

# **Country Report: Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China May 2025**

Since the National Security Law's introduction in 2020 and its expansion in [2024](https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/19/hong-kong-new-security-law-full-scale-assault-rights), Hong Kong has seen a sharp erosion of civil liberties, with peaceful dissent now criminalized and pro-democracy voices—activists, journalists, and students—[leading to mass arrests of pro-democracy activists](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/11/hong-kong-grave-concerns-over-sentencing-under-national-security-law). Independent media has been dismantled, opposition leaders jailed, and public institutions brought under authoritarian control, signaling deepening political repression. In 2025, this crackdown extended beyond Hong Kong’s borders, with authorities arresting the family of [U.S.-based activist Anna Kwok](https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-police-arrest-father-brother-wanted-activist-anna-kwok-2025-05-02/)—an unprecedented act condemned by Human Rights Watch as collective punishment. These actions have drawn international criticism and raised alarm over the collapse of judicial independence and basic freedoms in Hong Kong.

These developments highlight a disturbing shift in Hong Kong's human rights landscape, where repression is no longer confined within its borders but now targets individuals and their families in exile. Those who have fled persecution—journalists, activists, former legislators, and students—continue to face transnational threats, including arrest warrants, asset seizures, and intimidation of relatives. [The targeting of family members as a means of silencing dissent sends a chilling message to the broader diaspora and represents a serious violation of international human rights norm](https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/04/hong-kong-targeting-exiled-activists-families-escalates)s. As Hong Kong authorities pursue extraterritorial enforcement of repressive laws, the safety of those in exile and the integrity of global human rights protections face growing peril.

Genocide Watch considers Hong Kong to be at **Stage 3: Discrimination,** **Stage 4: Dehumanization**, **Stage 5: Organization, Stage 6: Polarization, and Stage 8: Persecution** due to escalating political repression under the National Security Law. Pro-democracy activists, journalists, and civil society members are systematically targeted through arrests, censorship, and extrajudicial legal measures, while state rhetoric portrays dissenters as threats to national security. The use of specialized security units, loyalty laws, and transnational intimidation reflects an organized campaign to eliminate political opposition and suppress fundamental freedoms.

Genocide Watch Recommends:

* International Monitoring: Establish a UN Special Rapporteur on the situation in Hong Kong or a dedicated mandate within OHCHR.
* Targeted Sanctions: Expand Magnitsky-style sanctions on officials responsible for human rights abuses.
* Support Civil Society: Provide asylum, funding, and protection to Hong Kong exiles and NGOs abroad.
* Documentation Efforts: Support secure digital evidence collection of arbitrary arrests, trials, and police abuse.
* Advocate for ICC Referral: Although China is not a party to the Rome Statute, advocacy for international accountability mechanisms must continue.