

September 15, 2026

TO: Congressional-Executive Commission on China
Senator Dan Sullivan, Chair
Representative Chris Smith, Co-Chair
Commission Members

RE: Urgent appeal to raise the conviction of Cardinal Zen along with fellow appellants with President Xi.

A priority for President Trump's human rights agenda when talking with President Xi must include the recent conviction by the Hong Kong court against Cardinal Zen and fellow appellants. As concerned citizens, we ask that this letter and linked Hong Kong court ruling be placed in the record at the September 16th Commission hearing along with the examination of Jimmy Lai.

If China is for human rights, President Xi must bring justice and restore the reputation for 94-year-old Cardinal Zen! We ask that President Trump raise this case to President Xi when he visits Washington. The conviction against Cardinal Zen that just came out on September 3, 2026 should be condemned globally as an unacceptable restriction of the freedom of association.

Cardinal Zen, a long time advocate for religious and political freedoms in China, led the Diocese of Hong Kong from 2002 to 2009. In May 2022, Cardinal Zen along with four other defendants was arrested on suspicion of collusion with foreign forces under the Hong Kong's national security law. The cardinal was fined over an unregistered fund, called the 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund. This fund paid the legal and medical bills of prisoners, along with compassionate donations to immediate family members of any person who died in a public protest. On September 3 of this month, Hong Kong's Special Administrative Region Court of Appeals upheld Cardinal Zen's conviction for failing to register a fund that aided the 2019 Hong Kong protesters. What many would call a work of mercy, the Hong Kong court has called the fund an "unregistered society." The 122-page court ruling of the High Court of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Court of Appeal issued on September 3, 2026 upheld Cardinal Zen's conviction. (See attached ruling.)

Cardinal Zen, though retired, is still seen as a strong spiritual leader, not only among Catholic activists but non-Catholics as well. Cardinal Zen has always been one of the first persons identifying the traps and dangers in social new legislation and policies that endanger the rights of the people and the Church. These legislative actions usually cloth themselves under attractive promises. The Cardinal's voice is always strong. But he never neglects charity, eg. visiting the prison and supporting activists facing prosecution. He requires Catholic schools to admit children without residence papers who otherwise would be denied education by the Government.... to mention only a few.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

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Link to September 3, 2026 ruling upholding the conviction of Cardinal Zen and others by the High Court of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Court of Appeal: <https://perma.cc/RX8B-F94X>