

Hong Kong: RSF condemns intimidation campaign against remaining independent journalists

For at least two months, a number of journalists in Hong Kong have been targeted by what appears to be a coordinated intimidation campaign aimed at silencing remaining independent media outlets. In the context of ongoing repression of press freedom led by the Chinese regime and Hong Kong authorities, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) calls on the international community to take firm action in support of the territory's journalists.

At a press conference held on Friday, 13 September 2024, the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) [revealed](#) that dozens of journalists from at least 13 local and international media outlets, including news websites [InmediaHK](#), [HK Feature](#), [Hong Kong Free Press](#), and two journalism education institutions have been subjected to “systematic and organised attack” since at least June this year. This online and offline harassment campaign includes death threats and defamatory content sent via emails or letters to the journalists’ homes, workplaces and their family members, as well as trolling, intimidation attacks on social media and doxing.

According to HKJA, “many of the letters and emails threatened recipients that if they continue to associate with relevant journalists or their family members, they could be endangering national security or violating the [Safeguarding National Security Ordinance](#) (Article 23)”.

“We strongly condemn this harassment campaign led against the independent media outlets that managed to survive the previous waves of government repression. We urge the international community to intensify its pressure on the Chinese regime so press freedom is fully restored in the territory.

Cédric Alviani

RSF’s Asia-Pacific Bureau Director

Since the adoption by the Chinese regime of National Security Law in June 2020, the Hong Kong government has been [leading an unprecedented campaign](#) against the right to information, resulting in the prosecution of at least 28 journalists and press freedom defenders, 10 of whom are currently detained, including 2020 RSF Press Freedom Prize laureate [Jimmy Lai](#). On 29 August 2024 two former editors-in-chief of defunct online media *Stand News*, [were found guilty](#) of publishing “seditious publications,” in the first sedition case involving media in modern Hong Kong history.

Authorities also forcibly shut down two major independent media outlets, [Apple Daily](#) and [Stand News](#), while the climate of fear led at least dozen of smaller media outlets to cease operations. At least [900 journalists](#) have lost their jobs due to the closure of the independent media outlets, hundreds of media professionals had no other choice but to [go into exile](#), while [some foreign journalists](#) and an [RSF representative](#) were barred from entering the territory.

Hong Kong is ranked 135th in RSF’s 2024 [World Press Freedom Index](#), having plummeted down the rankings from 18th place in just two decades. China itself ranks 172nd of the 180 countries and territories surveyed.