

Hong Kong: Student leader Joshua Wong guilty over 2014 pro-democracy protest

Joshua Wong, Alex Chow, Nathan Law will be sentenced on 15 August

Thursday 21 July 2016, by [PHILLIPS Tom](#) (Date first published: 21 July 2016).

Teenager convicted of ‘illegal assembly’ by a court after entering fenced off area outside Hong Kong’s government headquarters

Joshua Wong, the teenage activist who was one of the most recognisable faces of Hong Kong’s umbrella movement protests, has been found guilty of “illegal assembly” by a court in the former British colony.

Wong, 19, was convicted of unlawfully entering a fenced off area outside Hong Kong’s government headquarters on 26 September 2014. The action helped launch a 79-day street occupation that was described as the greatest challenge to China’s Communist rulers since the 1989 Tiananmen protests [1].

Alex Chow, another prominent student leader, was found guilty of the same offence while Nathan Law, a third activist, was convicted of inciting others to join the unlawful action, local broadcaster RTHK reported [2]. Wong was found not guilty of inciting others to join the assembly.

Speaking outside Hong Kong’s eastern court, where the verdicts were delivered, on Thursday morning [3], Wong said: “We do not regret what we have done.”

The three men were released on bail and will be sentenced on 15 August. Wong and Chow could face up to five years in prison, according to Agence France-Presse.

Amnesty International said the guilty verdicts sent “a chilling warning for freedom of expression and peaceful assembly” in Hong Kong.

“The prosecution of student leaders on vague charges smacks of political payback by the authorities,” Mabel Au, the group’s director in Hong Kong said.

“The continued persecution of prominent figures of the Umbrella Movement is a blow to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in Hong Kong.”

While the umbrella movement failed to achieve any democratic concessions from Beijing, Wong has vowed to remain on the frontline of his city’s struggle for universal suffrage.

Asked to address Chinese president Xi Jinping on the one-year anniversary of the umbrella movement, Wong told the *Guardian*: “Give Hong Kong democracy and autonomy.” [4]

In April the student leader helped launch Demosisto, a new political party that founders said was created to kick start a long-term struggle for democracy in the former colony [5], which still enjoys

greater freedoms than the mainland thanks to the 'one country, two systems' framework.

The party's first challenge will come in September when it fields candidates in the election for Hong Kong's legislative council parliament.

Tom Phillips in Beijing

P.S.

* The Guardian. Thursday 21 July 2016 05.17 BST Last modified on Thursday 21 July 2016 05.54 BST:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/21/student-leader-joshua-wong-found-guilty-over-hong-kong-pro-democracy-protest>

Footnotes

[1] <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-29454326>

[2] <http://news.rthk.hk/rthk/en/component/k2/1274065-20160721.htm?spTabChangeable=0>

[3] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-crime/article/1992665/guilty-hong-kong-student-leader-joshua-wong-and-associates>

[4] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/28/hong-kong-umbrella-movement-first-anniversary-democracy>

[5] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/10/hong-kongs-umbrella-movement-spawns-new-political-party-demosisto>