



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on August 20, 2019

China Strongly Criticizes Taiwan's Offer of Asylum for Hong Kong Protesters

The 11 weeks of protests in Hong Kong, which began in early June as a reaction to an extradition bill under which individuals could be sent to China for trial, have escalated as protesters object not only to the bill, but also to the authorities' harsh policing of the protests.

Hong Kong is a former British colony that Britain returned to Beijing in 1997 as part of an arrangement described as "one country, two systems," under which Hong Kong residents were promised certain democratic rights not afforded to people in mainland China. But many Hong Kongers have accused the Communist Party-ruled central government of chipping away at their freedoms in recent years.



The protesters have demanded the resignation of Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam, democratic elections, and an independent investigation into the police use of force against the protesters.

In response to the protests, the government of the Republic of China on Taiwan (which Communist China considers to be part of its own territory) in July offered political asylum to members of Hong Kong's protest movement.

The Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* reported on July 19 that during a visit to St. Lucia the previous day, Republic of China President Tsai Ing-wen told reporters, "I believe relevant departments are keeping abreast of the situation [in Hong Kong]. These friends from Hong Kong will be treated in an appropriate way on humanitarian grounds."

Tsai was speaking after media reports suggested that at least a dozen and as many as 60 protesters had arrived in Taiwan or were planning to seek shelter there, following protests and violent clashes in Hong Kong, reported the *Post*.

Newsweek reported that Taiwan's Act Governing Relations With Hong Kong And Macau states, "Necessary assistance shall be provided to Hong Kong or Macau residents whose safety and liberty are immediately threatened for political reasons."

On August 19, Ma Xiaoguang, spokesman for the Chinese Cabinets Taiwan Affairs Office, criticized Taiwan's offer of political asylum to Hong Kong protesters and was quoted by the Chinese news agency Xinhua as saying, "By turning a blind eye to the facts and confusing right and wrong, the DPP [Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party] authority has not only helped cover up the criminalities of a small number of violent radicals in Hong Kong, encourage their acts of messing up Hong Kong, but also announced protection for them. Such acts will make Taiwan a 'haven sheltering criminals.'"



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An August 20 article in the Singapore-based *Straits Times* noted that the number of people moving from Hong Kong to Taiwan has risen rapidly in recent months, and during the first seven months of 2019 is up 28 percent compared to a year earlier. The *Times* attributes this increase to the “anti-government protests that have swept the former British colony amid fear that its autonomy from Beijing is being eroded.”

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Warren Mass has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at wmass@thenewamerican.com.

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