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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**19 EMINENT INTERNATIONAL FIGURES CONDEMN THE IMPRISONMENT OF
HONG KONG PRO-DEMOCRACY STUDENT LEADERS**

Nineteen eminent international leaders, including the former British Foreign Secretary Sir Malcolm Rifkind, the former President of the Maldives Mohamed Nasheed, Alissa Wahid, daughter of Indonesia's former President Abdurrahman Wahid, and Myanmar's Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, today issued a statement condemning the decision by the Court of Appeal in Hong Kong to jail three prominent pro-democracy student leaders, Joshua Wong, Nathan Law and Alex Chow.

The statement, signed by nineteen respected public figures including Parliamentarians, lawyers and civil society leaders from the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Myanmar, describes "the decision by the courts in Hong Kong to sentence three courageous, principled young men to jail yesterday" as "an outrageous miscarriage of justice, a death knell for Hong Kong's rule of law and basic human rights, and a severe blow to the principles of "One Country, Two Systems" on which Hong Kong was returned to China twenty years ago."

In addition to Sir Malcolm Rifkind, who served as British Foreign Secretary for the final two years before the handover of Hong Kong, from 1995-1997, and the former President of the Maldives Mohamed Nasheed, himself a former political prisoner, the signatories include the former Leader of the Liberal Democrats in the United Kingdom, Lord Ashdown, the independent cross-bench Peer and human rights campaigner Lord Alton, the Chair of the UK Conservative Party Human Rights Commission Fiona Bruce MP and the United States Congressman Chris Smith, Co-chair of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

The statement was also signed by the Burmese comedian and former political prisoner Zarganar, Malaysian Member of Parliament Charles Santiago, the Co-Chair

of the Human Rights Committee of the Bar Council of Malaysia Andrew Khoo, the Indian writer and activist John Dayal, Canada's former Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific David Kilgour, former Canadian Senator Consiglio di Nino, retired United States Ambassador Grover Joseph Rees, the former Australian Ambassador to the Holy See John McCarthy, former Australian member of parliament Janelle Saffin, Charles Tannock, Member of the European Parliament and Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, former chief prosecutor in the trial of Slobodan Milosevic.

The full statement can be found below.

For further information or comment please contact:

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FULL STATEMENT AS FOLLOWS:

The decision by the courts in Hong Kong to sentence three courageous, principled young men to jail yesterday is an outrageous miscarriage of justice, a death knell for Hong Kong's rule of law and basic human rights, and a severe blow to the principles of "One Country, Two Systems" on which Hong Kong was returned to China twenty years ago.

Joshua Wong, Alex Chow and Nathan Law helped lead the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong in 2014 – one of the most peaceful and restrained movements of public protest the world has ever seen. Joshua Wong and Nathan Law have already served the penalties imposed by a court a year ago. Joshua Wong served 80 hours of community service and Nathan Law 120 hours. Alex Chow received a three-week suspended prison sentence a year ago. Yet the Hong Kong government decided to reopen the case and seek tougher punishments. Yesterday the Court of Appeal jailed Joshua Wong for six months, Alex Chow for seven months and Nathan Law for eight months.

Joshua Wong turns 21 in October, an age where he could be eligible to stand for election to the Legislative Council. However, his eligibility is automatically now removed as a result of a six-month jail sentence. Nathan Law, aged 24, was elected as the youngest ever member of the Legislative Council a year ago, but was removed from his seat earlier this year on the grounds that he failed to take his

oath properly. Alex Chow is 27 and has recently completed his studies at the London School of Economics.

Yesterday's verdict is not only outrageously unjust because these three young men had already served their sentences and because it strikes a severe blow to Hong Kong's freedoms, but also because it robs three bright, intelligent, principled and courageous young men of more than half a year of their lives and potentially denies them a future in politics or other employment in Hong Kong.

The three student leaders were charged for leading a peaceful sit-in that triggered the 79-day pro-democracy Umbrella Movement in 2014. At that time, the Hong Kong government described the demonstrations as illegal, invoking the Public Order Ordinance, which has been criticized by the United Nations Human Rights Committee for possibly "facilitat[ing] excessive restrictions" to basic rights. The law, which requires that processions involving more than 30 people and assemblies with more than 50 must apply for and receive a "letter of no objection" from the government in advance, is incompatible with article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which applies to Hong Kong. Human rights organisations such as Human Rights Watch have long urged Hong Kong authorities to revise the ordinance to comply with the ICCPR. According to Human Rights Watch, imposing new punishments on Joshua Wong and Nathan Law, who had already completed their sentences of community service, may violate article 14(7) of the ICCPR, which enunciates the principle of "double jeopardy" that no one shall be "punished again" for the same offense.

In a series of tweets Joshua Wong exhibited his courage even upon learning of his sentence. He wrote: "You can lock up our bodies, but not our minds! We want democracy in Hong Kong. And we will not give up. They can silence protests, remove us from the legislature and lock us up. But they will not win the hearts and minds of Hong Kongers. Imprisoning us will not extinguish Hongkongers' desire for universal suffrage. We are stronger, more determined, and we will win."

As former heads of government, Parliamentarians, lawyers and civil society leaders, we stand in solidarity with these three brave young men, we condemn yesterday's verdict by the Court of Appeal, we call for it to be reviewed and for these three political prisoners to be released, and we urge the international community to put pressure on the governments of the People's Republic of China and the Hong Kong

Special Administrative Region to respect the principles of “One Country, Two Systems” and the Basic Law in Hong Kong. Joshua Wong, Alex Chow and Nathan Law should be honoured, encouraged and supported, not jailed. Yesterday was a dark day for Hong Kong and it should be met with international condemnation.

Signed by:

Lord Alton of Liverpool – Independent Crossbench Peer, House of Lords, United Kingdom

Lord Ashdown of Norton-sub-Hamdon – former Leader of the Liberal Democrats, former UN High Representative in Bosnia, member of the House of Lords, United Kingdom

His Eminence Cardinal Charles Maung Bo – Archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar

Fiona Bruce MP – Chair of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, United Kingdom

John Dayal – Writer and activist, India

Andrew Khoo - Co-Chairperson, Human Rights Committee, Bar Council Malaysia

David Kilgour – former Canadian Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific, former Member of Parliament and Nobel Peace Prize Nominee 2010, Canada

John McCarthy – former Australian Ambassador to the Holy See

Mohamed Nasheed – former President of the Maldives

Sir Geoffrey Nice QC – former chief prosecutor in the trial of Slobodan Milosevic, United Kingdom

Consiglio Di Nino – former Senator, Canada

Grover Joseph Rees – United States Ambassador (retired), USA

Sir Malcolm Rifkind – former Foreign Secretary, United Kingdom

Janelle Saffin – former Member of Parliament, Australia

Charles Santiago – Member of Parliament, Malaysia

Christopher Smith – Member of the United States Congress & Co-Chair of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, USA

Charles Tannock MEP – Member of the European Parliament, United Kingdom

Alissa Wahid – daughter of former President Abdurrahman Wahid and founder of the Gusdurian Network, Indonesia

Zarganar – comedian and former political prisoner, Myanmar (Burma).