

ACAT (Harrow group) – prayer case of the month (*February 2021*)

Please pray as you feel led for **Joshua Wong** (24), a prominent pro-democracy activist and politician in Hong Kong, who was sentenced in December 2020 to more than a year in prison for his role in an ‘unlawful protest’ outside police headquarters in June 2019. Two others were sentenced at the same time.



Joshua Wong served as secretary-general of the pro-democracy party *Demosistō* which had called for the protection of Hong Kong’s autonomy from Beijing until it disbanded following the implementation of the Hong Kong national security law on 30 June 2020. Joshua was previously convenor and founder of the Hong Kong student activist group *Scholarism*. He first rose to international prominence during the 2014 Hong Kong protests, and his pivotal role in the ‘Umbrella Movement’ resulted in his inclusion in *TIME* magazine’s ‘Most Influential Teens’ of 2014 and nomination for its 2014 ‘Person of the Year’; he was further called one of the “world’s greatest leaders” by *Fortune* magazine in 2015, and nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017.

Following his arrest, **Joshua Wong** was placed in solitary confinement for three days, as prison authorities feared he had ingested a “foreign object” prior to his detention. In his cell, the lights were left on 24 hours a day, causing him difficulties to sleep. Moreover, he was subjected to regular medical checks, although no foreign object was found in his body.

Amnesty International’s Asia-Pacific Regional Director said: “Once again, the government has used the politically motivated charge of ‘inciting others to protest’ to prosecute people who have merely spoken out and protested peacefully. By targeting well-known activists from Hong Kong’s largely leaderless protest movement, authorities are sending a warning to anyone who dares openly criticise the government that they could be next”.

Over 50 pro-democracy campaigners who include former lawmakers, academics, social workers, and students, were arrested in a police crackdown on 6th January. All but 3 have been released on police bail, pending charges.

Update: PAKISTAN: Imran Ghafur Masih (our prayer case for August 2018) has been acquitted of ‘blasphemy’ having received a life sentence in 2010.