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The Question of Hong Kong



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Introduction

Hong Kong, whose official name is Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (HKSAR) is situated at the South-eastern tip of China on the eastern Pearl River Delta of the South China Sea. It serves as a special administrative region as part of China, but operates under its own laws. With a population of approximately 7.52 million stretched over a landmark consisting of 1,106.66 square kilometres, it is one of the most densely populated metropolitan areas in the world.

The city is unique due to its status as Asia's economic, financial powerhouse and its competitive position in the global trade, as it is the world's 7th largest trading economy with a GDP of 366.03 billion USD in 2019. The HKSAR's economy is primarily based on the service sectors which contribute more than 90% to its GDP. Multinationals including banks and foreign investors are attracted by the city due to its tax system, geographical location in Asia, free market and its freedoms. Whereas Hong Kong serves as a trade bridge between Western companies and mainland China for capitalist markets to reach Asia, it has now become a place of political unrest.

Noting that numerous protests have taken place in the past, the current movement of protests in the special administrative region of the People's Republic of China were one of the largest, as a result of the introduction of the Extradition Bill in the first quarter of 2019. The Bill was introduced by Carrie Lam, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, which would have allowed criminal suspects who are settled or staying in Hong Kong to face trial on the Chinese mainland. In said protests, both sides - the protesters and the police – often spiraling into only resorting to violence.

Notwithstanding that the Extradition Bill protests seems to have come to an end, political discontent currently passes further than solely the Extradition Bill. Critics have expressed its concerns with regards to China's new national security law which is presented by the Carrie Lam as an act that safeguards Hong Kong's security. Opponents fear for unfair



trial on the mainland and the erosion of Hong Kong's freedom, whereas Carria Lam has defended the law consistently that it would restore and maintain the peace and security in the city.

In the long run, this unstable situation could harm the economy significantly as a result of numerous multinationals leaving this SAR region. Additionally, this ongoing event establishes further political polarisation among the population.

Definition of Key Terms

Basic Law

The Basic Law is Hong Kong's mini constitution. It enshrines within a legal document the important concepts of "One Country, Two Systems", "a high degree of autonomy" and "Hong Kong People administering Hong Kong". It also prescribes the various systems to be practised within the HKSAR. (See Appendix I for more information)

Colony

A colony is a country or area under the full or partial political control of another country, typically a distant one, and occupied by settlers from that country.

Democracy

The belief in freedom and equality between people, or a system of government based on this belief, in which power is either held by elected representatives or directly by the people themselves.

Mainland China

Mainland China, also known as the Chinese mainland, is the geopolitical as well as geographical area under the direct jurisdiction of the People's Republic of China (PRC). It includes Hainan island and strictly speaking, politically, excludes the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau, even though both are partially on the geographic mainland.

Special Administrative Region (SAR)

A Special Administrative Region is an area that falls under the general auspices of one country, but which has maintained its own set of laws including a separate political and economic system and a high degree of autonomy. Currently, there are two SAR's: Macau



and Hong Kong. Both maintain their own legal, administrative and judicial systems under the “one country, two systems” concept, located in the Pearl River Delta in the South of China.

After the handover, Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People’s Republic of China (China) since 1997 and is no longer a British colony. The HKSAR does not fall under the full system of Mainland China until 1 July 2047.

According to agreements with the UK and Portugal in the 1980s, Hong Kong and Macau will retain their separate systems until 2047 and 2049, respectively. During these 50-year as autonomous areas, the SARs are governed by Basic Laws, constitutions unique to each region. These give Macau and Hong Kong considerable executive, legislative and judicial freedom. In Hong Kong, the Basic Law is implemented by its Chief Executive. Defense and diplomatic responsibilities, including military and foreign affairs, remain with the Chinese central government (situated in Mainland China).

The Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is the head of the HKSAR and is advised on major decisions by the Executive Council, the members of which are appointed by the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is in charge of the implementation of the Basic Law, signing bills and budgets, the formal proclamation of laws – declaring them as in effect – and issuing executive orders. (See Appendix II for more information). The current Hong Kong’s chief executive is Carrie Lam since 1 July 2017.

Recession

According to the economist Julius Shishkin, a recession is defined as a nation’s state when its GDP is declining in two successive quarters. This became a common standard of recession measurement definition over the years. Opposed to this, a healthy economy expands over time, whereas within a recession two quarters in a row of contracting output indicates serious underlying economic problems.

During a recession, the economy struggles, unemployment rates rises, company sales decreases and the country’s overall economic output declines. The point where the economy officially falls into a recession depends on a variety of factors. With regards to the situation of Hong Kong, the political and social unrest during the 2019 protests is one of the main contributory factors that slid Hong Kong into a recession in October 2019.

Gross domestic product (GDP)



Gross domestic product (GDP) is a widely used measure of a country's financial value created through the production of goods and services during one year. While GDP is the single most important indicator to capture economic activity, it falls short of providing a suitable measure of people's material well-being, since GDP solely focuses on output, but not on welfare. Therefore, it could be rather considered as a component of welfare as opposed to a measurement of human welfare, as aspects - including health, equality and human rights - are not been taken into account.

Additionally, it is important to note that not all productive activity is included in the GDP measurement. For instance, unpaid labour (such as work that is performed in home or by volunteers) and black-market activities are not included, because they are difficult to measure and value accurately.

Social cohesion

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a society is characterised cohesive if “it works the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility.”

The three pillars of social cohesion are social inclusion, social capital, and social mobility. Social inclusion is the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society. Social capital represents the value of the relationships between people who work or live together and the knowledge and skills that they have and share. Social mobility reflects the degree to which people can change their position in society.

Social cohesion is a very important driver of long-term prosperity and competitiveness. Cohesive societies are politically stable and focus on economic growth and business development. Social cohesion itself is built over years, not overnight. It results from policies that allow everybody in society to share its prosperity. It makes competitiveness sustainable.

Polarisation

The act of dividing something, especially something that contains different people or opinions, into two completely opposing groups.

Legislative Council

The Legislative Council is the law-making body of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It comprises 70 members, with 35 elected directly by geographical



constituencies and 35 elected by functional constituencies (including five elected by the District Council (second) functional constituency). Apart from its law-making function, the Legislative Council debates issues of public interest, examines and approves budgets, receives and debates the Chief Executive's policy addresses, and endorses the appointment and removal of the judges of the Court of Final Appeal and the Chief Judge of the High Court. (See Appendix II for more information)

General Overview

N.B. Due to the dynamic character of the Hong Kong situation, the last developments might not been added in this research report.

Hong Kong prior to and during its colonial period under British authority

Trading relations between the United Kingdom and China dates back as far as in 17th and 18th century. Around that time China was the only place on earth that was producing tea on a massive scale, whilst the product became highly popular among the British. Britain exchanged silver bullion for tea. Up until one point, Britain's treasury ran low on silver as a result of a national crisis. Thus, the British government started an illegal drug trade, smuggling opium, a highly addictive narcotic that was illegal in China, and sell this opium in exchange for Chinese silver which was used to buy Chinese tea.

Eventually, this illegal drug trade was noticed by the Qing Dynasty, the ruler of the region called the People's Republic of China today. After the two Opium Wars of the 19th century, the Hong Kong island and the neighbouring peninsula of Kowloon was ceded to Britain. The New Territories also came under British control besides the Hong Kong island and the neighbouring peninsula of Kowloon in a 99-year lease that would expire in 1997.

Sino-British Joint Declaration

As the lease drew to a close, negotiations regarding the future of Hong Kong between the UK and China took place in 1980s. Thereafter, in 1984, the Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed which stated that Hong Kong which contains Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories would be no longer under British rule. Therefore, it would be part of China in 1997, but operates under its own set of rules during a 50 year long period until 2047. Hong Kong's political and economic capitalist system would remain unchanged for 50 years under its high degree of autonomy and includes freedoms such as freedom of speech, press, assemble and demonstrate.





Fig. 1. Map that identifies the Territory of british Colonial Hong Kong (before 30 June 1997) (Mugnier, Clifford J. "Grids & Datums—Hong Kong." *Photogrammetric Engineering & Remote Sensing*, vol. 82, no. 4, 2016, pp. 253–254., <https://doi:10.14358/pers.82.4.253>.)

Extradition Bill

From April 2019 until approximately the begin of 2020, massive protests were held in response to the extradition bill which was introduced in April 2019. After the bill was indefinitely delayed in mid-June of 2019 and it was declared as "dead" on the 18th of June, the bill was eventually formally withdrawn in September 2019.

The proposals of the extradition bill would have allowed for the HKSAR government to consider requests from any governments for the extradition of criminal suspects including those it does not have an extradition treaty with such as mainland China.

The murder of a woman and child in China got the Hong Kong government thinking (see Appendix III for more information). The suspects of this murder fled to Hong Kong. Because the murder took place in China and Hong Kong did not had an extradition treaty with the Chinese mainland, he could no longer be extradited due to the special status of

Hong Kong. Because of this, the HKSAR believes the extradition bill is necessary to uphold justice and fulfill international obligations such as protecting human rights.

Furthermore, the HKSAR has stated consistently that Hong Kong courts would have the final conviction whether to grant such extradition requests, and suspects accused of political and religious crimes would not be extradited. Additionally, it also made clear that **only** fugitives who committed offences which carried judicial sentences of at least seven years would be handed over.

Opponents of the law are concerned that Hongkongers would be exposed to unfair trials, violent treatment and lose their democratic freedoms. They also argued that political activists and journalists are risking to be a target of this bill.

4 Remaining demands

Notwithstanding that the protests seems to have come to an end, the protesters originally still have 4 demands, as their first demand – the formally withdrawal of the Extradition Bill, which took place in September 2019 – has already been met.

Firstly, advocaters of the demands do not want to be defined as "rioters", as being sentenced as a "rioter" can lead to a 10-year prison sentence. Proponents of this demand have expressed its concerns about non-violent protesters who may potentially be prosecuted unfairly.

Secondly, another demand states that all already arrested protesters should be released and their charges must be dropped.

Thirdly, they also demanded an independent investigation into police brutality since there have been numerous violent incidents between the police and protesters.

Lastly, they want a change in the electoral system. Currently, the central government of China decides who can run for the election as the next Hong Kong Chief Executive. Citizens who are critical about the structure of Hong Kong's political system demand the elections to be officially unaffected by the central government of China and be able to vote for self-promoting candidates.

National Security Law

On June 30th 2020, a new security law has been passed by Chinese central government. It criminalises any act of secession (breaking away from the country), subversion (undermining the power or authority of the central government), terrorism (using



violence or intimidation against people) and collusion with foreign or external forces (See appendix VI for more information).

Opponents of the new law fear the law might erode Hong Kong's freedoms as a semi-autonomous region and its freedom of speech, and that it may undermine the Basic Law and "one country, two systems" principle.

Hong Kong officials said it would restore stability after the violent protests. Carrie Lam argued that it was "actually relatively mild as far as national security laws are concerned" and would enable Hong Kongers to "exercise their rights and freedoms without being intimidated and attacked".

According to the BBC the new law's key provisions include that:

- "Crimes of secession, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces are punishable by a maximum sentence of life in prison;
- Damaging public transport facilities can be considered terrorism;
- Those found guilty will not be allowed to stand for public office;
- Companies can be fined if convicted under the law;
- Beijing will establish a new security office in Hong Kong, with its own law enforcement personnel - neither of which would come under the local jurisdiction;
- This office can send some cases to be tried in mainland China - but Beijing has said it will only have that power over a "tiny number" of cases;
- In addition, Hong Kong will have to establish its own national security commission to enforce the laws, with a Beijing-appointed adviser;
- Hong Kong's chief executive will have the power to appoint judges;
- Importantly, Beijing will have power over how the law should be interpreted, not any Hong Kong judicial or policy body. If the law conflicts with any Hong Kong law, the Beijing law takes priority;
- Some trials will be heard behind closed doors;
- Management of foreign non-governmental organisations and news agencies will be strengthened;



- The law will also apply to non-permanent residents and people “from outside [Hong Kong] ... who are not permanent residents of Hong Kong”.

New national security office

The new opened national security in Hong Kong is an element of the new national security law. For the first time mainland Chinese agents are situated in this SAR besides the mainland as well. They would have to the authority to investigate people for a wide range of crimes defined by the new law and potentially extradite suspects to the mainland for trial. According to Luo Huining, head of existing Hong Kong-Beijing liaison office, the new office would be “the envoy for Hong Kong’s safety and is also the gatekeeper of national security”.

Article 23

Under a similar agreement, the HKSAR government has passed a national security law, which was set out in Article 23 of the Basic Law. Article 23 provides that the HKSAR “shall enact laws on its own to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People’s Government, or theft of state secrets, to prohibit foreign political organizations or bodies from conducting political activities in the Region, and to prohibit political organizations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political organizations or bodies.”

Proposals to implement Article 23 were released in September 2002, introduced to the Legislative Council in February 2003. As these developments were followed by intense debates and a massive demonstration in Hong Kong - that expressed its concerns especially about the right to freedom of expression and assembly -, the proposed bill was formally withdrawn on 1 July 2003.

Other underlying factors or effects that steers unrest

Besides the extradition bill and the new security law, there might be other indirect factors or effects that threaten the Hongkongers hope for a good future.

Housing crisis

Even before the protests of 2019, the housing crisis was a complex issue as well, as Hong Kong is one of the world’s most expensive housing market. The city is one of the most densely populated places in the world with a population of 7.52 million people, yet most of its 200 islands are uninhabitable. According to Vox (2018), 75%



of the territory is not developed and only 3.7% is intended for public housing. This is primarily explained by the HKSAR's policy.

The HKSAR government controls nearly half of the total supply of housing through public housing rentals and assisted home ownership purchase programs which are intended for lower income households. Nevertheless, the supply of public housing is not sufficient to keep up with the demand which results to long waiting lists intended for public housing.

Those who are competing in the private property market, are fighting for half of the entire supply of housing in order to sell these houses for record prices. As a result of this system of supply and demand, accessible and affordable housing is challenging to find. In the worst cases, people with lack of financial resources have to sleep in cages between 7 and 13 square metres. The living conditions of these cages are characterised as harmful and unhealthy – especially for young children and the elderly – as the states of hygiene, ventilation and lighting are highly concerning. Additionally, these homes are at higher risk of outbreaks of fire and infectious diseases.

Moreover, most of its government revenues comes from land sales. The HKSAR government leases out land to property developers at astronomical prices as it works with an auction process. As a result of this, the government is able to make a ton of revenue and therefore is not obligated to raise high taxes on its citizens or corporations that reside there and keep their reputation as one of the freest economy on earth. In spite of this system, the HKSAR government rarely free up more land and lower prices. However, whereas this current auction system is advantageous for government revenues and the market generally, those who are unable to afford housing that stems from the private sector, would either have to be on the public housing list for years or choose the option to live in a cage home.





Fig. 2. A glimpse of Hong Kong's cages homes

(Kelly, Erin. "21 Harrowing Images Of Life Inside Hong Kong's Tiny Cage Homes." *All That's Interesting*, All That's Interesting, 13 May 2020, www.allthatsinteresting.com/cage-homes-hong-kong.)

Recession

In October 2019, Hong Kong slid into recession for the first time in a decade due to violent anti-government protests and trade tariffs as a result of the Trade War between China and the USA, as the GDP continues to decrease. The unrest in the streets during the protests resulted to people avoiding going out including tourists due to safety reasons which resulted in less spending. Sectors in retail catering, tourism and transportation have all been suffering as a result of this, therefore causing an ever worsening recession.

In addition to this pandemic caused by COVID-19 might keep the city in recession for longer according to Martin Rasmussen, a chinese economist at Capital Economics. As people are avoiding unnecessary exposure to large crowds and employees at many companies are practicing remote working, even more detrimental economic impacts could be expected such as further increases in the unemployment rate.



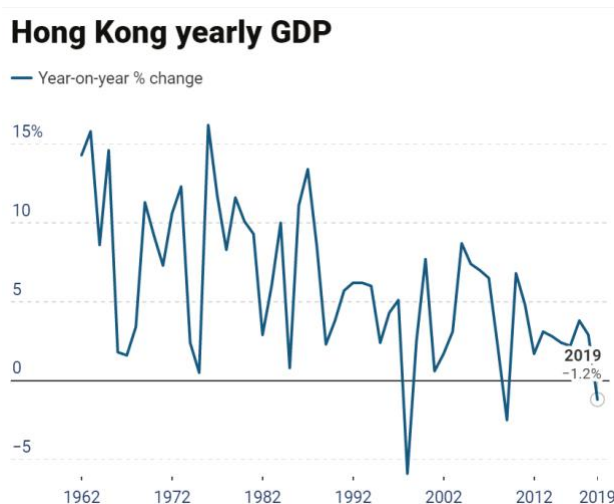


Fig. 3. Hong Kong yearly GDP

(Lok-kei , Sum, and Denise Tsang. “Hong Kong Faces Threat of Worst Recession Ever, Finance Chief Warns.” *South China Morning Post*, 29 Apr. 2020, 13:05, www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/hong-kong-economy/article/3082062/hong-kong-facing-greater-financial-crisis-2018-or.)

Polarisation, neglect of the social cohesion within the HKSAR

Another factor that threatens Hong Kong is the extreme social polarisation. Opinions among friends and family concerning the current situation of Hong Kong are divided. One side is concerned about the implications on HKSAR’s economy and its status as an attractive financial hub. Others sympathise with the aims of the protesters, but not always with their tactics such as defacing the legislative building and metro stations.

A substantial percentage of protesters are in their late teens and early 20s, born around the time of the 1997 handover. They fear that the Hong Kong they have grown up with - its culture, traditions, autonomy - slips away. Some parents have expressed their support to this belief while other households are more likely to tear apart due to opposing stances.

If the extreme social polarisation continues to accelerate consistently, the tensivity of the city’s atmosphere might increase further and the polarisation would cause more massive divisions across the city in places such as schools, work environments, social areas and families tearing apart. This would be highly inconstructive to get further as a society when citizens are facing severe difficulties with respecting or being exposed to different opinions while those they have to work and live together. In the most extreme cases, people might develop extremist thoughts when they are barely exposed to other perspectives of a story.



Major Parties Involved and Their Views

China

China argues that the implementation of the National Security Law restores the peace in Hong Kong as crimes such as vandalism of metro stations would be prevented with the security law. It has frequently outspoken its discouragement towards other countries including the United States, United Kingdom and Australia to stop interfering with their “national affairs” regarding Hong Kong. Furthermore, it warns countries that have outspoken concerning the Hong Kong affairs might follow consequences. Thusfar, in practice, the Chinese government has imposed sanctions on 11 US citizens including senators and other high profile officials in response to the US’ latest decision to sanction 11 Chinese officials. In addition to this, China has announced that Hong Kong will suspend its extradition agreement with Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region’s government

Before the formal withdrawal of the extradition bill, Carrie Lam argued in 2019 that the extradition bill was necessary to protect the city against criminals. After delaying and declaring the bill as “dead”, the bill was eventually withdrawn in September 2019. Despite this, the unrest in HKSAR still remains unsolved.

The Hong Kong government has emphasised its support towards the national security law by stating the law was urgently needed to ensure peace and prevent further unrest in the city. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, a new national security office has opened on the HKSAR territory in order to supervise the implementation of the new security law. As Lam puts it: “The core values in terms of the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, the various rights and freedoms enjoyed by people, will continue to be there”.

Hong Kong officials including Carrie Lam have been sanctioned by the United States. Lam’s spokesman mentioned that Lam would not be “intimidated” and he argued that “Speaking on behalf of her senior colleagues who are being targeted, the Chief Executive Mrs Carrie Lam said that we are discharging an honourable duty to safeguard national security, protecting the life and interest of not only 7.5 million Hong Kong people but also the 1.4 billion Mainlanders.”

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom, a former colonist of Hong Kong, is critical about the situation in Hong Kong and has made that clear in the past few years. Thus, UK Prime Minister Boris



Johnson has commented on the recently passed security law stating that the passing of the law was a “clear and serious breach” of the 1985 Sino-British Joint Declaration. In response to the law, the UK announced that up to three million Hong Kong residents would be offered the chance for settlement and eventually be eligible to apply for full British citizenship, which would put in place in early 2021 according to the British foreign secretary. Additionally, the UK government has decided to suspend its extradition treaty with Hong Kong.

United States

Similar to the United Kingdom, the United States is also critical regarding the Hong Kong situation and has publicly outspoken their stance regarding the SAR frequently. In a recent press statement that was publicly released on 7 August 2020, it is stated that Hong Kong will be treated as an “one country, one system” and that President Trump will “take action against individuals who have crushed the Hong Kong people’s freedoms.”

In practice, the US had already begun the process of eliminating the special status of HKSAR. The elimination means that it would no longer recognise and treat Hong Kong as a SAR. More specifically, this would mean that defence exports would be halted and territory’s access to high-technology products would be restricted.

Other sanctions that was imposed by the United States contain the suspension with the extradition treaty of Hong Kong and sanctions on Hong Kong and mainland China officials.

Australia

Australia has expressed its fears in regards with the new national security law by suspending its extradition treaty with Hong Kong. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison argues that the new law undermined “Hong Kong’s own basic law” and the HKSAR’s autonomy. Additionally, Australia has offered 5 year visa extensions to Hong Kong residents while providing a pathway to permanent residency for up to 10.000 people.

Timeline of Events

N.B. Due to the dynamic character of the Hong Kong situation, the last developments might not been included in the timeline of events.

Date	Description of event
1840 -1842	First Opium war between the UK and Qing dynasty China



1842	China cedes Hong Kong island to the UK after the First Opium War
29 August 1842	Treaty of Nanking between the UK and China, which was ratified in 1843, after the UK defeated China
1898	Hong Kong, which contains of Hong Kong island, Kowloon and the New Territories, is leased to China for 99 years.
1941- 1945	Japan occupies Hong Kong during Second World War
1970s	Hong Kong is established as an "Asian Tiger" - one of the region's economic powerhouses - with a thriving economy based on high-technology industries.
1982-1984	Negotiations between China and the United Kingdom with regards to the future of Hong Kong
19 December 1984	Sino-British Joint Declaration which was ratified in 1985
1 July 1997	Hong Kong is handed over to China according to the terms of the Sino British Joint Declaration
2002-2003	Article 23
December 2007	China declares that elections held in 2017 and 2020 would be through direct and universal suffrage
August 2014	The decision to allow a free choice of the candidates at the elections is revoked by the Central Government which results to protests demanding more democracy
February 2019	Hong Kong's Security Bureau proposes amendments to extradition laws that would allow extraditions to mainland China and other countries that are not covered by existing treaties.



31 March 2019	Thousands of people took to the streets to protest in response to the proposed extradition bill.
3 April 2019	Hong Kong's government introduced plans for the extradition bill that would allow for criminal suspects to potentially be extradited to China.
30 May 2019	Concessions to the extradition bill are introduced but opponents express their disapproval by stating they are not enough.
15 June 2019	The extradition bill is indefinitely delayed by Lam.
23 October 2019	The extradition bill is formally withdrawn.
31 October 2019	Hong Kong slid into recession for the first time in decade in the third quarter.
21 May 2020	Beijing says it is planning to impose a national security legislation on Hong Kong as a result of the violent protests and unrest of 2019.
28 May 2020	China's parliament overwhelmingly approves imposing the national security law on Hong Kong to address secession, subversion, terrorism and foreign interference.
28 May 2020	Donald Trump orders his administration to begin the process of eliminating special U.S. treatment for HKSAR, but stops short of calling an immediate end to privileges.
30 June 2020	Hong Kong Security Law came into effect.
July 2020	Multiple countries are imposing measures as a response to the new national security law including Australia, Canada, Germany and the UK. As a result of this, China has announced that Hong Kong will suspend its extradition agreement with Australia, Canada and the UK.
3 July 2020	Zheng Yanxiong, a new Hong Kong Security Chief, has been appointed
8 July 2020	Opening new national security office



August 2020

US suspends its extradition treaty with Hong Kong and imposes sanctions on Hong Kong and mainland China officials. In response to this, China has imposed sanctions on 11 US citizens including UN senators and other high profile officials.

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The United Nations recognise the Sino-British Joint Declaration and therefore that Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region within China. However, there are no relevant solutions or treaties been passed so far. Nonetheless, several UN officials have released their statements with regards to Hong Kong and there have been attempts to place the situation of Hong Kong on the UN agenda.

On 13 August 2019, Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has expressed her concern towards the ongoing events in HKSAR and the escalation of the violence. She encouraged - in a press briefing note on Hong Kong, which was released on the same day - that Hong Kong authorities as well as its citizens should engage in an “open and inclusive dialogue” to resolve all issues in a peaceful manner, while achieving “long-term political stability and public security”.

On 27 May 2020, a call for an UN Security Council Meeting in the form of a formal debate on Hong Kong was requested by the United States of America. However, this meeting was refused by China and not supported by the majority of the Security Council. Therefore, it failed to proceed in the Security Council.

During the 44th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (taken place on the 30th June 2020 – 17th July 2020), two opposing statements were released in response to China’s new national security law in Hong Kong.

Cuba expressed - on behalf of 53 countries (see Appendix V) - its support towards the National Security Law by stating: “Non-interference in internal affairs of sovereign states is an essential principle enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.” and “We believe every country has the right to safeguard its national security through legislation, and commend relevant steps taken for this purpose.”

Conversely, the United Kingdom stated on behalf of 27 countries: “We urge the Chinese and Hong Kong governments to reconsider the imposition of this legislation and to engage Hong Kong’s people, institutions and judiciary to prevent further erosion of the rights and freedoms that the people of Hong Kong have enjoyed for many years.”



Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Notwithstanding that the UN along with several countries have expressed its concerns regarding the situation of Hong Kong, it seems that there has been no resolutions been released or formal meetings with the intention of creating resolutions being held in the past in order resolve the issues of Hong Kong.

As permanent members of the Security Council have veto power, any resolution created in the Security Council could be rejected as the veto power of only one permanent member would be sufficient to block the adoption of a certain resolution. Therefore, this limits the opportunity to discuss and adopt internationally binding resolutions with regards to the situation of Hong Kong.

Furthermore, notwithstanding that community housing and assisted home ownership purchase programs have been set up for low income households, in fact, this financial support is limited since the supply of these resources does not sufficiently meet the demand.

Thusfar, there has not been a strategical plan released publicly that shows how the Hong Kong government plans to combat the long term implications of the recession and prevent further polarisation. Although, there have been measures taken to reduce the economic damage in response to COVID-19 including subsidising wages and struggling industries. Besides this, there has been no formal attempts in the past to resolve other aspects of this issue.

Possible Solutions

It is unclear what will happen after 2047. The situation in Hong Kong is a complex topic due to the political structure of this special administrative region. In recent years, the rising polarisation has become an increasingly prominent among the Hong Kong residents where some support with regards to closer ties with the Mainland whereas an opposing group is striving for democracy and supports further autonomy for the HKSAR.

As the violence that was involved in the Extradition Bill protests may have raised questions about the behaviours from the police and protesters and has resulted into increasing tensions within the city. It might be recommended to start an independent investigation regarding the violence that has been involved from both the police and the



protesters side in order to minimise conflict and take the necessary measures to safeguard the safety of Hong Kong.

The underlying issues such as the housing crisis and the implications of the recession could threaten the future of Hong, whilst the protests and the COVID-19 pandemic make it even more adverse. This could lead to the young working class to leave the city and with it the Chinese territory, putting Hong Kong's future at more risk of prospering. It is recommended to rethink HKSARs strategy to provide proper and affordable housing, and to create a plan for a sustainable economic recovery of the financial hub, to make the city more attractive to young adults.

Lastly, compromises with China regarding the degree of sovereignty of China on its SARs are necessary to constructively combat the unrest. Restarting negotiations regarding the future of Hong Kong with Hongkongers from different sectors and backgrounds might serve as a begin of the understanding of the Hong Kong situation from different perspectives among the population.

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Appendix or Appendices

Appendix I

This link provides further information regarding the Basic Law.

<https://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/index/index.html>

Appendix II

This link provides further information concerning the government structure of Hong Kong including the mandates of the Chief Executive and the Legislative Council.

www.gov.hk/en/about/govdirectory/govstructure.htm.

Appendix III

Full story of the murder that poses the HKSAR government to consider the concept of the Extradition Bill

"Chan Tong-kai was sentenced to prison by a judge in April 2019. Just over one year earlier, authorities say the then 19-year-old admitted to killing his girlfriend, 20-year-old Poon Hiu-wing, while the pair were in Taiwan. Poon would have been about 15 weeks pregnant at the time.

Though Chan was arrested in March 2018 and soon confessed to the killing, according to police, that wasn't why he was before a judge in April. Because Hong Kong and Taiwan have no extradition agreement, and do not usually provide cross-border legal assistance -- and because they couldn't prove the alleged murder was planned in Hong Kong beforehand -- prosecutors in the city were unable to charge Chan with murder."

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/10/23/asia/hong-kong-taiwan-murder-intl-hnk/index.html>

Appendix VI



