



MEDIA RELEASE

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MEAA welcomes return to Australia of journalist Cheng Lei

The union for Australian media workers welcomes the release and repatriation of fellow journalist Cheng Lei today.

Ms Cheng has been reunited with her family in Melbourne this afternoon after more than three years in jail in China on undefined espionage allegations.

Today's news is the culmination of years of campaigning by the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance in alongside other journalist organisations around the world, Ms Cheng's family and friends.

Ms Cheng was arrested in August 2020 for what Chinese authorities described as national security reasons. She was working in China as an anchor for the state-owned China Global Television Network (CGTN). Her mother and two children aged 12 and 14 live in Melbourne.

She was tried in secret last year but at the time of her release, she was still awaiting a verdict.

The federal president of MEAA's Media section, Karen Percy, said the release of Ms Cheng was wonderful news.

"Australian journalists and press freedom advocates will be celebrating that our colleague Cheng Lei has finally been united again with her children in Melbourne," she said.

"From the day she was arrested, her fellow journalists at MEAA have campaigned for her release.

"We have always believed that the charges against her had no substance, and that if due legal process was followed she would be found innocent.

"Meanwhile, she has languished in a jail far from her family and friends for more than three years.

"But today is not a time for recriminations but for celebration that justice has finally been done.

"We commend the advocacy of the Albanese Government and especially Foreign Minister Penny Wong for doggedly pursuing this case. To all the journalists and press freedom supporters who took part in the campaign to free Ms Cheng, thank you.

"But most of all, this is a moment of joy for Ms Cheng's family in Melbourne, her mother and her two young children who she has not seen for three years, and for her partner Nick Coyle, who has left no stone unturned as he sought to have her freed."

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