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Stand Up. Be Heard!



Dear World Leaders,

We the undersigned 46 organisations, representing hundreds of millions of people from 27 countries, strongly condemn recent authoritarian actions by the Administration of The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in exerting control over Hong Kong and threatening both the freedoms of its citizens and its economic stability.

While the SAR government has apparently taken some steps back by signaling the withdrawal of its extradition bill and a probe into misconduct and human rights abuses by their police force against protestors, we note that these are largely superficial steps that do not end the PRC's ongoing encroachment on Hong Kong's autonomy, and are at least partially motivated by the threat of further U.S. economic sanctions against the PRC. We note, for example, that the extradition bill will not be formally withdrawn unless the decision is approved by the pro-PRC Legislative Council in late October, and that the inquiry into police brutality will be conducted by a body with limited investigative abilities that is not empowered to call a single witness and is staffed by former policemen and pro-PRC Legislative Council members.

We therefore call upon our governments to issue an unequivocal condemnation of actions undertaken by the SAR regime which has enacted a state of effective martial law designed to intimidate and force protestors into silence despite the irrevocable alteration of their way of life, and express their support for the people of Hong Kong. We further call for world governments to support the passage of the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which is intended to safeguard Hong Kong's autonomy.

The actions by authorities in the SAR ignore the wishes of the people of Hong Kong to retain their autonomy and liberal freedoms, whilst blatantly breaking the terms of the bilateral international agreement under which Hong Kong was given to the PRC in 1997. Hong Kong has been a bastion of liberal freedoms and values in the region and has been consistently ranked as one of the world's most economically free cities. It has had a strong foundation of an independent judiciary and the rule of law, as well as private property rights, both physical and intellectual, allowing for an influx of investment and for its economy to flourish and prosper.



It is therefore understandable that the people of Hong Kong strongly oppose illiberal laws that undermine human rights, including the PRC's attempt to pass an extradition bill that would have denied individuals in Hong Kong the basic right to due process in justice and allowed for political dissidents to be extradited and imprisoned. Hong Kong's independent judiciary is critical for countries doing business, and therefore for its position in global trade. If these freedoms are eroded, and companies become subject to arbitrary actions by the government, or have their intellectual property stolen as occurs on the mainland, companies will no longer be willing to invest. This will damage not just the economy of Hong Kong, but the economies of all countries that do business with the region. This is why over 2 million Hong Kong residents have taken to the streets to protest - almost half the city's entire population.

In the face of the Hong Kong people's reasonable demands, the Administration has resorted to illegal tactics such as using tear gas indoors, shooting protesters in their faces with rubber bullets (permanently blinding a nurse in one eye) and simply beating people with no just cause. Police have been recorded pepper spraying protesters and viciously assaulting them to the point of causing serious fractures and broken bones, even after the protesters have surrendered. On 11 August, over 23 protesters were also detained and denied access to their lawyers. Linda Wong, the executive director of the Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women, has also said that Hong Kong police officers have been recorded sexually assaulting both female and male pro-democracy protesters over the past three months to humiliate and silence them. Other dubious tactics include undercover police officers infiltrating protests.

Amnesty International has also condemned the use of blue dye in water cannons to identify protesters for later arrest as it's indiscriminate and could mark medical staff, journalists, and other bystanders for arrest and detention. Unless the international community sends a clear message, this abuse will only escalate.

The people of Hong Kong need international solidarity in their time of need as they hold the fort against PRC expansionism and imperialism - a phenomenon that threatens every free, liberal country in the world. A failure to act now, by taking a decisive stand in support of the Hong Kong people against these actions, will only embolden the PRC government to take further action against external parties that it deems enemies of its state- as well as against its own people who already live under an oppressive regime with a track record of wantonly disregarding the human rights of ethnic and religious minorities.



Abuses committed by the PRC are not limited to Hong Kong. These human rights violations also include the imprisonment of over a million people from Uighur minorities in indoctrination camps to quell any political opposition, the harvesting of organs from political prisoners, collusion with criminal triad gangs to intimidate and harass dissidents, the killing of protesters and dissidents and torture and killing of persecuted sects.

All governments should stand with the people of Hong Kong who are literally risking life and limb on the frontlines of a fight for democracy and freedom. The implications of what occurs in the coming days, weeks, and months has significant ramifications, not just for the persons living in Hong Kong and its local economy, but the international economy as a whole. Beyond the short term economic consequences, this is a fight which could spread elsewhere, if the actions of the increasingly fascist authoritarian and expansionist regime that is cracking down on citizens' rights is not checked.

As the eyes of the world are on what happens in Hong Kong, now more than ever it is critical that our governments do the right thing.

Sincerely,

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