



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

### **Written statement\* submitted by Hong Kong Federation of Women, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 August 2019]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



## **On the true situation of Hong Kong, China**

### **Written Statement by Pansy Ho, Chairperson, Hong Kong Federation of Women**

#### **Introduction**

I am speaking as Chairperson of the Hong Kong Federation of Women, a non-profit and non-political organization with Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

Established in 1993, the Federation's mission is to unite women from all walks of life, encourage them to take an active interest in Hong Kong affairs, and advocate women's rights all over the world. With a total membership exceeding 100,000, our members include business women, professionals, workers, housewives and those who are fervent in women development and advancement.

Born, raised, educated in part, and working all my life, in Hong Kong, I have tremendous vested interests in the city, and immense respect for Hong Kongers for their unparalleled work ethics, independent minds, strength and resilience.

On behalf of the Hong Kong Federation of Women, and as a Hong Konger with proud Chinese heritage, extended family ties, long-standing commitments to the society's well-being, and continued business investments, I am here to offer a fact-based perspective of many Hong Kongers on what is really happening in Hong Kong.

#### **Summary of Statement**

- Hong Kong, China is a 7.5 million-people strong region. In the 22 years since Hong Kong was rightfully returned to its motherland China in 1997 and has been operating under the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, Hong Kong has continued to enjoy a high degree of autonomy, economic prosperity and social stability. However, the foundation of such prosperity and stability has been shaken to the core by violent protests in the past two months.
- The views of a small group of radical protesters do NOT represent the views of all 7.5 million Hong Kongers. The systematic and calculated violent acts of this group have never been condoned by all Hong Kongers.
- Spreading misinformation across different platforms locally and internationally, instigating disturbances in public places, destroying public and government properties, engaging in acts with the intention to cause bodily harm to the police and private citizens, vilifying the police to create public hatred, and engaging in unlawful acts to impel police reactions are all part of a grand scheme created by the radical protesters to undermine the Hong Kong Government's authority to maintain social order.
- These radical protesters carry out violent acts in the name of human rights, but are in fact violating the basic human rights of expression, safety and livelihood of other citizens who are neither part of this group nor share its radical views and tactics.

#### **Hong Kong, China**

In 1997, Hong Kong was rightfully handed over to its motherland China and became a Special Administrative Region of China. Since then, Hong Kong has continued to enjoy a high degree of autonomy, economic prosperity and social stability.

According to the World Bank, Hong Kong's GDP was US\$341.4 billion and GDP per capita was US\$46,193.61 in 2017; unemployment rate was at 2.8 in 2018; and climbed to number 4 in 2019 on its lists of easiest places to do business, just after New Zealand, Singapore and Denmark. Until two months ago, Hong Kong had been one of the safest places in the world for visitors to visit.

In the 2019 Index of Economic Freedom, published by The Heritage Foundation, Hong Kong's economic freedom score is 90.2, sustaining its status as the world's freest economy in the 2019 Index. Hong Kong's economic resilience, high-quality legal framework, low tolerance for corruption, high degree of government transparency, efficient regulatory framework and openness to global commerce continue to be recognized by that Foundation.

Hong Kong has also continued to rank 2<sup>nd</sup> globally in the latest World Competitiveness Yearbook (WCY) 2019, published by the International Institute for Management Development. The WCY once again recognized Hong Kong as one of the most competitive economies in the world.

### **Radical protesters continue to undermine Hong Kong government's authority over law and order**

Hong Kong is governed by the Basic Law, approved by the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on 4 April 1990. The rights and freedoms of people in Hong Kong are based on the impartial rule of law and an independent judiciary.

The Extradition Bill as proposed by the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, Mrs. Carrie Lam, was intended as a mechanism to seek justice for one of its citizens, the Hong Kong woman who was murdered by her Hong Kong companion in Taiwan in 2018.

Unfortunately, radical protesters hijacked the well-intended bill and used it to spread fear among Hong Kongers and as a propaganda to undermine the Hong Kong Government's authority to protect the right of one of its citizens even in her death.

These radical protesters continue to make a blanket statement about police brutality against protesters in the past two months through the use of tear gas and rubber bullets, without naming the circumstances under which these measures were used.

Anyone who has watched news reporting by international media organizations such as BBC, CNN, Bloomberg and other global media outlets, would have seen Hong Kong policemen holding up huge white, black, orange and blue flags with different levels of warnings asking protesters to disperse and leave before the police took the next actions for crowd control and to prevent disorder.

During the past two months, time and again violent protestors set up road blocks in major city streets and cross-harbour traffic tunnels, paralyzed mobility of major thoroughfares and Hong Kong's only international airport, damaged traffic lights, tampered with train tracks, flooded underground metro train stations with water, poured gasoline fluid on the streets to start a fire, set garbage and wood on fire on the streets and around police stations, etc. And time and again, police held warning signs asking protesters to disperse and leave. Instead, violent protesters blatantly disregard police warnings, and engaged in throwing bricks, glass bottles, metal objects and gas bombs at the police, and shining laser lights on policemen's eyes. Only then the police used tear gas and rubber bullets as a means to disperse the crowd.

Tear gas and rubber bullets are tools used by police forces around the world, and are not unique to the Hong Kong police. Used according to law enforcement procedures, tear gas and rubber bullets are effective way to create a distance between the police and the protesters, and to avoid close physical confrontation and resulting injuries.

Everyone is entitled to human rights of life, liberty and security, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, nationality or social origin, political or other opinion. Human rights are never discriminatory and double standard can never be accepted.

The very nature of the police's job is to enforce the law and maintain order, regardless of the police's political or social opinion. Targeting the police with the intention to cause bodily harm, exposing the private information of the police and family members, and harassing or threatening the police families are acts of violation of the police's human rights.

Disagreement with government policies does not give anyone carte blanc to take away the human rights of another person through violent acts. No one is above the law.

The people of Hong Kong support Hong Kong Government's effort to stop the wide-spread violence and apprehend the violent protesters to maintain social order and protect the entire population.

**Damaging impact of violent protests on Hong Kong's economy and its people's livelihood**

Financial Secretary Paul Chan has issued grave warnings about the adverse impact the anti-extradition movement has had on Hong Kong's economy.

As thousands of people joined the largest citywide strike in decades to protest against the government's extradition bill crisis on August 5, Hong Kong suffered massive flight cancellations, commuter chaos, traffic jams and service disruptions. Economists had estimated on the economic cost of that day's protests to be from US\$38 million to US\$332 million.

On August 15, Bloomberg reported that two months of protests "are slamming Hong Kong's economy," resulting in the following dire conditions:

- \$622 billion of stock market losses since early July.
- 30-50% drop in foreign visitors to stores in June.
- 200 flights cancelled by Cathay Pacific during airport shutdown on August 12.
- 10% drop in housing prices Bank of America expects to see from the June peak.
- 17% decrease in the main index of property stocks since early July.
- 74%. Hong Kong IPOs since the start of June have raised \$5.5 billion, down 74% from \$19.63 billion a year earlier.

**Conclusion**

Hong Kong people respect their motherland China's sovereignty over Hong Kong. People in Hong Kong are ethnically, culturally and socially Chinese in our way of lives, thinking and social interaction.

We, the Hong Kong Federation of Women, are concerned citizens who firmly believe in justice, and are putting together our best effort to restore harmony in our society. This is our statement about the true situation in Hong Kong.

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