C/2024/487

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Deterioration of fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong, notably the case of Jimmy Lai

European Parliament resolution of 15 June 2023 on the deterioration of fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong, notably the case of Jimmy Lai (2023/2737(RSP))

(C/2024/487)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on Hong Kong and on China,

— having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas since the Chinese regime imposed the National Security Law (NSL) on 30 June 2020, fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and the judiciary's independence in Hong Kong have deteriorated alarmingly; whereas the PRC has fully breached the 'one country, two systems' principle, the Sino-British and Sino-Portuguese Joint Declarations and the ICCPR;

B. whereas Jimmy Lai has been detained since February 2021 on trumped-up charges, accused under the NSL of collusion with foreign forces and of fraud; whereas his trial starts in September 2023 and he faces a possible life sentence; whereas his British lawyer has been refused permission to represent him at the trial; whereas several independent media outlets, such as Apple Daily and Stand News, have been forced to cease operations;

C. whereas political prisoners generally remain imprisoned throughout a lengthy pre-trial detention period in very difficult conditions, while many of them have serious health conditions; whereas this has been the case for prominent representatives of the pro-democracy camp such as Jimmy Lai, Albert Ho, Benny Tai, Chow Hang-Tung, Lee Cheuk-yan, Joshua Wong and Cyd Ho;

1. Urges the Hong Kong Government to immediately and unconditionally release and drop all charges against Jimmy Lai and all the other pro-democracy representatives and activists who have exercised their freedom of expression and basic and human rights;

2. Expresses its deep concern for Ms Chow Hang-tung, who was placed in solitary confinement during her 34-hour hunger strike, and for Mr Albert Ho, whose bail was revoked on arbitrary legal grounds and who has cancer;

3. Reiterates its calls on the Council to introduce targeted sanctions under the EU global human rights sanctions regime against John Lee and all other Hong Kong and PRC officials responsible for the ongoing crackdown on human rights in Hong Kong;

4. Expresses concern about the extra-territorial application of the NSL; calls on the authorities to stop impeding the work of all journalists; calls on the authorities to repeal the NSL;

5. Calls on the EEAS to adequately support the EU Office to Hong Kong in intensifying trial observation, in coordination with representations of EU Member States and like-minded countries, monitoring human rights by releasing public statements, and establishing a human rights focal point for human rights defenders and raising their cases with the authorities at all levels; calls on the EEAS and the EU Office to report on the most prominent trials; calls on the EU Office to request a prison visit;

6. Condemns attempts by the Chinese authorities to target Hong Kong diaspora communities within the EU; reiterates its call on all EU Member States to suspend extradition treaties with the PRC and Hong Kong;

7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the EU institutions, the Government and Parliament of the PRC, and the Chief Executive and the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.