



Written by [James Murphy](#) on May 29, 2020

U.S., U.K., Canada, and Australia Issue Joint Statement Condemning Chinese Move on Hong Kong

The governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia have issued a [joint statement](#) condemning the Communist Chinese government's plan to impose new security measures on Hong Kong.



The statement concludes that Hong Kong's longstanding position as a world leader in trade was at stake should the authoritarian new measures take place.

From the statement:

Hong Kong has flourished as a bastion of freedom. The international community has a significant and long-standing stake in Hong Kong's prosperity and stability. Direct imposition of national security legislation on Hong Kong by the Beijing authorities, rather than through Hong Kong's own institutions as provided for under Article 23 of the Basic Law, would curtail the Hong Kong people's liberties, and in doing so, dramatically erode Hong Kong's autonomy and the system that made it so prosperous.

The statement was released just a day after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo [tweeted](#) that Hong Kong is no longer self-governing. "Today, I reported to Congress that Hong Kong is no longer autonomous from China, given the facts on the ground. The United States stands with the people of Hong Kong," Pompeo wrote.

The statement declares that China's proposed new security crackdown effectively nullifies the [Sino-British Joint Declaration](#) signed in 1984, in which the U.K. ceded Hong Kong back to China with the promise that Hong Kong's capitalist system and way-of-life would remain unchanged for a period of 50 years from July 1, 1997.

From the statement:

China's decision to impose a new national security law on Hong Kong lies in direct conflict with its international obligations under the principles of the legally-binding, UN-registered Sino-British Joint Declaration. The proposed law would undermine the One Country, Two Systems framework. It also raises the prospect of prosecution in Hong Kong for political crimes, and undermines existing commitments to protect the rights of Hong Kong people — including those set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

On Thursday, China's legislature almost unanimously (there was one abstention) approved plans to go forward with drafting new, strict security measures that might include strictures against undefined cases of "sedition," "subversion," "succession," and "terrorism." The nebulous nature of these crimes leads many to fear that the new security measures will greatly curtail individual liberties in the city.

Earlier this week, Hong Kong's chief executive, Carrie Lam, appeared to suggest that the security



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crackdown would have devastating effects on the city's freedoms. "We are a free society, so for the time being, people have the freedom to say whatever they want to say," Lam said before adding that "rights and freedoms are not absolute."

The new Chinese law is still being drafted, but officials are looking to implement the new restrictions as early as September of this year.

Although it did not sign the joint statement condemning China's actions, the European Union weighed in as well. On Thursday, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas tweeted: "We all agree in the E.U.: The high degree of autonomy in Hong Kong must not be undermined, a translated version of Maas' tweet read. "The citizens there enjoy the freedoms and rights that are granted to them by the Basic Law and the principle 'one country, two systems.' We expect that to be respected."

"The Basic Law" is Hong Kong's constitution. It provides guarantees for freedom of speech and assembly and also allows for Hong Kong to have its own legislature, although that body is ultimately under the auspices of Beijing.

The new security measures would likely put an end to the large-scale demonstrations that were seen in the city prior to the coronavirus pandemic. Although on Tuesday protesters attempted to surround government buildings in the city and stop daytime traffic, a large police presence prevented any large-scale disruptions in the city.

"I think this may be the last chance we have to fight back," said 20-year-old college student Sheldon Liu. "Of course I hope these laws will not pass, but I feel it is impossible to stop."

President Trump is expected to address the situation today in an afternoon news conference. Yesterday, the president said, "We are not happy with China. We are not happy with what happened."

Photo: Yongyuan Dai / E+ / Getty Images Plus

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