

Joint Statement to Oppose Article 23

We, the undersigned organizations, firmly oppose the passage of the Safeguarding National Security Bill, commonly referred to as “Article 23,” set to be enforced in Hong Kong this Saturday, March 23. We condemn the Hong Kong S.A.R. government’s plan to dismantle Hong Kong’s autonomy under the guise of “national security,” which further exacerbates the existing crackdown on human rights.

Article 23’s vague and broad definitions of crimes adversely impact not only individuals facing political arrests and prosecutions, but also everyone else in Hong Kong. The law opens the door to further arbitrary arrests and detentions while escalating censorship, creating a global chilling effect.

Article 23 is designed to impact an unprecedentedly wide range of people. The law, for example, defines the crime of “espionage” as applicable to those who, “with intent to endanger national security,” obtain, collect, or possess information that is “directly or indirectly useful to an external force” ([clause 41](#)). It also broadly criminalizes acts with “seditious intention,” which includes an intention to bring anyone in Hong Kong “into hatred, contempt or disaffection” against the Chinese and Hong Kong governments, institutions or constitutional order. With such low thresholds for prosecutions, Article 23 could provide a pretext for even more politically-motivated prosecutions and convictions.

Article 23 exacerbates the persecution of political prisoners and compounds the existing human-rights violations under the National Security Law (N.S.L.). The new legislation reinforces a separate judicial process for political cases, which involves appointed national security police officers in addition to handpicked prosecutors and judges, and deprives suspects of important [procedural protections](#) that were once available under Hong Kong’s legal system. Political prisoners charged under the N.S.L. have already been routinely [denied bail](#), subjected to months of pre-trial detention, and deprived of the right to [a jury trial](#). The new law further undermines these procedural rights by allowing the police to not only extend the period of detention without charge from the current 48 hours to a further 14 days, but also limit suspects’ access to counsel.

In addition to those facing political persecution, international businesses and Hong Kongers not directly involved in politics will also feel the impact of Article 23, as the law intensifies existing censorship. Following the N.S.L., the Hong Kong government forced major media outlets, such as Stand News and Apple Daily, to shut down. With the passage of Article 23, investigative journalism and reporting on “sensitive” political issues – given the broad definitions of “state secrets” and “sedition” – become even riskier. Article 23’s chilling effect on the freedom of expression extends to the Hong Kong diaspora globally, as the new law applies to Hong Kong residents anywhere in the world. The law’s extraterritorial implications will undoubtedly set the stage for heightened transnational repression.

The S.A.R. government expedited the passage of Article 23 despite mounting international pressure to uphold human rights. The U.N. [Human Rights Committee](#) issued a list of recommendations in 2022, [urging](#) the S.A.R. government to prioritize human rights. During the [Universal Periodic Review on China](#) in January this year, eight U.N. member states also called on the People’s Republic of China to repeal or review the N.S.L. Despite these clear and urgent appeals, the S.A.R. government opted to expedite the passage of Article 23 – clearing all legislative hurdles within 50 days of the initial public consultation.

We call on governments around the world and the international community to:

1. Impose sanctions on Hong Kong and Chinese officials responsible for undermining the rule of law in Hong Kong, particularly those involved in the passage of the two pieces of “national security” legislation;
2. Review the status of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices globally, with an eye towards shuttering their operations;
3. Offer asylum and other humanitarian pathways and provide temporary travel documents to Hong Kong human-rights defenders, especially those who have been labeled by S.A.R. authorities as “absconders” and are likely to face passport cancellation in the near future.

Signatories:

1. 29 Principles
2. AfricaHongKongFrance (AHKF)
3. Arizona for Hong Kong
4. ARTICLE 19
5. Asian Lawyers Network (ALN)
6. Assembly of Citizens’ Representatives, Hong Kong
7. Association of Cosmopolitan Culture Action Taichung
8. Association of Hong Kongers in Western Australia
9. Athenai Institue
10. Aus-Hong Kong Connex Inc
11. Australia Capital Hong Kong Association
12. Australia Hong Kong Link
13. Australia Tibet Council
14. Australian and New Zealand Alliance for Victims of the Chinese Communist Regime
15. Bay Area Friends of Tibet
16. Befria Hongkong (Sweden)
17. Birmingham HongKongers
18. Blossom Community HK CIC
19. Bonham Tree Aid CIC
20. Bristol Hongkongers
21. Britons in Hong Kong
22. Campaign For Uyghurs
23. Canada-Hong Kong Link
24. Center For Uyghur Studies
25. Chicago Solidarity with Hong Kong (CSHK)
26. Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD)
27. Coalition of Students Resisting China
28. Committee For Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation
29. Committee to Protect Journalists
30. Czechs Support Tibet
31. Democracy for Hong Kong (D4HK)
32. Dialogue China

33. European Belarus Foundation
34. European Values Center for Security Policy
35. Fight for Freedom. Stand with Hong Kong.
36. Finnish Hongkongers
37. Flow HK
38. Formosan Association for Human Rights
39. Frankfurt Stands With Hong Kong
40. Free Tibet
41. Free Uyghur Now
42. Freedom House
43. Freiheit für Hongkong e.V. (FfHK)
44. Friends of Hong Kong (Calgary)
45. Fundación Para la Libertad de Nicaragua
46. Germany Stands with Hong Kong
47. Global Alliance for Tibet & Persecuted Minorities
48. Grupo de Apoio ao Tibete - Portugal
49. HKersUnited
50. Hong Kong Aid
51. Hong Kong Affairs Association of Berkeley
52. Hong Kong Committee in Norway
53. Hong Kong Democracy Council
54. Hongkonger Community Center (HKCC Brisbane)
55. Hongkonger in Deutschland e.V.
56. Hongkongers in Britain (HKB)
57. HongKongers in Leeds
58. Hong Kongers in San Diego
59. Hong Kongers in San Francisco Bay Area
60. Hong Kong Forum, Los Angeles
61. Hong Kong International Alliance Brisbane (HKIA Brisbane)
62. Hong Kong Media Overseas (HKMO)
63. Hong Kong Outlanders in Taiwan
64. Hong Kong Scots
65. Hong Kong Social Action Movements in Boston
66. Hong Kong Student Advocacy Group - NYU
67. Hong Kong Watch
68. Human Rights in China
69. Human Rights Network for Tibet and Taiwan (HRNTT)
70. Humanitarian China
71. Humanosh USA
72. India Tibet Friendship Society NAGPUR
73. Internationale Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte (IGFM)
74. International Tibet Network
75. Khmer Movement for Democracy
76. KONGcentric

77. Lady Liberty Hong Kong (LLHK)
78. Lamp of Liberty
79. Le Comité pour la Liberté à Hong-Kong
80. Liberté au Tibet (France)
81. Lion Rock Café (New York)
82. Manchester Stands With Hong Kong
83. McMaster Stands With Hong Kong
84. New School for Democracy (NSD Taiwan)
85. New Yorkers Supporting Hong Kong (NY4HK)
86. North America Taiwanese Professors' Association (NATPA)
87. Northern California Hong Kong Club
88. North East Hongkongers Club - U.K.
89. Norwegian Tibet Committee
90. Nottingham Stands With Hong Kong
91. NYC852HKER
92. Ontario Hong Kong Youth Action
93. PMGI [Peace Media & Good Governance Institute]
94. Power to Hongkongers
95. Reading UK Stands with HK
96. Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
97. Santa Barbara Friends of Tibet
98. Scottish Hongkongers
99. SEArrious For HKG (Seattle)
100. South Sudan Democratic Alliance (SSDA)
101. Southampton Hongkongers
102. Stand with HK@JPN
103. Students for a Free Tibet International
104. Students for a Free Tibet - Boston
105. Students for a Free Tibet- India
106. Students for a Free Tibet - Japan
107. Students for a Free Tibet - Middletown High School
108. Students for a Free Tibet - Minnesota
109. Students for a Free Tibet - New York/New Jersey
110. Students for a Free Tibet -Toronto
111. Students for Hong Kong
112. Sutton Hong Kong Culture & Art Society
113. Swedish Tibet Committee
114. Swiss Tibetan Friendship Association
115. Taiwan Association for Human Rights
116. Taiwan East Turkestan Association (TETA)
117. Taiwan Forever Association
118. Taiwan Hong Kong Association
119. Taiwan Labour Front
120. Taiwan Youth Association for Transitional Justice and Kiōng-Seng

121. Taiwanese Association In Japan
122. Texans Supporting Hong Kong (TX4HK)
123. Tibet Initiative Deutschland e.V.
124. Tibet Justice Center
125. Tibet Solidarity
126. Tibet Support Group Ireland
127. Tibet Support Committee, Denmark
128. Tibetan Youth Association in Europe (TYAE)
129. Uniting HongKongers (Australia)
130. Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO)
131. US Hongkongers Club
132. Uyghur Academy International
133. Uyghur American Association
134. Uyghur Center for Human Rights and Democracy
135. Uyghur Human Rights Project
136. Vancouver Activists of Hong Kong (VAHK)
137. Vancouver Hong Kong Forum Society
138. Vancouver Society in Support of Democratic Movement (VSSDM)
139. Victoria Hongkongers Association (Australia)
140. Washingtonians Supporting Hong Kong (DC4HK)
141. We The Hongkongers
142. Winnipeg Hong Kong Concern
143. World Federation of Taiwanese Associations
144. World Liberty Congress
145. World Uyghur Congress