

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN HONG KONG:

HONG KONG WATCH BRIEFING ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS: FEBRUARY 2023

KEY FIGURES

Hong Kong hopes to attract at least **1,130** companies to expand their operations in the city by 2025.¹

20% of the Americans in Hong Kong have left in the last two years.²

In 2022, Hong Kong's population declined **0.9%** to **7.3** million.³

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¹<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/hong-kong-economy/article/3210680/100-foreign-companies-talks-hong-kong-about-possible-investment-plans-commerce-chief-says>

²<https://www.thestandard.com.hk/breaking-news/section/4/199636/Consul:-20-of-Americans-in-Hong-Kong-left-in-past-2-years>

³<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/hong-kong-population-drops-3rd-year-covid-shadow-97248985>

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POLITICAL PRISONERS: ARRESTS, CHARGES & TRIALS

Trial of 47 Democrats Begins

The long-anticipated trial of the 47 democrats opened on Monday 6 February 2023.⁴ The trial concerns the 47 democrats who organised or participated in “unofficial” primaries in July 2020. As a result of these primaries, 55 people were arrested in January 2021, in the largest crackdown since the National Security Law was passed.

⁴<https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/2/5/hong-kong-watch-urges-international-community-to-monitor-the-unfair-trial-of-the-47-hong-kong-democrats>

Of these, 47 have been accused of “conspiracy to commit subversion” and are now facing trial. The majority of defendants have been in detention for 2 years, as only 13 have been granted bail. 31 of the defendants have pleaded guilty. This is one of the most significant trials since the National Security Law was passed.

On the first day of the trial, the court heard that four defendants are set to testify for the prosecution in return for a reduced sentence. This includes former lawmaker Au Nok-hin, ex-district councillors Andrew Chiu and Ben Chung, and founder of retail chain AbouThai Mike Lam.⁵

Former legislator Au Nok-hin, who has pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit subversion, began his testimony as the first prosecution witness.⁶ Au testified that he was in charge of holding election forums, and the procedures were formulated by him, but he did not remember which forums he attended.⁷

Concerns were raised that the large number of people queuing to enter the trial were paid to attend since the first day. When journalists spoke to people in line, many did not know what trial they were queuing for and evaded questions. Later on, reporters saw a group of people handling money at a nearby restaurant after they left the court.⁸ This is evidence that the pro-establishment camp in Hong Kong is using Beijing’s tactics to prevent people from accessing and reporting on a trial, as is often done for trials of human rights defenders in the Mainland.

There have been other developments, including a judge warning against harassing prosecution witnesses,⁹ summoning Registration and Electoral Office officials to testify in this trial¹⁰ and defendants who pleaded guilty being placed under disciplinary actions.¹¹

Hong Kong Watch publishes weekly updates on the trial of the 47, which you can view on our [website](#) and social media.

⁵<https://hongkongfp.com/2023/02/06/hong-kong-47-4-activists-to-testify-for-prosecution-in-national-security-case-court-hears/>

⁶<https://hongkongfp.com/2023/02/13/hong-kong-47-ex-lawmaker-au-nok-hin-testifies-against-fellow-democrats-during-national-security-trial/>

⁷<https://thewitnesshk.com/%e3%80%90%e5%af%a6%e6%99%82%e6%9b%b4%e6%96%b0%e3%80%9147%e4%ba%ba%e6%a1%88%ef%bd%9c%e7%ac%ac%e4%b9%9d%e5%a4%a9%e5%af%a9%e8%a8%8a%e3%80%80%e6%8e%a7%e6%96%b9%e7%ba%8c%e5%95%8f%e5%8d%80%e8%ab%be%e8%bb%92/>

⁸<https://hongkongfp.com/2023/02/08/hong-kong-47-suspicious-grow-over-paid-court-goers-as-people-with-public-gallery-tickets-leave-before-hearing/>

⁹<https://hongkongfp.com/2023/02/09/hong-kong-47-court-warns-against-harassment-ahead-of-witness-testimony-in-democrats-national-security-trial/>

¹⁰<https://hongkongfp.com/2023/02/10/hong-kong-47-election-officials-to-testify-in-democrats-national-security-trial-prosecutors-reveal/>

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/xinqisu/status/1623296420559085569?s=46&t=5x0Ij8zuF15363s6FeyKA>

Stand News Trial Continues

The Stand News Trial, where former editors Chung Pui-kuen and Patrick Lam face sedition charges and are accused of conspiring to publish 17 “seditious” articles between July 2020 and December 2021, has continued this month. Notably, Chung told the court he never imagined that journalism could attract a sedition charge and that the government’s “suppression of critical voices or opinions will cause hatred more easily” than the comment itself.¹²

The prosecution added that they would cite four articles not previously submitted to the court to examine what the intentions were in publishing allegedly seditious pieces. One was an opinion piece by activist-in-exile Nathan Law which criticised the government and stated that the court “worked with the CCP to carry out a state-level trial”. Chung said he thought Law’s criticism was within the bounds of free speech and there had been similar comments on different media platforms at that time.¹³

This trial marks a sinister turn for basic rights and freedoms in Hong Kong, as the prosecution argues that even allowing political commentary to be published, as editors, may violate national security. This may have a devastating effect on freedom of expression and rights related to the press in Hong Kong.

Former Police Officer Convicted of Sedition

Chui Chun-man, a former police officer, has been convicted under the colonial-era sedition law over Facebook comments. He was arrested and prosecuted after posting comments on the police Facebook page and his own Facebook page about the death of marine officer Lam Yuen-yee in September 2021, who had drowned during a police operation. Chui claimed that he did not have any seditious intent and the comments were made to highlight the unfairness of Lam’s death and express his frustrations over this.¹⁴

Martial Arts Coach Jailed for Inciting Subversion

Denis Wong, a martial arts coach, was arrested in March 2022 in an undercover bust of his martial arts training hall where police said he and an assistant were teaching “combat tai chi”. However, police said they had seized weapons, including machetes, crossbows and steel-tipped arrows, during a raid of his home. This month, he pleaded guilty to inciting subversion, and was sentenced to five years in prison. He was also accused of posting anti-government messages on Facebook, including calls to topple the Hong Kong and

¹²<https://hongkongfp.com/2023/02/16/stand-news-trial-ex-hong-kong-editor-accused-of-sedition-says-politicians-should-be-free-to-criticise-authorities/>

¹³<https://hongkongfp.com/2023/02/23/stand-news-trial-prosecution-to-cite-previously-unsubmitted-articles-to-question-top-editors-intention/>

¹⁴<https://hongkongfp.com/2023/02/28/ex-hong-kong-police-officer-convicted-of-sedition-over-comments-over-death-of-marine-officer/>

Chinese governments and setting up a "shadow government and self-defence force".¹⁵

Jailed Youngsters ‘Corrupted’ with ‘Anti-Government Sentiment’

The Secretary for Security Chris Tang claimed that, during prison visits, he noticed that many young inmates have been instilled with hatred of the Hong Kong government. He warned of “soft resistance tactics” used to endanger national security and that some prison visitors have “unyieldingly” used different means to continue to “corrupt” youngsters jailed over offences linked to the 2019 extradition bill protests. Hong Kong lawmakers have endorsed this by commenting that if inmates deliberately sparked disputes under the instructions of those who were anti-China and trying to stir trouble in Hong Kong, they would have to be punished under the Correctional Services Department’s guidelines.¹⁶

THE STATE OF THE RULE OF LAW

Hong Kong Rules that Surgery is Not Necessary for Legal Gender Change

The Court of Final Appeal in Hong Kong ruled that the government’s requirement that transgender men undergo “full sex reassignment surgery” to change their legal gender is unconstitutional. It referenced the 2017 Hong Kong government working group paper as well as the European Court of Human Rights and concluded that this requirement violated their right to privacy and failed to provide a reasonable balance between “societal benefits and the appellants’ rights.”¹⁷

Hong Kong Responds to UK Foreign Secretary

In its six-month report on Hong Kong, that the UK Foreign Office released last year, the UK detailed the systematic erosion of freedoms in Hong Kong by the Chinese government, highlighting the crackdown on free speech. The Hong Kong Government responded to this by stating that it “strongly disapproves and firmly rejects the untruthful and biased remarks recently made by the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom (UK), Mr James Cleverly, about the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL) and the rights and freedoms in the HKSAR” and that these “amount to political smearing and fact twisting.”¹⁸

¹⁵<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230224-hong-kong-martial-arts-coach-jailed-for-inciting-subversio>
[n](#)

¹⁶<https://hongkongfp.com/2023/02/24/jailed-youngsters-corrupted-with-anti-govt-sentiment-during-prison-visits-hong-kong-security-chief-claims/>

¹⁷ https://legalref.judiciary.hk/lrs/common/ju/ju_body.jsp?DIS=150362&AH=&QS=&FN=&currpage=

¹⁸ <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202302/28/P2023022800418.htm>

MEDIA FREEDOM IN THE CROSS HAIRS

Bao Choy Launches The Collective HK

The Hong Kong journalist and former RTHK host Bao Choy has launched a new media outlet, The Collective HK, to “monitor the rich and powerful” and “seek truth”. It is co-founded with veteran journalist Ken Lui Tsz-lok. The press release made reference to the city’s latest press freedom ranking by Reporters Without Borders, which plummeted 68 places in the last year, and The Collective has nevertheless vowed to provide in-depth reporting and news analysis each week.¹⁹

Disney Censors Forced Labour Episode in Hong Kong

The TV Show The Simpsons has an episode which makes reference to forced labour camps in China. The TV show is streamed by Disney in Hong Kong, who have removed this episode from the city without explanation and without responding to journalists’ comments.²⁰ This raises concerns about censorship in Hong Kong, which has already been an issue since the National Security Law was passed in 2020.

Hong Kong Journalists in Ukraine

As the war’s one year anniversary passed, several Hong Kong journalists have been reporting from Ukraine where they feel a deep sense of solidarity. One journalist said the days in Ukraine reminded him of his home city, and that the way Ukrainians were helping each other so selflessly was similar to the way Hongkongers helped each other. Other journalists expressed the view that Hong Kong and Ukraine are incomparable, but found rich reporting experiences to share.²¹

Hong Kong Disconnects SIM Cards

The Hong Kong government introduced new regulations requiring residents to register SIM cards under their real name, and people who did not do so found their SIM card disconnected automatically. Officials claimed that the move will thwart scammers, identity thieves and manufacturers of home-made bombs, and the Deputy Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office Deng Zhonghua previously cited the registration scheme as one of a series of policies to protect China’s national security. This new regulation may limit the right to privacy, and nearly 60% of Hong Kong people fear the police will get new powers to acquire personal data from telecommunications companies under this registration plan.²²

¹⁹<https://hongkongfp.com/2023/02/20/hong-kong-journalist-bao-choy-launches-new-media-outlet-amid-collapsing-press-freedom/>

²⁰ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-64550177>

²¹<https://hongkongfp.com/2023/02/19/witnesses-to-war-the-hong-kong-journalists-on-the-frontlines-in-ukraine/>

²²<https://hongkongfp.com/2023/02/24/hong-kong-disconnects-phones-without-real-name-registered-sims-as-deadline-arrives/>

THE GREAT PURGE UNDERWAY

Hong Kong's Democratic Party Forced to Cancel Fundraiser

The Hong Kong Democratic Party, the biggest opposition party, has cancelled an annual fundraising event after the venue cancelled the booking for the third year running. Although they had booked a venue with 200 seats, the venue cancelled the booking at the last minute, saying it had to close for "urgent" repairs to its gas supply. This is the third year in a row that the political party has faced this problem, as the venue bookings were also cancelled in the last two years. Another pro-democracy party, the League of Social Democrats, also had a venue to cancel one of its events in August 2022.²³

Hong Kong Population Drops Again

Hong Kong's government announced the population dropped for a third straight year, declining at a rate of 0.9% to 7.3 million at the end of 2022. It cited the rising deaths during the pandemic and the COVID-19 measures which reduced the number of arriving workers. The Census and Statistics Department said there was a net outflow of 60,000 residents, with 21,200 new residents arriving.²⁴ The government did not mention the political reasons for mass exodus.

20% of Americans Left Hong Kong in Last Two Years

The US Consul General said that 20% of the Americans in Hong Kong have left for various reasons over the past two years. He specified that Hong Kong's strict anti-COVID-19 measures and "diminishing freedoms" have "clearly impacted the city and the people in it." Nevertheless, there are still about 70,000 Americans and 1,300 U.S. companies are currently present in Hong Kong.²⁵

Hong Kong Tells America to Stop 'Scaremongering'

Following the American Consul General's comments above, the Hong Kong government criticised the consulate and insisted Washington's "scaremongering" only reflected its "ill intent". The US consulate later responded that it would "not hesitate to express publicly and privately the United States' deep concern over the erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy". The US Consul General also attended a talk this month, where he told delegates that Hong Kong's legal system was threatened by mainland China.²⁶

²³<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/hongkong-democrats-02232023094611.html>

²⁴<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/hong-kong-population-drops-3rd-year-covid-shadow-97248985>

²⁵<https://www.thestandard.com.hk/breaking-news/section/4/199636/Consul:-20-of-Americans-in-Hong-Kong-left-in-past-2-years>

²⁶<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3211542/hong-kong-tells-america-stop-scattermongering-over-citys-future-after-beijing-warns-us-consul-general>

Hong Kong Attempts to Attract Regional Talent

As more and more people leave Hong Kong, officials have been travelling the region in an attempt to attract talented workers to the city. Earlier this month, Secretary for Labour and Welfare Chris Sun (孫玉菡) made a trip to Singapore and the Philippines to peddle the "advantages" offered by Hong Kong's proximity to mainland China and its growing integration with other cities in the Pearl River Delta under the "Greater Bay Area" plan. Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu (李家超) has already announced a scheme aimed at enticing graduates from the world's top 100 universities to come and work in the city.²⁷

STATE SECURITY AND ECONOMY

Hong Kong Releases New Budget

Hong Kong's Financial Secretary Paul Chan announced the first budget of Chief Executive John Lee's administration. It includes measures to address the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its restrictions, including consumptions vouchers and tax caps. However, critics have highlighted that the government did not include measures to alleviate poverty, despite increasing inequality in Hong Kong.²⁸

John Lee Visits Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates

Hong Kong's Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu (李家超) went on an official visit to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and brought a business delegation with him. In Saudi Arabia, he negotiated investment protection and promotion pacts, agreed on six deals between Hong Kong and Saudi Arabian enterprises, and promoted the Belt and Road Initiative. In the United Arab Emirates, Lee met local political and business leaders and visited enterprises and visited the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Dubai.

This is Lee's first international trip this year, which followed the visit of China's President Xi Jinping to the country in December 2022. This Hong Kong delegation's tour to promote the city and deepen Middle Eastern countries' understanding of Hong Kong.²⁹

Lee said the next "logical next step" for Hong Kong and the United Arab Emirates will be a bilateral free-trade agreement to boost investment ties. However, formal discussions have not begun.³⁰ Hong Kong will also cooperate with Saudi Arabia in Fintech, ESG and cross listings, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding³¹ and has stated that the two economies

²⁷ <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/hongkong-talent-drive-01272023143802.html>

²⁸ <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/02/22/hong-kong-budget-mixed-reviews-as-critics-slam-govt-for-overlooking-the-poor/>

²⁹ <https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202302/08/WS63e2f334a31057c47ebad83d.html>

³⁰ <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/3209568/hong-kong-and-united-arab-emirates-set-commence-talks-bilateral-free-trade-agreement-city-leader>

³¹ https://www.hkex.com.hk/News/News-Release/2023/230206news?sc_lang=en

are “entering a new level of cooperation.”³²

John Lee Visits Guangdong Bay Area

Hong Kong’s Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu (李家超) also visited the Guangdong Bay Area with a government delegation. He first stopped in Shenzhen and Guangzhou, and future visits to other cities are expected. According to Lee, leaders from Guangdong have pledged to increase collaboration with Hong Kong in key areas, especially the flow of talent, innovation and technology, and financial services. He envisions the Guangdong Bay Area as an integrated economic area as described in the national blueprint.³³

100 Foreign Companies to Invest in Hong Kong

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Algernon Yau Ying-wah (丘應樺) has stated that more than 100 foreign companies are discussing potential investment plans with Hong Kong authorities, but he did not disclose any names because it was commercially sensitive information. Hong Kong hopes to attract at least 1,130 companies to expand their operations in the city by 2025.³⁴

Hong Kong Woos Family Offices

In addition to the other investment schemes, the Hong Kong government will host an ‘invitation-only’ event next month for some of the world’s richest family offices. The Wealth for Good in Hong Kong event in late March will target representatives of some of the world’s richest families, in particular those from China and the Middle East, as well as a smaller number from the US and Europe. Financial secretary Paul Chan stated that Hong Kong will allocate HK\$100 million (US\$12.7 million) and set up a steering committee focused on luring family offices.³⁵

COVID-19 Probe Denied

As the COVID-19 pandemic’s impacts lessen in Hong Kong, many lawmakers and government pandemic advisers have asked for an official inquiry into the impact of COVID-19 on the city. One policy advisor stated that it was “critically important”, he added, for Hong Kong to learn from mistakes, miscommunication and missed opportunities in its fight with Covid-19. However, Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu (李家超) said he was against the probe and that the government had been fine-tuning its pandemic response constantly.³⁶

³²<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/society/article/3209190/hong-kong-saudi-arabia-sign-6-bilateral-deals-forge-closer-economic-ties-john-lee-vows-new-level>

³³<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3211287/hong-kong-leader-john-lee-wraps-guangdong-day-trip-talent-it-and-financial-services-among-key-areas>

³⁴<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/hong-kong-economy/article/3210680/100-foreign-companies-talks-hong-kong-about-possible-investment-plans-commerce-chief-says>

³⁵ <https://www.ft.com/content/0bff01a4-d20b-4f56-933d-334f1ee01c48>

³⁶<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/3209159/coronavirus-hong-kong-leader-says-no-probe-governments-pandemic-response-so-how-will-city-learn>

HSBC Complicit in Hong Kong Human Rights Abuses

A new report by the all-party parliamentary group (APPG) on Hong Kong has concluded that HSBC is complicit in human rights abuses against Hong Kong residents by siding with Chinese authorities and denying pension payouts to those who fled the authoritarian crackdown. The bank helps manage the compulsory pension fund that all residents pay into and has bowed to local authorities by refusing to recognise the documentation of residents who have tried to withdraw their pensions after fleeing to the UK. This decision has not only left Hong Kong residents unable to create new and safe lives for themselves in the UK, but also means the bank is complicit in human rights abuses.³⁷

Hong Kong Brokers Suspend Accounts of China Users

Hong Kong-based Bright Smart Securities is suspending accounts held by mainland Chinese clients until further regulatory guidance is given, so that they can comply with a ban issued last year to suspend cash outflow. This is another blow to Hong Kong-based brokers as they just started a much-anticipated marketing push to mainland Chinese clients after almost years of Covid travel restriction between the two markets.³⁸

Hong Kong Stock Exchange IPO Drought

In 2022, Hong Kong's stock exchange saw its fewest IPO listings in over a decade. There are a reported 90 initial public offerings during 2022, amounting to HK\$104.6 billion (US\$13.3 billion), a fall of almost 70 percent from the previous year. This is a stark contrast to the peak level in 2020 when IPOs raised HK\$400 billion. The Hong Kong economy suffered from severe COVID-19 restrictions and the regulatory crackdown in Mainland China.³⁹

Hong Kong Exports Plunge

Hong Kong's exports have fallen to HK\$290.9 billion (\$37.1 billion), 36.7% less than a year earlier, representing the lowest drop in 70 years. Imports also declined 30.2% from a year ago. These statistics reflect the shrinking economy in China, which has a strong impact on Hong Kong, and which is still suffering from the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions.⁴⁰

Parallel Trading Returns to Hong Kong

Since the border between Hong Kong and Mainland China has reopened after years of COVID-19 restrictions, parallel trading has also returned, after being completely halted by

³⁷<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/feb/08/uk-mps-and-peers-find-hsbc-complicit-in-hong-kong-human-rights-abuses>

³⁸<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-02-13/hk-brokers-suspend-accounts-of-china-users-after-crackdown>

³⁹<https://www.thestandard.com.hk/breaking-news/section/2/200685/Hong-Kong-exchange-reports-IPO-drought-in-2022-as-profits-slide%C2%A0>

⁴⁰<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-02-27/hong-kong-exports-plunge-by-most-in-70-years-as-demand-plummets?leadSource=verify%20wall>

the closed border. Local residents are particularly upset by parallel trading as daily goods are swept up in local shops and the traders have created a garbage problem too.⁴¹

Hong Kong Homelessness Rising

The rate of homelessness in Hong Kong is rising, despite it being one of the wealthiest cities in the world, due to simultaneous economic inequality. This has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which there has been a 25% increase in the number of homeless women on the streets of Hong Kong. Local NGOs are working with the homeless and complain that the government institutions are ill-equipped to tackle this issue.⁴²

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Canada Expands Open Work Permit for Hong Kong Residents

Canada is extending the deadline to apply and expanding eligibility to Hong Kong residents or BN(O) passport holders, allowing more Hongkongers to relocate and seek opportunities in Canada. Canada has also established 2 pathways to permanent residence for eligible Hong Kong applicants and their families.⁴³ Hong Kong Watch welcomed this decision, particularly that it was offering a lifeline to those at risk of political persecution in the city.⁴⁴

Hong Kong Rescue Team Arrives in Turkey, China Promotes Propaganda

After the devastating earthquake hit regions of Turkey and Syria earlier this month, the Hong Kong government sent a 59-member rescue team to assist in local rescue efforts. They joined the Chinese rescue team in looking for survivors under the rubble. At the same time, China's consul general in Belfast, Zhang Meifan, tweeted a photo of a Chinese-built bridge in Turkey that had survived the earthquake. However, commentators noted that the bridge was over 1000 km away from the epicentre of the earthquake and that it was built by a multinational team including Korean, Turkish and Danish companies. The tweet was deleted after much criticism.⁴⁵

China Defends Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights at the UN

In February, China's compliance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights was reviewed by independent experts at the UN in Geneva. Despite many critical questions, China defended its record, especially in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong.

⁴¹<https://www.voanews.com/a/with-covid-travel-bans-lifted-hong-kong-china-parallel-import-trade-returns/6969378.html>

⁴² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/14/its-an-emergency-homelessness-on-the-rise-in-hong-kong>

⁴³<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/02/canada-extends-and-expands-open-work-permit-program-for-hong-kong-residents.html>

⁴⁴<https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/2/6/hong-kong-watch-canada-welcomes-the-decision-by-ircc-to-extend-and-expand-its-open-work-permit-for-hong-kongers>

⁴⁵<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/china-propaganda-02172023124429.html>

The Hong Kong delegate added that the National Security Law “does not affect the legitimate rights” of the public to criticise official decisions or affect academic freedom.⁴⁶

Hong Kong Revokes Visa for Controversial Chinese Scientist

He Jiankui, the controversial Chinese biophysicist, who had been imprisoned after creating the world’s first gene-edited babies, had his Hong Kong work visa revoked after immigration officials suspected he lied on an application form for a talent scheme. He was sentenced by a Chinese court to three years in prison in late 2019 for illegally carrying out human embryo gene-editing intended for reproduction, and was released in April 2022.⁴⁷

South Korea and Japan Open Border to Hong Kong Travellers

Both South Korea and Japan have lifted restrictions on Hong Kong travellers, allowing them to once again go to these countries. These restrictions were introduced in December, following the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong government welcomed the lifting of the restrictions, which had forced airlines to cancel hundreds of flights in the past two months.⁴⁸

⁴⁶<https://apnews.com/article/politics-united-states-government-xi-jinping-hong-kong-china-d08a427c8a58d796a2ec972dc4cdca86>

⁴⁷<https://www.voanews.com/a/hong-kong-revokes-visa-for-controversial-chinese-scientist-who-edited-babies-genes/6974384.html>

⁴⁸<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/society/article/3211737/good-news-hong-kong-travellers-japan-and-south-korea-lift-restrictions-flights-arriving-city>