

## UPHOLDING THE LAW

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

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The writer is the Chinese Ambassador to India

Recently, the situation in China's Hong Kong has drawn much attention. What happened in Hong Kong? Who caused the current situation there? What is China's position and attitude? I would like to take this opportunity to share the truth and China's views.

First, as protests in Hong Kong have descended into violent acts, the top priority is to stop the violence and chaos, and restore order in accordance with law. Over the past two months, Hong Kong saw continued illegal protests, which have become more and more aggressive and descended into extreme violence. This is by no means a matter of democracy or freedom. The aggressiveness and destructiveness of these acts are shocking.

Radical protesters attacked official institutions. They stormed the Hong Kong Legislative Council building, tore up copies of the Basic Law and defaced the regional emblem of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). They besieged the Liaison Office of the Central People's government in HKSAR and defaced China's national emblem.

They repeatedly removed China's national flag from the flagpole and threw it into the sea. Radicals have staged multiple violent assaults against the police. They attacked police with toxic liquids and powders and bit off one officer's finger. They hurled petrol bombs at police at various locations. A dozen police officers were injured and sent to hospital. What is even more horrifying is that on the evening of August 30, three masked men hacked a Hong Kong police officer with a knife, leaving him with bone-deep wounds. Radical protesters have assaulted citizens, bound up and attacked one reporter from the mainland, vandalised shops and hurled petrol bombs. These atrocities, which are still escalating with extreme hazards and cruelty, defy laws both human and divine, and cannot be tolerated by any civilised society.

Second, behind the demonstrations is the interference and instigation by some countries. External meddling in Hong Kong must cease. If one looks for the source of the violent acts, it can be found that rushing at the front are radical protesters, behind the scenes are "anti-China" forces inside and outside Hong Kong who scheme to destabilise the city. These people colluded with each other in an organised and premeditated attempt to create social unrest in Hong Kong. Some external forces have played a very disgraceful role in this regard. Instead of condemning the recent violent crimes in Hong Kong, some Western politicians criticised the HKSAR government for stopping the violence and chaos and restoring order in accordance with the law, defaming China's social system and internal and external policies.

The diplomatic agencies of some countries in Hong Kong support radicals by providing guidance and funding to them secretly or in public. Some Western media follow suit — they distort facts and paper over violence, advocating that "violence is the only solution to problems". They blame the Hong Kong police, who uphold public order, for "excessive law enforcement", but turn a blind eye to the atrocities committed by radicals against the police. With such double standards, how could equity and justice be upheld?

Third, what's happening in Hong Kong is purely China's internal affair. Any attempt to endanger China's sovereignty and security is absolutely impermissible. On July 1, 1997, China resumed sovereignty over Hong Kong and Hong Kong returned to the embrace of the motherland. Hong Kong is a part of China. The Chinese government exercises jurisdiction over Hong Kong according to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law of the HKSAR. Hong Kong affairs are purely China's internal affairs. This is a fact recognised internationally. All governments in the world recognise China's sovereignty over Hong Kong.

Hong Kong implements the policy of "One country, Two systems". What needs to be highlighted is that "One country, Two systems" should be understood and implemented as a whole. When talking about "Two systems", one must not forget that "One country" is the fundamental premise. In implementing "One country, Two systems", any attempt to endanger China's sovereignty and security, to challenge the power of the central government and the authority of the Basic Law, or to use Hong Kong to carry out infiltration and sabotage activities against the mainland is absolutely impermissible.

Fourth, the central government of China has the strong resolve and confidence to maintain Hong Kong's prosperity and stability. Hong Kong is known for its openness, prosperity and law and order. In the 22 years since its return to China, and with the support of the central government, Hong Kong's economic output has doubled and its global rule of law ranking jumped from below 60th to 16th. Hong Kong's status as an international financial, shipping and trade centre has been consolidated. It has been recognised by many international institutions as one of the world's most free economies and most competitive regions. Maintaining the rule of law, stability and prosperity of Hong Kong is in line with the common interests of all parties. I believe that all our fair-minded Indian friends would like to see Hong Kong put an end to violence, curb chaos and restore order.

Lessons from history tell us that so-called democracy and freedom without rule of law and order only lead to anarchism and social disorder. The people of Hong Kong can no longer bear the current grim situation and have spoken with righteous voices "anti-violence, seeking stability". What Hong Kong needs most today is to stop the violence and chaos, advocate the rule of law, restore order and punish violent activities.

The central government of China will continue to firmly support Chief Executive Carrie Lam in leading the Hong Kong government's administration according to the law, firmly support the Hong Kong police in strictly enforcing the law, and firmly support Hong Kong's prosperity and development. I hope and believe that the people of Hong Kong and the HKSAR government can work together to stop violence and chaos, resolutely resist foreign interference and restore and maintain the rule of law in Hong Kong as soon as possible.

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