



**THE SIX-MONTHLY REPORT ON HONG KONG
1 JANUARY TO 30 JUNE 2024**

Deposited in Parliament by the
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

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FOREWORD

I was honoured to take up my role as Foreign Secretary in July. As part of my role, it is my duty to ensure the UK's continued engagement with and support for the people of Hong Kong.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, signed by the governments of the United Kingdom and China in 1984. In this UN-registered, legally binding treaty, China made a set of commitments to the people of Hong Kong: to uphold Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy, to maintain its existing social and economic systems, to ensure existing rights and freedoms would be guaranteed by law, and that Hong Kong's way of life would remain unchanged for a period of at least fifty years following handover in 1997.

This 55th Six-monthly Report covers the period from 1 January – 30 June 2024, predating my appointment as Foreign Secretary and this Government's tenure in office. However, the detail it sets out underscores a continued drift away from the commitments set out in the Joint Declaration. Whilst we judge that Hong Kong's economic, monetary, and financial systems remain distinct, the report suggests that the continued focus on any perceived threat to national security is undermining Hong Kong's international reputation. Additional concerns have arisen from attempts to apply Hong Kong law extra-territorially. The report also covers the ongoing prosecution and imprisonment of British national Jimmy Lai which is a particular concern for the UK.

As Foreign Secretary, I am deeply aware of the long-shared history with Hong Kong, fostered by our deep and strong people-to-people and trading links. It is a city like no other, that has played a truly global role and should continue to do so. This government will remain committed to Hong Kong's future as an open and vibrant city. This will require mature channels of Government communication to raise concerns where we believe Hong Kong's future risks being undermined, to support the interests of Hong Kong people, their autonomy, their rights, and their freedoms; and to provide a warm welcome and continued protection to all members of the Hong Kong community who have made the UK their home.

INTRODUCTION

This series of six-monthly reports reflects our continuing interest in developments in Hong Kong and our commitment to the faithful implementation of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration. The Declaration guaranteed that, for 50 years from 1997, Hong Kong would enjoy a high degree of autonomy, except in foreign and defence affairs, and that it would be “vested with executive, legislative and independent judicial power”. The continuation of Hong Kong’s social and economic systems, lifestyle, and rights and freedoms is also guaranteed under the Sino-British Joint Declaration. This arrangement was popularly referred to as ‘One Country, Two Systems’. The structure of this report is based on Annex I of the Joint Declaration, which outlines the commitments made by the Chinese Government. This report covers the period from 1 January to 30 June 2024.

In March, following a one-month public consultation period and a rushed legislative process, the Legislative Council passed the Safeguarding National Security Bill, implementing Article 23 of the Basic Law. The Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO) came into effect on 23 March. At least 13 arrests and 3 charges were made under the law in the reporting period, all for sedition offences. Measures under the SNSO have also been used to prevent the early release of individuals charged with national security offences and to target activists based in the UK.

On 28 February, the Financial Secretary presented the 2024-25 Budget to the Legislative Council. He announced the cancellation of all additional stamp duties imposed over the past decade to improve the residential property market.

On 8 May, the Court of Appeal granted the Hong Kong Government an injunction to prohibit unlawful acts relating to the protest song ‘Glory to Hong Kong’. Google complied with the injunction order removing 32 videos from YouTube.

On 30 May, the High Court delivered its verdict for the 16 defendants who pleaded not guilty in the trial of the 47 pro-democracy politicians and activists under the National Security Law (NSL). 14 of them were found guilty, and two were acquitted – the first time any individual has been acquitted under the NSL brought in by the Beijing authorities in June 2020. The Hong Kong Government filed an appeal against one of the acquittals. As of the end of the reporting period, the 45 who pleaded guilty or were found guilty were still awaiting sentencing, with mitigation hearings ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

Jimmy Lai’s trial for conspiracy to commit sedition, as well as conspiracy to collude with foreign forces under the NSL, continued. Five prosecution accomplice witnesses, including three former Apple Daily staff, along with Andy Li Yu-hin and Chan Tsz-wah, gave testaments against Lai. The prosecution concluded their opening case against Lai on 11 June, after 90 days of hearings, exceeding the original 80 days allotted for the entire trial. The trial is set to resume on 24 July.

On 6 June, two retired UK judges, the Rt Hon The Lord Collins of Mapesbury and the Rt Hon Lord Sumption, resigned as non-permanent judges of the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal (CFA), citing concerns regarding the political situation in Hong Kong.

On 12 June, the Hong Kong Government targeted six pro-democracy activists living in the UK using measures under the SNSO.

Freedom of assembly continued to be constrained, with no large-scale demonstrations or protests taking place during the reporting period. Media freedom remained under

pressure from the Hong Kong Government. Several ongoing sedition cases and the denial of entry of an international journalist into Hong Kong to observe Jimmy Lai's NSL and sedition trial has contributed to a growing climate of self-censorship.

TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

- **17 January** – Five prosecution accomplice witnesses, including Andy Li Yu-hin and three former Apple Daily staff, begin testifying against Jimmy Lai in his ongoing NSL trial.
- **23 January** – Hong Kong Chief Secretary Eric Chan Kwok-ki attends UN Human Rights Council (HRC) meetings in Geneva, as part of China's fourth review by the Universal Periodic Review Working Group.
- **25 January** – The CFA restores Hong Kong Alliance vice chair Chow Hang-tung's conviction for inciting people to attend the 2021 Tiananmen vigil.
- **30 January** – The Hong Kong Government outlines proposals to implement Article 23 of the Basic Law and launches a one-month public consultation.
- **22-28 February** – Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO) Director Xia Baolong visits Hong Kong.
- **23 February** – The CFA grants permission to seven individuals, including Jimmy Lai, to appeal against their convictions for taking part in the 18 August 2019 protest. An appeal hearing takes place on 24 June.
- **8 March** – The draft Safeguarding National Security Bill to implement Article 23 of the Basic Law is introduced into the Legislative Council. A bills committee is set up to scrutinise the bill.
- **19 March** – The Legislative Council unanimously passes the Safeguarding National Security Bill.
- **23 March** – The Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO) is published in the Government Gazette with immediate effect, implementing Article 23 of the Basic Law.
- **25 March** – Adam Ma Chun-man, who was sentenced to five years in prison for inciting secession under the NSL, is denied early release for good behaviour in prison under provisions of the SNSO. This marks the first use of such provisions of the new legislation.
- **3 April** – The Hong Kong Government announces changes to allow transgender individuals who have not undergone full sex reassignment surgery to apply to alter gender markers on their Hong Kong identification documents.
- **10 April** – A Reporters Without Borders (RSF) staff member who planned to observe Jimmy Lai's national security trial is denied entry to Hong Kong.
- **11 April** – Joseph John, a dual Portuguese and Chinese national is sentenced to five years in prison for conspiracy to incite secession under the NSL.
- **16 April** – The Court of Appeal (CA) upholds the lower Court's decision to bar British barrister Timothy Owen KC from representing Jimmy Lai in his national security trial.

- **23 April** – A trial of seven individuals charged under the United Nations (UN) Anti-Terrorism (Measures) Ordinance begins.
- **8 May** – The CA allows the Hong Kong Government’s application for an interim injunction to prohibit four types of unlawful acts related to “Glory to Hong Kong”, a song written during the 2019 anti-extradition bill protests.
- **28 May** – National Security Police arrest six people, including Chow Hang-tung, for allegedly posting seditious comments online to commemorate the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre. Two further arrests are made on 29 May and 3 June.
- **30 May** – The High Court announces its verdict for 16 of the 47 pro-democracy politicians and activists (‘NSL 47’) who pleaded not guilty to conspiracy to commit subversion. 14 are found guilty and two are acquitted. The Hong Kong Government later files an appeal against one of the non-guilty verdicts.
- **4 June** – The National Security Police arrest an individual commemorating the Tiananmen Massacre for sedition under the SNSO. Three others were arrested for non-national security offences.
- **6 June** – The Hong Kong Judiciary announces the resignations of two retired UK judges, the Rt Hon The Lord Collins of Mapesbury and the Rt Hon Lord Sumption, as non-permanent judges of the CFA.
- **12 June** – The Hong Kong Government uses measures under the SNSO to target six Hong Kong pro-democracy activists living in the UK, including the cancellation of their Hong Kong passports.
- **14 June** – National Security Police charge a 27-year-old man with sedition under the SNSO for wearing a T-shirt with a protest slogan in public.

CONSTITUTION

Enactment of Article 23 of the Basic Law

Under Article 23 of the Basic Law, Hong Kong’s constitutional document which implements Annex I of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, Hong Kong is required to “enact laws on its own to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People’s Government, or theft of state secrets, to prohibit foreign political organisations or bodies from conducting political activities in the Region, and to prohibit political organisations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political organisations or bodies.”

In September 2002, the Hong Kong Government began a three-month consultation process for legislation to implement Article 23. On 1 July 2003, an estimated 500,000 protesters took to the streets given concerns about the legislation’s scope and potential erosion of rights and freedoms. On 5 September, the then-Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa announced the bill would be withdrawn, and that there was no timetable for its reintroduction.

Following the 2019 anti-extradition bill protests, on 30 June 2020 China’s National People’s Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC) adopted the NSL, with no public consultation. It was gazetted and took effect in Hong Kong later that day. The NSL criminalises secession, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces, which cover some of the offences listed in Article 23.

On 30 January 2024, the Hong Kong Government released a 110-page consultation document outlining its proposals for the legislation. The public was given one month to comment on the proposals. Details of the proposals and the consultation exercise are provided in the 'Legal System' section of this report.

On 8 March, the draft Safeguarding National Security Bill was introduced to the Legislative Council. On 19 March, the Legislative Council unanimously passed the bill. On 23 March, the bill, formally known as the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO), was published in the Government Gazette with immediate effect. The SNSO is broader in scope than both the 2002 proposed legislation to implement Article 23, and the offences listed in Article 23. The process of legislative scrutiny is detailed in 'Legal System' section of this report.

Appointment in Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China

On 10 April, Cui Jianchun, formerly Chinese ambassador to Nigeria, was appointed as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Commissioner of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Hong Kong, replacing Liu Guangyuan (now Deputy Director of the PRC's Central Government Liaison Office (CGLO) in Hong Kong).

Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office Director Xia Baolong's Visit to Hong Kong

Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO) Director Xia Baolong visited Hong Kong from 22 to 28 February - his second visit to Hong Kong within a year. In addition to meetings with Hong Kong Government senior officials, the Executive Council, Legislative Council and District Councils, Xia held closed-door meetings with businesses, economists, legal professionals, financial regulators and media executives.

Appointments to the District Committees

Under the new electoral system, candidates participating in the District Council elections are required to secure nominations from members of the three government-appointed District Committees.

Following the District Council elections which took place on 10 December 2023, the Hong Kong Government on 1 April this year appointed a total of 2,999 people to the nominating District Committees. The appointments included all 470 serving District Councillors and other individuals, including more than 100 candidates who were unsuccessful in the District Council elections.

BASIC RIGHTS & FREEDOMS

Press and Media Freedom

Hong Kong Journalists Association

On 25 January, the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) issued a statement regarding a letter from the Hong Kong Government's Inland Revenue Department, demanding backdated profit taxes of HKD 400,000 (approximately £40,000) for the last six years. Previously, the authorities requested HKJA submit detailed accounting records and reviewed its taxes for the 2017/18 financial year. The authorities have warned that more taxes might be collected for other years.

In response, HKJA said it was "perplexed" by the tax assessment and would file an objection, emphasising that the association has always complied with the accounting

and audit requirements stipulated in the Trade Unions Ordinance, and submitted relevant information on time.

On 14 May, the chairman of HKJA, Ronson Chan Ron-sing, elected in 2021, announced that he would not seek re-election. He stated it would be “extremely difficult” to remain in the position, adding that “the attacks and attention brought by ‘Ronson Chan’ and the ‘HKJA’ are far more than those brought about by the two separately”.

Radio Free Asia

On 29 March, Radio Free Asia (RFA) announced it had closed its Hong Kong office, citing concerns regarding the safety of RFA staff and reporters. In a statement, RFA noted that it will retain its official media registration without full-time personnel in Hong Kong. The closure came shortly after the enactment of the SNSO on 23 March. The President and CEO of RFA, Bay Fang, said: “Actions by Hong Kong authorities, including referring to RFA as a ‘foreign force’, raise serious questions about our ability to operate in safety with the enactment of Article 23”.

The Wall Street Journal

On 2 May, The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) announced its decision to move its Asia headquarters from Hong Kong to Singapore. Local media reported that the number of staff stationed in Hong Kong would be reduced significantly.

Freedom of Information

Access to Government Vehicle Registry

On 5 January 2024, the Hong Kong Government’s Transport Department announced restrictions on journalists’ access to the vehicle registry. Under the new rules, any relevant search application requires a written submission to justify the purpose of accessing vehicle records, and an application may be granted if the Commissioner for Transport determines that “significant public interest” is involved. There is no appeal mechanism. The revision was made in response to a June 2023 CFA ruling in favour of investigative journalist Bao Choy, overturning her conviction for making false statements to access the vehicle registry for an investigation into police misconduct in relation to the 2019 Yuen Long incident. In a statement, the HKJA noted that it was “inappropriate” for the Commissioner to define public interest and interfere with journalistic activity, which would violate the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Basic Law. Lawmakers urged the authorities to provide clear guidelines and define the meaning of public interest.

On 5 April, the HKJA launched a judicial review to challenge the constitutionality of the Transport Department’s “unreasonable” policy, citing extreme difficulty in accessing vehicle ownership records. The association noted that a number of applications were made by several local news outlets, but none had been approved as of 27 March. On 17 April, the High Court granted HKJA leave to apply for judicial review, with an appeal hearing scheduled for 24 September.

As of the end of the reporting period, no application had been approved by the Transport Department, according to local media reports.

Internet Freedom

The Hong Kong SAR Government continued to request local and overseas Internet Service Providers remove “crime-related” content online. Google noted in its July – December 2023 transparency report that the Hong Kong authorities made a total of

33 relevant requests, involving 134 items. The majority of items were removed for privacy and security grounds, and three on national security grounds.

Freedom of Assembly

No large-scale demonstrations or protests took place during the reporting period. The Emergency Regulations Ordinance invoked on 4 October 2019 to ban face masks during protests, and restrictions imposed by the police on participants such as wearing ID badges, remained in place.

Labour Day

1 May has traditionally seen workers' rights marches in Hong Kong. However, no Labour Day march was held in Hong Kong for the fifth year in a row. On 21 April, the pro-establishment Federation of Trade Unions explained its decision not to hold a march at a press conference, noting that there were "more effective" channels for workers to express their opinions.

On 1 May, four members of pro-democracy political party the League of Social Democrats gathered outside Government Headquarters to petition for an increase in the minimum wage.

Remembrance of the Tiananmen Square Massacre

No candlelight vigil was held in Hong Kong's Victoria Park for the fifth year in a row. Police had refused permission for the vigil in Victoria Park from 2020 to 2022 citing Covid-19 restrictions, and no applications for public gatherings were made in 2023 and 2024. Pro-establishment groups held a "market carnival" in Victoria Park for the second consecutive year, from 27 May to 8 June. Chief Executive John Lee warned the public in advance to comply with the law.

Arrests in relation to the commemoration of the massacre were recorded. Police arrested activist Wong Fung-yiu (known as 'Grandma Wong'), who reportedly chanted political slogans in public, for alleged offences relating to seditious intention under the SNSO. Three others were arrested for non-national security offences such as disorderly misconduct and assault of police officers. Another five individuals near Victoria Park were taken away on suspicion of breaching public peace and released afterwards. All four arrestees were released on police bail without charge as of the end of the reporting period.

Chow Hang-tung

As recorded in previous Six-monthly Reports, former Hong Kong Alliance vice chair Chow Hang-tung was found guilty of inciting people to attend an unauthorised assembly in Victoria Park on 4 June 2021 and sentenced to 15 months in prison. In December 2022, the High Court overturned her conviction and sentence, on the basis that the police had not properly considered what measures they could have taken to allow the public assembly. The Hong Kong Department of Justice (DoJ) filed an appeal to the CFA, arguing that Chow could not challenge the legality of the assembly as a defendant during a criminal trial.

On 25 January 2024, the CFA unanimously allowed the DoJ's appeal and restored Chow's conviction, ruling that the ban on the assembly was proportionate.

Installation of Surveillance Cameras

During the reporting period, the Hong Kong Police Force expedited the installation of surveillance cameras across the city, with the number anticipated to be increased by approximately 2,000 by the end of 2024. A media report cited a cybersecurity and privacy research company's estimate that "Hong Kong had 54,500 public surveillance cameras" as of May 2023. In February, Secretary for Security Chris Tang Ping-keung said the cameras would help combat terrorism. In a paper submitted to the Legislative Council, the Security Bureau confirmed that the cameras will comply with local privacy laws and only capture footage in public places and noted they do not currently have any tracking function.

Freedom of Religion or Belief

Between 22 and 26 April, Catholic Bishop of Hong Kong, His Eminence Cardinal Stephen Chow Sau-yan, led a 10-member delegation to visit several Great Bay Area cities following his unprecedented trip to Beijing in April 2023. Local media reported that, apart from meeting with different leaders and diocesan offices, the group attended seminars on the Chinese constitution and national security. Chow said he hoped to "use practical actions to show his love for the country and compatriots".

Artistic Freedom

In January, the Hong Kong SAR Government-funded Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) announced that it would withdraw its funding support for the Hong Kong Drama Awards, organised by the Hong Kong Federation of Drama Societies. At the same time, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced that it would no longer provide a venue for the awards ceremony.

In a letter to the Federation, HKADC suggested that the Awards "damaged the Council's reputation". It also announced deducting part of the funding for last year's ceremony after receiving complaints about "inappropriate content and arrangements". Prominent political cartoonist Wong Kei-kwan (known as Zunzi) and former Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) journalist Bao Choy Yuk-ling were amongst the award presenters.

HKADC chairman Kenneth Fok Kai-kong, also a legislator, said the Council must minimise the risk of violating the NSL. Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism Kevin Yeung Yun-hung supported the Council's decision to ensure the "proper use of public funds and resources", noting it "meets the requirement and expectation of the Government", and "has nothing to do with restrictions on creativity".

Universal Periodic Review at the United Nations Human Rights Council

On 23 January, Chief Secretary for Administration, Eric Chan Kwok-ki, led a delegation of senior officials to attend UN Human Rights Council (HRC) meetings in Geneva, as part of China's fourth review under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. Chan defended the NSL, and changes made to Hong Kong's electoral system.

On 23 January, the UK Permanent Representative to the UN, delivered a statement during China's UPR session at the HRC:

"The UK has four recommendations:

1. cease the persecution and arbitrary detention of Uyghurs and Tibetans and allow genuine freedom of religion or belief and cultural expression without

fear of surveillance, torture, forced labour, or sexual violence, and implement OHCHR recommendations on Xinjiang.

2. repeal the Law on Safeguarding National Security in Hong Kong as recommended by the UN and cease prosecutions, including of Jimmy Lai.
3. guarantee an impartial judiciary and cease the harassment of lawyers, the use of the death penalty, and 'residential surveillance in a designated location'.
4. cease the restriction of civil society and independent media, end forced repatriations, and stop targeting human rights defenders.

Thank you, Mr. President.”

The UNHRC adopted the review report on China (including Hong Kong) on 26 January.

Equality

Following the CFA ruling in February 2023, which found the requirement for transgender people to undergo full sex reassignment surgery to alter gender markers on Hong Kong identification documents as unconstitutional, on 3 April 2024 the Hong Kong SAR Government announced changes to its policy. Applicants who have not undergone full sex reassignment surgery may apply to change the gender marker on their ID card if they have completed surgical treatment for the purpose of modifying sexual characteristics. For those changing from female to male, they are required to have completed the removal of breasts, while those transforming from male to female are required to have completed the removal of their penis and testes to be eligible for the application. Applicants must also confirm that they have gender dysphoria, have lived as the opposite sex and have had continuous hormonal treatment for at least two years, and will continue to do so. The Director of Immigration will consider the application after all the requirements have been satisfied.

As noted in the last Six-monthly Report, the CFA made a landmark ruling on 5 September 2023 by declaring the lack of an alternative framework for the recognition of same-sex partnerships as unconstitutional. On 27 October 2023, the CFA issued a final order for the government to comply with the ruling. It set a two-year deadline for the Government to establish an alternative framework for legal recognition of same-sex unions. As of the end of the reporting period, the Government had not yet proposed any framework for the recognition of same-sex partnerships.

LEGAL SYSTEM

Basic Law Article 23 National Security Proposals: Public Consultation and Legislative Process

As covered in the 'Constitution' section, on 30 January, the Hong Kong SAR Government released a 110-page consultation document outlining its proposals for legislation to meet its obligations under Article 23 of the Basic Law. Chief Executive John Lee said the draft legislation would be “subject to scrutiny by Hong Kong people” and “international people” and would “conform with the international standards” including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The public was given one month, until 28 February, to comment on the proposals. This compares

with three months given to comment on the proposed Article 23 consultation document in 2002.

The 2024 consultation document proposed creating a new ordinance to cover five offences under Article 23 of the Basic Law which were not already covered by the NSL, including: treason; sedition; theft of official secrets; and the prohibition of political activities by, as well as of the establishment of ties with, foreign political organisations in Hong Kong. It also proposed covering further offences in the ordinance. They included:

- Insurrection (maximum penalty: life imprisonment)
- Espionage (maximum penalty: 20 years' imprisonment)
- Sabotage (maximum penalty: life imprisonment)
- Use of computers or electronic systems without lawful authority, with intent to endanger national security (maximum penalty: 20 years' imprisonment)
- External interference (maximum penalty: 14 years' imprisonment)

The consultation document recommended that the offences provide for “appropriate extra-territorial effect”. The document also referenced “laws of foreign countries relevant to national security”, including the United Kingdom.

On 6 February, Chief Executive John Lee, along with Secretary for Security Chris Tang and Secretary for Justice Paul Lam, met representatives from diplomatic missions and local and overseas chambers of commerce in Hong Kong to explain and discuss the proposals.

On 27 February, three members of the pro-democracy group the League of Social Democrats protested outside the Hong Kong Government headquarters against the proposals. No arrests were made.

At the end of the consultation period, the Hong Kong SAR Government announced that they had received a total of 13,489 submissions from a range of organisations and individuals, including from the Hong Kong Bar Association and the Law Society of Hong Kong. The Democratic Party, the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA), the Foreign Correspondents' Club (FCC), Amnesty International and Hong Kong Watch also made submissions.

On 28 February, the then-Foreign Secretary, the Rt Hon Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton, issued a statement:

“The Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong confirmed that for 50 years, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) would maintain a high degree of autonomy and that the rights and freedoms, as provided for by the laws previously in force in Hong Kong, would continue. Hong Kong’s Basic Law sets out those rights and freedoms.

As a co-signatory to the Joint Declaration, the UK has a responsibility to ensure that those rights and freedoms are maintained.

The UK government recognises the right of all jurisdictions to implement legislation to address national security concerns. We also acknowledge that Hong Kong has a constitutional obligation to introduce such legislation under Article 23 of the Basic Law.

Hong Kong is also required to ensure that national security legislation aligns with international standards and upholds rights and freedoms, as set out in the Joint Declaration, the Basic Law, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Legislative proposals announced on 30 January by the Hong Kong government do not uphold these obligations. They will have a negative impact on the people of Hong Kong in the exercise of their rights and freedoms.”

My officials have raised our concerns privately with the Hong Kong authorities and through the public consultation process. Those concerns include, but are not limited to:

- the toughening of penalties for speech crimes and the use of the broadly defined term ‘state secrets’ will inhibit freedom of speech, of expression and of the press.
- the risk that the work of international organisations in Hong Kong could be labelled as ‘foreign interference’.
- vague references to ‘external forces’ and the new offence of ‘external interference’ threaten the legitimate and lawful diplomatic and consular activity as protected in the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.
- the absence of any reference to independent oversight, or the mechanisms that would support it.
- lack of clarity on the procedures that will govern detention without charge, and the absence of a judicial oversight mechanism.
- the absence of any provision for independent and robust mechanisms to safeguard against arbitrary action by the executive on national security grounds.

The UK has noted the references to UK national security legislation throughout the consultation document. UK national security legislation is informed by public consultation and was subject to full scrutiny by both Houses of Parliament, including the democratically elected House of Commons. This ensures that our national security legislation is fully representative of the views of the UK public and has democratic legitimacy.

I strongly urge the Hong Kong SAR government to re-consider their proposals and engage in genuine and meaningful consultation with the people of Hong Kong.

We will monitor development of this legislation closely.”

On 28 February, Chief Executive John Lee said the “vast majority of submissions” expressed support for “timely” implementation of Article 23. On 6 March, the Hong Kong SAR Government claimed that over 98% of the submissions (13,297 out of 13,489) “show support and make positive comments”, and only 0.72% (97 of them) “oppose the legislative proposals”, adding that the proposed legislation had gained “majority support from the public”. The authorities highlighted that of the 97 objections, nine were from “external anti-China organisations” and three from “persons with names identical to absconders”.

On 8 March, the draft Safeguarding National Security Bill was submitted to the Legislative Council, with a bills committee set up immediately to scrutinise it. Meetings were held over the weekend, for the first time since the handover, to speed up the legislative process. On 14 March, after seven consecutive days of meetings (more than 40 hours), the bills committee concluded vetting the bill. Key proposed amendments included:

- Empowering the Chief Executive in Council to make subsidiary legislation for safeguarding national security in “unforeseen circumstances”.
- Empowering the Chief Executive in Council to expand the scope of ‘public officers’ in respect of offences related to incitement to disaffection or state secrets.
- Enabling courts to make orders prohibiting disclosure of specific personal information, or to hold closed hearings.
- Empowering Secretary for Security to identify and label absconders immediately after the issuing of arrest warrants.
- Formalising the roles and functions of the Hong Kong National Security Committee in local legislation.
- Defining an ‘international organisation’ as consisting of two or more countries, regions, places, or entities entrusted with a function; and
- Renaming the offence of ‘external interference’ as ‘external interference endangering national security’.

On 15 March, at the request of Secretary for Security Chris Tang, the Legislative Council waived all notice period restrictions to expedite the passage of the bill. On 19 March, the Legislative Council’s House Committee resumed second reading of the bill. The same day, the bill and its amendments were unanimously passed. Chief Executive John Lee hailed the passage as a “proud” and “historic” moment for Hong Kong.

In response, the then-Foreign Secretary issued a statement on 19 March:

“Hong Kong’s reputation as an international city was founded on respect for the rule of law, the independence of its institutions, its high degree of autonomy and protection of the rights and freedoms afforded to all people living and working there. This new law, rushed through the legislative process, will have far-reaching implications for all of these areas.

The broad definitions of national security and external interference will make it harder for those who live, work and do business in Hong Kong. It fails to provide certainty for international organisations, including diplomatic missions, who are operating there. It will entrench the culture of self-censorship which now dominates Hong Kong’s social and political landscape, and enable the continuing erosion of freedoms of speech, of assembly, and of the media.

The overall impact of Hong Kong’s new national security law is that it will further damage the rights and freedoms enjoyed in the city. It undermines Hong Kong’s implementation of binding international obligations including the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

I urge the Hong Kong authorities to respect the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Basic Law, uphold its high degree of autonomy and the rule of law and act in accordance with its international commitments and legal obligations.”

US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, issued a statement on 22 March expressing concern over the extra-territorial application of the legislation, and the Hong Kong authorities’ “ongoing campaign of transnational repression”.

On 23 March, the bill, formally known as the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO), was published in the Government Gazette entering into immediate effect.

On 19 April, in their Capri meeting communique, G7 Foreign Ministers and the High Representative of the European Union said:

“We express our concerns about the deterioration of pluralism and civil and political rights in Hong Kong since the 2020 National Security Law. We reemphasize these concerns following the recent passage of the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance under Article 23 of the Basic Law, which will further erode autonomy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong. The new law will make it harder to live, work and do business in Hong Kong and undermine the ability of Hong Kong people to maintain free and open exchanges with the wider world. We reiterate our call on China to uphold its commitments under the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law, which enshrine rights and freedoms and a high degree of autonomy for Hong Kong. Furthermore, we urge China and the Hong Kong authorities to act in accordance with their international commitments and applicable legal obligations.”

Implementation of the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (Article 23 National Security Legislation)

The reporting period saw the use of the SNSO by the Hong Kong authorities following its enactment on 23 March. Between 23 March and 30 June 2024, at least 12 arrests were made, and three individuals were charged. All arrests and charges were for sedition.

The charges were as follows:

- **14 June:** Chu Kai-pong was charged with sedition for wearing a T-shirt and mask in public which allegedly called for Hong Kong's "liberation". Prosecutors said Chu had intended to incite hatred against "the fundamental system of the state established by the Constitution of the People's Republic of China". He was denied bail. The case was adjourned to 7 August.
- **21 June:** Au Kin-wai was charged for allegedly posting seditious statements and videos on social media, including calls for President Xi Jinping and Chief Executive John Lee to "step down". Prosecutors said Au had "knowingly published publications that had a seditious intention" to incite hatred and advocate a revolution against the authorities. The defendant did not apply for bail. His case was adjourned to 7 August.
- **25 June:** Chung Man-kit was charged with writing seditious statements "on multiple occasions" on the back of seats on public buses. The police claimed the content "provoked hatred" towards the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities. The defendant did not apply for bail. His case was adjourned to 22 August.

Arrests under the SNSO included:

Chow Hang-tung and others

On 28 May, National Security Police arrested a total of six people, including detained former Hong Kong Alliance vice chair Chow Hang-tung, for allegedly publishing seditious posts online to commemorate the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre, marking the first arrests under the Ordinance. Reportedly, the arrestees included Chow's mother and other former Alliance members. Police accused the group of provoking hatred against the authorities and having the intention to incite individuals to organise or participate in illegal activities. Police made two further arrests relevant to the case on 29 May and 3 June. All arrestees, except Chow who remained on remand for subversion under the NSL, were released on bail without charge as of the end of the reporting period. Secretary for Security Chris Tang confirmed that movement restriction orders under the SNSO were imposed on those arrested.

Wong Fung-yiu (Grandma Wong)

On 4 June, police arrested activist Wong Fung-yiu, known as 'Grandma Wong', for sedition. She allegedly chanted political slogans in public to commemorate the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre. She was released on bail without charge as of the end of the reporting period.

Adam Ma Chun-man

Adam Ma Chun-man was convicted of incitement to secession under the NSL and sentenced to five years and nine months in prison in November 2021 for chanting pro-independence slogans in public. He appealed against his sentence. On 3 August 2022, the Court of Appeal (CA) allowed Ma's appeal – the first ever under the NSL – and reduced his sentence to five years.

In late March 2024, local media reported that Ma, expected to be released on 25 March, was denied early release for good behaviour in prison, due to changes to sentencing rules under the SNSO.

Prior to the changes, a one-third sentence reduction would normally be granted for good behaviour. The amended sentencing rules state that prisoners convicted of national security offences cannot be released early unless the authorities are satisfied that release "will not be contrary to the interests of national security". This meant that Ma would remain in prison for a further 20 months to serve his 60-month sentence in full.

On 26 March, Chief Executive John Lee said individuals convicted of national security offences would not receive early release "under normal circumstances".

On 21 June, Ma applied to the High Court for a Judicial Review against the decision, arguing that the new arrangements under the SNSO were retrospective, violating prisoners' rights and procedural fairness.

Measures targeting activists living in the UK

As recorded in the last Six-monthly Report, in July and December 2023 the Hong Kong National Security Police issued arrest warrants under the NSL for a total of 13 pro-democracy activists living overseas (including six currently living in the UK), offering financial rewards (one million Hong Kong dollars, approximately £100,000) for information leading to their arrests and prosecution

On 12 June, the Hong Kong SAR Government adopted a range of measures under the SNSO against six activists living in UK, including cancelling their Hong Kong passports. Other measures included barring any person from providing funds and resources to, leasing properties to, and establishing a joint venture or partnership with the six, as well as suspending their qualifications.

Secretary for Security Chris Tang explained that the six “are hiding in the United Kingdom” and “continue to collude with foreign forces to endanger national security”, adding that the UK Government and many politicians in the UK were “deliberately smearing the [Hong Kong] Government and attempting to influence the outcome of ongoing national security trials in Hong Kong”. Tang stressed that the cancellation of their passports did not violate the ICCPR.

In response, on 13 June, then-Minister of State for the Indo-Pacific the Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP said:

“Latest regrettable decision from Hong Kong authorities sees arbitrary measures taken against individuals in the UK including the cancellation of their Hong Kong passports.

It is unacceptable to use these kinds of legal measures to try and punish freedom of expression in the UK.”

JUDICIAL SYSTEM

Resignation of Two Retired UK Judges from the Court of Final Appeal

On 6 June 2024, the Hong Kong Judiciary announced the resignations of two retired UK judges, The Rt Hon The Lord Collins of Mapesbury and the Rt Hon Lord Sumption, as non-permanent judges of the CFA. The terms of office of Lord Collins and Lord Sumption were due to expire on 30 June 2026 and 18 December 2025 respectively.

In announcing his resignation, Lord Collins cited the “the political situation in Hong Kong”, but stressed he continues to have the “fullest confidence in the court and the total independence of its members”.

Chief Executive John Lee expressed regret at the resignations. Hong Kong’s Chief Justice Andrew Cheung Kui-nung, and Secretary for Justice Paul Lam Ting-kwok also regretted the decisions but reiterated the judiciary and the DoJ’s commitment to upholding the rule of law and judicial independence in Hong Kong.

On 10 June, Lord Sumption published the reasons for his resignation in the Financial Times. In his opinion piece entitled “The rule of law in Hong Kong is in grave danger”, he stated that Hong Kong judges have to operate in “an impossible political environment created by China”, and the existence of “illiberal legislation”, such as the NSL and sedition laws, coupled with continual calls for “judicial patriotism”, severely limits their freedom of action. Lord Sumption further stated “the rule of law is profoundly compromised in any area about which the government feels strongly”. He concluded it was “no longer realistic” to remain on the court “in the hope that the presence of overseas judges would help sustain the rule of law”.

Lord Sumption also referenced the High Court’s reasons for its verdict in the NSL trial of 47 pro-democracy politicians and activists (further details provided under this section), describing it as “legally indefensible” and “symptomatic of a growing malaise

in the Hong Kong judiciary". Lord Sumption concluded the NSL was imposed in response to "the paranoia of the authorities" to crush peaceful political dissent.

On 11 June, the Hong Kong Government issued a statement in response to Lord Sumption's remarks, saying there is "no truth" that the courts are under any political pressure from the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities in the adjudication of national security cases. Chief Executive John Lee said people who "try to damage the rule of law in Hong Kong" are "amongst those in the UK" and "in the UK Government". He noted that "some UK officials and politicians try to weaponise the UK judicial influence to target China and the Hong Kong SAR".

The Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the PRC and the CGLO, issued statements criticising Lord Sumption. Chief Justice Andrew Cheung, on behalf of the Judiciary, thanked Lord Sumption for his contribution to the CFA.

On 18 June, Chief Executive John Lee said Hong Kong would continue to appoint overseas non-permanent judges to the CFA.

Appointments, Extensions and Non-renewal of Terms of Overseas Non-permanent Judges of the Court of Final Appeal

On 23 February, Chief Executive John Lee accepted the recommendation of the Chief Justice to extend the term of office of retired UK judge the Rt Hon The Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury as a non-permanent judge to the CFA for three years, starting 1 March.

On 12 March, the Judiciary, in response to media enquiries, confirmed that the Hon. Mr Justice Anthony Murray Gleeson, formerly Chief Justice of the Federal Court of Australia, did not renew his tenure as a non-permanent judge of the CFA, citing age. Gleeson was appointed to the CFA in 2009. His term ended on 29 February 2024.

On 25 March, the Chief Executive appointed the Hon. Mr Justice James Leslie Bain Allsop, formerly Chief Justice of the Federal Court of Australia, as a non-permanent judge of the CFA for a term of three years.

As of the end of the reporting period, eight overseas non-permanent judges from common law jurisdictions were serving on the CFA, including three from the United Kingdom, four from Australia and one from Canada.

On 10 June, the Rt Hon Madam Justice Beverley McLachlin, formerly Chief Justice of Canada, announced she would not renew her tenure as a non-permanent judge, citing family reasons. Her term of office expires on 30 July 2024.

Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (National Security Law)

According to the Hong Kong Security Bureau, since the imposition of the NSL on 30 June 2020 until 7 June 2024, a total of 299 people have been arrested for national security offences and 176 have been charged, with at least 112 convicted or awaiting sentence.

Joseph John

On 11 April, the District Court sentenced dual Portuguese and Chinese national Joseph John, also known as Wong Kin-chung, to five years in prison for conspiracy to incite secession for publishing pro-independence posts online whilst overseas. He is the first dual national convicted and imprisoned under the NSL.

Judge Ernest Lin Kam-hung ruled the offence was “serious” and adopted the mandatory NSL minimum sentence of five years for “serious” offences. Lin criticised the defendant for inciting hatred and violence whilst “being in a safe place” and “having pledged allegiance to another country”.

The Hong Kong Alliance

As detailed in previous Six-monthly Reports, in September 2021, three former committee members of the disbanded Hong Kong Alliance were charged with incitement to subversion under the NSL. These individuals were Chow Hang-tung, Lee Cheuk-yan and Albert Ho Chun-yan.

In a case management hearing on 24 April, one of the presiding judges Alex Lee Wang-tang noted the trial would not take place in 2024, with no date set as of the end of the reporting period. The three defendants have been held on remand for subversion since their arrests in September 2021.

Separately, Chow and two other former committee members filed an appeal to the High Court, after being found guilty in March 2023 of failing to cooperate with National Security Police and sentenced to four and a half months in prison. This case concerned the Alliance’s refusal to hand over details of its financial reports and activities to aid investigation, thereby breaching the implementation rules of Article 43 of the NSL. The defendants argued that they had no obligation to comply as the Alliance did not fall into the “foreign agent” category under the NSL.

On 14 March, High Court Judge Anna Lai Yuen-kee dismissed the appeal based on the defendants’ non-compliance, upholding the legitimacy of the police request. The court ruled that the police did not have to prove the Alliance was a “foreign agent” before issuing the notices to provide information under the NSL.

On 17 April, the High Court rejected the defendants’ application for leave to appeal to the CFA. They later sought leave directly from the CFA. An application hearing by the CFA is set for 31 July 2024.

Agnes Chow Ting

Activist Agnes Chow Ting, former Standing Committee member of the disbanded political party Demosisto and student group Scholarism, was arrested along with Jimmy Lai and others for allegedly colluding with foreign forces on 10 August 2020. She was released on bail on the condition that she surrender her passport and report to police regularly. In September 2023, Chow was allowed to leave Hong Kong to continue her studies in Canada, under the requirement she report to police by the end of the year. Chow later announced that she would not return to Hong Kong, citing personal safety. On 6 February 2024, Hong Kong Police confirmed an arrest warrant had been issued for Chow, warning that she would be “pursued for life”.

Trial of 47 Pro-democracy Politicians and Activists under the NSL

The trial of 47 pro-democracy politicians and activists (known as the ‘NSL 47’) charged with conspiracy to commit subversion ended on 4 December 2023. On 30 May 2024,

the High Court delivered its verdict for the 16 defendants who pleaded not guilty. 14 of them were found guilty, and two – Lawrence Lau Wai-chung and Lee Yue-shun– were acquitted, marking the first ever acquittals under the NSL.

The High Court ruled that had those elected in unofficial primaries become Legislative Council members and obtained a majority, the plan to veto Government budgets and public expenditure indiscriminately would have created “a constitutional crisis for Hong Kong”, thereby constituting a conspiracy to subvert state power. The court determined that violence, or threat of violence, is not a necessary element of the subversion offence.

In their judgment, a panel of three judges, including Alex Lee Wan-tang, noted:

- Limiting unlawful means to acts of force would be a “narrow” interpretation. The definitions of ‘other unlawful means’ in the NSL include means other than by use of force or threat of force.
- Otherwise, it would be “absurd and illogical and defeat the purpose of the NSL”. The NSL was drafted with the understanding that national security could also be undermined by non-violent acts.
- “It was therefore inconceivable that acts or activities by whatever forms and methods with a view to subverting the state power could be considered to be acceptable or tolerable.”
- Indiscriminately vetoing the budgets or public expenditure would be a violation of the Basic Law, and the NSL, and would lead to a serious interference in, disruption or undermining of the Government’s performance of duties and functions.

The judges adjudicated on whether the 16 defendants had: taken part in the conspiracy; had knowledge of the scheme; were a party to the scheme; and lastly, had the intention to subvert state power. They concluded they were certain that all four elements could be proved against 14 of the defendants. They were uncertain Lawrence Lau and Lee Yue-shun had the intention to subvert state power, noting both never publicly advocated vetoing Government budgets, thereby finding Lau and Lee not guilty.

Chief Superintendent of National Security Police, Steve Li Kwai-wah, commented on the case outside the court on 30 May. He welcomed the verdict, noting that 45 of 47 defendants had been convicted and the other two were just “temporarily” acquitted. Li said the case was “serious” and criticised the defendants for using the primary election as a “disguise” to paralyse the Government.

In response to this verdict on 30 May, then-Minister of State for the Indo-Pacific, the Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, said:

“This case is a clear demonstration of the way that the Hong Kong authorities have used the Beijing-imposed National Security Law (NSL) to stifle opposition and criminalise political dissent. The NSL 47 are guilty of nothing more than seeking to exercise their right to freedom of speech, of assembly and of political participation, as guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and promised in the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

Today's verdict will only further tarnish Hong Kong's international reputation. It sends a message that Hong Kongers can no longer safely and meaningfully participate in peaceful political debate.

We call on the Hong Kong authorities to end NSL prosecutions and release all individuals charged under it."

On 31 May, the then-Foreign Secretary commented on X (formerly known as Twitter):

"This is the opposite of one country, two systems."

The DoJ immediately indicated its intention to appeal against the non-guilty verdicts, ultimately only filing an appeal against Lau on 13 June.

Mitigation commenced following the High Court verdict, with the first round of mitigation hearings held between 25 and 26 June. The remainder have been tentatively scheduled for July and August. By the end of the reporting period, a total of 45 defendants remained in custody after being convicted of their NSL charges. One defendant, Lau, was acquitted pending the DoJ's appeal. The other defendant Lee was acquitted and awaits the court's lifting of existing bail conditions.

Jimmy Lai's National Security Law and Sedition Trial

Jimmy Lai Chee-ying, founder of Apple Daily, stands accused of two counts of conspiracy to collude with foreign forces under the NSL, and one charge of sedition under the Crimes Ordinance. A third NSL charge of collusion with foreign forces was later dropped by the prosecution. Lai pleaded not guilty to all three charges he currently faces. His trial, which began on 18 December 2023, continued throughout the reporting period.

Five prosecution accomplice witnesses, including three former Apple Daily staff, along with Andy Li Yu-hin and Chan Tsz-wah, all charged with conspiring with Lai to collude with foreign forces under the NSL, testified against Lai in court over a period of approximately 60 days. Royston Chow Tat-kuen, former senior executive of Apple Daily's parent company Next Digital, also testified against Lai. The prosecution concluded their opening case on 11 June.

At the end of the reporting period, Lai's defence was scheduled to continue the trial with a submission of "no case to answer" on 24 July, in which they seek Lai's acquittal by arguing that the prosecution's evidence is insufficient to demonstrate a case against him. As of the end of the reporting period, his trial has sat for 90 days, already exceeding the 80 days allotted.

Jimmy Lai's Legal Actions Relating to the NPCSC Interpretation of the NSL

As detailed in previous Six-monthly Reports, British barrister Timothy Owen KC was blocked from defending Jimmy Lai in his NSL and sedition trial, despite permission being granted by the CFA in November 2022. This came after an interpretation of the NSL made by the NPCSC in December 2022, which clarified the powers of the Hong Kong National Security Committee (NSC) in determining whether overseas lawyers not qualified in Hong Kong can participate in national security cases. The NSC advised the Immigration Department to refuse a work visa for Owen. In response, Lai launched a judicial review challenging the NSC decision. The High Court rejected his application,

noting that the NPCSC interpretation was “applicable”, and all NSC decisions are “not amendable to judicial review”. Lai brought the legal challenge to the Court of Appeal.

On 16 April this year, the Court of Appeal upheld the High Court’s decision. In their judgment, a panel of three judges reiterated, citing the NSL and the NPCSC interpretation, that the NSC must be free from interference and its decisions are not amendable to judicial review. The court highlighted that “the combined effect” of the NSL and the NPCSC interpretation “leaves no room for any doubt or ambiguity”, adding that “the meaning of the language is not reasonably capable of sustaining any competing alternative interpretation”. The court ruled that Lai must pay an undisclosed amount of costs for the proceedings. Lai applied to the Court of Appeal for leave to appeal to the CFA. As of the end of the reporting period, no decision was made on a CFA appeal.

Use of Sedition Laws Under the Crimes Ordinance

Tam Tak-chi

As recorded in the previous Six-monthly Reports, activist Tam Tak-chi sought leave to appeal against his conviction and sentence, after being found guilty of seven counts of “uttering seditious words” and given a 21-month prison sentence in 2022. Tam, citing English case law, submitted a judgment concerning the constitutionality of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago’s Sedition Act, delivered by the Judicial Committee of the UK Privy Council in October 2023, to the Court of Appeal for consideration. Contrary to rulings of the Hong Kong courts, the Privy Council ruled that intention to incite violence is an essential element of sedition offences.

On 7 March 2024, the Court of Appeal dismissed Tam’s application. The court ruled that intention to incite violence is “not a necessary ingredient” of sedition, and seditious intention must be interpreted with reference to the “specific legal and social landscape” in Hong Kong. In particular, the Court said it had “reservations” about the applicability of the case law cited, describing the Judicial Committee’s views as “necessarily limited to the Trinidad Sedition Act”.

Tam subsequently applied for leave to appeal to the CFA. The appeal was not yet scheduled by the end of the reporting period.

Stand News

The trial of two former Stand News journalists charged with conspiracy to publish seditious publications remained ongoing. Both pleaded not guilty to the charge. The verdict, after being adjourned three times, is scheduled for 29 August.

Chui Hoi-chun

19-year-old Chui Hoi-chun, was given three years detention in a training centre for sedition and charges under the National Anthem Ordinance, filed an appeal to the High Court against his conviction and sentence, pending the CFA verdict for Tam Tak-chi’s sedition appeal. Chui was the first person convicted for seditious acts committed outside of Hong Kong.

Chu Kai-pong

On 10 January, Chu Kai-pong was sentenced to three months for acting with seditious intent and possessing seditious publications. He was arrested at the airport in November 2023 wearing clothing bearing the slogan “Liberate Hong Kong” and carrying related items such as flags. Chief Magistrate Victor So Wai-tak noted that

despite the defendant having worn the slogan in public for a relatively short period of time, which was “less penetrative” than posting it online, he had “knowingly” broken the law.

Chu was charged under the SNSO for wearing the same protest slogan in public on another occasion. Details are provided in the previous section.

Koo Sze-yiu

On 16 February, veteran activist Koo Sze-yiu, who had allegedly planned a protest against the December 2023 District Council election, was found guilty of sedition. He was sentenced to nine months in prison for “attempting to do or making preparations to do an act or acts with seditious intention”. Chief Magistrate Victor So ruled that Koo had an intention to create resistance and incite hatred against the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities by carrying a homemade paper coffin, which symbolised “overthrowing the Central Government”, noting his plan would have been carried out had the police not arrested him in advance.

Koo had previously been convicted of the same offence and sentenced to nine months in prison for planning a protest at the CGLO against the Beijing Winter Olympics.

Tsang Kwok-hei

On 10 April, Tsang Kwok-hei was sentenced to five months in prison for posting seditious and pro-independence messages online allegedly inciting hatred against the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities. Those ruled “seditious” included his negative forecasts on Hong Kong as well as criticisms of the Chinese Communist Party and senior Hong Kong SAR Government officials. Magistrate Don So Man-lung said that the defendant had “provoked disgust” amongst the public.

Court of Final Appeal Grants Government Injunction in Relation to ‘Glory to Hong Kong’ Song

As recorded in the previous Six-monthly Reports, ‘Glory to Hong Kong’ is a song written during the 2019 anti-extradition bill protests. In June 2023, the DoJ applied to the High Court for an interim injunction to prohibit, on national security grounds, four types of unlawful acts related to the song. In July the same year, the High Court rejected the DoJ’s application, ruling that an injunction was not necessary as the unlawful acts were already criminal offences. The DoJ appealed against the ruling.

On 24 February this year, the DoJ submitted an amended injunction order, requesting 32 YouTube videos in relation to the song should be removed from the website. However, the Court of Appeal said the draft order remained ambiguous, asking the DoJ to re-amend it to clarify and specify what acts should be prohibited.

On 8 May, the Court of Appeal allowed the DoJ’s appeal, and granted an interim injunction in relation to the song. Its judgment noted that the Chief Executive’s national security assessment was “binding on the court”, that there was a “compelling need” for an injunction as a “countermeasure” to aid the criminal law for safeguarding national security. The judgment highlighted that there had been “widespread” and “persistent flouting of the criminal law” and accepted the executive’s assessment that “prosecutions alone are clearly not adequate to tackle the acute criminal problems”. The judgment also noted that an injunction would effectively prevent further damage to national security, which “would likely to be irreparable”.

The injunction allows exceptions for lawful use of the song, including academic and journalistic activities. Members of the public can apply to the court for such exceptions.

Local media reported that Google had complied by blocking Hong Kong viewers' access to all 32 videos listed in the injunction. A spokesperson for YouTube said it would consider appealing to promote access to information. No known applications were made before the deadline for appeal on 5 June.

Use of United Nations Anti-Terrorism Law

On 23 April, the trial of seven individuals charged under the United Nations (UN) Anti-Terrorism (Measures) Ordinance began, marking the first time it was invoked in Hong Kong after being enacted locally in 2002 as per a binding UN Security Council resolution. The defendants, including three of the Shenzhen 12 previously imprisoned in mainland China, who stand accused of conspiring to plant two bombs and shoot police officers during a 2019 protest.

Amongst the seven, six were charged with conspiracy to commit bombing of proscribed objects, and the seventh charged with conspiracy to assist the commission of terrorist acts. All pleaded not guilty to their respective conspiracy charges. The bombing charge is liable to life imprisonment. A nine-person jury has been selected. The trial was scheduled to last 60 days and was still ongoing as of the end of the reporting period.

Outstanding Arrests in relation to 2019 Protests

According to Hong Kong Police statistics, at least 10,000 people were arrested in relation to the 2019 anti-extradition bill protests. As of 31 March 2024, around 3,000 of them have been charged with around 2,300 convicted. As of the end of the reporting period, about 7,000 arrestees were still pending police investigation.

18 August 2019 Protest Conviction Appeals

As recorded in the last Six-monthly Report, seven pro-democracy politicians, activists and pan-democrat legislators, including veteran Martin Lee Chu-ming and Apple Daily publisher Jimmy Lai Chee-ying, appealed against their convictions for organising as well as participating in the 18 August 2019 protest.

In August 2023, the Court of Appeal cleared all seven defendants of organising an unauthorised assembly but maintained their convictions for knowingly taking part in it. In December the same year, the Court of Appeal allowed the defendants to appeal to the CFA against their convictions for taking part, acknowledging that the case involved a "great and general importance" despite ruling the evidence of their participation as "overwhelming". At the same time, the DoJ sought leave to appeal to the CFA against their 'organising' acquittals.

On 23 February this year, the CFA refused the DoJ's application. In its judgment, the CFA noted that the DoJ had failed to establish "well-founded" arguments. They ruled that it was not reasonably arguable to state that a person who organises the route is the person who organises the procession, and therefore the defendants were organisers as they had led the procession throughout. The CFA made clear the fact that Lai and others had marched at the head of the procession, holding a banner and chanting slogans "did not support the inference that the defendants had organised the procession".

On the same day, the CFA granted permission to Lai and others to challenge whether the implementation of the Public Order Ordinance had excessively restricted participants' right to freedom of expression and assembly.

A panel of five CFA judges, including the Rt Hon The Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury, conducted an appeal hearing on 24 June. The CFA will hand down its verdict at a later date.

Prosecutions Against Former Legislator Lam Cheuk-ting in relation to the 21 July 2019 Yuen Long Incident

Two non-NSL prosecutions against former Democratic Party lawmaker Lam Cheuk-ting remained ongoing, both related to the 2019 incident at Yuen Long. Apart from the two non-NSL charges he faced, Lam remained in custody on charges of conspiracy to commit subversion under the NSL.

Disclosure of identity of a subject person under investigation

On 8 February, the High Court quashed the conviction of Lam for disclosing details of an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) investigation into the misconduct of a senior police officer involved in a 2019 incident at Yuen Long. Lam was previously found guilty of unauthorised disclosure of investigation details under an ICAC ordinance, and sentenced to four months in prison, after he revealed publicly the identity of the officer and his suspected misconduct offence amidst the investigation. Lam subsequently appealed. High Court Judge Douglas Yau Tak-hong acquitted Lam on the basis that the ordinance covers investigation into bribery-related offences only, in which misconduct in public office is not specified.

In particular, Yau noted that the Department of Justice (DoJ) had adopted a "broad interpretation" of the law, in contrary to the legislative intent of narrowing down the scope of offences.

On 20 February, the DoJ applied for leave to appeal to the CFA against the ruling and was granted leave on 7 March. No date has been set for the appeal hearing as of the end of the reporting period.

Rioting

As covered in previous reports, Lam, along with six others, were charged in August 2020 with taking part in a riot inside Yuen Long MTR station on 21 July 2019. They allegedly attacked a group of people in white shirts (some of whom were also charged with rioting in a separate case). All seven pleaded not guilty and have competed testifying. The District Court had previously ruled that the defendants have a case to answer. The Court set closing submissions for 19 September. The verdict is expected to be delivered by the end of 2024.

Prosecutions under the Anthem, Flag and Emblem Ordinances

The reporting period saw further arrests and convictions under the National Anthem Ordinance and the National Flag and National Emblem Ordinance.

On 27 March, 36-year-old Chu Wing-fung was sentenced to 45 days in prison after pleading guilty to insulting the Chinese national flag and the regional flag. He was found to have taken down 11 national and 7 regional flags and thrown them on the street during HKSAR Establishment Day celebrations in 2023. The magistrate said the defendant's act of removing and disposing the flags constituted a "serious" insult.

On 10 April, 21-year-old Chan Pak-yui, charged with insulting the national flag during an international volleyball match held in Hong Kong, began his trial at the Magistrates' Court. Chan allegedly refused to stand up and sang the song 'Do you Hear the People Sing' when the Chinese national anthem was played. Chan pleaded not guilty. His defence argued that he did not intend to insult the national anthem and that his autism diagnosis, as well as the fact that he did not take medication as prescribed before the game, explained his behaviour. The Court is due to deliver its verdict on 15 July.

On 6 June, three people were arrested for allegedly insulting the national anthem during an international football game held in Hong Kong. Police said the individuals refused to stand up and turned their backs when the anthem was played, during which spectators were reportedly observed and filmed by plainclothes officers. Amnesty International condemned the arrests, describing them as "an attack on freedom of expression". All three arrestees were later released on bail without charge.

Court Overturns Government Dismissal of Public School Teacher over Anti-police comments

In July 2023, a government schoolteacher was dismissed for misconduct over anti-police comments published online during the 2019 protests, with all of her retirement benefits forfeited, following an investigation by the Education Bureau. In response, the teacher requested a judicial review of the dismissal decision. She argued that it constituted a disproportionate interference with her constitutional rights to freedom of expression and privacy.

On 26 April this year, the High Court ruled in favour of the applicant and quashed the Government's dismissal, ruling it as "harsh and oppressive". In his judgment, Judge Russell Coleman noted that dismissal without benefits was not the "only" appropriate punishment and its imposition "must have involved some error of law", given other possible options stipulated in existing codes and regulations such as compulsory retirement. In addition, Coleman noted that "the need for deterrence against the particular misconduct in 2019 or 2020 was likely significantly reduced in the changed civil and societal circumstances".

Arrest of Kwok Cheuk-kin

On 6 June, 85-year-old Kwok Cheuk-kin, a retired civil servant known for launching legal challenges against government policies, was arrested for allegedly making false representations about his income and assets. Police said Kwok had obtained subsidies and social welfare benefits (including legal aid) by deception under the Theft Ordinance.

Kwok has brought multiple high-profile judicial reviews against the government since 2006, with the most recent ones related to the invalidation of Covid-19 vaccination medical exemption certificates in October 2022 and the constitutionality of the new nomination requirements in the December 2023 District Council Election.

Kwok was released on police bail pending investigation. He has not been charged as of the end of the reporting period.

PUBLIC SERVICE

New Civil Service Code

In December 2023, the Hong Kong SAR Government proposed updating the Civil Service Code, which was first introduced in 2009, highlighting the need for civil servants to safeguard the constitutional order and national security. Political neutrality remains one of the core values. The updated Code states that public officers must not criticise government policies openly in their capacity as civil servants. This requirement also applies to all civil service unions. Secretary for the Civil Service Ingrid Yeung Ho Poi-yau warned civil servants must be cautious when expressing personal opinions.

The consultation on the updated Code ended on 19 January this year. The Government said it would consider the views received and promulgate the updated Code. Some civil service unions, including the Federation of Civil Service Unions, expressed concern that civil servants would no longer be able to criticise, for example, the Government over policies relating to pay rise. As of the end of the reporting period, the updated Code had not been released.

National Security Training for Civil Servants

On 24 April, the Civil Service College held seminars for over 200 civil servants and political appointees on China's achievements in safeguarding national security. Head of the Civil Service College, Oscar Kwok Yam-shu, the former Deputy Police Commissioner, describes national security training as "a significant part of national studies training" for civil servants, adding it enables civil servants to fulfil the Government's responsibility in safeguarding national security.

Separately, local media reported in April that the Civil Service Bureau will introduce a series of training programmes for middle and senior rank civil servants, focussed on "mindset building", to enhance patriotism and strengthen their awareness of national security.

EDUCATION

Patriotic Education

China's NPCSC adopted a new Patriotic Education Law in October 2023. The law, which took effect on 1 January 2024, was not added to Annex III of the Basic Law. Nonetheless, it includes provisions on patriotic education for Hong Kong. The Hong Kong SAR Government has since put forward various measures to align with the law.

In February, the Education Bureau updated its guidelines, requiring schools to teach students the symbolic meanings of the regional flag and emblem and relevant norms, in addition to the established requirements for the national flag and emblem.

In early April, the Hong Kong SAR Government announced the establishment of a working group on patriotic education under the Constitution and Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee, with Chief Secretary Eric Chan Kwok-ki, and Starry Lee Wai-king, Hong Kong's sole delegate to China's NPCSC, appointed chairman and convenor respectively. The working group was set up to coordinate the work of government departments and non-governmental organisations in "dovetailing with the Patriotic Education Law of the People's Republic of China". It will formulate strategy for promoting patriotic education in Hong Kong, as well as evaluate and review its implementation.

During a media interview on 21 April, Lee said it was “necessary” for Hong Kong people to learn about socialism, highlighting China’s “achievements” under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. She added that people would not face punishment for not loving China and the ruling party.

On 29 April, the Working Group held its first meeting. Chief Secretary Eric Chan noted that the authorities would promote patriotic education in “an all-around manner”, and “soft tactics” would be used to integrate patriotism into core values of the community.

FINANCE

Over the reporting period, the Hong Kong SAR Government continued to manage its own financial matters, including disposing of its financial resources and drawing up its budgets and its final accounts.

The Financial Secretary, Paul Chan, attended the World Economic Forum in Davos which ran between 15-19 January 2024.

On 24-25 January, Hong Kong hosted the first fully in-person Asia Financial Forum.

On 28 February 2024, Financial Secretary Paul Chan presented the 2024-25 Budget to the Legislative Council, which aimed to boost confidence with new measures to improve financial competitiveness, stimulate tourism and support technological innovation. Measures included the removal of all special stamp duties on residential property transactions.

ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Hong Kong maintained its capitalist economic and trade systems during the reporting period, retaining policy autonomy in economic and trade decisions. Hong Kong continues to be a separate customs territory, and to engage independently through its membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

On 9 January, Hong Kong signed an amendment to its free trade agreement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to liberalise product specific rules of origin.

Hong Kong Green Week commenced on 26 February, promoting discussion around sustainability, and providing a platform for sustainability-themed events across the SAR.

Between 26-29 February, the Secretary for Commercial and Economic Development, Algernon Yau, attended the 13th Ministerial Conference of the WTO in Abu Dhabi.

On 3 March, Yau signed an Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement and a Double Taxation Treaty with Bahrain during a visit there.

On 1 April, Hong Kong customs extended the Free Trade Agreement Transshipment Scheme to cover shipments moving from Mainland China to Singapore.

On 19 April, the China Securities Regulatory Commission issued a series of measures to further expand mutual access (‘Connect’ schemes) between the stock markets in mainland China and Hong Kong.

On 22 April, the Hong Kong Commissioner of Customs and Excise signed an Authorized Economic Operator Memorandum of Understanding with the Bahraini Customs Authority during a visit to Bahrain.

30 April, the Securities and Futures Commission permitted the trading of bitcoin and ether spot-exchange traded funds in Hong Kong.

On 6 May, the Shenzhen and Hong Kong authorities announced the pilot launch of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong cross-boundary data validation platform, facilitating the development of fintech innovation and cross-boundary data flow in both Guangdong and Hong Kong.

Between 12-22 May, the Commerce Secretary Algernon Yau attended the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ministers Responsible for Trade meeting in Peru. On 15 May, during this visit, the Secretary announced the substantive completion of free trade agreement negotiations between Hong Kong and Peru.

On 13 June, the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Financial Co-operation Committee was established and convened its first meeting in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong applied to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership in January 2022. By the end of the reporting period, the city had yet to accede.

At the end of the reporting period, the decision by the Hong Kong SAR Government on 24 August 2023 to ban seafood imports from 10 prefectures in Japan following the Fukushima Daiichi wastewater released remained in place.

MONETARY SYSTEM

Hong Kong maintained its status as an international financial centre and was ranked fourth of 121 financial centres in the 35th Global Financial Centres Index. Hong Kong's monetary and financial systems continued to be overseen by its four major independent regulators. The Exchange Fund continued to be managed and controlled by the Hong Kong SAR Government via the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), and continued to regulate the exchange value of the Hong Kong Dollar (HKD), within a band of HKD \$7.75 to \$7.85 to one US Dollar (USD). As of the end of the reporting period, the official foreign currency reserve assets of Hong Kong amounted to USD 416.3 billion, representing over five times the currency in circulation.

On 7 March, the HKMA, Hong Kong's de facto central bank, announced the commencement of *Project Ensemble*, a new wholesale central bank digital currency project to render support to the development of the tokenisation market in Hong Kong. On 14 March, HKMA launches Phase 2 of the e-HKD Pilot Programme, to further explore innovative use cases for an e-HKD in Hong Kong.

SHIPPING

Hong Kong maintained its own systems of shipping management, regulation and registration over the reporting period.

On 23 February, the Hong Kong SAR Government introduced domestic legislative amendments to incorporate the latest requirements of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (1973) of the International Maritime Organisation, and the Maritime Labour Convention (2006) of the International Labour Organisation.

Industry statistics released in April showed that for the first time, Hong Kong no longer ranked in the top ten busiest sea cargo ports globally, falling to 11th place. Neighbouring ports in Shenzhen and Guangzhou saw greater volumes of sea cargo

traffic, registering at 5th and 6th respectively. Analyst firm Sea-Intelligence noted a major loss in the Port of Hong Kong's international connectivity, driven by route consolidation towards larger regional hubs by shipping alliances. This is mirrored in Hong Kong's ongoing fall across Q1 and Q2 2024 in the UN Trade and Development's Liner Shipping Connectivity Index.

On 21 June, the Hong Kong SAR Government introduced domestic legislative amendments to incorporate the latest requirements of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea of the International Maritime Organization.

CIVIL AVIATION

Hong Kong maintained its status as an international aviation centre over the reporting period, remaining the busiest air freight hub globally by a significant margin.

Hong Kong's flag carrier, Cathay Pacific, faced criticism from the Hong Kong SAR Government and some members of the Legislative Council for a high number of cancellations driven by staffing shortages. Michael Tien Puk-sun, a member of the Legislative Council, commented to local media that he thought the Government should take a stake in the airline. A spokesperson for the Transport and Logistics Bureau confirmed the Government had no plans to become a long-term shareholder of the airline.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS & UK-BILATERAL RELATIONS

British National (Overseas)

On 23 May, the Home Office published the latest UK immigration statistics. Following its launch on 31 January 2021, until March 2024, there were approximately 210,800 applications for the British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) visa route, with over 201,877 visas granted.

The Hong Kong SAR Government continued not to recognise the BN(O) passport as a valid travel document.

Visits

Between 23 and 24 April, the then-Minister of State for Indo-Pacific, the Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, visited Hong Kong. This marked the first visit by a UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development (FCDO) minister to Hong Kong since 2018. She met with Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Christopher Hui Ching-yu.

During the meeting, the Minister emphasised the UK's support for rights and freedoms set out in the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The Minister raised concerns over the deterioration of rights and freedom in Hong Kong precipitated by the NSL, as well as the prosecution of Jimmy Lai and others and the recent passage of legislation under Article 23. She also addressed matters of concern for the BN(O) community in the UK including the issuing of arrest warrants and bounties for individuals living in the UK. The Minister discussed areas of cooperation, including issues of global concern such as tackling illicit finance.

The Lord Mayor of the City of London, Lord Mayor Mainelli and the City of London Policy Chairman Chris Hayward visited Hong Kong between the 17-18 March and on 17 June respectively to promote London as a financial centre.

Trade and Investment

Hong Kong represents the UK's 18th largest global trading partner, having accounted for 1.4% of total UK trade in the four quarters to the end of December 2023. Total trade in goods and services (exports plus imports) between the UK and Hong Kong SAR was £25.5 billion in the four quarters to the end of December 2023, a decrease of 11.8% or £3.4 billion from the four quarters to the end of December 2022. Of this £25.5 billion, UK exports accounted for £15.7 billion.

Culture

Between 1 January and 30 June 2024, the British Council delivered 1,761 University and School entrance exams and 1,579 UK professional qualifications (e.g. Association of Chartered and Certified Accountants). The British Council also delivered 24,873 IELTS tests. During the same period 4,124 Young Learners and 1,092 Adult students attended regular English Language courses.

To coincide with International Women's Day, the British Council launched a graduate scholarship programme for women from minority backgrounds in collaboration with Newcastle University and supported by the Sir Tang Shiu Kin Education Trust. The scholarship offers up to five fully funded scholarships per year for three years in Law; engineering; environment and sustainability subjects; economics, finance, and international development. The scholarship attracted 24 applications and four scholarships have been awarded.

The National Gallery's exhibition *Masterpieces: Botticelli to Van Gogh* which opened at the Hong Kong Palace Museum on 22 November 2023 closed on 11 April 2024.

In May, the UK Department for Business and Trade led a delegation of museum operators from the West Kowloon Cultural District and the Hong Kong SAR Government to attend London's Museums + Heritage Show. The operators also met representatives from 10 museums and cultural venues in London.

DEFENCE

There has been no evidence that military forces sent by the Central Peoples' Government (CPG) to be stationed in Hong Kong for the purpose of defence have interfered in the internal affairs of the city. Expenditure for these military forces have been borne by the CPG.

RIGHT OF ABODE, TRAVEL & IMMIGRATION

On 10 April, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said its Taipei-based advocacy officer Aleksandra Bielakowska was denied entry to Hong Kong after being detained, searched and questioned for six hours at the airport. In response, RSF said in a statement: "This action by the Hong Kong authorities, unprecedented for RSF, marks a new decline in the already poor press freedom climate in the territory".

OTHER REPORTS

In January, Human Rights Watch released its annual World Report. The report noted that the "Chinese government resumed full control" over Hong Kong and "freedoms have sharply declined" since the NSL was imposed in 2020.

On 15 February, the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)'s annual democracy Index 2023 continued to rank Hong Kong 88th out of 167 countries or territories. The EIU categorised Hong Kong as a "hybrid regime", ranking Hong Kong's scores for electoral process and pluralism at 2.75 out of 10 and overall ranking at 5.24 out of 10.

On 29 February, Freedom House's 2024 Freedom in the World report scored Hong Kong 41 out of 100 and as "partly free", falling one place from 2023. The report maintained that Hong Kong traditionally enjoyed substantial civil liberties and the rule of law, but the implementation of the NSL has "amounted a multi-front attack" on the 'One Country, Two Systems' framework.

On 23 April, the US State Department 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in China (including Hong Kong) highlighted a number of human rights issues. These included: arbitrary arrest and detention; the independence of the judiciary; transnational repression against individuals outside of Hong Kong; unjustified arrests or prosecutions of journalists and censorship; substantial interference with the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of association, and unreasonable restrictions on political participation. The report stated that China continued to dismantle Hong Kong's political freedoms and autonomy in violation of the commitments made in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law.

On 3 May, RSF published its 2024 World Press Freedom Index, marking World Press Freedom Day. Hong Kong was ranked 135th out of 180 countries and territories globally, with its overall score falling from 44.86 to 43.06. RSF noted that the fall was due to "an increase in the persecution of journalists" under the NSL.

On 13 June, the European Union External Action Service published its Joint Report on Hong Kong to the European Parliament and Council. The report emphasised the continued erosion of rights and freedoms in the city.

CONCLUSION

Under the Sino-British Joint Declaration, China guaranteed to uphold Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy, as well as protect and uphold in law the rights and freedoms of people in Hong Kong. This includes the provisions of the ICCPR and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Actions taken by the CPG since the 2019 protests, in particular the imposition of the NSL in 2020 and the elimination of any meaningful opposition in the Legislative Council in 2021, have seriously impacted the civil and political rights and freedoms of people in Hong Kong.

The last six months have demonstrated the Hong Kong SAR Government's continued focus on national security above all other considerations. Provided this remains their main priority, the freedoms of people in Hong Kong will continue to be overridden by the interests of the executive. Every jurisdiction has the duty to protect the safety and security of the state and its citizens. However, governments must ensure fundamental rights are protected when implementing national security legislation, as outlined by internationally accepted standards such as the Johannesburg Principles and enshrined in international human rights law.

Meeting the commitments of the Joint Declaration remains the best way for China to ensure Hong Kong's security and stability. As a co-signatory to the Joint Declaration, the UK will continue to stand up for the people of Hong Kong and honour our responsibilities.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

British National (Overseas)	BN(O)
Central Government Liaison Office	CGLO
Court of Appeal	CA
Court of Final Appeal	CFA
Central People's Government	CPG
Department of Justice	DoJ
Economist Intelligence Unit	EIU
European Union	EU
Foreign Correspondents' Club	FCC
Hong Kong Arts Development Council	HKADC
Hong Kong Bar Association	HKBA
Hong Kong Journalists Association	HKJA
Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office	HKMAO
Hong Kong Monetary Authority	HKMA
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region	HKSAR
Independent Commission Against Corruption	ICAC
Legislative Council	LegCo
National People's Congress Standing Committee	NPCSC
National Security Committee	NSC
National Security Law	NSL
Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	MFA
People's Republic of China	PRC
Reporters Without Borders	RSF
United Nations	UN
UN Human Rights Council	HRC