

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN HONG KONG:

HONG KONG WATCH BRIEFING ON EVENTS: JUNE 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

POLITICAL PRISONERS: ARRESTS, CHARGES, & TRIALS

Throughout June 2021, Beijing has continued its crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, with:

- The arrest of seven journalists under the National Security Law.
- Confirmation by the police of the creation of a National Security 'watch list' of over fifty journalists and individuals, who will be arrested if they attempt to leave the city.
- The banning of the June 4 vigil marking the Tiananmen Square Massacre and the July 1 annual march marking the handover.
- The arrest of Chow Hang-tung, the pro-democracy activist and organiser of the annual June 4 vigil.
- The arrest of two individuals for displaying Liberate Hong Kong banners.
- The disbanding of more than six civil society groups following the latest crackdown in Hong Kong.
- The movement of two high-profile National Security cases to the high court, which will allow Beijing to push for the maximum sentence of life in prison.

CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS, INTERNET, ARTS & CULTURE

In the last month, the Hong Kong Government and Beijing have moved to censor the free press, internet, and arts and culture in Hong Kong, with:

- Apple Daily closing after the Hong Kong Police refused to unfreeze its bank accounts.
- StandNews reporting that it will no longer accept paid subscriptions or donations and that it has removed content from its website published before May 2021.
- The pro-democracy website, Winandmac, announcing that it will relocate out of Hong Kong as a result of the National Security Law.
- Public libraries removing copies of the pro-democracy newspaper, Apple Daily, from their archives and books authored by Jimmy Lai, its founder and former proprietor.

- Facebook, Twitter, and Google threatening to leave Hong Kong if the Government moves ahead with a new data law, which could make staff liable to prosecution and fines for users' posts online encouraging doxing.
- HK Charter 2021, a group set up by pro-democracy activists abroad, reporting that their website has been blocked in Hong Kong under the National Security Law.
- The Hong Kong's Art Development Council announcing the withholding of HK\$700,000 in funding for Ying E Chi Cinema for distributing a documentary featuring clashes between protestors and the Hong Kong Police at Polytechnic University in 2019.
- RTHK continuing to cut programs from its schedule, including its current affairs radio program Open Line Open View.
- Hong Kong authorities closing a museum marking the Tiananmen Square Massacre.

THE STATE OF THE RULE OF LAW

- The Financial Times has reported that pro-Beijing lawmakers have successfully intervened in the appointment of a senior judge to the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal, in what appears to be an attempt to undermine the independence of the judiciary.
- The Deputy-Director of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office has told a legal summit that the denial of bail and the principle of no juries under the National Security Law "must come first" ahead of Hong Kong's Basic Law.
- The newly appointed Hong Kong Chief Secretary and former Security Minister, John Lee Ka-chiu, has been appointed to head a newly created vetting committee to ensure candidates running for Legislative Council seats are sufficiently "patriotic".

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

- Forty-four countries signed a statement led by Canada at the United Nations raising concern about the National Security Law and urging China to abide by its human rights obligations.
- G7 leaders called on China to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially in relation to Xinjiang and those rights, freedoms and high degree of autonomy for Hong Kong enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law.
- The Canadian Government has announced new pathways to citizenship for Hong Kongers, as part of its lifeboat package previously announced back November 2020.
- A cross-party group of twenty Canadian lawmakers have written to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to call for the Government of Canada to undertake an audit of the Canadian assets of Hong Kong officials and their families.
- The Home Affairs Select Committee in the UK Parliament has called for the Government to extend its BNO visa scheme for those born after 1997, by allowing a young person with a BNO parent to apply separately.

- A growing number of Hongkongers with BNO passports who fled to the UK in fear of Beijing's ongoing crackdown say their requests to withdraw their pension funds provided by some of the world's biggest multinational banks and insurers have been rejected.
- Thirty-one European parliamentarians have written to the Hong Kong Chief Executive, Carrie Lam, to protest the closure of Apple Daily and to call for the release of all journalists arrested under the National Security Law.
- The Hong Kong Government has banned direct flights from the UK to Hong Kong, citing the rising number of COVID-cases in the UK.

POLITICAL PRISONERS: ARRESTS, CHARGES, & TRIALS

Arrest of seven journalists under the National Security Law

On 17 June 2021, the Hong Kong Police raided the offices of Apple Daily newspaper for the second time in 10 months and arrested five employees for ‘collusion with foreign forces’ under the National Security Law.

Those arrested include Next Digital CEO Cheung Kim-hung and Chief Operating Officer Chow Tat Kuen, Apple Daily’s Editor-in-Chief Ryan Law, Associate Publisher Chan Pui-man and Cheung Chi-wai, who manages the newspaper’s online news platform.

According to the National Security Unit Senior Superintendent Steve Li, the operation was launched at 6 a.m. HKT and involved around 500 officers. He said HK\$18 million worth of assets belonging to three companies linked to Apple Daily have also been frozen.¹

On 19 June 2021, the Hong Kong Police charged two of the five journalists with ‘colluding with foreign forces’ under the National Security Law. The other three were released on bail.²

Following the announcement by Apple Daily that it would be closing its doors on 23 June 2021, the Hong Kong Police announced that they had arrested an Apple Daily columnist under the National Security Law.

On 27 June 2021, Hong Kong Police arrested a senior editorial writer of Apple Daily newspaper at Hong Kong airport under the National Security Law for ‘collusion with foreign forces’. Fung Wai-kong, 57, was intercepted by police at the airport at about 10pm and was about to board a plane to the UK. He is the seventh journalist to be arrested in Hong Kong under the draconian law in over a week.³

In a sign that the National Security Law will increasingly target journalists, the Hong Kong Chief Executive, Carrie Lam, in a press conference refused to outline how journalists could avoid breaching the draconian law, while the Secretary of Security John Lee Ka-chiu has stated that other journalists should keep their distance from the work of Apple Daily newspaper.

¹ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2021/6/17/todays-raid-on-apple-daily-newspaper-and-arrest-of-journalists-is-an-act-of-brazen-and-shameful-thuggery>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/22/hong-kong-leader-carrie-lam-apple-daily-arrests-national-security-law>

³ <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3138957/national-security-law-hong-kong-online-news-portal-pulls>

Hong Kong Police confirm National Security Law ‘watch list’

On 28 June, the Hong Kong Police confirmed reports that they have a ‘watch list’ of fifty individuals who are under investigation for possible violation of the National Security Law and are to be arrested and intercepted if they attempt to leave the city.⁴

Tiananmen Square Massacre June 4 vigil banned

Authorities in Hong Kong banned this year’s annual June 4 vigil marking the Tiananmen Square Massacre for the first time in thirty years.

Despite warnings not to congregate near Victoria Park, the site of the annual vigil, hundreds of Hong Kongers took to the streets holding candles or their mobile phone lights.

The Hong Kong Police arrested six individuals, including Chow Hang-tung, the pro-democracy activist and organiser of the annual June 4 vigil.⁵

Pro-democracy activist and June 4 vigil organiser re-arrested

Chow Hang-tung, the pro-democracy activist and organiser of the annual June 4 vigil to mark the Tiananmen Square Massacre, had her bail revoked and was re-arrested on 30 June 2021.⁶

Her arrest came on the eve of the anniversary of the handover of Hong Kong to Chinese Communist Party rule and the day before the annual 1 July procession would normally take place.

The Hong Kong Police banned the annual 1 July procession from taking place this year, citing grave threats to public safety and the potential for COVID-19 to spread.⁷ The annual march has been a key date in Hong Kong’s calendar since 2003 and regularly draws tens of thousands of Hong Kongers onto the streets.

This development came as Hong Kong officials travelled to Beijing to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party with a series of banquets and events organised.

⁴ <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-and-crime/article/3139082/hong-kong-national-security-police-have-watch-list>

⁵ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-57353803>

⁶ <https://hongkongfp.com/2021/06/30/hong-kong-tiananmen-vigil-head-chow-hang-tung-rearrested-as-police-revoke-bail-ahead-of-handover-anniversary/>

⁷ <https://news.rthk.hk/rthk/en/component/k2/1598101-20210628.htm>

Six civil society groups disband as a result of the National Security Law

On 1 July 2021, six civil society groups announced their intention to disband as a result of the National Security Law.⁸

Two individuals arrested for displaying liberate Hong Kong banners

The Hong Kong Police have arrested two individuals on 22 June 2021 and 26 June 2021 for displaying banners with the slogan 'Liberate Hong Kong; revolution of our times'.⁹

American lawyer jailed for 'assaulting' an off-duty police officer

Samuel Phillip Bickett, a former Asia-Pacific compliance director at Bank of America Securities, was sentenced to four months and two weeks in jail on 6 July 2021 for 'assaulting' an off-duty police officer.¹⁰

Mr Bickett was walking home on 7 December 2019 near Exit F of Causeway Bay MTR station and interceded in an altercation between an off-duty police officer and a young pro-democracy protestor.

The first National Security trial begins

The first National Security trial began in Hong Kong on 23 June 2021. Tong Ying-kit has been charged with 'secession' and 'terrorism' under the National Security Law. His trial is taking place for fifteen days without a jury and with three judges handpicked by the Hong Kong Chief Executive presiding – Esther Toh, Anthea Pang and Wilson Chan.¹¹

Tong Ying-kit has pled not guilty to the charges. If convicted he faces between ten years to life in prison under the National Security Law.

Jimmy Lai and Andy Li's National Security cases transferred to the High Court

On 15 June 2021, the National Security case of the former owner of Apple Daily and pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai, was transferred to the Court of First Instance. This means that

⁸ <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3139713/fresh-wave-hong-kong-unions-civil-society-groups-disband>

⁹ <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-and-crime/article/3138225/hong-kong-man-arrested-after-passer-calls-police-over>

¹⁰ <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-and-crime/article/3139997/american-lawyer-gets-four-months-two-weeks-jail>

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/XinqiSu/status/1407525004946939910?s=20>

if convicted he could face the maximum sentence under the draconian law, which is life in prison.¹²

The case of the journalist and activist Andy Li, has also been transferred to the High Court which means he too could face the life in prison under the National Security Law.¹³

Agnes Chow is released from jail

The pro-democracy activist, Agnes Chow, was released from jail on 12 June 2021. She had been serving a seven-month sentence for organising and participating in an “unauthorised assembly”.¹⁴

Chow was previously arrested in August 2020 under the National Security Law.

UK consulate reports that at least four British nationals have been mistreated or tortured in custody since 2019

The UK Consulate in Hong Kong has reported that at least four British nationals have been mistreated or tortured in police custody since the anti-Extradition Bill protest movement in 2019.¹⁵

CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS, INTERNET, ARTS & CULTURE

Apple Daily closes, StandNews stops taking donations, and Winandmac leave Hong Kong

On 23 June 2021, Apple Daily, the largest Chinese-language mass circulation daily pro-democracy newspaper in Hong Kong announced that it would close as a result of the National Security Law.

The decision by the newspaper follows the arrest of its owner Jimmy Lai under the National Security Law, two separate police raids on the newspaper, the recent arrest of five Apple Daily executives including the editor, and the freezing of the paper’s accounts under the draconian law.

¹² <https://twitter.com/XinqiSu/status/1404690839691939846?s=20>

¹³ <https://hongkongfp.com/2021/07/07/hong-kong-activist-andy-li-could-face-life-in-jail-as-foreign-collusion-case-transferred-to-high-court/>

¹⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-57450592>

¹⁵ <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3135387/least-four-nationals-mistreated-tortured-while-detained>

Despite the paper having 600,000 paid subscribers and \$500 million in the bank which would allow it to continue to print for at least another 18 months, the Hong Kong Police has refused to unfreeze the paper's accounts citing national security concerns.

Following the closure of Apple Daily, on 27th June 2021 six executive directors from the pro-democracy publication StandNews announced their resignation. The publication said that it would be removing all opinion pieces and commentary from its website prior to May 2021, and the publication announced that it would no longer accept new donations and will halt monthly subscriptions as a result of the National Security Law.¹⁶

The pro-democracy website, Winandmac, has also announced that it will relocate out of Hong Kong as a result of the National Security Law.¹⁷

The Hong Kong Journalists Association has said that it believes there could be further arrests of journalists in the city with rumours that the authorities have drawn up a list of individuals who are to be arrested under the National Security Law.¹⁸

Commenting on the closing of Apple Daily, Benedict Rogers, Hong Kong Watch's Chief Executive, said:

"Today Beijing has launched an all-out assault on press freedom in Hong Kong by finally shutting the largest pro-democracy newspaper in the city. Apple Daily has long been a thorn in the side of the Chinese Communist Party by daring to criticise Carrie Lam and Xi Jinping in a city that day by day declines further into authoritarian rule.

The journalists at the paper continued to report and deliver the news without fear or favour in the face of advertisement boycotts orchestrated by Beijing, the arrest of the newspaper's owner and founder Jimmy Lai, the arrest of the newspaper's executives and journalists, and a number of raids by the Hong Kong Police.

In the end it was the decision by the Chinese Government to freeze the paper's assets that has forced its closure, signalling that Hong Kong is no longer a city where individuals can move their money freely.

We urge the international community to respond to this assault on the free press in Hong Kong through the swift introduction of Magnitsky sanctions against Hong Kong and Chinese officials, the US Congress to pass the Hong Kong Safe Harbor Act, the EU to adopt a lifeboat scheme for Hong Kongers, and the UK Government to do more to live up to its legal, historic, and moral obligation to the city and those journalists in jail who carry British citizenship."¹⁹

¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/xinwenxiaojie/status/1409156825489068036?s=20>

¹⁷ <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/hongkong-media-07052021123308.html>

¹⁸ <https://news.rthk.hk/rthk/en/component/k2/1598060-20210628.htm>

¹⁹ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2021/6/23/beijings-closure-of-apple-daily-is-an-all-out-assault-on-press-freedom-in-hong-kong>

Public libraries remove Apple Daily and Jimmy Lai's books

Public libraries have removed copies of the pro-democracy newspaper, Apple Daily, from their archives and books authored by Jimmy Lai, its former owner.

On 1 July 2021, a librarian at Shek Tong Tsui Public Library was suspended and is being investigated by the National Security police after displaying books by Jimmy Lai as the 'Librarian's choice of the week'.²⁰

Authorities have previously banned books from other pro-democracy activists, including Joshua Wong, citing that they possibly violate the National Security Law.

Facebook, Twitter, and Google threaten to quit Hong Kong

Three of the largest social media companies – Facebook, Twitter, and Google – have threatened to leave Hong Kong if the Government moves ahead with a new data law, which could make staff liable to prosecution and fines for users' posts online encouraging doxing.²¹

HK Charter 2021 website blocked in Hong Kong

HK Charter 2021, a group set up by pro-democracy activists abroad, have reported that their website has been blocked in Hong Kong under the National Security Law.²²

Arts Development Council cuts funding to Ying E Chi Cinema over protest films

Hong Kong's Art Development Council have withheld HK\$700,000 in funding for Ying E Chi Cinema for distributing a documentary featuring clashes between protestors and the Hong Kong Police at Polytechnic University in 2019.²³

Hong Kong public broadcaster continues with its cancellation of programs

Hong Kong's public broadcaster, RTHK, has continued with its plans to cancel and reform its programming.

²⁰ <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3139486/hong-kong-librarian-suspended-after-books-jailed-apple>

²¹ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-twitter-google-warn-planned-hong-kong-tech-law-could-drive-them-out-11625483036?mod=e2tw>

²² <https://twitter.com/chungchingkwong/status/1405864979018964992?s=20>

²³ <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3139612/hong-kong-protests-film-distributor-has-funding-cut-after>

On 29 June 2021, the veteran radio host Allan Au Ka-lun announced that RTHK was cancelling its current affairs radio program Open Line Open View for which he served as host for 11 years.²⁴

Hong Kong's Museum marking the Tiananmen Square massacre forced to close

Ahead of the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Massacre on 4 June, the Hong Kong authorities forced Hong Kong's Museum marking the tragic events to close.²⁵ Hong Kong officials from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department visiting the museum accused the organisers of operating a "place of public entertainment" illegally.

THE STATE OF THE RULE OF LAW

Pro-Beijing lawmakers intervene in a judicial appointment

For the first time ever, pro-Beijing lawmakers in Hong Kong have successfully intervened in a judicial appointment.

Justice Maria Yuen, the wife of Geoffrey Ma, the city's previous chief justice, was set to be appointed as the next permanent judge on Hong Kong's Court of Final Appeal, but due to an intervention by pro-Beijing lawmakers she has withdrawn her candidacy.

The lawmakers argued that Yuen might be influenced by her husband, who pro-Beijing groups criticised in the past after he defended the neutrality of Hong Kong's judiciary.²⁶

Beijing says National Security Law procedures "must come first"

The Deputy-Director of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, Deng Zhonghua, Beijing's representative in Hong Kong, has told a legal summit that the denial of bail and the principle of no juries under the National Security Law "must come first" ahead of Hong Kong's Basic Law.²⁷

At the same summit, Deng Zhonghua confirmed that the new law requiring phone sim cards to be registered is part of measures to increase national security in Hong Kong.²⁸

²⁴ <https://www.thestandard.com.hk/section-news/section/11/231630/RTHK-axes-veteran-host-amid-changes>

²⁵ <https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/june-fourth-museum-tiananmen-square-hong-kong-cmd/index.html>

²⁶ <https://www.ft.com/content/56de7f6d-c89a-4857-b2f9-5d184fa3d096>

²⁷ <https://twitter.com/XinqiSu/status/1411908377920217090>

²⁸ <https://twitter.com/XinqiSu/status/1411879928128147456>

Hong Kong's Security Minister made Chief Secretary

Hong Kong's Security Minister John Lee Ka-chiu, has been appointed Chief Secretary of Hong Kong, which is the second highest position in Hong Kong's administrative government.²⁹

Mr Lee has stated he will use the new position to 'enhance education of national security', while critics have argued that he lacks government policy experience.

China's State Council has also appointed Hong Kong Police Chief Chris Tang Ping-keung to take over Lee's previous portfolio as Hong Kong's Security Minister.

Former Hong Kong Security Minister and Chief Secretary to head election vetting committee

The newly appointed Hong Kong Chief Secretary and former Security Minister, John Lee Ka-chiu, has been appointed to head a newly created vetting committee to ensure candidates running for Legislative Council seats are sufficiently "patriotic".³⁰

Other committee members include, Hong Kong Constitutional Affairs Chief Erick Tsang, Hong Kong Security Secretary Chris Tang and Hong Kong Home Affairs Minister Caspar Tsui, as well as three pro-Beijing supporters: former justice secretary Elsie Leung Oi-sie, ex-Legislative Council president Rita Fan Hsu Lai-tai and former Chinese University of Hong Kong president Lawrence Lau Juen-ye.

Pro-Beijing lawmakers urge government not to support 2022 Gay Games

Pro-establishment lawmakers Priscilla Leung and Junius Ho have called on the Government not to help the organisers of the 2022 Gay Games to secure venues in Hong Kong, citing their views on same-sex marriage and that they do not want the city to earn "dirty money" from the event.³¹

Lawmakers have also called for stricter rules for Hong Kong athletes competing in the Olympics in Tokyo, arguing that athletes should not be able to air political messages at the competition.³²

²⁹ <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3138857/hong-kong-cabinet-reshuffle-new-no-2-official-john-lee>

³⁰ <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3139953/hong-kong-chief-secretary-john-lee-tapped-lead-vetting>

³¹ <https://hongkongfp.com/2021/06/10/its-disgraceful-i-dont-want-dirty-money-hong-kong-lawmakers-urge-govt-not-to-support-2022-gay-games/>

³² <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3137899/hong-kong-lawmakers-demand-athletes-do-not-let-politics-and>

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Forty-four countries at the United Nations raise concern over the National Security Law

On 22 June 2021, forty-four countries signed a statement led by Canada at the United Nations raising concern about the National Security Law and urging China to abide by its human rights obligations.³³

G7 calls on China to respect Hong Kong's autonomy

As part of the G7 Communique at the end of the recent G7 summit, G7 leaders called on China to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially in relation to Xinjiang and those rights, freedoms and high degree of autonomy for Hong Kong enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law.³⁴

Canadian Government announces new routes as part of its lifeboat scheme

The Canadian Government has announced new pathways to citizenship for Hong Kongers, as part of its lifeboat package previously announced back November 2020.³⁵

These two new pathways include a stream for Hong Kongers who have studied at Canadian post-secondary institutions and a stream for Hong Kongers who have one years' work experience in Canada.

In the same week, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration released a report calling for the expansion of Canada's lifeboat scheme following a long inquiry into the measures announced by the Canadian Government back in November 2020, including extending the Working Holiday work permit and expanding the rules around family reunification.³⁶

Twenty Canadian lawmakers call for an audit of Hong Kong officials' assets in Canada

A cross-party group of twenty Canadian lawmakers has written to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to call for the Government of Canada to undertake an audit of the Canadian assets of Hong Kong officials and their families.³⁷

³³ <https://twitter.com/CanadaGeneva/status/1407278605797838848/photo/4>

³⁴ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/50361/carbis-bay-g7-summit-communique.pdf>

³⁵ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2021/6/8/hong-kong-watch-welcomes-the-announcement-of-new-pathways-for-hong-kongers-to-move-to-canada>

³⁶ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2021/6/9/the-standing-committee-on-citizenship-and-immigrations-report-offers-a-clear-roadmap-for-canada-to-improve-its-lifeboat-scheme-for-hong-kongers>

³⁷ <https://www.hilltimes.com/2021/07/01/parliamentarians-call-for-audit-of-personal-financial-connections-hong-kong-officials-may-have-in-canada/304393>

Hong Kong bans direct UK flights citing COVID

The Hong Kong Government has banned direct flights from the UK to Hong Kong, citing the rising number of COVID-cases in the UK.³⁸

UK Home Affairs Select Committee calls for gaps in BNO scheme to be filled

The Home Affairs Select Committee in the UK Parliament has called for the Government to extend its BNO visa scheme for those born after 1997, by allowing a young person with a BNO parent to apply separately.

Following an inquiry into the new BNO visa scheme to which Hong Kong Watch submitted both oral and written evidence, the cross-party Home Affairs Select Committee also recommended the Government to appoint a new BNO Resettlement Panel that would work with local authorities, new residents and civil society groups to help visa holders settle into study, work and civil and community life in the UK, as well as establish an expert casework team within the Home Office to process complex BNO applications.

The Home Affairs Select Committee report also raises concern over the cost of the BNO visa scheme, arguing that the upfront nature and scale of the additional Immigration Health Surcharge will not be affordable for some BNO visa holders.

The Committee recommends that the Government instead introduces means-tested fee-wavers or reduced payments for Hong Kongers to whom the cost is a significant barrier.³⁹

Concerns raised over the denial of access for BNOs to their pensions in Hong Kong

Hong Kong Watch has raised concern over reports that banks are blocking Hong Kongers who moved to the UK under the BNO visa scheme from accessing their Mandatory Provident Funds.

A growing number of Hongkongers with BNO passports who fled to the UK in fear of Beijing's ongoing crackdown say their requests to withdraw pension funds provided by some of the world's biggest multinational banks and insurers have been rejected.⁴⁰

³⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-57647613>

³⁹ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2021/7/7/hong-kong-watch-welcomes-the-home-affairs-select-committees-call-for-the-uk-government-to-meet-the-gaps-in-its-bno-visa-scheme>

⁴⁰ <https://hongkongfp.com/2021/07/04/banks-accused-of-beijing-backed-asset-grab-as-hongkongers-in-uk-denied-access-to-pension-savings/>

EU Hong Kong Watch Group sends letter to EU Commission and Council marking one year anniversary of the National Security Law

A cross-party group of Members of the European Parliament has written to the EU Commission and EU Council calling on leaders to adopt a lifeboat scheme, Magnitsky sanctions against Hong Kong and Chinese officials, and back the creation of an International Contact Group on Hong Kong, to mark the first anniversary of the National Security Law.

European Members of Parliament write to Carrie Lam to protest the closing of Apple Daily

Thirty-one European parliamentarians have written to the Hong Kong Chief Executive, Carrie Lam, to protest the closure of Apple Daily and to call for the release of all journalists arrested under the National Security Law.⁴¹

UK Foreign Secretary says National Security Law has ‘curtailed the space for free expression’

As part of the UK’s six-monthly report on Hong Kong, the UK Foreign Secretary has said that the National Security Law “has been used to drastically curtail the space for the expression of alternative political views and deter freedom of expression and legitimate political debate”.⁴²

In the report, the UK Government outlines three breaches of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in the last year. The Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has said that China is in a “state of ongoing non-compliance” with the Sino-British Joint Declaration.⁴³

Hong Kong’s human rights record fell sharply in 2020

Hong Kong’s human rights record worsened sharply between 2019 and 2020, according to a database compiled by an international team of researchers.⁴⁴

The Human Rights Measurement Initiative has found that people in Hong Kong faced arbitrary detention, while protesters and detainees were most at risk of ill-treatment and what they called torture.

⁴¹ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2021/6/24/31-european-parliamentarians-condemn-the-closing-of-apple-daily-newspaper-and-call-on-carrie-lam-to-release-all-the-journalists-arrested-under-the-national-security-law>

⁴² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/six-monthly-report-on-hong-kong-july-to-december-2020/six-monthly-report-on-hong-kong-july-to-december-2020>

⁴³ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Six monthly report on Hong Kong July-December 2020, 10 June 2021 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/six-monthly-report-on-hong-kong-july-to-december-2020>

⁴⁴ <https://hongkongfp.com/2021/06/24/hong-kongs-human-rights-record-worsened-sharply-in-2020-database/>

The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority cancels Cantonese oral exams

The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority has cancelled Cantonese oral exams, citing the impact of COVID on the teaching curriculum. It argues that the streamlining of the curriculum will free up teaching time and allow flexibility for learning.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ <https://www.dimsumdaily.hk/oral-dse-chinese-test-to-be-cancelled-next-year-by-hkeaa/>