

Hong Kong Activist Granted Asylum in Australia with Family

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Hong Kong pro-democracy activist and former lawmaker Ted Hui has been granted asylum in Australia, more than four years after leaving his home city amid criminal charges tied to the 2019 protests. Hui confirmed on Facebook that the Department of Home Affairs approved his claim on Friday. His wife, children, and parents were also issued visas.

Reflecting on the decision, Hui wrote: “When people around me say ‘congratulations,’ although I politely thank them, I can’t help but feel sad in my heart. How to congratulate a political refugee who misses his hometown?” He added, “If it weren’t for political persecution, I would never have thought of living in a foreign land. Immigrants can always return to their hometowns to visit relatives; exiles have no home.”

The Department of Home Affairs did not immediately respond to questions sent after business hours.

The Hong Kong government issued a statement opposing the move, saying it was “against the harbouring of criminals in any form by any country.” China’s foreign ministry did not respond to inquiries.

Hui, a former Democratic Party legislator, left Hong Kong in late 2020 after facing charges linked to the 2019 protests. In 2023, authorities accused him and seven others of national security offenses, including incitement to secession, and placed HK\$1 million (\$127,782) bounties on their heads. Australia at the time expressed concern about the charges.

The asylum approval follows Prime Minister Anthony Albanese’s recent visit to Beijing, where talks focused on strengthening bilateral relations. Hui’s case underscores ongoing political and legal tensions between Hong Kong and Western governments.

The development also comes as businessman Jimmy Lai stands trial in Hong Kong under Beijing’s national security law. Lai faces charges including alleged sedition in a case closely watched by international observers.

For Hui, Australia has now become both a refuge and a permanent separation from his home city. His move highlights the challenges faced by individuals who leave Hong Kong under investigation and seek protection abroad.