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TADC Condemns the “Death Sentence” of Jimmy Lai

Toronto Association for Democracy in China (TADC) strongly condemns the 20-year sentence imposed by Hong Kong courts on Jimmy Lai today and calls on Canada to take the lead among G7 countries to make an urgent appeal to China for his immediate release.

“This is effectively a death sentence and a cowardly act that is devoid of any humanity,” said Winnie Ng, co-chair of TADC. “More broadly, it’s also a death knell to the freedom of expression and the rule of law in Hong Kong.”

Seventy-eight-year-old Lai is in ill health. He has already endured five years of imprisonment, often in solitary confinement for extended periods. He will likely die in prison.

Lai, a former businessman and founder of the popular pro-democracy Apple Daily, was convicted on all charges, including collusion with foreign forces and sedition, in December 2025. His trial is the most high-profile case and with the longest sentencing term since Hong Kong’s National Security Law took effect on July 1, 2020. The law has basically outlawed any act of dissent.

“We urge PM Carney to seize the momentum out of Davos to take the lead among G7 leaders to make a forceful call for the immediate release of Jimmy Lai,” said the association’s co-chair, Cheuk Kwan.

It is not uncommon for China to release its political prisoners ahead of the completion of their sentence. In 1997, *Democracy Wall* dissident Wei Jingsheng was released on his fourteen-year imprisonment on medical parole. Tiananmen student leader Wang Dan was released on medical parole in 1998. They both settled in the United States.

“Lai has a lot of family connections in Canada and it’s only appropriate that we welcome him to spend the rest of his life here in peace and security,” Kwan added.