House of Commons

HOUSE OF LORDS

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear Prime Minister,

This week, you said *'it is more important than ever that Britain stands for something.'* The Foreign Secretary went further: that governments *'have to make our own decisions about legality, values'* and act on them.

We agree. We are asking you to apply that principle to Hong Kong and the Joint Declaration, and hold China to account for its abusive use of the National Security Law, criminalising peaceful democratic activity.

Joshua Wong has been a pro-democracy advocate since he was a child. At 15 he founded a movement to resist Beijing's education law and went on to become the face of the Umbrella Movement. His work always sought to hold Beijing to the 1997 agreement, 'One Country, Two Systems', agreed between the UK and China. But in 2020 he was arrested and detained. Now, like British Citizen Jimmy Lai, he faces the prospect of life in prison.

This is not a distant problem. Two men were convicted at the Old Bailey this year for spying on Hong Kong dissidents in Britain, reportedly also monitoring British parliamentarians. Police are investigating footage appearing to show Chinese embassy security in London brandishing banned electroshock weapons at peaceful protesters. Hong Kongers settled in the UK have bounties on their heads. China's National Security Law is felt on the streets of Britain.

The UK has a moral and diplomatic responsibility, arising from the 1997 handover and the Joint Declaration, to speak out for those who stood up for the treaty it guaranteed. The UK Government has already found China in breach of the treaty. In December, the last Foreign Secretary told the Commons plainly: "China breached the Joint Declaration by imposing its National Security Law on the city."

It is time that you called the Chinese Ambassador to raise Joshua's case and that of the others imprisoned for standing up for democracy.

Britain signed the Joint Declaration and guaranteed Hong Kong's freedoms for fifty years. Joshua Wong only ever asked his government to keep its word. We are asking ours to keep it too.

NAMES

Lord Alton of Liverpool

Alex Barros-Curtis MP

Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

Bob Blackman CBE MP

Sir Bill Browder KCMG

The Rt Hon Alistair Carmichael MP

Mark Clifford, President, The Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation

Bobby Dean MP

Graeme Downie MP

Andrew Duncan, Co-Founder, RT Weatherman Foundation

The Rt Hon Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP

Fortify Rights

The Rt Hon the Baroness Foster of Aghadrumsee DBE

The Rt Hon The Lord Garnier KC

The Rt Hon Sir Jeremy Hunt MP, former Foreign Secretary

Jamie Fly, CEO, Freedom House

Hong Kong Watch

Alicia Kearns MP, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Chair of the APPG on Arbitrary Detention and Hostage Affairs

Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws KC, Director of the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute

Tim Loughton, former Member of Parliament and current Chair of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission

The Rt Hon Sir Andrew Mitchell KCMG MP

Meaghan Mobbs, President RT Weatherman Foundation

Sir Geoffrey Nice KC, Chair of the Uyghur Tribunal and China Tribunal

James Naish MP

The Rt Hon the Lord Patten of Barnes KG CH

The Rt Hon Sir Malcolm Rifkind KCMG KC

Benedict Rogers, Co-founder and Chair of Hong Kong Watch and Senior Director of Fortify Rights

Jemimah Steinfeld, Chief Executive, Index on Censorship

The Rt Hon Tom Tugendhat MBE VR MP, Shadow Foreign Secretary

Sara Wilbourne, Acting Deputy Executive Director, ARTICLE 19

Bess Weatherman, Co-Founder, RT Weatherman Foundation