

Debate Pack

CDP-0076 (2021)
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7 June 2021

Human rights in Hong Kong

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Summary

A Westminster Hall debate on 'Human rights in Hong Kong' has been scheduled for Wednesday 9 June 2021 from 2.30-4:00pm. The debate has been initiated by Tom Randall MP.

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Background

Hong Kong was a British colony from 1842 until the UK transferred sovereignty over Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China in 1997, after which it became a Special Administrative Region of China. In preparation of the handover, in 1984 Great Britain and China agreed the [Joint Declaration on the Question of Hong Kong \(Joint Declaration\)](#).

Joint Declaration and period up to 2019

The Joint Declaration states that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) will be directly under the authority of the People's Republic of China but will enjoy a “high degree of autonomy” and its social and economic systems and lifestyle will remain unchanged for fifty years.

However, in recent years there has been growing concern the principle ‘One Country, Two Systems’, in which Hong Kong is part of China but has separate legal and economic systems, is being steadily eroded. The UK Government has catalogued such fears in its [six-monthly reports](#) on Hong Kong, as has the Foreign Affairs Committee in reports on [Hong Kong](#) and [China](#) in 2015 and 2019.

The Joint Declaration is a legally binding treaty but it contains no enforcement provisions.

Chinese officials have challenged the status of the declaration, [calling it](#) a historical document without practical significance. China's Embassy in the UK put out [a statement](#) in May 2020 saying “not a single word or paragraph in the Joint Declaration gives the UK any responsibility over Hong Kong after its handover”, and that the Declaration “should not be used as an excuse to interfere in Hong Kong affairs, which are China's internal affairs”.¹

There were tensions in 2014 when the pro-democracy [Umbrella protest movement](#) broke out. Protestors claimed that China had reneged on an agreement to grant them open elections by 2017, and demanded “true universal suffrage”.

2019 protests

In March 2019, mass protests broke out again in opposition to a draft Bill to amend Hong Kong's extradition laws. Those opposed to the amendment feared it would enable the Chinese government to pursue political opponents, by having them extradited to mainland China.

¹ PRC UK Embassy, '[Chinese Embassy Spokesperson's Remarks regarding the Hong Kong-related Statement by Foreign Ministers of the UK, the US, Australia and Canada](#)', 29 May 2020.

In June 2019 protesters [tried to storm key government buildings](#) demanding the Bill be scrapped. The Bill was formally withdrawn in September 2019 but demonstrations in favour of greater democracy continued.

In November 2019, [local council elections](#) resulted in pro-Beijing parties and politicians being resoundingly defeated. However, these councils have little influence beyond local politics.

National security law

In June 2020, the Chinese Government introduced a [new national security law](#) in Hong Kong. The legislation criminalises any act of:

- secession - breaking away from the country;
- subversion - undermining the power or authority of the central government;
- terrorism - using violence or intimidation against people; and
- collusion with foreign or external forces.

The law established a new Beijing-led security office in Hong Kong, with its own law enforcement personnel - neither of which would come under the local authority's jurisdiction. Hong Kong's political leader, Chief Executive Carrie Lam, now has the power to appoint judges to hear national security cases. Beijing will have also power over how the law should be interpreted, not any Hong Kong judicial or policy body. If the law conflicts with any Hong Kong law, the Beijing law takes priority.

The law also applies to non-residents of Hong Kong, including those based abroad.

A group of 50 Special Rapporteurs and independent experts appointed by the United Nations' Human Rights Council, [criticised the law](#), saying it would undermine the right to a fair trial, and open the door to a "sharp rise in arbitrary detention", undermining the "one country, two systems" governance framework that was introduced at the end of British rule; enabling the Chinese Government to establish "agencies" in Hong Kong "when needed."

The experts added that the law would "violate China's international legal obligations and impose severe restrictions on civil and political rights in the autonomous region".²

The Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, [said the law](#) was a "clear and serious violation of the UK-China Joint Declaration, and with it a violation of China's freely assumed international obligations".³

² UN News, '[Independent UN rights experts call for decisive measures to protect 'fundamental freedoms' in China](#)', 26 June 2020.

³ FCDO, '[Hong Kong and China: Foreign Secretary's statement in Parliament, 20 July 2020](#)'.

Legislative elections postponed

Elections to Hong Kong's Legislative Council were due in September 2020 but were postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some pro-democracy campaigners [dismissed claims](#) from the island's authorities that the postponement were only due to public health concerns, and said pro-Beijing politicians were worried about their election prospects after the local election results. Hong Kong authorities had already announced it had [disqualified 12 pro-democracy candidates](#) from standing in the elections.

Arrests of activists and politicians

Since the passing of the National Security Law there have been mass arrests of pro-democracy activists and politicians.

On 6 January 55 of the most prominent individuals from the pro-democracy movement [were arrested](#). They were targeted for having run an unofficial "primary" election to pick opposition candidates ahead of postponed 2020 elections. They were accused of trying to "overthrow" the government.

A spokesman for the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Liz Throssell, said that

These latest arrests indicate that – as had been feared – the offence of subversion under the National Security Law is indeed being used to detain individuals for exercising legitimate rights to participate in political and public life.⁴

China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying defended the arrests saying they were needed to stop "external forces and individuals [colluding] to undermine China's stability and security".⁵

On 1 March, 47 of those arrested in January were [told to](#) report to police stations for detention ahead of court appearances, where they were charged with "subversion".

It [was reported](#) on 3 March, that in total a 100 people had now been arrested under the new law.

Hong Kong's election laws changed.

On 30 March, China's legislative body [passed significant changes](#) to Hong Kong's electoral rules which could tighten its control over the city.

The number of directly elected seats in parliament will be cut almost by half, and prospective MPs will first be vetted by a "candidate qualification review

⁴ UN News, '[Hong Kong: UN human rights office urges immediate release of arrested activists](#)', 7 January 2021.

⁵ '[National security law: Hong Kong rounds up 53 pro-democracy activists](#)', BBC News, 6 January 2021.

committee” to ensure that only "patriotic" figures can run for positions of power.

Chief Executive Carrie Lam, in response to criticisms that democracy was being eroded [said](#) there is not a "one-size-fits-all" way of doing democracy. Ms Lam said the vetting committee will not screen people out based on their political views, but rather weed out any "non-patriots". Adding that as long as the candidates can show allegiance to Hong Kong, uphold the Basic Law and pass national security checks, they will be permitted to run for election.⁶

The Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab said the changes were the “latest step by Beijing to hollow out the space for democratic debate in Hong Kong, contrary to the promises made by China itself”. Mr Raab said further that “this can only further undermine confidence and trust in China living up to its international responsibilities and legal obligations”.⁷

UK Government response to National Security Law

The UK Government [responded with](#) three main actions since the National Security Law was passed in Hong Kong.

First, it suspended the UK’s extradition treaty with Hong Kong.

Second, it extended the [embargo on certain military items](#) already imposed on mainland China (in response to the 1989 Tiananmen Square repression), to Hong Kong. It had already in June 2019 restricted the sale of crowd control equipment to Hong Kong.

Third, it announced it would open a new visa route to people from Hong Kong who have British National (Overseas) – ‘BN(O)’ – status and their close family members. The [Hong Kong British National \(Overseas\) visa](#) launched on 31 January 2021. At the end of May, the Home Office announced that it [had received 34,000 applications](#) for the visas in the two months it had been in operation.

Calls for sanctions

In November 2020 the Government said [it would consider](#) imposing “[Magnitsky-style sanctions](#)” on Chinese officials in response to the announcement that 12 pro-democracy candidates were being barred from standing in legislative elections.

In April 2021, a cross-party group of over a 100 MPs and peers [wrote to the Prime Minister](#), asking him to impose sanctions on Chinese officials “responsible for the crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in Hong

⁶ ‘[Hong Kong: China limits parliament to 'patriots'](#)’, BBC News, 30 March 2021.

⁷ ‘[China passes Hong Kong election law despite US warning](#)’, Financial Times, 11 March 2021.

Kong”. The cross-party group includes shadow foreign secretary Lisa Nandy and former governor of Hong Kong Lord Patten.

Chinese Government response

In May 2020, China’s Embassy in the UK put out [a statement on Hong Kong’s national security legislation](#). It said that the legislation is “purely China’s internal affair, which no foreign country has the right to interfere in”.

The Embassy also said the law was “timely and necessary”, and that in recent years national security in Hong Kong “has faced increasing risk”. It described the 2019 protests as “increasingly rampant activities by the “Hong Kong independence” elements, and radical and separatist force”, and that there were “escalating violence and terrorist activities”.

It accused activists of being “separatists”, and undertaking actions that

[T]hreaten national unity, undermined social order intentionally, confronted the police enforcement with violence, damaged public facilities and property, and paralyzed government administration and the operation of the Legislative Council.⁸

The statement said the “One Country, Two Systems” and the “high degree of autonomy” envisaged under the system had been “implemented faithfully” since Hong Kong’s handover.

Human rights groups

Human Rights Watch (HRW) a month after the new National Security Law was imposed, said that it had rapidly been used to “prosecute peaceful speech, curtail academic freedom, and generate a chilling effect on fundamental freedoms in the city”. Maya Wang, senior China researcher at HRW said “Hong Kong people now face the prospect of lengthy prison terms for possessing banners or chanting slogans that the authorities dislike”.⁹

After the charging of 47 pro-democracy activists in March 2021, Ms Wang said that the Hong Kong Authorities had used the National Security Law to “wrongfully” charge people who “sought peaceful change through the democratic process”. She added that “the Chinese government is showing Hong Kong and the world that it stands in direct opposition to human rights and democracy”.¹⁰

In April 2021, responding to the [sentencing of 10 Hong Kong pro-democracy activists](#) to between eight and 18 months in prison for taking part in two

⁸ China’s Embassy to the UK, ‘[Chinese Embassy Spokesperson’s Remarks regarding the Hong Kong-related Statement by Foreign Ministers of the UK, the US, Australia and Canada](#)’, 29 May 2020.

⁹ Human Rights Watch, ‘[China: New Hong Kong Law a Roadmap for Repression](#)’, 29 July 2020.

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, ‘[Hong Kong: 47 Charged Under Abusive Security Law](#)’, 2 March 2021.

“unauthorized” protests in August 2019, Amnesty International’s Asia-Pacific Regional Director Yamini Mishra said:

The wrongful prosecution, conviction and sentencing of these 10 activists underlines the Hong Kong government’s intention to eliminate all political opposition in the city.

Having arrested the majority of Hong Kong’s most prominent dissidents using the repressive national security law, the authorities are now mopping up remaining peaceful critics under the pretext of bogus charges related to the 2019 protests.

These convictions are a violation of international law, which states that participating in and organizing peaceful assemblies does not require prior permission by the state. Nor does failure to notify the authorities about an assembly make it unlawful to take part in it. The prosecution’s case against these activists is simply not tenable.¹¹

¹¹ Amnesty International, ‘[Hong Kong: Jailing of opposition figures over protests is violation of international law](#)’, 16 April 2021.

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Press and media articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

[Hong Kong vigil leader arrested as 7,000 police enforce ban on Tiananmen anniversary protests](#)

The Guardian
Helen Davidson and Vincent Ni
4 June 2021

[China's One-Way Diplomacy](#)

Project Syndicate
Chris Patten
1 June 2021

[Hong Kong: Jimmy Lai jailed again for pro-democracy protests](#)

BBC News Online
29 May 2021

[Australia and New Zealand unite over China human rights issues](#)

Reuters
31 May 2021

[RTHK: How authorities cracked down on Hong Kong's only public broadcaster](#)

BBC News Online
Grace Tsoi
27 May 2021

[China tells Germany to focus on trade, not human rights](#)

Politico
Hans Von Der Burchard
28 April 2021

[EU slams China's 'authoritarian shift' and broken economic promises](#)

Politico
Stuart Lau
25 April 2021

[**Hong Kong pro-democracy figures given jail terms of up to 18 months**](#)

The Guardian

Helen Davidson

16 April 2021

[**Hong Kong human rights 'greatly stifled' under security law, says Amnesty**](#)

Hong Kong Free Press

Rhoda Kwan

7 April 2021

[**The legal profession's troubling relationship with China**](#)

The Spectator

Matthew Scott

20 January 2021

[**Britain warns on future of UK judges in Hong Kong**](#)

Financial Times

George Parker, Jane Croft and Primrose Riordan

24 November 2020

[**What's False and What's True on China-related Human Rights Matters**](#)

Xinhua

3 July 2020

[**Hong Kong security law: What is it and is it worrying?**](#)

BBC News Online

30 June 2020

[**Boris Johnson on the Hong Kong crisis: We will meet our obligations, not walk away**](#)

The Times

Boris Johnson

3 June 2020

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Press releases

Sentencing of pro-democracy figures in Hong Kong: FCDO statement

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
16 April 2021

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office comments on the sentencing of Jimmy Lai and other pro-democracy figures in Hong Kong.

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson said:

The Hong Kong authorities' decision to target leading pro-democracy figures for prosecution is unacceptable and must stop.

The right to peaceful protest is fundamental to Hong Kong's way of life - protected in both the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law - and it should be upheld.

Radical changes to Hong Kong's electoral system: Foreign Secretary's statement

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
13 March 2021

The UK now considers Beijing to be in a state of ongoing non-compliance with the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

The Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

Beijing's decision to impose radical changes to restrict participation in Hong Kong's electoral system constitutes a further clear breach of the legally binding Sino-British Joint Declaration.

This is part of a pattern designed to harass and stifle all voices critical of China's policies and is the third breach of the Joint Declaration in less than nine months.

The Chinese authorities' continued action means I must now report that the UK considers Beijing to be in a state of ongoing non-compliance with the Joint Declaration - a demonstration of the growing gulf between Beijing's promises and its actions.

The UK will continue to stand up for the people of Hong Kong. China must act in accordance with its legal obligations and respect fundamental rights and freedoms in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong: G7 statement on Hong Kong electoral changes

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

12 March 2021

G7 Foreign Ministers have issued the following statement on China's decision to erode democratic elements of the electoral system in Hong Kong.

We, the G7 Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America and the High Representative of the European Union, are united in expressing our grave concerns at the Chinese authorities' decision fundamentally to erode democratic elements of the electoral system in Hong Kong. Such a decision strongly indicates that the authorities in mainland China are determined to eliminate dissenting voices and opinions in Hong Kong.

The package of changes approved by the National People's Congress, combined with mass arrests of pro-democracy activists and politicians, undermines Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy under the "One Country, Two Systems" principle. The package will also stifle political pluralism, contrary to the aim of moving towards universal suffrage as set out in the Basic Law. Furthermore, the changes will reduce freedom of speech which is a right guaranteed in the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

The people of Hong Kong should be trusted to cast their votes in the best interests of Hong Kong. Discussion of differing views, not silencing of them, is the way to secure the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong.

We call on China to act in accordance with the Sino-British Joint Declaration and its other legal obligations and respect fundamental rights and freedoms in Hong Kong, as provided for in the Basic Law. We also call on China and the Hong Kong authorities to restore confidence in Hong Kong's political institutions and end the unwarranted oppression of those who promote democratic values and the defence of rights and freedoms.

Embassy Spokesperson's Comment on the UK Side's Wrong Remarks about Hong Kong

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United Kingdom

2 March 2021

Question: The UK Foreign Secretary, referring to the decision to charge 47 Hong Kong politicians and activists, claims that the National Security Law "stifles any political dissent" and "violates the Joint Declaration". What is the comment of the Chinese Embassy?

Embassy Spokesperson: The UK side's remarks confuse right and wrong, and interfere in China's internal affairs and judicial sovereignty. The Chinese side expresses its grave concern and strong opposition. I want to emphasize the following:

First, the handling of this case by the Hong Kong judicial authorities is in line with the law and brooks no distortion or discredit. China upholds the rule of law. Hong Kong is a society under the rule of law where no one is above the law. The 47 people in the relevant case organized, plotted and took part in last year's so-called "35+ primary election" and "mutual destruction" plot aimed at paralyzing the Government of the Hong Kong SAR and pushing the city into the abyss of chaos. The relevant authorities in Hong Kong arrested and charged these people, in accordance with law, for suspicion of violation of the National Security Law for the Hong Kong SAR and subversion of state power. These are legitimate legal and judicial actions and brook no distortion or discredit.

Second, the accusation that the National Security Law for the Hong Kong SAR is used to "stifle any political dissent" is absurd. The Law was enacted to plug the legal loophole for safeguarding national security and to provide effective safeguards for the democratic rights and extensive freedoms of the Hong Kong citizens. The implementation of this Law marked a turning point in Hong Kong from chaos to law and order and provided better legal safeguards for the rights and freedoms of the Hong Kong citizens.

Third, the allegation that the National Security Law for the Hong Kong SAR "violates the Joint Declaration" is a non-issue. The Chinese government governs the Hong Kong SAR in accordance with the Constitution of China and the Basic Law of the Hong Kong SAR, not the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The National Security Law for the Hong Kong SAR was made in accordance with the Constitution of China and its inclusion in the legal system of the Hong Kong SAR was authorized by the Basic Law. The core content of the Joint Declaration is about China resuming sovereignty over Hong Kong, so the historical mission of the Joint Declaration was completed on 1 July 1997. The UK has no right to take the Joint Declaration as an excuse to interfere in Hong Kong affairs, which are China's internal affairs.

Fourth, Hong Kong affairs are purely China's internal affairs and brook no external interference in any form. The Chinese Government remains unwavering in its determination to safeguard its sovereignty, security and development interests, and to oppose any external interference. China urges the UK to respect the facts and the rule of law, discard its double standards and political manipulation, view the National Security Law for the Hong Kong SAR and the handling of the case by the relevant authorities in accordance with law from an objective and fair perspective, immediately stop meddling in Hong Kong affairs, stop interfering in China's internal affairs and judicial sovereignty, and stop going further down the wrong path.

Hong Kong politicians and activists on charges for conspiracy to commit subversion: Foreign Secretary's statement

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

1 March 2021

Dominic Raab gave a statement after 47 Hong Kong politicians and activists were charged for conspiracy to commit subversion under the National Security Law.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The decision to charge 47 Hong Kong politicians and activists for conspiracy to commit subversion under the National Security Law is another deeply disturbing step. It demonstrates in the starkest way the use of the law to stifle any political dissent, rather than restore security which was the claimed intention of the legislation. The National Security Law violates the Joint Declaration, and its use in this way contradicts the promises made by the Chinese government and can only further undermine confidence that it will keep its word on such sensitive issues.

Foreign Ministers' joint statement on arrests in Hong Kong

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

9 January 2021

Statement by the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom, and the United States Secretary of State on arrests of 55 politicians and activists in Hong Kong.

We, the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom, and the United States Secretary of State, underscore our serious concern at the mass arrests of 55 politicians and activists in Hong Kong for subversion under the National Security Law.

The National Security Law is a clear breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and undermines the 'One Country, Two Systems' framework. It has curtailed the rights and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong. It is clear that the National Security Law is being used to eliminate dissent and opposing political views.

We call on the Hong Kong and Chinese central authorities to respect the legally guaranteed rights and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong without fear of arrest and detention. It is crucial that the postponed Legislative Council elections in September proceed in a fair way that includes candidates representing a range of political opinions.

Hong Kong pro-democracy arrests: Foreign Secretary statement

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

6 January 2021

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab comments on the arrest of over 50 pro-democracy politicians and activists under the National Security Law in Hong Kong.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The mass arrest of politicians and activists in Hong Kong is a grievous attack on Hong Kong's rights and freedoms as protected under the Joint Declaration.

These arrests demonstrate that the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities deliberately misled the world about the true purpose of the National Security Law, which is being used to crush dissent and opposing political views.

The UK will not turn our backs on the people of Hong Kong and will continue to offer British Nationals (Overseas) the right to live and work in the UK.

The Chinese Embassy in the UK Strongly Condemns the Hong Kong-related Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers and Secretary of State of the "Five Eyes" Alliance

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United Kingdom

20 November 2020

Question: The foreign ministers of the UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand and the US Secretary of State have issued a joint statement urging "the Chinese central authorities to reconsider their actions against Hong Kong's elective legislature and immediately reinstate the Legislative Council members." What is the comment of the Chinese Embassy in the UK?

Embassy Spokesperson: The Chinese side firmly opposes and strongly condemns this joint statement on Hong Kong, which made unwarranted accusations against the decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) on the qualification of the members of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), recklessly discredited the policy of the Chinese Government on Hong Kong, and openly meddled in Hong Kong affairs and interfered in China's internal affairs.

The question of the qualification of the Legislative Council members of the Hong Kong SAR concerns the understanding and implementation of the relevant decision of the NPC Standing Committee, Article 104 of the Basic Law and its interpretation, and the National Security Law for the Hong Kong SAR,

which are outside the terms of reference of the Hong Kong SAR Government. It is reasonable, legitimate and in line with the Constitution of China that the NPC Standing Committee, as the highest organ of state power in China, should rule on this constitutional issue from the level of the Central Government. This decision brooks no slandering or discrediting.

It is a basic political ethics in any country that holders of public office, legislators in particular, shall uphold constitutional laws and pledge allegiance to the country. It is a universal practice to require an oath of allegiance, set out the qualifications for legislators and ensure their national identity and political loyalty in the form of legislation. Here in the UK, the law clearly stipulates that members of the House of Lords and House of Commons shall take an oath to swear allegiance to the Crown before taking their seats. Nowhere in the world will local legislators ever be allowed to collude with foreign forces in attempts of subversion and secession. China is no exception.

The decision of the NPC Standing Committee is required inherently by the need to uphold and improve the institutional system of "One Country, Two Systems" and implement the relevant laws and regulations, including the Basic Law and the National Security Law for the Hong Kong SAR. It is a legitimate action which will safeguard rule of law and constitutional order in the Hong Kong SAR. This decision will protect, rather than erode, the high degree of autonomy of the SAR under the premise of "One Country" and with patriotic Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong. Instead of undermining the rights or freedoms of Hong Kong residents, this decision will only hold in check the anti-China elements who are aimed at destabilizing Hong Kong and who have undermined democracy under the pretext of advocating it and smothered others' freedoms by abusing the freedom of speech. It will provide better safeguards for the lawful rights and interests and wellbeing of the majority of Hong Kong residents. The truth is, no one is more earnest and determined than the Chinese Government in implementing "One Country, Two Systems" fully and accurately; no one cares more about the prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and the rights and freedoms of Hong Kong residents than the Chinese Government. Since the handover, Hong Kong has seen its rankings in freedoms, the judicial system and the rule of law surging, and Hong Kong residents are enjoying unprecedented rights and freedoms under the law. Such achievements are fully recognized by the international community.

It is completely wrong for a few countries, including the UK, to take the Sino-British Joint Declaration as an excuse time and again to accuse China of "not fulfilling its international obligations". China was the first country to put its signature on the UN Charter. It has joined almost all the inter-governmental organizations, has signed more than 500 international conventions and has been fulfilling its due international obligations. China firmly rejects the accusation of failing to fulfill its international obligations! By using Hong Kong-related issues to interfere in China's internal affairs, it is these few countries who are trampling on the basic norms governing international relations, who have breached bilateral and multilateral agreements, and who

deserve the strong condemnation of the international community. The core content of the Joint Declaration is China's resumption of the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong. The Joint Declaration has 1,137 words, eight articles and three annexes. Not a single word or article gives the UK any responsibility over Hong Kong after the handover. The UK has no sovereignty, jurisdiction or right of "supervision" over Hong Kong after the handover. No foreign country has the right to use the Joint Declaration as an excuse to interfere in Hong Kong affairs, which are China's internal affairs!

China urges these few countries, including the UK, to abandon their cold war mentality and double standards, stop colluding on anti-China agenda, and stop interfering in Hong Kong affairs, which are China's internal affairs. China remains unwavering in its determination to maintain sustained prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and to safeguard its national sovereignty, security and development interests. Any attempt to harm China's sovereignty, security or development interests is doomed to failure!

Hong Kong joint statement: November 2020

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
18 November 2020

The foreign ministers of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the UK, and the US Secretary of State issued a joint statement on the situation in Hong Kong:

We the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, and the United States Secretary of State, reiterate our serious concern regarding China's imposition of new rules to disqualify elected legislators in Hong Kong. Following the imposition of the National Security Law and postponement of September's Legislative Council elections, this decision further undermines Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and rights and freedoms.

China's action is a clear breach of its international obligations under the legally binding, UN-registered Sino-British Joint Declaration. It breaches both China's commitment that Hong Kong will enjoy a 'high degree of autonomy', and the right to freedom of speech.

The disqualification rules appear part of a concerted campaign to silence all critical voices following the postponement of September's Legislative Council elections, the imposition of charges against a number of elected legislators, and actions to undermine the freedom of Hong Kong's vibrant media.

We call on China to stop undermining the rights of the people of Hong Kong to elect their representatives in keeping with the Joint Declaration and Basic Law. For the sake of Hong Kong's stability and prosperity, it is essential that China and the Hong Kong authorities respect the channels

for the people of Hong Kong to express their legitimate concerns and opinions.

As a leading member of the international community, we expect China to live up to its international commitments and its duty to the people of Hong Kong. We urge the Chinese central authorities to re-consider their actions against Hong Kong's elected legislature and immediately reinstate the Legislative Council members.

Foreign Office statement on postponement of Hong Kong elections

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
31 July 2020

Foreign Office statement in response to the postponement of the Legislative Council elections in Hong Kong.

Foreign Office spokesperson said:

Free and fair elections are essential to the high degree of autonomy and rights and freedoms guaranteed in the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

The Chinese government will need to reassure the people of Hong Kong and the world that elections will be held as soon as possible, and that they are not using COVID as a pretext to further undermine the autonomy of Hong Kong.

Role of UK judges on the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal

The Supreme Court
The Right Hon Lord Reed of Allermuir
17 July 2020

Until the return of Hong Kong by the UK to China in 1997, Hong Kong's final appeal court was the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London, whose judges were the members of the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords. Following the Handover, the final appeal court became the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal. Article 82 of the Hong Kong Basic Law provides that 'the power of final adjudication of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be vested in the Court of Final Appeal of the Region, which may as required invite judges from other common law jurisdictions to sit on the Court of Final Appeal'.

At the time of the Handover, the then Lord Chancellor (the Rt Hon Lord Irvine of Lairg) and the Chief Justice of Hong Kong (the Hon Andrew Li) agreed that the House of Lords would provide two serving Law Lords to sit on the newly created Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal, as part of the UK's continuing

commitment to safeguarding the rule of law in Hong Kong. Details of this agreement were announced by Lord Irvine in Hong Kong on 8 September 1997.

Ever since, two serving judges of the House of Lords and, since its establishment in 2009, the UK Supreme Court, have been provided in accordance with that agreement. They have made an important contribution to the work of the Court of Final Appeal, not only in civil and commercial cases, but also in cases concerned with rights of protest and free speech. Serving judges do not receive any additional remuneration for their work in Hong Kong, but a fee is paid to the Supreme Court. The Court of Final Appeal also includes retired judges from the UK and from other common law jurisdictions, including Australia and Canada.

Currently, I am the only serving judge provided under the agreement, as the other serving judge, Lady Hale, retired from the Supreme Court earlier this year and has not yet been replaced on the Hong Kong court. No serving UK judge has been scheduled to sit in Hong Kong this year.

The new security law contains a number of provisions which give rise to concerns. Its effect will depend upon how it is applied in practice. That remains to be seen. Undoubtedly, the judges of the Court of Final Appeal will do their utmost to uphold the guarantee in Article 85 of the Hong Kong Basic Law that 'the Courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall exercise judicial power independently, free from any interference.' As the Chief Justice of Hong Kong, the Hon Geoffrey Ma, recently said: 'The independence of the Judiciary and the rule of law are cornerstones of the Hong Kong community, and they are guaranteed under the Basic Law. It remains the mission and the constitutional duty of the Hong Kong Judiciary to maintain and protect them.'

The Supreme Court supports the judges of Hong Kong in their commitment to safeguard judicial independence and the rule of law. It will continue to assess the position in Hong Kong as it develops, in discussion with the UK Government. Whether judges of the Supreme Court can continue to serve as judges in Hong Kong will depend on whether such service remains compatible with judicial independence and the rule of law.

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PQs

Hong Kong: Sanctions

30 March 2021 | HL14309

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the decision of the government of the United States of America to impose sanctions on (1) 14 vice chairs of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, and (2) officials in (a) the National Security Division of the Hong Kong Police Force, (b) the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, and (c) the Office for Safeguarding National Security; and what plans they have to impose sanctions on overseas financial institutions that knowingly conduct significant transactions with these individuals.

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is deeply concerned about the situation in Hong Kong and the erosion of rights and freedoms and the high degree of autonomy enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The UK has already taken a number of actions in response to developments in Hong Kong. These include introducing a new bespoke immigration path for British Nationals (Overseas) (BNOs), suspending our extradition treaty with Hong Kong indefinitely, and extending our arms embargo on mainland China to Hong Kong.

We will continue to consider designations under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations. It is not appropriate to speculate who may be designated under the sanctions regime in the future. We will continue to stand up for the people of Hong Kong as befits our historic commitment to them, to call out the violation of their rights and freedoms.

We will also continue to engage and coordinate our actions with our international partners to hold China to their international obligations freely assumed under international law.

Hong Kong: Press Freedom

25 March 2021 | 173206

Asked by: Imran Ahmad Khan

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps his Department is taking to help encourage freedom of the press in Hong Kong.

Answering Member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is deeply concerned about the situation in Hong Kong and the erosion of rights and freedoms and the high degree of autonomy enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The UK has already taken a number of actions in response to developments in Hong Kong. These include introducing a new bespoke immigration path for British Nationals (Overseas) (BNOs), suspending our extradition treaty with Hong Kong indefinitely, and extending our arms embargo on mainland China to Hong Kong.

Freedom of the press is one of the rights set down in paragraph 3(5) of the Joint Declaration. It is vital that journalists are able to investigate and report without undue interference. We expect the Hong Kong authorities to abide by their international obligations and to investigate instances of attacks on the media. It is imperative that this freedom is fully respected. We will continue to stand up for the people of Hong Kong as befits our historic commitment to them, to call out the violation of their rights and freedoms.

Hong Kong: Administration of Justice

22 March 2021 | 169955

Asked by: Afzal Khan

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Chinese Government on its proposed reforms of the judicial system in Hong Kong; and if he will make a statement.

Answering Member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is deeply concerned about the situation in Hong Kong and the erosion of rights enshrined under the Sino-British Joint Declaration. As the Foreign Secretary said on 11 March, this is the latest step by Beijing to hollow out the space for democratic debate in Hong Kong, contrary to the promises made by China itself. This can only further undermine confidence and trust in China living up to its international responsibilities and legal obligations, as a leading member of the international community.

On 13 March the Foreign Secretary issued a statement calling a third breach of the Joint Declaration following the decision by the National People's Congress in Beijing to bring in changes to the Hong Kong electoral system. This is the third breach in 9 months and the UK now considers Beijing to be in a state of ongoing non-compliance with the Joint Declaration - a demonstration of the growing gulf between Beijing's promises and its actions. On 12 March the Foreign Secretary also released a joint statement with his G7 counterparts expressing their grave concerns at the continued erosion of rights in Hong Kong.

The UK has raised our concerns with China, including with the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Hong Kong SAR Government and the Chinese Embassy in London, as have many of our international partners. The Chinese and Hong Kong authorities can be in no doubt about the seriousness of our concerns.

Hong Kong: Electoral Systems

16 March 2021 | 164378

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with Chinese counterpart on proposed changes to the electoral system in Hong Kong.

Answering Member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

As the Foreign Secretary said in his statement on 13 March, the decision to impose these changes on Hong Kong is a further clear breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, and the third breach in nine months. The UK considers Beijing to be in a state of ongoing non-compliance with the Joint Declaration - a demonstration of the growing gulf between Beijing's promises and its actions.

On 12 March the Foreign Secretary issued a joint statement with his G7 counterparts expressing our grave concerns at the Chinese authorities' decision fundamentally to erode democratic elements of the electoral system in Hong Kong.

The UK has also raised our concerns with the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Hong Kong Special Autonomous Region (SAR) Government and the Chinese Embassy in London. The Chinese and Hong Kong authorities can be in no doubt about the seriousness of our concerns.

Hong Kong: Human Rights

9 March 2021 | 161692

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of taking (a) sanctions and (b) other measures against Chinese and Hong Kong officials who are responsible for committing human rights abuses and curtailing democracy in Hong Kong.

Answering Member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK Government remains deeply concerned about the situation in Hong Kong and has declared two breaches of the Joint Declaration in the last nine months.

The UK has taken a number of measures already in response to developments in Hong Kong. These include introducing a new immigration path for BN(O)s, suspending our extradition treaty with Hong Kong, and extending our arms embargo on mainland China to Hong Kong. We will not speculate on who may be designated under the UK sanctions regime in the future.

We will continue to engage and coordinate our actions with our international partners as befits our historic commitment to the people of Hong Kong, to call out the violation of their rights and freedoms, and to hold China to their international obligations freely assumed under international law.

Hong Kong: Politics and Government

9 March 2021 | 160803

Asked by: Ruth Jones

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the political situation in Hong Kong.

Answering Member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK Government remains deeply concerned about the situation in Hong Kong and has declared two breaches of the Joint Declaration in the last nine months. In response to the imposition of the National Security Law on 1 July 2020, the Government put in place a new bespoke immigration path for British Nationals Overseas passport holders (BN(O)s), suspended our extradition treaty with Hong Kong, and extended our arms embargo on mainland China to Hong Kong. On 13 November, the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress issued a decision that removed elected pro-democracy legislators arbitrarily from their positions in Hong Kong's Legislative Council. The FCDO Permanent Under-Secretary summoned the Chinese Ambassador to explain why this was a further breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and to call on China to uphold its international obligations.

The recent decision by the authorities in Hong Kong to charge 47 Hong Kong politicians and activists for conspiracy to commit subversion under the National Security Law is another deeply disturbing step. It demonstrates in the starkest way the use of the law to stifle any political dissent, rather than restore security which was the claimed intention of the legislation. The

National Security Law violates the Joint Declaration, and its use in this way contradicts the promises made by the Chinese government and can only further undermine confidence that it will keep its word on such sensitive issues. We continue to bring together our international partners to stand up for the people of Hong Kong, to call out the violation of their freedoms, and to hold China to its international obligations.

Hong Kong: Human Rights

8 February 2021 | HL12469

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the European Parliament's (1) adoption of an urgent resolution on 'the crackdown on the democratic opposition in Hong Kong', and (2) call for sanctions to be imposed on senior officials from Hong Kong and China under the EU human rights global sanction regime.

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The European Parliament passed a resolution on 21 January on the mass arrests earlier that month. On 6 January, the Foreign Secretary issued a statement on those arrests, condemning the mass arrest of politicians and activists in Hong Kong as a grievous attack on Hong Kong's rights and freedoms as protected under the Joint Declaration.

We will continue to engage and coordinate our actions with our international partners as befits our historic commitment to the people of Hong Kong, to call out the violation of their rights and freedoms, and to hold China to their international obligations freely assumed under international law.

The UK is no longer part of the EU and has developed an independent sanctions regime. We will not speculate on who may be designated under the UK sanctions regime in the future.

The UK has taken a number of measures already in response to developments in Hong Kong. These include introducing a new immigration path for British Nationals (Overseas) passport holders - BN(O)s, suspending our extradition treaty with Hong Kong, and extending our arms embargo on mainland China to Hong Kong.

Hong Kong: Human Rights

8 February 2021 | HL12467

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the remarks made by Anthony Blinken, the nominee for Secretary of State of the United States of America, on 19 January that the USA should “take in some of those fleeing Hong Kong, fleeing the repression, for standing up for their democratic rights”; and what plans they have to coordinate an international strategy in support of the people of Hong Kong.

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is in close touch with all our international partners, including the US, on developments in Hong Kong. We will continue to engage and coordinate our actions with our international partners, as befits our historic commitment to the people of Hong Kong, to call out the violation of their rights and freedoms, and to hold China to its international obligations.

The UK has taken a number of measures in response to the introduction of the National Security Law. These include a new immigration path for British Nationals (Overseas) passport holders BN(O)s, suspending our extradition treaty with Hong Kong, and extending our arms embargo on mainland China to Hong Kong.

Hong Kong: Legal Profession

4 February 2021 | HL12400

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the article by Matthew Scott in the Spectator The legal profession's troubling relationship with China, published on 20 January; and what plans they have to discuss the participation of British lawyers serving as prosecutors in Hong Kong with (1) the Bar Council, (2) the Law Society, and (3) other professional and regulatory bodies.

Answering Member: Lord Wolfson of Tredegar | Ministry of Justice

In order to uphold the constitutional principle of the rule of law, and under the framework established by the Legal Services Act 2007, the legal services sector in England and Wales is independent of Government. Barristers are regulated by the Bar Standards Board. The Government has not made any assessment of the article and has no plans to discuss this issue with the legal services professional bodies or regulators.

Hong Kong: Human Rights

2 February 2021 | 142931

Asked by: Jim Shannon

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Chinese counterpart on the effect of national security legislation on human rights in Hong Kong.

Answering Member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

As the Foreign Secretary said on 1 July 2020, the National Security Law (NSL) constitutes a clear and serious breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. It violates the high degree of autonomy of executive and legislative powers and independent judicial authority, provided for in the Joint Declaration. The legislation also contains a slew of measures that directly threaten the freedoms and rights protected by the Joint Declaration.

The Foreign Secretary has raised this issue with his counterpart, Chinese State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs Wang Yi. Additionally, the Permanent Under Secretary of the FCO summoned the Chinese Ambassador on 1 July 2020 to register our deep concerns about the NSL. We will continue to raise our concerns with the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities.

Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal: Judges

1 February 2021 | HL12205

Asked by: Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether the practice of British judges sitting on Hong Kong's Court of Final Appeal confers legitimacy on processes otherwise undermined by the actions of the government of China.

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

British judges have played an important role in supporting the independence of Hong Kong's judiciary for many years. We want and hope that this can continue. The UK judiciary is independent of the Government and it is for them to make an assessment on this. It is therefore right that the Supreme Court continues to assess the situation in Hong Kong, in discussion with the Government.

Hong Kong: Politics and Government

14 January 2021 | HL12162

Asked by: The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have taken any urgent action in the UN Human Rights Council in response to reports of the government of China's treatment of pro-democracy leaders in Hong Kong; and if so, whether any such action includes (1) resolutions, or (2) emergency sessions.

Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK continues to work with international partners, including at the United Nations, to raise our deep concern about the situation in Hong Kong. On 9 January, the Foreign Secretary released a statement with his Australian, Canadian and US counterparts underscoring our serious concern at the arrest of 55 politicians and activists.

At the UN, on 6 October, alongside Germany we brought together a total of 39 countries to express grave concern at the situation in Xinjiang and Hong Kong in a joint statement at the General Assembly Third Committee.

Hong Kong Human Rights

20 January 2021 | 138455

Asked by: Stephen Kinnock

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the UK's reputation (a) for defending democracy and upholding the rule of law and (b) generally of British barrister David Perry QC leading the prosecution of Jimmy Lai and eight other pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong.

Answering Member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Anyone working on cases involving Hong Kong politicians and activists will want to assure themselves that the very highest legal standards, including fairness, are being upheld. The Government has been clear that the Hong Kong authorities must end their targeting of pro-democracy voices.

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Further Parliamentary material

Written Statements

[Launch of the Hong Kong British National \(Overseas\) route](#)

1 February 2021 | HCWS751

Home Office

[Hong Kong British National \(Overseas\) Visa and Suspension of Extradition Treaty with Hong Kong](#)

22 July 2020 | HCWS421

Home Office

Debates

[Hong Kong: Pro-Democracy Campaigners](#)

19 April 2021 | House of Lords | 811 cc1640-1645

[China: Convictions of Democracy Campaigners in Hong Kong](#)

13 April 2021 | House of Lords | 811 cc1157-1161

[Hong Kong Courts: British Judges](#)

22 March 2021 | House of Lords | 811 cc607-610

[Hong Kong: Electoral Reforms](#)

11 March 2021 | House of Lords | 810 cc1813-1818

[Hong Kong: Electoral Reforms](#)

10 March 2021 | House of Commons | 690 cc881-894

[Hong Kong: Democracy Movement](#)

8 March 2021 | House of Lords | 810 cc1312-1317

[Hong Kong: National Security Law](#)

7 January 2021 | House of Lords | 809 cc285-290

[Hong Kong: Sentencing of Pro-democracy Activists](#)

8 December 2020 | House of Lords | 808 cc1125

[Hong Kong: Sentencing of Pro-democracy Activists](#)

7 December 2020 | House of Commons | 685 cc587-598

[Hong Kong: Legislative Council](#)

12 November 2020 | House of Lords | 807 cc1143-1147

[Hong Kong](#)

12 November 2020 | House of Commons | 683 cc1051-1066

[Hong Kong: Political Situation](#)

29 September 2020 | House of Lords | 806 cc105-109

[Hong Kong British National \(Overseas\) Visa](#)

29 July 2020 | House of Lords | 805 cc253-256

[China](#)

22 July 2020 | House of Lords | 804 cc2298-2310

[Hong Kong](#)

21 July 2020 | House of Lords | 804 cc2043-2047

[China](#)

20 July 2020 | House of Commons | 678 cc1831-1849

[Hong Kong National Security Legislation](#)

2 July 2020 | House of Lords | 804 cc873-886

[Hong Kong National Security Legislation](#)

1 July 2020 | House of Commons | 678 cc329-350

[China](#)

29 June 2020 | House of Lords | 804 cc469-473

[China](#)

17 June 2020 | House of Lords | 803 cc2168-2171

[Hong Kong: Human Rights](#)

4 June 2020 | House of Lords | 803 cc1502-1520

[Hong Kong](#)

2 June 2020 | House of Lords | 803 cc1290-1295

[Hong Kong National Security Legislation: UK Response](#)

2 June 2020 | House of Commons | 676 cc681-703

[Hong Kong: Covid-19](#)

19 March 2020 | House of Lords | 802 cc1558-1581

[British Overseas Passport Holders in Hong Kong](#)

29 January 2020 | House of Commons | 670 cc308-312WH

[Hong Kong](#)

15 January 2020 | House of Lords | 801 cc699-701

Early Day Motions

Arrests of democrats in Hong Kong

EDM 1319 (2019-21 session)

6 January 2021

Andrew Rosindell

That this House notes with profound concern the sweeping arrests of over 50 democrats in Hong Kong by the Hong Kong Police Force simply for having demonstrated their commitment to democracy by arranging primary elections to inform the process of candidate selection for the now cancelled elections to the Legislative Council; deplores this egregious and heavy-handed clampdown on freedom of expression and basic rights in Hong Kong; reminds the Chinese Communist Party and its puppet administration in Hong Kong that the provisions of the Sino British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong are a binding international treaty, lodged with the United Nations, and continue to apply; calls for the urgent introduction by Her Majesty's Government of targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for the denial of human rights not only in Hong Kong but also in relation to the Uighurs and Falun Gong in mainland China; deeply regrets the willingness of the European Union, against this background of repression, to confirm an investment agreement with China; and urges the European Parliament to stand firm against this decision and so reiterate its commitment to human rights and democracy.

Use of weapons during protests in Hong Kong and the UK Government's response

EDM 684 (2019-21 session)

7 July 2020

Jim Shannon

That this House is profoundly concerned that tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets and baton rounds have been used against even peaceful protestors in Hong Kong; notes that some of these items are included in the UK Strategic Export Control List; is concerned by the sale and export of such equipment from the UK to the Hong Kong authorities who are increasingly showing a willingness to encourage and condone police violence and political intervention by the Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong's affairs; notes that protestors and bystanders, as well as those providing humanitarian assistance, have been injured by the inappropriate use of such equipment; is concerned that the China-controlled regime in Hong Kong may have breached international human rights laws in the use of such equipment; notes that China is proposing to remove the independence of the judiciary in Hong Kong through the new national security law; notes that the proposed national security law of Hong Kong would breach the Sino-British Joint Declaration; calls on the Government to reconsider permitting the export of such

equipment to Hong Kong; and calls on the Foreign Secretary to introduce a Magnitsky-style sanctions regimes to target those who sanction and cause such abuses, including the Chief Executive of Hong Kong and its senior police officers.

China's new National Security Law for Hong Kong

EDM 616 (2019-21 session)

16 June 2020

Andrew Rosindell

That this House notes with surprise and concern the decision by HSBC Bank Plc and Standard Chartered Plc to support China's proposals for a new National Security Law in Hong Kong; recognises that financial institutions, particularly those enjoying the benefits and protections of being based in the UK, have a duty to uphold and promote democratic principles and human rights around the world, wherever they may trade; warns that the proposed National Security Law is likely to be in direct breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration; and calls on the Government to set out the measures it will take to encourage HSBC and Standard Chartered to review their support for that proposed legislation from the Chinese Communist Party, which has a serial record of violating human rights and undermining democratic principles.

Hong Kong and Magnitsky-style sanctions

EDM 322 (2019-21 session)

24 March 2020

Andrew Rosindell

That this House notes with profound concern the ongoing breaches by China and its controlled regime in Hong Kong of basic principles of human rights and specifically of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong; welcomes the commitment by Her Majesty's Government to develop a regime for the introduction of Magnitsky-style sanctions to enable it to target those who sanction and cause abuses of human rights overseas; looks forward to the urgent publication of the proposed regime; and encourages the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to begin now to identify those senior members of the Hong Kong Police Force and of the governing Administration of Hong Kong who have approved and permitted its brutal response to what were initially peaceful expressions of legitimate protest so that sanctions can be promptly implemented against them.

Police conduct in Hong Kong and international human rights law

EDM 106 (2019-21 session)

27 January 2020

Mr Alistair Carmichael

That this House welcomes the inauguration of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hong Kong to promote democracy and the rule of law, and to defend human rights in Hong Kong, to share information about Hong Kong, and to nurture relations between the United Kingdom and the people of Hong Kong; notes that the inaugural meeting heard chilling testimony from a consultant surgeon who provides humanitarian aid to those injured in the protests, including police, protestors and bystanders, and who reported having treated the kind of injuries seen in wars; is profoundly concerned by reports of the arrest and public humiliation of those providing medical assistance to the injured; observes that video footage of police brutality demonstrates that the Hong Kong police are failing to adhere to the provisions of the United Nations Guidance on Less Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement; further observes that the arrest of those providing humanitarian assistance is contrary to international law and the global consensus on fundamental human rights of access to medical treatment; is alarmed that failure of the international community to condemn these breaches by the Hong Kong police would set a dangerous precedent, encouraging others to follow suit, placing in grave jeopardy the lives and welfare of humanitarian aid workers around the world, including providers of medical and other aid from the United Kingdom; and calls on the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to raise these concerns with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

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Further reading

Library Briefings Papers

[Hong Kong British National \(Overseas\) visa](#), Commons library Research Briefing, 6 May 2021

[Hong Kong: National Security Legislation](#), Lords Library Research Briefing, 29 May 2020

Committee publications

Human Rights (Joint Committee) Freedom of Expression Inquiry Evidence reported to the House for publication on 15 April 2021
[Written evidence from *Stand with Hong Kong* \(FOE0121\)](#) [dated 27.01.21/published 19.04.21]

[A cautious embrace: defending democracy in an age of autocracies: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2019](#), First Special Report of Session 2019-21, Foreign Affairs Committee, HC 116, 6 March 2020

[A cautious embrace: defending democracy in an age of autocracies](#), Second Report of Session 2019, Foreign Affairs Committee, HC 109, 5 November 2019 [Section 4: Hong Kong]

[China and the Rules-Based International System: Government Response to the Committee's Sixteenth Report](#), Twenty-First Special Report of Session 2017-19, Foreign Affairs Committee, HC 2362, 21 June 2019

[China and the Rules-Based International System](#), Sixteenth Report of Session 2017-19, Foreign Affairs Committee, HC 612, 4 April 2019 [Section 5: Hong Kong]

Other

[Human Rights situation in Hong Kong: Hong Kong Watch Briefing on Events: April 2021](#), Hong Kong Watch, 6 May 2021

*Previous monthly reports are available on the [Briefings page](#) of the Hong Kong Watch website.

[The six-monthly report on Hong Kong 1 January to 30 June 2020](#), Deposited in Parliament by the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, 23 November 2020

[Rapid Deterioration of Human Rights in Hong Kong after Passage of National Security Law](#), Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 4 November 2020

[The Shrinking Safe Space for Humanitarian Aid Workers in Hong Kong: Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights and Humanitarian Principles by the Hong Kong Police Force](#), APPG on Hong Kong, August 2020

[All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hong Kong](#) (Membership webpage)

[Amnesty International](#) (Hong Kong Webpage)

[Human Rights Watch](#) (Hong Kong Webpage)

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