December XX, 2022

[Name of recipient organisation]

[recipient organisation address]

[recipient email address]

**Re: Destruction of independent media and press freedom in Hong Kong**

***ADD DATE***

Dear XXX

[Insert Organisation Name] respectfully requests [insert name of recipient or organisation] to take immediate action to condemn the destruction of independent journalism in Hong Kong and to urge the authorities to respect Hong Kong’s Basic Law obligations and press freedom.

Since the introduction of Beijing’s national security law in 2020, Hong Kong has borne witness to a catastrophic collapse of human rights, press freedom, and independent media, with journalists and media workers facing legal persecution, harassment, intimidation and arrest. Independent journalism has been effectively criminalised, with self-censored and pro-government voices dominating Hong Kong’s once vibrant media landscape.

In a new report, [‘The Story That Won’t Be Silenced: Hong Kong Freedom of Expression Report 2022'](https://www.china.ifj.org/hong-kong-report-2022-en), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), a global federation of unions representing over 600,000 journalists and media workers across 140 countries, documents the destruction of independent journalism across the city, with at least 12 pro-democracy and/or critical media outlets closing since the introduction of the national security law. In the cases of *Stand News* and *Apple Daily*, senior officials face excessive and blatantly intimidatory charges of ‘collusion’ and ‘sedition’ for the normal operations of a newspaper, while asset freezing has led to the financial collapse of dissenting outlets.

Hong Kong’s legal system has been infiltrated and manipulated to target civil liberties. Hong Kong Chief Executive and hand-picked Beijing appointee John Lee personally intervened in the National Security trial of *Apple Daily* founder Jimmy Lai. Lee, the sole candidate in the 2022 Chief Executive elections, has asked Beijing authorities to deliberate on whether Lai can be represented by United Kingdom national and barrister Timothy Owens. Lai faces potential life imprisonment under charges of ‘collusion with foreign forces’, and conspiracy to distribute ‘seditious publications’. He has already been sentenced to over five years imprisonment for inflated fraud charges, and thirteen months for ‘inciting a vigil’ commemorating the Tiananmen Square massacre.

At this time, journalists and media workers in Hong Kong face legal persecution and struggle to support themselves through journalism and media work. Those from shuttered outlets have only been able to persevere in Hong Kong and in exile through social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram and Patreon.

We write to ask [insert name of recipient or organisation] to recognise the urgent and precarious situation faced by journalists, media workers and other human rights defenders in Hong Kong, and to advocate for special immigration programs and humanitarian visas for fleeing Hong Kong journalists and media workers.

[Insert name of recipient or organisation] must remind the governments of Hong Kong and China of their obligation under Hong Kong’s Basic Law to protect the rights guaranteed to Hong Kongers under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Vital advocacy must take place to urge the Hong Kong government to enact legislation including the UN Human Rights Committee's General Comment No. 34, and adhere to the Johannesburg Principles on National Security, Freedom of Expression and Access to Information.

We further ask you to closely monitor freedom of expression and the conditions faced by journalists and media workers to ensure that the Chinese and Hong Kong governments observe their international obligations.

Yours sincerely,

Insert Name   
Insert Title  
Insert Organisation  
Insert signature