



Ethics complaint to UNAIDS concerning James Chau, presenter of Forced TV Confessions on China's CCTV

To: fraudreporting@unaids.org ([Report fraud, abuse, misconduct](#))

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Submitted June 3, 2020 by Safeguard Defenders

Background

On August 27, in 2013, the predecessor of today's CGTN (China Global Television Network), namely CCTV International, aired its English language broadcast of Mr. Peter Humphrey supposedly confessing to alleged crimes. Mr. Humphrey, British citizen and a former Reuters journalist, had undergone torture, drugging and deprivation of medical care prior to this incident. China's state broadcaster CCTV and other Chinese state journalists gathered in a detention center cell while Mr. Humphrey was forced to sit inside a metal cage in handcuffs and locked to an iron chair, pointing cameras aimed at him through the cage bars, as a police interrogator posed as a journalist and asked questions, and in some cases instructed him how to answer in front of the journalists.

After broadcasting this widely in China, CCTV's international arm produced an English language broadcast based on this forced fake interview, not only repeating the same information (of which much was provably false), but also adding further journalistic sins by intentionally wrongfully translating the Chinese original of Mr. Humphrey's responses into English, putting words such as "illegally" into his mouth to paint Mr. Humphrey as confessing guilt to a crime.

The victim Mr. Humphrey was in effect tried and convicted by CCTV and CGTN and its news anchor, long before any real judicial trial or even any indictment, thus depriving Mr. Humphrey of a fair and transparent trial, which is a cornerstone of international law and human rights.

That news presenter who packaged the English broadcast was the well-known CCTV journalist and anchor **Mr. James Chau** (see [Appendix](#) below for more information on James Chau). About a year later, once again *before* Mr. Humphrey was formally tried, Mr. Chau presided over yet another such CGTN broadcast, dooming Mr. Humphrey, who was then further incarcerated and was caused to contract an avoidable cancer due to the deliberate withholding of appropriate medical treatment in captivity. One of these two broadcasts also includes an American victim, Mr. Humphrey's wife.

James Chau has refused to comment on these broadcasts when contacted by New York Times journalist Paul Mozur, and by the NGO Safeguard Defenders, and very importantly, has refused to respond to contact by his victim, Peter Humphrey, who seeks to clarify further circumstances of this abuse.

Since his days with CCTV, Chau has gone on to become a *goodwill ambassador* at both The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO), and in the same timeframe much information has been published revealing the reality behind Mr. Humphrey's and many other forced TV confessions, including the details of how Mr. Humphrey's forced and falsified "confessions" were extracted and recorded under illegal duress amounting to torture. Those revelations have also been very widely reported on, and any journalist working with China would be hard pressed to be ignorant to this.

On May 27, the UK's TV-regulator (Ofcom) convicted CGTN, specifically the program that James Chau used to anchor, China24, of broadcasting in violation of UK law, in biased reporting on the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong. They may now either face a fine or revocation of their broadcasting license.

What is this document?

This is a complaint to The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) who have chosen to appoint James Chau as a goodwill ambassador, starting in 2009. As a person who has worked to commit *several* gross human rights violations by depriving the victim, Peter Humphrey and his American wife, also put on TV before her trial, of the right to a fair trial, it is clear that, purely from an ethics point of view, James Chau is not fit to be a goodwill ambassador for the UNAIDS or any other UN-affiliated institution.

"UNAIDS ensures that global human rights standards and commitments translate into action and programmes at the country level by supporting stakeholders to build alliances within the Joint UNAIDS Programme and beyond and to respond effectively to human rights challenges in the context of the AIDS response." – Paragraph 5, UNAIDS statement on Human Rights (website).

We request that you investigate James Chau's suitability as a UNAIDS goodwill ambassador, and upon verification of the information herein presented, to terminate that relationship without undue delays, in order to avoid any further damage to the UNAIDS's reputation. James Chau has worked to deny victims key rights of several international laws, customary international law and codes of conduct mentioned in UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) documents.

Basis for complaint

UNAIDS claims to bind itself to the highest standard of conduct in its [UNAIDS Secretariat Competency Framework](#). The framework upholds the value of INTEGRITY as being:

“about defining, committing to and maintaining clear ethical standards. This includes acting in the interest of the organization without consideration of personal gain. It is about being transparent and forthright in our interactions within the organization and with external partners, and taking a stand against behaviour that is unethical or incongruent with our values.”

And adds that “*upholding INTEGRITY means*”:

- *We act in accordance with the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service*
 - *We conduct ourselves in an ethical manner at all times and do not abuse power or authority*
 - *We follow through on commitments and take responsibility when we are unable to fulfil them*
- And most important:
- ***We take prompt action against unprofessional or unethical behaviour***

As stated in its [Update on strategic human resources management issues](#) (2018), a number of policies and official guidance exist that directly affects UNAIDS, including WHO Staff Regulations and Staff Rules (WHO, February 2018), which binds its staff members and collaborators to the highest standard of conduct in its [Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct](#). The full code of ethics specifies that in [case of violation of its ethics policy](#), WHO may

- terminate any contract with the contractor or collaborator immediately upon written notice to the contractor or collaborator, without any liability for termination charges or any other liability of any kind; and/or
- exclude the contractor or collaborator from participating in any ongoing or future tenders and/or entering into any future contractual or collaborative relationships with WHO.

The core values and principles of UNAIDS’s Secretariat Competency Framework and other regulations to which the agency, its staff and its collaborators are subjected, are, amongst others, integrity, respect for dignity and impartiality, all of which James Chau has not only failed to follow, on multiple occasions, but actively sought to deprive others of.

Latest Development

On February 26, Safeguard Defenders assisted Peter Humphrey in [filing an ethics complaint with the World Health Organization](#) (WHO) for the appointment of UK-born James Chau and CGTN news presenter as their “goodwill ambassador”.

On May 29, the World Health Organization (WHO) states that it had started an 'internal review' of James Chau, following the complaint made by Safeguard Defenders on February 26, 2020. In a statement to [Financial Times](#), the WHO said:

"The matter is taken seriously, as any such complaint would be. It is currently under internal review, and therefore cannot be commented on."



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APPENDIX

About James Chau

(**twitter** @jameschau, **weibo** weibo.com/jameschau)

James Chau (周柳建成) (b. December 11, 1997), London-born to Chinese parents from Hong Kong and Indonesia, was educated at City of London school (graduating in 1996) and Cambridge University, graduating with a degree in English literature.

Chau's journalism career began after moving to Hong Kong in 2001, working in the newsroom of TVB Pearl, a Hong Kong TV broadcaster, and later as an anchor.

Chau moved to Beijing in 2004 and became a news anchor with CCTV International's English language channel. From April 2010 he co-hosted its flagship program *China 24* and also hosted CCTV's *News Hour* (both shows are now defunct, having been replaced by similar programming under GCTN under different names). Chau left his position in August 2014, becoming a special contributor.

Besides CCTV, Chau has also written a column for China's state-owned ultra-nationalist English language newspaper the *Global Times*.

Chau was selected as a goodwill ambassador for WHO for Sustainable Development Goals in February 2016.

Alongside his work with CCTV, Chau has earlier appeared as a guest presenter on BBC World News, and has participated in events with the British Council, and is affiliated with China's state-censored online Sohu news portal.

On social media, Chau can often be seen taking selfies with a combination of celebrities, beautiful women and 'elites', and exhibiting aspects of a narcissistic and luxury lifestyle.

The offending broadcasts

The broadcast that victimized Mr. Humphrey and violated his rights includes many direct lies and intentional distortions. CCTV International's staff and the anchor Chau were not present in the prison cell at the recording of the forced and falsified "confession" (a CCTV crew with cameras labeled CCTV were present) . For this reason, from among many wrongs in the broadcast, we only cite here those that are either directly perpetrated by the CCTV International program China 24 and its lead anchor, Chau, even though there are many additional transgressions.

The United Kingdom's TV-regulator OFCOM is currently investigating this offending state TV channel and the two broadcasts herein mentioned. OFCOM has officially accepted the complaint filed and has launched an official investigation, one which is likely to conclude in spring 2020. Due to the very clear and very severe violation of the UK broadcasting code, it is very likely that the TV station, CGTN, will be found guilty, based on precedents set in previous cases involving other broadcasters. A complaint about Chau's two broadcasts, along with other broadcasts of a similar nature by CGTN, is also being filed with the United States' TV-regulator, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

The most outrageous **direct lie**, purposely perpetrated by CGTN staff, is that Mr. Humphrey says, in *Chinese*, in the "confession" he recorded, "we obtain personal information." The English narration and translation used in the broadcast, added by CGTN, **adds the word "illegally"**, which Mr. Humphrey is not heard to say in Chinese. You can hear his Chinese behind the English narration, and it simply contains the phrase "we obtained personal information," which was indeed a function of his job as a due diligence analyst but not an illegal function. And his words are obviously slurred due to the fact he was drugged before being paraded on camera and is not speaking with a free will.

The presenter states that police have arrested the two people in the newscast, Mr. Humphrey and his American wife Ms. Yingzeng Yu, **on charges of selling personal information. This is a lie.** They were not arrested for selling personal information (a more severe charge) and were never charged with this far graver offence. The broadcast goes on to re-report this, through both its second and third reporters/narrators. The couple had in fact been preliminarily charged, though not yet indicted, tried or convicted, which was known by CCTV/CGTN at that time, with the minor charge of *illegally obtaining personal information*, never with selling. This presentation prompted all Chinese newspapers and some international newspapers to use even worse language when they reported that the couple had engaged in "trafficking of information", despite the fact no such language had been used in any legal charge.

The broadcast again falsely states the couple obtained and illegally sold such data, implying that it was a profit-making activity. After a **direct lie** about what they were charged with, the newscast then seeks to distort facts, to present them as people arrested for *trafficking* in personal data. The fact Mr. Humphrey was charged only with *illegally obtaining personal information* (a charge that was nonetheless also false) was well known by the China 24 team, unless they were incompetent in their jobs. However, even in the same broadcast they later contradicted their earlier contention by saying that such information was obtained for screening (i.e., due diligence), which by implication means not for selling.

The broadcast finishes this section by stating that the reports created by the couple contained information that violated Chinese people's rights. However, at this time, the couple had not been indicted, tried, or convicted, and the charge against them was merely under investigation. Yet **CGTN still brands them as guilty**, despite not having been tried or convicted of the crime in question.

Almost a year later, in a second broadcast, following yet another forced TV interview of Mr. Humphrey while he remained in captivity, Chau correctly starts off by stating that they were arrested on a charge of illegally obtaining personal data, but he does not correct the earlier untrue statement about having reported them as being charged with a much more serious crime, i.e., *selling* personal data.

Broadcast 1

Title of Broadcast:

Identity theft / Personal data protection
– Shanghai arrests husband and wife
over misuse of personal data

Program: China24

Channel: CGTN

Date of broadcast: 2013-08-27

Broadcast 2

Title of Broadcast:

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) China private-
eye agents indicted in Shanghai for
illegal investigation

Program: News Hour

Channel: CGTN

Date of broadcast: 2014-07-14