

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

MICHAEL ABRAMOWITZ *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

—v.—

KARI LAKE, in her official capacity as Senior
Advisor to the Acting CEO of the United States
Agency for Global Media;

VICTOR MORALES, in his official capacity as
Acting CEO of the United States Agency for
Global Media;

and

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR GLOBAL
MEDIA,

Defendants.

Case No. 1:25-cv-00887-RCL

DECLARATION OF GAO YU

1. I am independent Chinese journalist and a two-time recipient of the Courage in Journalism Award from the International Women’s Media Foundation. Born in 1944, I am 81 years old. Because of my reporting I have been imprisoned by the Chinese authorities and I am classified by the government as a tightly controlled dissident.

2. Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, VOA has been classified by the Communist government as a “hostile station.” Generations of Chinese citizens risked their lives to listen to VOA just to access truthful information. After the Cultural Revolution, which lasted from 1966 to 1976, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) somewhat loosened its jamming of VOA broadcasts. Like many others in China, I was able to regularly

tune in to VOA's Mandarin programs. Its reporting was accurate, comprehensive, and objective. Every program clearly and powerfully conveyed U.S. policies and ideals. VOA's programming not only challenged my outdated knowledge, but also subtly reshaped my worldview, outlook on life, and core values.

3. On the morning of June 3, 1989, I was kidnapped by the Beijing State Security Bureau and became the first intellectual arrested during the Tiananmen Movement. Fifteen months later, I was released, but my employer, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, refused to reinstate me. I was forced to become an independent journalist.

4. Through years of reporting and investigation, I came to deeply understand how critical VOA's attention and reporting were to Chinese political prisoners. VOA was not only a spiritual lifeline to the prisoners themselves, but also to their families.

5. Because of my independent reporting, I myself became one of the CCP's key political prisoners. I was arrested and sentenced twice by the CCP regime—on October 2, 1993, and again on April 24, 2014. VOA provided ongoing, factual coverage of my cases, which generated widespread international support. That coverage was a critical source of strength that helped me maintain my dignity during the darkest periods of my life and sustain my long struggle for freedom of speech against the CCP regime.

6. I am still currently classified as a tightly controlled "dissident" in Beijing. The authorities have shut down my Weibo and WeChat accounts, leaving the US-based X (formerly Twitter) as my only way to speak publicly. To force me to stop speaking up on X, in 2020, the Beijing Public Security Bureau pressured my son's employer to fire him—citing "issues related to his mother." He has been unemployed for five years.

7. On August 26, 2024, Chinese authorities cut off my home's Internet, landline, and mobile phone services. At the age of 80, I found myself trapped in Beijing—unable to register for hospital appointments, shop online, pay with cards, call a taxi, or even communicate with relatives. VOA's timely reporting on these incidents helped the world understand the severe and often unimaginable human rights abuses in China.

8. The CCP rules through lies, deceiving its people, and banning truthful speech. In the Internet age, it has built a national firewall, monitoring all cross-border communications, and disrupting, blocking, or censoring content it deems politically unacceptable. Its methods include DNS poisoning, TCP reset attacks, countermeasures against firewall circumvention, and email interception. Such a national firewall not only violates freedom of expression but also serves as a major trade barrier for foreign companies.

9. The CCP's investment in state media, party-controlled websites, and its national firewall is astronomical. Its spending on international propaganda and infiltration of Western mainstream media is equally vast. In this context, shutting down VOA—a highly influential U.S. government media outlet that the CCP regime fears—is akin to cutting off one of America's own arms or slitting its own throat. It is ceding the information battlefield to the authoritarian regime, causing pain for the Chinese people and joy for the CCP.

On this ____ day of April 2025 I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing declaration is true and correct.

Gao Yu

(The ~~first~~ day of April 2025 I decline under penalty of perjury that the foregoing declaration is true and correct.)

03. 1997

