

East Asia Democracy Forum Statement:

National Security Law a Severe Blow to Democracy in Hong Kong and the Region

June 2, 2020

The EADF strongly condemns the passage on May 28 by the National People's Congress (NPC) of the People's Republic of China of a resolution authorizing the imposition of a national security law on Hong Kong. This move is a severe blow to democracy in Hong Kong and indeed in the region as a whole.

Moreover, we recognize that the Beijing regime's harsh treatment of Hong Kong is closely connected to its increasingly assertive campaign to weaken and undermine democracy in Asia and beyond, through propaganda, corruption, and even military intimidation. Therefore, the fate of Hong Kong is a matter of grave concern to all democrats in the region.

Although the detailed content of the law is yet to be released, the NPC's resolution already confirms that it will have a serious impact on the basic civil rights of people in Hong Kong, especially their freedoms of speech and assembly. The people of Hong Kong have depended upon these rights to protect their way of life on numerous occasions, including blocking the dangerous extradition bill last year. The resolution also clearly indicates that the central government intends to interfere directly in Hong Kong's judicial system and key policy areas such as the content of education, and even establish new law enforcement agencies in Hong Kong.

The fact that the NPC has bypassed the legislative authority of the HK Legislative Council is a breach of the Basic Law and the Sino-British Joint Declaration. It violates the fundamental tenets of "one country, two systems": self-government by the Hong Kong people and 50 years of no change to their way of life. Not to mention that the NPC itself is obviously a pure rubber-stamp body, with no democratic mandate. Therefore, this law is completely lacking in legitimacy, and represents a rupture of the constitutional order in Hong Kong.

As the people of Hong Kong once again take to the streets in defense of their liberty, all East Asian democrats must stand together with them in solidarity. They are proving once again that democratic values are alive and well in our region, and cherished by people everywhere.

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