



***For Immediate Release***

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**A Glimmer of Light in Dark Times:**

**Young Hong Kong Pro-Democracy Activists Safe in the US after Perilous Journey to Freedom**

Washington D.C. (Friday, January 15, 2021) - From HKDC's Managing Director, Samuel Chu:

This week, HKDC welcomed a group of young Hong Kong activists to the United States after an arduous and perilous journey to freedom. The activists, all under the age of 30, took part in the ongoing pro-democracy protest in Hong Kong, faced protest-related arrests or charges, and fled the city by boat last July. I am relieved and overjoyed to welcome them to the United States and to assist them as they seek asylum and a new life.

The group left behind their families and the only home they know, but they are now safe. They are also extremely fortunate compared to the over 10,000 Hong Kongers who are still facing arrests, awaiting trials, and behind bars for exercising their guaranteed democratic rights.

They are free today because of the generosity of the United States and other ardent supporters who provided shelter and protection along the way. They could have easily perished at sea or met the same fate as the 12 activists caught, detained, and jailed in the mainland by Chinese authorities. The dangerous trip made by these activists illustrates how it remains difficult for Hong Kongers to seek safe harbor in the US and that options for safe passage are limited. Their desperate effort exemplifies the rapidly deteriorating human rights condition and growing humanitarian crisis Hong Kong is in right now.

They are now free and safe - but without additional actions from the US and its allies - they could very well be the last group to successfully find safe harbor abroad. Just this week, the Hong Kong authority arrested an additional 11 Hong Kongers who, the government claimed, assisted the 12 activists in their failed attempt to flee by boat.

I implore the US and all free nations to open their borders and doors and to work together to preserve the lives and future of freedom-loving Hong Kongers.

I urge the current and incoming US administrations to continue targeted sanctions of individuals responsible for the ongoing mass arrests and crackdown in Hong Kong and to take bold actions to welcome all who are fleeing political persecution as well as their immediate families.

I also ask Congress to reintroduce relevant legislation like the Hong Kong People's Freedom and Choice Act of 2020 and the Hong Kong Safe Harbor Act immediately to strengthen and expand ways Hong Kongers can find refuge in the US. Hong Kongers need every avenue and option available to them to exit and seek protection abroad, or to remain abroad without being forced to return and face persecution. We must answer their call for help now more than ever.

Today, we are grateful for these activists who are now safe; but we will not stop fighting until all are free.

**Statement from the group of Hong Kong activists:**

“We want to share our sincere thanks to everyone who cares about Hong Kong and to the US government and HKDC for all their help and support. We are young pro-democracy fighters now in exile. We are now safe in the United States. From the moment we left Hong Kong, our hearts have been filled with anxiety and all kinds of emotions. Whenever we see Hong Kong in the news and how the situation has become worse and worse, we are even more concerned and worried about all Hong Kongers.

Even though we have left our home, our hearts remain there and we stand with everyone fighting for Hong Kong. As we begin our new life, despite the difficulties and obstacles ahead of us, we will face the future and challenges with the ‘lion rock’ spirit, just like all Hong Kongers.

As a fellow Hong Konger once shared with us, ‘As long as there is a glimmer of light, there is no darkness.’

To everyone rooting for us, we are rooting for you. Thank you.”

***Hong Kong Democracy Council (HKDC)*** is a Washington, DC-based nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Hong Kong's basic freedoms, the rule of law, and autonomy.

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