|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS  telephone: 020 7636 4030 fax: 020 7636 0632 [www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk/)  General Secretary: *Frances O’Grady* Assistant General Secretary: *Kay Carberry CBE*  Assistant General Secretary: *Paul Nowak* |  |
| Rt Hon Philip Hammond Secretary of State Foreign & Commonwealth Office King Charles Street London SW1A 2AH | our ref hk/fog/ot  date: 10 January 2015  contact: Owen Tudor  direct line: +44 (20) 7467 1325  email: otudor@tuc.org.uk |

Dear Philip

Hong Kong – request for urgent intervention

As the UK government was a co-signatory to the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration on the Question of Hong Kong, I urge you to intervene with the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to urge them to refrain from any arrests of the leaders of the Umbrella Movement, including two leaders of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) listed below, and to release those currently imprisoned for having participated in the peaceful protest organised by or associated with the Umbrella Movement or pro-democracy rallies generally.

Following the mass-mobilisation of pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong which began on 28 September 2014, the government, directly or through coordination with known criminal gangs, retaliated against the protestors in violation of the right to assemble and to associate. Nearly a thousand people have been arrested during the three-month long protest and others suffered physical harm from tear gas or beatings by police batons.

Now the government has announced a plan to arrest and detain the top leaders of the Umbrella Movement for inciting ‘an illegal assembly’[[1]](#footnote-1). This is despite the fact that those leaders and their many thousands of followers engaged in an extraordinarily peaceful protest to advocate for the legitimate aim of greater democratic governance in Hong Kong.

The protesters included many from the HKCTU, which, like the TUC, is an affiliate of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Two of its leaders – Lee Cheuk-yan, General Secretary, and Mung Siu-tat, Executive Director - are among those listed for arrest.

The protests carried out by the HKCTU and the rest of the Umbrella Movement constitute the legitimate exercise of their freedom of association, as provided for by the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The ITUC has contacted the ILO on this matter, and I am therefore copying this letter to the ILO Director General and to The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, in the hope that the UK representatives at the ILO will also support action to defend the protestors of the Umbrella Movement.

I am also copying this letter to the ITUC and HKCTU, and to Sir Richard Ottaway, whose Foreign Affairs Select Committee is, I understand, examining the response of the authorities to the Umbrella Movement protests.

Yours sincerely

**FRANCES O’GRADY**

General Secretary

Cc Rt Hon Ian Duncan-Smith MP, Secretary of State for Work & Pensions

Guy Ryder, ILO Dierector General

Sir Richard Ottaway MP, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary

Lee Cheuk-yan, General Secretary, Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions

1. The announcement of the police to arrest the leaders of the Umbrella Movement can b found widely in the local media. See, for example Epoch Times, Hong Kong Police Plan Mass Arrest in Protest Backlash, 8 January 2015, <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/1185422-hong-kong-police-plan-mass-arrest-in-protest-backlash/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)