

September 25, 2023

President Joseph Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We, the undersigned international human rights groups, urge you to take immediate actions in response to the case of independent publisher Jimmy Lai, who will have been in prison in Hong Kong for 1,000 days on September 26, 2023.

Lai was wrongfully detained on December 31, 2020, on charges under the Beijing-imposed National Security Law (NSL). In addition to his current jail sentence for spurious fraud charges, Lai served a 20-month prison sentence for peacefully protesting in 2019 and 2020. After multiple delays to the start of his NSL trial, Lai's trial is now due to begin on December 18.

Jimmy Lai is a 75-year-old husband, father, and entrepreneur who founded *Apple Daily*, a Hong Kong pro-democracy newspaper forcibly shut by the Hong Kong government in 2021 after 500 police officers raided its offices and froze its bank accounts for supporting protests calling for greater democracy in the city and for condemning the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). As the leader of the free world, we implore you to defend the democratic way of life and press freedom in Hong Kong by urging the Hong Kong government to immediately and unconditionally release Jimmy Lai.

Since Beijing imposed the NSL in Hong Kong on June 30, 2020, it has been broadly and arbitrarily applied in arresting 264 individuals for national security crimes, including Jimmy Lai. In court cases to date, the government boasts a 100% conviction rate. The wide scope of NSL-related targeting of academics, media outlets, and civil society organizations has negatively affected millions of Hong Kongers, and the UN Human Rights Committee has recommended that the government take "concrete steps" to repeal the NSL and "in the meantime, refrain from applying it."

To mark Jimmy Lai's 1,000th day in prison, we urge you to call for the immediate and unconditional release for Jimmy Lai and all the political prisoners in Hong Kong, both publicly and directly in diplomatic engagements with your Chinese counterparts. It is vital that you advocate for their fair treatment and release.

We are calling on you to take the following three actions:

- 1) The U.S. government must hold Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee as well as Hong Kong and Chinese officials to account for the unjust imprisonment of Jimmy Lai and other political prisoners in Hong Kong.
- 2) The U.S. must ensure that the U.S.-sanctioned John Lee and other Hong Kong officials are not invited to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in San Francisco this November.

- 3) Finally, the U.S. should leverage its sanction authorities under the *Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act*, *Hong Kong Autonomy Act*, and *Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act* to issue sanctions against the Hong Kong and Chinese officials responsible for deteriorating conditions in Hong Kong. This includes the judges and prosecutors who have abused Hong Kong’s legal system to undermine the city’s freedoms.

It is time for the United States to stand up to Beijing for violating the “one country, two systems” agreement, the *Sino-British Joint Declaration* of 1984, and the very values we hold dear. China should not be allowed to unilaterally tear up an international agreement with no repercussions. It is essential for the U.S. to broaden multilateral cooperation among our allies on Hong Kong, including the United Kingdom, European Union, Japan, and Australia. The Chinese government must not have the final say.

We urge you to speak up against the unjust imprisonment of Jimmy Lai in Hong Kong to safeguard freedom from further destruction by the CCP. We are confident that your actions will make a significant impact for Jimmy Lai, other political prisoners, and the preservation of freedom in Hong Kong.

Sincerely,

Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation, on behalf of a coalition of 67 organizations.

Names of organizations in alphabetical order:

1. ARTICLE 19	36. Human Rights in China
2. Aus-Hong Kong Connex	37. Humanitarian China
3. Bay Area Friends of Tibet	38. Institute For China’s Democratic Transition
4. Birmingham HongKongers	39. International Tibet Network
5. Blasian March	40. Lamp of Liberty
6. Bonham Tree Aid	41. McMaster Stands With Hong Kong
7. Bristol Hongkongers	42. North East Hongkongers Club (UK)
8. Campaign For Uyghurs	43. Northern California Hong Kong Club
9. Cardiff Hongkonger group	44. NY4HK - New Yorkers Supporting Hong Kong
10. China Against the Death Penalty	45. Philly4HK
11. Chinese Human Rights Defenders	46. Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights
12. Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation	47. Re-Water CIC
13. Committee to Protect Journalists	48. Reading UK Stands with Hong Kong
14. EXE.HKers Action	49. Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
15. Fight for Freedom. Stand with Hong Kong.	50. Salford HongKongers
16. Filipino American Human Rights Alliance	51. Santa Barbara Friends of Tibet
17. Finnish Hongkongers	52. Scottish Hongkongers
18. France Tibet	53. SEArrious for HKG
19. Freiheit für Hongkong e.V.	54. Southampton HongKongers
20. Germany Stands with Hong Kong	

21. Grupo de Apoio so Tibete - Portugal	55. Students For Hong Kong (Students4HK)
22. HKersUnited	56. Sutton Hong Kong Culture & Arts Society
23. Hong Kong Affairs Association of Berkeley	57. Swedish Tibet Committee
24. Hong Kong Aid	58. The Hong Kong Scots
25. Hong Kong Community Focus CIC	59. The Norwegian Tibet Committee
26. Hong Kong Democracy Council	60. The Tibet Support Committee, Denmark
27. Hong Kong Forum, Los Angeles	61. Tibet Action Institute
28. Hong Kong Professional Network	62. TX4HK - Texans Supporting Hong Kong
29. Hong Kong Social Action Movements in Boston	63. US HongKongers Club
30. Hong Kong Watch	64. Uyghur Human Rights Project
31. Hong Kongers in San Diego	65. Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation
32. Hong Kongers in San Francisco Bay Area	66. Visual Artists Guild
33. Hongkonger in Brighton CIC	67. We The Hongkongers
34. Hongkongers in Britain	
35. HongKongers in Leeds	

Cc:

Hon. Secretary of State Antony Blinken
Congressional-Executive Commission on China
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
House Committee on Foreign Affairs

*For further inquiry or follow-up, please contact Frances Hui of the Committee for Freedom
in Hong Kong Foundation via email frances.hui@thecfhk.org.*