



8 April, 2024

The Rt Hon Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

Dear Foreign Secretary,

We are writing to urge you to declare the enactment of the Safeguarding National Security Bill, known as ‘Article 23’, in Hong Kong a breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and therefore a violation of international law; impose targeted sanctions to ensure accountability; and implement measures to protect the safety and well-being of the more than 160,000 Hong Kongers in the UK.

As you are aware, at the conclusion of the Hong Kong Government’s public consultation process for Article 23 on 28 February 2024, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) recognised Article 23 as a violation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, the Basic Law, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. We urge the FCDO to do the same following the passage of Article 23 in the Hong Kong Legislative Council on 19 March 2024.

The Hong Kong government has already targeted six exiled pro-democracy Hong Kongers in the UK by issuing arrest warrants with HK\$1 million bounties. Article 23 will bring further severe consequences for rights and freedoms for overseas Hong Kongers and foreigners, beyond the impact of the National Security Law imposed by Beijing in 2020. This includes the potential cancellation of Hong Kong passports for “absconders” who have fled from the increasing oppression of the Hong Kong authorities.

We urge the UK government seriously and swiftly to consider imposing targeted sanctions on Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee for his lead role in the development and enactment of Article 23 in Hong Kong, including by asset freezes and a travel ban. In January 2023, Hong Kong Watch made a formal sanctions submission to the FCDO outlining the case for John Lee to be sanctioned under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime. The submission was accompanied by a cover letter from two of us, Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws, KC and Sir Geoffrey Nice, KC, and has yet to receive official FCDO action in response.

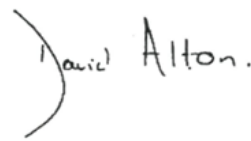
Given the increased risk to personal safety in Hong Kong and transnational repression abroad, we also call on the UK government to offer greater protections for Hong Kongers in the UK and to expand the British National (Overseas) visa scheme to enable the children of BNO passport holders born before 1 July 1997 to apply for the visa scheme independently of their parents, bringing them in line with children born after 1 July 1997.

Given that 140,000 Hong Kongers will be eligible voters in the next UK general election, I hope the British government will seriously consider how the proposed Article 23 legislation will negatively impact Hong Kongers in the UK and Hong Kong, and take swift action to sanction John Lee and offer increased protections against transnational repression and a greater safe haven from the Hong Kong government and government of the People's Republic of China.

Yours sincerely,



Lord Patten of Barnes
Patron of Hong Kong Watch



Lord Alton of Liverpool
Patron of Hong Kong Watch



Sir Malcolm Rifkind, KC
Patron of Hong Kong Watch



Alistair Carmichael MP
Patron of Hong Kong Watch

Helena A. Kennedy.

Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws, KC
Patron of Hong Kong Watch

Sir Geoffrey Nice

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