

21 October: *Over 85 global organisations call for the release of the 'Hong Kong 12'*

Global Call for Release of 12 Hong Kong Activists and Action from World Governments

'Hong Kong 12' detained for over 60 days after allegedly attempting to escape Hong Kong

We, the undersigned condemn the arrest and detention of the 12 Hongkonger activists who are currently being held in incommunicado detention in mainland China,¹ including three who were under 18 years old at the time of their arrest.

The 12 activists were intercepted by China's Coast Guard on 23 August 2020 while attempting to escape Hong Kong. Concern has been growing for the detainees, aged 16² to 30, who have now been held for more than 50 days with no communication with their families or access to lawyers of their choice.³

The group of 12 were detained with the charge of "illegal border crossing," a criminal offence that carries a sentence of up to two years in prison. After a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson labeled the detainees as "separatists"⁴ there are fears that the extreme charge of "endangering national security" could also be given. This could result in a life sentence or even the death penalty in "egregious cases."

Families of the 12 held an emotional press-conference in Hong Kong calling on Carrie Lam, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, to intervene in the case and to press for the detainees' safe return to Hong Kong, as well as ensure their access to family appointed lawyers.⁵ At least four Chinese human rights lawyers, appointed by the families, have attempted to visit the detainees but were turned away. One was told his client already had lawyers,⁶ raising concerns that the lawyers were appointed by the government and therefore unable to provide an effective defense not biased towards the state-run police.⁷

The arrest of this group of 12 activists and their forcible removal to mainland China and their incommunicado detention further signals the alarming and rapid decline in human rights for those living in Hong Kong. Yet even so, Hongkongers continue to mount a remarkable challenge to Beijing. They are still working to resist the pervasive restrictions on their

¹ China's coastguard [released a statement](#) on Weibo stating authorities in Guangdong tracked down a speedboat suspected of an illegal border crossing.

² Under international human rights law, the arrest, detention, or imprisonment of a child under the age of 18 may be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period. Every detained child has the right to maintain contact with his or her family through visits and correspondence. Moreover, any detained child has the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the detention before a court or other independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action.

³<https://hongkongfp.com/2020/09/09/rights-lawyer-says-china-may-have-appointed-state-lawyers-to-hongkonger-arrested-while-fleeing-by-boat/>

⁴ <https://twitter.com/SpokespersonCHN/status/1304989967509151744?s=20>;

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1200706.shtml>

⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/9/15/hong-kongs-lam-says-12-arrested-at-sea-not-democracy-activists>

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<https://hongkongfp.com/2020/09/09/rights-lawyer-says-china-may-have-appointed-state-lawyers-to-hongkonger-arrested-while-fleeing-by-boat/>

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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/30/we-want-our-son-back-families-of-detained-hong-kong-activists-left-in-the-dark>

fundamental rights and freedoms, including a refusal to accept a sham version of democracy with leaders pre-approved by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

We call on the Chinese authorities to immediately release the 12 Hong Kongers who have been detained as a direct result of their human rights activism.

We call on world governments to take urgent action to press Chinese authorities, in the strongest possible terms, to release the Hong Kong 12.⁸ Governments must continue public pressure and demands along with concrete actions to support the peaceful exercise of rights by Hong Kong people.

We express our solidarity with the Hong Kong movement for democracy and rights, and we salute the people of Hong Kong for refusing to remain silent as Beijing reneges on its promise of universal suffrage and democratic reforms.

Names of the Hong Kong 12:

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| Hoang Lam Phuc 黃臨福 16 Cheng Tsz Ho 鄭子豪 17 Liu Tsz Man 廖子文 17, now 18 Kok Tse Lun 郭子麟 18 Cheung Ming Yu 張銘裕 20 Yim Man Him 嚴文謙 21 | Cheung Chun Fu 張俊富 22 Li Tsz Yin 李子賢 29 Li Yu Hin (Andy Li) 李宇軒 Wong Wai Yin 黃偉然 29 Tang Kai Yin 鄧焯然 30 Quinn Moon 喬映瑜 33 |
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Signed:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Aref International Onlus2. Amigos de Tíbet Colombia3. Asociación Cultural Tibetano Costarricense4. Asian Solidarity Council for Freedom and Democracy5. ASSOCIATION FRANCE TIBET6. Australia Tibet Council7. Australian Uyghur Tangritagh Women's Association8. Boston Uyghur Association9. Casa Tíbet México10. Campaign for Uyghurs11. Chinese Human Rights Defenders12. Citizen Power Initiatives for China13. Canada Tibet Committee14. China Against the Death Penalty15. China Democracy Party16. Comité pour la Liberté à Hongkong17. Daily Hongkong18. Defend Democracy19. Étudiants pour un Tibet Libre20. Frankfurt Stands With Hong Kong | <ol style="list-style-type: none">48. Safeguarding Defenders49. Santa Barbara Friends of Tibet50. Save Tibet Indonesia51. Save Tibet, Austria52. Students for a Free Tibet - Japan53. Sierra Friends of Tibet54. Sounds of the Silenced - SOS55. Southern Mongolia Congress56. The National Foundation Alliance of Hong Kong57. Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center58. Stand With Hong Kong Vienna59. Students for a Free Tibet60. Students for a Free Tibet - Denmark61. SumOfUs62. Swedish Tibet Committee63. Tíbet Patria Libre - Uruguay64. Taiwan Independence Project65. The National Foundation Alliance of Hong Kong66. The Norwegian Tibet Committee67. Tibet Action Institute68. Tibet Initiative Deutschland e.V. |
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⁸ Detainees must also be granted legal representation organised by their families and be allowed contact with their families. Furthermore, detainees must be given access to prescribed medication and medical treatment and not be subject to any form of torture or inhumane treatment.

21. Free Indo-Pacific Alliance
22. Free Tibet
23. Hong Kongers in San Francisco Bay Area
24. Hong Kong Committee in Norway
25. Hong Kong Forum, Los Angeles
26. Hong Kong Political Affairs and Social Services (HKPASS) at UC Davis
27. Human Rights Network for Tibet and Taiwan
28. Humanitarian China
29. Human Rights in China
30. International Campaign for Tibet
31. International Service for Human Rights
32. International Society for Human Rights - Sweden
33. International Tibet Network Secretariat
34. Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte (IGFM)
35. Japan Uyghur Union/ 日本ウイグル連盟
36. Keep Taiwan Free
37. La Federacion of Cantonia
38. Lamp of Liberty
39. Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
40. Les Amis du Tibet, Luxembourg
41. Libertyusa
42. LUNGTA - Actief voor Tibet
43. National Committee of Democracy Party of China
44. NorCal HK Club
45. NOW!
46. Rangzen Movimento Tibete Livre, Brasil
47. REACH India Group

69. Tíbet Mx
70. Tibet Support Group Ireland
71. Tibet Justice Center
72. Tibetan Community in Britain
73. Tibetan Community of New York and New Jersey
74. Tibetan Community in Sweden
75. Tibetan community of South Australia
76. Tokyo Tibetan Community
77. TIBET LIVES
78. Toronto Association for Democracy in China
79. Torontonians HongKongers Action Group
80. Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam
81. US Hongkongers Club
82. Uyghur Human Rights Project
83. Voces de Tibet México
84. Vancouver Society in Support of Democratic Movement
85. Vancouverites Concerned About Hong Kong
86. Victoria Hong Kong Tertiary Student Association
87. Viet Tan
88. We The Hongkongers
89. World Uyghur Congress
90. 台灣永社 Taiwan Forever Association
91. 臺灣東突厥斯坦協會 Taiwan East Turkestan Association
92. 芝援香港 Global Solidarity with Hong Kong - Chicago
93. China Alarm
94. Grupo de Apoio ao Tibete