

# HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN HONG KONG:

## HONG KONG WATCH BRIEFING ON EVENTS: MARCH 2023

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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#### POLITICAL PRISONERS: ARRESTS, CHARGES, & TRIALS

In the last month, Beijing continued its crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, with the following developments:

- National Security Law (NSL) trial of the 47 democrats enters its second month, one of the most significant trials since the NSL was passed.
- Veteran union leader Elizabeth Tang is arrested on NSL grounds after visiting her jailed husband, the trade unionist Lee Cheuk-Yan.
- Jimmy Lai's son and his international lawyers call on the United Nations (UN) to seek his release as the UK Government is urged to do more.
- Hong Kong police re-arrest Albert Ho, a veteran pro-democracy politician who was out on bail for medical treatment after spending more than a year in detention on a subversion charge under the NSL.
- Two arrested for possessing 'seditious' children's books about sheep, believed to be the first arrests for merely owning the books after the publishers were jailed last year.
- Founder of independent outlet Free HK Media Alan Keung, known as "Pastor Keung," is sentenced to eight months behind bars after pleading guilty to selling copies of a "seditious book" at a Lunar New Year fair.
- Three former members of a group that organised annual vigils to mark the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown in China jailed on NSL grounds for failing to give police information on members and other data.
- National security police have arrested a 48-year-old woman over "acts with seditious intention," reportedly related to posts on Twitter.

#### THE STATE OF THE RULE OF LAW AND POLICING

- The first protest in two years – a march against a proposed land reclamation and rubbish processing project – takes place under close monitoring by police.
- Hong Kong falls in international civic rights index, from a rating of "repressed" to "closed", the worst rating possible.
- Hong Kong Law Society opposes blanket ban on overseas lawyers in national security cases.

- A women's rights group cancelled a demonstration at the last minute after police said violent groups might want to join the protest.
- Hong Kong Taoist Association cancels parade after meeting with police.

### A FREE PRESS IN THE CROSS HAIRS

- The screening of Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey, a British horror film due to be released in Hong Kong, has been cancelled, amid fears it may have upset censors protecting President Xi Jinping.
- Department store removes artwork with hidden 'political content'.
- Press freedom groups condemn harassment of journalists after Hong Kong Free Press reporter is tailed, with reports of other incidents.

### STATE SECURITY AND ECONOMY

- Hong Kong political elite are pressed to give up western passports.
- Crypto groups expand in Hong Kong in bid to tap mainland China demand.
- HSBC and UBS bosses among new chief executive advisory body to steer Hong Kong towards post-Covid recovery.
- Hong Kong investors have forced HSBC into a shareholder vote on its structure and strategy, including a potential spin-off of its Asian arm.

### OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

- Hong Kong to make first ministerial visit to UK since the NSL, with financial services secretary Christopher Hui set to meet UK officials and business representatives in London in April.
- The UK government announce a further year of funding for its Hong Kong BNO Welcome Programme for 2023 to 2024, to support Hong Kongers coming to live in the UK under the BNO visa.
- Italian supreme court blocks extradition to China.
- Forty US senators join push for tougher stance over China's treatment of Hong Kong.
- Thousands demand removal of actor Donnie Yen from Oscars ceremony.
- Canadian Government announces a public consultation into the adoption of a foreign agents register.
- UK statement to UN Human Rights Council condemns Hong Kong's NSL

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## **POLITICAL PRISONERS: ARRESTS, CHARGES & TRIALS**

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### **National Security Law trial of the 47 democrats enters its second month**

The long-anticipated trial of the 47 democrats opened on Monday 6 February 2023. 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.

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.

Hong Kong Watch is posting weekly updates on the trial throughout its course.<sup>1</sup>

### **Veteran union leader Elizabeth Tang arrested after visiting her jailed husband**

A prominent Hong Kong trade unionist, Elizabeth Tang, was arrested under the National Security Law, with local media reporting that the national security police have accused her of “collusion with foreign forces”.<sup>2</sup>

She was arrested outside Stanley Prison after visiting her husband, the trade unionist Lee Cheuk-Yan, who is remanded on “inciting subversion of state power” under the National Security Law in relation to his role in the Tiananmen vigil group.

Commenting on her arrest, Sam Goodman, the Director of Policy and Advocacy at Hong Kong Watch, said: “The arrest of Elizabeth Tang coming a day after we celebrated International Women’s Day is a stark reminder that Beijing’s quislings in Hong Kong have little respect for those who advocate labour, civic, and political rights.

“We urge the UK Government and other likeminded governments to press for Elizabeth’s release, the Hong Kong SAR to respect trade union rights, and to listen to the United Nations and suspend this draconian and authoritarian law.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Jimmy Lai’s son and lawyers call on UN to seek his release as UK Government urged to do more**

The son and overseas lawyers of Jimmy Lai have urged the UN to condemn the prosecution of the pro-democracy media businessperson.

Sebastian Lai told the UN Human Rights Council his father was handed “lengthy and disproportionate terms of imprisonment” after he “chose to stand up for his principles and for freedom of expression and association in Hong Kong.” The Hong Kong government said the comments were unfounded.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, Mark Clifford, the former director of Apple Daily’s parent company, has called on the UK to do more to secure the release of Lai. He said: “The British government must make a choice regarding whether it will do more to support the immediate release of British citizen Jimmy Lai”.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/prominent-hong-kong-union-leader-arrested-after-prison-visit-source-2023-03-09/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/3/9/the-arrest-of-elizabeth-tang-is-a-stark-reminder-that-beijing-has-little-respect-for-those-who-advocate-for-labour-civic-and-political-rights>

<sup>4</sup> <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/03/16/jimmy-lais-son-and-lawyers-urge-un-to-seek-his-release-following-trumped-up-charges-sparking-protest-from-hk-govt/>

As well as not doing enough to support Lai, Clifford said: “the British government doesn’t seem to be doing a lot to protect” Hong Kong activists who have fled to the UK, many of them under the BNO scheme.<sup>5</sup>

Speaking at the All Party Parliamentary Group on Hong Kong Inquiry, Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC, who is part of Lai’s international legal team, claimed Lai’s guilty verdict for fraud in October 2022 went ‘completely unnoticed’ by the UK Government and equated its overall response to ‘radio silence’.<sup>6</sup>

### **Hong Kong police put bailed pro-democracy leader Albert Ho back under arrest**

Hong Kong police have re-arrested Albert Ho, a veteran pro-democracy politician who was out on bail for medical treatment after spending more than a year in detention on a subversion charge under the national security law.

Ho, 71, who was granted bail in August 2022, once led the city’s largest opposition group, the Democratic party, and runs his own law firm.<sup>7</sup>

Media reports citing police sources said that he “interfered with witnesses and obstructed justice,” breaching his bail conditions.<sup>8</sup> The UN has called for his release.<sup>9</sup>

### **Two arrested for possessing 'seditious' children's books**

Two men have been arrested for the possession of picture books which authorities say are “seditious”. They are believed to be the first arrested for merely owning the books – after the publishers were jailed last year.<sup>10</sup>

Authorities interpreted the books – about sheep trying to hold back wolves from their village – as referring to Hong Kongers and China’s government.

The pair, aged 38 and 50, have been released on bail but must report to police next month, Mingpao quoted police as saying.<sup>11</sup>

A web-based broadcaster in Hong Kong, d100.net, has raised concerns over a shifting red line in the legality of possessing controversial material.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/24/uk-must-fight-for-jimmy-lais-release-friend-of-jailed-hongkonger-tells-mps>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11891241/Jimmy-Lai-Lawyer-slams-Government-radio-silence-China-sponsored-arrest-75-year-old.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/21/hong-kong-police-put-bailed-pro-democracy-leader-albert-ho-back-under-arrest>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/albert-ho-03302023154631.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://twitter.com/UNHumanRights/status/1640635932675133442?s=20>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-64985527>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/17/hong-kong-two-arrested-for-possessing-seditious-childrens-book>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/hong-kong-seditious-childrens-books-mailed-uk-2023-0kjdfd9rq>

Amnesty International said that the arrests represented a new low for human rights in the city, adding: “It is the latest example of the Hong Kong authorities using the colonial-era sedition law as a pretext for cracking down on critical voices.

“These ludicrous sedition charges must be dropped. No one should be imprisoned only because they own children’s books.”<sup>13</sup>

### **‘Pastor Keung’ and two others jailed for up to 10 months over ‘seditious’ book**

Founder of independent outlet Free HK Media Alan Keung, known as “Pastor Keung,” was sentenced to eight months behind bars, along with two others, after the three pleaded guilty to selling copies of a “seditious book” at a Lunar New Year fair.<sup>14</sup>

### **Jail for Tiananmen anniversary vigil organisers**

Three former members of a group that organised annual vigils to mark the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown in China were jailed this month on national security law grounds for failing to give police information on members and other data.

Prosecutors said Chow Hang-Tung, Tang Ngok-kwan and Tsui Hon-kwong were under foreign influence but refused to say who it was.

The three were jailed for four-and-a-half months for not complying with a national security police request for information.<sup>15</sup>

### **Woman arrested for ‘seditious’ acts for posts on Twitter**

Hong Kong national security police have arrested a 48-year-old woman over “acts with seditious intention,” reportedly related to posts on Twitter.

According to the police, the woman was suspected of posting “seditious” content on different social media platforms. The posts involved content that police said “incited hatred towards the Hong Kong and central governments, included slogans, promoted Hong Kong independence, incited violent protest, and insulted China’s national flag and anthem.”

The woman is a homemaker and was accused of using multiple Twitter accounts to post seditious messages, local media reported.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/03/hong-kong-arrests-for-possession-of-seditious-childrens-books-a-new-low-for-human-rights/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/03/21/hong-kongs-pastor-keung-and-2-others-jailed-for-up-to-10-months-over-seditious-book/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/11/hong-kong-court-jails-tiananmen-anniversary-vigil-organisers>

<sup>16</sup> <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/03/29/hong-kong-national-security-police-arrest-woman-over-seditious-acts-linked-to-social-media-posts/>

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## THE STATE OF THE RULE OF LAW AND POLICING

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### **First protest in two years takes place under close monitoring by police**

Police have permitted a small protest march under tight restrictions, in one of the first demonstrations to be approved since the enactment of the national security law in 2020.

Several dozen demonstrators were required to wear numbered lanyards and were barred from wearing masks, as police monitored their march against a proposed land reclamation and rubbish processing project.<sup>17</sup>

### **Hong Kong falls in international civic rights index**

Hong Kong's political crackdown has seen the monitoring group CIVICUS Monitor downgrade the territory's status from "repressed" to "closed," the worst rating possible.

CIVICUS released its People Power Under Attack 2022 report in March.<sup>18</sup>

Josef Benedict, CIVICUS Asia Pacific researcher, said: "The repressive National Security Law has been systematically deployed to bring trumped-up, politically motivated charges against activists, journalists and other critics and has created a climate of fear in the territory.

"Further sedition charges have been increasingly used to silence peaceful expression while there has been a relentless campaign against press freedom. The continuous onslaught on civic freedoms by the Hong Kong authorities has prompted the downgrade."<sup>19</sup>

### **Hong Kong Law Society opposes blanket ban on overseas lawyers in national security cases**

A group representing thousands of Hong Kong lawyers has said it would not support any "blanket ban" on overseas lawyers appearing in national security cases.

President of the Law Society Chan Chak-ming, in a letter to the Legislative Council's Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services, said the admission of overseas counsel in such proceedings should be decided "on a case-by-case basis."<sup>20</sup>

Under the current government proposal, a defendant must give reasons, backed up by evidence, why the use of a foreign lawyer would not damage national security.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/27/hong-kong-police-keep-tight-control-over-first-authorised-protest-in-years>

<sup>18</sup> <https://monitor.civicus.org/globalfindings/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/a/hong-kong-falls-in-international-civic-rights-index/7013005.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/03/16/hong-kong-law-soc-opposes-blanket-ban-on-overseas-lawyers-in-national-security-cases/>

The debate arose when Jimmy Lai sought to hire British Timothy Owen KC for his national security trial which was due to start in December, but Owen's work visa application was blocked.<sup>21</sup>

### **Women's rights protest cancelled after police cite risk of violence**

A women's rights group cancelled a demonstration at the last minute after police said violent groups might want to join the protest.

The Hong Kong Women Workers' Association was originally granted permission by Hong Kong police to hold a rare public protest on the Sunday before International Women's Day (March 8), calling for labour rights, women's rights and gender equality.

But the association said on its Facebook page late on the Saturday it had regrettably decided to cancel the march without giving a reason.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, the League of Social Democrats, a pro-democracy party, said police told four members of the group before the planned protest that they would be arrested if they joined the march.<sup>23</sup>

### **Hong Kong Taoist Association cancels parade after meeting with police**

The Hong Kong Taoist Association – an organisation that promotes Taoism in Hong Kong – cancelled a parade it had planned after meeting with police.

The group originally planned to march from Maple Street Playground in Sham Shui Po along Nathan Road to the Hong Kong Cultural Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui. The organisation held a rally at Maple Street Playground instead.<sup>24</sup>

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## **A FREE PRESS IN THE CROSS HAIRS**

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### **Winnie the Pooh horror film censored over Xi Jinping comparisons**

The screening of *Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey*, a British horror film due to be released in Hong Kong, has been cancelled, amid fears it may have upset censors protecting President Xi Jinping.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/01/hong-kong-jimmy-lai-british-lawyers-visa-withheld-trial-delay-timothy-owen>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-womens-rights-protest-cancelled-after-police-cite-risk-violence-2023-03-04/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/03/06/hong-kong-pro-democracy-party-says-police-warned-members-against-joining-womens-rights-march/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/03/13/hong-kong-taoist-association-cancels-parade-after-meeting-with-police/>

VII Pillars Entertainment said on its Facebook page that it was with "great regret" that the scheduled release of the movie on March 23 had been cancelled. It did not give further details. The film was released in the US in February and across the UK in March.

Chinese censors have in the past targeted the film's main character, originally created by English author A.A. Milne, due to memes that compare the bumbling bear to Xi Jinping.<sup>25</sup> The 2018 Christopher Robin film was banned in the country.<sup>26</sup>

### **Department store removes artwork with hidden 'political content'**

A Hong Kong department store took down a digital artwork that contained hidden references to jailed free-speech defenders, in an incident the artist says is evidence of the erosion of free speech by Chinese authorities.

Patrick Amadon's No Rioters was put on display on a billboard at the huge Sogo Causeway Bay store as the city was promoting itself as a cultural hub following years of pandemic travel restrictions.

Flashes of Matrix-like text showcased the names and prison sentences of convicted activists and other prominent figures in the pro-democracy movement, including the legal scholar Benny Tai and the former student leader Joshua Wong, who were both charged with subversion.<sup>27</sup>

"A few years ago, this art would have been a free and legal expression. For the government to take it down now objectively demonstrates how Hong Kong has changed and completes the art work," Mr Amadon told the BBC.<sup>28</sup>

### **Press freedom groups condemn harassment of journalists after Hong Kong Free Press reporter is tailed, with reports of other incidents**

Reporters Without Borders and the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) have condemned the harassment and surveillance of local journalists, after a Hong Kong Free Press court reporter was followed from her home to her workplace for over an hour by two men with earpieces.<sup>29</sup>

The HKJA said: "We strongly condemn any attempt to harass or intimidate journalists... Women are also more likely to face risks of being stalked or harassed. No reporter should face disproportionate risks due to their gender."

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2023/03/21/hong-kong-release-winnie-pooh-british-horror-film-censored-xi/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-65030531>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/24/no-rioters-hong-kong-megastore-sogo-self-censors-art-with-hidden-political-content>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-65061112>

<sup>29</sup> <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/03/24/press-freedom-groups-condemn-harassment-of-hong-kong-journalists-after-hkfp-reporter-tailed/>



The HKJA said that the group had received several reports from “different media outlets and journalists” about reporters being followed.<sup>30</sup>

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## STATE SECURITY AND ECONOMY

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### **Hong Kong political elite are pressed to give up western passports**

Beijing is pressing Hong Kong’s political elite to give up their western passports in order to be selected for the Chinese parliament as it tries to stamp out foreign influence and tighten control of the territory.

Officials told politicians wishing to represent Hong Kong at China’s top decision-making body to renounce passports or travel documents from countries including the UK.

While Beijing had previously said that British National (Overseas) passport holders were eligible for the National People’s Congress (NPC), the “message was either you give it up or you don’t run”, said a former NPC delegate.<sup>31</sup>

### **Crypto groups expand in Hong Kong in bid to tap mainland China demand**

Cryptocurrency companies are rushing to Hong Kong in the hope that the city’s high-profile push to become a hub for digital assets will help them to capture demand from mainland China to buy and sell tokens.

Hong Kong is perceived by some companies to be more crypto-friendly than rival Singapore, which cracked down on the sector last year after several high-profile collapses in the industry. The city is planning a new regulatory regime for exchanges and legalising crypto trading for retail investors.<sup>32</sup>

### **HSBC and UBS bosses among new chief executive advisory body to steer Hong Kong towards post-Covid recovery**

International bankers, including HSBC chairman Mark Tucker and UBS Group AG chairman Colm Kelleher are among businesspeople and top scientists who are part of the 34 members of a new high-level advisory body overseeing Hong Kong’s development as the city strives to revive its economy.

The government announced the establishment of the “timely and crucial” Chief Executive’s Council of Advisers, chaired by city leader John Lee Ka-chiu, saying Hong Kong was seeking a comeback on the international stage after the health crisis.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/03/28/hong-kong-press-group-receives-more-reports-of-reporters-being-tailed-as-police-slam-unverified-speculation/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/be0ac1d9-4cd4-4d0e-ad9e-04e5a19b5a88>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/84454295-0273-45fe-8199-bb520bfc81c4>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3213890/tycoons-academics-bankers-among-members-new-chief-executive-advisory-body-steer-hong-kong-towards>

## **Investors force HSBC shareholder vote on structural overhaul of bank**

Hong Kong investors have forced HSBC into a shareholder vote on its structure and strategy, including a potential spin-off of its Asian arm.

An investor group, led by the minority shareholder Ken Lui, said the bank's Asian activities were "effectively subsidising the western businesses, to the detriment of HSBC's global shareholders" in a way that undermines efforts to increase the bank's value and growth.<sup>34</sup>

HSBC, which makes the bulk of its profits in Asia, reported \$5.2bn in pre-tax profit for the last three months of 2022, more than double the \$2.5bn it reported for the same period a year earlier.<sup>35</sup>

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## **OTHER DEVELOPMENTS**

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### **Hong Kong to make first ministerial visit to UK since the national security law**

The proposed trip by financial services secretary Christopher Hui, the first ministerial visit since the implementation of the NSL in Hong Kong, is a sign of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's quiet reset of UK-China economic relations.<sup>36</sup>

Hui is set to meet UK officials and business representatives in London in April, and will speak at the Innovate Finance Fintech Summit in London on 17 April in an event sponsored by the Department of Business and Trade.<sup>37</sup>

### **UK Government extends integration funding for Hong Kongers**

The government announced a further year of funding for its Hong Kong BN(O) Welcome Programme for 2023 to 2024, to support Hong Kongers coming to live in the UK under the BN(O) visa.<sup>38</sup>

A further £2.6 million has been made available to voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, and there will be continued funding for the 12 Welcome Hubs across the UK and support for English language classes and destitution support. The programme of support was set up in April 2021, shortly after the BNO visa opened.

### **Italian supreme court blocks extradition to China**

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/mar/26/investors-force-hsbc-shareholder-vote-on-structural-overhaul>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/feb/21/hsbc-quarterly-profits-interest-rate-rises-ceo-ping-an>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/f685b98b-7667-4cbf-b582-cdab53b1aa79>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.innovatefinance.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ifgs-2023-agenda-march.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-a-third-year-of-support-to-help-hong-kongers-settle-into-life-in-the-uk>

Italy's highest court has blocked China's request to extradite a suspect accused of committing economic crimes, in the first such ruling since the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled there was a "general situation of violence" in China's prison system.<sup>39</sup>

The Supreme Court overturned a regional Italian court's decision to extradite the unnamed suspect.

The decision comes as a blow to Beijing's efforts to bring fugitives back to China, and follows a landmark ruling last October, when the ECHR vetoed its attempts to extradite a man from Poland.<sup>40</sup>

### **Forty US senators join push for tougher stance over China's treatment of Hong Kong**

Forty of the 100 U.S. senators co-sponsored a resolution urging a strong US government response to any Chinese efforts to clamp down on dissent in Hong Kong, including the use of sanctions and other tools.<sup>41</sup>

The measure backed by the 40 Democrats and Republicans comes as members of the US Congress urge President Joe Biden's administration to take a harder line in dealings with a rising China over a wide range of issues.<sup>42</sup> The resolution is non-binding, but is intended to convey a strong sense that lawmakers are closely watching events in China and will respond.

### **Thousands demand removal of actor Donnie Yen from Oscars ceremony**

Tens of thousands of people signed a petition to remove the actor Donnie Yen from the Oscars presenting list over his opposition to the 2019 pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong.<sup>43</sup>

Yen, who starred with Keanu Reeves in the new *John Wick: Chapter 4* film, described the mass rallies as a "riot" and praised the Chinese government in a recent GQ Hype interview.<sup>44</sup>

### **Canadian Government announces a public consultation into the adoption of a foreign agents register**

The consultation announced by Minister of Public Safety, Marco Mendicino MP, will run between 10 March 2023 and 9 May 2023 and the Government is encouraging submissions

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3212306/italian-supreme-court-blocks-extradition-china-after-landmark-human-rights-ruling>

<sup>40</sup> <https://safeguarddefenders.com/en/blog/landmark-decision-could-herald-end-europe-s-extraditions-china>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/forty-us-senators-join-push-tougher-stance-over-chinas-treatment-hong-kong-2023-03-15/>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/rep/release/risch-menendez-lead-colleagues-in-introducing-resolution-in-support-of-hong-kongers>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/oscars-2023-thousands-demand-removal-of-actor-donnie-yen-from-ceremony-jmtp0g5zh>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/culture/article/donnie-yen-interview-2023>

from civil society groups and communities impacted by interference campaigns from foreign authoritarian actors.<sup>45</sup> Ministers will also be conducting roundtable discussions with stakeholders.

Minister Mendicino's announcement follows increased debate in the Canadian Parliament over the need for a foreign agents' registry like the USA and Australia currently have in place.<sup>46</sup>

### **UK statement to UN Human Rights Council condemns Hong Kong's national security law**

UK Human Rights Ambassador Rita French delivered a statement to the UNHCR in Geneva condemning the use of the national security law to deliberately target pro-democracy figures, journalists and businessmen and women, including Jimmy Lai and the 47 pro-democracy advocates.

She called on China to uphold the commitments made in the Joint Declaration, a treaty agreed by the UK and China and registered with the UN.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/defence/nationalsecurity/consultation-foreign-influence-transparency.html>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2023/3/12/hong-kong-watch-welcomes-the-announcement-of-a-public-consultation-into-the-adoption-of-a-foreign-agents-register-in-canada>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/un-hrc52-uk-statement-under-item-4-general-debate>