



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Country Report: Hong Kong July 2022

In 2019 and 2020, protests took place in Hong Kong against the extradition bill allowing protesters to be sent to mainland China for trials. The bill eroded the judicial independence and autonomy of the city protected under the [Sino-British Joint Declaration](#) by exposing Hong Kong to the repressive justice system in China. Signed in 1984 and effective from 1997, this agreement promised Hong Kong fifty years of political and economic liberty under Chinese sovereign rule. It has now been broken by China.

The protests were initially peaceful but escalated under mounting police brutality. The protests persisted into early 2020, when the COVID19 pandemic raised public health concerns regarding mass assembly.

China passed a new [National Security Law \(NSL\)](#) in July 2020, giving Beijing the sole power to interpret what may constitute “secession”, “subversion”, “terrorism”, and “collusion with foreign forces” against Chinese national security in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong’s government and courts soon designated many protest activities as “terrorism”. The bail in cases relating to the NSL was raised. Fifty-three high-profile Hong Kong democrats [who organized an unofficial democratic “primary”](#) ahead of the cancelled 2020 Legislative Council elections were charged with conspiracy to commit subversion. Most of them have been denied bail and have remained in custody since [February 2021](#). The accused could face [life sentences](#) in prison. As of June 22, 2022, the Hong Kong Police Force has made over [114 arrests related to the NSL](#).

The Hong Kong and Chinese governments are also curtailing press freedom. Between June and December 2021, police raided the offices of Apple Daily and Stand News, two of the largest independent media outlets critical of the Hong Kong and Chinese leadership. They seized journalistic materials on charges of conspiracy to publish seditious publications. Both outlets subsequently closed down. Apple Daily’s founder was charged with [collusion with foreign forces](#). In June 2022, Hong Kong’s government [barred multiple news outlets](#) from covering the Chief Executive (C.E.) inauguration scheduled for July 1, 2022.

In 2022, John Lee was elected as Hong Kong’s next Chief Executive after running for election uncontested with the blessing of Chinese president Xi Jinping. Lee says [national security is the fundamental mission of his administration](#).

Due to China's imposition of direct legal control over Hong Kong, mounting authoritarianism, erosion of press freedom, and targeted persecution of political dissidents, Genocide Watch recognizes Hong Kong to be at **Stage 5: Organization**, **Stage 6: Polarization**, and **Stage 8: Persecution**.

Genocide Watch recommends that:

- NATO member states grant visas to Hong Kong human rights activists.
- NATO members should ban exports to China of technological products that can be used for [Chinese surveillance](#).