

U.S. SENATE PASSES HONG KONG RIGHTS BILL

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Nowhere to escape: Police detaining protesters as they tried to flee the Hong Kong Polytechnic University campus. AFP/NICOLAS ASFOURI

The U.S. Senate unanimously adopted legislation on Tuesday supporting “human rights and democracy” in Hong Kong and threatening to revoke its special economic status, angering China which promptly summoned a U.S. diplomat and threatened countermeasures.

The lawmakers also approved a measure that would ban the sale of tear gas, rubber bullets and other equipment that have been used by security forces to suppress protests for nearly six months.

Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu summoned the acting U.S. charge d'affaires, William Klein, to lodge a “strong protest” and demand that the U.S. prevent the Bill from becoming law. U.S. Ambassador Terry Branstad was out of the country.

“Otherwise, the Chinese side will take strong measures to resolutely counter it, and the U.S. side must bear all the consequences,” the statement said.

A U.S. Embassy spokesman said Mr. Klein “relayed that we are watching the situation in Hong Kong with grave concern” during the Foreign Ministry meeting.

China had also reacted angrily when the U.S. House of Representatives passed a similar measure last month.

The Senate’s Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act would require the U.S. President to annually review the favourable trade status that Washington grants to Hong Kong.

Rights abuses

It also mandates sanctions against Hong Kong and Chinese officials who commit human rights abuses including “extra-judicial rendition”.

The Senate “sent a clear message to Hong Kongers fighting for their long-cherished freedoms: We hear you, we continue to stand with you and we will not stand idly by as Beijing undermines your autonomy”, Republican Senator Marco Rubio said.

Passage of the Bill marks “an important step in holding accountable those Chinese and Hong Kong government officials responsible for Hong Kong’s eroding autonomy and human rights violations”.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee’s top Democrat, Robert Menendez, added the legislation “makes it clear that the U.S. will stand firmly and unambiguously with the legitimate aspirations of the people of Hong Kong”.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said the U.S. purpose was to “support the extremists and violent elements against China that are trying to mess up Hong Kong... and realise their sinister plot to hinder China's development by taking advantage of the Hong Kong

issue.”

Months of protest

The pro-democracy movement was ignited in June when millions took to streets in opposition to a now-abandoned attempt to allow extraditions from Hong Kong to the mainland.

The protests and resulting crackdowns have turned parts of Hong Kong into violent battlegrounds for weeks.

On Tuesday, protesters occupying a university defied warnings to surrender, as skirmishes between police and demonstrators continued.

Special discount offer on The Hindu subscription only for Today's paper readers

Already have an account ? [Sign in](#)

Find mobile-friendly version of articles from the day's newspaper in one easy-to-read list.

Enjoy reading as many articles as you wish without any limitations.

A select list of articles that match your interests and tastes.

Move smoothly between articles as our pages load instantly.

A one-stop-shop for seeing the latest updates, and managing your preferences.

We brief you on the latest and most important developments, three times a day.

*Our Digital Subscription plans do not currently include the e-paper ,crossword, iPhone, iPad mobile applications and print. Our plans enhance your reading experience.

Support The Hindu's new online experience.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

