

16 May 2023

116 MEDIA LEADERS FROM 42 COUNTRIES CALL FOR THE RELEASE OF JIMMY LAI

“We, as publishers and editors of news media organisations from around the world, are united in support of *Apple Daily* founder and publisher Jimmy Lai, and his fight for media pluralism and press freedom in Hong Kong.

Jimmy Lai has stood for these values his entire life, and founded *Apple Daily* to ensure that the people of Hong Kong had access to vital independent information. In a tremendous act of courage, he chose to stay in Hong Kong and continued to publish as long as he could, despite the severe crackdown taking place around him.

Now it is our turn to stand up for Jimmy Lai, whose detention serves only to damage the reputation of the authorities in both China and Hong Kong. The arbitrary charges against him are clear violations of Chinese, Hong Kong, and international law.

In targeting this 75 year-old press freedom emblem, the Chinese regime has taken its attempts to control information beyond its borders, and made it a concern for the entire world. When press freedom is threatened anywhere, it is threatened everywhere.

Together with Reporters Without Borders (RSF), we stand with Jimmy Lai. We believe he has been targeted for publishing independent reporting, and we condemn all charges against him. We call for his immediate release, for the national security charges against him to be dropped, and for his convictions on other charges to be overturned.

We note that the case against Jimmy Lai takes place as part of a broader press freedom crackdown in Hong Kong, and are deeply concerned by the rapid deterioration of Hong Kong’s press freedom climate, as reflected in RSF’s World Press Freedom Index.

We call for the immediate release of all 13 of the currently detained journalists, and for any remaining charges against all 28 journalists targeted under national security and other laws over the past three years to be dropped.

We also call for immediate steps to allow for the reinstatement of media that have been forced to close, including *Apple Daily* and *Stand News*, which have served as devastating blows to media freedom in Hong Kong.

The universal right to press freedom must be protected for the people of Hong Kong and around the world.”

Signatories:

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