News
Lai sits at desk looking into camera.

Jimmy Lai, a prominent Hong Kong Catholic, philanthropist and media mogul, is pictured in Hong Kong May 29, 2020. He was arrested in August 2020 and charged with sedition and collusion with foreign powers under China's National Security Law. A bipartisan, bicameral group of U.S. lawmakers gathered Sept. 18, 2024, to call for the immediate release from prison of Lai, who is facing a trial on what they called bogus charges. (OSV News/Tyrone Siu, Reuters)



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Hong Kong — August 19, 2025
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At the start of final submissions in his landmark trial, Hong Kong pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai was provided with medication and a heart monitor Aug. 18, after health concerns had delayed proceedings the previous week.

U.S. President Donald Trump told a Fox News radio program he is "going to do everything I can to save him."

For decades Lai, a Catholic who founded the now-defunct pro-democracy Apple Daily, campaigned for freedom of the press and freedom of expression in Hong Kong, which was designated a Special Administrative Region of China in 1997, when British rule ended after more than 150 years. Hong Kong's Basic Law was supposed to allow the region "to exercise a high degree of autonomy and enjoy executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication."

However, after a year of pro-democracy protests in 2019, in 2020 China imposed the national security law, which has all but silenced dissent in Hong Kong, The Associated Press reported.

Under the law, Lai was arrested in August 2020 and has been imprisoned since December 2020. He has pleaded not guilty to two charges of conspiring to collude with foreign forces and one count of conspiring to publish seditious materials. If he is found guilty, he could face life in prison.

Closing arguments in the long-running trial were originally expected to begin on Aug. 14, but all court sessions were suspended due to heavy rain, AFP reported.

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Defense lawyer Robert Pang said that Lai had heart "palpitations" and experienced the feeling of "collapsing," according to the French news agency.

Concerns have previously been raised over Lai's health, with his son Sebastien calling the British government to do more in his father's case, as Lai is a British citizen.

Lai has been held in solitary confinement for around 1,700 days. "I don't want my father to die in jail," his son said.

Trump advocated for Lai and told a Fox News radio program on Aug. 14 that he had previously brought up the Lai case with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"I'm going to do everything I can to save him ... you could also understand President Xi would not be exactly thrilled," Fox News quoted Trump as saying.

Meanwhile the Hong Kong government said on Aug. 13 that it "strongly disapproved and rejected the slanderous remarks made by external forces" regarding Lai's case, AFP reported.

Several Western governments have urged Lai's immediate release, voicing concerns over the erosion of fundamental rights in Hong Kong under China-imposed national security laws.

In response, Hong Kong and Chinese authorities maintain that Lai is receiving a fair trial.

On Aug. 18, an Australian foreign affairs spokesperson told Reuters agency the government leaders in that country were "deeply concerned by Hong Kong's widespread application of national security laws to repress civil society and prosecute pro-democracy advocates ... such as Jimmy Lai."