

Summary of 2019-2020 Protest Movement and Hong Kong's Current Situation Under the National Security Law

Policy Brief

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Written Submission to the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

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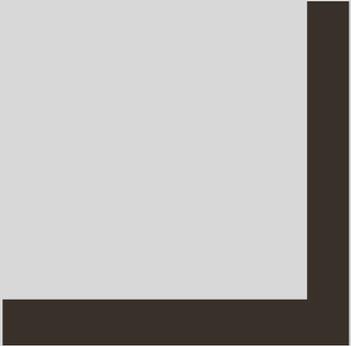


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Introduction

It has been less than two years since two million Hong Kongers marched in the streets calling for the withdrawal of the extradition treaty.

The anti-extradition protests have launched a global movement for the future of Hong Kong, in reaction to the authoritarian crackdowns launched by the HKSAR and Chinese governments who rejected Hong Konger's initial 'Five Demands'¹. In the next two years, the protest movement would face incredible pressure, silenced through state violence, lawfare, censorship, and the criminalization of dissenting political activities.

We call for Canada to join the international community in protecting Hong Kong's autonomy, to facilitate the long-denied promises of universal suffrage and democratic developments, and to hold those responsible for human rights abuses and the decimation of Hong Kong's autonomy to account.

Human Rights Violations Should Not be Normalized

As the anti-extradition protests shifted to a general rejection of the Chinese government's heavy-handed attempt at totalitarian control of the city, Hong Kongers have been relentlessly subjected to a barrage of oppressive tactics — some of them human rights violations — by both state and private actors supported by the HKSAR and the Chinese government.

Throughout 2019 and 2020, peaceful protestors were indiscriminately tear gassed and shot at with rubber bullets², a violation of international human rights treaties on policing. Calls for an independent inquiry into police brutality were met with more tear gas and senseless violence, with up to an estimated 88% of Hong Kong residents affected³.

The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) also began refusing protest permits⁴ to justify their actions, a move to criminalize political activity and silence freedom of expression, which are constitutional rights in Hong Kong, as agreed by the signatories of the Sino-British Joint Declarations.

As of February 28, 2021, there have been 10,242 arrests and 2,506 prosecutions related to the protests⁵. Yet after two years of perpetrating violent state and police suppression, few if any police officers, gang members, or government officials have been held accountable for their actions. A common refrain in the

¹ "1) Complete withdrawal of the proposed extradition bill, 2) Government to withdraw the use of the word "riot" in relation to protests, 3) Unconditional release of arrested protesters and charges against them dropped, 4) An independent inquiry into police behaviour, 5) Implementation of genuine universal suffrage"; [What do the Hong Kong protesters want?](#) (13 August 2019). The Guardian.

² [1,800 rounds of 'Tear Gas': Was the Hong Kong police response appropriate?](#) (19 August 2019). The New York Times.

³ [Millions in Hong Kong Have Been Exposed to Tear Gas Since June](#) (5 November 2019). Bloomberg.

⁴ [Hong Kong police refuse permission for four anti-government marches, organisers call it 'shocking' attack on Basic Law rights](#) (9 August 2019). SCMP.

⁵ Obtained from a freedom of information request.

city is “remember to never become numb [to what is happening],” a cry to resist the current attempts to erase the collective memory of the nature of the protests.

At the height of the protests, violent crackdowns were a daily occurrence. Coordinated attacks by police officers and criminal gangs^{6 7} on regular civilians took place after protest events to strike fear into the general populace. There are innumerable well-documented instances of arbitrary arrests: peaceful protestors, medical personnel, reporters⁸ and even random individuals⁹ on the streets near protest events. Authorities barred journalists from covering crucial stories. This was a curious decision, as “scores of journalists have received beatings, pepper spray, direct hits of tear gas, and water-cannon spray, and have been wounded with rubber bullets and bean-bag rounds” at the hands of police themselves¹⁰. Protestors began avoiding hospital trips for fear of being arrested even when sustaining severe injuries¹¹. There are many accounts of protestors being beaten, raped¹², tortured¹³, and denied due process¹⁴. Some activists would go missing for months on end. A comprehensive documentation of these incidents can be seen in Alliance Canada Hong Kong’s Program Options: Hong Kongers Seeking Protection¹⁵ (Appendix A).

Nowadays, the city resembles a police-state, with large banners exhorting its citizens to fulfill their patriotic duties and militarized architecture surrounding common protests sites. Under the National Security Law (NSL), you can now be arrested for holding up a blank piece of paper in protest¹⁶ or by urging others to cast blank ballots or boycott an election¹⁷. In the eyes of the government, these are somehow egregious violations of national security.

We should not be numb to this.

A New Form of Authoritarian Crackdown

The NSL was introduced to the National's People Congress in June 2020 without consultation of the Hong Kong government or its people. Itself a violation of the Joint Declaration, the NSL effectively criminalizes all forms of dissent in the city. The Hong Kong Government has used the NSL as a pretext to

⁶ [Hong Kong Connection : 721 Yuen Long Nightmare <Video>](#) (4 October 2019). RTHK.

⁷ [‘Please Stop Beating Us’: Where Were Hong Kong’s Police?](#) (29 July 2019). The New York Times.

⁸ [Hong Kong police arrest 51 who ‘claimed to be medics or journalists’ near besieged PolyU campus](#) (18 November 2019) Hong Kong Free Press.

⁹ [‘Being young is a crime’ in Hong Kong: Police arrest students and teenagers.](#) (27 September 2019) LA Times.

¹⁰ [Hong Kong’s Worsening Press Climate](#) (11 October 2019). The Atlantic.

¹¹ [Hong Kong police arrested 5 people inside public hospitals over June 12 protests, gov’t says](#) (30 October 2019). Hong Kong Free Press.

¹² [Woman files complaint against Hong Kong police over alleged rape in station](#) (9 November 2019). Hong Kong Free Press.

¹³ [Hong Kong police tortured detainees, says rights group, as UN experts voice concern over leading activists’ arrests](#) (14 May 2020). Hong Kong Free Press.

¹⁴ [UN rights boss urges Hong Kong to uphold due process, fair trials](#) (9 December 2019). Reuters.

¹⁵ “Appendix A: Suppression Of Political Opinions And Persecution In Hong Kong and Appendix B: Corrupted Criminal Justice System”; [Policy Brief: Programs Options for Hong Kongers Seeking Protection](#) (June 2020). Alliance Canada Hong Kong.

¹⁶ “After the Hong Kong government deemed the protest slogan as illegal, Hong Kongers held up blank papers in protest. They were arrested by the police on suspicion of taking part in an unauthorized assembly and obstructing police officers”; [Security law: Hong Kong police arrest 8 at ‘blank placard’ silent protest](#) (6 July 2020). Hong Kong Free Press.

¹⁷ [Urging people to spoil or cast blank ballots in elections to become a crime in Hong Kong](#) (13 April 2021). Hong Kong Free Press.

stamp out street protests, gut the city’s legislature, and decimate political opposition. It has conveniently weaponized COVID-19 health measures¹⁸ to restrict movement, mobility and gatherings, effectively bringing the movement to its knees.

Since the law’s passage, every aspect of life in Hong Kong has been distorted by its outsized legal and political implications — the authorities’ goal is to overwhelm citizens into fearful compliance of Chinese authoritarian rule. The tactics have changed: instead of targeting citizens with tear gas, they are targeting their basic freedoms.

In January 2021, Hong Kong authorities arrested over 50 Hong Kong pro-democratic candidates, organizers, and affiliates of the primary elections accused of violating the NSL¹⁹. Included were some of the most prominent pro-democracy legislators and activists. Political opposition have been decimated, with many arrested and incarcerated²⁰. Some have preemptively chosen a life of exile²¹, choosing instead to advocate for Hong Kong from abroad.

Beijing is now rewriting Hong Kong’s electoral system for its own benefit²², dismantling the few elements of democratic representation remaining and explicitly calling for “patriots” to rule Hong Kong²³. As the pro-democracy legislators and politicians are sidelined, the changes were rammed through the legislature despite near-universal disapproval outside of the Legislative Council.

Critical parts of civil society that have expressed concern about the changes to the city are now under threat. In Hong Kong. After the passage of NSL, university administrations are defunding and detaching student unions due to their political stances. Trade unions, religious groups, and civil society organizations are harassed by the authorities. The public sector now requires pledges of absolute allegiance from civil servants. Educators are fired for their political views. Professional bodies such as the Hong Kong Bar Association to adhere to its “patriotic statutory duties”.

The suppression expands into the private sector, where “yellow businesses” sympathetic to the protests are facing targeted harassment from Hong Kong authorities. Internet service providers are required to ban specific websites. Younger people and those wearing a black mask (a common signal of support for the protests) continue to be disproportionately stopped and carded by the police in street checks.

Under the NSL, Hong Kong’s education system is now teaching an altered version of history²⁴, rewriting and omitting historical events that are critical of the Chinese government. More recently, the Hong Kong Education Bureau hosted a national security education day (see Appendix C), where schools dedicate a full day to disseminate NSL propaganda to influence the next generation.

¹⁸ [Hong Kong police are using coronavirus restrictions to clamp down on protesters](#) (1 April 2020). Quartz.

¹⁹ [Hong Kong Police Arrest Dozens of Pro-Democracy Leaders](#) (5 January 2021). The New York Times.

²⁰ [‘I won’t give up’: four of the politicians and activists sentenced in Hong Kong](#) (16 April 2021). The Guardian.

²¹ [Fugitive former Hong Kong lawmaker Ted Hui reveals move to Australia, thanks authorities for waiving Covid-19 entry curbs](#) (9 March 2021). SCMP.

²² [Less Democracy, More ‘Patriots’: Hong Kong’s New Electoral System](#) (31 March 2021). The Diplomat.

²³ [Hong Kong: China limits parliament to ‘patriots’](#) (30 March 2021). BBC.

²⁴ [Hong Kong’s Lesson to Schoolchildren: Love China, No Questions Asked](#) (24 February 2021). The New York Times.

The NSL is now the guiding principle to the city's governance. Fearful of triggering the wrath of Beijing, administrators in Hong Kong are tripping over themselves to anticipate (and create) new forms of oppression and suppression in the city. The changes in Hong Kong mirror the institutionalized and systemic suppression tactics commonly seen in China. A summary of reports on some concerning social and political changes brought on by the NSL can be seen in Appendix C: Hong Kong After the National Security Law²⁵.

How Are the People Feeling?

Public research & data shows that over 60% of youths in Hong Kong²⁶ are hoping to leave the city, while 1 in 5 Hong Kongers are seeking to flee the city and 65% are not confident about Hong Kong's political future²⁷. Many Hong Kongers who hold foreign passports or with financial resources have fled the city in fear of retaliation for their involvement in the protest movement before the NSL was implemented.

Even those ambivalent about the protests are affected by the chilling effects of the NSL. Chief Executive Carrie Lam's popularity ratings fell to 17.5% — she is now on track to finishing her five-year term as the least popular leader in Hong Kong²⁸.

Hong Kongers continue to live in fear. While many are looking into options to leave Hong Kong, not everyone has the financial means to resettle elsewhere, and many are unwilling to leave their families and peers behind.

The collective trauma from the protests have created a mental health crisis in Hong Kong. The average mental health score of Hong Kongers has fallen to 45.12 (52 as the satisfactory level)²⁹, with many citing the social turmoil as a traumatic experience.

In light of Canada's international obligations and deep historical ties to Hong Kong, it is imperative to take a strong and confident stance against challenges to liberal democracy everywhere. Alliance Canada Hong Kong presents three recommendations to SDIR for consideration.

Recommendations

1. Resettlement Options for Hong Kongers Seeking Protection

We urge Canada to consider adopting a swift response to Hong Kong's new immigration law³⁰ that enables arbitrary exit bans for anyone inside the HKSAR jurisdiction. After August 1st, it is no longer

²⁵ Appendix C: Hong Kong After the National Security Law

²⁶ [New poll shows 60% of Hong Kong youth aged 15 to 30 want to leave the city if they can](#) (30 April 2021). Business Insider.

²⁷ [To Stay or To Leave? A Critical Question for Good Governance](#) (1 February 2021). The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups.

²⁸ [Hong Kong Leader's Approval Rating Falls to Lowest Since Sept](#) (17 February 2021). Bloomberg.

²⁹ [Hong Kong's mental health hits new low in survey listing Covid-19 pandemic and social turmoil as likely factors](#) (9 September 2020). SCMP.

³⁰ [Hong Kong passes immigration bill, raising alarm over 'exit bans'](#) (28 April 2021). Reuters.

clear whether emigration can be an option for Hong Kong pro-democracy activists that are known to the authorities.

Most Hong Kongers cannot wait out the long complicated bureaucratic processes required by traditional immigration pathways. The IRCC is facing a large backlog and will likely not process applications in time. Furthermore, under Canada's COVID-19 border restrictions, most Hong Kongers are unable to reach Canada to claim asylum through a travel visa.

To address this, Alliance Canada Hong Kong has submitted Program Options for Hong Kongers Seeking protection³¹ from June 2020 and Written Submissions to the Standing Committee of Citizenship and Immigration³² from February 2021 - the documents have been attached as Appendix B for SDIR for your consideration.

Our recommendations are as follows³³:

- Create a dedicated asylum pathway for those fleeing persecution, allowing Hong Kongers to apply for travel documents directly from overseas with the ability to waive border restrictions.
- Expand private sponsorship and family reunification measures for extended family members of Canadian citizens to resettle activists with pre-existing ties in Canada.
- Modernize and expedite the Canadian immigration and asylum system to address the backlog of new and pending claims.
- Create a clear and strategic communications plan to combat misinformation and promote the various existing pathways for Hong Kongers.
- Release a plan to support Canadians and their families in Hong Kong. Restore status for those who lost their citizenship and permanent residence, and expedited permanent residence pathways for extended family members

2. Invoke the Justice for the Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act

This recommendation is derived from Alliance Canada Hong Kong's community consultation survey from January 2020³⁴, which received over 13,400 Hong Kong and Canadian responses. Their top demand was to invoke Magnitsky-style sanctions against the Hong Kong government, HKPF, and CCP officials. While organizations have identified specific individuals who are actively destroying Hong Kong's autonomy and violating human rights^{35 36}, there has been no actionable efforts by Canada to hold these egregious human rights abusers to account.

³¹ See Appendix A: ACHK's Program Options for Hong Kongers Seeking Protection

³² See Appendix B: ACHK's Written Submission to CIMM

³³ "Elaboration of these recommendations are outlined in ACHK's previous recommendation that was submitted to CIMM in February 2021";

See Appendix B: ACHK's Written Submissions to CIMM

³⁴ [Canada Five Demands: A Community Consultation Survey](#) (January 2020). Alliance Canada Hong Kong.

³⁵ [Profiles of Hong Kong Repression. Perpetrators of Human Rights and Democracy Abuse.](#) (December 2020). Stand With Hong Kong, Hong Kong Higher Institution International Affairs Delegation.

³⁶ Human Rights Abusers and State Violence Perpetrators in China and Hong Kong. For the consideration for sanctions under: Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law) S.C. 2017, c. 21 (July 2020). Alliance Canada Hong Kong.

We urge the committee to recommend targeted sanctions against individual officials from the Hong Kong Police Force, the Hong Kong government, and the Chinese government. Canada must also ensure that the appropriate departments have the resources to ensure enforcement of these sanctions and that the perpetrators of human rights abuses are held accountable.

3. Address the Global Systems of Harassment and Intimidation against Canadian Dissidents

In an increasingly interconnected world, the struggle for human rights knows no borders. In a previous report submitted to CACN, Alliance Canada Hong Kong has noted troubling incidents of global surveillance and harassment operations against pro-democracy Hong Kongers³⁷. These operations are suspected to be mobilized by CCP supporters who actively video and photograph overseas activists. Some have even admitted that these records would be sent to the consulate to be used by the Chinese authorities.

Canadian human rights activists often receive veiled threats against their family members back home³⁸. As a result, many overseas dissidents are forced to cut ties with their families in China and Hong Kong³⁹.

The protections and rights enjoyed by Canadians should be afforded to those with social and kinship ties to Canadian dissidents and activists. Canada should be known as a staunch protector of human rights both abroad and at home. We urge the committee to uphold principles of the Charter of Rights and Freedom to ensure that Hong Kongers in Canada and their loved ones, who are under the globalized systems of surveillance, suppression, and control orchestrated by the CCP, are safe from retribution.

³⁷ [Report: National Security and Chinese State Influence - Pro-Hong Kong Democracy Events During August 16-19, 2019](#) (August 2020). Alliance Canada Hong Kong.

³⁸ [Harassment & Intimidation of Individual in Canada Working on China-Related Human Right Concerns](#) (March 2020). Canadian Coalition on Human Rights in China & Amnesty International Canada.

³⁹ [China uses threats about relatives at home to control and silence expats and exiles abroad](#) (30 January 2018). The Insider.

Appendices

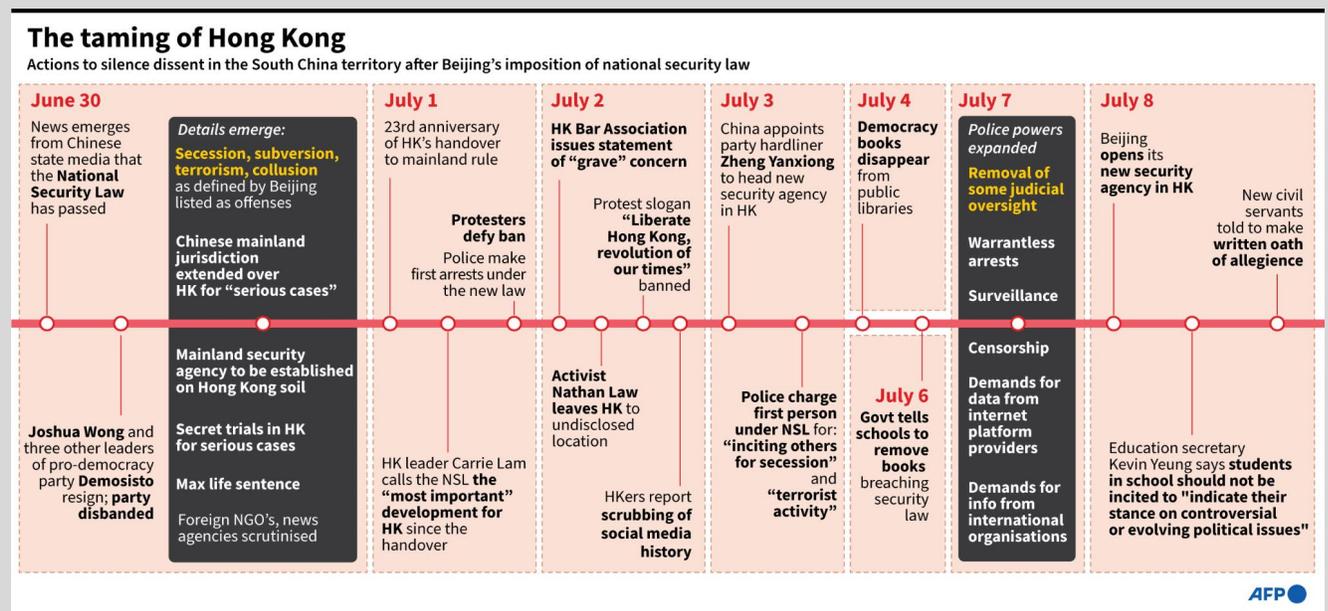
Appendix A: Program Options for Hong Kongers Seeking Protection (June 2020), submitted to CACN and CIMM

attached separately

Appendix B: ACHK's Written Submission to CIMM (February 2021)

attached separately

Appendix C: Hong Kong After the National Security Law



(Source: [AFP Twitter](#), 10 July, 2020)

Summary: The National Security Law has officially criminalized dissent and will legalize operations of Chinese state agents from the National Security Bureau to be active in Hong Kong jurisdiction. Beijing has quashed dissent and sought to make the semi-autonomous city more like authoritarian China.

- Prosecution of prominent local and overseas individuals under NSL
 - March 2021 - The National Security law broadly outlawed even benign acts of defiance, such as carrying a flag calling for independence or shouting the ubiquitous protest chant (Source: [Hong Kong Makes 100th Arrest Using National Security Law](#))

- January 2021 - The national security department of the Hong Kong police arrest 47 people that ran in pro-democracy primaries back in July 2020 for “conspiracy to commit subversion” (Source: [Hong Kong charges 47 activists in largest use yet of new security law](#))
- November 2020 - Even media personalities and radio hosts were charged under NSL for crowdfunding a scholarship for HK students to study in Taiwan. (Source: [Hong Kong radio host ‘Giggs’ arrested under national security law and for money-laundering in funding drive for protesters to study in Taiwan](#))
- July 2020 - Police in Hong Kong are seeking the arrest of six pro-democracy activists living in exile in Western countries, suspected of violating the national security law (Source: [Hong Kong police order arrest of Nathan Law and other exiled activists – state media](#))
- Erosion of rights and institutions
 - April 2021 - The government passes legislation that allows immigration authorities to ban people from entering or leaving (Source: [Hong Kong passes law that can stop people leaving](#))
 - April 2021 - More changes proposed to Beijing’s overhaul of Hong Kong’s electoral system by significantly curbing democratic representation in its institutions to ensure that only “patriots” can rule (Source: [Hong Kong announces more electoral system changes favouring pro-Beijing camp](#))
 - April 2021 - Authorities refused to disclose where activist Andy Li was detained when handed over to Hong Kong authorities after being detained by Chinese police on a failed escape attempt. He was assigned a lawyer by the government and allegedly refused his family-appointed lawyer. (Source: [Mystery lawyer appears in court for Hong Kong activist Andy Li, but family still don’t know where he is](#))
 - January 2021 - Internet service providers block the website HKChronicles, which lists the personal information of police officers (Source: [A Hong Kong Website Gets Blocked, Raising Censorship Fears](#))
 - September 2020 - Targeting Hong Kong’s independent judiciary, party officials called for an overhaul of the courts to rein in judges’ autonomy. (Source: [Hong Kong’s judiciary under fire over alleged leniency in protest cases: will a sentencing council redress claims of bias and lead to tougher penalties?](#), [Hong Kong’s Courts Are Still Independent. Some Want to Rein Them In](#))
- Suppression of Journalists and Free Media
 - April 2021 - Former journalist for Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), was arrested in November and accused of breaching the law for accessing a public database of car registrations (Source: [A Hong Kong journalist exposed police failures. A court found her guilty of a crime.](#))
 - April 2021 - The Hong Kong government proposes changes to the Companies Registry, which would restrict access to the personal information of company directors and officers (Source: [Hong Kong government plan to restrict access to company heads’ personal data will shield lawbreakers, critics say](#))
 - August 2020 - Issuing of visas for journalists are politicised. Chinese authorities vets and delay foreign journalists’ press credentials in Hong Kong. (Source: [Visas for journalists being vetted and delayed by Immigration’s national security unit over “technical reasons”](#))
- Suppression of Political Opinions in Public and Private Sectors
 - April 2021 - Rev. Lo Hing-choi, head of the Baptist Convention of Hong Kong, leaves Hong Kong citing fears of the National Security Law, which he has been outspoken against (Source: [Outspoken Hong Kong pastor and head of Baptist Convention leaves city over national security law fears](#))
 - April 2021 - Raiding and targeted pro-democratic “yellow businesses” (Source: [Hong Kong shop founded by pro-democracy activist raided over content labelling](#))
 - April 2021 - Requiring professional bodies like the Hong Kong Bar Association to be patriotic (Source: [Beijing calls Hong Kong Bar Association Chief an ‘anti-China politician’](#))

- March 2021 - Hong Kong civil servants were given four weeks from Mid-January to pledge loyalty to the government (Source: [About 200 Hong Kong civil servants face dismissal for refusing to pledge allegiance to city and mini-constitution](#))
- July 2020 - Popular VPN providers announced their exit from Hong Kong over concerns about ability to operate effectively under new Chinese security laws, with more companies set to follow (Source: [VPN providers quit Hong Kong following new China security laws](#))
- Education and Academic Influence
 - April 2021 - Two more teachers were deregistered for life; one was accused of using “one-sided and biased teaching materials”, while the other was convicted for involvement in the 2019 protests (Source: [Two more Hong Kong teachers deregistered for life, one for ‘defaming the nation’ and the other for a protest-related crime](#))
 - April 2021 - Universities takes patriotic stance by severing with student unions (Source: [Hong Kong’s top university cuts ties with student union over national security ‘legal risk’](#))
 - April 2021 - The Hong Kong government, in conjunction with the Chinese government, holds a “National Security Education Day” event to promote patriotic education. Schools, including kindergartens, distributed pamphlets and held flag-raising ceremonies (Source: [Quizzes, photo mosaic of ‘children’s smiles’ mark Hong Kong’s first National Security Education Day since Beijing imposed law on city](#))
 - August 2020 - The Education Bureau instructs all schools to teach students about the national security law with a “positive approach” to help foster a “correct” understanding of the relationship between “our country and Hong Kong.” (Source: [How Beijing’s National Security Crackdown Transformed Hong Kong in a Single Month](#))

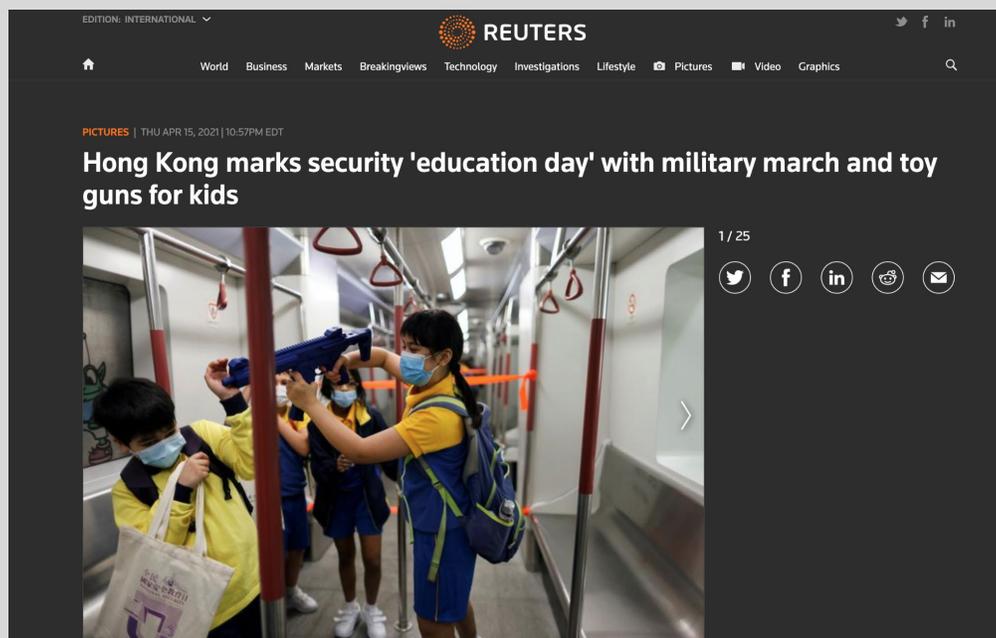


Figure one: Screenshot of article "[Hong Kong marks security 'education day' with military march and toy guns for kids](#)". (15 April 2021). Reuters.

Appendix D: Hong Kongers' Testimonies (April 2021)

Testimonial 1: Activist Known as "Bobo"

"It's been such a difficult situation for us lately, while battling with the pandemic situation and economic downturn and struggling to make a living. Many of our friends have left the city because there is a great possibility of prosecution. Some others are planning to immigrate to other countries like UK, Canada, or Australia, because the government is stepping up to restrict Hong Kongers' freedom day by day. Most of the time, in the name of COVID. It is even more heartbreaking and helpless to know while the majority of pro-democracy icons are arrested and now facing trial every day; many more people who are involved on the frontline anonymously are now convicted on court publicly and often without public's attention. It feels like reality is forcing us to get our lives to get back to what people say normal or on track.

We all clearly understand that nothing can get back to normal. We are still doing what we can, fighting for what we deserve. And we hope that all of you still notice there are a lot of us in desperate situations every day.

Please stand with us."

Testimonial 2: Teammate A

"From hope to despair to fear

In Apr 2019, the very first match against the extradition bill took place. Some people started to talk about but they were the minority. I thought, the bill would pass anyway. There was nothing more for me to do.

Jun 2019 brought me hope, I saw a HK which I had never experienced before in my life. Every protest was filled with kind and warm people. It stunned me. I had the wishful thinking that we may be Goliath this time.

When peaceful protests were in vain, people resorted to other means for the fight of freedom. Blatant police brutality, collusion with gangsters, the government's inaction, HK had then become very foreign to me. Similar to the umbrella movement in 2014, I had become a part time protestor. But this time, I went digital as well. Working with unknown souls sharing the yearning for freedom was invigorating. I felt the passion and energy of friends whom I had never met. And, this truly moved me. We knew we wouldn't win but we never imagined the price would be this huge. Over 10k people were arrested and I believe still more to come.

We forced the government to cancel all celebrations, ' National Day', ' Xmas', ' New Year's Eve'. There was no mood to celebrate anyway.

We warned the world about the intrusion of CCP, today HK, tomorrow the world. We knew but the rest of world didn't or probably still don't.

The siege in the two universities broke my heart. My hope was smashed when seeing students trying to leave the university rounded by police by climbing down fr pipes and flyovers. Paramedics were arrested and treated like criminals. What had HK become?

Those who managed to escape are now charged with rioting.

In the beginning of 2020, we heard of a new SARS like virus in Wuhan. Our Lunar New Year was spent searching for masks, sanitizers and spray. We didn't want SARS to repeat. It eventually did.

Protests were halted, the government banned any sorts of gathering of people. I fell into the stage of despair. There was nothing much for me to do , but, HKers demonstrated agility. Be Water.

The first half of the year was spent establishing the yellow economy (ie a community of conscious businesses), sharing SARS fighting tips with the world, sending supplies to our friends around the globe. We continued our fight for freedom by supporting the yellow economy. We no longer go to Starbucks and IKEA.

Summer 2020, HKers were astounded by the abrupt legislation of the Almighty National Security Law. It's so arbitrary that all HKers could be subject to prosecution. The slogan we used 'Liberate HK, revolution of our time' is now forbidden. What's left for HKers?

Yet, over 600k HKers cast their votes in the pan- democrats primaries. In the name of pandemic prevention, the Legislative Council Election was called off later.

Sooner after the enforcement of the National Security Law, we witnessed familiar faces being detained without trial, Joshua, Agnes and Jimmy, and many more. We saw activists fleeing HK.

In Aug, we were shocked by how the police searched the Apple Daily office. On that day, the share price of Next Media (which owns Apple Daily) rose over 1000%, 500000 copies were sold on the day after. Yes, we were silenced but we found a way to speak up.

Unfair trials and sentences became a daily routine. Our fight for freedom changed. Instead of taking to the street, we went to court hearings, we flashed our mobile torch to send our love to the arrested, we wrote letters to our imprisoned friends. Whenever a conscious business was picked on by the government, we went to support and emptied their shelves. These practices still continue today.

I can't really recall what happened in the rest of 2020. The despair has now changed fear as the 47 candidates of the primaries were charged and the majority of them are still detained without trial, friends and colleagues are leaving HK, thanks to the schemes imposed by the UK, Australia and Canada.

I am afraid of being charged by penning this even. After the enforcement of the National Security Law and the 'improvement' of our Legislative Council Elections, the voices of HKers are forever muted in HK. The media are self-censored. Our kids are brainwashed and loving the regime is a MUST. We are being retaliated for defending the core values which made HK HK. We rely on our friends outside to speak up for us. We are the fine example of CCP could do once it's seized control.

May I conclude my thoughts with a few lines from a song written by a renowned lyricist fr HK, whose name is now made 'anonymous' in China due to his political views. And, I am confident that they resonate with HKers incarcerated, exiled, emigrated and stayed due to this political movement, and most importantly, freedom fighters across the globe.

- There is a space which can't be shattered
- There is wisdom n thoughts which can't be stolen.
- Powerlessness n feebleness is the evidence of perseverance."

Testimonial 2: Teammate B

"Arrests related to the protest are continuing, though very underreported in international media, the numbers are increasing. The mass charges of the 47 Pro-democracy politicians and activists are a clear breach of the common law's concept of 'innocent until proven guilty'. Also Andy Li's incident, being assigned a lawyer without family's consent or knowledge. Bail has been refused for most of the people on the grounds that they pose a security risk or threat.

I have noticed that police officers are frequenting and patrolling MTRs and public areas more often - usually in fours. There are random ID checks, usually targeting young people still occurring

There's an increase of harassment of people who are holding street stands, particularly for trade unions. Universities are cutting off ties with student unions due to 'legal risks'. Banning June 4 vigil under the guise of 'coronavirus concerns'.

Recent passing of immigration law amendments, without clear provisions that have given the government broad sweeping of powers including exit bans.”

Testimonial 3: Comments from Teammate C

“Very strong police presence on the streets.

Certain premises are not accessible without 安心出行 (government COVID-19 app).

Availability of employment opportunities have become associated with your political views.”

Testimonial 4: Comments from a Reporter

“As international media reporters we’ve had more rejections from experts or fewer on the record comments”

Testimonial 5: Friend A

“Although the National Security Law does not have a huge impact on the general public, it is obvious that the government has used this to pick on people or use it as political intimidation.

For me, the previous demonstrations are the result of a government that has caused popular grievances. No doubt the National Security Law restricts the speaking platform, which citizens can no longer express their opinions and it is an ordinance that is not beneficial to the citizens. If a government can really do a good job of people's livelihood, listen to their people, will anyone like to come out to go against them?”

Testimonial 6: Friend B

“The election reforms are already... but I don’t care (because it’s a sham previously anyways). It’s crazy that they’re not letting people check records. They’re just asking for corruption. And the police can just blatantly rape people then since the Department of Justice would go and clear their name anyways.

They’re picking on and targeting pro-democratic yellow businesses, like raiding About Thai. Though it hasn’t happened to me yet, I’ve witnessed random police checks on people with black masks.

There’s no longer any human rights. With the 40-hour marathon of court hearings for the 47 activists, Hongkongers rushed to buy M&M’s for jailed activists to bypass a strict list of approved items for inmate visitation, and the case of the 12 missing Hong Kongers all shows that the Hong Kong we know is dead.

Testimonial 7: Friend C

“As of right now, National Security Law will not affect you as much if you obey the government. What I mean is that I joke and laugh at Xi Jinping all the time, but it will not be harmful to me nor my family immediately. It also doesn’t mean that National Security Law will not affect me. The most obvious reason is that more and more people around me want to immigrate. Several friends who own a second nationality have already left. Other parents, riders, and protestors have left before the national security law takes effect, the leftover ones are the people who do not have a second nationality and do not have financial support. I also noticed some other families who never mentioned immigrating, but now they will bring up the topic once in a while.

In addition, one of my friends who used to be an admin of a Channel had told me, since National Security Law had taken place, there are fewer subscribers. He continued that this is not just his Channel, others also experience this

phenomenon. I also discovered that many discussion forums had slowly turned silent. The most exaggerated I have seen is people started to use code to replace some words, just like in the mainland (China). I am not sure about all the behinds meaning, but the thought of it is already very scary on its own.

What impacted me the most is, every weekend I will help my friend (who left Hong Kong already) to visit the graves (of their relatives to pay respect - this is tradition), after that I will purposely go out and cruise for a while (in case someone is following) before I return home. Sometimes I wonder will visiting the grave end up becoming one of the violations of the National Security Law in the future? I can't help it, but I found this is pretty funny if we all end up in jail from this.

I bet the National Security Law does not seem to impact daily life significantly due to the distraction of Sinovac (a kind of China COVID Vaccine) and "Leave Home Safe" app. The Hong Kong Government is infamous and not reliable. First, they started with the National Security law, the real-name system for SIM cards, then the immigration bill, what is up next? It is foreseeable that the government can form Hong Kong as in another Xinjiang easily. After the encirclement net was completed, the emperor can now order a concentration camp in Hong Kong and there is nothing much we can do about it. As we can see, the internet network has been tightened. LIHKG (one of the most popular discussion forum) servers is down occasionally and some websites cannot be loaded suddenly as well, especially the websites that are related to Hong Kong Chronicles. They are straightforward and block buried, which is the first step in network monitoring. Even though some still hope to fight for this long-term struggle, this fight can be easy, just as we can't rehabilitate the bloody Tiananmen Square crackdown by singing a song or chanting slogans.

To be honest, if you ask me the future of Hong Kong, I am so pessimistic. The government can send over a tank anytime. After National Security Law has been enrolled, we are no longer facing a 10-year sentence, instead it will be a lifetime sentence. I used to think that riots, arson and keeping weapons are serious enough, but at least it is listed out black and white. Although there is no difference right now, you have no idea when they will arrest you, perhaps you are just holding a Winnie the Pooh on the street.

In the end, I would like to talk about how grateful I am for the Lifeboat programs within different countries. However, there are a lot of people who are taking it for granted and the program couldn't help the one that is needed. It will be great if the Lifeboat program can set the threshold higher."