



***For Immediate Release***

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## **The Crackdown on Stand News**

*Washington, D.C.* — On Wednesday morning in Hong Kong, National Security forces arrested six individuals affiliated with Stand News, a vital independent media outlet, over their alleged “conspiracy to publish seditious publications” and raided their newsroom. Among those apprehended were Ms. Margaret Ng and Ms. Denise Ho, both former directors. Mr. Ronson Chan, the deputy assignment editor who also chairs the Hong Kong Journalists Association, was likewise taken away for questioning. In response to the crackdown, HKDC issues the following statements.

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

“Stand News represents one of the last remnants of independent journalism in Hong Kong, and we aren’t sure whether it can survive this suppression. We’re reminded yet again that press freedom — a cornerstone of what used to define Hong Kong — has long crumbled. The incident came right after prosecutors [added the same charge](#) against Mr. Jimmy Lai and others at Apple Daily. **By branding the exercise of press freedom as sedition, Beijing is making clear that the regime doesn’t tolerate truth-telling in Hong Kong.**”

“Although the case at hand rests on the British colonial-era Crimes Ordinance, rather than the sweeping National Security Law (NSL), Hong Kong’s top court [recently ruled](#) that the higher bail threshold outlined by the NSL are applicable to even non-NSL offenses with national-security implications. **Therefore, these arrestees will likely face a prolonged, arbitrary period of pre-trial detention similar to other NSL defendants.** If so, their right to a fair trial is jeopardized; further charges may always pile on. We demand their immediate release and urge fellow journalists as well as the broader international community to stand in solidarity with them.”

From HKDC’s Policy and Research Fellow, **Jeffrey Ngo**:

“As directors, Ms. Ng and Ms. Ho hadn’t been directly involved in Stand News’s daily reporting and editorial operations. In fact, they’d already [resigned from their positions](#) in June. **There’s hence every reason to believe that their arrests constitute a punishment for their record of pro-democracy**

**activism.** A retired opposition legislator and a prominent Cantopop superstar, respectively, they were also co-founders of the 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund, an organization offering legal and financial assistance to political prisoners that were forced to shut down in October.”

“Most importantly, in the past, they defended Hong Kong’s autonomy around the world. Ms. Ng met Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in May 2019 to warn him about the impending danger of proposed Hong Kong-China extradition arrangements. When that bill then drove millions of Hong Kongers to the street, Ms. Ho testified before Congress that September. The Hong Kong government’s disturbing tendency to retroactively apply the NSL — which came into effect in June 2020 — is an active, additional threat against them. **They were once crucial to helping the free world understand Hong Kong’s reality; now the free world must stand up for them.**”

*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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