



Human Rights Now

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Human Rights Now Strongly Protests the Police Use of Excessive Force in Hong Kong

Human Rights Now, a Tokyo-based international human rights NGO, is deeply concerned by the excessive force used by Hong Kong police against demonstrators protesting an extradition bill before the Hong Kong Legislative Council. Hong Kong authorities must respect their obligations under international human rights law, particularly the right to peaceful assembly, and immediately end the excessive use of force against protestors.

Hong Kong officials are planning to consider a proposed law that would allow the transfer of criminal suspects to states where they are wanted, even if Hong Kong does not have formal extradition treaties with those states. Protestors fear this legislation will be exploited to send political dissidents to mainland China, where defendants lack due process and fair trials. As a result, hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets to demonstrate against the bill.

Videos of alleged police brutality against protestors have widely circulated on social media; one clip shows multiple officers surrounding a man and repeatedly beating him with batons even as he falls to the ground. News outlets report that police have used tear gas, rubber bullets, and beanbag rounds against protestors. At least 81 people have been hospitalized so far.¹

The use of excessive force by police against largely peaceful demonstrators contravenes Hong Kong's ICCPR duties to respect the rights of its citizens to peaceful assembly, association, and expression. It also contravenes the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, which holds that officials should "act in proportion to the seriousness of the offence" and "minimize damage and injury."²

HRN calls on the Hong Kong government to respect the fundamental human right to protest of its people, immediately end the use of excessive force against protestors, hold police using excessive force accountable, offer redress to victims, and prevent future occurrences of excessive force.

¹ New York Times, "Police Violence Puts Hong Kong Government on Defense", 12 Jun. 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/12/world/asia/hong-kong-protests.html>.

² Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, 7 Sept. 1990, Arts. 4 and 5, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/firearms.pdf>.