

The Rt Hon Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer KC
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AB

21 August 2025

Dear Prime Minister,

We, a coalition of 73 human rights and press freedom organisations, are writing to express our profound concern over the rapidly deteriorating health of Jimmy Lai, the 77-year-old British publisher, writer, and media entrepreneur, who has now endured over 1,680 days in solitary confinement in Hong Kong. During this time, his health has significantly deteriorated. He remains imprisoned while awaiting the outcome of a politically motivated trial that has been repeatedly delayed, further undermining his right to a fair and timely legal process.

On 15 August, the trial was postponed again after it was revealed that Mr. Lai had suffered heart palpitations and episodes where he felt as though he were “collapsing.” Despite this, the court rejected a defence request to excuse him from attending the closing arguments and instead proceeded with rescheduling the hearing, demonstrating a disturbing disregard for his fragile health and well-being.

As a British citizen, Mr. Lai has been enduring an unthinkable ordeal in prison, including solitary confinement with only 50 minutes of exercise per day and minimal access to natural light. At his age, and given his pre-existing medical conditions, including diabetes, the lack of specialised medical care puts him at severe risk of life-threatening complications. His international legal team has already raised alarms about his alarming weight loss and growing physical frailty.

Prime Minister, given Britain’s unique relationship with Hong Kong and its status as Jimmy Lai’s home nation, you have a responsibility to take strong leadership in this case, acting swiftly and decisively.

With each passing day, the risk that Mr. Lai could die in prison increases. We appreciate your statements in Parliament acknowledging the significance of this case to your government and your ongoing efforts to raise it at the highest levels. However, the time for statements has passed. We urge you to act now to secure Jimmy Lai’s immediate release before he dies in prison.

We therefore respectfully call on you to demand Mr. Lai’s urgent humanitarian release on medical grounds, so that he may reunite with his family in the United Kingdom and receive the care he needs.

We stand ready to support you in any way we can as you work to secure Jimmy Lai's release.

Yours sincerely,

Access Now

Anti-Globalist International

ARTICLE 19

Asia Freedom Institute (AFI)

Aus-Hong Kong Connex 港人滙坊

Australia Hong Kong Link

Australian and New Zealand Alliance for Victims of the Chinese Communist Regime

Bay Area Friends of Tibet

Birmingham HongKongers

Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA)

China Change

Chinese Human Rights Defenders

Coalition For Women In Journalism

Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong (CFHK)

Committee to Protect Journalists

English PEN

Étudiants pour un Tibet Libre, France

Forum 2000 Foundation, Czechia

Freiheit für Hongkong e.V.

GreatFire

Grupo de Apoio ao Tibete-Portugal

Hong Kong Aid 港援

Hong Kong Committee in Norway

Hong Kong Human Rights Front

Hong Kong Watch

Hong Konger in San Diego

Hongkonger in Deutschland e.V. 香港人在德國協會

Hongkongers in Britain 英國港僑協會

Human Rights Foundation

Human Rights in China

Humanitarian China

Independent Chinese PEN Center (ICPC)

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International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), in the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

International Tibet Network

International Tibet Network

Lamp of Liberty

Legal Initiatives for Vietnam (LIV)

Liberal Democratic League of Ukraine
Media Diversity Institute
New South Wales Hong Kong Friends 新州自己友
Northern California Hong Kong Club
NSW Hong Kong Friends
Ontario Hong Kong Youth Action
PEN America
PEN Canada
PEN International
PEN Melbourne
PEN Sweden
PEN Tibet
Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
Safeguard Defenders
Scottish Hongkongers
Society for Threatened Peoples / Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker, Germany
Solidarité Chine
Students for a Free Tibet
Students For A Free Tibet, Japan
Taiwan Association for Human Rights 台灣人權促進會
The Association for the Defense of Human Rights and Religious Freedom (ADHRRF)
The European Hong Kong Diaspora Alliance 歐洲香港人聯盟
The Global Alliance for Tibet & Persecuted Minorities (GATPM)
The Hong Kong Scots
US Hongkongers Club 美國香港人會館
Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP)
Vancouver Activists of Hong Kong (VAHK) 溫哥華手足
Vancouver Society in Support of Democratic Movement (VSSDM)
Victoria Hongkongers Association (Australia) 澳洲維港
Viet Tan
Wahrheitskämpfer e.V. Fighters for Truth - Memorial for Press Freedom Germany
Women's Rights Without Frontiers
World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), in the framework of the Observatory for the
Protection of Human Rights Defenders