



2020 no. 4 £6.50 (free to members)

INTERLIB

Journal of the Liberal International British Group



Martin Lee & 14 others arrested in Hong Kong - 18th April.

Deforestation Hong Kong Philippines

Covid 19

EVENTS

22nd -24th May Scottish Liberal Democrats' Spring Conference. Peebles Hydro, Peebles. **Postponed**

25th-27th June 63rd Liberal International Congress, Sofia, Bulgaria. **Postponed**

6th July LIBG AGM. **Postponed**

26th-29th September Liberal Democrats' Autumn Conference. **Will be an Online event.**

For bookings & other information please contact the Treasurer below.

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CONTENTS

LIBG 2020 Programme page 3

How to Stop Deforestation, Forum Report by
Imaduddin Ahmed pages 4-5

Chinese Liberal Democrats Statement on
the arrests of Pro-Democracy legislators
and advocates. page 6

Martin Lee arrested in Hong Kong page 7

Joint Statement of LI, FNF, CALD and
ALDE Party – Hong Kong's clampdown
on the opposition is its other pandemic. page 7

'Terrorism' in Hong Kong? By CheungLog
and Nicholas Chan. pages 8-12

Shutdown of ABS-CBN and the systematic
persecution of the media in Philippines
condemned: Statement by CALD pages 12-13

Africa, oil and COVID-19, by Rebecca
Tinsley. pages 14-16

Reviews pages 17-19

We must oppose Beijing's Power Grab,
by Alistair Carmichael page 20

Police brutality during COVID19 is under-
mining the Rule of Law page 20

Photographs: Chinese Liberal Democrats, Paola
Despretz, Rebecca Tinsley, Stewart Rayment.

*InterLib is published by the Liberal International
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LIBG 2020 PROGRAMME



A programme of events for LIBG has been organised by the executive for the rest of the year. It is intended that these will be held physically at the National Liberal Club starting at 6.30pm in each case, but also broadcast online. These arrangements will obviously depend on both corona virus restrictions and technology.

Details of online access, speakers and exact subjects will be announced nearer the time for each. Please check the forthcoming events link on the LIBG website, www.libg.co.uk

The events are:

17 August:

Hungary Loss of human rights - worry for EU disintegration? Is Orban out of Control?

14 September

Forum on China

12 October

75 years of peace with the UN - is it still upholding the spirit of supporting human rights or does its form need to change?

9 November

Annual General Meeting (postponed from July due to pandemic restrictions) followed at 7pm by speaker meeting

7 December

What's happening to the USA's Global position, and what are the threats?

How to Stop Deforestation

Imaduddin Ahmed

With LIBG's fora locked down, a webinar discussed policy, a market intervention and monitoring technology to help stop deforestation.

The Liberal International British Group together with the Paddy Ashdown Forum organised a webinar on 27 April 2020 hosted by BrightTALK on How to Stop Deforestation¹. 428 people registered for the event from around the world. The aim of the discussion was to learn how to stop deforestation in a socially just manner, given that the largest rainforests exist in parts of the world that are economically lagging developed nations that have already denuded their natural environments of tree cover.

Jon Shepard, a director at Global Development Incubator, explained why we should care about deforestation: forests absorb a third of global carbon dioxide emissions. A quarter of CO₂ emissions are absorbed by oceans. The rest goes into the atmosphere, acting as a greenhouse gas, causing global warming and the climate crisis. The destruction of forests has also been associated with a rise in zoonotic pandemics. Olivero et al (2017)² showed in *Nature Scientific Reports* that destroyed forests with closed canopies in Africa resulted in outbreaks of Ebola, with a lag of two years. The Ebola virus has been associated with increased interaction between bats and humans when bats lose their natural habitats. The COVID-19 virus has also been associated with bats³.

Duncan Brack, an advisor to the UK government's Global Resource Initiative Task Force, explained that agriculture is the main driver of forest loss in the tropics. Consumer-country demand for commodities such as tropical timber, beef, soy, palm oil, rubber, cocoa and coffee, wood pulp all drive deforestation; for most of these, the Asia-Pacific region accounts for the bulk of consumption, but Europe and the US are both important sources of demand.

Duncan and Yulia Stange, a manager at ClientEarth, offered law-based solutions to curb consumer-based deforestation. These included

- the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan to stop the import of illegal timber and address governance weaknesses;
- Voluntary Partnership Agreements between the EU and timber-exporting developing countries to create timber legality assurance and export licensing systems designed to exclude illegal timber from consumer markets, improve forest governance and support local populations; this same model could potentially be applied to other commodities such as cocoa;
- social agreements between communities local to forests and logging companies;
- due diligence regulation for businesses, either through a commodity-specific approach such as the EU Timber Regulation, or a broader corporate approach, applying to a company's entire operations and supply chains such as the French Devoir de Vigilance law of 2017;
- public procurement policy to include sustainability criteria.

There is a mechanism within the EU Withdrawal Agreement for the UK to transpose EU FLEGT into UK Timber Regulation. There is also movement for the UK entering Voluntary Partnership Agreements that it had initially entered as a Member of the EU.

Complementing government-to-government agreements and domestic policy in consumer countries are market interventions to correctly value standing forests and disincentivise their destruction for quick and little profit. Jon Shepard talked about how non-profit organisations such as Emergent monetise the difference in CO₂ emissions that would have been produced had a forest been burned and then used for agriculture and the emissions that would be naturally sequestered into the soil had a forest been left unharmed. After verifying the counterfactual emissions, they create "carbon credits" – a function of a dollar value and reduced carbon dioxide by square metre – and then sell those to large corporations which want to offset their emissions and

become carbon neutral. This allows corporations such as Microsoft to offset their historic emissions. The proceeds of the sale are then transferred to the forest nations to compensate them for not using the land for short-term economic gains. Emergent’s scheme has been underwritten by the Government of Norway as a buyer of last resort.



Both government and market interventions require monitoring. Paola Despretz, an economist at Vivid Economics, shared her experience on the UK Space Agency-funded programme to tackle deforestation in Côte d’Ivoire using satellite images to detect forest loss on a fortnightly basis. Deforestation alerts are used to identify and destroy illegal incursions of cocoa farming in protected areas. Thanks to the online forest monitoring platform, [IMAGES](#), the rate of deforestation in certain areas of Côte d’Ivoire has reduced substantially since 2017.

Verification of alerts in Forêt Classée de Cavally, Côte d’Ivoire, allowed forestry services to uncover 10+ hectares of illegal cocoa.

**Imad Tweets @ImadAhmed. He is on the Academic Board of the Paddy Ashdown Forum and an Executive Member of Liberal International British Group and an economist at Vivid Economics. He has written this in his own capacity and views expressed are his own.*

¹ <https://www.brighttalk.com/webcast/1035/396571/panel-discussion-how-do-we-stop-deforestation>

² <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-017-14727-9>

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/28/how-did-the-coronavirus-start-where-did-it-come-from-how-did-it-spread-humans-was-it-really-bats-pangolins-wuhan-animal-market>

⁴ <https://www.vivideconomics.com/images/>



Within days of the first visit, forestry services acted on the discovery and destroyed the cocoa plantation.

Chinese Liberal Democrats Statement on the arrests of Pro-Democracy legislators and advocates.

On 18th April 2020, 15 of Hong Kong's most respected pro-democracy politicians and advocates were arrested on charges that they participated in organising unlawful assemblies on 18th August, 1st October and 20th October last year.

I note that the peaceful demonstration that took place on 18th August 2019 was attended by an estimated 1.7 million people,

These arrests are the latest in a recent spate of attacks on the opposition instigated by the Hong Kong administration. In late February this year, senior supporters of the pro-democracy movement were also arrested for taking part in an allegedly unauthorised demonstration on 31st 2019. This was subsequently followed by the arrests of more than a hundred people on various charges ranging from unauthorised assemblies to obstructing justice.

I believe that these recent arrests, undertaken in the midst of the global health pandemic, are a calculated and direct attack on the fundamental freedoms of speech and assembly, which the Hong Kong administration pledged to uphold under one country two systems. They are also an abrogation of the international rules-based order, a breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, the cornerstone of Hong Kong's Constitution enshrined in the Basic Law.

I also note with deep concern recent reports of increased pressure on the judiciary of Hong Kong especially with calls by Chinese government's Liaison Office in Hong Kong for the application of a national security law in Hong Kong.

Furthermore, Chinese Government's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office has also criticised pro-democracy legislators for filibustering and accusing them of breaching their Legislative Council Oath. This has led to the Hong Kong Bar Association suggesting that this could amount to a breach of Article 22 of the Basic Law which states that "No department of the Central People's Government and no province, autonomous region or municipality directly under the Central Government may interfere in affairs which the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region administers on its own in accordance with this Law."

In the wake of the ongoing health and political crises, HMG should implore the Hong Kong administration to be proactive and constructive in its approach, resist authoritarian influence, and to regain the trust of the Hong Kong people. Only through the legitimate elections of the Legislative Council (not arbitrary arrests) can the Hong Kong administration bring back peace and economic stability to Hong Kong.

The 15 people arrested are not the enemy within but are potential dialogue partners for rebuilding a post Covid19 world.

Finally, I hope and expect any arrests and judicial processes will be conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

Footnote:

The above statement adopted by the executive of Chinese Liberal Democrats on 26th April, draws upon like statements made by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and by Liberal International, FNF, CALD and ALDE Party, both on 18 April 2020, as well as the letter from Members of the European Parliament to the Chief Executive of Hong Kong dated 20th April 2020.

Martin Lee, aged 81 and amongst those arrested, has said in an interview with dw.com “I'd rather be charged together with my colleagues rather than be left alone. I have been doing this for so many years through peaceful means and by holding them [authorities] to their own agreements. However, it has not worked. So, I can't complain about these young people trying another way, although I'm against using violence.

If the Hong Kong government wants to charge me, I will face the consequences. I will never resort to violence. If the court finds me guilty, I will go to prison. I know justice is on my side. There wouldn't be any necessity of any movement of this kind if China had honoured her agreement made with the British government.

If China is allowed to get away with breaking an international agreement in such a ridiculous manner, how can the international community expect China to honor other agreements? The international community needs to insist China to honor its obligation toward Hong Kong. If they want to deal with China, Hong Kong is the key to their relationship with Beijing.”

As far as we understand, there is not much action reported on the arrests itself since mid-April, but it is part of the ongoing situation in HK. Opposition councillors tried to take police into account and they refused to cooperate, while there are a few arrests since mid-April, but not on large scale anywhere similar to 18th April.

Small scale protests are still organised continuously but the police dispersed them under the measures of fighting coronavirus.

LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL **FRIEDRICH NAUMANN FOUNDATION** **Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats** **ALDE**

Joint Statement of LI, FNF, CALD and ALDE Party

Hong Kong's clampdown on the opposition is its other pandemic

As the world struggles to contain the COVID-19 virus, the Hong Kong administration unleashes another 'pandemic' on the leaders of the political opposition and their supporters.

Today, April 18, key members of the political opposition, including Liberal International (LI) and Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) Individual Member, Martin Lee, and CALD Individual Member, Chung-kai Sin, have been arrested on charges that they participated in organising unlawful assemblies on August 18, October 1 and October 20 last year.

These arrests are the latest in a recent spate of opposition attacks instigated by the Hong Kong administration. In late February this year, senior supporters of the pro-democracy movement were also arrested for taking part in an allegedly unauthorised demonstration on August 31. This was subsequently followed by the arrests of more than a hundred people on various charges including unauthorised assemblies, possession of offensive weapons and instruments fit for unlawful purpose, arson, attacking police officers and obstructing them in the execution of their duties.

LI, FNF, CALD and ALDE Party strongly believe that these arrests, which have been undertaken in the midst of the global health pandemic, are nothing but cold-blooded political persecution and a direct attack on fundamental freedoms of speech and assembly, which the Hong Kong administration pledged and claimed to uphold.

Those arrested, it must be emphasised, were just freely expressing legitimate concerns on issues such as repeal of the extradition law and implementation of the Basic Law. They did not advocate violence nor call for the unlawful overthrow of the current administration. They exercised their right to responsible and legitimate dissent, which is in line with the goal of making government effective in its functions and responsive to the needs of the people it serves.

Furthermore, LI, FNF, CALD and ALDE Party are concerned that these arrests are also being used to divert the Hong Kong people's attention on the incumbent administration's seeming inefficiency in handling the COVID-19 pandemic. By making these arrests, the administration could be avoiding accountability and evading scrutiny of its abysmal performance that led to the second wave of COVID-19 cases in Hong Kong.

All over the world, the pandemic is increasingly used by authoritarians and populists to further centralise political power, and in the process, attack the political opposition. The Hong Kong administration appears to follow this authoritarian playbook, which further taints its already questionable reputation, both domestically and internationally, as a society governed by the rule of law.

In the wake of the ongoing health and political crises, LI, FNF, CALD and ALDE Party implore the Hong Kong administration to be proactive and constructive in its approach, resist authoritarian influence, and start listening to the five demands of Hong Kong's democracy movement.

The Hong Kong administration must, without delay, stop political persecution by dropping all the charges against those arrested in relation to the recent protests, immediately releasing those who are still in detention, and cease from committing further acts that intimidate, harass and threaten the political opposition.

The Hong Kong people have already suffered enough due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Do not make their situation worse by curtailing the fundamental freedoms that they hold dear.

Hakima el Halte
President
Liberal International

Karl-Heinz Paqué
Chairperson
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

Bi-khim Hsiao
Chairperson
Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

Hans van Baalen
President
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party

18 April 2020

‘Terrorism’ in Hong Kong?

CheungLog and Nicholas Chan

Over the years we do talk in lengths about the legal and moral obligation of Britain as a state what she should do to stand by the people of Hong Kong because both Britain and China are joint signatories to the Sino-British Joint Declaration which guaranteed Hong Kong people’s way of life. As a General Election commitment and in the Hong Kong Motion organised by Lib Dem Campaigners for Hong Kong for the Spring Conference, the Liberal Democrats have also carried on Paddy Ashdown’s argument to right the wrongs of history and afford equal rights of British Nationality classes. British National (Overseas) should be afforded Right of Abode to the UK. However, while advocating for the rights of British Nationals, we must also not forget the **legal obligations** and **legal protections** of Nationals. We must remember that three million British Nationals reside in Hong Kong, a majority of which bears similar characteristics to the ordinary HongKonger in all walks of life. Did any of them conducted grievous crimes such as acts against humanity, torture, murder or even terrorism? Are British Nationals also victims of such crimes such as terrorism? This article will look into ‘terrorism’ affecting British Nationals in Hong Kong.

In understanding this article, we first need to go into some legal and background aspects.

April 2020 – crackdown of protest movement in Hong Kong under the pretext of Global Coronavirus Crisis

Briefly recalling, since politically persecuting pro-democracy politicians like Nok-him, Au; Margaret Ng and Martin Lee in April last month, China continues to be unsympathetic or obligatory to the people of Hong Kong. Beijing has pressed forward with interferences such as meddling with the elections in the Hong Kong Legislative Council House Committee and pressuring on members of Hong Kong’s highest court including the Chief Justice. Meanwhile, Carrie Lam have only taken further measures to rub salt on Hong Kong’s wounds during the Coronavirus pandemic by doing Beijing’s bidding to crackdown on RTHK editorial freedom and pushing forward a draconian National Security Bill. Perhaps, such continuous spite of Authoritative oppressions come as no surprise to HongKongers. Article 22 of the Basic law plainly puts forwards Hong Kong’s high degree of autonomy but Beijing continues to interfere with Hong Kong’s domestic affairs in plain sight. Meanwhile, when locally organised groups raced to successfully design and produce face masks and sanitisers for the society, it was not until this week Carrie Lam decides to procure facemasks for all citizens through abnormal processes that involved awarding the contract to a company linked with Hong Kong government officials. As the author have pointed out in the Lib Dem Voice ¹article earlier on 20th April 2020, [*Preaching to confine Hong Kong to the Basic Law is Wishful Thinking*](#), the governments of Beijing and Hong Kong cannot be relied on to abide by rules-based international order or the Rule of Law.

21st July 2019 – What happened at Yuen Long?

Summarily, anti-terrorism legislations in the UK consists of the Terrorism Act 2000 and Terrorism Act 2006. According to the Terrorism Act 2000 Section 1(1)-(2), ‘terrorism’ can be defined as:-

- i) Involves serious violence against a person, serious damage to property
- ii) Serious risk to the safety of the public or governmental and non-governmental bodies; or the endangerment to public life
- iii) The treat being for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Indeed, the nature of enlargement of statutory power and the scope of offences it constitutes with anti-terrorism legislations means academics constantly debates on the balance of compromises to rights and national security.

¹ <https://www.libdemvoice.org/preaching-to-confide-hong-kong-to-the-basic-law-is-wishful-thinking-64169.html>

In understanding whether any law has been contravened, we further define key suspects on the night of 21st July 2019; namely the ‘white-shirts’, ‘Hong Kong Police’ and person(s) who incite the ‘white-shirts’.

White-Shirts

(The RTHK documentary *721 Yuen Long Nightmare* available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpkFRsSo30o> provides a detailed description of the incidences on the night of 21st July. On that night groups of perpetrators dressing in white shirts deployed weapons against civilians on Hong Kong’s public transit system. As the ‘white-shirts’ settle to a village in Yuen Long, high ranking officers of the Hong Kong Police Force is filmed in friendly conversations with the white-shirts and made no arrests. Neither was there any police presence to protect the Hong Kong public, many of who are badly injured in the attack.)

Firstly, it is unmistakable the ‘white-shirts’ used violence and caused Grievous bodily harm (‘GBH’) on others. Secondly, it is beyond debate the night of 21st July reigns terror and fright within the society in Hong Kong. Lastly, irrespective the ‘white-shirts’ either having emphasised that they are conducting defensive actions to protect their homeland or that they are in support of the HK Authorities, their actions have constituted to a political or ideological cause.

According to sources, including the documentary noted above, the white-shirts have first assembled at various locations, had dinner and handed out weapons. These evidence means their aggression are conducted with intent.

Therefore, according to the board definition of English Anti-terror legislations, the actions of the white-shirts constituted to ‘terrorism’ beyond a reasonable doubt.

Hong Kong Police

Just as stated in the RTHK documentary, these acts from the Hong Kong Police can be observed:

- iv) When the ‘white-shirts’ first assembled prior to their GBH actions, police vehicles are present at their assembly positions;
- v) Prior to the incident, there are rumours flowing around in the town of Yuen Long that there are smaller-scale acts of violence against civilians around the town. A District Councillor have also made a police report on ‘possible crimes’. Therefore, the police have intelligence into the abnormalities on the night of 21st July;
- vi) When the GBH incidences were occurring at the Yuen Long Station, 2 police officers were seen walking away from the station where the violence is happening, ignoring the injuries;
- vii) The public made numerous calls to the police Emergency Hotline 999 but there was no response;
- viii) When the white-shirts assembled in the village next to Yuen Long Station for hours after the incidences in the station, the police made no effort to conduct arrests. Fascinatingly, reporters’ microphones picked up officers patting on the ‘white-shirts’ and saying “your efforts are acknowledged” in Cantonese.
- ix)

In the absence of justice in Hong Kong, we may find it challenging to lay out the chain of evidence before Court. Yet, has crimes been committed? Have the Hong Kong Police colluded with the white-shirts? As a recipient of information, you may make some logical assumptions.

Hitherto, if the Hong Kong Police have conspired with the ‘white-shirts’, as according to the case *R v Shillam* (2013) EWCA Crim 160; the Force would have conspired with ‘terrorism’ on the night of 21st July. Indeed, in line with English Common Law, a governmental organisation can be subjected as a terror organisation or have conducted acts of terror.

Person(s) who incite the ‘white-shirts’.

There are also individuals and organisations who are suspected to have incite the ‘white-shirts’. Junius Ho, a pro-Beijing Legislator whose honorary degree at the Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge was stripped off due to conduct and human rights concerns, was seen articulating support for the ‘white-shirts’ as events are unfolding.

Again, in the absence of ability to conduct an investigation to put forth a chain of evidence for trial, we can only place prima facie testaments for inciting terror. Withal, the suspicious for such crimes falls under the Serious Crime Act 2007 Section 44-46 of English Law. There may have been support for ‘acts of terror’.

If crimes are committed, why did we say British Nationals are a subject of matter?

If crimes are committed on the night of 21st July, criminal prosecution will fall under:

- j) Jurisdiction;
- k) In consideration of how legally binding current legislations can be held;
- l) Public Interest Test;
- m) Presentation of Forensic evidence.

In essence, we shall state that under laws such as anti-terror legislations, manslaughter, torture, and crimes against humanities; prosecutors in England & Wales and Scotland each have their extraterritorial judiciary powers over these aspects. In other words, British Nationals are bound to such laws and courts have the powers to make judgements on trials in regards to these laws and regardless whether the crimes are committed without and within UK territories.

Further, to prevent legislations from overly misused, Section 117 of the Terrorism Act 2000 provides guidance that prosecution requires the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions or the Attorney General. So if anti-terror legislations are placed against suspects of 21st July, a public interest test will be compiled.



Martin Lee arrested in Hong Kong

So, what may be the public interest for such prosecutions? Notably, the number of people and organisations that are susceptible for indictment is high; and there are also many victims, individual or institutional, of the suspected crimes. In addition, both suspects and victims may well be holders of British passports. (In a city of 7.2 million, the Home Office have recognised there are some 3 million British Citizens or British National (Overseas) in Hong Kong.) In a single night on 21st July, crimes could well involve the planning of British Nationals (‘British’), thereafter conducted by British and crimes are further incited by British. Moreover,

British can also be involved in colluding with the suspects in acts such as destruction of evidence and / or obstruction of justice. Lastly, the victims of crimes on the night can also be British.

Thus, is it just for the British Government to abstain from any involvement? The British public has given support from a ¹Savanta Comres poll in December 2019. 63% of the British public is concerned about China eroding the human rights and freedoms of the people in Hong Kong. More importantly, there are strong British interests involved on the night of the incidents. Alas, even though it may be a judicial matter, it will be a big foreign diplomacy step to undertake if the British Government is to heavily pursuit on such justice. Crucially, we recognise the chain of evidence for a guilty verdict may well have vanished under the

¹ Hong Kong Watch and Friends of Hong Kong UK-HK poll published 7 December 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.comresglobal.com/polls/hong-kong-watch-and-friends-of-hong-kong-uk-hk-poll/>

situation in Hong Kong.

It's challenging, so what's next?

The absence of a definite guilty verdict in court does not reflect an absence of crime. The people of Hong Kong are determined to fight for the way of life and justice. Even as corruption of the highest had produced the worst, they will not give up. Concurrently, Britain have a legal and moral obligation. Most justifiably, there are strong evidence of large number of British Nationals and interest involved. There should be no excuse for a lack of pursuit under foreign diplomacy and Westminster politics.

The Hong Kong Bill initiated by Alistair Carmichael MP puts forwards the need to strengthen the six-monthly reports on Hong Kong. The Bill should seek to list concrete red lines akin to the United States Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act. The United States legislation is greatly supported by many pro-democracy advocacy groups from Hong Kong.

1. Red-line on electoral reforms

The United States Act made US policy to require Hong Kong in establishing democratic elections for all members of the Hong Kong Legislative Council by 2020. It also made requirement for the recognition of US interest and certifying that Hong Kong has held free and fair elections for 2 consecutive Chief Executive and 2 consecutive Legislative Council periods. In Hong Kong, the people have made it clear to implement immediate Universal Suffrage that deals away with the absurdity of Functional Constituencies and interventions from Beijing; and directly choosing the Chief Executive in a one-person-one-vote electoral system. Rather than empty chants about the Basic Law or more empty promises of 'progress' mandated by Beijing; candidly, this is the right they desire and also the right that will guarantee Hong Kong's stability and global interests in world commerce.

2. Red-line for protection of British persons

In the matter of protecting British persons, the other red line will be maintain the safety of all British Nationals. British Citizen Lee Bo has already been abducted by Chinese authorities from Hong Kong in violation of a number of laws. It is also another breach of the Joint Declaration. Just like the night of 21st July, how many British persons need to be harmed before a red line is crossed? The six-month reports should state none other.

3. Red-line and to implement sanctions

Another important aspect will be red lines and the placement of automatic sanctions. Many Hong Kong or Chinese high-ranking officials have financial interests in Britain. Their financial interests are also used or maintained by family members who may be British Nationals. In fact, the families of 3 out of 4 Hong Kong's Chief Executives have established financial interest in the UK and the constant need for themselves to travel to the UK to maintain these establishments. Is it a breach of justice to allow monies from the well-paid Carrie Lam (a £522,585p.a. income) to be spent for family maintenance in the UK? If Russian Oligarch's wealth is seen as obscene, so too should there be a written effect on Hong Kong's officials' wealth gained from presiding on human rights violations. There needs to be a six-monthly regular review to automatically place sanctions when red-lines are crossed.

Conclusion

To conclude, British interests specifically protecting individuals from atrocities, atrocities conducted by individuals or economical values are intertwined in Hong Kong. We recalled Liberal Democrats Lord Ashdown putting the need for a British response to human rights violations in Yugoslavia as a moral imperative. Recently, Labour peer Lord Pendry described the Hong Kong violence as "Bloodsheds on the streets as the guardians of law became weapons of the state." Lord Alton have strenuously laid plain the situation of Hong Kong in the Upper House and as a member of the APPG on Hong Kong will be

investigating on the atrocities conducted by the Hong Kong Police. In the Commons, we know Conservatives MPs like Andrew Rosindell MP have put forward Early Day Motions to target those who cause abuses of human rights overseas. Bob Sealy MP have witnessed Hong Kong Protests in first hand. The Hong Kong Bill submitted by Liberal Democrats Carmichael MP have the support from MPs from all parties North and South.

Even if terror cannot be remedied by law now, terror must be stopped politically.

Written by CheungLog and co-authored by Nicholas Chan

CheungLog is a law student studying in London and Nicholas Chan is a Liberal Democrats member and Lib Dem Campaigners for Hong Kong

Shutdown of ABS-CBN and the systemic persecution of the media in Philippines condemned.

Statement by the Council of Asian Liberals & Democrats (CALD)

CALD is outraged by the cease and desist order of the Duterte administration to prohibit ABS-CBN from broadcasting to deliver crucial news and information that is vital particularly when the whole country is struggling to survive and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

ABS-CBN, the largest broadcasting network in the country, was ordered to stop its broadcasting operations by the government's National Telecommunication Commission (NTC) after the network's congressional franchise expired on 4 May. ABS-CBN officially went off the air on 5 May at 7:52pm.

President Duterte made several threats prior to the shutdown. In April 2017, he said he would file a complaint and would block the network's franchise renewal. In December 2019, he said that he'll see to it that ABS-CBN is out and later said it is better to sell the network.

Congress has the exclusive right and jurisdiction on legislative franchises under the Philippine Constitution and it has yet to deliberate whether to grant, deny, extend, revoke or modify the franchise renewal application of the network. During a congressional hearing on 10 March, NTC Commissioner Gamaliel Cordoba assured House of Representative members that NTC would issue a provisional authority to ABS-CBN so it could operate beyond 4 May.

However, like a thief in the night, the government broke its promise and delivered a huge blow not just on a particular TV network, but on the fundamental freedoms and basic human rights of Filipinos. Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said that Duterte has total control of the executive department and has the power to reverse the NTC order, but no such actions were done.

ABS-CBN has the widest broadcasting reach in the Philippines and has been providing vital news to keep the public updated on the pandemic. In some places, ABS-CBN is the only news source of the people especially during this pandemic. The network, together with executives, employees and celebrity talents,

has also been instrumental in helping Filipinos address their daily needs through relief operations and fund-raising initiatives.

CALD echoes the sentiments of the Liberal Party of the Philippines, a founding member of CALD, “That this government would shut ABS-CBN down in the midst of a pandemic – where media is both a lifeline and a source of comfort – calls into questions their motivations, their priorities, and their commitment to our people’s well-being.”

Philippine Vice President Leni Robredo, Chairman of the Liberal Party of the Philippines, said stopping the network’s operations would leave 11,000 workers jobless and would cut off the free flow of correct and timely information that gives direction to the country’s actions in tackling COVID-19. “There should be no space for harassment and personal agenda at this time when we should be working together...this free flow of information literally saves lives,” Robredo emphasized.

Sadly, there is a systemic persecution of the media in the Philippines. ABS-CBN is only the latest case, but other media institutions such as Rappler, the leading online news website in the country, is facing closure as well due to legal and tax cases. In this regard, the members of CALD are united in making the following calls to the Philippine government:

Curb the Virus, Not the Flow of Information

CALD condemns in strongest terms the shutdown of ABS-CBN and calls for the government to allow the network to operate freely. CALD believes that the fast, fair and free flow of information, as successfully exemplified by the Democratic Progressive Party-led government in Taiwan, is crucial particularly during a crisis. This will definitely provide efficient delivery of services and effective coordination between and among stakeholders to flatten the curve and address the social and economic challenges.

No to Abuse of Power

During this health crisis, there should be no room for unnecessary vindictive agenda on the part of Duterte and his government against people and institutions that form the cornerstone of democracy. The Filipino people must remain vigilant of the authoritarian actions of the government and must always stand firm to hold them accountable.

Defend Press Freedom

When information is silenced, truth is silenced. This media shut down is clearly a setback to the collective efforts, sacrifice and unity of the country at a time when everyone, especially the leaders, should be focusing on beating the pandemic and protecting its people. Also, with the culture of impunity in the country, journalists and media people have been killed and continue to be at risk during the Duterte administration. The international community must closely monitor these alarming situations to protect and defend press freedom.

Bi-Khim Hsiao

Chairperson of CALD

Africa, Oil and COVID-19

Rebecca Tinsley

The oil price and COVID-19 will test African resilience. The Coronavirus recession is plunging African further into debt as demand for commodities falls, along with oil prices.

The COVID-19 financial crash will have devastating consequences for Africa, halting or even reversing recent success in fighting poverty. As demand for commodities shrinks, and Africans in lockdown are unable to earn money, many countries on the continent will face severe economic downturns. Moreover, thanks to opaque loan agreements, some African oil-producing nations are paying their Chinese lenders in oil priced at current market rates: that means they could be shipping China five times more oil than when they negotiated the loans. The slump will also have far-reaching geopolitical consequences: in the absence of American leadership, China can count on the continent's UN representatives to look away as it flexes its muscles in Hong Kong, the South China Sea and Taiwan.

Even before COVID-19, a combination of poor governance and corruption had burdened several African nations with enormous foreign debts. Johns Hopkins University estimates¹ that China lent Africa \$143 billion between 2000 and 2017. Angola alone owes \$49 billion, giving rise to a local headline, "Every Angolan owes \$754 to China". Forbes magazine estimates Nigeria's public debt at \$85 billion², meaning that each of Nigeria's 200 million citizens owe China \$41³.

President Xi's plan for interlinking global infrastructure projects, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is not a form of aid. The majority of Chinese investment in Africa is for projects funded by loans. The conditions attached to those loans do not necessarily benefit Africa's citizens.

According to Nigerian economist Obadiah Mailafiya³ African governments should have read the small print before agreeing to loans with China. He suggests most of the money goes back to China in the form of contracts for materials, equipment and approved construction firms specified for infrastructure projects. He also believes China has laid claim to assets in several African countries in lieu of interest payments.

Noel Mbala⁴, a former transport minister in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), says few African leaders have skilled advisors on hand when negotiating contracts with lenders. This has led to paying loans with commodities such as oil. These contracts are rarely transparent, giving rise to fears that oil-for-loans agreements are subject to the current market price. That was advantageous when oil was \$120 a barrel, but not now. The opaque nature of the agreements makes scrutiny difficult.

Anyone working in Africa has noticed the empty conference centres, idle power plants, roads to nowhere and railways running at low capacity; symbols of the local elite's grandiose empire-building, funded by Chinese loans. For instance, Nova Cidade de Kilamba⁵ in Angola, a city of 750 tower blocks, was built by China's CITIC group at a cost to Angola of \$3.5 billion. Intended to house half a million people, it has an estimated 80,000 residents⁶. The smallest apartments were initially priced at \$125,000 but reduced to \$70,000 still beyond the reach of all but a tiny elite. Angolan GDP⁷ per person is \$6,800, 36% live below the poverty line, and 71% of the rural population is without running water. If Angola is paying its loans with oil at the current market price, then it will be in debt to China for centuries.

Part of President Xi's BRI is the Mombasa-Nairobi-Naivasha railway⁸. Yet, the second section, from the Kenyan capital to Lake Victoria, comes to an inglorious halt in Suswa, a Maasai village. China will not now participate in the third section that would have connected land-locked Uganda with the port of Mombasa. The project's cost is \$3.7 billion, whereas for \$205 million, the British colonial era line could have been refurbished. As it is, estimates of cargo traffic on the Mombasa-Nairobi section have proved over-optimistic, to put it kindly.

Critics argue that China often calibrates its support according to the needs of the African elite. For instance, China built the African Union HQ (rumored to be equipped with Chinese eavesdropping devices⁹), the ECOWAS HQ¹⁰ and the new Zimbabwean Parliament¹¹ for free. Although China denies it vehemently, some African commentators call it neo-colonialist for deciding what Africa needs, rather than consulting local people who might prioritize running water and electricity. Yet, African leaders are not forced to go along with China's plans: some desire vanity projects to boost their status or kickbacks to pad their off-shore bank accounts.

China's far-sighted strategy has also opened the continent to Chinese goods, which may initially be dumped at a loss, putting African competitors out of business, at which point China can raise the price of its goods. Since the appearance of COVID-19 in China, African social media have featured clips of Africans who work or study in China being beaten or banned from McDonald's¹², accused of bringing the virus to China. Confronted by an anti-Chinese backlash in Africa, officials are reported to be offended that Africans are ungrateful for the help received from China.



Nova Cidade de Kilamba, Angola,

Yun Sun¹³ of the Stimson Center remarks that Africans may have woken up to racism in China against them, despite the official narrative of brotherhood and unity. Yet, it is just one episode, she says, and China's relationship with Africa remains transactional and based on elite connections, rather than African public opinion. African leaders are already in China's pocket when it comes to supporting China at the UN when issues of contested sovereignty such as Hong Kong or Taiwan arise. She argues that some African leaders have a track record of being untroubled by human rights concerns such as the issue of Muslim Uighurs. In an absence of US leadership, there is even debate in China about taking advantage of how distracted the global community is, to further its agendas on Taiwan, stake its claim on the South China Sea and neutralize democracy activists in Hong Kong.

The oil slump is largely due to reduced demand in the global north during the lockdown. Yet, China continues to buy oil, taking advantage of falling prices. Yun Sun points out that China's oil imports rose 5% in March, opportunistically buying crude shipments from tankers that were unable to unload at ports shuttered by the virus. China will store the oil until its economy recovers.

The G20 moved quickly¹⁴ to suspend African loan repayments until 2021, and there are calls for debt forgiveness. However, it seems unlikely China's lenders will cancel loans while the Chinese economy is struggling. Although much of Nigeria's debts¹⁵ were forgiven in 2005-6, its leaders have borrowed so much recently that it is back in the same position now. There is little evidence Nigerians have benefited from the spending spree: 70%¹⁶ live below the poverty line, and even in urban areas the power supply is so poor that

it makes manufacturing difficult. Since its citizens are unlikely to be helped by debt cancellation, it may be difficult to argue for forgiveness a second time in two decades.

The global north's economies are forecast to contract dramatically this year, while subsequent years are unlikely to enjoy a swift recovery. How popular will spending on foreign aid be when cuts in the domestic budget become necessary?

Meanwhile, Africa will struggle to contain COVID-19 in congested and insanitary cities, with few healthcare resources. Many people must go out daily to sell their labour or goods; tourism has evaporated; remittances from relatives working abroad are down; and societies relying on communal solidarity will be tested by the lockdown.

Many Africans do not trust their governments for good reason, so they question the health advice from on high. During the Ebola epidemic, Sierra Leone and the DRC learned that co-opting local leaders as legitimate messengers worked best. But Africa is short on the time and resources necessary to reach every community. According to a health worker¹⁷ in remote northern Uganda (who wishes to remain anonymous), the countries with the best governance will come through COVID-19 with the least devastation. She was not hopeful about the nations where the elite's credibility does not extend beyond the suburbs of the capital city. Africans will be left to rely on their resilience and resourcefulness yet again.

Rebecca Tinsley

Rebecca Tinsley founded Network for Africa, a charity delivering psychotherapy training to survivors of genocide and conflict. <https://network4africa.org>

A shorter version of this article appeared in The Times of Israel

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-africa-china-analy-idUSKCN21V0CS>

² <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ikebrannon/2019/08/06/nigerias-deceptively-large-external-debt-could-threaten-its-economy/#57b07c5f2491>

³ <http://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20190411-focus-africa-imf-warns-nigeria-about-mountain-chinese-debt>

⁴ Noel Mbala, speaking at a meeting in London on May 21st 2018

⁵ <https://www.businessinsider.com/chinese-built-ghost-town-kilamba-angola-2012-7?r=US&IR=T>

⁶ <https://www.africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/blog/views-of-suburban-luanda-banishing-the-ghosts-from-kilamba/>

⁷ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ao.html>

⁸ <https://www.dw.com/en/kenya-struggles-to-manage-debt-for-railway-to-nowhere/a-50887431>

⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-africanunion-summit-china-idUSKBN1FI2I5>

¹⁰ <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/03/27/asia/ecowas-china-headquarters-intl/index.html> - Economic Community of West African States.

¹¹ <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3044402/how-zimbabwes-new-parliament-symbolises-chinas-checkbook>

¹² <http://www.zimeye.net/2020/04/13/china-mcdonalds-apologises-for-abusing-black-africans-following-zimeye-expose/>

¹³ Yun Sun, telephone interview April 28th 2020

¹⁴ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/oliverwilliams1/2020/04/16/g20-agrees-debt-relief-for-global-poor-will-investors-follow/#6f17b47c2366>

¹⁵ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ikebrannon/2019/08/06/nigerias-deceptively-large-external-debt-could-threaten-its-economy/#3869dce52491>

¹⁶ <https://www.cia.gov/redirects/ciaredirect.html>

¹⁷ Ugandan health worker, email, April 3rd 2020

reviews

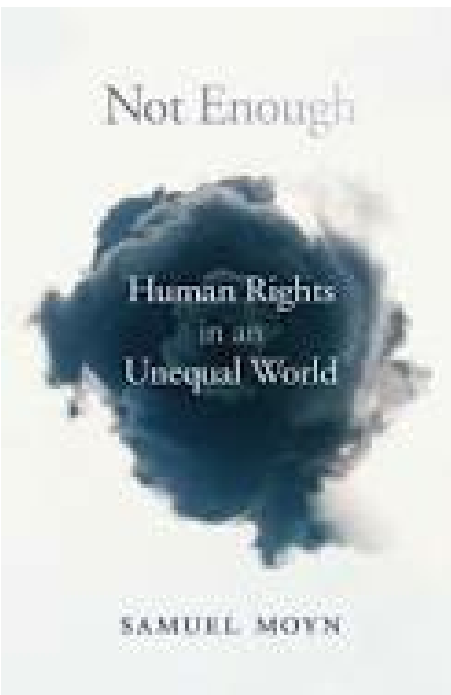
Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World by Samuel Moyn
Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 2018 £14.95 isbn 9780674241398

According to this book's blurb, Moyn "*analyses how and why we chose to make human rights our highest ideals while simultaneously neglecting the demands of a broader social and economic justice*".

Unfortunately, his ideas are not (clear) enough. Moyn does not explain what he is arguing for (or against) and the book frequently descends into a bland narration of historical events. It may have a powerful message, but this work is let down by poor writing style.

It is only in his concluding chapter that Moyn sets out what he has (apparently) been attempting to argue throughout the book: human rights only require that each person's basic needs are protected, and so are compatible with an unequal distribution of wealth which Moyn considers to be unfair (or even wrong). Even here, Moyn does not expand his theory properly. What does he mean by the equality he advocates – how much deviation from the average should be permitted? Why is equality of resources a worthy goal (and indeed a better goal than basic necessity or equal distribution of political rights)? He seems to work on the assumption that his readership is already on board the equality train, presumably due to an instinctive sense of moral justice, and so fails to defend his ideas with intellectual rigour.

The book consistently suffers from a lack of definitions. It is not merely a case of him assuming a high level of knowledge on the part of the reader, but many of his concepts do not have universally-accepted meaning.



For example, he writes an entire chapter on the "*Jacobin legacy*" without properly explaining what he considers the "*Jacobin state*" to be (we know only that it existed in France from 1793-4 and "*tended towards dictatorship*"). I surely cannot be the only reader who does not have an in-depth understanding of this period of French history at my fingertips, let alone one which coincides exactly with Moyn's interpretation. Similarly, Moyn does not analyse historical events as he describes them (apart from the odd veiled comment here and there) so it is difficult to understand the reason he is narrating seemingly obscure political events.

Even more significantly, he does not define the two theories he is arguing for and against: sufficiency and equality (each of which he calls various names throughout the book). Without knowing what they are, and where their great points of difference arise, it is impossible for the reader to decide which to support. In particular, he does a very poor job of explaining whether the "human rights" he is criticising are political and/or socio-economic rights. It seems that bare minimum socio-economic rights are what he dislikes (preferring instead a more

equal distribution of wealth) but there are points that could be made around political rights (such as greater wealth giving a person greater power to exercise their freedom of expression). Confusingly, he neither explores nor expressly excludes political rights.

I remain unconvinced that the supposed tension between sufficiency and equality really exists (although perhaps this is because I still do not really understand what they are!). Redistributing wealth, or generating wealth in a more equal manner in the first place, is a task for economists. Ensuring that each person can enforce their right to a particular level of basic survival is the work of the lawyer. The interaction between the two is a political decision. I see no reason why a society could not decide to set the legally-enforceable right to basic resources at a level which would lead to equal economic distribution. Of course, most societies

do not do this, and only guarantee a very low level of resources for each person. That is not an inherent constraint imposed by human rights, but simply a different political decision.

It is a pity that this book is such a slog to read. It appears to have some interesting ideas which, if better developed, would give us much to ponder. It is not clear what Moyn thinks is the solution to the (supposed) tension between sufficiency and equality. Should we focus on equality and forget about sufficiency, or is it better to try and achieve both? If you want to explore this topic further, I do not suggest you read this book. But if you happen to bump into Moyn, consider buying him a drink and asking him what he really thinks – he may have something enlightening to say.

Eleanor Healy-Birt

fabric-ation: slip back to source, a journey of materials
ONCA eco-poetry collective 2
Elephant Press 2020 £10.00 + £3.50 p&p
isbn 9781916233621

Some interesting developments emerge out of eco-feminism in the search for meaning in otherwise mundane item. The ONCA eco-poetry collective, who meet in the ONCA Gallery in Brighton – just east of the North Laines, on the Steyne, comprises for this anthology of nine poets & artists who met together over the last Winter to explore the roots of various fabrics with which we attire ourselves. Some of the pieces were primarily written by one person, others collective, specific authorship is not attributed on the page, and indeed, when performed, the poets moved across each other’s work. The poets work their way across silk, rubber, polyester, wool, linen and eider down. There is empathy with the natural materials, though not with their exploitation in all instances, but not polyester and its environmental impact.

The anthology has been put together beautifully, although it doesn’t contain any of the artwork associated with the performance (some depicted here), except perhaps in the typographic arrays, which might be seen in a similar context to, say Dada poems.

There was an open discussion after the performance last February – I did not have the heart to tell them of the misogyny in 16th century Dutch silk production in the incubation of the silkworm egg – it’s a bit like the myths of the finest Havana cigars.



if linen is a vegetable whose mouth does it feed?

*all are both dear and cheap, the field and the human,
defined by the hands - cruel and loving
threading their story*

From ‘song written on a linen shirt’

Elephant Press can be contacted by email – books@elephantpress.co.uk – they are at Forest Lodge, Ashburnham, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 9PH, www.elephantpress.co.uk has some of their more recent work online because of lockdown. Visit ONCA when the LDs are next in Brighton.

Lynn Syed

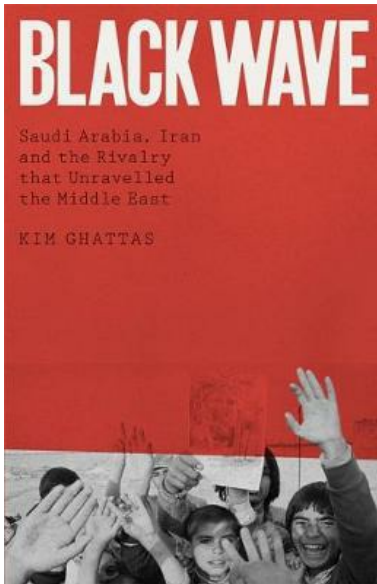
Black Wave: Saudi Arabia, Iran and the forty-year rivalry that unravelled culture, religion and collective memory in the Middle East, by Kim Ghattas.

Henry Holt, New York. 2020 \$30.00

isbn 9781250131201

“What happened to us?” is the question posed by Lebanese author Kim Ghattas as she surveys the wreckage of Syria, Egypt, Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon and Pakistan. The answer is “1979.” Ghattas reveals the region’s descent into hell through the eyes of brave individuals who refused to be silenced by fear.

This superb chronicle of four decades of destructive sectarian conflict illuminates the core themes obscured by day-to-day reporting on the region. Three earth-shaking events in 1979 precipitated the downward spiral of the Middle East: the Iranian revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the Islamist occupation of Mecca in Saudi Arabia.



Ghattas makes clear that after 1979, Iran and Saudi weaponized sectarian identities to pursue their own paranoid expansionist agendas. Fearing the example set by the overthrow of the shah, the Saudis continue to use oil wealth to spread Wahhabism, its joyless, authoritarian version of Sunni Islam, destroying previously more tolerant societies such as Pakistan. They export a jihadist interpretation of Islam, hoping to rid their own kingdom of its trouble-makers, while extinguishing a more inclusive form of Sunni faith.

It was Saudi King Fahd who ordered a new, definitive translation of the Koran in which passages encouraging the hatred of Christians and Jews were inserted; he ordered the confiscation of all previous versions in Saudi, and then exported millions of his approved, racist version around the globe to madrassas and mosques paid for with Saudi money. Consistent throughout has been Saudi’s refusal to take responsibility for the consequences of its actions (Al Qaeda, 9/11, the destruction of Yemen, the elimination of tolerance in Pakistan, the Muslim Brotherhood, the murder of Jamal Khashoggi).

Iran’s ayatollahs have relentlessly stirred up Shia Muslims to counter Saudi, igniting proxy wars in Lebanon, Yemen, Syria and Iraq. If anyone benefited from the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, it was Iran, which now controls territory and rulers from Tehran to the Mediterranean. Only the discontent of the Iranian public, fed up of bankrolling this expansionism, may eventually clip the wings of the all-powerful Republican Guard.

This is the story of leaders who thought they could use extremists to further their own political ends (Sadat in Egypt, Saddam in Iraq, Bhutto in Pakistan, the USA in Afghanistan): in each case, they unleashed destructive forces they could not control.

It is also the story of personally corrupt men who seem to hate women, taking it upon themselves to determine who is a good Muslim; and hypocritical societies such as modern Pakistan which put the full burden of honour on female shoulders, averting its eyes from the degenerate behaviour of men, rather like the Victorians.

As the power to hold their young populations in line with religion fades, both Iran and Saudi are reverting to nationalism, argues Ghattas. Sadly, there seems to be no international leadership capable of understanding the subtlety required to navigate these roiling waters. The virus may be distracting us from events in the Middle East at the moment, but the suffering of its voiceless people continues.

Rebecca Tinsley

We must oppose Beijing's Power Grab

Alistair Carmichael

We cannot allow coronavirus to blind us to the injustice that is unfolding on Hong Kong.

Beijing's new national security law is a naked power-grab. It bypasses Hong Kong local law-making processes and demonstrates a complete lack of respect for the Joint Declaration.

Clearly China no longer cares for the 'one country, two systems' agreement made between the UK and China during the Handover.

We cannot sit back and watch this violation of rights and freedoms.

The international community should be standing up for the people of Hong Kong. Above all, the UK has a moral and legal duty to act.

Liberal Democrats are clear on this issue: we stand with the people of Hong Kong.

Thank you for backing our campaign to protect the rights of the people of Hong Kong. As part of this campaign, my Bill would re-open the offer of British National Overseas (BNO) passports for Hong Kong citizens and extend the scheme to provide the "right of abode". This would allow a person from Hong Kong to live or work indefinitely in the UK.

But we must get the message out further.

We are going to put pressure on the UK Foreign Secretary to fulfil the UK's moral and legal obligation to the people of Hong Kong through my Bill.

Will you help build our campaign by sharing it on social media?

Police brutality during COVID19 is undermining the Rule of Law

As Liberal International has raised several times during the ongoing crisis, many governments have been using the spread of the coronavirus as an excuse to clamp down on the freedom of expression and silence their critics. However, excessive enforcement of lockdown rules is by no means restricted to the digital sphere or to freedom of expression.

The UN, when raising alarm of excessive measures in enforcing lockdowns, has warned against what it called "toxic lockdown culture". Several countries, such as France, Kenya, South Africa and the Philippines, have seen reports of police using excessive force in enforcing lockdown rules and curfews. In South Africa, police have used rubber bullets and tear gas, while in Kenya and Nigeria brutal police measures have resulted in the deaths of several people. Such actions by police undermine not only the measures taken to control the spread of the virus, but also risks further undermining the rule of law at a time when liberal democracy is under siege. This alarming trend of democratic decline across the world continues, and the coronavirus risks accelerating this negative trend.

While measures do need to be enforced, excessive and even lethal violence by police against the citizens they are meant to protect is just as unacceptable during this crisis as it was before and will be after.

Governments and legal systems have a duty to uphold the rule of law and protect their citizens. As people and health systems are fighting to reduce the damage done by the virus all over the world, security forces must not make the measures taken to control the virus as damaging to our societies as the virus itself.