

**#FREE
JIMMYLAI**



Press Release

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FORMER PRISONERS AND HOSTAGES WRONGLY HELD ABROAD, AND THEIR FAMILIES, URGE UK GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ACTION TO FREE JIMMY LAI

OPEN LETTER SENT TO UK PM STARMER URGING ACTION BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

LONDON—A group of former prisoners and hostages wrongly held abroad, along with family members who campaigned for their release, gathered in London today in a show of solidarity with Jimmy Lai and his son Sebastien Lai. Together with other survivors of arbitrary detention and their families, they have written an [open letter](#) to Prime Minister Starmer, calling on the UK Government to take urgent steps to secure Mr Lai's release.

Mr Lai, a British citizen, has spent 1,600 days arbitrarily detained in solitary confinement in Hong Kong. He is being persecuted for his public interest journalism and pro-democracy advocacy. He is 77 years old, in ill health, and faces the possibility of life in prison. The group's letter highlights their grave concerns about Mr Lai's advanced age, health, and the extreme conditions he must endure, particularly in the rising temperatures of another oppressively hot Hong Kong summer. The letter urges the Prime Minister to *"meet with Jimmy Lai's family as a matter of urgency and to work tirelessly with your Parliamentary colleagues and international allies to secure his immediate release."*

The letter was signed by 22 people - survivors of arbitrary detention and their families - including Australian journalist **Cheng Lei**, who was imprisoned by Beijing for more than three years until her release in 2023. Ms Lei added, *"China's power and desire for control should never be the reason we are coerced into a safe silence. If we don't speak up for those who have no voice, what is our freedom for?"*

Speaking at the press conference today were **Sebastien Lai**, son of Jimmy Lai; **Richard Ratcliffe**, husband of former hostage and prisoner, **Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe** (Iran); **Carine Kanimba**, daughter of former prisoner, **Paul Rusesabagina** (Rwanda); and **Anoosheh Ashoori**, former hostage and prisoner (Iran); with **Fiona O'Brien**, UK Director, Reporters Without Borders (RSF), and **Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC**.

For the complete text of the letter to Prime Minister Starmer, please follow this link:

<https://supportjimmylai.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2025.05.21-Jimmy-Lai-Prisoners-Public-Letter.pdf>

Please contact Doughty Street Chambers (laipress@doughtystreet.co.uk) or April Ponnuru at Ridgely|Walsh (april@ridgelywalsh.com) for more information.

Jimmy Lai is on trial for democracy; the #FreeJimmyLai campaign is dedicated to his release. It is led by his son Sebastien Lai. Learn more at www.supportjimmylai.com