



For Immediate Release

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Contact: *Brian Leung*

[*brian.leung@hkdc.us*](mailto:brian.leung@hkdc.us)

(202) 813-9930

The Sentencing of Tony Chung

Washington, D.C. — In response to the sentencing of 20-year-old Tony Chung to 3 years and 7 months in prison for “secession” under the Beijing-imposed National Security Law (NSL) and “money laundering,” HKDC issues the following statement.

From **Brian Leung**, HKDC’s Executive Director:

“Tony Chung is convicted for his work with a student group, Studentlocalism, which disbanded just before the NSL’s enactment. While the Beijing and Hong Kong authorities repeatedly emphasize that the law cannot be applied retroactively, the prosecution relies heavily on Mr. Chung’s past words and deeds; over half of its 69-page case summary focused on his social media posts and activism before June 30, 2020. The sweeping NSL not only has completely stifled free expression in Hong Kong, but has also blurred the line between retroactivity and prospectivity, which is crucial for protecting citizens from later laws that arbitrarily punish past behaviors.”

“Hong Kong authorities have adopted a strategy that exhausts every legal instrument in the common law repertoire to double down on their NSL-powered crackdown. Mr. Chung is guilty of ‘money laundering’ for simply maintaining the operation of his organization and receiving donations. He was previously also charged for conspiring to publish seditious materials, an outdated law from the British colonial era. This will continue to be the pattern of the Hong Kong government to punish pro-democracy activists.”

“Mr. Chung’s case is particularly tragic in that he was arrested en route to the U.S. Consulate last October, attempting to seek refuge there. He never made it to the building; the other activists who traveled with him would be turned away. Incidents like this underscore the desperation of many Hong Kongers with a well-founded fear of political persecution under the NSL and the urgent need for more institutionalized pathways for them to receive protection as soon as possible.”

Hong Kong Democracy Council (HKDC) is a Washington, D.C.-based nonpartisan, nonprofit organization for Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement and Hong Kongers in the United States.

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