

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG



From: Members of the Economic Freedom of the World Network

We the undersigned of the Economic Freedom of the World Network stand with the people of Hong Kong as their rights and freedoms are threatened by the actions of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Hong Kong was left devastated at the end of World War II yet by granting its people the highest level of **economic freedom** in the world, Hong Kong rose to become one of the most prosperous places on the planet. The growth in quality of life was astonishing. In 1950, Hong Kong was about tied with the world average per capita GDP at just over \$2,000 in constant 2010 US dollars; in 2018, Hong Kong's per capita GDP reached \$40,000, four times the world average. The OECD, formed in 1961, had an average per capita income more than three times that of Hong Kong then; now they are equal.

Civil and personal freedom blossomed too since Hongkongers were not dependent on government or other powerful players and were protected by a strong and impartial rule of law. Hongkongers came to enjoy the highest level of personal freedom in the world, according to the **Human Freedom Index**. This includes security and safety, the right to practice a religion of one's choosing, the freedom to associate and assemble, the right to join political organizations, freedom of personal expression, freedom of the press, freedom to use the internet and freedoms to establish one's own identity. China, unfortunately, fails to provide its citizens with many of these basic human freedoms.

Hong Kong is the world's most entrepreneurial society, with new business formation the highest in the world, at 28.6 per thousand working age population, compared to an OECD average of 3.8 and a world average of 1.5. In the World Bank's Human Capital Index, Hong Kong at .822 scores fourth globally, compared to an OECD average of .751 and a world average of .567.

To protect the Hong Kong miracle, when Britain returned Hong Kong to China in 1997, China agreed that the economic and political systems in Hong Kong would not be changed for 50 years. That is, China would abide by the "one nation, two systems" principle. Over the past several years, communist China has been attempting to strip from Hong Kong its long-held status as one of the freest places in the world and undermining the "one nation, two systems".

Most recently, China has ordered large scale arrests of dissidents and, on May 28, China's National People's Congress imposed a security law which attacks Hong Kong's freedoms and Hong Kong's Basic Law (effectively, a freedom-protecting constitution) by bypassing Hong Kong's Legislative Council. While the CPC has yet to release details, the law is intended to allow mainland authorities to crush freedom in Hong Kong and extend absolute CPC rule.

Pro-democracy demonstrators, young and old, Chinese, and the many other groups that populate Hong Kong, are demonstrating to protect their freedoms and hopes for the future of their children and grandchildren. We stand with the people of Hong Kong as they attempt to protect their freedoms and rights and believe a strong global response is critical.

Yours truly,

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