

May 27, 2021

H.E. Xi Jinping  
President of the People's Republic of China  
State Council General Office  
2 Fuyoujie  
Xichengqu  
Beigingshi 10017  
People's Republic of China

Your Excellency:

**Re: Conviction and unjust sentencing of lawyers Dr. Margaret Ng Ngoi-yee, Martin Lee Chu-ming, and Albert Ho Chun-yan**

I write on behalf of the Law Society of Ontario to voice our grave concern over the conviction and unjust sentencing of lawyers Dr. Margaret Ng Ngoi-yee, Martin Lee Chu-ming, and Albert Ho Chun-yan. When lawyers, paralegals, judges, and human rights advocates have suffered from fundamental injustices, we advocate for the protection of their rights.

On 18 April 2020, Hong Kong police arrested 15 individuals on suspicion of organizing and participating in unauthorized protests. Among those arrested were Democratic Party founder and barrister Martin Lee Chu-ming, former lawmaker and barrister Margaret Ng Ngoi-yee, and solicitor and former member of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong Albert Ho Chun-yan. On April 16, 2021 Mr. Lee received an 11-month jail sentence, while Dr. Ng and Mr. Ho were handed 12-month sentences.

Albert Ho Chun-yan has been a frequent, outspoken voice against the persecution of human rights lawyers and defenders in China, and he has organized protests calling for the release of detained and imprisoned Chinese human rights defenders on many occasions. Martin Lee Chu-ming and Dr Margaret Ng Ngoi-yee are the International Bar Association's 2019 Human Rights and Pro Bono award winners, and have both had long careers devoted to the advancement of human rights and democratic ideals.

The recent convictions and unjust sentencing of lawyers and pro-democracy advocates lawyers Dr. Margaret Ng Ngoi-yee, Martin Lee Chu-ming, and Albert Ho Chun-yan underscore the continuing assault on freedom of expression and right to assembly in Hong Kong. Arresting and charging lawyers and other human rights defenders who have engaged in peaceful assembly and advocacy creates a dangerous standard for all those who work to promote and defend human rights and the rule of law in Hong Kong.

In light of these circumstances, the Law Society urges Your Excellency to comply with China's obligations under international human rights laws, including the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Article 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20 states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Furthermore, Article 23 of the United Nations' *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers* provides:

Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organizations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organization.

The Law Society urges the Government of China to:

- a. immediately and unconditionally release Dr. Margaret Ng Ngoi-yee, Martin Lee Chu-ming, and Albert Ho Chun-yan;
- b. immediately and unconditionally vacate the conviction rendered against Dr. Margaret Ng Ngoi-yee, Martin Lee Chu-ming, and Albert Ho Chun-yan;
- c. ensure that all lawyers, paralegals and human rights defenders in China can carry out their professional duties and activities without fear of reprisals, physical violence or other human rights violations; and
- d. ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments.

Yours truly,

Teresa Donnelly  
Treasurer

*\*The Law Society of Ontario is the governing body for more than 55,000 lawyers and 9,000 paralegals in the province of Ontario, Canada. The Treasurer is the head of the Law Society.*

*The mandate of the Law Society is to govern the legal profession in the public interest, and the Law Society has a duty advance the cause of justice and the rule of law.*

cc:

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