# Hong Kong awaits landmark verdict in major national security case against pro-democracy activists



A landmark verdict is pending in Hong Kong's largest national security case, where 14 pro-democracy activists have been found guilty of subversion under a National Security Law imposed by Beijing. The court's ruling could see these activists, including former lawmakers Leung Kwok-hung and Helena Wong, facing life imprisonment.

The case stems from the 2020 unofficial primary election organized by 47 democracy advocates. These individuals aimed to secure a legislative majority to potentially veto government budgets, which prosecutors argued was an attempt to paralyze and topple the government. Over 600,000 Hong Kong residents participated in the primary, despite warnings that it might violate the National Security Law.

The 47 activists represent a broad spectrum of Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement, from legal scholars like Benny Tai to former student leaders like Joshua Wong. While 31 activists, including prominent figures, pleaded guilty, hoping for shorter sentences, the remaining 16 who claimed innocence faced non-jury trials.

Notable defendants include Leung Kwok-hung, a lifelong dissident, and social worker Hendrick Lui. Several others, including former district councillors Lawrence Lau and Lee Yue-Shun, were acquitted but face potential appeals.

This case, alongside the trial of billionaire Jimmy Lai, has garnered significant attention as a critical test of Hong Kong's civil liberties under Chinese rule. Critics argue the National Security Law, which criminalizes subversion, secession, collusion with foreign forces, and terrorism, is being used to suppress dissent.

Many prominent figures and legal experts have expressed concerns, highlighting that the case underscores a broader effort to silence opposition and curtail democratic freedoms in Hong Kong. The verdict has led to a significant debate on judicial independence and political repression in the city.