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HONG KONG VETERAN RADIO HOST FACES YEARS IN PRISON

Detained veteran internet radio host “Giggs” Edmund Wan, who has been remanded in custody for over 18 months, faces a total of 10 sedition and money laundering charges. At the time of being charged, Wan hosted his own show on an independent radio station, in which he commented on current affairs. He also hosted a fundraiser for the education of Hong Kong young protesters in Taiwan. Wan was targeted merely for exercising his right to freedom of expression through peaceful means. Charges against him must be dropped, and he must be released immediately.

Wan was targeted simply for his political comments about Hong Kong and mainland China, as well as for hosting a fundraiser for sponsoring the education of Hong Kong youths in Taiwan. Peaceful expression of opinion and public fundraising are permissible under international human rights law and standards and must not be criminalized or otherwise restricted through the use of vague national security offences.

Hong Kong authorities are weaponizing colonial-era charges that have not been used since 1967 to target dissidents. Just this July, the UN Human Rights Committee in its Concluding Observations on the Fourth Periodic Report of Hong Kong have [expressed concern](#) over the government using sedition charges to prosecute journalists and representatives of civil society exercising their right to freedom of expression. The prosecution of Wan violates international human rights laws and standards. The Committee urged the repeal of the sedition provisions in the Crimes Ordinance and the discontinuation of all cases against individuals charged for exercising their freedom of expression. The Hong Kong authorities should implement these recommendations immediately.

Write to the Secretary of Justice urging him to:

- drop all charges against and facilitate the release Wan Yiu Sing immediately, as he was charged solely for peacefully exercising his human rights
- end the practice of bringing ‘national security’ charges against those who have simply exercised their right to freedom of expression or other human rights
- review and amend all laws and regulations, and end all related measures, that violate the exercise of human rights, in particular to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association

Write to:

Secretary for Justice Paul LAM Ting-kwok
Department of Justice
G/F, Main Wing, Justice Place
18 Lower Albert Road, Central, Hong Kong
Fax: 852 3902 8638
Email: sjo@doj.gov.hk
Salutation: Dear Secretary Lam:

And Copy:

His Excellency Peiwu Cong
Ambassador
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
515 St. Patrick Street
Ottawa, ON K1N 5H3
Fax: 613 789 1911
Email: chineseembassy.ca@gmail.com

Additional information

Edmund Wan, better known as “Giggs”, is a veteran internet radio host and public affairs commentator. Prior to his arrest, he was the host of four shows on a local independent online radio station in Hong Kong. Wan also commented on current affairs on his social media platforms and paid membership platform. Other than comments critical of the Hong Kong and Chinese central authorities, he started a fundraiser for sponsoring the education of Hong Kong youths in Taiwan in February 2020. These youths fled the city for Taiwan as the Hong Kong government arrested tens of thousands of young people who took part in the 2019 protests.

On 21 November 2020, Wan was arrested under Article 21 of the Hong Kong National Security Law for providing financial assistance for the commission by other persons of secession. However, on 8 February 2021, Wan was officially charged with four counts of ‘doing an act with a seditious intention’. He was further charged on 10 May 2021 with an additional five counts of money-laundering and one count of conspiring to commit an act with a seditious intention. In May 2022, the prosecution reached a plea deal with Wan, under which six of the ten charges he was facing would be kept on file if he pleaded guilty to the remaining charges and agree to the prosecution’s application to confiscate the crowdfunding proceeds. His sentence will be handed down on 7 October 2022.

The colonial-era sedition charges in Hong Kong have only been resuscitated by the government since 2020. No one has been prosecuted under these charges since 1976. The authorities weaponized these charges to prosecute political activists, journalists and authors who exercised their right to freedom of expression. In December 2021, executives and board members of the defunct media outlet Stand News were arrested for “seditious publications”. On 6 April 2022, national security police arrested six people on sedition charges because they “caused nuisance” during a court hearing. Two were subsequently charged with sedition for clapping and chanting slogans in court. On 10 April 2022, a journalist was arrested for allegedly publishing “seditious materials”. On 20 April 2022, a political

activist was convicted of “uttering seditious words” and sentenced to 40 months’ imprisonment for chanting popular protest slogans such as “Down with the Communist Party” and “Five demands, not one less” in public.

The recent UN Human Rights Committee’s Concluding Observations on the Fourth Periodic Report of Hong Kong, China, has rightly noted that the Hong Kong government has invoked the sedition provisions in the Crimes Ordinance, after decades of disuse, to suppress freedom of opinion and expression. Moreover, sedition provisions are additionally problematic because they are construed as a national security offence, therefore is investigated by special police in the newly established national security department, which have been granted excessive investigatory powers.