



The BENENSON SOCIETY

Campaign for Joshua Wong

In a time of when many bemoan the lack of inspirational leaders, teenage Chinese activist, Joshua Wong is a standout. He has been a courageous voice for freedom in Hong Kong. A week ago he was found guilty of unlawfully entering a fenced off area outside a government building in Hong Kong (see details in the following article from the *Guardian*). He is to be sentenced on August 15.

Student leader Joshua Wong guilty over Hong Kong pro-democracy protest

Tom Phillips in Beijing Thursday 21 July 2016



Joshua Wong, the teenage activist who was one of the most recognisable faces of Hong Kong's umbrella movement protests, has been found guilty of "illegal assembly" by a court in the former British colony.

Wong, 19, was convicted of unlawfully entering a fenced off area outside Hong Kong's government headquarters on 26 September 2014. The action helped launch a 79-day street

occupation that was described as the greatest challenge to China's Communist rulers since the 1989 Tiananmen protests.

Alex Chow, another prominent student leader, was found guilty of the same offence while Nathan Law, a third activist, was convicted of inciting others to join the unlawful action, local broadcaster RTHK reported. Wong was found not guilty of inciting others to join the assembly.

Speaking outside Hong Kong's eastern court, where the verdicts were delivered, on Thursday morning, Wong said: "We do not regret what we have done."

The three men were released on bail and will be sentenced on 15 August. Wong and Chow could face up to five years in prison, according to Agence France-Presse.

Amnesty International said the guilty verdicts sent "a chilling warning for freedom of expression and peaceful assembly" in Hong Kong.

"The prosecution of student leaders on vague charges smacks of political payback by the authorities," Mabel Au, the group's director in Hong Kong said.

"The continued persecution of prominent figures of the Umbrella Movement is a blow to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in Hong Kong."

While the umbrella movement failed to achieve any democratic concessions from Beijing, Wong has vowed to remain on the frontline of his city's struggle for universal suffrage.

Asked to address Chinese president Xi Jinping on the one-year anniversary of the umbrella movement, Wong told the Guardian: "Give Hong Kong democracy and autonomy."

In April the student leader helped launch Demosisto, a new political party that founders said was created to kick start a long-term struggle for democracy in the former colony, which still enjoys greater freedoms than the mainland thanks to the 'one country, two systems' framework.

The party's first challenge will come in September when it fields candidates in the election for Hong Kong's legislative council parliament.

What can we do? Contact the Secretary of Justice before sentencing on August 15.

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Dear Sir

It is with concern that I read of the conviction of Joshua Wong, Alex Chow and Nathan Law for their involvements in protests in Hong Kong. Freedom of speech and the right to assembly are vital ideals in a democracy.

Joshua Wong is highly regarded outside of China, having been named as one of TIME's Most Influential Teens of 2014, nominated for TIME's Person of the Year 2014 and was listed by *Fortune* as one of the world's greatest leaders in 2015. Sentencing him to prison for damage Hong Kong's reputation around the world and would be seen as an attempt to damage the Demosisto Party before the coming election.

I urge you to ensure that freedom of expression and assembly are protected in Hong Kong and that Joshua is not imprisoned on August 15.

Yours sincerely.