



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université

July 8, 2020

By email: gov@govonline.cn

His Excellency Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
The State Council General Office
2 Fuyoujie
Xichenqqu
Beijingshi 100017

Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the 72,000 members of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) to condemn the implementation of China's national security law for Hong Kong and the arrest of professor Xu Zhangrun, on July 6th. This arrest and the far-reaching security law imposed on Hong Kong threaten human rights and academic freedom. CAUT implores you to release Xu Zhangrun and repeal the *National Security Act* for Hong Kong.

Professor Xu Zhangrun is well known for his outspoken comments against the government – criticizing its intolerance of debate and the control it has imposed on universities. Now, he has joined a growing list of people who have been imprisoned for exercising their civil and professional rights. This arrest and the law itself effectively curtail protest and freedom of speech.

The law has vaguely defined offences, harsh sentences, and takes control of court processes. Additionally, it has the ability to move cases to mainland China and applies in Hong Kong and to foreign nationals. This over-reaching law will prevent many professors and students currently overseas from returning to Hong Kong for fear that any comments they have made criticizing China will see them arrested and imprisoned.

This law effectively silences any inquiry among Hong Kong academics that leads to criticism of government or any narrative that is contrary to your government's policies. This blatant denial of academic freedom is harmful, unacceptable, and will have grave consequences for higher learning, academic inquiry, and a just society.

Once again, CAUT and its members urge you to release Xu Zhangrun, repeal the *National Security Act* for Hong Kong, and uphold the rights of the people of Hong Kong and China.

Yours sincerely,

David Robinson
Executive Director

c.c. Hon. Francois-Phillippe Champagne, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs
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