr. Chang's bail application submitted that same month. This constitutes an unusual delay in legal proceedings.

Ministers, we are quite concerned about Mr. Chang's health, which has deteriorated in prison. The family has been denied access to Mr. Chang's medical records since he has been in prison. This is unacceptable.

We understand Lulu Island Winery has appealed to Global Affairs Canada for help on the grounds that this is not only a consular case, but also a violation of China's international trade obligations under the WTO's Customs Valuation Agreement. We are disappointed to learn that Global Affairs Canada has done little to answer these appeals.

We are also concerned about the implications this case has for future trade relations between Canada and China, at a time when Canada is considering entering into free trade negotiations with China. In addition to our serious concerns about China's human rights record and its treatment of other Canadian citizens such as Huseyin Celil, this case raises significant questions about China's respect for the rule of law. How can the government assure Canadians that trade with China is safe when basic business disputes are dealt with in such a manner?

We urge Canada to do everything in its power to ensure John Chang and Allison Lu return home immediately, and ask for an update on this case immediately following the Prime Minister's visit.

Sincerely,



Hélène Laverdière, MP
NDP Foreign Affairs Critic



Tracey Ramsey, MP
NDP International Trade Critic

CC:

Omar Alghabra, MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Consular Affairs
Amy Chang