

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN HONG KONG:

HONG KONG WATCH BRIEFING ON EVENTS: DECEMBER 2023

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POLITICAL PRISONERS: ARRESTS, CHARGES & TRIALS

Hong Kong Watch highlights Hong Kong's political prisoners on 75th anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights

On Human Rights Day, to mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), pro-democracy newspaper owner Jimmy Lai's birthday, and the sixth anniversary of the establishment of Hong Kong Watch, Hong Kong Watch released a statement to reaffirm the rights enshrined within the UDHR and call for the release of political prisoners in Hong Kong. The statement underscores that the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has concluded that Hong Kong barrister Chow Hang-Tung is arbitrarily detained and is currently considering the case of Jimmy Lai.¹

Hong Kong Watch Patrons, including the last Governor of Hong Kong Lord Patten of Barnes, the former Foreign Secretary Sir Malcolm Rifkind, Lord Alton of Liverpool, Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws, KC, Sir Geoffrey Nice, KC and MPs Fiona Bruce (Conservative), Sarah Champion (Labour) and Alistair Carmichael (Liberal Democrat), also wrote to the British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, urging them to publicly call for the release of Jimmy Lai, who has been behind bars in Hong Kong more than 1,100 consecutive days.²

Jimmy Lai begins national security trial in Hong Kong

Jimmy Lai's national security trial began on 18 December 2023.³ Before adjourning for the Christmas holiday, a Hong Kong court rejected a bid from Mr Lai to drop his alleged sedition charge.⁴ Judge Esther Toh said, "We are of the view the charge is not time-barred. So the application of the defence must fail."⁵

However, despite the Hong Kong authorities' wishes, Mr Lai's high-profile trial without a jury and the lawyer of his choice is not without international pressure. Ahead of Mr Lai's trial, British Foreign Secretary David Cameron released a statement, urging the Hong Kong authorities to "end their prosecution and release Jimmy Lai," a "British citizen."⁶ The US and EU also released statements, calling for the release of Mr Lai and deploring the charges

¹<https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/5/hong-kong-watch-highlights-hong-kongs-political-prisoners-on-75th-anniversary-of-universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

²<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58ecfa82e3df284d3a13dd41/t/6571b1b9c87f466b826d4f0d/1701949883571/Letter+to+FCDO+on+Jimmy+Lai%27s+76th+Birthday-2.pdf>

³ <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/08/18/national-security-trial-of-hong-kong-media-mogul-jimmy-lai-to-be-delayed-again-to-december/>

⁴ <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/hong-kong-court-rejects-activist-publisher-jimmy-lais-105861784>

⁵<https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/22/political-prisoner-trial-developments-in-hong-kong-this-week-18-december-22-december>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-statement-on-jimmy-lais-national-security-trial>

against him, respectively.⁷ The Canadian Senate and House of Commons unanimously supported motions calling for Mr Lai's immediate release.⁸

This follows the British Foreign Secretary's meeting with Sebastien Lai, son of Jimmy Lai, on 12 December 2023. Before the meeting, Hong Kong Watch's co-founder and Chief Executive Benedict Rogers wrote to Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton to offer an update on the situation in Hong Kong and that of British National (Overseas) Hong Kongers as well as thanking him for agreeing to meet with Sebastien Lai.⁹

Mr Rogers also spoke at an event in Parliament chaired by Hong Kong Watch Patron Lord Alton of Liverpool, to highlight Jimmy Lai's upcoming National Security Law trial, call on the British government to demand Mr Lai's immediate and unconditional release, and ensure that Mr Lai's case features prominently in China's Universal Periodic Review at the United Nations in January.¹⁰ Mr Rogers said Mr Lai's case is "emblematic" of the dismantling of Hong Kong's press freedom, freedom of expression, democracy and the rule of law, and cited the increasing threats to freedom of religion or belief in the city, detailed in Hong Kong Watch's new report, *Sell Out My Soul: The Impending Threats to Freedom of Religion or Belief in Hong Kong*.¹¹

Jimmy Lai is a British citizen who founded the now-defunct newspaper *Apple Daily*, the largest pro-democracy newspaper in Hong Kong. After Beijing imposed the National Security Law in June 2020, charges were issued against Mr Lai including organising and inciting others to participate in an unauthorised candlelight vigil and participation in peaceful protests. Mr Lai was detained on 31 December 2020, and his trial is expected to last 80 days. The latest developments can be found on the Hong Kong Watch website.¹²

Hong Kong national security police issue arrest warrants and bounties against five exiled Hong Kong pro-democracy activists

The Hong Kong national security police issued five more arrest warrants with HK\$1 million (£101,118) bounties for five exiled Hong Kongers who now live in the US and UK.

Joey Siu and Frances Hui, both 24 and based in the US, are charged with alleged "collusion" between October 2020 and July 2023 and October 2020 and January 2022, respectively. Joey Siu works as a Program Manager at the National Democratic Institute and previously worked

⁷ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/hong-kong-statement-spokesperson-start-national-security-trial-against-jimmy-lai_en

⁸ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/18/canadian-and-uk-parliaments-call-for-the-release-of-jimmy-lai>

⁹ <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58ecfa82e3df284d3a13dd41/t/65776fe3ec0e25190a84ed23/1702326245561/Letter+to+Lord+David+Cameron+on+Hong+Kong-2.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/12/hong-kong-watch-ceo-benedict-rogers-speaks-alongside-sebastien-lai-and-jimmy-lai-s-international-legal-team-in-parliament>

¹¹ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/11/7/hong-kong-watch-launches-groundbreaking-new-report-on-threats-to-freedom-of-religion-or-belief-in-hong-kong>

¹² <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/pol-prisoners>

as a Policy Advisor at Hong Kong Watch. Frances Hui is a Policy and Advocacy Coordinator at the Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation.

Simon Cheng, 33, is charged with alleged “incitement to secession” and “collusion” between August 2020 and June 2022. Simon Cheng is based in the UK and founded Hongkongers in Britain, the largest UK-wide Hong Kong diaspora organisation. Johnny Fok, 42, and Tony Choi, 46, are also based in the UK and are charged with alleged “incitement to secession and incitement to subversion.”¹³

In response to the bounties, Hong Kong Watch and 86 other Hong Kong civil society and human rights organisations from around the world signed a joint statement calling on governments to introduce measures to protect the rights and freedoms of Hong Kong activists in exile, particularly those who have been granted asylum and face past and current threats from Beijing.¹⁴

The five arrest warrants follow the arrest warrants and bounties issued for eight overseas Hong Kong pro-democracy activists in July 2023: Ted Hui, Dennis Kwok, Nathan Law, Anna Kwok, Elmer Yuen, Mung Siu-Tat, Finn Lau and Kevin Yam. Hong Kong Watch condemned these arrest warrants as well as the many instances of the Hong Kong government targeting their family and colleagues in Hong Kong.¹⁵

Four individuals arrested for allegedly providing financial assistance to two wanted overseas Hong Kong pro-democracy activists

The Hong Kong national security police arrested two men and two women, aged between 29 and 68, for allegedly providing financial assistance for activities endangering national security to Nathan Law and Ted Hui, two wanted overseas Hong Kong pro-democracy activists who were issued arrest warrants and bounties in July 2023.¹⁶

The arrest of these four individuals were the first arrests on financial assistance grounds under the National Security Law, which carries a maximum sentence of ten years in prison. These arrests may have serious implications for other family members and colleagues of the 13 total overseas Hong Kong activists who have arrest warrants and bounties for allegedly endangering national security.

¹³<https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/14/hong-kong-watch-condemns-targeting-of-five-exiled-hong-kong-pro-democracy-activists>

¹⁴<https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/20/80-human-rights-organisations-sign-joint-statement-urging-government-action-in-response-to-latest-arrest-warrants-and-bounties-on-hong-kong-pro-democracy-activists>

¹⁵<https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/7/3/hkw-condemns-the-hk-national-security-polices-targeting-of-pro-democracy-activists-overseas>

¹⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/hong-kong-police-issue-arrest-warrants-5-more-overseas-activists-2023-12-14/>

Hong Kong Watch previously condemned the arrest warrants and bounties placed on Nathan Law and Ted Hui as well as the Hong Kong government's intimidation of their families in Hong Kong.¹⁷

The trial of the 47 democrats comes to a close

The trial of the 47 democrats came to a close on 4 December 2023, after ten months of a case that was initially expected to last four months. The judge said there are “no guarantees” as to when the verdict will be released.¹⁸

During the closing arguments, Steven Kwan, who represented ex-District Councillor Lee Yue-shun, challenged lead prosecutor Jonathan Man by arguing that to be guilty of subversion, an individual must have threatened to use or have used violence.

Trevor Beel, representing former journalist Gwyneth Ho, argued that the charge for “intent to commit subversion” depends on the definition of what constitutes an offence, which the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress has yet to define. Mr Beel said, “This charge of conspiracy is like no other charge that has come before the courts. Everything was conducted openly for the simple reason that nobody knew what they were doing was illegal.”

The defendants who participated in the closing arguments include Benny Tai, Joshua Wong, Gwyneth Ho, Winnie Yu, and Gordon Ng. A full list and biographies of the 47 democrats are available on the Hong Kong Watch Political Prisoner Database.¹⁹

The trial of the 47 democrats is one of the most significant cases since the passage of the National Security Law, because it will set a precedent for a broad interpretation of the NSL and cement its impact on civil society in Hong Kong.²⁰

Bail denied to Hong Kong lawyer Chow Hang-tung

A Hong Kong court rejected a bail application from Hong Kong human rights lawyer Chow Hang-tung. Hong Kong High Court judge Andrew Chan said he could not grant bail “because Chow might carry out acts that endanger national security.”²¹

This followed Chow Hang-tung appearing at the High Court in early December alongside Tang Ngok-kwan and Tsui Hon-kwong to appeal their conviction and sentencing in March

¹⁷<https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/14/hong-kong-watch-condemns-targeting-of-five-exiled-hong-kong-pro-democracy-activists>

¹⁸<https://hongkongfp.com/2023/12/04/hong-kong-47-landmark-national-security-trial-comes-to-a-close-with-no-guarantees-of-when-verdict-is-expected/>

¹⁹ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/political-prisoners>

²⁰ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/4/political-prisoner-trial-developments-in-hong-kong-this-week>

²¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/bail-denied-hong-kong-rights-lawyer-landmark-security-case-2023-12-21/>

2023 to four-and-a-half months in jail for failing to provide personal information and information regarding the now-disbanded Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China to the national security police in August 2021. Judge Anna Lai said the defendants can expect a verdict within three months.

Chow was also charged with “inciting others to participate in an unauthorised assembly” for a Tiananmen Square Massacre vigil in 2021, and has been remanded in custody since September 2021. If convicted of “inciting subversion of state power,” she faces potential 10 years’ imprisonment. Chow’s trial is expected to begin in late 2024.²²

Marilyn Tang receives six-month jail sentence for removing potential evidence against sister and labour rights activist Elizabeth Tang

Marilyn Tang, sister of labour rights activist Elizabeth Tang received a six-month jail sentence for “perverting the course of justice” after she removed electronic devices from her sister’s home on the day her sister was arrested in March 2023. In June 2023, Elizabeth Tang was charged with “colluding with foreign forces” after visiting her husband in prison following her move to the UK in 2021.²³

Appearing before the West Kowloon Magistrates’ Court on 7 December 2023, Marilyn Tang admitted that she perverted the course of justice. Marilyn Tang was charged with “perverting the course of justice” in September this year, six months after her initial arrest.²⁴ She was granted bail and required to surrender her travel documents. CCTV footage shows Marilyn Tang visiting her sister’s home twice on the day of her sister’s arrest, for 69 minutes and 41 minutes respectively, and prior to the arrival of the police.²⁵

Pro-democracy activist Agnes Chow flees to Canada

Pro-democracy activist Agnes Chow Ting, who has remained silent since being released on bail in Hong Kong in June 2021 and relocating to Canada for study, announced in a social media post that she will not meet bail conditions requiring her return to Hong Kong for fear of threats to her safety and well-being.²⁶ The Hong Kong authorities responded by condemning Chow for committing the “offence of collusion with a foreign country or with

²²<https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/22/political-prisoner-trial-developments-in-hong-kong-this-week-18-december-22-dece-mber>

²³<https://hongkongfp.com/2023/12/21/hong-kong-woman-jailed-for-6-months-over-removing-potential-evidence-against-sister-arrested-under-nat-security-law/>

²⁴ <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/12/07/hong-kong-woman-faces-jail-for-removing-devices-from-home-of-sister-arrested-under-security-law/>

²⁵<https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/22/political-prisoner-trial-developments-in-hong-kong-this-week-18-december-22-dece-mber>

²⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/4/hong-kong-activist-agnes-chow-skips-bail-moves-to-canada>

external elements to endanger national security.”²⁷ Referring to Chow, Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee said, “Fugitives will be pursued for life unless they turn themselves in.”²⁸

In November 2020, Chow was arrested and sentenced to ten months in jail on an unauthorised assembly charge after participating in an alleged unlawful assembly outside Hong Kong police headquarters in June 2020.²⁹ Chow co-founded Demosisto, the now-defunct Hong Kong pro-democracy party, alongside activists Joshua Wong and Nathan Law.

THE STATE OF THE RULE OF LAW AND POLICING

Record-low voter turnout and six arrests during Hong Kong District Council elections

Hong Kong held District Council elections across all 18 Districts in Hong Kong. The participation rate in the elections was 27.54 percent, in contrast to the 2019 elections where participation was 71.2 percent and democratic candidates won by a landslide.

This record-low voter turnout among all post-1997 elections in Hong Kong occurred despite voting hours being extended from 10.30pm to midnight due to a technical glitch in the voting system.

There were also a total of six arrests on voting day over a planned protest outside a polling station and alleged election interference, with 10,000 national security police deployed at polling stations. All candidates were also required to complete national security vetting to ensure only “patriots” were elected.³⁰

The District Council elections prompted numerous international responses, notably from the European Parliament’s Informal Hong Kong Watch Group, which stated, “This sham election will not provide any legitimacy for the political regime in Hong Kong. We will not forget the peaceful opposition and free media that have stood courageously against this repression. In line with previous statements and resolutions of the European Parliament, we reiterate our call for targeted sanctions against John Lee, intensified trial observation, refraining from normalizing the relationship with his regime and steps to educate European companies active in Hong Kong on the political risks of doing business there.”³¹

²⁷ <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202312/04/P2023120400599.htm>

²⁸ <https://www.economist.com/china/2023/12/07/why-agnes-chow-fled-hong-kong-and-isnt-likely-to-return>

²⁹ <https://www.ft.com/content/3a1dd92c-cabf-11e9-a1f4-3669401ba76f>

³⁰ <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/12/11/breaking-poorrest-ever-turnout-for-hong-kongs-district-council-election-6-arrests-during-opposition-free-polls/>

³¹ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/11/european-parliament-informal-hong-kong-watch-group-expresses-concern-over-hong-kong-district-council-elections>

Hong Kong Watch previously published a Briefing on Electoral Reforms and the Erosion of Democracy in Hong Kong, which covers reforms made to the Chief Executive, Legislative Council, and District Council elections in the HKSAR and analyses how, with every electoral reform, the HKSAR is less democratic and more directly controlled by the PRC.³²

Hong Kong Watch welcomes publication of UN documents in advance of Universal Periodic Review

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published three documents in preparation for the upcoming Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of China, which will take place on 23 January 2024. The UPR is a UN review process which every member state is required to go through every four to five years, and is a mechanism to ensure scrutiny of every country's human rights record and recommendations for improvement.

The documents are a Summary of stakeholders' submissions on China, the Compilation of information prepared by the OHCHR, and the National report submitted in accordance with Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21.³³ The Summary highlights points in Hong Kong Watch's submissions, including recommendations to urge China to repeal the National Security Law in Hong Kong, restore the right of defendants to choose their own lawyer, ensure the practice of trial by jury in all national security cases, and stop all attacks against human rights lawyers. The Summary also states that the National Security Law has precipitated attacks on internet freedoms.³⁴

Ahead of the UPR, Hong Kong Watch Patrons Rt Hon Sir Malcolm Rifkind, KC, Sir Geoffrey Nice, KC, Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws, KC, Lord Alton of Liverpool and Alistair Carmichael MP have written a letter to British Foreign Secretary Lord Cameron, urging him to ensure that the UK Mission to the United Nations (UN) raises the human rights situation in Hong Kong in their recommendations at the UPR on China.³⁵

Hong Kong Watch made three joint submissions to the UPR of China, which focus on human rights violations related to the 2019 protests, the National Security Law, civil society, political prisoners, women's rights, and freedom of the media.³⁶

³²<https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/10/3/hong-kong-watch-publishes-briefing-on-electoral-reforms-and-the-erosion-of-democracy-in-hong-kong>

³³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/cn-index>

³⁴ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/21/hong-kong-watch-welcomes-publication-of-un-documents-in-advance-of-universal-periodic-review>

³⁵ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/s/Letter-to-Lord-David-Cameron-on-UPR.pdf>

³⁶ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/7/18/hong-kong-watch-makes-submissions-for-chinas-un-universal-periodic-review>

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Hong Kong Watch hosts a question and answer session with British Parliamentarians from the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties

As part of Hong Kong Watch's political and civic engagement series of Greater London Authority-funded events, Hong Kong Watch hosted a question and answer session with three parliamentarians from the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties. Many Hong Kongers gathered in Portcullis House to hear from Alicia Kearns, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee and Conservative MP for Rutland; Catherine West, Shadow Minister for Asia and the Pacific and Labour MP for Hornsey and Wood Green; and Sarah Olney, Liberal Democrat MP for Richmond Park.

The Parliamentarians shared their thoughts on a number of pressing issues faced by the British National (Overseas) community in the UK. These included security issues around the renewal of HKSAR passports, the ongoing inability of Hong Kongers to access their MPF pension funds, and the ineligibility of BNOs to pay home fees at UK universities. Hong Kongers were able to raise additional issues they had encountered, from visa restrictions on working as a sports coach to the security risks associated with the outsourcing of visa processing to non-governmental organisations.³⁷

EU challenges China on Hong Kong at EU-China summit

President of the European Council Charles Michel and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, accompanied by High Representative Josep Borrell, met with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Chinese Premier Li Qiang in Beijing for the first in-person EU-China summit since 2019. The summit focused on EU-China relations and other international issues including Russia's war in Ukraine and the conflict in Gaza.³⁸

The European Council reported that the EU officials emphasised "the continued erosion of fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong, where China should honour its prior commitments."³⁹ The EU also expressed its desire for the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue of February 2023 to resume and take place in China in 2024.⁴⁰

³⁷ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/6/mps-discuss-bno-issues-in-hong-kong-watch-qampa-session>

³⁸ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/eu-china-summit-december-2023-gx9ba>

³⁹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/12/07/24th-eu-china-summit-engaging-to-promote-our-values-and-defend-our-interests/>

⁴⁰ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/425784_fr

This follows the European Parliament’s resolution on Hong Kong in 2023 which highlights the alarming deterioration in fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, and judicial independence in Hong Kong since Beijing imposed the National Security Law.⁴¹ The European Parliament also previously issued resolutions in 2022 and 2020 on Hong Kong which called on European Member States to prepare concrete responses to the National Security Law and implement lifeboat schemes to allow Hong Kongers to flee from Hong Kong to the EU.⁴²

EU pressed to confront China over human rights violations in Hong Kong

The European Parliament held a plenary debate on EU-China relations, in which the EU was pressed to confront China over its human rights violations in Hong Kong. Members of the European Parliament referred to China as “a partner, but increasingly a competitor and systemic rival.” MEPs also recognised the need to de-risk EU-China trade flows to protect the strategic autonomy of the EU, as well as limit Chinese Communist Party control in EU critical infrastructure and cyberspace.

Following the debate, with 529 out of 616 votes in favour, the EU passed recommendations that encourage the EU to continue engaging pragmatically with China on climate change, financial stability risks and security issues, while proceeding with caution given that the Chinese Communist Party does not hold the same democratic values as EU Member States.⁴³

Referring to recent developments in Hong Kong and Macau as well as the concerning situations in Xinjiang and Tibet, the recommendations urge the EU to call on Beijing to stop committing human rights abuses against religious and ethnic minorities. The recommendations also call on the EU to provide a robust response to Beijing’s efforts to reshape the multilateral rules-based order through plans such as the Belt and Road Initiative.⁴⁴

Hong Kong Watch attends *China In The World Conference* in Taiwan

Hong Kong Watch Research and Policy Advisor Anouk Wear and Policy Advisor Katherine Leung attended the *China in the World Conference* in Taiwan, where they gave a presentation on how digital rights in Hong Kong are impacted by the National Security Law and the sedition law, and how this influences global narratives related to Hong Kong and China.

⁴¹ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/de/press-room/20230609IPR96215/human-rights-breaches-by-russia-in-sudan-and-in-hong-kong>

⁴² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-9-2022-0358_EN.html

⁴³ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/sv/press-room/20231208IPR15781/the-eu-must-respond-to-chinese-efforts-to-change-the-rules-based-order>

⁴⁴ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/13/meps-press-eu-to-confront-china-over-human-rights-violations-in-hong-kong>

Hong Kong Watch also met with Chi Hui-Jung, Commissioner of National Human Rights Commission and Ombudsman of Control Yuan. Commissioner Chi shared her insights regarding the human rights violations faced by Hong Kongers in Taiwan and Taiwanese government policies aimed at assisting Hong Kongers. She also outlined Taiwan's efforts to abide by the standards of international human rights laws, despite not being a member of the United Nations.⁴⁵

This visit follows that of Hong Kong Watch's co-founder and Chief Executive Benedict Rogers to Taiwan in September, where he attended the International Religious Freedom Summit together with Hong Kong Watch Patron and former US-Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, Samuel Brownback. Mr Rogers met with many government officials to discuss the situation in Hong Kong and the future of global democracy.

Hong Kong Watch joins statement urging China to respect rights of lawyers in China and Hong Kong

Hong Kong Watch joined The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, The 29 Principles, The Rights Practice, Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, Lawyers for Lawyers, Free Tibet and Tibetan Community in Britain in a joint statement urging Chinese and Hong Kong authorities to respect the rights of lawyers in China and Hong Kong.

The statement includes specific cases of lawyers who are jailed and facing persecution simply for practising their profession, including Ding Jiaxia, Li Yuhuan, Chang Weiping, Yu Wensheng, Xu Zhiyong, Hao Jinsong, Dennis Kwok and Kevin Yam. The statement then urges the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities to abide by their obligations under national and international law to respect, protect and fulfil human rights by respecting the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers and immediately and unconditionally releasing all lawyers included in the statement, among other key recommendations.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/14/hong-kong-watch-concludes-visit-to-taiwan>

⁴⁶ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/12/16/hong-kong-watch-joins-statement-urging-china-to-respect-rights-of-lawyers-in-china-and-hong-kong>