

FREE HONG KONG

NEWS DIGEST

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More civil groups disband

University student union, student political activist group, Amnesty International Hong Kong are forced to disband due to the national security law.

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“Hong Kong add oil” can be seditious

Hong Kong’s annual marathon event stopped runners displaying a cheering slogan. University professor says the slogan can be subversive at court.

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Rights & freedom in custodies/prisons

Hong Kong introduces ‘smart prison’ and revises legal aid scheme. Prison censors books by former pro-democratic lawmaker.

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NATIONAL SECURITY LAW

New security offences to be created

Hong Kong authorities are drafting the Basic Law article 23, hoping to be completed within the next legislature term. The bill will target espionage activities, which the Security Chief Chris Tang said occurred during the social unrest between 2019-2020. Tang mentioned that distributing protective gear and metro tickets during the protests 2019-2020 are state-level organised behaviors. The bill will undergo public consultation. [[Al Jazeera, Standard](#)]

Police issues court order to 612 Humanitarian Fund

The 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund has been providing humanitarian and financial support to those injured, arrested or otherwise affected during the protests that began in 2019. Hong Kong authorities have requested information on donors, recipients, and crowdfunding efforts in order to determine whether it “colluded with external forces” and violated the national security law. Two weeks before the court order was issued, it was announced that the fund would cease operations. [[HKFP](#)]

Student group disbands following the arrest of its leaders

After several of its members were arrested and charged with conspiring to incite subversion, Student Politicism announced that it would dissolve as it is unable to “continue our mission”. In a statement on Facebook, it thanked Hongkongers for their support over the past year. The group frequently organised street booths to encourage support for jailed pro-democracy activists and to discuss

democracy issues. While in prison, the arrested members were accused of trying to “recruit like-minded people” by sharing chocolate with fellow inmates. [[HKFP](#)]

Tiananmen vigil group deregistered by Carrie Lam, after the group and its leaders are charged with subversion. Two ex-leaders decline bail for freedom of speech.

On 26 October, Chief Executive Carrie Lam made an executive order to strike the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China from the city’s companies registry, claiming it is for safeguarding national security, public safety, public order.

Lee Cheuk-yan, Chow Hang-tung and Albert Ho, leaders of Alliance, and the Alliance itself, were accused of inciting subversion under the national security law earlier in September.

Vice-chairperson Chow Hang-Tung and four committee members of Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, were arrested in early September for refusing to provide data, including members’ information, requested by the police. The subversion charge can lead to life imprisonment.

On 22 October, all five were granted bail. Two of them, Chow Hang-tung and Simon Leung, decided to remain remanded because of the additional conditions restricting their freedom of speech, saying they do not know how to comply. [[Standard](#), [HKFP 1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [HK01](#) (in Chinese)]

“*Physical liberty and freedom of speech – I will choose the latter.*

- Chow Hang-tung (36)

FREEDOMS

Over 50 civil society groups have disbanded under pressure

In October, HKFP reported that over 50 groups have disbanded in 2021, including Amnesty International Hong Kong's offices. [[HKFP](#)] (See next section).

Earlier in September, Stand News reported at least 49 civil society groups have disbanded under the pressure from the authorities and fear under the national security law. Many of them are prominent civil unions. The oldest one was 48 years old. Their social media platforms are also removed upon disbandment. [[Stand News](#) (in Chinese)]

Amnesty International closes its Hong Kong office

Amnesty International closed its local section office at the end of October, and will close its regional office by the end of 2021. The human rights group said the decision was driven by Hong Kong's national security law. The group has been running for over 40 years in Hong Kong, and tackled human rights issues in many countries in Asia, including crackdowns on human rights lawyers in China. Amnesty's deputy secretary-general Kyle Ward said Amnesty's other offices will continue monitoring and responding to Hong Kong's human rights situation. [[Amnesty](#), [VOA](#)]

Chinese University Student Union forced to dissolve

The Chinese University Student Union became the next group in line to shut down as part of the crackdown on civil society organizations in Hong Kong. According to members, the decision was made based on issues arising from the university's decision to cut ties with the union earlier this year. Former chair of the union, Owen Au, voiced concerns that "the dissolution of CUSU would be an end for the time when the young generation could autonomously explore for their own future and voice out themselves". [[HKFP](#)]

Book censorship in prison

According to Chow Hang-tung, vice leader of the Tiananmen Massacre annual vigil group, the Correctional Services Department in Hong Kong rejected three books sent to her in custody by Chow's friends, claiming these books contain subversive acts, and that the book ban was a final decision and Chow could not appeal. These books include:

- "Tiananmen 1989", a collection of historical materials published in 1989.
- A memoir of Szeto Wah, published in 2011. Szeto Wah (d. 2011) was a former lawmaker, the founding leader of the vigil group, and prominent member of the Basic Law drafting committee.
- A collection of articles written by Uncle Wah, published by MingPao in 2011. The book synopsis described Uncle Wah as a recognised patriot.

[[Patreon](#); [MingPao](#)]

Privacy rights concerns over Chinese style 'smart prisons' in Hong Kong

Hong Kong authorities launched the first 'smart prison' in May 2021. Detainees who are kept in a 'smart prison' have to wear a device on their wrist that tracks biometric data and location. They are also under surveillance, even in the toilets. A refugee that had been remanded in custody described detainees in a 'smart prison' as being kept as 'dogs or pigs'. In 2019, local group Liber Research Community raised concerns about the 'smart prisons' as the starting point of implementing the same systematic surveillance that subdues Uyghurs in western China as over detainees in Hong Kong. [[HKFP](#), [InMediaHK](#) (in Chinese)]

Freedom of expression: “Hong Kong add oil” banned at Hong Kong Marathon

Standard Chartered's Hong Kong Marathon 2021 banned runners from wearing clothing with the slogan “Hong Kong add oil”, with organisers explaining they didn't want any political elements to appear in the sports event. This contradicted the clarification provided earlier that week. The organiser did not answer whether the ban was decided by Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2021 organising committee or the police. [[Standard](#); [Stand News](#) (in Chinese); [RTHK](#)]

China Cracks Down on Influencers

To tighten the grip on private businesses, the Communist regime in China announced new guidelines for how online live-streamers should behave in front of the camera. For instance, they should speak Mandarin and their clothing should not violate public order or ‘good morals.’ [[Reuters](#)]

China to outlaw all news outlets not funded by Communist Party

The Chinese government has come up with a proposal to ban news reporting by organisations that are not funded by the Communist Party. Under the proposed new regulations, rewriting stories reported on by foreign media outlets and live-streaming events related to politics, culture, military policy and other topics that may affect public opinion will also be banned. Chinese media company Caixin media and Alibaba-owned South China Morning Post are among the organisations at risk of being impacted. [[Bloomberg](#)]

PATRIOTS RULING HONG KONG

As of 21 October 2021, the Hong Kong Home Affairs Bureau has unseated a total of 55 opposition district councillors because of invalid loyalty oaths. The disqualified district councillors are banned from standing in elections for the next five years.

Over 260 district councillors resigned ahead of the oath-taking in 2021 over fears that their salaries would be seized if they are ousted over their oaths.

The United States, UK, and the EU voiced their objections to the disqualification of the elected officials. [[HKFP](#), [SCMP 1](#), [2](#)]

NEW LEGAL AID SCHEME

Authorities to assign lawyers to defendants receiving legal aid, potentially infringing on the right to choose lawyers under the Basic Law

Sources say that the Hong Kong government has completed revisions of the legal aid scheme. The revised scheme will assign a lawyer to defendants who have applied for legal aid in criminal cases in the future, meaning that the defendants cannot choose the lawyer they want. The revision echoes the query by the pro-establishment camp in June 2021 criticising resources spent on defending opposition figures and anti-government protesters under the legal aid scheme. Sources say the proposal will be studied by a related LegCo panel at the end of October. Sing Tao Daily reported that the government will execute the revised measures through administrative works without the law amendment procedures via LegCo. The Bar Association warned the government earlier that Article 35 of the Basic Law guarantees “choice of lawyers”.

[[Yahoo](#); [Standard](#); [SCMP](#); [SingTao](#) (in Chinese)]

ARRESTS & TRIALS

► Hong Kong and Tibet activists detained in Greece for protesting against Beijing Olympics

Tibetan student activist Tsela Zoksang and Hong Kong activist Joey Siu were detained by police during a protest in Athens. Numerous groups and activists expressed their support for the duo, who were appealing to the International Olympic Committee to move the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics to a different country due to China's ongoing human rights violations. The incident led to concerns that Chinese and Greek authorities were working together to silence critical voices. In response, human rights NGO Safeguard Defenders issued a "China Travel Risk Advisory" to inform travelers of which countries have extradition treaties with China and Hong Kong. [[Radio Free Asia](#)], [[Safeguard Defenders](#)]

► Figo Chan: No regrets to civil disobedience after watching my fears become reality

On 7 October 2021, seven pro-democracy leaders pleaded guilty to organising and participating in unlawful assembly on Handover Day 2020, the day on which the National Security Law took effect. Among the charged are former convenor of Civil Human Rights Front Figo Chan, and former legislators Leung Kwok-hung, Wu Chi-wai, and Eddie Chu. They pleaded guilty in accordance with the principles of civil disobedience.

"[Hong Kong] only permits voices that support the government, and continually suppresses those who do not," said Chan. "As a result, numerous political parties and civic organizations disband one after another, Hongkongers have left the city in droves, and

freedom and rights due to citizens are gradually disappearing." [[Stand News](#) (in Chinese)]

“*Looking back and watching my fears become reality, how could I regret speaking up through peaceful civil disobedience and protest?*

- Figo Chan (25)

► University Professor: “Hongkongers, add oil” capable of inciting others to break the law

The trial for activist Tam Tak-chi (aka Fast beat) began. Tam is facing 14 charges, including eight related to uttering seditious words between January and July in 2020. These “seditious” words include calling the government “tyrannical”, the protest slogan “Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times”, and the very common phrase “Hongkongers, add oil”. Lingnan University Professor Lau Chi-pang said to court that these phrases were capable of inciting the others to break the law, if they were used during the chaos outside the liaison office. [[HKFP](#), [SCMP](#)]

The same professor witnessed the city's first NSL case over activist Tong Ying-kit, and said the user of slogan “Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times” believes that Hong Kong does not belong to the People's Republic of China (PRC). The court later said the same slogan was a general call for the separation of the HKSAR from the PRC and sentenced Tong to a 9-year imprisonment. [[HKFP](#)]

INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS

UN experts urge review of national security law

Hong Kong authorities have received criticism for the implementation of the national security law introduced by Beijing last year. According to UN human rights experts, the law violates commonly held international standards of citizens' rights and freedoms, accusations which the government has rejected. The experts also urged charges against Chow Hang-tung to be reconsidered. Chow, barrister and vice-chair of the now-disbanded Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, was charged with "incitement to subversion" after her arrest in September.

[[HKFP](#)]

Large Danish companies move production away from China

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed major weaknesses in global supply chains and prompted a number of players in the Danish retail and transport sectors to consider whether production should be moved away from China to Europe. The fashion group DK Company and JYSK said they would have an overall assessment of delivery times, quality, price, effect on carbon footprint and so on.

[[Berlingske](#)]

Lithuania urges European Union to cut reliance on China

Lithuania, which recently recalled its ambassador from China, has urged EU member states to reduce their dependence on China. Foreign minister Gabrielius Landsbergis encouraged increased cooperation between the EU and Indo-Pacific countries as well as NATO on issues related to China. Meanwhile, high Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell said that the EU was currently "experiencing complicated times" with regards to China but that they need to continue to work together on economic and trade matters. [[SCMP](#)]

Harvard moves top language program from Beijing to Taiwan

Harvard's summer Mandarin program will be moving to Taiwan next year due to "perceived lack of friendliness" from the Beijing Language and Culture University where it is currently located, according to program director Jennifer Liu. William Kirby, chair of Harvard Center Shanghai, however, claims that the relocation is due to logistical reasons and that Harvard is in fact deepening its relations with China. [[Taipei Times](#)]

CHINA IN THE WEST

Report: China's Microsoft hack vacuums up information

An investigation revealed that China's hack into Microsoft Exchange swept data from emails to calendars to contacts of tens of thousands of unsuspecting victims. Experts believe that the breach was in the service of something bigger than just spying since the diversity and quality of data could fuel China's AI ambitions. [[NPR](#)]

Huawei employs more lobbyists in the EU than any other tech companies

Huawei, which has been struggling to roll out its 5G infrastructure in Europe, currently employs the equivalent of 19 full-time lobbyists in the EU. In comparison, Facebook comes in at second place with 14 while Microsoft has 7.5. However, according to a report by Corporate Europe Observatory and Lobbycontrol, Huawei spends less on lobbying than some of the large US tech companies. [[SCMP](#)]

China's Ambassador to Denmark: Taiwan's Call for Inclusion in UN is "Coarse Propaganda"

Feng Tie, China's ambassador to Denmark, responded to the call of Joseph Wu, Taiwan's foreign minister, for Taiwan's inclusion in the UN, saying it was "coarse propaganda and a futile attempt to divide China." He reinforced that Taiwan independence would only lead the people of Taiwan to disaster. [[Politiken](#)]

China's ambassador warns Belgian lawmakers about Hong Kong resolutions

China's ambassador to Belgium sent a letter to lawmakers expressing his disapproval of proposed measures against China due to its actions in Hong Kong. Cao Zhongming claimed that the proposals "interfered with China's internal affairs", a common criticism aimed at countries and individuals who speak out against the Chinese Communist Party's handling of human rights issues in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong. Undeterred, Green Party MP Samuel Cogolati said that "it would be extremely naive to believe that we would be intimidated by this kind of letter". [[SCMP](#)]

**Table 1: Hong Kong Arrested Protesters and Political Leaders Database
(incl. NSL cases that are specified in Table 2)**

Item	Number of individuals	Last update	Sources		
Total arrested	> 10 447	18 Oct 2021	1		
	Prosecuted 2866				
	Release unconditionally 1620				
	Technically subject to re-arrest/prosecution later > 5961				
Total charges over rioting (up to 10 years imprisonment)	760 (13-61 years old)	30 Apr 2021	2, 3		
	Found not guilty 27			Pleaded guilty 21	Found guilty 15
	No. of trials scheduled 622			Scheduled until Dec 2023	
Custodial sentences	479 (110 to juvenile detention facilities for age 14-20)	18 Oct 2021	1		
Currently remanded in custody	ca. 140 (incl. those bearing NSL charges)	18 Oct 2021	1		
Longest jail sentence	12 years (Possession of explosives) 9 years (NSL charges) 5 years and 6 months (Rioting)	18 Oct 2021 See Table 2 30 Apr 2021	1 See Table 2 2		

[Sources: (1) [Kong Tsung-qan](#), (2) [Stand News](#) (Chinese) (3) [HKCNEWS](#) (Chinese)]

Table 2: Hong Kong National Security Law Database

Item	Number of individuals	Last update	Sources
Total arrested (Stated grounds of arrest for violating NSL)	Individuals: 165	23 Sept 2021	1
	Secession & subversion 90		
	Terrorist Activities 19		
	Collusion with a foreign country or with external elements to endanger national security 14		
<i>* Some arrestees have other charges such as failure to comply, non-NSL charges, and unknown charges.</i>			
Total charged violating NSL (no. convicted)*	89 (4)	25 Oct 2021	1
Custodial sentences	1	30 Jul 2021	2
Currently remanded in custody	In custody: 77	23 Sept 2021	1
Longest NSL jail sentence	9 years (Tong Ying-kit for inciting secession & terrorist activities)	30 Jul 2021	2

[Sources: (1) [ChinaFile](#), (2) [HKFP](#)]

* Table does not include corporate entities:

- Three companies charged with collusion provision: Apple Daily Limited, Apple Daily Printing Limited, AD Internet Limited
- One civil organisation charged with inciting subversion: The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China

IMPORTANT DATES

October - January 2022

- 1 Nov Expected 10-day trial for incitement of unauthorised assembly, June 4th Candlelight Vigil 2020: Eight prominent figures **Choi Yiu-cheong, Chow Hang-tung, Leung Kam-wai, , Leung Yiu-chung, Lee Cheuk-yan, Jimmy Lai, Wu Chi-wai, Gwyneth Ho.**
- 23 Nov Sentencing of **Tony Chung Hon-lam**, 20, for secession and money laundering. Pleaded guilty.
- 14 Dec Trial of Tam Tak-chi (aka “Fast Beat”) for his 14 charges including sedition
- 19 Dec Legislative Council Election
- 3 Jan High court mention of **Andy Li** and **Chan Tsz-Wah** (#SAVE12) under collusion charges.

End of News Digest