

“Hong Kong 47” Trial: three press freedom defenders sentenced to years in prison

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) calls for the immediate release of three prominent Hong Kong press freedom defenders, who have been handed heavy prison sentences on trumped-up national security charges in the group trial recently held against 47 pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong.

On Tuesday, 19 November 2024, three leading voices in the defence of press freedom in Hong Kong [were sentenced](#) to prison: four years and five months for media founder **Frankie Fung**, seven years for former journalist **Gwyneth Ho**, and four years and two months for former journalist and former legislator Claudia Mo.

Prosecuted alongside 44 others in the largest trial of the pro-democracy movement since the Chinese regime enacted the Hong Kong National Security Law, they were convicted of various charges under this legislation, including “conspiracy to subversion” and “subversion.”

The three figures have been detained since February 2021, targeted for their steadfast commitment to defending press freedom and the right to information in Hong Kong. [Gwyneth Ho](#), who used to work with *Stand News*, an independent outlet [forcibly shut down](#) by authorities, was previously sentenced to six months in prison for participating in a commemoration of the Tiananmen Square massacre. [Frankie Fung](#), co-founder of the now-defunct news site *DB Channel*, has been detained since 2021, as has [Claudia Mo](#), an ex-legislator who previously worked for *Agence France-Presse*, *Radio Television Hong Kong*, *Apple Daily*, and *Ming Pao*. In 2019, while serving as an MP and actively involved in the promotion of press freedom, supported the event for the release of RSF’s World Press Freedom Index [press conference](#), which was held on the premises of Hong Kong’s Legislative Council.

“By handing down heavy sentences to these three emblematic press freedom defenders, the Hong Kong government has shown the extent of its contempt for the people’s right to information. We call on the international community to step up pressure on Hong Kong and the Chinese regime and to echo our call for the release of these prisoners.

Cédric Alviani

RSF's Asia-Pacific Bureau Director

Since Hong Kong’s national security law was introduced in 2020, the authorities have waged a [relentless war on the right to information](#). At least 28 journalists and press freedom defenders have been prosecuted, with 11 currently behind bars. Among them is **Jimmy Lai**, the founder of *Apple Daily*, who faces a possible life sentence in an [ongoing sham trial orchestrated by the Chinese regime](#).

Hong Kong has fallen dramatically in [RSF's World Press Freedom Index](#), ranking 135th out of 180 countries and territories surveyed, compared to 18th two decades prior. China, ranked 172nd, remains the world’s largest jailer of journalists, with at least 123 currently detained, including 11 in Hong Kong.