

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 30, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On the second anniversary of the promulgation of the national security law in Hong Kong, we write to follow up on the letter we sent last year and to share our continued concern over the crackdown on freedoms and political dissent by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). We urge your Administration to continue working with likeminded allies and partners in support of the Hong Kong people's struggle for their promised freedoms and rights, and to advocate for the release of democracy and rights activists, journalists, and other prisoners of conscience.

In the year since we last wrote you on this important issue, the PRC and HKSAR governments have stepped up their efforts to crush the city's democratic institutions and those seeking to exercise their rights. Many pro-democracy advocates and lawmakers arrested last year await trial behind bars, with courts commonly denying bail. The PRC and HKSAR governments have further expanded their repression through the targeting of civil society organizations and respected figures like Cardinal Joseph Zen and barrister Margaret Ng, accusing them of "collusion with foreign forces" under Hong Kong's national security law.

To further squeeze Hong Kong, Beijing has imposed restrictions on Hong Kong's electoral system to root out candidates that the Chinese Communist Party deems disloyal—only "patriots" are allowed to govern. As a result of these changes, which were imposed in March 2021, the most recent Legislative Council election held on December 19, 2021, had the lowest turnout ever, and all but one of the ninety seats went to pro-Beijing candidates.

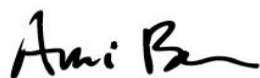
We urge your Administration to continue raising these concerns at all levels with Chinese interlocutors and advocate for the release of Hong Kong's pro-democracy figures and other political prisoners. In particular, we urge you to highlight cases like that of former lawmaker Jeremy Tam, whose application for bail was denied in part because the U.S. consulate invited him by email to "catch up."

Moreover, given the continued deterioration of the situation in Hong Kong, we respectfully request answers to the following questions:

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1. What is the Administration doing to coordinate with allies and partners to ensure that the private sector, particularly U.S. companies with economic interests in Hong Kong, is aware of risks the national security legislation poses to the security of U.S. citizens and to the medium and long-term interests of U.S. businesses in Hong Kong?
2. Given the crackdown in the media and education sector, what is the Executive Branch doing to support civil society, journalists, and academics to help preserve some level of free speech in Hong Kong? What is the Executive Branch doing to expand support for those in the Hong Kong media establishment who are fleeing Hong Kong, but wish to continue to elevate what is going on inside their country?
3. How is the Administration working with likeminded partners to advocate for pro-democracy activists?
4. Given three consecutive determinations by the Executive Branch that Hong Kong is no longer sufficiently autonomous from the PRC, how does the Administration think this determination affects Hong Kong's participation separate from that of the PRC in organizations such as the World Trade Organization? The Financial Action Task Force? The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum?

We would appreciate your written response to the questions above by August 1, 2022. We look forward to working with you in support of the people of Hong Kong in their struggle for their rights and freedoms. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.



Ami Bera, M.D.
Chairman
Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific,
Central Asia, and Nonproliferation



Steve Chabot
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific,
Central Asia, and Nonproliferation