

Hong Kong Activist Granted Asylum in Australia

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SYDNEY, Former Hong Kong lawmaker and pro-democracy activist Ted Hui has been granted asylum in Australia, including protection for his wife, children, and parents, he announced on social media. Hui, who is wanted by authorities in Hong Kong, thanked the Australian government for its support and called on Canberra to assist other activists still jailed in the Chinese-administered city.

Hui, a high-profile participant in the 2019 pro-democracy protests, resettled in Adelaide after facing increasing pressure from Hong Kong authorities. The protests erupted over concerns about Beijing's influence and led to the enactment of a sweeping national security law that has been widely criticized internationally for suppressing dissent.

"I express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Australia, both present and former, for recognizing our need for asylum and granting us this protection," Hui wrote on Facebook.

The activist has been outspoken in his criticism of both Hong Kong and Beijing authorities. In 2023, police in Hong Kong placed a HK\$1 million bounty on him, a move seen as largely symbolic given that Hui resides abroad in a country unlikely to extradite him. Other activists have faced similar measures while living overseas, drawing criticism from Western governments.

Hui used his announcement to urge Australia not to forget those who remain imprisoned under the national security law. Among them is media tycoon Jimmy Lai, who has been detained since 2020. "Australia must do more to rescue them and to speak up for their humanity," Hui said. "Its stance matters internationally, and its protection of Hongkongers sets a precedent for other democracies."

Hui added that he and his family plan to contribute to Australia through civic engagement and professional work, emphasizing a commitment to democratic values and freedom.

The Hong Kong government has not directly commented on Hui's asylum but reiterated that individuals who flee the city should not expect to avoid criminal liability. A government spokesman said that harboring "Hong Kong criminals" in other nations shows contempt for the city's legal system and interferes in its affairs.

Australian officials have previously expressed concern over Hong Kong's broad use of the national security law. Foreign Minister Penny Wong stated that freedom of expression and assembly are fundamental to democracy and affirmed Australia's opposition to the extraterritorial application of the law. "We will continue to express our strong objections to China and Hong Kong on these matters," she said.

Hui's asylum marks a significant development for the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement abroad, highlighting the ongoing tension between the city's authorities and activists seeking

refuge overseas. The case underscores the role of democratic nations like Australia in offering protection to individuals facing political persecution.