



Political/Humanitarian Committee: The Hong Kong Manifestations

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I. Introduction

Currently, there are ongoing protests occurring throughout Hong Kong and other cities due to citizens' dissatisfaction regarding the newly amended extradition law by Hong Kong's government. The Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019, was a proposed amendment to the Fugitive Offenders



Ordinance. Hong Kong authorities supported the amendment, referring to the case of a local man who was wanted for the potential homicide of his pregnant girlfriend while the two were on vacation in Taiwan.¹ He could not be sent to trial in Taiwan given that there are no proper extradition agreements between the two territories. Hong Kong currently holds bilateral extradition treaties with 20

countries, however, the amendments being proposed have been framed in such a way to enable the sending of suspected offenders to places with which the territory has no formal extradition agreement. The Chief Executive of Hong Kong, who is not elected but chosen by an election

¹ Mayberry, Kate. "Hong Kong's Controversial Extradition Bill Explained." News | Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera, June 11, 2019.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/06/explainer-hong-kong-controversial-extradition-bill-190610101120416.html>.



committee in China, would have the authority to decide on any case of extradition. Furthermore, Hong Kong courts would not be permitted to inquire about the “quality of justice” being carried out or even if the accused was guilty of the offence or not. Article 4 of the Basic Law, the informal constitution which governs post-colonial Hong Kong, promises to "safeguard the rights and freedoms of the residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and of other persons in the Region in accordance with law". Nonetheless, the implementation of the extradition bill would give China jurisdiction over any citizen accused of a crime and into the hands of their judicial system. Furthermore, this would be undermining the autonomy of the region and people’s rights and freedoms.

II. Background Information

Democratic reform in Hong Kong has been an everlasting endeavor for citizens striving for a proper governing system since the transfer of sovereignty to China in 1997. The “**one country, two systems principle**”, which was a constitutional principle established during the 1980s to reunify China, allows Hong Kong to administer all areas of government except for foreign relations and military separately from the People’s Republic of China (PROC). This being said, Hong Kong functions as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) with full autonomy and serves under their own Basic Law.

Ever since 1842, when Hong Kong was subject to being a British colony, they have been suffering from unequal treatment. During the 150 years that Hong Kong endured as a British colony, a country that embodies the epitome of democracy gave its subjects not a single day of it. Yet it was only after separating from Great Britain that Hong Kong's citizens have held the right to the democratic privilege of universal suffrage as stated by their Basic Law. However, even



that has been flawed due to Hong Kong's candidates for the Chief Executive position be already preselected by China.² This all goes to demonstrate how the fight towards democratic justice has been a prevalent issue throughout Hong Kong's history, not just with the arrival of the extradition bill. It is due to the Communist Party of China (CPC) that it has taken so long for pro-democracy demonstrations to arise. During the 1950s the British colonial governors of Hong Kong attempted to introduce popular democratic elections, but were forced to abandon those efforts after being threatened by the Communist Party.³ Said threats had the desired results after Britain halted all attempts at introducing democracy, confirming that China's opposition to a democratic Hong Kong had begun almost a half-century earlier.

III. Regional and Social Implications

Based on the **Sino-British Joint Declaration** of 1984⁴, an international treaty signed by Britain and the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong follows to the "one country, two systems" principle, limiting its sovereignty. Under this treaty, China has about total control of Hong Kong's government. Furthermore,



² Sheets, Connor Adams. "Pro-Democracy Protests Erupt In Hong Kong Over Controversial Electoral Decision." International Business Times, September 1, 2014.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20141220160848/http://www.ibtimes.com/pro-democracy-protests-erupt-hong-kong-over-controversial-electoral-decision-1675068>.

³ Jacobs, Andrew. "Hong Kong Democracy Standoff, Circa 1960." The New York Times. The New York Times, October 27, 2014.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/28/world/asia/china-began-push-against-hong-kong-elections-in-50s.html>.

⁴ Blakemore, Erin. "How Hong Kong's Complex History Explains Its Current Crisis with China." National Geographic, August 13, 2019.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/topics/reference/hong-kong-history-explain-relationship-china/>.



China's President, Xi Jinping, need to exert his authority over the country and its territory led him to change Hong Kong's constitution to demand the approval of a law that would punish people for insulting the national anthem.

In light of the recent protests this Chinese political control has been more than evident. When the protests first began in June 9th, Chinese media coverage was minimal, there being only one mainland media outlet that wrote about the event. Additionally, this article falsely labelled the march as one in favor of the extradition bill, diminishing the urgency that presented such bill. After a few days of silence from the Chinese government, its top office in Hong Kong acknowledged the protests as "evil and criminal"⁵, clearly demonstrating its opposition to the freedom of speech the island has demonstrated. While the initial responses from the mainland are somewhat passive, it quickly escalated after protestors took over Hong Kong's international airport in early August, affecting the country's economy. This combative protest resulted in



police brutality taking place. The protestors took over the airport again on September 1st and police responded with water cannons and tear gas.

These violent responses made way for one of the social results of this conflict: police brutality. Even though Chinese action was

surprisingly passive, the Hong Kong armed forces, a subsection of the Chinese People's

⁵ Feng, Emily. "As Hong Kong Protests Continue, China's Response Is Increasingly Ominous." NPR. NPR, August 13, 2019.

<https://www.npr.org/2019/08/13/750695968/as-hong-kong-protests-continue-chinas-response-is-increasingly-ominous>.



Liberation Army, quickly took excessive force to the streets. As early as June 12th, reports of excessive police force were recounted. According to Amnesty International, “Hong Kong police must end the unlawful use of force against peaceful protesters who have once again taken to the streets.”⁶ Hong Kong’s armed forces, The People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison, have even gone to the lengths of arresting protesters without a lawful reason. There have also been reports of undercover officers taking part in the protests in order to make such arrests. Protestors have been left bleeding and defenseless to the said actions. Though rumours of deaths caused by police beatings have surfaced, Hong Kong’s government strictly denies it.

IV. Economic Implications

Though protesters hit the streets with the purpose of defending their rights through a pro-democratic stance, their strategies have had a detrimental effect on Hong Kong’s economy. Since the protests began, companies have reported a loss of revenue due to the stagnant economic environment these marches have created, according to the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong.⁷ Moreover, Hong Kong’s government notified that its 2019 GDP growth forecast was diminishing to between 0% and 1%, from the normal range of 2% to 3%.⁸ The protests that took place in the island’s airport, the eighth largest one, specifically impacted the economy since many flights were cancelled, estimating a loss of US \$76 million⁹ from flight

⁶ “Evidence of Police Violence against Hong Kong Protesters Verified.” Amnesty International. Accessed September 10, 2019. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/06/hong-kong-police-violence/>.

⁷ John, Tara. “Why Hong Kong Is Protesting.” CNN. Cable News Network, August 30, 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/13/asia/hong-kong-airport-protest-explained-hnk-intl/index.html>.

⁸ Weizent. “Carrie Lam Says Hong Kong Economy Faces 'Risk of Downturn' amid Protests.” CNBC. CNBC, August 20, 2019. <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/08/20/hong-kong-protests-carrie-lam-speaks-about-economic-impact-shenzhen.html>.

⁹ Morrison, Allen. “How Hong Kong's Protests Are Affecting Its Economy.” The Conversation, August 23, 2019.

<http://theconversation.com/how-hong-kongs-protests-are-affecting-its-economy-122098>.



cancellations. In response to the intense loss of economic development the chief executive Carrie Lam, expressed hope to have a peaceful dialogue with the protesters in order to ameliorate the situation. However, China's control over the island still manages to be present for local and international businesses who have expressed support to the cause have been accused of participating alongside them.

V. Foreign Affairs

The involvement of foreign nations has been massively apparent throughout the Hong Kong manifestations as protesters rally the streets with American flags and signs that read “President Trump please liberate Hong Kong. Defend our constitution.” and “free Hong Kong, democracy now.”. The protest have swept international media, however, the nation that should feel most entitled to assist is the United Kingdom as they have a legal responsibility being one of the two signatories of the Joint Declaration. Said document is an international agreement which promises the just ways of life including the freedom of expression, guarantee of human rights, and the rule of law would be unchanged for 50 years, until 2047, under the constitutional principle of “one country, two systems.”.





VI. Timeline

- 1) **February 2019**: Hong Kong's Security Bureau submits a paper to the city's legislature proposing amendments to extradition laws
- 2) **April 3, 2019**: Carrie Lam introduces amendments to Hong Kong's extradition laws.
- 3) **May 21, 2019**: Carrie Lam assures her support for the Bill
- 4) **June 4, 2019**: More than 120,000 students, staff and parents sign a petition against the extradition law.
- 5) **June 6, 2019**: More than 3,000 Hong Kong lawyers take to the streets dressed in black protesting against the extradition law.
- 6) **June 12, 2019**: Police fire rubber bullets and 150 canisters of tear gas during a protest.
- 7) **June 16, 2019**: Lam issues a written apology to the public after the second massive protest in a week
- 8) **June 18, 2019**: Lam makes allusion to the withdrawal of the controversial Bill but refuses to step down or officially withdraw it.
- 9) **June 28, 2019**: Anti-extradition protesters rally again near government headquarters
- 10) **July 21, 2019**: Clashes in parts of Hong Kong, as police fire tear gas and rubber bullets at protesters. Men dressed in white attack demonstrators and commuters in an MTR station in Yuen Long, leaving 45 injured.
- 11) **August 5, 2019**: A general strike is called across Hong Kong, with civil servants walking out and joining protests. Several parts of Hong Kong Island, the New Territories and Kowloon join and the violence escalates. Police use tear gas and rubber bullets to clear the crowds, large fires are set outside police stations. More than 200 flights in and



out of Hong Kong airport are cancelled. Police say 148 protesters were arrested
tear gas rounds fired.¹⁰

VII. Guide Questions

- 1) Is your delegation for or against the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill?
- 2) How does your delegation perceive China's authority over Hong Kong under the Sino-British Joint Declaration?
- 3) Does your delegation agree with the excessive force used by the The People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison against the protesters? If not, how do you propose it be controlled?
- 4) What measures can be taken in order to improve Hong Kong's decaying economy?
- 5) Do you think the Chinese government and/or its armed forces violated the UN Code of Human Rights? If so, how should they be held accountable?
- 6) Does your delegation think international aid should be accepted in order to resolve the conflict?



VIII. Message from the Dias

Hello delegates! For the purpose of this committee, the starting date will be **September 3, 2019**, thus anything that takes place after this date will not affect the committee. Position papers will be due on **September 16, 2019** and must be sent to hongkongcpnmun@gmail.com. The format will consist of **Times New Roman font size 12** and will have a minimum of **2 pages** and a maximum of **3** (References page is not counted). In your header, you must include your **delegation** and indicate if you are a **novice or veteran**. Even though the briefing gives you a complete idea of Hong Kong's current situation, we strongly encourage you to research beyond it. We expect this committee to be a very dynamic and interesting one. We look forward to all the solutions you might present! Do not hesitate to contact either of us if you have any questions!

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