

Commissioner Wong Kwok-hing
Commissioner of Correctional Services
24th Floor, Wanchai Tower,
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Hong Kong
Email: comroffice@csd.gov.hk

Dear Commissioner Wong,

I am writing to express my grave concern for detained activists **Chow Hang-tung, Jimmy Lai and Owen Chow**, who are currently detained in correctional institutions. They have been charged, and in Jimmy Lai's and Owen Chow's cases convicted, solely for their peaceful exercise of human rights.

It is alarming to read reports that indicate they are currently, or were previously, subjected to prolonged periods of solitary confinement. Jimmy Lai has reportedly been held in solitary confinement continuously for more than five years, despite his deteriorating health condition. Chow Hang-tung reportedly spent a total of 82 days in solitary confinement in 2023 alone; we have recorded at least two other instances of her being placed in solitary confinement in the two years since. Recent reports allege that Owen Chow was held in a solitary cell for more than two years between 2021 and 2024.

While authorities have sometimes claimed – including in Lai's case – that solitary confinement was imposed at the inmates' own request, [Amnesty International research](#) has found that some inmates in Hong Kong have been coerced into making such requests.

The practices also raise serious concerns, as solitary confinement appears to be used in a way that is punitive or retaliatory rather than for legitimate prison management purposes. Chow Hang-tung has said she often faced solitary confinement after exercising her right to freedom of expression, for example by drafting an acceptance statement for the CCBE Human Rights Award and undertaking a hunger strike to commemorate the Tiananmen crackdown.

Solitary confinement is a harsh penalty with serious psychological consequences. I would like to remind you that, in accordance with international standards, solitary confinement should only be used as an exceptional measure, for as short a time as possible, and must never exceed 15 days under any circumstances.

I therefore call on you to:

- **Immediately stop imposing unlawful solitary confinement on Chow Hang-tung, Jimmy Lai, Owen Chow and all imprisoned activists;**
- **Review and amend the current Prison Rules to ensure full compliance with international standards;**
- **Immediately and unconditionally release the above individuals and any other detainees who are imprisoned simply for their exercise of human rights.**

Yours sincerely,