



## **CALD Statement No. 5, S. 2020**

### **“China-Imposed National Security Legislation will be the End of Hong Kong as We Know It”**

The Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) is extremely alarmed by China’s announcement to unilaterally and arbitrarily enact national security legislation on Hong Kong. Should this proposal push through, it will be the end of Hong Kong as we know it.

Hong Kong is known as a world financial and business center, an international air hub, and a cosmopolitan city. An estimated 7.5 million people call the city their home, around 5% of which are foreigners. The Hong Kong people and expatriates enjoy freedom, human rights, personal safety and the rule of law at levels unknown to mainland China. All of these will be threatened by the proposed national security legislation.

The draft national security law will cover offences of secession, subversion, terrorist activities and interference in Hong Kong affairs by foreign governments and external forces. Moreover, the proposed bill will also allow Chinese security forces to set up outposts in the city.

Martin Lee, founding chairperson of the Democratic Party of Hong Kong, said it best: “Beijing wants to rule Hong Kong with an iron fist...(It) must trust the Hong Kong people, give the people democracy as promised, and not interfere in Hong Kong’s internal affairs to allow Hong Kong to remain prosperous and stable.”

It must be remembered that this is not the first time for China to propose a national security law for Hong Kong. In 2003, a similar legislation was advanced, but it was shelved after the Hong Kong people launched mass protests criticizing the proposal. Last year, the attempt to pass an extradition bill also resulted in massive and prolonged demonstrations that led to the bill’s shelving. CALD is deeply concerned that this renewed attempt to undermine Hong Kong’s autonomy would lead to the worsening of the already tense political situation.

CALD strongly believes that the proposed national security legislation will further exacerbate the political tensions in Hong Kong because of the following reasons:

- it breaches the Sino-British Joint Declaration which gives Hong Kong’s Legislative Council the sole power to legislate laws in the city;
- it contravenes the Basic Law, which states that Chinese laws can only be applied in Hong Kong on matters relating to defence and foreign affairs, and to those “outside the limits of Hong Kong’s autonomy”; and
- it undermines China’s one country, two systems commitment on Hong Kong, which guarantees the city’s freedoms for another 50 years (1997-2047) after the British handover.

In this regard, CALD is united with the people of Hong Kong in condemning this brazen attempt to undermine Hong Kong’s autonomy and freedoms. We strongly urge China to learn from its mistakes in the past, and refrain from pushing policies which clearly violate the Sino-British Joint

Declaration, Hong Kong's Basic Law, and its one country, two systems commitment on Hong Kong. We call on the Carrie Lam administration to stand with and defend the people of Hong Kong against attempts to subvert their way of life. We appeal to the government of United Kingdom not to renege on its responsibility to 2.9 million holders of British National Overseas (BNO) passport in Hong Kong, who currently feel insecure and threatened by Chinese intrusions. Finally, we implore the international community to remain vigilant, to speak in support of Hong Kong, and to take proactive steps to combat authoritarianism and all forms of attack to freedom.

Silence and complacency may not only result in the end of Hong Kong. These may lead to the end of the free world as we know it.

For the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bi-khim Hsiao". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Bi-khim Hsiao**  
Chairperson

26 May 2020