

CALL FOR THE RELEASE OF THE 2014 UMBRELLA MOVEMENT ACTIVISTS IN HONG KONG AND STOP THE ATTACKS AGAINST FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY

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Seoul, Korea – Nine leaders of the pro-democracy “Occupy” movement in Hong Kong, also known as 2014 Umbrella Movement protests, were sentenced to prison terms of 16 months for their roles in the 2014 pro-democracy movements. Benny Tai and Chan Kin-man were sentenced to prison for “conspiracy and incitement to commit public nuisance.” Chu Yiu-ming was suspended for two years due to his age, and six other activists, Tommy Cheung Sau-yin, Eason Chung Yiu-wa, Tanya Chan, Shiu Ka-chun, Raphael Wong Ho-ming and Lee Wing-tat were convicted with the related public nuisance and received sentence of 8 months of imprisonment. In response to the court ruling that their occupancy of public roads was “unreasonable obstruction,” they plead not guilty since it was peaceful civil disobedience, exercising their fundamental right to the freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

The Asia Democracy Network expresses its concern toward how the government of Hong Kong employs prosecutions as means of attacking democracy activists and peaceful protesters to quell the critics over sensitive issues like the country’s autonomy and democracy. The verdicts towards the Umbrella Nine was a daring attempt to attack fundamental principles of democratic governance and an obvious disregard for the right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. These actions are grave infringements to the sound basis of democracy.

The Asia Democracy Network calls for the release of the convicted nine activists of 2014 Umbrella Movement and urges the government of Hong Kong to revoke jail sentence against them. ADN demands the Hong Kong authorities to stop the use of the incitement law against the people’s freedom of expression. In addition, the court shall hold high standards and scrutiny in distinguishing such acts on their court and shall not be influenced by outside forces when making a decision.

ADN stands in solidarity with the nine activists and all democracy activists and peaceful protesters who are persecuted for expressing their political opinion by any forms of civil disobedience, exercising their fundamental rights to the freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association.

Asia Democracy Network