

公益社団法人 日本外国特派員協会

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan

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FCCJ Statement on the Sentencing of Jimmy Lai

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan joins Reporters Without Borders (RSF): Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and other leading journalism watchdogs in condemning the recent decision by authorities in Hong Kong to send Jimmy Lai, founder and publisher of the *Apple Daily*, to prison for 20 years.

Hong Kong has plummeted in recent years from 18th to 140th place in RSF's annual press freedom rankings, the sharpest and most rapid deterioration in the watchdog's history, according to its Asia-Pacific Bureau Advocacy Manager Aleksandra Bielakowska. RSF calls Lai's conviction a "death sentence" and a symbol of the collapse of press freedom in Hong Kong.

<https://hongkongfp.com/2025/05/02/hong-kong-falls-to-140th-in-press-freedom-index-with-historic-low-score-entering-red-zone-for-first-time/>

Jodie Ginsberg, from the Committee to Protect Journalists, called the decision "the final nail in the coffin for freedom of the press in Hong Kong". Lai's case "shows the Chinese government's determination to crush independent journalism and silence anyone who dares to criticise the Communist Party", said Human Rights Watch's Asia director Elaine Pearson.

As the FCCJ has previously noted, Lai was arrested in 2020. In June 2021, Hong Kong's chief executive, Carrie Lam, used the National Security Law to close *Apple Daily* and to prosecute at least 12 journalists and media workers, including Lai. In December 2021, independent media *Stand News* also shut down following the arrest of six current and former members of its team.

<https://www.fcchk.org/correspondent/looking-back-on-a-year-of-eroding-press-freedom-under-the-national-security-law/>

According to the CPJ, Lai was convicted in December of conspiracy to collude with foreign forces, and conspiracy to publish seditious material. In addition to Lai, six editors and executives with the *Apple Daily* who pled guilty to conspiring with foreign forces, were also sentenced, some after testifying against Lai.

<https://cpj.org/2026/02/jimmy-lai-sentenced-to-20-years-in-prison-in-hong-kongs-biggest-media-trial/>

Hong Kong's Security Bureau has published a [statement](#) supporting the decision to jail Lai, which is said showed that "the rule of law is upheld and justice is done."

In 2022, the FCCJ awarded its press freedom prize to journalists in Hong Kong. Accepting the award, Ronson Chan, chairman of the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA), quoted 2021 Nobel Peace Prize winner Maria Ressa: "Without facts, you can't have the truth. Without truth, you can't have trust. Without trust, we have no shared reality, no democracy, and it becomes impossible to deal with the existential problems of our times."

We urge the Hong Kong authorities to reflect on the words of Ressa and Chan and allow journalists to do their jobs without fear of prosecution.

FCCJ Freedom of the Press Committee