

Hong Kong Bar Association's
Statement on the conviction of Mr Wang Quanzhang

1. The Hong Kong Bar Association (“HKBA”) refers to the conviction of Mr Wang Quanzhang (“Mr Wang”) of “subversion of state power” on 28 January 2019. Mr Wang had been detained by police since 3 August 2015. He was one of about 250 lawyers and activists arrested as part of what is now known as the “709 Crackdown”.
2. Mr Wang was tried on 26 December 2018 behind closed doors at the Tianjin Municipal No. 2 Intermediate People’s Court. The South China Morning Post (“SCMP”) reported that the trial was not open to public on the basis that the case involved state secrets. On 28 January 2019, Mr Wang was sentenced to four and a half years’ imprisonment and deprived of his political rights for five years.
3. The HKBA had previously issued three statements respectively on 18 July 2015, 31 March 2017 and 18 December 2018 calling upon the Mainland authorities to conform to due process and to ensure the fundamental human rights of detained Chinese citizens. The last statement dealt with Mr Wang’s detention and trial.
4. The HKBA notes that: -
 - a. While the Chinese Criminal Procedure Law allows the court to hear a case in closed session when it concerns state secrets, the Mainland authorities have not provided any explanation to show that Mr Wang’s case is one that really concerns state secrets;
 - b. Mr Wang’s right to be represented by a lawyer had not been secured. The SCMP reported that no lawyer hired by Wang’s family has been permitted to see him. Instead, he was given a government-appointed lawyer, Liu Weiguo. Mr Wang was deprived of the right to be represented by a lawyer of his own choice at the trial;
 - c. Mr Wang has been detained for more than 1,200 days before the trial. During this entire period, there was no explanation as to the reasons why this lengthy detention was necessary.

5. The HKBA expresses the gravest concern about the treatment of Mr Wang and also the decision to conduct the trial of Mr Wang in secret. The HKBA also notes, with utmost concern and regret, that the Mainland authority's failure to hold an open trial of Mr Wang has undermined confidence in the judicial system of China.

HONG KONG BAR ASSOCIATION

Dated: 19 February 2019